



SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND POPULAR MOBILISATION IN THE MENA

Digest of Current Publications and Events

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CALL FOR PAPERS & CONFERENCES

Academic Freedom and Politics

8-9. December 2017 LMU Munich

Deadline: 5 July 2017

A conference and volume focused on the current situation of universities and the educational system generally seeking to find ways for educational institutions, their networks, and allies to analyze and oppose the repressive policies and practices at schools and universities. The repressive policy in Turkey is in the foreground.

In many countries, state oppression of universities and schools is intensifying. With the acceleration of right-wing populist and nationalist movements, anti-intellectualism has become more widespread, fostering scepticism toward knowledge and expressed in the form of attacks on many disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

Unions that defend the rights of the workers, especially the education unions, play an important leadership role in democratic movements worldwide. The working conditions for researchers and teachers has become increasingly precarious as thousands have now lost their positions, affecting a wide range of workers in public education. As economic and political crises and global conflicts are intensifying in many parts of the world, it is increasingly important to consider Gramsci's notion of organic crisis which expresses the link between the deterioration of education and the intensification of global crises. What can education and universities do in these times? In Turkey, Hungary, India, and the USA, restrictions on academic freedom and the withdrawal of support for education demand a concerted and focused response.

The anti-democratic developments in Turkey reached new heights with the passage of Erdogan's Bonapartist referendum. For a long time the Turkish state was able to convince the international community of its commitment to education, foregrounding its elite institutions, but with the decimation of educational institutions through terminating positions and repressing open intellectual inquiry, that dogma is no longer accepted Abroad. How is a comprehensive and truthful study of the relation between politics and education in Turkey now possible? Academic freedom and freedom of expression are among the most important rights of a democratic society. They assure that we can inquire into the truth and make it known. And without open and responsible forms of inquiry, we can neither know nor change our world. How can the universities optimize the dialectical relationship between universities and the democratization of society?

We ask for submissions of abstracts of no more than 2,000 characters no later than July 5, 2017 to Dr. Halis Yildirim (toprak4@gmx.net). Decisions on acceptance will be communicated by 1 August. The selected contributions for the congress will also be considered for inclusion in an anthology on the topic. We ask that the submission of the abstract be suitable for anonymous review and that a separate document be included with the title and contact information. Abstracts in English are desirable, but Kurdish, Armenian and Turkish submissions are also welcome.

Organizing team

Dr. Halis Yildirim (LMU München)

Asst. Prof. Dr. Latife Akyüz (sociology - Frankfurt University academics for freedom)

Prof. Dr. Stephan Lessenich (LMU München)

Research assistant Güneş Gümüş (University Ankara – academics for freedom)

Prof. Judith Butler (Berkeley University)

Someone from Education union GEW (requested)

Keywords

- Academic freedom
- Anti-intellectualism
- Organic crisis
- Trade unions to the academies
- The making of official history and academy in Turkey
- The dialectical relationship of education and society

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Revolutions Against Capital, Capital Against Revolutions? - Deadline for the HM London Conference extended until 15 May

One hundred years ago, hailing the Russian Revolution, Antonio Gramsci characterised the Bolsheviks' success as a 'revolution against Capital'. As against the interpretations of mechanical 'Marxism', the Russian Revolution was the 'crucial proof' that revolution need not be postponed until the 'proper' historical developments had occurred.

2017 will witness both the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the 150th anniversary of the first publication of Marx's Capital. Fittingly, the journal Historical Materialism will celebrate its own twentieth anniversary.

In his time, Gramsci qualified his title by arguing that his criticism was directed at those who use 'the Master's works to draw up a superficial interpretation, dictatorial statements which cannot be disputed', by contrast, he argues, the Bolsheviks 'live out Marxist thought'. From its inception, Historical Materialism has been committed to a project of collective research in critical Marxist theory which actively counters any mechanical application of Marxism qua doctrine. How the Russian Revolution was eventually lived out – with all of its aftershocks, reversals, counter-revolutions, and ultimate defeat – also calls not just for a work of memory but for one of theorisation.

We might view the alignment of these anniversaries, then, as disclosing the changing fates of the Marxist tradition and its continued attempt to analyse and transform the world. Especially once it is read against the grain of the mechanical and determinist image affixed to it by many of the official Marxisms of the 20th Century, and animated by the liberation movements that followed in its wake,

the work-in-progress that was Capital seems vitally relevant to an understanding of the forces at work in our crisis-ridden present. The Russian Revolution, on the contrary, risks appearing as a museum-piece or lifeless talisman. By retrieving Gramsci's provocation, we wish to unsettle the facile gesture that would praise Marxian theory all the better to bury Marxist politics.

Gramsci also remarks that Marx 'predicted the predictable' but could not predict the particular leaps and bounds human society would take. Surveying today's political landscape that seems especially true. Since 2008 we have witnessed a continuing crisis of capitalism, contradictory revolutionary upsurges – and brutal counterrevolutions – across the Middle East and North Africa and a resurgent 'populist' right represented by Trump, the right-wing elements of the Brexit campaign, the authoritarian turn in central Europe and populist right wing politics in France; the power of Putin's Russia and authoritarian state power in Turkey, Israel, Egypt and India. Even the 'pink tide' of Latin America appears to be turning. Disturbingly, we seem to face a wave of reaction, and in some domains a recrudescence of fascism, much greater in scope and intensity than the revolutionary impetus that preceded and sometimes occasioned it. There is a new virulence to the politics of revanchist nationalism, ethno-racial supremacy, and aggressive patriarchy, but its articulation to the imperatives of capital accumulation or the politics of class remains a matter of much (necessary) debate.

