

H.M. Mohamed VI Fellowship in Moroccan and Mediterranean Studies

Report

2004-2005

Draft

The first year of the Fellowship has been taken up with a number of different projects aimed at establishing the Fellowship and raising the profile of Morocco at Oxford and in the UK in general.

The start of the Fellowship was formally marked by the visit of a delegation from St Antony's College to Rabat in October 2004. The Warden of the College, Sir Marrack Goulding, the Director of the Middle East Centre, Dr Eugene Rogan, Honorary Fellow Mr Foulath Hadid and the newly appointed holder of the King Mohamed VI Fellowship, Dr Michael Willis, were presented to His Highness Prince Moulay Rachid in a ceremony at the Royal Palace. At the ceremony, the Agreement establishing the Fellowship was signed by Her Highness Princess Lalla Joumala for the Moroccan British Society and by Sir Marrack Goulding for St Antony's College. Sir Marrack Goulding and Foulath Hadid were also formally decorated by His Highness Moulay Rachid for services to Moroccan-British relations along with other prominent members of the Moroccan British Society Mr Frank Law, Mr Derek Conway MP and His Excellency Mr Anthony Bailey.

Activities at Oxford

Lecture Series on Morocco in the Contemporary World

The main event organised by the Fellowship during the year was a weekly lecture series entitled 'Morocco in the Contemporary World: The Road Ahead' which invited a distinguished collection of speakers to address the College on a variety of themes related to contemporary Morocco. The series started with a lecture by George Joffé, Director of the Centre for North African Studies at Cambridge University, on political reform in Morocco. It was followed by an address by His Excellency Ambassador Hassan Abouyoub, former Cabinet Minister, Ambassador and nominee for the Directorship of the World Trade Organisation on the subject of Morocco and the Globalised Economy. Professor Richard Gillespie, Head of the Department of Politics at Liverpool University gave the third lecture in the series on Moroccan-Spanish relations and the following week Dr Michael Willis, the holder of the Fellowship, gave his opening lecture to the College which focused on the Islamist movement in Morocco. Journalists gave the fifth and sixth talks in the series with Toby Shelley from the Financial Times and Jon Marks from Cross Border Information speaking respectively on the Saharan question and business and politics in Morocco. Professor Rahma Bourqia, President of Mohammedia University, then visited to speak on the subject of women and social change in Morocco. The final and culminating lecture in the series

was given by former Prime Minister Ahmed Osman who spoke on the theme of 'Morocco: Lessons from the Twentieth Century; Challenges for the Twenty-First Century.' The lecture was attended by members of the corps of Arab Ambassadors in London who were also invited to the reception held in Mr Osman's honour at the Middle East Centre following the lecture.

Students and Courses

One of the major objectives of the Fellowship in its first year has been to increase the profile of, and interest in, Morocco and its regional environment amongst students at Oxford. This has been done through setting up new courses and the encouragement of postgraduate students to focus their research on the region.

Two new courses taught by Dr Willis on North African Politics and the History of the Maghreb have now been established for students studying for the highly selective MPhil in Modern Middle Eastern Studies at Oxford. These courses have succeeded in attracting students who have asked that more courses related to the region be offered and as a result an additional course on the International Relations of the Maghreb will be offered from next academic year. Altogether, over one third of the students registered for the MPhil took a course related to Morocco in their first year. Dr Willis has also contributed to the teaching of other courses already taught at Oxford related to the Middle East to which he has added a North African component.

Several research students are now working on projects related to Morocco either directly supervised or assisted by Dr Willis. Rachel Orth is an MPhil students working on a project looking at the mechanics of Privatization projects in Morocco. Sylvia Bergh is a DPhil student carrying out research on local development projects in southern Morocco; and, beginning in October 2005, Avi Spiegel has started work on a DPhil looking at youth and politics in Morocco.

Conferences and Speaking Engagements

Dr Willis has been invited to give a number of lectures and presentations during his first year as Fellow. In addition to his lecture at St Antony's as part of the series on Morocco in the Contemporary World these have included:

Diversity in Morocco. Moroccan Cultural Days, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University, May 2005.

Islamism in Morocco: The End of the Moroccan Exception? Middle East Studies Association (MESA) of America, San Francisco, USA, November 2004

Western Saharan Options Moroccan Royal Academy of Diplomacy, Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco, April 2005.

Containing Radicalism through the Political Process in North Africa. Securitizing Terrorism in Europe and North Africa: Strategies for Regional Cooperation, NATO Advanced Research Workshop, Madrid, Spain, June 2005.

