



## A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962 (New York Review Books Classics)

By Alistair Horne

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The Algerian War lasted from 1954 to 1962. It brought down six French governments, led to the collapse of the Fourth Republic, returned de Gaulle to power, and came close to provoking a civil war on French soil. More than a million Muslim Algerians died in the conflict and as many European settlers were driven into exile. Above all, the war was marked by an unholy marriage of revolutionary terror and repressive torture.

Nearly a half century has passed since this savagely fought war ended in Algeria's independence, and yet—as Alistair Horne argues in his new preface to his now-classic work of history—its repercussions continue to be felt not only in Algeria and France, but throughout the world. Indeed from today's vantage point the Algerian War looks like a full-dress rehearsal for the sort of amorphous struggle that convulsed the Balkans in the 1990s and that now ravages the Middle East, from Beirut to Baghdad—struggles in which questions of religion, nationalism, imperialism, and terrorism take on a new and increasingly lethal intensity.

*A Savage War of Peace* is the definitive history of the Algerian War, a book that brings that terrible and complicated struggle to life with intelligence, assurance, and unflagging momentum. It is essential reading for our own violent times as well as a lasting monument to the historian's art.

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### **Review**

"He brings a long historical perspective and six decades of experience to bear on the affairs of the day."  
—Salon.com

"First the Pentagon plugged the movie, now President Bush is reading the book...*A Savage War of Peace*, British historian Alistair Horne's celebrated 1977 account of the [Algerian] war...Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who recommended *A Savage War of Peace* to Bush, said recently on PBS' Charlie Rose Show that he did not believe 'that the French experience could be applied precisely to the United States. But I thought there were enough similarities and enough complexities and enough tragedy for the president to gain a perspective on his own period.'" —*Associated Press*

"Anyone interested in Iraq should read this book immediately." —Thomas Ricks, *The Washington Post*

"[Horne's] tome is so well written it reads more like a novel but is, in fact, a work of superior historical narrative...There are few historical works that provide so comprehensive a treatment of revolutionary and counterinsurgency warfare, domestic and international politics, and economics and ideology." —*Marine Corps Gazette*

"When Horne's book first appeared, it seemed to be an account of one major, but now largely closed, chapter in the history of postwar decolonization. Subsequent developments—in Algeria and elsewhere—have made the past prologue. [It] has become a de facto textbook for American Military officers facing time in Iraq..."  
—Scott McLemee, *Inside Higher Ed*

"This thirty-year-old history, written before the Iranian revolution, the Algerian civil war, and Al Qaeda, captures a contingent moment in the conflict between the West and the Arab world, when present-day dogmas were hardly imagined by most. It provides a much needed reminder that modern history is not made by the 'clash of civilizations' but by people." —*Harper's Magazine*

"The present conflict in the Middle East is frighteningly similar, making this book a good volume to have on library shelves. Horne provides a new preface." —*Library Journal* (Classic Returns)

"[T]he read of choice for many U.S. military officers serving in Iraq...[this] universally acclaimed history...should have been mandatory reading for the civilian and military leaders who opted to invade Iraq"  
—*The Washington Times*

"There is enough to make this the most complete history of the Algerian war yet written, one which will be indispensable for future historians. It is compelling reading, filled with intimate detail about characters and situations that have served as inspiration for a dozen novels from *The Day of the Jackal* on." —*The Los Angeles Times*

A "highly readable, toughly edited history that blends the pace and sweep of a work of fiction with a relentless pursuit of every main actor still alive and willing to talk about the war." —*The Washington Post Book World*

"Alistair Horne is one of the best writers of history in the English speaking world. *A Savage War of Peace* shows him at the peak of his powers."—*The Financial Times*

"An awesome and superlative piece of historical narrative...Mr. Horne has a terrible and tremendous tale to tell, one full of omen for posterity."—*The Times* (London)

"An accomplished historian of earlier French wars has written an admirably impartial, lucid and readable book...as full and objective a history of the Algerian war as we are likely to see for some years." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"A book of compelling power...magnificent. It has the poetic sense of place without which no great work of history can be written."—*The Spectator*

"...brilliantly and compassionately told by an historian whose mastery of this subject is complete."  
—*The Washington Post*

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About the Author

**ALISTAIR HORNE** is the author of eighteen previous books, including *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954—1962*, *The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916*, *How Far from Austerlitz?: Napoleon 1805—1815* and the official biography of British prime minister Harold Macmillan. He is a fellow at St. Anthony's College, Oxford, and lives in Oxfordshire. He was awarded the French Legion d'Honneur in 1993 and received a knighthood in 2003 for his work on French history.

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