

The story of a one-sided love: Jews in Kemalist Turkey pre-1948

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Abstract

When the Turkish Republic was established, the majority of Jews had positive expectations of the new regime. Many of them shared the Kemalists' enthusiasm for progress and secularization. Prominent representatives of the Jewish community repeatedly voiced the hope that the Jews of Turkey would merge into Turkish society on the basis of equal rights and obligations and become Turks of Jewish faith.

But they would soon realize that these hopes were not fulfilled. Jews, like other non-Muslims, became targets of nationalist campaigns, were forced out of their jobs, and their communal rights were restricted. Their willingness to adapt was not rewarded. Official representatives of the Jewish community kept trying in vain to prove their loyalty to the Turkish state in addresses of devotion and even with donations to the Turkish Red Crescent or the Turkish airline. But all these efforts did the Jews little good. Time and again, they were reminded that they had been taken in as "guests" and were expected to show appropriate gratitude.

Faced with the nationalist and, in part, anti-Jewish climate of the young Turkish Republic almost half of the Jews decided to emigrate from Turkey.

Bio

Corry Guttstadt received her masters in Turkology and history from Hamburg University and her Ph.D. in history from the same University. Currently she is Co-director of the Turkey-Europa Zentrum at Hamburg University (Department of Turkology).

She has been teaching at the department of Turkology of Hamburg University and worked as a researcher at the "Verein Aktives Museum" in Berlin (2019-2021) and as a project manager and researcher at the Anne-Frank-Zentrum, Berlin (2010-2012). She earned numerous fellowships (USHMM, Yad Vashem, foundation pour le mémoire de la Shoah, Vienna Wiesenthal Institute).

Her main fields of research are Turkey's minority policies, especially towards Jews and anti-Semitism in Turkey. She is currently working on an edited volume on Anti-Semitism in and from Turkey.

Her Ph.D. Turkey the Jews and the Holocaust is based on research in about fifty archives worldwide. It was first published in Germany in 2008 (Die Türkei die Juden und der Holocaust, Assoziation A, 2008) in Turkey in 2012 (İletişim) and in English with Cambridge University Press (2013). Numerous publications and articles on topics like minorities and human rights in Turkey, anti-Semitism, Kurdish People, Armenians, nationalism, migration etc.

Among her last books are:

Zwischen Aufbruch und Verfolgung: Migrationsgeschichten türkischer Juden im 20. Jahrhundert, (in print).

MUESTROS DEZAPARESIDOS – Mémorial de Judéo-Espagnols déporté de France, with Henriette Asséo, Annie Bellaïche Cohen, Muriel Flicoteaux, Xavier Rothéa, Sabi Soulam, Alain de Toledo (eds.), June 2019.

Bystanders, rescuers or perpetrators? The Neutrals and the Shoah, IHRA series, vol. 2, Berlin, Metropol, with Thomas Lutz, Bernd Rother and Yessica San Roman (eds.), 2016.

Wege ohne Heimkehr - an Anthology of Armenian reports of Deported and Survivors in Literature and Memories, 2014.