

Guerrilla Warfare

An anarchist strategy for armed resistance in the belly of the beast.

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INTRODUCTION

The night again falls silent. The whole squad car is riddled with holes, and rocks slightly on its suspension before becoming still. The cop at the wheel is slumped over, his face pressed against the wheel. Beside him, his partner leans to one side, his limp hand draped over a pistol he never had time to draw. The insurgents move in quickly from the treeline. Two set up security down the length of the road in either direction while the other two move to the car, shooting both men again as they get closer before reaching through the shattered window to open the door from the inside. They quickly frisk both men for guns and ammo, which they dump into sturdy bags. One pops the trunk and the other searches it for rifles and shotguns. Finding two rifles, she puts them securely in her duffel bag. With the shutting of the trunk as their signal, the insurgents rush back into the treeline, disappearing into the night. The whole affair, from the firing of the first shot to the departure of the last insurgent, takes only a minute and a half, while the skills involved have been carefully rehearsed for months. The first cops on the scene an hour later will be horrified, and will quit their jobs before the end of the month. They've seen and inflicted a lot of violence in their careers, but they've never had a taste of it so bitter as this. Tomorrow, when the state investigators and news crews arrive to the scene, they will not realize that they'll only have a short time to try and make sense of what happened, much less preserve evidence, before they'll find themselves on the receiving end of potshots fired by lone wolves, forcing them to disperse and run for cover.

“This has not happened yet, but I gift you this fictional narrative anyway because ‘we owe each other the indeterminate.’”¹ With adjustments made for local situation and context, this scene can be replicated across the country, in cities as much as in the countryside, to great success. It makes use of key concepts – defeat in detail, hit and run attacks, and small autonomous fighting cells – to inflict as much loss on the enemy as possible within a small engagement, while taking as few losses as possible ourselves, and to that end sustaining ourselves on the enemy's supplies to offset even the loss of ammunition during the course of the attack. These concepts, and this style of fighting, can be crystallized into a larger strategy that can enable us to actually have and sustain an armed, fighting resistance in the united states.

In a previous zine, we advocated for the creation of small autonomous armed fighting cells, which will be the building block of our strategy. In that zine, we listed nine points these cells should strive for:

1. Firearm familiarity and marksmanship skills.
2. A grasp of asymmetric strategy (e.g. protracted people's war, ‘defeat in detail’) – in other words, they should have the answer to the question, “how do we win in the big picture?”
3. An intimate familiarity with small unit tactics (e.g. fire and maneuver, breaking contact, movement to contact) – in other words, they should have the answers to the question, “how do we win on the small scale – in individual engagements?”²

¹ Taken from the introduction to the zine and essay *How to Build the End of the World*, by Miliaku Nwabueze. “We owe each other the indeterminate” is in turn a quote from *The Undercommons*, by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney.

² A series of zines on this point is in the works. In the meanwhile, you can also refer to the Ranger's Handbook, which can be pretty dense and inaccessible when taken as an introductory resource, but in our opinion far more accessible than the united states military's other work on small unit tactics and battle drills, FM 3-21.8. Versions of both throughout the years are available for free online.

4. A familiarity with ‘soldiering skills’ (e.g. individual movement techniques, range estimation, signature reduction, cover and concealment).³
5. Serious first aid skills.
6. Bushcraft and foraging skills.
7. A familiarity with OpSec (operational security) and security culture.
8. Discipline, in the sense of self-drive and perseverance.
9. Consistency in training.

The aim of this zine is not to convince you of the necessity of armed struggle. While it can be read standalone, it is intended as a sequel to our previous zines, *Paving the Way for the Enemy’s Victory*⁴ and *Towards a New, Anarchist Gun Culture*, which build towards this zine and attempt to develop an extremely lacking, often only surface-level conversation around armed struggle and the role and potential of guns in our movements. The purpose of this zine is to lay out the answer we have settled on for the question, *how do we win, in an armed struggle?* In other words, it addresses the second point on our list. It is intended as an introduction to a strategy of asymmetric warfare, extremely powerful if well-understood and correctly wielded, developed based on a deep review of history and military science and specifically with our current context in the united states in mind.

SECTION 1

To begin, we need to distinguish tactics and strategy. In general terms, strategy is how we intend to achieve an objective on the large scale, as well as what our actual objective is, and what winning looks like – what our desired “end condition” is. For example, in a straightforward war between two states, one state’s strategy might be to beeline for the enemy’s most important cities and control them as quickly as possible in order to force a peace deal. On the other hand, its strategy could be to seize key infrastructure, in order to cut off supplies to the enemy’s key cities and to its armies, again hoping to force a peace deal. Or, its strategy could be to build a robust system of fortifications, force the enemy to go on the attack, and wear down their army in a slow, grueling war until its forces are destroyed or a favorable peace agreement is reached. Each of these approaches ultimately seek the same outcome, victory, but they each seek to reach it in a different way.

