
The Enemy Doesn't Know How Many We Are: A Proposal for Building An Insurgency

Contents:

Dedication

Revolutionary pledge

Introduction

The US state is currently at war with its own population, those in the global south and leftist factions

The fight will be won

Rebellions

An insurgency is needed to succeed

What does it take to build an insurgency?

- 1) political and social organizations
- 2) fighting forces
- 3) political education
- 4) revolutionary culture
- 5) material considerations
- 6) strategic timing

Who would support an insurgency

Why an insurgency would succeed in the US

Dedication

Embarking on this historical mission, it is imperative to pay respects to those who have come before us, fought the most difficult battles and paved the path of struggle with their fortitude. Without them the proposals put forward in this text would not exist, nor the potential of liberation. Specifically we acknowledge Russell Maroon Shoatz, Safiya Bukhari, Carlos Marighella, Lucy Parsons, Kuwasi Balagoon, Lorenzo Orsetti, Yahya Sinwar, Sekou Odinga, Dedan Kimathi, and the many others unnamed for the sake of space, and all those whose names we will never know because they were so brave.

Revolutionary pledge

“Positions are seldom lost because they have been destroyed, but almost invariably because the leader has decided in his own mind that the position cannot be held.”ⁱ

This observation opens up a world of possibility based on the sheer will not to be deterred. Unlike the paid mercenaries of a state army, liberation forces are gifted with a deep motivation for the struggle. As a guerrilla commander in the Kurdish_HPG once noted, there can be a successful action with just one fighter if they have the will and determination to succeedⁱⁱ. Fighting a battle is first and foremost a mental feat, and the trials people in the movement face against the armed henchmen of the United States have hardened the resolve of brave political actors. The possibilities that spring steadfastness underpins the following text. This text lays out a strategy for fighting an asymmetrical war against a much better armed and more technologically advanced enemy. The war of the small against the mighty will be won by fortitude and determination.



HPG teacher instructs students in the art of guerrilla war

Introduction

For many decades the movement for liberation in the United States has been on the back foot. Overwhelmed by the struggle to survive, many find themselves and their groups reacting to the brutality of the state through programs like Cop Watch, ICE Watch, and demonstrations or encampments. These initiatives are important, even essential, but always in response to the violent overtures of institutionalized racism. They can mitigate a rough situation, help people in a one-off crisis or show solidarity, but no recent attempt has presented a way to win the war against humanity waged by the US government.

There are many examples of oppressed people throughout history overcoming their oppressors or colonizers, but not many with a long standing anarcho-communist result. On the other hand, there are a lot of far left groups that currently exist that mean well and have excellent analyses but could benefit from strategic direction in order to become revolutionaries. The question for all those on the side of humanity: how to win the war that has been launched against communities of color? How to effectively overthrow the state? How to organize towards a liberated society? Taking example from diverse insurgent forces, this text will look at how to adapt effective organizational models to support an anarcho-communist revolution. Armed with this knowledge and committed to see a revolution through, a nascent movement would have the capacity to build a force that can overturn the state and capitalism while constructing liberatory communities of the future.

The US state is currently at war with its own population, those in the global south and leftist factions

The US was built on human misery, from the slave trade to the genocide of indigenous people. This foundation has seeped through its ideology. With its mentality of domination, the US wants to obliterate its adversaries rather than see people live with dignity or according to revolutionary principles. The COINTELPRO attacks against the Black Panthers and the bombing of the MOVE headquarters line up squarely with its support of the far right in Central and South America. The weight of this reality can be read on the faces of people and felt in day to day interactions: people have to accept the brutality of the United States to live here.

The state makes its war against people of color clear through the development of Cop Cities, the blatantly racist judicial system, routine torture in state and federal prisons, its brutal reaction to uprisings and the military tactics and equipment they bring into city police departments.ⁱⁱⁱ The United States views not only people of color as enemy combatants but those on the left who fight for marginalized people. The legacy of the Red Scare and the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti is alive and well, and visible in the inability of the left to counter ICE raids and police executions. The question isn't if the movement should start a war with the state. The war is already here. Instead the question is if people of conscience who live under this regime decide to fight back.

Fighting back allows people who have historically been oppressed to fully realize themselves through revolutionary struggle. Contrary to what US propaganda espouses, people are not individualized, separate entities. Everyone rises or falls together. When the state tortures someone in prison, bulldozes families in Palestine, or when a person walks past someone sleeping on the street, pieces of their shared humanity are

The fight will be won

It is infinitely possible to win this war that has been launched by the US against the population, and humanity in general. What does it mean to win? Winning in this text is defined as: destroying the state structure and capitalism and replacing them with liberatory and egalitarian ways of existing as a society. The organization of a liberated community holds just as true today as it did in revolutionary Spain or the Korean People's Association in Manchuria: self-governance through a federation of councils, production by collectives, personal property held by use rather than private property, defense militias structured according to and defending revolutionary values, resources distributed appropriately amongst the population, expropriation of the enemy class: turning the assets of the enemy into the collective wealth of the new society and prohibiting them from rising and exploiting again.

