



Fifty Years of "The Battle of Algiers": Past as Prologue (Forerunners: Ideas First)

Sohail Daulatzai

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The Battle of Algiers, a 1966 film that poetically captures Algerian resistance to French colonial occupation, is widely considered one of the greatest political films of all time. With an artistic defiance that matched the boldness of the anticolonial struggles of the time, it was embraced across the political spectrum—from leftist groups like the Black Panther Party and the Palestine Liberation Organization to right-wing juntas in the 1970s and later, the Pentagon in 2003. With a philosophical nod to Frantz Fanon, Sohail Daulatzai demonstrates that tracing the film's afterlife reveals a larger story about how dreams of freedom were shared and crushed in the fifty years since its release. As the War on Terror expands and the "threat" of the Muslim looms, *The Battle of Algiers* is more than an artifact of the past—it's a prophetic testament to the present and a cautionary tale of an imperial future, as perpetual war has been declared on permanent unrest.

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