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**From the Tupamaros to the Red Brigades,  
Common Tactics, and Strategies of the Urban Guerrilla**

**Abstract**

Starting from the irregular fighter and the use of guerrilla warfare as an unconventional weapon used by the weak against the strong, we quickly rediscovered its history and the enormous use of it over time. The guerrilla technique has become a symbolic tool for the oppressed to fight against the oppressor. It was the European wars, after the French revolution, which exacerbated the conflicts by precipitating the war into a new global dimension, not only because of the enormous human resources available but also for the overcoming of the limits between civil and military, between regular armies and irregulars. It is the figure of the partisan and defender of his homeland, who emerges in this new context, in which he finds himself, fighting fierce, bloody wars to defend his land, his nation, his family from the invader. The partisan manages to find an advantage over his enemy through a profound knowledge of the terrain and with popular support; this would be one of the winning strategies that led Mao to outline guerrilla tactics as did other strategists such as General Giap to bring heavy defeats to French colonial troops. The real turning point occurred with Mao Zedong and his resistance to the Japanese invasion; Mao had brilliant intuition; he abandoned Soviet orthodoxy, shifting attention from the urban proletariat to the peasant one. Even before Mao Zedong's definitive success in the Chinese civil war, his theories had spread throughout Europe and overseas. In Italy, the first revolutionary uprisings arose at Universities around the 1960s and immediately afterwards in factories. They were places where important events were discussed, such as the Cultural Revolution of Mao and the exploits of "Che" Guevara, Casto, and the Uruguayan Tupamaros were admired. The

## From the Tupamaros to the Red Brigades, Common Tactics, and Strategies of the Urban Guerrilla

revolutions, before being military, were cultural and ideological. The events in the sixties in Latin America had a profound effect in Italy and provoked in-depth debates, as well as a notable diffusion of news, essays, solidarity campaigns, marches, demonstrations, and above all a widespread guerrilla culture, which would shortly after that lead to armed struggle with terrorist groups such as the Red Brigades.

*Political power comes out of the barrel of a gun.*

-Mao Tse-Tung, 1938.

Guerrilla, “little war,” unorthodox war, irregular or insurrectional war, with different names, we indicate the use of a panoply of tactics which, despite their complexity, present common characteristics (Brizzi, 2002, p. 39), (Breccia G., 2010, Tre lezioni sulla guerriglia, Limes, n 5, p. 243). Guerrilla warfare (Freedman, 2013, p. 179) gets its name from the tactics of ambush and harassment used during the “little war” fought by Spaniards against French occupation forces at the start of the nineteenth century<sup>1</sup>. These ancient forms of combat, which have become of great importance since the early nineteenth century and are still current could be defined as those actions of “the struggle of the weak against the strong.” (Nasution, 1965, p. 14-15). Every time a group of armed men finds themselves having to face a much more powerful adversary, the only feasible choice is to resort to expedients aimed at delaying the battle and trying to survive. Mao considered the guerrillas as a weapon that a nation inferior in arms and military equipment might employ against a more powerful aggressor nation (Mao, 1989, p. 41). Guerrilla warfare could cause an occupying force trouble, but it was the “last and desperate resort” of an otherwise defeated people. A general uprising against an occupier would need to be “nebulous and elusive” because as soon as it became concrete, it could be crushed. However, as a strategically defensive concept, the tactics of guerrilla warfare had take the offensive, aiming to catch the enemy unawares. (Freedman, 2013, p. 178).

Even prehistoric hunters used guerrilla tactics to kill large animals such as land exploitation, or by setting up ad hoc traps but also using surprise. The guerrilla is also the poor who arms himself the best he can to attack those who have more significant resources than he does. In accordance with Gastone Breccia, one of the oldest and most interesting cases of legitimization of the irregular is linked to a famous episode of the Old Testament, David against Goliath. (Breccia G., 2010, Tre lezioni sulla guerriglia, Limes, n. 5, p. 15-16). The duel between David and Goliath (1 Sm, 17, 38-39) is an accurate and elaborate metaphor for guerrilla warfare;

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Revolutionary Spain*, 1854, available at  
< <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1854/revolutionary-spain/index.htm> > (20/1/2020).

the surprising thing is to find already outlined the characteristics of the guerrilla that will remain constant over time. There are places more suitable than others where the "guerrilla" can move quickly and secretly in small groups to surprise the enemy, to defeat him, and then disappear back into thin air.

