

ANTI-ARMENIAN ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY “ARMENOLOGICAL” DEPARTMENTS AND ANALYTICAL CENTRES IN TURKEY

Simavoryan A. S.

*Head of the Centre of Armenian Studies,
Noravank Scientific Educational Foundation*

In foreign countries Armenology in general has a number of important functions for Armenianness, but in some cases it is distorted and made to serve anti-Armenian and anti-Armenological purposes. Today there are such “Armenological” centers abroad whose activity is different from others and has an adverse context. They can be described as anti-Armenological or pseudo-Armenological centers since they are engaged in anti-Armenian, anti-scientific and anti-propaganda activities. Such institutions have been founded and operate in Turkey, Azerbaijan, and also in some other countries by their initiation and sponsorship. The main purpose of those centers is to serve their political anti-Armenian interest in the information area. Thus, anti-Armenian centers disguised under the name of “Armenological” have strategic meaning for Turkey.

Establishing “Armenological” university departments in the Republic of Turkey was brought forward in 1984 at the conference on the Armenian Question in Ataturk University of Erzurum (old Armenian Karin subjected to the Genocide by Turks in Western Armenia)¹.

During the last decade were established “Armenological” institutions in the faculties of humanities of several universities by the decision of the Government of Turkey at the suggestion of the superior body of institutions of higher education². As a result of the decision several specialized institutional departments were created. The establishment of such centers was conditioned by Turkey’s denial policy against the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by different countries through 1990-2000. As mentioned by the vice-rector of Erciyes University, prof. Metin Hulagu “... *the purpose of opening an Armenian department is to prepare specialists able to work in the Armenian archives and to fight against the Armenian theses*”³.

Presently such departments operate in the following universities:

- Department of “Armenian language and culture” of Ankara University (*Ankara Üniversitesi Ermeni Dili ve Kültürü Anabilim Dalı*)⁴,

¹ “Ermeni Dili Bölümü ilk mezunlarını veriyor” (“The department of the Armenian language has its first graduates”), Sabah, 31.05.2014.

² Հայերենը որպես օտար լեզու, <http://www.aravot.am/2011/05/18/341858/>

³ The number of applicants wanting to learn Armenian has drastically increased, <http://akunq.net/am/?p=13194>

⁴ http://www.dtcf.ankara.edu.tr/akademik_birim.php?ermeni-dili-ve-kulturu-anabilim-dali&bid=74&icerik=bolum_hakkinda&lang=tr#breadcrumb

- Department of “Armenian language and literature” of Nevşehir University (*Nevşehir Üniversitesi Ermeni Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü*),
- Department of “Armenian language and literature” of Trakia University (*Trakya Üniversitesi Ermeni Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümü*),
- Department of “Armenian language and literature” of Erciyes University (*Erciyes Üniversitesi Ermeni Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü*).

The above-mentioned departments operate within the framework of educational programs and courses developed for the purposes of anti-Armenological strategy (research and translations are also being made).

In 2001 the first “Armenological” department was established in Ankara University. Within the same year several other “Armenological” centers were founded which perform not educational, but research functions. They were affiliate institutions to universities and research centers (e.g. “Research center of Turkish-Armenian relations” of Sakarya University, “Institute of Armenian studies”). The department of “Armenian language and culture” of Ankara University prepared researchers who were involved in the propaganda work within the framework of the “studies” carried out by the above-mentioned centers targeted at the denial of the Armenian Genocide. At the same time in some universities research centers were established whose real purpose was the denial of the Armenian Genocide. Such centers are:

- Research center of “Turkish-Armenian relations” at Sakarya University (*Sakarya Üniversitesi Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri Araştırma Merkezi*),
- Research center of “Turkish-Armenian relations” at Ataturk University (*Atatürk Üniversitesi Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri Araştırma Merkezi*).

One of the strategic goals of these two centers, involved in falsification, was to develop and spread abroad the thesis of “genocide” as if carried out against the Turks by the Armenians. It is no coincidence that the above-mentioned center of Ataturk University, which is in the city of Karin-Erzurum, occupied as a result of the Genocide and now considered the hotbed of Turkish nationalism, has for that purpose established “museums of genocide” in several villages⁵. These two centers have once cooperated with the “Armenian Institute” of Ankara and now they have closer ties with the department of “Armenology” of “*Eurasian research center*” (*Avrasya İncelemeleri Merkezi, AVİM*).

