TURKEY ABUSES ALEVI DEAD

Posted on July 24, 2013 by Keghart



Category: Opinions

By Jirair Tutunjian, Toronto, 24 July 2013

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Although the identity of the 15 to 20 Muslims buried at the Brantford (Ontario) Mount Hope cemetery is not known, the most credible candidates are Alevi immigrants, since they made up the majority of the Brantford internees sent to northern Ontario by the government as enemy aliens. The Canadian government--an ally of Britain--considered the Alevis hostile or suspect because the latter had come from the Ottoman Empire or had Ottoman citizenship.

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The Turkish government, long adept at appropriating the lands, property, and culture of minorities such as the Alevis, is now trying to appropriate the dead Alevis to enhance Turkey's image in Canada and to depict Turks as victims. The long-buried men at the Canadian cemetery, who are most probably Alevis, are being identified as Turks by the Turkish diplomat. This is manipulation to the nth degree. This is "kidnapping" of the dead Alevis and is ghoulish.

Three years ago a Canadian researcher in Brantford revealed that the internees came from Kharput and Dersim, a traditional region of the Alevis and Armenians. The researcher informed the Turkish government representative of his findings. Despite knowing this fact, Ankara decided to erect a monument to the "Turks" buried at the Canadian cemetery. Ankara is even sending an adviser to Prime Minister Raccep Erdogan to officiate at the commemoration of the phony monument.

Because of his conquests, Suleiman I (1494-1566) of the Ottoman Empire was given the misnomer "Magnificent". A more appropriate title for the absolute monarch would be "Butcher", if one inquired the Alevis and the Kurds. The "magnificent" sultan massacred more than a million members of these two Ottoman minorities. Since then successive Turkish governments have maintained an official policy of persecution against the Alevis and the Kurds. To this day Turkish imams consider it a sin to conduct the funeral ceremonies of Alevis in a mosque. Alevis are "heretics" in Turkey.

While Alevis continue to be considered outcasts by official Turkey, Ankara is brazenly using the long-buried Alevis to enhance Turkey's image in Canada. One could call it double irony.

It's high time Alevis in Canada and around the world raised their voices and demanded that Turkey stop its abuse of Canada's dead Alevis.

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