

La conscription des Arméniens et des Juifs dans l'Empire ottoman : une triste mascarade

Studies at Fresno State, will give a Zoom presentation on “Living Together Requires Dying Together”: Conscription of Armenians into the Ottoman Army after the 1908 Revolution” at 7:00PM on Friday, September 18, 2020. The presentation is part of the Fall 2020 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation. All Lecture Series events will take place online, and not face-to-face, through the Fall 2020 semester.

After three decades of Hamidian despotism, the July 1908 revolution that restored the constitution and parliament was greeted with joy and hope as people, especially Armenians, regarded it as the end of oppression and the beginning of a new era where different ethno-religious groups would live freely as equal citizens. One of the most essential indicators and necessities of the equal citizenship was the conscription of Christians and Jews who had been exempted from military service in exchange for paying a special tax until that date. As a matter of fact, after the revolution conscription of Christians and Jews became one of the hot debates in the newly formed parliament as well as in the press.

Eventually, in July 1909 the Ottoman parliament abolished all exemptions and military service became compulsory for all males. This talk focuses on these debates and how different Armenian circles, including Armenian MPs, reacted to this idea, what they said and did before and after the promulgation of the conscription law. Armenian opinion leaders, both civil and clergy, were quite enthusiastic about the conscription of Armenian youth. They were encouraging the youth to perform their military duties wholeheartedly as Ottomans. However, there were also some worries, apprehensions, and reservations among Armenians.

The talk will elaborate on these issues. The main sources for the talk are the articles, news pieces in the Armenian press, speeches of Armenian deputies in the parliament as well as official Ottoman documents.

Dr. Kiliçdağı was the Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor at Middle Eastern South Asian and African Studies (MESAAS) at the Columbia University for Spring 2020. He was accepted between 2017 and 2019 as a post-doctoral fellow by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University and completed a pre-doctoral fellowship (2011-2012) at the Armenians Studies Program, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Zoom Registration Link: bit.ly/armenianstudieskilicdagi

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