Tactics, on the other hand, are the methods we use to implement our strategy. For example, on the large scale, an entire army or an entire division might flank an enemy division in order to seize a city, or might feint an attack on a city in order to seize a supply line. On the smaller scale, in individual battles, a platoon might fix an enemy force in place with heavy machine gun fire while another platoon moves to flank and destroy it. This is the application of tactics. The strategy guides when, where, and why we meet the enemy, and our tactics are how we meet and overcome the enemy.

If we are going to consider armed resistance, we have to consider what our strategy would be. How do we intend to win, and what is the desired end state?

In over a decade of study and deliberation, there is one strategy we have always been brought back to. This strategy is to destroy the enemy, piece by piece, only biting off what we can chew

³ The Finnish Soldier’s Guide (2024) is a superb foundational resource on this, available free online.

⁴ The aforementioned zine where we originally advocated for the autonomous fighting cell model.

and nothing more, constantly reducing his numbers and his supplies through small, rapid hit and run attacks, preserving our numbers through carefulness, moderation, discretion, speed, and rapid disappearance. (This approach, where we seek out small, isolated, and vulnerable targets, and concentrate our forces on them, is called defeat in detail.) Meanwhile, we reduce his recruitment numbers through political, social, civil, and armed attacks, and meanwhile increase the number of insurgents and insurgent cells through the distribution of relevant literature, mutual aid activity, and other regular subversive anarchist activities, now to be oriented towards the armed struggle. This is all effectively a mirror of US counterinsurgency strategy, which aims to reduce the numbers of insurgents through armed battle – as well as offers of amnesty and financial incentives – while also reducing insurgent recruitment through methods like token reforms (especially in the area of social welfare and employment) and financial incentives. It is also informed by Mao's theory of Protracted People's Warfare, which is how the Chinese expelled the genocidal, fascist Japanese army, how the Chinese communists overthrew their government, how the Vietnamese defeated the united states, and how the Taliban defeated the coalition militaries in Afghanistan. Protracted People's Warfare has two especially key understandings – that it is a protracted war, meaning one which is drawn out, potentially lasting decades, and that it is a people's war, drawing its strength from 'the masses'. This point poses a problem for us in the united states. That's because the united states is a settler state: 85% of its population is composed of settlers, with the vast majority of them, 71%, being white. As we said in *Paving the Way*:

At pivotal intersections of history settlers will, on the whole, uniformly defend settlerism.⁵ When settlers claim progressive politics, they tend to actually pursue a politics of settler privilege. In practice, settler leftist class-reductionists, guns or no guns, have more in common with the radical tradition of the white miner uprisings in apartheid South Africa or the Israeli kibbutzim than with Turtle Island's rich history of slave uprisings and Native resistance. White race-traitors are real but rare, and settlers willing to betray their settler status are even fewer. The struggle in America will be primarily black and indigenous, or it will not be a liberatory struggle.

This is why programs which organize around a strategy of mass mobilization fail. A million white people whose primary political objective is to avoid discomfort were never going to make real sacrifices or take real risks for Gaza. Nor are they going to do anything meaningful against ICE and its violence, a nightmarish pedophile elite, or the next imperialist war. Leftists moreso than anarchists like to view or at least portray these huge white 'movements' as a sign of growth, that the nation is waking up, that liberals are 'moving towards the left.' In reality, these are white people who saw children being killed, or protesters being killed, or so on, and were disturbed and troubled by it. This is a basic human function: It does not indicate any willingness for political or personal growth. Because again, what does the white settler rebel against? Their own discomfort. Their movements don't fizzle out because it stops being trendy, or because they forgot – they fizzle out because it left the news cycle, disappeared from the algorithm – which effectively was *their goal*. Because once it's left the news cycle, it is not disturbing their comfort anymore. Did you think they were going to change anything about how they lived their lives for Gaza? They hated boycotting McDonalds and Starbucks, did you think they would begin living in a way that opposes a global order of settler-colonialism, imperialism, genocide, and slavery? Their way of living *epitomizes* that world.

⁵ Read *Settlers*, by J. Sakai.

Covid is also an excellent example of this phenomenon. The moment the Biden administration's CDC ended testing, masking all but disappeared, and they refuse to mask again even if you *prove* to them that the pandemic is still ongoing and dangerous. Because their goal was not to end the pandemic, for people to be safe and healthy – their goal was for the pandemic to stop getting in the way of their comfort and desires. Who cares how many people die, how many people are disabled for life? As long as it's quiet, tucked away, out of sight, they're satisfied.

All this to say: the 'masses' here, the sweeping majority of the population, are predisposed to oppose, frustrate, or co-opt liberation⁶. Because of that, our war cannot be a people's war or a popular war. It can be an indigenous people's war, a black people's war, but it is not under any circumstances going to be that story american leftists and radicals love to tell themselves, the 99% against the 1%. If it is the 99% against the 1%, expect without a shadow of a doubt the reinvention of the same systems of oppression, and prepare again for war.

