



Contemporary  
**Turkish** Studies

## ENCOUNTERING THE PAST IN TURKEY

11-12-13 May 2015, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

In the past ten years something unexpected, but long overdue, started to unfold in Turkey. A new interest in history emerged in a country that had erased its Ottoman past. More surprising, the most traumatic aspects of Turkish history, especially those that were considered taboo, or simply denied until recently, became issues of public debate. Even though still a minority, citizens of diverse backgrounds have begun commemorating the Armenian Genocide, the Dersim and Maraş massacres, the Wealth Tax, and expulsions of Greeks. At the face of an official policy of denial, increasing number of activists, artists, scholars, and citizens demand a deeper understanding and recognition of past atrocities in order to atone and seek justice.

This 3-days conference explores how, why, under what conditions, and among which groups did willingness to confront the Armenian Genocide and other violent episodes Turkish history came into being. What kinds of strategies are used by different groups to promote coming to terms with the past as well as avoiding it? What transformative power can we expect from this numerically limited but strongly articulated movement? What are the implications of encountering the past for contemporary dynamics in Turkey? By doing so, it is hoped that the conference will contribute to promoting acts of reconciliation that have begun in Turkey.

### CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

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Monday, 11 May 2015

Venue: Room STC. S75, Ground Floor, St. Clements Building, LSE

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18:00 – 20:00

#### Opening Panel

##### Paper Titles and Speakers

*“Violence, Survival, Sovereignty”*

**Marc Nichanian**, Visiting Professor, Sabancı University, İstanbul

*“The Impact of Refusal to Encounter the Past on Turkish State and Society”*

**Fatma Müge Göçek**, Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies, University of Michigan

*“Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in the Cultural Imaginary”*

**Max Silverman**, Professor of French, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

**Moderator:** **Esra Özyürek**, Associate Professor, Chair for Contemporary Turkish Studies, European Institute, LSE

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**Tuesday, 12 May 2015**

**Venue: Graham Wallace Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Old Building, LSE**

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**10:00 – 12:30**

**Panel I**

**Paper Titles and Speakers**

***“Lost in Translation: The Monument’s Demolishing”***

**Ayda Erbal**, Adjunct Professor and PhD Candidate, Department of Politics, New York University

***“Change and Continuity in the Politics of Denial: A Comparative Look at Reconciliation Discourses in Turkey”***

**Bilgin Ayata**, Department of Political Science, Center for Transnational Relations, Foreign and Security Policy, Freie Universität Berlin

***“Commemoration and Denial: Holocaust and Armenian Genocide in Public Memory in Turkey”***

**Corry Guttstadt**, Lecturer for Turkish Studies, Hamburg University, Germany

***“Limits of Liberal Multiculturalism: Neo-Ottomanism, Humanism, Branding the Nation and Civilization in Contemporary Turkey”***

**Aslı Iğsız**, Assistant Professor of Culture and Representation, Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University

**Moderator:** **Marc David Baer**, Professor of International History, Department of International History, LSE

**12:30 – 14:00**

**Lunch**

**14:00 – 16:00**

**Panel II**

**Paper Titles and Speakers**

***“Re-Making Life between the Weight of the Past and Void of Future: Ethnographic Explorations on Daily Encounters between the Cow, Villager and Returnee in a Ghost Village of Midyat, Turkey”***

**Zerrin Özlem Biner**, Research Associate, Division of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge

***“Moral Domains of Return”***

**Ceren Özgül**, Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

***“Debt of the Dead: Hunting for Treasures in what was Once Also Western Armenia”***

**Alice von Bieberstein**, Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Cambridge

**Moderator: Hakan Seçkinelgin**, Associate Professor, Department of Social Policy, LSE

**16:00 – 16:30**                      **Coffee Break**

**16:30 – 18:30**                      **Panel III**

**Paper Titles and Speakers**

***“Narratives of Survival: Gender, Memory and the Armenian Genocide”***

**Ayşe Gül Altınay**, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, İstanbul

***“Landscapes of Memory and Forgetting: Facing the Armenian Genocide in 2015”***

**Sossie Kasbarian**, Lecturer in Middle East Politics, University of Lancaster

***“Cutting Manhood: A Phallic Genealogy for the Turkish State Sovereignty across Two Fin-de-siècles”***

**Serap Ruken Şengül**, Manoogian Post-Doctoral Fellow, Armenian Studies Programme, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

**Moderator: Esra Özyürek**, Associate Professor, Chair for Contemporary Turkish Studies, European Institute, LSE

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**Wednesday, 13 May 2015**

**Venue: Room STC.S221, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, St. Clements Building, LSE**

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**09:30 – 12:00**                      **Panel I**

**Paper Titles and Speakers**

***“Bûka Baranê (Bride of the Rain): A Documentary about the 90’s Truth Telling in Divided Societies”***

**Murat Çelikkan**, Co-Director of Truth Justice Memory Center in İstanbul

***“Yüzleşme from a Psycho-Political Perspective”***

**Murat Paker**, Department of Psychology, İstanbul Bilgi University

***“Encountering the Past in Turkey: A Personal Reflection on Two Decades of Research and Experience”***

**Leyla Neyzi**, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, İstanbul

***“Encountering National Histories, Encountering Global Histories: Turkey, Armenia and the First World War Centenary”***

**Joanne Laycock**, Senior Lecturer in Modern History, Sheffield Hallam University

**Moderator:** **Armine Ishkanian**, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Policy, LSE

**12:00 – 12:30**

**Coffee Break**

**12:30 – 13:15**

**Final Discussion**

**This event is free and open to all. No ticket is required.**

For further information about the LSE Contemporary Turkish Studies and its seminars and other activities, please contact:

