

Striking from the Margins, Phase II Project Summary:

The Carnegie-funded research project *Striking from the Margins* located at the Center for Religious Studies at CEU enters a second phase under the title *Striking from the Margins, Phase II: From Disintegration to Reconstitution of State and Religion in the Middle East*. The first phase of the project concluded with an international conference at the American University of Beirut in January of 2019, after a successful period of two years which brought together leading experts and academics in a multi-disciplinary framework. The first phase organized over 30 talks, discussions and seminars. A collective volume of select contributions reflecting the project will be released in November of 2020 in English, to be followed by its release in the USA, and with the Arabic edition scheduled to appear in Beirut in February of 2021.

Phase II continues to be supported by a generous grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, from September 2020 to August 2022. This Phase seeks further to analyze, reset and extend the original research agenda, and to foster an expanded network of dissemination. It will see the continuation of its mandate to address, with new analytical and conceptual directions, the complex dynamics of relations between state, religion and society in the rapidly changing context of the Middle East, and under conditions of disaggregation and violent conflict. The second phase will shift perspective, however, from the diagnostic to the prognostic, now that some of the worst of the fighting may have come to an unstable truce. This second phase will deepen the project's purview by detailed consideration of issues relating to gender relations and their reconfigurations.

Phase II of the research program welcomes two new post-doctoral fellows. Dr. Haian Dukhan's research interests revolve around issues of identity and political violence with a focus on tribal communities in the geographical continuum between Syria and Iraq. Dr. Valentina Zagaria's research focuses on the mutual-aid networks, employment, and political imaginaries and engagement of Libyan women in Tunisia post-2011. Dr. Harout Akdedian remains on board as senior post-doctoral fellow. His research interests lie at the intersection of political science and political anthropology with a focus on institutional and socio-cultural formulations of state atrophy and state-society relations in Syria.

The project is also pleased to welcome Dr. Abdullah Al-Jabasini and Dr. O. Bahadır Dinçer as Associate Fellows. Dr. Abdullah Al-Jabasini's research focuses on wartime and post-rebellion local configurations in southern Syria. Dr. O. Bahadır Dinçer project focuses on the consolidation of *de facto* regimes in the Middle East: The cases of Northern Iraq and the Islamic State in Iraq & Sham.

The project is directed by Professor Aziz Al-Azmeh (CEU Department of History) and Professor Nadia Al-Bagdadi (CEU, Department of History and Center for Religious Studies and Director, Institute for Advanced Study at CEU). We continue to maintain cooperation with our international partners.

