THIS ISSUE: Oil – Past, Present, Future

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Oil has cast a long shadow over the Middle East for the better part of the last century. While opinion has been divided over whether the ‘black gold’ has been a curse or a blessing for the region, there is agreement that its impact has nevertheless been pervasive, generating fabulous wealth and striking inequalities, environmental disasters and spectacular urban development, hyper-modern lifestyles and cultures of repression.

This issue of the magazine visits the vexed relationship between oil and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA); multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and nuanced perspectives seek to shed light on the past, just as much as to understand the present and the future of oil in MENA.

The first two contributions ask whether oil will continue to have the same influence in the future of the region. In Insight, George Joffé considers this in the context of the recent crisis in Ukraine and asks whether the Middle East can allay European energy security concerns in its stand-off with Russia. Similarly, Paul Stevens considers the implications of new technologies (such as fracking and extraction of shale oil and gas) for the future of oil in the Middle East.

Massoud Karshenas looks back at the evolution of oil economies arguing that while oil has provided major developmental opportunities for oil-exporters in the region, it has also slowed down, if not derailed, the timetable for major economic reforms in these economies. Hormoz Naficy takes a similar line in his piece on the future of Iran’s oil sector in the post-sanctions period to make a plea for rational reforms to put the management of the sector on a sound and apolitical footing.

The next four pieces go beyond the politics and economics of oil by focusing on its social and cultural influences. Rasmus Christian Elling and Mona Damluji present new and exciting aspects of early oil life and cultures. Elling explores the nostalgia surrounding the bygone oil age in the Iranian city of Abadan since the Islamic Republic and the Iran–Iraq War. Similarly, Damluji looks at the cinematic experience of oil, explaining how films produced by the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) in the 1950s sought to present a new and modern image of Iraq.

Elsewhere in the magazine, Elisabetta Bini and Claudia Ghrawi tell us a different story: that of the labour and social struggles generated by the development of the oil industry in Libya and Saudi Arabia under the control of foreign companies. Bini sheds light on the little known world of Libyan oil before the rise of the Qaddafi regime in 1969, a world dominated by US Cold War concerns with leftist trade unionism. Focusing on another corner of America’s oil empire, Ghrawi unveils the links between oil industrialisation, political mobilisation and civic solidarity in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia before the 1973 oil boom.

The next issue will be published in October after our summer recess. May we take this opportunity to thank our readers and contributors for their support and wish you all a good break over the summer months.
Most of us assume that the Middle East and North Africa, through OPEC, dominate European horizons as far as access to oil and gas is concerned. After all, Britain opened up oil production in Iran in 1908 and in Iraq and the Gulf in the 1920s and 1930s respectively, whilst America became embroiled in oil in Saudi Arabia at the end of the 1930s and France developed the Algerian oil industry in the 1960s, just before oil from Libya came on-stream. Ironically enough, the reality is somewhat different and, today, it is Russia which is Europe’s major supplier of both oil and gas.

In fact, Russia supplied 46.4 per cent of Europe’s oil imports and 35.2 per cent of its gas imports in 2012. In comparison, the Middle East and North Africa supplied 30.7 per cent of Europe’s imported oil and 21.2 per cent of its gas imports. Norway, Europe’s third major supplier, provided 24.7 per cent of European gas and 13.3 per cent of the oil. And that makes European states peculiarly vulnerable to Russian sensitivities over its geopolitical role. Indeed, in January 2006 and 2009, Europe had a foretaste of what could happen when Russia and Ukraine fell out over payment delays and much of Europe shivered for weeks as a result. It is a difficult dilemma, given the number of Eastern European countries that have acute memories of Soviet oppression and their own dependence on Russian gas; understandably, they fear Russia’s renewed diplomatic ambitions.

**In Europe, there is an uncomfortable awareness that its energy links to Russia are going to be a powerful restraint on what it can do to oppose Russian ambitions**

**European fears**

However, over the past three months, the diplomatic horizon for both Europe and the United States has been dominated by the crisis over the Ukraine, Russia’s annexation of Crimea and fears of a new Cold War. While it is clear that Russia’s resentments over NATO expansion and European Union encroachment into what it regards as its western ‘near abroad’ are not going to erupt into a hot war, Western opposition and a general sanctions regime seem certain to poison the diplomatic atmosphere for many months, if not years, to come. And, for Europe in particular, there is an uncomfortable awareness that its energy links to Russia are going to be a powerful constraint on what it can do to oppose Russian ambitions and thus exclude it from this contested arena.

Against that background, Europe’s hesitancy over too robust a reaction to Moscow’s threats to Kiev seem to be prudent, however annoying they may be.
The real problems are whether the oil and gas is available for Europe, whether it can be accessed by the European consumer and if so at what price to Washington! Brussels, to be fair, has long been aware of the danger and has desperately sought to ensure its energy security by diversifying its sources of supply and through diplomacy. Diplomacy, however, has failed; Russia refuses to sign the European Energy Charter which is supposed to ensure that energy supplies will not be broken off by unilateral action, and alternative sources of supply are hard to find, particularly given the global competition for gas today as a partial solution to the problem of climate change.

Since the Ukraine crisis erupted, many commentators have assumed that unconventional oil and gas resources or other traditional suppliers will save the day. Europe, they suggest, can easily switch away from dependence on Russia. There is the Middle East, for example, with Qatar by far the world’s largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG), providing 30 per cent of the world’s demand in 2012, or, in North Africa, Algeria, already linked by pipeline to Spain via Morocco and to Italy via Tunisia, or even Libya with its own pipeline to Sardinia. Then there are the new discoveries off the coasts of Israel and Lebanon, with the promise of more in the sea by Gaza. Central Asia, too, could be an alternative. There is also shale gas, in Europe, the Arab World or even America where gas, at least, is far cheaper than it is in Europe and Asia, although the same is not true for oil.

Indeed, vast reserves of oil and gas certainly exist but that is not the issue. The real problems are whether the oil and gas is available for Europe, whether it can be accessed by the European consumer and furthermore, if so, at what price. Although the world’s oil market is truly global, with prices set through market demand, gas markets are regional, with gas often sold on long-term contracts and prices linked to the price of oil – the tradition in Europe and Asia – or determined by the spot and short-term markets at local distribution points, like the famed ‘Henry Hub’ market in the United States, with prices ranging from $3 to $16 per million British Thermal Units worldwide. Clearly, if price were the only consideration, Europe should turn westwards towards the United States for its all-important gas.

**Solutions**

Unfortunately, the situation is more complicated. As far as oil is concerned, OPEC producers, dominated by the Gulf with the world’s lowest production costs, are still the key players with up to 70 per cent of world reserves. And even if shale oil has freed America from its import dependence now, in 15 years time it will once again be importing oil, if falling oil prices do not accelerate its return to import dependence earlier, simply because shale and other unconventional forms of oil are so expensive to produce. As far as gas is concerned, the problem is one of transport. Russia and the Arab World, even Central Asia too, are easily accessible through pipelines, the cheapest form of gas transport; America is not, there gas must be liquefied and shipped across the Atlantic.

The technology involved in producing LNG and turning it back to gas again is complex and expensive. Furthermore, until very recently, the United States was a net gas importer and is only now beginning to export gas instead. It takes two-to-five years to build the necessary plant and, because of the costs, sales markets are determined in advance. The United States has only two operating plants and, although many more are planned, it will be years before they are available and the destinations for their outputs are already set.

That means that, for Europe, the only real alternative to Russia is Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, either through pipelines or via LNG tankers. But, once again, the solution is not so easy, for demand for gas in the Arab world is rapidly accelerating as electricity demand spirals and long-term contracts in Asia eat up the majority of its output. Within a decade the Gulf could become a net importer of gas and political problems hamper North Africa’s ability to expand production, whilst the new supplies in the Eastern Mediterranean are too small to be significant.

Iran, too, despite having the largest gas reserves in the world, needs them to satisfy escalating domestic electricity demand and for reinjection into its oil fields, particularly if it is prevented from accessing nuclear power. And, in any case, it would far rather supply South Asia by pipeline than Europe.

There is, in short, little additional marginal supply for Europe and Russia, by default, is likely to remain its key supplier – as Mr Putin must have calculated!

George Joffé teaches at the Department of Politics and International Studies in the University of Cambridge and is a member of the Editorial Board
The Arab uprisings have posed some interesting and unexpected dilemmas for OPEC members since the Tunisian change of regime in 2011. One major consequence has been that Arab oil producers now need significantly higher oil revenues to keep protestors off the streets by supplying jobs and subsidies. However, this is only possible through higher oil prices as any attempt to raise revenues by increasing production would simply undermine prices. It has been estimated that in 2005 Saudi Arabia needed $50 per barrel to balance its budget. By 2012 this had risen to well over $95. This gives rise to a simple problem of basic economics: high prices will lead to market feedback loops that create oil demand destruction and increase non-OPEC supply. Oil demand destruction arises when consumers reduce their demand for oil on a permanent basis (for instance through conservation and energy efficiency). Thus, buying more fuel-efficient cars such as hybrids or taking to bicycles are examples of demand destruction. This occurs when consumers try to offset the impact of higher oil prices by improving appliance efficiency and/or switching fuels. The International Energy Agency’s ‘New Policies’ scenarios show that 68 per cent of the expected increase in world oil demand between 2011 and 2035 will come from the Middle East, India and China (known as the MIC’s).

All three regions have had a long history of highly subsidised oil prices for their consumers, fuelling high demand growth rates. However, this state of affairs is changing. In India, the old administrative price system was abolished with prices being moved to international levels. At the start of 2009, China also switched to higher prices based on international prices, coupled with sales taxes on some products. In both countries the domestic oil product prices rose dramatically. In the Middle East, domestic oil price reform is being discussed, but now is not a good time politically to increase energy prices and higher prices will eventually lead to demand destruction. This suggests that the conventional wisdom that sees oil demand outside of the OECD rising forever is likely to be wrong. Similarly, higher crude oil prices globally...
OPEC members’ dilemma is that they need high prices to survive politically, but these high prices will sow the seeds of their own destruction

The economic prospects for the region are thus not good. The only realistic solution would be for the Arab governments to initiate serious policies to encourage economic diversification. However, this is easier said than done. Such moves have been talked about regularly and at length throughout the region since the first oil shock of 1973 but with little serious impact. According to an IMF report on the GCC in 2011, the contribution of non-hydrocarbon GDP to total GDP had fallen to 51 per cent in 2010 from 61 per cent in 1990. As for the non-hydrocarbon primary fiscal deficit – an excellent proxy measure for oil dependence – for Saudi Arabia this rose steadily from an average below 50 per cent in the 1990s to 140 per cent by 2010. Other GCC countries have shown a similar trend of growing dependence on oil revenues. Sadly the undoubted entrepreneurial talents in the Arab world that would be essential for a process of diversification have consistently been stifled by the political system. Ruling elites have grabbed all the best deals for themselves leaving, at best, crumbs for the rest of the private sector. Given the way in which the Arab uprisings have now stalled this situation is unlikely to change in the near future.