E-mail: [euroinst.turkish.studies@lse.ac.uk](mailto:euroinst.turkish.studies@lse.ac.uk) or Tel: +44 (020) 7955 6067

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/Research/ContemporaryTurkishStudies/Home.aspx>

## **Paper Abstracts:**

### **“Violence, Survival, Sovereignty”**

**Professor Marc Nichanian**

In my book, *La Perversion historiographique* (Léo Scheer/Lignes, 2006), I wrote the following, without offering any further explanation: "Do subject peoples have anything to say about the sovereign people and about the political system in which the latter made them live, in what was after all a system of domination? Do they have anything to say of the system of subjection and of its catastrophic collapse?" (the English translation is by Gil Anidjar, *The Historiographic Perversion*, Columbia Univ. Press, 2009, p. 53). The explanation has been given and developed first in my 2008 book in French *Le Roman de la Catastrophe*, and again in my 2010 book in Turkish, *Edebiyat ve Felaket*. "Catastrophe" is the name for the apocalyptic end of a system of subjection, which coincided with a (both universal and murderous) transformation of the regime of sovereignty. This at least is the understanding and interpretation of the Catastrophe offered by an Armenian novelist and literary critic, Hagop Oshagan. Why should literature know more about the genocidal events that brought an end to the existence of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, more than historians, let's say? Because there is no archive for the end of a system of subjection and the violent transformation of a regime of sovereignty, no other archive than the paradoxical experience of the survivor. Consequently is no other memory of the catastrophic event. The fact is that both sides, victims and perpetrators alike, need to understand what happened, they therefore need the work of interpretation (just as the patient of a psychoanalyst needs the same work of interpretation), even if after so many years there is nothing left but some sort of survival on the one side, and some (new) sort of sovereignty on the other side. Without the work of interpretation, there will be no recovery, no mourning, no reconciliation on the horizon. Both sides need to understand, yes. But because up to now (as a consequence of a strange complicity between the survivor and the sovereign) the events have been the private ground of the historians, the only interpretation that is available on the market is that of a conflict between belligerent nationalisms. Which is tantamount to adding insult to injury, again on both sides. We then need first to get rid of that type of supposedly naive interpretations, in order to disentangle the complicity between survival and sovereignty, and to begin a work of memory, to enter into the time of forgiveness.

### **“The Impact of Refusal to Encounter the Past on Turkish State and Society”**

**Professor Fatma Müge Göçek**

Even though many scholars agree that encountering the past enables states and societies to become more tolerant, democratic, and egalitarian, there is much less work done on what refusal to do so entails. In this paper, I will specifically discuss the impact of denial through history of the violence committed by Turkish state and society against the Armenians. I will also reflect on how this impact may compare to other cases of collective violence.

### **“Lost in Translation: The Monument’s Demolishing”**

**Ayda Erbal**

The annals of Turkish-Armenian “rapprochement,” “reconciliation,” “initiative,” and “dialogue” marked January 8, 2011 as the day when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called the Monument of “Humanity” by Mehmet Aksoy in Kars a freak (ucube), and ordered

its demolition. Although the parties to the discussion became divided among “conservative” “nationalist hawks” (who were against the statue) and “non-nationalist” “progressive” “doves” (who wholeheartedly embraced both the statue’s concept and its implementation), there were no wide-scale public deliberation either about the decision-making process or about the concept itself, or about its execution. Much like the “apology” campaign, there also was not any wide-scale deliberation, neither with diaspora Armenians, nor with Armenians from Armenia to whom the monument was addressed. Armenians, just as they have been erased from the land, also were erased from the debate. The Turkish—but not the Armenian--public was informed several times in the course of the construction that this is a monument built to counter the spatial/politico-historical arguments of not one but two monuments, both the İğdir Monument and the Tsitsernakaberd.

What can we learn from this particular episode of history about the limits of the civil society in a setting where there is no normative commitment to a post-genocidal institutional order? How come Humanity was recast as contra-genocide recognition? What do the Monument debates tell us about the political responsibilities of the majority, not only vis-à-vis the Armenian Genocide but also in terms of its textual and spatial representations? Why can the actors in Turkish civil society not differentiate themselves radically from the state’s representation of the other as the one who has to abide by the rules of the top down and overbearing peace fantasies of the spatial colonizer?

This paper will deal with these questions and others by analysing the elements, the context and the symbolic grammar of both the Monument and the faux-substantial binary debates surrounding it. The subsections of the paper deal with the deliberative quality of this monument by way of positing it against other monuments or monumental ventures within Turkish lieux de memoire and other comparative settings. I argue that just as the representations of the victims of the Armenian Genocide have been problematic in the Turkish historiography, their artistic representations as well as discursive reframing within the contemporary Turkish “progressive” public sphere has been marred with the same kind of asymmetrical power which is itself the result of the Genocide.

### **“Change and Continuity in the Politics of Denial: A Comparative Look at Reconciliation Discourses in Turkey”**

**Dr. Bilgin Ayata**

Denialism has been a persistent repertoire of official politics and public discourse in Turkey. From the 1930s onwards, the very existence of Kurds was denied, and aspirations for its recognition have been vehemently persecuted. The annihilation of Armenians and other Non-Muslim communities during 1915-1918 is even after a century not being officially acknowledged as Genocide and constituted for the longest time an untouchable topic in public discourse. The military operation against 'the abscess of the Republic' in Dersim during 1936-1938 (as well other massacres against Alevis in Çorum, Maraş, Sivas later on) remained another firmly denied subject of the Republican history. This paper will compare the changes and continuities not only in the politics of denial with regard to these three cases, but also will compare the forms of contestations against the politics of denial. All of these three former taboo subjects constitute at present the most hotly debated issues in Turkey spurred by various reconciliation efforts and discourses, yet a comparative look is rather absent. As a result of the compartmentalization by the official discourse that has reframed state violence as Armenian, Kurdish and Alevi "questions", this separate and isolated treatment is still mirrored in scholarship and public debate. To counter this compartmentalization, this paper takes a

comprehensive look at contemporary reconciliation discourses in Turkey to carve out patterns and frames within the official discourse and public debate vis-a-vis the former taboo subjects. It argues that despite the unprecedented amount of engagement and discussion of state crimes, the treatment of minorities and memory/identity politics in Turkey, a persistence of denialist frames -albeit in modified forms- still poses the limits of discussion.

