

WALKOUT AT CARLETON UNIVERSITY PROTESTING GENOCIDE DENIAL

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[Asbarez](#), 8 March 2016

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The CTC organized the conference under the deceiving title of "Turkey-Canada Relations in Troubled Times," when in fact the event promoted anti-Armenian sentiments. The organizers held a panel discussion which included Prof. Christopher Gunn of Coastal Carolina University and Lale Eskicioglu of Carleton University.

While Eskicioglu spoke about the Turkish claim of a small plot of the Brantford Mount Hope Cemetery that is allegedly dedicated to ethnic Turks, Gunn spoke about secret Armenian armies in the 1970s and 1980s—a topic that clearly diverged from the event's supposed intent. The lecture focused on the actions of a small minority of Armenians outside of Canada, which contributed nothing to the discussion of Turkey-Canada relations.

Armenian attendees took part in the conference with the intent to give the speakers benefit of a doubt by listening to their presentations. Unfortunately, many pieces of inaccurate information were

delivered. Representatives from the group politely questioned the validity of some of the remarks and statements by Gunn and Eskicioglu. It was later confirmed by Gunn that multiple points of his presentation were mere inferences, with no tangible evidence to support his claims.

"Carleton University, being one of the most prestigious universities in a country that strongly upholds human rights, justice, and democratic values, should not so willingly allow for such groups to stage events on its campus. In general, a university should be devoid of any affiliation to politically motivated agendas," said Harout Kassabian, AYF Canada Chair.

Most of the opinions that were voiced during the panel had underlying motives to create a false narrative in the attendees' minds about the Armenians during the 20th century. The group was disappointed to learn that lecturers and attendees used the phrase "events of 1915" to refer to the Armenian Genocide -- a common tactic by genocide deniers.

Sevag Belian of the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) questioned Gunn about the title of his latest publication "Getting Away with Murder: Soghomon Tehlirian, ASALA, and the Justice Commandos, 1921-1984."

"What is your opinion of the Turkish government getting away with the murder of 1.5 million Armenians during the Armenian Genocide? Do you think there should be justice for that?" asked Belian.

After Gunn stated that he is not an expert in the field and believes in having an impartial approach towards the issue, a member of the group stressed the unacceptable nature of his approach.

"The use of the term 'events of 1915' is commonly used by genocide deniers. The fact that this term keeps being used makes us question the impartiality and academic integrity of this conference. We do not see a beneficial purpose to continue being a part of this event."

After the activists left the conference room in a mass walk-out, the group went on to the major intersections in downtown Ottawa to pass out flyers to the public regarding Turkey's human rights record, its denial of the Armenian Genocide, and why it should not be trusted as a NATO ally.

"Turkey has one the highest number of jailed journalists in the world and uses excessive force to silence protesters and other dissenters of the country, yet they are still regarded as Canadian allies. Furthermore, NATO has yet to speak out against Turkey's human rights violations," said Belian.

The Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) condemns that an event with the intention to spread inaccurate and divisive speech took place at the university, and demands that Carleton University formally apologizes for this oversight.

Founded in 1934, the Armenian Youth Federation of Canada is the largest and most influential Armenian-Canadian youth organization, working to advance the social, political, educational and cultural awareness among Armenian-Canadian youth.

