

# THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE DURING WORLD WAR I

## INTRODUCTION

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Interest in the history of the final years of the Ottoman Empire has intensified in recent years, as evidenced by the appearance of a sizable number of studies on various aspects of the Second Constitutional Period. The World War I era, however, has been relatively neglected. The study of the Empire during the Great War has mostly remained in the domain of military and diplomatic historians, while the impact of the war on national politics, society, and culture has been ignored.

This used to be the case in other “national” historiographies as well. Recently, however, an increasing amount of work has appeared in which World War I and its impact have come to the fore. Reading these studies for comparative purposes, a group of young scholars of the late Ottoman Empire strongly felt the lack of similar emphasis in their own field. Thus, the idea was born to organize a workshop on this topic. Koç University agreed to host and finance such a workshop, which met at its İstinye campus in Istanbul from July 23 to 25, 1998, and was entitled “The Ottoman Empire during World War I.” During the course of the workshop, ten young scholars delivered papers on topics of their own interest, but all were situated within the context of the war. Feroz Ahmad of the University of Massachusetts at Boston, Nur Bilge Criss of Bilkent University, and Zafer Toprak of Boğaziçi University commented on the papers. Erik Jan Zürcher was invited to deliver general comments at the end of the workshop, while Hasan Kayalı of the University of California at San Diego also made some very useful contributions to the lively discussions.

Two articles that follow here—by Isa Blumi of New York University and Gottfried Hagen (currently at Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Germany but moving soon to the University of Michigan)—are based on papers delivered during this workshop. A subsequent issue of *New Perspectives on Turkey* will carry more articles based on papers given

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during the workshop. I would like to thank Atilla Aşkar, provost of Koç University, and Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science at Koç University, for their support during the organization of this workshop. I would also like to point out that without the assistance of Filiz Koca, the workshop and the activities connected with it would not have run so smoothly.