**“Commemoration and Denial: Holocaust and Armenian Genocide in  
Public Memory in Turkey”  
Dr. Corry Guttstadt**

In the last few years the Holocaust is present in Turkish politics and public: Some Turkish officials join the international Holocaust Remembrance Day celebrations at January 27, the Turkish government considers implementing Holocaust education in the school curricula and the Turkish Ambassador to Germany held a mourning ceremony at the memorial site of the former concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen, where a memorial plaque for the Turkish Jewish victims was unveiled. Holocaust related topics also appear in some novels recently published in Turkey. On the one hand it might be astonishing that Turkey “discovers” the Holocaust only now: Until recently the Holocaust was a non –topic in Turkey, no Turkish academic conducted any research on the topic. Although several thousand Jews from Turkey were deported and murdered by the Nazis, Turkish government agencies to this day did not take the trouble to compile the names of the victims. Not a single memorial book about them exists. It is noteworthy that most of the activities of Turkish officials regarding the Holocaust are closely linked to the denial of the Armenian genocide. Any mention of the Holocaust triggers an almost reflexive negative association with the Armenian genocide. My paper analyses the connection / correlation of Turkish reactions to both the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. I will discuss recent comments and publications by Turkish officials and opinion makers in Turkey, but I will also examine some literary publications (novels, short stories) recently published on the topic.

**“Limits of Liberal Multiculturalism: Neo-Ottomanism, Humanism,  
Branding the Nation and Civilization in Contemporary Turkey”  
Assistant Professor Aslı İğsız**

In 2005, the United Nations launched the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, cosponsored by the Spanish and Turkish governments, to address issues raised by “Clash of Civilizations” discourses in the aftermath of 9/11. In 2006, a series of “rebranding” initiatives were launched during the World Economic Forum meetings to repair the image of the Middle East and to propose Turkey as a “bridge between civilizations.” In this process, certain categories (e.g. civilization and the East/West) have informed the terms of relevance in these projects. It is at this juncture in 2006 that the European Union selected Istanbul as a 2010 European Capital of

Culture. One of the most important selection criteria was “diversity” and all cities selected as the 2010 European Capital of Culture had highlighted their “multicultural” character. In surface, all these initiatives appear to endorse the “celebration of diversity.” Yet, how inclusive are these transnational initiatives and the local multiculturalism policies they inform? What are the broader implications of these dynamics for alterity? This paper will address the limits of liberal multiculturalism in general, with Turkey as a particular instance.

**“Re-Making Life between the Weight of the Past and Void of Future: Ethnographic Explorations on Daily Encounters between the Cow, Villager and Returnee in a Ghost Village of Midyat, Turkey”**

**Dr. Zerrin Özlem Biner**

This paper explores the political and affective meanings of the practices of returning home from the perspective of Syriac Christians who left their villages as a result of different cycles of violence that involve 1915 Armenian Genocide, 1925 Kurdish uprisings, and 1990’s military conflict between the Turkish armed forces and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). Drawing on the ethnographic research in a Syriac-Kurdish village, the paper analyses the relationships between the Kurdish settlers and Syriac Christian returnees who struggle to reclaim their property and re-vitalise life in the ruined village. The daily struggle for return involves tackling both with the legal and bureaucratic procedures of the state and economic and political rules of the feudal order. More significantly, it involves the effort to create new forms of relationships between the Syriac returnees and Kurdish villagers who remained in the territory as the perpetrator, witness, survivor or the occupier. This paper is concerned with the analysis of the meaning of the new encounters that take place in-between the fractured imaginations of the past atrocities, pragmatism of everyday survival and hope for the possibility of re-possessing home.

**“Moral Domains of Return”**

**Dr. Ceren Özgül**

"When I decided to convert back, my father and brothers told me what I am doing is *ayıp* (it's a shame).... *Ayıp*, they told me, as if I am dishonouring them, or our family's name. *Ayıp*!" This account of his family’s reaction by a return convert to Armenianness introduces *ayıp* as a category that conveys the conflictive moral domains produced around return conversions. In different stages of my research on Armenian return conversions in Turkey, I encountered this powerful word repetitively. *Ayıp* is materialized around several issues regarding return conversions: Some converts relayed me that they were accused of being pragmatists, or even worst, impostors who were not after reclaiming their Armenian identity but were expecting material gain. They also recognized an appeal to *ayıp* from members of the established Armenian community in Istanbul, as they were warned not to succumb into the so-called “Armenian diaspora’s propaganda”; that is to pressure the Turkish state to accept the events of 1915 as genocide. Armenian return converts’ repetitive return to accusations of moral inferiority and infliction of shame to their families in their conversion narratives constitutes a similar “obsession” to what Vincent Crapanzano calls as “dwelling obsessively on a tangential but consequential event” (2011, 73). This paper argues that this obsession with *ayıp* assumes extraordinary centrality for their experiences of exclusion and



loss. Specifically, it discusses *ayip* as a term around which the decision to convert is made, discussed, and assessed by the converts themselves. Through the prism of *ayip*, these return conversions not only appear to be a (a)moral decision that harms a person's reputation as well as his/her family's honour, but also conveys a sense of loss as a result of their consequential exclusion by their families, previous religious communities, and neighbourhoods through this moral category.