It should be mentioned that the anti-Armenological activities in Turkey and Azerbaijan are not only used for the purpose of anti-Armenian propaganda, but also prepare personnel for different fields, including special services. Not only the “Armenological” centers of Turkey serve this purpose, but also certain specialists are sent to Armenological centers abroad for training. For example in 1999 a number of Turkish specialists were sent to Saint Petersburg University to study the Armenian language in

⁵ There is such a museum in the village Yeshilyayla (old Armenian name – Artsati).

order to open the chair of “Armenian language and literature” in Ankara University to prepare Armenologists⁶. Behind these steps “one can clearly see Turkey’s certain political and long-term intelligence goals and problems directed at linguistic and area studies training of present and future employees and agents of Turkish special services for the purpose of carrying out effective intelligence activities against Armenia”⁷.

As a probable place of employment are mentioned also the Turkish Historical Society and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey which have a demand of personnel knowing Armenian⁸.

To replenish the university departments of Turkey with lecturers, specialists of Armenian language and literature are invited from abroad, particularly from Georgia and Azerbaijan⁹.

When in 2011 at the initiative of MFA of Turkey, Kadir Has University (financed also by the USA “Marshall Fund” - \$32,500) was faced with the problem of preparing diplomats knowing Armenian¹⁰, the efforts of staffing it with lecturers had been in vain as a result of which the opening of the department of “Armenology” was temporarily suspended¹¹. Now it works not as an “Armenological” department, but offers courses on the Armenian language¹².

Compared to state institutions of higher education the analytical institutions carry out another kind of work. Once the research work of the main part of numerous analytical centers, including the “close analytic” groups, was mainly focused on gathering information about the proceedings in the Armenian Diaspora and mostly the activity of ASALA¹³. This information was elaborated for anti-Armenian purposes. Presently the problems of a political and strategic character concerning Armenian-Turkish relations, the Armenian Genocide, the Diaspora and in general Armenia and Armeniacy have become the subject matter of anti-Armenian “research” of Turkish analytical institutions as well.

The “intellectual production” (articles, books, reports) full of falsification, published by around 10 research centers¹⁴ in the course of the last five years can be divided into

⁶ Հարությունյան Ա., Թուրքական հատուկ ծառայությունների ստեղծման պատմությունը և դրանց գործունեությունը արդի փուլում, «Թուրքիա. անվտանգության ու պաշտպանության հիմնախնդիրները», Երևան, 2007, էջ 170:

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ «Ermeni Dili Bölümü ilk mezunlarını veriyor» (“The department of the Armenian language has its first graduates”, Sabah, 31.05.2014).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ “Kadir Has’ta ücretsiz Ermenice kursları başlıyor sırada Kürtçe var” (“Free courses of the Armenian language, as well as Kurdish will start in Kadir Has University”) (18.05.2011), <http://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/pervin-kaplan/631678-kadir-hasta-uccretsiz-ermenice-kurslari-basliyor-sirada-kurtce-var>.

¹¹ Հայերենը որպես օտար լեզու (05. 18. 2011), <http://www.aravot.am/2011/05/18/341858/>:

¹² <http://www.khas.edu.tr/egitim/yasam-boyu-egitim-merkezi/komsu-diller-akademisi/ermenice-dil-kursu.html>

¹³ Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia.

¹⁴ “Fund of social and strategic research” («KÖK Sosyal ve Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı-KÖKSAM»-founded in 1991), “New Turkey strategic research center” (Yeni Türkiye Stratejik Araştırma Merkezi»-founded in 1994), “Turkish center of international relations and strategic analyses” («Türkiye Uluslararası İlişkiler Ve Stratejik Analizler Merkezi-TURKSAM»-founded in 2004), “Eurasian research center” (Avrasya İncelemeleri Merkezi, AVİM»-founded in 2009), “Turkish-Asian strategic research center” (Türk Asya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi-TASAM»-founded in 2004),

two parts, “historical” and modern. In the so-called “historical” studies and surveys of modern problems, for the purpose of denying the Armenian Genocide, the problems of the History of Armenia are being distorted from the positions of Pan-Turkism and neo-Osmanism¹⁵ and information warfare is being fought against the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh.

“Historical” “research” is carried out either in the affiliate research-analytical centers at universities (e.g. in the research centers of “Turkish-Armenian relations” in Sakarya and Ataturk universities), or in the *think tank* centers specializing in anti-Armenological questions.

