

CMENAS Bulletin

An Annual Publication of the Centre for Middle East and North African Studies
at Macquarie University



CMENAS Director and Deputy Director discussing Egyptian politics at Al-Azhar Park Cairo in January, 2010.

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From the Deputy Director:

On behalf of the staff and associates of the Centre for Middle East and North African Studies I wish you a warm welcome to 2010. Also, welcome to the first bulletin of the CMENAS. The bulletin will be produced to report on the activities of the Centre's activities and to present some of the important work undertaken by the staff, associates and students involved with the Centre. In terms of upcoming events, the Centre website will continue to provide up-to-date information and we ask that you regularly refer to the website for information about up-coming and past speakers, Centre seminars, publications and other important news.

The format of the Bulletin differs from the newsletters the Centre has produced in the past. Firstly, the Bulletin is much longer and more comprehensive in its scope. You will still be presented with information regarding the activities of the Centre over the past twelve months. But in addition to the news about the Centre's people and activities, you can read a brief travelogue, two book reviews, and summaries of the research from two dissertation students. Also, you will find a list of publications from members of the Centre on the back page of the Bulletin. But to begin I'll briefly outline the initiatives, events, and news from the year that has just past.

A Bigger and Better Centre

The Centre for Middle East and North African Studies is like any academic centre in that it is only as strong or as weak as the people that it draws upon. Over the past twelve months, one of our principal aims has been to increase the human capital of the Centre. A number of scholars, here at Macquarie University, who work in the field of Middle East studies have accepted our invitation and become research fellows of the Centre (their details can be found at <http://www.mq.edu.au/mec/Associatelist.html>). More work needs to be done here to draw this web of people together but the first important steps have been taken and the next year holds much promise in terms of research and teaching collaboration.

Our efforts to bring together Macquarie's Middle East researchers was provided a boost when the Centre in conjunction with the Department of Critical and Cultural Studies and the Innovative Universities European Union Centre held a symposium titled "Relational Dis/locations: Mediterranean Cultures in Translocal and Transnational Contexts". The symposium was the brain-child of Joseph Pugliese (Head of Critical and Cultural Studies and a research fellow of the Middle

East Centre) who brought together a group of scholars whose work addressed issues of power and identity in the countries of the Mediterranean region which includes the countries of the Maghreb (North Africa) and the Levant. The long and rich history of interaction between the societies encircling the Mediterranean Sea begs the question of whether, the Mediterranean region may indeed be a more coherent geographical space than the current continental ones such as Europe, Africa or Asia. For Middle East studies, which suffers from an ambiguity about what, and where, the Middle East actually is, this symposium provided the opportunity to raise and address these key questions amongst a range of other critical themes. Thanks to the efforts of Associate Professor Joseph Pugliese, the day's proceedings have been collected into an edited book that has just been accepted by European publisher Peter Lang and will be available second quarter of 2010 (details of the book will be available on the CMENAS website in due course).

Since 2008, there has been an expansion in the number of people associated with the Centre which means that we can now boast of having expertise in key Middle East locations and issues. Gennaro Gervasio focuses on Egyptian politics and more widely on issues of Islamisation, left-wing movements in the Middle East, and democratisation. Chris Houston's work concentrates on Kurdish identity. Joseph Pugliese works towards uncovering the way that Muslims and Arabs have become identified with violence and as international malcontents, and the implications of this form of neo-orientalism. Hsu-Ming Teo examines orientalist representations of Arab culture with particular reference to British imperial ambitions in the Middle East and American involvement in the 1991 Gulf and 2003 Iraq wars. Lisa Wynn also contributes to our understanding of Egypt, and she combines this with work on Saudi Arabia, and reveals ways that Arab identity is used in different Middle Eastern settings to mean different things. I continue to work on Sudan with particular interest in events in Darfur, and in issues related to state (in)capacity, identity politics, and the international relations of the Middle East. Other members bring further reach to our centre and in the coming months additional information will become available on the expertise and research interests of the Centre's other newest recruits.

Public Lectures and Talks

Of the Centre's public events the inaugural Andrew Vincent Memorial Lecture was the most significant. The event honoured the legacy of Dr Andrew Vincent and we hope this event will become a key date on the CMENAS calendar. We were very honoured to have Professor Michael Humphrey, a long-time friend and colleague of the late Dr Vincent, deliver the first lecture. Michael

not only delivered a personal tribute to Andrew but also addressed the broader issues of the past thirty years of Middle East studies in Australia. The second lecture was held on October 31, 2009 and was presented by Dr Matthew Gray who currently holds the Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Chair in the Centre of Arab and Islamic Studies at ANU and was a former student of Middle East Studies at Macquarie (more on this lecture later).

Hot on the heels of the inaugural memorial lecture, the Centre was fortunate enough to host Iranian born scholar Farhad Khosrokhavar. Farhad Khosrokhavar is Professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) - Cadix, Paris and addressed a large audience on the sociology of terrorism in France and Britain. The visit in August 2008 by Professor Khosrokhavar was organised in conjunction with Macquarie's Department of Sociology and Innovative Universities European Union Centre. Our appreciation to Dr Shaun Wilson and Dr Blanche Melandier for their help in bringing this distinguished scholar to Macquarie University.

On 11 March, 2009, the Centre held a lecture, attended by over 200 people, by Israeli Anthropologist Professor Jeff Halper in the Price Theatre. Jeff Halper, who is also a peace activist, co-founded the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (ICAHN) in 1997 and while he has retired from his academic post, Professor Halper remains a major critic of Israeli policies and of the way that the Israeli state discriminates against Palestinians. Throughout his lecture, Professor Halper presented evidence of the state-sanctioned policies of house demolitions and evictions that Palestinians continually face.

On Monday 21 September 2009, the Centre was proud to host a lecture by Saree Makdisi on the spatial politics of Palestinian dislocation and dispossession. Saree Makdisi who is a Professor of English Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) was in Australia to deliver the annual Edward Said Memorial Lecture at the University of Adelaide and agreed to present a paper at Macquarie University for the Centre following a tradition inaugurated by Robert Fisk in 2005. We were pleased with the large lunch-time crowd who attended and participated in an enthralling discussion.

In week following Saree Makdisi's lecture, the Australian Political Studies Association annual conference was held at Macquarie University. The program featured a number of panels specifically related to Middle East studies. In fact, there was an entire Middle East stream and a special roundtable discussion (more details on pp. 22-28). An initiative to form a national body comprised

of scholars, artists, intellectuals and community organisations who have an interest in issues related to the Middle East, Arab society and culture, and Islam was firmly agreed upon at the roundtable. We are particularly pleased with the response and, we have already begun working with people across the country to make such an organisation a reality. This makes 2010 and beyond a very exciting time for the Centre and for the Middle East studies in Australia. Hopefully, there will be positive news on this initiative in coming months.

