



**Urban Studies Seminar
2014 - 2015**

Chaired by Prof Ulrike Freitag and Dr Nora Lafi

Monday, May 4th, 2015, 5 pm

Twice a month,
Mondays 5 pm - 7 pm

War, Revolution and Re-making the Urban Margins of Van Province, May-August 1915

Venue:
Conference Hall
Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin-Nikolassee

Lecture by **Yektan Turkeyilmaz** (EUME Fellow at ZMO)

Please register
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Yektan Turkeyilmaz's talk revisits one of the most controversial sites of the Armenian Genocide, the Eastern Anatolia city of Van in 1915 and explores the formation and politics of the short lived Armenian Regional Government in the province.

From April to August 1915 Van became a scene for the most tragic occurrences: Van - the hub of the Young Turk-Dashnag alliance after the 1908 constitutional revolution - is interestingly the first place in the empire where inter-communal coexistence entirely and violently collapsed. Van is also the site in the Ottoman Empire where the genocidal intent of the Young Turk government first materialized. It was the ruling elite's fantasy of an imminent "Armenian conspiracy" that triggered the so-called Armenian Rebellion in April 1915. Van Armenians managed to resist the government's utterly exterminationist repression after a month long struggle.

Soon after, Van became the first Ottoman city to fall under Russian occupation in May 1915, which was preceded by the evacuation of the city by the Ottoman bureaucracy and Muslim inhabitants. At a time when the rest of the Ottoman-Armenians were being subjected to widespread arrests, deadly deportations and unprecedented massacres, Van Armenians were building their own rule in the province under Russian protection. By the end of July 1915, the Russian military authorities unexpectedly ordered the evacuation of the city by the remaining inhabitants, mostly Armenian. In August 1915, historic Van was already entirely in ruins and a ghost city.

For this presentation drawing on Armenian, Ottoman and Russian archival documents, periodicals, memoirs, photographic and cartographic materials and secondary sources Turkeyilmaz will discuss the creation a new hierarchy of urban power relations along lines of class, spatial allegiance, ethnic and political in the course of the Armenian Regional Government in Van. His analysis opens a critical window into the contradictions and multiple layers of Van Armenians' victimization in 1915, which monolithic and Manichean portrayals have too often rendered invisible.

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Studien**

Yektan Turkeyilmaz is currently a EUME fellow at the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin, Germany. He taught at Sabanci and Bilgi Universities addressing the debates around the notions of collective violence, memory making and reconciliation. Turkeyilmaz received his PhD from Duke University Department of Cultural Anthropology. He wrote his dissertation on: *Rethinking Genocide: Violence and Victimhood in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1915*.