

Heath W. Lowry

The Story Behind *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*

AMBASSADOR
MORGENTHAU'S
STORY

BY
HENRY MORGENTHAU
Formerly American Ambassador to Turkey



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PREFACE

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PREFACE

Henry Morgenthau, a successful New York real estate developer, had served as the 'Democratic Party Finance Committee' chairman in Woodrow Wilson's 1912 presidential campaign. Upon Wilson's election he was rewarded with a political appointment as Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, a position which he initially rejected on the grounds that it was the only diplomatic post open to American Jews. Only Wilson's personal intervention, and the insistence of Rabbi Stephen Wise of New York City, convinced Morgenthau to reconsider. Having done so, the fifty-eight year old Morgenthau arrived in the Ottoman capital of Istanbul (Constantinople), to take up his position on November 27, 1913. He served in Turkey for a period of twenty-six months and returned to the United States in February, 1916. His book, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, written two years later, tells the 'story' of his foray into the world of international diplomacy.

When it comes to shaping the manner in which successive generations of Americans have viewed a given people and country, the impact of the book known as *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* can have few equals.

Pivotal as a foundation for the vehement anti-Turkishness, which came to typify American public opinion in the 1920s, and remnants of which are still visible today, the Morgenthau book continues to be a primary source for the belief that the Young Turk Government of the Ottoman Empire perpetrated a premeditated massacre of its Armenian minority under cover of World War I.

This is not a study designed to answer the question of whether or not the fate of Ottoman Armenians during the First World War, should or should not be termed 'genocide.' It is, however, a work designed to question the credibility of the United States Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, as a source for the history of that era as portrayed in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. This disclaimer is necessitated by the fact that partisans, be they Turks or Armenians, to the discussion of Turco-Armenian relations during World War I., tend to defend their positions from behind 'blindness' which allow them to see only what they want with no regard for the larger picture. Thus, to Armenians, an attack on the credibility of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* as a source for wartime Ottoman history, will in all likelihood be viewed as tantamount to "genocide denial," whereas, to the Turks, an attack on Morgenthau's veracity may well be interpreted as an attack on the Armenian charge of 'genocide.' Neither interpretation is, in the opinion of its author, warranted by the scope of this study.

I should like to express my appreciation to Justin McCarthy whose careful reading and helpful comments have added to whatever value this work possesses, although its shortcomings are mine alone. In addition, I am indebted to Aysegül Acar and Hakki Öcal for their patient editorial assistance.

Washington, D.C.
July 12, 1990

Heath W. Lowry

CHAPTER I

WHY WAS AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY WRITTEN?

ANY examination of the genesis of the Morgenthau 'Story,' must begin by focusing on a letter the Ambassador addressed to his friend and confidant, United States President Woodrow Wilson, on November 26, 1917. For it is in this previously unpublished letter that Morgenthau set forth both his idea of writing a book, and his aims and objectives in desiring to do so. He combined his concept with an appeal for the President's 'blessing' as it were for his proposal. Given the fact that his sole aim was fostering public support for the United States war effort by writing a work of anti-German, anti-Turkish propaganda which would "win a victory for the war policy of the government," he not surprisingly received it. He couched his idea to Wilson in the following terms:

"...Greatly discouraged at the amount of outright opposition and the tremendous indifference to the war, as

well as by the lack of enthusiasm among the mass of those who are supporting the war...

I am considering writing a book in which I would lay bare, not only Germany's permeation of Turkey and the Balkans, but that system as it appears in every country of the world. For in Turkey we see the evil spirit of Germany at its worst – culminating at last in the greatest crime of all ages, the horrible massacre of helpless Armenians and Syrians. This particular detail of the story and Germany's abettance of the same, I feel positive will appeal to the mass of Americans in small towns and country districts as no other aspect of the war could, and convince them of the necessity of carrying the war to a victorious conclusion...

We must win a victory for the war policy of the government and every legitimate step or means should be utilized to accomplish it."¹

In its simplest form, this study intends to evaluate the ensuing work from the perspective of whether or not, as written, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* exceeds or adheres to his own criteria of utilizing "every legitimate means" to reach his stated goal of convincing the "mass of Americans" to support the war.

Within a year of the date of Morgenthau's letter to Wilson, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, as the work he proposed was eventually titled, had been written; serialized in monthly installments in one of America's best-known magazines, *The World's Work* (circulation:

¹The largest public collection of papers relating to the life and career of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau (1856–1946), is preserved in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Housed in the Library's 'Manuscript Division,' under the title 'The Papers of Henry Morgenthau,' they consist of approximately 30,000 items which are made available to researchers in the form of a set of 41 reels of microfilm. In the present study references to materials in this collection will be given in the following format: LC: PHM – Reel No. – followed where applicable (as in the case of correspondence) by a date. In the case of the present document, the citation is LC: PHM – Reel No. 8 – HM letter to President Woodrow Wilson of November 26, 1917.

120,000);² appeared in over a dozen of the country's largest newspapers with a combined circulation of 2,630,256;³ released with great fanfare as a book by Doubleday, Page & Co.,⁴ and already accumulated sales of several thousand copies (by July 1st of the following

²*The World's Work* was a monthly publication owned in this period by 'Doubleday, Page & Co.,' the New York publishers. Beginning in its April, 1918 edition with an article by Burton J. Hendrick entitled: "Ambassador Morgenthau's Story—Introductory Article," this periodical serialized in seven installments (which ran between May and November), the Morgenthau book. To Professor Robert J. Rusnak of Rosary College in Illinois, I am indebted among other things, for the circulation figures of *The World's Work*. Prof. Rusnak's doctoral dissertation was devoted to a study of this journal and its impact.

³The second major collection of Morgenthau Papers is housed in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park, New York, as part of the collection titled: 'The Papers of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.,' Ambassador Morgenthau's only son who served for many years as a member of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Cabinet. This collection, comprising some 414 linear feet, is divided into eleven series, of which Series nos. 8 and 10 contain papers relating to Ambassador Morgenthau. Specifically Series No. 8, the 'Gaer File,' is material collected by Joseph Gaer, Morgenthau Junior's collaborator in his unpublished autobiography. In this series we find a typed transcript of all correspondence between Ambassador Morgenthau and his son. Material in this series which is cited in this study, will appear as: *FDR: HMJ/Gaer - Box No. .* Series No. 10 is titled the 'Papers of Henry Morgenthau, Sr.' and consists of some 10 linear feet of primarily business and personal correspondence. When cited in this study, items from this collection will appear as: *FDR: HMS - Box No. ____*.

The circulation figures for the newspapers which published *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* are found in a letter from Frank Doubleday of Doubleday, Page & Co. (Morgenthau's publisher), to Henry Morgenthau, Sr. of October 17, 1918 (*FDR: HMS - Box No. 12*). This letter was originally accompanied by a list of the actual papers which were running the serialized version of the book. Unfortunately, this list is lost or separated from the letter.

Having worked in Libraries and Archives in a number of countries, I would be remiss were I not to express my thanks and appreciation to the staff of the Roosevelt Library, who made my all too brief stay in Hyde Park a working pleasure. In particular my research benefited from the gracious assistance provided by Ms. Susan Y. Elter, an 'Audiovisual Archivist' at this facility.