Professor Paul Stevens is a Distinguished Fellow at The Royal Institute of International Affairs

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Photograph of a fracking operation
Oil in MENA: a curse or a blessing?

There is little doubt that oil has had a major transformative effect on the economies of the Middle East and North African (MENA) region since the middle of the 20th century. However, opinion is sharply divided as to whether it has been mainly a curse or a blessing for the region as a whole.

The oil era in the region began in earnest in the post-World War II period as the demand for low-cost, Middle Eastern oil surged and a series of contractual changes with international oil companies increased the revenue share of the exporting countries. The economic development of current GCC states in recent decades epitomises this transformative effect of oil. Within the time span of two generations these simple and underdeveloped economies have been transformed into high per capita income nations with sophisticated infrastructures and highly advanced welfare systems for their citizens.

Other more diversified oil economies such as Iran, Algeria and Iraq with complementary land and labour resources benefited even more. Even the non-oil economies stood to benefit from oil thanks to migration and remittances, transport and trade and capital flows. By the end of the century, most countries in the region were thus ranked amongst the middle income or high income countries, with the exception of Yemen and Sudan which remain amongst the least developed countries in the world.

Oil revenues provided the resources for massive public investments in physical and social infrastructure such as health and education. While in the 1960s the MENA countries were amongst the most underdeveloped in terms of health and education indicators, by the 1990s they had achieved parity with countries at similar income levels. Particularly pronounced were the rapid closure of the gender gap in education and the remarkable decline in fertility rates. By century’s end the MENA region had reached a new phase of development whereby the continuation of economic growth required qualitatively different strategies.

A main distinguishing feature of this phase was the availability of an abundant supply of educated, young labour. In this phase, oil income was supplemented with growing private savings resulting from lower fertility and dependency rates.

Contrasting the earlier decades’ emphasis on physical development and showcase urban projects, after the 1990s combining the growing supplies of educated labour and capital became a precondition for sustained growth. It was clear now that growth had reached its limits and the new economic priorities required deep-seated and far-reaching economic reform after the early 1990s. The pace of economic reform, however, was painfully slow and prolonged.

The reasons for the slow pace of economic reform in almost all countries were mostly internal, although the EU’s protectionist policies also did not help. Mounting youth unemployment and sluggish economic growth, combined with continued dependence on oil or foreign assistance, were indicators of the lack of success of economic reform and the inability of the MENA economies to withstand the

The real question is: to what extent can the slow pace of reform be explained by the availability of oil income in the region?
The Middle East in London

The region has both the human capital and the financial and other complementary resources to support the emergence of dynamic and inclusive economies. Challenges of this new development phase. But the real question is: to what extent can the slow pace of reform and the general inability to generate productive employment be explained by the availability of oil income in the region?

From a strictly economic point of view the availability of oil income is likely to facilitate – rather than hinder – economic reform. A good example of this is the recent subsidy reform in Iran where hefty price subsidy reductions were undertaken without any social protests, as part of oil revenues were used to compensate those affected. However, not everybody adheres to this view with some maintaining that oil income can hinder economic diversification by crowding out other productive sectors – the so-called Dutch Disease phenomenon.

In the case of the MENA economies with large and growing unemployed labour, however, this has not been the case, as evidenced by the close correlation between oil cycles and the growth cycles in all the non-oil sectors of the economy. It is indeed this type of oil dependence that economic reforms are aimed at reducing through creating the conditions for greater economic diversification.

In reality, politics and policies based on short-sighted political compromises have been mainly responsible for the slow reform and sluggish economic growth in the region. The existence of oil income or foreign assistance has made it possible to postpone urgently required economic reforms. Another way in which oil has mingled with politics is the adoption of populist policies by the region’s governments, compounded over time by a sense of individuals’ entitlement to a share of the oil based on the mere citizenship of an oil economy. This has particularly plagued the oil-rich GCC countries, with their extremely dualistic labour markets characterised by segmentation across lines of nationality and citizenship. The outcome has seen large levels of youth unemployment with wage expectations well above the actual productivity of national labour. But the solution to the vexed problem of youth unemployment in small, rich oil economies is difficult without ending the dual labour markets based on the nationality of workers.

The global financial crisis of 2007/8 had different impacts on the economies of the region. One consequence was the growing power of oil-exporting GCC countries. But it also set the clock back for the reforming economies, where after the popular uprisings in 2011 the domestic economic reform agenda seems to have been largely derailed. The immediate reaction to public implosion was an increase in wages and salaries of public employees and other appeasement policies by the established regimes. This, combined with additional fiscal expenditures to alleviate the effects of the ensuing economic recession, has led to historically large fiscal deficits and unsustainable public debts with the exception of the GCC countries.

A dangerous new tendency has been for the oil-exporting countries to flex their financial power in their regional foreign policy. Cynics may even argue that the increased regional tensions only help drive oil prices even higher. But this overlooks that even the GCC economies do not seem to have fiscal surpluses adequate to withstand fluctuations in oil prices in the medium term. Furthermore, with the rapid spread of non-conventional oil extraction technologies, the demand for Middle East oil is unlikely to remain buoyant at current prices for long.

At present the region has both the human capital and the financial and other complementary resources to support the emergence of dynamic and inclusive economies – if the right policies are adopted. This requires economic rationality – rather than partisan political interferences – to guide the allocation of regional financial resources. Oil can thus be a blessing if future oriented economic rationality rather than partisan politics and backward-looking and archaic ideologies guide regional policies.

Massoud Karshenas is Professor of Economics at SOAS. He specialises on Middle East economics, oil and economic development, poverty and growth, labour markets and employment policy.
Hormoz Naficy takes a critical look at prospects and challenges for Iran’s oil and gas industry after years of tough economic sanctions

Iran is home to the oldest oil industry in the Middle East. Oil was first discovered in Masjed Soleyman, in Iran’s Khuzestan province in 1908. Since then, the socio-political history and economic development of Iran have been inextricably linked with, and impacted by, oil and the politics of international oil. It is therefore not surprising to see opinion sharply divided between those who see oil as a ‘blessing’ for Iran and those who view it more like a ‘curse’. Whatever one’s view on this old and vexed question, there is little doubt that a willingness to learn from past missteps has to be considered an essential ingredient for future planning. Many such lessons stem from the responses of Iranians to a real and perceived conflict with, and the intentions of the West. Accepting at least partial responsibility for past errors is thus important, especially as the Iranian oil and gas sector is preparing to free itself of the constraints and detrimental effects of the international sanctions regime.

The weakness and sheer incompetence of the Qajar rulers in the early 20th century, when oil concessions were first granted, meant that from the outset oil agreements were one-sided and heavily favoured the foreign party. Iran had little experience, until then, in negotiating commercial deals, in any sphere or sector, with savvy outside investors well practised in their desire to maximise returns. A long and noble struggle to gain a fairer deal thus ensued. But both during the Mosaddeq era and again in the 35 years since the 1979 Revolution, the pendulum has swung too far, from a past of unacceptable subservience to outside influences, to a degree of radicalism or isolation that has been, and still is, preventing Iran from achieving the ultimate goal of an equitable partnership with foreign investors and partners. Iran has to free herself of what can only be described as the ‘action and overreaction syndrome’ of the past. A calm and considered national dialogue, led by industry professionals, could lead to consensus building and a well thought out and calibrated response.

The fact that the oil industry has been deeply impacted by that ruinous interference of politics is neither surprising nor unique to Iran. A review of the history of other major oil producers in the Middle

Depoliticising means putting the sector on a more commercial footing and adopting a more modern business model.

NIOC Directors (circa 1950s). Fatollah Naficy and Bagher Mostofi at the site of a major oil well blowout, Alborz Oilfield near Ghom. Photo courtesy of Dr Mohammad Ali Ala of Imperial College

© Mohammad Ali Ala
East and North Africa region will offer the same conclusion. After all, they too have experienced the same curse that comes with the oil blessing.

Benefitting from its longer exposure to oil and given its cadre of highly trained and experienced oil personnel, Iran, however, has a golden opportunity to finally decouple politics from oil and to begin to take the next steps required for reforming the economy and the oil sector. This in turn will require greater confidence and a bolder look at other models for managing her oil industry. Specifically, depoliticising will mean putting the sector on a more commercial footing and adopting a more modern business model. Ideally, that working model would involve an approach that is neither too distrustful of the other party nor too naïve in believing in the inherent best intentions of others.

In order to achieve a healthier business climate, Iran may well have to overhaul the entire structure of the industry. A key reform would be the decoupling of the policy and regulatory functions of the state from the operational aspects of the industry. The current mingling of the two functions is untenable. Energy policy and related regulations can and should continue to be generated by the Ministry of Petroleum. The Ministry can also continue to monitor the industry, ensuring the maximisation of returns for and on behalf of the nation. But the Ministry and its various subsidiaries and affiliates cannot remain involved in day-to-day oil and gas related operations. That task is essentially a commercial operation and has to be left to private sector entities that are entirely independent of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and other meddling organs of the state.

Moreover, as a consequence of the sanctions and, well before that, the paranoia with respect to working with the international oil companies (the so called IOCs), the industry now requires massive injections of capital and new technology. Unfortunately the Iranian private sector, which has suffered the most as a result of the sanctions, is no longer able to cope with these challenges alone and will have to form joint ventures with those very IOCs.

But before the sector reopens to the international oil industry, well considered and well crafted laws and regulations must be in place in order to properly monitor and regulate a freed up sector. Some important first steps have indeed been taken already. In February, NIOC organised a timely conference on the intended revisions to the current ‘buy back’ oil contracts. At the conference, the findings of an expert panel, that had been tasked with seeking the views of the oil companies and other domestic stakeholders, and had also assessed the merits of other oil and gas contracts in the region, were presented to a larger public. A similar conference has been slated for later this summer in London.

However, the Iranian Parliament (the Majles), poorly versed on the subtleties and intricacies of international oil contracts, will have to review and approve any new contract. That will be a major challenge and a huge selling job for NIOC.

The hope must be that a legal and political framework will eventually evolve that is in sync with the reasonable expectations of the international oil industry, while at the same time safeguarding the long-term interests of Iran. Since the Iranian presidential elections last June, the officialdom, at least within the oil industry, has rediscovered – and is now emphasising – the merits of creating ‘win-win’ scenarios.

That approach to driving future business will lay the foundations for attracting the right kind of long-term investment and partnerships for Iran’s oil and gas industry and hopefully rid it of the shackles of the harsh sanctions and years of underperformance.