This year's Historical Materialism Conference seeks to use the 'three anniversaries' as an opportunity to reflect on the history of the Marxist tradition and its continued relevance to our historical moment. We welcome papers which unpack the complex and under-appreciated legacies of Marx's Capital and the Russian Revolution, exploring their global scope, their impact on the racial and gendered histories of capitalism and anti-capitalism, investigating their limits and sounding out their yet-untapped potentialities. We also wish to apply the lessons of these anniversaries to our current perilous state affairs: dissecting its political and economic dynamics and tracing its possible revolutionary potentials.

More information [here](#)

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TALKS & OTHER EVENTS

A New Orientalism? The Question of Literature as Such and Islamic Fundamentalism

19 May 2018, 18:00 – 19:30

Venue: Room GOR B04, Birkbeck, University of London, Bloomsbury, 43 Gordon Square, WC1H 0PD

Speaker: John Beverley

One of the legacies of postcolonial criticism is the proposition that modern literature itself, in the form it takes in the Renaissance and after, was itself complicit in the processes of European colonization of the world, that literature and literary education are a "mask of conquest." This talk will use that insight to explore the representation of an Islamic or Arab subject in three texts from the first decade of the 21st century. These are Michel Houellebecq's novel *Soumission* (Submission), Orhan Pamuk's novel *Snow*, and Michael Haneke's film *Caché* (Hidden). *More information* [here](#)

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The Calculus of Dissidence: The Socialist Forces Front and the Failure of Opposition in Algeria

30 May 2017, 17:15-19:15

Venue: Room 9.04, 9th Floor, Tower 2, LSE, London WC2A 2AZ, United Kingdom

Speaker: Hugh Roberts, Tufts University

The Socialist Forces Front (FFS) is routinely referred to as Algeria's oldest opposition party. Finally legalised in 1989, the FFS from its foundation in 1963 provided the main template of 'opposition' in Algeria, but its achievements have been meagre at best. Hugh Roberts examines the FFS's origins in the rebellion of 1963-5, arguing that its achievements as an opposition movement have been limited because it has not been engaged in opposition properly so called, merely dissidence. *More information* [here](#)

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The will of the people? Revolutionary legacies, reactionary manipulations

1-2 June 2017, Kingston University

Venue: Clattern Lecture Theatre, Penrhyn Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2EE

Speakers include: Gilbert Achcar (SOAS), Peter Hallward (Kingston), Lars Lih (McGill), Marisa Linton (Kingston), Karma Nabulsi (Oxford), Yves Sintomer (Paris VIII; Harvard)

Debates about the nature and value of democracy and of popular sovereignty have returned to the centre of political discussion in recent years and over the past year in particular. Right-wing or extreme right-wing groups claiming to champion 'the will of the people' have established themselves all over the world, from Venezuela to Finland, and have taken or consolidated power by various means in places as different as the USA, Turkey, Russia, the UK, and Poland. These recent re-appropriations of the phrase, however, cannot erase its revolutionary origins and implications. Popular sovereignty is indissociable from the effective formulation and imposition of the people's will, and democracy remains an empty word unless it affirms the power of ordinary people to prevail over any form of privileged interest or ruling class. This conference aims to address some of the central questions that have become so divisive in contemporary political struggles, and to review some of the most significant revolutionary sequences that sought to empower a genuinely egalitarian and inclusive collective will to political change - from the French and Russian Revolutions to recent mobilisations in parts of the Middle East and Latin America. *More information & booking [here](#)*

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The Global Settler Colonial Present

5 June 2017, 17:00 – 19:00

Venue: Paul Webley Wing (Senate House), Wolfson Lecture Theatre, SOAS, London, UK

Speaker: Lorenzo Veracini, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne

This paper focuses on a specific mode of domination and its contemporary manifestations. It outlines the global settler colonial present: a predicament fundamentally characterised by a logic of elimination and containment rather than exploitation. This appraisal of a developing dispensation is offered as a reminder of the need to develop indigenous-nonindigenous alliances. This paper emphasises a growing commonality of dispossession. It argues that a commonality between indigenous and non-indigenous dispossessions informs a non-Indigenous responsibility to engage in reconciliation and indigenous-led struggles. Of course, commonality does not mean identity and this article is not suggesting that 'we' are actually becoming 'indigenous'. I remain a migrant and a settler on indigenous land. But it seems important to note that we are increasingly being subjected to a mode of domination that treats us like indigenous peoples. 'Responsibility' literally means being able to respond. Focusing on a growing crisis and a convergence of interests offer important opportunities for responsible resistance and reconciliation. *More information [here](#)*

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Political Remittances and Political Transnationalism: Narratives, Political Practices and the Role of the State

19-20 June 2017

Venue: University of Oxford, Nuffield College, Clay Room

Conveners: Dr Félix Krawatzek and Dr Lea Müller-Funk

This workshop seeks to gather an interdisciplinary group of researchers undertaking innovative research on migrants' political remittances and political transnationalism. The question of how political ideas and practices circulate between migrants and their home country has clearly gained in relevance with the current increase in worldwide migration and requires historically sound investigations. The workshop continues discussions initiated during "Political, Social, and Economic Migrant Remittances: Content, Social Networks, and Impacts" held at Nuffield College (Oxford) in September 2016. Political remittances and political transnationalism have increasingly been addressed across social sciences and the humanities. Research has covered a wide array of topics, such as migrants' transnational political practices to understand the development of the home country, the interlinkages of political remittances and conflict resolution vs conflict exacerbation, the connection between political transnationalism, immigrant integration and identity constructions, and the role of diaspora engagement policies on political transnationalism. These phenomena have been studied using methods such as interviews, ethnography, text and corpus analysis, surveys, network analysis or policy analysis. However, important questions remain open: What factors can be identified from historical and cross-country comparisons to improve understandings of political transnationalism? What can different disciplines learn from each other in studying political narratives and practices circulating among migrants? What influence do states have on political transnationalism? What theoretical concepts have been developed to study these phenomena across disciplines? What type of sources and methodologies are appropriate to study the flow of political remittances? *More information* [here](#)

