



Not All Quiet on the Ottoman Fronts:  
Neglected Perspectives on a Global War, 1914–18  
Osmanlı Cephesinde Yeni Bir Şey Var:  
Cihan Harbi'ne (1914–1918) Yeniden Bakmak

International Conference, Istanbul, 9 – 12 April 2014

[www.ottomanfronts1914-1918.org](http://www.ottomanfronts1914-1918.org)

## Call for Papers

*Deadline:* **June 1, 2013**

The History Foundation (Tarih Vakfı) and Orient-Institut Istanbul with the support of Boğaziçi University, Institut Français des Études Anatoliennes (IFEA), İstanbul Bilgi University, Sabancı University, and İstanbul Şehir University will host an international multidisciplinary conference on World War I at İstanbul Bilgi University between 9 and 12 April 2014.

The study of the First World War in the initial phase focused on the question of war aims and the responsibility for its outbreak in the framework of imperialism and the process of nation building and/or reaffirmation of national concepts on the great battlefields. Following the social turn in history of the 1970s, researchers discussed the social history of the war. Following the discursive turn of the late 1980s, a new focus on representations of the war in public memory evolved. More recently, historians have concentrated on atrocities.

The historiography of the Ottoman fronts has followed the same general trends, although not always at the same moments in time. Debates have concentrated on: the question whether the Ottoman entry into hostilities was a genuine decision by the country's government or the result of German imperialist manipulation; the relevance of the Gallipoli front (Çanakkale) for the nation building processes in Turkey, Australia, and New Zealand; atrocities committed against civilians in the framework of either retaliation or of demographic engineering.

As World War I was the central founding experience of the twentieth century and thus needs to be discussed in relation to various segments of society and on several levels, we believe that its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary is the appropriate moment to bring together recent research on the Ottoman theater of the war based on the various traditions of this new military history established in the last 30 years and assess where we stand today in our knowledge of the World War and where we are headed. We therefore invite papers that develop existing approaches and questions to a further level. On this basis these papers will aid us in entering into a comparative, and where possible transnational, perspective of the war.

### *Experiencing the War*

The experience of the war varied greatly not only between different national (or proto-national) groups, but also according to the individual role people assumed during these years. Those groups, which were not integrated into

the later national narrative of the war, such as, for example, deserters, ethnic minority soldiers, or even prisoners, have not received due attention. Groups, which are integrated into the national narrative, such as irregulars, on the other hand need to be reconsidered without a teleological bias. Also issues related to everyday life behind the front, including gender, labour, and sanitary conditions, are taken into consideration

### ***Organizing the War***

Many techniques modern states use to organize, control, indoctrinate, punish, economically exploit, sanitarly protect, or demographically manipulate their citizenry were either introduced or mass-fieldtested in this period. These need to be analysed both in their original martial framework and in terms of their long-term impact on societies. On this basis, we can come to a more in-depth understanding of governance of the Ottoman state (and others) in wartime, its aims and methods. In the same way, possible manifestations of individual or group resistance vis-à-vis war-related social engineering need to be addressed.

### ***Speaking about the War***

War on an unprecedented scale led those affected to search for novel ways to cope with their experiences, to communicate their feelings, hopes, despair in personal writings, to distract themselves in entertainment or to laud or criticize the war and what they saw as its underlying causes in art, literature, or other forms of culture and expression of self.

In subsequent periods, the public discourse on the Great War became increasingly selective. Certain aspects of the war, such as masculinity, heroism, the need for sacrifice for a greater good and religious or semi-religious devotion used to be commemorated, whereas issues failing to agree with hegemonic discourses were suppressed and forgotten. As a consequence, we encounter a set of established historical realities which need to be reviewed and deconstructed. A critical rereading of the discourses and their production processes allow us to determine the missing links, silences, and generalizations that have become common for general views of the war.

Papers may address one or more of, **but are not limited to**, the following topics:

#### ***Experiencing the War***

- officers
- drafted soldiers
- deserters
- nurses and other medical staff
- veterans and wounded
- prisoners of war
- civilian internees
- ‘ethnic minority’ soldiers
- violence in its various forms

#### ***Organizing the War***

- war aims
- governance in wartime
- war economy, supply (incl. black market, smuggling), transport
- health and provisioning
- the battlefield and irregular troops
- military justice
- intelligence
- the *teşkilat-ı mahsusa*
- forced migration
- Germany’s role in the war

#### ***Speaking about the War***

- Propaganda: inciting the masses, orchestrating jihad, anti-colonial revolt, etc.
- literature, arts, culture
- historiography in national and post-national perspective
- personal testimonies (ego-history)
- public memory and commemoration

## ***Abstracts***

Abstracts and proposals for panels of maximum 500 words should be submitted to [info@ottomanfronts1914-1918.org](mailto:info@ottomanfronts1914-1918.org) with a brief CV of the submitters.

## ***Deadline for submission of abstract: June 1, 2013***

We welcome papers from across a wide range of academic disciplines, including history, politics, anthropology, sociology, economy, literature, art, media, and geography. We especially seek applications from scholars whose work is informed by a broad perspective of war and society.

The papers will be selected according to the novelty of the themes and findings addressed or their potential to take existing debates into a new direction. The academic quality and promise will be assessed by a committee formed of representatives of the organizing institutions. The working languages of the conference will be English and Turkish.

We kindly invite the participants to approach their own institutions in the first instance to cover their costs. Partial support for travel expenses and accommodation of some participants will be provided.

Participants will need to submit their complete papers by February 1, 2014 for their panel discussants to have sufficient time to prepare a response.

## **Organizing Institutions**



## **Supporting Institutions**

Boğaziçi University

İstanbul Bilgi University

IFEA

Sabancı University

İstanbul Şehir University



İstanbul  
Bilgi Üniversitesi  
LAUREATE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES



Institut Français  
d'Études Anatoliques



## **Organizing Committee**

Mehmet Ö. Alkan	(İstanbul University)
Mehmet Beşikçi	(Yıldız Technical University)
Bülent Bilmez	(İstanbul Bilgi University)
Sinan Birdal	(Işık University)
Doğan Çetinkaya	(İstanbul University)
Evangelos Kechriotis	(Boğaziçi University)
Abdulhamit Kırmızı	(İstanbul Şehir University)
Erol Köroğlu	(Boğaziçi University)
Oktay Özel	(Bilkent University)
Akşin Somel	(Sabancı University)
Işık Tamdoğan	(IFEA)
Alexandre Toumarkine	(Orient-Institut Istanbul)
Richard Wittmann	(Orient-Institut Istanbul)
Sinan Yıldırım	(İstanbul University)