**“Debt of the Dead: Hunting for Treasures in what was Once Also Western Armenia”**

**Dr. Alice von Bieberstein**

Hunting for treasures in Eastern Turkey/Northern Kurdistan/Western Armenia is an officially criminalized yet tacitly tolerated passion pursued almost exclusively by men who spend fortunes on the acquisition of tools and expert knowledge in the hope of finding what is also commonly referred to as 'Armenian gold'. Besides the libidinal pleasures of transgression and digging - mostly in the dark of the night, treasure-hunters are enthralled by the jewellery, statues, coins and other objects that emerge from the ground and are bathed in an aura of singularity and historicity. This presentation follows the question of how the practice of treasure-hunting and the engagement with sought-out or found objects articulates a relation - or not - to the Armenian past of the region and the disappearance of its Armenian population during the 1915 genocide. While the emergence of objects from the ground might prompt both experiences of loss as well as questions of how to relate to the origin and makers of these objects, fuelled by a broader nostalgic discourse on the lost skilful craftsmanship of Armenian artisans, this 'Armenian' past remains a generic, irretrievably lost time while the objects are submitted to an essentially future-oriented reading, pointing to ever more potential riches. The force of loss, though, returns in the form of the state, in whose hands most treasures eventually land, and in moralised tales of the gold's essentially destructive force, cursing finders through illness, death and poverty.

**“Narratives of Survival: Gender, Memory and the Armenian Genocide”**

**Dr. Ayşe Gül Altınay**

The presentation will review the ways in which “survival” is portrayed in recent memory and historical works regarding the Armenian genocide. Special attention will be given to narratives on women and Islamized Armenian survivors.

**“Landscapes of Memory and Forgetting: Facing the Armenian Genocide in 2015”**

**Dr. Sossie Kasbarian**

This co-authored paper (with Kerem Oktem) seeks to understand the emergence of a new landscape of memory and forgetting by analysing acts of remembering and denial among civil society and state actors based in Turkey, Armenia and in diaspora. This landscape is characterised by a new sets of actor alliances that extend beyond the politically constructed borders between Turks and Armenians, and by new locales of memory, many of which, surprisingly, are located in Turkey. The paper will hence seek to map this landscape and search for the societal and political tensions and conflicts this new landscape is causing for the

different sets of actors. This work is part of a larger project which analyses the centenary, and its wider implications for Armenian and Turkish histories, culture, politics and society. The paper will be based on a survey of the key events marking 2015 in Turkey, Armenia and among the Armenian diaspora based in Europe. The focus will be on the commemoration events in Turkey, where conflicts between and among actors are expected to become most visible.

**“Cutting Manhood: A Phallic Genealogy for the Turkish State Sovereignty across Two Fin-de-siècles”**

**Dr. Serap Ruken Şengül**

Gendered analysis of the Armenian and Kurdish issues is characterized by a tendency of equating gender with “woman” or the universally feminized category of “women-children”. This work explores male-gendered topographies of these histories of violence by tracing the politics of circumcision that have involved in their making since the late nineteenth century. Male circumcision is a formidably polysemic practice that seals group boundaries and hierarchies in the materiality of the body according to ever-shifting sets of outsiders across time-space. In the historical Ottoman East, the practice was observed by Muslims, Jews and heterodox communities as simultaneously a religious prescription and a gender initiatory ritual. With the late 19th century context of anti-Armenian antagonism “being uncircumcised” gained a meaning in-itself as sign of an irreducible Muslim-Christian alterity. During the Hamidian era Armenian men encountered circumcision as one distinguished threshold of their relation to life and death over the course of pogroms and mass conversions. Circumcision gained a novel nationalizing function under the reign of the secular Ittihadists: While invalidating Armenian conversions to Islam, the Ittihadists also pursued a systematic policy of circumcising Armenian and Kurdish male orphans of the Genocide and World War I as means to inscribe the mark of the Turkish father on their bodies following the murder of their non-Turkish fathers. Non-Turkish men’s ordeal with circumcision continues in Turkey in circulations of the sexist and racializing trope of “the uncircumcised terrorist,” coined by the Turkish state toward the legitimate murder or symbolic castration of male Kurdish rebels for the past three decades. By tracing the shifting political semantics of circumcision across these thresholds, I aim to contribute not only to the critical feminist scholarship on modern Turkish identity and sovereignty, but also to the understandings of the affiliative genealogies between the Armenian and Kurdish issues from a yet unexplored terrain.

**“Bûka Baranê (Bride of the Rain): A Documentary about the 90’s Truth Telling in Divided Societies”**

**Murat Çelikkan**

Bûka Baranê literally means the bride of the rain the name given to a rainbow in Kurdish. This documentary intends to tell the story of children who grew up in a village in the Kurdistan region of Turkey, during the 90’s and during the war between the Kurdistan Workers Party guerillas and the state security forces. Hafıza Merkezi made more than 40 screenings for the documentary all over Turkey, intriguing and sometimes contentious reactions. The audience's political position about war and the peace process also dominated their perception of truth as transmitted through the documentary. This paper will deal with the impact of truth telling (a documentary in this is case) in a highly opinionated and politicized society.

