

## THE METHODS AND MECHANISMS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE DENIAL IN MODERN TURKEY

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The Turkish denialism was launched in parallel with the Armenian Genocide. It was developed as a state policy from the very outset and obtained new shapes during the time. As the American genocide scholar Henry Huttenbach describes, the genocide denial presents “the institutionalized denialism”<sup>1</sup>. As Donald Bloxham asserts, the denialism is a vital instrument for formation of the Turkish national identity through making legends on the origin of modern Turkey<sup>2</sup>.

Since World War I each succeeding government in Turkey has consistently denied the mass killings of Armenians. The first example of literature of the official denial was a brochure “The aspirations and actions of Armenian committees prior to proclamation of Constitution and after it”, compiled and published in several languages - Turkish, German, English and French by the support of the German propagandistic agency “Wolf” in 1916<sup>3</sup>. It was full the photos of “dashnak and hntchakist committeemen” with “horrifying” faces being pictured under the flags of their parties as well as with the portraits of guns, having been allegedly “confiscated” from them. The book was immediately sent to the embassies represented in Constantinople and was planned “to justify” the exterminating actions against the Armenians carried into effect by the Ottoman government. Taner Akcam remarks that during the last November meeting of the “Unity and progress” party in 1918 Talaat pasha boasted that he “prepared a ground” for the “Turkish version” of denialism through “regulating” the deportation, dispossession and killings of Armenians by provisional laws<sup>4</sup>.

The denialist policy of the Young Turks was inherited by the Republican Turkey, too, and the Armenians either “did not exist” in the “new historiographic concept”<sup>5</sup> in general worked out by the latter’s founder, Kemal Atatürk or were acting simply as an instrument in the hands of the Western imperialistic powers<sup>6</sup>, threatening the integrity of

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<sup>1</sup> Denialism, in which the state structures and institutes take active part; see Henry R. Huttenbach, “The Psychology of Genocide Denial : a Comparison of Four Case Studies”, in Problems of Genocide, Zoryan Institute of Canada, Toronto, 1997, pp. 166-168.

<sup>2</sup> Bloxham D., The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of Ottoman Armenians, Oxford, 2005, p. 207

<sup>3</sup> “Ermeni Komitelerinin Âmâl ve Harekât-i İhtilâliyesi; İlân-i Meşrutiyetten Evvel ve Sonra” [“Armenian Aspirations and Revolutionary Movements”, Istanbul, 1916(in English, French, and German)].

<sup>4</sup> Taner Akcam, A Shameful Act, New York, 2006, p. 184.

<sup>5</sup> Հովհաննիսյան Ա., Թուրքիայում «նոր պատմական կոնցեպցիայի» մշակման հարցի շուրջը (XX դարի 30-ական թթ.), Մերձավոր և Միջին Արևելքի երկրներ և ժողովուրդներ, 1989, XV, էջ 5-16:

<sup>6</sup> Fatma Ulgen, Reading Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on the Armenian Genocide of 1915”, in Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 44, No. 4, 2010, pp. 369-391, <https://goo.gl/klyv1w>.

the Ottoman Empire and Turkey; and the Armenian Genocide was mentioned as an “alleged” or “so-called” if mentioned at all. The denialism reached such an extent that leading specialists in the field of genocide studies Yves Ternon and Pierre Vidal-Naquet called the Turkish historiography *the historiography of denialism*<sup>7</sup>.

Nevertheless, if it was a taboo to talk about the Armenian Question after proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, then numerous books had started to be published at full tilt since the 1950s. Despite the Armenian “taboo” was continuing to be in force, works were published in the Turkish historiography, considering the events of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This interest toward the history of the Armenian people is interpreted not by the Turkish authors’ desire to investigate the history of the Western Armenians, suffering under the yoke of the Ottoman despotism for centuries, but by intention to substantiate, “scientifically and historically”, that is to say, to justify the barbaric policy of the former Turkish ruling circles that committed the annihilation of Armenians. To such works of that period belong “The Armenians in the History and The Armenian Question” by E. Uras, which has been published in 1950, “The Armenians in Civil Service of Turkey in 1453-1953” by Y. Chark (published in 1953), “How Karabekir destroyed Armenia” by J. Kuta (1956), “The History of Turkish Revolution” by H. Bayur (1957) etc<sup>8</sup>.