In terms of military practice, the Taliban's victory over the united states holds a lot of insights for us in that it proves a protracted guerrilla war can win without it being 'a people's war.' It proves that an extremely unpopular force⁷ can still utilize the strategy and framework of protracted people's warfare, to great success.

The protracted aspect of this strategy troubles people. It took 14 years for China to liberate itself from Japanese occupation. The Chinese Civil War lasted 22 years before the Communist victory in 1949. The Vietnamese fought the French for seven and a half years, and then had to fight the united states for 20 years, before finally liberating itself from foreign occupation. Afghans had to fight the united states and coalition forces for 20 years before its victory over them. And for an example of a protracted war against a settler state – the people of Zimbabwe fought for 15 and a half years before the settler state of rhodesia was destroyed, and this was their second war of liberation. You could argue that the Zimbabwean struggle for independence lasted 89 years, between when Zimbabwe was colonized in 1890 and when Zimbabweans liberated themselves in 1979.

Our war will not be 10, or 20, or even 30 years. No, when the dust settles, we will find that this war was over 400 years long. Not because we have 400 years of fighting ahead of us, but because we have inherited over 400 years of protracted struggle against our enemy. The work behind us, centuries and centuries of Black and Indigenous resistance, is far heavier than the work in front of us.

The insurgent fighter fights until victory or martyrdom, for decades or a lifetime if necessary. The enemy soldier spends only 6 to 12 months on a combat deployment. We must have more stamina, more resolve, more bravery, more determination, and more desperation than them. In 2020, so much pressure was put on the police in the streets and in the social arena that cops started to quit in droves, and it continues to affect police recruitment to this day. We are capable of doing that again, at an even greater intensity and to an even greater affect, to both police and soldiers over the course of an armed struggle.

There is another aspect of our strategy, an opportunity which they did not have in Afghanistan, Vietnam, or Gaza. This is that we live in the heart and the belly of the beast. While so much of american manufacturing has been outsourced to the children and slaves of the Global South, its war manufacturing is still almost entirely domestic. This is intentional – it means no

⁶ Seriously, read Settlers.

⁷ In 2019, a study found that 85% of Afghans had 'no sympathy' for the Taliban.

one can cut off its military production without attacking its heart. We live in its heart. We can strike its heart.

In other words, while simultaneously waging a grueling guerrilla war of attrition, we can also strike the enemy's military production sites, the infrastructure leading to and from those sites, even the mines and refineries which supply materials for those sites. This means that as the course of the war progresses, we may begin to make faster and faster progress against the enemy as his key military infrastructure is eliminated and his war machine begins to unravel. In Afghanistan, Vietnam, and so many other imperialist wars, brave resistance fighters did not have this opportunity. They could only meet the enemy as he advanced into their land. And still they won, and humiliated him. With our opportunities and advantages, we can not only defeat and humiliate the enemy, but cut him off at the source and destroy him entirely.

Which brings us to our end goal, what winning means for us, militarily. In simple terms, within the strategy we have already described, the goal is to destroy the enemy's forces so that he is rendered absolutely incapable of imposing his political will, incapable of fighting, incapable of resisting.

The work to be done after that point – to ensure that it really is an anarchist victory, a liberatory victory, a decolonial victory, an abolitionist victory – is already the subject of hundreds if not thousands of well-written, well-researched and beautiful zines, essays, and books, but is fully outside the scope of this zine. This zine is about how we get there.

Before we continue, we'll reiterate the essence of our strategy. We'll repeat ourselves in order to preserve the preciseness of the language. Our strategy is: To destroy the enemy, piece by piece, only biting off what we can chew and nothing more, constantly reducing his numbers and his supplies through small, rapid hit and run attacks, preserving our numbers through carefulness, moderation, discretion, speed, and rapid disappearance. Meanwhile, we reduce his recruitment numbers through political, social, civil, and armed attacks, and meanwhile increase the number of insurgents and insurgent cells through the distribution of relevant literature, mutual aid activity, and other regular subversive anarchist activities, now to be oriented towards the armed struggle. We also target his military production, infrastructure, and supply sources, drastically reducing his ability to wage war. We become stronger as he becomes weaker.

This is a clear strategy. However, there are some foundational basics around the theory of protracted guerrilla warfare that we have not yet gone over.

SECTION 2

There are three points.

1. Protracted guerrilla warfare traditionally exists on a spectrum with three main phases:

1. The lowest intensity phase can be called a *latent insurgency*. In this phase, the insurgency exists, but is "sleeping" – its primary focus is internal, revolving around its own growth and survival. Insurgent attacks are small-scale, and rare.
2. The second phase is *equilibrium*, where the power of the insurgency approaches equaling the power of the enemy.

3. The third phase is the *decisive* phase, or the *decision* phase, where the insurgency has eclipsed the enemy in power, and beats them in *decisive*, large-scale, regular combat.

