

Guerrilla Cuisine: A Comparison of Various Food Provisioning Methods of Revolutionary Forces in the Field

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Revolution: 'A forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favour of a new system' (Pearsall 2001, p.1590).

The historian Norman Davies describes the defeat of a Napoleonic army in 1808 in Andalusia by a band of 'guerrilla fighters' as showing '...how small bands of determined fighters could contest the overwhelming force of a professional army' (Davies 1997, p.736).

The eventual surrender of 22,000 French soldiers was a shock to conventional military logic and Davies goes on to say (Davies 1997, p.736):

The guerrillas of Napoleonic Spain have had many heirs, not least in the popular heroes of colonial wars and the back-wood revolutionaries of Latin America. But they have had their disciples in Europe as well – in the Russian anarchists, in the partisans and the maquisards of the Anti-Nazi Resistance Movement, and, with the IRA or ETA, in the 'urban guerrillas' of modern political terrorism.

Revolution and food are inextricably linked. The need for food that supplies basic nutritional values to the masses has been at the heart of many political upheavals; notably the French Revolution in 1789 where the price and/or scarcity of bread/grain led the ragged underclass to challenge the power of the absolute monarch Louis XVI which culminated in the overthrow and execution of the king and the eventual downfall of the Ancien Regime. In Russia in 1917 one of the sparks to revolution was the inability of the authorities to provide bread for the populace; the experience of spending forty hours a week (Laudan, 2013) queuing (sometimes unsuccessfully) for bread after have completed a week's manual labour was just too much for the urban industrial working-class women and soon transformed into radical street protests.

The important role that adequate food provisioning by the authorities plays can also be a buffer to armed insurrection as the situation in Syria in 2016 shows. The Ba'ath-ist regime had long subsidised bread, which is a staple in the Arab world and when the regime lost control of the wheat producing areas to ISIS forces, they were quick to react and immediately started importing wheat from Russia and Ukraine in order to maintain the flow of subsidised bread to the populace and thereby presumably the popular support of the masses, (www.bbc.com, 2016). The war-time price increase of bread in regime-held areas is 230%; this contrasts with non-regime-held areas where the increase has been 6500% in some cases.

Figures like these underpin the importance of food supply as a tool for gaining popular support. The Roman *Annona* is perhaps an early example of such an overt attempt by the authorities to 'buy' the support from the masses- however temporary that may be (Toussaint-Samat, 2009).

As in any undertaking food is crucial because the lack of it prohibits the pursuit of success. Revolutionary groups are subject to this as much as anyone. If the group is small, to prosper it will need to have the goodwill of a support community prepared to hide and feed them and provide other essential logistical supports. This cannot be achieved without the group having a common cause with the host community. If the group is substantial in number then they will have to requisition stores and foodstuffs from the populace at large and this has the potential for causing the host community to turn against the armed revolutionary group. Therefore both situations are open to potential problems. A third scenario is one by which the armed revolutionary group liberates territory and the burden of provisioning both guerrillas and civilians fall to it as it has to behave as a *de facto* government with all the attendant logistical issues that comes with it; not least the inevitable conversion of important members of the group from military cadres to civilian functionaries. This essentially dilutes the group's capability for armed struggle.

This research project has, by necessity, relied on a wide ranging selection of secondary sources which has informed the direction of this paper. It studies provisioning within revolutionary movements with the aim of investigating the food pathway used by revolutionaries under arms. The immensely broad nature of such an undertaking has suggested a narrower focus and this has led to the author to decide to investigate two very different types of revolutionary warfare:

Rural Guerrilla War as exemplified by the Cuban revolutionary war by the 26th of July Movement and their 'Jungle War' in the Sierra Maestra mountains in the 1950s or the Khmer Rouges in Cambodia in the 1970s and the PLAF (Viet Cong) in Vietnam in the 1960/70s. These revolutionary armies had different pressures on their food provisioning – sometimes they had conquered territory and were often acting as *de facto* governments or in contrast to that were a jungle -or wilderness-based army who emerged to attack the enemy and then melt back into the wild.

Urban Guerrilla War as exemplified by armed insurrectionary groups such as the I.R.A. since the early nineteenth hundreds and the Rote Armee Fraktion (Baader-Meinhof) (RAF) in 1970's and 80's. This is necessarily characterised by the anonymity of the revolutionary cadres

and the need for them to fit into the background of society often using safe houses and other counter-surveillance techniques to avoid detection. This lifestyle is fraught with danger and food provisioning as a daily essential poses many barriers.

The shift from guerrilla war from its largely rural setting to a largely urban setting came about from the 1960's onwards, inspired and motivated by the failures and successes of the post-Cuban missions of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and was best exemplified by the concept of *foco*. The Spanish word means focus and in revolutionary theory, refers to the concept of armed revolutionary groups focussing their efforts on specific targets rather than full-scale military encounters with the authorities. This can be summed up as a policy of hit-and-run and represents the huge leap made by insurrectionaries from living outside society as armed revolutionaries to living within society as armed revolutionaries.

