

## War of the poor and oppressed

General Abdul Haris Nasution, 1969  
Fundamentals of Guerilla warfare  
324 pp. *Pall Mall*, London  
£2.25 (out of print)

Time and again it has been proved that in any conflict, if a weaker or poorer nation has got a strong will to resist aggression, it is indeed possible to eventually win.

A successful means to achieve this is by guerilla warfare. The first example of this kind of resistance after the second world war was the liberation of Indonesia from the Dutch colonial power. The latest example, of course, is the war in Vietnam in which France earlier and the USA later with all their military might were not been able to impose their will against a small, poor but resolute nation.

The impact of these events on the art of warfare has been great. Many studies have been carried out to understand the technique of guerilla warfare and to find effective means of bringing it under control both by Western military strategists and tacticians and the Communists. Gen. Abdul Haris Nasution, the former Commander-in Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces is, however, exceptional in that belonging neither to the Eastern or Western bloc he has tackled the problem from a different angle altogether.

Nasution was the main architect of the Indonesian military resistance and guerilla warfare in the war of liberation against a well organised, well equipped and strong colonial power. Born in North Sumatra in 1918 he was educated at the Royal Military Academy at Bandung and commissioned in the Netherland Indies Army in 1941. During the occupation by Japanese Forces, he led civil defence forces in Bandung. Later on he commanded the crack Swiliwangi Division of the Indonesian National Army, which was formed by him from irregular troops. In 1948 he became the chief of the operational staff of the Armed Forces.

When the second police action was started by the Dutch, the author was Commander of the Army in Java. This is where most of the fighting took place and in fact the main guideline for the conduct of guerilla warfare was laid down by General Nasution himself.

Nasution first deals with the concept and ideology of guerilla warfare and makes it quite clear that war today has become a total war. Of necessity guerilla warfare is the war of the weak against the strong. This type of warfare cannot by itself bring final victory, it only saps the enemy's strength. This is a very important factor and must clearly be understood by all resistance movements. Guerilla warfare also does not mean that all the people are fighting. It must not consist of unorganised destruction and has to be of a systematic character. Such a war to be successful calls for unified leadership, not only at the national level but also down to the local level. Being an ideological and protracted war it should be able to draw wholehearted support from the people.

In dealing with the future planning of guerilla warfare, Nasution lays particular emphasis on organisation and training and elaborates on many useful, basic principles which can be modified to suit any other country or situation.

In the section on the methodology of a popular resistance movement, Nasution exemplifies and elaborates on the administration of the various operations under Java headquarters. Basic details of the various battles are given. This along with the instructions compiled and added to by Lt. Colonel Salamat Ryadi go to make a compendium on guerilla warfare.

One does agree entirely with Otto Heilbrunn that the book written originally in 1953, does not merely contain variations on Mao Tse Tung but is the product of independent thought; and it is the independence of thought that should commend the most.

(Col. Khalid)

## The revelatory culture

Abdul Hasan Ali Nadvi, 1970  
Religion & Civilisation  
120pp. *Academy of Islamic Research and Publications*, Lucknow (India). Rs. 5

Professor Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, Rector Nadvat-ul-Ulama, Lucknow, is a well known Indian scholar. He has written on different aspects of Muslim thought and culture. Most of his original work is in Arabic and Urdu. It is to be welcomed that his works are now becoming increasingly available in English. The latest is *Religion and Civilization*, translated by Moinuddin Ahmad.

This brief but incisive work comprises the lectures delivered some years ago at the Jamia Millia, Delhi and deals with the essential questions of eschatology, cosmology and the resultant socio-ethical order. Like Sorokin, he classifies cultures into sensate and idealistic but unlike him develops his own formulation of the revelatory culture, articulated *par excellence*, in the Islamic faith and culture. After posing the fundamental questions he evaluates the sources of knowledge: sensory, intellectual, philosophic, dialectical and mystic. This is followed by an exposition of the three important types of civilization—materialistic, intellectual and mystic. The achievements and failings of each are briefly discussed. The author demonstrates that neither of them really meets all the needs of mankind. Besides, they all fail to answer the fundamental questions of life and existence. In conclusion, Nadvi deals with another source of knowledge: the prophetic, a source historically most important and revolutionary yet very often ignored in modern philosophic discourses. Thus the necessity and nature of prophethood is discussed and the message of the prophets delineated. One does get from this book a broad and overall view of the ethico-social order based on revealed guidance.

(Khurshid Ahmad)