



Urban Studies Seminar 2011 - 2012

Chaired by Prof. Ulrike Freitag and Dr. Nora Lafi

Annual theme: Urban Sociability and Urban Movements (Middle East, North Africa, Iran, Turkey)

Monday, February 27th, 2012, 5 pm

ZMO-EUME-Colloquium

Twice a month,
Mondays 17:00-19:00

Venue:

Conference Hall
Zentrum Moderner Orient
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14129 Berlin-Nikolassee

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The seminar is a joint activity of
the Zentrum Moderner Orient
(ZMO) and 'Europe in the Middle
East - The Middle East in Europe'
(EUME).

EUME is a project at



which is funded by



Senatsverwaltung für Bildung,
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Sea Transport Workers between Urban and Rural: Sociabilities and Mobilizations of Şirket-i Hayriye Workers

Lecture by Nurşen Gürboğa

With its spectacular size, and political and economic importance, Istanbul has been always a magnet for workers. The city was a land of opportunity in the nineteenth and early twentieth century for the workers who joined labor market by tens of thousands from the provinces, seeking employment in that commercial and industrial entrepot. In this lecture the focus will be on the living and working experience and labor activism of the workers of a steamship line, Şirket-i Hayriye, which provided transport service on the waterfronts of Bosphorus from the mid nineteenth century to 1944. With its workers, ranging from 500 to 800, Şirket-i Hayriye was one of the biggest enterprises in Istanbul. Great majority of the workers were made up of mariners who followed various migratory strategies to work in the company and to keep their ties to the provinces of origin on the coastal line of the Black Sea region of Anatolia. The Şirket-i Hayriye workers constituted one of the militant laboring groups in Istanbul as well. They went on work stoppages several times in the late 1870s and participated in the great strike upsurges of 1908 and 1925. A great majority of Şirket-i Hayriye workers were also in close contact with leftist movements by 1920. In this lecture, Şirket-i Hayriye workers' source of militancy and solidarity, their ways of struggle and organization will be examined in relation to their professional identities and various networks they built around their professional identities.

Nurşen Gürboğa is a EUME Fellow at ZMO in Berlin. She received a Master of Arts in history from Boğaziçi University in İstanbul and a Ph. D. in Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History of Boğaziçi University in 2005. Her dissertation is published by Osmanlı Bank Research Center Publications in 2009 under the title of *Mine Workers, the State and War, Zonguldak Coal Basin as the Site of Contest: 1920-1947*. She is a lecturer in Marmara University's department of Political Science and International Relations. Her research interests include the social history of the Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey, labor history and social movements.