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The Nasr offshore platform in the Persian Gulf, from NIOC publications (2002)
Nostalgia is a thriving business in the bazaars of Abadan. In its heyday, the city was home to the world’s biggest oil refinery and one of the Middle East’s most modern, cosmopolitan societies. Today, Abadan is a mere shadow of its former self, and Abadanis yearn for bygone times. Pride in the past and embarrassment over the present becomes palpable when locals present their city to the now only occasional foreign visitor.

The popular nostalgia is expressed in memoirs and fiction, in urban myths and local historiography, in online and exile communities.

This culture of nostalgia is a product of oil’s transformative, creative and destructive powers, and it illustrates how oil modernity can shape societies but also animate their imaginaries. In order to understand this, we must appreciate Abadan’s dramatic trajectory from a sleepy village of a couple of hundred Arab date farmers when oil was struck in 1909 to a complex cultural and political city of over 220,000 inhabitants in the 1950s.

During the Anglo-Persian (later Anglo-Iranian) Oil Company’s four decades of presence in Iran, Abadan developed into a multi-cultural if segregated city with a progressive if unequal society. It had middle class suburban houses with all mod-cons alongside impoverished shantytowns. It saw both ruthless suppression of labour activists as well as gradually increasing social mobility and welfare. Abadan was then populated by Europeans, Jews, Armenians, Arabs, Indians and Iranians who had flocked from all over the country to Abadan in search of work. As they settled, they forged a new culture, distinctly global in its orientation.

As a key entrepôt of new technology, fashion and consumerism, Abadan’s image as a liberal, even hedonistic haven and leftist hotspot was cemented in the years after World War II. In July 1946, the oil labour movement staged a strike at Abadan refinery, which foreshadowed the ousting of British imperialism during the 1951 oil nationalisation movement. The latter movement was headed by the popular Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq, who in turn was overthrown by a CIA-engineered coup in 1953.

As American ideals replaced British influence, Abadan entered a golden age of cultural production and consumption that spawned some of Iran’s most famous artists, novelists, cinematographers and musicians. Political dissent remained strong, and one of the key events that took the

This culture of nostalgia is a product of oil’s powers and it illustrates how oil modernity can shape societies but also animate their imaginaries.
Abadanis routinely re-invoke the image of a city that was once the epitome of industrial progress, aspiring for a place in the world and symbolising the possibilities of the future. Abadan is not in denial that the promises of modernity remain largely unfulfilled, and they are conscious of the tormented chapters of their city's history. They are aware – and proud – of Abadan's role in Iran's bloody national struggles, with holes in the walls and streets, erratic power cuts and horrendous water quality reminding them daily of the price their city has paid. Yet while oil brought social injustice, political oppression, ethnic tensions and environmental degradation, it also broadened horizons and enlivened imaginaries. Abadani nostalgia, then, is the embodiment of the contradictory experience of oil modernity as perceived by a city that refuses to forget.

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National music competition organised by the Khane Javanan ('House of Youth') in 1977. Abadani bands often won first place in these competitions. Photo courtesy of Shahriar Tashnizi.
British petroleum companies have played an integral— but often unrecognised— role in the history of cinema in oil producing countries of the Middle East. Modern Iraq’s cinematic debut in petroleum company sponsored films came after decades of orientalist storytelling and representation in literature, painting and cinema.

A cinematic history of Baghdad could begin in London on the eve of World War II. For the Academy Award-winning *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940), British filmmakers created an imaginary version of the city on an elaborate, London-based film set. The urban landscape, based on the fantastical setting of *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, painted Baghdad as an exaggerated portrait of extremes: brilliant hues and massive forms of opulent, palatial architecture juxtaposed with monochromatic sand-coloured facades and chaotic informal market stalls belonging to the people’s city below. An image of a make-believe Baghdad was pasted into the background as a two-dimensional cut out of a hilltop cluster of desert-toned structures, foregrounded by a sea of pastel domes and minarets. *The Thief of Bagdad* epitomises orientalist cinema, in which filmmakers used motion pictures to animate rich imaginary worlds of the so-called Orient that were first crafted in the letters, oil paintings and photographs of European orientalists during the previous two centuries. Central to this production of this imagined geography is that Baghdad is imagined as a city frozen in time and space. Orientalist depictions in every medium are a closed loop of spatial tropes: the city depicted in the fantasy film mirrors the urban scenery portrayed in lavish orientalist paintings from the late 19th century, which echo the passages of orientalist literature from the 18th century, which harken to the translated tales of *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. Yet the cinematic fantasy of a timeless Baghdad, epitomised by the sets constructed in London for *The Thief of Bagdad*, conceal the socio-spatial transformations that shaped the real city: the modern capital of Iraq.

Just ten years after the theatrical release of *The Thief of Bagdad*, the British-controlled Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) began to produce its own films about the legendary city. In stark contrast to the popular fantasy films, which relied on hackneyed visual tropes in order to conjure a fantastical city backdrop, the IPC documentaries of the 1950s attempted to project the first ‘real’ images of contemporary Baghdad to general audiences in Europe and the Middle East. These films recast the image of Baghdad, formerly an urban fantasy of flying carpets and magic lamps, as a modern oil metropolis. The IPC documentaries framed Baghdad as a modern metropolis, a city that had become an oil port of entry and departure. The IPC documentaries of the 1950s attempted to project the first ‘real’ images of contemporary Baghdad to general audiences in Europe and the Middle East. These films recast the image of Baghdad, formerly an urban fantasy of flying carpets and magic lamps, as a modern oil metropolis.
The IPC documentaries of the 1950s recast the image of Baghdad, formerly an urban fantasy of flying carpets and magic lamps, as a modern oil metropolis

as the central stage for the modernisation of Iraq, known famously as the 'cradle of civilisation.' These films and their related publications, advertisements and photographs captured nuanced aspects of the production of space and transformation of society on screen for the first time.

In other words, these films were among the earliest cinematic representations of modern Iraq.

Yet the IPC films are not about oil in its crude form. Rather, these films set out to depict space and society in Iraq as visible evidence of the promise of petroleum as a modernising force. The films worked to make 'black gold' visible to Iraqis as national wealth that manifested in modern infrastructure, public buildings and boulevards.

Unlike its industrial contemporaries in the region, the IPC was deeply concerned with its public image among the national population. An internal IPC report emphasised the cooperation of the Iraqi government, 'which welcomed the concept that films would publicise the country's historical traditions, plans for development and, generally speaking, arouse public interest, both inside and outside Iraq.' The same report claims that these films 'probably contributed to bringing Iraq before the public eye, both in the sense of awakening the interest of the Iraqi people themselves, many of whom had little or no concept of their own country's history and an equally sketchy knowledge of development projects.'

In 1951, IPC established a company film unit based in Baghdad. According to founder John Shearman, the film unit's stated goals were, first, 'to train Iraqi film technicians in [the British] tradition of technical and documentary filmmaking', and second, 'to make films which would explain to the people of Iraq what the oil company was doing in their territory... that it was not really taking away the black gold because it was putting money back into national development.' Moreover, the IPC prioritised the production of Arabic-language films and circulation among mass audiences in Iraq.

In addition to special premieres in Baghdad for nobility, government ministers and other dignitaries, IPC films and especially episodes of the cine-magazine Beladuna (meaning 'our country' in Arabic) were shown regularly in theatres of Iraq's major cities prior to feature films. Additionally, mobile cinema van units would travel to remote towns, refineries and pump stations and stage screenings for small audiences of IPC employees. In this way, the IPC films constructed a 'national' cinematic imaginary of Iraq for Iraqis. The company speculated that the state looked to the IPC to do a job of general publicity that, for various reasons, they were unable to do themselves. Senior advisor to the film unit, Arthur Elton, noted enthusiastically that the IPC documentary series Beladuna 'happened to be almost the first film ever made about Iraq, almost the first time anyone had recorded what was happening in Iraq.' According to the company, during the 1950s one- to two-thirds of the total Iraqi population had seen the IPC films.

The Third River was the earliest documentary film about modern Iraq to be made for and circulated to audiences not only in Iraq but around the world. Sponsored by the British-controlled Iraq Petroleum Company, produced by Film Centre in London, shot on-location in Iraq and Syria and translated into both English and Arabic versions, this film signified a new approach in the long orientalist history of representing Baghdad. In The Third River the land, people and places of Iraq figured as a primary subject of a film narrative rather than serving merely as an exotic backdrop. The film's director, Michael Clarke, addressed the weight of these competing imaginaries, writing, 'in making The Third River we were faced with Iraq as it is, not with the luscious and cloying luxuries of a Hollywood gorgeous East.' The Third River was the first among the oil company's attempts to produce a national imaginary for Iraqis residing in all parts of the country using the power and allure of cinema. Ultimately, the IPC films aimed to 'project modern Iraq' as a modern oil state in part as a counter-narrative to the persistent orientalist imaginaries, using a positivist narrative to link extraction to petroleum's promise to modernise Iraq.

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In the second half of the 1950s, Libya became one of the main oil producing countries of the Mediterranean. Following the Suez Crisis, US and British oil companies and governments sought to differentiate the sources of oil coming from the Middle East, in order to avoid being entirely dependent on the Suez Canal. Libya’s geographic position west of the canal and close to the markets and refineries of Western Europe made it an ideal place for foreign companies to invest public and corporate resources.

International oil politics in Libya were not defined only in terms of oil revenues, but also in terms of labour policies. As US oil companies established their position in Libya, they brought with them the forms of exploitation and discrimination that characterised America’s informal empire in Latin America and the Middle East. In order to challenge US policies, the Libyan government and trade unions embraced the idea that the Libyan workforce should be crucial in assuring Libya’s independence and that workers should be granted decent working and living conditions. In the late 1950s, a concerted effort led by the US administration, conservative Libyan trade unions and the main American trade union, the AFL-CIO, marginalised radical Libyan oil workers. Yet, during the Six Day War of 1967, oil workers emerged as one of the main forces behind Libya’s challenge to international oil politics support for oil nationalism and set the stage for the emergence of Qaddafi’s regime in 1969.

Starting in the mid-1950s, after the discovery of large quantities of crude oil, Libya’s society changed dramatically. As dozens of international oil companies applied for concessions, thousands of male Libyans moved from the desert to the large cities. Compared to other oil producers, in Libya the oil industry did not act as a wage leader or as a promoter of employment. Since Libyan workers were mostly unskilled, US oil companies often relied on Italian technicians, who were not...
The nationalisation of Iranian oil had shown the power large numbers of concentrated and organised workers could have over the international oil market. As US and British oil companies pursued their interests in Libya, the Libyan government started considering the importance oil workers might have for the country's self-determination. In 1957, it passed a Labour Law aimed at 'Libyanising' the oil workforce, in order to create a class of skilled workers that could constitute the backbone of the country's economy and independence. The Law promoted the employment of Libyan workers to avoid hiring or training Libyans away from the oil fields, leading them to prefer to be employed by the state.

