



MEEA

NEWSLETTER

MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION

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Letter from the Executive Secretary

We received a record number of submissions to both the winter meetings we had in San Francisco and our international conference in Nice, France this year, and the total number of papers presented at these meetings has exceeded the total in previous years. Still, “no show”s continued to be a problem. Unfortunately, more than a few members failed to attend the meetings often on very short notice –sometimes with no warning at all. As a result, some sessions were held with fewer presentations than intended, whereas many good papers had been left out of the program on account of the lack of space. I am afraid we will have to go back to strict blacklisting of members with a history of no shows from now on.

We put together four ASSA sessions and seven pre-ASSA sessions during the 28th Annual Conference in San Francisco this past January. A total of 41 papers and 15 posters were presented in these sessions. Two of the pre-ASSA sessions were proposed and organized by our members: The session on capital flows was organized by Nathalie Hilmi, and the session on the crisis in the Palestinian economy was organized by Jennifer Olmsted. I once again encourage other members to also propose sessions to be held in future meetings.

Nathalie was also instrumental in getting us together in Nice for the 8th International Conference of the MEEA in March. We had enthusiastically approved the proposal she and Alain Safa submitted and selected the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis as the venue for our international conference earlier. Thanks to the hard work of the local organization committee, and the time contributed by Claude Berthomieu and the other colleagues who joined the MEEA team in the program committee,

we had a productive and enjoyable conference in Nice. The conference provided a forum for rich discussions around more than 90 papers and close to 15 posters presented March 18th to 20th. The weather was really beautiful that time of the year, allowing us to have a great time after the sessions as well. Everybody also enjoyed the guided tour to Monaco –including myself, even though I, together with Mehmet Akarca, lost a small fortune by gambling at a casino and dining at a restaurant in the main square!

The preparations are currently under way for the 9th International Meetings to be held in Istanbul in 2010. The calendar and other submission details have not been finalized yet but on-line submission of abstracts and fees must open in not too distant a future.

After experimenting with on-line submission of papers to the international meetings, we decided to switch to on-line submissions and payments for the winter meetings in the US as well. Starting with 2010 Atlanta meetings, we decided to consider submitted abstracts for inclusion in the program, only if they are submitted, together with necessary payments, through the MEEA portal at <http://meeaweb.org>. While some members have had some problems during their attempts to submit to the 2010 winter meetings in Atlanta, everyone eventually managed to complete their on-line submission. I am sure that we will have fewer problems next time when our members submit through the portal. In the mean time, please bring any suggestions that you may have to improve the on-line submission/payment process to the attention of Reza Boroon, our web master, at info@meeaweb.org.

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In Memoriam: Abbas Alnasrawi

It is with great sadness that the MEEA announces the passing away of Dr. Abbas Alnasrawi on August 20, 2009. Dr. Alnasrawi was a former president of MEEA and his leadership was crucial in evolving MEEA into a major scholarly international organization. He was MEEA's Executive Secretary (1986-1989) and President (1990-1994). Dr. Alnasrawi was a highly accomplished scholar and Professor Emeritus at the University of Vermont.

Abbas Alnasrawi was born on February 1, 1932, in Hindia, Iraq. He was the son of Abdul-Karim Alnasrawi and Shafika Abul-Timman. He received his B.A. in Economics (1953) from University of Baghdad, and Ph.D. in Economics (1965) from Harvard University. In 1963 he joined the Department of Economics in University of Vermont where he taught until his retirement in 2002.

Dr. Alnasrawi was a highly accomplished scholar. He is the author of six books, *The Economy of Iraq: Oil, Wars, Destruction of Development and Prospectus, 1950-2010* (Greenwood Press 1994), *Arab Nationalism, Oil, and the Political Economy of Dependency* (Greenwood Publishing Group 1991), *OPEC in a Changing World Economy* (John Hopkins University Press 1985), *Arab Oil and U.S. Energy Requirements* (AAUG Press 1982), *Financing Economic Development in Iraq* (Praeger 1967) and *Iraq's Burdens: Oil, Sanctions and Underdevelopment*. His articles appeared in: *The Middle East Journal*, *Journal of World Trade Law*, *Syracuse Journal of International Law and Commerce*, *American Economic Review*, *Journal of Economic Literature*, *OPEC Review*, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, *American-Arab Affairs*, *Oil and Arab Cooperation*, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *Scandinavian Journal of Alternative Development*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Al Mustaqbal al Arabi* and *Al Thaqafa al Jadidah*.

