

# The of violence which were witnessed by

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The depiction of torture gave the film, *Battle of Algiers*, considerable global attention, raising the questions regarding the efficacy of torture in the context of colonialism. However, to what extent can this movie be regarded as accurate in portraying the violence, for it to be used as a historical source in the study of the Algerian War of Independence? It's important to assess whether or not the movie is objective in displaying the violence exerted by both sides of the conflict. Sources of relevance to this investigation are the book "Dying colonialism" and the testimony of French Brigadier general Paul Aussaresses on the French's employment of torture during the Algerian colonization. Source 1: *L'An cinq de la revolution algérienne*, translated to English under the title *A Dying Colonialism*, is a book written by Frantz Fanon, Frenchman, and published in 1959. The value of the source lies in its origin, being a primary source written in the midst of the Algerian War of Independence. Furthermore, Fanon was a physician who was aiding the FLN<sup>1</sup>, thus making the book of insider insight.

The purpose of this book is to highlight the Algerian struggle, showing the violence and the torture the Algerians went through in response to their guerrilla tactics. However, this book is highly subjective and offers rather an emotional appeal, than factual accounts. "We condemn, with pain in our hearts...." the author says. Living through the experience inevitably lead the author to recount an emotion based account of the Algerian war. Although the author is not Algerian, the account can be slightly compassionate with the Algerian side. This source is particularly valuable to the investigation because it explains the origin and extent of Algerian counterinsurgency terror, and also the forms of violence which were witnessed by Algerians.

Source 2: Another particularly valuable source is the interview held with Brigadier General Paul Aussaresses in December of 2000, under the French magazine Le Monde. He confesses that he and his subordinates were conducting torture in its various methods during the Battle of Algiers. At the time of the interview, Paul was 83 years of age. The origin holds both value and limitation. Paul was one of the French leaders who were directly, and only, involved in the practices of torture, making this exclusive knowledge that wouldn't have been released otherwise, especially considering there were French Amnesty signed in 1968. At the same time, it has been over 40 years since the conflict, and Aussaresses has aged significantly, leaving there room for loss of memory or detail. However, this is overcome by the numerous confessions made by other French generals, which correspond to Paul's.

Paul acknowledges the use of torture, and accepts its responsibility and has regrets but no guilt. This adds value to the source because Paul has absolutely nothing to gain from the confession, in fact, much to lose<sup>2</sup>.

Aussaresses's account is valuable to this investigation because it provides insight from the perpetrator on the motives of French torture and its forms, allowing a true assessment of the accuracy of portrayal of the French torture in the film. Especially that Aussaresses was the basis of the movie character which embodies the French. 1 Front de Liberation National (Algerian National Liberation Front)<sup>2</sup> He was convicted and fined €7, 500 for violating the French Amnesty signed in 1968