



Politics and War in Lebanon: Unraveling the Enigma

Mordechai Nisan

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Lebanon is an exceptionally misunderstood country; its religious politics are typically misrepresented and denigrated in Western political commentary. *Politics and War in Lebanon* offers a lucid examination of Lebanese society and politics. Mordechai Nisan examines Lebanon in its own terms on its own cultural turf. He then points to the causes of political disintegration in 1975 and explores the capacity of Lebanon to recover and retain its unique national poise.

Avoiding disorienting Western stereotypes, Nisan presents Lebanon in its own native frame of reference, as a multi-ethnic country that operates according to its immutable and enigmatic political forms. Lebanon is different from other Arab countries, as demonstrated through its very complex electoral system, its tradition of cross-elite cooperation, and its special sense of Lebanese national identity that differentiates it from its overbearing Syrian neighbor.

Nisan explores intra-Maronite Christian feuds, identifies Syria's occupation strategy, analyzes the violence of the Palestinians, and studies Israel's failed policy strategy and the role of Hezbollah in the Lebanese power equation. Lebanon is caught between its special historical identity as a country of poise, creativity, and liberty and the interminable warfare in the streets and villages of the country. Although its future appears dim, its resilience enabled it to prevail in the past, and may yet continue to do so.

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