

# THE PROMISE ARMENIAN INSTITUTE AT UCLA

## DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES



# CEMAL PASHA'S ROLE IN THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020 | 11 AM PDT (2 PM EDT)

ZOOM WEBINAR: REGISTRATION REQUIRED AND FREE

RSVP at [bit.ly/PAI2Web](https://bit.ly/PAI2Web)



Lecturer

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Discussant

**Ronald G. Suny, Ph.D.**

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University Professor of History at the  
University of Michigan and Emeritus  
Professor of Political Science and History at  
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## ABSTRACT

One popular view of Cemal Pasha among non-historians has emphasized his role as one of the “Three Pashas” (along with Talat Pasha and Enver Pasha) who were largely responsible for the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during the Armenian Genocide (1914-1923). Yet in scholarly writings, many historians have argued that, although Cemal Pasha was very harsh in his treatment of Arabs and Jews, he opposed the annihilationist policies directed toward the Armenians. In fact, the prevailing view has been that Cemal Pasha not only tried to treat Armenians well but actively worked to rescue them, to the extent that his efforts opened a serious rift between him and the Unionist government in Istanbul. The testimonies of some survivors of the Armenian Genocide appear on the surface to support this latter view. For example, two Genocide survivors are quoted as follows: “Talat sent Cemal the [following] order...from Istanbul: Not even a dog should be left on the streets. In other words, annihilate the Armenians; but [Cemal] acted cleverly and killed all the stray dogs; As for the Armenians, [he ordered] ‘Change your names as if you’ve become [Muslim] Turks... I will send a telegram [to Istanbul] stating that ‘No Armenians remain here, all have already converted, and there are no Armenians left to kill.’”

According to new research by Professor Akçam, neither oft-repeated view of Cemal Pasha is entirely accurate. There were no major disagreements between the authorities in Istanbul and Cemal Pasha over Armenian policy; rather, they were in nearly complete accord. Indeed, in many aspects the latter’s policies can be seen as more radical than those of his collaborators in Istanbul. In his talk, Professor Akçam will present a reevaluation of Cemal Pasha’s role in the Armenian Genocide in light of recently discovered Ottoman documents. Professor Ronald Grigor Suny will provide commentary on this work, followed by Q&A.

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(Photos provided by Professors Akçam and Suny)