⁴*FDR: HMS - Box No. 12* (Letter of October 17, 1918 from Doubleday to Morgenthau) mentions that the publisher has arranged windows in Macy's, Brentano's, Wanamaker's, Scribner's, etc., in addition to sending out advance copies of the book and various publicity releases.

year those sales would reach 22,234 copies).⁵

In short, Morgenthau's goal of contributing to America's war effort by authoring a book which would, in his words, "appeal to the mass of Americans in small towns and country districts as no other aspect of the war could,"⁶ had been attained in a manner which must have exceeded even his wildest expectations. Indeed, no sooner had *World's Work* begun its installments of the book's opening chapters in May, 1918, than Morgenthau received an offer from Hollywood for the film rights of his 'story,' an offer accompanied by the promise of \$25,000 for said rights. After initial excitement, and the writing of a basic film treatment,⁷ Morgenthau's enthusiasm for

⁵The third major collection of materials utilized in this study, are the personal papers of the late Burton J. Hendrick. Hendrick, a distinguished author and journalist was the individual who actually 'ghosted' the Morgenthau book. Through a *New York Times* obituary (March 25, 1949), which detailed the life and achievements of Hendrick, I was able to trace his grandson, a Hobart Hendrick, Jr. of Hamden, Connecticut, who most graciously answered all my queries. He, in turn, put me in touch with a cousin, Martha Rusnak of Winfield,, Illinois, whose husband, Robert Rusnak, a professor of History at Rosary College, has actually written on his wife's grandfather. Professor Rusnak most kindly provided me copies of a number of documents from the 'Papers of Burton J. Hendrick,' which are in their collection. These included correspondence between Morgenthau and Hendrick, and, in particular an unpublished Rusnak study on Hendrick, called: "'To Cast Them in the Heroic Mold': Court Biographers - The Case of Burton Jesse Hendrick." Professor Rusnak also informed me that Hendrick had participated in the Columbia University Oral History Project and been interviewed by Alan Nevins shortly before his death in 1949. Material cited in this study from the Hendrick materials supplied by Prof. Rusnak will appear as: *Hendrick/Rusnak*: together with a description of the actual item being referred to.

The sales information figures given here are found in a handwritten document in the *Hendrick/Rusnak* papers which is headed: "Statement of Profit and Loss to July 1, 1919 on 'Ambassador Morgenthau's Story' by Henry Morgenthau." This document, apparently written by Morgenthau himself, shows sales as of that date totalling 22,234 copies.

⁶LC: PHM - Reel No. 8 : HM Letter to President Woodrow Wilson of November 26, 1917.

⁷*Hendrick/Rusnak*: Among the material provided by Robert Rusnak relating to the Morgenthau - Hendrick collaboration, is a typed 8 page document titled: "Proposal for a Moving Picture on the Near East, Based to a Considerable Extent on Ambassador Morgenthau's Story." Across the top of this document is the following handwritten note: "This great scheme (for which the moving picture people offered us \$25,000) was busted by the war's suddenly coming to an end! B.J.H."

a career in the movies cooled following receipt of a second letter from President Wilson which expressed his disapproval in no uncertain terms. Wilson wrote:

"I appreciate your consulting me about the question whether the book shall be translated into motion pictures, and I must frankly say that I hope you will not consent to this... *Personally I believe that we have gone quite far enough in that direction.* It is not merely a matter of taste, —I would not like in matters of this sort to trust my taste,—but it is also partly a matter of principle... There is nothing practical that we can do for the time being in the matter of the Armenian massacres, for example, and *the attitude of the country toward Turkey is already fixed.* It does not need enhancement."⁸

Less than a year earlier it had been the approval of Wilson which Morgenthau sought prior to beginning the book project, and, indeed, it was only when Wilson had blessed the proposal and written: "I think your plan for a full exposition of some of the lines of German intrigue is an excellent one and I hope you will undertake to write and publish the book you speak of,"⁹ that Morgenthau responded positively to preliminary inquiries from Burton J. Hendrick of Doubleday, Page & Company's *The World's Work*,¹⁰ and the project began to materialize. It would be somewhat surprising to find the

⁸LC: PHM – Reel No. 8: President Woodrow Wilson letter to Henry Morgenthau of June 14, 1918. The emphases in this quotation and throughout this study are the present author's.

⁹LC: PHM – Reel No. 8: President Woodrow Wilson letter to Henry Morgenthau of November 27, 1917. Interestingly, whereas Morgenthau's November 26, 1917 letter to Wilson has never been published, he did include the President's answer in his 1922 autobiography, *All In A Life-Time*. New York (Doubleday, Page & Co.), 1922. p.297, and cites it as the reason he wrote his book.

¹⁰FDR: HMS – Box No.11: Frank Doubleday letter to Henry Morgenthau of November 7, 1917; Henry Morgenthau letter to Frank Doubleday of November 12, 1917 in which Morgenthau states:

President of the United States of America and an ex-Ambassador communicating on a topic of this nature. But, this was wartime and, as the Morgenthau-Wilson correspondence illustrates, from its inception, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* was conceived as an integral part of 'President Wilson's Story' as well. It was a desire to increase support for Wilson's war effort which prompted Morgenthau to write an anti-German, anti-Turkish work, which would convince the American public of the "necessity of carrying the war to a victorious conclusion,"¹¹ In other words, as envisaged by Morgenthau, his 'story' was intended as wartime propaganda, i.e., as a contribution to the Entente war effort. It is against this background that we must attempt to examine how and by whom the book was actually written, as well as the larger questions concerning the accuracy or lack thereof of the 'story' it purports to tell.

"Since Mr. Hendrick called upon me I have again carefully considered the advisability of writing a book about my experiences in Turkey and have now definitely concluded that this is not the time to publish it." However, upset by lack of public support for the war, two week later he asked the President's blessing and following receipt of Wilson's November 27, 1917 letter changed his mind and immediately entered into serious negotiations with the publisher. See also: Frank Doubleday letters to Henry Morgenthau of 23 November and 5 December 1917, and Arthur Page to Henry Morgenthau letters of 8 December and 20 December 1917. By the latter date, all contract arrangements for the book had been completed.

¹¹LC: PHM – Reel No. 8: HM Letter to President Woodrow Wilson of November 26, 1917.

CHAPTER II

WHOSE 'STORY' IS IT?

Our sources for the history of Ambassador Morgenthau's *Story*, are two collections of surviving Morgenthau papers, one housed in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., which is known as: *The Papers of Henry Morgenthau* (Hereafter: *LC: PHM*),¹² and the other, part of the Henry Morgenthau, Jr. Papers in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park, New York (Hereafter: *FDR: HMS*).¹³ These two collections, which comprise literally tens of thousands of documents, must be supplemented by a wide variety of published and unpublished materials, the most important of which are the papers of the well-known Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, biographer and historian, Burton J. Hendrick.¹⁴ For, not only did Ambassador Morgenthau

¹²See: Footnote #1 above.

¹³See: Footnote #3 above.

¹⁴See: Footnote #5 above.

need the approval of President Woodrow Wilson to proceed with the plan for the book which bears his name, more importantly he needed the skilled hand of Burton J. Hendrick, to actually write the work in question. In point of fact, it appears that the actual concept of the book originated in the mind of Hendrick, who first suggested it to Morgenthau in April of 1916.¹⁵ It is through an examination of several thousand letters and documents in the above-mentioned collections that eventually the rather murky origins of the work in question emerge. To unravel the many threads which went into *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, we must begin by discussing the various sources upon which it was based.

