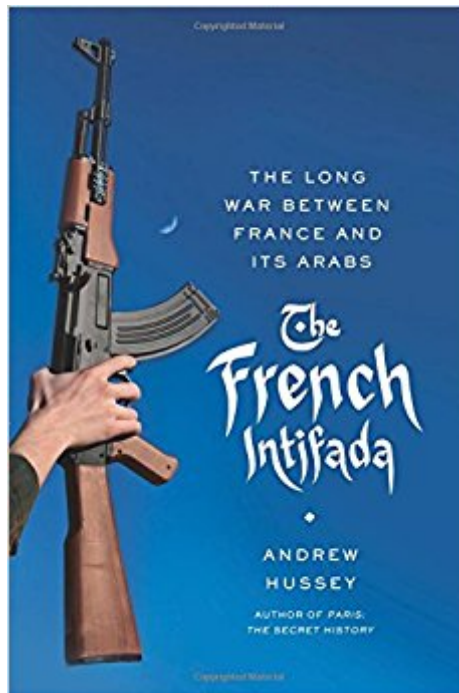


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The French Intifada: The Long War Between France And Its Arabs



Synopsis

A provocative rethinking of France's long relationship with the Arab world To fully understand both the social and political pressures wracking contemporary France—and, indeed, all of Europe—as well as major events from the Arab Spring in the Middle East to the tensions in Mali, Andrew Hussey believes that we have to look beyond the confines of domestic horizons. As much as unemployment, economic stagnation, and social deprivation exacerbate the ongoing turmoil in the banlieues, the root of the problem lies elsewhere: in the continuing fallout from Europe's colonial era. Combining a fascinating and compulsively readable mix of history, literature, and politics with his years of personal experience visiting the banlieues and countries across the Arab world, especially Algeria, Hussey attempts to make sense of the present situation. In the course of teasing out the myriad interconnections between past and present in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Beirut, and Western Europe, *The French Intifada* shows that the defining conflict of the twenty-first century will not be between Islam and the West but between two dramatically different experiences of the world—the colonizers and the colonized.

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Customer Reviews

In 1827, France was trying to weasel out of paying its long overdue debts for goods imported from Algeria. The French consul confronted the Bey of Algiers (ruler of the country) with France's demands, in a supercilious manner. The irate Bey replied by slapping the pompous Frenchman with a fly-whisk. In response France's ships blockaded Algiers, the Bey's army cannonaded the French,

the hostilities gradually escalated, culminating into a full blown invasion by France in 1830. And for the next 130 years, until Algeria's war of independence, France ruled Algeria as part of its territory but a second class province. The annexation of Algeria was accomplished with unmitigated brutality against individuals (incarceration, beatings, torture and executions) as well as entire villages, with firebombing from the air and "enfumades" (smoking attacks) - where villages are set on fire and the escaping dwellers are shot down by the French army. The same tactics were again used to quell the 1950s uprisings. About 1.5 million French "colons" settled in Algeria and ruled it with an iron fist. Dissent was crushed with ruthless, merciless and violent efficiency by the "gendarmes" who were proficient in torture methods. Their innovative techniques are said to have been later adapted by the tyrants of the Middle East. To the French, the natives were barbarians who needed to be "civilised" and abandon their culture. Algerians, who according to Hussey, were considered by the French to share "racial and cultural defects of all North Africans, ranging from stupidity, criminality and a taste for violence." They were given the choice between French citizenship or continue to live as Muslims. The devout were thus definitely excluded from governing.

Before discussing the ideological content (and the content is always ideological, extremely rarely historical and hardly sociological) let me evacuate an irritating surface of the book. THE SLOPPY SURFACE There are very numerous mistakes at the level of the spelling, the plain syntax, the general proofreading that was sloppy and careless. Apart from misspellings, some words are missing, some words are in excess, some words are misplaced. The author has a real problem with his articles. You will learn that someone "was born in THE Isère" (p. 270) That must have been a very wet delivery. I just wonder if it would be possible to be born in THE Thames. That would be very muddy indeed. For a Britisher, what's more working for the BBC, he should know better: it is a typical mistake performed by "continental" British expatriates. But what about these other cases: "the real masters of THE Bagneux" (p. 32), "taking his cue from THE Iran" (p. 307). Those were petty remarks. But the following is not. He systematically uses the word "deputy" for a French Member of Parliament as if "deputy" did not have a meaning in English that makes it quite different from what an MP is. He could if he wanted use the French word in italics, *député*, or in single quotes, but he translates the word as if it were a transparent word. It is not. It is irritating to use that Franglish that means NOTHING in NO language NOWhere in NO world. We could of course go on with such mistakes. The book is full of them, literally as stuffed with them as a Thanksgiving turkey. Let's move to the content. REDUCTIVE INFORMATION The book starts with the famous 2007 "Gare du Nord riot" in Paris (page 1).

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