

Levant. Perhaps most interesting is Gaunson's account of the way Spears rankled members of the British Foreign Office almost as much as he did the Free French themselves.

The Spears controversy is indeed fascinating. Sir Edward had assisted De Gaulle's flight from France in 1940, and was such a Francophile that in the House of Commons he was known as the "Member for Paris." Yet, within months of his arrival in the Levant he had turned against his French allies and begun to support Arab nationalist aspirations, in what appeared to be a deliberate effort to obstruct the French from reviving their empire in the Levant. Churchill promoted Spears' mission in the face of protests from the Free French and some of his closest British colleagues, including Eden, because he wanted to remind de Gaulle just how far he was in the driver's seat and because of his personal friendship with Spears. Gaunson, like Kersaudy, demonstrates that the longer Spears remained, the more Anglo-French relations suffered.

Gaunson is particularly interested in exposing the contradictions in French and British policies in the Levant. What animated the Free French was not the Levant per se, but the need of de Gaulle to counter Vichy accusations that the Free French were traitors. For Gaunson, the surest way to justify his claim to speak in the name of France was to resurrect the French Empire and, with regard to the Levant, to guard it against supposed British designs. But de Gaulle and his supporters were running against the grain of history, both in terms of French capabilities and of political realities in the Levant.

The British, by contrast, were more realistic in their assessments. Yet, they had difficulty squaring their support of Syrian and Lebanese independence with their need to preserve and strengthen the Anglo-Free French relationship. As for Spears himself, his roles were virtually irreconcilable. He was supposed to act as a liaison with the Free French and, at the same time, to develop relations with the Syrian and Lebanese. Once it was determined that the latter was the more

soon ran afoul not only of the French but of many of his own British colleagues as well—except, of course, those who were avowedly pro-Arab.

There is a problem with this book: An entire dimension of the story is missing. Gaunson spins his narrative without regard for the dynamics of the Syrian and Lebanese nationalist movements. With the exception of the Lebanese crisis of 1943, neither movement receives any attention. One might fault Gaunson for not consulting Syrian and Lebanese documentary sources, or for writing a history of Anglo-French wartime relations in the Levant without consulting the Foreign Ministry and military archives in France. But the problem is more serious. Gaunson apparently ignores dispatches in the British Foreign Office records (which he consulted) that would have enabled him to trace the missing dimension. These dispatches indicate that French fears of Perfidious Albion, while not entirely groundless, were much exaggerated. For instance, because the British were more vital to the realization of Syrian aspirations than the Syrians were to Britain's overall Arab policy in the Middle East, Syrian nationalists more actively cultivated and pursued the British than the British pursued them. The paranoid French, of course, saw only the British hand and reacted accordingly.

Had Gaunson done his homework, his analysis of British and French wartime motives in the Levant would have been sharper and more nuanced. His Eurocentricity detracts considerably from an otherwise engagingly written book about an important subject.

Philip S. Khoury, History Faculty, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Baath and the Creation of Modern Syria, by David Roberts. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987. x + 154 pages. Appends. to p. 166. Bibl. to p. 169. Index to p. 182. \$35.00.

Sir David Roberts, who died in June 1987, has been eager to publish this work, or parts of it, many years earlier; but he was prevented from doing so because of his obligations toward the Foreign Office as Britain's ambassador to Syria (1973-6), the United Arab Emirates (1977-81), and Lebanon (1981-3). In the meantime, several other studies on Syria, covering similar ground, were published, leading Roberts to rework his original study. The result is a valuable interpretative treatise on the history, ideology, and structure of the Baath from its earliest beginnings. Roberts' book covers the contribution of the Baath to the creation of present-day Syria as a regional power in the Levant, under the leadership of Baathist President Hafiz al-Asad, who has now ruled his country for a continuous, and unprecedented, period of more than 16 years. The author devotes a special chapter to the background of the Alawis, the community whose members have played such an important role in modern Syrian history. His book ends with some interesting conclusions and a useful analysis of prospects for the Baath in Syria, of Baathism in the Arab world, and of Syria's future in general. Although Roberts' study is not as deep, nor anywhere near as detailed, as some earlier well-known studies, his does have the advantage of being a more general comprehensive analysis. As Roberts rightly observes, "much of the exegesis occurred during what turned out to be a transitional period in Baathist history."

Throughout his book Roberts devotes a great deal of attention to what he calls the *doctrine* of "Greater Syria." Roberts maintains that the "Greater Syria" theory of Parti Populaire Syrien leader Antun Saada "directly influenced and has continued to influence the Levant in general" (p. 11). Although the Greater Syria concept was in fact strongly rejected by Baathist leaders as a kind of divisive regionalism that contradicted their concept of Arab nationalism and unity, this does not necessarily exclude the existence today of a "great concealed current of 'Greater Syria'" (p. 73) or a "Syrian determination to dominate the Levant, i.e. 'Greater Syria'" (p. 141). The latter policy

seems, however, to be much more a result of pragmatic motivations, rather than a doctrinal principle. Indeed, it seems only natural for Syria, within the framework of regional inter-Arab or Arab-Israeli power politics, to seek to strengthen its influence over neighboring countries like Lebanon, where the internal situation has offered it every opportunity to do so. Similarly, if Syria were to have a realistic chance of achieving a kind of hegemony over, for instance, Iraq or Jordan, it would probably not hesitate to act, irrespective of the existence of a "Greater Syria" doctrine.

Roberts has provided an interesting introductory study, or "primer," as was his intention, which should encourage students of the subject to pursue it further. The book is not a profound academic oeuvre, and one might disagree with Roberts on several points, but this does not detract from its value as a practically oriented work, which is lent a special, added dimension by the personal insights and analyses of its author, culled from his many years of experience in the Arab world, particularly "Greater Syria."

Nikolaos van Dam, deputy director of the African and Middle Eastern Affairs Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is the author of The Struggle for Power in Syria: Sectarianism, Regionalism and Tribalism in Politics (1961-1980).

Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800-1980, by Norman N. Lewis. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Cambridge Middle East Library. xvii + 198 pages. Maps. Appends. to p. 210. Notes to p. 237. Bibl. to p. 244. Index to p. 249. \$44.50.

Reviewed by James A. Reilly

The paucity of studies on the rural history of the Middle East is perhaps understandable in the light of the urban bias of most sources, but is unfortunate since the majority of Middle Eastern peoples live in the countryside. This book is thus doubly welcome, not only