As a result, oil companies increasingly limited the number of local workers they employed in their oil camps and divided them according to nationality and skill in order to prevent the emergence of organised political conflict. As US and British oil companies pursued their interests in Libya, the Libyan government started considering the importance oil workers might have for the country's self-determination. In 1957, it passed a Labour Law aimed at 'Libyanising' the oil workforce, in order to create a class of skilled workers that could constitute the backbone of the country's economy and independence. The Law promoted the employment of Libyan workers to avoid hiring or training Libyans away from the oil fields, leading them to prefer to be employed by the state.

Carried out by international oil companies, the PWU denounced employers for not respecting the Labour Law, and for establishing hierarchies between Libyan, Italian and foreign workers. While its language was similar to that adopted by the Libyan government, the PWU promoted rights for unskilled as well as skilled workers. As in other contexts, the US administration reacted to the emergence of labour conflict by offering its support to an anti-Communist trade union, the Libyan General Workers' Union (LGWU), under Salim Shita's leadership, and mobilised the AFL-CIO to establish a strong relationship between the LGWU and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Furthermore, it sent Kekhya to study at the 'Centro Studi CISL' in Florence, an institute funded by the ICFTU and run by the anti-Communist Italian Confederation of Trades' Union (CISL). The US government assigned an American labour advisor to Libya, to work both with the government and with trade unions, and promoted Shita's leadership inside the LGWU and his participation in the ICFTU. Shita, for his part, took advantage of the support he received from the US to marginalise other trade unionists. By 1959, all Libyan trade unions were placed under the control of the Libyan General Federation of Trade Unions (LGFTU), led by Shita, while the US strategy became part of a new policy introduced by the National Security Council (NSC), which according to a Statement of US Policy toward Libya issued on 15 March 1960 (NSC 6004) aimed at 'encourag[ing] the Free World orientation of Libyan labor organizations with a view to influencing Libya to follow courses of action favorable to US interests and US–Libyan relations.'

Despite such forms of repression, oil workers' activism continued throughout the decade and emerged as a crucial force during the Six Day War of 1967. Oil and dock workers in Tripoli and Benghazi, together with students, organised a series of strikes to stop the export of oil to Western Europe and the US. The embargo they placed on oil exports was unprecedented and forced the US government to come to term with Arab oil producers. By doing so, oil workers played an important part in preparing the outbreak of the Libyan revolution and the rise of Qaddafi's regime in 1969.

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Localising the effects of oil development helps us to understand how this precious commodity has shaped the social and political conditions of a society, challenging the idea that oil has had similar repercussions across time and space. A common belief is that in some countries oil industrialisation has stifled civic engagement and subjugated indigenous societies under the imperatives of oil production and rent seeking. This argument loses plausibility when examining political and civic life in Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province at the dawn of the Saudi petro-age from the beginning of commercial oil production in 1938 until the oil boom of 1973. In this period the impact of oil on the local communities was by no means unidirectional but also worked in reverse, with various local actors and the nascent Saudi state shaping oil life and politics at various levels.

Far from being the remote and desolate place, which commonly held perceptions of the ‘oil frontier’ make us believe, Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province was traditionally a space of socio-economic and political interaction, connecting the interior of the Arabian Peninsula to the Gulf. Even before the advent of oil, local businesses and fertile oases attracted numerous immigrants from inland provinces such as the Najd and Qasim. The province’s large Shi’a communities, known locally as baharina (literally ‘people from Bahrain’), added to the heterogeneous and trans-regional character of the area. The beginning of oil extraction in 1938 further reinforced this social condition with thousands of mostly young men from the Saudi heartland and the wider Gulf region streaming into the province seeking work in the oil industry.

By the early 1940s, the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) had built labour camps in the three oil districts to accommodate its large American labour force as well as several thousand Saudi oil workers, following a system of strict segregation of the two nationalities. Americans and Saudis lived in two worlds apart. The fenced American camps provided a living standard similar to that of middle class suburbs in the United States, including lush greenery and ample recreational areas. Saudi workers were housed in tents or concrete dormitories in separate areas that

\[ \text{The impact of oil on local communities was by no means unidirectional – various local actors and the nascent Saudi state shaped oil life and politics at various levels} \]
were bare of vegetation and thus directly exposed to heat and dust. Company services such as transportation, hospitals, cafeterias and water fountains were provided separately for Americans and Saudis and differed considerably in quality.

Saudi workers started to mobilise in 1945 as a result of their adverse work and living conditions in Aramco’s towns. Aramco’s discriminating policies vis-à-vis the Saudi workforce played a decisive role in raising their awareness as a national labour force. Being Saudi meant an existence at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy of Aramco towns, with hardly any access to modern amenities, and under the fear of local Saudi officials who resorted to harsh punishment when a Saudi disobeyed law or order. Execution of bodily punishments against lawbreakers was recurrent at the gates of company towns, and defiant workers were readily deported from the oil production area. During the labour unrest of 1945 and 1953 the central government sent Saudi soldiers and paramilitaries to restore order in the oil districts with the result that by the mid-1950s, the Eastern Province had developed into a heavily militarised security zone.

While the early labour movement was nurtured by the discrimination of the foreign oil company and by the disciplinary power of the local administration and central government, it also blended with traditional localist resentment against Saudi rule that formed an integral part of the Kingdom’s young history. Many labour activists had been under the influence of resistance movements in their home regions before settling in the oil areas of the Eastern Province. Workers from the Qasim region had a reputation of being particularly rebellious in the same way as the local Shi’ites who were especially affected by the religious policies of the Saudi regime.

Oil industrialisation gave new meaning to local resistance, giving birth to a sense of Saudi solidarity and national affiliation that transcended geographic, tribal and sectarian divisions. During the 1953 strike Shi’a residents harboured hundreds of protesters from Saudi police and army troops. Local merchants helped to prolong work stoppages by extending credit to the strikers. After the strike, many labour activists who came from outside the Eastern Province escaped to their home communities where they were hidden from the Saudi authorities. In the following decade, the labour movement became more radicalised, embracing leftist and anti-imperialist ideas. The movement’s nationalist core established close ties with intellectuals and state officials in the Eastern Province and beyond, sharing with them reformist ideas: from more inclusive and participatory forms of government to independence from American hegemony.

This alliance of political activists, reformers, and advocates of modernisation engaged actively in the process of oil urbanisation by carving out vibrant spaces of civic activism in the grey zones of state and company control. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed various initiatives for the establishment of an independent press, elected municipal councils and forums for cultural and (barely covered) political activities in the form of public libraries, sports and literary clubs, some of which have survived into the present day.

Research on Saudi Arabia has often turned a blind eye to the fact that the share of oil wealth that was channelled towards local communities did in fact plant the seeds for a more inclusive and participatory public life in the province. This is illustrated by the case of Saleh Ambah, the first Dean of the College for Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran between 1963 and 1970, and his wife Aisha al-Fasi, who were among those who actively promoted the formation of students and women associations and the introduction of higher education for girls. Ambah’s liberal ideas and al-Fasi’s connection to the nationalist ‘Front for the Liberation of the Peninsula’ (jabhat tahrir al-jazira’), which was active in the Hijaz, led to Ambah’s imprisonment in 1970. Similarly, politically active leftists, nationalists and modernisers among oil workers, students, well established businessmen and state officials were arrested in the hundreds in the Eastern Province between 1969 and 1970 alone. Since the early flow of oil rent created the conditions for large scale mobilisation and vivid civic engagement, a question remains to be answered by research on the local history of Saudi Arabia’s oil life: how and to what extent did oil contribute to the suppression of grass root activism after the oil boom of 1973?

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Street life scene in the oil town of al-Khobar (1954)
The Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), which became Saudi Aramco in 1988, has published a number of accounts of its own history and the history of Saudi Arabia over the past few decades. Frank Jungers, a former leader of Aramco, adds to these accounts a book that is part history and part personal memoir. Born in North Dakota, Jungers joined Aramco in 1947 and worked for it for 30 years. In 1971, he became the company's President and, between 1973 and 1978, served as Chairman of the Board and CEO. Jungers's book is mainly based on his own memories, input from other Aramco employees, as well as a few other books on Saudi Arabia. The book begins with a chapter on 'Aramco's Origins' and ends with the company's '75th Anniversary' in 2008.

As the subtitle of his book suggests, Jungers argues that Aramco and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are 'roughly the same age' and 'were destined to grow up together' (Jungers, 12). In the beginning of his book, he narrates that King Abdulaziz created Saudi Arabia in 1932. The following year, Standard Oil of California (Socal) secured a concession from the Saudi government to explore for, and produce, petroleum in the Kingdom. To this end, Socal established the California Arabian Standard Oil Company, which was renamed the Arabian American Oil Company in 1944. Over the decades, Jungers writes, Aramco and the Saudi government ‘expanded in parallel, relying on each other to achieve common goals’ (12). This partnership has lasted from the 1930s to the present. In his conclusion, Jungers relates that the Saudi government asked Aramco to build the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in 2006. He quotes King Abdullah as saying that he knew Aramco would not misuse any funds when implementing such projects. Jungers concludes that the story of Aramco and Saudi Arabia is a ‘history of mutual progress over more than 75 years, with each partner relying on and supporting the other’ (230).

Jungers's book is accessible and informative. Its 255 pages are divided into twenty-six chapters in addition to appendices on chronology and company leaders. With each chapter having less than ten pages on average, the chapters are easy to read and digest. They are also beautifully illustrated with many photographs provided by Saudi Aramco. The book contains much general information on the history of the Kingdom and the company in addition to rare memories and anecdotes about some lesser-known episodes of Saudi history. Jungers narrates an attempt by the Vatican and Saudi Arabia to establish diplomatic relations in the early 1970s, for instance. This attempt saw a visiting cardinal walking the streets of Riyadh in religious garments without arousing negative public reactions. This rapprochement came to an end with the assassination of King Faisal by a nephew in 1975. Jungers also shares his own memory of this assassination. He claimed that he was the first person called by the Head of the Royal Protocol Office after Faisal had been shot. As President of Aramco, Jungers was asked to send urgent medical help and an airplane for King Faisal.

While the book contains much interesting information, a potential future edition might benefit from an engagement with more recent scholarly literature. Jungers describes Aramco as exceptional compared to other foreign-owned oil companies, which ‘often had adversarial, exploitative or even colonialist relationships with their host governments’ (15). But he shows little awareness of a book by Robert Vitalis entitled America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier. Vitalis argues that it is a myth that Aramco acted less exploitatively than similar companies in other countries. To get a more balanced view of Aramco and its relationship with Saudi Arabia, I thus recommend that readers read both Frank Jungers’s and Robert Vitalis’s books.

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Law, State, and Society in Modern Iran: Constitutionalism, Autocracy, and Legal Reform, 1906-1941
By Hadi Enayat

Reviewed by Saïd Amir Arjomand

In this theoretically informed account of the modernisation of law in Iran, Hadi Enayat discusses the intractable dilemmas faced by the Iranian constitutionalists when they sought to translate the popular notion of the House of Justice (edalat-khana) into a system of constitutional government based on the rule of law from 1906 to 1941. Enayat has a consistent analytical framework for dealing with constitutional laws and judiciary organisation in the course of state-building and modernisation of Iran, with ad hoc explanations being few and far in between. As Enayat shows in painstaking detail, the translation of justice into modern law was far more intractable in Shi'i Iran than in the Sunni Ottoman empire because state law (qanun) and sacred law (sharia) were not integrated but were rather under separate jurisdictions, respectively, of the Shah and his governors on the one hand, and of the Shi'i hierarchy on the other. The legitimacy of monarchy in the Persianate conception was based squarely on justice. The Shah was the 'fountain of justice' and his tribunal for injustices (mazalem, divan-khana), was the highest court of justice in the realm. In the course of the reforms of Naser al-Din Shah (1848-96), the royal tribunal was first expanded with the installation of 'justice boxes' (sadnuq-e edalat) in major cities, and then by transforming it into the Judiciary (adliyya) (Enayat, 39-46). Hence the assimilation, in popular conception, of the parliament demanded by the constitutionalists to a House of Justice in 1906.

It soon became clear, however, that the reform of the Judiciary was not as easy as establishing constitutional government by a royal decree. The Shi'i hierarchy was the guardian of 'the sharia of Mohammad', and its conception of divine law and justice had clear implications for judiciary reform. Unlike the Ottoman Sultan, the Shah of Iran had no religious authority, which rested with an independent Shi'i hierarchy. The authoritative jurists (mojtaheeds) of the Shi'i hierarchy exercised this independent authority not only to secure themselves the right to veto all parliamentary legislation through a committee of five 'high-ranking mojtaheeds', but insisted that equality before the law meant the equality of Muslims and non-Muslims before state law (qanun-e dawlati), implicitly leaving their patent inequality in the sharia untouched.

The Iranian constitutionalists' solution to integrating state law and the sharia, carefully detailed with much new information and insightfully analysed by Enayat, is an achievement well worth noting by students of comparative constitutionalism. The great judiciary reformers of modern Iran – Hasan Pirniya in 1907-11 and Ali Akbar Davar in 1927-35 – secured the cooperation of a number of prominent jurists for their respective reforms. Pirniya's 1911 Law of Judiciary Organization adopted modern procedural law that was at complete variance with the sharia Kadi justice, and did so in close cooperation with the clerical jurist, Seyyed Hassan Modarres, who was informally acting as the spokesman for the high-ranking mojtaheeds and went along on the condition that the reform should not affect substantive law. This condition was by and large honoured by Davar, who relied on the expertise of reputable clerical and former clerical jurists for the inclusion of much of Shi'i law in Iran's Civil Code (1928-35).

With Davar's codification and his new round of judiciary reorganisation under Reza Shah Pahlavi, Iranian law became just state law (qanun), which was henceforth the official embodiment of justice to be administered by a judiciary consisting of a modernised hierarchy of lower and appellate courts that divided the old Kadi's function between the judge and the public prosecutor. Sharia courts were initially incorporated into the judiciary, but subsequent laws quickly restricted their jurisdiction, and they disappeared altogether before long.

Enayat's book also includes an informative and original chapter on legal institutions in practice from 1906 to 1941. All in all, it is a major achievement and an auspicious beginning for a brilliant career.

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On the Arab Revolts and the Iranian Revolution: Power and Resistance Today

By Arshin Adib-Moghaddam

Bloomsbury Academic, October 2013, £65.00 (hardback), £22.90 (paperback)

Reviewed by Ghoncheh Tazmini

It is probably one of the most challenging scholarly endeavours to capture the complexity of the revolutionary movements that have convulsed the Arab world before the dust has settled. Few scholars would venture into such tempestuous waters and even fewer would hazard to juxtapose the dynamics of the Arab uprisings alongside a revolution that predates the revolts by three decades: the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The common thread, Arshin Adib-Moghaddam argues, is the quest for self-rule and the emphasis on national independence. The author shows how these two political events have engendered profound changes in the ‘rules of knowledge’ and in the way politics is made, power is exercised and resistance is organised. The author addresses the praxis and theory of power and resistance – both very slippery words in political terminology – and focuses on why the dialectics of power and resistance are universal.

The events in the Arab world have provoked mutations in ‘truth conditions’: specifically, the idea that democracy and social justice are not strictly ‘Western’ aspirations. The author supports this claim by painting the Arab uprisings onto an even larger canvas – sketching out the protests that have occurred from Tehran to Cairo to New York, London, Madrid and Athens, in order to make the case that resistance is a truly universal phenomenon as are calls for human rights, social justice, political empowerment and national dignity. He identifies the contours of this new, ‘borderless’ globalised political space, highlighting the way in which the Arab revolts are shifting our perception away from the orientalist idea that the Arab–Muslim ‘other’ is ultimately different. The uprisings have rendered these depictions even more obsolete and devoid of analytical purchase.

Indeed, one of the strongest merits of this wide-ranging inquest is the reminder that the demand for democracy is not confined to the West. Moving even further beyond the ‘us versus them’ bifurcation, the author argues that the field of International Relations needs to be reconstituted accordingly, and that the ossified canons and convictions of the Western social sciences and humanities need to be reformulated in order to accommodate this new reality.

Stressing the global interconnectedness of contemporary manifestations of power and resistance, the author contends that current transformations in the region promise to foster a unified field of global politics and a cosmopolitan spirit that feed into a new form of globalised resistance. Acts of resistance reveal a human default position that is provoked whenever a sense of normative and material injustice prevails. This statement is theoretically grounded in the fourth chapter, which discusses how forms of power act upon resistance via a dialogue between Michel Foucault and Edward Said. The book is not short of highlights, but this chapter stands out in delivering the necessary theoretical anchorage to support the book’s compelling claims.

A good yardstick for any review is to ask whether the title has achieved its goal. In his introduction, the author describes his intention to map out continuities in the politics of power and resistance within various disciplines that go beyond experiences of the Western world. Evocative, erudite and empirically rich, the book has definitely achieved this goal. Well-structured and user-friendly, it is organised into seven chapters that weave into each other seamlessly.

With careful handling of what has become an emotionally charged subject, the prose is engaging and dramatic, with anecdotal snippets from mass media, popular culture, social sciences and humanities interspersed throughout. The chapters systematically build up a momentum and are consummated with a concluding message: that we have been living in the end of times of the West and the East, and that it is time to move beyond geopolitics and inflated notions of territoriality and ideological cohesion in order to finally live at peace with ourselves and our global neighbours. By fostering the conceptual habitat and the cognitive space for such a vision, On the Arab Revolts and the Iranian Revolution takes an intellectual leap in that direction.

Ghoncheh Tazmini is Iran Heritage Visiting Fellow in Iranian Studies at London Middle East Institute. She holds a PhD in International Relations and her latest book is titled Revolution and Reform in Russia and Iran.
The uprisings of 2011 which spread across the Middle East once again propelled the armies of the region to the centre of the political stage. The experience of the first decade of the twenty-first century provides ample reason to re-examine Middle Eastern armies and the historical context which produced them. By adding an historical understanding to a contemporary political analysis, Stephanie Cronin examines the structures and activities of Middle Eastern armies and their role in state- and empire-building. Focusing on Iran, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, *Armies and State-building in the Modern Middle East* presents a clear and concise analysis of the nature of armies and the differing guises military reform has taken throughout the region.

*January 2014, IB Tauris, £17.99*

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**Armies and State-building in the Modern Middle East: Politics, Nationalism and Military Reform**

**By Stephanie Cronin**

The uprisings of 2011 which spread across the Middle East once again propelled the armies of the region to the centre of the political stage. The experience of the first decade of the twenty-first century provides ample reason to re-examine Middle Eastern armies and the historical context which produced them. By adding an historical understanding to a contemporary political analysis, Stephanie Cronin examines the structures and activities of Middle Eastern armies and their role in state- and empire-building. Focusing on Iran, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, *Armies and State-building in the Modern Middle East* presents a clear and concise analysis of the nature of armies and the differing guises military reform has taken throughout the region.

*January 2014, IB Tauris, £17.99*

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**A Concise History of the Arabs**

**By John McHugo**

John McHugo unfolds centuries of political, social and intellectual development, from the Roman Empire to the present day. Taking the reader beyond the headlines, McHugo presents a series of turning points in Arab history: the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, the expansion of Islam, the conflicts of the medieval and modern ages, the struggles against foreign domination, the rise of Islamism and the end of the rule of dictators. This concise history reveals how the Arab world has come to assume its present form and illuminates the choices that lie ahead in the wake of the ‘Arab Spring’.

*April 2014, Saqi Books, £10.99*

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**The Reckoning of Pluralism: Political Belonging and the Demands of History in Turkey**

**By Kabir Tambar**

The Turkish Republic was founded simultaneously on the ideal of universal citizenship and on acts of exclusionary violence. Today, nearly a century later, the claims of minority communities and the politics of pluralism continue to ignite explosive debate. The Reckoning of Pluralism centres on the case of Turkey’s Alevi community, a sizeable Muslim minority in a Sunni majority state. Alevi have seen their loyalty to the state questioned and experienced sectarian hostility, and yet their community is also championed by state ideologues as bearers of the nation’s folkloric heritage. This book offers a critical appraisal of the tensions of democratic pluralism, exploring the coupling of modern political belonging and violence, of political inclusion and domination.

*April 2014, Stanford University Press, £21.50*
Since the beginning of 2011, the political situation in Syria has consistently found itself at the top of news broadcasts, newspaper headlines and the agendas of politicians. Little known, however, has been the struggle of the Kurds in Syria to have their voice heard on the political stage and to have equitable access to both economic and political resources. Here, Harriet Allsopp examines contemporary Kurdish politics in Syria, concentrating on the Syrian–Kurdish political parties which operate illegally in the country. It is these parties which, despite state sanctions, have attempted to promote their political agendas and to bring about change for the approximately 3 million Kurds that currently reside in Syria. This book explores the fundamental issues of minority identity and the concept of being ‘stateless’ in a turbulent region.

April 2014, I.B. Tauris, £59.50

Egypt's Copts make up one of the oldest and largest Christian communities in the Middle East. Yet despite the availability of a large number of books on aspects of Coptic culture, including art and architecture, monasticism, theology and music, there is to date no single volume that provides a comprehensive cultural history of the Copts and their achievements. *Coptic Civilization* aims to fill this gap by introducing the general reader to Coptic culture in all its variety and multi-faceted richness. With contributions by twenty scholars, there are chapters on monasticism, the Coptic language, Coptic literature, Christian Arabic literature, the objects and documents of daily life, magic, art and architecture and textiles, as well as the history of the Coptic Church, its liturgy, theology and music.