As the Armenian historian A. Marukyan points, the accents of the Turkish historiography in the attempts to deny and distort the Armenian Genocide underwent essential changes after WW II, when a series of important international events took place - the Nuremberg trial of the Nazi criminals, the USSR brought a territorial claim against Turkey on behalf of Soviet Armenia and Georgia, the adoption of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the commemoration of the semi- centennial of the Armenian Genocide by the whole Armenian nation in 1965, which was followed by the process of recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide by the Parliaments of different countries. The abovementioned developments made the Turks not to accept the historical truth, but to make more sophisticated the tricks of the denial and misinterpretation. The Turkish state has taken the denial and misinterpretation under its protection and control, turning it into a state propagandistic policy, as the recognition and condemnation of the

<sup>7</sup> Саакян Р., Методологические вопросы историографии геноцида армян, Մերձավոր և Միջին Արևելքի երկրներ և ժողովուրդներ, 1996, XVI, էջ 156:

<sup>8</sup> The Armenian historians-Turkologists have published a number of books and articles about the falsifications of the Turkish historiography; see Սարգիսով Ե., Սաֆրաստյան Ա., Պատմության հակագիտական լուսաբանման մի քանի փաստերի մասին, Արևելագիտական ժողովածու, 1960, I, էջ 379-398; Սարգսյան Ե., Սահակյան Ռ., Հայ ժողովրդի նոր շրջանի պատմության նենգափոխումը թուրք պատմագրության մեջ, Երևան, 1963: Կիրակոսյան Զ., Երիտթուրքերը պատմության դատաստանի առաջ, գիրք երկրորդ, Երևան, 1983, էջ 335-401: Զովալյան Մ., Հայոց պատմության խեղաթյուրումը արդի թուրք պատմագրության մեջ (հին և միջին դարեր), Երևան, 1995: Ներսիսյան Մ., Պատմության կեղծարարները, Երևան, 1998: Հովհաննիսյան Ն., Հայոց ցեղասպանությունը ցեղասպանագիտության հայեցակարգային համակարգում, Երևան, 2002:

Armenian Genocide by different countries considers a threat to its interests, and the probability to be a subject of international responsibility for that crime is also perceived<sup>9</sup>.

In the course of time new questions on the Armenian Genocide appeared in the circles of Turkish society. The “wall” of silence of Turkish society cracked at the beginning of the 1990s<sup>10</sup>. If for decades the Turkish denialism was directed toward the exterior world, then it started to obtain an inner direction, as well, which, in its turn, made difficult the realization of the denialist policy by the Turkish state. If formerly Turkey applied all its resources to deny the fact of Genocide in the exterior world, then it was already compelled to take steps to prove the same for an interior audience, as well. Alternative points of view of the Turkish society on the Armenian Genocide, different from the official thesis, has started since the 1990s. Such a state of affairs was promoted by the independence of Armenia, that is, the restoration of Armenian statehood, and consequently, the possibility of touching the Armenian Question at the state level as well as by both the aspiration of Turkey to be integrated with the EU and its interior political developments, the Kurdish Problem, discussions around the Turkish identity etc<sup>11</sup>.

The tradition of discussing freely the themes concerning the problem of genocide was missing in Turkey for a long time; it was the so called “Armenian taboo”, which has been operated. But the said tradition has been shattered in recent times. The Turkish official view has obtained serious opponents in this matter in the face of historians, writers and journalists like Taner Akcam, Orhan Pamuk, Baskin Oran, the late Hrant Dink, Ragyp Zarakolu etc. Anyhow, the abjuration and denialism continue to be predominant official and public standpoints. Some specialists are searching the explanation of the Turkish denialist syndrome and find it in the peculiarities of both Turkish identity and creation of the Republic of Turkey<sup>12</sup>. It is known that the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Kemal Ataturk, was trying to present his land as a new country, gotten rid of the past, which pretends to take its start from zero. One of Turkish identity's pillars in the Kemalist interpretation is the creation of the republic, triumphed in “anti-imperialistic and national-liberation” struggle. In reality, this state has been created not as a result of the triumph against the imperialist powers, but as a result of annihilation of the empire's Armenian and Greek subjects<sup>13</sup>. As Taner Akcam denotes, if a public takes part in massacres, it can't find the strength to condemn these events<sup>14</sup>. A point of view that the Turkish national Kemalist movement was organized by the “Unity and progress”

<sup>9</sup> Մարության Ա., Հայոց ցեղասպանության ժխտման ու նենգափոխման թուրքական «հայեցակարգի» հիմնական բաղադրիչները, Պատմա-քաղաքական հանդես, 2015, 1, էջ 27:

<sup>10</sup> Taner Akcam, “Genèse d'une histoire officielle. Le tabou du génocide arménien hante la société turque“ <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2001/07/AKCAM/15341>.