First and foremost, is a typed-transcript called 'Diary' which covers the actual period of Morgenthau's sojourn in Istanbul (Constantinople), that is, the period from November 27, 1913 (the date of Morgenthau's arrival in the Ottoman Capital), to his departure from Turkey on February 1, 1916,¹⁶ a period of twenty-six months. From internal evidence, in particular Morgenthau's comments about dictating to his secretary, a Turkish-Armenian named Hagop S. Andonian,¹⁷ it appears that on a regular

¹⁵FDR: HMS – Box No. 9: Burton J. Hendrick letter to Henry Morgenthau of April 7, 1916, in which Hendrick refers to discussions with Morgenthau of the possibility of Doubleday, Page & Co. publishing a book which would appear in a series of "personal narratives of all the big people who have figured in this war." This is apparently the earliest surviving document which specifically relates to the book project.

¹⁶LC: PHM – Reel No. 5 (Containers 3 & 4): Contain the only known copy of this daily record of Morgenthau's sojourn in Turkey. Simply labeled as the 'Diary,' this document provides a day by day account of Morgenthau's activities while in Constantinople. When cited in the present study, I have listed the following information: LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: 'Diary' date: . All references in the text to 'Diary' refer to this key source of information on Morgenthau's day by day contemporary record of his activities.

¹⁷References of this nature include the following: LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: 'Diary' entries for September 25, 1914, February 19, 1915. The July 8, 1915 entry reads: "We worked at the book from 7:15 to 8. Then Schmavonian and Wirth took supper with me." This passage raises two possibilities: a) that others than Andonian may have also had a hand in compiling the 'Diary,' and, b) that Morgenthau's 'Diary' may have all along been envisaged as the outline for a book he intended to publish. Given the fact that he does not appear to have ever kept such a detailed 'Diary' at any other stage of his life, this interpretation may well be true.

basis Morgenthau related his day's experiences to Andonian, who in turn typed them up for posterity. Though extremely detailed, in particular as regards his contacts with the Young Turk leaders, Said Halim Pasha, Enver Pasha, and Talaat Bey, the version of events recorded in his daily 'Diary' entries often bears little relationship (as will subsequently be demonstrated) to the descriptions of the same meetings and discussions narrated in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. Despite this problem, there can be no doubt that the key source material upon which the book was based is the daily record preserved in the 'Diary.'

In addition to his 'Diary,' and based primarily upon it, Morgenthau was in the habit of writing a lengthy 'round robin' type weekly letter to various members of his family back home in the United States.¹⁸ These letters were likewise prepared by Hagop S. Andonian, Morgenthau's personal secretary, and indeed often, as Morgenthau tells us in a letter of May 11, 1915, actually written by him:

"I have really found it impossible to sit down and dictate a letter quietly. So I have instructed Andonian to take my diary and copy it with some elaborations of his own. Of course this relieves me of all responsibility for any errors."¹⁹

¹⁸Copies of Morgenthau letters are found primarily in two separate sections (series) of the FDR Library – Morgenthau Papers. Specifically, they are in the *FDR: HMS – Boxes 5, 7, 8, 10* and in the *FDR: HMJ/Gaer – Boxes Nos. 1–2*. While clearly based on the 'Diary' entries for the period they describe, there is often additional data found in the 'Letters,' in that they provide a useful supplement to the sometimes laconic 'Diary' entries.

¹⁹*FDR: HMS – Box 7: HM to children letter of May 11, 1915*. That this comment does not relate solely to the May 11, 1915 letter is confirmed by *FDR: HMJ/Gaer – Box 1–2: HM letter to Henry Morgenthau, Jr. of September 1, 1915*, where we read: "I am sending you one of the copies of the general letter which recently has been written by Andonian, so don't blame me if it is too impersonal and skeletonish." On another occasion we find the following in a letter: "I don't know whether you folks all noticed the difference in style between this letter and the preceding ones. I have dictated this one myself and filled the mere skeleton notes that I gave Andonian and from which the recent letters were written." (*FDR: HMS – Box No. 8: Letter of 7/13/1915 – p.15*)

It was then a combination of the Morgenthau 'Diaries' and 'Letters' which served as the basic raw material out of which the work was ultimately assembled. These two sources were supplemented in some instances by copies of actual reports received by Morgenthau in Constantinople, or dispatched by him to Washington, D.C.²⁰ Stated differently, these formed the skeletal framework upon which the finished product was to be hung.

With this background in mind we must now turn to an examination of the actual manner in which the book was written, and to the even more complex question of by whom it was written. In this regard, in each and every edition, the author appeared solely as: *Henry Morgenthau*. And today, seventy-two years after its appearance, no one has ever suggested in print that anyone but Morgenthau authored *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*.²¹ Despite this fact, there are abundant clues scattered about in the surviving Morgenthau material to provide us hints as to the identity of the work's actual author. First and foremost, is an acknowledgement made by Morgenthau in the 'Preface' to both the book's American and British editions, where he wrote: "My thanks are due to my friend, Mr. Burton J. Hendrick, for the invaluable assistance he has rendered in the preparation of this book."²² This acknowledgment is, to say the least, an understatement. For in point of fact, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* emerged from the pen of Burton J. Hendrick, with the editorial assistance of a

²⁰Copies and 'paraphrases' and Morgenthau's cable traffic are found scattered throughout the LC: PHM—See, in particular, Reels No. 5, 7, 8, 17. This material was compared with copies of Morgenthau's official reports preserved in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. In particular: Record Group 59 - General Records of the Department of State: Decimal File 867.4106 - Race Problems (Microfilm Publication 353: Reels 43-48).

²¹Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. New York (Doubleday, Page & Co.), 1918. (hereafter: AMS).

²²AMS: p. vii.