Rebellions

Rebellions and uprisings do not have the capacity to change people's day to day reality. For example, after the Ferguson Uprising, the police returned with a vengeance. With the state empowered and the movement on the back foot, many of the key participants died in suspicious circumstances, presumably executed by the state. There wasn't sufficient advancement on an organizational level to expel the police from Ferguson, and defense was not commensurate with any of the gains. There are countless examples in the US of rebellions that are an important expression of dissatisfaction, but without organization, people cannot force the state to permanently retreat and create a new reality in their communities.



The remit of an anarcho-communist insurgency is to build a society that is driven by the self-governance of the people. Through the process of engaging in self-governance, people become collectively-minded, self-actualized and responsible for their entire communities. It is ideologically consistent and strategically important to facilitate this type of social organization because: **an insurgency is a war for the population.** If people agree with the political project, they will want to participate and help the fighters. A salient example is the bank tellers who drove Black Liberation Army (BLA) fighters to Chicago from New York overnight when they needed to hide out, or people from local neighborhoods who would give BLA members their guns if they lost theirs during a firefight.^{vi} This would not have happened without community support and a certain level of organization created by aboveground groups. An insurgency has been described by counterinsurgent experts as 20% military and 80% political;^{vii} another way of articulating the famous Clausewitz quote, “War is a continuation of the policy by other means.” Without people supporting the insurgent forces, it is impossible to have a struggle, and people will support if insurgents are creating sustainable means for true liberation.

This text lays out how the comprehensive process of building an insurgency is integral to engaging many people with a range of capacities and abilities in the revolutionary process, increases the development of all people and creates new economic and political systems, all while materially supporting revolutionary fighters.

What does it take to build an insurgency?

There are six main fields to consider: 1) political and social organizations 2) fighting forces 3) political education 4) revolutionary culture 5) material considerations and 6) strategic timing.



Al Quds Brigades, Tulkarm

2) Fighting Forces

“The urban guerrilla's weapons are inferior to the enemy's, but from the moral point of view, the urban guerrilla has an undeniable superiority.”^{xiv} - Marighella

Guerrilla Struggle

The goal of fighting forces is to demoralize the enemy and win popular support. The armed work of an insurgency starts with guerrilla units. Due to flexibility and mobility, the guerrilla has the ability to launch attacks anywhere and disappear. Hidden amongst the population, the insurgent chooses when and where to attack, making their attacks unpredictable.

The tactical advantage is with the insurgent at this stage. The state must prove that it can retain order, whereas the insurgent only has to challenge the authority of the state. The state has to spend a lot of money to protect its assets and chase down insurgents, but insurgents can launch effective attacks very inexp

6. Develop social organizations.
 - Members with key skills and knowledge start building agreed upon social organizations.
 - Assigned members speak with already existing projects about joining forces.
7. Offer political education for potential new members and/or the public.
 - Develop a comprehensive educational program.
 - Have a clear system in place for new members to join.
8. Recruit fighters.
 - Develop a training regimen and assign members to carry out this program.
 - Put material needs in place: safe houses, armories, training areas, workshops.
 - Develop a plan for weapons procurement.



Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War

Until we meet

Setting out to build an insurgency in the US from the current state of the movement might seem like a monumental task but it is important to keep some precedents in mind.

Every organization and every armed struggle had to start from nothing. Many began in even less favorable conditions and with much less support. Know that it is possible to fight through extreme adversity when our organizations are strong, and always remember that it is possible to create the best conditions for the movement.

The situation in the US makes it ripe for political change. The US is flailing politically and economically. People are searching for solutions for basic survival and want to see the development of a capable struggle. Concerted and functional organization creates confidence in people and an insurgency has the capacity to turn a sustainable and humanizing society into a reality.

The tides of political change have been decisively shifting within the last 20 years. The veneer of civil society has eroded, making activism essentially useless. Where previously many on the far left have vocalized a more tempered political vision, now they are taking their cues from the most serious insurgent forces like the Resistance in Palestine. The fact that this is one of the last Western colonial bastions materially connects our struggles, giving political actors psychological fortitude and demonstrating how to fight a more militarized enemy. People in the movement in the US are no longer presenting themselves as radicals, but as revolutionaries, a fundamental perspective necessary to transform a wavering movement into a solid and impenetrable insurgency.

We are never too few and it is never too late to start building. Our determination and steadfastness will lead to our success.

This text is written with love for fellow revolution

Further reading

Warfare Manuals

The Art of War, Sun Tzu
On Organizing Urban Guerrilla Units, Field Marshall D.C.
Handbook for Volunteers of the Irish Republican Army
On Guerrilla Warfare, Mao Tse-Tung
Guerrilla Warfare, Che Guevara
The Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla, Carlos Marighella
The Life and Death of the East Asia Anti-Japan Armed Front, Max Res

Experiences in the Struggle

My Life in the Black Panther Party, Field Marshall D.C.
Maroon the Implacable: The Collected Writings of Russell Maroon Shoatz
Democratic Autonomy in Northern Kurdistan
The Fire and the Word: A History of the Zapatista Movement, Gloria Muñoz Ramírez
Mau Mau From Within a book by Karari Njama, Donald L Barnett
The War Before: A True Life Story, Safiya Bukhari

Counterinsurgency

The Other Side of COIN Kristian Williams
Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, David Galula
Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam, John A. Nagl
The U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual, David Petraeus
Warfighting, US Marine Corps

Theory