The spectrum moves ‘from left to right’ as the intensity of the fighting and the power of the guerrilla force increases, and as the power of state forces decreases.

In the first phase, the insurgency has little more than small arms. Common attacks consist of sabotage and targeted shootings. A cop might be killed on a street corner, or the tires of his squad car might be popped. Large attacks might happen, but are rare. These larger attacks might look like the a dozen squad cars being burned in a lot, or a shooting attack on a police convoy or military checkpoint. Insurgency in the united states has hovered at this level for several decades, primarily upheld by Black youth and anarchist saboteurs.

The gradient between the first and second phases, between the sleeping insurgency and the equilibrium, contains a wide breadth of developments and intensities. Because of this, we might insert a fourth distinct phase between them: the *waking insurgency*. A phase of “progressive expansion,” in terms of capability, intensity, and manpower, and where attacks become more common, beginning to exist as part of a more coherent strategy, rather than sporadic, isolated, out of desperation.

By the second phase, equilibrium, the power of the enemy has been seriously hindered. Perhaps now the majority of people hate to become cops, or to become soldiers, because of social consequences, physical consequences, and effective propaganda intensifying the specter of both, so that the prospective soldier or cop is convinced he will be ostracized, convinced he will die in combat, convinced he will come home *changed*. In any case, recruitment for the enemy has slowed, and his armies have been worn down by efficient, persistent, light attacks, plagued by an enemy he cannot see until he is struck and cannot find after he is struck. Each day, more of his soldiers are dead, and more of his equipment is stolen or destroyed.

In the third phase, the insurgency has either developed the combat capability to take the enemy head on (perhaps its own air force, its own air defenses, its own armored vehicles, its own artillery and rockets) or has diminished the enemy’s combat capability to where they can take the enemy head on (perhaps by destroying his air force, his air defenses, his armored vehicles, his artillery and rockets). Or, perhaps most likely, an interaction between the two factors - the insurgency has made some advancements in its capability, and at the same time decreased the enemy’s as much or more. In a war on the enemy’s turf, as in our case, and as we discussed earlier, perhaps his factories have been destroyed or seized, and he cannot sustain his forces any longer. Perhaps his infrastructure is destroyed and his supply lines are cut off, so all the supplies in the world cannot reach his forces. In any case, the power of the enemy is eclipsed, and the insurgency can take him head on. The insurgency can now take and hold positions such as cities, bases, airfields, factories, and defend them – and it is now advantageous for it to do so.

It should be noted here that the duration of an insurgency is not realistically going to be evenly split into these three phases. That is to say, an insurgency is not going to be in the first phase for 5 years, the second phase for 5 years, and the third phase for 5 years. In the case of Afghanistan, for example, anyone who was paying attention to the news cycle will remember how quickly the Taliban eclipsed the Afghan National Army in strength in 2021 and seized the entire country in a matter of months. The vast majority of those twenty years of fighting were spent in the first phase (that is, the low intensity phase, the latent phase), in the waking phase,

or at the precipice of the second phase, equilibrium. Only in those last few months of the war did the Taliban really reach equilibrium and subsequently eclipse their enemy in strength.

Whether or not anarchists should strictly ascribe to this model – specifically the third phase – is a different matter. Some anarchists, recalling Makhno, believe that we as anarchists can have a unified, formal army. This author is skeptical – such an army in our context could easily become an anarchist ‘vanguard,’ an army at that scale entails some degree of hierarchy, and so much consolidation of power is dangerous. There is another option, seen in Afghanistan and elsewhere, where, rather than ‘graduating’ to become a conventional military, our many small, light, autonomous cells remain small, but can come together to achieve major tasks or fight decisive, larger-scale battles. From *Towards a New, Anarchist Gun Culture*:

Small cells of as little as four to as many as fourteen or twenty [fighters] can operate independently for light, rapid attacks, and in any given area as many cells as needed can come together for special circumstances, such as to attack a key objective or to defend against massacres. This is precisely how they defeated the united states in Afghanistan, and, interestingly, a western military analyst applying an anthropological understanding to this model discovered that it strongly resembled how hunter-gatherer bands across the world tend to operate, hunting and gathering independently of one another but coming together for special circumstances such as a prominent harvest or mast year, whereas, to his findings, western militaries operated more like small states.

It is worth noting that, while this is how the Taliban fought the united states for 20 years, they abandoned this model as they rapidly eclipsed their enemy in strength in the last months of the war. Ultimately, they did form a unified military, in order to consolidate power as well as to concentrate its forces for the capture of Afghanistan’s key cities. If in our strategy we decide to apply this small cell model to the final phases of protracted warfare, we should understand that it will be an experiment, and we should also look to see if we can find other instances of it in recent history, within the last century or so, to inform how we go forwards. Earlier phases of the war in Afghanistan can be included in this study – the capture of the city of Kunduz in September of 2015, the first major city captured by the Taliban since the american invasion began, was achieved using this model, with many autonomous small cells coming together to achieve a major objective. Of course, that city was quickly recaptured, because by taking and attempting to hold the city, the Taliban fighters presented fixed targets which could then be struck from the air and with artillery. The capacity for air defenses remains extremely important before transitioning to a model of seizing and holding ground. However, Kunduz still proves that decisive battle is possible without adhering to the traditional third phase of protracted guerrilla warfare.