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Personalised Media and Participatory Culture

Project Conference 29-30 June 2017

London School of Economics

For some years now the idea of digital media as an activator in politics and the civic sphere has taken hold. Digital networks have been said to redefine relationships between individuals, audiences and media organisations, and those between citizens and the state by acting as a virtual public sphere. The sorts of participatory connections – and dare we say it – *cultures* that are apparently enabled by digital media have been assumed, celebrated and also decried. In many cases it has been argued that young people are at the forefront of 'digital revolutions'. But are such assumptions borne out equally in different parts of the global north and global south? Are the movements and networks that fall under discussions of 'digital revolution' actually primarily digital? Any what are the real-world effects of assumptions about the motivating, connective and civilising power of the digital in low income communities of the global south?

Young people's uptake and uses of new and emerging digital technologies for cultural and civic participation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region remains under-studied and under-theorised, particularly in the context of their everyday lives. This conference aims at problematising the assumed connections between particular parts of the world, networks (both digital and real-world), participatory cultures, young people, and emerging media tools. Keynotes and panels will aim at assessing and theorising the nature and extent of digital media's articulation with artistic, civic, cultural and political participation and pinning down what exactly is *new* about the participatory uses and potentials of new media in particular communities and geographic spaces. In doing so, we aim to present a fresh perspective on concepts such as the 'digital age', 'empowerment', 'networks' and 'participation' amidst the range of face-to-face and old-media participatory civic, political and cultural networks, practices and identities that abound in modernity.

During the conference we will present the findings of our project that concentrated on participatory networks and media in Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and UAE. Through mapping the field of youth participation textually and analytically, and through interviews with young people, experts and stakeholders, the research presents a wide and different range of forms of social and political participation of youth in the MENA region. We suggest factors that can explain how young people decide to participate in their communities. Our research evaluates and theorises young people's civic engagement and public participation not only in the narrow domain of institutional politics, but in a broader sense that encompasses artistic and cultural consumption, cultural remixing and the production of popular culture as an emerging civic participatory culture.

The opening keynote will be delivered by Professor Mohamed Zayani (Georgetown University, Qatar) with plenary keynote panels and a few parallel panels. *More information* [here](#)

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Shubbak Festival

1 – 16 July 2017

London, UK, various venues

Shubbak is London's largest biennial festival of contemporary Arab culture, bringing new and unexpected voices alongside established artists to audiences in London this summer, 1–16 July 2017 will celebrate contemporary Arab culture. *More information* [here](#)

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RECENT & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

Revolution without Revolutionaries - Making Sense of the Arab Spring

Asef Bayat

August 2017 – Stanford University Press

The revolutionary wave that swept the Middle East in 2011 was marked by spectacular mobilization, spreading within and between countries with extraordinary speed. Several years on, however, it has caused limited shifts in structures of power, leaving much of the old political and social order intact. In this book, noted author Asef Bayat—whose *Life as Politics* anticipated the Arab Spring—uncovers why this occurred, and what made these uprisings so distinct from those that came before.

Revolution without Revolutionaries is both a history of the Arab Spring and a history of revolution writ broadly. Setting the 2011 uprisings side by side with the revolutions of the 1970s, particularly the Iranian Revolution, Bayat reveals a profound global shift in the nature of protest: as acceptance of neoliberal policy has spread, radical revolutionary impulses have diminished. Protestors call for reform rather than fundamental transformation. By tracing the contours and illuminating the meaning of the 2011 uprisings, Bayat gives us the book needed to explain and understand our post-Arab Spring world.

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White and Black - Political Cartoons from Palestine

Mohammad Sabaaneh

May 2017 – Just World Books

Mohammad Sabaaneh, a talented political cartoonist from Palestine, has gained worldwide renown for his stark black-and-white sketches, which draw attention to brutalities of the Israeli occupation and celebrate the Palestinians' popular resistance. These provocative drawings do not flinch from tackling the tough subjects that confront Palestinians, from Israel's everyday injustices in the West Bank to their frequent military operations on Gaza. This collection includes 180 of Sabaaneh's best cartoons, some of them depicting the experience of Palestinian political prisoners being held in Israel. In his Foreword, titled "Sabaaneh's Social Surrealism", veteran American political cartoonist Seth Tobocman notes the influence of Picasso and Braque on Sabaaneh's work, and asks: "Can there be an accurate depiction of an insane situation? Why should we draw in perspective when the world has lost its perspective? When reality becomes bizarre social realism gives way to social surrealism."

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Where Are The Unions? Workers and Social Movements in Latin America, the Middle East and Europe

Sian Lazar (Ed)
2017 – Zed Books

The start of the 21st Century has been marked by global demands for economic justice. From the wave that swept through Latin America in the early 2000s, and the Arab revolutions from 2011, to the Occupy and anti-austerity movements in Europe and North America, the last 20 years have witnessed the birth of a new type of mass mobilisation. *Where are the Unions?* compares, for the first time, the challenges faced by movements in Latin America, the Arab world and Europe. Workers' strikes and protests played a critical role in these mass movements, yet their role is significantly underestimated in many narratives of these events. This book focuses on the complex interactions between organised workers, the unemployed, self-employed, youth, students and the state, and critically assesses the concept of the 'precariat'. With contributions from across four continents, it is the most comprehensive look at the global context of mass mobilisation in the 21st Century.

