

GUERRILLA WARFARE

by Che Guevara

Chapter I: General Principles of Guerrilla Warfare

1. Essence of Guerrilla Warfare

The armed victory of the Cuban people over the Batista dictatorship was not only the triumph of heroism as reported by the newspapers of the world; it also forced a change in the old dogmas concerning the conduct of the popular masses of Latin America. It showed plainly the capacity of the people to free themselves by means of guerrilla warfare from a government that oppresses them.

We consider that the Cuban Revolution contributed three fundamental lessons to the conduct of revolutionary movements in America. They are:

1. Popular forces can win a war against the army.
2. It is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them.
3. In underdeveloped America the countryside is the basic area for armed fighting.

Of these three propositions the first two contradict the defeatist attitude of revolutionaries or pseudo-revolutionaries who remain inactive and take refuge in the pretext that against a professional army nothing can be done, who sit down to wait until in some mechanical way all necessary objective and subjective conditions are given without working to accelerate them. As these problems were formerly a subject of discussion in Cuba, until facts settled the question, they are probably still much discussed in America.

Naturally, it is not to be thought that all conditions for revolution are going

to be created through the impulse given to them by guerrilla activity. It must always be kept in mind that there is a necessary minimum without which the establishment and consolidation of the first center is not practicable. People must see clearly the futility of maintaining the fight for social goals within the framework of civil debate. When the forces of oppression come to maintain themselves in power against established law, peace is considered already broken.

In these conditions popular discontent expresses itself in more active forms. An attitude of resistance finally crystallizes in an outbreak of fighting, provoked initially by the conduct of the authorities.

Where a government has come into power through some form of popular vote, fraudulent or not, and maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, the guerrilla outbreak cannot be promoted, since the possibilities of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted.

The third proposition is a fundamental of strategy. It ought to be noted by those who maintain dogmatically that the struggle of the masses is centered in city movements, entirely forgetting the immense participation of the country people in the life of all the underdeveloped parts of America. Of course, the struggles of the city masses of organized workers should not be underrated; but their real possibilities of engaging in armed struggle must be carefully analyzed where the guarantees which customarily adorn our constitutions are suspended or ignored. In these conditions the illegal workers' movements face enormous dangers. They must function secretly without arms. The situation in the open country is not so difficult. There, in places beyond the reach of the repressive forces, the inhabitants can be supported by the armed guerrillas.

We will later make a careful analysis of these three conclusions that stand out in the Cuban revolutionary experience. We emphasize them now at the beginning of this work as our fundamental contribution.

Guerrilla warfare, the basis of the struggle of a people to redeem itself, has diverse characteristics, different facets, even though the essential will for liberation remains the same. It is obvious-and writers on the theme have said it many times-that war responds to a certain series of scientific laws; whoever ignores them will go down to defeat. Guerrilla warfare as a phase of war must be ruled by all of these; but besides, because of its special aspects, a series of corollary laws must also be recognized in order to carry it forward. Though geographical and social conditions in each country determine the mode and particular forms that guerrilla warfare will take, there are general laws that hold for all fighting of this type.

Our task at the moment is to find the basic principles of this kind of fighting and the rules to be followed by peoples seeking liberation; to develop theory from facts; to generalize and give structure to our experience for the profit of others.

Let us first consider the question: Who are the combatants in guerrilla warfare? On one side we have a group composed of the oppressor and his agents, the professional army, well armed and disciplined, in many cases receiving foreign help as well as the help of the bureaucracy in the employ of the oppressor. On the other side are the people of the nation or region involved. It is important to emphasize that guerrilla warfare is a war of the masses, a war of the people. The guerrilla band is an armed nucleus, the fighting vanguard of the people. It draws its great force from the mass of the people themselves. The guerrilla band is not to be considered inferior to the army against which it fights simply because it is inferior in firepower. Guerrilla warfare is used by the side which is supported by a majority but which possesses a much smaller number of arms for use in defense against oppression.

The guerrilla fighter needs full help from the people of the area. This is an indispensable condition. This is clearly seen by considering the case of bandit gangs that operate in a region. They have all the characteristics of a guerrilla army: homogeneity, respect for the leader, valor, knowledge of

the ground, and, often, even good understanding of the tactics to be employed. The only thing missing is support of the people; and, inevitably, these gangs are captured and exterminated by the public force.

Analyzing the mode of operation of the guerrilla band, seeing its form of struggle, and understanding its base in the masses, we can answer the question: Why does the guerrilla fighter fight? We must come to the inevitable conclusion that the guerrilla fighter is a social reformer, that he takes up arms responding to the angry protest of the people against their oppressors, and that he fights in order to change the social system that keeps all his unarmed brothers in ignominy and misery. He launches himself against the conditions of the reigning institutions at a particular moment and dedicates himself with all the vigor that circumstances permit to breaking the mold of these institutions.

When we analyze more fully the tactic of guerrilla warfare, we will see that the guerrilla fighter needs to have a good knowledge of the surrounding countryside, the paths of entry and escape, the possibilities of speedy maneuver, good hiding places; naturally, also, he must count on the support of the people. All this indicates that the guerrilla fighter will carry out his action in wild places of small population. Since in these places the struggle of the people for reforms is aimed primarily and almost exclusively at changing the social form of land ownership, the guerrilla fighter is above all an agrarian revolutionary. He interprets the desires of the great peasant mass to be owners of land, owners of their means of production, of their animals, of all that which they have long yearned to call their own, of that which constitutes their life and will also serve as their cemetery.