Guerrilla operations must not be considered as an independent form of warfare, and it is one-step in total war, one aspect of the revolutionary struggle (Mao, 1989, p. 41). Lenin in *People and Revolution* said: "A people's insurrection and a people's revolution are not only natural but inevitable." According to Lawrence Freedman, "a revolution would need a disciplined fighting force of class-conscious proletarians continued to influence socialist thinking so that guerrilla warfare was seen as the domain of anarchists and criminals, of drunken riffraff indulging their violent tendencies." Despite the fact that in Russia, they had this vision of guerrilla warfare, Lenin refused to dismiss it entirely. Nevertheless, he believed it could only be a subordinate form of struggle, not the primary method, and would benefit from proper party discipline to keep it under control, (Freedman, 2013, p. 180).

Guerrilla tactics are a weapon that a nation inferior in arms and military equipment may employ against a more powerful and aggressive nation. According to Lawrence Freedman, Guerrilla warfare was, therefore defensive, fought on home territory with the advantages of popular support and local knowledge. The struggle, for Mao, had to be characterized by the mobilization of the masses, which had to increase day by day, so that not even the most active enemy would have been able to stop them. Furthermore, the war on the enemy for Mao was to be based on a strategy founded on continuous and aggressive waves of constant attacks, and among the guerrilla techniques, a speedy attack was preferred to a long-lasting battle, less favorable to the guerrillas. It often happens that the outcomes of the irregular war and also of the guerrilla depended on the behaviour of civilians or, in any case, on popular support, and it is the *sine qua non* for obtaining victory and as also stated by Stathis Kalyvas<sup>1</sup>, no insurgents can survive without local support. Guerrilla warfare alone is not sufficient and decisive in the struggle for the control of the State, but it is necessary and possible for a revolutionary war founded on agrarians (Mao, 1989).

Clausewitz, who experienced the French occupation of Prussia and was in a position to observe the Spanish revolution and the French debacle in Russia, made guerrilla warfare the subject of his early lectures and writing. In "*On War*", it was considered a form of defense

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<sup>1</sup> (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 92) «Almost all writers converge in asserting that no insurgent movement survive without "civilian support", and neither can incumbent victory be achieved without it. A member of IRA pointed out "Without the community we were irrelevant. We carried the guns and planted the bombs, but the community fed us, hid us, open their homes to us, turned a blind eye to our operations».

## From the Tupamaros to the Red Brigades, Common Tactics, and Strategies of the Urban Guerrilla

(Freedman, 2013, p. 179). The change of paradigm assumed by the war occurred with Napoleon and with the French Revolution, the conflicts, in that case, would have turned from dynastic wars into wars of the people, as the subject becomes a citizen, he would have be prepared to take up the rifle to defend his homeland (Clausewitz, 2010, pp. XVII-LXIII). The Napoleonic wars and the development of professional revolutionaries were a consequence of the French Revolution of 1789, and also the reference point and inspiration for all the revolutions that would follow. One of the many definitions that Clausewitz gives of war is: "War is, therefore, an act of force that has the purpose of forcing the opponent to submit to our will" (Clausewitz, 2010, pp. XXI-XXII). Among the many students of the Prussian general, the most gifted was without doubt Lenin, who extended his theories from the field of military struggle to politics. The whole of Leninism (Clausewitz, 2010, Introduction) can be reduced to the operation of translating the laws of war to those of politics: this is why Lenin encouraged the militants of his party to study Clausewitz.

The most assiduous follower of Mao after his revolution was the Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap, who fought against colonial France and then the U.S.-supported anti-communist government in the south. Giap was prepared to use regular forces, and his description of guerrilla warfare captured the best practice of the Asian communist struggle of the mid-twentieth century. The guerrilla war served the vast masses of an economically backward country to counter a "well-trained army of aggression." In the communist mainstream, from Engels to Giap, guerrilla warfare was, therefore, never seen as sufficient in itself. It was a way of holding out until it was possible to develop a real military capacity. At any time, it might be all that could be done to stay in the game. (Freedman, 2013, p. 187).