**“Yüzleşme from a Psycho-Political Perspective”**  
**Dr. Murat Paker**

*Yüzleşme* in Turkish does not have a perfect English translation, but can be translated as “coming to terms with,” or “facing up to,” or “confrontation.” It originally means “two persons coming face-to-face to uncover truth.” In recent years, *yüzleşme* has become one of the common terms used in Turkish political life and has become a familiar concept. This article aims to discuss the following different dimensions of *yüzleşme* in the context of Turkey. Goals of yüzleşme: 1) to establish the truth; 2) to create a new relational space between the parties which claim conflicting versions of the truth; 3) to reach reconciliation. Layers of yüzleşme: From the Other to Ourselves, at least five different layers could be identified. Spheres of yüzleşme: Truth and justice seeking a) on the individual sphere through individual interactions (including psychoanalysis / psychotherapy) vs. on the socio-political sphere through retributive and/or restorative justice. Elements-Stages of yüzleşme: 1) Trust and security; 2) Equivalence & equality; 3) Knowledge and Memory: Uncovering the truth; 4) Affect; 5) Meaning; 6) Apology and demand for forgiveness; 7) Restitution; 8) Reparation; 9) Redefinition of rights-Legal reforms; 10) Social Justice. Unofficial vs. official yüzleşme: An *unofficial* yüzleşme process has started in Turkey, but there is also a need for a more structural and systematic official yüzleşme process which is a matter of political struggle and transformation. Where should we start? As a general principle it can be said that the process should start with dark pages that have the highest degree of actuality and bitterness; hence with the greater potential of touching the daily lives of the citizens. For Turkey, this issue is indubitably the Turkish-Kurdish issue. Democratization vs. yüzleşme. Which is primary? Both. These two processes feed each other and are inevitably interlinked.

**“Encountering the Past in Turkey: A Personal Reflection on Two Decades of Research and Experience”**

**Professor Leyla Neyzi**

What happened in/to Turkey in recent years? Certainly, in my own experience of conducting research on memory for more than two decades, there has been a sea change. From a loud silence combined with resistance and quiet fragments to a virtual flood...In this paper, I would like to reflect on this phenomenon at two levels, not easy to differentiate: the personal and the collective. At the personal level, when I first began to compile an oral history archive in the late 1980s and 1990s, my sense was that individuals wished to speak but were curtailed by fear and the lack of a context within which to frame their stories. In the effort, the discovery of extremely painful experiences and events was a shock I too had to contend with. At the collective level, bottom-up organization and demands for rights and accountability vis-à-vis the past (and the not-so-past) was beginning to emerge. Today, on the other hand, the loneliness or aloneness and personal confrontations are replaced by a slew of public subjectivities heaving to and fro due to conflictual encounters in narrative and performance—not to mention in everyday life. The demand from below has created new structures and organizations, though with yet limited effect in terms of accountability and rights. My reflections will conclude with expectations about the consequences of a process that is still under way.

## **“Encountering National Histories, Encountering Global Histories: Turkey, Armenia and the First World War Centenary”**

**Dr. Joanne Laycock**

This paper addresses the significance and implications of the commemoration of the centenaries of the First World War and Armenian Genocide for understandings of war, violence, displacement and their aftermaths in the Ottoman/Russian borderlands. Whilst the First World War centenary has focused both popular and scholarly attention on this period of conflict, I suggest that the media coverage and commemorative events in Britain have reinforced popular understandings of the war which are both geographically narrow and framed in terms of the history of particular nation states. Last year this issue was highlighted by a British council report which argued for the importance of broadening current understandings and emphasized the need to ‘remember the *world* as well as the war. The forthcoming centenary of the Armenian genocide, meanwhile, has attracted increasing amounts of attention, both in the media and in academic circles. This development offers the potential to contest and broaden current popular understandings of the First World War. Yet thus far, the story of conflict, violence and displacement in this complex region has also been portrayed in ‘national’ terms as histories of Armenia and Turkey. Whilst understanding the evolution of contested Turkish/Armenian narratives is essential for understanding both the construction of contemporary Armenian and Turkish identities, the reiteration of these ‘national narratives’ is problematic, masking the complexities of the period and reinforcing reductive notions of the First World War as a straightforward ‘national’ conflict. In this paper therefore I examine the possibilities and challenges of developing transnational histories of these events and their potential for developing a richer and more complex public understanding not only of the fate of the Ottoman Armenians but of the First World War more broadly.

### **Speaker Biographies:**

**Ayşe Gül Altınay**, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, İstanbul

**Dr. Ayşe Gül Altınay** received her Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from Duke University and has been teaching at Sabancı University since 2001. Her research and writing have focused on militarism, nationalism, violence, memory, gender, and sexuality. She is the author of *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); co-author of *Violence Against Women in Turkey: A Nationwide Survey* (with Yeşim Arat, Punto, 2009, [www.kadinayoneliksiddet.org/English.html](http://www.kadinayoneliksiddet.org/English.html)), *işte böyle güzelim...* (based on women’s narratives of sexualities, with Hülya Adak, Esin Düzel and Nilgün Bayraktar, Sel, 2008, [www.isteboyleguzelim.org](http://www.isteboyleguzelim.org)), and *Torunlar* (based on Muslim grandchildren’s narratives of their converted Armenian grandparents, with Fethiye Çetin, Metis, 2009, second edition 2010; French translation: *Les Petits-enfants*, trans. Célin Vuraler, Arles: Actes Sud, 2011; Armenian translation: *Torner*, trans. Lilit Gasparyan and Tigran Mets Hratarakchatun, Yerevan: Targqnutyun, 2011; English translation: *Grandchildren*, trans. Maureen Freely, Transaction Publishers, forthcoming); and editor of *Vatan, Millet, Kadınlar* (İletişim, 2000, second edition 2004) and *Ebru: Reflections on Cultural Diversity in Turkey*, a photography project by Attila Durak (Metis, 2007, [www.ebruproject.com](http://www.ebruproject.com)). Her co-authored book with Yeşim Arat, *Türkiye’de Kadına Yönelik Şiddet* (Violence Against Women in Turkey) was awarded the 2008 PEN Duygu Asena Award.