Islamism in Morocco: A New Algeria in the Making? Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, Exeter University, February 2005.

Berberism, Islamism and the State: A New Configuration in Maghrebi Politics? British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) Durham University, UK, September 2005

Tunisia and its Maghreb Neighbours, Ambassadorial Seminar, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, October 2004.

In addition to these events, Dr Willis attended a conference on the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement held in Madrid in January 2005 and also one on Moroccan Migration held at Sussex University in July 2005.

Research and Publications

Dr Willis has continued to write and publish on themes related to Morocco and its regional environment. The main focus of his research has been a book for Hurst & Co publishers on the comparative politics of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Pieces written by Dr Willis that have been published this year have included:

‘Morocco’ in C. Neal Tate (Editor): *Governments of the World* (Macmillan Reference, USA, 2005)

(with Nizar Messari) ‘Analyzing Moroccan Foreign Policy and Relations with Europe’ Chapter in Gerd Nonneman (Editor), *Analyzing Middle Eastern Foreign Policies: The Relationship with Europe* (Routledge, London & New York, 2005)

‘The Long and Winding Road’, *Emerging Morocco 2005*.

A number of further pieces written by Dr Willis are currently in press and include:

‘Justice and Development or Justice and Spirituality?: The Challenge of Morocco’s Non-Violent Islamist Movements’

Chapter in Bruce Maddy-Weitzman and Daniel Zisenwine (Editors): *The Maghrib in the New Century: Identity, Religion and Politics* (University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 2007)

‘The Politics of Berber (*Amazigh*) Identity’

Chapter in Yahia H. Zoubir and Haizam Amirah-Fernandez (Editors), *The Maghreb in Motion* (Routledge, London, 2007)

‘Containing Radicalism Through the Political Process in North Africa’ *Mediterranean Politics* Special Issue: ‘Securitizing Terrorism in Europe and North Africa: Strategies for Regional Cooperation’ 2006

Dr Willis spent two weeks in Morocco in April 2005 during which time he gathered material for his research which included interviewing politicians, journalists and members of governmental and non-governmental organisations. He also paid a visit to Al Akhawayn University where he gave a lecture to the Royal Moroccan Academy of Diplomacy (see above) and led a research seminar with Moroccan diplomats and graduate students on contemporary Algeria.

Dr Willis has continued to be an active member of the editorial board of the international journal *Mediterranean Politics* and has performed peer review for this journal in addition to articles for the *Journal of North African Studies* and *Journal of Modern African Studies*. He was also a formal rapporteur for an Economic and Social research Council funded project on Maghrebi migrants in Britain and is a regular contributor to the North African forum held in London.

Media

Dr Willis has given regular interviews to the print and broadcast media during his first year. These have included interviews with *Le Matin* (Morocco), 2M TV Morocco, Radio France International, BBC World Television and the *Asia Times*.

Scholarships

Work has begun on setting up scholarships for Moroccan students to study at Oxford. Initial contacts have been made with regard to potential donors for the scholarships. These will be followed up on during 2005-06.

Other Activities

Other activities that the Fellowship has been engaged in during the year have included:

- Helping to host a visit to Oxford by four researchers from the Universities of Oujda and Marrakech in February 2005.
- Meeting with Moroccan Prime Minister Mr Driss Jettou during his visit to Britain in December 2004.
- Organising an informal gathering of all students in Oxford with connections to Morocco.

Programme for Academic Year 2005-2006

A range of activities are planned for the academic year 2005-2006 which aim to build on the firm base established during the first year of the Fellowship:

- Professor Abdou Filali Ansari has been invited to give the prestigious annual Antonius Lecture at St Antony's College in June 2006.
- An academic workshop on the provisional theme of 'The Maghreb: Between Europe and the United States?' is projected to be held in Trinity (Summer) term at St Antony's.

- The establishment of a visiting scholars scheme to enable leading Moroccan scholars to come and spent time at St Antony's College both to further their own academic work and to contribute to the intellectual and academic life of the College and University through lectures and seminars.
- Dr Willis will be speaking at conferences in Amman, Jordan; Washington DC; Barcelona and Cambridge University he will also be making an extended trip to Morocco in the Spring of 2006.
- A selection of the texts of the lectures presented in the 'Morocco in the Contemporary World' series will be assembled for publication.
- Dr Willis will be taking sabbatical leave for six months from July 2006 to work on his book for Hurst & Co.
- Work to establish scholarships for Moroccan students will continue.

Michael Willis
December 2005