<sup>11</sup> Հովհաննիսյան Ա., Թուրք հասարակության վերաբերմունքը Թուրքիայի կողմից Հայոց ցեղասպանության ճանաչման խնդրին, ՎԷՄ համահայկական հանդես, 2012, թիվ 2(38), էջ 189-198:

<sup>12</sup> Taner Akcam, Türk ulusal kimliği ve ermeni sorunu, Istanbul, 1993, s. 149-153.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 149.

<sup>14</sup> Taner Akcam, İnsan hakları ve Ermeni sorunu. Ittihat ve Terakki' den Kurtuluş savaşı' na, Istanbul, 2002, s. 586.

party has entered into circulation in the historiography in recent times. The Young Turks had prepared the so called plan “B” for the case of being defeated in WW I, that is, to take positions in the Asian part of the country and to call for national liberation struggle. This plan was launched after the ceasefire in 1918<sup>15</sup>. *The nouveaux riches*, having embezzled and stolen the property of the massacred Armenians, laid the economic foundation of the Republic of Turkey. The political elite of the newly created republic consisted mainly of the persons, who were direct organizers and participants of the Armenian Genocide.

**The denial of genocide in the Republic of Turkey has underlying reasons. In fact, those “heroes”, who “saved the Turkish nation” and created a country from nothing, merely act as murderers and plunderers.**

The Turkish state machine and society deny fiercely their own culpability; and there are sound “reasons” for that, which have been considered by a number of researchers, who set aside basically three factors of fear:

- a) **the fear of compensation**; the Armenians were the most advanced and powerful people in terms of culture and economy. This huge fortune passed to the organizers of their massacres and killers after the genocide. Turkey’s largest trade houses and business companies have an Armenian trace in their history of wealth accumulation. Namely, these forces have a fear that the Armenian Genocide recognition will bring a claim for compensation. It can turn into territorial claims because of reparation’s huge sizes;
- b) **the fear of discrediting the heroes**; many former members of the Young Turks’ party, who were convicted by the government also for the crime, committed against the Armenians, had joined the Kemalist movement. Joining the Turkish nationalistic and revolutionary movement was the only way for those criminals to escape the responsibility. Later they got important offices in the new Turkish republic. For instance, Shyukru Kaya, the general secretary of the Republican People's Party, established by Kemal, and the minister of interior affairs, was one of the chief responsible persons for the deportation of Armenians, made declaration to the German consuls many times, “We have to annihilate the Armenians”<sup>16</sup>. Mustafa Abdulhalik Renda, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly in the republican period, had burned alive thousands of Armenians in Mush. The founders of the Republic will be presented as murderers and criminals in the case of veritable history;
- c) **the fear of identity crisis**; The loss of the modern Turkish society’s collective memory is the main obstacle for the matter to be discussed publicly. When Ataturk was creating a new state he changed the real history with that of the official narrative, where the military defeats and the bloody

<sup>15</sup> Հովհաննիսյան Ա., Ցեղասպանության ժխտումը և էթիկան (թուրքական ազգային պետության կազմավորման որոշ հարցերի լույսի ներքո), Թուրքագիտական և օսմանագիտական հետազոտություններ, 2006, IV, էջ 124-129:

<sup>16</sup> Մանուկյան Ս., «Թուրքական ժխտողականություն» <https://goo.gl/rPft4X>

crimes, committed against the subjugated peoples, simply are not mentioned and are taken out of the public discussions. One may say that exterminating the Armenians, the Ottoman leaders avenged the European powers in a unique way for humiliation they had been subject to and were getting rid of their own complexes. The Kemalist leaders not only removed the consequences of this trauma, but also rewrote the history and reshaped the national identity. And from that time on, the Turkish state itself suppresses every initiative, which would try to disclose “the prohibited history”.

The recognition of Armenian Genocide will bring all conceptions to nothing, upon which the history of the republican Turkey is based. In this case the anti-imperialistic war becomes warfare against the Armenian and Greek minorities; the first people's brigades, Kuvva-i Milliye, which are being presented as fighters for independence, simply become gangs, which had grown rich at the expense of possessions of the Armenian Genocide victims. It turns out that Mustafa Kemal has neither waged a national liberation struggle nor founded the Republic of Turkey, but merely carried out the backup plan of the Young Turks and, exterminating the Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians, secured the existence of the crushed empire at least. There is a need to remark that **the state-society concord persists in the matter of the Armenian Genocide denial**<sup>17</sup>.