It should be noted that in current interpretations there are two different types of guerrilla warfare, one of which—a struggle complementing great regular armies such as was the case of the Ukrainian fighters in the Soviet Union—does not enter into this analysis. We are interested in the other type, the case of an armed group engaged in struggle against the constituted power, whether colonial or not, which establishes itself as the

only base and which builds itself up in rural areas. In all such cases, whatever the ideological aims that may inspire the fight, the economic aim is determined by the aspiration toward ownership of land.

The China of Mao begins as an outbreak of worker groups in the South, which is defeated and almost annihilated. It succeeds in establishing itself and begins its advance only when, after the long march from Yenan, it takes up its base in rural territories and makes agrarian reform its fundamental goal. The struggle of Ho Chi Minh is based in the rice-growing peasants, who are oppressed by the French colonial yoke; with this force it is going forward to the defeat of the colonialists. In both cases there is a framework of patriotic war against the Japanese invader, but the economic basis of a fight for the land has not disappeared. In the case of Algeria, the grand idea of Arab nationalism has its economic counterpart in the fact that nearly all of the arable land of Algeria is utilized by a million French settlers. In some countries, such as Puerto Rico, where the special conditions of the island have not permitted a guerrilla outbreak, the nationalist spirit, deeply wounded by the discrimination that is daily practiced, has as its basis the aspiration of the peasants (even though many of them are already a proletariat) to recover the land that the Yankee invader seized from them. This same central idea, though in different forms, inspired the small farmers, peasants, and slaves of the eastern estates of Cuba to close ranks and defend together the right to possess land during the thirty-year war of liberation.

Taking account of the possibilities of development of guerrilla warfare, which is transformed with the increase in the operating potential of the guerrilla band into a war of positions, this type of warfare, despite its special character, is to be considered as an embryo, a prelude, of the other. The possibilities of growth of the guerrilla band and of changes in the mode of fight, until conventional warfare is reached, are as great as the possibilities of defeating the enemy in each of the different battles, combats, or skirmishes that take place. Therefore, the fundamental principle is that no battle, combat, or skirmish is to be fought unless it will

be won. There is a malevolent definition that says: "The guerrilla fighter is the Jesuit of warfare." By this is indicated a quality of secretiveness, of treachery, of surprise that is obviously an essential element of guerrilla warfare. It is a special kind of Jesuitism, naturally prompted by circumstances, which necessitates acting at certain moments in ways different from the romantic and sporting conceptions with which we are taught to believe war is fought.

War is always a struggle in which each contender tries to annihilate the other. Besides using force, they will have recourse to all possible tricks and stratagems in order to achieve the goal. Military strategy and tactics are a representation by analysis of the objectives of the groups and of the means of achieving these objectives. These means contemplate taking advantage of all the weak points of the enemy. The fighting action of each individual platoon in a large army in a war of positions will present the same characteristics as those of the guerrilla band. It uses secretiveness, treachery, and surprise; and when these are not present, it is because vigilance on the other side prevents surprise. But since the guerrilla band is a division unto itself, and since there are large zones of territory not controlled by the enemy, it is always possible to carry out guerrilla attacks in such a way as to assure surprise; and it is the duty of the guerrilla fighter to do so.

"Hit and run," some call this scornfully, and this is accurate. Hit and run, wait, lie in ambush, again hit and run, and thus repeatedly, without giving any rest to the enemy.

There is in all this, it would appear, a negative quality, an attitude of retreat, of avoiding frontal fights. However, this is consequent upon the general strategy of guerrilla warfare, which is the same in its ultimate end as is any warfare: to win, to annihilate the enemy. Thus, it is clear that guerrilla warfare is a phase that does not afford in itself opportunities to arrive at complete victory. It is one of the initial phases of warfare and will develop continuously until the guerrilla army in its steady growth acquires the characteristics of a regular army.

At that moment it will be ready to deal final blows to the enemy and to achieve victory. Triumph will always be the product of a regular army, even though its origins are in a guerrilla army. Just as the general of a division in a modern war does not have to die in front of his soldiers, the guerrilla fighter, who is general of himself, need not die in every battle. He is ready to give his life, but the positive quality of this guerrilla warfare is precisely that each one of the guerrilla fighters is ready to die, not to defend an ideal, but rather to convert it into reality. This is the basis, the essence of guerrilla fighting. Miraculously, a small band of men, the armed vanguard of the great popular force that supports them, goes beyond the immediate tactical objective, goes on decisively to achieve an ideal, to establish a new society, to break the old molds of the outdated, and to achieve, finally, the social justice for which they fight.

Considered thus, all these disparaged qualities acquire a true nobility, the nobility of the end at which they aim; and it becomes clear that we are not speaking of distorted means of reaching an end. This fighting attitude, this attitude of not being dismayed at any time, this inflexibility when confronting the great problems in the final objective is also the nobility of the guerrilla fighter.

2. Guerrilla Strategy

In guerrilla terminology, strategy is understood as the analysis of the objectives to be achieved in light of the total military situation and the overall ways of reaching these objectives.