As briefly mentioned earlier, Dr Matthew Gray was kind enough to deliver the second Andrew Vincent Memorial Lecture. Dr Gray's paper for the event was titled "The Middle East: Recent Changes and Possible Futures" in which the question of continuity versus change was examined. Dr Gray warned against predicting the future but made a valiant effort to present a number of possible scenarios for the different sub-regions of the broader Middle East. After Dr Gray's presentation, Mr Gordon Short, Chairman of the New South Wales chapter of the Arab Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI) presented the winners of the yearly prize for best essay in Middle East Studies written by a Macquarie student. This prize was shared between Kit Baigent and Laurence Plant for their essays for the third year undergraduate course 'The International Relations of the Middle East'. We would like to extend our gratitude to the AACCI for their continued generosity and for their continued support of the Centre.

It is still too early to announce the speaker for the 2010 memorial lecture but details should be available soon, on our website.

Another of the events held in 2009, was the launch of the third edition of Antony Lowenstein's *My Israel Question*. As most of you will already know, Antony is a board member and long-time friend of the Centre and we were proud to be able to host this event at Macquarie. To Antony, and all the other speakers that have given your time and expertise to the Centre, and to all of you who attended our events over the last year, we extend our gratitude and look forward to another exciting year of informative presentations and engaging public debate on issues related to the politics, international relations, society and culture of the Middle East.

A few brief announcements before I conclude. Dr Gennaro Gervasio was appointed director of the Centre in February this year. At the same meeting the Board agreed on the appointment of Macquarie University ancient historian Dr Andrew Gillet and Sydney University's Professor of Arab and Islamic studies Ahmed Shboul to join the Board's ranks. Both are highly respected and will

provide excellent support for the scholars working at the Centre (more details available on page 30). Also at that meeting, it was agreed that Dr Geoffrey Hawker should be elected as a full member of the board in recognition of his past service to the Centre. These three appointments strengthen the Board even further and provide a solid foundation on which to continue expanding the Centre's role of contributing to both the academic and wider appreciation of Middle Eastern societies.

Finally, votes of thanks to those people that helped make 2009 another successful year for the Centre. In particular, a special thanks to Jumana Bayeh for her devotion to the Centre throughout the year and her contributions to organising events and sending out notifications which have been given voluntarily, and which imposes on her own research and teaching time. Robyn Maher has worked tirelessly over the last few months in preparing for APSA and continues to lead the way forward in efforts to raise funds and extend the reach of the Centre. To the other members of the Board, thank you once again for your support and assistance on which we rely so much. In 2009, we have also been very fortunate to have had a number of other volunteers and interns work with us. In particular, three students, Renda Darwich, Alwin Binder and Michael Parker, have contributed in various ways over the past year, including in the preparation of this bulletin.

And the final thank you goes to the hundreds of members of the Centre and the wider Macquarie community who have taken the time to attend the events we have held throughout the year and support the work of the centre.

Ma'a as-salaama

Noah Bassil is the Deputy Director of the Macquarie University Centre for Middle East and North African Studies.

Arab Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sponsored Essay Prize Presentation, 2009.



The essay prize winners, Kit Baigent (left) and Laurence Plant, with Mr Gordon Short , Chairman of the New South Wales chapter of the Arab Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI).

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Reclaiming a Space: a Journey through Egyptian Civil Society

By Gennaro Gervasio

From years of experience in carrying out fieldwork in the Arab World, and in Egypt more in particular, I learned that often you get to know a lot from unplanned 'casual encounters'. This year's short research trip to Cairo was no exception. In my last days there – after several interviews with civil society activists – a specific issue still made me feel rather uncomfortable. I could say – as literature maintains – that the country has a very vibrant civil society, that many activists are conscious of their role as an alternative to the power of the Mubarak regime, still even they feel the frustration of a very scarce popular support. Even in the days of the Israeli attack on Gaza in January 2009, no popular demonstration in support of the Palestinians could be organized in Cairo, with the Brotherhood "responsibly" organizing demonstrations in the smaller provincial towns or in Alexandria, away from the centres of the power, and from foreign dignitaries. Under such circumstances, even a convinced anti-Orientalist like me could find himself rambling on the 'Arab mind' and wondering why the larger populace is in practice absent from the civil and political scenarios. I could see that these frustrations were shared by many activists, mostly from the *intelligentsia* but also from the newly founded independent workers' associations.



Monsieur le President,

From *2kitching*, by dernocarmine.

By kind concessions of the artists

And in loving memory of Derno Ricci.

The answer, or one of the possible answers, came just two days before my departure, late at night in a taxi ride, as I was going back home from *al-Horriyya* café in Bab al-Luq. The taxi driver, having realized that I was a *khawaga* ('foreigner') who could understand and speak Arabic offered his explanation in a long sincere outburst. What 'Adel – this is the taxi driver's name – said is that he

did care a lot about his country as many of his fellow Cairenes, but the *nizam* (both 'system' and 'regime') had made (political and civil) life impossible, as the great majority of the population is struggling to survive. He said he had two or three jobs to help his family: even participating in a strike or a demonstration was a dream, as this would have impinged upon his contribution to the household. 'The *nizam* has taken our lives and emptied them of civil meaning', was 'Adel's conclusion. Still, he seemed to hold not entirely pessimistic views as he maintained the people of Egypt had shown throughout their history that they have the capacity to reclaim the streets and decide in their own best interests.

I found 'Adel's analysis both illuminating and complementing the many hours of conversation I had with civil society activists, intellectuals and 'party people'. In this respect, the regime was aware of its declining popularity as it was using both the economic recession and the ongoing repression of organized political activities to stay in control of an otherwise turbulent country.

During my fieldwork days, I found an extremely healthy civil society, well aware of the challenges existing internally and externally, and of the competition between 'secular' and 'Islamic' organizations. Some activists told me that their work was 'apolitical' but – as the women of the 'New Woman Foundation' admitted – 'civil society is the only opposition in Egypt at the moment and this is why the regime is clamping down heavier and heavier on us'. This particular interview helped me to debunk another 'received truth' of Egyptian (and Arab) politics, namely that the Islamist opposition is the only opposition in the country. As many intellectuals made quite clear, there are big differences between a 'systemic opposition' and a real alternative political and social project. In this respect, my conversations with representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood were revealing. While speaking of the recent upsurges of dependent workers – correctly perceived by the regime as direct threats against the (political and economic) system based on oligarchy, authoritarianism and Western-oriented privatizations – the Brothers declared support for *both* the workers *and* of the privatization of public services (water, transportation, electricity, gas etc). A closer look at the Brotherhood economic platform would illustrate how little alternative they constitute to the regime in power. In turn, this might indicate that the chances of their cooption into a wider ruling alliance are indeed great. The support of the Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood to the 'election' of Gamal Mubarak (the current president's son) to the presidency is hence not an unlikely scenario. In fact, such support would only have to be considered as a further step in the Brotherhood's match towards power-sharing.