March 2014, The American University in Cairo Press, £29.95

What does it mean to promote ‘transitions to democracy’ in the Middle East? How have North American, European and multilateral projects advanced human rights, authoritarian retrenchment or Western domination? This book examines transnational programs in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Yemen, Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria, the exceptional cases of Palestine and Iraq, and the Arab region at large during two tumultuous decades. To understand the controversial and contradictory effects of political aid, Sheila Carapico analyses discursive and professional practices in four key fields: the rule of law, electoral design and monitoring, women’s political empowerment and civil society. Her research explores the paradoxes and jurisdictional disputes confronted by Arab activists for justice, representation and ‘non-governmental’ agency.

OBITUARY

Hossein Shahidi
(1953-2014)

Saeed Barzin

In the conclusion to the book, Hossein laments the closure of newspapers and detention of journalists in Iran but says the modernisation and expansion of Iranian journalism need to be supported by educational, legal and political progress to create a stable and secure environment for journalists.

Fluent in Persian, English and Arabic, his last scholarly work was a translation of Katouzian’s *The Persians*. As a member of the Centre for Iranian Studies, he contributed to the Centre’s magazine. His piece ‘Iranian Journalism and the “Land of Freedom”’ was published last year in our February-March 2013 issue – on Media – which was edited by Roger Hardy.

Hossein is survived by his wife, Roya, and two sons, Farhad and Farhang.

Hossein Shahidi, university lecturer, BBC journalist and Associate Member of the Centre for Iranian Studies at LMEL, passed away on 10 April, aged sixty-one.

Hossein, a prominent figure in Iranian academic and journalistic circles in London, was a man whose life and passions revolved around journalism and teaching, nurtured and shaped by a cultured family background, personal eccentricities and historical events.

He was the son of a literary scholar, Ja’far Shahidi, head of the Dehkhoda Institute for Persian studies in Tehran and the Persian translator of ‘Nahj al-Balagha’; sermons attributed to Ali, the first Shi’i Imam.

As with many middle-class Iranian youngsters in the 1960s – when an education in medicine or engineering was the accepted norm – Hossein favoured the latter, and received a Bachelor’s degree from the American University of Beirut.

But destiny had other plans. As the 1979 Revolution swept through Iranian society, Hossein shifted his focus towards journalism. He worked as a stringer for foreign journalists frantically trying to cover the re-emergence of politicised Islam, and then for English-language Kayhan International, which by then was firmly in the grip of the revolutionaries in Tehran.

At this point, a trip to Britain proved critical. In London, he successfully applied for a job with the BBC Persian Service. Iranians looked to BBC Persian as a source of reliable news, and it is well known that the revolution’s leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, had his fiddly shortwave radio set permanently tuned to the station. These facts could not have escaped the attention of any aspiring journalist.

Hossein was with the BBC for nearly two decades. There he excelled not only in the Persian and Arabic sections, but also in the World Service central newsroom and in the training department, where he was appointed a chief manager.

His BBC colleagues remember not only his professional abilities but also his personal qualities. He was seen as a passionate man, sometimes sensitive and emotional, who cared about and looked after the people around him: a well mannered man who approached others with humility.

Hossein was also regarded as a talented journalist who worked and lived devoutly, if not obsessively, by the BBC editorial guidelines of impartiality, fairness and accuracy. He was disciplined in his editing and steadfast in his teaching.

Ironically, it was probably his devotion to journalism that took him away from the BBC. He wanted to look at the subject from a higher, more abstract plateau, and he found this in PhD research at Oxford University. Under the tutorship of Dr Homa Katouzian, he wrote, and later published, *Journalism in Iran: From Mission to Profession*.

In conclusion, Hossein laments the closure of newspapers and detention of journalists in Iran but says the modernisation and expansion of Iranian journalism need to be supported by educational, legal and political progress to create a stable and secure environment for journalists.

Fluent in Persian, English and Arabic, his last scholarly work was a translation of Katouzian’s *The Persians*. As a member of the Centre for Iranian Studies, he contributed to the Centre’s magazine. His piece ‘Iranian Journalism and the “Land of Freedom”’ was published last year in our February-March 2013 issue – on Media – which was edited by Roger Hardy.

Hossein is survived by his wife, Roya, and two sons, Farhad and Farhang.

Hossein Shahidi, lecturer, broadcaster and Iran media specialist, born 20 April 1953 in Tehran, passed away on 10 April 2014 in London.

*Dr Saeed Barzin is a retired BBC journalist (Iran analyst, Monitoring Service)*
HE EVENTS and organisations listed below are not necessarily endorsed or supported by The Middle East in London. The accompanying texts and images are based primarily on information provided by the organisers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the compilers or publishers. While every possible effort is made to ascertain the accuracy of these listings, readers are advised to seek confirmation of all events using the contact details provided for each event.

Submitting entries and updates: please send all updates and submissions for entries related to future events via e-mail to mepub@soas.ac.uk

JUNE EVENTS

Monday 2 June

7:00 pm | The Book of Gaza (Book Launch & Discussion) Organised by: The Mosaic Rooms. Join Gazan writers Atef Abu Saif and Abdallah Tayeh to celebrate the launch of The Book of Gaza - a ‘compilation of human stories from Gaza’ by ten Palestinian writers translated into English for the first time. Admission free - Pre-registration required E rsvp@mosaicrooms.org. The Mosaic Rooms, A M Qattan Foundation, Tower House, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW. T 020 7370 9990 E info@mosaicrooms.org W www.mosaicrooms.org

Tuesday 3 June

7:30 pm | Heart by Zendeh (Performance) Until Saturday 7 June. A political love story told through physical theatre and performance poetry. Taking place between Durham and Tehran as a British and American orchestrated coup d'état destabilises a nation, and inspired by the love poem Leili and Majnouna, a love triangle unravels. Tickets: £10/£6 conc. 52-54 Kennington Oval, London SE11 5SW. T 020 7582 7680 W www.ovalhouse.com

Wednesday 4 June

6:10 pm | Omar (Film) Organised by: Zenith Foundation in collaboration with BFI Southbank. Part of the Discover Arab Cinema season. Dir Hany Abu-Assad (2013), Palestine, 96 min. A young man is caught between loyalty to his friends, the girl he loves, and freedom. With English subtitles. Tickets: £8.15 - £11.50. BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, South Bank, London, SE1 8XT. T 020 7928 3232 W https://whatson.bfi.org.uk

The 2014 Middle East in London Photo Competition

As the summer holidays approach, the London Middle East Institute at SOAS is pleased to announce a photo competition for its bimonthly magazine, Middle East in London.

Harness the power of photography and share your experiences from around the Middle East. A selection of entries will be published in a future edition of the Middle East in London magazine. The winner, chosen by members of the Editorial Board, will be awarded £100 worth of Amazon tokens.

By submitting a photograph, each entrant confirms and accepts the following terms and conditions:

* The photograph, in its entirety, is a single work of original material taken by the contest entrant.
* The photograph must be a single work of original material taken by the contest entrant.
* The entrant warrants that the photograph submitted is their own work, that they own the copyright for it and that no other party has any right, title, claim or interest in the photograph.
* The entrant accepts the responsibility to ensure that any images submitted have been taken with the permission of the subject and do not infringe the copyrights, trademarks, moral rights, rights of privacy/publicity and/or intellectual property rights of any entity, third party or any laws.
* Copyright in all images submitted for this competition remains with the respective entrants. However, each entrant grants a worldwide, irrevocable, perpetual license to London Middle East Institute at SOAS, University of London to feature any or all of the submitted images in any of their publications, their websites and/or in any promotional material with full credits given to the photographer.

The Middle East in London will not enter into correspondence regarding the final decision.
6:30 pm | The Future of Iranian Theatre (Panel Debate) Organised by: Iran Heritage Foundation (IHF). A panel of theatre insiders will discuss the current state and future of Iranian theatre. The panel includes Nassim Soleimanpour, author; Ramin Gray, Actors Touring Company; and Mehrdad Seyf, 30 Bird. Chaired by: Nelson Fernandez, NFA International Arts and Culture, and formerly of the Arts Council England. Followed by a Q&A. Admission free - Pre-registration required. Asia House, 63 New Cavendish Street, London W1G 7LP. T 020 3651 2121 E astrid@iranheritage.org W www.iranheritage.org

7:30 pm | Heart by Zendeh (Performance) Until Saturday 7 June. See listing for Tuesday 3 June.

Thursday 5 June

2:30 pm | The Maghreb and The Arab Uprisings: What is the Current State of Play? (Panel Discussion) Organised by: Maghreb Academic Network and the London Middle East Institute, SOAS. With Gilbert Achcar, SOAS; George Joffe, University of Cambridge; Mohamed-Salah Omri, University of Oxford; and Michael Willis, University of Oxford. Chaired by: Karima Laachir, SOAS. Admission free. MBI Al Jaber Conference Room, London Middle East Institute, SOAS, University of London, MBI Al Jaber Building, 21 Russell Square, London WC1B 5EA. T 020 7898 4490/4330 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/

5:30 pm | The Cordoba Caliphate through Madinat Al-Zahra: from its proclamation to its consolidation (Seminar) Antonio Vallejo Triano, former director of the Madinat Al-Zahra Architectural Complex (1985 to 2013). Organised by: Anna Contadini, The Department of the History of Art and Archaeology, SOAS. Research Seminar in Islamic Art and Archaeology. Madinat al-Zahra was the great urban creation of the Umayyad Caliphate of al-Andalus and was one of the Caliphate’s main means of propaganda and legitimisation, the seminar seeks to explain how city planning and architecture not only reflect the structure of the Caliphate State but also its most pressing concerns and issues. Admission free. NAB.LG.01, www.ibtauris.com

Friday 6 June

10:00 am | Religious Diversity and Tolerance in Europe and Turkey (Conference) Organised by: LSE Contemporary Turkish Studies. The conference will aim to understand the larger socio-political processes and discourses that shape and define religious diversity with an emphasis on similarities and differences. Admission free. NAB.LG.01.