To have a correct strategic appreciation from the point of view of the guerrilla band, it is necessary to analyze fundamentally what will be the enemy's mode of action. If the final objective is always the complete destruction of the opposite force, the enemy is confronted in the case of a civil war of this kind with the standard task: he will have to achieve the total destruction of each one of the components of the guerrilla band. The guerrilla fighter, on the other hand, must analyze the resources which the

enemy has for trying to achieve that outcome: the means in men, in mobility, in popular support, in armaments, in capacity of leadership on which he can count. We must make our own strategy adequate on the basis of these studies, keeping in mind always the final objective of defeating the enemy army.

There are fundamental aspects to be studied: the armament, for example, and the manner of using this armament. The value of a tank, of an airplane, in a fight of this type must be weighed. The arms of the enemy, his ammunition, his habits must be considered; because the principal source of provision for the guerrilla force is precisely in enemy armaments. If there is a possibility of choice, we should prefer the same type as that used by the enemy, since the greatest problem of the guerrilla band is the lack of ammunition, which the opponent must provide.

After the objectives have been fixed and analyzed, it is necessary to study the order of the steps leading to the achievement of the final objective. This should be planned in advance, even though it will be modified and adjusted as the fighting develops and unforeseen circumstances arise.

At the outset, the essential task of the guerrilla fighter is to keep himself from being destroyed. Little by little it will be easier for the members of the guerrilla band or bands to adapt themselves to their form of life and to make flight and escape from the forces that are on the offensive an easy task, because it is performed daily. When this condition is reached, the guerrilla, having taken up inaccessible positions out of reach of the enemy, or having assembled forces that deter the enemy from attacking, ought to proceed to the gradual weakening of the enemy. This will be carried out at first at those points nearest to the points of active warfare against the guerrilla band and later will be taken deeper into enemy territory, attacking his communications, later attacking or harassing his bases of operations and his central bases, tormenting him on all sides to the full extent of the capabilities of the guerrilla forces.

The blows should be continuous. The enemy soldier in a zone of operations ought not to be allowed to sleep; his outposts ought to be attacked and liquidated systematically. At every moment the impression ought to be created that he is surrounded by a complete circle. In wooded and broken areas this effort should be maintained both day and night; in open zones that are easily penetrated by enemy patrols, at night only. In order to do all this the absolute cooperation of the people and a perfect knowledge of the ground are necessary. These two necessities affect every minute of the life of the guerrilla fighter. Therefore, along with centers for study of present and future zones of operations, intensive popular work must be undertaken to explain the motives of the revolution, its ends, and to spread the incontrovertible truth that victory of the enemy against the people is finally impossible. *Whoever does not feel this undoubted truth cannot be a guerrilla fighter.*

This popular work should at first be aimed at securing secrecy; that is, each peasant, each member of the society in which action is taking place, will be asked not to mention what he sees and hears; later, help will be sought from inhabitants whose loyalty to the revolution offers greater guarantees; still later, use will be made of these persons in missions of contact, for transporting goods or arms, as guides in the zones familiar to them; still later, it is possible to arrive at organized mass action in the centers of work, of which the final result will be the general strike.

The strike is a most important factor in civil war, but in order to reach it a series of complementary conditions are necessary which do not always exist and which very rarely come to exist spontaneously. It is necessary to create these essential conditions, basically by explaining the purposes of the revolution and by demonstrating the forces of the people and their possibilities.

It is also possible to have recourse to certain very homogeneous groups, which must have shown their efficacy previously in less dangerous tasks, in order to make use of another of the terrible arms of the guerrilla band,

sabotage. It is possible to paralyze entire armies, to suspend the industrial life of a zone, leaving the inhabitants of a city without factories, without light, without water, without communications of any kind, without being able to risk travel by highway except at certain hours. If all this is achieved, the morale of the enemy falls, the morale of his combatant units weakens, and the fruit ripens for plucking at a precise moment.

All this presupposes an increase in the territory included within the guerrilla action, but an excessive increase of this territory is to be avoided. It is essential always to preserve a strong base of operations and to continue strengthening it during the course of the war. Within this territory, measures of indoctrination of the inhabitants of the zone should be utilized; measures of quarantine should be taken against the irreconcilable enemies of the revolution; all the purely defensive measures, such as trenches, mines, and communications, should be perfected.

When the guerrilla band has reached a respectable power in arms and in number of combatants, it ought to proceed to the formation of new columns. This is an act similar to that of the beehive when at a given moment it releases a new queen, who goes to another region with a part of the swarm. The mother hive with the most notable guerrilla chief will stay in the less dangerous places, while the new columns will penetrate other enemy territories following the cycle already described.

A moment will arrive in which the territory occupied by the columns is too small for them; and in the advance toward regions solidly defended by the enemy, it will be necessary to confront powerful forces. At that instant the columns join, they offer a compact fighting front, and a war of positions is reached, a war carried on by regular armies. However, the former guerrilla army cannot cut itself off from its base, and it should create new guerrilla bands behind the enemy acting in the same way as the original bands operated earlier, proceeding thus to penetrate enemy territory until it is dominated.

It is thus that guerrillas reach the stage of attack, of the encirclement of fortified bases, of the defeat of reinforcements, of mass action, ever more ardent, in the whole national territory, arriving finally at the objective of the war: victory.

3. Guerrilla Tactics

In military language, tactics are the practical methods of achieving the grand strategic objectives.

In one sense they complement strategy and in another they are more specific rules within it. As means, tactics are much more variable, much more flexible than the final objectives, and they should be adjusted continually during the struggle. There are tactical objectives that remain constant throughout a war and others that vary. The first thing to be considered is the adjusting of guerrilla action to the action of the enemy.