In such a situation where no change seems to be on the horizon, what could be the role of the 'real (ie independent) civil society'? Most activists agree that, given the current circumstances, multiple constraints imposed from above and scarce support extended from below are preventing civil society organizations (*al-gama'at al-ahliyya*) from delivering real change. Nevertheless, such organizations can play an effective role in reinvigorating the broader society. Their activity – often carried out on the margins of the official political spectrum – is critical to organise independent citizens towards political action, beyond the 'closed buildings' of the ineffective political parties.

Recently, political analysts in the west are 'warning' their governments that Egypt is 'the great sick of the East'. This perspective clearly matches (and to some degree helps sustaining) Western political and economic interests in the region, in despise of the fate of the millions of Egyptians living under severe conditions. As a preliminary and temporary conclusion in regard to my recent trip, I argue that the regime or at least the old cadres are definitively sick, while Egyptian society is extremely alive, even if only few channels of independent expression are currently available. Whilst the destiny of Egypt remains ultimately in the hands of *her* people ('Egypt is a woman' as they say!), the ongoing Western preference for political and economic stability over any possible change will not help the 'healing' of such a vibrant and historically avant-garde political society.

Gennaro Gervasio is a Lecturer in Middle East Politics in the Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations at Macquarie University, as well as the Director of CMENAS.

The Origins and Rise of the Nation-State and its Impact on The Middle East: A Critique of the Nation-State System

By Vince Scappatura

Introduction

This paper argues that the nation-state has played a significant role in contributing to the problems of war and oppression that plague the Middle East¹ and much of the third world today. Nation-state structures *by design* possess both a dangerous capacity for, and a tendency towards, oppressive forms of control which served to exacerbate the problems caused by colonial interference during state formation in the Middle East. Furthermore, the nation-state's insistence on delineated territorial borders acts in direct contrast to the natural diversity inherent in the vast majority of human communities creating unnecessary divisions and tensions that have created new and deadly forms of war and oppression.

State-Making, War-Making and Oppression

Many scholars have emphasised the central role of war in state-making including Tilly (1975), Gilpin (1981), Rasler and Thompson (1989), and Creveld (1999). During the process of state formation in Europe, Tilly describes how war made states, and conversely, how states would then facilitate the making of war.² Essentially, war making would lead to the increased extraction of the means of war; men, arms, food, lodging, transportation, supplies, and/or the money to buy them. The building up of war-making capacity likewise led to the development of more efficient methods of extraction which came in the form of tax-collection agencies, police forces, courts, and supporting bureaucracies; thus leading to state-making. Only those states that were most efficient at this process survived, that is, those states which were able to accumulate and concentrate the highest levels of coercion – administered through the apparatus of the state – to maximise their capacity for extraction and thus also their war waging capability. In this sense, the modern nation-state of the twentieth century merely caps this process. Indeed, it has been, and still remains, only the modern state that is capable of undertaking total mobilisation of its demographic, economic, military and industrial resources for the purposes of waging war. In this respect then, it matters not whether the apparatus of the state is under autocratic or contemporary forms of democratic control. In the latter, state apparatus is still all pervasive in society and continues to maintain a monopoly on power, only its control over the population is limited as its citizens, to varying degree, hold a stake

¹ Given the immense scope of the region, this paper largely limits its focus to the 'Arab' Middle East.

² Charles Tilly, 'War Making and State Making as Organised Crime,' in Peter Evans et al. (eds), *Bringing the State Back In*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p. 183.

in the state's bureaucracy and therefore exert, with varying success, a greater degree of influence over state actions. As Martin van Creveld notes when reflecting upon the total wars of the twentieth century, the differences between 'totalitarian' and 'democratic' states were not as great as is often assumed:

Other things being equal, those states whose regimes were most efficient in squeezing the last ounce of marrow out of their citizens' bones went on to victory, whereas those which were smaller or less successful in performing this praiseworthy task went down to defeat.³

Through the process of war-making and state-making then, state formation necessarily results in the accumulation and monopolisation of power at the centre through those actors that possess the greatest means for coercion. As a result, it is only natural that this process produces structures not only suited wholly for waging war, but likewise for imposing authoritarian forms of governance. While authoritarianism exists in other political constructs aside from the nation-state, in empires for instance, there remains a significant difference in the degree and efficacy to which the nation-state demonstrates authoritarian control. In other words, the nation-state possesses through its apparatus the supreme methods for imposing the greatest level of control and domination over its population.⁴ Furthermore, where it was the tendency in previous, major forms of political organisations to largely stay out of the domestic affairs of its population, and in fact, permit a great deal of diversity within a system of largely independent and self-governing communities,⁵ the nation-state necessarily requires a high degree of interference and regulation over the lives of its citizens while enforcing a relative degree of homogenisation. As Tilly points out, contrary to the modern state, previous states were "fierce but light in weight... they stung, but they didn't suck dry."⁶

By means of undertaking a historical analysis of the origins and evolution of the nation-state in Europe then, we find that the modern state possesses four significant concerns. To begin with, its structures were fashioned for, and continue to remain perfectly suited to, the purpose of waging 'total war' and imposing the most severe levels of authoritarian control. Secondly, it possesses not only the means to extract the maximum possible resources from its population, but also the desire

³ Martin van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p. 262.

⁴ Christopher Pierson, *The Modern State*, 2nd Edition, (London: Routledge, 2004) p. 9.

⁵ For a description of how medieval political structures afforded a large degree of autonomy for self-governing communities see Cornelia Navari, 'The Origins of the Nation-State,' in Leonard Tivey (ed), *The Nation-State: The Formation of Modern Politics*, (Oxford: M. Robertson, 1981) p. 17.

⁶ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990-1992*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 1992) p. 96.

to penetrate and order the lives of its citizens to a degree that never existed under previous forms of political organisation. Thirdly, the nation-state presents significant obstacles for democratic reform. While evidently democratic forms of control are possible, the process of democratisation in Europe, and by and large the rest of the world, illustrate that this process occurs largely in response to the centralising and authoritarian tendencies of state mechanisms. That is, historically, democratisation has been a process working against the tendencies manifested in the structural foundations of the nation-state.⁷ The corollary is that nation-state structures – centralised bureaucracies with the monopoly on the means for coercion – did not arise for the purpose of facilitating the kinds of liberties that democracy espouses. Quite the contrary, they arose to ensure such liberties were suppressed. In Europe, these characteristics and tendencies of the modern state resulted in a long and bloody struggle between the state and its citizen's demands for democratic freedoms, and for those states that were shaped by colonial rule, this struggle largely continues.