2. Protracted guerrilla warfare is multispacial.

The insurgency is not a monolith, and adapts to local circumstances wherever it exists. An insurgency may be fighting toe to toe with the state in one region, and waging limited, low-intensity warfare in another, depending on the capacity of the insurgency in each region. Returning to the example of Kunduz in 2015 - Taliban forces in this region were strong enough to capture a major city, while at the exact same time, in other parts of the county, Taliban cells

were low on resources and manpower, hiding in caves, only coming out briefly to fire at tribal police or other lightly armed forces. In some regions there was period of over a decade where fighters lived in caves in the mountains and carried out maybe one ambush in a year, if that. Those Taliban cells in Kunduz were at a higher phase of protracted guerrilla warfare than the forces in other parts of the country. In each region, cells evaluated their own strength and the enemy's strength, and adjusted how they operated accordingly. In this way, they were able to sustain the struggle.

3. Protracted guerrilla warfare is nonlinear.

The insurgency moves between phases depending on its circumstances. An insurgency may become strong enough to hold territory and fight on even ground with the state, and then be weakened and revert to a lower intensity phase of fighting, according to its capacity. Afghanistan, again, gives us strong modern examples. There were regions in Afghanistan where the united states had a robust network of patrols, supplies, and bases, and considered the Taliban entirely defeated. In some of these regions, fighting had halted completely for years, and Taliban fighters lived practically as civilians, until eventually circumstances favored fighting again – a new imperialist atrocity would drive men to seek to join the Taliban, for example, or someone would come into possession of supplies which could supply a new Taliban offensive. Or perhaps one youth would come into possession of one handgun, and would shoot a soldier posted on the street corner. One way or another, regions the US thought it had subdued would suddenly awaken and become a thorn in its side.

This applies even at a larger scale. We can look at our own history and see the intensity of fighting between Black radicals and the cops in the 60s and 70s, and compare this to the much lower intensity of the struggle today. The movement was extremely weakened by Cointelpro, and has still not recovered, and, accordingly, whether conscious or unconscious, the fighting has decreased in intensity as well. This is how the struggle survives, year after year, generation after generation, even if it be defeat after crushing defeat. We find ways to continue to put the pressure on the enemy, to inflict losses, supply ourselves with the enemy's equipment, and preserve our own forces, even if we are reduced to one brave youth with a handgun. And from this one youth, again a resistant movement can grow.

These three points – that protracted guerrilla warfare exists on a spectrum, that it is multi-spatial, and that it is nonlinear – amount to a foundational understanding of this way of fighting. Now, we can add to the statement of our strategy: To destroy the enemy, piece by piece, only biting off what we can chew and nothing more, constantly reducing his numbers and his supplies through small, rapid hit and run attacks, preserving our numbers through carefulness, moderation, discretion, speed, and rapid disappearance. Meanwhile, we reduce his recruitment numbers through political, social, civil, and armed attacks, and meanwhile increase the number of insurgents and insurgent cells through the distribution of relevant literature, mutual aid activity, and other regular subversive anarchist activities, now to be oriented towards the armed struggle. We also target his military production, infrastructure, and supply sources, drastically reducing his ability to wage war. We become stronger as he becomes weaker. We aim to eclipse him in strength, ideally preserving our autonomous small cell structure, with the desired end goal of destroying his capacity for fighting or implementing his political will entirely. Our small cells can come together for large operations, then disperse for regular operations, always adapting.

If we face a setback, or are reduced in capacity, we will revert to a lower intensity of fighting appropriate for our current strength. And we understand that in some parts of the country, we may have more strength and capacity than in other parts of the country. We fight according to our strength in relation to the enemy's strength, on the local level, never attempting a strategy above our capacity, but always striving to expand our capacity, and always striving for an opportunity to inflict a loss on the enemy.

SECTION 3

With our strategy fully crystallized, we can identify a few key areas where we need to develop our capacity in order to be able to put our strategy into practice, those being:

1. We should strive expand our ability to gather information on the enemy.

As fighting progresses and our enemies mobilize around the new threat we pose, a number of things necessary for our survival and our victory – staying one step ahead of them, exploiting key vulnerabilities, identifying isolated targets and vulnerable patrol and supply routes – will require a number of overlapping sources gathering intelligence on the enemy, drawing from a variety of methods of information gathering and making its way back to insurgent forces through a variety of mediums, with redundancies in order to prevent accessible information from going unnoticed. Guerrilla movements thrive when they have strong intelligence networks. Due to our small cell model, we need only to develop these intelligence networks on the local level – wherever we intend to fight, or may be made to fight by our enemy – which is an extremely feasible task. The methods and systems our communities have developed to track and communicate ICE movements are a good model and a strong starting point, especially as these methods continue to evolve and adapt and as we continue to work on minimizing rumors and maximizing reach.