A decision was taken in Turkey's National Security Council meeting in the autumn of 2000 according to which the Armenian Genocide related issue is an object of national security from that time on. In pursuance of the National Security Council's decisions a special body was created, responsible for the control and coordination of struggle against the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. It was called “The Coordination Committee Against Baseless Genocide Claims” (**«Asılsız Soykırım İddialarıyla Mücadele Koordinasyon Kurulu»**). High ranking officials of various offices were involved in the latter's staff<sup>18</sup>. The main objective of the council is to provide the Turkish society, beginning from the school years, with the reports about the “groundlessness” of claims on the Armenian Genocide and to shape a denialist consciousness as well as to neutralize the strivings for the Armenian Genocide recognition, having been regularly brought to the agenda in foreign countries. The “Council” had been financed by the foundation of Turkey's prime minister. After the founder of the council, D. Bahçeli, it was directed by some members of the “Justice and Development” party, Erkan Mumju, Abdullah Gull and Jemil Cicek<sup>19</sup>. In the policy of the Armenian Genocide denial the “Council” was working mainly on the following directions in the last decade:

- a) publication and dissemination of various books, manuals and leaflets,
- b) creation and service of web pages,
- c) “convincing” speeches in scientific conferences and lectures,

<sup>17</sup> Baskin Oran, “Son tabunun kökenleri: Türkiye kamuoyunun Ermeni sorunundaki tarihsel-psikolojik tikanışı”, Türk-Ermeni ilişkilerinin gelişimi ve 1915 olayları uluslararası sempozyumu bildireleri, Ankara, 2006, s. 202.

<sup>18</sup> Սաֆրաստյան Ռ., «Թուրքիան Հայոց ցեղասպանության հարցը համարում է իր ազգային անվտանգության խնդիր», Հնարավոր չէ 21-րդ դարում պատնեշներ ստեղծել հարևանների միջև..., Երևան, 2003, էջ 41:

<sup>19</sup> See Zarakolu R., “Yeni hükümet ASİMKK'yi sürdürecektir mi?”, 11.07.2011, <http://www.ozgur-gundem.com>.

- d) propaganda through TV and press,
- e) publication of books in authoritative universities.

There was a well awareness in Ankara that the resolutions and discussions in various parliaments and international instances on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide can seriously harm the prestige of Turkey and bring forward problems regarding the compensation and reshaping of Turkish society's identity, as well as to harm the implementation of the country's political objectives, especially the prospect of entering into the European Union<sup>20</sup>. Even today the Turkish state system spared no effort and resources in its policy to involve a number of western academic circles. Turkey seeks to transfer the Armenian Genocide from the political field into the whirlpool of the endless false scientific debates with the assistance of some western partner circles at any cost. Turkey finances those researchers who are able to form public opinion. A number of scholars, having popularity in the worldwide scientific sphere, are working under the direct control of the Republic of Turkey and its finances. They are classified in the group of public opinion makers, who conduct their activities for the purpose of having the world society "informed". The most common method the public opinion makers apply in the policy of the Armenian Genocide denial is the presentation of a target group, which was subjected to genocide, as a danger and not as a victim. The purpose of the so called public opinion makers is to assure the maximum number of people that the presented genocide had not occurred. They are busy in organizing scientific conferences, publishing books, creating factions, etc. The most active figures are Stanford Shaw, Bernard Lewis, Hit Lawry, Justin McCarty and others<sup>21</sup>. The difference and uniqueness of denialist policy of the public opinion makers from others is determined by the following factors:

- a) they are authors and figures of not Turkish origin,
- b) they try to show an "unprejudiced and neutral" attitude toward the events,
- c) they are financed by Turkey,
- d) they have a large audience and readers and are available for a wider layer of society due to linguistic diversity and massive dissemination of the provided materials.

The main directions of the public opinion makers' activities, serving the denialist policy of the Armenian Genocide, are the following directions:

- a) to transfer the problem of genocide into the field of endlessly protracted discussions,
- b) to deny the intention of realizing the genocide,
- c) to put under question the fact of genocide,
- d) to consider the Armenian Genocide as a fiction.

<sup>20</sup> Սահակյան Լ., Միրզոյան Ք., Հայոց ցեղասպանության ճանաչման գործընթացը կասեցնելու թուրքական մեթոդաբանությունը, Հայոց Մեծ Եղեռն 90 (հոդվածների ժողովածու), Երևան, 2005:

<sup>21</sup> Оганесян А., «Хорошо ли читать чужие письма или подробности "дела Лоури" (механизмы отрицания геноцида армян)», Թյուրքագիտական և օսմանագիտական հետազոտություններ, 2011, VII, էջ 354:

These figures are well conscious that they can't reach great successes when counteracting openly the historical facts in the field of the Armenian Genocide denial, since the fact of genocide is proved by the vast majority of the sphere's specialists; therefore, they seek to make usual the following concept, "even if something happened in 1915, these events may also be not genocide". The appliers of such tactics are guided by the slogan **"yes, but..."** according to genocide scholars<sup>22</sup>.