Finally, given the nation-state marks its territorial sovereignty by delineated borders that distinguish its citizens from the citizens of other states, it naturally came to be seen as the container and protector of 'the nation.'⁸ In reality of course, nations rarely fit neatly into separate and distinct units around which state borders can easily be constructed. As a result, natural inconsistencies existing between state borders and ethno-religious realities resulted and a whole host of new problems emerged. Namely, these are the existence of ethnic wars and conflicts fuelled by nationalist hatreds and the creation of national minorities who experience discrimination and repression at the hands the state. European states only managed to create a stable state system after centuries of war and border adjustments, sectarian conflict, population transfers, ethnic cleansing and genocide. In the offshoots of Europe such as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, many of these problems were avoided only because the lands were 'cleansed' of their indigenous inhabitants. Unsurprisingly then, the Middle East was to experience the same disastrous effects that were unfolding in Europe as a consequence of the nation-state emerging there. Indeed, the era that was to follow the establishment of national entities in the Middle East resulted in losses

⁷ As a consequence of centralisation, communal autonomy was reduced as the state proceeded to exact more and more from its population who first resisted, then sought a stake in, the emerging state bureaucracy. The state responded with brutal repression, but over time was forced to bargain out concessions to the masses. See Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States*, pp. 98-102.

⁸ For more on the causal link between the emergence of the nation-state and the rise of nationalism see Eric Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

of human life and livelihood that far surpass those incurred during the four hundred years of Ottoman rule.⁹

The Emergence of the Nation-State in the Middle East

During the course of World War I, the Allied powers undertook a series of negotiations that led to the partitioning of the Middle East into its modern territorial divisions.¹⁰ Once the territorial boundaries of the Middle East were agreed upon, the European powers concentrated on restructuring these states in order to serve their imperial interests. Primarily, these interests involved transforming traditional social relations and the creation of a 'local oligarchy' to ensure incorporation into the colonial (i.e. dependent-capitalist) mode of production and the redirection of these economies towards Europe.¹¹ Additionally, there existed the familiar colonial aspirations for securing trade routes and maintaining military bases as part of the long-standing geostrategic competition with other European powers. In order to achieve these goals, European powers took steps to restructure their colonial possessions to adhere to modern state principles of organisation. They began by adopting methods of divide and rule to prevent regional integration and weaken the threat of resistance efforts posed by Arab nationalism. The French, for example, who had been assigned the mandate over Syria, immediately moved to cut off the mainland from the rest of the coastal regions alongside the Mediterranean - where most of France's economic and strategic interests laid - by creating the boundaries for a Greater Lebanon, along with a separate Alawi state to its north and an autonomous region for the largely Turkish-speaking population who inhabited the small coastal strip bordering the Turkish frontier. To complete the atomisation, the provinces of Aleppo and Damascus were demarcated to create, in total, five effectively separate and divided states within Syria.¹²

Colonial powers also sought to restructure socio-political and economic relations by eliminating decentralised forms of authority and replacing communal with private ownership over land to create a social and economic structure conducive to domination by central control. Thus, in Iraq, where traditionally the authority of a sheikh over his tribe was founded on the basis of reciprocity –

⁹ Kemal Karpat, 'The Ottoman Ethnic and Confessional Legacy in the Middle East,' in Milton J. Esman and Itamar Rabinovich (eds), *Ethnicity, Pluralism, and the State in the Middle East*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988) p. 53.

¹⁰ The utter disregard of the colonial powers for the desires and realities of the inhabitants of the region when creating these territorial divisions has been well established as internal documents reveal; crucially, the Hussein-McMahon correspondence (July 14, 1915 to January 30, 1916), the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the notorious Sykes-Picot Agreement. Evidently, the determinant factors were shifting economic and geostrategic imperial interests.

¹¹ Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995) pp. 91-2.

¹² Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism 1920-1945*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) pp. 57-60.

a combination of prestige and consensus – the British bolstered the power of the sheikhs by granting them official recognition and absolute jural authority over their tribe. They then proceeded to grant ownership over large parcels of land to compliant individuals as relatively smaller pockets of land under communal ownership were far harder to control from the perspective of a centralised state. This resulted in the creation of large and powerful land owners while ensuring the sheikhs' loyalty to the British and the Iraq Civil Administration to whom they owed their authority and wealth. Essentially, a form of co-optation developed, drawing individuals into the reward system of the state whereby land was used as the reward for influence so that the British were able to purchase social order.¹³ While these policies were based on existing customary laws, the methods were largely imported directly from India, and resulted in a kind of individual tyrannical authority quite foreign to the ordinary tribal system of government.¹⁴ After the mandate ended, the absolute power of landlords was formally enshrined in legislation, and along with additional laws introduced to effectively tie a tenant to their landlord via a system of debt servicing, the entire system was bordering on slavery.¹⁵

By extending the state's authority throughout the entire territory, colonial powers were able to properly extract the resources from the population (taxes) necessary to fund further state-making activities, particularly those activities that acted to consolidate the state's power. Thus, while simultaneously restructuring the economy, a large bureaucracy and military apparatus were built to control and pacify the population and ensure government rule was extended throughout the territory. Though they were careful not to make them too strong – lest they risk them turning on their imperial masters – the military apparatus was by far the most developed sector of the state which came at the expense of more important elements to successful state-making such as education, public health, welfare and a robust economy directed towards internal development.¹⁶ The end result was the emergence of conditions and state structures that were primed for authoritarian rule. After formal independence, given the structures of the post-colonial state were fragile, instability was overcome by the only effective structures left available through the colonial experience: the central bureaucracy and security forces. It was an overdependence on these methods of state-making and the resulting authoritarianism, corruption and sectarian conflict that constitute the legacy left by colonialism in the Middle East.

¹³ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p. 51.

¹⁴ Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: 1914-1932*, (London: Ithaca, 1976) p. 242.

¹⁵ Sluglett, pp. 251-2

¹⁶ By World War II, France had invested some five billion francs on the occupation and administration of the Syrian colony, of which four billion had been spent on defence. See Khoury, p.80. For a more general account, see Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Middle East*, 3rd edition, (London: Routledge, 2004).

Conclusion

Understanding the circumstances in which state formation took place in the Middle East constitutes one important part of any approach that attempts to understand the problems that plague the region today. As this paper has attempted to illustrate, the nation-state has exacerbated the problems created by colonialism which utilised and fashioned modern state structures in ways that were detrimental to the future viability, stability and prosperity of the Middle East. Evidently, the persistence of conflict and authoritarianism in the Middle East are not solely attributable to the actions of past or present foreign powers and/or the existence of the nation-state. The reasons for an absence of peace and democratic freedoms in the Middle East are surely complex, including a combination of factors experienced by states to different degrees and under different historical circumstances, for which a complete explanation is far beyond the scope of this paper. Yet, quite apart from these factors, the nation-state should be recognised of its own accord for possessing undesirable characteristics and consequences that have impacted the entire world and continue to impact the Middle East and much of the third world in dangerous and harmful ways.

Vince Scappatura completed the Master of International Relations in 2009. The dissertation was supervised by Gennaro Gervasio and received a High Distinction. Vince plans to undertake a PhD in 2011.

