

From Raya on Che Guevara  
Detroit Meeting, January 25, 1968

To understand why philosophy is urgent today and what it means today, let's bring two things that will make it active and not like we're discussing something that we're correct, and someone else is wrong, but a third person can say I don't give a damn for either of you. Che was a wonderful man. I think the worst tragedy in the world is that he brought about his own death. One of the early stories, how Che got to be the minister of economy, they said, Fidel got up before the meeting and said, "Who here is an economist?" And Che raised his hand. Castro said, "Oh, you're the head of economics." He said, "I'm the head of what?" "The head of economics." "I thought you were asking who was a communist." I don't care whether they made it up, even the bourgeoisie are aware of the fact that here was a people who made a revolution and even though it was a complete misunderstanding, nevertheless, this was how it was going to be. run and a damn sight better than under Batista. That is one kind of feeling, together is the tragedy, not only in his death, but the tragedy that we may be forming tomorrow with another war, what was his last words, just before he died, to the conference of Latin America. Let us have two or three more Vietnams. Let's open a second front. And when you read his speech in total which just I read but unfortunately left at home, then you find it's even worse than that because he spells it out as meaning guerrilla warfare all the time, nothing else, let's forget our differences, let's not think about differences. In other words, he is talking about China and Russia, even though he does not mention them. Let's just go and fight. What are you going to have now by opening a second front when you don't even know what you are for. You may be facing a nuclear war. So it is not only his death we may be suddenly be facing the fact that people think that they can solve the world problem by having another Vietnam and tickling the U.S. imperialism goose or something. It is a goddamn cinch here we spend 25 billion dollars and something like 4 per cent of the national gross, I mean you can't overcome U.S. imperialism that way. If you can't overcome by counting how many millions you would have to have. It would have to be an entirely different basis. It would have to be your realizing that the same energy that you get out of people you can't get out of anything, not out of atomic energy, not out of guerrilla warfare, not out of anything. That is the greatest energy force on earth. Let's get down to these three absolutely fundamental and basic philosophic categories for our age, never mind any other age, just ours. Their universal; particular; individual; it's in Hegel's logic but we have to spell it out materialistically for our age, you have a universal that socialism, all these people agree that's what they want. You have a universal that's for your capitalism, but we're going to talk about socialism. You have a particular get formed into something, it assumes a specific form, at one or another stage. In the case, say, of Russia, it assumed a form of nationalized property. That was the form it assumed, the first time property became nationalized. In the case of Guevara, it assumed the form that he got part in guerrilla warfare. If you ever stop and say that the form it assumed at a specific point in history is the universal, you are lost. You're going to regress all the time, because you have to see this third little category, individual. How individual means it's concrete it has really realized itself. The individualization of socialism would be every man's freedom, the multi-dimensional capacities of man, on entirely new social order. So all the time you look at these particulars and see whether it is accidental, whether it is a specific form, whether you want

14010

to see and measure whether that is the mediation. You know the bourgeoisie is always accusing us, we only care supposedly about the goal and don't care about the means getting there. It is the exact opposite, they are the ones that don't care about the means. If you have a division between means and goals you cut yourself, you've already ended your goal. Now the individual means you have to judge it by the individual, ~~and~~ it concretely so, now you take nationalized property in Russia. Was the man really free, the worker, the peasant, by having nationalized property? It was only a beginning. Now if you want to stop at nationalized property not only do you not get actual full freedom, but something worse than that, you have forgotten that this can also be the form of capitalism, only that time it is not the particular but the actual ultimate of it, because what Marx was saying was, capitalism, can assume many forms. We have private competitive and at another stage we shall might be monopoly, and its ultimate would be state. All the concentration and centralization would be in the hands of one single capitalist. He was predicting, but he wasn't predicting. He didn't know he would live that long; he was hoping that half of them would be long gone before it reached its ultimate. He was saying it only in order to show that the logic, even if it lived to its ultimate and had state property, would change absolutely nothing, unless wage labor and capital were completely transformed. In other words, he was saying the wage laborer would be a wage laborer, he would be driven down, he would be degraded, he, not getting anything from it, so that you see, to get stuck in a particular, to get stuck in a quagmire, whether it is guerrilla warfare or nationalized property or whatever form it assumes, at this particular point means that instead of seeing the actual development of man and whether you have concretized the goal that you have waited for instead of just one form, you can retrogress just as easily. In other words, take capitalism as the case we now live in. A private capitalist would think I am not for state capitalism. But if the world is a state capitalist world, if planning is the measure, yes you have it. In the middle of the world, nobody has privacy, you may get private property, but nobody has anything to say; it is the state that has been substituted for the individual in the concretization. NOW, if the guerrilla warfare is not just a means and not just a certain point--take the Red Guards. What a mockery China has made out of them. He thinks he can create them by himself, he is a big man now, he has power and all that. I disagree with calling military dictator for a guerrilla leader. He is a dictator then all right. It means something different. A military dictator means you are trying to have the old power. A guerrilla leader is in a certain sense more dangerous because as he were, he doesn't look like a military dictator, youth as so forth. What were the Red Guards in the Russian Revolution--they came in on the last stage in order to check that the guns and so forth that would be sent by Kerensky who had overthrown the czar, would really go to the masses and not to shoot another worker. Anything can be transformed into its opposite, that is why Hegel is so alive. Every single unit contains the opposite within itself and the surest way to make that a shortcut, a real shortcut into opposit, is to step at that particular without seeing whether it becomes the individual. Right now, we are confronted with the fact everything that has come out, never mind what it was in Cuba, never mind what it was in Bolivia, right now we have the Korean situation and suddenly we are going to have to answer on the basis of two powers, two nuclear powers, Russia and China, or Russia without China; America and France or America without France. We should

have to say this one is a little bit better or that one is a little bit  
 better, to fall with both of your haunches. We have to see, therefore, that  
 instead of thinking that it is just a debate or just because I want to be  
 right or just because somebody else was right that we don't get sucked into  
 the war that will just perpetuate, or not even perpetuate, because we can't  
 just as easily. We finally have reached a point where we can absolutely  
 destroy all of civilization. So it isn't a simple thing, and it isn't  
 a question that they have not done something it is that at each stage  
 that opposes which is contained in every unit waits to swallow you in; it  
 doesn't matter whether it is a personal life, whether it's science, whether  
 politics, only in politics and revolution matters all and unless you take  
 that self activity of war, not because we love the worker more, or love the  
 present more, or love someone else more but that it is the only way to see  
 that the movement doesn't get sucked retrogressively, but moves forward to  
 the individual or actual and for that you need men who are  
 inspired, and they are not going to be inspired, they are not going to have  
 the extra energy that makes revolutions successful, and then see it extend  
 itself, until they see that they, the multi-dimensional man, are the subject  
 of this revolution.