


# ARMENIAN GROUP TAKES CBC TO TASK

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April 28, 2015

Ms. Esther Enkin


CBC, Ombudsman

P.O. Box 500 Station A Toronto, Ontario

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Dear Madam,

The CBC Alert Desk issued an internal memo to staff covering the Armenian Genocide centennial commemorations and instructed them that "the common term Armenian genocide should be qualified when used in our reporting." Details of the unfortunate memo were first posted on the Canadaland media watch website.

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commemorations and instructed them that "the common term Armenian genocide should be qualified when used in our reporting." Details of the unfortunate memo were first posted on the Canadaland media watch website.

To justify its policy instructions, the CBC memo went on to state: "Turkey has refused to classify the mass killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turks during the First World War as genocide. Turkish authorities consider the deaths a legitimate military response to revolution and banditry."

The memo also stated "critics, however, have questioned whether the killings between 1915 and 1916 were actually part of an orchestrated, systematic attempt at extermination--a key component in their definition of genocide." The guidelines concluded that "while some governments and many scholars label the killings genocide, it's important to acknowledge that Turkey and others do not."

The CBC memo reads like a page from the Turkish government denial book. It's shocking to watch our publicly-funded corporation become an instrument of historical revisionism. The memo undermines CBC's credibility and integrity. Thus in contrast to the 'Globe and Mail', 'Toronto Star', 'Montreal Gazette', 'Ottawa Citizen', the Sun newspaper chain, CTV and other media outlets, the CBC is the only major Canadian media outlet which has adopted such a regressive policy.

The 'Montreal Gazette' policy states: "It seems clear from the historical record that what took place in Turkey around 1915 amounted to a genocide, as defined in the 1948 UN convention on genocide...As a result, reporters and editors are free to use the word genocide, without quotation marks, in relation to the Armenian tragedy and should avoid using qualifiers." Other major Canadian media outlets have similar guidelines in their style books.

Major international media outlets such as the 'New York Times', 'Boston Globe', 'Los Angeles Times', 'Guardian', 'Independent', 'Daily Telegraph', 'Times' of London and all French media institutions in Quebec and France unequivocally utilize the term 'genocide' to describe what happened to the Armenians in 1915.

In addition to Canada, France, Russia, the Vatican and a score of other countries, the horrific crime of the Armenian Genocide are recognized by Germany and Austria (Turkey's allies in the First World War), Quebec, Ontario, B.C., and 43 American states.

In the face of the mountain of evidence proving the reality of the Armenian Genocide it's stunning to witness the CBC's belated guideline which fabricates a false equivalency between the 'studies' of a half-dozen Turkey-hired 'scholars and critics' and the overwhelming majority of genocide and Holocaust scholars, experts, and organizations. The ultimate authority on genocides is the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS). In a letter to then-Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the IAGS labelled such 'historians' as "Scholars who advise your government and who are affiliated in other ways with your state-controlled institutions are not impartial. Such so called scholars work to serve the agenda of historical and moral obfuscation." In contrast to the

above denialist and revisionist "critics", over 400 historians and genocide experts, among them 126 Holocaust scholars (Elie Wiesel, Yehuda Bauer, Israel Charny, Steven Katz, Steven Jacobs, and Irving L. Horowitz...etc.), have asserted that what Ottoman Turkey committed was genocide.

The CBC memo claims that its news department "maintains balanced coverage." However, it's guidelines re the Armenian Genocide makes us wonder about the corporation's credibility, integrity and professionalism. Do Armenians and credible scholars have to prove again and again and again that Ottoman Turkey committed genocide? The gross inaccuracies of the CBC Armenian Genocide narrative is a black mark on the corporation and should be erased immediately by unequivocally asserting the veracity of the Armenian Genocide.

It seems that the persons responsible for this appalling guideline are unaware that nowadays within Turkey, an influential movement of righteous Turks have acknowledged what happened to the Armenians as genocide and are openly criticizing their government's denialist policy. It is shameful for the CBC to succumb to the Turkish government falsehoods when courageous Turks are standing up to the same government's intimidation and are putting their safety on line by demanding Armenian Genocide recognition and atonement.

Considering CBC's misguided guideline, we wonder whether those responsible for writing the embarrassing advice are more qualified than jurist Raphael Lemkin, the father of the UN Genocide Convention, who during a 1949 interview with CBS said: "I became interested in genocide because it happened to the Armenians." In his autobiography he also stated " ... Soon contemporary examples of genocide followed, such as the slaughter of the Armenians in 1915." Elsewhere in his book Lemkin said: "...A bold plan was formulated in my mind. This consisted obtaining the ratification by Turkey ...This would be an atonement for genocide of the Armenians."

Furthermore, the IAGS, during its 1997 convention, unanimously adopted a resolution reaffirming: "The mass murder of over a million Armenians in Turkey in 1915 is a case of genocide which conforms to the statutes of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide."

Finally, the memo is in direct conflict with former CBC Ombudsman Vince Carlin's March 12, 2008 report. In his report, Mr. Carlin said: "In the cases at issue , the preponderance of credible academic work has found that the Turkish government took deliberate action against the Armenian population and those actions fit what became the definition of genocide. ...While fairness and balance would impel journalists to be on the look-out for credible contradictory evidence, appropriate weight must be given to broad-based conclusions, in this case not only academic-based, but also endorsed by UN agencies and the Canadian government."

He went on to say: "I must point out that, as stated above, policy does not imply that equal time has to be given to those who dissent from a historical consensus. The implications of such a notion are evident when one thinks of giving substantial time to those who deny that there was a genocide

directed against Jews during World War II."

The current memo, being inconsistent with Mr. Carlin's report, creates confusion for your staff and audience.

With the above in mind, we kindly ask you to retract the said policy memo, apologize to the Armenian, Jewish, Greek Pontian, Assyrian and other victims of genocide, and issue a new directive to uphold the historical truth without qualifiers and lame euphemisms.

We also request a meeting with the CBC CEO, the head of the news department, and the Ombudsman to formulate a historically accurate portrayal of the Armenian Genocide.

Sincerely,

Vatche Demirdjian, Chairman

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