**Dr. Bilgin Ayata**, Department of Political Science, Center for Transnational Relations, Foreign and Security Policy, Freie Universität Berlin

**Dr. Bilgin Ayata** is Lecturer at the Center for Transnational Relations, Foreign-and Security Policy in the Department of Political Science at Freie University Berlin, where she teaches International Relations. Her research interests are migration, conflict, social movements, memory and postcolonial theory. She has published on internal displacement, transnational protest movements, Armenian- Kurdish relations and the politics of denial in Turkey. After receiving her MA from York University in Toronto, she obtained her PhD in Political Science in 2011 from Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore and has held postdoctoral fellowships at FU Berlin. Since 2006, she is a participant observer, critic and contributor to the reconciliation discourses in Turkey, both with regard to the Armenian Genocide as well as the Kurdish conflict.

**Dr. Alice von Bieberstein**, Graduate Student, Department of Anthropology, University of Cambridge

**Dr. Alice von Bieberstein** completed her PhD in Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge in 2012. In her dissertation she explored the making and re-making of (mostly Armenian/minority) subjectivity in relation to the politics of history and citizenship in Turkey and Germany. Currently, she is postdoctoral research associate at the University of Cambridge on an ERC-funded project entitled 'Remnants', researching material traces of past and present formations of violence, as well as their engagements and transformations, in Moush, Eastern Anatolia.

**Zerrin Özlem Biner**, Research Associate, Division of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge

**Dr. Zerrin Özlem Biner** is a Research Associate at the Division of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge. She received her Ph.D. from University of Cambridge in 2007. Dr. Biner is an anthropologist with research interests in the ethnography of the state, history, violence and memory, minorities and diasporic communities, cultural heritage and materiality, and reconciliation. Her research engages with the material, cultural and psychic effects of political violence in Turkey. She is currently in the final stages of drafting her first book manuscript and is also working on a co-authored book on the material and immaterial remnants of past violence in Turkey.

**Murat Çelikkan**, Co-Director of Truth Justice Memory Center in İstanbul

**Mr. Murat Çelikkan** has been working as a journalist for the past 25 years in various positions such as reporter, editor, columnist and chief executive editor. Mr. Çelikkan has been an active member of the Turkish Human Rights Movement. He was a founding member and has been on the boards of the Human Rights Association, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Amnesty International and Human Rights Foundation. He has worked on projects related to the Kurdish problem and media ethics, freedom of speech and assembly. Mr. Çelikkan is a graduate of Middle East Technical University. He is currently the Co-Director of Truth Justice Memory Center in İstanbul. ([www.hakikatadalethafiza.org](http://www.hakikatadalethafiza.org)) He is also the producer of two feature films and the documentary Bûka Baranê.

**Ayda Erbal**, PhD Candidate and Adjunct Professor, Department of Politics, New York University

**Ayda Erbal** is writing her dissertation in the department of politics at New York University. She teaches two advanced undergraduate classes, “International Politics of the Middle East” and “Democracy and Dictatorship,” as adjunct professor of politics. Her work focuses on the politics of changing historiographies in Turkey and Israel. She is interested in democratic theory, democratic deliberation, the politics of “post-nationalist” historiographies in transitional settings, and the politics of apology. She is a published short-story writer and worked as a columnist for the Turkish-Armenian newspaper Agos from 2000-03.

**Fatma Müge Göçek**, Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies, University of Michigan

**Fatma Müge Göçek** is a Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies. Her research focuses on the comparative analysis of history, politics and gender in the first and third worlds. She critically analyzes the impact of processes such as development, nationalism, religious movements and collective violence on minorities. Her published works includes *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the 18th Century* (Oxford University Press, 1987), *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition, Identity, Power* (Columbia University Press, 1994 co-edited with Shiva Balaghi), *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (Oxford University Press, 1996), *Political Cartoons in the Middle East* (Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998), *Social Constructions of Nationalism in the Middle East* (SUNY Press, 2002), *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era* (I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2011), and *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2011 co-edited with Ronald Grigor Suny and Norman Naimark).

**Dr. Corry Guttstadt**, Lecturer for Turkish Studies, Hamburg University, Germany

**Dr. Corry Guttstadt** received her masters in Turkology and History from Hamburg University and her Ph.D. in History from the same University. During the 1980s and 1990, she worked as a translator/interpreter for Turkish and as a journalist on Turkey. She is teaching at Hamburg University (Department of Turkology). During 2011/2012, she was a Project manager at the Anne-Frank-Zentrum at Berlin. Her Ph.D. *Turkey the Jews and the Holocaust* is based on research in about fifty archives worldwide. It was first published in Germany in 2008 (*Die Türkei die Juden und der Holocaust*, Assoziation A, 2008) in Turkey in 2012 (İletişim) and in English with Cambridge University Press (May 2013). Her main fields of research are Turkey's minority policies, especially towards Jews and anti-Semitism in Turkey. Numerous publications and articles on topics like minorities and human rights in Turkey, anti-Semitism, Kurdish People, Armenians, nationalism, migration etc. Her last publication is: *Wege ohne Heimkehr* an Anthology of Armenian reports of Deported and Survivors in Literature and Memories (Assoziation A, 2014). She is currently a research-fellow at Yad Vashem, working on a document edition on Turkey and its politics during the Holocaust to be published with the Beate-and-Serge-Klarsfeld-Foundation and on a collection of life stories of Turkish Jews in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s (to be published in Turkey as “Hayat Yolları – Ölüm Yolları”).

**Aslı Iğsız**, Assistant Professor of Culture and Representation, Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University

**Dr. Aslı Iğsız** is Assistant Professor of Culture and Representation, Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, at New York University. Her teaching and research interests include cultural representation and cultural history, narratives of war and displacement, and dynamics of alterity in the late Ottoman and contemporary Turkish contexts. Her publications span a variety of issues that include the politics of memory; nation branding, alliance of civilizations and image wars; law, neoliberalism, and the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey. Her current book project, *Humanism in Ruins: Liberal Multiculturalism, Memory and the 1923 Greek-Turkish Population Exchange in Contemporary Turkey*, examines the implications of “liberal multiculturalism” and cultural memory as a mode of humanism in the post-Cold War and post 1980 military-coup era Turkey.

