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Battle of Algiers (1967) Study Guide

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THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS (1967)
STUDY GUIDE, 2004
Steven Alan Samson

Chief Characters

Omar Ali or Ali Amar (alias **Ali-la-Pointe**): FLN enforcer
Lhadi Djafar (Larbi Ben M'Hidi?): FLN leader
Philippe Mathieu: commander of Operation Champagne

Terms

The **Casbah**: the Muslim quarter of Algiers
National Liberation Front (FLN): the Organization, seeking Algerian independence and the suppression of vice associated with the European presence
Dien Bien Phu: the decisive 1954 battle that led to French withdrawal from Indochina

Study Questions

1. Why did the children beat the wino?
2. How was the marriage ceremony an act of conscience and an act of war?
3. How did the FLN use (and sabotage) the openness of the European quarter?
4. How was the FLN organized?
5. What was the rationale for the eight-day strike?

   "Neither wars nor revolutions are accomplished by incidents. Terrorism is useful only as a start. But then the people must act. That's why we had to have the strike. To mobilize the people; count them; assess our strength. And prove it to the UN. It is difficult to start a revolution, more difficult to sustain it, and still more difficult to win it. But it is later, when we have won, that the real difficulties begin."

6. How did the commander respond when asked whether the FLN would succeed?
7. What was the response of the UN General Assembly to the Algerian situation?
8. How did the commander propose to break up the FLN? Did he succeed?
9. What the final *dénouement* (unraveling or resolution)?

Major Aussaresses, the paratroop commando leader of the 11th Shock, has recently published his memoirs: Paul Aussaresses, <u>The Battle of the Casbah: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Algeria, 1955-1957</u> (New York: Enigma, 2002).