

LET'S PUT "FINIS" TO THE BRANTFORD PLOT

Posted on December 8, 2013 by Keghart




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Dear Friends,

The question of honouring "Turk" internees in Brantford has resurfaced again. While the Turkish  project at the Brantford Mount Hope Cemetery (Ontario) to erect a monument to honor "World War I Turkish Internees in Canada" [had died](#), some Canadian-Turks have recently written to the Brantford City Council and repeated the falsehoods of the failed Turkish consul-general. Author and journalist Marsha Skrypuch, who has reported extensively on the most recent Turkish plot to appropriate Alevi history in Canada, also sent a letter to the Brantford mayor and council. We urge readers of Keghart.com to write to the Mayor of Brantford and the Councillors. Below are the [relevant addresses](#). Ed.

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Author Marsha Skrypuch's letter

"Dear Mayor Friel and Council Members,

I understand that you have received two letters from people in Toronto regarding the Mount Hope Cemetery/Ottoman W/WI internment controversy.

Koral Kanca writes that 100 "Turkish Canadians" were interned at Kapuskasing Ontario in WWI.

This is incorrect.

There were approximately 135 Ottoman citizens interned in World War I. Approximately 100 were from Brantford. Most of those interned were not ethnically Turkish, but were instead a non-Muslim minority group -- Alevi Kurds -- who had fled the Ottoman Empire to come to Canada.

Kanca then goes on to say that "16 of these men perished and were buried at Mount Hope Cemetery."

This is incorrect.

One Kapuskasing internee from the Ottoman Empire died while imprisoned. He is buried in Kapuskasing. He was a non-Muslim Alevi Kurd named Alex Hassan. The Turkish consulate convinced the town of Kapuskasing to put a star and crescent on Mr. Hassan's grave.

Mr. Hassan was not Muslim. This can be viewed as a desecration of his grave. The town has been asked by the director of the First World War Internment Recognition Fund to remove the religious symbols from the stone. As you can imagine, this is a deep embarrassment for the town.

A second letter written by Kaan Oran cites Brantford newspapers circa 1914 that refer to the interned men as "Turks" as proof of their ethnicity.

My grandfather was also interned as an enemy alien in W/WI. He was Ukrainian. He was referred to as Austrian.

It was the convention of the time to refer to lesser-known ethnic groups by the country they came from.

Brantfordians in 1914 were not familiar with Alevi Kurds nor Ukrainians. We are more culturally sensitive now.

Kaan, in his letter, also cites the enmity between Turks and Armenians of the time.

This is correct.

The people who were interned from Brantford rented rooms from the Armenians. Would the Armenians of Brantford have rented to ethnic Turks? Emphatically no. But Alevi Kurds and Armenians lived in the same villages in the district of Keghi. They understood each other's language. Kaan mentions in his letter that an Armenian did the translating for them.

Indeed. More proof that they were on good terms.

In all, there were more than 8,000 people interned during World War I as "enemy aliens". The vast majority were Ukrainian.

The Ukrainian Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist on Terrace Hill Street will be erecting an inclusive plaque to all internees in August 2014. There will be 100 plaques across the country all unveiled at the exact same time in August 2014.

All are welcome to attend the unveiling.

As more details of this commemorative event unfold, I will keep you posted.

Let us not get caught up in petty bickering, but instead learn from injustices of the past so they will not be repeated.

Sincerely,

Marsha Skrypuch

Addendum: E-Mails sent to Brantford Mayor & Councillors

From: Jerry Tutunjian

Sent: Thursday, December 05, 2013 12:43

To:

Subject: Mount Hope

To Mayor Chris Friel and Brantford City Councillors.

I have been informed that the Brantford City Hall has recently received several letters which allege that the people buried at the "Muslim corner" of Mount Hope Cemetery were Turks.

I am amazed that the above claim is still being made when the Brantford researcher (William Darfler), who first publicized the Brantford WWI internment story and did further research on the topic, has stated that the people buried at the said location were not Turks. Mr. Darfler's conclusion was supported by author Marsha Skrypuch who also has researched the story to the point of traveling to Kapuskasing to tour the WWI camp.

