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Cong. Wm. St. Onge in Statement



CONG. WILLIAM L. ST. ONGE

Remarks of Cong. William L. St. Onge before the House of Representatives, April 5, 1965.

Mr. Speaker, this year marks a half century since that infamous day in 1915 when the mass slaughter and deportation of some 2 million Armenians began in Turkey. Since then, April 24 of each year is observed as Armenian martyrs day in commemoration of this great tragedy which almost saw the annihilation of a whole people.

In the long and turbulent history of the Armenian people, the year 1915 undoubtedly stands out as the darkest year. By the end of that year only a handful of Armenians were left, spared miraculously from the scourge that swept over Turkey and destroyed nearly every Armenian community in that country.

Clergymen, intellectuals, businessmen, artisans, old and young, men, women and children—no one was spared, all were slaughtered in cold blood, save for the very few fortunate survivors who lived to tell the world of the massacre of an innocent people.

The noted British historian Arnold J. Toynbee in his book "The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-16," describes the gruesome events in these words:

Early in February a decree went forth that all Armenians should be disarmed. The Armenians in the army were drafted out of the fighting ranks, re-formed into special labour battalions, and set to work at throwing up fortifications and constructing roads. The disarming of the civil population was left to the local authorities, and in every administrative centre a reign of terror began. On a certain date, in whatever town or village it might be, the public crier went through the streets announcing that every male Armenian must present himself forthwith at the government building. In some cases the warning was given by the soldiery or gendarmerie slaughtering every male

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PRELATE OPENS HOUSE SESSION OF APRIL 26 WITH PRAYER, ADDRESS ON GENOCIDE

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 26—His Grace, Archbishop Hrant Khatchaturian, Prelate of the Armenian National Apostolic Church of North America, opened this afternoon's session of the United States House of Representatives with a solemn prayer, following which he addressed House members on the commemoration of the

50th Anniversary of the Turkish Genocide of the Armenians, and the significance of the Armenian memorial year.

His Grace was accompanied to the House Chambers by a delegation consisting of Mr. John Der Hovanessian, the Reverend Sempad Mekhjian, Dr. Hratch Abrahamian, Mr. Manoug Najarian, and others.

CONG. FLOOD ON 'RUTHLESS' MASSACRES

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 26—Congressman Daniel J. Flood, Pa., today addressed the House of Representatives on the matter of the Turkish Genocide of 1915.

Mr. Flood, long a proponent of action in favor of the captive nations, said:

"April 24 of this year marks the 50th anniversary of an event of World War I almost forgotten, the outright extermination of the Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire. At the beginning of that year there were close to 2,000,000 Armenians in the sultan's sprawling domain, and about half of these were living in their historic homeland in Eastern Asia Minor. By the end of that terrible year nearly all of them had been uprooted from their homes (only those residing in the sultan's capital city Constantinople were spared through the tireless efforts of the United States Ambassador Mr. Morgenthau), and many hundreds of thousands had been massacred outright.

"Most of those who were spared this cruel but quick form of death were doomed to suffer longer in the course



U.S. REPRESENTATIVE DANIEL J. FLOOD

of forced marches, but they also shared a similar fate "under circumstances of brutality and cruelty unsurpassed in the history even of the blood-stained East." Barely one-tenth of the total number managed to survive this secretly planned and most carefully executed first case of genocide in all modern history. Thus the Armenian people, who throughout their long and turbulent history had steadfastly clung to their ancestral homes, and who in the opinion of those who knew them had long been regarded as the most energetic, industrious and progressive element in the Ottoman Empire, were carried off as if by some affliction early in the First World War.

"The causes for this tragedy are numerous, but the real cause was that the Armenians, always oppressed and robbed and violated by the unruly Kurds and unscrupulous

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HEROIC DEFENSE OF VAN TO BE MARKED

The Hamavabouragan Compatriotic Union of Greater Boston will hold a public rally to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the heroic resistance of the natives of Vabouragan. The event is scheduled for Sunday, May 2, 1965, Oakley Country Club, Belmont St., Watertown, 1 p.m.

As you well know, in 1915, the year of the terrors, our ancient enemy the Turk perfidiously set upon the Armenian people in all parts of the Armenian Highland.

