



International Association of Contemporary Iraqi Studies

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SOAS, University of London

Abstract of paper to be presented at the conference.

For details of the conference programme go to www.iraqistudies.org

Speakers: Nadjie Al-Ali (SOAS) and Nicola Pratt (University of East Anglia)

Title: Gendering Imperialism and Resistance: A Postcolonial Feminist Perspective on the Occupation

Abstract:

The proposed paper is based on our co-authored book (*What kind of Liberation? Women and the Occupation in Iraq* (University of California Press, forthcoming fall 2008) in which we illustrate the big gap between the official rhetoric that put Iraqi women at centre stage and the reality of how women's rights and women's lives have been used in the name of competing political agendas. Based on interviews with Iraqi women's rights activists, international policy-makers and NGO workers, we have also tried to document the varied scope of Iraqi women's involvement in political transition and attempts at shaping "the new Iraq." In this paper we will present our theoretical and political underpinnings and make a case for the centrality of gender for the understanding of processes related to empire-building and the resistance to it.