It's a shame that certain people have no compunction in falsifying the life and death of the long-ago dead for imagined political gain.

I am certain Mayor Friel and the Councillors will ignore these fraudulent attempts to politicize the memory of the dead Alevis.

Sincerely,

Jerry Tutunjian

From: Keith Garebian

To:

Subject: Mount Hope

Date: Sat, 7 Dec 2013 13:18:30 -0500

As the son of a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, I am appalled that there are some influential Canadian politicians who continue to be bamboozled and held hostage by Turkish deniers of their shameful history with respect to the Armenian genocide. It should be eminently clear by now that there is absolutely no historic merit in their claims with respect to the Mount Hope memorial, and it would behoove all of you to put an end once and for all to this "circus."

If any of you need lessons in the chronicle of 20th century Ottoman historical atrocity and obscenity, I can easily refer you to unimpeachable historical sources--some of which are Turkish, themselves--

but I trust that such instruction will not be necessary and that you will not capitulate to egregious falsehood and duplicity.

Yours,
Keith Garebian

From: D. Boyajian
To:
Subject: Dear Brantford officials
Date: Sat, 7 Dec 2013 20:29:39 +0000

December 7, 2013

Dear Brantford officials:

Regarding the Alevi (not Turkish) cemetery issue:

In the interest of fairness and historical accuracy, I believe that the public library should be buying books on Alevis and the history of their persecution by Turkey. This would inform the public about the plight of Alevis.

You should know that Alevis do not have mosques because they do not consider themselves to be Muslims per se. Alevis attend "Cem" (pronounced "jem") houses, which are places of "gathering". Most Alevis do not fast during Ramadan.

Brantford is being made fools of by the Turkish government in the cemetery issue.

The public library should also be buying books on the genocide of Christians carried out by Turkey against Armenians, Assyrians, and Hellenes. Again, this is to ensure fairness and historical accuracy.

A major exhibit on Alevis, Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians and Hellenes - all persecuted by Turkey - should also be held by Brantford. I hope that you will sponsor such an exhibit.

Finally, a memorial dedicated to the various peoples and religions persecuted by Turkey should be erected on municipal grounds.

I hope that you find these ideas fair and useful.

Sincerely,

David Boyajian

On Sunday, December 8, 2013 9:37:18 PM, Tom Siraki wrote:

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee... (Thanks to Canada our new found home)

To: Brantford Mayor and Councillors

My wife and I are children of Genocide survivors. The Genocide of the Armenians committed by Turkey in 1915 that to this day, 98 years later, they (Turks) have been denying. Genocide Denialist Turkey invaded western Armenia and confiscated all churches, properties and cultural centers of Greek, Armenian, Alevi, Zaza, Kezelnash, Assiryan and claimed it their own as if these minorities never existed. Now we hear Turkish consul-general is making a second attempt to install a fraudulent memorial project in the 'moslem corner' of Mount Hope Cemetery. We are amazed and shocked at the audacity of the Turkish consul-general who is claiming that the people at the Brantford Cemetery are Turks, whereas after the initial findings, Brantford researcher William Darfler did further thorough research on the topic and has stated that the people buried at the "Moselem corner" of Mount Hope Cemetery in Brantford were NOT Turks.

My wife and I are certain that Honorable Mayor Chris Friel and the councillors will not allow such Turkish fake claims be used for whatever political gains by Turkey on the verge of 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey in 1915 which our own Government has officially recognized.

Respectfully.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and Alvert Siraki

Date: Mon, 9 Dec 2013 04:13:24 -0500

From: Dikran Abrahamian

To:

Subject: Greetings

Dear Lord Mayor and Honourable Councillors,

Greetings.

The controversy surrounding the "Muslim" section of the Mount Hope cemetery has dragged on far too long. With dismay I heard that some people have again raised the question of honouring a "Turk" or "Turks" who was/were interned during WWI.