Syria misunderstood

By Jamie Travis

"Look! You know, people have the wrong impression about Syria!" Ghassan and I had barely greeted each other when he confronted me with his impassioned assertion. Ghassan is an optometrist and eyewear retailer in Aleppo who I had befriended over the 13 years in which I have been travelling to and from Syria. I had just returned after a four-year absence and hurried to meet him at his shop in the district of Azizieh. It was May 2006, and he went on to describe his dismay concerning the anti-Syrian sentiments that he had witnessed most notably during a recent trip to an optical tradeshow in Geneva. This was by no means news to me, for what Ghassan had heard in his time abroad represented exactly the impressions conveyed through the Australian media whereby "expert analysts" tout Syria as being the primary source of instability and radicalism in the region. Although I risk making a sweeping generalisation (but it would be un-Australian to do otherwise), the perceptions held by Australians (and most other "westerners" I suspect) would have Syria ascendant to that so-called "axis of evil"; a place surrounded by violent conflict; a place in which

human rights are brutally oppressed; a place in which terrorism festers; a place to be feared; with people to be feared ... Arabs; Muslims; Islamists; terrorists, you know. My evidence for this lies in that simple, recurring question asked by my family, friends, and colleagues over the last thirteen years as I've prepared yet again to depart for Syria: *"Is it safe?"* Safe? *"Well of course. I feel safer there than here"* is my well-honed reply; but then for uninformed eyes and ears I can see why it would seem otherwise.

Since Ghassan and I had last met in 2002, Syria had been plagued by an array of threats. Since the invasion of Iraq, an aggressive US-Israeli agenda had subjected Syria to hostile rhetoric because of its opposition to the war, its support for Hamas, Hizballah and Iran, and alleged role in fuelling the ethnic and sectarian strife in Iraq. A climate of insecurity and uncertainty throughout the Syrian public had emerged, with talk of a widely held fear that Syria's territorial integrity would be breached by a belligerent US bent on pre-emptive war. The fall of Saddam Hussein had revived Kurdish nationalism, and Iraqi Kurds began agitating for their territorial rights in Syria's north east, spawning protests, ethnic clashes and a security crackdown. The US had commenced sanctions on Syria; the isolating effects of which reinforced Syria's alignment with Iran. The UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon and a Presidential election free of Syrian interference. Then the 2005 Valentine's Day murder of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri sparked a cascade of events that culminated in Syria's troop withdrawal after a 30 year presence, including the withdrawal of the US ambassador and the eruption of anti-Syrian "Cedar Revolution" demonstrations in Lebanon. Simultaneously, leaders from Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia acted to pressure, isolate and disempower Syria. Pressure from the EU and Russia also grew, evoking speculation that Syria's waning influence in Lebanon would threaten the very survival of the Syrian regime. Meanwhile, in Azizieh, Ghassan told me that *"something was about to go down"* in Lebanon. He, and others to whom I spoke, said that the troop withdrawal had left Lebanon vulnerable, and that a full-scale confrontation between Hizballah and Israel was imminent. That certain "something" went down barely two months later in July.

On the face of it, considering all of the above, one may be forgiven for harbouring dark impressions of Syria. Yet according to Ghassan and many other Syrians I've come to know, gross misconceptions prevail; and so I was compelled to begin my inquiry into Syria's behaviour and influence on regional dynamics, which during this time had attracted much international contempt, even ridicule. Some analysts had asserted that Syria had brought all of this upon itself through a series of irrational foreign policy blunders. Further to that, Syria's weakened economy, compounded by the arrival of some two million Iraqi refugees and the awakening of identity conflicts in neighbouring

Iraq, had some observers speculating that the Syrian public was abandoning its support for the regime and its foreign policy agenda.

Irrational foreign policy blunders? Public support waning? Somehow, given that so many authors and “experts” have yet to set foot in the Syria, I found the arguments to be less than convincing. So I returned to Damascus in April this year to get closer to the truth; and despite the mass of commentators (both professional and amateur) claiming that Syrians are politically repressed, reticent to speak about political matters, disconnected from and, therefore, unable to influence those in power, I encountered a very different reality: an informed, politically astute network of people that led all the way to the top.

Connections

Hussein is a merchant in old Damascus. Like the many flanking it, his shop is adorned with Bedouin silver, shawls and assorted textiles. A charming and charismatic man, he carefully seduces the passing “ajnaabi” (foreigners) as they stroll by the Jesus Minaret of the great Umayyad Mosque. I’ve known Hussein now for some ten years having, too, been seduced into purchasing several necklaces that I didn’t need then and which now occupy the glory boxes of my mother and those women close to my heart. Through Hussein I met Tarif, a lecturer in Arabic at Damascus University, who introduced me to Bashar – a Damascene journalist and foreign correspondent for a number of news agencies in both Italy and Egypt. It was through Bashar that I met Roula - a 38 year old self-employed tour guide who lives with her parents in the old city. I interviewed Roula at my hotel near Bab Touma when she revealed that her tour group was staying at the same hotel. The following morning, as Roula arrived to meet her group, she introduced me to Amar – a local business man and economist. Amar took an instant interest in my research and revealed that the previous day he had met with Dr Bouthaina Shaaban, the President Bashar al-Asad’s personal Advisor in Political and Media Affairs. *“You must meet this woman!”*, he said. *“Here, take her number. Tell her that Amar said you should call her”*. I did just as he said but with the expectation that, at best, her personal assistant would answer. In Australia it would be impossible to just cold call a politician of equivalent status. You would have to be well-known, well-heeled and/or well-connected, as well as well-equipped to deliver something in that politician’s interest in order to gain access in the first instance. Surely there’s no way that a Masters student from The Macquarie University could access the President’s personal advisor. Then, soon after meeting Amar, Dr Shaaban and I were speaking about making an arrangement to meet the Deputy Foreign Minister.

The relative ease in which I was able to navigate a pathway from the “Syrian souq” to those in the inner sanctum of the Syrian government should cause one to question the prevalent western view that the Syrian regime, in making policy decisions, maintains complete autonomy over an apparently silent and inert public sphere. Whilst Syrian officials claim that the public has little role to play in determining its foreign policy trajectory, it nevertheless engages it in the policy discourse and monitors popular sentiments. In the first instance, this is evident on a superficial level as demonstrated by the apparent need for the government to, very publicly, promote its resistance partnerships with Iran, Hizballah and Hamas. One cannot walk far in Damascus today without passing a pictorial celebrations of Bashar al-Asad with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hasan Nasrallah and Khalid Mash’al. It would seem that the regime is well aware that its policy decisions can only be sustained if the public recognises and supports them.

In the second, though less visible, instance, the interconnections that led me from a merchant in the Old City to senior ministers are the same ones that provide members the Syrian public an audience with those in power and, one might say, the opportunity to influence government decision-making. Just because the Syrian public is not viewed as being overtly critical of the regime and its policies through the channels otherwise available to, for example, an Australian public, it does not necessarily amount to public consent, acquiescence or impotency. It has been observed that this relative silence is, indeed, a political position that exerts a subtle yet broadbased pressure on a government and the actors with which it chooses to align; however, I’m not convinced that the Syrian public is so silent. Rather, it is my impression that public perceptions, debate and dissent are conveyed quietly between the public and the government through all-pervasive social networks. It is through these networks that Syrians have a voice in shaping policy decisions.

