THE LAST ACT IN THE DUEL BETWEEN JAMANAK AND AGOS

AVİM

Lately tension is being observed regarding the incomes that are being transfered to some of the newpapers that are published in Turkey and represent our Armenian citizens. Among these newspapers, Jamanak and Agos have been attacking eachother in their front pages regarding the incomes particularly receievd from Patriarchate bulletins. Although Jamanak does not give names, it has portrayed Agos as its target which is where its arrows of criticism are pointing towards. Agos response to Jamanak was quick. In Agos response, although it claims that the Patriarchate is making money distribution unfairly, it states that the connections of Agos and the Hrant Dink Foundation that acts jointly with it benefit from much wider financial means despite these complaints and criticisms.

The Jamanak newspapaer published its first open letter to Agos on 9 April 2018 with the signature of the Chief Editor Ara Kochunyan. In this open letter to Agos, which is described as a media outlet that has been going through an discredit in recent years , Kochunyan has stated that Agos aim is to appear as oppositional and obtain influence in the community administration.[1]

In Jamanaks next article, it stated that the Agos is not the source of information regarding the Patriarchate but the Patriarchate itself. It was expressed that Jamanak had acted on the information from the press. Jamanak brought up two reasons that disturbed Agos and lead to Agos criticisms. The first is that Agos was not receiving bulletins from the Patriarchate, the other is that there are no Jamanak editors in the Advisory Committee. Jamanak added that they do not question that the bulletins of one of the oppositional parties in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey are given to Agos and not them. Another point is that Jamanak is a daily newspaper. Jamanak justifiably wrote that bulletins are passed to daily newspapers all over the world.[2]This has nothing to do with the newspaper. Sharing information quickly with the reader is a necessity of journalism. Jamanak has also expressed that it struggles to receive commercial advertisements because its publishing language is Armenian. It was also underlined that it was natural for the Patriarchate to pass bullettins to Jamanak as it language of worship and Jamanaks language of publishing overlap.[3]

Another point that draws attention is the reaction that Agos gave to journalists from the Jamanak and Nor Marmara newspapers being in the Advisory Committee. Agos stated the necessity for its spokesman to be in the Advisory Committee. At this point, Jamanak wrote that the representation of the Advisory Committee with spokespeople is besides the point

and that the two journalists are relied on individually.

Agos claims that Jamanak is especially recieving more advertisements and support. Those who hear this may think that Agos is in a financial struggle and unable to do its duty. Whereas, it is known that Agos has sources of income that are difficult to explain. It is especially known that it recieves large amounts of resources from the diaspora. Among the evidence of this is that in 2015 Agos spent a large amount to restore the Anarad Hığutyun building and transform it into the Agos newspaper publishing house. It is still known that even today Agos recieves substantial support from the Hrant Dink Foundation and other resources. If Agos is disturbing the Patriarchate over Jamanak, claiming that it has financial struggles, far from explaining the support it recieves, then it is necessary to solemnly investigate the severity of the situation.

During this open correspondence, Agos stated that its stance has been obvious since the first day of its establishment.[4]Agos has made very beneficial and constructive publishing in the past. However, after the assasination of Hrant Dink, Agos had a change of course. It became the spokesperson of the diaspora in Turkey. As it can be understood from Garo Paylans speechs, it has become a fortress of Bekchiyan. Agos siding against the Patriarchate due to financial reasons became another excuse for opposition to the Patriarchate.

After the response Jamanak gave to Agos without giving any names, Agos openly bringing this foreward leads to the questioning of Agos other resources.

Apart from the personal donations from the Hrant Dink Foundation in which it is possible to see a money box in the name of Agos at churches Agos posts the contributions it recieves from organizations with very substantial incomes on its website. One of these is from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation that has an income of 118,3 million American dollars. Additionally, the *Açık Toplum Vakfı*(Open Society Foundation) is at the head of the unknown contributions. In 2015, one of the non-governmental organizations that the *Açık Toplum Vakfı* had supported with the 4,3 trillion Turkish Liras it recieved from George Soros was the Hrant Dink Foundation. It has been clearly stated in the *Açık Toplum Vakfı*s website that the Hrant Dink Foundation is being supported. As it can be observed, it is not possible to say that the Hrant Dink Foundation, thus Agos is facing financial struggles. Quite the contrary, after they moved to their new building, they became more aggressive with their activities. Regarding their transfer to the new building, Pınar Öğünç from the *Cumhuriyet*newspaper writes, The Hrant Dink Foundation and the Agos newspapers transfer to the Anarad Hığutyun building is a hundredth year activity in and of itself.[5]The change in building was an indicator that there were no financial struggles. This situation actually shows how the Hrant Dink Foundation and Agos are strayying away from the path of late journalist Hrant Dink. While it was being stated that the issue between the Armenians and Turks could be resolved during the editorship of the deceased Hrant Dink, today the newspaper has gone toward a completely different direction. As a result of this change in direction, finacial support began flowing in.

Regarding the Jamanak newspaper, it is a minority newspaper that has been active in turkey for 110 years. Jamanak means time in Armenian. The newpapers executive editör

Ara Kochunyan stated that since the beginning of 2018, they have not experienced any discrimination as press members.[6]

[1]Aman Dikkat, *jamanak.com*, 9 April 2018, http://www.jamanak.com/content/օրակարգի-հիւթերը/6-04-2018-aman-dikkat

[2]Aman Dikkat, *jamanak.com*, 9 April 2018, http://www.jamanak.com/content/օրակարգի-հիւթերը/6-04-2018-aman-dikkat

[3]Aman Dikkat.

[4]Agosun Merceğinden, Zorunlu Bir Yanıt Daha, *agos.com.tr*, 20 April 2018, http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/20520/agos-un-merceginden-zorunlu-bir-yanit-daha.

[5]Agos ve Dink Vakfı Yeni Adresine Taşındı, Eski Agos Vicdan Müzesi Olacak, T24.com.tr, 28 March 2015, http://t24.com.tr/haber/agos-ve-dink-vakfi-yeni-adresine-tasindi-eski-agos-vicdan-muzesi-olacak,291801.

[6]Ara Koçunyan: Türkiyedeki Ermeni Basın Mensupları Ayrımcılığa Maruz Kalmıyor, *ermenihaber.am*, 24 January 2018, https://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2018/01/24/Ara-Koçunyan-Türkiye-Ermeni-Jamanak/121729.

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