Provisioning an army of revolutionary cadres, hundreds or even thousands strong, is not easily achieved and despite the disparity in numbers, the same is equally true of small 'cells' of Stadtgeurrillas in their urban setting.

Glossary of terms

- 26th of July Movement: Cuban revolutionary organisation founded in Mexico by Fidel Castro and others. After a two year jungle war they eventually overthrew the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959.
- Armée Revolutionnaire: Formed to perform grain requisitioning and political commissary (food provisioning) work during the French Revolution.
- Campesinos: Latin American term for subsistence farmers who own very small plots of land.
- Foco: The concept of guerrilla warfare devised by French author Regis Debray. Based on his observations in Latin America in the 1960's, it is a policy of hit and run which moves the revolutionary cadre from the jungle to the city, as the concept relies on engaging popular support for a small group through revolutionary action.
- Food Army: Armed battalions founded by the Bolsheviks with specific responsibility for food provisioning during the Russian Revolution and Civil War, operated under the command of regional procurement committees.
- FSLN Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front)
- I.R.A. (Irish Republican Army): Armed irredentist group in Ireland, they sporadically attempt to subvert British rule in Northern Ireland – Sometimes referred to as the 'Provisional' I.R.A.
- ISIS: Armed Islamic group fighting in Syria and Iraq with the aim of the overthrow of those legally constituted governments and replacing them with an Islamic Caliphate.
- Khmer Rouges: Cambodian revolutionary group led by Pol Pot. After a long jungle war they took power and ruled from 1975-1979.
- N.L.F. (National Liberation Front): Vietnamese political organisation dedicated to re-unification of Vietnam aka Viet Cong.
- P.L.A. (People's Liberation Army): Chinese armed forces originally the military wing of the Chinese Communist Party, participated inter alia in the Civil war and Long March.
- P.L.A.F. (People's Liberation Armed Forces): Military wing of the Viet Cong. With the North Vietnamese armed forces, they were ultimately responsible for the victory against the U.S. backed alliance that supported the puppet regime in South Vietnam.
- R.A.F. (Rote Armee Fraktion / Red Army Faction): Armed Marxist group based mostly in West Germany and after reunification, Germany. Active between 1970 and 1998, often referred to as the Baader-Meinhof group after two prominent founder-members.
- Red Army: Founded by Leon Trotsky. De Facto armed forces of the Soviet Union from 1917 onwards, responsible for the liberation of Russia from Tsarist rule.
- RZ (Revolutionäre Zellen /Revolutionary Cells): A Rote Armee Fraktion affiliate in West Germany in the 1970's

In the city

The history of Ireland is characterised by uprisings, revolutions and rebellions against British rule and every century has seen a serious attempt at obtaining freedom by force of arms.

In the Seamus Heaney poem 'Requiem for the Croppies' (1966) which deals with the battle of Vinegar Hill in Wexford in 1798, the decisive engagement of the United Irishmen rebellion of that year, Heaney refers to the absence of field kitchens and the rebougeel's habit of carrying barley in their pockets whilst conducting a guerrilla war through 'hedge and ditch'. The poem's melancholy climax then speaks of the thousands of rebels killed and barley (from the pockets of dead rebels) growing out their graves (Heaney, 2010).

The pockets of our greatcoats full of barley...
 No kitchens on the run, no striking camp...
 We moved quick and sudden in our own country.
 The priest lay behind ditches with the tramp.
 A people hardly marching... on the hike...
 We found new tactics happening each day:
 We'd cut through reins and rider with the pike
 and stampede cattle into infantry,
 then retreat through hedges where cavalry must be
 thrown.
 Until... on Vinegar Hill... the final conclave.
 Terraced thousands died, shaking scythes at
 cannon.

The hillside blushed, soaked in our broken wave.
They buried us without shroud or coffin
and in August... the barley grew up out of our
grave.'

The poem may be considered a metaphor for food provisioning, as again and again in Irish history the armed insurgency can be seen to be accompanied by little planning for food.

The most celebrated event in Irish political history is usually considered to be the Easter Rising of 1916; often just referred to as 'Easter' or '1916' or 'the rising'. The events of Easter week provide an insight into the mind-set of the leadership, who were intent on making the gesture of defiance towards The British Empire, yet gave little or no thought to the day to day provisioning of the volunteers under their command.

The Easter Rising was conducted mostly but not exclusively in Dublin where the rebels seized a number of strategically located buildings and fortified them. They were effectively in their home city and the idea of occupying fixed positions against a militarily superior enemy was a poor choice when contrasted with the urban guerrilla warfare model that was subsequently employed during the War for Independence (1919-1921). The main rebel positions were the Royal College of Surgeons, St. Stephens Green, The Four Courts, and Boland's Mill, The G.P.O. and the South Dublin Union.

