



## Letter from the Editor

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I recently read a blog post by a colleague written to commemorate the closing of a community art center after a brief year-long success. Toward the end of the blog, my colleague reflects on a TV interview with the actor Roberto Mario Gómez Bolaños Sr., who played a kind of anti-hero, El Chapulín Colorado (The Red Grasshopper). In that interview, Bolaños notes: “When everyone knows you are destined to lose and you continue to get up and fight, that’s when you’re a real superhero.” This is a message for us all, as many *Review of Middle East Studies* readers and MESA members face an onslaught on our profession, our scholarship, and our classrooms. Daily, we get up to fight again and completing minor tasks requires the energy of champions. This issue of *RoMES* contains a range of submissions and contributor voices that collectively embody this effort to continue our work across disciplines and professional commitments.

Bilal Nasir (Pomona College) guides us through “Internationalist Islam and the Question of Palestine” as part of a Special Focus on Academic Freedom & Action after October 7, 2023. Nasir explores intersections between scholarly and pedagogical practice and reminds us of the stakes in this moment. We will be publishing other contributors to this Special Focus in the next two issues – as you may well imagine, some participants were engaged in campus and national organizing and publishing deadlines have been hard to meet! Nandini Sikand’s (Lafayette College) “Pedagogical Perspectives” column is an important companion piece to Nasir’s contribution, as her review essay on “Liberatory Images: A Palestinian Film Series” addresses the potential challenges involved in curating programming around Palestine, especially for those who seek to affirm liberatory histories and actions.

We are also nearing the end of our tenure as an editorial team, so Ghayde Ghraoui and I have been finalizing stand-alone research articles submitted to *RoMES*. The three articles in this issue do cohere around a central theme: nation-building, participatory politics, and the nature of community and collective action in regional histories. In “Nation-Building in the Post-Colonial Qatari State: The Politics and History of Nationalism,” Zarqa Parvez (Georgetown University, Qatar) presents a tour-de-force history attentive to how “the nation” is a constant site of contestation. Meral Uğur-Çınar (Bilkent University) explores “What Leads to Voting Despite Intention to Abstain?: Emotions, Turnout, and



Negative Campaigns in Turkish Elections,” in the midst of ongoing authoritarian and economic crises in Türkiye. And Selin Bengi Gümrükçü (Rutgers University) positions “Gezi Park as a Cycle of Protest” and closes out this section with a reminder that protests are not just singular events: they can also embody a posture of dissent that inserts resistance into the very structure of politics.

We are also releasing a number of book reviews and book review essays in the upcoming issues, as a testament to the ongoing labor in our field. Manuscripts encompass disparate geographies like Cairo, Berlin, Algeria, Egypt, and Turkey and hail from scholars of religion, history, and political science. Finally, Ann Blair and Malika Zeghal’s (Harvard University) “In Memoriam” piece on “Kathryn Schwartz, Book Historian of the Modern Middle East,” provides a critical introduction and review of Dr. Schwartz’s extraordinary contribution to a nascent and evolving field in Middle East Studies. As we grieve in the present for so much violence and loss, we also celebrate those who continue to foster new scholarly conversations via the traces they have left behind.

Thank you, all, for your continuing contributions to *RoMES* and to your communities as we fight against defeatism and embrace our collective mission.

*Interested in reading the latest from RoMES? Follow us on Twitter at @RevoMES. Any questions or inquiries concerning content or potential submissions should be sent via email to Editor Heather Ferguson and Managing Editor Ghayde Ghraawi at [romes@cmc.edu](mailto:romes@cmc.edu). We are especially interested in submissions for our two recurring columns “Pedagogical Perspectives” and “Curator’s Corner.”*