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PETITION AGAINST DENIALISM

Dear members of the Academic and Intellectual Community

We are inviting you to sign a petition, whereby the Chancellery of Austria is asked not to support financially publishers in Austria who include denialist literature in their publisher's lists.

At issue here is "Die Armenierfrage" [The Armenian Question] published in January 2007 by Wieser Verlag in Klagenfurt, Austria. This work is authored by Yusuf Halacoglu, president of the Turkish Historical Society (TTK: Tuerk Tarih Kurumu, a branch of the Turkish state apparatus). Mr. Prof. Halacoglu [Halacoglu] is heading the campaign by the Turkish state to deny the Armenian genocide.

Wieser Verlag [Wieser Publishers: <http://www.wieser-verlag.com>] specializes in Eastern European Literature, Society and History (and its connections to Austria). It is a respected Austrian publisher. Because of its intended stated purpose of bridging cultural and national divides it receives general subsidies (order of 60 to 100 thousand dollars US) semi-annually from the Austrian Chancellery (presidency).

In the same context of bridging divides, Lojze Wieser, head of the publishing house, has published Yusuf Halacoglu's latest book. Moreover, Wieser has written in the front cover of the book, and has expressed similar views in the presentation of the new publications appearing in spring 2007 (click "Neuerscheinungen", then "Fruehjahrskatalog 2007", p. 31; and "antescriptum", p. 2).

Wieser denounces the "continuous repetition of old accusations", and through Halacoglu's work he hopes to present "another Turkish view onto the Armenian question, in order to facilitate discussion, not least supported by the wish to break the taboo on this burdened and burdening topic." He pledges to continue facilitating publications in support of this "over-due debate – even if [he] does not, or not fully, consent to the content of the publications, as long as the texts are carried by the wish to make steps towards each-other, rather than further divide human beings." He states that it is not his role as a publisher to "play Censor."

In our view, Wieser's argument is highly problematic. It simply turns around all the points denouncing official Turkish denialism – and it certainly divides, rather than tries to unite human beings.

The "repetition of old accusations" would now mean the "imperialists" denouncing alleged (but actually invented) atrocities against the Armenians. Halacoglu, who according to Wieser "for the first time, offers another Turkish view" (Fruehjahrskatalog 2007, P. 2; totally absurd in view of Halacoglu's repetition of denialist arguments old as the genocide itself) would contribute to shatter the "taboo-topic."

"Nothing but opening our eyes, helps when it comes to the Turk's image in Europe." (ibid.)
Opening eyes, would mean to finally recognize that "Turks" at that time didn't do anything wrong, and we should all recognize that any talk about this so-called Armenian genocide is only, wrongfully-maliciously, used to tarnish the image of the Turks in Europe.

We believe, this clearly needs rectification – not least because it is issued by an otherwise respected Austrian/European publisher. We welcome if you could write comments on Halacoglu's work, and/or if you could sign our petition.

It is sad enough that such writings are published at all by European publishers – but it is unacceptable that they are supported with public funds who are meant to facilitate steps towards reconciliation. This is what our petition is about. Please sign it, if possible by April 15, by forwarding this mail to kontakt@voelkermord.at – indicating your name (title), and occupation as well as state/country. Or send a fax by which you state your wish to sign the petition against denialism to ++43 (1) 4277 9 142.

Best regards,

Völkermord.at - Gesellschaft zur Dokumentation von Völkermorden, Wien, Österreich
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Internationales Zentrum für Menschenrechte der Kurden, Bonn, Deutschland
Prof. Dr. Vahakn N. Dadrian, Director of Genocide Research at the Zoryan Institute,
Toronto, Kanada
Dr. Rouben Paul Adalian, Director of the Armenian National Institute - ANI,
Washington D.C., USA
Dr. Aram Arkun, Assistant Director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center,
New York, USA
Prof. Dr. Roger W. Smith, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, USA
Dr. Gerayer Koutcharian, Informations- und Dokumentationszentrum Armenien, Freie Universität,
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Dr. Tessa Hofmann, Freie Universität, Berlin, Deutschland
Peter Balakian, Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities, Colgate
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