The Turkish Government's policy of extermination reached the peak of its intensity in the Month of April when the victorious Russian armies were advancing on the Armenian provinces. The chief objective of the Turkish leaders at this time was to massacre the Armenians of Van.

The Turkish attacks first began in the remote regions of Van

where murder and pillage were the order of the day.

The brave youth of Van, quite naturally, could not remain indifferent to a situation which threatened the safety of life, honor and property of countless thousands of Armenians.

The result was a heroic resistance which wrote a glorious page in the history of the Armenians.

The City of Van, in particular, became the scene of fierce fights where the valiant natives, regardless of political party or religious

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Maine House Adopts Sahagian Resolution

The following Resolution, offered by the Hon. Herman D. Sahagian, was adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Maine.

"WHEREAS, Fifty years ago, on April 24, 1915, the Government of Turkey ordered the commencement of a systematic plan of Massacre of the Armenian nation which before its termination was to take the awful toll of 1,000,000, with an additional 1,000,000 displaced, ill and in want, marked forever by the terrible experiences of the first modern genocide which, on the confessions of Adolph Hitler himself who, in 1941 in ordering a minority people to its Golgotha asked, "Who today remembers the Armenian Massacres" served as the prototype, inspiration and model of the German Nazi pogroms; and

"WHEREAS, The beginning of the Armenian Martyrdom marked at the same time the opening of the many important contributions to the Allie war effort in World War I by the Armenian nation, affectionately termed "The Little Ally" by Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, and

"WHEREAS, The awful sacrifice of the Armenian nation in the cause of virtuous government, freedom, justice and human rights the enormous proportions of which are reflected in the fact that Armenia, although one of the smallest Allies of the Western alliance, suffered more casualties than any other member of that alliance, serves to remind us that mankind is indeed ready to perish in the interest of noble causes nearer and dearer to the human heart than life itself; and

"WHEREAS, In this the Fiftieth Anniversary Year of the 1915 Turkish genocide of the Armenian Nation it

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Governor Reed of Maine Issues Proclamation

The Text of Maine Governor John H. Reed's proclamation:

"WHEREAS, fifty years ago, on April 24, 1915, the Government of Turkey ordered the massacre of the Armenian nation which before its termination was to take the toll of 1,000,000 lives, with an additional 1,000,000 displaced, ill and in want; and

"WHEREAS, the beginning of the Armenian Martyrdom marked at the same time the opening of the many important contributions to the Allied war effort in World War I by the Armenian nation, affectionately termed "The Little Ally" by Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America; and

"WHEREAS, the sacrifice of the Armenian nation in the cause of virtuous government, freedom, justice and human rights serves to remind us that mankind is ready to perish in the interest of noble causes; and

"WHEREAS, in this anniversary year of the 1915 genocide of the Armenian Nation it is significant to remember those men, women and children who perished in violence, to honor their memory and pay tribute to their self-sacrifice;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John H. Reed, Governor of the State of Maine do hereby proclaim Saturday, April 24, 1965, as

ARMENIAN MARTYRS DAY

and urge that proper recognition be accorded to this solemn occasion.

John H. Reed
Governor

Resolution Adopted by Maine House:

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would behave all citizens of This State to remember those innocent men, women and children who perished to the sword of violence, to honor their memory and pay tribute to their self-sacrifice, while at the same time reminding those who would in our day indulge in mass murder that Americans indeed do remember the genocide of 1915 and, in remembering signify their readiness to raise a powerful voice against those forces which would unleash the terrible weapon of genocide: we therefore

"RESOLVE, to give full recognition to the Gubernatorial proclamation making Saturday, April 24, 1965, Armenian Martyr's Day and urge that proper recognition be accorded to this grievous and solemn occasion."

St. Onge Statement

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Armenian they encountered in the streets. The men presented themselves in their working clothes. When they arrived, they were thrown without explanation into prison, kept there a day or two, and then marched out of the town in batches, roped man to man, along some southerly or south-easterly road. They were starting, they were told, on a long journey—Mosul or perhaps to Baghdad. But they had not long to ponder over their plight, for they were halted and massacred at the first lonely place on the road. There was complete coordination between Talaat Bey, Ministry of the Interior and Enver Pasha's Ministry of War, for simultaneously the Armenian Labour Battalions working behind the front, were surrounded by detachments of their commander Mustafa Kemal soldiers and massacred in cold blood."

