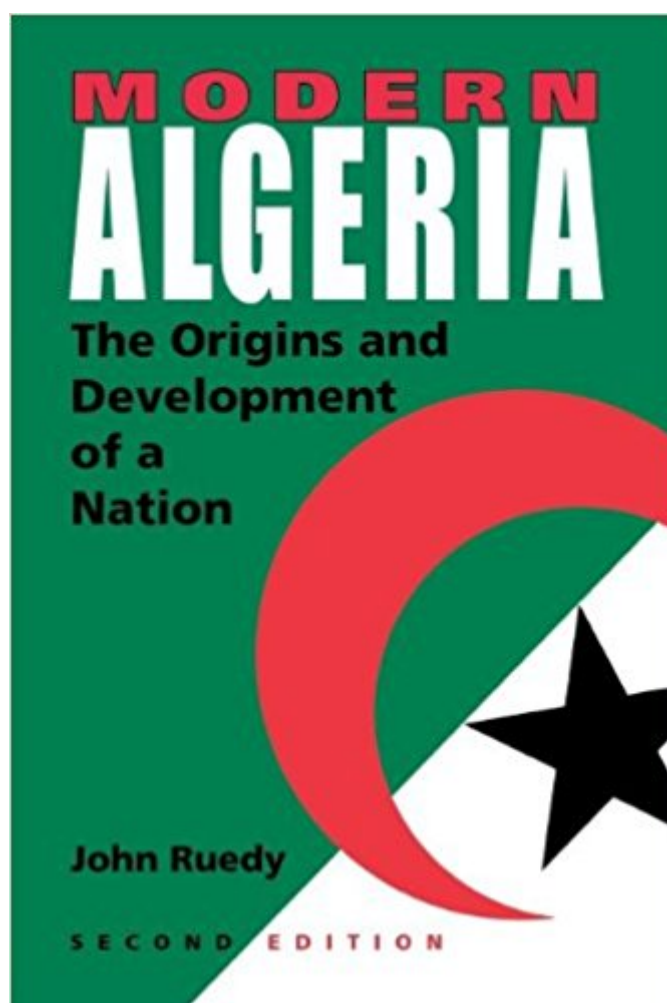


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# Modern Algeria, Second Edition: The Origins And Development Of A Nation



## Synopsis

Praise for the first edition: "[E]ssential reading for Maghreb specialists as well as for anyone interested in issues of nation-building and political culture in Africa." *Àfrica Today* "[T]he best and most comprehensive history of modern Algeria in English." *À Digest of Middle East Studies* "[A] thoughtful and much-needed introductory historical analysis of Algeria."

*À Choice* The second edition of *Modern Algeria* brings readers up to date with the outcome of the 2004 Algerian elections. Providing thorough coverage of the 1990s and the end of the Algerian Civil War, it addresses issues such as secularist struggles against fundamentalist Islam, ethnic and regional distinctions, gender, language, the evolution of popular culture, and political and economic relationships with France and the expatriate community. Updated information on resources enhances the usefulness of this popular textbook that has become a standard in the field.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This same chapter also includes a brief presentation of the author's view of nation-building as a contrast between segmentation and integration (p. 2), the progression from one to the other being particularly distorted and delayed in the cases of settler colonies. (For Ruedy, it is an indisputable fact that Algeria was a French settler colony of the most exploitive type even though the French authorities never designated Algeria as a colony in the formal legal sense nor administered it as such, declaring it, instead, an integral part of France by decree of March 4, 1848.) Chapter 2, *Ottoman Algeria and Its Legacy*, describes the rise and fall of the Regency of Algiers (151" *À 1830*). Ruedy's detailed presentation of the political, social, and economic history of this

