

Austrian National Assembly Candidate denies Genocide



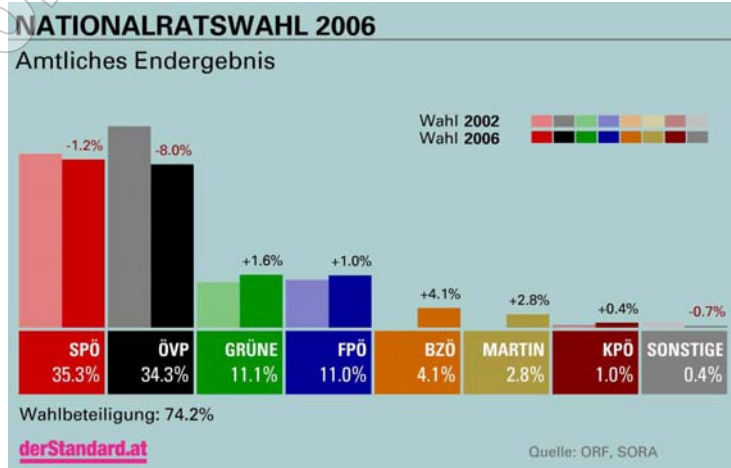
On the Austrian National Assembly election day (October 1st, 2006) our organisation's "Völkermord.at - Gesellschaft für die Dokumentation von Völkermorden" (voelkermord.at – Association for the Documentation of Genocides) attention was called to an election poster that was publicly displayed at the Victor Adler Platz in Vienna's Tenth District.

The poster, written in Turkish language, was the work of the Austrian Peoples Party (OeVP) district council Mustafa Iscel. On this poster, he asked Austrians with immigrant backgrounds to vote for him. One of the slogans he announced was: "If you don't want that the Armenian Bill to pass the Parliament ... vote for the OeVP." A fast Internet investigation showed that on Mr. Iscel's homepage, which was hosted by the Austrian Peoples Party, you could see the election poster and download it.

Several groups agreed to undertake our protest and we send a letter signed by six organisations to the OeVP-Vienna, in which we asked for a response to this election poster.

On the fifth of October, once could read an interview from Mr. Iscel in the Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet*. Reflecting his view, only the racist and xenophobic Austrian political parties won this election. OeVP 34,3% (-8,0); SPOe 35,3% (-1,2); FPOe 11,0% (+1,0); Green 11,0% (+1,5); BZOe 4,1% others the Green party is the most liberal party in the Austrian spectrum concerning foreign policy.

And he added: "Austria was and is, compared to other European countries, always behind them. The political parties in Austria don't see that the time is ripe for a Congressman of (foreign) descent/background and as I see it, they are not ready for it now. In other European countries like Germany and Belgium politicians of Turkish origin are making politics for the Turks there."



On October 18, 2006 the Austrian daily Newspaper "Die Presse" published an article about the Iscel Poster and quoted Mr. Iscel: " ... there was no mass murdering. That was a resettlement because of the war. People had died because of disease and other contagion." In the same article you can read that according to the Peoples Party district chairman, Alfred Hoch, Mr. Iscel is an "outstanding district council" (member) and was always on "party line".

The next day the "Die Presse" published the statement of Vienna Peoples Party spokesman Norbert Walter: "We distance ourselves explicitly from these (there was no mass murdering ...) statements. This isn't part of our policy."

Six years ago the Austrian National Assembly avoided acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide by referring to Resolution (50/A(E)), brought up by the Green Party, of the Human Rights Commission of the Austrian Parliament. There in 2002, especially under pressure from the Austrian Peoples Party (OeVP) and the foreign minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner (OeVP), this commission did formulate a new resolution, by keeping set phrases. Because of presumed Turkish pettiness, you can't find the word Armenia or Genocide in the entire document.

On October 21 this year Mr. Iscel gave the Turkish newspaper *Zaman* (Turkish release) an interview in which he said: " I stressed in my campaign the topic "there was no Armenian genocide" [...] Now they expect an apology from me. They foresee that I will retract this statement. But certainly, I won't take back this statement. I will be true to my word."

In this article Mr. Iscel styled himself as a victim and hero by announcing that the "Armenian Lobby" was a threat to him and the Austrian Peoples Party (OeVP) but he wouldn't change his point of view. This article was finally printed in the *Zaman* (Austria) on page 3.

On the after noon of October 23, Mr. Iscel resigned the position of district council. We received a letter from the Austrian Peoples Party with a clear excuse and they (OeVP) clarified their position on the Armenian genocide.

On 25th of October the Peoples Party- Vienna has introduced the Resolution "for respect and acknowledgement of ethnic minorities as a principal element of European human rights policy" in the Vienna Federal States Parliament (not the Austrian Parliament). The Vienna Federal Parliament (majority Socialistic Party) decide unanimously for this resolution.

Federal Vienna Parliament member Dr. Franz Ferdinand Wolf (Peoples Party-Vienna) said on 25th of October in the Federal Parliament: "the Peoples Party-Vienna condemns every kind of displacement and genocide."

In an Internet-Forum PUSULA.at, you will find an Article about Mr. Iscel, where the question was raised (why you are silence) concerning why other politicians of Turkish origin did not help Mr. Iscel. On the same site, you can find a protest letter against the Peoples Party-Vienna, ready to download.

The question that was raised - why the others don't speak up - is a good question. There was a candidate's election poster hanging for over a month in Turkish coffee houses, Turkish restaurants and even openly on the street, and none of the related Turkish politicians (whom know Turkey language), doesn't matter which party they belong to, have ever heard of this Poster?