Abbas played a crucial leadership role during the early and incipient years (see Manoucher Parvin's dedication on page 3), as well as the subsequent evolution and development of MEEA into a vibrant international scholarly organization. He also played leadership roles in a number of other associations: Association of Arab-American University Graduates (President, 1984) and Iraqi Economic Forum (President, 1996). Abbas served as consultant to OPEC, The OPEC Fund, UNESCO and UNDP. At UVM he was designated University Scholar in the Social Sciences and Humanities (1992-1993) and served as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (1972-1977).

In recent years he was deeply pained to see the ongoing destruction of his homeland, leading his research and publications to focus on the problems and issues surrounding Iraq's crippled economy and its eventual post-war stabilization and reconstruction. Abbas was known as a compassionate humanitarian scholar who was deeply concerned about the plight of all struggling peoples.

Abbas is survived by his wife Susan Alnasrawi; two daughters, Leyla and Kara Alnasrawi; two sons-in-law, Brent Raymond and Franz Schmidpeter; two grandsons, Brodyn Raymond and Kareem Schmidpeter; and his brother Abdul-Ilah Alnasrawi of Karbala, Iraq.

FATEMEH MOGHADAM

Abbas Alnasrawi was a wise scholar and a gentleman who helped widen the scope of Middle East Economic Association. He nurtured young scholars, cherished new ideas, applications and was a colleague one could rely on. He suffered much while part of his family in Karbala, Iraq went through rough times including starvation during the Saddam regime, yet he always kept his gracious and hopeful outlook on the Middle East and on humanity. It was a privilege to work with him. I wish my condolences to his family and to his wide circle of friends and colleagues.

MINE CINAR

I am saddened losing my good friend, Abbas. Abbas was an honorable man of high professional and ethical principles. I worked with him during his terms as the President of MEEA. I saw how he respected pluralism of MEEA and worked hard to expand and elevate our association. It was Abbas who raised MEEA from a small forum of interested economists, to an international organization, with members in many European and the Middle Eastern countries, other than those in North America. Abbas was a gentle soul and a great mentor for many of us. I am saddened by his death but proud of him as a colleague and mentor. I hope that we will remember him as one of the principal forces in building MEEA.

Let's honor a great colleague and mentor!

SOHRAB BEHDAD



Photo courtesy of the University of Vermont

Continued on page 3

Abbas Alnasrawi and MEEA: A brief history of the way it happened

More than thirty years ago while at Columbia University the idea of a journal in political economy of the Middle East occurred to me. This idea originated partly due to my frustration with the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, which at the time would rarely publish any work in the field. But also there were the obvious positive motivations and reasons.

I was coldly reminded by a few colleagues that only an organization can launch a scholarly journal. In the next meeting of the MESA I met Abbas Alnasrawi. He proved to be the Miracle Man the imagined organization needed! He liked the idea. I realized quickly that he was a patient, wise, and realistic man. We meshed together also because of our mutual interest in literature. Years later he was one of the beautiful spirits in academia who read my novels and discussed them with me. He gave me a gift of Milan Kundera's famous novel: *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.

We agreed that we needed a big name in our budding organization. So with Abbas's approval I invited my former professor Charles Issawi to be the first President of MEEA. After all Charles could be considered the father of the field in modern times.

Charles asked me "how many members we have." I held up all my fingers while saying, "around ten!" which was a slight exaggeration!

