

The referendum and after

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a majority for the referendum as one more task in which it is to prove its ability. (What wonder if those traditional watchdogs of the Republic, the primary school-teachers, should react in the other direction!) Finally, it is not very Republican to vote for the new Constitution, as many Frenchmen will do, because there is no other prospective roof to keep out the rain—though it may be a very sensible and justifiable motive.

On some issues, such as policy towards Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt, the General has already made his choice, but it is to be noted that, like some of his Fourth Republic predecessors, he has found it necessary to do good by stealth. Most Frenchmen had no idea that in this sphere he has followed the opposite course to that recommended by his Right-wing backers. His first important post-referendum choice will be the electoral law. Will he yield to the pressure of the Right and choose a system that is likely to give them a large and unrepresentative majority? The second decision will be over Algeria. For how long can he leave the central problem of all French political life in the hands of

a self-governing Army? Does he really refrain from using the word "integration" only because he has had to wait till the opinion of Metropolitan France has caught up with Algiers? This is the story being told by psychological warfare officers in Algeria. He has confided to men of the Left his views about Algeria which are remote from those being preached under his aegis at Algiers to-day. Is he sitting down to besiege a fortress because he cannot take it by assault? This surely by his own military doctrines would already be half-way to defeat.

Above all, how can a new policy in Algeria be promoted if opinion is not prepared for it? Or, indeed, how can a new Republic be promoted without new Republicans? So far as the present regime can be judged, it bears one resemblance to the last in spite of many differences. It encourages submissiveness in citizens and independence in military men. The last Constitution was a bad one, but almost any Constitution can be made to work by resolute, public-spirited citizens. There was an insufficiency of these. Will this Constitution help to increase their number?