THE AK-47

A Communist bestseller
Birth of the gun:

- WW2 @ Stalingrad the Soviet troops used the PPSH machine gun effectively in urban warfare.
- World War Two the Soviets wanted a new weapon and the Avtomat Kalashnikova (AK)-47 was born.
- Soviets thought the next war would see massive troop movements through western Europe.
- Innovation doesn’t just come from the market:
  - T-34 also in service around the world until the 1970s.
  - Soviet Mi helicopters developed for Afghanistan still used today.
Licenses to produce it were granted to Warsaw Pact countries (eg. East Germany), and also to other countries seen as leaning to the USSR, such as Egypt and Iraq.

Chinese made AK 47s in great numbers & supplied them to NVA and VC in the Vietnam War.

While Soviet soldiers carried AK 47s in their ten year war in Afghanistan the mujahideen fighting them also carried AK-47s made in China and shipped to them by the CIA.
AK 47s used in wars of liberation eg. Angola and Mozambique:
AK-47 reliable (less jamming, stoppages)
Easy to maintain
Easy to carry
Easy to fire (suitable for jungle or urban warfare)
Cheap (100 million have been made often without license)
AK 47 has become a brand name due to its use by standing armies, revolutionaries, national liberation movements, organised criminals.

It appeared on posters in the 1960s.

On TV regularly in the 1970s.

In music and films in the 1980s and 1990s.

Currently Mexico’s drugs wars have seen the rise of narcocorridos.

Kalshnikov recently announced an increase in production to 300,000 a year.