The fundamental characteristic of a guerrilla band is mobility. This permits it in a few minutes to move far from a specific theatre and in a few hours far even from the region, if that becomes necessary; permits it constantly to change front and avoid any type of encirclement. As the circumstances of the war require, the guerrilla band can dedicate itself exclusively to fleeing from an encirclement which is the enemy's only way of forcing the band into a decisive fight that could be unfavorable; it can also change the battle into a counter-encirclement (small bands of men are presumably surrounded by the enemy when suddenly the enemy is surrounded by stronger contingents; or men located in a safe place serve as a lure, leading to the encirclement and annihilation of the entire troops and supply of an attacking force). Characteristic of this war of mobility is the so-called minuet, named from the analogy with the dance: the guerrilla bands encircle an enemy position, an advancing column, for example; they encircle it completely from the four points of the compass, with five or six men in each place, far enough away to avoid being encircled themselves; the fight is started at any one of the points, and the army moves toward it; the guerrilla band then retreats, always maintaining visual contact, and initiates its attack from another point. The army will repeat its action and

the guerrilla band, the same. Thus, successively, it is possible to keep an enemy column immobilized, forcing it to expend large quantities of ammunition and weakening the morale of its troops without incurring great dangers.

This same tactic can be applied at nighttime, closing in more and showing greater aggressiveness, because in these conditions counter-encirclement is much more difficult. Movement by night is another important characteristic of the guerrilla band, enabling it to advance into position for an attack and, where the danger of betrayal exists, to mobilize in new territory. The numerical inferiority of the guerrilla makes it necessary that attacks always be carried out by surprise; this great advantage is what permits the guerrilla fighter to inflict losses on the enemy without suffering losses. In a fight between a hundred men on one side and ten on the other, losses are not equal where there is one casualty on each side. The enemy loss is always reparable; it amounts to only one percent of his effectives. The loss of the guerrilla band requires more time to be repaired because it involves a soldier of high specialization and is ten percent of the operating forces.

A dead soldier of the guerrillas ought never to be left with his arms and his ammunition. The duty of every guerrilla soldier whenever a companion falls is to recover immediately these extremely precious elements of the fight. In fact, the care which must be taken of ammunition and the method of using it are further characteristics of guerrilla warfare. In any combat between a regular force and a guerrilla band it is always possible to know one from the other by their different manner of fire: a great amount of firing on the part of the regular army, sporadic and accurate shots on the part of the guerrillas.

Once one of our heroes, now dead, had to employ his machine guns for nearly five minutes, burst after burst, in order to slow up the advance of enemy soldiers. This fact caused considerable confusion in our forces, because they assumed from the rhythm of fire that that key position must

have been taken by the enemy, since this was one of the rare occasions where departure from the rule of saving fire had been called for because of the importance of the point being defended.

Another fundamental characteristic of the guerrilla soldier is his flexibility, his ability to adapt himself to all circumstances, and to convert to his service all of the accidents of the action. Against the rigidity of classical methods of fighting, the guerrilla fighter invents his own tactics at every minute of the fight and constantly surprises the enemy. In the first place, there are only elastic positions, specific places that the enemy cannot pass, and places of diverting him. Frequently, the enemy, after easily overcoming difficulties in a gradual advance, is surprised to find himself suddenly and solidly detained without possibilities of moving forward. This is due to the fact that the guerrilla-defended positions, when they have been selected on the basis of a careful study of the ground, are invulnerable. It is not the number of attacking soldiers that counts, but the number of defending soldiers. Once that number has been placed there, it can nearly always hold off a battalion with success. It is a major task of the chiefs to choose well the moment and the place for defending a position without retreat.

The form of attack of a guerrilla army is also different; starting with surprise and fury, irresistible, it suddenly converts itself into total passivity.

The surviving enemy, resting, believes that the attacker has departed; he begins to relax, to return to the routine life of the camp or of the fortress, when suddenly a new attack bursts forth in another place, with the same characteristics, while the main body of the guerrilla band lies in wait to intercept reinforcements. At other times an outpost defending the camp will be suddenly attacked by the guerrilla, dominated, and captured. The fundamental thing is surprise and rapidity of attack.

Acts of sabotage are very important. It is necessary to distinguish clearly between sabotage, a revolutionary and highly effective method of warfare, and terrorism, a measure that is generally ineffective and indiscriminate in its results, since it often makes victims of innocent people and destroys a large number of lives that would be valuable to the revolution. Terrorism

should be considered a valuable tactic when it is used to put to death some noted leader of the oppressing forces well known for his cruelty, his efficiency in repression, or other quality that makes his elimination useful. But the killing of persons of small importance is never advisable, since it brings on an increase of reprisals, including deaths.

There is one point very much in controversy in opinions about terrorism. Many consider that its use, by provoking police oppression, hinders all more or less legal or semiclandestine contact with the masses and makes impossible unification for actions that will be necessary at a critical moment. This is correct; but it also happens that in a civil war the repression by the governmental power in certain towns is already so great that, in fact, every type of legal action is suppressed already, and any action of the masses that is not supported by arms is impossible. It is therefore necessary to be circumspect in adopting methods of this type and to consider the consequences that they may bring for the revolution. At any rate, well-managed sabotage is always a very effective arm, though it should not be employed to put means of production out of action, leaving a sector of the population paralyzed (and thus without work) unless this paralysis affects the normal life of the society. It is ridiculous to carry out sabotage against a soft-drink factory, but it is absolutely correct and advisable to carry out sabotage against a power plant. In the first case, a certain number of workers are put out of a job but nothing is done to modify the rhythm of industrial life; in the second case, there will again be displaced workers, but this is entirely justified by the paralysis of the life of the region. We will return to the technique of sabotage later.

