



Political Economy Seminar

Frontiers and oil in the formation of Arab States: 100 years of Cairo Conference (1921)

Casa Árabe (c/ Alcalá, 62), Madrid, 18/11/21, 16:00-19:30h

Coinciding with the centenary of the Cairo Conference, that discussed the drawing and creation of those borders and states that would come to be known as the Middle East, Casa Árabe in collaboration with the Centre d'Estudis Antoni Campmany of the University of Barcelona, organize this seminar entitled *Frontiers and oil in the formation of Arab States: 100 years of Cairo Conference (1921)*, which aims to be the beginning of a set of joint activities focused on the past and present of the Political Economy of the MENA region.

From a historical perspective, the seminar will be dedicated to do a political economic analysis of the creation of Iraq and its evolution in later years, with a particular focus on how importance the definition of its borders and state structures was in the aftermath of the First World War for its integration into the world capitalist system and its oil into the flows of the, then just born, International Oil Regime.

The seminar will start with an introductory session with the lecture on “Frontiers, mandates, and oil in the configuration of the Middle East” by professors **Aurelia Mañé Estrada** and **Elvira Sánchez Mateos**. It will be followed by a second session on Iraq, with the lecture “State, oil and war in the formation of Iraq”, offered by Professor **Nida Alahmad** and organized in the framework of “Arab University Classroom” Program (Aula Árabe Universitaria 3) with the collaboration of the BA in International Relations of the University Complutense of Madrid, and the BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics of the Autonoma University of Madrid.

Alahmad will analyze how, over the past few decades, three themes—the state, oil, and war—have shaped both Iraqi politics and Iraqi studies. These themes emerge from Iraq’s modern history and its representation in academia. Academic work on Iraq witnessed a number of shifts that can be traced to two interrelated factors: access to primary source material, and the political context of the time. Hence, it will show how state, oil, and war are interrelated themes rather than definitively bounded categories that determine certain political economy effects. They are markers in historical processes that, since the late nineteenth century, involved the formation of social relations often organized by conceptual categories such as class, sect, nation, and gender. These social relations have constantly informed and constituted one another within particular material and historical contexts.

Program

16:30 *Welcome*

Olivia Orozco de la Torre, Casa Árabe
Aurelia Mañé Estrada, Universitat de Barcelona
Gonzalo Escribano, Elcano Royal Institute

17:00 *Frontiers, mandates, and oil in the configuration of the Middle East*

Aurelia Mañé Estrada, Universitat de Barcelona (UB)
Elvira Sánchez Mateos, Universitat de Barcelona (UB)
Chair: Carmen Rodríguez, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM)
First reaction: Gonzalo Escribano, Elcano Royal Institute

18:00 *State, oil and war in the formation of Iraq*

Nida Alahmad, Edinburgh University
Chair: Olivia Orozco de la Torre, Casa Árabe
First reaction: Isaías Barreñada, Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM)