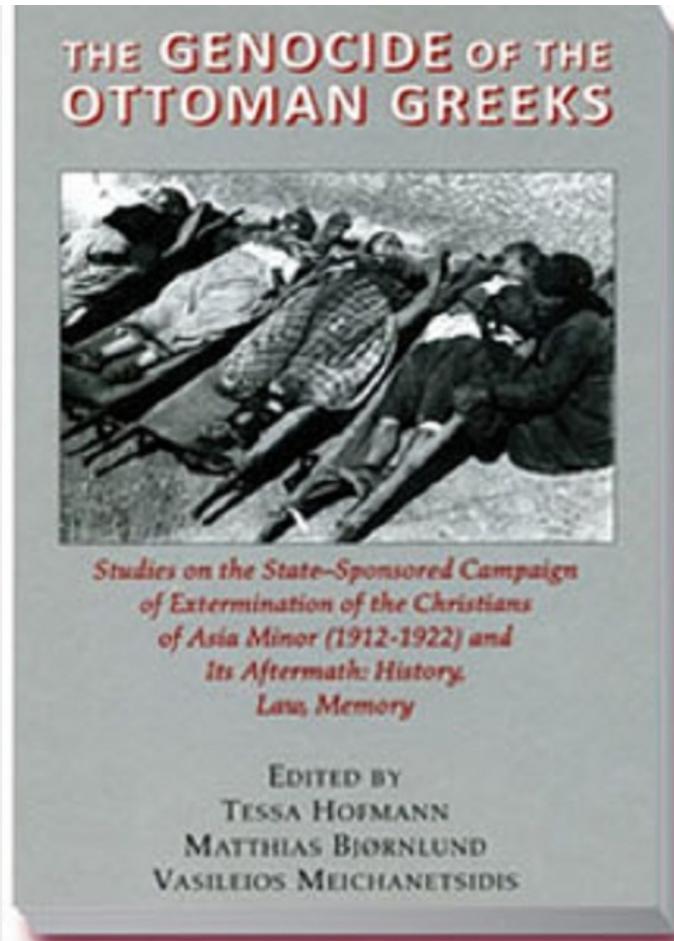


BERLIN MOSQUE HONORS GENOCIDE PERPETRATORS

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An interview with Dr. Tessa Hofmann

The below interview with Dr. Tessa Hofmann was conducted by Hamo Moskofian for Keghart.com on October 2, 2012 in Berlin. Dr. Hofmann is a long-time scholar of Genocide.

HM.- You recently published an important book that was presented in Greece.

TH.- It is the first academic collective monograph in English dealing with the Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks. I had always felt, when I began to study the Armenian Genocide 40 years ago, that it was the tip of the iceberg, that the real dimension of this state crime was much larger than against the 2.5 million Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. It was a genocide against the Christian nationals of the Ottoman Empire. This holistic approach is necessary to understand that the Young Turk perpetrators of the Genocide of the Armenians, their Kemalist successors, and the serial perpetrators committed this crime to rid the Ottoman Empire of a quarter of its population, every resident who was Christian. Now the percentage of the Christian population in Turkey is less than one percent! The Greek-Orthodox community has 1,200 members only. The Armenian community is the largest, with 40,000 to 60,000. So what the Young Turk perpetrators planned after the revolution of 1908 materialized in the extermination of the Christians in their second homeland in the Middle East, after Palestine which is the first homeland of Christianity.

HM.- What are your plans regarding further academic studies and in publishing books in various languages?

TH.- Besides Genocide studies, I have done related Armenian studies, including migration studies. It was conducted in an international research project, which took place in Armenia, Russia and Georgia. It was a comparative research about migration from Armenia and neighboring Georgia. This is an urgent issue...the loss of people and why?

Second, I published in Armenia a long essay on identity. The Armenian identity is unique and diversified, depending where Armenians are living and to which generation they belong to. The Armenian identity in the U.S or France differs from that of Armenians in Moscow, Turkey, Syria and Lebanon. Of course, it differs from the identity of *Hayasdantsiner*, *Karabaghtsiner* also. I did research on the Armenian identity. Usually there are five and are differently focused in different communities: religion, language, Genocide awareness, culture. In Turkey we have a slightly different, but unique, picture.

Third, I certainly will continue my studies in philology and in migration issues.

Regarding the Genocide, I am focusing on four groups of participants, plus the cult of the perpetrators which is acute in Turkey. Imagine, for comparison, in Germany the main street would be named after Hitler or Goebbels; or the churches be named after Holocaust perpetrators. In Ankara a mosque is named after Tal'aat Pasha. Likewise schools and kindergartens. There's a regional and

nationwide cult of Genocide perpetrators in Turkey. In the Turkish diaspora, in Berlin for example, you can visit the "Shehidlik Jami" (Martyrs' Mosque), where two of the Genocide perpetrators--Jemal Azmi and Dr. Behaedin Shakir--are buried. The Turkish community, with the support of a Berlin Azeri organization "donated" richly-decorated tombs with marble and golden inscriptions in three languages which say: "Here are the martyrs ('shehids') that the Armenian terrorists shot". They present these Genocide criminals as martyrs killed by Armenian "criminals".

Berlin authorities have not responded to complaints about the Turkish glorification of these mass murderers. The authorities have told journalists that the mosque is extraterritorial land, like an embassy! This is the background to the situation: Long ago the Prussians gave the land, as a gift, to the Ottomans. We have no way of stopping the cult of these two mass murderers. We don't have a memorial for the Christian victims of the Ottoman Genocide. We are working on it, but it seems it is much easier in Berlin to build a memorial for the Genocide perpetrators.

A second focus will be on the "Oscar Schindlers of the Ottoman Genocide"-- civilians or administrators, who tried to save victims, sometimes, successfully. Their names must be commemorated as the true heroes of Ottoman history...so as to give positive role models for young people in Turkey and outside.