One of the favorite arms of the enemy army, supposed to be decisive in modern times, is aviation. Nevertheless, this has no use whatsoever during the period that guerrilla warfare is in its first stages, with small concentrations of men in rugged places. The utility of aviation lies in the systematic destruction of visible and organized defenses; and for this there must be large concentrations of men who construct these defenses, something that does not exist in this type of warfare. Planes are also potent against marches by columns through level places or places without cover; however, this latter danger is easily avoided by carrying out the

marches at night.

One of the weakest points of the enemy is transportation by road and railroad. It is virtually impossible to maintain a vigil yard by yard over a transport line, a road, or a railroad. At any point a considerable amount of explosive charge can be planted that will make the road impassable; or by exploding it at the moment that a vehicle passes, a considerable loss in lives and materiel to the enemy is caused at the same time that the road is cut.

The sources of explosives are varied. They can be brought from other zones; or use can be made of bombs seized from the dictatorship, though these do not always work; or they can be manufactured in secret laboratories within the guerrilla zone. The technique of setting them off is quite varied; their manufacture also depends upon the conditions of the guerrilla band.

In our laboratory we made powder which we used as a cap, and we invented various devices for exploding the mines at the desired moment. The ones that gave the best results were electric. The first mine that we exploded was a bomb dropped from an aircraft of the dictatorship. We adapted it by inserting various caps and adding a gun with the trigger pulled by a cord. At the moment that an enemy truck passed, the weapon was fired to set off the explosion.

These techniques can be developed to a high degree. We have information that in Algeria, for example, tele-explosive mines, that is, mines exploded by radio at great distances from the point where they are located, are being used today against the French colonial power.

The technique of lying in ambush along roads in order to explode mines and annihilate survivors is one of the most remunerative in point of ammunition and arms. The surprised enemy does not use his ammunition and has no time to flee, so with a small expenditure of ammunition large results are achieved.

As blows are dealt the enemy, he also changes his tactics, and in place of isolated trucks, veritable motorized columns move. However, by choosing the ground well, the same result can be produced by breaking the column and concentrating forces on one vehicle. In these cases the essential

elements of guerrilla tactics must always be kept in mind. These are: perfect knowledge of the ground; surveillance and foresight as to the lines of escape; vigilance over all the secondary roads that can bring support to the point of attack; intimacy with people in the zone so as to have sure help from them in respect to supplies, transport, and temporary or permanent hiding places if it becomes necessary to leave wounded companions behind; numerical superiority at a chosen point of action; total mobility; and the possibility of counting on reserves.

If all these tactical requisites are fulfilled, surprise attack along the lines of communication of the enemy yields notable dividends.

A fundamental part of guerrilla tactics is the treatment accorded the people of the zone. Even the treatment accorded the enemy is important; the norm to be followed should be an absolute inflexibility at the time of attack, an absolute inflexibility toward all the despicable elements that resort to informing and assassination, and clemency as absolute as possible toward the enemy soldiers who go into the fight performing or believing that they perform a military duty. It is a good policy, so long as there are no considerable bases of operations and invulnerable places, to take no prisoners. Survivors ought to be set free. The wounded should be cared for with all possible resources at the time of the action. Conduct toward the civil population ought to be regulated by a large respect for all the rules and traditions of the people of the zone, in order to demonstrate effectively, with deeds, the moral superiority of the guerrilla fighter over the oppressing soldier. Except in special situations, there ought to be no execution of justice without giving the criminal an opportunity to clear himself.

4. Warfare on Favorable Ground

As we have already said, guerrilla fighting will not always take place in country most favorable to the employment of its tactics; but when it does, that is, when the guerrilla band is located in zones difficult to reach, either because of dense forests, steep mountains, impassable deserts or marshes, the general tactics, based on the fundamental postulates of guerrilla warfare, must always be the same.

An important point to consider is the moment for making contact with the

enemy. If the zone is so thick, so difficult that an organized army can never reach it, the guerrilla band should advance to the regions where the army can arrive and where there will be a possibility of combat.

As soon as the survival of the guerrilla band has been assured, it should fight; it must constantly go out from its refuge to fight. Its mobility does not have to be as great as in those cases where the ground is unfavorable; it must adjust itself to the capabilities of the enemy, but it is not necessary to be able to move as quickly as in places where the enemy can concentrate a large number of men in a few minutes. Neither is the nocturnal character of this warfare so important; it will be possible in many cases to carry out daytime operations, especially mobilizations by day, though subjected to enemy observation by land and air. It is also possible to persist in a military action for a much longer time, above all in the mountains; it is possible to undertake battles of long duration with very few men, and it is very probable that the arrival of enemy reinforcements at the scene of the fight can be prevented.

A close watch over the points of access is, however, an axiom never to be forgotten by the guerrilla fighter. His aggressiveness (on account of the difficulties that the enemy faces in bringing up reinforcements) can be greater, he can approach the enemy more closely, fight much more directly, more frontally, and for a longer time, though these rules may be qualified by various circumstances, such, for example, as the amount of ammunition.