**The denial apologists are seeking continuously to make the denial of the Armenian Genocide a more effective model, which aims to establish itself as a legitimate "history of the other side".** Mark Mamigonian considers them to look like the heroes of the novel *«Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius»* by world known Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, who are making the multivolume encyclopedia of Tlön, a composed planet with the detailed descriptions of its languages, philosophy, mathematics and other spheres, having been united in a secret organization. According to Mamigonian, the historiographic fictions of Turkish state that have a tendency "to subdue, modify or build the past in a new fashion" can be seen as creation of a specific Turkish Tlön<sup>23</sup>.

The Turkish denialist policy on the Armenian Genocide was continuing and obtaining new developments even during a process called "football diplomacy" by the journalists, when the official Ankara was trying to show its alleged "constructive" approach in the affair of "reconciliation with the Armenians" in every way<sup>24</sup>. If the events and incidents of the beginning of the preceding century had been merely denied in the past, now they are qualified as a tragedy, which as if it causes Turkey great pain. For instance, during the press conference with President Obama in Turkey in 2009, the President of Turkey Abdullah Gull reacted to the Armenian Genocide related issues in the following manner,

- a) both sides have suffered from the events of 1915, for which he feels pain,
- b) this tragedy occurred with the intervention of outer forces, whose provocation was echoed by "some of our citizens",
- c) the Armenian Diaspora exploits the events of 1915 to establish itself,
- d) the history can't become the subject of review for political figures and parliaments,
- e) only historians should deal with this issue and Turkey is ready to accept the unbiased conclusion of each historical commission<sup>25</sup>.

The prominent genocide scholar and the executive director of the Jerusalem Institute of Holocaust and Genocide, Israel Charny, makes a note of a sample,

<sup>22</sup> Deborah E. Lipstadt, "Deniers, Relativists and Pseudo-Scholarship", Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies, vol. 6, No.1, 1991 [http://archive.adl.org/braun/dim\\_14\\_1\\_deniers.html#Vug1Z\\_I97IU](http://archive.adl.org/braun/dim_14_1_deniers.html#Vug1Z_I97IU).

<sup>23</sup> Mamigonian M., Tlön, Turkey, and the Armenian Genocide", The Armenian Weekly Magazine, April 2012 <http://armenianweekly.com/2012/06/04/mamigonian-tlon-turkey-and-the-armenian-genocide/>.

<sup>24</sup> About the factor of Armenian Genocide in the Armenian-Turkish relations see Անանյան Ա., Հայոց ցեղասպանության հիմնախնդիրը հայ-թուրքական հարաբերություններում, Երևան, 2006:

<sup>25</sup> Հովհաննիսյան Ա., Թուրքիա. ազնիվ միջնորդություն թե՞ քաղաքական սակարկություն, Թյուրքագիտական և օսմանագիտական հետազոտություններ, 2009, VI, էջ 354-355:

turned to a “template” of tactics for denial of genocides<sup>26</sup>, almost all items of which are applied by deniers of the Armenian Genocide,

- a) **“Rebellion and treachery”**: the Ottoman empire has adopted a decision of “deportation”, for the Armenians, having rebelled against the state, assisted the hostile countries;
- b) **“The reason of displacement was the Van rebellion”**: A massive Armenian revolt was exploded in Van. The Ittihat government didn’t find immediate means in wartime conditions except the exile;
- c) **“The genocide is one thing, and the displacement, another”**: it was made a decision of deportation, but not the one of genocide. The deportation had been limited to the period of war. Despite all kinds of preventive measures, deaths were recorded because of either natural conditions or gangs’ attacks;
- d) **“The mistreatment is not gone unpunished”**: the state has punished those who mistreated the Armenians, subjected to deportation;
- e) **“The state extended an affectionate hand”**: the Ottoman government provided every possible help to the deported peoples and has acted with the initiative of finding a job in the places of exile;
- f) **“The death toll is exaggerated”**: the number of the deported reaches five hundred thousand. Two hundred thousand people died;
- g) **“The displacement has been limited simply with the period of war”**: the decision of deportation has been applied in May. First, it was employed in the war zones;
- h) **“The Armenians were sent to a terrain, where they would find a peace”**: Armenians were sent to the settlements of Syria in the empire, suitable for residence, but not to a desert;
- i) **“The victims of April 24 were not guiltless”**: all Armenian intellectuals, arrested on April 24 1915, were committeemen, fomenting revolt.
- j) **“The Ittihadists were acquitted, having been convicted at the international level”**: the Ittihadists were cleansed from the genocide’s sin at the international level via the process of Malta.

