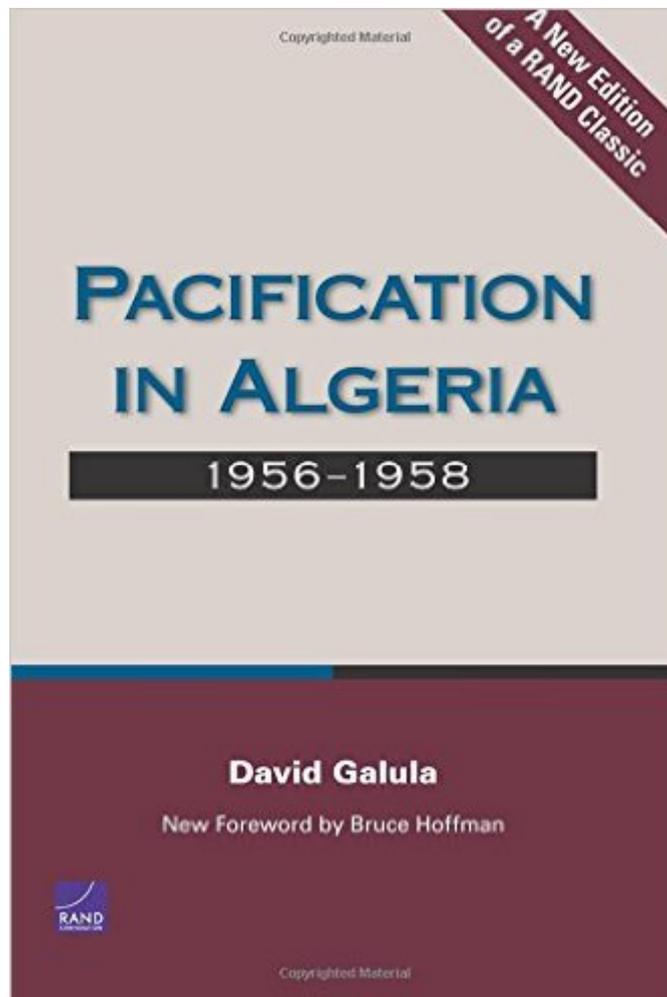


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Pacification In Algeria, 1956-1958



Synopsis

When Algerian nationalists launched a rebellion against French rule in November 1954, France, mired in similar wars for independence in its colonial territories, was in a poor position to cope with further upheaval. The Algerian strategy encompassed varying approaches and was more adaptable than that of the French, necessitating a rethinking of traditional counterinsurgency methods. In this volume, originally published in 1963, David Galula reconstructs the story of his highly successful command in the district of Greater Kabylia, east of Algiers, at the height of the rebellion, and presents his theories on counterinsurgency and pacification. In the process, he confronts the larger political, psychological, and military aspects of the Algerian war, and provides a context for present-day counterinsurgency operations. This groundbreaking work retains its relevancy as a challenge to traditional counterinsurgency tactics and presents approaches to predicting, managing, and resolving insurgent and guerilla conflict. The parallels between the Algerian war and modern warfare are striking, and lessons can be extracted from French successes and failures in its drive to contain and manage the Algerian uprising. A new foreword by counterterrorism expert Bruce Hoffman elucidates the relevance of this historic study in the context of modern times.

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Customer Reviews

David Galula, a veritable Cassandra of counter-insurgency warfare has, thanks to the Iraq and Afghan wars, risen anew from the "dustbin of history" to have his pithy observations on the nature and conduct of "revolutionary wars" considered again. This book is a coda to Galula's magnum opus, "Counterinsurgency Warfare". Both books are well worth reading, but "Counterinsurgency

Warfare" is the more cogently argued and less anecdotal of the two. Many of the vignettes Galula recites in "Pacification" are idiosyncratic to the Algerian conflict. For example, the overwhelming material and organizational weaknesses of the FLN, their inability to effectively communicate with "the masses" and their relative isolation are not features of most current insurgencies. The ability of the French to effectively seal the Algerian frontiers, thus interdicting flow of men and supplies to the FLN is also unique to that conflict. In addition, Galula focuses almost exclusively on his pacification campaign in Kabylia, only providing occasional glances at the terror campaign being waged in Algiers, Oran and elsewhere. Very little perspective on the pieds noirs (European-Algerians) was provided and a rather stilted perspective on the Salan coup was offered. There was nothing in the book to suggest the impending emergence of the OAS and little was given to suggest that something along the lines of the Evian talks (De Gaulle's negotiations with the FLN which ultimately ended the conflict) could emerge. As this monograph was originally issued by RAND in 1963 (and the war ended in 1962) this recounting of events presents a curiously removed perspective. RAND evidently requested a very specific report on Galula's own efforts, so perhaps the criticism is somewhat unfair.

In "Pacification in Algeria", David Galula describes his (largely) successful experiences as a company commander and battalion S3/XO in Algeria in the late 1950's and draws on these experiences and his earlier exposure to Communist insurgency throughout Asia and the Balkans in order to develop and articulate a theory of COIN. Most of the book is a relatively detached and analytical (albeit honest) discussion of his experience and reaction to events as a company commander in a rather nondescript battalion and AO. The reader expecting exciting accounts of desperate battles or tales of derring-do will be disappointed - not only is combat fleeting, but Galula's perspective is about recounting what he thought and did in a "campaign planning" sense, rather than in the "here and now" tactical space. For anybody with more than a superficial interest in sub-unit operations there is however ample description, explanation and analysis of a range of tactical activities and objectives, be they kinetic or otherwise. Despite the author's obvious scholarly interest in advocating a theoretical approach to COIN, it is still relevant and enjoyable reading for tactical level commanders with more pressing concerns than wading through dense academic tracts. Both Galula's own actions and embryonic theory (explored more fully in

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