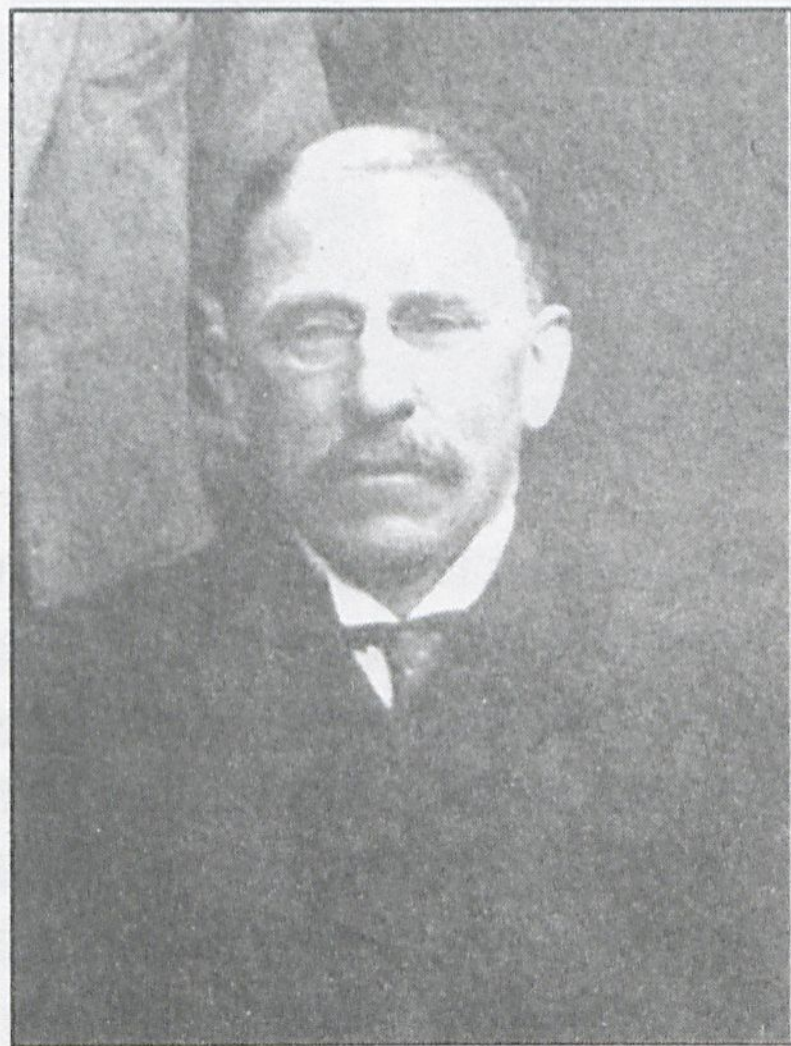
large number of individuals, including Morgenthau himself. In addition, he was assisted by his Armenian secretary Hagop S. Andonian who followed Morgenthau to the States and lived with him throughout the period in which the book was under preparation.

Very little is known concerning the life of Hagop S. Andonian. In numerous appearances of his name in both

Ambassador Henry Morgenthau

U.S. envoy to Turkey, November 1913-January 1916. Photograph taken just prior to his departure from Turkey.

[Courtesy of U.S. Consul General Thomas Carolan, Istanbul, Turkey.]



the 'Diary' and 'Letters' he is generally referred to by Morgenthau as "my secretary," though on occasion he clearly fulfilled the role of "Dragoman," (translator) as well.²³ The 'Diary' records the fact that he was a frequent guest at the Morgenthau table, and often accompanied the Ambassador to the movies in the evening. From a reference in Morgenthau's family 'Letter' of July 15, 1914²⁴, it appears that Andonian was a student at the American run Robert College around the turn of the century. A surviving photograph of the Embassy staff

²³LC: HMS – Reel No. 5 for March 15–16, 1915, where Andonian accompanied Morgenthau to the Dardanelles in that capacity.

²⁴FDR: HMS – Box No. 5.



Hagop S. Andonian

*Ambassador Morgenthau's secretary, who accompanied him back to the United States in 1916. His services in the preparation of **Ambassador Morgenthau's Story** were described by his employer as "really indispensable"*

taken during Morgenthau's tenure, shows him to have been in his early thirties at that time. While nothing specific has apparently survived to shed light on the question of why he returned to the United States with the Morgenthau's, a 'Diary' entry for February 8, 1916 clearly establishes that he left Turkey with the Ambassador. On that date in describing a shipboard masquerade party en route to New York, Morgenthau records that his son "Henry was dressed as a Greek and Andonian as a Turkish lady."²⁵ Among the surviving Morgenthau correspondence is a copy of a letter addressed by the Ambassador on January 9, 1918 to the Honorable Breckenridge Long, Third Assistant Secretary of State, requesting that official's assistance in obtaining a deferment from military service for his secretary, Mr. Hagop S. Andonian. This letter includes the following paragraph:

²⁵LC: PHM – Reel No.5.

"You probably know that with the approval of the President, I have undertaken to write a book. Mr. Andonian is assisting me in the preparation of that work and owing to his intimate knowledge of the east and his unusual experience, his services to me are really indispensable."²⁶

This passage establishes three facts of interest: a) One reason for Andonian's being in the U.S. was to assist Morgenthau with the book; b) the actual work on the book had begun by the beginning of January 9, 1918, and, c) by 1918 Andonian was eligible for military service in the U.S.

There are also three short references to Andonian in Morgenthau's 1918 Diary/Appointments Calendar: 1) an entry for April 26, 1918 which reads: 'Dictated at Yale Club to Andonian and examined galley proofs of second installment next book;' 2) an entry for April 17, 1918 reading: 'Dictated all day to Andonian and Hendrick;' and, 3) a two-word notice on September 9, 1918 which reads: 'Andonian left.'²⁷ The next and final references to Andonian in the Morgenthau Papers are two handwritten letters dated December 16, 1920 and December 24, 1920²⁸. Written from Istanbul on a letterhead bearing the names: 'Haig, Nichan, Hagop Andonian' and listing their role as agents for the 'Sun Insurance Company,' and as real estate brokers, Andonian writes to inquire about the truth of rumors then circulating in the Ottoman capital to the effect that Morgenthau is to be appointed by the U.S. President to mediate between the Kemalist and Armenian forces. Andonian offers his services to Morgenthau should these rumors prove true (they didn't).

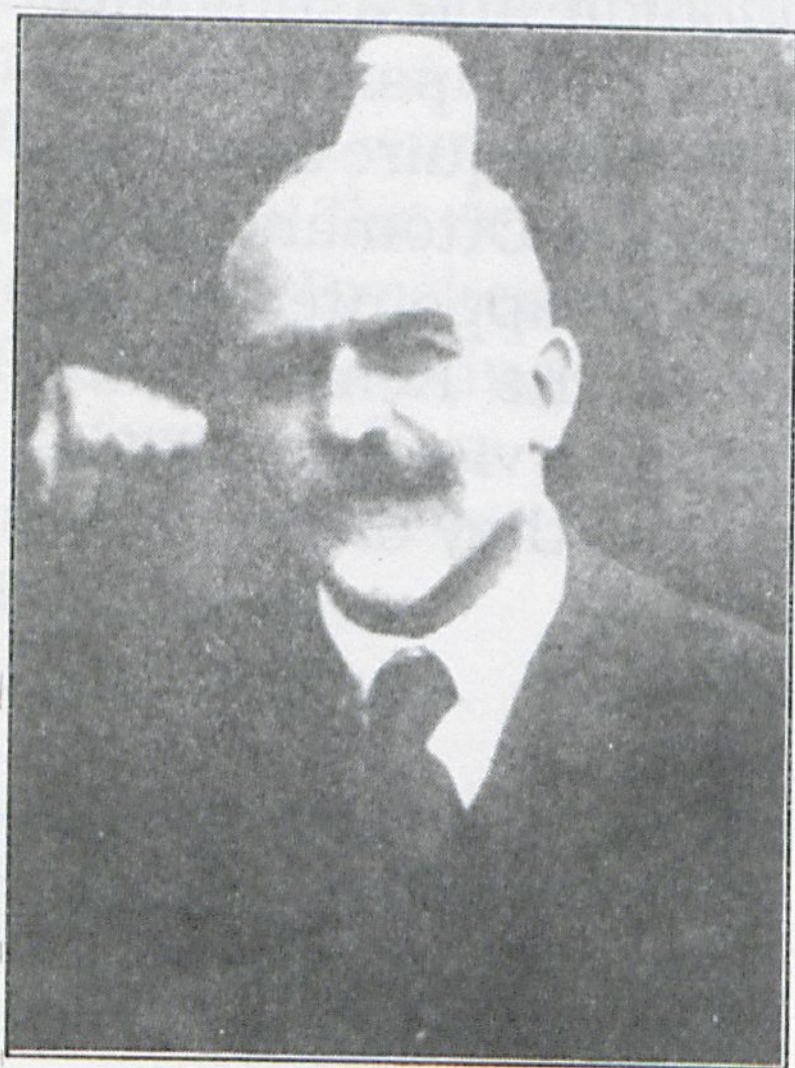
²⁶LC: PHM – Reel No.8

²⁷LC: PHM – Reel No.6.