entity makes a strong argument that, decentralized though it was, the Regency, by 1830, had evolved into a true state. Ruedy speculates that it might have become a nation had its development not been cut short by the French "invasion." A collateral result of the post-September 11, American-driven war on terrorism and military engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq has been a growing interest among Americans and others in the history of French involvement in North Africa, particularly the Algerian War of Independence. Alistair Horne's 1977 study of this war, *A Savage War of Peace*, with a revised preface by the author evoking Afghanistan and Iraq, has just recently been reprinted (2006). Gillo Pontecorvo's 1965 film, *The Battle of Algiers* has been made widely available on DVD. Both are required reading and viewing for U.S. military and civilian officials involved with Afghanistan and Iraq. The publication of the present work, the second edition of *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (originally published in 1992) appears to be directed at a similar readership (despite the author's more modest claims); but it also responds specifically to a growing concern about the post-1992 Islamist insurgency in Algeria. For certain observers, this insurrection appeared to be, at the same time, part of a worldwide Islamic war against the West and a continuation of the War of Independence that the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) had fought against the French Army between 1954 and 1962 to win Algerian independence. Thus John Ruedy has made a serious effort to update his book. He has revised chapter 8, "The Bendjedid Years—Readjustment and Crisis," to account for the social and economic crisis, the failed liberal reforms of the 1979–1992 period, and the assumption of power by the military-dominated Haut Comite de Securite, following the forced resignation of President Chadli Bendjedid on January 11, 1992. Ruedy has added a ninth chapter, "Insurgency and the Pursuit of Democracy," which chronicles the responses of a succession of military-dominated governments to the Islamist threat and describes the major political, social, and economic developments in Algeria through the April 2004 re-election of Abdelaziz Bouteflika as president of the Algerian Republic. Ruedy has also revised the bibliographical essay and the bibliography which conclude the book. Like the first edition, the second continues to have particular significance for Anglophone readers in a field that is still dominated by French-language literature., *H-Africa*, June 2007"Like many historians who have described the French military occupation of Algiers of July 1830, Ruedy emphasizes the contrast, on one hand, between the terms of the Treaty of Capitulation of July 5 (by which the French Commandant and War Minister, Count Louis de Bourmont, guaranteed the inviolability of the property, the businesses, and the industries of the local population, as well as the free exercise of Islam and the protection of women), and, on the other hand, the generalized looting and raping that

actually occurred including the theft of more than half of the Regency's treasury. Unfortunately, Ruedy fails to explain how and why Bourmont lost control of his army, making it possible for these outrages to occur. He does, however, draw a parallel between these events occurring at the start of French rule and the spontaneous seizure of French properties by Algerians in July 1962 as French rule ended."

The third chapter, *Invasion, Resistance, and Colonization, 1830-1871*, discusses the French conquest through 1871, stressing the resistance of such new men as Emir Abd el Kader whose state, for a while, dominated the western Algerian Tell, and the equally tenacious resistance of such traditional rulers as Ahmed Bey of Constantine. European settlement that began almost as an afterthought following the capitulation of Algiers developed, early on, a dynamic of its own. The chapter ends with an account of the French suppression of the Kabyle rebellion of 1871, an event that is conventionally taken as marking the end of primary resistance in the Algerian Tell and the northern Sahara, the end of French military rule (the so-called *regime du sabre*) in this part of Algeria, and the establishment of settled dominated civilian rule that would remain unshaken until after 1954.

Like Henri Pirenne in his search for the origins of the Belgian nation, Ruedy, in his introductory chapter, digs deeply into the North African past, struggling to identify the first germination of an Algerian nation, even though the name itself *Algerie*, coined by the French philosophe, Bernard le Bouyer de Fontenelle in the early eighteenth century did not become official until made so by French Royal Ordinance of October 14, 1839.[1] In rapid succession, Ruedy evokes the Berber kingdoms of classical antiquity, the Masaesytes, the Massyles, and Numidia that rose and fell on future Algerian territory. Consistent with his negative view of French rule in Algeria, Ruedy has almost nothing positive to say about the five centuries of rule by the Latin predecessors of the French, despite the impressive Roman archaeological remains that dot the Algerian countryside. Roman Numidia, he maintains, was a land of vast latifundia owned by Roman and Romanized Berbers, worked by exploited Berber coloni, that exported grain to Europe just as French Algeria would export wine. Ruedy suggests that the successful efforts of St. Augustine of Hippo to suppress the so-called Donatist heresy, one that was very popular among Berber Christians, led to the de-Christianization of the latter and prepared the way for the nearly total Berber adoption of Islam, despite fierce Berber resistance to the Arab conquest itself. The final pages of the introductory chapter concentrate on the post-A.D. 740 succession of Islamized Berber dynasties that flourished on Algerian soil: the Rustamids, the Zirids, the Hammadids, and the 'Abd el Wadids.

