

Free report on france and the dreyfus affair

[Law](#), [Evidence](#)



A documentary by Michael Burns

France and the Dreyfus Affair: A documentary by Michael Burns

The author, Michael Burns is a historian, actor and professor. He holds a Ph. d. and has written a handful of books, all revolving around wars. His book entitled France and the Dreyfus Affair: A documentary history was written in 1998 and is about Alfred Dreyfus during one of Europe's most significant political scandals. The theme of the book was anti-Semitism, socialism, militant nationalism and the separation of church and state. Dreyfus was a French citizen and a Jewish army officer. During 1894, he was wrongly convicted in Europe, the charges were of treason. Burns studied his subject well enough to create a character around him.

The book presented the events in a chronological order. The arrest started off the book where they had taken Dreyfus away for charges of treason (Burns, 1998). He was put on trial and then sentenced to Devil's Island. The case was later reopened, then pardoned after a while. A number of authors have given their own versions of the story. This is because the events that followed this case were very interesting. The people were torn apart by the scandal, which made it one of the most significant cases (Burns, 1998). A lot of people have argued whether Dreyfus was a victim of discrimination because he was a Jew. The first piece of evidence given to the court through the Embassy in Paris was already stated as "proof" of Dreyfus's treason. It makes you wonder how they used to run court during the time. There was a time where Dreyfus was unabashedly told that Jews had no place as a

General. During this time, Europe was already transforming into the divided nations that the world saw during the time of the Nazis.

Alfred Dreyfus was openly Jewish and he was admitted to very selective military schools. During this time, not a lot of Jewish boys had been admitted to such schools, let alone placed in a position that was very sensitive. His rank was the subject of a lot of talk, this rarely happened in Europe, especially in France. This Affair definitely split the country in two. Talks of radicalization and the Catholic church were involved (Burns, 1998).

Burns has another book about the holocaust. He seems to have an interest for the times of war and mostly the Jews. There is no evidence that he is a Jew himself, yet he seems to empathize with them. His books about the Jewish soldier and the Holocaust might even be a dedication to the people. Burns seems captivated by the times, and is more familiar with the 19th century than his own. This allowed him to write the book on Dreyfus with ease. It does not seem misplaced or out of its own time.

The book is very fascinating and interesting. It involves a lot of bits of history, which makes it much easier to read. Burns, being a historian himself, probably enjoys reliving characters from the past. It had a number of private correspondences from both sides which added to the suspense of the book. However, it was, at the same time frustrating to read. It was written as an account of Dreyfus, the infamous soldier (Burns, 1998). This made the evidences mentioned in the book seem quite biased. The goal of the book is probably to break down all myths, legends and other things surrounding the event. Yet, it somehow became more seemingly fiction than historic. The

point of the author in writing the book was to show evidences in regards to the Dreyfus Affair. A number of issues that were highlighted in the case were included which made the case so much more interesting to read. You will get drawn to the book, wanting to know a real conclusion. As the country was divided in to two parts at the time, so will your mind. You can see the lack of moral ambiguity, which is one of the rare instances in history.

The biases seen in the book were in favor of Dreyfus. However, there were hints of doubt in the character throughout the beginning, Burns stuck by Dreyfus. The way the book was written, was very noir. This event was very significant since it divided France during the 1890s. It is one of the most known political and judicial scandals in Europe (Burns, 1998). There were a number of things to examine within the book. Burns wrote it in a way that was of the time. Though the story was about historic incidences, it was mixed in with modern elements that made the read very light. Many might argue that the evidences presented in the book were one sided and would typically lead the reader to believe on side, rather than deciding on his own.

Burns shows that a number of officers in the army are anti-Semitic. They were quick to point fingers and judge Dreyfus without really looking at other proof of his treason. Dreyfus' conviction was premature and they did not so much as explore other alternatives for his indictment. There were other themes present in the book, though the anti-Semitism was most relevant. The book was very interesting and showed a handful of evidences. It clearly explained the sensitivity of the issue. Someone who would not have known the background of Europe and events to follow might not have understood

why it was such a big issue for a Jewish man to take such a position in the military. The process of the court and judicial system during the time also was an issue to look into. Burns did well in covering these areas, it was easy to follow and understand. The mood and themes in the book were relevant and you will be able to sympathize with the characters. The events to follow the Dreyfus Affair are said to be very significant. The divide of the nation during this time was extreme. It was hardly easy to believe that such a small case turned a whole nation upside down. Before reading the book, you have to understand the sensitivity of the matters that lead Dreyfus to the accusations.

References

Burns, Michael (1998). *France and the Dreyfus Affair: A documentary history*. Boston, MA: St. Martin's Press.