2. We must be capable of disappearing.

Hit and run attacks, and the model of maximizing losses inflicted on the enemy while preserving our own forces, only works for a guerrilla movement if we can disappear afterwards. If we present a target to the enemy, he can easily consolidate his forces and destroy us.

A few main challenges exist that will try to prevent us from disappearing.

The first is reinforcements. A cop can very quickly radio for assistance if given the opportunity, using either the radio handset on their chest or the one in their car. This is why the squad car, with one or two cops inside, represents a perfect target: both cops can be rapidly put out of action before they ever have time to think or react. But this must be practiced, honed, and perfected, and can still go wrong. Shots that should be lethal or cause the enemy to lose consciousness can simply fail to do so, and it takes a cop just a few seconds of consciousness to scream for help into their radio. And this is all assuming your ambush takes place in isolation, which will never be the case. In the city, one person in the vicinity calling 911 about hearing some gunshots is enough, and even in the countryside, it just takes one person you didn't know was nearby, a hunter in a blind or someone camping, to call 911 and bring reinforcements hot on your heels. Of course, it will take time for reinforcements to get there. But the more distance you can put between yourself and the site of the ambush to arrive, the better. The further you get from the site

of the ambush, the larger the radius they have to search, although dogs and search techniques can speed up the process for them.

The event of reinforcements being brought in is one that should be planned for and practiced. It should not be treated as an unthinkable situation. Escape is absolutely best, but depending on the reinforcements that are brought in and how dispersed they are after beginning their search, you may feasibly be able to fight your way out if necessary. This is not ideal, because this will certainly reveal your location and bring in even more reinforcements. However, the viscousness of your fighting may hold them back for a time, and fighting a trained insurgent unit is not something most police are mentally prepared for. With your team, you should come up with mutually agreed upon standard operating procedures, or SOPs, so that you all know what the plan is if a certain event arises. For example, if the enemy is right on top of us, do we fight, run, or hide? You and your team should look at your current abilities and determine an answer based on that. If your abilities change in the future, you should revisit your SOPs to see if anything can be updated.

The second challenge is technology. A substantial amount of military technological innovation in the 21st century has been focused around preventing the insurgent from disappearing. Gunshot detection systems were invented to locate urban snipers in Iraq, and drone and helicopter-mounted thermal and FLIR cameras detected insurgents retreating from ambushes in Afghanistan. During battles in the Iraq War, drone teams operating from the stratosphere were able to identify the sound of an RPG being fired⁸, trace the insurgents who fired it as they made their retreat, and destroy them when they regrouped with a larger force and revealed their friends' locations.

Stories like this can paint an image of a tech dystopia, where an insurgent force is unable to operate without being destroyed. However, we have to look at the context: these were high-intensity, head-to-head urban battles, which is how US drones knew where to surveil. There were clear hotspots where fighting was happening, and the US drones simply had to circle until a target was identified. An unexpected ambush along a country road, or on a cop car patrolling the projects, would not face this issue – even if US military drones were operating in the area, as during the 2025 LA uprising, those drones would be focused on central points of action, and action in their periphery may go unnoticed if done with skill. This highlights a larger point: ambushes must be fast. If an ambush had been carried out somewhere in LA during the uprising, it's entirely feasible that their drone could have been rapidly redirected to surveil the site of the ambush and track retreating insurgents, unless they were capable of retreating rapidly. There are also many ways to negate the advantages of the enemy's drones. Having drones does not give the enemy omnipotence. Familiar anarchist practices around bloc and debloc can be employed to great use – disappearing into the crowd is a hallmark of urban guerrilla warfare. In a rural environment, thick tree cover can protect you from being spotted by their thermal cameras and FLIR, but you often won't know that a drone is overhead, much less what angle it's approaching from and how your tree cover holds up from that angle. A good, breathable tarp, one which allows heat to flow through without accumulating or collecting – NOT a thermal blanket – can also potentially hide your heat signature. But military drones, of course, are not the only or most

⁸ This author is unable to remember if this was done using microphones attached to US ground forces, microphones attached to low-flying air assets, or something else. The drones in the stratosphere almost certainly did not have the ability to pick up sound from all the way up there.

pressing technological threat to an aspiring insurgent movement in Turtle Island, especially at this low-intensity phase (although these points also mostly apply to the small quadcopter drones many police agencies now have, which are also often equipped with thermal, although with a small quadcopter drone you will have an opportunity to hear and see it coming, and know that the threat exists, unlike with a military drone in the stratosphere). This variety of technological threats – helicopters and military & police drones – are generally best understood as a variety of enemy reinforcements, because they are generally only brought out in reaction to an attack, with exceptions like in the LA example.