(Arnold J. Toynbee, in "The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1914-16," pp. 634-44.)

It is hardly necessary to add much to this description of what

was probably the first genocidal act in modern days, except for the fact that the women and children were either slaughtered, sold into slavery, or remained as servants in Turkish and Arab households.

To this day the people of Armenian descent have never forgotten the tragic events of 1915, nor can they ever forget them. On April 24 of each year they remember the martyrs who were struck down so savagely at the hands of a cruel regime. In this country, where several hundred thousand Americans of Armenian origin live in peace with their neighbors, this sad day of tribute is observed in many communities. Special memorial services are held in the churches and public meetings are dedicated to pay homage to the martyrs of 1915.

On this day, peace-loving Americans of all faiths and national origins join in this observance with bowed heads and heavy hearts laden with sadness at the inhumanities of man. We express our profound sympathy to a countless and heroic people, so Armenians

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"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE"

Editorial:

Lebanese Government Points The Way

In attempting to revive the forgotten Armenian case, the principal objective of the current Armenian commemorative effort, signaling the fiftieth anniversary of the Turkish genocide of the Armenians is, of course, to obtain justice.

Webster defines justice as the maintenance or administration of that which is just, also merited reward or punishment.

Specifically, as applied to the Armenian case, justice contemplates redress for wrongs, reparation for damages inflicted, and restoration of unlawfully seized territories.

The approximately two million innocent souls who fell victim to the Turk's bloody scimitar, of course, can never be returned back to life, nor can they be atoned for other than the reciprocation of the barbarism, something which is abhorrent to the Armenian character. Those hapless souls who had a right to live through the three score and ten brief span as decreed by God are gone forever, and we can only mourn their loss.

But there still remains the matter of redress of grievances and reparation for losses inflicted, including the restoration of seized territories, something which, fifty years after the crime, even to this day, the Turk scorns to consider.

The Jews brought their executioners to trial at Nuremberg and punished them, and they still are ferreting out their murders. Over twenty years have passed since the Nuremberg trials, and yet the Jews have prevailed upon the German Government to suspend the statute of limitations, so that the outstanding few Nazi criminals may be brought to justice.

No such justice was meted out to the Turkish assassins of the Armenians by any international tribunal, something which, by all the laws of God and man, should have been done, and it took the Armenian braves to strike down the principal authors of the massacres of 1915. Most of the other criminals got away with murder, many of them have passed away since then, but there still are a few

criminals outstanding who should be brought to justice.

The matter of reparations for material losses sustained still awaits satisfaction, something about which the civilized world still can do something. History shows that the Armenians have made an imposing contribution to world civilization and they made their sacrifice to freedom's cause in two world war efforts far in excess of their numbers and resources. They certainly earned this much of a compensation from a presumably grateful world society.

How shall we bring about this reparation?

Happily, the Lebanese Government, one of the smallest and weakest peoples in the world, has set the courageous example.

At present writing, we do not know what progress the movement has made, but recent reports from that country, in the wake of Turkish intervention, and yes, Turkish threats against Armenian commemorative demonstrations in Lebanon, have aroused certain members of the Lebanese Parliament to sponsor a resolution, calling on their government to demand reparations from the Turkish Government for the material losses of the Armenians during the massacres which, in turn, at the suggestion of an Armenian member of the Parliament, will be used for sorely needed housing projects for the Armenians who now live in deplorable living quarters.

During the deportations, the Turks seized well over two thousand Armenian schools, churches and monasteries and confiscated their fabulous wealth. Research students have calculated this loot at no less than 35 billion dollars.

An international tribunal, sensitive to its responsibility, can exact this sum from the Turkish Government, even as the Lebanese Government has set the pace, and use it for the amelioration of the lot of the countless waifs who survived the Turkish scimitar and who now live under the hospitality of kind countries in the four corners of the world.

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in the United States and in other countries, who have risen from the ashes of annihilation to rebuild their culture and heritage. Let us hope and pray that never again will humanity be afflicted with such a tragedy as befell the Armenian people just a half century ago.