NEW FICTION TITLES FROM THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO PRESS

Hamdy el-Gazzar
Black Magic
AN EGYPTIAN NOVEL
Translated by Heba El-badawy
192 pages 198 x 126mm 9789774166266
Paperback £10.99

Idris Ali
Poor
A NUBIAN NOVEL
Translated by Heba El-badawy
220 pages 198 x 126mm 9789774166273
Paperback £11.99

Hamdy el-Gazzar
PRIVATE PLEASURES
192 pages 198 x 126mm 9789774166013
Paperback £11.99

www.ibtauris.com
2:00 pm | Avicenna and Avicennisms: A Colloquium at SOAS (Two-Day Colloquium: Friday 6 - Saturday 7 June) Organised by: Department of the Languages and Cultures of the Near and Middle East, SOAS and sponsored by Neal A Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship and the Brigham Young University London Centre. Bringing together a range of Avicenna scholars from established names to younger, up-and-coming scholars, this colloquium will focus on the impact and reception of Avicenna in scholasticism and in the Islamicate world. Admission free - Pre-registration required for Day 2. Day 1: KLT, SOAS & Day 2: B102, Brunei gallery, SOAS. E as117@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/nme/events/

6:30 pm | A Lens on the Middle East - CISD Annual Lecture 2014 by Jeremy Bowen (Middle East Editor, BBC) (Lecture) Organised by: Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy (CISD). Jeremy Bowen is the author of Six Days: how the 1967 war shaped the Middle East (2003), War Stories (2006) and The Arab Uprisings - The People Want the Fall of the Regime (2012). He is the current Royal Television Society journalist of the year and has won two Bayeux war reporting awards. Lecture followed by a reception. Admission free - Pre-registration required. Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4840/4830 E cisd@soas.ac.uk / rg35@soas.ac.uk W www.cisd.soas.ac.uk


7:00 pm | Algerian Supper Club Organised by: The Mosaic Rooms. Discover the flavours of authentic Algerian cuisine at this special supper club hosted by Chris Benarab of Azou Restaurant. Tickets include a three course meal with wine. Tickets: £35 (includes a three course meal with wine) - Pre-booking required. The Mosaic Rooms, A M Qattan Foundation, Tower House, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW. T 020 7370 9990 E info@mosaicrooms.org W www.mosaicrooms.org

7:30 pm | Heart by Zendeh (Performance) Until Saturday 7 June. See listing for Tuesday 3 June.

Saturday 7 June

4:20 pm | When I Saw You (Film) See listing for Friday 6 June. Also on at 6:40pm.

9:00 am | Avicenna and Avicennisms: A Colloquium at SOAS See listing for Friday 6 June.

7:30 pm | Heart by Zendeh (Performance) Until Saturday 7 June. See listing for Tuesday 3 June.

Sunday 8 June

4:20 pm | When I Saw You (Film) See listing for Friday 6 June. Also on at 8:45pm.

7.00 pm | London Festival of Kurdish Music (Concert) Organised by: Peyman Heydarian, SOAS. Doors open at 6:30pm. 4th festival of Kurdish music from four parts of Kurdistan. Instrumental and vocal music will be performed in Kalhor, Sorani and Kurmanji dialects. The theme of the festival is diversity in diaspora and musical interactions with other cultures. Tickets: £10/£8 conc. & students/£6 SOAS students. DLT (G2), SOAS. E events.santur@yahoo.com W www.thesantur.com

Monday 9 June


Tuesday 10 June

7:00 pm | #FCBBCWS Egypt’s Roadmap (Panel Debate) Organised by: The Frontline Club in partnership with BBC World Service. Over three years on from the fall of Hosni Mubarak, Egypt is gearing up for its second democratic presidential election. Having resigned as army chief and announced his candidature, there are strong indicators that Field Marshal Abdul Fattah al-Sisi will get a majority. Are we seeing a return to military dominance of politics and what does that signal for Egypt? Tickets: £12.50/£10 conc. The Frontline Club, 13 Norfolk Place, London W2 1QJ. T 020 7479 8940 W www.frontlineclub.com

8:50 pm | When I Saw You (Film) See listing for Friday 6 June.

Thursday 12 June

7:30 pm | Rome Rather Than You (Film) Organised by: The Mosaic Rooms. Set in the Algeria of the 1990s, ravaged by civil war and corruption Tariq Teguia’s film Rome Rather Than You takes us on a journey with Zina and Kamel, a resourceful young couple who, disillusioned by the ongoing civil war, decide to seek a future in Italy. Tickets: £5. The Mosaic Rooms, A M Qattan Foundation, Tower House, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW. T 020 7370 9990 E info@mosaicrooms.org W www.mosaicrooms.org

Friday 13 June

7:00 pm | Preview Screening: Return to Homs + Q&A (Documentary) Organised by: The Frontline Club. Dir Talal Derki (2013), 90 min. Filmed between August 2011 and August 2013, Return to Homs is an intimate portrait of a group of young...
A new 2-day course

‘Understanding Political Islam: Contemporary Challenges’

Offered by the London Middle East Institute (LMEI), SOAS, University of London
Dates: 12–13 June 2014
Location: London Middle East Institute (LMEI)
MBI Al Jaber Building, 21 Russell Square,
London WC1B 5EA

World-renowned academics, experts and practitioners discuss Political Islam and its prominence within Muslim countries and the wider world. Despite its political centrality, Islamism remains poorly understood, partly because of its complexity and controversial aspects, and partly because of sweeping generalisations and misrepresentations by the media.

This course aims to enrich the participants’ understanding of the various components of Islamism and their contemporary political significance at the national, regional and global levels.

Thursday 12 June
• The emergence of Islamic Political thought
• Al Qaeda and Global Jihad
• Salafism and the Muslim Brotherhood
• Hamas and Hezbollah

Friday 13 June
• The Arab Spring
• Islamists in Government: Egypt; Turkey; Malaysia
• Political Islam in Asia: Pakistan and India
• Political Islam in Africa

For programme details, fees and Terms and Conditions, please visit our website: www.soas.ac.uk/political-islam
Registrations will be accepted until one week before the start of the course. Book early to avoid disappointment!
Please note, a cancellation and refund policy applies. For enquiries, please contact sophie.dilley@soas.ac.uk.
revolutionaries in the city of Homs. Filmmaker Talal Derki followed the journey of two close friends whose lives were turned upside down by the events in Syria. This screening will be followed by a Q&A. Tickets: £10/£8 conc. & students/£6 SOAS and the SOAS Iranian Music Series
7:30 pm | Last Days in Jerusalem (Film) See listing for Monday 9 June.

Monday 16 June

Tuesday 17 June
8:50 pm | When I Saw You (Film) See listing for Friday 6 June.

Wednesday 18 June
8:40 pm | When I Saw You (Film) See listing for Friday 6 June.

Thursday 19 June
3:00 pm | Some of the Palestinians + Q&A with Mamoun Hassan (Documentary) Organised by: Zenith Foundation in collaboration with BFI Southbank. Part of the Discover Arab Cinema season. Dir Mamoun Hassan (1976), UK-Jordan-Ukraine, 55 min. A documentary that delves into the everyday situations facing refugees. Tickets: £6.00 - £8.00. BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, South Bank, London, SE1 8XT. T 020 7928 3232 W https://whatson.bfi.org.uk

6:00 pm | Oil Cultures in Iraq under the Monarchy (Lecture) Nelida Fuccaro, SOAS. Organised by: The British Institute for the Study of Iraq (Gertrude Bell Memorial). Doors open at 6:00pm with the lecture starting at 6:10pm. Followed by a reception. Since its discovery in the late 1920s oil has been a key commodity in modern Iraq. This lecture presents contrasting aspects of oil lives and cultures before the 1958 Revolution. Admission free - Pre-registration required. The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. T 020 7969 5274 E bisi@britac.ac.uk W www.bisi.ac.uk


7:00 pm | Press Architecture: Uncategorized Buildings in Algeria (1958-1962) (Talk) Organised by: The Mosaic Rooms. Architect and researcher Samia Hennas discusses architectural modernism in Algeria, specifically the significance of the Plan de Constantine, a national socio-economic modernization plan announced by General Charles de Gaulle in Algeria in 1958. Admission free - Pre-registration required E rsvp@mosaicrooms.org. The Mosaic Rooms, A M Qattan Foundation, Tower House, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW. T 020 7370 9990 E info@mosaicrooms.org W www.mosaicrooms.org

8:30 pm | When I Saw You (Film) See listing for Friday 6 June.

Friday 20 June
7:30 pm | Piano & Organ Recital Series Ealing Abbey, Charlbury Grove, London W5 2DY. See listing for Saturday 14 June for more information and tickets.

Saturday 21 June
10:00 am | Syria - Correcting the Narrative, Building Solidarity (Conference) Organised by: Center for Middle East Studies, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver and the London Middle East Institute, SOAS (LMEI). Admission free. Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS. T 020 7898 4490/4330 E vp6@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/

Sunday 22 June
11:00 am | Palestine Israel - A Cultural Exploration: Voices from the Palestinian Diaspora Voices from the Israeli and the Jewish Diasporas (Symposium) Organised by: Exiled Writers Ink. The symposium will explore cultural representations of the Palestine Israel ‘situation’ through diaspora arts to reveal a range of personal interpretations and insights. Literature, food and visual arts panels and participatory workshops. With Rabai Al Madhoun, novelist, Zeina Ghandour, academic, Atar Hadari, poet, writer, translator, Emmanuel Moses, poet, novelist, translator, Anwar Hamed, novelist, Jonathan Wilson, novelist and academic, Idit Nathan, visual artist, Rachel Moses Klapisch, video artist. Tickets: £14/£12 conc./£10 E W www.exiledwriters.co.uk
Monday 23 June

7:30 pm | Walaa (Loyalty) (Performance) See listing for Sunday 22 June.

Tuesday 24 June

8:40 pm | Omar (Film) See listing for Wednesday 4 June.

Wednesday 25 June

6:10 pm | Omar (Film) See listing for Wednesday 4 June.

6:30 pm | Presentation of ORTS Cup Awards Organised by: The Oriental Rug and Textile Society. Talk by last year’s ORTS Cup Award winner Iona Ramsay followed by show and tell presided by Clive Rogers, Aaron Nejad, Chris Legge and Ron Stewart. Tickets: £7. St James Piccadilly Conference Room, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9L. E ortscup@orientalrugandtextilesociety.org.uk W www.orientalrugandtextile society.org.uk

6:45 pm | Contemporary Moroccan Literature (Reading) Karima Laachir, SOAS. Organised by: Centre for Cultural, Literary and Postcolonial Studies (CCLPS), SOAS and P21 Gallery. Admission free - Pre-registration required. P21 Gallery, 21 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD. T 020 7121 6190 E info@p21.org.uk / kl19@soas.ac.uk W www.soas.ac.uk/cclps/ / www.p21.org.uk

Thursday 26 June

9.00 am | Ottoman Pasts, Present Cities: Cosmopolitanism and Transcultural Memories AHRC Research Network (Two-Day Conference: Thursday 26 - Friday 27 June) Speakers include Karen Barkey, Columbia University; Edhem Eldem, Boğaziçi University; Ulrike Freitag, Free University of Berlin; and Claudia Roden, Chef, Writer and Cultural Anthropologist. Organised by: Arts & Humanities Research Council, University of Leeds, Birkbeck College, University of London, University of Westminster; University of Portsmouth. One of the largest and one of the longest, running from the early 1300s to 1922 and stretching East to West, the Ottoman Empire is still relatively understudied. The conference aims to explore all aspects of the ex-Ottoman city and its many intercultural encounters. Admission free - Pre-registration required. Birkbeck College, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX. E ottoman.cosmopolitanism@leeds.ac.uk W http://ottomancosmopolitanism.wordpress.com/events/international-conference-2014/

7:00 pm | ‘From third force to critical dialogue’: German-Iranian relations in the 20th century (Lecture) Oliver Bast. Organised by: The Iran Society. Admission free for Society members and one guest. Marlborough Suite, The Army and Navy Club, 36-39 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JN (Dress code calls for gentlemen to wear jacket and tie). T 020 7235 5122 E info@iransociety.org W www.iransociety.org

8:40 pm | Omar (Film) See listing for Wednesday 4 June.

