

though it may add luster to their reputation in one or two campaigns. It will not be remembered for new information or insight into the politics of high command, despite several individually interesting retellings of British-American strategic arguments. It will not add appreciably to reconsideration of the Berlin problem either in wartime strategy or in subsequent cold war.

On to Berlin nevertheless is a fine memoir of a front-line commander, with all the strengths and limitations of outlook that implies. His recollections of the actual operations of his forces have an immediacy that marks them out in the memoir literature of senior officers. Gavin's philosophy of command and leadership required him to fight with his troops, on the very front, and not to command from remote or safe distances. His accounts of operations convey a sense of the chaotic, the accidental, the difficult—all those things that Carl von Clausewitz described as the friction of war. The book also contains excellent maps, an absolute necessity for intelligible discussion of military operations. As a commander's memories, then, *On to Berlin* makes good reading.

Reviewed by THOMAS H. ETZOLD

"*Vous Suffrirez*"

A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962, by Alistair Horne, *New York: The Viking Press, 1977. 604 pp. \$19.95.*

THROUGHOUT HISTORY the most durable form of political organization has been the empire. Nation-states have been aberrations, thrown up by the peculiarities of Western Europe in the modern era and dubiously implanted among non-European peoples. Yet, ironically, the civilization that produced nation-states also fostered one of the most successful and durable empires in history. Beginning in the late fifteenth century, the European states in-

dividually expanded their contacts with and control of non-European areas. This expansion lasted for four-hundred years, reached its apogee in the late nineteenth century, and came to an end in the twentieth, which has seen not merely the withdrawal but the complete liquidation of the European imperial system. While there is immense satisfaction in the West at the end of its empire, there is no reason to be satisfied or even complacent. The end of Western control of most of the world will have repercussions on the Western way of life at least as far reaching as the coming of democracy or technology had.

Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace* chronicles the collapse of one of these national empires. There is throughout the book a refreshing abstention from all windy generalizations of social science and ideology. There is the careful attention to variations of time, place, and personality that marks the professional historian, and there is the synthesis of narrative and analytical skills that marks a craftsman of writing. It is evident that Mr. Horne sympathizes with the Algerians over the French, with de Gaulle over the rebellious generals and *pieds noirs*, and that he has no sympathy for the O.A.S. Yet there are no polemics in his book, and the author has very nearly achieved a masterpiece of historical writing: a dispassionate yet insightful study of one of the most savage and controversial conflicts of the century.

It is impossible for an American in the 1970's to read this book without drawing parallels: with Vietnam in the 1960's, with southern Africa today. Horne is aware of these parallels and occasionally makes suggestive insights, but it was not his purpose to expand on them. At the center, however, are the questions of why France lost Algeria and the broader one of why the West is losing the world.

The Algerian rebellion in 1954 was not the result of colonial exploitation and repression. The revolutionary nationalist cadre was minute in its beginnings; its early attacks were very limited in success; and its resources and unity were virtually nonexistent. It succeeded in creating a mass movement because the French showed not the slightest capacity to

deal effectively with it and because the F.L.N. was ruthless in its strategy and operations. It did not hesitate to terrorize and extort other Algerians, and it continually purged itself of suspect or incompatible elements. In the latter respect it resembled the kind of revolutionary cadre that Lenin idealized, continually being destroyed and reorganized to preserve its purity. Horne repeatedly points out that Communism meant little to the F.L.N. and its leaders. Neither the French nor the Algerian Parties were active in its behalf, and both China and the Soviet Union were skeptical of the F.L.N.'s chances and tightfisted with their support. Nor were the F.L.N.'s leaders particularly influenced by Marx, Lenin, or Mao. When they had read them at all, it seems to have been Marxist tactics that impressed them, and not the vision of a classless utopia.

Yet, as Horne acknowledges, the F.L.N. was a totalitarian party. Indeed, it would seem that totalitarianism was the only course it could take. The terrorist strategy that it followed could be rationalized only on the grounds that a total way of life—and not merely its military or police apparatus—was the enemy. The strategy of terrorism was, as Carlos Marighela later argued, to provoke a reaction from the French so repressive that the residual loyalty of the Algerians would collapse. The French response helped fulfill this strategy. By evacuating and resettling entire villages, by mass reprisals and indiscriminate and arbitrary arrests, by failing to recognize or make use of ethnological distinctions, the French managed to bungle the early stages of the war, disrupt the social fabric of Algerian loyalty, create uncertainties among the Algerians of French capacities to preserve order, and allow the F.L.N. to use the rulers' blunders in building its organization. The French were slow to use counter-insurgency tactics against the rebels and tried to rely on an army designed for conventional war against other Europeans. They were continually faced with F.L.N. support across the Tunisian border, which remained inviolate throughout the war (does this not recall Vietnam and Cambodia and the current controversy over Rhodesian raids into Zambia and Mozambique?). They were slow to develop

counter-intelligence among the rebels and probably never understood the deep personal hostilities and the splits between Kabyle and Arab within the F.L.N. leadership.