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The Arab Revolution of 2011: A Comparative Perspective

Saïd Amir Arjomand (ed)
SUNY Press, 2016

How do we make sense of the Arab revolution of 2011? What were its successes, its failures, and significance in world history? *The Arab Revolution of 2011* brings together a broad range of perspectives to explain the causes, processes, and consequences of the revolution of 2011 and its critical implications for the future. The contributors, in this major addition to the sociology of revolutions, step back from the earlier euphoria of the Arab Spring to provide a sober analysis of what is still an ongoing process of upheaval in the Middle East. The essays address the role of national armies and foreign military intervention, the character and structure of old regimes as determinants of peaceful or violent political transformation, the constitutional placement of Islam in post-revolutionary regimes, and the possibilities of supplanting authoritarianism with democracy. The revolution of 2011 is also examined within a broad historical perspective, comparing the dynamics of revolution and counterrevolution in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya with such epochal events as the European revolution of 1848 and Russia in 1917.

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Upheavals in the Middle East: The Theory and Practice of a Revolution

Ronen A. Cohen

2014 - Lexington Books

Upheavals in the Middle East: The Theory and Practice of a Revolution engages with some of the most sensitive issues in the Middle East—revolutions and social protests. The book offers theoretical paradigms that suit the Middle East's conditions—culturally, religiously and historically. It deals with seventeen case studies from a range of Muslim and Arab states and provides a theoretical framework to study other situations all over the world, including cases from the recent Arab Spring. Revolution, as political action, can occur in all societies, but in recent years it has appeared most frequently in the Middle East. Will this trend continue? What makes the Middle Eastern revolution unique and surprising? This book seeks to answer these questions, placing side by side those cases that were successful and those that were doomed to fail.

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Spaces of Governmentality: Autonomous Migration and the Arab Uprisings

Martina Tazzioli

2014 - Roman & Littlefield

Much work has been done on the causes and characteristics of the Arab Spring, but relatively little research has examined the political and spatial consequences that have developed following the uprisings. This book engages with the ways in which spaces in Southern Europe and Northern Africa have been negotiated and transformed by migrants in the wake of the uprisings, showing that their struggles are a continuation of their political movement. Drawing on an innovative counter-mapping approach, based on radical cartography, Martina Tazzioli illustrates the spatial upheavals caused by migration in the Mediterranean and the transformations created by migration controls applied by European nations. With critical insight on the application of Foucault's concept of governmentality to migration studies, exploration of a reconfigured theory of autonomy of migration and discussion of the politics of invisibility that underpins migration, this book sheds new light on the enduring struggles that follow the Arab Spring."

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Arab Revolutions and World Transformations

Anna M Agathangelou, Nevzat Soguk (Eds)

2013 – Routledge

Stories about institutions and regimes that have failed us are echoing worldwide. This book critically engages the multiple uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) following the self-immolation of Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi in December 2010. It brings together authors who critically analyse the unstoppable force unleashed in the streets of Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Syria, Libya and Yemen. This book analyses the roots and trajectory of the recent revolts in the context of the global transformations that have redefined the politics of movement and revolution. For example, some authors engage extensively with the strategies embraced by the younger generation of activists. Others argue that the power of these revolutions lies in the people's creative orientations including their collaborations. While much of the mobilization efforts in these different parts of the world happen through word of mouth, radio, cartoons, placards, and SMS services; sites such as Facebook helped people meet each other with a click, carrying their claims through stories, songs, poetry and art of protest across international borders quickly enabling them to rapidly bring authoritarian regimes to the brink of collapse and make a qualitatively different expression of uprisings. All authors in this volume address the question of the stakes in these revolts, as through them, spectacular and everyday violence can be challenged, and alternative social projects can emerge. Neither a footnote to the West's history, nor an appendix to neoliberal capitalist global projects, people are actively drawing on their power to disrupt domination and oppression, creatively responding to global problems and calling for democratic institutions with viable ecologies.

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The Communist Movement in the Arab World

Tareq Y. Ismael

2009 - Routledge

This book examines the communist movement in the Arab world from the time of the Russian revolution until after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It traces the interaction of the world communist movement which was characterized by an uncritical acceptance of Marxism-Leninism, and local communists, who moved from initial dependence on Moscow to a position more adapted to local circumstances and sensitivities that could be characterized as a distinctive 'Arab communism'. It goes on to trace the impact of 'Arab communism' on a range of issues in the region, arguing that the role of Arab communist parties was highly significant, and disproportionate to the relatively small numbers of communists in the countries concerned.

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JOURNAL ARTICLES & OTHER ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Criminalizing Resistance: The Cases of Balata and Jenin Refugee Camps

Alaa Tartir

Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 46 No. 2, Winter 2017; pp. 7-22

The Palestinian Authority (PA) adopted donor-driven security sector reform (SSR) as the linchpin to its post-2007 state-building project. As SSR proceeded, the occupied West Bank became a securitized space and the theater for PA security campaigns whose ostensible purpose was to establish law and order. This article tackles the consequences of the PA's security campaigns in Balata and Jenin refugee camps from the people's perspective through a bottom-up ethnographic methodological approach. These voices from below problematize and examine the security campaigns, illustrating how and why resistance against Israel has been criminalized. The article concludes by arguing that conducting security reform to ensure stability within the context of colonial occupation and without addressing the imbalances of power can only ever have two outcomes: "better" collaboration with the occupying power and a violation of Palestinians' security and national rights by their own security forces.

