Conference on World War I and Beyond: Armenian, Assyrian, and Greek Minorities

Hosted by the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC),
The Graduate Center, CUNY
and co-sponsored with the
The Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center (AMPHRC)
and the Zoryan Institute

Thursday, May 21 and Friday, May 22, 2015

Proshansky Auditorium
The Graduate Center
City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue at 34th Street
New York, New York, 10016-4309
Program

Opening Statements
(Thursday, May 21, 2015, 3.00 – 3.15 pm)

- Simon Davis, welcome message
- George Shirinian, introductions
- Kostas Tsilfidis, greetings

Session 1: Nationalism, Military, Minorities – moderated by George A. Kiraz
(Thursday, May 21, 2015, 3.15 – 5.15 pm)


Nora Cherishian Lessersohn, “Voluntary Enlistment, Prophesied Liberation: An Armenian Solider in the Ottoman Military (1910-1914)”

David Gaunt, “A Zone of Extreme Violence – the Intertwining of the Armenian and Assyrian Genocides”

Alexandros Kastrinakis, “The Kemalist Movement and the Christians of Pontos, in 1919-1923, from an International Politics’ Perspective”

Silver $500 (continued)
Dr. Demetrios Georgiou, Astoria Cardiovascular Services
Nikos Gavalas
Giorgos Togridis
Jon-Carlos Tsilfidis
Pontian Greek Association "Phoenix" of Cleveland
Pontian Greek Society of Chicago
Pontian Society "Akritai" of Philadelphia
Pontian Society "Euxinos Pontos" of Montreal
Pontian Society "Panagia Soumela" of Boston
Pontian Society "Panagia Soumela" of Toronto

Bronze $250
Ara and Aline Araz
Nurhan Becidyan
Christos Paridis
John Theofilaktidis
John Tsilfidis

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Kopiaste Taverna, 23-15 31st St, Astoria, NYC
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Break: 5.15 – 6.15 pm

Session 2: Genocide – moderated by Panos Stavrianidis
(Thursday, May 21, 2015, 6.15 – 8.15 pm)

Sabri Atman, “Women in the Assyrian Genocide”

Steven Leonard Jacobs, “The State and Fate of Jews in the Ottoman Empire during World War I”

Robert Shenk, “American Women during the Crisis at Kars”

Session 3: Women Survivors, Building Community – moderated by Melissa Bilal
(Friday, May 22, 2015, 3.00 – 5.00 pm)

**Inger Marie Okkenhaug**, “Armenian Women Refugees during and after World War I: Biographies of Survival, Strategies and Relocation”

**Arda Melkonian and Doris Melkonian**, “Symbolic Resistance of Armenians during Genocide”

**Hasmik Grigoryan**, “The Problem of Mass Suicide in the Context of the Armenian Genocide”

**Jennifer Manoukian**, “Towards Social Reconstruction: Armenian Education in Constantinople (1918-1922)”

**Constantine Hatzidimitriou**, “The Persecution and Destruction of American Educational/Philanthropic Institutions in Turkey during the Ottoman Genocides and the Role of the United States Government: The Case of Anatolia College”

**Arda Melkonian** is completing her Ph.D. in Education at UCLA. With her sister Doris, Arda’s focus is on gender and sexual violence during the Armenian Genocide and Islamized Armenians.

**Doris Melkonian** is completing her Ph.D. in Education at UCLA. With her sister Arda, Doris has written on gender and identity and Christian faith.


**Break: 5.00 – 6.00 pm**
**Session 4: Aftermath, Representation and Denial – moderated by Joyce Apsel**  
(Friday, May 22, 2015, 6.00 – 8.00 pm)

**Gregory Aftandilian**, “‘Separation is the Only Way’: The Impact of the Armenian Genocide on Post-World War I Armenian Demands for Territorial Redemption”

**Nickos Michailidis**, “State Denial, Music and Memory in Contemporary Trebizond”

**Dan Georgakas**, “Mass Media and Denial”

**Hannibal Travis**, “National Security Justifications for Genocidal Acts: From the Ottoman Empire to Iraq, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur”

This conference was organized by Anny Bakalian, George Mavropoulos and George Shirinian

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**George Shirinian** is the Executive Director of the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (A Division of the Zoryan Institute). He is an official of the journal *Genocide Studies International* (University of Toronto Press), and one of the organizers of the annual Genocide and Human Rights University Program, run in partnership with the University of Toronto. He is the author of articles on the Armenian Genocide, co-editor of *Studies in Comparative Genocide* (Macmillan 1999) and editor of *The Asia Minor Catastrophe and the Ottoman Greek Genocide: Essays on Asia Minor, Pontos and Eastern Thrace, 1913-1923* (The Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center 2012).

**Panos Stavrianidis, Ph.D.**, is an adjunct Professor, FIT (SUNY) and Researcher Associate at Panteion University Athens, Greece.


**Kostas Tsilfidis** is President of the PanPontian Federation of USA and Canada and board member of the Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center.
Biographic Sketches of Presenters

Gregory Aftandilian, M.A., is an adjunct faculty member of Boston University, as well as an Associate of the Middle East Center at UMass-Lowell and a Senior Fellow for the Middle East at the Center for National Policy in Washington, DC. He is the author of Egypt’s Bid for Arab Leadership: Implications for U.S. Policy; Armenia: Vision of a Republic; The Independence Lobby in America, 1918-1927; and “World War II as an Enhancer of Armenian-American Second Generation Identity,” published by the Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies.