All these positions, with the exception of St. Stephens Green, an open air park, were buildings in urban or inner-city Dublin. The rebels barricaded themselves in and waited for the inevitable British response. As any military undertaking requires military ordnance the rebel leadership prudently gave thought to guns and ammunition, which had occupied much of their pre-rising efforts which saw guns landed in Howth Co. Dublin and Kilcoole Co. Wicklow, however the provision of food which is an essential seems to have been overlooked or at best was an afterthought.

The garrison at St. Stephens Green was perhaps the most exposed of all rebel positions therefore a lack of food could not be easily remedied as they were surrounded by the British, yet it seems from the start they suffered severe shortages (O'Brien, 2013):

Food was still scarce, and continued to be rationed. Many of the Volunteers collapsed at their posts from lack of sustenance and had to be removed to the sick bay. Commandant Mallin detailed a unit to go through all the buildings in his perimeter and search for supplies. This resulted in some finds, but the lack of food was to remain a problem in the coming days.

This was by no means restricted to the St. Stephens Green outpost, the nearest garrison was the Royal College of Surgeons (Shannon, 2006):

Food and rations in the College like in the other garrisons around the city were scarce. Food could only be obtained by tunnelling from house to house between the College and Grafton Street. Mary Donnelly was one of the women given the onerous task of foraging for food.

Most garrisons used female volunteers for food foraging and this was based on the precept that the British were less likely to shoot women out of hand if found at large outside the immediate combat zone.

Mary Donnelly a volunteer in 1916 said of her time in the Royal College of Surgeons during the Rising (Shannon, 2006):

As each house was taken it had to be guarded and this meant that food had to be carried under fire from the lane beside the College and through rough holes in walls where a bullet through the window on landings threatened us as we clambered up assisted by the men on guard in these lonely houses. A big fire was lit in the fireplace of one of the large classrooms to the rear of the College, which was used to make porridge when eventually some oatmeal was delivered to the garrison. According to Countess Markievicz, 'on Tuesday and Wednesday we were absolutely starved. In the beginning men coming off guard could only get a few cream crackers, supplied by McDonagh from Jacob's factory, before trying to get some sleep.'

To the hungry volunteers, porridge and cream crackers may have seemed like a feast but the absence of a serious attempt to collect food supplies left the individual garrisons living hand-to-mouth for the duration of Easter week with varying degrees of success.

The General Post Office was the central location of the Uprising and contained the Provisional Government headed by P.H. Pearse and others. After one hundred years of analysis and scrutiny, it is still not clear what the rebels hoped to achieve, but an indication of possible intent can be seen by the order below issued and signed by Pearse himself which ordered volunteers to bring only eight hours rations.

The volunteer to whom this order was issued mobilised at Rathfarnham Chapel in the southern suburbs of the city (Fig. 1). We can surmise that the volunteer then marched to one of the city-centre locations to man the barricades and participate in the fighting all with no more than eight hours rations which seems very little for men embarking upon war with no prospect of replenishing their supplies other than foraging. Furthermore there is evidence that within the command structure of the G.P.O. there was an over-zealous rationing policy in place.

Other garrisons fared better as they sent foraging parties out early and were not so centrally located. A case in point is the South Dublin Union which was commanded by Éamonn Ceannt. The garrison under his command faced similar food provisioning problems but were alleviated by

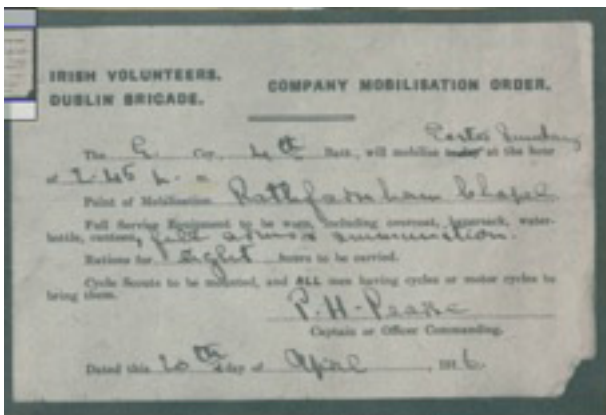


Fig. 1 Mobilisation order signed by P.H. Pearse.

the fortunate capture during ambush of a delivery boy and his cargo of ten chickens. The same garrison were also lucky in that the next day they captured three calves. The South Dublin Union, a workhouse, had the added advantage of having volunteer Bob Holland in their group who was a butcher by trade. They also had a 'head cook' within their ranks and so had the expertise needed to feed the volunteers using the workhouse kitchen. This helped the supply of adequate nutrition but did not stop individual volunteers from consuming their rations at will. One volunteer named Thomas Young ate 48 hours rations in ten minutes according to himself.

