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The Calorie, Development, and War in Mandate Palestine, 1915-1945

This talk explores British economic policy in the Middle East in general and Palestine specifically during WWII. Scholarly depictions have focused on the importance of measuring and realizing economic growth. This analysis looks instead at the construction and provision of basic needs during times of scarcity. It shows how British officials sought to realize economy through new technologies such as the calorie and the emerging science of nutrition. Far from an imperative to rationalize the colonized body, this effort was born of the exigencies of war. British colonial officials introduced new conceptions of development, poverty, health, and productivity throughout the war. Their failures reveal the politics of basic needs. They also show how paradigms such as colonial development and sciences like nutrition promised the universal but instead enforced and were constituted by exclusion.

Sherene Seikaly is Assistant Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is the editor of the Arab Studies Journal, co-founder and co-editor of Jadaliyya e-zine, and an editor of Journal of Palestine Studies. Her book, Men of Capital in Times of Scarcity: Economy in Palestine (Stanford University Press, 2016) explores how Palestinian capitalists and British colonial officials used economy to shape territory, nationalism, the home, and the body. She has published in academic journals such as International Journal of Middle East Studies and Journal of Middle East Women's Studies and several online venues.



The calorimeter in the Wesleyan University basement where Wilbur Atwater invented the calorie in 1896.



The Calorie, Development and War in Mandate Palestine, 1915-1945 — May 15, 1:30 pm, Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library, 2201 Laguna Street. This event is free, but please detach the form below at the dotted line and mail to UCSB History Associates, Department of History, UCSB, 93106-9410 so we can have enough refreshments on hand.

Name _____ Guest(s) _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____ E-mail: _____