

NO, MR. WIESEL, YOU DON'T SPEAK ON MY BEHALF!

Posted on June 30, 2016 by Keghart



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In the next few weeks we will see/hear a great deal of positive coverage about the life and work of the late Elie Wiesel who died over the weekend at the age of 87. Despite his much balihooed reputation, Wiesel was far from being a saint as evidenced by the politics he played, among other issues, with the Armenian Genocide. Below are two articles published in 2007.- Editor (03-07-2016)

Dikran Abrahamian BA, MD October 31, 2007

A Lebanese identity card written in Arabic states as follows:

Name & Surname: Joseph Abrahamian

Date and Place of Birth: 1916, Adana

Religion: Armenian Orthodox

That's my late father's identification in my hand. He passed away at the age of 69 back in 1985 in one of the prairie cities out west up north. There isn't much joy in telling about his childhood. Misery and deprivation were his constant companions on the way of escaping from the Genocide in a boat. He landed in a Greek port with my grandfather and uncle. He was initially brought up without a mother; later his step-mother took over the upbringing of the two little boys. The whereabouts of my biological grandmother and her fate are not known. Like so many other grandmothers who were either raped, abducted, perished or lost, she ultimately "vanished"...Rumor has it that she was a beautiful woman and prior to the atrocities a certain Turkish Pasha was "attracted" to her.

I'll stop there. The subsequent Odyssey of my grandfather and his two sons are not relevant to what I'd like to tell the distinguished Nobel Laureate Mr. Elie Wiesel. It is prompted by his recent bizarre statements that he made in an interview with *The Philadelphia Jewish Voice*.

Mr. Wiesel, I guess chronologically I should be considered as a second generation survivor. My question to you is very simple. You are a survivor of the Holocaust, and there is no doubt in my mind that you have told stories after stories about your horrible experiences to your family, friends and the world. Did anybody give you permission to do so? Were you told by anyone to *remember*? Why on earth then you give to yourself the cavalier attitude of speaking on my behalf. I require nobody's permission, including yours, to remember, and ask others to remember.

Simply because you are a Holocaust survivor does give you neither the moral nor the legal right to tell me what I want and what I do not want. You must be deluded to think that I don't ask the Turks to take responsibility for the horrible crimes that their ancestors committed. No, Mr. Wiesel, you are wrong when you assert that "seven generations separate us from the events that happened in World War I". What, you think the likes of me are hares that procreate and multiply in no time? Was it a slip of the tongue, or an insinuation that it happened a long time ago and it's not worth fighting over it? I do remember well what I was told in so many vivid terms. Even Turkish scholars acknowledge that the Turks of today have to take responsibility by acknowledging the past; they differ only in what to call it.

What on earth was going through your mind when you stated, "The Armenians don't want reparations", and "they don't even want an apology"? Shame! An apology is owed not only to Armenians, it is owed to humanity. I thought you would have understood that by now. I am disillusioned. I respected you as a scholar, a humanitarian, a Human Rights activist, and foremost as a survivor, because I never made any distinctions between an Armenian, a Jew, a Cambodian, a Rwandan or a Darfurian when Genocide was involved.

It was back in mid 1960's when I was in my early twenties that I visited Adana. Unfortunately it was winter; not so pleasant roads hampered my short visit to go around and explore. I could not see much, specially the orchards that I had heard about. It was sort of a pilgrimage and I was somewhat content with what could be achieved under the circumstances. My question to you Mr. Wiesel is why did I go to Adana? Explain it in whatever way and terms you want. The crux of the matter is that there is a yearning to go back, to see the land, kneel and honour the people who were sacrificed and loudly say, "This land belonged to my ancestors, it is my rightful inheritance, you stole it in the most fiendish brutal way! I have come to reclaim it."

One final point does exact your patience. Why is it that your friend prefers to use "tantamount to Genocide" and you try in an obtuse manner reminding that the word Genocide did not exist at the time the Armenians were massacred? You are well aware that your compatriot Lemkin had exactly the Armenian massacres in mind when he was deliberating what to call the tragic phenomenon and enact laws that would prevent such occurrences. He was fully aware that a calamity of the sort could be in the making, and his people would be the victim. Otherwise how to explain his pleas to his father, family and friends to leave their homes and move to safer countries? Another great compatriot of yours immortalized the heroic stand of *Musa Dagh* to tell his own people of what could happen, and inspire them to resist and fight. Have you forgotten Mr. Wiesel? It seems you have not followed your own advice to remember. I need not remind you of your other compatriot who was one of the first diplomats who talked about race extermination. You know it all too well, better than many.

Please, enough of this crippled game on words and twisting arguments. You are treading along a path which is not any different than what some "progressive" scholars in Turkey are trying to do. To make things palatable to their respective audiences, some have even contemplated using translations of expressions in Armenian when the word Genocide was not coined yet.

No, Mr. Wiesel, you don't speak on my behalf!

