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Hamo Moskofian, Berlin-Beirut, 8 February 2011

Pilgrimage to the Grave of Armenian Prince

A Keghart.com reader, Hemshinli Vashdanoglu, contacted me recently to say that the church of Princess Tamar, the second daughter of the Prince Hamam Amadouni continues to be a pilgrimage destination. The princess was the daughter of the powerful and patriotic Prince Hamam Amadouni, who in the 9th century, founded the Hamamashen Fort in Northern Armenia.
A few days later our convert Hemshinli compatriot sent to me not only photos of that historic church in the mountains of occupied Armenian Hamshen, but also a touching story about his grandfather who had made a pilgrimage to "Ermenisdan", visiting the Oshakan village, the birthplace and grave site of Prince Amadouni.

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The narrative of Memnun about his Armenian grandfather once again proves the nationalistic feeling among Islamized Armenians, living under the dictatorial and chauvinistic Turkish regime, is more powerful than any religion. I noticed the same vigor when I met Hamshentsis--convert or Christian in Germany, Russia or Armenia. The biggest ethnic Armenian population in the world--Hamshen Armenians--have not only survived through the centuries, but have also attained high state offices wherever they live. Many are scientists, economists, businessmen, artists, ship-owners, builders, and military men.
Their feelings of unity prevail. In this age of advanced technology and communication firm bridges are being established to herald a new dawn of national self-recognition and return to their ethnic roots.

Dersim Movement to Take Turkey to Court

> *"I could not understand your lies and intrigues as they always worried me. You also could not make me kneel in front of you, and that will always worry you."*

--Seyed Riza, Dersim martyr leader addressing his killers, the Fascist Inonu puppets (1938)

During my last visit to Berlin, the 'capital' of the Dersim Movement (Dersim Vakefe), I was introduced by Dr. Jirayr (Gerayr) Kocharian to Ismailo Kilic, a prominent Kizilbash politician and the leader of the Dersim movement. Kilic is brother-in-arms of Seyfi Cengiz, Cigdem Turan Cigdem, Murat Cano, Ali Riza, Aydin Nuray Sehin, M. Aslan, Guvercin Dersim, Artin Akyuz...the list of these brave intellectuals could be very long. They live in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and even in Armenia where Samvel Felekian and Arto Tuncboyadjian live.
These activists have something in common: Zazas, Kizilbash, Armenians, Assyrians, Alevis, Kurd-Kirmancis, Zoroastrians, worshipers of the sun, they are all natives of Dersim, an independent territory in historic Western Armenia. In 1937-38 the region was overrun by the army of the Ataturk-Inonu bloody regime, pretending to crush the rebellion of martyr Sayed Reza, who had protected more than 45,000 Armenians from the genocide of 1915. These Armenians were later (1925) slain during the genocide of Zazas and the 1937-38 Kizilbash genocide during which hundreds of thousands perished. Thousands more were deported. Turkey renamed the homeland of these martyrs Tunceli and hanged Seyed Riza together with his Armenian, Zaza and Kizilbash fedayees.

Riza's son visited Beirut in the '60s where he was invited to dinner in the house of the Topjians, a prominent Ramgavar family. The 80-year-old survivor of the genocides, who for decades lived under house arrest in Turkey, told his Armenian hosts how the "republican" Turkish army had bombarded and wiped out his village.

A few days ago, through Ismailo Kilic, I received a package which contained documents where the Dersim Movement demonstrates the numerous crimes of the Turkish state in the past century. Even in recent years, while building dams on the Munzuri (Mnzur River), Turkey deported in 'civilized' manner the inhabitants of thousand-year-old villages.

The Dersim Movement has begun a campaign to take Turkey to the International Court, to demand just penalties and compensation, and the right of every deported person to return to his home and lands. At the same time, in Switzerlasnd, dersimkatilami website collecting solidarity endorsements from all over the world against Turkey for its refusal to acknowledge its black history. How can truth be hidden in the age of internet, Facebook, international mobile phones? We are all brothers. We must leave aside our marginal disputes and unite for a joint struggle to regain our rights and occupied motherland.