²⁸FDR: HMS – Box No. 13.

To anyone familiar with Turco-Armenian history in the post-war period, the question of a possible relationship between Morgenthau's Secretary Hagop S. Andonian and, Aram Andonian, the author of the collection of forged documents known as: *The Memoirs of Naim Bey: Turkish Official Documents Relating to the Deportations and Massacres of Armenians*, London (Hodder & Stoughton), 1920, immediately comes to mind. Both were natives of Istanbul and shared the rather uncommon surname of 'Andonian,' which raises the possibility that they may have indeed been related. To date, no additional information on this question has been uncovered.

Another key figure who had significant input in the preparation of the book was Arshag K. Schmavonian, yet another Turkish-Armenian who, in 1918 was in the employ of the State Department in Washington, D.C. as a 'special adviser,' and who had worked as Morgenthau's interpreter in Istanbul and accompanied him in all meetings with Turkish officials. Schmavonian's role as friend, confidant and adviser to Morgenthau both during and after his stay in Istanbul is easily traceable in the various surviving Morgenthau Papers. Indeed, almost from the



Arshag K. Schmavonian

Legal adviser, U.S. Embassy, Constantinople, described by Morgenthau as "always thoroughly loyal to his own people, the Armenians."

day of his arrival in Turkey, Morgenthau relied upon Schmavonian as his eyes and ears in what must have seemed an alien environment given the fact that Morgenthau knew neither Turkish, French, Greek nor Armenian, the four principal languages spoken in the Ottoman Capital. Already, in a 1914 interview given shortly after his arrival in Turkey to a correspondent of *The New York Herald*, Morgenthau acknowledged his dependence on Schmavonian in the following terms:

"It will be my duty to dive into the very heart of things surrounding me. *With the help of the Legal Adviser of the Embassy, Mr. Schmavonian, who knows the Orient so well, I shall be able to master the task in a more or less satisfactory manner in a few weeks.*"²⁹

There is hardly a page of the Morgenthau 'Diary' which does not contain reference to Arshag K. Schmavonian.³⁰ He accompanied Morgenthau on almost every official visit he paid to members of the Young Turk Government, he sat in on Morgenthau's meetings with American businessmen (many of whose legal affairs he handled in Turkey), he participated in all meetings with the American missionary interests (whose legal affairs he also handled), and, also assisted Morgenthau in the writing of his cables to Washington, D.C. The National Archives in Washington, D.C. houses a collection of Schmavonian Papers.³¹ Though the overwhelming majority of these papers deal with Schmavonian's representations of various American business and missionary

²⁹LC: PHM – Reel No. 37 – date is illegible.

³⁰LC: PHM – Reel No. 5.

³¹National Archives: Record Group No. 84 – Personal Correspondence of Arshag K. Schmavonian – 4 Boxes.

interests, they also preserve a few handwritten notes from Morgenthau to Schmavonian, all of which bear the salutation: 'My dear Mr. Schmavonian.' In the Morgenthau papers there are also a large number of letters from Arshag Schmavonian to Ambassador Morgenthau, covering the years 1914-1921.³² All of the letters written prior to 1919 bear the salutation: 'My Dear Chief.'

The extent to which Morgenthau relied upon his Armenian adviser can be partially measured by a speech he gave when raising funds for Armenian and Syrian Relief following his return to the United States. Of Schmavonian, he wrote:

"The first man I found in the Embassy whom I could lean upon for all kinds of assistance, the man who has done the yeoman work of the American Embassy, is an Armenian [Schmavonian]. He has been connected with our Embassy for sixteen years. I found him to be an unusual man, held in high regard by the Turkish authorities. My private secretary [Andonian] was also an Armenian.

Through these two men I became acquainted with some Armenian priests and with patriots and professors, and learned not only to respect but to love and admire many of the Armenians."³³

Nor did this relationship end with Morgenthau's departure from Turkey. The two men were reunited in 1917 when Morgenthau was sent by President Wilson to Europe, and Schmavonian joined him once again in the role of interpreter. Then, following the rupture of relations between Turkey and the United States, Mr. Schmavonian was transferred late in 1917 to

³²FDR: HMS - Boxes No. 5 (17 letters from 1914), 9 (4 letters from 1916), 10 (2 letters from 1916), 12 (3 letters from 1919), 14 (5 letters from 1921).

³³LC: PHM - Reel No. 22.

Washington, D.C. where he remained in the capacity of a 'Special Adviser' until his death in January, 1922. Morgenthau wrote a moving tribute to his memory, which illustrates the closeness of their relationship:

'Great was my pleasure to find upon meeting Mr. Schmavonian that the enthusiastic praise of my predecessors [Ambassadors Straus and Rockhill] was not only fully justified, but had failed to do him adequate justice. He had all the traditions of the office most methodically stored away in his mind, and made them accessible to me at any time, day or night, at a moment's notice, and it was the same as to all the American missionary and educational activities in Turkey. He was so eminently just, and so absolutely truthful, that every one with whom he came in contact, promptly recognized the sterling qualities, and soon learned to love their possessor.

'He was a delightful social companion and graced any assembly which he attended. The services which he rendered to the United States government and to all the Ambassadors at Constantinople, to the missionary interests, American business interests, and the Armenian and Jewish populations in Turkey, were unexcelled by anyone.

'He was unobtrusive to a fault, and never claimed any credit for himself. His devotion to his mother and to the service possessed him completely, and he was always thoroughly loyal to his own people, the Armenians.

'The United States has lost one of its most faithful servants, and I, one of my dearest friends.'³⁴

Some idea of the extent of Schmavonian's role in shaping *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* may be had by an ex-

³⁴LC: PHM - Reel No.40.

amination of his surviving correspondence with Morgenthau during the period in which the book was written:

- a) January 16, 1918 letter from Schmavonian to Morgenthau responding to an earlier request for the names and titles of various Ottoman Cabinet members during Morgenthau's tenure;³⁵
- b) January 26, 1918 letter from Morgenthau to Schmavonian asking him to supply facts based on the cables and dispatches which Morgenthau sent the Department of State from Turkey;³⁶
- c) An enclosure of August 29, 1918 of comments on Morgenthau's manuscript prepared by the State Department, appears to have been written by Schmavonian as well, thus raising the possibility that he was (as might logically be expected) the official in the Department assigned to comment on the draft of Morgenthau's book;³⁷
- d) September 3, 1918 Morgenthau to Schmavonian letter, clearly establishes that it was Schmavonian who was commenting on Morgenthau's manuscript. When Morgenthau writes:

'I am sending by this mail our article No. 7, the first half of the Armenian story... I do hope that in your good-natured and accommodating way, you will work over time, and I will promise you that I shall not write more books that have to get the approval of the State Department.'³⁸

In short, Schmavonian was a key aide to Morgenthau both throughout his tenure in Turkey, as well as during

³⁵LC: PHM - Reel No.8.

