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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

The first three articles in this issue, grouped under the subtitle "Insurgency, State Formation, Counterinsurgency," all deal with historical aspects of nationalism and state-building in the 20th century and resonate with contemporary politics in the Arab world. Starting with Egypt, Omnia El Shakry looks at how student demonstrations in 1935 and 1936 helped usher in the "figure of youth as an insurgent subject of politics." This discourse placed youth at the vanguard of nationalist struggle and social change in Egypt "but only insofar as they could enact a non-antagonistic conception of politics grounded in national unity." It also foreshadowed the emergence of a discourse of adolescent psychology in the 1940s, in which adolescence was "reconfigured as a psychological stage of social adjustment, sexual repression, and existential anomie." Given the emphasis on the role of youth in the 2011 uprisings in Arab states, the article has potential theoretical implications for analyses of current events and discourse.

Moving to Mandatory Palestine, the article by Gershon Shafir examines a blueprint designed by a group of Jewish capitalist entrepreneurs and intellectuals for a binationalist Jewish-Arab state. The proposal—which was in large part a response to the Arab Revolt of 1936, the same year of the student uprisings in Egypt that form the starting-point of El Shakry's article—was different from other binationalist programs in the Mandate period in that it based political parity on economic integration. It thus ran up against and was ultimately defeated by "the Labor Settlement Movement's [LSM] separatist state-building strategy." Drawing on a comparison with South Africa—which developed a "caste-based" rather than "exclusivist" colonial economy—Shafir argues that the LSM's victory was not a foregone conclusion. Rather, it was one path among several that states built on a "split labor market" emerging from a settlement colony have historically pursued.

Gordon Matthews turns our attention to Iraq in his examination of the Kennedy administration's approach to the Baʿthist regime that came to power in the 1963 coup and ties U.S. support for the new regime to what were seen as the interconnected projects of modernization and counterinsurgency. In response to a dominant premise of modernization theory that "'transitional' states universally faced developmental crises that communists could exploit," U.S. policymakers "developed a doctrine of counterinsurgency, which entailed support for the repressive capacities of developing states." The Baʿthist government fit the two basic requirements of U.S. support, since administration officials had deemed it both "an agent of Iraq's modernization and of anticommunist counterinsurgency." Matthew's analysis may prove insightful for those looking for antecedents to recent U.S. policy linking "democratization" to anti-Islamist counterinsurgency.

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The next three articles, grouped under the subtitle "Turkish Letters," examine various practices of reading and writing in modern Turkey. Sibel Erol's study of Orhan Pamuk's memoir *Istanbul* asks why so many readers have accepted Pamuk's claim that the inhabitants of Istanbul suffer from a collective sadness caused by the historical dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The article traces Pamuk's construction of a "hybrid literary canon and tradition," in which he locates himself and previous writers of Istanbul, in order to naturalize his identification of the city "as an unchanging and perpetual locus of melancholy and decline."

Shifting from a reading of *Istanbul* to changes in writing dictated by Ankara, the article by Hale Yilmaz provides a fresh perspective on the 1928 "alphabet reform" that replaced the Arabic script used to write Ottoman Turkish with the modern Turkish alphabet based on Latin letters. Departing from state-centered studies of the reform, Yilmaz explores "the social life of the alphabet change as experienced by Turkish citizens in their everyday lives and their encounters with state authorities." One of her findings is that use of the Arabic script persisted far longer than many scholars have recognized, especially in the private world of letters but to a surprising degree even within official government circles. Yilmaz suggests that this persistence often reflected the difficulties involved in changing deeply ingrained habits of writing rather than political or ideological resistance to the alphabet reform.

Covering roughly the same time period, the article by Murat Metinsoy examines a genre of reports written by deputies of the single-party Turkish government from the 1920s through the 1940s. The reports, which have recently been made available to researchers, originated as part of a comprehensive mechanism of the central government designed to monitor local bureaucracies, social movements, and popular opinions around the country. Yet Metinsoy argues that they functioned not only as a method of social and political control by the center but also as a way for local communities and citizens to influence government policy. He concludes that "the early republican government seems to have relied on modern techniques of social control that were at times responsive to public opinion and to have displayed flexibility in adapting to social circumstances."

Turning from Turkish letters to Arabic literature, the *IJMES* Roundtable for this issue reflects on how "theory" has affected the study of Arabic literature in the U.S. academy and vice versa. In the roundtable, organized by Samah Selim, five contributors discuss intellectual, disciplinary, and institutional aspects of this dynamic. One common theme that runs through the five essays is the "move" of Arabic literature out of area studies and into comparative literature departments over the last decade or two. The contributors seem to agree that this move has been, by and large, a positive one for Arabic literature, though they differ on the extent and depth of its actual institutionalization and on the implications of its benefits (for critical and theoretical work) and its costs (for empirical and historical work).

The review essay in this issue highlights recent works on Saudi Arabia. Fred Lawson examines seven books that have contributed to overturning the "conventional approach to Saudi politics" through new explorations of the country's labor movements, political struggles among Saudi elites, the influence of U.S. officials and of institutions such as the IMF and ARAMCO, the emergence of a capitalist class outside the state,

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intellectual and tactical shifts in radical and reformist Islamist movements, and the politics of water.

The field has lost some giants of late. We conclude this issue with obituaries for Oleg Grabar and André Raymond.

Beth Baron and Sara Pursley

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