POLITICALLY CHARGED ACTIONS BLANKET HISTORICAL EVENTS

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The U.S. state of Indiana has unfortunately become another entity that has decided to involve itself in the historical debate surrounding the events of 1915. Like every other US state before it, Indianas decision to involve itself in this debate was not out of a desire facilitate establishment of historical facts to serve reconciliation, but rather to serve political interests.

The political nature of the Indianas decision to portray the events of 1915 as genocide and how historical truth was sacrificed by such a decision can easily be seen by looking at the declaration of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).[1] After Governor of Indiana Eric J. Holcomb signed the declaration regarding the events of 1915, ANC of Indiana Chairperson Seda Arzumanyan made the made the following declaration:

> The Armenian community in Indiana is small, but mighty ☀ Armenians have called Indiana home for several generations and have made noteworthy contributions to the development of our great state. We are glad to see the Hoosier State join the rest of the nation in properly memorializing and condemning this horrific atrocity and look forward to celebrating our culture and heritage with our fellow Indianans during the week of November 6-12 and beyond.[2]

There are five issues in this declaration which should not be overlooked.

The first issue here is that for organizations such as ANCA, their of actions are all about ensuring the alienation of a certain group of people (in this case, people of Turkish descent). More specifically, such actions are not about reconciliation between the Turkish and Armenian communities. Diaspora Armenian organizations such as ANCA are not interested in rapprochement between Armenians and Turks. Rather, they are interested in exacting vengeance from and generating hate towards people of Turkish descent. Analyzing the discourse put forth, diaspora Armenian organizations clearly demonstrate their Turcophobic mindsets that oftentimes go so far as to justify terrorism (one would be hard pressed to find any diaspora Armenian organization condemning the acts of terrorism perpetrated against Turkish diplomats by ASALA and JCAG).

Secondly, the anti-Turkish Armenian discourse voiced by such organizations as ANCA would like to bury the historical events of 1915 under a pile of political rubble. More specifically, they would like to ensure the actual details of tragic historical events of 1915 are not discussed in scholarly manner. They cannot let the historians or scholars deal with

the facts surrounding the events of 1915, because allowing them to do so would reveal the shady politics to which the debate about the events of 1915 is subjected to. As they have stated at the beginning of their statement, they wanted to prove their might.

Thirdly, as ANCA so accurately implies and states in its statement, this recognition is not about history or truth. It is about the identity of the Armenian diaspora. After this declaration, as ANCA has stated, the Armenian diaspora has proven how mighty it is. Why would a diaspora community, need to prove it is might? It is actually very simple. As with other Armenian diaspora communities, concerned with integration and assimilation to the main stream, the Indiana community is using this and other types of proclamations as a way to define its identity.

Fourthly, the Proclamation signed by the Governor of Indiana states the following:

> WHEREAS, from 1915-1923 during the Armenian Genocide, one and one-half million ethnic Armenian men, women and children as well as over one million Greeks, Assyrians, Syriacs and others were massacred as part of the planned complete eradication of those indigenous communities by the Ottoman Turkish Empire during the first modern genocide that still requires justice; and....[3]

Here, the most important part seems that the proclamation seems to deal with multiple nations. Specifically it seems to deal with Armenian, Greeks, Assyrians, Syriacs populations in the Ottoman Empire.[4] Then it carelessly uses the words and others. Why are individuals whose members died in the years the of the First World War less valued compared to Armenian, Greeks, Assyrians and Syriacs? More specifically, why hasnt State of Indiana and its Governor did not mention the Muslim population which perished in Anatolia. Why didnt the proclamation mention any Turks that have died during the conflict of 1915? Are Turks, as a nation less valued then Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians or Syriacs?

Fifthly, apparently the Proclamation has been made against the Ottoman Turkish governments crimes. Furthermore, apparently, the actions of the Ottoman Empire still requires justice. However, the State of Indiana and its Governor have forgotten something major.[5] What about the crimes committed by the Armenians gangs and revolutionaries before and during the events of 1915? What about the murders they have committed against Ottoman Muslims? Why does Proclamation fail mention the crimes they have committed? Is it because mentioning such crimes would automatically force third-party people to question their assumptions regarding the events of 1915 and how Armenians are portrayed purely as the victims and Turks are portrayed purely as the perpetrators? Or is it because the life and death of Turks and Muslims are not worth mentioning?

May be the words of Harut Sassounian, a notorious Armenian American journalist known for his deep-seated hostility towards anything Turkey and Turkish, best explains the proclamation made by the State of Indiana and signed by its Governor. In one relevant article, he writes that recognition of Armenian genocide by states has a propaganda meaning, it can be beneficial from this perspective.[6] It should never be forgotten that historical truth and furthermore step for reconciliation should not be sacrificed to propaganda.

**Photo: Anca.org*

[1] Indiana Becomes 48th U.S. State to Recognize the Armenian Genocide, *Armenian National Committee of America*, November 6, 2017, https://anca.org/indiana-becomes-48th-u-s-state-to-recognize-the-armenian-genocide/.

[2] Indiana Becomes 48th U.S. State to Recognize the Armenian Genocide.

[3] Indiana Becomes 48th State to Recognize the Armenian Genocide, *The Armenian Weekly*, November 6, 2017, sec. Headline, https://armenianweekly.com/2017/11/06/indiana-becomes-48th-state-recognize-armenian-genocide/.

[4] Indiana Becomes 48th State to Recognize the Armenian Genocide.

[5] Indiana Becomes 48th U.S. State to Recognize the Armenian Genocide.

[6] Recognition of Amernian Genocide by U.S. State of Indiana Is Moral and Propaganda Benefit - Harut Sassounian, *ArmenPress*, November 7, 2017, https://armenpress.am/eng/news/911587/recognition-of-armenian-genocide-by-us-state-of-indiana-is-moral-and-propaganda-benefit---harut-sassounian.html.

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