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Key Findings from the Arab Transformations Project. Arab Transformations Working Paper 16

Pamela Abbott, Andrea Teti

The project on Political and Social Transformation in the Arab World (ArabTrans) explored the root causes of the revolutions, whether and how these countries changed economically, socially and politically following the Uprisings and the outlook for the region. At a substantive level, project findings advance our understanding of the political, social and economic drivers, outcomes and future of the Uprisings. Specifically, data analysis produced new knowledge on a range of topics, including the perception of democracy in the MENA, the relation between religion and politics, gender, corruption, political mobilisation and the role of the EU. The survey data revealed the popular concern about economic security – including corruption, jobs, and services – and an equally worrying distrust in state institutions and leadership which ought to be delivering such security. Against this backdrop, survey analysis reveals that respondents have a much more holistic and substantive conception of democracy than international policy makers: the latter focus on certain core procedural and formal aspects – e.g. elections, civil and political rights – but public opinion in the MENA also understands democracy to entail substantive commitments to social justice and economic rights. In addition, while most people do not demand Western-style liberal democracy, they also reject religious leaders' involvement in politics: social justice and economic rights are their

primary focus. Methodologically, the project contributes the construction of a longitudinal data base, combining macrodata and international indexes with individual-level survey data, which will facilitate the analysis of socio-political transformations both within the region and beyond it.

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The Trade Union Movement in Egypt in Light of the 2011 Uprising: Cooptation, Containment and Limits of Resistance

Nadine Abdallah

Preceding the uprising, Egypt had experienced the “longest and strongest wave of workers’ protests since the end of World War II”, these protests being partly a response to the growing aggressive neoliberal economic policies by the government of Ahmed Nazif (2004–2011). However, Egypt’s post-revolutionary trajectory since 2011 has shown the weakness of organized labor and its failure to achieve significant labor-specific gains or to influence the country’s overall political transformation. The Egyptian labor movement turned from being an important driver of change during the destabilization of authoritarian rule to a weak, fragmented, and politically marginalized actor during the post-revolutionary period. Hence, this paper will attempt to assess the trade unions’ capacity to respond to the workers’ demands with a focus on the aftermath of the 2011 uprising. Three topics will be discussed: the effects of the policies of economic liberalization before the 2011 uprising on labor conditions; the traditional or official trade unions’ capacity to defend the workers; and the new role of trade unionism in representing the labor movement, fighting for their demands, and the challenges they face in this quest. *Download [here](#)*

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Egypt’s Resilient and Evolving Social Activism

Amr Hamzawy

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 5 April 2017

With the decline of party politics in Egypt, social activism is becoming increasingly relevant in the fight against the government’s new authoritarian policies and tactics. While Egypt’s ruling generals have developed a tight grip on power in virtually every sector of society, various activist groups have had at least some success in holding the government accountable for human rights abuses. It will take many more victories to counteract the entrenched repression, but these groups offer the best hope for changing Egypt’s current reality. *Download [here](#)*

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NEWS PIECES & COMMENTARY

Tunisia orders army to protect oil and gas fields

Al-Jazeera English, 11 May 2017

Tunisia's President Beji Caid Essebsi has ordered the army to protect the output of the country's main resources following a wave of protests over unemployment and worsening economic conditions. This is the first time that troops in Tunisia have been deployed to guard industrial installations, including phosphate, gas and oil production facilities, that are key to the national economy. "It is a serious decision, but it must be applied to protect our resources," Essebsi said on Wednesday in a speech to the nation. "Our democratic path has become threatened and law must be applied but we will respect freedoms. He who wants to go on strike can do it, but without disrupting work," Essebsi added. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Palestinian prisoners enter 20th day of mass hunger strike

Ma'an News Agency, 6 May 2017

Some 1,600 Palestinian prisoners entered their 20th day of a mass hunger strike demanding humane treatment in Israeli prisons and an end to Israel's policy of imprisoning Palestinians without charge or trial, as more Palestinian prisoners have joined the strike amid an ongoing crackdown by the Israel Prison Service (IPS) on the hunger strikers. According to the Media Committee of the Freedom and Dignity Strike -- a joint committee formed by the Palestinian Prisoner's Society (PPS) and Palestinian Committee for Prisoners' Affairs, five more Palestinian prisoners in Israel's Ofer prison joined the hunger strike on Friday. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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In a Fight for Land, a Women's Movement Shakes Morocco

Aida Alamimay

New York Times, 7 May 2017

About 35 percent of Morocco's land is designated as Sulaliyyate, the Interior Ministry says. In 1919, while Morocco was still a French protectorate, management of the land was transferred to the ministry from the tribal authorities, with the idea of discouraging migration from rural areas to the cities. Under this system, while people did not own the land, they were given the right to work designated plots and take their share of the harvest. Shares in the communal lands could be passed only from fathers to sons older than 16. According to tribal law, single women, widows, divorcées

and those without sons could not inherit the land, which meant that the state could confiscate it without compensation. Over the years, thousands of women — no one really knows how many — were forced from their homes and into slums in surrounding towns and cities. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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The Political Economy of a ‘Salaries Massacre’

Toufic Haddad

Palestine Square, 4 May 2017

On April 8, the Gaza Strip witnessed the largest demonstration in recent memory after thousands of public sector employees converged in central Gaza City to protest the surprise implementation of mass cuts to their salaries – cuts ranging from 30 to 70 percent of take-home pay. Demonstrators called for the firing of the Government of National Consensus led by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, and demanded repeal of the decision, locally referred to as the “salaries massacre”. The wage cuts affect approximately 55,000 public sector employees in Gaza (both civil servants and security personnel), paid for by the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank. It does not affect 120,000 public sector employees in the West Bank itself however. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Hunger Strikes Highlight Isolation of Palestinian Prisoners

