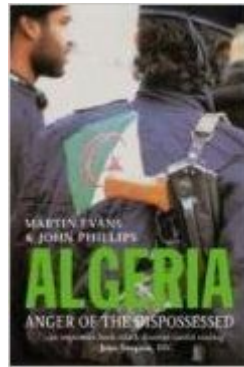




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Algeria: Anger Of The Dispossessed



Synopsis

After liberating itself from French colonial rule in one of the twentieth century's most brutal wars of independence, Algeria became a standard-bearer for the non-aligned movement. By the 1990s, however, its revolutionary political model had collapsed, degenerating into a savage conflict between the military and Islamist guerillas that killed some 200,000 citizens. In this lucid and gripping account, Martin Evans and John Phillips explore Algeria's recent and very bloody history, demonstrating how the high hopes of independence turned into anger as young Algerians grew increasingly alienated. Unemployed, frustrated by the corrupt military regime, and excluded by the West, the post-independence generation needed new heroes, and some found them in Osama bin Laden and the rising Islamist movement. Evans and Phillips trace the complex roots of this alienation, arguing that Algeria's predicament—political instability, pressing economic and social problems, bad governance, a disenfranchised youth—is emblematic of an arc of insecurity stretching from Morocco to Indonesia. Looking back at the pre-colonial and colonial periods, they place Algeria's complex present into historical context, demonstrating how successive governments have manipulated the past for their own ends. The result is a fractured society with a complicated and bitter relationship with the Western powers—and an increasing tendency to export terrorism to France, America, and beyond.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fifty years after winning a bloody independence struggle, Algeria remains disturbingly unstable and impoverished. British historian Evans and journalist Phillips draw a complex, engrossing portrait of a

nation afflicted with many contemporary problems: terrorism, economic inequality, a stalled transition to democracy and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. After gaining independence from France in 1962, leaders spoke of democracy but ruled with a one-party state. The first generation of free Algerians grew up under an increasingly corrupt military dictatorship. As decades passed, a swelling population and massive unemployment among young people increasingly attracted to the Islamic movement exploded into widespread violence during 1988's Black October. Although the army brutally suppressed the uprising, thereby radicalizing many victims and observers, the government determined that democratization was essential. After reforms, the radical Islamic party won a landslide victory in the 1991 preliminary electoral ballot despite laws aimed at the party's suppression. Military leaders canceled further elections and imprisoned thousands of Islamists. Other Islamists took to the hills. A vicious guerrilla terror campaign ensued for a decade. Evans and Phillips's clear-eyed tome reveals a fractured society seething under an insecure and oppressive government. (Jan.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"An excellent primer that provides readers a quick orientation into Algeria's history from 1820 to the present." —Cmdr. Youssef Aboul-Enein, *Waterline* (Cmdr. Youssef Aboul-Enein *Waterline* 2008-08-14)"As this chilling and important book makes clear, [Algeria] remains a country controlled by unelected men who have left most of the population disinherited and at continuing risk of political violence." —Michael Mewshaw, *Washington Post* (Michael Mewshaw *Washington Post* 2008-03-30)

The book is worthy to stand next to Alistair Horne's classic "A Savage War of Peace" in the bibliography of books about this fascinating country with a tragic history. Not only does it clearly describe the war for independence in the 50's and 60's, but it also provides a very readable account of the extreme violence the country witnessed in the 1990's. It also provides some interesting lessons that we could apply to our involvement in Iraq. Very readable and highly recommended for anyone with an interest in the region or Algeria specifically.

* Three maps* Seventeen plates* Helpful Arabic glossary* Twenty two pages of footnotes* Seven page bibliography* Chapters four to eight focus on post-1988 Algeria. Bite-sized chapters; longest is 41 pages.

Great Thanks to John Philips and Martin Evans for the quality of this study. They succeeded to give a global vision of a complicated conflict which has deep roots in the regional history.

Furthermore, they kept an ability to go into the more important details. We find a lot of anecdote along the study that helps a non native to understand the subtleties of the local character and visions. I didn't find such a synthesis, even in the french literature. Grand merci aux auteurs pour leur analyse perspicace et leur honnêteté intellectuelle. Ils ont su donner une vision globale du conflit actuel et mettre en évidence des causes qui plongent leurs racines dans l'histoire de la région, tout en gardant un souci du détail remarquable; le récit est jalonné d'anecdotes instructives et parlantes. Il n'y a pas, à ma connaissance, d'équivalent à cet ouvrage dans la bibliographie francophone.

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