

Albert Camus Biography

Albert Camus was the most controversial French philosopher of his times. Read his brief biography and timeline to know more about his life.

Quick Facts	
Famous as	Philosopher
Nationality	French
Born on	07 November 1913
Zodiac Sign	Scorpio
Born in	Dréan
Died on	04 January 1960
Place of death	Villeblevin
Father	Lucien Auguste Camus
Mother	Catherine Hélène Sintés
Spouses	Simone Hi (m. 1934-1936), Francine Faure (m. 1940)
Children	Catherine Camus, Jean Camus
Education	University of Algiers
Works & Achievements	The Stranger (1946), The Plague (1948), The Rebel (1954) and The Myth of Sisyphus (1955)
Awards	1957 - Nobel Prize for Literature



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A Nobel Prize laureate, Albert Camus was the French Algerian philosopher, author and journalist, much renowned worldwide for his contribution in the field of literature. The second youngest recipient of the award, after Rudyard Kipling, Camus was the first African born writer to have been facilitated with the award. He was a representative of the non-metropolitan French literature. Additionally, Camus is also renowned worldwide for founding the Group for International Liaisons within the Revolutionary Union Movement, which was opposed to some tendencies of the Surrealist movement of André Breton. Interestingly, though the work of Albert was often noted as a proponent of existentialism, he always rebuffed the idea.

Early Life

Albert Camus was born on November 7, 1913 to a “Pied-Noir settler” in Dréan (French Algeria, then known as Mondovi). His father, Lucien, a poor agricultural worker, served as a member of the Zouave infantry regiment during World War I but died in the battle of the Marne in 1914. Post his father’s death, Albert Camus lived along with his half-deaf mother in unfortunate condition in the Belcourt section, Algiers. However, this did not continue for long, for he was soon admitted into the lycee (secondary school) in 1923. Later, he got admission in the University of Algiers. Football was his favorite activity and he used to be the goalkeeper for the university. But in 1930, he developed tuberculosis and thus, had to forgo all his football

activities. Due to the disease, Camus opted for the part time studies. For livelihood, he took up miscellaneous jobs like car parts clerk, private tutor and assistant at the Meteorological Institute. In 1935, he completed his *licence de philosophie* (BA). In 1936, he received his *diplôme d'études supérieures* (equal to M.A thesis).

Early Politics

In 1935, Albert Camus joined the French Communist Party as he looked it up as a route to "fight inequalities between Europeans and 'natives' in Algeria." He never implied that he was a Marxist but wrote "we might see communism as a springboard and asceticism that prepares the ground for more spiritual activities." Algerian Communist Part (PCA) was established in 1936 but Albert Camus joined the works of *Le Parti du Peuple Algérien* (Algerian People's Party). This association created friction between him and his communist party colleagues. Due to the same, he was condemned as a Trotskyite and dismissed from the party.

Thereafter, Camus went on to be linked with the French anarchist movement. In 1948, he was introduced by the anarchist Andre Prudhommeaux for the first time in the *Cercle des Étudiants Anarchistes* (Anarchist Student Circle) as a comforter friendly with anarchist thought. He wrote several publications for anarchist like *Le Libertaire*, *La révolution Proletarienne* and *Solidaridad Obrera*. Albert also supported anarchists when they declared to stand for the uprising of 1953 in East Germany, followed by the support of the workers' uprising in Poznan, Poland in 1956 and then later in the same year with the Hungarian revolution.

His Struggle

Camus established *Théâtre du Travail* (Worker's Theatre) in 1935 which was renamed *Théâtre de l'Equipe* (Team's Theatre) in 1937. The theater survived until 1939 only. He also wrote a

socialite paper from 1937 to 1939 named *Alger-Républicain*. His writings were based on the peasants who resided in Kabylie in poverty, for which he lost his job. Later, from 1939 to 1940, he worked for a similar paper called *Soir-Republicain*. He even tried to enter the French army, but was rejected due to TB. He also wrote for magazine named *Paris-Soir*. During the initial stage of World War II, on 15 December 1941, Camus witnessed the killing of Gabriel Péri, which heightened his revolt against Germans. He settled to Bordeaux with all the members of *Paris-Soir*. In the same year, he completed his first two books, 'The Stranger' and 'The Myth of Sisyphus'. In 1942, Camus returned to Oran, Algeria.