The Turkish historians Mehmed Polatel and Naziphe Kosukoglu have gathered these essential statements of the state historiography on the 1915 Armenian Genocide under 10 points, each of which has been critically considered with the incontestable historical records, giving rise to no doubt<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> “Templates for Gross Denial of a Known Genocide: A Manual,” in Encyclopedia of Genocide, ed. Israel Charny, Jerusalem, 1998, vol. I, p. 168.

<sup>27</sup> Փոլաթել Մ., Քոսուքոկլու Ն., «10 հնացած թեզեր, որոնք պաշտոնական պատմագրությանը ստիպում են նույն դասարանում մնալ», <http://akunq.net/am/?p=26636>; տե՛ս նաև Տատրյան Վ., Հայոց ցեղասպանության ժխտման թուրքական հիմնական փաստարկները. աղավաղման և կեղծարարության ուսումնասիրություն, Երևան, 2005, էջ 5-50:



To meet the 2015 demands Turkey activated the struggle against the fact of the Armenian Genocide in both political and academic directions<sup>28</sup>. As the former Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey, Bulent Arinch stated, “The centenary of both Dardanelles events and the “Claims of Armenian Genocide” is having been completed. We are working seriously. Operations are carried out through symposiums, conferences, seminars, publications and documentaries. But we are working out a special activity in the sphere of public diplomacy, too, to influence the public opinion of all countries in the world”<sup>29</sup>.

The views of the Turkish government in the mentioned matter have found their expression in the “Armenian Report” made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2011, which carries the title “The events of 1915”<sup>30</sup>. Having not changed the strategy of the genocide denial, Turkey tries to apply new tactics, deforming the essence of the matter and ignoring the consequences of the genocide. Particularly,

- an attempt is made to put the genocide of Armenians and the hardship of combating Turkish people on the same scale, presenting the genocide as «tragic events», which occurred during the war and “having caused hardships to the Armenian and Turkish peoples”.
- Mentioning that Turkey has solved the problem of the “Ottoman debt”, an attempt is made to renounce the claims of Armenians, that is, the material compensation for Genocide;
- pointing out that the “tragedy” occurred by the intervention of the “outer forces”, whose impulsion was resounded “by some of our citizens” (the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire-A. H.), an effort is made to keep Turkey away from any responsibility;
- claiming that this matter should be weighed up by the historians of these two countries and that Turkey is ready to accept every conclusion of the “historians’ committee”, an attempt is made to prevent the discussions and adoptions of resolutions on the Armenian Genocide in international organizations.

On the eve of the Genocide centenary one of the steps elaborated by the Turkish government had been the announcement of Turkey’s current President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (former Prime Minister), delivered on April 23, 2014, before the day of commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, April 24, and addressed to Armenians, on the basis of which was laid the thesis of “common pain”<sup>31</sup>, according to which “grievous events occurred in the course of World War I, the victims of which were not only

<sup>28</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, “The Role of Historians of Turkey in the Study of Armenian Genocide”, vol. IV, Issue 5, (May, 2015), pp. 12-17 <http://researchturkey.org/?p=8775>; Boyakhchyan G., “The Armenian Genocide in Modern Turkey’s Official Denialism: A Hundred Shades of Denial”, <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/author/grigor-boyakhchyan/>.

<sup>29</sup> Cengiz O. K., “What is Turkey’s 2015 strategy?”, 30.01.2014, Today’s Zaman, <https://goo.gl/GX4HzW>

<sup>30</sup> «Թուրքիայի ԱԳՆ-ն ընդդեմ Հայոց ցեղասպանության 100-ամյակի «1915-ի դեպքերը» անունով զեկույց է պատրաստել» <http://news.am/arm/news/48632.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Պետրոսյան Գ., «Ընդհանուր ցավ». թուրքական ժխտողականության արդիականացումը» <https://goo.gl/8L02f1>

Armenians, but also the Turks and Muslims; hence, this pain belongs to all”<sup>32</sup>. It is noteworthy that the mentioned statement of R. Erdogan was qualified “as a bone, thrown for Armenians” by some influential representatives of the Armenian community in Turkey<sup>33</sup>.

In the joint press conference on the occasion of the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s visit to Ankara President R. Erdogan announced about having arrangements on the centennial of the Dardanelles battle to celebrate in great festivity on April 24, 2015, which was aimed at counterbalancing and shadowing the events on commemoration the centennial of the Armenian Genocide through the simultaneous and mass arrangements<sup>34</sup>. The anniversary of the Dardanelles battle was being traditionally celebrated on March 18; therefore, “the trick” of Ankara to create a fictitious date of a historic event was nothing more than a “diplomatic fiasco” as the lecturer of Istanbul’s Bilgi University, Ayhan Aktar, interpreted<sup>35</sup>.

