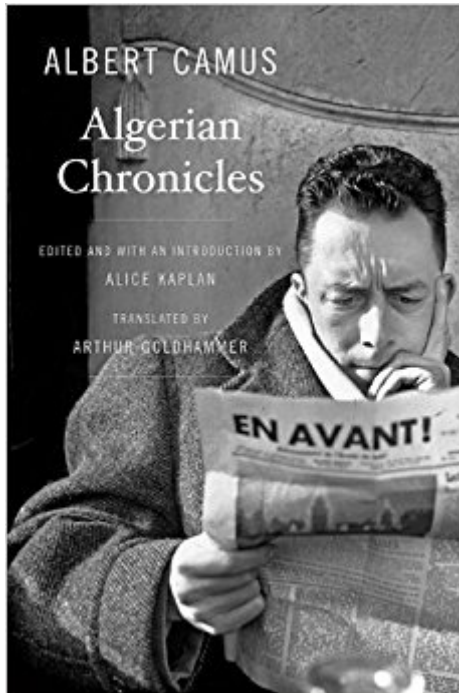


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# Algerian Chronicles



## Synopsis

More than fifty years after Algerian independence, Albert Camus "Algerian Chronicles" appears here in English for the first time. Published in France in 1958, the same year the Algerian War brought about the collapse of the Fourth French Republic, it is one of Camus most political works an exploration of his commitments to Algeria. Dismissed or disdained at publication, today "Algerian Chronicles, " with its prescient analysis of the dead end of terrorism, enjoys a new life in Arthur Goldhammer s elegant translation. Believe me when I tell you that Algeria is where I hurt at this moment, Camus, who was the most visible symbol of France s troubled relationship with Algeria, writes, as others feel pain in their lungs. Gathered here are Camus strongest statements on Algeria from the 1930s through the 1950s, revised and supplemented by the author for publication in book form. In her introduction, Alice Kaplan illuminates the dilemma faced by Camus: he was committed to the defense of those who suffered colonial injustices, yet was unable to support Algerian national sovereignty apart from France. An appendix of lesser-known texts that did not appear in the French edition complements the picture of a moralist who posed questions about violence and counter-violence, national identity, terrorism, and justice that continue to illuminate our contemporary world."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Algerian Chronicles" is a collection of journalistic writings published in 1958, when the crisis in Algeria posed a persistent threat to the government of France. It was to be Camus's final book and

appears in retrospect as a summing-up of his feelings about his birthplace...These remarkably mature dispatches, written when he was 25, show that Camus was anxious from the start about the political relationship between his native country and the mainland...The impetus behind the repeated pleas for constructive dialogue that occupy the later parts of "Algerian Chronicles" was personal as much as political..."Algerian Chronicles", never before translated in its entirety, is a document worth having.--James Campbell"Wall Street Journal" (05/03/2013)It was the last book Camus published in his lifetime, and it appears now in its entirety for the first time in English, expertly translated by Arthur Goldhammer. The editor, Alice Kaplan, has added six texts to Camus's original selection in an appendix, to further illuminate Camus's relation to Algeria... As the writings in "Algerian Chronicles" make clear, Camus's position in 'no man's land' left him increasingly isolated: hated by the right for his condemnation of government policies, scorned by the left for his inability to imagine an independent Algeria from which the French would be absent...As Kaplan points out, we cannot know how he would have reacted to the final years of the war, or to the independence that followed. We do know that his ethical positions are still meaningful, worldwide.--Susan Rubin Suleiman"New York Times Book Review" (05/12/2013)Despite his lucidity and his avowed anti-colonialism, Camus during his lifetime failed to accept that Algeria should or could be permanently separated from France; and, as Kaplan rightly points out, his premature death in 1960 means that we can never know how he would have reacted to the agreements enacting that separation...At the same time, as a record of passionate insights into the processes involved, the book still makes absorbing reading, not least because of the many portentous analogies between what happened in Algeria and what is happening in much of our world today..." Algerian Chronicles "is infused with bitter-sweet nostalgia for a personal lost paradise, a not infrequent ingredient of Camus's writing generally. But the book transmits a wider angry grief in its demonstration that the most humane and reasoned ideals seldom work to diminish the destructive and self-mutilating brutalities that humanity, endlessly, inflicts on itself. Camus has been well served here by Arthur Goldhammer, who is probably the most gifted living translator into English of French texts. Goldhammer, in his translator's note, describes the challenges of capturing the purity, restraint, and discipline of Camus's prose; and he expresses the hope that his work has done justice to what he calls 'a precious document of a soul's torment lived in real rather than eternal time.' He need not have worried: the author's voice resounds with eerie clarity.--Colin Nettlebeck"Australian Book Review" (05/01/2013)The singular importance of "Algerian Chronicles" is that it brings together for the first time in English all of Camus's writings on Algeria, ranging over his early journalism covering the famine in Kabyle in 1939 to his appeals for reason and justice in Algeria in 1958. Beautifully translated by Arthur Goldhammer, they reveal Camus not