EVENTS OUTSIDE LONDON

Friday 13 June

Time TBC | The Clash of Empires: World War I and the Middle East (Two-Day Conference: Friday 13 - Saturday 14 June) Organised by: University of Cambridge Centre for the Study of the International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa (CIRMENA), University of Utah and Turkish Historical Society. To mark the 100th anniversary of WWI, this two-day conference will examine the clash between the British and the Ottoman Empires and will provide an international forum on the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of the modern nation-state system in the Middle East. Admission free - Pre-registration required. Little Hall, University of Cambridge (Sidgwick Site). E el402@cam.ac.uk W www.cirmena.polis.cam.ac.uk

Saturday 14 June

Time TBC | The Clash of Empires:
An intensive five-week programme which includes two courses: an Arabic Language Course (introductory or intermediate) and another on ‘Government and Politics of the Middle East' or 'Culture and Society in the Middle East'.

**Beginners Arabic (Level 1)**

This is an introductory course in Modern Standard Arabic. It teaches students the Arabic script and provides basic grounding in Arabic grammar and syntax. On completing the course, students should be able to read, write, listen to and understand simple Arabic sentences and passages. This course is for complete beginners and does not require any prior knowledge or study of Arabic.

**Beginners Arabic (Level 2)**

This course is a continuation of Beginners Arabic Level 1. It completes the coverage of the grammar and syntax of Modern Standard Arabic and trains students in reading, comprehending and writing with the help of a dictionary more complex Arabic sentences and passages.

To qualify for entry into this course, students should have already completed at least one introductory course in Arabic.

**Government and Politics of the Middle East**

This course provides an introduction to the politics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. It gives on a country by country basis, an overview of the major political issues and developments in the region since the end of the First World War and addresses key themes in the study of contemporary Middle East politics, including: the role of the military, social and economic development, political Islam, and the recent uprisings (the ‘Arab Spring').

**Culture and Society in the Middle East**

This course examines the major cultural patterns and institutions of the MENA region. It is taught through a study of some lively topics such as religious and ethnic diversity, impact of the West, stereotyping, the role of tradition, education (traditional and modern), family structure and value, gender politics, media, life in city, town and village, labour and labour migration, the Palestinian refugee problem and Arab exile communities, culinary cultures, music and media, etc.

**FEES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session (5 weeks)</th>
<th>Programme fee*</th>
<th>Accommodation fee**</th>
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<tr>
<td>23 June-24 July 2014 (two courses)</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
<td>from £300/week</td>
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* An early bird discount of 10% applies to course fees before 31 May 2014.

** Rooms can be booked at the Intercollegiate Halls which are located in the heart of Bloomsbury: www.halls.london.ac.uk.

For more information, please contact Louise Hosking on LH2@soas.ac.uk. Or check our website www.soas.ac.uk/lmei
JULY EVENTS

Wednesday 2 July

6:30 pm | The Art of Iran (Lecture) A S Melkian-Chirvani, Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Organised by: Iran Heritage Foundation (IHF). Melkian-Chirvani, a leading specialist in Iranian art history, will give a lecture arguing the reasons for using the term 'Iranian art' as opposed to 'Islamic art' in a historical context. Followed by a reception. Tickets: See website below for tickets. Asia House, 63 New Cavendish Street, London W1G 7LP. T 0203 651 2121 E astrid@iranheritage.org W www.iranheritage.org

Monday 28 July

10:00 am | Ancient Egyptian Coffins: craft traditions and functionality (Two-Day Colloquium: Monday 28 - Tuesday 29 July) Organised by: Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, BM. Annual Egyptological Colloquium. Leading academics will discuss the circumstances in which Egyptian coffins were made, considering workshop practices and regional variability. Tickets: £40-£15. BP Lecture Theatre, BM. T 020 7323 8181 W www.britishmuseum.org

Tuesday 29 July

10:00 am | Ancient Egyptian Coffins: craft traditions and functionality (Two-Day Colloquium: Monday 28 - Tuesday 29 July) See listing for Monday 28 July.

6:00 pm | The Coffins of the Lector Priest Sesenebenef: a Middle Kingdom Book of the Dead? (Lecture) Harco Willems, University of Leuven. Organised by: Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, BM. Sackler Distinguished Lecture in Egyptology. Tickets: £25/£20/£10. BP Lecture Theatre, BM. T 020 7323 8181 W www.britishmuseum.org

EVENTS OUTSIDE LONDON

Thursday 10 July

Time TBC | 'Bread, Freedom and Social Justice': Organised Workers and Mass Mobilizations in the Arab World, Europe and Latin America (Two-Day Conference: Thursday 10 July - Friday 11 July 2014) Organised by: CRASSH (Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities). Scholars, journalists and activists compare the challenges faced by the Latin American movements against neoliberalism in the early years of the 21st century with the experience of mobilizations for similar demands in the Arab world and Europe since 2011. Tickets: TBC. CRASSH, Alison Richard Building, 7 West Road, Cambridge, CB3 9DT. T 1223 766886 E enquiries@crassh.cam.ac.uk / conferences@crassh.cam.ac.uk W http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/25028

Friday 11 July


EXHIBITIONS

Sunday 1 June

Until 15 June | The World is With Us: Global Film and Poster Art from the Palestinian Revolution, 1968-1980 A gallery show accompanied by talks, screenings, and performances. The exhibition’s design is inspired by film depictions of early PLO information bureaus, with their disorderly array of technologies, artworks, and office paraphernalia and presents some twenty-five films alongside posters from the revolutionary era. Admission free to the exhibition. Rich Mix, 35 - 47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA. E info@palestinefilm.org W www.theworldiswithus.org

Until 27 June | Seasons of Mud New paintings by Iraqi artist Yousif Naser – an exhibition in collaboration with the Iraqi Cultural Centre, London. Admission free. The Street Gallery, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, Stocker Road, Exeter EX4 4ND. E jane.clark@exeter.ac.uk W http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/iais/events/exhibitions/

Until 27 June | Farhad Ahrarnia: Stage on Fire Farhad Ahrarnia combines his interest in dance, high modernism, and the arts of Central Asia and the Middle East to explore the relationship between various national, cultural and political institutions and 20th-century avant-garde arts. Admission free. Rose Issa Projects, 82 Great Portland Street, London W1 1NW. T 020 7602 7700 / 0207 323 1710 E info@roseissa.com W http://roseissa.com

Until 28 June | Intervening Space: From The Intimate To The World First London group show of six contemporary Algerian artists, featuring newly-commissioned and reimagined works from Fayçal Baghriche, Amina Menia, Atef Berredjem, Hanan Benammar, Massinissa Selmani and Sadek Rahim. Working in a range of media, their work explores interscites in time and space. Admission free. The Mosaic Rooms, A M Qattan Foundation, Tower House, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW. T 020 7370 9990 E info@mosaicrooms.org W www.mosaicrooms.org

Until 28 June | Golnaz Fathi: Dance Me to the End of Night Golnaz Fathi’s new solo exhibition comprising large scale canvases, works on paper and video. Her bold strokes and traditional calligraphy creates a new form of expression; an imaginary language deeply rooted in Persian tradition. Admission free. October Gallery, 24 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AL. T 020 7242 7367 E press@octobergallery.co.uk W www.octobergallery.co.uk

Thursday 5 June

Until 2 August | Walid El Masri: Cocoon Solo exhibition by Paris-based Lebanese painter Walid El Masri featuring a new body of work, inspired by the violent conflict that has besieged his native Syria. Admission free. Ayyam Gallery, 143 New Bond Street, 1st Floor, London W1S 2TP T 020 7409 3568 E london@ayyamgallery.com W www.ayyamgallery.com

Friday 6 June

Until 5 July | Volkan Aslan: A Day Not Yet Lived Istanbul based Turkish artist Volkan Aslan’s first major show in the UK in which he will transform the gallery with a site-specific installation that will act as an unconventional platform for his well-known broken figurine series. Admission free. Pi Artworks London, 55 Eastcastle Street, London W1 8EG. T 020 7637 8403 E london@piartworks.com W www.piartworks.com

Monday 16 June

Until 11 July | Internal Worlds-External Relations A travelling exhibition of paintings by Iranian artist Lida Sherafatmand. The paintings explore the different internal life states of humans, expressed through the symbolism and movements of flowers, stimulating a journey for the viewer into the infinite aspects of the human spirit. As part of this exhibition there will be a public lecture on Monday 16 June at 6.30pm. Admission free. Atrium Gallery, LSE. T 020 7849 5342 E arts@lse.ac.uk W www.lse.ac.uk

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The SOAS Centre for Palestine Studies (CPS) at the London Middle East Institute (LMEI) has announced the launch of the first, and presently the only, university series in Palestine Studies in the English language.

The SOAS Palestine Studies Series will be edited by the CPS and published by I.B. Tauris, the well-known London-based publishing house specialising in Middle East Studies.

The SOAS Palestine Studies Series is open to submissions by academics at various levels of their career, from writings by recognised scholars to monographs derived from PhD theses adapted for publication. Submissions from all countries and from various disciplines are welcome as long as they fall plainly within the category of Palestine Studies.

The aim is to publish the first books in the new series in the autumn of 2015. Only manuscripts at an advanced stage of writing and post-examination theses provided along with the examiners’ reports will be considered.

Submissions should be sent in electronic format to Louise Hosking at LMEI (LH2@soas.ac.uk). For enquiries, you may also contact her on +44-20 7898 4330.
SOAS, University of London, is pleased to announce the availability of several scholarships in its Centre for Iranian Studies (CIS).

The Centre, established in 2010, draws upon the range of academic research and teaching across the disciplines of SOAS, including Languages and Literature, the Study of Religions, History, Economics, Politics, International Relations, Music, Art and Media and Film Studies. It aims to build close relations with likeminded institutions and to showcase and foster the best of contemporary Iranian talent in art and culture.

MA in Iranian Studies
In 2012/13 CIS members successfully launched an interdisciplinary MA in Iranian Studies, the first of its kind, which will be offered again in 2014/15.

Thanks to the generosity of the Fereydoun Djam Charitable Trust, a number of Kamran Djam scholarships are available for BA, MA and MPhil/PhD studies.

For further details, please contact:

Scholarships Officer
E: scholarships@soas.ac.uk
T: +44 (0)20 7074 5091/ 5094
W: www.soas.ac.uk/scholarships

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