Back in Aleppo, Ghassan agrees; although he concedes that there are hindrances. On the subject of hindrances he asserted “*we [the Syrian people] have the means and are responsible for changing that*”.

Jamie Travis completed the Master of International Relations in 2009. His dissertation, *Syria since Iraq: Determinants and public perceptions of Syria’s foreign policy and alignment choices*, was completed under the supervision of Dr Gennaro Gervasio and was awarded a High Distinction.

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Book Review: Samia Mehrez, Egypt's Culture Wars. Politics and Practices, London: Routledge Advances in Middle East and Islamic Studies, 2008, 352 pages, ISBN-10: 0203929004.

Review by Maria Elena Paniconi

Developed on Bourdieusan bases, Egypt's Culture Wars by Samia Mehrez analyzes the Egyptian cultural field, offering an insightful scrutiny of its actors and dynamics. The book is an example of a militant critique, given the author's involvement in the field not only as an observer, but as an actor whose position moved from being heretical and marginal to being central and recognized (Introduction, pp. 11-2). The period analyzed is the Mubarak era. Mehrez argues that since the Eighties, in a context of increasing economical globalization, Egypt's cultural field has become less informed by the traditional osmosis with the State, once (in the 60's) both regulator and promoter of the cultural agenda (pp.3-4). In its very structure, the book mirrors the new complexity of the field: it is divided in three parts, each one divided into four chapters.

The first part, "Insight into the Literary Establishment: Power Struggles and Dreams of Autonomy", deals with the dynamics of construction of the autonomous writer's charisma (ch.1), with the processes of inclusion and exclusion within the literary field (ch.2), and with the practices of objectification of the relationship between intellectual and political power within the literary text (ch.3). Sonallah Ibrahim appears in this first part as an example of the autonomous author, whose symbolic value is by definition inversely proportional to the official recognition, as the author himself perfectly knows (see in ch.4 the analysis of Ibrahim's notorious and highly debated rejection of the "Arab Novel Award" in 2003). Institution-like national prizes, by converse, stand out as a means for both international recognition (a translation into English is immediately guaranteed once the volume is awarded) and a coronation by the national literary establishment.

The second part, "Remaking Culture", focuses on institutions, discourses, icons, and metaphors of the Egyptian cultural panorama. Particular importance is given to the critique of the education policy, which allows a sharp splitting between an anachronistic public education and a private one, where the Arabic language is largely absent (pp.101-2, ch.5). Chapter 6 is devoted to a theoretical understanding of what translating the field of gender studies in the Arab context means and how (through which organizations, actors, processes) this operation has implied a changing of the cultural field. Two chapters are dedicated to the blasting poetics of the 90's, letting texts speak by authors such Hamdi Abu Golayyel, Mustafa Zikri, and Nura Amin. "Where Are all the Families Gone?" (ch.7) in particular articulates a survey of the writing of the 90's, a kind of writing that sends to death those icons that were the supporting pillars of the national official discourse, as for instance the topos of the traditional structured family (p.143). The same topography of the most

recent fiction (ch.8) celebrates a new “hazardous” urbanity: from Zuqaq al-Midaqq by Mahfuz, to Dhat by Ibrahim, to Imarat Ya`qubyan by al-Aswany, the author traces the history of a metamorphosis, which leads the reader from the communitarian *hara* (“quartier”), to the beehive-like construction of the *imara* (“building”).

Part three, “The Bounds of Change”, deals with various sub-fields: mass-media, cinema, visual arts, and the academy through the analysis of the soap-opera Hajj Metwalli and of the articulated reactions (audience’s praise, intelligentsia’s blame, and eventually corrective interventions by several institutions) that followed it. Mehrez enlightens strategies and counter-strategies of discursive constructions on a pan-Arab level during a critical moment as was Ramadan 2001, when the soap opera took place (ch.9). In chapter 10, the contested film Bahibbissima by Usama Fawzi becomes a case in point, reflecting relations between street censorship, religious identity, and the traditional advocacy of the state in defending secularism. The reading of these two texts undermines the binary representation of a controller state versus a controlled cultural field, by promoting a more complex and globalized scenario where extrinsic religious, aesthetic and social values play a prominent role. Ultimately, chapter 12 chronicles “al-Khubz al-Hafi crisis”, i.e., the impasse involving Mehrez herself after teaching the contested autobiography by Muhammad Choukri at AUC in 1998. This chapter is completed by the official documents and the letters reported in the appendix, exactly because the author is interested in offering the readers the relevant documentary value of this national and international crisis, which from a “private discourse [evolved in]to a public collective one.” Indeed, through its different stages, between the (global) solidarity to the right for a liberal education and the (local) expressions of support to the incriminators of al-Khubz al-Hafi, this crisis shows how the academic field is subjugated to logics of patriarchal-hierarchical power that seems analogous to those existent within the literary field.

Beside Bourdieu’s structures, we catch glimpses of Foucault’s methodologies and analyses, which emphasize the powerful role of socio-institutional bounds in the process of making culture. This book marks a change in the general orientation of the author. Indeed, close textual readings are more uncommon than in her previous works, but the texts are reframed and placed inside an intersectional space, at the crossroad among translation, cultural, and social studies. Lastly, by deliberately transforming a private discourse into a public one, Mehrez narrates and elegantly celebrates her solid friendship with the scholar Magda al-Nowaihi, who passed away in 2002 and to whose memory the book is dedicated.

Maria Elena Paniconi is Lecturer in Arabic Literature at the University of Macerata (Italy)

Book Review: Islam: Ali Mazrui, Between Globalization & Counter-terrorism,

Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press Ltd., 2004, 331 pages, ISBN-10: 159221326X

Review by Giovanni Luciano

Ali Mazrui, a scholar and a by-product of Africa's triple heritage launches his book by giving a unique overview and analysis of Islam's status in the contemporary international system. Mazrui provides a dense comparative study between the Roman Empire and the American empire; and evaluates the Roman Empire's mishandling of Christianity and its eventual collapse with that of United States policies towards political Islam. Mazrui's comparative analysis presents a unique insight into an inordinately complex subject. Through the political and philosophical perspectives of Toynbee, Darwin, Huntington and Islamic international law, Mazrui aims to make sense of the contemporary international system; specifically the role of Islam and its impact on the United States.