All the guerrilla bands that spring from the masses of the people suffer from lack of organization at the time of their formation. Unorganized guerrilla warfare cannot contribute to victory and those who attack the movement as a combination of banditry and anarchism do not understand the nature of guerrilla action; also, for this reason, all guerrilla units must have political and military leadership. In accordance with Lenin, "evil does not exist in guerrilla warfare but only in the unorganized and undisciplined activities" (Mao, 1989, p. 46). In his extensive, essay "*War in the Shadows*" (Asprey, 1994), on the guerrilla, the meaning of "shadows" is not only the shadows of the night, which are friends of the irregular fighter but also those shadows cast on the world by forests, marshes, mountain ranges. The "closed" ground is the homeland of the guerrilla; he protects it using rapid assault, and in parallel, hinders the enemy's movements, his logistics, and the use of his more powerful weapons, which is a characteristic that remains unchanged from ancient times to the present. The forest was so much the enemy of regular armies as to push the Americans, a few decades ago, to plan its

systematic destruction in Vietnam<sup>1</sup> using chemical defoliants, to deprive the guerrilla of its main ally. It is not, of course, the only environment favourable to partisans, but it is necessary for them to know perfectly the geographical setting of the theatre of the struggle.

The guerrilla fights well in the place where he has his roots, where he was born and raised, able to exploit the "secondary roads," the hidden paths, that multiply the mobility of the partisan "bands" allowing them to attack by surprise and escape to the hunters. (Breccia G. , 2009, p. 167-216). Speed and surprise are fundamental weapons of the irregular fighter; they depend primarily on the exploitation of the characteristics of the terrain. The base of guerrilla's strategy is on alertness, mobility, and attack. In guerrilla strategy, the enemy must be continually attacked on his vital points, and there he must be harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted, and annihilated. A famous Chinese maxim condensed in just four ideograms perfectly summarizes the very essence of the guerrilla: make an uproar in the East, strike in the West<sup>2</sup>.

Mao has adopted the teachings of the classical Chinese military tradition to elaborate a new, more complete, and current theory of "people's war." In his brief and fundamental treaty of 1937, Mao, in turn, underlines the importance of surprise, "even if the element of surprise is not absent in the conventional war, there are certainly fewer possibilities to exploit it than there are in the guerrilla war. In the latter, speed is essential. There is only one fundamental method of guerrilla warfare: violent and surprise attack." (Mao, 1989, p. 97) According to G. Breccia, on the treatise of Carlo Bianco "*On the National War of Insurrection for Bands*" in 1830, the partisan war is fought by armed civilians in defence of their land against an occupying

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<sup>1</sup>(Qiao & Wang, 2001, p. 23) «Previously, the US had also used silver iodide powder and defoliants to locate soldiers on the Ho Chi Min path during the Vietnam War. This operation called "Popeye operation" was a highly classified program of climate modification in South East Asia, which lasted from 1967 to 1972. The cloud seeding operation during the Vietnam war took place from March 20, 1967, until July 5, 1972, in an attempt to prolong the monsoon season, particularly on areas of the Ho Chi Minh trail. The operation was used to induce rain and extend the monsoon season in support of the United States government's efforts related to the war in Southeast Asia. The operation sowed the clouds with silver iodide and lead iodide, with a consequent extension of the monsoon period from an average of 30 to 45 days in the affected areas. The constant rain slowed down the truck traffic so much that the operation was a relative success. However, the resulting rain and subsequent flooding of the nearby Song Con River caused the transfer of prisoners of war from the Son Tay prison camp and, therefore, the failure of the Ivory Coast operation. Former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara was aware of the objections the national scientific community could raise but stated in a note to the president that such objections have not in the past been a basis for preventing the military activities considered be in the interest of US national security. The chemical climate modification program was conducted from Thailand to Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20090612231729/http://www.sunshine-project.org/enmod/popeye> (20/1/2020)

<sup>2</sup> (Tzu, 1990) «It is the sixth of the thirty-six stratagems, a Chinese text with obscure genesis and dating, but which brings together traditional and certainly very ancient strategic principles. An enemy who is caught unprepared is almost defeated, and deception, simulation, as well as speed, are the fundamental means to obtain the surprise. Speed is what matters in war. We take advantage of the unpreparedness of others by following unpredictable roads and attacking where the enemy is disorganized.»

