Guerrilla Warfare by Ernesto Che Guevara

A Guerilla Outline

This indispensable book includes three of Che Guevara's most influential essays describing his tactical philosophy of fighting a guerrilla war in Latin America. Guerrilla Warfare, written in 1960, outlines Guevara's doctrine for guerrilla fighters, especially against Caribbean-style dictatorships. In Guerrilla Warfare: A Method (1963) and Message to the Tricontinental (1967), Guevara modified some of his earlier tenets. These latter two works move away from his earlier dogmatism, suggesting that Marxist revolution was possible even in purportedly democratic regimes. All three essays reflect his deeply held belief that a small, rural-based guerrilla army could trigger a revolution.

My Personal Review:
A very insightful description of what was like to fight a guerrilla warfare in Latin America in the revolutionary 1960s. However, I would say that instead of being the bible for revolutionary guerrillas, Ches book was more or less a set of guidelines that drew most of its theory from his experience in Cuba. Che thought the conditions for guerrilla warfare could be created, rather than resulting from a set of vital circumstances for a revolutionary army to evolve, such as widespread discontent with the status quo and a pattern of repression that comes prior to a popular armed struggle. Again, because Che takes his theory from the Cuban campaign, it only deals with rural warfare, in a predominantly rural country. Forty years afterwards, most of the population in Latin America live in Urban centers, and Ches theory is far outdated to deal with events nowadays.

In guerrilla warfare Che still highlights an unavoidable truth: strong support from the population is vital to keep an insurgency alive, if not victorious.

The Shining Path guerrillas in Peru lost popular ground because they alienated the peasants by repressing them as bad as the Army.

In Colombia, the FARC have lost to the army vast areas formerly under its control because they have engaged in atrocities that have brought about considerable support in favor of a hardline government.

In contrast, the Zapatistas in southern Mexico still are holding on, because they have not only support in their country, but also abroad.
The reviewer who said that guerrillas (not gorillas) could no longer deal with a sophisticated counterinsurgency army, may want to give a look at the Iraqi fiasco. A growing and more sophisticated (in tactics, not in equipment) guerrilla campaign is being fought every hour of the day in Iraq, with no sign of slowing down. I wish some good book about modern Urban guerrilla warfare, apart from Urbanos, would come out any time soon, in which the Iraqi model could analysed and compared to other similar situations.

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