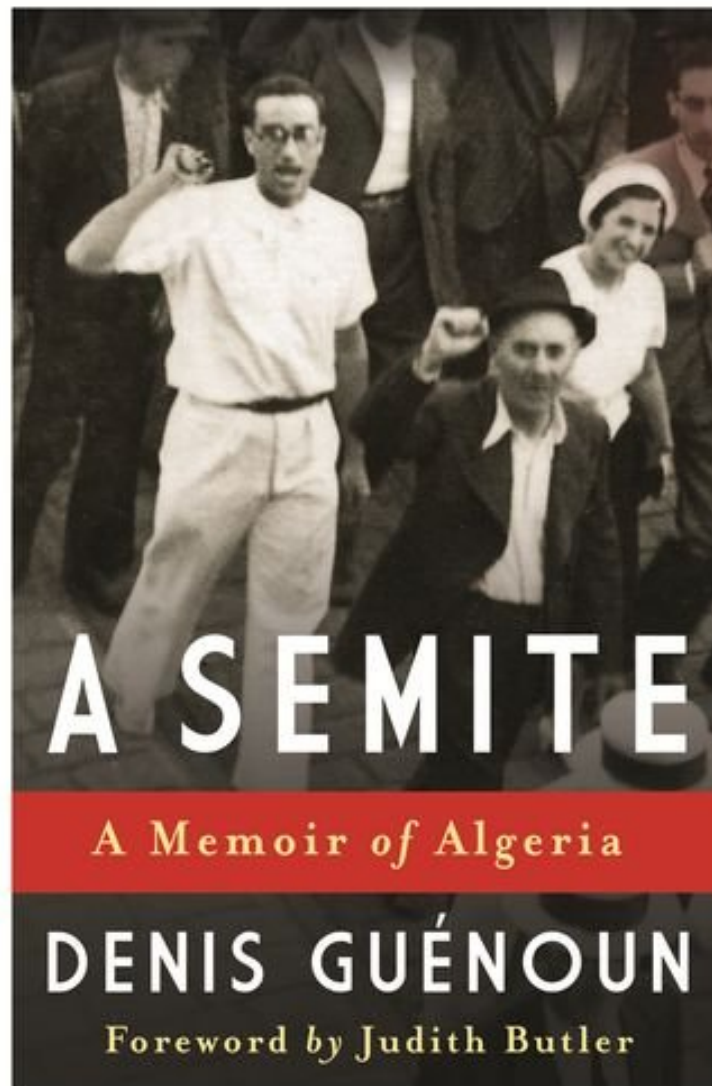


(Mobile library) A Semite: A Memoir of Algeria

## A Semite: A Memoir of Algeria

*Denis Guenoun*

*DOC | \*audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#2699472 in Books 2014-05-06Original language:FrenchPDF # 1 8.75 x 6.00 x .75l, .82 #File Name:  
0231164025176 pages | File size: 19.Mb

**Denis Guenoun : A Semite: A Memoir of Algeria** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Semite: A Memoir of Algeria:

In this vivid memoir, Denis Gunoun excavates his family's past and progressively fills out a portrait of an imposing, enigmatic father. Ren Gunoun was a teacher and a pioneer, and his secret support for Algerian independence was just one of the many things he did not discuss with his teenaged son. To be Algerian, pro-independence, a French citizen, a

Jew, and a Communist were not, to Ren's mind, dissonant allegiances. He believed Jews and Arabs were bound by an authentic fraternity and could only realize a free future together. Ren Gunoun called himself a Semite, a word that he felt united Jewish and Arab worlds and best reflected a shared origin. He also believed that Algerians had the same political rights as Frenchmen. Although his Jewish family was rooted in Algeria, he inherited French citizenship and revered the principles of the French Revolution. He taught science in a French lyce in Oran and belonged to the French Communist Party. His steadfast belief in liberty, equality, and fraternity led him into trouble, including prison and exile, yet his failures as an activist never shook his faith in a rational, generous future. Ren Gunoun was drafted to defend Vichy France's colonies in the Middle East during World War II. At the same time, Vichy barred him and his wife from teaching because they were Jewish. When the British conquered Syria, he was sent home to Oran, and in 1943, after the Allies captured Algeria, he joined the Free French Army and fought in Europe. After the war, both parents did their best to reconcile militant unionism and clandestine party activity with the demands of work and family. The Gunouns had little interest in Israel and considered themselves at home in Algeria; yet because he supported Algerian independence, Ren Gunoun outraged his French neighbors and was expelled from Algeria by the French paramilitary Organisation Armée Secrète. He spent his final years in Marseille. Gracefully weaving together youthful memories with research into his father's life and times, Denis Gunoun re-creates an Algerian past that proved lovely, intellectually provocative, and dangerous.

