

ORGANIZING...FOR OUR INALIENABLE RIGHTS


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Hamo Moskofian, 6 December 2010

Doc. [Souren G. Seraydarian](#) is a Former Assistant Secretary General of UN, and currently he is the Deputy Executive Director and Secretary General of the International Organizing Committee (IOC) of the proposed National Congress of Western Armenians. During a recent sojourn in Germany we had the opportunity to meet him on several occasions. Amongst other questions the following were posed to him: 

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Q.- Doc. Seraydarian, can you tell about your recent activities?

A.- I would like to say that it's already two years that we are visiting various communities of the Armenian Diaspora, and currently our colleagues are in Switzerland and Lebanon making contacts with interested individuals and organizations. Recently with Mr. Karen Mikaelyan, the Executive Director of IOC, and two other members of the committee we participated as observers at the Symposium in Los Angeles dedicated to the topic of Elective Leadership & Worldwide Structure for the Armenian Diaspora. We were very pleased to notice that there is great interest in this matter.

Q.- What is your comment about Islamized Armenians residing in Germany.

A.- We were fortunate to establish direct links with them, through your efforts, for which we thank you. We met with Islamized Armenians, Zazas & Kizilbashs. I'd like to emphasize that the Armenian Question is not a religious issue, though it is an element. Armenians are Apostolic, Catholic, Evangelical or even Atheist. The main issue is that Armenians feel they belong to a nation and nobody can decide who is an Armenian and who is not. If convert Armenians in Germany feel that they are part of our nation, then we must wholeheartedly accept them. Their relatives still live in Turkey, on our Western Armenian lands. They are the inheritors of the Ottoman Empire. It appears that they are getting organized and we should work and co-operate with them.



Igor Zakarian, member of IOC (2nd from left) & Souren Seraydarian (3rd from right) with expatriates from Turkey

Q-The activity of IOC has attracted various comments, and opened discussions with different political entities in the Diaspora. Can you elaborate with whom you have made contacts?

A.- At this stage I would refrain from giving specific names, and we don't have the right to give lessons to anyone! But we like to emphasize that the two Western Armenian National Congresses took place at the beginning of the past century, and the 3rd must be organized soon. We contacted all Armenian Political Parties in the Diaspora. They have their own ideologies and as political parties they like to lead the Armenian nation themselves. The "silent" majority of the Armenians is not involved in the parties' activities of which the struggle for the Armenian Cause is the principle one. We are trying to unite all those who are fed up with religious and political disputes, and we think the majority of the Armenians do not like to follow the parties today.

Q- What can you tell us about the meeting with [Prof. Tessa Hofmann](#) and [Doc. Jirair Kocharian](#) of Open University of Berlin?

A.- We had a very friendly meeting. We discussed issues related to the Genocide and human rights, and the need to concentrate on the 25th of April, what to do the day after. Prof. Hofmann suggested arranging the required preliminary groundwork to hold a meeting with a select number of members of the German Parliament.



From left to right Igor Zakarian, Doc. Tessa Hofmann, Souren Seraydarian, Artashes Shirikian (Treasurer of IOC)

& Doc. Jirair Kocharian

Q.-Can you give us more information about when you plan to establish the National Congress of Western Armenians?

A.- We'll have several preparatory conferences until we make a call to people to participate in a convention to establish the Congress. That might take place in September-October 2011 in Sevres. All what IOC is trying to do is raise awareness of the issue. It's up to the participants to make their proposals, debate them and adopt resolutions that will guide the future congress. The IOC, naturally will make proposals. They may get adopted by the people present, modified or even rejected. Ultimately it's up to the participants to decide.

We are not in a competition, but we must explain to whoever is interested why we must hold the Congress. We have lost our culture, citizenship, assets, lands and we have just demands. For us it's important what we shall do on April 25th! Organizing and having a representative body on the international scene is the continuation of struggle for our inalienable rights.