Mazrui's extensively in-depth chapters present the main historical assailants in initially suppressing Islam and eventually radicalizing it. He views Globalization and counterterrorism as the two main perpetrators. He posits that it is specifically America's cultural and economic export to the South which has shackled Islam, an entity which was globalizing long before the rise of the West. Via exhaustingly lengthy historical examples Mazrui aims to illustrate the main source of mistrust and tension between Islam and the West- that is the West's desire to attain the regions natural resources. Mazrui's points out to the complexities of the matter, in specific for Africa. He points to Africa as the third party engulfed in the war between the two civilisations. Mazrui writing clearly, critically and honestly about the issue affirms that the cultural disparity is artificial and prejudice based. Through all-encompassing examples Mazrui illustrates that the difference in cultural and moral norm is not the main cause of tension, as claimed by many intellectuals. He proceeds by giving a list of interesting characteristics and facts which even the most conservative of all Westerners share with the ideals of Islam.

Mazrui is far more passionate and insistent in outlining the second suppressive factor of Islam – counterterrorism. Mazrui's personal experience from the early days of the Kenyan liberation movement with Mau Mau to his current stance on Islam has left him highly impatient with the diatribes of counter terrorism. He speaks of the hypocrisy of the US foreign policy which on one hand declares its intent to spread democracy and fight terrorism and on the other hand openly inflicts terror upon the Third World through covert action, occupation and proxy totalitarian states. Mazrui through the four sections of his book attempts to clarify US foreign policy and concludes

that its intention is to not disseminate democracy into the Middle East. He hypothesises that the reason the US prefers a non democratic Middle East is because a democratised Middle East population would demand the annihilation of Israel and the ousting of US interest.

Mazrui's solution to the conflict according to his critics is the most controversial aspect of his book. For Mazrui, the roots of all political conflicts are in the establishment of Israel and the suppression of Palestinians. He manages to surpass the simple political justification of the conflict. He gives an intricate cultural and theological explanation to the conflict which sheds new light into the conflict. In the process, Mazrui attempts to make sense of the unjust representation and depiction of Muslims as violent sinner's rather than the victim. He accepts killing of civilians by Muslims in Palestine, Sudan and other Muslim regions yet he points out that the numbers still suggest a disproportionate level of loss between the two, affirming the Muslims are the ones that suffer the most. This however leaves Mazrui open to criticism. His hypothesis fails to demonstrate that Islam does play a definite role in defining the West-Islam relationship. He identifies the causes of the breakdown between the relationships but patronises political Islam as a victim who is simply reacting to injustices. By distinguishing terrorism as separate from Islam, he unwittingly confers the Islamic world as infantile and incapable of rationalising its relationship with the west, thus inadvertently adopting the same intellectual perspective as the West.

Mazrui's book is a commendable attempt at capturing the complexity, diversity and historical specificity of the relations between Islam, Globalization and the West. Through personal experience, principle and his unique vision of a global reform he presents simple and concise definitions of the dilemmas, concepts and issues which he feels the West should be enlightened upon. His analysis of the facts and assessing the options is aimed at breaking the wall of ignorance that is built with the scant of coverage in the general media. His calculated yet passionate argument for many, casts him as a moral apologist for terrorists, yet his passionate and stern stance shows that he is prepared to defy the stigma that comes in defending Islam today. While it is undeniable that the book sheds new light on an over analysed arena, Mazrui's thesis's lack of objectivity weakens an otherwise brilliant hypothesis that aims to establish a marriage between clashing civilizations.

Giovanni Luciano completed his Masters of International Relations at Macquarie University in 2009.

The Future of Middle East Studies in Australia Roundtable Discussion



Gennaro Gervasio explains the importance of scholarly debate during the Middle East Roundtable at the Australian Political Studies Association Conference, Macquarie University 2009. Also seated at the table are (from left to right): Noah Bassil, Professor Samina Yasmeen, Khaled Sabsabi and Dr Minerva Nasser-Eddine. Dr Matthew Gray and Ms Robyn Maher were seated to the right of Dr Nasser-Eddine and were completing the panel.

Report to Macquarie University Centre for Middle East and North African Studies (CMENAS)

on the

The Future of Middle East Studies in Australia Roundtable Discussion

Australian Political Studies Association Conference

29 September 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Macquarie University

Sydney NSW

By Robyn Maher

During the last week in September 2009 Macquarie University hosted the Australian Political Science Association (APSA) conference. During the APSA conference, Dr Gervasio, Director of CMENAS and Noah Bassil, Deputy Director, convened a roundtable session to discuss the future of Middle East studies in Australia. In the course of the proceedings, it became increasingly clear that there existed a major lacunae in Australian Middle East studies. The absence of a active national body was clearly a topic of discussion and a matter of keen interest.

The fact that the 2009 Australian Political Studies Association conference had a Middle East track for the first time, and that it was heralded as a long-needed addition, is an indication that there is a growing need for Middle East Studies to have an umbrella organization of its own in which scholars, community and business leaders, as well as graduate students and others can come together to share their research and to collaborate on projects that will enhance the essential field of Middle East Studies in the region.

The conveners chose the roundtable format to allow the greatest input from the large audience in attendance. All participants of the APSA conference were invited, as well as all recipients of the CMENAS mailing list, other scholars, diplomats, community activists and journalists to discuss how best to proceed. The roundtable was scheduled to begin at 2:30 pm and end at 5:00 pm. It was, however, so popular and of such great interest to all who attended, that it continued until just past 6:00 pm when everyone rushed off to the APSA conference banquet.

List of Presenters and General Topics

The session was chaired by Noah Bassil. Dr Matthew Gray of Australian National University spoke on the last several years of Middle East Studies in Australia and the region. Dr Minerva Nasser-

Eddine of the University of Adelaide spoke on the now defunct AMESA and how best it might be revitalized or restructured. Professor Samina Yasmeen of the University of Western Australia spoke on her long experience in the field of Middle East Studies in Australia and what is presently missing in a comprehensive approach to Middle East Studies for the future. Dr Gennaro Gervasio spoke on future prospects for Middle East Studies in Australia and the region. Mr Khaled Sabsabi, Sydney artist and community worker, spoke on the role of Middle Eastern intellectuals, artists and activists and their expectations of academics working in the area of Middle East Studies. Ms Robyn Maher spoke on her preliminary research into legally setting up a new non-profit, non-political entity; raising start-up funds; attracting members and affiliates; and creating income streams to maintain and administer the new organization.

After almost four hours of debate and discussion, consensus was reached on the proposal to initiate a process to form a national body. The practical outcome of the roundtable was that there was agreement to establish a working group to begin to give structure to a plan for a new organization. The conveners were gratified by the huge response of attendees who signed a list expressing their interest in participating in this working group. The response was much too large to include everyone in the initial phase of the working group, but it is hoped that the group will expand in phases and more and more people will be included and counted upon to take an active role in assuring the success of establishing this new association.

Robyn Maher is a member of the Board of the Macquarie University Centre for Middle East and North African Studies.

Report on the Middle East Stream at the Australian Political Studies Association Annual Conference 28-30 September 2009, Macquarie University Sydney.

