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Abstract. This article describes the political benefits of acting as if a reality that is but fantasy were reality.

With the recent 30th anniversary (October 8, 1997) of Che Guevara's execution, much has been made of his pop-icon status: the beret; the cigar; the fatigues; the eternal youth; the intense and fervent gaze; the essence of fecund revolutionary process; the poster boy that could and did and does become idealized by so many of the unfulfilled and, in turn, seemed and seems to project so much of his own unwanted characteristics onto them. Although this pop icon status may be significant for the field of popular culture studies, another aspect of Che--two of his approaches to the "as if"--has significance for political psychology.

The first approach--acting "as if" a revolutionary process were warranted and could be successfully effected--can actually help induce a change in one's environment so that acting "as if" is no longer necessary. The real environment begins to closely and more closely approximate the ideal environment. One's reality is in the process of becoming one's fantasy.

The intensity of this propelling motive force--this "as if"--as manifested by Che and also by Fidel Castro may well be one explanatory and causal factor in continuing the insurgency against Batista after initial disaster and severe hardship. The "as if" also may be implicated in continuing the revolutionary process in some African and Latin American countries during Che's lifetime and in Cuba for over 40 years--whether or not the "as if" was still necessary or sufficient.

The second approach----acting "as if" one were a revolutionary with the thoughts, emotions, motives, and behaviors that one believes revolutionaries to have--can actually help induce a change in oneself so that acting "as if" is no longer necessary. The real self begins to closely and more closely approximate the ideal self. One's reality is in the process of becoming one's fantasy.

The intensity of this "as if" as propelling motive force may be an explanatory and causal factor in several statistically deviant aspects of Che's personality. These aspects include his continuous quest for superhuman physical stamina in compensation for his asthma, his refusal to accept virtually all of the perquisites commonly available to victors of insurgencies, his significant sensitivities towards hypocrisies--perhaps with a blind spot for Fidel--and his seeming discomfort with living a settled life with family and friends.

In the 20th century alone there are other exemplars of politically significant "as ifs" including that of acting "as if" one were free as a route to inducing environmental freedom and freedom of the self in totalitarian regimes (cf. Havel, 1989.) Yet in an era of globalization--with the increasing social, cultural, and psychological interdependence fostered through telecommunications and mass media--"as ifs" can be employed to control others as well as break the controls of others. Thus, one ironic feature of the "as ifs" of Che and Havel is that in a postmodern world of saturated, fragmented, and constructed selves, a vehicle of political and psychological revolution may be counterrevolutionary as well. (See Anderson, J.L.

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