Other volunteers complained in retrospect that despite the rebellion happening in their own city and its leaders having perhaps twelve months' notice of it that there were no plans made to provide adequate food supplies.

In Jacobs's factory the volunteers were entirely without food and again relied on female volunteers to forage for food. One forager found slabs of cooking chocolate and distributed them amongst the volunteers. The female foragers in this garrison also shared their meagre supplies with the garrison at the Royal College of Surgeons where it was reported that some female volunteers were passing out through hunger (and no doubt fatigue) (Townsend, 2006).

The experience of fighting from fixed positions and the subsequent ease with which the British regained control of the city was a lesson well learned by the Irish rebels and by the time the Easter Rising was over and the leaders had been executed, the younger generation of rebel leaders were getting ready to try again.

In contrast, the subsequent War for Independence was characterised as having almost no full scale military engagements and marked a shift towards modern guerrilla warfare. The tactics of hit-and-run were adopted and thus the necessity for rebels to melt into the background of society became paramount. The method of warfare had changed and so had the method of provisioning the combatants.

The new type of warfare was typified by the flying columns in the rural areas and by small hit squads in the urban areas. These two different types of approach required the revolutionaries to take personal responsibility for their

day-to-day food needs, whether it was for a two day mission in West Cork or reconnaissance duty in Dublin.

The flying columns were highly mobile ad hoc grouping of riflemen used to operating in rural areas often with the tacit approval and support of the populace at large, these were highly successful in the war and were provisioned by their own families and the goodwill of neighbours (Barry, 2010).

The most famous of the flying columns was the West Cork Brigade commanded by General Commandant Tom Barry. The West Cork Brigade numbered 310 men and it required 12,500 British military personnel to enforce the Pax Britannica in the region. Feeding 310 occasional soldiers was not an easy task and Barry's men had to take every opportunity to supply themselves. On one occasion when some of them occupied a 'big house' belonging to a local Crown sympathiser, the volunteers appeared to take great delight in plundering the food stores. He recalls that there was:

... four rashers and four fried eggs for every man.

And that:

...the volunteers appeared to enjoy their first experience of eating at the expense of one of their enemies (Barry 2010, p.80).

The resourcefulness of these volunteers was a quality much needed in a military theatre that has even less certainties than conventional war.

Irish independence was achieved in 1922 with the foundation of the Irish Free State; however the six north easternmost counties had been retained under British Rule. As a result, the Irish guerrilla war was continued albeit on a smaller scale and now republican activists faced imprisonment from their fellow Irishmen. During World War II, the Irish State imprisoned a large number of republican activists, some were detained without trial and some were tried and sentenced for various crimes.

Brendan Behan the famous poet and playwright was a member of the I.R.A and was imprisoned a number of times by the authorities. His description of going on the run in the 1940's in an attempt to evade capture details his use of a 'safe-house' where an elderly republican sympathiser feeds and hides him and his colleague overnight (Behan 1991, p.38):

... she took us in and gives us this plate of bacon and cabbage, which was her own dinner for sure, as she would hardly be likely to have food enough for herself, let alone to spare, and a glass of porter ... and Jesus, Mary and Joseph wasn't she apologising for the sparsity of it all?

Behan and a colleague continue to avoid arrest and after a spell in Belfast they attempt to re-join their units in Dublin. On reaching a pub on the Dublin county border Behan and his comrade order (Behan 1991, p.43):

A pint of stout myself. A Pint of stout?... So we had the pint of stout and a crubeen each and a plate of bread and

butter, and the steaming hot pig's foot warmed us up for the road and what we might have to face out there.

The use of safe houses continues but eventually the net closes on Behan and he is arrested in Dublin's inner-city whilst stretching his legs after a breakfast of (Behan, 1991, p.47):

...a kipper, some mushrooms, tea with bread and marmalade and butter...

Behan was eventually sentenced to fourteen years imprisonment and as a political prisoner was locked up with other members of the I.R.A. in the internment camp in The Curragh where the prisoners were issued foodstuffs and given access to kitchens and largely fended for themselves. After a government amnesty which led to the release of hundreds of these I.R.A. prisoners Behan is transferred to a smaller holding facility with twenty-one other republican detainees. He notes that the cooking is better as it (Behan 1991, p.74):

...was now done by professional Free State Army cooks rather than our own boys who had sketchy ideas about what constituted cooking.

In an Irish context the use of the safe house was to continue as a feature of armed rebellion for decades more until the eventual ceasefire that came with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

The urban guerrilla must know how to live among the people, and he must be careful not to appear strange and different from ordinary city life (Marighella 2008, p.6).