The most prominent technological threat to our ability to disappear is cameras. In the cities, this now especially means Flock and Ring cameras, as well as traffic cameras, especially those which are able to identify vehicle make, model, color, and supposedly even more details. In rural areas, this means trail cameras – which may sound silly, but we have real world examples of the danger they pose. When Danelo Cavalcante was on the run in Pennsylvania in 2023 after escaping from prison, law enforcement were searching in the wrong place for almost a week. While they continued their search in a radius around the prison, Cavalcante had slipped through their search perimeter, until a trail camera recorded him, twice, on the night of September 4th. This gave the police an exact location and a timestamp to reorient their search efforts around – and if it hadn't happened, he really might have been able to slip them entirely. Ultimately, he was caught by a plane using thermal imaging.

We should also remember that every police car dashcam and every police bodycam is a surveillance device.

Many zines and articles exist around thwarting AI cameras and facial recognition. As for trail cameras – do these cameras emit infrared light at night, the way many security cameras do? If so, this could be an easy way of detecting them from a distance, if one had access to night-vision goggles. Night vision is prohibitively expensive, but perhaps over the course of the struggle we will come into possession of some.

The third challenge is forensics. This isn't an area we're particularly qualified to go into depth on, but things we consider when we think about forensics and guerrilla warfare include spent shell casings, footprints and litter,⁹ and ballistic analysis - word on the street is that every gun's barrel rifling has a unique 'fingerprint,' and that forensic analysis of recovered bullets can reveal this fingerprint. We have no idea if this is true. If it is the case, there are certainly creative ways to mitigate it. The simplest way would be to use shotguns, which don't have barrel rifling, but this would limit some of your capabilities – rifles and pistols are more versatile, in our opinion.

There are a lot of zines, articles and essays out there that address thwarting forensic analysis. As for accessing them in a way that isn't sketch, unless someone in your community is already distroing them, we're not really sure.

The fourth challenge to disappearing is the social environment. Because we live in a settler state, because the majority of the population sincerely opposes liberation, and because americans love cops and will even risk their lives for them, we live in a far more prohibitive environment than, say, resistance fighters in the West Bank or in Gaza. Though Palestinians in the West Bank have a wide spectrum of opinions on armed resistance, and the Palestinian Authority comprador government has proved a potent counterinsurgency tool as controlled opposition, resistance fighters can still generally walk armed down the street or train in the alleyways of Jenin

⁹ If you litter, that's kind of on you? Don't litter.

or Tulkarem without fear of being reported to authorities by passersby. The same cannot be said for us in our circumstances.

Of course, for example, a black armed group can often operate openly within the neighborhood or neighborhoods it rose from, with great community support, as in the case of Lincoln Heights' armed community defense or the Huey P. Newton Gun Club in Texas. However, when the first large ambushes take place, we can expect that there will be shock and backlash, the type of social reaction that caused so many 'radicals' to backpedal and criticize violence after Charlie Kirk got smoked, or after October 7th. This means it is entirely possible that our own communities may reject us in the first days or months of fighting. People fear change more than they fear oppression, and they fear the idea of being powerful, of having duties and responsibility, more than they fear being ruled and dominated. However, as with 2020, and as with Gaza's resistance war, the course of the fighting will reveal the truth. As conflict increases, contradictions sharpen, leaving no one 'on the fence.' Despite the enemy's counterinsurgency techniques, millions supported 2020. Of course, as referenced in our discussion on settler society earlier, much of that support was empty, and amounted to little more than 'thinking favorably' of rioters, if even that. But thinking favorably of us is enough to create a more permissive environment for us to operate in. All of this is most relevant for the urban environment, and less relevant for the rural environment.

The ability to disappear after an attack is an essential skill for an insurgent force. It means the difference between a one-off ambush followed by the destruction of the entire cell, and a sustained campaign of insurgency.

3. We must be able to adapt.

Our enemies will study us, will feed the data of our attacks into complex algorithms in an attempt to anticipate future attacks. Those who live to tell the tale after one of our attacks will teach their friends what mistakes not to make, what mistakes they noticed us making. Over the course of an intense war which will pose an existential threat to our enemy, they will adapt to our tactics. The things that worked so well at the beginning will almost certainly no longer work by the end. The fact that we intend to operate in small, autonomous cells will make it harder for him to adapt to us, as each cell fights in its own way, with its own techniques and habits, but he will still adapt. If we are fighting well, and inflicting serious losses, you can count on it that he will adapt. We need to be able to readily adapt as well, to be creative, to be analytical of our techniques, critical of our weak areas, to anticipate future threats and able to identify what isn't working. War is constant adaptation, as both sides force each-other to evolve to the constant threat of one another. If we cannot adapt, we will fall behind, and falling behind means destruction at the hands of our enemies.