**Sossie Kasbarian**, Lecturer in Middle East Politics, University of Lancaster

**Dr. Sossie Kasbarian** was awarded her PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London in 2007. She was a Visiting Lecturer at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva 2007-2010, and a Teaching Fellow at SOAS. She was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World (CASAW) at the University of Edinburgh in 2011. Since January 2012 she is Lecturer in Middle East Politics at the University of Lancaster. Sossie is co-editor of the book *Contextualizing Community – Diasporas of the Middle East* (with Anthony Gorman, Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming 2015). She is also co-editor (with Kerem Öktem) of the special issue of the journal *Patterns of Prejudice* entitled *Armenians, Turks and Kurds Beyond Denial* (Vol. 48, May 2014), as well as author of several articles relating to the Middle East and Diaspora Studies.

**Joanne Laycock**, Senior Lecturer in Modern History, Sheffield Hallam University

**Dr. Joanne Laycock** is currently Senior Lecturer in History at Sheffield Hallam University. Her research addresses the history of Armenia from a transnational perspective, focusing on the aftermaths of conflict, disaster and displacement and the responses that they engender. Her monograph *Imagining Armenia*, was published by Manchester University Press in 2009 and addressed British representations of Armenia and the ways in which they conditioned responses to the Armenian genocide. She has also published on the post-1995 repatriations of Armenians to the Soviet Union. Her current research project addresses the entwined local and international responses to displacement in early Soviet Armenia and the South Caucasus and their relationship to the construction of Soviet society. With Dr. Sossie Kasbarian, she is also involved in the development of a research network on Armenian/Turkish studies and am particularly interested in the memory of genocide and its aftermaths in Soviet Armenia and the contemporary Republic of Armenia.

**Leyla Neyzi**, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabancı University, İstanbul

**Professor Leyla Neyzi** is an anthropologist and oral historian, and is based at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Sabancı University in Istanbul. Her research areas include oral history, memory studies, transnational youth subjectivities, nationalism and minorities. Most recently, she completed an oral history project on Kurdish and Turkish youth in Turkey and Germany. Her publications and projects can be viewed on her website:

<http://myweb.sabanciuniv.edu/neyzi/>

**Marc Nichanian**, Visiting Professor, Sabancı University, İstanbul

**Professor Marc Nichanian** was Professor of Armenian Studies at Columbia University, New York, until 2007, and is now teaching occasionally as a visiting professor at Sabancı University, İstanbul, in the Program of Cultural Studies. He is the author of *Entre l'art et le témoignage* (three volumes, MétisPresse, 2006-2008), and *Edebiyat ve Felaket* (Literature and Catastrophe), the Turkish translation of a series of public lectures in İstanbul (İletişim, 2011). His most recent publications are *Mourning Philology* (Fordham University Press, 2014), and the Armenian translation of three novels by Maurice Blanchot (*Death Sentence, The Madness of the Day, The Last Man*, éd. Inknagir, Yerevan, 2013). Forthcoming in French: *Le Sujet de l'histoire. Vers une phénoménologie du survivant* (Paris: Lignes).

**Ceren Özgül**, Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

**Dr. Ceren Özgül** is a legal anthropologist. Having just completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Armenian Studies and Anthropology at Michigan University, Ann Arbor, she is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the European Research Council and ELIAMEP conducting research on the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) religious freedom jurisprudence. Her article "Legally Armenian: Tolerance, Conversion, and Name Change in Turkish Courts" was published in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* in 2014, and draws on her dissertation research on the return conversions of forcibly Islamized Armenians during the genocide of 1915. Her current research analyzes how religious minorities, political agency, legal responsibility, and conditions of belief are produced through the legal and cultural codification of religious tolerance in Turkey. As the 2014 recipient of the Wenner-Gren's Hunt Fellowship, she is currently revising her book manuscript entitled "The Return: Armenian Conversions, Secularism, and Law in Turkey" for publication.

**Murat Paker**, Department of Psychology, İstanbul Bilgi University

**Murat Paker** graduated from İstanbul University, School of Medicine in 1985 and worked as a physician for seven years while also completing his MA in clinical psychology at Boğaziçi University, İstanbul. He went to New York in 1992 to do his PhD in clinical psychology at the New School for Social Research. He completed his PhD and post-doc work in 2000. Till 2005, he worked as a psychotherapist and clinical director at Safe Horizon / New York, a large NGO which provides psycho-social support to trauma (including war-torture) survivors. He relocated back to İstanbul in 2005 and founded the graduate program in clinical psychology at İstanbul Bilgi University. Currently, he is a full time faculty at the Psychology Department of the same university; is the director the graduate; teaches clinical graduate courses; and provides clinical supervision. He also runs a part-time private psychotherapy practice. He is the founding-general-editor of the book series, Psychoanalysis/Psychology, of the İstanbul Bilgi University Press. His main interest areas are psychoanalysis, psychotraumatology, psychotherapy, and their intersection with politics. Dr. Paker has published extensively on the psychology of torture survivors, psychotraumatology, trauma therapy, human rights, and psycho-politics. His book titled *Psiko-politik Yüzleşmeler*[Psycho-political Confrontations] was published in 2007. Since 2008, he has been an active member of 1980-84 *Diyarbakır Prison Truth and Justice Commission*, Turkey's first and only, unofficial, truth commission. Dr. Paker writes a column for T24, a web-based newspaper in Turkish.