He said, "Do I not need be elected, Manoucher?" I said, "Elections are rigged in the Middle East!" He laughed and agreed to help. The membership increased and we managed to organize a few panels in the AEA meetings.

Three years later we elected another former Professor of mine, S Welliz. Even though Abbas was not an officer he worked very hard for MEEA at the expense of his scholarly interests. He improved the brochure I had written for MEEA. We drafted it several times together. Everything we did for MEEA was new to both of us. He could work with anybody effectively and he did. We also consulted with one another on other matters than MEEA as if we were brothers. He began to glue colleagues and programs together, making every new member feel welcome.

Finally Abbas came to me and said. "Manoucher, we need working leaders for MEEA." So he offered me this deal: "You should be the next President and I will be the Secretary of MEEA and then we will switch roles when your term is up! That is when MEEA took off — not because of my Presidency but mostly because of Abbas's quiet and wise drive and leadership. I began calling myself his assistant. He would smile knowing that this had a ring of truth in it!

With the help of new colleagues we were now able to produce several MEEA sessions for the AEA meetings. Future leaders of the organization such as Professors Sohrab Behdad, Fatemeh Moghadam, Mine Cinar, and Jeff Nugent joined in. Sohrab was generous enough to become the next Secretary instead of me when Abbas became President. So I did not have to keep my promise to be the next secretary. Thus MEEA was saved! Sohrab was also a true blessing for MEEA. He brought some modern organizational concepts to our now growing organization. Fatemeh and Mine were also very effective and down to earth leaders. MEEA prospered under their leadership.

The original motivation for MEEA, the creation of a journal I dreamed about, was discussed in just about every annual meeting. But it was never realized -- even though we had a good number of members by now. Perhaps we did not have the critical mass, or sufficiently potential writers, or readers or total commitment. I am still waiting! I am still waiting for these truly fantastic new leaders to pull it off! I am still waiting! We did start to publish MEEA's yearly books only years later! It was a good substitute; something to be proud of.

Abbas advised patience to me. Now seeing MEEA in such capable hands I told Abbas we need not worry about MEEA anymore. This changed reality also fitted into my growing interest in writing novels. Abbas agreed and also started to gradually pursue activities that he had been putting off for years. Parents must let the siblings fly on their own and fly high and higher, higher than their parents ever flew.

Abbas was a very productive scholar, an academic leader, a literary person, and a father of a proud family. To me he was a friend with a beautiful mind, a beautiful heart, and a beautiful character. I was fortunate to know him and to work with him. I will miss Abbas, we will all miss this wonderful soul.

MANOUCHER PARVIN

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IBN KHALDUN PRIZE

Reminder that submissions for the Ibn Khaldun Prize for the best paper on one or more Middle Eastern countries by a junior economist (no more than five years since receiving Ph.D.) must be received no later than December 10th, 2009 at the following address: Prof. Jeffrey B. Nugent, Dept. of Economics, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0253, USA.(email: nugent@usc.edu) . The entries will be evaluated by a three person committee.

MEEA-CHRAF

MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION CONDEMNS ATTACK ON IRANIAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

Whereas the Middle East Economic Association (MEEA) is committed to academic freedom, which includes safeguarding and respecting the sanctity of the university campuses;

Whereas Iranian students from universities in Tehran, Shiraz, Tabriz, Mashhad, and other cities in Iran were engaged in peaceful expressions of their views in their campuses,

Whereas paramilitary forces have violated the sanctity of the campuses and student dorms of these universities

Whereas these violations have caused tragic deaths of a number of students and destruction of their properties on June 13th-16th, 2009,

Be it resolved that the MEEA deplores and condemns the inhumane and violent activities perpetrated by the paramilitary forces and calls on the authorities to stop the recurrence of such tragic events on Iranian campuses in the future.

The MEEA council also expresses its condolences and sympathy to families of slain students.