³⁶FDR: HMS - Box No. 12.

³⁷FDR: HMS - Box No.12.

³⁸FDR: HMS - Box No.12.

the months in which *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* was being written in 1918. He was even entrusted by the State Department with the task of approving Morgenthau's manuscript.

Despite his role at each and every stage of the project, he is not mentioned by name in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, an oversight which is hard to comprehend. This is particularly so in light of the fact that he is named in Morgenthau's 1922 autobiography: *All In A Life Time*. In this book, which Morgenthau wrote in collaboration with French Strother, Schmavonian appears (as he in reality was) a close confidant of Morgenthau.³⁹ Can it be that Morgenthau felt that reference to his dependence upon his Armenian assistants (An-donian is not mentioned either) might appear strange in a book devoted partially to the Armenian Question?

Yet another participant in the project was the U.S. Secretary of State, Robert Lansing who (at the President's behest?) read and commented upon every chapter of the work in progress. The nature of Lansing's role will be discussed below; however, a number of letters, dating from the gestation period of the book fully illustrate that it was not insignificant:

a) Lansing to Morgenthau letter of April 2, 1918, in which the Secretary states: "I am returning herewith the first installment of the proof of your book which I have read with particular interest... I have made various marginal notes suggesting certain alterations or omissions in the text before publication and I trust that you will agree with these suggestions;"

b) Lansing to Morgenthau letter of April 27, 1918, accompanying another segment of the draft manuscript

³⁹ Henry Morgenthau (in collaboration with French Strother), *All In A Life Time*, New York (Doubleday, Page & Co.), 1922. See: pp. 178, 187, 215, 216, 224, 227, 259, and 266.

"accompanied by a few suggestions which after careful consideration we venture to propose;"

c) Lansing to Morgenthau letter of August 29, 1918, together with proof sheets and more suggestions;

d) Lansing to Morgenthau letter of September 17, 1918 with "suggestions and remarks,"

e) Morgenthau to Lansing letter of September 22, 1918 asking permission to acknowledge in the Preface to the published book, his appreciation for the "trouble taken by the Secretary of State Robert Lansing in *reading the manuscript and of the many valuable and wise suggestions he has made*;"

f) Lansing to Morgenthau letter of October 2, 1918 declining Morgenthau's wish to acknowledge his assistance with the book on the grounds "*that on the whole it would be advisable not to mention my name in connection with the book.*"⁴⁰

When one recollects the fact that prior to beginning his project, Morgenthau received the written blessings of the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, and, that as the work progressed, each chapter received the personal stamp of approval of the U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing, it is clear that Morgenthau's book may be said to bear the imprimatur of the United States Government.

This said, what literary merit the work has, and all its reviewers found it very readable indeed, is purely the result of Hendrick. While Hendrick was never accorded his due in terms of open recognition of his role in 'ghosting' the story, he was well paid for his efforts, as a surviving letter from Morgenthau to him dated July 5, 1918 attests. In lieu of a formal written contract, which does not appear to have existed between the two men, Morgenthau wrote the following to Hendrick:

⁴⁰FDR: HMS – Box No.12.

'I desire to put in writing that I intend to transfer to you a share of the income of the book, 'Ambassador Morgenthau's Story,' about to be published by Doubleday, Page & Company.

'The definite arrangement is to be made *when your work on the book is completed*, but if anything should happen to me in the meantime, I hereby direct my Executors to arrange that you are to receive two-fifths of any profits that are coming to me from Doubleday, Page & Company, until you have received Ten Thousand (\$10,000) Dollars, and that the first five thousand (\$5,000) Dollars coming to me are to paid to you on account.'⁴¹

Hendrick, an individual fully deserving of serious scholarly study in his own right, must have been fully satisfied with the final 'arrangement' made at the completion of the book. From a receipt which has survived in the Morgenthau papers we may surmise that whatever the final agreement was, it guaranteed Hendrick's 40% share throughout the life-time of the book. It shows that in the period between January 2, 1932 and July 1, 1932, that is, fourteen years after its initial publication, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* was still in print. In this six month span it registered a grand total of \$2.00 in sales, of which the author's one-half share, i.e., \$1.00, was divided as follows:

Mr. Burton J. Hendrick's 40% share	40¢
Mr. Henry Morgenthau's 60% share	60¢ ⁴²

Thus fourteen years after its initial publication, the American edition of the book was still providing income to Hendrick and Morgenthau. As for Hendrick's feelings, they were recorded in an Oral History interview he gave

⁴¹Hendrick/Rusnak: Morgenthau to Hendrick letter of July 5, 1918.

⁴²LC: PHM - Reel No.17.

the historian Alan Nevins at Columbia University, a few months before his death in 1949. He stated:

"I had one job of 'ghosting.' That was the elder Henry Morgenthau's *Reminiscences*. That book created quite a good deal of interest. I worked with Henry all the time.

He was an interesting character. Henry Morgenthau was a very capable person, very chummy and good natured and was a very successful man. He, of course, made a great fortune here in New York in real estate...The writing of my books on Sims and Morgenthau was very interesting – more or less of a job..."⁴³

Hendrick⁴⁴ who within ten years of the publication of the Morgenthau book was to receive three Pulitzer Prizes, one for the book he co-authored with Admiral William S. Sims: *The Victory at Sea* (recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in History in 1920), and two in Biography for his 1922 work, the *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page* and in 1928 for his

⁴³I am indebted to Mr. Ronald J. Grele, Director of the 'Oral History Research Office' at Columbia University's Butler Library, for a copy of the 62 page Nevins interview entitled: '*The Reminiscences of Burton J. Hendrick*.' The passage quoted above is taken from pages 31–32 of this interview, and is a summary of Hendrick's comments. In addition to the Hendrick materials discussed earlier in what I have termed the *Hendrick/Rusnak Collection*, and the Nevins interview, there are also 75 Hendrick letters in the archives of the *American Academy of Arts and Letters* in New York City. I am informed by Ms. Nancy Johnson, the 'AAAL' Librarian, that this material consists primarily of letters relating to Hendrick's membership in the 'AAAL,' an organization to which he was elected in 1923, and of which he remained a member until his death in 1949.