Among Turkish *think tanks* the largest “Armenological” center engaged in the problems of “historical” and modern periods was the Institute for Armenian Studies which founded in Ankara and operated in 1999-2009 in cooperation with Turkey’s “Eurasian Center for Strategic Studies” (ASAM). As Haykaram Nahapetyan noted: “Although the structure is called the Institute for Armenian Studies, however, by its functions it doesn’t completely coincide with its name. One can not even speak about objective researches on the subjects of Armenian civilization, culture and history. The structure is mainly engaged in carrying out works of denying character on the issue of the Armenian Genocide and conducts research to reveal propagandistic, social-political activities and economic capabilities of the Armenian Diaspora¹⁶. In 2009 was terminated the activity of the “Institute for Armenian Studies” and it was incorporated into the Centre for Eurasian Studies (AVIM) (established the same year by the “Turkmeneli Cooperation and Cultural Foundation” in Ankara). AVIM is also involved in the publication of two journals which were established by the “Institute for Armenian Studies” [“Journal of Armenian studies” (in Turkish, first publication in 2001) and “Review of Armenian Studies” (in English, first publication in 2002)]¹⁷. In the magazines are prevailing the publications concerning the denial of the Armenian Genocide, which testifies to the fact that they still continue to work by the principles adopted by the “Institute of Armenian Studies” of Ankara. Besides the Turkish authors, Azerbaijani and several western authors also publish their articles and they are also included in the advisory boards which lend “international” character to the periodicals. The anti-Armenian propagandistic publications do not limit themselves to these periodicals. The center also prepares similar works as a daily bulletin. It can be seen that together with

“Political social strategic research fund of the Turkish Academy” («Türk Akademisi Siyasi Sosyal Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı-TASAV»-founded in 2012), “21st century Turkish Institute” («21 Yüzyıl Türkiye Enstitüsü»-founded in 2005), “Strategic research center of Erciyes University” (Erciyes üniversitesi Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi-ERUSAM»-founded in 2011), “Research center of Turkish-Armenian relations” of the University of Ataturk (Atatürk Üniversitesi «Türk-Ermeni İlişkileri Araştırma Merkezi»-founded in 2001), “Eurasian economic relations association” (“Avrasya Ekonomik İlişkiler Derneği”-founded in 2006).

¹⁵ Taking into consideration the denial of the Armenian Genocide in Turkish historiography it has been noted that “presently the question of the Armenian Genocide is problem number 1 of Turkish historiography towards which it implements a systematic policy”. (Թուրքերը թուրքերի մասին, հատոր երրորդ: Կազմող և խմբագիր Ռ. Մելքոնյան, Երևան, 2011, էջ 3).

¹⁶ See the details in: Haykaram Nahapetyan, Institute for Armenian Studies in Ankara, http://www.noravank.am/eng/articles/security/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=3486

¹⁷ http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=322&debate_ID=4&slide_ID=15

the Turkish forgers several foreign “specialists” consolidated around these magazines (e.g. Jean-Luis Mattei, Derk Jan van der Linde, Jeremy Salt, Maxime Gauin¹⁸, et al.), who propagating the Turkish misinformation, invented falsified theses serving the Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide, neglecting the fact that Western Armenia is the largest part of the Armenian Motherland and the genocide was committed against Armenians in their Homeland.

The founder of the former “Institute of Armenian Studies” affiliate to the “21st Century Turkish Institute” and ASAM, member of the party “National Movement”, Umit Ozdagh, who was engaged in anti-Armenian topics for years, considering the work carried out for the effective distribution of the Turkish theses abroad so far unsatisfactory, suggests training foreign young “scientists” for protecting the interests of Turkey and involving famous “historians” choosing them from target countries (particularly from the USA, Great Britain, France, Spain, Latin America, Lithuania, Germany, China and Japan). Ozdagh is convinced that with Turkey’s sponsorship and support they will have an opportunity to publish pro-Turkish works in dozens of languages and contribute to the establishment of Turkish research institutes in the above-mentioned countries¹⁹.

Together with the activity of the anti-Armenological centers the following private analytical centers, having other research fields, also appear in the range of anti-Armenian propaganda:

1. Fund for social and strategic research (KÖK Sosyal ve Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı-KÖKSAV-established in 1991)
2. New Turkey strategic research center (Yeni Türkiye Stratejik Araştırma Merkezi-founded in 1994)
3. Turkish-Asian strategic research center (Türk Asya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi-TASAM-founded in 2003)
4. Turkish center of international relations and strategic analyses (Türkiye Uluslararası İlişkiler Ve Stratejik Analizler Merkezi-TURKSAM- founded in 2004)
5. Political social strategic research fund of the Turkish Academy (Türk Akademisi Siyasi Sosyal Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı-TASAV-founded in 2012)
6. Strategic research center (Birlik Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi BİRSAM-founded in 2014)

¹⁸ Jean-Louis Mattei, Mkrtich Portukalian and the “Armenia” Journal (From Terrorism to Skeptical Modesty). – Review of Armenian Studies, 2011, No 24, pp. 65-92; Derk Jan van der Linde, The Armenian Genocide question and Legal Responsibility. – Review of Armenian Studies, 2011, No 24, pp. 123-151; Jeremy Salt, The Armenian “Relocation”: The Case for “Military Necessity”. – Review of Armenian Studies, 2014, No 29, pp. 65-75, Maxime Gauin, Facing Liberty: The Victory of Rational Argumentation and Its Consequences, – Review of Armenian Studies, 2014, No 29, 127-145, et al.).

