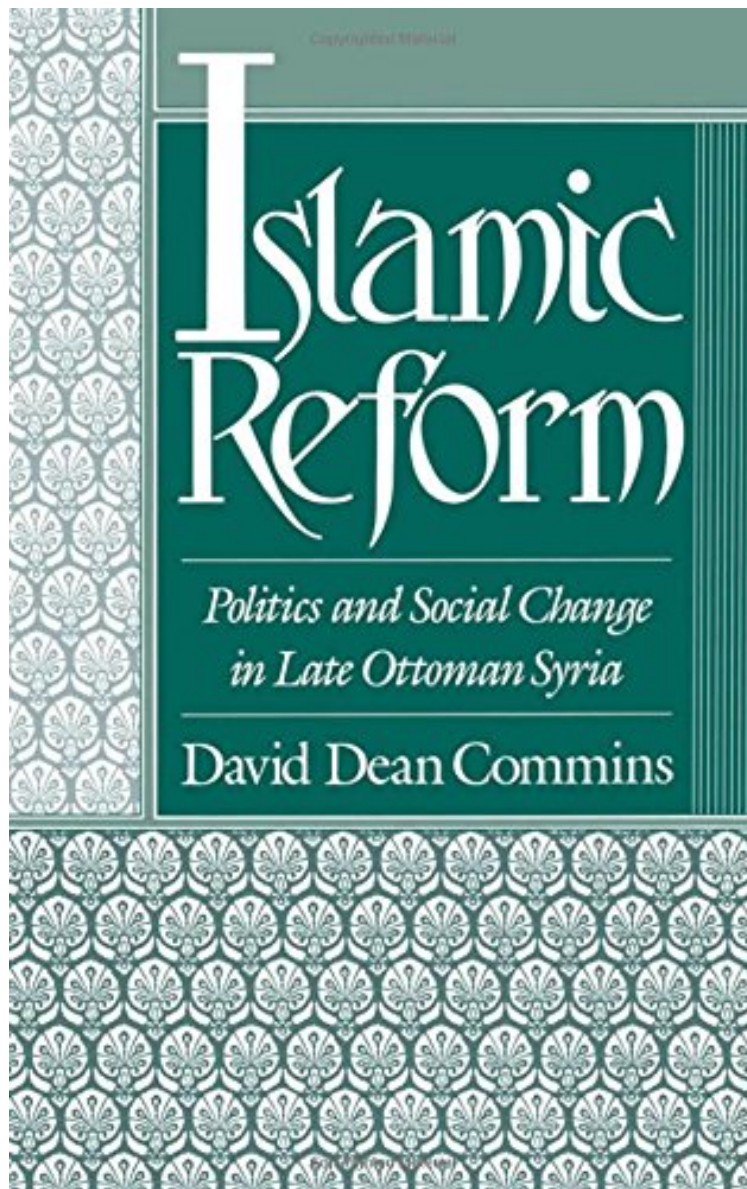


[Ebook free] Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria (Studies in Middle Eastern History)

Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria (Studies in Middle Eastern History)

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Religious community and nation have long been the chief poles of political and cultural identity for peoples of the modern Middle East. This work explores how men in turn-of-the-century Damascus dealt, in word and deed, with the dilemmas of identity that arose from the Ottoman Empire's 19th-century reforms. Muslim religious scholars (ulama) who advocated a return to scripture as the basis of social and political order were the pivotal group. The reformers clashed with their fellow ulama who defended the integrity of prevailing religious practices and beliefs. In addition to two conflicting interpretations of Islam, Arabism comprised a new strand of thought represented by young men with secular educations advancing Arab interests in the Ottoman Empire. Religious reformers and Arabists shared a political agenda that shifted focus from constitutionalism before 1908 to administrative decentralization shortly thereafter. Using unpublished manuscripts and correspondence, inheritance documents, and Ottoman-era periodicals, this work weaves together social, political, and intellectual aspects of a local history that represents an instance of a fundamental issue in modern history.

"Commins' book explores these tensions via a careful study of the documents of three generations of a notable Damascus family. His extensive research is a painstaking elucidation of the changing role of the ulama and the rise of a 'secular' Arabism."--Theological Book "Commins effectively and convincingly explains the social and political context of several generations of salafis in late Ottoman Syria. The author draws on a wide range of published sources as well as local court registers and the large library of the movement's most articulate and prolific spokesman, Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi. The result is a complex and fascinating story -- Middle East Journal" A penetrating study of this important group of 19th-century Muslim intellectuals."--Choice "A fascinating study.... This study represents an important contribution to the history of Muslim intellectual development in English, providing as it does formulation of key salafis position."--British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies "David Commins has made a major contribution to scholarship, and expanded measurably our knowledge of more than one area of the history of Islamic reform in late Ottoman Syria. It is likely to remain an important resource for scholars and students for many years to come."--International Journal of Middle East Studies "Commins' study is one in which... real personalities emerge from the amorphous, faceless late-Ottoman period.... Commins has concentrated on three endearing ulama.... The author seems quite literally to have read everything they read, everything they wrote, and everything that was written about them.... Commins' work is an intellectual historian's delight, full of direct quotes beautifully rendered into English. Here we have the thoughts, writings and pronouncements of communal leaders within the larger framework of the still poignant emergence of Arab social and political ideology."--Journal of the American Oriental Society About the Author David Dean Commins is at Dickinson College.