## From the Tupamaros to the Red Brigades, Common Tactics, and Strategies of the Urban Guerrilla

army, which is a war without quarter, ferocious and ruthless for both parts. (Breccia G. , *Tre lezioni sulla guerriglia*, 2010, p. 269). The guerrilla in the way he conducts himself often manages to sow terror among enemy units, even though he is militarily weaker than the regular soldier, he can spread panic amongst them because they are not prepared psychologically to fight an invisible enemy, which could be anywhere.

As pointed out by (Breccia G., 2010, *Tre lezioni sulla guerriglia*, Limes, n.6, pp. 267-269), Carlo Bianco rightly underlines the problem of resilience and the guerrilla's moral resistance, because duration is a strategic element conducive to guerrilla warfare. Conventional war tends towards brevity, whereas the guerrilla strategy is based on delaying military operations. The guerrilla cannot and must not aim for a rapid solution to the conflict because in a "direct" confrontation with the better-armed enemy it will undoubtedly be defeated; it can and must, therefore, conduct a struggle of attrition, for which it is essential to have sufficient time, (Levy, 1964, p. 40-48). The "guerrillero" is originally a man of his land who sacrifices himself to defend that territory which he knows how to exploit every feature of to gain an advantage over the enemy. This bond with his homeland cannot be broken. The "guerrilleros" needs a regular friendly army to support them and take charge of offensive operations. When the "revolutionary guerrilleros" do not fight on their land, they are often defeated: think of the failure of the pro-Chinese guerrillas in Malaysia, or the various Guevarist *focos* in Latin America in the 1960s. (Mao, 1989, p. 92) It follows a fundamental consideration; the "guerrillero" has the full support of the population because, in essence, he is the population. The revolutionary, at least in the initial phases of the struggle, does not represent all the population and must patiently enlarge its base of consensus. The "guerrillero," in other words, is an amateur, an occasional defender of the homeland; he can be very skillful, cruel, irreducible, but he is ready to return to his civil life as soon as the immediate offense ceases.

On the contrary, the "revolutionary" is a true guerrilla professional: his ultimate goal is aggressive, because it is not limited to the "liberation" of territory, but extended to the imposition on the world of an idea of the world. For example, "Che" Guevara tried to spread his *focos* throughout Latin America, and organizations of Maoist-inspired guerrillas arose on at least three continents, from Nepal to Angola to Peru. From the 1960s, Uruguay was not any longer that happy island of a few decades earlier; the populist policy initiated by the president José Battle y Ordonez had pushed Uruguay towards a progressive economic decline. The young Uruguayans began to experience a student mobilization influenced by the communist ideology that had opposed the new university law since the late 1950s. The clearest example that Latin American guerrilla groups had at that time was the Cuban revolution, whose influence was enormous both in South America and in Europe.

In South America, precisely, in Uruguay, arose a revolutionary group of Marxist-Leninist extraction: the “Tupamaros.” The name Tupamaros comes from *Tupac Amarú*, the famed Inca rebel who, during 1780-81, tried to free his people from the Spanish and who was put to death in Cuzco in 1782. After the defeat of his forces and his execution, the Spanish called “Tupamaros” all members of insurgent groups that sprang up throughout most of Latin America—particularly those engaged in independence movements. In Uruguay, too, the followers of revolutionary hero José G. Artigas in 1811 received the name “Tupamaros.” However, instead of rejecting the nickname, Uruguay’s revolutionaries accepted it proudly and used it freely throughout the struggle for independence. The choice of the name “Tupamaros” for the guerrilla organization was meant, therefore, to have historical and symbolic meaning (Porzecanski, 1973, p. IX) and the modern guerrilla used it for the first time in August 1965<sup>1</sup> (Labrousse, 1971, p. 100-110). Among the objectives of the Tupamaros, ideology was the construction of a socialist state, first in Uruguay and, later, in all of Latin America and the method to be used to bring it about would be the application of Marxism-Leninism to the country’s specific historical conditions (Porzecanski, 1973, p. IX ss). Unlike other revolutionary groups inspired by the Cuban revolution<sup>2</sup>, the Tupamaros made no attacks during the dictatorial period in Uruguay. The absence of violence, when one would expect a clandestine terrorist organization to mobilize more, was because most of the organization’s militants were in jail at that time.