Omar Shakir

Human Rights Watch, 2 May 2017

On April 16, more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners began a hunger strike. Their primary demands include more frequent and lengthy family visits, better prison conditions such as improved medical care, and an end to solitary confinement and administrative detention – detention without charge or trial. Many Palestinian civil society groups have mobilized in support of the prisoner movement. Last Thursday, nearly all shops in the West Bank city of Ramallah were shuttered in adherence to a general strike called for by the prisoners – a level of participation in a protest that one rights leader said he hadn’t seen in Palestine in nearly three decades. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Internet Revolution Egypt Facebook admin released on bail

Mada Masr, 1 May 2017

Ahmed Abdel Naby, an administrator of the Internet Revolution Egypt Facebook page who was arrested on Friday in Alexandria after the page published documents detailing former government discussions to block and surveil VoIP services that allow users to make voice and video calls on the internet, was released on LE1,000 bail on Saturday. The Alexandria prosecutor has charged Abdel Naby with spreading false news, disturbing the peace and threatening public security, presumably in connection to the documents published on the page. The Internet Revolution Egypt page, which has over 1 million followers, announced that the administrator had been arrested on Friday at dawn by a police force from the National Security Agency, a day after the page had published several documents it claimed originated from the National Telecom Regulatory Authority. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Blood and treasure: Egypt's army

Amr Khalifa

Middle East Eye, 27 April 2017

The Egyptian army is killing Egyptians. Over the past several years, I have interviewed Sinai locals who said the men tasked with protecting them had instead been killing them. Until last week, the only video evidence had been Egyptian conscripts physically and verbally abusing Sinai residents. All that changed on 19 April when a video broadcast by Mekameleen, a pro-Muslim Brotherhood TV channel based in Turkey, showed the bloodcurdling images of soldiers executing multiple Egyptians in cold blood. In the days that followed, press and human rights reports suggested that the men executed with bullets to the head and the body may very well be the same men who appeared dead in a December 2016 video, released by the Ministry of Defence. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Why support for Syria's nonviolent fighters is key to ending the war

Maria J. Stephan

Waging non-violence, 21 April 2017

Debates over the morality, legality and strategic efficacy of U.S. missile strikes in Syria will dominate the news for the foreseeable future. It is understandable why so many people, notably many Syrians, would want to see a regime that has repeatedly targeted its population with sarin and chlorine gas, barrel bombs and starvation tactics be punished for its actions. The Syrians I know feel alone and abandoned by the world. They have seen the United States and its Western and Arab allies undertake massive diplomatic and military action targeting the so-called Islamic State, or ISIS, while

regime-sponsored violence has been responsible for a vast majority of the close to 500,000 civilian deaths in Syria since 2011. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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The ‘Beautiful Resistance’ of Aida Camp – “People cannot tolerate injustice for eternity”

International Solidarity Movement, 19 April 2017

Tucked within the antiquated corridors of the municipality of Bethlehem, there lies Aida Camp, established 1950. The densely populated cement structures, thinly outlined by narrow passageways, are a living summation of the occupation of Palestine itself. Scraping elbows with the massive checkpoint pathway between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, hedged by the West Bank apartheid separation wall and situated nearby two large illegal Israeli settlement blocs, Aida camp sits on the front lines of the Palestinian struggle to exist in the grim face of an ethnic cleansing. For the internally displaced residents of the camp, a predominant feature of life inside Aida is the near daily child arrests that occur. This specter links arms with prolific doses of teargas that are hurled by occupation forces over the wall, drugs being smuggled inside, staggering unemployment rates and regular military incursions. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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A profile of the activist outside his prison

Alaa Abd El Fattah

Mada Masr, 18 April 2017

My generation came of age at the time of the second intifada. Our first real steps in the world coincided with bombs falling on Baghdad. All around us, fellow Arabs were shouting, “Not at the expense of our dignity!” and allies in the north were chanting, “Not in our name!” while comrades in the south were singing, “Another world is possible.” We understood that the world as we had inherited it was coming to an end, and we also understood that we were not alone. We strove to understand more — company brochures, international NGO statements and the declarations of officials were not enough. So we read all that was available to us, contributed to translating some of it, discussed it and argued about it. Then we set off in every direction — to commercial as well as civil society projects, initiatives in any space we found that was relatively free. Our projects were intellectual, economic, developmental and philanthropic. We criticized authorities, chanted against rulers, and, when possible, we cooperated with institutions such as trade unions, universities and sometimes even ministries. We sought links with those who came before us; we learned from them and taught them. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Saudi women in silent walking protest over right to drive in the Kingdom

Rachel Roberts

The Independent, 5 April 2017

Women campaigners in Saudi Arabia have filmed themselves silently walking in the street without male companions as part of their fight for the right to drive. The campaign is part of a growing protest against sweeping restrictions which prevent women from doing everyday activities unless they are accompanied by a male guardian. Prime Minister Theresa May has been urged to address human rights abuses including the oppression of women during her visit to the deeply conservative Islamic kingdom, which comes as part of a Government bid to secure post-Brexit trade deals. She said she hopes to be seen as a “role model” for women there and met the country’s crown prince without wearing a head scarf, eschewing sharia law’s strict dress code. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Thousands of Yemenis rally in Sanaa on war's second anniversary

