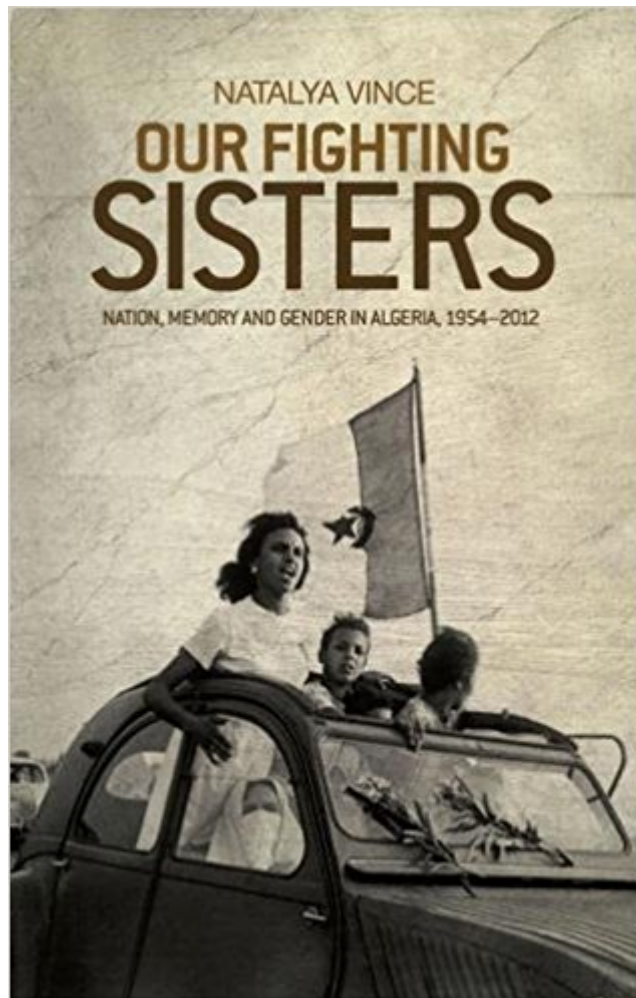




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# Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory And Gender In Algeria, 1954-2012



## Synopsis

Between 1954 and 1962, Algerian women played a major role in the struggle to end French rule in one of the twentieth century's most violent wars of decolonisation. This is the first in-depth exploration of what happened to these women after independence in 1962. Based on new oral history interviews with women who participated in the war in a wide range of roles, from urban bombers to members of the rural guerrilla support network, it explores how female veterans viewed the post-independence state and its multiple discourses on 'the Algerian woman' in the fifty years following 1962. It also examines how these former combatants' memories of the anti-colonial conflict intertwine with, contradict or coexist alongside the state-sponsored narrative of the war constructed after independence. Making an original contribution to debates about gender, nationalism and memory, this book will appeal to students and scholars of history and politics.

## Book Information

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Four dimensions make this book remarkable: it covers a long period (from the origins of the independence fight to the Facebook pages devoted to these women); it refuses academic chronological patterns; it breaks the historiographic silence of the post-independence years in Algeria (resulting from the impossible access to national archives); and it challenges many received ideas-for instance, the 'women returning to the kitchen' one. The book's coherence is underpinned by interviews held with 27 women belonging to two groups: a few rural women from small Kabyle villages who supported the guerrillas, and a greater number of urban women who were involved in the Algiers network. Marc Andr  f  , Paris-Sorbonne, Modern & Contemporary France, 03/12/2015

"Well written and meticulously researched, Vince's book offers important insights into Algeria's past and present. Challenging stereotypes and engaging in debates concerning gender, nation-building, and memory, the text encourages readers to view Algerian women as more than 'wombs of the nation, guardians of national essence, courageous teenage fighters' (212). Natalya Vince reminds us to see them all - the few high-profile women whose names became known beyond Algeria, and the many anonymous militants - as important contributors to an epic narrative of resistance that did not end in 1962." - Mildred Mortimer from the University of Colorado, *Journal of North African Studies* "It is hard to underestimate either the value of this resource or the originality of the insights derived from it...Specialists in women's history and historical memory will find rich pickings throughout, and perhaps most of all in a searing final chapter, "Being remembered and forgotten" in which the post-colonial disappointments of nationalist activism and modernist idealism are laid bare." - Martin C. Thomas, University of Exeter, *H-Diplo* May 2016 "This sophisticated and thought-provoking study shows how the memory of the war simultaneously unites Algerians while offering a space to fight for gender rights and equality." - Allison Drew, University of York, *Labour History Review*, vol. 81, no. 1 "...a fascinating, worthwhile book on female war veterans' memory of their role in the war and how it coincides with the national image of the Algerian woman shaped and re-shaped during the decades and political phases until 2012 contrasting their real life conditions." - Katharina Marlenehey, LMU Munich/ENS Paris, *French History*, (2016) "Our Fighting Sisters is an extremely rich and well-documented monograph." - Emmanuel Pierre Guittet, *Explosive Politics* 'This book is one of the first to take an interest in the place of women in discussions of the Algerian nation from the War [of Independence] to the 2000s. It is very exciting in a number of ways.' - Raphaël Branche, *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'histoire* "Scholars from multiple disciplines will therefore find much of interest and value in this excellent study of memory and gender in Algeria." - Claire Eldridge, University of Leeds, *Journal of Contemporary History* 52(2)

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