With everything covered by our initial nine-point list and these final three points, taken alongside the strategy we have argued for, and if our communities form and encourage the creation of these autonomous fighting cells - we can lead a sustained insurgency against the united states from within. We can sustain constant armed resistance to its global oppression. We can have an armed resistance that remains decentralized, autonomous, empowering, and free. And we can win. ☒

On the morning of the 19th of December, 2024, an Al-Qassam fighter awoke to a ruined city. It was Jabalia camp, encircled by Israeli forces for weeks, bombed into the ground, and totally cut off from the rest of the Strip. The situation in Jabalia in those weeks was more critical than anywhere else in Gaza at the time. They had run out of food, had run out of water, and at last, had run out of ammunition. This fighter, whose name remains with God, rose alone from the darkness of the tunnels and the dust of the rubble with a knife. Alone, he found an Israeli position with three Israeli soldiers and their commanding officer. Alone, he seized them. Alone, against their guns, he stabbed all four of them, killing all four, and seized their weapons and supplies. And alone, he retreated back to friendly lines, with enough equipment to keep the fight going at least one more day.

The situation in Jabalia was critical and it only got worse, and the siege showed no signs of stopping. But the fighters there, still unable to be resupplied by their fellow fighters outside the camp, categorically refused surrender, defeat, or humiliation. In the following days, Jabalia's heroes continued to rise to an impossible task – their fists and their knives against tanks, armored personnel carriers, fighter jets, machine guns, and artillery. In the coldest days of December, news continued to come out of the camp: Another stabbing operation, with more supplies and ammunition recovered. And another, and another. For the first time in recent memory, we heard reports from the camp of a suicide bombing operation. And another. What is the result when total desperation meets total bravery, a total commitment to liberation and to one's people? The fighters of Jabalia clawed their way tooth and nail through the blood and steel of an impossible enemy. Bone-thin and throats dry, Jabalia camp was like a burning flame for the enemy, a hornet's nest. Israel had done everything it could do to subdue the camp's resilient people, and yet its soldiers still feared to enter the camp. They knew they would die there like the rest. And when the ceasefire deal of January 2025 was reached, the surviving fighters of Jabalia, along with all the proud and defiant people of the camp, stood victorious over a humiliated enemy. And when that ceasefire ended in March, Jabalia's fighters did not cower, make excuses, or try to hide from their responsibility. They reloaded their weapons, restocked their supplies, and prepared for the next round. Perhaps the fighter who woke up that December day and stabbed those soldiers was among them.

God have mercy on the brave fighters of Gaza. When they ran out of ammunition, they turned to knives. If they had lost their knives, they would have thrown stones. Surrender never crossed their minds. It was not an option. Around the world, proud and resistant people are fighting impossible odds, the most unfair battles. Around the world, the machinations of empire are foiled by knives, rusty rifles, ingenuity, human bravery, flesh, and blood. Iraq put fear in the hearts of the invading coalition. Memories of the early years of the occupation still haunt the coalition soldiers who survived, and to this day Iraq's sons still target American military bases with rockets and artillery. Afghanistan defeated the most powerful military in the world and its allies only after 20 years of grueling conflict, famine, and drought – and until the last American soldier was expelled, Afghanistan had not experienced a day of peace since 1979.

We could have lived in a world where Afghanistan fell to Western occupation. Where the people of Iraq submitted to American rule. Where Gaza rolled over and accepted domination, genocide and expulsion. Only with the bravery of their people, the human desire to live free, and a willingness to do the impossible, to create new worlds, and to win, was empire humiliated, its plots foiled, its planes to return home filled with coffins. We live in a world where thousands have rushed to face down tanks, fighter jets, and artillery with whatever weapon they could get

their hands on. And we live in a world where they have won. Time and time again, they have won.

So what of NYPD or LAPD, ICE and BORTAC, the National Guard, or the Marines? Are we scared? Are the fighters of Jabalia camp not simply humans like us, are we not humans like them? The struggle continues every day. Are we without the capacity for human bravery and human ingenuity? Will we continue to accept each new blow with our heads down, or will we escalate, day by day, until their armored vehicles burn in the streets of Brooklyn, in the streets of Minneapolis, in the streets of Chicago, Philly and Atlanta? Until every prison and precinct is up in flames, until victory is irresistible, until the cops have taken so many losses that the survivors go on strike and refuse to come out of their homes, like in the last days of Bangladesh's uprising?

The choice is ours and ours alone. No one is coming to save us, and our government's oppression continues not just against us but across the globe. We will have to offer our own blood, our own martyrs, to be free. No amount of Afghan, Palestinian, Iranian, or Iraqi blood sacrificed on the altar will free us, despite the desires of so many western leftists. We owe it to ourselves, each-other and the world. At the very least our generation must make its great contribution to struggle, must write history with our blood, prove new possibilities and leave stories of heroes behind for the next generation. These are decisive times and the clock is ticking. The rivers are running dry.

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Guerrilla Warfare

An anarchist strategy for armed resistance in the belly of the beast.

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