

WESTERN ARMENIAN MISSION: JUST DEMANDS

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Hamo Moskofian, Moscow, 2 November 2010



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IOC members and guests from Armenia, Australia, Canada, Europe, Lebanon, Russia, and USA participated in the two-day event. Individuals from Latin America could not attend because of unexpected and last-minute circumstances.

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Hamo Moskofian: As political and state official in Soviet Armenia for many years and as one of the unofficial spokesmen for more than 2.5-million-strong Armenian community in Russia, what are your national concerns at present?

Karen Mikaelyan: The continuous process of assimilation, the closing down of schools, newspapers, national establishments, benevolent organizations etc. are all serious matters. We need re-organize before it's too late.

HM: In your view what should be the goal of the Armenian Diaspora?

KM: The Armenian Diaspora is the result of centuries-long massacres, the Genocide and deportation

of Western Armenians from our motherland. The majority of Diasporan population has Western Armenian roots. They are the descendants of the survivors of the Genocide. There is the unfinished judicial process of the Armenian Cause. The main reason for our failures and losses in the past has been disorganization. Our aim is to organize the Diaspora.

HM: Aren't other organizations already performing that task?

KM: The lobbying efforts in Washington, Paris and elsewhere, the process of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the US Congress, the thankful work that "Hye Tad" and other American-Armenian organizations are performing constitute an incomplete struggle because they don't tackle the issue of the just demands of Western Armenians. Let's consider for a moment that America and Turkey recognize the Armenian Genocide. Then what? Nobody knows what would follow such recognition.

The Armenian authorities cannot think about the "then" because Armenia lacks the strength to dictate its demands on Turkey. The struggle for just demands is the mission of the Western Armenians, and in order to accomplish it there is need to create an authorized body or establishment. There must be an invitation for a 3rd National Congress. We must create a representative body, an NGO. This requires a huge effort.

HM: Why is it called the 3rd National Congress?

KM: Two such Western Armenian Congresses took place shortly before and during the first Republic of Armenia. They dealt with the refugees and presented the Armenian demands to the Peace Conference in Paris. Boghos Nubar Pasha led the mission.

The Treaty of Sèvres, recognized by the Great Powers of the day, met the Armenian demands, but we could not acquire what was ours because we did not have an army to defend our rights. Afterwards the process of pursuing our demands halted when Armenia became a Soviet republic.

Previous attempts to organize the Diaspora have ended in failure because of internal disputes and struggles as to who would lead the Diaspora. We took a step to organize The Western Armenian Congress leaving aside partisan and marginal disputes.

HM: Would you like to say anything further regarding the recent organizational conference in Sèvres for the establishment of the Western Armenian Congress?

KM: It seems absurd, but this movement started in Russia, by Russian-speaking Western Armenians. They are mostly intellectuals. Efforts are underway to organize a conference in Sèvres in the spring of 2011. The various Diaspora communities have to decide who to send as delegates, each community according to its local traditions and circumstances. At the conference we plan to prepare the organizational, financial and ideological documents and a list of our demands, which following the discussions will be transferred to the realm of the highest bodies of international law.

After 90 years of interruption, we must resume the struggle to pursue our just demands.