One should record that the consistent actions toward the anti-Armenian propaganda have resulted both to equilibrium of Turkey’s and Azerbaijan’s forces and to creation of mutually beneficial approaches. In this regard it is worth mentioning the activities of anti-Armenian organization “The union of struggle against the Armenian groundless claims” (ASIMDER), operating in Turkey and financed by Azerbaijan, the objective of which is to counteract the actions of the Armenian Diaspora within the frames of the 100<sup>th</sup> centennial of the Armenian Genocide<sup>36</sup>.

The subversive work in the communities of the Armenian Diaspora is an active component of anti-Armenian policy, conducted in the direction of the Armenian Genocide denial by the official Ankara. Its objective is to make contradictions both within the Armenian communities and in Armenia-Diaspora relations. Still in 2010 the former Minister of Foreign affairs of Turkey, then the Prime Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoglu had talked over the Armenian Genocide and Armenian Diaspora in an interview on CNN Türk: “Turkey wants to normalize its relations not only with Armenian, but also with the Armenian Diaspora”<sup>37</sup>. And in the end of November of the same year, having a speech at Georgetown University, USA, Davutoglu announced that if the events at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were denied in former times, now they don’t deny that the Armenians

<sup>32</sup> The unofficial translation of the message of the Prime Minister of The Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, on the events of 1915, 23 April 2014» <http://www.mfa.gov.tr>; Cengiz Çandar, “Erdoğan Ermenilere başsağlığı mesajı sürprizler” <http://www.almonitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/04/erdogan-condolence-armenians-shrewd.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Հովսեփյան Ա., Հայոց ցեղասպանության ժխտողական քաղաքականության արդի դրսևորումները Թուրքիայում, Բանբեր Երևանի համալսարանի. միջազգային հարաբերություններ, քաղաքագիտություն, 2015, 1 (16), էջ 29:

<sup>34</sup> “Turkey Invites Armenian Leader to Gallipoli Commemoration” <http://www.rferl.org/content/turkey-invites-armenian-leader-to-gallipoli-commemoration/26797274.html>

<sup>35</sup> «Թուրքիայի Ապրիլի 24-ի հաշիվներն ու դիվանագիտական ֆիասկոն. թուրք պատմաբան», <https://goo.gl/gbnMOX>

<sup>36</sup> <http://asimder.org.tr>

<sup>37</sup> «Մենք ցանկանում ենք նաև երկխոսություն սկսել Հայկական սփյուռքի հետ. Ահմեդ Դավութօղլու» [http://www.1in.am/arm/a\\_a\\_15116.html](http://www.1in.am/arm/a_a_15116.html).

experienced tragic events in Turkey: “We don’t say that nothing happened to Armenians in those days. If mistakes occurred, then they should be considered. But one has to remember that we are talking of a historical period, during which there was no law and order in the entire territory of Turkey. 1915 is an important date for Armenians, but one should remember that about 250.000 Turks died just in one of the fronts (in Dardanelles) during that same year, including my grandfather”<sup>38</sup>. This thesis of “rightful memory” (“*adil hafıza*”) authored by the Ex-Prime Minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoglu has been repeatedly criticized by the Turkish specialists, too<sup>39</sup>.

The circular of Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sent to Turkey’s extraordinary and plenipotentiary ambassadors in September, 2011, with the demand to be prepared for the 100<sup>th</sup> centenary of the Armenian Genocide and to carry out an active propaganda against the international recognition of the Genocide, testifies about developing a subversive activity in the Armenian Diaspora. Reminding of the Diaspora’s worldwide endeavors for recognition of Armenian Genocide, the Ministry of Turkey’s Foreign Affairs was expecting from the ambassadors to enter into close contacts with the Armenian Diaspora and prevent these actions. One should pay attention to the tactics of rethinking the meaning of the word “Diaspora” or redefining it by the authorities of Turkey in this context. We have to remember the speech of Ex-Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu at the year-end conference of Turkey’s ambassadors on December 23, 2011: “When I left for the USA I had meetings with our ambassador and consuls general there and gave them the following order; we have to change the concept of “Diaspora”. Each individual, emigrated from the lands of Anatolia<sup>40</sup>, is our Diaspora, irrespective of religion and belief. Where there is an Armenian, there we have to go and talk to him/her of our joint history, on how we have lived together for 10 centuries”. He also cynically indicated that the official Ankara is discussing the matter of granting the citizenship of Turkey to the descendants of the former Ottoman-subject Armenians<sup>41</sup>.

