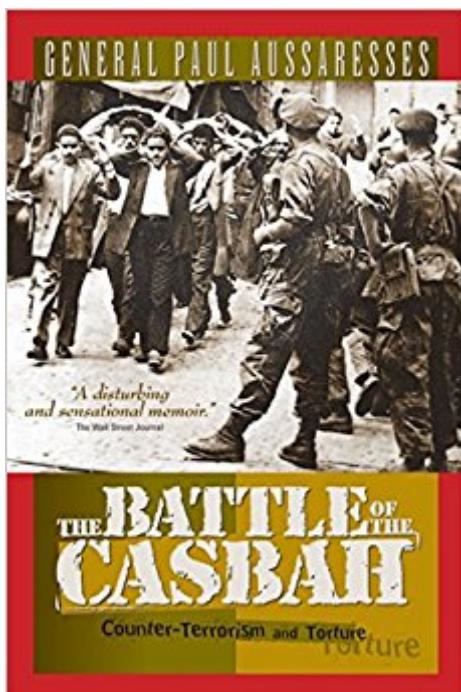


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The Battle Of The Casbah: Terrorism And Counterterrorism In Algeria 1955-1957



Synopsis

This book is particularly relevant to the current debate on terrorism. That story constitutes the main part of this book. It details the methods used, including torture and summary executions, and the results obtained by the paratrooper commando units led

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A disturbing and sensational memoir!" -The Wall Street Journal, October 17, 2001 "Once you have seen with your own eyes as I did, civilians, men, women, and children quartered, disemboweled and nailed to doors [by the rebels], you are changed for life. What feelings can anyone have towards those who perpetrated such barbaric acts and their accomplices?" -General Paul Aussaresses, quoted in *Le Monde*, May 4, 2001"

General Paul Aussaresses was a career French army intelligence officer with an excellent military record during World War II. He was dispatched to eastern Algeria in 1955 where he and his unit fought the rebels of the FLN. He retired after having served a

This book is a unique war memoir in that it describes the actions of the intelligence arm of the French Military. This tale tells how the French military destroyed the Moslem insurgency in the city of Algiers using torture, summary executions, and other dirty means. It is written by a veteran of the conflict and it is matter-of-fact about the terrible nature of this ugly war. While being somewhat disturbing, it implies that the rough methods of torture were effective. Since its publishing it seems

that the techno-thriller genre has come to portray torture as a good idea-a bad development in this darkening world. The book also shows the culture and life of War Era French Algeria.

The author was instrumental in waging France's campaign against terrorism in Algeria. This battle was the last gasp of the French Colonial Empire, following their withdrawal from French Indo China in 1954. In 1952 a group of Egyptian officers led by Col. Nasser overthrew King Farouk. Nasser's ambition was to encourage, support and fund Arab nationalism in the region. He provided weapons and funds to the Algerian FLN which had been founded in October 1954. The FLN attacks against civilians began within a week. The FLN objective was to get rid of the French settlers, French army and kill those Algerians who worked with the French whom they called collaborators. This war was probably the first where terrorist bombings were used on a large scale against the civilian population. Horrific atrocities were committed as well. In fact the French military defeated the FLN by mid 1957. But, like the U.S. experiences in Vietnam and Iraq, French public opinion influenced by the media opposed the war. And ultimately they withdrew in 1962. This book reads like a fast paced novel. The pages turn quickly. It is a valuable historical read.

What a great book! General Aussaresses lets all the skeletons out of the closet. Too often we talk about wars and the way they should be fought. Aussaresses tells you the way a guerilla war is REALLY fought. It is the people caught in the middle who suffer. What is really scary is that his logic does make some sense. Traditional justice systems are not designed to deal with large scale disturbances. They are designed to deal with crimes committed by individuals or small groups of individuals. In a sense, terrorists are equated with serial killers and the question the reader is left with is Can we afford to make a mistake and let them go free because they will kill innocents again. This book made me glad that I never have to make these types of decisions.

well written and insightful. i can recommend it for anyone wanting to understand more about the conflict there and it's ripples down through history.

An excellent book written by one of the slowly diminishing numbers of participants in this campaign. This book deals with the French war in Algeria, and the Battle of Algiers which was a part of that war. The book is interesting, has photographs, and is a good resource for those interested in that conflict and the atrocities that occurred on both sides..

FINAL OPTION - Torture & Execution General Paul Aussaresses' memoir "The Battle of the Casbah: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Algeria, 1955-1957" details the brutal counter-terrorist campaign against Algerian insurgents during the Algerian War. His controversial, and some argue failed, methods include torture and summary execution. Overall this is a very interesting book for a look at the dirty side of counter-insurgency.

I believe many of those who wrote reviews of this book are writing from their hearts as opposed to coolly assessing this excellent work. Afterall, it is hard for one to embrace the author's premise that physical torture and summary executions were the only way to effectively deal with Algerian insurgents. Although one may not want to accept this methodology, many influential members in French military and political circles accepted this as the price to pay to keep Algeria French.

Because these senior leaders were able to get men like Paul Aussaresses to do their dirty work for them does not make their hands any cleaner. Aussaresses obviously could not have done what he did for so long without the approval of his chain of command. I commend the author for having the moral courage to admit his own actions when everyone else involved has taken the different approach of sweeping it under the rug. Admitting to crimes against humanity is nothing to be proud of, but Aussaresses was certainly the implementer of French political will just as Adolf Eichmann was for Germany. This is an important work for understanding to what extent nations will go to, to secure their empires. It is also important for understanding counterinsurgency and the limits of violence. Whatever your political/moral take on the author, this is an interesting, unique book and well worth the time spent reading it.

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