Reuters, 26 March 2017

Thousands of Yemenis packed a square in the capital Sanaa on Sunday on the second anniversary of a war that has claimed the lives of more than 10,000 people and pushed the impoverished country to the brink of famine. It was the biggest gathering since a Saudi-led coalition of Arab states entered the conflict in 2015 to try to restore President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi to power after he was ousted from Sanaa by the Iran-aligned Houthis. Witnesses said that a crowd estimated at more than 100,000 people comprising supporters of the Houthis Ansarullah group and former President Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) party pressed into Sabeen Square in central Sanaa. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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Between Repression and Resistance: Egyptian Workers’ Struggles

Mostafa Bassiouny and Anne Alexander

Review of African political Economy Blog, 23 March 2017

Only two years after Abdelfattah el-Sisi welcomed international investors to a glitzy development conference showcasing opportunities in Egypt, his regime’s promises of a brighter economic future are looking threadbare to millions of Egyptians. Reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund as the price of a \$12 billion Extended Fund Facility loan have led to spiralling inflation, and despite repression, rising levels of frustration are spilling onto the streets and workplaces in a new wave of social protest. At the end of last year the Sisi regime managed to force through some of the most painful changes – such as last November’s currency devaluation, the imposition of a new Value

Added Tax, and further cuts to subsidies on fuel – without significant protest on a national scale reflecting repression on an unprecedented scale, rather than a genuine indicator of acceptance of these policies. Although fragmented and spontaneous, levels of grass roots economic and social protests are high, and the workers’ movement in particular has remained relatively resilient in the workplaces. Crucially, the regime’s success in implementing the IMF’s conditions for the loan is also contributing to the draining away of its popular support. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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[Egypt:] Supply Ministry rescinds cuts in bread subsidies following protests

Mada Masr, 7 March 2017

Supply Minister Ali Meselhy announced during a press conference on Tuesday evening that the Supply Ministry would rescind the planned reduction in the quota of subsidized bread allocated to those without subsidy smart cards. The press conference comes after protests erupted in several governorates over the last two days in reaction to the proposed subsidy cuts. The Supply Ministry issued a statement on Wednesday morning, stating that the bread quota will range from 750-3500 loafs of bread for bakeries servicing those without smart cards. The Supply Ministry will issue 100,000 smart cards to citizens in six other governorates. Demonstrations broke out in several Egyptian cities on Tuesday after the Supply Ministry announced the cuts. *Continue reading [here](#)*

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POSITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Post-Doctoral Teaching Scholar in the History of the Modern Middle East, North Carolina State University

Review of applications from 22 May 2017

The Department of History at North Carolina State University invites applications for a Post-Doctoral Teaching Scholar position in the history of the Modern Middle East.

We seek applicants who specialize in any aspect of the history of the modern Middle East. The Teaching Scholar will pursue their own individual research agenda and be guided by a faculty mentor in their respective field. A research presentation in the Spring semester of each year will summarize progress in this arena and should result in one or more publications. The Teaching Scholar will be

expected to teach two courses each semester. The Postdoctoral Teaching Scholar will be evaluated on a regular basis regarding her/his teaching and mentoring of students.

Qualifications: Ph.D. in Middle Eastern History awarded no more than three years from date of postdoctoral appointment. Experience as a teaching assistant or instructor of record desired. Motivation to teach, mentor, conduct and publish research and/or scholarship is expected.

Applications should include a cover letter; curriculum vitae; and a chapter-length writing sample. In addition, applicants should send three letters of recommendation, addressed to: Professor Akram Khater, Chair, Search Committee, Department of History, North Carolina State University, Campus Box 8108, Raleigh, NC, 27695-8108. Questions can be sent via email to akhater@ncsu.edu. Review of applicants will begin on May 22, 2017 and will continue until position is filled.

AA/EOE Statement:

Inclusiveness and diversity are academic imperatives and thus are university goals. We are especially interested in candidates who will contribute to the diversity and inclusive excellence of the academic community through demonstrated excellence and/or participation in diversity matters. NC State University is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as an individual with a disability, or status as a protected veteran. [Individuals with disabilities requiring disability-related accommodations in the application and interview process, please call 919-515-3148.]

More information and application [here](#)

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Assistant Professor in Ottoman History, University of Pennsylvania

Review of applications from 15 September 2017

The Department of History at the University of Pennsylvania invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track Assistant Professor in Ottoman History. We welcome a range of scholarship in Ottoman history, including transnational and imperial perspectives as well as approaches that address the political, ethnic, and religious diversity of the Ottoman world. Specialists from any period in Ottoman history may apply. We expect that the successful candidate will be able to teach the broad sweep of the empire's history. Receipt of the PhD is expected by the time of appointment.

Please include letter of application, curriculum vitae, writing sample approximately 7500 words in length, and the contact information of three individuals who will provide letters of recommendation. Recommenders will be contacted by the University with instructions on how to submit letters to the website. If the writing sample is part of a dissertation or other major project, include an abstract explaining the sample's relationship to the larger work. Review of applications will begin 15 September 2017 and continue until the position is filled.

The Department of History is strongly committed to Penn's Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence and to creating a more diverse faculty (for more information see: <http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v58/n02/diversityplan.html>).

The University of Pennsylvania is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Minorities, women, individuals with disabilities and protected veterans are encouraged to apply.

More information and application [here](#)

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Ottoman History or Modern Middle East, Rowan University, 3/4 Time Position

Deadline 10 June 2017

The Department of History at Rowan University is seeking a specialist in Ottoman history or the history of the modern Middle East with an ability to teach a course in *Historical Methods* and preferably *World History since 1500*. This is a one-year ¾ time position for 2017-2018 academic year with a possible extension for at least two more years. Teaching duties will include three history courses per semester, including *Historical Methods* and one or two upper level courses per semester such as *Modern Middle East* (scheduled for fall 2017), *Islamic Civilizations*, *Ottoman History*, *Arab-Israeli Conflict*, *Islamist Movements* and/or a course in the candidate's area of research and/or *World History since 1500*. In addition, the successful candidate will support the History Department by providing light service to the department.