Fighting on favorable ground and particularly in the mountains presents many advantages but also the inconvenience that it is difficult to capture in a single operation a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition, owing to the precautions that the enemy takes in these regions. (The guerrilla soldier must never forget the fact that it is the enemy that must serve as his source of supply of ammunition and arms.) But much more rapidly than in unfavorable ground the guerrilla band will here be able to "dig in," that is, to form a base capable of engaging in a war of positions, where small industries may be installed as they are needed, as well as hospitals, centers for education and training, storage facilities, organs of propaganda, etc., adequately protected from aviation or from long-range

artillery.

The guerrilla band in these conditions can number many more personnel; there will be noncombatants and perhaps even a system of training in the use of the arms that eventually are to fall into the power of the guerrilla army.

The number of men that a guerrilla band can have is a matter of extremely flexible calculation adapted to the territory, to the means available of acquiring supplies, to the mass flights of oppressed people from other zones, to the arms available, to the necessities of organization. But, in any case, it is much more practicable to establish a base and expand with the support of new combatant elements.

The radius of action of a guerrilla band of this type can be as wide as conditions or the operations of other bands in adjacent territory permit. The range will be limited by the time that it takes to arrive at a zone of security from the zone of operation; assuming that marches must be made at night, it will not be possible to operate more than five or six hours away from a point of maximum security. Small guerrilla bands that work constantly at weakening a territory can go farther away from the zone of security.

The arms preferable for this type of warfare are long-range weapons requiring a small expenditure of bullets, supported by a group of automatic or semiautomatic arms. Of the rifles and machine guns that exist in the markets of the United States, one of the best is the M-1 rifle, called the Garand. However, this should be used only by people with some experience, since it has the disadvantage of expending too much ammunition. Medium-heavy arms, such as tripod machine guns, can be used on favorable ground, affording a greater margin of security for the weapon and its personnel, but they ought always to be a means of repelling an enemy and not for attack.

An ideal composition for a guerrilla band of 25 men would be: 10 to 15 single-shot rifles and about 10 automatic arms between Garands and hand machine guns, including light and easily portable automatic arms, such as the Browning or the more modern Belgian FAL and M-14 automatic rifles. Among the hand machine guns the best are those of nine millimeters, which permit a larger transport of ammunition. The simpler its construction

the better, because this increases the ease of switching parts. All this must be adjusted to the armament that the enemy uses, since the ammunition that he employs is what we are going to use when his arms fall into our hands. It is practically impossible for heavy arms to be used. Aircraft cannot see anything and cease to operate; tanks and cannons cannot do much owing to the difficulties of advancing in these zones.

A very important consideration is supply. In general, the zones of difficult access for this very reason present special problems, since there are few peasants, and therefore animal and food supplies are scarce. It is necessary to maintain stable lines of communication in order to be able always to count on a minimum of food, stockpiled, in the event of any disagreeable development.

In this kind of zone of operations the possibilities of sabotage on a large scale are generally not present; with the inaccessibility goes a lack of constructions, telephone lines, aqueducts, etc., that could be damaged by direct action.

For supply purposes it is important to have animals, among which the mule is the best in rough country. Adequate pasturage permitting good nutrition is essential. The mule can pass through extremely hilly country impossible for other animals. In the most difficult situations it is necessary to resort to transport by men. Each individual can carry twenty-five kilograms for many hours daily and for many days.

The lines of communication with the exterior should include a series of intermediate points manned by people of complete reliability, where products can be stored and where contacts can go to hide themselves at critical times. Internal lines of communication can also be created. Their extension will be determined by the stage of development reached by the guerrilla band. In some zones of operations in the recent Cuban war, telephone lines of many kilometers of length were established, roads were built, and a messenger service maintained sufficient to cover all zones in a minimum of time.

There are also other possible means of communication, not used in the Cuban war but perfectly applicable, such as smoke signals, signals with sunshine reflected by mirrors, and carrier pigeons.

The vital necessities of the guerrillas are to maintain their arms in good condition, to capture ammunition, and, above everything else, to have adequate shoes. The first manufacturing efforts should therefore be directed toward these objectives. Shoe factories can initially be cobbler installations that replace half soles on old shoes, expanding afterwards into a series of organized factories with a good average daily production of shoes. The manufacture of powder is fairly simple; and much can be accomplished by having a small laboratory and bringing in the necessary materials from outside. Mined areas constitute a grave danger for the enemy; large areas can be mined for simultaneous explosion, destroying up to hundreds of men.

5. Warfare on Unfavorable Ground

In order to carry on warfare in country that is not very hilly, lacks forests, and has many roads, all the fundamental requisites of guerrilla warfare must be observed; only the forms will be altered. The quantity, not the quality, of guerrilla warfare will change. For example, following the same order as before, the mobility of this type of guerrilla should be extraordinary; strikes should be made preferably at night; they should be extremely rapid, but the guerrilla should move to places different from the starting point, the farthest possible from the scene of action, assuming that there is no place secure from the repressive forces that the guerrilla can use as its garrison.

A man can walk between 30 and 50 kilometers during the night hours; it is possible also to march during the first hours of daylight, unless the zones of operation are closely watched or there is danger that people in the vicinity, seeing the passing troops, will notify the pursuing army of the location of the guerrilla band and its route. It is always preferable in these cases to operate at night with the greatest possible silence both before and after the action; the first hours of night are best. Here, too, there are exceptions to the general rule, since at times the dawn hours will be preferable. It is never wise to habituate the enemy to a certain form of warfare; it is necessary to vary constantly the places, the hours, and the forms of operation.

