

Editors' Letter

This issue of *New Perspectives on Turkey* brings together five articles from disciplines ranging from history and media studies to film studies. Nevertheless, although published in an open issue, there is a noteworthy common thread in the essays in issue no. 53; namely, a focus on communication, especially between state and society, through petitions, cartoons, and film.

Cengiz Kırılı's article examines the struggle of the people of Ottoman Vranje against its governor Hüseyin Paşa during the period of the Tanzimat reforms. His focus is on the petitions—perhaps one of the earliest mediums of communication to have strong relevance to the expression of public opinion—sent to İstanbul by the disgruntled population of Vranje in the run-up to armed resistance. Kırılı illustrates the interplay between the governor's resistance to the Tanzimat and the locals' resistance against him. The next article also tackles communication, but this time in the age of online communities. Ivo Furman's essay discusses how the technological infrastructure of a communications medium influences the culture of an online community. Adopting a socio-technical (STS) approach to online communities and computer-mediated communication, Furman's article introduces and explores the communication culture of Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) active in Turkey between 1995 and 1996, using a sample from a privately-owned archive of correspondences from "Hitnet." The next essay, by Bahar Aykan and Sanem Güvenç-Salgırlı, is on the Ministry of Health's media campaign on quitting smoking and preventing obesity. Examining the ministry's "public spots," the authors argue that this new means of communication flowing from the state to society operates as a form of neoliberal governmentality. Then, Gökçen Başaran İnce studies the political cartoons published in pro-government newspapers to unravel how the Free Republican Party, which was formed and dissolved in 1930 as a state-instigated opposition party, was represented in this particular medium. For this task, she takes advantage of political cartoons' ability to simplify complex political messages into understandable symbols and metaphors, to support the text in a newspaper, and to penetrate historical memory through stereotypes. The final article in this issue is about gender and memory in the films of Tomris Giritlioğlu and Yeşim Ustaoglu. Pelin Başçı uses these two directors' films, which have themes pertaining to ethnic minorities, to examine the recording of personal stories in order to complicate nationalist narratives and the gendering of trauma as female suffering inflicted by patriarchal authority. She concludes that the directors engage in feminist politics by questioning the relationship between women and the nation.

In this second issue published in 2015, *New Perspectives on Turkey* marks the centennial of the Armenian genocide through a review of and about recent scholarship on this historical event. In a review article, Mark Baker discusses recent books by Taner Akçam, Fatma Müge Göçek, Ronald Grigor Suny, and Uğur Umut Üngör. He points out that these books make important contributions to our understanding of the violence in that period, as well as helping us understand the causes and consequences of the long-standing denial in Turkey of the extreme violence committed against Armenians. Then, in the Debate section, four scholars from different disciplines discuss the understudied aspects of the Armenian genocide, particularly with respect to historiography, literature, gender, and property relations. Thanks to the contributions of Bedross Der Matossian, Mehmet Polatel, Lerna Ekmekçiöğlü, and Mehmet Fatih Uslu, we are confident that this debate will contribute to opening up new and fruitful avenues of research and analysis in studying this major catastrophe, which proved, with great tragedy, to be a decisive event in the making of different histories and presents for people not only in this part of the world, but also for millions living quite far away.

We will continue to publish such debates in the future. Our motivation in doing this is to provoke discussion and a critical exchange of ideas among scholars studying similar social and historical issues. We hope that the Debate section in *New Perspectives on Turkey* will serve as a platform both for presenting the state of the field and for delineating major faultlines in recent scholarships on Turkey.

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