so much as a philosopher (or 'ponderous metaphysician' as Said called him) but as something like a French George Orwell. Certainly, in all these essays he demonstrates a most un-Parisian aversion to abstraction and a taste for the concrete detail that reveals the reality of a situation...There is a new generation of readers in Algeria who are beginning to understand how [Camus] felt: torn between opposing forms of terror, neither of which promised justice or redemption. "Algerian Chronicles" is a beautiful and significant illustration of the complexities of that dilemma.--Andrew Hussey "Literary Review" (05/01/2013) Essentially, "Algerian Chronicles" surveys the making of a metaphysical rebel, Camus himself. In his world, like ours, riven by mindless extremism and terrorism, he sought moderation, toleration and humanity. He is being reread today, without post-colonial prejudice, as a means to engage our comparable metaphysical condition. 'The role of the intellectual is to seek by his own lights to make out the respective limits of force and justice in each camp,' he contended in 1958. 'It is to explain the meaning of words in such a way as to sober minds and calm fanaticisms, even if this means working against the grain.' "Algerian Chronicles" reminds that Camus accepted that lonely, singular role with inspiring courage and commitment.--Phillip C. Naylor "Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel" (05/03/2013) Camus was a far more engaged writer than his critics have allowed, and the essays, columns and speeches collected here make a strong case for his continued relevance...Today, although his failure to support full independence for Algeria seems off the mark, Camus stands as a powerful voice against violence and extremism, and the very late appearance of these essays in English could not have come at a better time...With the future of the Arab spring uncertain and with terrorism back on the front page, these "Algerian Chronicles" are not only history. They're also guides for how to be just in a difficult world.--Jason Farago "NPR Books" (05/13/2013) "Algerian Chronicles..." has been invisibly translated by Arthur Goldhammer and prefaced perceptively by Alice Kaplan...All [the essays] are a model of engaged journalism: scrupulous and exhaustive in the facts, telling in colorful anecdote, reasoned in argument, with no hint of sarcasm or anger. Apart from their historical interest, Camus's essays show us two things. One is it is possible to be politically engaged without foaming at the mouth. The other is the more things change in what historian Ian Morris calls 'the arc of instability,' from central Africa to Pakistan, the more they stay the same. Further, they remind us that a great deal of the horror going on there today is the legacy of 19th-century European colonialism and superpower maneuvering in the Cold War...Through all these bloody convulsions and those of the wider region, Camus's central call--to spare the lives of noncombatants--echoes still...After Iraq, after Syria, after the still unexplained suspension of international law in deadly American drone strikes, after the constant bombing of marketplaces and mosques now that asymmetrical war has made obsolete the

