TALK ABOUT TAKING YOUR EYE OFF THE BALL

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Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia PA, 17 November 2009

A hundred years or so ago, when I was in school learning to be a journalist, in our editorial-writing class, we were introduced to the term “Afghanistanism,” which was defined as “ignoring the problem at home and commenting on the problems in a faraway and unknown land."--at least it was in those days.

It was explained that ignoring the problem at hand (where your comments may make you enemies) and discussing the problems elsewhere (where you can be as indignant as you want to be) is easy work and you make no enemies--and shows your high principles.

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Journalism (they are now called “communications”) schools nowadays more than likely don’t use the ancient terminology, any longer. If they would like to and need a substitute word, I would suggest that they use the term “Armeniaism.”

This is prompted by two news items that I came across recently. While the Armenians in this country were getting their undergarments in a twist about things in Yerevan, one of the items indicated that the Turks in this country were busy setting up yet another “let us distort history” programs at a leading university. The other item concerned the heretofore usually dormant and placid Hellenes raising all kinds of you-know-what at that university because of the program to steal the ancient name “Macedonia” for one of the former “countries” of Yugoslavia.
I don’t pretend to have read everything by every Armenian who has access to the Armenian newspapers and web-sites. In fact, I try to read little of it. So, if the Armenians in this country have protested--and loudly--at the doors of the University of Utah, I apologize in advance for my oversight.

Set up by the University and the Turkish Coalition of America, the program bears the lofty title: “The Origins of Modern Ethnic Cleansing: The Collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the Emergence of

Nation States in the Balkans and Caucasus."

Its Project Director, explaining the program's purpose, has said: "Our new program will explore the shaping of modern Turkish identity through scholarly work, conferences, community participation, and support for new research, much of which will focus on a series of traumatic formative events including crises in the Balkans and the Caucasus, the loss of major territories, and forced migration that presaged the establishment of the Turkish Republic."

Then, just when one begins to think that "Turkish scholarship" isn't an oxymoron, after all, we learn that to provide insight and guidance, a Partnership Board composed of "recognized experts and leaders has been formed." On that board are four Turks and a Briton who teaches at a Turkish university. 'Nuff said?

Whether or not it is related, just recently the same University played host to an anti-Hellenic conference designed, basically, to promote the idea that Macedonia is not Hellenic, and that the Muslim country is entitled to use the name, despite the fact that there is a Macedonia in present-day Greece (and has been for two millennia), that the world and history knows of Macedonia through its knowledge of Greek history and that it was a son of Macedonia--Alexander--who spread Hellenic culture throughout what was then the known world. Etc.

But, the Turks are on the side of the Skopjia government. When he was a candidate, President Medz Yeghern promised the Greeks that he would try to get the Skopjians to change their name, but having been instructed by Ankara what his policy must be regarding matters-Armenian and matters-Hellenic, President Yeghern is strangely silent.

But, getting back to what the Hellenes did. As a start, five organizations combined their efforts to tell the University president that he was hosting a revisionist program, and alerted him that they were not going to take the matter lightly.

As a result of their efforts, the University was forced to go "underground" and tried to close the events to the public, though about half the public present were Hellenic protestors. Five presentations were cancelled. One presentation's titled was changed from "Macedonian refugee children from the Greek Civil War" to "Refugee Children from the Greek Civil War."

It was reported the one of the revisionist speakers "exploded in rage," several times, against Hellenes for daring to ask questions, " showing the intolerant and unprofessional nature of the conference organizers and the racist atmosphere present at the supposed 'academic' conference."

Of course, there may be people out there who fervently believe that disruptive behavior is out of place in an academic situation. But if that academic conference is designed to deny history and to falsify history and to claim that white is black and that black is red, and that the lies were designed to corrupt the young minds of students, perhaps a bit of protest is justified.

Apparently, the whistle was blown by one Hellene in Salt Lake City, and the five organizations

responded. So far, none of the five has invested in a megaphone to boast of its role in the "victory" (as they call it).

Now, if they were Armenian. . . .