In June 2001, for example, on the 60th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, Hrant Dink represented the Armenian community in Turkey: "We are observ- ing with shame how the Armenian diaspora could not agree on. On the eve of the 24 April commemorations in 2002, for example, he addressed members of the Armenian diaspora in France in an interview with L’Express newspaper.

"Do not seek Armenian identity among the 1915 graves, but in the present. I am ready to discuss all issues with you... I am proud to be a Turkish Armenian." He said this in 1998.

Mr. Dink and his colleagues were symbols as well as agents of change in relation to the Armenian community in Turkey. They were determined to express the indignation and resentment linked to the issue of Armenian denial in the public of Turkey. If society and the political system did not allow them to voice their fears, concerns, and hopes for the future of the Armenian community in Turkey, the silence surrounding them - they believed - must be made audible. It was to a large extent this combination of the hitherto unheard, and the desire to address the "existential" problems surrounding the Armenian church and educational establishments - that sparked the creation of Agos in Turkey.

Agos, a weekday newspaper, was launched in April 1996. The five founders who headed Agos were: Diran Bakar, a lawyer; Luiz Bakar, also a lawyer and (since 1994) the spokesperson of the patriarchate; Harutin Sessian, a businessman; Anahit Tutur, a public-relations professional; and Hrant Dink, who at the time owned a newspaper.

The founding members - as is the case with any equivalent innovative project - were to have different personalities and interests. But Agos (and Hrant in particular) remained consistent in the effort to open channels of communication and dialogue between the Armenian church and society, and at times isolated Armenian community and Turkish soci- ety. Hrant defined one of the newspaper’s purposes as “(trying) to identify and explain our problems to the government and to Turkish society”, while acknowledging that “because of the 1915 graves, we also have problems”. (Ar- menian International Magazine, 111(3), March 2000). His core belief was that prejudices could be overcome by educa- tion and dialogue. The target of this education and dialogue was not just misunderstanding and prejudice in Turkish society, but the Armenian community itself. Hrant’s criticism of the government’s silence about the Armenian community, and especially the Armenian patriarchate, was unpopular, costing him supporters and even friends.

Hrant passionately recorded the constant indignities experienced by Ar- menian educators. In August 1998 he wrote: "If I am not mistaken, it was three years ago... One of the vice-directors of the ministry of national education’s Istanbul office - who was later convicted of lying in court - said to the following ‘vice-principals’ he appointed (whom the minority schools called ‘Turkish vice-principals’): ‘You are our eyes and ears... You are to inform us of even the minutest mistakes that these people make.’ He said this in the presence of the minority school principals, with total disregard for their dignity and community. Nothing was said. ...And what was I fantasising all these years... With my 45-year-old brain, I was thinking: ‘would, one day, a minister of national education start the ceremony for the new school year in a minority school?’ Sweet thoughts...My naivety ...Sorry...” (see “Kinkel ve Vatıclk”, Agos, 21 August 1998 - trans- lated excerpts posted on ).

A ‘voice of dignity’

Hrant Dink and his colleagues were a time of silence

It was never going to be easy, for the challenge was at once institutional, legal, and political.

The Armenian community, like that of other minorities in Turkey, experi- enced three times their political woes. We were the country and the world’s worst refugees with no homeland, and were the targets of terrorism, hatred, and intimidation across the long decades from the 1950s to the 1990s without being able to speak up in its defence - and in a very different atmosphere to later controversies over Article 301 and even minimal debate about the genocide of 1915. The Armenian community in Tur- key faced (and face) perennial problems that had been glossed over by the Armenian International Magazine, 113(3), March 2000. His core belief was that prejudices could be overcome by educa- tion and dialogue. The target of this education and dialogue was not just misunderstanding and prejudice in Turkish society, but the Armenian community itself. Hrant’s criticism of the government’s silence about the Armenian community, and especially the Armenian patriarchate, was unpopular, costing him supporters and even friends.

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GLENDALE -- The Armenian Athletic Association “Homenmen” women’s auxiliary Glendale chapter organized an open house for Homenmen athletes and their parents on Sunday March 4 at the Glendale central library auditorium. This event was attended by young athletes and parents who wanted to learn more about the organization and its direction.

Seta Khodanian, master of ceremonies, briefly discussed the 86 year old history of Homenmen in general and more specifically talked about Homenmen’s activities in the greater southern California area and in particular the city of Glendale. She also addressed some of the short and long range plans of the organization.

Homenmen Glendale chairman Vartan Kojababian addressed the( ship that parents, community leaders and the youth have gone through in the past to make Homenmen not only a successful athletic organization, but also a learning step for youth to participate in professionalism. He stated that Homenmen creates a platform for discussion in activity giving youth the necessary skills to become well-informed, active members and leaders of their community.

Armenian Athletic Association “Homenmen” women’s auxiliary Glendale chapter chairwomen Rozin DerTavitian addressed the audience on the meaning of being a Homenmen member, and following its creed “Sound Body, and a Sound Mind.” She added that those who have participated in Homenmen throughout their youth and into their adulthood have achieved a higher level of success and happiness in both their personal and professional lives. Everyone was encouraged to proactively recruit their friends and family into the organization.

Hrant Dink and Armenians in Turkey
Continued from page 3

cused on the substance of reconciliation, “I know what happened to my grandfather,” he told AFP. “It’s not a matter what you called it: genocide, extermination, annihilation. The more some people yearn for openness and understanding, the more others who are afraid of such changes struggle to keep society closed. In Turkey, the legal cases against Hrant Dink, Orhan Pamuk, Ragip Zarakolu or Murat Belge are examples of the breaking of every taboo causes panic in the end. This is especially true of the Armenian issue: the greatest of all taboos in Turkey, one that was present at the creation of the state and which represents the principal “other” of Turkish national identity” (, 13 December 2005).

Hrant Dink “was Turkey in its complexity”, wrote Dogu Ergil. “He was a Turk against Armenian extremism and an Armenian against Turkish extremism.”

The day of Hrant Dink’s funeral was the evidence of how far Turkey had travelled since that press conference at Istanbul’s Patriarchate in 1994. More than twelve years on, the Ermeni pvc epithet hurled by nationalists was overthrown by the cries of Hepting, Armenian (”We are all Armenians!”) in the throats of tens of thousands of Turks. Hrant himself, in his life as much as his death, had played an enormous role in bringing about that change. He opened the door to a future that Armenians and Turks must find together.

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Dr. Lawrence Baron to Speak on “Genres of Genocide” at Fresno State

FRESNO -- Dr. Lawrence Baron, Nasarit Chair in Modern Jewish History at San Diego State University, will give a lecture on “Genres of Genocide: Depicting the Armenian, Jewish, and Rwandan Genocides in Feature Films,” at 7:30PM on Tuesday, March 20, 2007. The lecture, part of the Spring 2007 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program, will be held in the Ailes Peters Auditorium, Room 191, in the University Business Center on the Fresno State campus.

This lecture examines how feature films draw on iconic documentary images to convey the uniqueness of the Armenian and Jewish experiences while simultaneously employing similar cinematic strategies to dramatize their stories. Clips from such films as Ravished Armenia, Schindler’s List, and Myriam, for Armenia’s democratization and European integration, Markarian was reported to assure him that his government has “the desire and the will” to hold a first-ever Armenian election recognized as democratic by the West. “I haven’t gotten any guarantees, but I have a very strong sense that the authorities are aware of the importance of the elections,” Semneby told RFE/RL after the talks. He stressed the fact that it will be the first major ballot since Armenia’s and neighboring Azerbaijan’s and Georgia’s inclusion in the EU’s European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) framework.