⁴⁴The most detailed work on Hendrick's career is Robert Rusnak's unpublished paper entitled: "To Cast Them in the Heroic Mold': Court Biographers – The Case of Burton J. Hendrick." I am indebted to the author for a copy of this study. Additional biographical information has been consulted in the following reference works: a) Obituary notice: "Burton Hendrick, Historian, 78, Dies," *The New York Times*, Friday, March 25, 1949. p.23. (Hereafter: Hendrick, *Times*: p.23.) b) Burton Jesse Hendrick entry in: *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*. Vol. XXXVIII., page 476. Ann Arbor, MI (University Microfilms), 1967. c) Louis Filler, "Burton Jesse Hendrick," entry in *The Encyclopedia Americana* (International Edition). Vol. 14, page 91. Danbury, CT (Grolier Inc.) ND. d) Burton Jesse Hendrick entry in the 1922–1923 *Who's Who in America*. Vol. 12, page 1482. Chicago (A.N. Marquis & Co.), 1923.

second Page volume entitled *The Training of an American*, was already in 1918 a well-known journalist who had done stints as an editorial writer with *The New York Evening Post*, *McClure's Magazine*, and *The World's Work*. In these positions, in the words of his *New York Times* obituary writer, Hendrick "developed a reputation for painstaking accuracy, honest thinking and good humor and developed an appetite for research in subjects of great historical interest." The *Times* obituary goes on to say that "critics of his biographies and histories almost invariably would remark that his freshness and penetrating analysis bore the mark of his early journalistic training."⁴⁵

Ironically, at least one reviewer of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, a 'W.K.K.' writing in December 5, 1918 issue of the *Detroit Michigan News*, instinctively sensed that Morgenthau must have had a journalistic collaborator when he wrote:

"...Henry Morgenthau, our Ambassador to Turkey in the first year of the war, is either a born journalist, or else he had journalistic help in the preparation of his volume; for 'Ambassador Morgenthau's Story' is pure journalese..."⁴⁶

What we are faced with is less the memoirs of one individual, Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, than a memoir by committee as it were. Morgenthau's Istanbul notes (consisting of his 'Diary' and Family 'Letters'), are reworked initially by Morgenthau and Andonian, together with Hendrick; edited for content by Schmavonian (on behalf of the State Department); then 'fine tuned' by the Secretary of State Robert Lansing (on

⁴⁵Hendrick, *Times*: p.23.

⁴⁶LC: PHM – Reel No. 40.

behalf of the Executive); and, finally written down as *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* by Burton J. Hendrick.

As to the question of whose story it really is, as our subsequent examination will illustrate, it is a collective story bearing only a cursory relationship to what was actually experienced by Henry Morgenthau during his tenure in Turkey.

CHAPTER III

THE INTENT AND SCOPE OF THE 'STORY'

The key questions with which the remainder of this study is concerned are these: how much of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* which doesn't originate from the 'Diary' or 'Letters' comes from the fertile journalistic imagination of Burton J. Hendrick, and how much of it was invented by Morgenthau in support of his aim of writing a sensational book damning the Turks and Germans and thereby stirring up support for the war among his fellow Americans? In the same vein, what was the nature of the input from U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing? That is, did he confine himself to censoring potentially embarrassing diplomatic disclosures on the part of Morgenthau, or did he take an active role in attempting to blacken the reputations of Turks and Germans alike in keeping with his Presidential employer's and the author's stated aims? Were Morgenthau's views of the disputes between Turks and Armenians shaped by his Armenian eyes and ears, namely Arshag K. Schmavonian and Hagop S. Andonian?

Most importantly, what were Morgenthau's real views of the Turkish leaders and German diplomats he dealt with during his tenure in Constantinople and how (and to the extent possible why) had these views been altered some two years later when *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* was written?

For the benefit of those unfamiliar with Morgenthau's book, it may be necessary to set forth its basic themes, which are four in number, in summary form: 1) German imperialistic motives led the naive Young Turk Government into the war; 2) The Young Turk leadership, in particular Talaat Bey and Enver Pasha, decided to use the cover of the war to once and for all 'Turkify' the Ottoman Empire. To aid this objective they conceived and perpetrated a plot to exterminate the Ottoman Armenian population, whom they falsely accused of aiding and abetting their Russian enemy in wartime; 3) Henry Morgenthau was a lone voice tirelessly attempting to dissuade the evil Talaat and Enver from their nefarious scheme of destroying the Armenians; and, 4) Morgenthau's efforts failed for the sole reason that the one man who could have persuaded the Turks to alter their action, the German Ambassador Baron Wangenheim, sat idly by and refused to speak on behalf of the helpless Armenians.

Morgenthau's themes are given credibility by virtue of the fact that throughout his 'Story,' literally from beginning to end, his troika of villains, Wangenheim, Talaat and Enver, repeatedly condemn themselves with their own voices of his charges, i.e., over and over Morgenthau provides us first-person accounts, complete with quotation marks, of comments allegedly made by these individuals which buttress his contentions as to their roles. Indeed, the only crime that they did not openly confess to, if Morgenthau's account is accepted, was that of 'genocide,' and that only because the term had not yet been coined.

The question we must ask is, did these alleged conversations actually occur in the manner described by Morgenthau/Hendrick? To answer this query we must compare a series of statements in the book with the parallel accounts provided in the 'Diary,' 'Letters,' and reports submitted by Morgenthau to the Secretary of State Lansing in Washington, D.C.

At the outset, one fact is indisputable: None of the statements given in quotation marks throughout the book, and purporting to be comments made by one or another Turkish or German official, are based on written records. There simply are no such statements recorded in any of the sources used in writing *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. Stated differently, the use of such quoted statements is simply a literary convention adopted by Hendrick in telling Morgenthau's 'Story.' Their purpose can only have been to make the words put into the mouths of the various players more believable. While this does not *de facto* establish that they were false, it does mean that we should subject them to far greater scrutiny than they have hitherto received.

CHAPTER IV

THE TREATMENT OF TALAAT BEY: A CASE STUDY

The principal villain of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, and the subject of its greater invective, is Talaat Bey,⁴⁷ the Ottoman Minister of Interior. An examination of the treatment accorded him, therefore, will serve to establish the inexplicably wide discrepancies between events as recorded by Morgenthau in his 'Diary' and 'Letters,' that is, during his actual sojourn in Constantinople (November, 1913 – January, 1916), and in his 1918 book. While in no way comprehensive, the following examples,

⁴⁷Throughout *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, Talaat Bey is vilified in every conceivable fashion. See: AMS – pp. 20–24, 34–40, 50–51, 58, 78, 99–100, 123–127, 137–145, 154, 172, 194–95, 198–99, 253–55, 286, 326–342, and 390–392. A grimmer portrait is hard to imagine, nor one less in keeping with what is generally known about Talaat's character. I have used contemporary English spelling as found in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, rather than modern Turkish orthography throughout this study. Hence 'Talaat' rather than 'Talât' and 'Abdul Hamid' for 'Abdülhamid.'



**Talaat Bey, Ottoman
Minister of the Interior**

This photograph which was presented to Ambassador Morgenthau is preserved in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library, in Hyde Park, N.Y.

[FDR: PHM- Photo Collection]

presented in the order in which they appear in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, will serve to illustrate this point:

1) In describing "Talaat, the leading man in this band of usurpers," Morgenthau states:

*"I can personally testify that he cared nothing for Mohammedanism for, like most of the leaders of his party, he scoffed at all religions. 'I hate all priests, rabbis, and hodjas,' he once told me."*⁴⁸

In point of fact, there is not a single reference in any of Morgenthau's contemporary Constantinople papers to support this statement. To the contrary, the sole reference to Talaat's religious attitudes is found in a 'Diary' entry for July 10, 1914, where, in describing a small supper party he gave on the previous evening for Talaat,

⁴⁸AMS: p. 20.