¹⁹ Ümit Özdağ, Dış İşleri Bakanına Açık Mektup veya 2015'e Doğru Yeni Bir Büyük Strateji Önerisi (“An open letter to the minister of foreign affairs or a proposal for a new great strategy towards 2015”), <http://www.21yyte.org/arastirma/milli-guvenlik-ve-dis-politika-arastirmalari-merkezi/2013/04/29/6972/dis-isleri-bakanina-acik-mektup-veya-2015e-dogru-yeni-bir-buyuk-strateji->

What is common for the analytical centers is that the research concerning the RA and generally the Armeniacy are mainly periodical, in other cases - casual or situational. Most of it is carried out by the subdivisions called "Caucasian", "regional", etc. Thus, in the sphere of anti-Armenian research great is the role of TTs which come as a supplementary potential.

From the point of view of institutional ties the level of cooperation between the Turkish institutions engaged in anti-Armenian research or "educational" activities (whether they are university departments or analytical centers) is high. They work by the principle of complementarity which gives an opportunity to perform several key functions in the field of anti-Armenian policy: training of personnel, programming and realization of strategic goals, realization of joint programs, conferences, etc.

The above-mentioned anti-Armenological Turkish centers carry out a large-scale propaganda activity both in Turkey and abroad, serving the anti-Armenian policy of the Turkish government in information warfare.

Taking into account that fact it should be mentioned that the real Armenological centers have great significance in conditions of current information warfare for unmasking and confronting the Turkish-Azerbaijani encroachments against Armenian history, culture and other fields of Armenology which is one of the important problems of contemporary Armenology²⁰. It concerns not only the protection of interests of Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora in the international sphere but also the informational security of the Armeniacy. Thus, the "achievements of Armenology should become a reliable stronghold for the further strengthening of Armenian statehood and against anti-Armenian pseudoscience and propaganda"²¹.

It should be mentioned that in the Republic of Armenia Armenologists and the specialists and experts of informational security²² detect and unmask the Turkish falsifications, the methods and mechanisms of their realization.

***Translated from Armenian by
S. E. Chraghyan***

²⁰ Սուվարյան Յ., Հայագիտության արդի վիճակը Հայաստանում և զարգացման հիմնախնդիրները. - Հայագիտական միջազգային երկրորդ համաժողով. «Հայագիտությունը և արդի ժամանակաշրջանի մարտահրավերները», Լիագումար Նիստի զեկուցումներ, Երևան, 2013 (henceforth՝ ՀՄԵՀ), էջ 29: Մելքոնյան Ա., Հայ պատմագիտության խնդիրները արդի ժամանակաշրջանում, - ՀՄԵՀ, էջ 102:

²¹ Հակոբյան Հ., Հայրենիք-Սփյուռք հարաբերությունները և հայագիտության հիմնախնդիրները, ՀՄԵՀ, էջ 91:

²² Զուլալյան Մ., Հայոց պատմության խեղաթյուրումը արդի թուրք պատմագրության մեջ (հին և միջին դարեր), Երևան, 1995: Danielyan E. L., Importance of the Armenian toponyms' ontological integrity in the system of National Security. - "21st CENTURY", No. 2, 2013, pp. 78-101. Danielyan E.L., Historical truth against Turkish-Azerbaijani falsifications in information warfare. - "21st CENTURY", No. 1, 2014, pp. 105-131. Դանիելյան Է., Հայաստանի և այլ երկրների պատմության թուրք-ադրբեջանական կեղծարարությունների քննադատությունը, - ՀՄԵՀ, 2014, էջ 84-86: Սիմավորյան Ա., Հովյան Վ., Ղանալանյան Տ., Արտերկրի հայագիտական կենտրոնները. ներուժի գնահատում, Երևան, 2014, էջ 24-35: Hovhannisyan M., Collision of past and present. The Collective memory of the Armenian Genocide and the Turkish denial, Saarbrücken, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2012, Hovhannisyan M., Anti-Armenian manifestations of internet propaganda, Second International Congress on Armenian Studies "Armenian Studies and the challenges of modern times" 17-19 October, 2013, Collection of papers, Yerevan, 2014, pp.121-124. Sahakyan L.S., Turkification of the toponyms in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, Montreal, 2010, etc.