



# The Burdens of Brotherhood: Jews and Muslims from North Africa to France

By Ethan B. Katz

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Headlines from France suggest that Muslims have renewed an age-old struggle against Jews and that the two groups are once more inevitably at odds. But the past tells a different story. *The Burdens of Brotherhood* is a sweeping history of Jews and Muslims in France from World War I to the present. Here Ethan Katz introduces a richer and more complex world that offers fresh perspective for understanding the opportunities and challenges in France today.

Focusing on the experiences of ordinary people, Katz shows how Jewish-Muslim relations were shaped by everyday encounters and by perceptions of deeply rooted collective similarities or differences. We meet Jews and Muslims advocating common and divergent political visions, enjoying common culinary and musical traditions, and interacting on more intimate terms as neighbors, friends, enemies, and even lovers and family members. Drawing upon dozens of archives, newspapers, and interviews, Katz tackles controversial subjects like Muslim collaboration and resistance during World War II and the Holocaust, Jewish participation in French colonialism, the international impact of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and contemporary Muslim antisemitism in France.

We see how Jews and Muslims, as ethno-religious minorities, understood and related to one another through their respective relationships to the French state and society. Through their eyes, we see colonial France as a multiethnic, multireligious society more open to public displays of difference than its postcolonial successor. This book thus dramatically reconceives the meaning and history not only of Jewish-Muslim relations but ultimately of modern France itself.

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**Editorial Review**

Review

**Winner of the American Library in Paris Book Award**

**Winner of the J. Russell Major Prize for the Best Book in French History**

**Winner of the 2015 National Jewish Book Award for Writing Based on Archival Material**

**Winner of the 2016 David H. Pinkney Prize for the Best Book in French History**

“Thought-provoking... Katz has uncovered fascinating stories of interactions between Muslims and Jews in France and French colonial North Africa over the past 100 years that defy our expectations... His insights are absolutely relevant for understanding such recent trends as rising anti-Semitism among French Muslims, rising Islamophobia among French Jews and, to a lesser degree, rising rates of aliyah from France... If it’s the current crisis that is of interest, this book is more than worth your time... *The Burdens of Brotherhood* is an important book because it gives us new ways of thinking about Muslims and Jews in France, as well as for what it tells us about the French policies that, too often over the past century, stigmatized, excluded and triangulated in the name of secularism, democracy and social peace.”—Lisa M. Leff, Haaretz.

“Katz has written a compelling, important, and timely history of Jewish/Muslim relations in France since 1914 that investigates the ways and venues in which Muslims and Jews interacted in metropolitan France... This insightful, well-researched, and elegantly written book is mandatory reading for scholars of the subject and for those approaching it for the first time.”—J. Haus, Choice

A compelling analysis on the complicated--and often fraught--relationship of Jews and Muslims vis-à-vis France from the late 19th century to the present day... **Katz's** narrative argues that Jews and Muslims may have spent a considerable portion of French history in constant opposition to each other. However, he also points out that they've fought side-by-side as soldiers in war, formed close bonding friendships, lived peacefully in the same neighborhoods, and even become lovers at times too. (J. P. O'Malley, *The Times of Israel*)

Katz's great strength is the richness of his examples, his empathy toward his subjects, and the nearly epic breadth of his research. Unsurprisingly, his narrative includes no shortage of interethnic violence...But for each conflict, Katz also brings his readers to a smoky Parisian café, a Marseille grocery store selling Algerian products, or a soccer club in the working-class suburb of Cronenbourg, where relations between French Jews and Muslims may have been complicated or unequal but were also characterized by tolerance, mutual support, human decency, and genuine affection...Katz is far too careful a historian to countenance unchecked nostalgia, so such examples effectively serve to unearth a textured, complicated, and intertwined history that is consistently ignored or even erased by the upholders of today's brutish binaries. (Joshua Schreier, *Jewish History*)

A stunningly complex history that unsettles many of our certitudes about Muslim-Jewish relations...Over the past 150 years, Katz argues, the shared history of Muslims, Jews and the French has deeply shaped, and often scarred, all three parties to this triangular and peculiar relationship. But as Katz reveals, it is a history

that need not have turned out the way it did...Katz's book offers not only a powerful counter-narrative to the story we now tell ourselves about Jewish-Muslim relations in France, but also a reason to hope that other narratives might still unfold. (Robert Zaretsky, *The Jewish Daily Forward*)

A detailed, informative, and often colorful look at the ever-changing relationship between France's predominant non-Christian immigrant minorities. (*Publishers Weekly* 2015-11-13)

From the Back Cover

This is a thoroughly researched and thoughtfully composed exploration of a challenging subject: the relations between French Muslims and French Jews across the turbulent and painful history of France in the twentieth century. Katz's sensitive analysis is made possible by his deep engagement with new and provocative archival material and his broad familiarity with a wide range of published sources. His book exemplifies the best aspects of recent work on Jews and Muslims in Europe. (Joshua Cole, University of Michigan)

This courageous book addresses the very contentious debate on Muslim-Jewish relations that has divided both scholars and the wider public. Katz powerfully and convincingly challenges conventional understandings of the issue by proposing that there were multiple ways in which Jews and Muslims have interacted in France through the course of the twentieth century. (Daniel Schroeter, University of Minnesota)

About the Author

Ethan B. Katz is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati.

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**Joshua Atkins:**

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