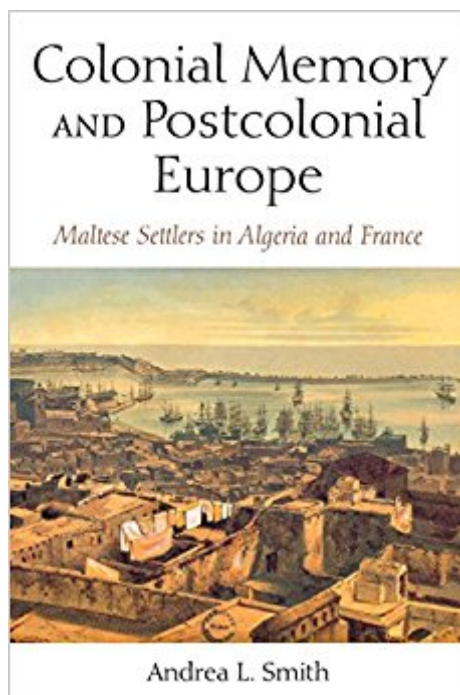


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Colonial Memory And Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers In Algeria And France (New Anthropologies Of Europe)



Synopsis

"[I]ntersects with very active areas of research in history and anthropology, and links these domains of inquiry spanning Europe and North Africa in a creative and innovative fashion." —Douglas Holmes, Binghamton University
Maltese settlers in colonial Algeria had never lived in France, but as French citizens were abruptly "repatriated" there after Algerian independence in 1962. In France today, these *pieds-noirs* are often associated with "Mediterranean" qualities, the persisting tensions surrounding the French-Algerian War, and far-right, anti-immigrant politics. Through their social clubs, they have forged an identity in which Malta, not Algeria, is the unifying ancestral homeland. Andrea L. Smith uses history and ethnography to argue that scholars have failed to account for the effect of colonialism on Europe itself. She explores nostalgia and collective memory; the settlers' liminal position in the colony as subalterns and colonists; and selective forgetting, in which Malta replaces Algeria, the "true" homeland, which is now inaccessible, fraught with guilt and contradiction. The study provides insight into race, ethnicity, and nationalism in Europe as well as cultural context for understanding political trends in contemporary France.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Co-winner of the William A. Douglass Book Prize in Europeanist Anthropology -- Society for the Anthropology of Europe, AAA, 2007

Andrea L. Smith is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Lafayette College and editor of

Europeâ€™s Invisible Migrants.

Smith takes us on a tour of a little known aspect of the post colonial era. Raising acute questions of identity in both a cultural and nationalistic sense. She describes Maltese who settled in Algeria during the period when France ruled it. But who then chose, voluntarily or otherwise, to move to France after independence. An interesting amalgam, where for many of these settlers, France was even less familiar than Algeria. The book shows that in Algeria, the Maltese has a fairly long history, dating back to the early 19th century. But in France, from the 1960s onwards, many had to start afresh. Encountering some discrimination from the government and locals. Ironies abound. Where they might have been lumped wholesale with the ethnic French who returned. But where the latter knew enough about the Maltese to consider both groups distinct. Questions of assimilation are also raised. But some now see themselves as a diaspora, tied to a lost homeland.

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