Joyce Apsel Ph.D., J.D. is Master Teacher of Humanities in the Liberal Studies Program of the College of Arts & Sciences at New York University, where she has taught a series of seminars on Genocide and Human Rights over the last decade. Dr. Apsel is currently President of the Institute for the Study of Genocide and former President of the International Association of Genocide Scholars. She is also director of RightsWorks, established in 1999 to promote peace, human rights and genocide education around the world. Dr. Apsel recent articles include: “Darfur: Historic Processes and Regional Dynamics” (Human Rights Review) and “Educating a New Generation: The Model of the Genocide & Human Rights University Program” Human Rights Review 12, no. 4 (2011).

Sabri Atman is a doctoral student at Clark University, Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. He founded and was the Director of the Assyrian Genocide Research Center, Seyfo (sword in Assyrian) for over a decade.

Nikolaos Michailidis is a Ph.D. student in Anthropology at Princeton University. His dissertation analyzes practices of music making, listening, remembering and belonging among Islamized Pontic-Greek speakers of Trebizond.

Inger Marie Okkenhaug, Ph.D., is Professor of History at Volda University College, Norway. In addition to chapters and articles, she is the author of “The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure”— Anglican Mission, Women and Education in Palestine, 1888-1948 (2002) and has co-edited the anthologies Interpreting Welfare and Relief in the Middle East (2008), Protestant Mission and Local Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, (2011) and Transnational and Historical Perspectives on Global Health, Welfare and Humanitarianism (2013).

Anny Bakalian, Ph.D., is Associate Director of both the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) and the Master’s Program in Middle Eastern Studies at the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is the leading scholar of the Armenian American experience, her publications include Armenian Americans: From Being to Feeling Armenian (Transaction Press, 1993, republished in 2011). She is also the author Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond with M. Bozogmehr (University of California Press, 2009).

Melissa Bilal, Ph.D., is a Mellon postdoctoral teaching fellow at Columbia University, Department of Music. She received her doctorate from the University of Chicago in 2013. She researched Armenian lullabies in her native Bolis (Istanbul). She is the author, with Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, Bir Adalet Feryadı, Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Beş Ermeni Feminist Yazar (1862–1933) [A Cry for Justice: Five Armenian Feminist Writers from the Ottomans to the Republic (1862–1933)].

Simon Davis, Ph.D., teaches History at Bronx Community and the Graduate Center, CUNY. He has written on British Diplomatic History as well as Contested Space Anglo-American Relations in the Persian Gulf, 1939-1947 (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009).

Umit Kurt is a Ph.D. student in the History Department at Clark University. His research is on the confiscation of the Armenian properties and the role of local elites/notables in Aintab during the Armenian genocide, 1915-1921. With his mentor Taner Akçam, he co-authored The Spirit of the Laws: The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide (Berghahn Books, 2015). His historical and political articles have appeared in Nations and Nationalism, Turkish Studies, Turkish Review, Culture and Religion Turkish Policy Quarterly, Turkish Journal for Politics, Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar, Birikim, Toplumsal Tarih, Cogito, Taraf, Radikal, and Bianet.

Nora Cherishian Lessersohn is completing her A.M. in Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. She article, “‘Provincial Cosmopolitanism’ in Late Ottoman Anatolia: An Armenian Shoemaker’s Memoir,” was published in Comparative Studies in Society and History (April 2015).


George Mavropoulos is Executive Director the Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center (AMPHRC).
Dan Georgakas, M.A., is Director of the Greek American Studies Project at the Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at Queens College, CUNY. He specializes on Greek and Greek American films and consequently appeared on MTV, the History Channel, the Canadian Broadcasting System and the Voice of America to mention a few. His publications include *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying* and *My Detroit: Growing Up Greek and American in Motor City*.

Hasmik Grigoryan, Ph.D., is a researcher at Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute, in Yerevan. Her publications focus on children and women in the Armenian genocide.

David Gaunt, Ph.D., is Professor of History at the Center for Baltic and East European Studies, Södertörn University, Stockholm. He specializes on violence against religious and ethnic minorities in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, particularly the Assyrians. He is the author of *Massacres, Resistance Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Gorgias Press, 2006).

Constatine G. Hatzidimitriou, Ph.D., has taught at Columbia University, the New School of Social Research, the University of Thessaloniki and various CUNY colleges. He is the author of *Navios: A Future Built upon a Historical Tradition of Innovation and Excellence* (2007); *American Accounts Documenting the Destruction of Smyrna* (2005) and *Founded on Freedom and Virtue: Documents Illustrating the Impact in the United States of the Greek War of Independence* (2002).

Steven Leonard Jacobs, D.HL., D.D., is the Aaron Aronov Endowed Chair in Judaic Studies, in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Alabama. He is the author of *Lemkin on Genocide* (Lexington Books, 2013); *Confronting Genocide: Judaism, Christianity, Islam* (Lexington Books, 2012).

Alexandros P. Kastrinakis, Ph.D., is scientific associate of the St. George Peristereota Research Centre and of the Center for Pontian Studies (KE.PO.ME.) in Thessaloniki. His dissertation was on “The Evolution of the Pontian Question According to USA, Italian and the Vatican’s Diplomatic Sources, 1850-1924.”

George A. Kiraz, Ph.D., is co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of Gorgias Press in Piscataway, NJ. He developed Unicode Meltho fonts enabling Syriac to be used on modern computers. He is also a deacon in the Syriac Orthodox Church.