Geneva Conventions, Camus's voice seems naively idealistic. The world needs that kind of naivete more than ever.--Miriam Cosic"The Australian" (06/08/2013)Camus's Algerian political pieces, collected and published in 1956, have now been lucidly translated by Arthur Goldhammer and edited along with some additional material by Yale's Alice Kaplan. Their appearance in France was met by something worse than attack: virtual indifference. The bloodshed had gone on too long; proposals for compromise, integration, and a sharing of power were well past their sell-by date. History is less reasonable than words and can move faster; Camus's words, sensible and moving, were left behind; he arrived at the station after the train had left...He unhesitatingly denounced the harshly unjust treatment of the Muslim majority; its exclusion from political power, its economic exploitation, the fact, for instance, that its wartime food ration was inferior to that of the settlers. He forcefully called for equitable economic partnership between the two populations, equal rights, and a shared political role.--Richard Eder"Boston Globe" (05/11/2013)In his own lifetime, [Camus] was criticized for keeping quiet as his Algerian homeland slipped into crisis; then, when in 1958 he published this eloquent and passionate plea for understanding, the hush from the reviewers was deafening...As one of over a million "pieds noirs" himself, he was better placed than any of his comrades on the French Left to appreciate the inadequacy of the opposition they drew between cruel colonialists and a suffering Arab mass. 'Day after day, ' he says, 'these simplifications prove, in a sort of *reductio absurdum*, that in Algeria the French and the Arabs are condemned either to live together or to die together.' Whether he was ultimately right is open to question: he certainly paid a high price for his nuanced view of the situation.--Michael Kerrigan"The Scotsman" (05/02/2013)[Camus's] writing about Algeria confounds the persistent accusation that he was a metropolitan Frenchman...Some of his finest writing is here.--Brian Morton"Sunday Herald" (05/19/2013)[*"Algerian Chronicles"*]has not, for the most part, been regarded as one of Camus's 'important' works...This is, perhaps, an oversight. At a historical moment when it seems crucial to the human prospect to think intelligently about terrorism and other forms of political violence, the thinking Camus does in *"Algerian Chronicles"* may strike us, if we open ourselves to it, as necessary, cogent, and sane...What is clear from *"Algerian Chronicles"*is that Camus's compassion could be triggered by the suffering of any human being, and that his political and moral concern was with any innocent person who might be made the victim of violence in the name of any political cause...*"Algerian Chronicles"*may have suffered the fate of being published at a time when those who most needed to hear what it had to say were entirely unable to read it with an open mind. It is possible that, now that some decades have passed, it will find a second life. We Americans would be well advised to pay it serious attention. After more than a decade in which the United States has

chosen to respond to the specter of lawless terrorism with forms of violence some have regarded as state-sanctioned terrorism--years during which, as in the Algerian war, the violence inflicted by each side has been used to justify the violence inflicted by the other, and during which the use of torture by American military and security forces has been not only condoned but applauded by a large segment of the American citizenry--Camus's reflections on these subjects seem to address us directly.--Troy Jollimore"Barnes & Noble Review" (06/13/2013)"Algerian Chronicles"...comprises everything Camus wrote on Algeria...Camus's writing on Kabylia is a marvel of eloquence. His sympathy for the people, his critique of the colonial regime, his pain over the injustices that he witnesses--all thrilling. Seventy years after he wrote these pieces the reader is still penetrated by their literary beauty. But at no time in "Algerian Chronicles" are we listening to the speaking voice of a revolutionary. It is the voice of a despairing citizen who does not want his country's government overthrown; he wants it to do better by its people. He wants France to remain in Algeria, but to honor its own founding myths of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The pieces in "Algerian Chronicles" that were written years later in France, during the war for independence, are repetitive pleas for each side to stop demonizing the other, for human decency to prevail.--Vivian Gornick"Boston Review" (07/01/2013)Read today, the articles brim with [Camus's] trademark Mediterranean passion, the sensibility that lent all his literary works their moral and lyrical depth...Prove[s] indispensable to a fuller understanding of the intellectual history of 20th-century Europe.--Arlice Davenport"Wichita Eagle" (07/29/2013)[A] brilliant translation Camus fell silent after this effort, but for one exception. In 1958, while the sale guerre in his native country grew ever more dirty, he returned to his first trade, journalism. Gathering his newspaper articles and commentaries on Algeria, he published them under the title "Actuelles III". In his preface, he lambasts France's colonial policy, castigates the use of torture and terrorism by both sides, and defends innocent French and Arabs at the mercy of these violent designs. Yet, he concludes, his book is among other things a history of a failure. But noble failures like "Algerian Chronicles" are both timeless and timely.--Robert Zaretsky"Times Literary Supplement" (10/11/2013)"History has proven Camus right when he warned in 1955 that those who support terror and call for massacres, no matter which camp they come from and no matter what argument or folly drives them, are in fact calling for their own destruction. A lesson the world, alas, has still not learned.--Micah Mattix"New Criterion" (10/01/2013)"Among the French writers, not too many people in those days, back in the 1930s, appeared to care one way or another about Algeria and its poverty. You could read about the erotic and exotic dream-life of Andre Gide, but not about injustice. Camus was a pioneer.--Paul Berman"New Republic" (08/19/2013)"The last time [Camus] had spoken out on Algeria had been in

