POPE FRANCIS' DOUBLE STANDARD – II

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On June 21, Pope Francis of the Roman Catholic Church made a visit to the city of Turin in Italy to attend a religious ceremony.[1] During this visit, he made some remarks about events that happened during World War I, and also about events that happened during World War II.

In terms of World War II, Pope Francis stated that the Great Powers of the time did nothing despite knowing the fact that Jews, Christians, the Roma, and homosexuals were being killed in concentration camps run by the Nazi regime of Germany. He indicated that the Great Powers could have bombed the railways (which were used to transport the victims of the Nazi regimes extermination campaign) going to the concentration camps. In a similar fashion, he highlighted the death of many Christians in the gulags in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalins leadership, and criticized the worlds inaction.

Drawing parallels to his above statements, he referred to the Great Tragedy of Armenia and said: So many [Armenians] died. I don't know the figure, more than a million, certainly. But where were the great powers then? They were looking the other way."

Two points can be taken from his latest remarks:

The first point is that, after the criticisms he faced for referring to the World War I losses of Armenians as genocide,[2] he chose to take a step back. This time, he refrained from using the genocide term, and instead used the term great tragedy.

The second point is that, it appears that Pope Francis is adamant about continuing his double standards that I had drawn attention to in my previous article about him.[3] Through his words, it can be construed that Pope Francis continues to ignore the casualties and suffering experienced by groups with Muslim identity. Before and during World War I, millions of indigenous Muslims were either killed or expelled from their homelands in the Balkans and in Caucasia (many of these people eventually fled to and settled in Turkey). The Great Powers of the time completely ignored, and many times encouraged what was being done to Muslims in these regions.

It can be seen that Pope Francis is keen to talk about past tragedies and suffering, so why did the Pope not talk about the deaths and sufferings of millions of Turks and other

Muslims that took place in the same time period of the example he gave during his visit in Turin?

Furthermore, despite what the Pope said about the Great Tragedy of Armenia, the Great Powers at that time were not looking the other way. They were very much looking in the direction of the Ottoman Empire (what the Pope erroneously referred as Armenia). The Great Powers -in this case Great Britain, France, and Russia- were busy inciting Ottoman Armenians against the Ottoman Empire in the hopes that it would facilitate the break up and the subsequent carving up of the Ottoman Empire. France and Russia even employed volunteer Ottoman Armenians in their armies for the French and Russian territorial ambitions against the Ottoman Empire.

One can argue that since Pope Francis is the spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic Church, it is only natural that he only talks about the events that pertain to Christians. If that is the case, why did he then talk about what happened to Jews, the Roma or homosexuals for example?

Furthermore, Pope Francis is not just a spiritual leader. He is also the temporal leader of the Roman Catholic Church, which □□□ the Vatican City- is a sovereign state that has influence around the world due its leadership of Catholic Christians. As the temporal leader of this influential state, Pope Francis should refrain from cherry-picking topics that suit his agenda and from marginalizing Muslims, which can only serve to fuel Christian-Muslim friction. It really should not be that difficult to acknowledge the fact that, throughout history, Muslims have had their share of suffering just like Christians and other groups of faith.

[1] Pope Slams Great Powers Over Armenian Genocide, Holocaust, *Asbarez*, http://asbarez.com/137134/pope-slams-great-powers-over-armenian-genocide-holocaust/ . Also see; Pope Francis: 'Great Powers' Did Nothing When Jews Were Taken To Auschwitz, *Huffington Post*, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/21/pope-francis-auschwitz_n_7632276.html

[2] Mehmet Oğuzhan Tulun, Introducing Religion into a Legal and Historical Dispute, *AVIM*, http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlarduyurular/en/INTRODUCING-RELIGION-INTO-A-LEGAL-AND-HISTORICAL-DISPUTE---Mehmet-Oguzhan-TULUN/3995

[3] Mehmet Oğuzhan Tulun, Pope Francis Double Standard, *AVIM*, http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlarduyurular/en/POPE-FRANCIS%E2%80%99-DOUBLE-STANDARD/4108

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