# Battle of Algiers

The Battle of Algiers was one of the pivotal events in the history of Algeria’s struggle for independence. Algeria was against colonization by the French army, and this was the predominant cause of the war. This war actually started in November 1954 with a series of bombing attacks across Algeria (Pontecorvo n.p). The film Battle of Algiers explains more in a clear way about the struggle for nationalism in Algeria. It is even today used as a training film for urban guerrillas as it was declared on TV in 1968 by Jimmy Breslin. Many Algerian were torched as shown by the film. In this paper, we will focus on the main aspects of the film which include religion, economic, cultural, political, and military aspects which were universal. These are some of the aspects that could have been used as the basis for films in diverse settings in the history of decolonization in Asia, Africa, and in the Middle East or in any other part of the biosphere.

The Battle of Algiers is noticeably based on socio-political structure. It is generally welcomed as one of the paramount political movies of all time (Nette n.p). In the film – just as in reality, the French wanted to control the people of Algeria politically. The Algerians never wanted to be controlled by the French, and so they had to engage in a battle with them so they can have full control of their land. Socially, the French wanted the Algerians to learn to speak French. They actually forced people to learn how to speak French, but unfortunately were not enthusiastic to learn this new language in their land. The Algerians wanted to retain their own cultures by speaking their own language (Pontecorvo n.p). This caused the French to embark on forcing them to learn to talk in French, and they did this by starting up schools that were used to teach this language. However, Many Algerians repelled. This is was a universal aspect that would be used in any setting of a film in that all Europeans or other colonialists wanted to spread their culture to other parts of the universe. They also wanted to suppress the already weak countries.

One of the aspects of Pontecorvo’s film that was fascinating was how the role of Islam played in the film. This was typically via the use of diegetic sound. There were two parts in this movie where the call to prayer was being recited - some sort of loudspeaker in the background. On normal occasions, the call for prayer is a reminder that one of the five prayers of the day should be honored shortly, and there is need to take antecedence in preparing oneself for this specific prayer; the members of FLN and Ali did not in both scenes (Gillo n.p). This was actually interesting since Islam is so highly valued the film, and even when one specific character expresses his desire for Algeria to become free he states that it should be free, but under Islamic rule. One question that comes to mind is, if the film highly valued religion, then why didn’t Ali and his colleagues stopped praying in these two scenes? Through this interesting action, what was Pontecorvo trying to convey? One clear answer would be Pontecorvo tried to convey - via the incorporation of the plea to pray as a diegetic sound - that Islam plays a very immense role in the movie and is in the back of the Algerian’s mind, but perhaps freedom from the French was taking priority at the time (Mark 63).

One of the other aspects clear in the film is militarism. The film shows that terrorism is not a method merely used by insurgents, but also conventional militaries when it suits them. The French military is portrayed to have used eccentric methods such as manipulation and torture (Mark 65). It is not always expected that any trained military would use such unconventional methods, buy this film centers on unmasking them (Saer 2). This is actually an aspect that should be the basis for a film in the decolonization in other parts of the world such as Africa and Asia in that they eccentric methods such as torture were highly used by the colonists (Pontecorvo n.p).

In conclusion, this film rebuilds the events that were witnessed in Algeria in the years between 1954 and 1962. It is a movie that is founded on political aspects as it concentrates on the war for independence of Algeria and has an indiscriminate depiction of the occurrences. The film has tried to show the atrocities committed by both sides. It does this with total disregard of the fact that its budget was partially taken care of by the Algerian government. The events shown in the movie are actually a true reflection of the war of independence in Algeria. It represents the period when a wave of nationalism was spreading through Africa and other parts of the world. Much has been seen about the suffering of people and the wanton destruction of life and property. Despite this entire struggle by the Algerian people to gain their independence, they ultimately defeated the French and were able to gain their independence in 1962.

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