Relatively closely, I have followed this matter since 2011, when author Marsha Skrypuch was interviewed by Boston based [The Armenian Weekly magazine](#). Subsequently, I was acquainted with

the work of Mr. William Darfler who was instrumental in unearthing a chapter of Brantford history.

Additionally, I have had the opportunity to be enlightened about the matter by Alevi friends who had visited the cemetery in question.

The facts are quite clear. There is no shred of evidence that any "Turk" interned died in Brantford. There was one death and it occurred in Kapuskasing and not in Brantford. Furthermore, he was not an ethnic Turk but an Alevi.

The so called "Turks" were citizens of Ottoman Empire when they came to Brantford, but they were Alevis and not ethnic Turks.

As the 100th Anniversary of the major first Genocide of the 20th anniversary approaches, the Turkish state, instead of apologizing for the crime that its predecessor the Ottoman administration committed, is hellbent in creating distractions. And this matter is one of them. It was a genocide during which more than two million people were massacred including Assyrians, Pontic Greeks, Chaldeans, Armenians and other minorities. This genocidal state not long ago, in late 1930s heavily bombarded Dersim--named Tunceli in present day Turkey. Thousands upon thousands of Alevis and people of other minorities (Zazas, Kizilbash, Armenians, Kurds) were massacred. It is reminiscent and far worse than the tragedy of Guernica in Spain. Turkey is a state which has desecrated holy shrines, churches and temples of worship throughout its history and continues to do so, excepting renovation of some churches to serve a well conceived agenda for propaganda purposes.

Granted, the Alevis came to Canada as "Turks". So did the Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians, Arabs, Armenians who fled the Ottoman (i.e. Turkish) state persecution. They were known as "Turks" until such time that their history and ethnic identities became known. Would you erect a monument, or dedicate a plaque of honour or some other symbolic measure sponsored by the Genocidal state on/near their graves? That would be considered a sacrilege. So is the case for the Alevis, with the difference that they were not able to declare openly who they were, because of fear that their loved ones back home would suffer.

Do the honourable thing, and once and for all put this scandalous issue to rest. Don't tarnish the name of Brantford, a city that was so hospitable at the turn of the last century by providing shelter to refugees who fled the Ottoman Empire. Don't confuse citizenship with ethnicity. Don't get caught in an international intrigue, like Kapuskasing did, and later apologize for it.

Wishing you and your loved ones all the best, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Respectfully,

Dikran Abrahamian MD

From: Lucine Kasbarian

Sent: Tue, Dec 10, 2013 12:13 pm

Subject: Mount Hope Cemetery

TO:

Mayor Chris Friel
Councillor Vince Bucci
Councillor Richard Carpenter
Councillor Ceschi-Smith
Councillor Debi Dignan-Rumble
Councillor Larry Kings
Councillor Dan McCreary
Councillor David Neumann
Councillor John Utley
Councillor Jan Vanderstelt
Councillor Dave Wrobel

Dear Brantford Municipal Officials,

Now that it has been ascertained that the human remains discovered at the Mount Hope Cemetery in Brantford are that of Kurdish Alevis and not Turks, should your Council proceed with erecting a tribute monument, I suggest that the plaque read as follows:

"This memorial has been erected in honor of the Kurdish Alevis who were persecuted in their native homeland by the Ottoman Turkish regime."

Given the continuing hostility Turkey demonstrates towards Canada for recognizing the Armenian-Assyrian-Hellenic Genocide, why would you feel you "owe" Turkey a monument -- and one that falsely portrays Kurdish Alevis as being Turks, at that?

The intent of Ankara and that of its diplomats in Canada is clear. By demonstrating Canada's "maltreatment of Turks" during World War I, the Turkish government wishes to penalize Canada for recognizing genocides perpetrated by Turkey. It would be beyond ironic if your council becomes party to this scheme which would see the erection of an anti-Canadian and false Turkish monument under the guise of "multiculturalism and brotherhood of nations" sleight-of-hand.

Sincerely yours,

Lucine Kasbarian,
descendant of Armenian & Assyrian Genocide martyrs and survivors

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City of Brantford Councillors Website

<http://www.brantford.ca/govt/council/members/Pages/default.aspx>

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