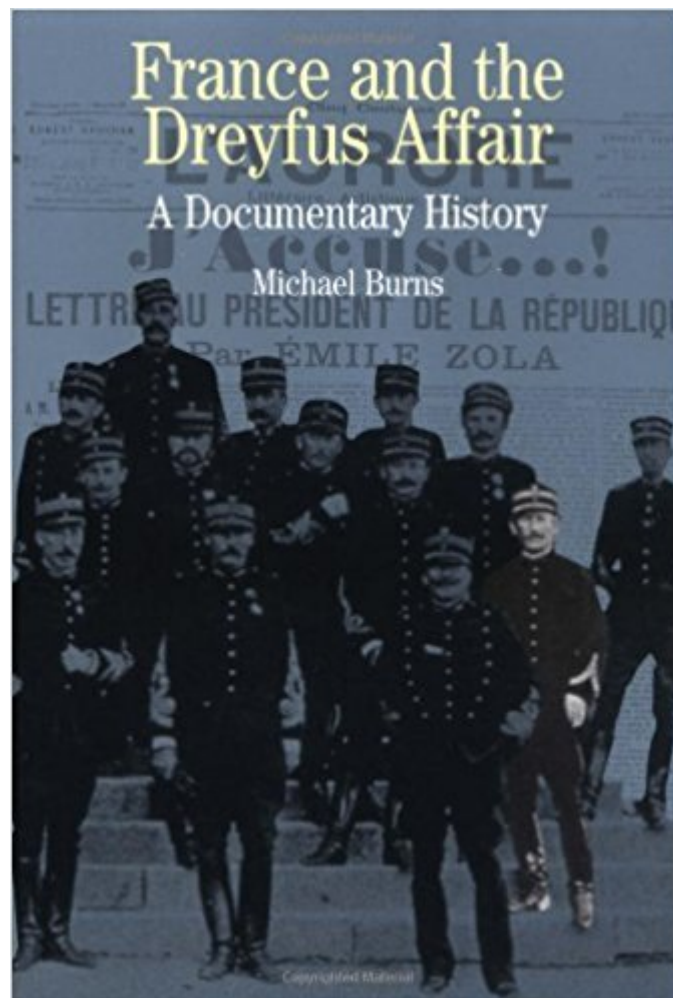




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# France And The Dreyfus Affair: A Brief Documentary History (Bedford Series In History & Culture)



## Synopsis

The Dreyfus affair – the infamous account of Jewish army officer and French citizen, Alfred Dreyfus, unjustly convicted of treason in 1894 – was the most significant political and social crisis of fin-de-siècle Europe. In the first book designed to introduce students to the broad outlines and significant legacies of the affair, the author deftly interweaves text with documents, tracing the course of events. He highlights the many issues connected with the case, including anti-Semitism, militant nationalism, socialism, the birth of modern Zionism, and the separation of church and state. Sixty-six documents are embedded in the narrative, offering students a broad range of sources to examine, including newspaper editorials, letters, trial testimony, and diary entries. A list of the principal characters is included in the appendices.

## Book Information

Series: Bedford Series in History & Culture

Paperback: 210 pages

Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's; First Edition edition (November 15, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312111673

ISBN-13: 978-0312111670

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.3 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #382,664 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #254 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > France #317 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Jewish #779 in Books > History > Europe > France

## Customer Reviews

"In both his analysis and his choice of documents, Michael Burns has brilliantly captured all the complexity and the passion of the Dreyfus affair. I salute his achievement."

MICHAEL BURNS teaches History at Mount Holyoke College.

I usually read American history, but this book intrigued me and it did not disappoint. Easy to read and most interesting that such an incident took place in France. It is sad that such bigotry existed and that a man was sent to prison for who he was rather than what he did. Dreyfus' family was to

commended for their steadfastness in his defense and eventual acquittal. The original documents were well placed to make the reader all the more aware of the horror and ignorance of the time.

The description for this book is exactly the same for the other book they sold me (The Second World War by Keegan) which it was not true.

I read this book for a class on 19th century Europe. Burns has done a wonderful job of providing documentation showing both sides of the affair. I wish all historical events were analyzed and documented so completely. After reading this book I have a greater understanding of what led to the court martial of Alfred Dreyfus, the turmoil following his conviction, and the societal changes that continued to evolve through the first half of the 20th century. Great book!

This book has translations of many of the relevant documents over a time line. It provides the background story as well. I really enjoyed reading this kind of chronology.

A fascinating book. I read it for a college level 'discussion' class and this book sparked a lot of fun discussion. The France and Dreyfus Affair was a fascinating historical incident and this book is an excellent overview of it.

There are two interesting things about this book:(1) It tries to view the Dreyfus affair from the perspective of (a) the entire period of 1789 to 1945, and (b) the entire Dreyfus family (it even includes a family tree!).(2) It is written like a novel, even though it is actually a history book. For example, beginning his discussion with Dreyfus's 18th century ancestors, Burns casually remarks on how one of these ancestors, being a butcher, must have had prodigious physical strength, and how (as per Jewish law and custom) he probably would sell the front half of the animal as kosher and sell the rear half to the gentiles due to the unkosher sinews (by contrast, Sephardi (Spanish and Middle Eastern) Jews tend to remove the individual sinews, a tedious process, and thereby render the rear half kosher). Burns also discusses the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of Ashkenazi (European) French Jewry in Alsace (of which Dreyfus's ancestors were a part), as contrasted with the French Sephardim (Spanish) in Bordeaux and Bayonne, and how the French Enlightenment figures never doubted that the latter (being already acculturated to France) would be accorded emancipation, even as they were reluctant to emancipate the former (who were very insular). The result is a history book that flows like a novel and includes a fascinating amount of both human

character and element (as per (1) above), as well as side details of daily life and thought (as per (2) above).

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