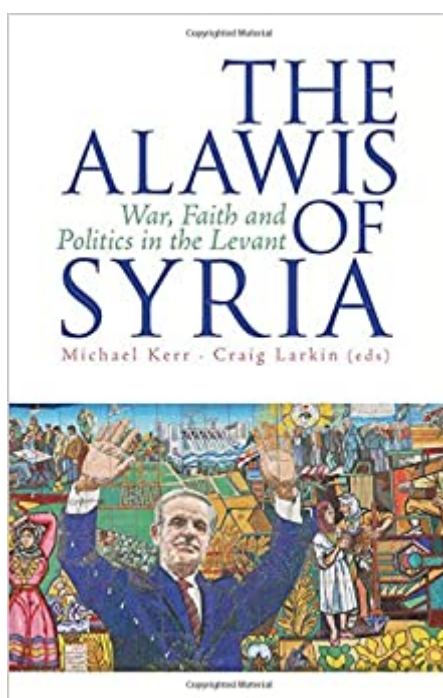


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The Alawis Of Syria: War, Faith And Politics In The Levant (Urban Conflicts, Divided Societies)



Synopsis

Throughout the turbulent history of the Levant the 'Alawis - a secretive, resilient and ancient Muslim sect - have aroused suspicion and animosity, including accusations of religious heresy. More recently they have been tarred with the brush of political separatism and complicity in the excesses of the Assad regime, claims that have gained greater traction since the onset of the Syrian uprising and subsequent devastating civil war. The contributors to this book provide a complex and nuanced reading of Syria's 'Alawi communities -from loyalist gangs (Shabiha) to outspoken critics of the regime. Drawing upon wide-ranging research that examines the historic, political and social dynamics of the 'Alawi and the Syrian state, the current tensions are scrutinised and fresh insights offered. Among the themes addressed are religious practice, social identities, and relations to the Ba'ath party, the Syrian state and the military apparatus. The analysis also extends to Lebanon with a focus on the embattled 'Alawi community of Jabal Mohsen in Tripoli and state relations with Hizballah amid the current crisis.

Book Information

Series: Urban Conflicts, Divided Societies

Hardcover: 384 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (December 1, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0190458119

ISBN-13: 978-0190458119

Product Dimensions: 8.6 x 0.9 x 5.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Best Sellers Rank: #979,633 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #60 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Islam > Shi'ism #126 in Books > History > Middle East > Syria #492 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Islam

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"An outstanding collection of essays by leading scholars of contemporary Syria. Without doubt this book will remain a core text for an understanding of the sect which remains at the heart of the Baathist regime." -- Lord Williams of Baglan, former UN envoy in the Middle East
"A fascinating collection of excellent in-depth studies dealing with the unique role and backgrounds of Alawis in contemporary Syria, Lebanon and Turkey. The authors convincingly analyse the complex origins of

the sectarian tinted war in Syria, the struggle for survival of its Alawi dominated Ba'th regime, and the wish of the Sunni population majority to definitively rid themselves of half a century of Alawi-dominated dictatorship. This volume fills an important gap in Syria studies." -- Nikolaos van Dam, author of *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society Under Asad and the Ba'th Party*"Kerr and Larkin's collection of essays looks set to become an essential source of rigorous academic research and analysis on the complex history and contemporary role of Alawis in Syria. Approaching the subject from a broad range of angles, *The Alawis of Syria* is intensely rich in detail and provides an exceptional level of analysis on a subject all too often limited to 'on the surface' accounts." -- Charles Lister, Visiting Fellow, Brookings Doha Center and author of *The Syrian Jihad: Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Evolution of an Insurgency*"By far the most comprehensive and up-to-date account on a sensitive and complex subject. *The Alawis of Syria* is well informed and well researched, and comes at a time when the issue is becoming ever more timely. Reports that young Alawis have been dodging the military service and fatal incidents among the regime's supporters in Bashar al-Assad's heartlands have raised questions about the nature of Alawis' relationship to the Assad regime. This book has timely answers for many questions pertinent to this minority whose role, in war and peace, will determine the future of Syria." -- Hassan Hassan, Associate Fellow, MENA Programme, Chatham House and co-author of *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*"A timely collection of studies on a community that is much talked about, yet still poorly understood. This volume is unparalleled in terms of depth, breadth, and diversity of approaches, and will therefore constitute a landmark in the literature on the Alawites." -- Thomas Pierret, Lecturer in Contemporary Islam, University of Edinburgh and author of *Religion and State in Syria: The Sunni Ulama from Coup to Revolution*"Kerr and Larkin bring together the finest commentators on Syria's most powerful and most contested minority. The excellent contributions shed light on the role of Alawis in Syria's past and present. This book is a compelling read, which is essential to our understanding of how to address and involve this important group in resolving the Syria conflict." -- Bente Scheller, Director of the Heinrich Böll Foundation's Middle East office in Beirut, and author of *The Wisdom of Syria's Waiting Game: Foreign Policy Under the Assads*

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