



# **Pax Syriana: Elite Politics in Postwar Lebanon (Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East)**

*Rola El-Husseini*

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The recent political history of Lebanon has been defined by the legacy of war. In addition to repeated external invasions and the ongoing presence of foreign troops of diverse nationalities, the Lebanese people have endured the scars left by a bitterly contested civil war that began in the spring of 1975 and continued unabated for the next fifteen years. While much has been written about the tragedy of the civil war, el-Husseini's *Pax Syriana* is the first book focused on the evolution of the postwar political scene.

In a series of negotiations brokered by Saudi Arabia, under the auspices of the larger international community, the civil war came to an end with the signing of the Ta'if Agreement. This agreement ushered in an era of Syrian control and rule by a disparate group of power elites. El-Husseini provides an in-depth account of how the political elite left an indelible mark on the Lebanese state and society. Through extensive field work and firsthand interviews, el-Husseini offers an intimate portrait of postwar Lebanon and shows how the Syrian influence brought a degree of stability to this fragmented nation and yet simultaneously undermined the development of a full constitutional democracy as Lebanon began to acquire some of the authoritarian character of the Syrian regime.

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