January 1956 on a visit to Algiers, when he had called for a civilian truce between French colonialists and the Arab-dominated National Liberation Front (FLN). For his trouble he received death threats from the colonialists and scornful rejection by the FLN. At the risk of being labeled a coward, Camus decided to keep his peace." "This silence lasted until 1958 when he published "Actuelles III", a selection of essays and articles outlining his position on Algeria. Some of these writings were translated into English for "Resistance, Rebellion and Death" (1960) but others, such as his early forays into journalism for the anti-colonialist newspaper "Alger Republicain", appear for the first time in this new translation of the 1958 collection. "Algerian Chronicles" also includes two letters that Camus wrote to French president Rene Coty in 1957 beseeching him to pardon several captured FLN members. That Camus should have been working behind the scenes to save the separatists whose violence he so abhorred speaks volumes about this complex man.--Tobias Grey"Financial Times" (05/03/2013)"Camus's liberal admirers saw his insistence on a peaceful resolution to the [Algerian struggle for independence], his condemnation of violence on both sides, as further proof of his moral integrity. Meanwhile, his leftist critics saw his moderation as a species of evasion, condemning his failure to come down clearly on the side of Algerian liberation. Today, when North Africa is once again the scene of revolutionary violence and the relations between the West and its former Arab colonies remain dangerously fraught, the debate about Camus and Algeria still resonates.--Adam Kirsch"The Daily Beast" (10/20/2013)"Camus's "Algerian Chronicles", edited and introduced by Alice Kaplan and beautifully translated by Arthur Goldhammer, affords Camus the belated opportunity to make his own case to the Anglophone public. This book, in slightly different form, proved his final public word on the Algerian question when it was originally published in June 1958 To witness the progression of his responses is to recognize above all the remarkable consistency of Camus's moral conviction, the dogged optimism of his outlook, and his unfailing ability, even in the complex turmoil of emotional involvement with the issue, to cleave to his own principles of justice It was this moral lucidity that had provoked Camus's disenchantment with communism and underpinned his ardent opposition to the death penalty, a stance that prompted him to speak out, at different times, to save the lives of Nazi collaborators and FLN terrorists alike Camus's honesty and consistency retain, in retrospect, a moral purity that few others could claim.--Claire Messud"New York Review of Books" (11/07/2013)"Camus writing is shot through with appeals to the moral sense of his audience. And it is his own moral sense that makes the occasional writing collected here still so readable After years of neglect and rejection, Camus is being rediscovered in Algeria. In the 1990s, Algeria endured another decade of bloody civil strife, this time between the Algerian army and Islamic insurgents. The questions Camus raised about