Committee for Human Rights and Academic Freedom
(CHARAF)-MEEA

June 22, 2009

KEEP DEMOCRACY IN THE MEEA ALIVE BY VOTING ON THE BALLOT MEASURE

In the last two days each dues-paying MEEA member should have received an electronic mailing containing two ballots, along with bio-sketches of the candidates and the existing by-laws. The first ballot is one on which each member can vote for their preferred candidates for the executive officers and members of the Board for three year terms beginning Jan 1, 2010. The second allows you to vote for or against proposed changes in the By-Laws of the MEEA. All ballots must be returned by October 1, 2009. If you have not received the ballot by then and believe that you have paid your dues, please email the Treasurer Hassan Aly. We will make every effort to get a ballot to you in time for it to count.

Election Committee (Mine Cinar, Fatemah Moghadam and Jeff Nugent (Ch.))

FEATURED TITLES

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: INSTITUTIONS, CORRUPTION AND REFORM

Serdar Sayan, ed., Routledge Press 2009

Economic Performance in the Middle East and North Africa: Institutions, Corruption and Reform, a volume edited by Serdar Sayan, has just been published by Routledge as part of the publisher's Political Economy of the Middle East and North Africa series edited by Hassan Hakimian. The book contains 10 chapters studying various aspects of the relationship between economic growth and institutional characteristics, including prevalence of corruption, in MENA countries. The chapters written by reputable scholars follow a foreword written by Daron Acemoglu, a most prominent name in the related literature. For more info about the book, including a link to the Library Recommendation Form, please visit <http://www.routledge.com/books/Economic-Performance-in-the-Middle-East-and-North-Africa-isbn9780415438049>

GENERATION IN WAITING: THE UNFULFILLED PROMISE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Navtej Dhillon and Tarik Yousef, eds., Brookings Institution Press 2009

Young people in the Middle East (15-29 years old) constitute about one-third of the region's population. Growth rates for this age group trail only sub-Saharan Africa. This presents the region with an historic opportunity to build a lasting foundation for prosperity by harnessing the full potential of its young population. Yet young people in the Middle East face severe economic and social exclusion due to substandard education, high unemployment, and poverty. Thus the inclusion of youth is the most critical development challenge facing the Middle East today. *A Generation in Waiting* portrays the plight of young people, urging greater investment designed to improve the lives of this critical group. It brings together perspectives from the Maghreb to the Levant. Each chapter addresses the complex challenges facing young people in many areas of their lives: access to decent education, opportunities for quality employment, availability of housing and credit, and transitioning to marriage and family formation. This volume presents policy implications and sets an agenda for economic development, creating a more hopeful future for this and future generations in the Middle East.

Recent Journal Articles

As part of the information services to MEEA members, the newsletter publishes a selection of recent journal articles on the economic issues in the Middle East and North Africa. Articles are selected with the criteria of providing regional diversity. Priority is given to articles in journals that are more highly ranked according to ISI's impact factor and that are indexed by EconLit. Please email the newsletter editor if you wish to include your recent publications.