The safe house and self-provisioning was heavily used in West Germany in the 1970's by the Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF). The West German authorities called them the Baader-Meinhof Gruppen and this grouping were born out of student protests in the late 1960's, eventually transforming into an armed insurrectionary movement. The tactics of the RAF were straightforward; they lived in safe houses or squats/ communes and effectively lived 'below the radar' appearing as typical young students to the outside world whilst waging an urban guerrilla war against the Bund which including bank robberies, kidnappings, assassinations and other subversive activities.

The food provisioning in the communes was similar to a student house activity; a weekly shop was done and all participants helped out with the cooking. The need to appear unremarkable was essential so often the group took short lets in major cities such as Frankfurt, Cologne and Hamburg – houses rented as holiday lets or exam study centres for students. The similarity to the clichéd student house is striking. As one describes the atmosphere and décor as (Becker 1978, p. 222):

...bare floorboards and bricks and planks ... no tablecloth ... eating and drinking consisted of beer and coffee and smoking cigarettes.

In claustrophobic West Berlin the sharing of accommodation was more commonplace and the cause of disputes. On one occasion hungry cadres devoured a colleague's wife's plum cake in its entirety, causing the colleague to question the movement's living arrangements, particularly the lack of comfort available (Becker, 1978). In an attempt to provision themselves more suitably the cadres bought small gas stoves both for heating and cooking, this however was not always utilised for food purposes as the revolutionaries often ended up eating '...bread and sausage' and drinking Coke and Cognac (Becker 1978, p. 241).

The theme of food as a source of dispute and lack of comfort resurfaced when some of the group's senior cadres were at a training camp in Jordan run by a Palestinian group where they were fed basic rations which were not popular (Aust 2008, p. 67):

They were served the scanty food on which the Palestinians had been living for years: canned meat donated by UNRRA, the United Nations refugee relief organisation, generally mixed with rice. With it they got flat cakes of Arab bread, water, fruit only occasionally, fresh meat never. The Germans did not like this diet, and complained from the start.

Despite their haphazard approach to provisioning themselves, the RAF as a group understood the importance of food as a means of building support amongst the wider populace and one method used was to offer poor people state benefits without the usual bureaucracy. In short they forged food vouchers and distributed them amongst poor and homeless families; this largesse was also extended to transit passes for bus, tram and rail (Smith & Moncourt, 2009).

Between urban and rural

Any revolution will need a supply of food but the greater the number of revolutionaries the greater the problems of creating a viable supply-chain. This can be seen by examining two large-scale revolutions, namely the French Revolution of 1789 & the Russian Revolution of 1917.

These had many common points, including the near-starvation of the urban poor and the contrasting luxury in which the royal families were perceived to have lived being a major catalyst for uprising in both cases. Food as the cause of uprising is further developed when the actions of the above revolutionary governments regarding food supply are examined.

Both the French and the Bolshevik revolutionary governments chose not only to ration food but also create specialist military groups to collect, transport and distribute foodstuffs. The French created the Armée Revolutionnaire to carry out commissary duties i.e. to provision the cities especially Paris by marching into rural areas and collecting agricultural produce. The necessity for this was shown by the pre-revolutionary guerre de farines (Flour War) of 1774 (Wright 1974, p. 27):

Bread prices increased to starvation levels and created widespread unrest, resulting in attacks on granaries ...and rioting against bakers, farmers, corn dealers, game laws and royal taxes.

In 1793, Robespierre, a senior member of the revolutionary government demanded that an Armée Revolutionnaire be formed with specific responsibility for collecting grain from peasants in the rural areas. This Armée was to be constituted from the ranks of the urban sans-culottes. This idea of provisioning the revolutionary masses in the cities by re-distributing the surplus grain being hoarded by avaricious peasants is one that has a resonance beyond the French Revolution and re-appears throughout revolutionary movements in many different eras with strong echoes of later soviet collectivisation. The French revolutionary government instituted central requisitioning and the Armée Revolutionnaire report to the general assembly on March 16th, 1794, highlighted the importance of provisioning the revolution (Wright 1974, p. 134):

From the moment we have arrived here, we have been occupied in arranging the provisioning of Paris, several of our comrades, in the course of their duties, have found eggs and butter hidden in the cupboards in farmhouses and even grain hidden in barrels ... We ask that we be allowed to requisition food and bring it to Paris.

In a report from Cityoen Le Grand who was a revolutionary sent on a mission to Normandy specifically charged with finding food supplies for Paris, he comments that people are exhausted by '...the excessive increases in the price of basic necessities and, even more so., by the rarity and poor quality of bread...' (Wright 1974, p. 128).

The Russian situation one hundred and twenty-odd years later bore striking similarities, as shown by the bread shortages in the urban areas prior to the October revolution (Figs 1996, p. 605):

It all began with bread. For several weeks the bakeries in Petrograd had been running out, especially in the workers' districts...the average worker consumed fewer than 2,000 calories a day- less than half the recommended intake.