Literary Career & Controversies

While the World War II was going on, Albert Camus joined the French Resistance cell, Combat, as the *nom de guerre* *Beauchard*. The group worked opposite to Nazis and published newspaper by the same name, Combat. In 1943, he became the editor of the newspaper. He was in Paris when the allies gave freedom to the city from where reported the last fighting. Few days later the event of August 8, 1945, he was one of the few French editors who expressed opposition to the United States after it dropped the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. But when the newspaper became commercial, he resigned from Combat and soon after met Jean-Paul Sartre. He then used to meet Sartre and others regularly in the *Café de Flore* on the Boulevard Saint-Germain in Paris. Albert Camus also went to United States to address the Americans on French thoughts. Politically, he strongly criticized communist doctrine because of which he had no friends in the communist parties and by the course of time, his association with Sartre had gone sour too.

Unfortunately, in 1949 Albert was again trapped with TB and resided in isolation for two years. But this did not alienate him from his writing for he soon released his book 'The Rebel' in 1951. A philosophical analysis of rebellion and revolution

expressing his rejection of communism, the book brought about a final end to the relationship between Camus and Sartre. Dejected by the dour reception, he commenced to translate plays. His idea of the absurd marked his first significant contribution to philosophy. He looked at it as the result of the desires for clarity and meaning within the world and condition which was completely absent. Albert expressed the same in 'The Myth of Sisyphus', followed by 'The Stranger' and 'The Plague'. Some continued to argue that he was an existentialist but he again rejected this tag in his essay "Enigma". His personal views on the world and its progress set him apart from the rest.

In 1950s, he directed all his efforts to human rights. When United Nations welcomed Spain as a member under General Franco leadership, Albert resigned from his work for UNESCO. In 1953, he strictly disapproved Soviet methods to compress a workers' strike in East Berlin. In 1956, he stood against similar methods in Poland and the Soviet repression of the Hungarian revolution. Albert Camus remained a pacifist and opposed capital punishments all over the world. He also came out with an essay against the same in cooperation with the writer, intellectual and founder of the league against capital punishment, Arthur Koestler. After the Algerian war started in 1954, he found himself under difficult circumstances as his identity was marked with the pied-noirs parents and protected the French government's action opposing the revolt.

Camus also appealed that the revolt was a necessary part of the 'new Arab imperialism' led by Egypt and an 'anti-Western' offensive orchestrated by Russia to 'encircle Europe' and 'isolate the United States' but he still agreed that the pied-noirs and Arabs could exist together. He secretly started to work for the imprisoned Algerians with death penalties. From 1955 to 1956, he wrote L'Express. His efforts paved off well for he was honored with glorious Nobel Prize in Literature "for his important literary production, which with clear-sighted earnestness

illuminates the problems of the human conscience in our times", and his writings against capital punishment in the essay "*Réflexions sur la Guillotine*" was highly appreciated. Speaking to the students at the University of Stockholm, he defended his inactivity in the Algerian stated that he was anxious about his mother who still resides in Algeria which result in further banishment by French left-wing intellectuals.

Personal Life

In 1934, Albert Camus married Simone Hie who had an addiction of morphine. The marriage broke up as a result of disloyalty from both sides. Then in 1940, he married Francine Faure, a pianist and mathematician. She gave birth to twins, Catherine and Jean on September 5, 1945. However, even after marriage and kids, Albert was famous for his number of affairs and specifically with the Spanish-born actress Maria Casares.

Death

Albert Camus died on January 4, 1960 at the age of 46 in a car accident that took place in Le Grand Fossard, a small town of Villeblevin. The place was near the Sens. Camus was going in the Facel Vega Car, driven by Michel Gallimard, his publisher and close friend when the event happened. Michel Gallimard also died in the mishap. Later, an unused train ticket was found in the coat pocket of Camus as he had planned to travel with his wife and children earlier, but changed his plan last minute, when his publisher asked to travel with him. Albert Camus was buried in the Lourmarin Cemetery, Lourmarin, Vaucluse, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France. The copyrights of his work are preserved by his wife and children. Two of his works were published posthumously, namely 'A Happy Death' (1970) and 'The First Man' (1995). The latter novel was incomplete as Camus was still working on it before his death.

