

Ruth L. Barnett, *B.Sc.*, 73 Fortune Green Road, W. Hampstead NW6 1DR
Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist & BAPPS registered supervisor
Tel.: 020 7794 7968 email: rutheclb@gmail.com

An den
Bundestagspräsidenten
Prof. Dr. Norbert Lammert
Deutscher Bundestag
Platz der Republik 1
11011 Berlin

8/11/14

COMMEMORATION OF THE OTTOMAN GENOCIDE AGAINST ITS CHRISTIAN PEOPLE

Dear Prof. Lammert,

I write to you as a Berliner who came to England on the Kindertransport at age four in 1939 to escape almost certain death at the hands of the Nazis.

As a London supporter, I am deeply disappointed to learn from the Arbeitsgruppe Anerkennung - Gegen Genozid, für Völkerverständigung e.V. (AGA) that the German Federal Government has so far made no significant contribution to reconciliation between Armenians and Turks, an issue to which AGA has devoted so much time and energy. Furthermore, the government continues to avoid its responsibility, as German officers were with the Ottoman military that perpetrated this genocide, to recognise the Ottoman acts as constituting the crime of genocide as defined by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. I would emphasise that this UN definition was based on the word 'genocide' coined by Raphael Lemkin in relation to the Ottoman Genocide. That the Ottoman Genocide was perpetrated before the UN accepted genocide as a crime in International Law does not in any way detract from the fact that it was genocide.

April 24th 2015 will be the centenary of the horrific massacre by the Young Turks of the spiritual, intellectual and economic leaders of the Armenian community in Constantinople (now Istanbul) to terrorise the rest of the community. This was the beginning of the genocide in which approximately two million Christians were murdered by planned eviction from their homes, death marches into the desert, and deliberate killings. Do you not agree that it is time to face the whole issue of genocide by acknowledging the Ottoman Genocide and commemorating the victims of this genocide that created impunity for the perpetrators of the Holocaust and all the genocides that have been allowed to take place since?

The omission of commemoration of the Ottoman Genocide is a form of denial that has manifestly toxic effects not only in the continuing conflict between the Turkish and Armenian communities today, but also makes a substantial contribution to the tension between current European communities and their minorities. Failure to face the whole issue of genocide, and its long term negative

effects on the welfare and cohesion of communities, underlies the increasing problems of rising anti-Semitism, intolerance towards minorities, especially migrants, Roma and asylum-seekers, and the growing indifference to the suffering of persecuted people.

I have written a book, "Love, Hate and Indifference: the slide into Genocide" that will be published in January 2015 by the UK National Holocaust Centre in Laxton, in which I put a strong case for humanity to face the whole issue of genocide and wake up to the toxic effects of continued indifference and denial.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Ruth Barnett,
Writer and speaker challenging stereotypes, prejudice and
racism. Ruth L. Barnett, B.Sc., 73 Fortune Green Road, W. Hampstead
NW6 1DR
