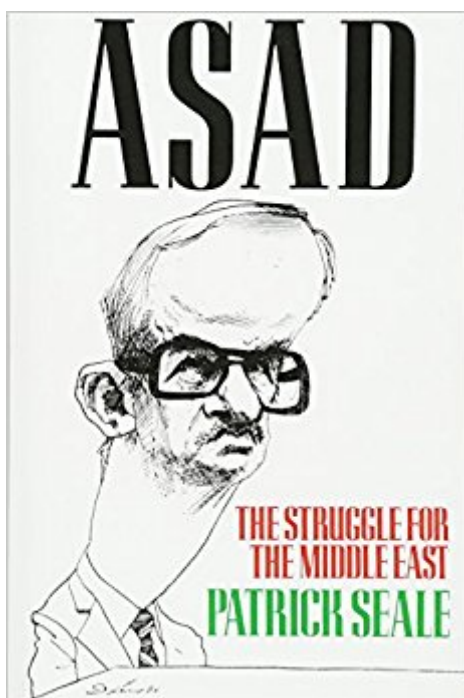


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Asad: The Struggle For The Middle East



Synopsis

“This is a book in the finest tradition of investigative scholarship. The research is awesome. . . . Seale’s great strength is his ability to explain the confusing kaleidoscopic nature of Middle Eastern diplomacy. He understands the game being played and also knows the players. . . . [An] impressive book.” Los Angeles Times Book Review

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Customer Reviews

British journalist Seale (*The Struggle for Syria*) here fashions a political portrait of President Hafiz al-Asad that emphasizes his patience, caution and courage without obscuring his conspiratorial past or his selective ruthlessness. He describes Asad’s rise from peasant origins to national leadership in a bloodless coup, analyzes the view from Damascus of Syria’s role in the wars with Israel and Asad’s continuing efforts to block piecemeal settlements with Israel by other Arab countries. Double-crossed, according to Seale, by his Egyptian partner Anwar Sadat during the 1973 October War, Asad was then "duped" by Henry Kissinger’s shuttle diplomacy and "robbed" of the fruits of the war. Asad is quoted as claiming that his goal is not Syrian supremacy but a balance of power, and that a fair peace will come about only when the Arabs achieve strategic parity with the Jewish state. An admiring but not uncritical biography of Israel’s most dangerous enemy, this book sheds light on an enigmatic leader. Photos. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

More than an excellent biography of Hafiz al-Asad, Syria's national leader, this is a tour de force of contemporary Syrian history and politics. Seale, a Middle Eastern specialist and a journalist, had direct access to Asad. Here is a clear successor to Seale's near monumental *The Struggle for Syria* (1965) and a substantial companion to Moshe Ma'oz's *Asad: The Sphinx of Damascus; A Political Biography* (LJ 9/15/88). Seale perceives Asad as a masterful politician maneuvering Syria into a position of dominance in the Middle East and uncovers much of the mystery that has surrounded the Syrian leader by documenting Asad's interactions, directly and indirectly, with national and regional leaders. Well recommended and indeed required reading for anyone interested in the contemporary Middle East.- Sanford R. Silverburg, *Catawba Coll.*, Salisbury, N.C. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is important for anyone trying to learn about the Middle East, but I agree with other reviewers that the book is flawed. It is very biased and paints Asad in a much more positive light than he deserves. Asad and his regime were responsible for many atrocities and has contributed to the instability of the region, but Mr. Seale simply glosses over many of these crimes. Mr. Seale's description of Asad's attack against the Syrian city of Hama is cursory at best. By all accounts I have read Hama was devastated, and thousands of people were killed, maimed or displaced, but the account given here doesn't say anything about the human suffering. Not only that but Seale seems to justify and even approve of the action because of the attacks that emanated from this city. Asad was not a humanitarian and his regime was extremely oppressive. As with any authoritarian regime Asad enriched cronies to the detriment of the Syrian people. He killed and tortured his own people. These facts seemed to be omitted from this book. I have no idea why this was left out, but it skews the book and leaves the reader an irrevocably flawed book. This book also casts Israel as the main instigator in all the areas troubles. This book will leave the uninformed reader with the impression that had the region simply followed Asad then all would have been well. The fact is that Israel does in fact shoulder some blame for the current situation, but they certainly do not deserve all the blame. With that said the book is still important, and deserves the 4 star rating I gave it. Syria is a very important nation and the more we know about it the better informed we will be of the entire situation. This book contributes to the readers greater understanding of this region as long as they understand that the book is biased. The nature of the Asad regime means there will be little information available to readers, so any information is important. This book is well written and the author has obviously done a lot of research and got to know Asad very well. There is a lot of important information in here, but all readers should come into this book understanding its flaws

right from the beginning.

A comprehensive history not only of Asad's life but also that of contemporary Syria. For students of Syrian history, this is a must read.

Speaking as one who has "been there, done that," hopefully I can provide some extensively observed enlightenment. Syria and the Assad dynasty, for all their faults, has protected the lives and faith of thousands of Christians in the country. Christian religious sites across the country, many dating back 2000 years have been protected. The Cross is displayed on churches and Christian ministers and missionaries preach without imposition or limitation from the government. Insurrection and revolutionary movements have been attempted over the years, and as you would if someone were to take your home away from you, steps were taken and presently are being taken, to suppress the efforts. Should the present revolutionary forces take over the country there will be civil war for years while the various tribes, ethnic and religious combatants vie for control of the government and banking system. The Assad government may not be the ultimate, democratic and sublimely peaceful ruling party that suits your "from afar" position. The takeover by revolutionary forces will result in a blood bath, destruction of churches and the death of thousands of peaceful Christians. Is that your choice? You know of the destruction and havoc to the religious sites and lives of those living in Afghanistan, parts of Syria and Iraq. Certainly, that is not the fate we wish on Syria.

Excellent book on Syrian history. This book helps to explain the historical foundation behind the crisis in Syria today. Patrick Seale was one of the best Syrian historians; his death is a great loss. A must read for anyone interested in Syria.

Best book I've ever read. The author nailed it. He understands Syrian and middle eastern history very much.

Great book, great seller

The condition was better than I expected, thank you!

must say, it changes my prospective about many historical events in the area! Its a good book to

start your own debate about the period during Asad's life. It gives you a insight about the man's human side and struggles to control his destiny...I loved the book...

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