We have already said that the action cannot endure for long, but must be

rapid; it must be of a high degree of effectiveness, last a few minutes, and be followed by an immediate withdrawal. The arms employed here will not be the same as in the case of actions on favorable ground; a large quantity of automatic weapons is to be preferred. In night attacks, marksmanship is not the determining factor, but rather concentration of fire; the more automatic arms firing at short distance, the more possibilities there are of annihilating the enemy.

Also, the use of mines in roads and the destruction of bridges are tactics of great importance. Attacks by the guerrilla will be less aggressive so far as the persistence and continuation are concerned, but they can be very violent, and they can utilize different arms, such as mines and the shotgun. Against open vehicles heavily loaded with men, which is the usual method of transporting troops, and even against closed vehicles that do not have special defenses-against buses, for example-the shotgun is a tremendous weapon. A shotgun loaded with large shot is the most effective. This is not a secret of guerrilla fighters; it is used also in big wars. The Americans used shotgun platoons armed with high-quality weapons and bayonets for assaulting machine-gun nests.

There is an important problem to explain, that of ammunition; this will almost always be taken from the enemy. It is therefore necessary to strike blows where there will be the absolute assurance of restoring the ammunition expended, unless there are large reserves in secure places. In other words, an annihilating attack against a group of men is not to be undertaken at the risk of expending all the ammunition without being able to replace it. Always in guerrilla tactics it is necessary to keep in mind the grave problem of procuring the war materiel necessary for continuing the fight. For this reason, guerrilla arms ought to be the same as those used by the enemy, except for weapons such as revolvers and shotguns, for which the ammunition can be obtained in the zone itself or in the cities. The number of men that a guerrilla band of this type should include does not exceed ten to fifteen. In forming a single combat unit it is of great importance always to consider the limitations on numbers: ten, twelve, fifteen men can hide anywhere and at the same time can help each other in putting up a powerful resistance to the enemy. Four or five would

perhaps be too small a number, but when the number exceeds ten, the possibility that the enemy will discover them in their camp or on the march is much greater.

Remember that the velocity of the guerrilla band on the march is equal to the velocity of its slowest man. It is more difficult to find uniformity of marching speed with twenty, thirty, or forty men than with ten. And the guerrilla fighter on the plain must be fundamentally a runner. Here the practice of hitting and running acquires its maximum use. The guerrilla bands on the plain suffer the enormous inconvenience of being subject to a rapid encirclement and of not having sure places where they can set up a firm resistance; therefore, they must live in conditions of absolute secrecy for a long time, since it would be dangerous to trust any neighbor whose fidelity is not perfectly established. The reprisals of the enemy are so violent, usually so brutal, inflicted not only on the head of the family but frequently on the women and children as well, that pressure on individuals lacking firmness may result at any moment in their giving way and revealing information as to where the guerrilla band is located and how it is operating. This would immediately produce an encirclement with consequences always disagreeable, although not necessarily fatal. When conditions, the quantity of arms, and the state of insurrection of the people call for an increase in the number of men, the guerrilla band should be divided. If it is necessary, all can rejoin at a given moment to deal a blow, but in such a way that immediately afterwards they can disperse toward separate zones, again divided into small groups of ten, twelve, or fifteen men.

It is entirely feasible to organize whole armies under a single command and to assure respect and obedience to this command without the necessity of being in a single group. Therefore, the election of the guerrilla chiefs and the certainty that they coordinate ideologically and personally with the overall chief of the zone are very important.

The bazooka is a heavy weapon that can be used by the guerrilla band because of its easy portability and operation. Today the rifle-fired anti-tank grenade can replace it. Naturally, it will be a weapon taken from the enemy. The bazooka is ideal for firing on armored vehicles, and even on

unarmored vehicles that are loaded with troops, and for taking small military bases of few men in a short time; but it is important to point out that not more than three shells per man can be carried, and this only with considerable exertion.

As for the utilization of heavy arms taken from the enemy, naturally, nothing is to be scorned. But there are weapons such as the tripod machine gun, the heavy fifty-millimeter machine gun, etc., that, when captured, can be utilized with a willingness to lose them again. In other words, in the unfavorable conditions that we are now analyzing, a battle to defend a heavy machine gun or other weapon of this type cannot be allowed; they are simply to be used until the tactical moment when they must be abandoned. In our Cuban war of liberation, to abandon a weapon constituted a grave offense, and there was never any case where the necessity arose. Nevertheless, we mention this case in order to explain clearly the only situation in which abandonment would not constitute an occasion for reproaches. On unfavorable ground, the guerrilla weapon is the personal weapon of rapid fire.

Easy access to the zone usually means that it will be habitable and that there will be a peasant population in these places. This facilitates supply enormously. Having trustworthy people and making contact with establishments that provide supplies to the population, it is possible to maintain a guerrilla band perfectly well without having to devote time or money to long and dangerous lines of communication. Also, it is well to reiterate that the smaller the number of men, the easier it will be to procure food for them. Essential supplies such as bedding, waterproof material, mosquito netting, shoes, medicines, and food will be found directly in the zone, since they are things of daily use by its inhabitants.

