

Re: Bourbaki?

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- *From:* "Dik T. Winter" <Dik.Winter@xxxxxx>
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In article <xQ0yh.17855\$j7.345701@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> tim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx writes:

Dik T. Winter wrote:

Bourbaki is adopted as name by a group of French mathematicians. It was also the name of a real person (a particularly unsuccessful French general). Originally it was a joking adaption, but became more serious in the course of times. The family of the real general was not amused.

But it was an extraordinary choice.
Has any explanation ever been given?

It is not altogether clear. There is some explanation in:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourbaki_group> and more complete in:
<http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/HistTopics/Bourbaki_1.html>.

I believe Andre Weil, who was probably the father-figure, was extremely anti-militaristic, even for a mathematician. (Wasn't he sentenced to death for refusing to register for the army under the Vichy regime, or is my memory playing up?)

That is wrong. He was in Finland during WWII. He was arrested, accused of espionage for the USSR in Finland, but later released. Rolf Nevanlinna apparently spread the story that he was sentenced to death.

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