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

Proshansky Auditorium
The Graduate Center, CUNY
365 Fifth Avenue (at 34th Street)
New York, NY 10016

Conference Organizers: Anny Bakalian, George Mavropoulos and George Shirinian

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

• Simon Davis (The Graduate Center, CUNY), welcome message
• George Shirinian (Zoryan Institute), introductions
• Kostas Tsilfidis (PanPontian Federation), greetings

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

1. Umit Kurt (Clark University), “Race, Racist Discourses, Tones, Patterns and Colors as a Main Vein in Turkish Nationalism: The Case of Turk Yurdu (Turkish Homeland), 1911-1916”
3. David Gaunt (Södertörn University), “A Zone of Extreme Violence – the Intertwining of the Armenian and Assyrian Genocides”
4. Alexandros Kastrinakis (KE.PO.ME.), “The Kemalist Movement and the Christians of Pontos, in 1919-1923, from an International Politics’ Perspective”

Break: 5.15 – 6.15 pm

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

5. Sabri Atman (Clark University), “Women in the Assyrian Genocide”
6. Steven Leonard Jacobs (The University of Alabama), “The State and Fate of Jews in the Ottoman Empire during World War I”
7. Robert Shenk (University of New Orleans), “American Women During the Crisis at Kars”

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

10. Arda Melkonian (UCLA) and Doris Melkonian (UCLA), “Symbolic Resistance of Armenians during Genocide”

Break: 5.00 – 6.00 pm

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

14. Gregory Aftandilian (Boston University), “‘Separation is the Only Way’: The Impact of the Armenian Genocide on Post-World War I Armenian Demands for Territorial Redemption”
16. Dan Georgakas (Queens College, CUNY), “Mass Media and Denial”
17. Hannibal Travis (Florida International University College of Law), “National Security Justifications for Genocidal Acts: From the Ottoman Empire to Iraq, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur”
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 (www.instituteforstudyofgenocide.org) and former President of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (www.iags.org). She is also director of RightsWorks International (http://rightworksinternational.org), 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.

**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 Lema Ekmeçioğlu, *Bir Adalet Feryadi, 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).
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.

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).

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.

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).


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.