- Abu-Qarn, Aamer S. and Abu-Bader, Suleiman. 2009. "On the dynamics of the Israeli-Arab arms race" *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance* 49, no. 3 (Aug): 931-943.
- Behdad, Sohrab and Nomani, Farhad. 2009. "What a Revolution! Thirty Years of Class Reshuffling in Iran." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 29, no.1: 84-104.
- Beidas, Samya and Kandil, Magda. 2008. "Setting the Stage for a national Currency in the West Bank and Gaza: The choice of exchange rate regime" *Middle East Business and Economic Review* 20, no. 2: 1-34.
- Berrebi, Claude, Martorell, Francisco, and Tanner, Jeffery C. 2009. "Qatar's labour market at a crucial cross-road" *Middle East Journal* 63, no. 3: 421-442.
- Berument, Hakan and Ceylan, Nildag Basak. 2008. "US monetary policy surprises and foreign interest rates: Evidence from a set of MENA Countries" *Review of Middle East Economics and Finance* 4, no. 2 (April): Article 5.
- Billmeier, Andreas and Massa, Isabella. 2008. "Go long or short in pyramids? News from the Egyptian stock market." *International Review of Financial Analysis* 17, no. 5 (Dec): 949-970.
- Bjorvatn, Kjetil and Selvik, Kjetil. 2008. "Destructive Competition: Factionalism and Rent-Seeking in Iran." *World Development* 36, no. 11 (Nov): 2314-2324.
- Chemingui, Mohamed Abdelbasset and Dessus, Sébastien. 2008. "Assessing non-tariff barriers in Syria." *Journal of Policy Modeling* 30, no. 5 (Sep-Oct): 917-928.
- Darrat, Ali F. and Al-Sowaidi, Saif S. 2009. "Financial progress and the stability of long-run money demand: Implications for the conduct of monetary policy in emerging economies." *Review of Financial Economics* 18, no. 3 (Aug): 124-131.
- Durac, Vincent. 2009. "Globalizing patterns of business, finance, and migration in the Middle East and North Africa." *Mediterranean Politics* 14, no. 2: 255-266.
- Demir, Firat. 2009. "Financial liberalization, private investment and portfolio choice: Financialization of real sectors in emerging markets." *Journal of Development Economics* 88, no. 2: 314-324.
- Ekanayake, E. M. and Ledgerwood, John R. 2009. "An Analysis of the intra-regional trade in the Middle East and North Africa region." *International Journal of Business and Finance Research* 3, no. 1: 19-29.
- El-Said, Hamed and Harrigan, Jane. 2009. "“You reap what you plant”: Social networks in the Arab world—The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan." *World Development* 37, no. 7 (July): 1235-1249.
- Farzanegan, Mohammad Reza and Markwardt, Gunther. 2009. "The effects of oil price shocks on the Iranian economy." *Energy Economics* 31, no. 1 (Jan): 134-151.
- Furceri, Davide and Karras, Georgios. 2008. "Is the Middle East an Optimum Currency Area? A Comparison of Costs and Benefits." *Open Economies Review* 19, no. 4: 479-91.
- Ghosh, Baidyanath N. and Li, Eric A. L. 2009. "Macroeconomic vulnerability and investment risks in the Middle East and North Africa region." *International Economics*, 62, no.1 (Feb): 1-39.
- Hajj, Mandana and Panizza, Ugo. 2009. "Religion and education gender gap: Are Muslims different?" *Economics of Education Review* 28, no.3 (June): 337-344.
- Hamed, Osama. 2008. "Palestine—An economy in conflict: The continued de-development of the Palestinian economy in the Post-Oslo period." *Economics of Peace and Security Journal* 3, no. 2: 25-32.
- Hammoudeh, Shawkat M., Yuan, Yuan, and McAleer, Michael. 2009. "Shock and volatility spillovers among equity sectors of the Gulf Arab stock markets." *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance* 49, no. 3 (Aug): 829-842.
- Harvie, Charles and Saleh, Ali Salman. 2008. "Lebanon's economic reconstruction after the war: A bridge too far?" *Journal of Policy Modeling* 30, no. 5: 857-872.
- Jaeger, David A. and Paserman, M. Daniele. 2008. "The cycle of violence? An empirical analysis of fatalities in the Palestine-Israeli conflict." *American Economic Review* 98, no. 4 (Sept): 1591-1604.
- Kia, Amir. 2008. "Fiscal sustainability in emerging countries: Evidence from Iran and Turkey." *Journal of Policy Modeling* 30, no. 6 (Nov-Dec): 957-972.
- Langsten, Ray and Salen, Rania. 2008. "Two approaches to measuring women's work in developing countries: A comparison of survey data from Egypt." *Population & Development Review* 34, no.2: 283-305.
- Lim, Kian-Ping. 2009. "Weak-form market efficiency and nonlinearity: Evidence from Middle East and African stock indices." *Applied Economics Letters* 16, no. 4-6: 519-22.
- Marinho, Carlos Fonseca. 2008. "Ricardian equivalence, twin deficits, and the Feldstein-Horioka puzzle in Egypt." *Journal of Policy Modeling* 30, no. 6 (Nov-Dec): 1041-1056.
- Naceur, Samy Ben and Kandil, Magda. 2009. "The impact of capital requirements on banks' cost of intermediation and performance: The case of Egypt." *Journal of Economics and Business* 61, no.1 (Jan-Feb): 70-89.
- Olmsted, Jennifer C. "An economy in conflict: Post-Oslo Palestinian (un)employment: A gender, class and age-cohort analysis." *Economics of Peace and Security Journal* 3, no. 2: 33-38.
- Özdemir, K. Azim and Turner, Paul. "A monetary disequilibrium model for Turkey: Investigation of a disinflationary fiscal rule and its Implications for monetary policy." *Journal of Policy Modeling* 30, no.2 (March-April): 349-361.
- Özler, Şule, Taymaz, Erol, and Yılmaz, Kamil. 2009. "History matters for the export decision: Plant-level evidence from Turkish manufacturing industry." *World Development* 37, no. 2 (Feb): 479-488.
- Platteau, Jean-Philippe. 2008. "Religion, politics, and development: Lessons from the lands of Islam." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 68, no. 2 (Nov): 329-351.
- Ross, Michael L. 2008. "Oil, Islam and women." *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 1 (Feb): 107-123.
- Sayre, Edward. 2009. "Labor market conditions, political events, and Palestinian suicide bombings" *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 15, no.1: Article 1.
- Shechter, Relli. 2008. "The cultural economy of development in Egypt: Economic nationalism, hidden economy and the emergence of mass consumer society during Sadat's Infitah." *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 4: 571-583.
- Stegl, Mojgan and Baten, Joerg. "Tall and shrinking Muslims, short and growing Europeans: The long-run welfare development of the Middle East, 1850–1980." *Explorations in Economic History* 46, no.1 (Jan): 132-148.
- Turk-Ariss, Rima. 2009. "Competitive behavior in Middle East and North Africa banking systems." *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance* 49, no. 2(May): 693-710.
- Weiffen, Brigitte. 2008. "Liberalizing autocracies in the Gulf region? Reform strategies in the face of a cultural-economic syndrome." *World Development* 36, no.12 (Dec): 2586-2604.