Briefly, we can divide the history of Tupamaros into four distinct stages<sup>3</sup>: the first is that of

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<sup>1</sup> (Labrousse, 1971) «Raul Sendic, the founder of the movement, was born of family of medium landowners in Flores Dept. in 1925, he studied law in Montevideo and, he started work in 1960 by forming sugar workers into the “*Union de Trabajadores de Azucar de Artigas*.” In 1962 led them on a 500 km, march to Montevideo in support of claims to land owned by absentee landlords. Since it was election years he and his companions received a certain amount of apparently sympathetic attention, but nothing was achieved, despite a repletion of the march in 1964 and 1965. After the 1962 election, Sendic disappeared for eight months. In July 1963, an unknown group raided a Swiss rifle club and stole an assortment of 28 guns, mostly of antiquated type. Sendic was accused of being responsible, and he was eventually arrested in Argentina in December 1964, but escaped from custody and returned secretly to Uruguay. In June 1964, he and others apparently set up their first group in Montevideo. There may well have been some difference of opinion over the use of urban tactics at this stage, and since Sendic’s experience would have inclined him to favour rural tactics, he may in fact have relinquished effective leadership of the Tupamaros at this stage. During 1964, there was a series of minor raids, with a noble outbreak of bomb attacks on U.S. property in September 1964, when Uruguay broke off diplomatic relation with Cuba. The name “Tupamaros” was first used publicly on 25 August, 1965, when a communique left behind after a bomb attack on the Bayer chemical factory read as follows: “Death to the Yankee murderers in Vietnam: Oppressed peoples, peoples must unite to crush the common enemy in the face of the criminal intervention in Vietnam. Bayer, the Nazi firm, provides gas to the US aggressors. Gringe dictators out, lent live the Viet Cong! Long live the Revolution! Tupamaros.”»

<sup>2</sup> (Chomsky, 2015) available at <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cuban-Revolution> (20/1/2020)

<sup>3</sup> (Porzecanski, 1973) and (Labrousse, 1971) «All these stages must be distinguished as they were experienced differently by its protagonists, the first phase was that of clandestinity, the second in prison and exile, the third in

## From the Tupamaros to the Red Brigades, Common Tactics, and Strategies of the Urban Guerrilla

guerrilla warfare, which began in the early 1960s until 1973 and ended with the establishment of the dictatorship<sup>1</sup>. The second period runs from 1973 to 1985 and is that of the diaspora, characterized by the self-critical debate of the militants who had not managed to counter the dictatorship; the third stage begins in 1985 with the ending of the dictatorship, continuing until the electoral period of 2010. The last period coincides with the election of the former Tupamaros leader José Mujica in 2009, (Azcona & Re, 2012, p. 442-445).

The decision to locate the Tupamaro struggle in the urban of Montevideo was a strategic one; Moss argued that the strategy of urban guerrilla warfare of the Tupamaros was a genuine novelty (Moss, 1972, p. 247). Furthermore, for this reason for the “guerrillero” to prevail, he needs a regular friendly army to support him and takes charge of offensive operations. In the first place, the Tupamaros realized that there were no places in the Uruguayan territory where a durable, rural guerrilla “focos” could be established, although there are some places where geographical peculiarities make approach somewhat tricky. However, they did have a huge city with more than 300 square kilometres of buildings that permitted the development of an urban struggle. Indeed the straightforward geography of Uruguay almost precludes any type of guerrilla warfare except urban. (Porzecanski, 1973, p. 15), (Azcona & Re, 2012, p. 235). The urban guerrilla can pick and choose where he wishes to hit next - unlike his rural counterpart, who has only a handful of military and political targets available, and thus, limited possibilities for action. The Tupamaros saw that the urban guerrilla has one essential advantage over the rural one: he is physically close to the more politicized urban masses he wishes to influence. Mobilization was a strategy whereby the Tupamaros attempted to influence the masses and to interact with them through various political and military actions with considerable propagandistic content (Porzecanski, 1973, p. 43). The idea was to attract recruits, receive information, and publicize the movement's actions and ideology in order to act as a catalyst or "magnetic pole" that would attract the people to the Tupamaros while serving to polarize opposing ideological forces within society (Azcona & Re, 2012, p. 230-238). The Tupamaros felt that the mobilization of the masses was a *sine qua non*, strategy for a revolutionary process. A revolutionary movement must be in permanent contact with all organized groups within society that can cooperate with or adversely affect the actions of the guerrilla struggle.

Within the South American territory of that era, it was the armed urban struggle the great novelty introduced by the Tupamaros, that would have moved the revolutionary struggle from

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freedom thanks to the amnesty and the last in power.»

<sup>1</sup> This period was characterized by an increase in the violent actions of the guerrillas but also by a constant increase in the membership of the group, which would go from a few tens to many thousands of militants in just over 2 years. (Porzecanski, 1973)



the rural environment to the metropolis. (Azcona & Re, 2014, p. 236) After the dictatorship in Uruguay, for the first time, the city assumed crucial importance to carrying out guerrilla warfare. The guerrilla attacks took place in cities such as Montevideo and no longer in the countryside, where it was more difficult to hide due to the featureless terrain of Uruguay. As pointed out in the “*Actas Tupamara*” and investigate in (Azcona & Re, 2014, pp. 232-238), the tactics adopted in the urban territory were different from those used in the countryside; the attacks were limited by the number of participants, given that in a city, it was not possible to mobilize a large contingent. The enemy forces, even if they were concentrated within the urban space, were less agile and found it difficult to fight against the revolutionary thrust, as they were already occupied in the static defence of ministerial property. The logistical problem was much less complex than in the countryside; everything was simple; only the tactics needed to be changed. The Fighter must not be recognized; as such, he had to have an ordinary life working by day and fighting at night. All urban terrorist groups, not only South American ones but also European, adopted these tactics. In the “*Actas Tupamaras*,” a sort of handbook, the principle dictates of urban guerrilla tactics were collected, such as sabotage, bomb attacks, and kidnappings of key characters. Some striking examples were the seizure and killing of the CIA agent Dan Mitrione, the kidnapping of the Brazilian Consul, released after a ransom of 250,000 dollars, and the kidnapping of British Ambassador (Labrousse, 1971, p. 100-112), (Porzecanski, 1973, pp. 58-59). A very curious detail in the movie “*State of Siege*”<sup>1</sup> by Costa Grava, reconstructs the modus operandi of the Tupamaros guerrillas, during the kidnapping of Dan Mitrione, where the guerrillas carrying out terrorist actions, hijack the cars from ordinary citizens. The guerrillas expressed themselves through their armed actions, even if at times they used other ways of communication with the people such as newspapers and the spread of press releases and flyers. Radio and television interference and the occupation of cinemas were not rare as actions of propaganda to spread their revolutionary messages. However, the armed propaganda was always the one that came from military operations. The organization of the Tupamaros had a hierarchical structure, and they had regulations for the rights and duties of the militants (Porzecanski, 1973, p. 32). During the most intense period of the guerrilla struggle, the Tupamaros militants wanted by the police lived in hiding. A document of the ideological structure of the Tupamaros entitled “*Basic Ideological Values*” encouraged the militants to carry out total warrior activity and revolutionary political activity.

In Italy, the phenomenon of political violence and the armed struggle began from the end of the 1960s, principally with the Red Brigades. Their actions were always followed by the

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<sup>1</sup> «*State of Siege*» is a 1972 French film by Costa-Gavras available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uk21clVbds0> (20/1/2020)

## From the Tupamaros to the Red Brigades, Common Tactics, and Strategies of the Urban Guerrilla

constant dissemination of flyers and communiqués, very similar in content to those of Tupamaros. The leaflets directed at both their militants and those outside the organization served to claim the violent actions carried out, but also as a form of propaganda. In Italy, the famous publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, fascinated by the example of “Che” Guevara and Fidel Castro, who were his friends, in addition to publishing their booklets<sup>1</sup>, organized the GAP<sup>2</sup>, left-wing armed revolutionary groups. A former Brigatist Mario Moretti<sup>3</sup> and leader of the BR, in an interview (Moretti, 2007, p. 34-35) admitted the Red Brigades followed in the wake of the communist revolutions in Cuba and South America. Cuba was only the beginning, even if the strategy of the guerrilla war was not applicable everywhere in the same way. Violence and armed struggle help to create popular consciousness, but they can also create counterproductive effects unless used in the proper context and at the right time. The incubation of the Red Brigades was in 1969, in the “*Collettivo Politico Metropolitano*,” to blossom in 1970 (De Prospro & Priore, 2011, p. 22). The ideological models of reference most followed by the Red Brigades were revolutionary Marxism, the historical experience of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and the thoughts of Lenin and Mao Zedong. According to Silvano De Prospro and Rosario Priore, (De Prospro & Priore, 2011, pp. 43-45, 234), (Curcio & Scialoja, 1993, pp. 55-62) another reference model for the Red Brigades besides the Argentine revolutionaries, was as mentioned, the Uruguayan Tupamaros. The Tupamaros became an essential point of reference for the first Red Brigades, especially as regards the transition from rural to urban guerrilla warfare; an absolute novelty for the South American revolutionary movements and the only possible tactical option for the Red Brigades, which had to operate in Italian territory and therefore in a predominantly urban context.

