Thirteenth Annual Wadie Jwaideh Memorial Lecture

Religious Minorities and Secular Politics in the Middle East

Saba Mahmood
Associate Professor of Anthropology,
University of California, Berkeley

Opening Remarks by
Asma Afsaruddin
Chair and Professor
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures
Indiana University

Thursday, October 2, 2014
7:30 PM
President’s Room, University Club

Indiana Memorial Union
Generously Funded by Donations to the Jwaideh Memorial Fund
Professor Wadie Elias Jwaideh had a long and distinguished career both within and outside of Indiana University. He received the degree of Licentiate in Law from the University of Baghdad in 1942. In 1960, he received his PhD from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. During this time, he also held a position as lecturer in Arabic at Johns Hopkins University.

His dissertation, titled A History of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement, is the most comprehensive study ever made of the Kurdish question. This work established him as one of the world’s leading experts on the Kurds. It was published posthumously by Syracuse University Press in 2006, as The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Its Origins and Development.

Dr. Jwaideh joined the faculty of Indiana University in 1960 and became the founder and chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literature and Professor of History until his retirement.

In 1972, Professor Jwaideh was given the Lieber Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching. A number of his colleagues and former students contributed articles for a Festschrift in his honor. Dr. Robert Olsen edited this book, titled Islamic and Middle Eastern Society (Amana Books, 1987).

After his retirement from IU in 1985, Dr. Jwaideh accepted an appointment as Adjunct Professor of History at the University of California at San Diego, where he taught until 1990.
**Saba Mahmood** is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley. Her research and teaching focus on the interchange between religious and secular politics in postcolonial societies with special attention to issues of embodiment, cultural hermeneutics, law, and gender and sexuality. She is the author and/or editor of five books, including *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and Feminine Subject*, published by Princeton University Press in 2005, and winner of the American Political Science Association Victoria Schuck Award, also in 2005. She has been the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including the National Science Foundation Dissertation Research Fellowship, the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies Fellowship, and holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Uppsala, Sweden.

Professor Mahmood is the past chair and co-convenor of the Strategic Working Group on “Religion, Secularism, and Modernity” in the Townsend Center for the Humanities at the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently working on a book entitled *Political Secularism and the Minority Problem in the Middle East*.

**Abstract of Lecture:** Professor Mahmood’s talk focuses on the emergence of the category “minority” in modern political thought and its genealogy in the Middle East. How did this category and attendant political rationality transform the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims? How does the legacy of this historical emergence help us understand the embattled place of religious minorities in the Middle East today?
We would like to offer our sincere thanks to the generous people who have contributed over the years to the Wadie Jwaideh Memorial Fund:

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**Thank you!**

Asma Afsaruddin

Chair and Professor

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

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