Executive Secretary's Letter,
Continued from page 1

Despite difficulties experienced by some members during the submission process, the number of submissions to the Atlanta meetings did not visibly decline. The evaluation of abstracts submitted for presentation at the Atlanta meetings was not completed at the time of my writing of this letter, but it looks like we in the program committee will again have a tough time in deciding which papers to accept for presentation at the meetings. One important piece of information about Atlanta meetings that I can give you at the moment is that we will have post-rather than pre-ASSA sessions this year. By having these sessions after the ASSA meetings have ended on January 5, we will avoid forcing our members to fly to Atlanta on the New Year's Eve/Day.

As for our associated journals, our on-line journal Topics in Middle Eastern and North African Economies (<http://www.luc.edu/orgs/meea/>) has reached volume 10, whereas Review of Middle East Economics and Finance (RMEEF), the other associated journal, is at volume 4 (<http://www.bepress.com/rmeef/>). Both journals are expecting the high quality contributions of the MEEA members to publish.

I hope to see you all in Atlanta next January and in lovely Istanbul later in 2010.

Serdar Sayan, TOBB University of Economics and Technology



Membership

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Middle East Economic Association, please fill out this form and return it to the Treasurer. The membership fee is \$25 for faculty and other professionals, \$20 for students, and \$10 for all members residing in a MENA country.

Name: _____

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Send to: Hassan Aly
Treasurer, Middle East Economic Association
318 Morrill Hall
Ohio State University
Marion, Ohio 43302-5695

The Middle East Economic Association, a non-profit international organization, was formed in 1978 and is affiliated with the American Economic Association and the Middle East Studies Association. The main objective of MEEA is to foster scholarship and to establish lines of communication among specialists interested in the Political Economy of the Middle East. Web: www.meeaweb.org

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