POLITICAL TRAVELS

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Hamo Moskofian, Brussels-Aachen-Athens-Beirut
24 March 2016

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(L-R) Z. Aydar & H. Moskofian at the Research Center of the Kurdish National Congress

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I was impressed by the HDP's youthful and experienced leaders who are of leftist revolutionary background. Many of their predecessors were assassinated, thrown into military prisons, and tortured by consecutive dictatorships since the 1980 coup of Kenaan Evren. During our conversations I felt that Western Armenians and Cilicia Armenians have powerful allies, thanks to the HDP with which our Armenia and Diaspora political leadership does not care to establish links and plans of co-operation.

I also had a chance to visit the Brussels offices of the pro-Ocalan Kurdistan National Congress (*Kongreya Neteweyî ya Kurdistanê)* at their Research Center where Zubeyir Aydar, a member of the Congress, welcomed me. On wide-screen TV the militant women of PKK were celebrating the 8th of March Women's International Day dressed in military fatigues and carrying arms, just like Sose Mayrig, the heroic wife of Fedayi Serop Aghbyur. Sose fought in Sassoon and in Sghert. I was ashamed to tell Aydar, who is from Sghert, that Sose, in her last days, worked as a housemaid in Egypt in order to survive, whereas, her compatriot and assassinated martyr Sakine Canciz' funeral was attended by one-million people in Diyarbakir.

"Where are you, Armenians, who were the flag-bearers of freedom and revolution in the Ottoman Empire? We are waiting for you to join our armies for the liberation of our lands on which Christians flourished and lived for centuries, asked Aydar.

On my way back to Beirut I met the Pontic Greek leaders in Athens. Some 300,000 Pontic Greeks were massacred in 1922 by Ataturk and Topal Osman, while thousands were Islamized and Turkified, but like the Hamshens, they managed to preserve their language, songs and traditions. Our conversations revolved around common history and interests. The impression was that the Pontic Greeks too, are neglected by our short-sighted statesmen in Yerevan and also by the Athens politicians who try to please Turkey and its masters.

Back in Beirut, while preparing to lead a Kurdistan Iraq parliamentary delegation to Armenia and to the NKR an unpleasant news was received from Armenia. The Kurdish delegation included Iraqi-Armenian MP Yerwant Amenian, Assyrian-Chaldean MP Salem Toma Kako, envoys of President Mesut Barzani MP Ali Halko and Ali Tatar. Months ago we had received an invitation from NKR MP Hayk Khanumyan to visit liberated Artsakh. He had even managed to sponsor the delegation's expenses. But at the last minute... under pressure from the foreign ministry of Armenia, our parliamentary hosts refused to receive the Iraq-Kurdistan politicians as guests. The reason was that it would complicate relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran and, of course, Armenia's Protocol partner Turkey.