From Booklist Gunoun's father, an Algerian Jew, called himself a Semite, a word binding Arabs and Jews, but his life was a complex web of ethnic, racial, and political identities. In this lyrical memoir, Gunoun traces the lives of his forebears and himself in the geopolitics of Algeria and France. The cultural evolution of his family tells much of the story. His great-grandfather spoke only Arabic, his grandfather spoke Arabic and French, his father spoke French and a little Arabic, and he speaks only French. His father inherited French citizenship, taught science at a French lyce, and joined the French Communist Party. During WWII, he was drafted to defend the French colonies in the Middle East even though he and his wife were barred from teaching because they were Jewish. Caught up in the swirl of arms in Europe and the Middle East, the family was eventually expelled from Algeria to France. Drawing on his own recollections as well as documents that offer an official chronicle and letters and journals that pour out personal desires, Gunoun explores the complications of family and identity. --Vanessa Bush This is a complex engagement with the unique temporal, linguistic, and embodied qualities of family and cultural heritage. It is philosophically important and politically engaging, speaking to the necessities of repetition and distortion in the accuracies of memory and historical truth. It is also a delicate prose work of exceptional literary quality, an important contribution to contemporary studies in trauma and testimony and to the field of autobiography. (Penelope Deutscher, Northwestern University) This 'fable,' if I can call it that, is unmistakably magnificent, the former inquiry both rigorous and moving, the historical/political overview impeccably accurate. This is 'our' story, with its mistakes, its blind spots, its equivocations, its truth, with nothing omitted: families and the bonds of love, the teaching profession, an almost hallucinatory grasp of certain occasions, steadfastness, chance occurrences. Of all the things people have written about 'France,' this is the most just. (Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, philosopher, author of Heidegger and the Politics of Poetry) Drawing on his own recollections as well as documents that offer an official chronicle and letters and journals that pour out personal desires, Gunoun explores the complications of family and identity. (Booklist) [Gunoun] is an extraordinarily talented and creative Algerian born author and playwright and professor of French literature. Enticing... spellbinding... There is a musical rhythm to Gunoun's writing; a jazzy beat that feels like improvisation. (Jerusalem Post) An expert translation (Journal of the Society for Contemporary Thought and the Islamic World) [A] moving family biography. (Olivia Harrison The Los Angeles Review of Books) A Semite is an evocative work imparting to the reader that Jews and Arabs can and should, to induce the recent slogan, refuse to be enemies with each other. This wondrously written portrait of a cry is a resource of hope in our own envisaging of beautiful tomorrows. (Marcus Barnett Marx and Philosophy of Books) Gunoun has written a riveting account of his larger-than-life father that brings into sharp focus the last chapters of Jewish life in French Algeria in the 1960s.... A remarkable memoir. (Susan Gilson Miller The Journal of North African Studies) About the Author Denis Gunoun is professor emeritus of French literature at the Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris-IV). A playwright and essayist, he has published numerous books on theater and philosophy, including *Actions et acteurs*, *Livraison et délivrance*, and *Hypothèses sur l'Europe*, which has been published in English as *About Europe: Philosophical Hypotheses*. Judith Butler is Maxine Elliot Professor in the Departments of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature and the codirector of the Program of Critical Theory at the University of California, Berkeley. Ann Smock is professor emerita of French at the University of California, Berkeley. She has translated two books by Maurice Blanchot and a memoir by Sarah Kofman. Her own most recent work is *What Is There to Say?* William Smock, a documentary filmmaker, has translated scholarly articles and a chapter in *The Foucault Reader*. He is the author/illustrator of *The Bauhaus Ideal Then and Now*.