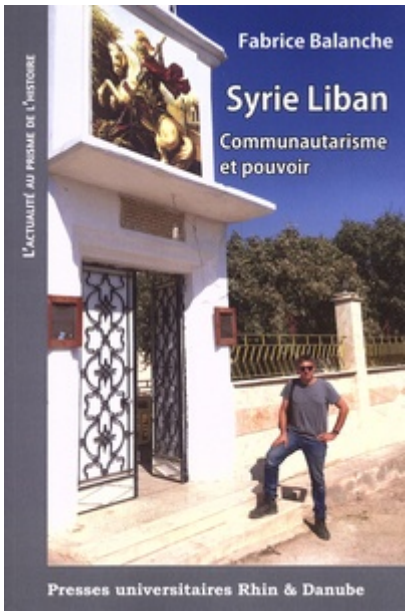


Syria and Lebanon are now two states under foreign influence, fragmented by ethnic, religious and tribal antagonisms that seem irreducible. Beyond international geopolitics and the Arab-Israeli conflict, the causes of their respective failures are also to be found in the weight of the sectarian system.

Sectarianism constitutes the hidden dimension of social, economic and political relations in the Middle East. It is a difficult object to decipher for us modern, individualistic and rationalist Westerners. Moreover, the ideological heritage of Edward Saïd still influences academic research, leading to truncated explanations with regard to the conflicts which bloody the region and from which we are suffering the blowback in Europe.

This book therefore aims to provide keys to realistic understanding based on three decades of field research, including at the heart of conflicts, with the sole principle of keeping your eyes wide open to reality and “no laughing , neither crying nor hating, but understanding” (Spinoza).

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