Figs discusses the breakdown of the market between urban and rural areas and says: '...the real root of the urban crisis was the peasantry's reluctance to sell foodstuffs for paper money' (1996, p. 608). This reluctance to exchange goods for Soviet-issued currency can be viewed as the peasantry 'hedging their bets' as to the outcome of the civil war which was raging between the Red Army and the Tsarist 'White' Army at the time.

In 1920, the Bolshevik government, in a move towards the ideal of a planned economy, took the first steps towards universal state rationing. The Bolsheviks had decreed that all surplus grain was to become the property of the state and to expedite the collection; they formed the 'Food

Army'. This adjunct of the military numbered 76,000 strong and took the initiative by forcibly seizing grain and other food supplies all over the Soviet Union. It was characterised by 'The battle for grain', exemplified by armed brigades sent to countryside to requisition grain from the rural peasantry by force (Figs, 1996).

As Civil War raged, the Food Army was divided into 'food brigades' who did the physical and sometimes unpleasant work in conjunction with locally organised party-inspired Committees of the Rural Poor. Later the Bolsheviks introduced a 'food levy' which included not only grains but all foodstuffs in order to provision the urban populace during the ongoing civil war. In order to safeguard the food supply to the cities, the Bolsheviks examined how to guarantee nutritional minimums to the populace and developed the idea of rationing.

The introduction of the ration coupon became an important tool in the war against mass starvation and by 1920 the Soviet state was feeding thirty million urban citizens via the implementation of work-place canteens (Figs, 1996, p. 727) – an impressive feat considering the civil war and the attendant difficulties it posed to food provisioning.

The rural situation during the revolution was later dealt with by the Bolsheviks by the collectivisation of agriculture, which in theory would lead the rural peasants to a better resolution than the previous situation which left them vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the market-based economy. It would be decades before the urban peasantry contemplated collectivisation with anything approaching support.

The urban situation is contextualised by Carlos Marighella shortly before his death in 1969 where he highlights the differences in tactics needed by revolutionaries in which he says conventional logistics require, food, fuel, equipment and ammunition (Marighella, 2008).

Marighella places a high degree of importance to food, and goes on to point out the differences between conventional armed forces and guerrilla forces (Marighella 2008, p. 13):

Conventional logistics refer to the maintenance problems for an army or a regular armed force, transported in vehicles, with fixed bases and supply lines. Urban guerrillas, on the contrary, are not an army but small armed groups, intentionally fragmented. They have neither vehicles nor rear areas. Their supply lines are precarious and insufficient, and they have no fixed bases.

Therefore the urban guerrilla group is essentially a smaller, clandestine movement which requires less formal supply lines yet needs to eat each day.

Welcome to the jungle

The enduring image conjured up by the words guerrilla warfare are perhaps the jungle-based endeavours of the

Cuban Revolution or the decades-long Vietnam War, both of which ended in military defeat for the conventional armed forces. The difference between this war by guerrillas on a grand scale and the hit-and-run tactics of the urban equivalent is one of scale, exacerbated by the need to feed large numbers of combatants and often assorted support personnel and in some cases the need to take on the role of administration in captured/ liberated territories.

This has been written about at length by Dr. Ernesto 'Che' Guevara in a number of books, notably *The Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, *Bolivian Diary* and *Guerrilla Warfare*.

Guevara led a column of the Cuban Rebel Army which was the military wing of the 26th of July Movement from its early struggle in the Sierra Maestra to the conflict-defining battle of Santa Clara, and eventual victory in January 1959. Guevara, despite being an entry-level recruit to the Rebel Army was highly educated and one of the posts he took up in the revolutionary government was that of head of the department of industry of the national institute of agrarian reform – a position of utmost influence to the food industry and one that the revolutionary government considered so important that it required the attention of the third-ranking officer in the entire Rebel Army (Castro, 1994).

Guevara speaks much of nutrition in his books. As a medical doctor, he knew the essentials and was quick to instil good practices into the cadres under his command. He wrote at length about the need for guerrilla fighters to carry fat, salt, sugar and preserved foods as well as the basics for cooking foods (Guevara 1969, p. 83):

...always it is necessary to assure a supply of the fundamental food for the troop as well as some kinds of fat which permit better food preparation; these may be animal or vegetable fats.

The thrust of Guevara's (1969) nutritional advice was that as the guerrilla fighter may be isolated without food sources from time to time, it was essential to carry extra foodstuffs and have knowledge of how to extract the maximum benefit from them. A warning to combatants was framed thus: '...He (the guerrilla fighter) cannot count on more than two or three friendly houses that will provide food...' (p.36). 'The guerrilla fighter ought always to carry some personal food besides that which the troop carries or consumes in its camps' (p.51).

