BUST OF ATATÜRK IN CANADA? LET'S NOT ADD INSULT TO INJURY

Posted on January 28, 2025 by Keghart



Category: Opinions

By Berge Jololian, Yerevan, Armenia, 26 January 2025

Picture this: a bust of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, proudly standing in Canada - a country that fought tooth and nail against him during World War I. The proposed monument would commemorate a man who not only sided with the Central Powers against the Allies but whose forces directly fought to kill Canadian, Australian, and British soldiers at Gallipoli. Oh, and as a bonus, Atatürk also played a pivotal role in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide. What could possibly go wrong with this plan? Spoiler: everything.

Let's break this down. During World War I, Atatürk was a prominent Ottoman Turkish commander, leading his troops against Allied forces, including Canadians, Australians, and Brits, in the brutal Gallipoli Campaign. The battle was a bloodbath, with over 250,000 Allied casualties, many of them from Commonwealth nations.

Canadian soldiers fought valiantly alongside their allies, only to face relentless attacks under Atatürk's command. Gallipoli remains a defining moment for Australians and New Zealanders, commemorated every year on ANZAC Day. Now imagine their reaction when Canada erects a monument to honor the guy who led the charge against their troops.

This decision, if carried out, would not only be an affront to Armenians who suffered immeasurably during and after the genocide but also to Canadians who fought and died opposing Atatürk during World War I. For Canadians, this battle is a testament to their valor and sacrifice. To erect a monument of the very man who commanded those attacks dishonors the memory of these soldiers and undermines Canada's commitment to historical truth and justice.



Capt. Alexander (left), Capt. Nunns (right) of B Company

But the Gallipoli medal that makes a monumental affront to Canadian dignity. Atatürk's legacy is also intertwined with the Armenian Genocide, where 1.5 million Armenians were systematically killed or forcibly displaced by the Ottoman Empire. While Atatürk didn't orchestrate the genocide himself, he shielded its perpetrators and actively benefited from the ethnic cleansing to consolidate his vision of a homogeneous Turkish nation-state. Turkish troops under his command attacked the First Republic of Armenia, annexing its lands and continuing the persecution of Armenians. Erecting a bust of Atatürk in Canada is not just a slap in the face to Canadians who died fighting him - it's a gut punch to Armenians worldwide.

Let's be clear: this isn't just a historical faux pas. It's a full-blown historical blooper reel. Canada prides itself on its commitment to human rights, historical truth, and honoring those who sacrificed their lives for freedom. A monument of Atatürk would fly in the face of these values, celebrating a figure whose actions directly contributed to both the deaths of Canadian and allied soldiers and the near-destruction of an entire people.

And let's not forget the irony here. Canada, a country that officially recognizes the Armenian Genocide, would be erecting a monument to a man who played a significant role in ensuring its aftermath. What's next? A Hitler Appreciation Day in Poland? A Mussolini Museum in Ethiopia? Let's not add a bronze insult to historical injury.

Instead, why not use this opportunity to honor the real heroes? A monument to the Canadian soldiers who fought and died at Gallipoli would be far more appropriate. Or better yet, a memorial to the victims of the Armenian Genocide - recognizing their suffering and reaffirming Canada's

commitment to justice and truth. After all, monuments should reflect the values we hold dear, not the ghosts of our enemies.

So, Canada, let's put the brakes on this ill-conceived plan. The world doesn't need another bad monument, and Canadians certainly don't need one that dishonors their history and the memory of their fallen soldiers. As the old saying goes, if we don't learn from history, we're doomed to repeat it - or worse, memorialize it in bronze.

*****

First Photo: Headquarters Dugouts – Canadians in Gallipoli 1915-16-1

There are no comments yet.