common guilt, forgiveness, justice, and who is a true Algerian have been recognized as relevant once more.--Gerald J. Rusello"Commonweal" (11/07/2013)"Magnificently eloquent and courageous Even today, admirers of Camus sometimes worry that his radiant bravery and integrity were compromised by a colonial kid's blind spot when it came to Arab Algerians. The ""Chronicles--"authoritatively edited by Alice Kaplan--should quell that doubt forever. From meticulous reports on poverty and prejudice in 1930s Kabylia to the great speech in Algiers in 1956, when right-wing thugs shouted down his heartfelt call for a civilian truce, every page speaks of his honesty, his compassion, his empathy.--Boyd Tonkin"The Independent" (12/21/2013)"Camus's tortured words may profitably be reconsidered half a century later, with the benefit of hindsight as regards Algeria's traumatic accession to independence, which included the mass exodus of the territory's settler population. Algeria's history since 1962, and particularly the black decade of civil war in the 1990s between the military-backed government and Islamist rebels, also casts new light on these texts, underscoring their contemporary relevance. Camus's alternately angry and anguished engagement is made readily accessible to an English-speaking audience in Arthur Goldhammer's sensitive rendering As the Franco-Algerian memory wars continue to rage--significantly, the French state acknowledged that the 1954-62 events had been a war only in 1999--this new translation offers a welcome opportunity to engage with the political soul-searching of a major figure who, as the American historian James Le Sueur has argued, may have been wrong about Algeria but may also have been right to be wrong.--Philip Dine"Irish Times" (01/18/2014)"

Albert Camus (1913-1960), Algerian-French novelist, essayist, and playwright, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957. Alice Kaplan is John M. Musser Professor of French and chair of the Department of French at Yale University.

camus is one of my very few favorite writers ... mystical, ethical, poetic prose. i particularly love the book that collects his lyrical and critical essays ... especially his writing about algiers, algeria, and his travels around europe. what an amazing person and writer. his underground writing, editing and publishing in france during the nazi control of france takes my breath away. and now, with this new publication of his "algerian chronicles," we have a sense of his birth in a french slum in algiers, his maturation there, and his deep, intellectual knowledge and assessment of the french control of algiers and his personal experience of being born there, growing up there, and the realities of cultural differences that can lead to conflict and bloodshed. camus is easily one of my very greatest



of writers. this new translation solidifies that.

What an amazing man! Here is someone who really put all he had behind his beliefs and convictions and even then.....These are articles Camus wrote for Le Monde and an attempt to keep France from a very stupid and costly war and one that was very destructive for Algeria. His thinking is flawless but he found himself not ignored or vilified in France and listened too incorrectly in Algeria. Sadly he did not live to see his beloved mother country free itself. Beautifully translated in the exact style Camus uses when he writes in French - concise, laser observations from a great man.

I discovered Camus about 2 years ago and instantly fell in love with him. I was allowed to use him as a topic for an essay in my French class. I picked up this book because I thought I might find some interesting aspects of his life. I began by skimming through the book and was quickly hooked and read the entire thing in two days and gained quite an education in the process. Camus writes so passionately that one can't help but feel the same compassion and outrage that Camus did. I'm so glad I decided to use this book. Not only did it educate me on a topic I was totally ignorant of, but it introduced me to a side of Camus I wasn't familiar with and has made me grow to love and appreciate him even more.

What is old is new again. The same situation is being repeated over and over. Algeria is the historical road map for all of the modern terror movements (Al-Qa`ida) and anyone who wants a good overview of what is going on needs to FIRST go back to Algeria and get a good solid foundation on what happened there to then move forward and look anew at all that is going on in the world today.

Reading anything not previously available from Albert Camus is of course a pleasure. These essays while dated are nonetheless insightful for the subtlety of Camus's argument and the careful way he constructs his case using statistics, first hand reporting and humanitarian concern all rendered in elegant prose. However, the subject matter here is confined to this one topic and can't reach the scope and the power of his essay collection Resistance, Rebellion and Death. For anyone who hasn't read it, I would recommend starting there..

**CAMUS, A GREAT WRITER** Albert Camus stands among the greatest authors of his century. It is his

ability to carry through his well-kept sentences, paragraphs and chapters to a direct, uncomplicated finish, without hype. Moreover, his philosophical conclusions are sound. His life in his world turned upside down, including loss of a father who died in World War 1, when Camus was age one and a life of terror living in Algeria is clearly expressed in his writings. Geoffrey M. Footner

Interesting read, but it is heavily biased by Camus political views which can be a good or bad thing based on the reader.

A good book to understand the writings of Camus as well as the back-ground of the Pied Noir.

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