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Diyarbakir 1915: Deportations, Massacres, and New Alliances Among the Local Elites



**A lecture by Ayhan Aktar
Bilgi University (Istanbul, Turkey)**

**4 PM / Wednesday, March 27, 2013
10383 Bunche Hall / UCLA**

Ayhan Aktar, professor of International Relations at Bilgi University in Istanbul, will speak on the tragic events that took place in Diyarbakir from 1914 to 1919. His presentation will focus on war, mobilization, the deportations of Armenians, and the flood of Muslim refugees from Eastern Anatolia, which was under Russian occupation from May 1915 to October 1917. The analysis of the social and economic structure of Diyarbakir prior to the war and its later transformation provides clues to understanding how Kurdish local notables and the nationalist bureaucrats appointed by Istanbul acted together to form a new political consensus. In Diyarbakir, the expulsion and massacres of the Armenian community not only altered the ethnic and religious composition of the city's urban population but also reshaped the nature of local notables' allegiance to the center. The analysis of the tragic events that took place in Diyarbakir during the First World War enables us to interpret the political attitudes of Kurdish notables, Unionist bureaucrats, and Armenian urban elites in a so-called buffer zone where the Ottoman and Russian Empires clashed and later collapsed.