By Noah Bassil

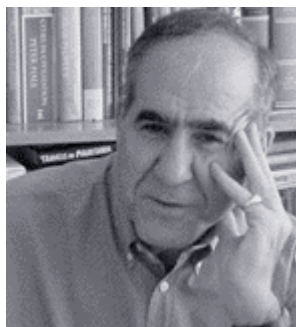
The Centre for Middle East and North African Studies at Macquarie University sponsored a stream of panels at the 2009 Australian Political Studies Conference held at Macquarie University. We saw it as a wonderful opportunity to showcase the Centre and to bring together scholars working on areas of research which coincided with the interests of the Centre and which fell within the broad disciplinary boundaries of APSA. A call for papers was circulated around Australian and New Zealand universities for articles which addressed issues of politics and international relations in the Middle East or of the Middle Eastern/Islamic communities in Australia. The response was overwhelming with almost forty abstracts received and a final compilation of thirty papers

requiring ten panels over the three days. Included in this list were the five presentations held as part of the roundtable (see the report in this bulletin by Robyn Maher) and over twenty other papers from scholars as far afield as the *Université de Provence* and Salford University.

The papers covered a vast intellectual and academic spectrum and were overall of a very high quality. Each panel was well attended and audience questions added to the sense that the proceedings were bringing together a community of critical enquiry. Rarely, in recent years, has there been a chance for scholars of Middle East studies in Australasia to gather in a way that occurred at this year's APSA conference. It is hoped that opportunities for future meetings will arise on a more regular basis.

The research presented by scholars in attendance was impressive. Research into such diverse issues as nation-building in post- Saddam Iraq, the representation of Muslims in Australia, the break-down of the political and civil order in Yemen, Arab public opinion, and the question of the Israel lobby in the US contributed to timely debates about the future of the region, and the place of the Middle East in the contemporary global order. APSA also illustrated the contribution that Australian scholars are making to demystifying the region and the significant role that scholars are undertaking in building a more robust and a clearer understanding of a number of the primary issues facing the Middle East today.

New Members at the Centre for Middle East and North African Studies



Ahmad Shboul is Honorary Associate Professor of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at University of Sydney. He has held positions at the University of Edinburgh, Harvard University, the ANU and at the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo. Professor Shboul's areas of intellectual and scholarly interest covers a vast terrain and includes the intellectual history and historiography of the Arab-Islamic world, Islam, society and politics in the contemporary Middle East, and cities, human geography and cultural dynamics in Arab & Islamic history.



Associate Professor Andrew Gillett works in the Department of Ancient History, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University. He previously held positions at the University of Toronto and the University of Melbourne before joining Macquarie University. Dr Gillett's field of research and teaching is Late Antiquity, the intersection between the Ancient World (of classical Greece, Rome, and Persia) and the Medieval/early Modern period (of western Europe, Byzantium, and Islam), with emphasis on western Europe from the fourth to the sixth centuries. He is particularly interested in the role of communication in public life, and how the period has been constructed in modern historical thought.



Dr Hsu-Ming Teo is a cultural historian and novelist who works in the area of twentieth-century European history, British imperial culture, travel and tourism, and popular literature. Dr Teo's popular fiction has been highly acclaimed and translated into a number of languages. Her current research focuses on the way that Arab representations served colonial ambitions and continue to provide legitimacy for intervention into the Middle East. In particular, Dr Teo's research looks at the influence of feminism and the politics of cultural pluralism on representations of Arab culture in the Anglophone world.

Jumana Bayeh is a PhD candidate in the Department of English at Macquarie University. The topic of her thesis is "Constructions of Place in the Literature of the Lebanese Diaspora". Her research interests include diaspora literature, particularly from the Arab diaspora, and the history and politics of the Levant. She has taught in both politics and English units at Macquarie, as well as the Lebanese American University in Beirut.



Bilal Salih commenced a PhD in Politics and Anthropology at Macquarie University in 2009 with a focus on religion and politics in post-Saddam Iraq. Prior to this, Bilal completed a masters by research (MA) in Applied Economics at Griffith University in 2003 with a thesis that analysed the US invasion of Iraq using collective action theory.

Publications 2009

Noah Bassil

The Crisis of the Sudanese Postcolonial State and Conflict in Darfur, Ph.D, Macquarie University, 2009.

"The Regional Consequences of the Iraq War" in Lynda Blanchard and Leah Chan (eds.) *Ending War, Building Peace*, Sydney University Press, 2009, pp. 65-84.

"Israel: International Rogue?" *AQ: Journal of Contemporary Australian Studies*, Vol. 81, Issue 1, 2009.

Jumana Bayeh

"Diasporic Literature as Counter-History: Israel, Palestine and Amin Maalouf" in Helen Groth and Paul Sheehan (eds.) *Rethinking Literary Historicism*, Cambridge Scholars Press, January 2010, pp.167-176.

Gennaro Gervasio

"Geografia dei poteri informali in Medio Oriente" (A Geography of Informal Powers in the Middle East), *Limes. Rivista Italiana di Geopolitica*, No. 1, 2009, pp. 135-142

Chris Houston

'Reproducing and Contesting Social Norms and Forms in Turkey', Introduction to special edition on Turkey for *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Vol 30, No. 1, 2009: 1-6

'An Anti-History of a Non-People: Kurds, Colonialism and Nationalism in the History of Anthropology', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 15, 2009, pp. 19-35.

Joseph Pugliese

"Interstitial Australia's Vernacular Violence," in Renata Summo-O'Connell (ed.), *Imagined Australia: Reflections Around the Reciprocal Construction of Identity Between Australia and Europe*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2009, pp. 43-55.

"Preincident Indices of Criminality: Facecrime and Project Hostile Intent," *Griffith Law Review*, 18.2, 2009, pp. 314-330.

"Crisis Heterotopias and Border Zones of the Dead," *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 23.5, 2009, pp. 663-677.

"Apostrophe of Empire: Guantánamo Bay, Disneyland," *Borderlands*, 8.3, 2009, at: http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol8no3_2009/pugliese_apostrophe.htm.

"Compulsory Visibility and the Infralegality of Racial Phantasmata," *Social Semiotics*, 19.1, 2009, pp. 9-30.

"Introduction: The Somatechnics of Race and Whiteness," *Social Semiotics*, 19.1, 2009, pp. 1-8. Co-authored with Susan Stryker.

"Civil Modalities of Refugee Trauma, Death and Necrological Transport," *Social Identities*, 15.1, 2009, pp. 149-165. ISSN 1350-4630.

Lisa L. Wynn

Pyramids and Nightclubs: A Travel Ethnography of Arab and Western Imaginations of Egypt, from King Tut and a Colony of Atlantis to Rumors of Sex Orgies, a Marauding Prince, and Blonde Belly Dancers. Austin: University of Texas Press (November 2007) was published in Arabic by Cadmus Press (Beirut, Damascus) in August 2009 as *Siyahat al-Leil, Siyahat al-Nahar: Al-Khalijiyoun wal-Aurobiyoun fi Misr*.