Tormented births: passages to modernity in Europe and the Middle East
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Acknowledgement

Almost fifteen years ago, the present author wrote his last book. Not laziness, nor even what a person can flatteringly excuse himself with; the difficult times that he has been through. No! What looks so certain and easy to grasp in your youth (militant youth especially!), becomes mercurial and slippery with age, and not necessarily with wisdom. Answers turn into questions and clearly defined disciplines pop into each other's erstwhile well-defined and respected domains violating their boundaries. Then come the uncalculated events in one's life. And because they are uncalculated and they are there at any rate, it would be futile to ponder on their advantages or disadvantages.

What in my twenties seemed to be satisfactorily 'answered' in rigorous economic analysis looked now subtler. A sudden uprooting, not only in the spatial sense of the word but also occupationally turned out to be a blessing. A lifelong company with non-economists-political scientists, philosophers, historians, musicians, novelists, painters and poets, and most of all militants fighting some of the most brutal contemporary tyrannies on earth has brought invaluable experience, all the more that this precious company was not confined to people of one and the same coloring or the same nationality. And that is mainly thanks to what we always like to curse: EXILE!

Thanks to the circumstances that made me change seven countries of residence, desperately striving to keep my
roots solid and my affections warm, that some modus vivendi between caring for your host society and your country of origin was reached.

Would that have been possible without the love, help and affection of those friends and colleagues whom it would be impossible to enumerate here? To all those Iraqi, Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, French, British/Irish, and American friends and colleagues I would like to say: thank you! My special thanks go to Abadalla Hanna, Rizkalla Hilal, Timothy Mitchell, Mahir al Sharif and Peter Sluglett.

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* Alphetically and titles withdrawn.
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