The successful candidate should have a Ph.D. degree by the time of employment and evidence of college teaching experience. Please submit a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, three letters of reference, sample syllabi or a course outline for at least one of the upper-level courses listed above, and other supporting materials by June 10, 2017. The committee will begin reviewing applications after that date.

Rowan University is a public comprehensive state-designated research institution with approximately 17,300 students. Its main campus is located in Glassboro, N.J., 20 miles southeast of Philadelphia, 20 miles southeast of Philadelphia, with additional campuses in Camden and Stratford. The University is comprised of seven colleges and five schools: the William G. Rohrer College of Business; the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering; the Colleges of Communication and Creative Arts, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Performing Arts, and Science and Mathematics; the Cooper Medical School of Rowan University; the Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine; the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences; the School of Health Professions; and the School of Earth and Environment. Rowan has been recognized as one of the top 100 public universities in the nation and is ranked third among public institutions in the North by U.S. News & World Report. Rowan University values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity in employment.

More information and application [here](#)

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Orient-Institut Beirut Postdoctoral Research Fellowship 2017/18, Lebanon

Deadline 15 June 2017

The Orient-Institut Beirut (Max Weber Foundation) conducts and supports research on the region (MENA) in the Humanities and Social Sciences. With our postdoctoral fellowships we seek to enhance co-operation with academic institutions in the region. The fellowship will be granted for up to 12 months, beginning with September 15 2017 (or later this year). The stipend amounts to € 1900 per month. We may further support up to two travels abroad for active participation at conferences and the like.

Requirements:

- Excellent research project.
- PhD in a region related discipline.
- Excellent command of Arabic and English.
- Basic command of German is expected.
- Research design must convincingly project results within the prospected period.

Postdoctoral fellows are expected to:

- Participate actively at academic activities of the Institute
- Present their research results
- Enhance the Institute's cooperation with academic institutions in the region
- Cooperate with ongoing research activities of the Institute
- Write a report at the end of their fellowship.

Deadline for submitting applications: before June 15, 2017 by e-mail to:

Orient-Institut Beirut

Prof. Dr. Stefan Leder

dir@orient-institut.org

Applications must include:

- Cover letter
- CV
- Outline of research proposal
- Letter of recommendation written by an academic supervisor
- Copy of the doctoral degree document

More information and application [here](#)

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Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in Middle Eastern and North African Studies, University of Stockholm

Deadline 5 June 2017.

The department conducts education and research within the Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages, as well as area studies within the two main areas: *Asian Languages and Cultures* and *Middle Eastern and North African Languages and Cultures*. Affiliated with the department is also The Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies, SUITS.

Main responsibilities

The work assignments include teaching at first cycle studies, including beginners level, second cycle studies and third cycle studies (i.e. undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students) within *Middle Eastern and North African Studies with focus on society, politics and history of the Middle East and North Africa*.

The teaching may occasionally be scheduled in the evening hours. Other work assignments consist of pursuing one's own research and taking part in third stream activities, i.e. collaboration with society outside of academia. Applicants must be prepared to take on management assignments within the Department such as Head of Department or Director of Studies. Developing new courses and the field of studies at large are also part of the work assignment. Regular attendance at the work place is presupposed in order to be able to participate in the work of the Department.

Qualification requirements

In order to qualify for employment as Senior Lecturer the applicant must have demonstrated teaching proficiency, gained from teaching Middle Eastern and North African studies, and have a doctoral degree (or equivalent expertise) in Social Sciences and/or History within Middle Eastern and North Africa Studies is also required for the position.

The Senior Lecturer is expected to master modern Arabic to such an extent that the candidate is able to teach it to both undergraduate and graduate students. Other well-developed language skills are also qualifying.

A general assessment criterion is the ability to work with other people, as well as other general abilities required to perform one's duties.

Assessment criteria

When assessing the applicants, equal weight will be attached to academic and pedagogical proficiency. The administrative ability of applicants will also be taken into account, as will their ability to pursue third stream activities and developmental work. Applicants must have a very well documented ability to cooperate with colleagues, as well as the suitability otherwise needed to fulfil the work assignments in a satisfactory way. The applicants' specialization should be in line with the overall profile of the Department.

Teaching and learning in higher education

Completed training in teaching and learning in higher education worth at least 15 credits, or equivalent knowledge, is an advantage.

Additional information

Proficiency in Swedish is not a requirement at the time of appointment, but the candidate should be prepared to carry out teaching and administrative duties that require proficiency in Swedish within two years of employment.

Contact

Further information about the position can be obtained from the Head of the Department, Alberto Tiscornia, phone +46-73 707 8723, alberto.tiscornia@su.se.

For questions regarding the application process, please contact administrator Kenneth Hjalmarsson, telephone: +46 8 16 21 30, kenneth.hjalmarsson@su.se.

Union representatives

Anqi Lindblom-Ahlm (Saco-S) and Lisbeth Häggberg (Fackförbundet ST and Lärarförbundet), telephone: +46 8 16 20 00 (operator), and seko@seko.su.se (SEKO).

Application

Apply for the position at Stockholm University's recruitment system by clicking the "Apply" button. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application is complete in accordance with the instructions in the job advertisement, and that it is submitted before the deadline.

We would appreciate it if your application is written in English. Since it will be examined by international experts, English is the working language.

More information and application [here](#)

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