The Red Brigade structure, lent from their South American "cousins," besides being very oligarchic, was organized in small groups of militants: Cells - Brigade and Columns, one column for each city.<sup>4</sup>The rules of the terrorist organization were mainly two: mobility and the

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<sup>1</sup> Feltrinelli publishes several works dedicated to both Che Guevara and Fidel Castro and books about the revolution as (Castro, 1967), (Guevara, 2003), (Feltrinelli, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> The Partisan Action Groups (GAP) , also known as the Partisan Action Groups - People's Liberation Army , were a far left Italian paramilitary and guerrilla group, Marxist-Leninist and Guevarist , founded and chaired by the publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli , operating in the Milan area, but with branches also in those of Genoa and Turin , between 1970 and 1972 . The acronym GAP was taken up by the formation of the Patriotic Action Groups , a communist organization operating in the Italian Resistance from 1943 to 1945. (Peli, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Mario Moretti (born 16 January 1946) is an Italian terrorist. A leading member of the Red Brigades in the late 1970s, he was one of the kidnapers of Aldo Moro, the president of Italy's largest party, Democrazia Cristiana, and several times premier, in 1978; Moretti later confessed to killing the politician, in (Flamini, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> (P.Peci, 2008), available at <http://www.robertobartali.it/introduzione.htm> (20/1/2020)

practicability of the structures (Ruggero, 2007, p. 378-392). The first involved the ability to continually change the points of attack to force the adversary to retreat continuously; the second was aimed at the creation of light organizational structures capable of procuring all that was needed by them. The fundamental element of the organization was the compartmentalization, general law of the revolutionary war in the metropolis (Marighella, 1969) and was one of the fundamental principles of security drawn precisely from the guerrillas' experiences. Rules of conduct had to be diligently respected by the militants and entirely consumed the daily life of the Red Brigade terrorist. The rules ranged from the use of the house to the way of dressing. In 1974, a severe blow was dealt to the Red Brigades when the ideologues of the organization, including Renato Curcio and Alberto Franceschini were arrested due to both defections of individual members and infiltrators. Following this, it would have become a priority for the armed organization to respect the rules of compartmentalization absolutely, a concept rigidly adopted by the Tupamaros, which allowed them not to jeopardize the safety of the entire group.<sup>1</sup> The Red Brigades considered the Tupamaros as legends and saw in them the myth of the guerrilla. The Red brigades themselves had never made a mystery of having studied the texts of the Tupamaros, particularly in the initial phases of the struggle.

Alberto Franceschini, on several occasions, reported that many manuals began to circulate in the revolutionary movement of the Red Brigades like the famous manual by Carlos Marighella, "Mini manual of the Urban Guerrilla" also abundantly used by the Tupamaros. To summarise a symbol that the Red Brigades imported from Latin American guerrillas was the habit of keeping a survival kit, which was indispensable, according to Che Guevara's teachings. The backpack had to be always within reach to allow an immediate escape and had to contain spare clothes, documents, money, a bag of salt, and cigars. (Franceschini A. , 1988). Another highly symbolic gesture adopted by the Tupamaros guerrillas and then assumed by the Red Brigades was to burn their documents, as mentioned by (Franceschini A. , 1988). In the Red Brigades, every new companion who entered the organization had to burn his documents in front of others; in that symbolic gesture, they had burned their ties with the past to embrace a new life, that of armed struggle. This gesture originated from the stories of "Che" Guevara (Guevara, 2003) when telling of the exploits of Simon Bolivar in the last offensive against the colonialists, where he gave the orders to his men to burn the ships to prevent the soldiers from retreating and fighting to the end; on that occasion, the famous motto "victory or death." was born.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.robertobartali.it/decalogo.htm> (20/1/2020)

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