Ruedy's aim, as he explained in the preface to the first edition, was to write a work of historical synthesis to serve as an introductory history of modern Algeria suited to serve the needs

of the general reader and useful in university classrooms (p. xi). Since what interests Ruedy is the history of the contemporary Algerian nation, he devotes all but two chapters of his study to the post-1830 period, tacitly recognizing that it was the French-Muslim dialectic that gave the principal impetus to the development of Algerian nationalism that came progressively into existence "in a sociological sense" between 1871 and 1920 (p. 4). Chapter 4, titled *The Colonial System and the Transformation of Algerian Society, 1871, 1919*, chronicles and describes the different ways in which the almost total ascendancy of the colons in French Algeria, and the power base they developed for themselves in the parliamentary system of the French Third Republic, completed the restructuring and pauperization of native Algerian society. While the result for the native Muslim population in general is what would lead the liberal French Governor-General, Jules Martin Cambon (serving between 1891 and 1897) to refer to Algerian society as a kind of human dust, a small elite of Algerians did learn to co-exist successfully with the French regime.[2] Some of its members who formed the Young Algerian movement sought equality with the colons and greater assimilation of Algeria and its whole population to France. Others formed the so-called *Vieux turban* neo-traditionalist group. The era also witnessed the beginning of the migration of Algerian workers to France and attempts at French reforms that were timid at best and almost completely stymied by the colon parliamentary delegation in Paris. Chapter 5, on *The Algerian Nationalist Movement 1919, 1954* that follows, details a very significant French failure, the inability of the Popular Front government of 1936 to adopt and impose the Blum-Violette reform proposals. Currently an emeritus professor at Georgetown University in Washington D. C., Ruedy established his reputation as one of the few American specialists on Algerian history with the publication of his doctoral dissertation, *Land Policy in Colonial Algeria: The Origins of the Rural Public Domain* at the University of California, Los Angeles (1967). One suspects that it was his scholarly encounter with the dark underside of French land policy in Algeria (in fact, the organized theft of Algerian lands for the benefit of the European colons or settlers) that led him to adopt the very negative view of the whole French project in Algeria—five generations of colonial exploitation (p. xi), as he labels it—that permeates the first seven chapters of his book. The publication of the present work, the second edition of *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (originally published in 1992) appears to be directed at a similar readership (despite the author's more modest claims); but it also responds specifically to a growing concern about the post-1992 Islamist insurgency in Algeria. For certain observers, this insurrection appeared to be, at the same time, part of a worldwide Islamic war against the West and a continuation of the War of Independence that the

Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) had fought against the French Army between 1954 and 1962 to win Algerian independence." "Thus John Ruedy has made a serious effort to update his book. He has revised chapter 8, The Bendjedid Years, Readjustment and Crisis, to account for the social and economic crisis, the failed liberal reforms of the 1979-1992 period, and the assumption of power by the military-dominated Haut Comite de Securite, following the forced resignation of President Chadli Bendjedid on January 11, 1992. Ruedy has added a ninth chapter, Insurgency and the Pursuit of Democracy, which chronicles the responses of a succession of military-dominated governments to the Islamist threat and describes the major political, social, and economic developments in Algeria through the April 2004 re-election of Abdelaziz Bouteflika as president of the Algerian Republic. Ruedy has also revised the bibliographical essay and the bibliography which conclude the book. Like the first edition, the second continues to have particular significance for Anglophone readers in a field that is still dominated by French language literature.

John Ruedy is Emeritus Professor of History at Georgetown University. He has served most recently as the North Africa editor for the Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa.

This book will help you understand the early formation of political terrorist groups as well as give you insights into Algeria, which is a really interesting country.

Had this book as one of three primary survey books in a course dedicated to a survey of the Maghreb since 1945. It's not particularly penetrative of what sorts of hard questions historians of the subject are going to pursue in more specific projects. It sometimes provided an oversimplified take of a particular instance that was remarkably complex...as any survey book will ultimately do.

Ruedy builds his history of modern Algeria the old-fashioned way, from the ground up, focusing on economic and social movements and the rise of the Algerian nationalist movement. He is especially strong on the disastrous economic and social effects of the 130-year French occupation and the way in which these disruptions paved the way for modern Algerian nationalism. Readers who are suspicious of state-based nationalisms will no doubt question the overarching narrative, with its focus on the inexorable rise of an Algerian nation-state; still, Ruedy makes a compelling case that the nationalist paradigm of Algerian history has a lot going for it. This book should be a standard reference for anyone interested in Algerian history or politics.

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