The April of 2015 was historical. The Armenians, scattered all over the world, commemorated the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide. High-level delegations from more than 60 countries joined Armenian people in Yerevan in the commemoration day of Genocide victims, sharing the tragedy and pain not only of a nation, but of a whole humanity, as well. Commemorative ceremonies and events took place not only in Armenia and Diaspora, but also in the entire world. The impressive speech, made by Pope Francis I during the Holy Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica in April, 2015<sup>42</sup>, as well as the courageous statement of the President of Federal Republic of Germany, where he

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> «Անխիղճ հիշողությունը չի կարող արդար լինել. թուրք հեղինակը՝ Հայոց ցեղասպանության մասին» <http://www.1in.am/1611580.html>

<sup>40</sup> Using the term Anatolia he meant not only Asia Minor, but also Western Armenia without mentioning it. The usage of the term Anatolia (or eastern Anatolia) instead of Western Armenia is wrong and must be considered as the continuation of the genocide in the sphere of historical geography.

<sup>41</sup> “Turkey considers citizenship for heirs of displaced Armenians” <https://goo.gl/a1voQh>

<sup>42</sup> <https://goo.gl/cP8n9N>

not only paid tribute to the memory of innocent victims, but also spoke about the share of Germany's responsibility in that crime<sup>43</sup>, deserve special mention.

But as the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Eduard Nalbandyan, pointed in his speech, made in the London Royal Institute of International Relations (Chatham House) during his official visit in September, 2015, "Unfortunately, not only the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide was commemorated, but also the 100<sup>th</sup> year of Turkish denialism this year"<sup>44</sup>.

On the one side, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoglu, had offered "a deep condolence" to the "descendants of the innocent Ottoman Armenians, having lost their lives"<sup>45</sup>; on the other side, the Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had issued a press release, condemning the resolution of European Parliament and qualifying it "as an example of Armenian propaganda, full of anti-Turkish patterns", because a call was made there for Turkey to recognize the Armenian Genocide<sup>46</sup>. As concerns President Erdogan, he had announced that "not a thing, called genocide and dropping either a spot or shade on Turkey, has occurred"; then he added with an undisguised and unrestrained shamelessness, typical of him, that "the words of Europeans go through one ear and out from the other"<sup>47</sup>.

**Thus, we may note that though the denialism is typical for almost all genocides, the Turkish denialism of the Armenian Genocide has a very important singularity, that is, an entire state is engaged in the denialism; hence, the denialism is the official policy of the Turkish state.**

The Turkish authorities will continue the policy of the Armenian Genocide denial with the new tactical approaches and initiatives, trying to solve the problem, by their opinion "dangerous" for national security of Turkey and being its first priority, in relations with Armenia by all means, that is, the matter of stopping the Armenian Genocide recognition process. The lecturer at the American Villanova University and the specialist of Turkish historiographic problems, Jennifer Dixon, has given an ironic, but very accurate characterization for the campaign of the Armenian Genocide denial, "**Change within continuity**"<sup>48</sup>.

Summarizing we have to indicate that the new tactics, adopted by Turkey, can be characterized as "**sprawling**" **denialism**<sup>49</sup>, which is more dangerous than the overt denial, since it may create seemingly an **illusion** of the intention to achieve the "objective" appraisements.

<sup>43</sup> <https://goo.gl/hVpG9V>

<sup>44</sup> «Այս տարի նշվեց ոչ միայն Հայոց ցեղասպանության 100-րդ տարեիցը, այլև՝ թուրքական ժխտողականության 100-րդ տարին» <https://goo.gl/3V77sT>

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/\\_Article/pg\\_Article.aspx?Id=7dfcf217-12f7-4354-b37b-6e78664f8e8f](http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/_Article/pg_Article.aspx?Id=7dfcf217-12f7-4354-b37b-6e78664f8e8f).

<sup>46</sup> [http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/\\_Article/pg\\_Article.aspx?Id=7dfcf217-12f7-4354-b37b-6e78664f8e8f](http://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/_Article/pg_Article.aspx?Id=7dfcf217-12f7-4354-b37b-6e78664f8e8f).

<sup>47</sup> Turkey's Willful Amnesia, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/17/opinion/turkeys-willful-amnesia.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/17/opinion/turkeys-willful-amnesia.html?_r=1)

<sup>48</sup> Dixon J., "Turkey's Narrative of the Armenian Genocide: Change within Continuity," in Annette Becker, et al., eds., *Le Génocide des Arméniens: Cent Ans de Recherche 1915-2015* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2015), pp. 249-256.

<sup>49</sup> «Ա. Հովհաննիսյան. Թուրքիան «սողացող մերժողականություն» է վարում» <https://goo.gl/7YIz1g>