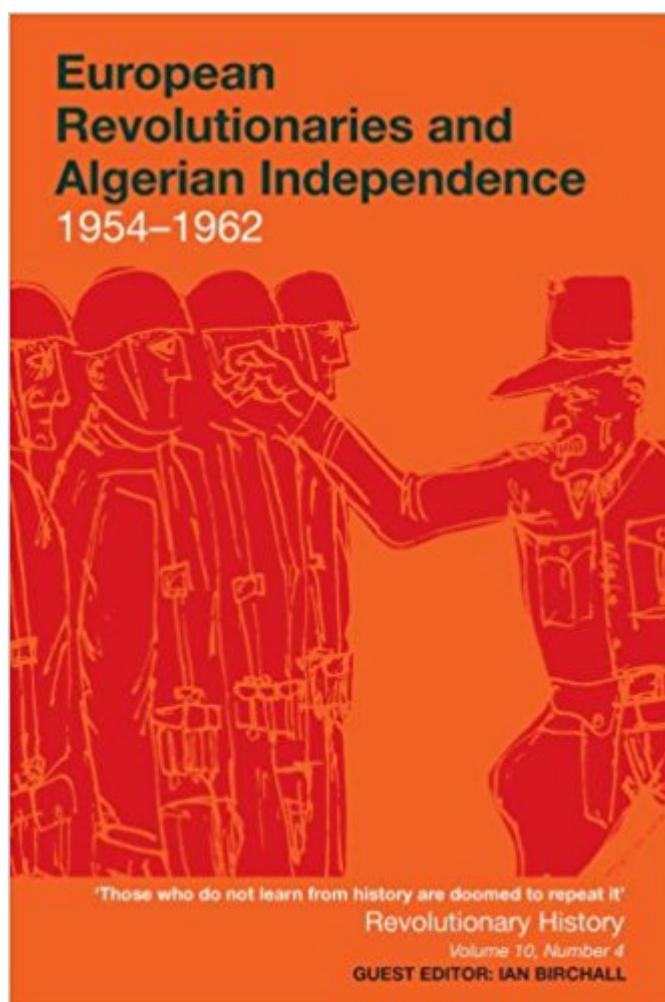


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European Revolutionaries And Algerian Independence: 1954–1962 (Revolutionary History)



Synopsis

With the summer of 2012 marking half a century of independence for Algeria, the Algerian War has been brought into discussions in France once more, where parallels between the past and present are revealed. This analysis takes an in-depth look at the war from 1954 to 1962 and the response from the French left. Drawing from documents and interviews, it offers a full account of not only the role of the revolutionary left in giving political and practical solidarity to the Algerian liberation struggle, but also that of the Trotskyists during that period. Including a section on how the war has been reflected in fiction, this volume is sure to interest academics across various fields.

Book Information

Series: Revolutionary History (Book 10)

Paperback: 276 pages

Publisher: Merlin Press (July 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0850366658

ISBN-13: 978-0850366655

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #2,039,859 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #105 in Books > History > Africa > Algeria #540 in Books > History > Africa > North Africa #1031 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Africa

Customer Reviews

Ian Birchall is an independent socialist writer and translator, a lifelong member of the Socialist Workers Party, and a member of the Editorial Board of Revolutionary History. He is also a member of the London Socialist Historians Group, a frequent contributor to Historical Materialism, and the author of Tony Cliff.

'The Algerian Revolution of 1954-62 was the last major colonial war fought by the French Empire against the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). The war ended with Algerian independence and victory. During the war, the French military engaged in systematic torture, murder, and terror with a death toll of 1.5 million. As the war dragged on, sectors of the French military with the backing of the settler population of Algeria attempted a coup d'etat that led to the downfall of the Fourth

Republic and the rise of De Gaulle. The French left behaved dishonorably during the war. Rather than working for the defeat of their own ruling class in a reactionary war, both the French socialist and communist parties supported the conduct of the war (although members of the CP did break with their party to aid the FLN). As this book demonstrates, only France's small Trotskyist movement, and to a lesser degree, anarchists and New Left supported the FLN and Algerian independence. The collection of documents contains a history of French Trotskyists in relation to the war, other currents who aided the FLN, and policy documents from the Trotskyists and the PCF in the early 20s (which had an ambivalent attitude toward Algerian independence). The collection shows that anti-war left initially wasn't sure whether to support the FLN or its more socialist-sounding rivals. Yet the antiwar left supported the FLN in a number of ways such as passing out pro-FLN leaflets, smuggling money and arms to the FLN, organizing strikes in support of Algerian independence, speaking out against torture by the French state, and encouraging desertion from the French army and Foreign Legion. The French antiwar left which supported the FLN did so on the principled internationalist basis of solidarity with an oppressed colonial population and that the defeat of 'their' own government was a revolutionary duty. For anyone wanting to know this untold story of the French left during the Algerian war and how revolutionaries should conduct themselves in an unjust war, this book is must-reading.'

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