



David Galula, from the Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock?

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So while Galula cannot be a textbook to be slipped into the dustbin, it should remain a source of inspiration and reflection to sift through the operations and difficulties that Western forces face today. Let us give a few examples of the use of force and how it is perceived.

For Galula, let us remember that the objective of counter-insurgency warfare is not the conquest of territory but of people, and this objective is not achieved by destroying enemy forces. It is because the insurgent can no longer find support among the population that he cannot continue the fight. Of course, in his view, in order to begin pacification, it is necessary to begin with a military operation aimed at at least temporarily expelling the rebels from the area in which one is to operate. But then things are quite different; the action of fire must give way to the turning of the population.

While Galula is achieving spectacular successes in his sector of Kabylia and this sector is gradually becoming the attraction of the Algiers headquarters, and even of the Parisian visitors, he is constantly confronted with incomprehension. Thus, when General Guérin wants to promote him to a higher rank on an exceptional basis, Algiers opposes him on the grounds that it is inconceivable to put forward an officer who has not been cited in an action of fire... On the contrary, the "warriors", theOn the contrary, the "warriors", the expression is Galula's, having a high score in terms of enemies out of combat, but a nil result in terms of pacification, had, them, all their chances... Two months later, Guérin and General Salan wrote a "false" quotation about him to win his case !

In the same spirit, he denounced the error of believing that it was enough to eliminate the rebel leaders to defeat the insurrection. He notes this in particular with regard to the interception of Ben Bella's plane and the FLN leaders between Rabat and Tunis in October 1956. Galula does not deny, however, that this could be useful in certain circumstances; he himself practised it in his sector, but almost as a consequence of the pacification action. On the other hand, it is questionable whether this means of action was

used almost systematically. Does targeted elimination not risk preventing the emergence of any credible interlocutor and encouraging the emergence of extremist leaders? Is there not currently a temptation to believe that special operations would be sufficient to achieve strategic objectives?

Contrary to traditional principles of employment, in his area of operations Galula will progressively disperse his company in each village in small groups of fifteen to twenty soldiers. Inspecting his sector, General Nogues was horrified: "Given the dispersal of your forces, you no longer have any military power. Your positions are completely useless, you are not powerful enough to allow you to make any serious sorties and fight the rebels!" He could not convince him that this was the result of success. Didn't he open six schools to educate 1,400 children, boys and girls, just because of his soldiers? Shouldn't this bias and these results be questioned when FOBs, armoured convoys and heavy helmets have become the norm?

While he lacks the means to carry out pacification, Galula criticizes the exaggerated cost of military operations (ammunition and destruction) in relation to their effectiveness. At the end of a day's sweep, he observed: "In one day, we used 500 105 mm shells and I don't know how many rockets. We found the bodies of three rebels. In my report, I compared the price of our ammunition with the result of the operation and suggested that eventually offering 500,000 francs (\$1,000) to each fellagha who surrendered with his weapon would cost us less and be more effective. »

More generally, counter-insurgency warfare is a war that, in order to be won, must go against the classical principle of going to extremes. The use of force must be kept to a minimum as far as possible. Nevertheless, in *Pacification in Algeria*⁴...his testimony from the field, things aren't always so clear-cut. Galula is, for example, in favour of using Napalm, DDT, even gas to purge an impenetrable forest of its rebels. Commenting on the battle of Algiers, in which he did not take part, he is ambiguous about the means used in the light of the blind terrorism that was rampant. However, in his practice of interrogation, he refuses any recourse to torture and advocates instead treating prisoners humanely in order to combat adverse propaganda, or even to return suspects, without, however, naturally abandoning the psychological pressure necessary to make them talk.

⁴ Les Belles Lettres, Mémoires de guerre collection, Paris, 2016, 363 p., translated from English by Julia Malye, "Pacification in Algeria", 1956-1958, 1963, Rand Corporation.

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