In regard to safeguarding supplies he adds (Guevara 1969, p.29):

For all lines of supply that pass through the country, it is necessary to have a series of houses, terminals, or way-stations, where supplies may be hidden during the day while waiting to be moved by night. Only those directly in charge of the food supplies should know these houses.

In terms of accessing foodstuffs, Guevara insisted that if the group were operating outside a 'liberated zone', then any foodstuffs taken from the populace should be 'paid' for by issuing of promissory notes and that a genuine attempt to redeem the note in full or part should be made, and sooner rather than later. This attitude was shared by other rebel commanders as Fidel Castro, the leader of the revolution says (Castro 2007, p. 214):

We paid the Campesinos with what very little we had for every single thing we got from them, even if they if they didn't want to accept it, and we paid them, I assure you, at a higher-than-market price.

As Marxists, the ideology of Castro and Guevara was one of class war and they were careful to foster good relations with the poor agricultural peasants and Campesinos and it was important for the guerrillas to be seen as the friend of the poor. This explains the insistence on 'paying' for requisitioned stores.

Guevara further instigated a tax on farmers in rebel-held zones. He imposed a tax on the sugar plantations and cattle ranchers which may have been a move designed to elicit food instead of cash, which was of more use to his group at that time (Guevara, 2009).

The difference between operating in enemy controlled zones and 'liberated' zones were stark as seen by the following statements (Reid-Henry 2009, p. 168):

El Hombrito – Che's zone as commandant had a micro-state feel with its own Radio Rebelde and its own news-sheet and crucially its own bread oven.

Contrasted with life in enemy territory: '...on the push west which eventually would lead to the spreading of the insurrection throughout the entire island, Guevara's column battle poor conditions and as well as the regime and at point have only enough food to eat ... once every two days' (Reid-Henry 2009, p. 189).

The inclusion of the agricultural peasants as part of a de facto support network was a tactic used elsewhere such as the Cuban-inspired Nicaraguan revolution by FSLN guerrillas in the 1970's. The Sandinistas, like their Cuban counterparts, were heavily committed to agrarian reform and early FSLN actions were reliant on peasant participation (Collins et al, 1982, p. 22):

Both Campesinos (owners of small plots of land) and landless agricultural workers joined the guerrillas. One of the earliest attacks on the National Guard was carried out by a Sandinista guerrilla column made up totally of small farmers and landless workers under the direction of Colonel Santos Lopez...

Guevara left Cuba in the 1960's after the success of the revolution and dedicated his life to revolutions elsewhere. It was in his final campaign in Bolivia that he died, but his

diary entries from that campaign show a strong similarity to the campaign waged in Cuba.

The Bolivian campaign was marked by smaller numbers of participants and perhaps due to this, the daily struggle to eat seems more marked. The column under Guevara's command became separated from their rear-guard and they spent months trying to re-establish contact. The food issue was always acute and at some points it seems as if the strategic goals were being set aside in the simple hunt for food and evading capture by the army.

Guevara speaks of these daily struggles candidly; he describes slaughtering a horse and making Charqui (jerky) out of the leftovers, and also describes catching and eating a tátu (Armadillo) and this being consumed by the group. The guerrillas lived mostly on peasant staples such as Mote which is a kind of porridge made from cereal grains cooked in the husk, or locro which was made from pork, rice, root vegetables and potatoes, when they were lucky. Other foods used were quechua soup, which consists of charqui, rice and vegetables, again this is a staple in Bolivia. On another occasion a soup was concocted from peanuts with hearts of palm cooked in lard.

The diary gives a daily update on the food situation and on March 18th 1967, he reports that they shot an Urina which is a deer-like creature and so they ate well. On May 21st he records that they ate 'extravagantly' – stew, corn, charqui and mote. They also ate a tapir and typically used all their resources to feed themselves utilising mussels from rivers and of course fish. This contrasts to March 14th when he glumly reports that they have eaten the last of their food.

These accounts differ hugely from the perception – eloquently outlined by Guevara's comrade Inti Peredo that (Guevara 1994, p. 356):

The erroneous impression exists that the guerrilla sits comfortably at his camp, sleeping in a hammock, eating a little bit; then a battle is planned, there is an encounter with the army, the dead and wounded are retrieved, and one returns to camp to rest up.

The idealised view of the guerrilla existence would appear to be far from the truth. Guevara's campaign ends on October 8th when he is wounded and captured in a firefight and then executed the next day. In the days before he died his diary records many expressions of thirst and a reference to dinner of corn meal and tapir meat, a poor ending for any venture.

The jungle-based revolutionary wars of South-East Asia are treated with differing approaches. Much is known of the conflict in Vietnam – due to the American involvement but much less is known about the Cambodian conflict which ran simultaneously during the 1960's and 1970's. Nevertheless these neighbours fought jungle wars at the same time and before a disastrous split between them, shared many resources including perhaps the most well-known supply chain ever used by armed insurgents that is

the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Named after the father of modern Vietnam and Communist leader of North Vietnam, the trail was used for decades by both the People's Liberation Armed Forces (P.L.A.F.) and the Khmer Rouges.