**Max Silverman**, Professor of French, School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds

**Max Silverman** is Professor of Modern French Studies at the University of Leeds. His most recent work is on post-Holocaust culture, colonial and postcolonial theory and cultures, and questions of memory, race and violence. He has recently published a book on connections between the Holocaust and colonialism in the French and Francophone cultural imaginary entitled *Palimpsestic Memory: the Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* (Berghahn, 2013). His co-edited book with Griselda Pollock *Concentrationary Cinema: Aesthetics as Political Resistance in Alain Resnais's 'Night and Fog'* was published in 2011 (Berghahn) and a second co-edited volume with Griselda Pollock entitled *Concentrationary Memories: Totalitarian Terror and Cultural Resistance* was published by I. B. Tauris in 2014.

**Serap Ruken Şengül**, Manoogian Post-Doctoral Fellow, Armenian Studies Programme, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

**Serap Ruken Şengül** received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin. Currently, She is a Manoogian Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Michigan working on a monograph that undertakes a gender analysis of formations of sovereignty, identity, violence, and memory that have been implicated in the turning of the Late Ottoman frontier province of Kurdistan into Turkey's "East" since the late nineteenth century.

### **Moderator Biographies:**

**Marc David Baer**, Professor of International History, Department of International History, LSE

**Marc David Baer** is Professor of International History at the Department of International History at LSE. Professor Baer earned his BA degree at Northwestern University and his PhD at the University of Chicago. Before joining LSE in 2013, Baer taught at Tulane University, New Orleans, and the University of California, Irvine. **His research interests are** Early Modern and Modern Europe and Middle East, Ottoman Empire, Turkey, and Germany. Professor Baer's research focuses on the connected histories of Christians, Jews, and Muslims in European and Middle Eastern history, from the early modern era to the modern. He published extensively on his research areas. His first book is *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford, 2008, Turkish translation, IV. Mehmet Döneminde Osmanlı Avrupasında İhtida ve Fetih, Hil, 2010). His most recent academic article is "Muslim Encounters with Nazism and the Holocaust: The Ahmadi of Berlin and Jewish Convert to Islam Hugo Marcus." *The American Historical Review* Vol. 120, No. 1 (February 2015): 140-171.

**Armine Ishkanian**, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Policy, LSE

**Armine Ishkanian** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics. Her research examines the relationship between civil society and social transformation as well as how civil society organisations and social movements engage in policy processes. Her main research interests include civil society, citizenship, democracy, gender, inequality, and poverty. She is the author of numerous academic articles and two books: *Democracy Building and Civil Society in Armenia* (2008) and *The Big Society*

*Debate: A New Agenda for Social Welfare?* [co-edited with Simon Szreter] (2012). Her most recent publications include, “Surreptitious Symbiosis: Engagement between activists and NGOs” co-written with Marlies Glasius in *Voluntas* 2015; ; “Neoliberalism and Violence: the Big Society and the changing politics of domestic violence in England” in *Critical Social Policy* (2014); and “Engineered Civil Society: the impact of 20 years of democracy promotion on civil society development in the former Soviet countries” in *Democracy Promotion and Civil Society in Post-Socialist Europe* (2014).

**Esra Özyürek**, Associate Professor, Chair for Contemporary Turkish Studies, European Institute, LSE

**Esra Özyürek** is an Associate Professor, and Chair for Contemporary Turkish Studies Programme at the European Institute at LSE. She received her BA in Sociology and Political Science at Boğaziçi University, İstanbul and her MA and PhD in Anthropology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Before joining the LSE, she taught at the Anthropology Department of University of California, San Diego. Her research interests are secularism, Islam, Christianity, nationalism, religious conversion, memory, Turkey, and Germany. Dr. Özyürek is a political anthropologist who seeks to understand how Islam, Christianity, secularism, and nationalism are dynamically positioned in relation to each other in Turkey and in Europe. For her research received funding from Fulbright Foundation, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, German Academic Exchange, Institute for Turkish Studies. She was a resident fellow at the American Academy in Berlin. She is the recipient of Barkan Prize for best article in the field of Turkish Studies. Her most recent book *Being German, Becoming Muslim: Race, Religion and Conversion in the New Europe* has been published by the Princeton University Press (2014). Her previous book *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* has been published by Duke University Press (2007). She also is the editor of *Politics of Public Memory in Turkey* published by Syracuse University Press (2007) and *Unuttukları ve Hatırladıklarıyla Türkiye'nin Toplumsal Hafızası* by İletişim Yayınevi (2002).

**Hakan Seçkinelgin**, Associate Professor in International Social Policy, Department of Social Policy, LSE and Visiting Research Fellow, CERi, SciencePo, Paris.

**Hakan Seçkinelgin** is Associate Professor in International Social Policy at the Department of Social Policy at LSE and Visiting Research Fellow at CERi at SciencePo in Paris. He was trained in political theory and international relations at the LSE. His work has consciously links theory and empirical research to unpack ways of thinking that impact action. He is interested in the continental philosophy around Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, Ricoeur, Arendt and Rancière. He has number of interrelated multidisciplinary research interests. One of his research fields since the late 1990s has been in the international HIV/AIDS field. He has worked on the relationship between international AIDS policy frameworks and people's experiences of the disease in Sub-Saharan Africa particularly in Rwanda, Zambia, Lesotho, South Sudan and Uganda. His last book was based on a research in Burundi after the civil war looking at the intersections of gender, violence and vulnerability to HIV. Another area of interest has been on theories of civil society and non-governmental organizations. He was an editor of *Global Civil Society Yearbook* and at present is the editor in Chief of the *Journal of Civil Society*. The public debates and related understandings of the Armenian genocide in Turkey has been a long standing research interest since 1990s. At present he is working on a project entitled *Memories that do not remember: The implications of forgetting 1915 in Turkey*.