Nevertheless, the French eventually learned, and their army performed valorously and intelligently. Without being ponderous, Horne is entirely frank about the use of torture, as are the veterans he interviews. He condemns its use but understands the psychological motivations of those who used it. He concludes that, aside from the moral question, torture was not an effective instrument of intelligence and had a demoralizing effect on those who perpetrated it. It is curious that Horne's account allows for heroism but seldom produces villains. Extremists on both sides appear simply ridiculous, despite the atrocities they practiced.

Horne is full of admiration for Charles de Gaulle, largely on the grounds that the General perceived Algeria as a burden on the French economy and to the new international rôle he planned for France. Yet regardless of de Gaulle's acute political acumen, his lofty silences and patronizing arrogance more often translate as posturing. It is not at all clear that he knew what he was going to do with Algeria or when he would do it. Horne quotes over a dozen contradictory statements made by de Gaulle between 1958 and 1960 on the various alternatives of *Algérie française*, "association," "self-determination," "independence," "peace," etc. Bordering on the irresponsible was de Gaulle's attitude toward the *harkis*, Moslem troops who fought with the French and were in large measure the basis of French victory. When told by a loyal Moslem that he and his comrades would suffer in an independent Algeria, de Gaulle replied, "*Eh bien! vous souffrirez.*" Suffer they did, with estimates of Moslem loyalists killed after independence ranging from 30,000 to 150,000—many of them, with their families, tortured and mutilated in front of French troops who were under orders not to interfere. "It was a tragedy," writes Horne, "even more odious than that of the Russian prisoners-of-war handed back by the Western Allies in 1945." Yet despite de Gaulle's posturing and duplicity, his compe-

tence compares favorably with the ill-conceived rebellion of the Generals in 1961 and the terrorism of the O.A.S. that succeeded it.

Given the failure of the French in Algeria, and the parallels with other crises of imperial rule in Vietnam, Rhodesia, and elsewhere since 1960, one is brought to wonder whether the West is capable of ruling an empire at all. Empires are not a pleasant business. They are won and kept by force and fraud, and their control requires unity of purpose, a willingness to inflict and endure suffering, and a conviction that the conquerors are in the right. The West does not now have a set of beliefs that justifies these realities of empire and it is not likely to develop one. It appears increasingly unwilling to accept or impose any form of physical force. Finally, it can be argued that what defeated the French in Algeria and what undermined America in Vietnam is the modern democratic nation-state itself: with its institutionalized factionalism and its international competition, it does not seem able to support the unity of purpose or the continuity of policy that imperial rule requires. The internal factions must be satisfied before external obligations can be met; the external obligations to and against other nations require men and measures different from those required for undeveloped colonies and satellites; and the kind of leader that is produced is not the kind suitable for the problems of empire. In the end, writes Horne of de Gaulle's peace negotiations with the F.L.N.,

he suffered from the lesson not learned by Kissinger in Vietnam, or perhaps by the Israelis *vis-à-vis* the Arab world; namely, that peoples who have been waiting for their independence for a century, fighting for it for a generation, can afford to sit out a presidential term, or a year or two in the life of an old man in a hurry; that he who lasts the longest wins; that, sadly, with the impatience of democracies and their volatile voters committed to electoral contortions every four or five years, the extremist always triumphs over the moderate.

Reviewed by SAMUEL T. FRANCIS

Reflective Reminiscing

New York Jew, by Alfred Kazin, *New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978. 307 pp. \$10.95.*

ALFRED KAZIN'S *New York Jew* includes far more than its somewhat defiant title would seem to indicate. The third volume of his intellectual and spiritual autobiography—the other two being *A Walker in the City* (1951) and *Starting Out in the Thirties* (1965)—Mr. Kazin's latest book begins in 1942 and continues its reflective reminiscing through World War II and the three decades which followed.

It was in 1942 that Kazin's *On Native Grounds: A Study of American Prose from 1890 to the Present* first appeared. He tells us that he spent almost five years doing research for the book "in the great open reading room, 315, of the New York Public Library, often in great all-day bouts of reading that began when the place opened at nine in the morning and that ended only at ten at night." The effort was well worth it. It impressed the reigning literati with its loving and meticulous scholarship and style. Unfortunately, its impact was so great and its level of achievement so high that it has tended to dwarf all of Kazin's subsequent efforts; the latter have consisted of collections of random book reviews, essays, introductions to classics such as *Moby Dick*, editorship or co-editorship of works by writers like William Blake and Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the autobiographic volumes previously mentioned. What with the responsibilities of teaching and lecturing at several prestigious colleges and universities in this country and elsewhere, little wonder that Kazin's unquestionable literary scholarship and insights have produced only sparks rather than the creative fire which illuminated his *On Native Grounds*. Nevertheless, *New York Jew* is worth reading.

The book proceeds chronologically, but its chronological narrative combines four parallel sets of reminiscences: impressions of people met; descriptions of places, cities, and countries visited; comments about the major events of the times; and revelations of personal intimacies.