Communications will be much easier in the sense of being able to count on a larger number of men and more roads; but they will be more difficult as a problem of security for messages between distant points, since it will be necessary to rely on a series of contacts that have to be trusted. There will be the danger of an eventual capture of one of the messengers, who are constantly crossing enemy zones. If the messages are of small importance, they should be oral; if of great importance, code writing should

be used. Experience shows that transmission by word of mouth greatly distorts any communication.

For these same reasons, manufacture will have much less importance, at the same time that it would be much more difficult to carry it out. It will not be possible to have factories making shoes or arms. Practically speaking, manufacture will have to be limited to small shops, carefully hidden, where shotgun shells can be recharged and mines, simple grenades, and other minimum necessities of the moment manufactured. On the other hand, it is possible to make use of all the friendly shops of the zone for such work as is necessary.

This brings us to two consequences that flow logically from what has been said. One of them is that the favorable conditions for establishing a permanent camp in guerrilla warfare are inverse to the degree of productive development of a place. All favorable conditions, all facilities of life normally induce men to settle; but for the guerrilla band the opposite is the case. The more facilities there are for social life, the more nomadic, the more uncertain the life of the guerrilla fighter. These really are the results of one and the same principle. The title of this section is "Warfare on Unfavorable Ground," because everything that is favorable to human life, communications, urban and semiurban concentrations of large numbers of people, land easily worked by machine: all these place the guerrilla fighter in a disadvantageous situation.

The second conclusion is that if guerrilla fighting must include the extremely important factor of work on the masses, this work is even more important in the unfavorable zones, where a single enemy attack can produce a catastrophe. Indoctrination should be continuous, and so should be the struggle for unity of the workers, of the peasants, and of other social classes that live in the zone, in order to achieve toward the guerrilla fighters a maximum homogeneity of attitude. This task with the masses, this constant work at the huge problem of relations of the guerrilla band with the inhabitants of the zone, must also govern the attitude to be taken toward the case of an individual recalcitrant enemy soldier: he should be eliminated without hesitation when he is dangerous. In this respect the guerrilla band must be drastic. Enemies cannot be permitted to exist within

the zone of operations in places that offer no security.

6. Suburban Warfare

If during the war the guerrilla bands close in on cities and penetrate the surrounding country in such a way as to be able to establish themselves in conditions of some security, it will be necessary to give these suburban bands a special education, or rather, a special organization.

It is fundamental to recognize that a suburban guerrilla band can never spring up of its own accord. It will be born only after certain conditions necessary for its survival have been created. Therefore, the suburban guerrilla will always be under the direct orders of chiefs located in another zone. The function of this guerrilla band will not be to carry out independent actions but to coordinate its activities with overall strategic plans in such a way as to support the action of larger groups situated in another area, contributing specifically to the success of a fixed tactical objective, without the operational freedom of guerrilla bands of the other types. For example, a suburban band will not be able to choose among the operations of destroying telephone lines, moving to make attacks in another locality, and surprising a patrol of soldiers on a distant road; it will do exactly what it is told. If its function is to cut down telephone poles or electric wires, to destroy sewers, railroads, or water mains, it will limit itself to carrying out these tasks efficiently.

It ought not to number more than four or five men. The limitation on numbers is important, because the suburban guerrilla must be considered as situated in exceptionally unfavorable ground, where the vigilance of the enemy will be much greater and the possibilities of reprisals as well as of betrayal are increased enormously. Another aggravating circumstance is that the suburban guerrilla band cannot depart far from the places where it is going to operate. To speed of action and withdrawal there must be added a limitation on the distance of withdrawal from the scene of action and the need to remain totally hidden during the daytime. This is a nocturnal guerrilla band in the extreme, without possibilities of changing its manner of operating until the insurrection is so far advanced that it can take part as an active combatant in the siege of the city.

The essential qualities of the guerrilla fighter in this situation are discipline

(perhaps in the highest degree of all) and discretion. He cannot count on more than two or three friendly houses that will provide food; it is almost certain that an encirclement in these conditions will be equivalent to death. Weapons, furthermore, will not be of the same kind as those of the other groups. They will be for personal defense, of the type that do not hinder a rapid flight or betray a secure hiding place. As their armament the band ought to have not more than one carbine or one sawed-off shotgun, or perhaps two, with pistols for the other members.

They will concentrate their action on prescribed sabotage and never carry out armed attacks, except by surprising one or two members or agents of the enemy troops.

For sabotage they need a full set of instruments. The guerrilla fighter must have good saws, large quantities of dynamite, picks and shovels, apparatus for lifting rails, and, in general, adequate mechanical equipment for the work to be carried out. This should be hidden in places that are secure but easily accessible to the hands that will need to use it.

If there is more than one guerrilla band, they will all be under a single chief who will give orders as to the necessary tasks through contacts of proven trustworthiness who live openly as ordinary citizens. In certain cases the guerrilla fighter will be able to maintain his peacetime work, but this is very difficult. Practically speaking, the suburban guerrilla band is a group of men who are already outside the law, in a condition of war, situated as unfavorably as we have described.

The importance of a suburban struggle has usually been under-estimated; it is really very great. A good operation of this type extended over a wide area paralyzes almost completely the commercial and industrial life of the sector and places the entire population in a situation of unrest, of anguish, almost of impatience for the development of violent events that will relieve the period of suspense. If, from the first moment of the war, thought is taken for the future possibility of this type of fight and an organization of specialists started, a much more rapid action will be assured, and with it a saving of lives and of the priceless time of the nation.