The Vietnamese were fighting to re-unite Communist North Vietnam with the American-backed South. The country was divided by a de-militarised zone (DMZ) which made Northern infiltration to the south problematic meaning that moving guerrillas and war materials and foodstuffs was extremely difficult.

The Khmer Rouges were fighting a war against the right-wing American-backed Cambodian government led by the Royal family. The Khmer Rouges and the NLF were originally part of the wider Indo-Chinese Communist Party which had fought against the French colonial government and after independence, with the re-establishment of the two Vietnams, Cambodia and Laos concentrated their efforts on national issues.

The problem that both groups had was that each had different competing global sponsors; Vietnam were backed by the Soviet Union but obviously had no border with them. The Khmer Rouges were backed by Red China and had no border with them.

Therefore Chinese assistance to The Khmer Rouges had to go through Vietnam, and Soviet assistance to Vietnam had to be flown direct to North Vietnam or go through Chinese territorial land or waters. This made for difficulty in an already confusing situation. The short term solution for both was to co-operate in the spirit of common anti-imperialism.

The trail started in North Vietnam and wound its way through the heavily forested mountains crossing into Laos and Cambodia eventually supplying bases near the Vietnamese border, and from then the bases supplied the frontline guerrillas in the Western jungles of Vietnam.

The Khmer Rouges had long been the junior partners in the alliance and had did not have the luxury of a hinterland to supply them. Their experiences in the jungle war led them to eat almost anything including elephants, tigers, wild dogs, monkeys and even moths (Short 2005, p. 146).

Food was a constant pre-occupation; the lack of protein drove us to frenzied efforts at farming or hunting whenever it was feasible.

One cadre referred to smoked elephant meat as their only source of protein. The same guerrilla recalled a cooked chicken being shared by thirty people in a jungle camp.

The trail was a constant target for American B-52 bombers and the continual attempts to disrupt the supply chain affected Vietnamese and Cambodians alike. Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouges leader, was returning from a meeting in the North Vietnamese capital, Hanoi and it took four months; twice the usual time because of American bombing raids and search-and-destroy missions (Short, 2005).

The Vietnamese and Cambodians moved essentials up and down the Ho Chi Minh trail by hand and foot and by bicycle and later by truck (Reynolds 2000, p. 281):

Using the network of trails along the jungle-clad mountain range inside Laos, the North could transport supplies slowly but surely into South Vietnam, increasingly by truck but often by bicycle. American B-52's bombed what they called the Ho Chi Minh Trail incessantly, but it was never closed.

From its humble jungle path beginnings, the trail developed into a jungle highway that contained oil pipelines and was used to transport everything from rice and dried fish to surface-to-air missiles.

The Asian struggles were not confined to Indo-China. In the mid-1930's in China, the military wing of the Chinese Communist Party (The Red Army a forerunner of the P.L.A.) was forced to retreat west through hostile territory and then north in order to join their comrades in safety. The entire retreat was undertaken by around 80,000 Communists of which 40,000 were combat troops and with the enemy Nationalist army in hot pursuit (Chang & Halliday, 2005). The food provisioning of this many people was an almost impossible feat and this is borne out by the fact that only 10% of the combat troops survived the march. The Red Army endured much hardship and the descriptions of eating horses to the bone and chewing the leather from their belts and even eating moss from trees give insight to the food shortages (Chang & Halliday, 2005).

As they were essentially on the run they commandeered crops en route from Tibetan peasants and justified it under the guise of 'taxation'. The entire march was undertaken so that the Communist leadership would avoid capture and was a success in those terms, yet the accounts from the march speak of constant hunger and food shortages.

Conclusion

The business of armed insurrection is a dangerous one and failure to provision adequately leaves the entire undertaking in jeopardy. The successful armed revolutions are those that plan for food shortages accordingly. The commandeering of foodstuffs has been a widespread practice and the offering of payment either in hard currency or promissory notes will ameliorate the loss to the agricultural producer somewhat. This is necessary for the revolution to convey legitimacy in the eyes of the populace. The more successful the revolution, the better the planning and it is plain that very successful movements such as the Vietnamese paid as much attention to food as they did to munitions.

In 2016 perhaps food and revolution will have a different face; this time the vanguard cadres will be the upwardly mobile classes and the 'foodie' sub-group. The counter-culture of the 1960's and 1970's has changed since the days of William Powell's 'Anarchist Cookbook' and

today we are seeing what is being called the counter-cuisine (Naccarato & Lebesco, 2012):

...the gradual effect of counter-cuisine insinuating itself into mainstream food culture perhaps showing that revolution sometimes relies on evolution...

The revolutions of the future may be about food and not reliant on it.

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