Grand Rabbi Nahoum and his wife, and Schmavonian, Morgenthau recorded:

*"Talaat told me the other evening that he was the most religious in cabinet; and that Djavit had none and Djemal little."*⁴⁹

Even were it not known that Talaat Bey was indeed the most religious of the Young Turk leadership, Morgenthau's own 'Diary' and 'Letters' contain literally dozens of references to the close relationship which existed between Talaat and the Grand Rabbi Haim Nahoum, leader of the Ottoman Jewish communities, which make the quote attributed to him in which he allegedly stated to Morgenthau his "hate (of) all Priests, Rabbis, and Hodjas," extremely unlikely.⁵⁰

Why then did Morgenthau choose to portray Talaat Bey as an atheist, when his own 'Diary' gives the lie to his contention? The obvious answer is that he felt it would be useful in generating the desired disgust and revulsion on the part of his intended audience to portray the villain of the piece as a godless atheist rather than as a supporter of religion, even if it were Islam.

* * *

2) In a section of his work dealing with the forced return of Greek settlers on the Aegean coast of Anatolia to the

⁴⁹LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: 'Diary' entry for July 10, 1914. See also: FDR: HMS – Box No. 5: Morgenthau family 'Letter' of July 15, 1914, pp. 10–11.

⁵⁰LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau's 'Diary' entries for the entire period of his stay in Turkey, are full of entries dealing with his close social relationship with Talaat Bey and Grand Rabbi Haim Nahoum. Only two examples will suffice to illustrate that relationship: 1) On February 16, 1914 Morgenthau's 'Diary' includes the following note: "We dined at Rabbi Nahoum. May, Helen, Ruth, Schmavonian, Talaat and I, and remained until 11, talking"; and, 2) Just three days later on February 19, 1914, the diary includes the following: "Talaat, Nahoum and Schmavonian were here for supper; we had a very intense talk about Turkish conditions."

islands from which they originated (in late spring and early summer 1914), Morgenthau writes:

*"By this time I knew Talaat well; I saw him nearly every day, and he used to discuss practically every phase of international relations with me. I objected to his treatment of the Greeks; I told him that it would make the worst possible impression abroad and that it affected American interests."*⁵¹

Contrary to Morgenthau's claim of almost daily intimacy with Talaat Bey, a thorough analysis of his 'Diary' entries for the period between January 1, 1914 and July 2, 1914, establishes that Morgenthau and Talaat met on a total of only twenty occasions, of which only eight were actual substantive meetings, the remainder being social events where they happened to be guests at the same dinner parties.⁵² Throughout the period in question, Morgenthau saw Talaat for substantive purposes an average of only once every three weeks. Indeed, during the height of the expulsions (Mid-May – June 1914) Talaat and Morgenthau did not meet at all. Morgenthau's 'Diary' records meetings only on May 4th and again on July 2, 1914.⁵³

Nor does the 'Diary' record a single instance, despite Morgenthau's assertion, in which the Ambassador remonstrated with Talaat Bey over his treatment of the Greeks. To the contrary, it establishes that the matter was the subject of discussion in only one of their meetings, that of July 2, 1914, an occasion on which Morgenthau simply recorded Talaat's reasoning for relocating

⁵¹AMS: p. 50.

⁵²LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Entries for the period between January 1, 1914 and July 2, 1914.

⁵³LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: See the entries for the period between May 4, 1914 and July 2, 1914.

the Greeks without any indication that he objected to it in any manner whatsoever:

"Schmavonian and I called on Talaat. He was very frank... Seems determined to have Greeks of the country, not cities, leave their country; he said the Greeks here pay taxes to Greece Government collected by Metropolitan; he says they want their islands back; admitted Greek superiority in education and mercantile capacities..."⁵⁴

In the weekly letter to his family of July 15, 1914, he records the same conversation as follows:

"In the afternoon, I paid a visit on Talaat. He was extremely frank... They are unquestionably determined to have such Greeks as live out of their cities to part from their country as peaceably and as soon as possible. The thing that seemed to annoy him most was that these very Ottoman Greeks are paying taxes to the Hellenic Government, and some of the very money that is earned on Turkish soil will be used to pay for the ships that Greece has just purchased from us. My secretary [Hagop S. Andonian] just informs me that when he attended Robert College twelve years ago, the Greek students used to pay every week something from their pocket money as a contribution to the Hellenic fleet. Talaat admitted to me that they either want the islands back or the Greeks expelled from the mainland."⁵⁵

Far from remonstrating with Talaat Bey over the Ottoman treatment of their Greek population, there is not a hint in anything Morgenthau recorded to suggest that he found their policy unacceptable. Why then in 1918 does he claim that "I objected to his treatment of the

⁵⁴LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Entry for July 2, 1914.

⁵⁵FDR: HMS – Box No. 5: Morgenthau family 'Letter' of July 15, 1914, pp.3–4.

Greeks," or that he "saw him [Talaat] nearly every day" and "he used to discuss practically every phase of international relations with me?"⁵⁶ Once again, there can be only one reason: he is laying the groundwork for his claim of intimacy with Talaat on one hand, and, on the other, seeking to establish his credentials as a defender of any and all minorities persecuted by the hands of the Moslem Turks.

3) In attempting to describe the motivations impelling Talaat's treatment of minorities, Morgenthau writes:

"...Talaat explained his national policy; these different blocs in the Turkish Empire, he said, had always conspired against Turkey; because of the hostility of these native populations, Turkey had lost province after province —Greece, Serbia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Egypt and Tripoli. In this way the Turkish Empire had dwindled almost to the vanishing point. *If what was left of Turkey was to survive, added Talaat, he must get rid of these alien peoples. 'Turkey for the Turks' was now Talaat's controlling idea.*"⁵⁷

This alleged conversation, complete with Talaat's use of the phrase "Turkey for the Turks," was, according to *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, part of the same discussion referred to above in which Talaat explained his desire to force the Greek settlers along the Aegean Coast to return to their original homes on the islands. As we have already seen, no reference to anything supporting Talaat's alleged views on 'Turkey for the Turks' was recorded by Morgenthau in either his 'Diary' or 'Letter' dealing with that meeting.

⁵⁶ AMS: p. 50.

⁵⁷ AMS: p. 51.

Why then did Morgenthau put these words into the mouth of Talaat Bey? Again, the answer is simple: he wanted to have the strongest figure among the Young Turk triumvirate embracing verbally what is one of the major *leitmotifs* of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, namely, it was run-away Turkish nationalism which prompted their attempt to "exterminate" the Armenians. This theme, which does not find a single iota of support in either the 'Diary' or the 'Letters,' runs throughout his book. Over and over we read statements such as 'Turkey for the Turks,'⁵⁸ 'In his eyes Turkey was the land exclusively of the Turks; he despised all the other elements in its population,'⁵⁹ 'It was his determination to Turkify the whole Empire,'⁶⁰ 'They decided to establish a country exclusively for Turks,'⁶¹ 'Their passion for Turkifying the nation seemed to demand logically the extermination of all Christians,'⁶² and, 'The time had finally come to make Turkey exclusively the country of the Turks.'⁶³ It is almost as if we are being subjected to some kind of 'subliminal' repetition designed to convince us that the Young Turks were racist ideologues. If Morgenthau himself had come to believe this of the Turks in 1918, he had certainly done so after leaving Turkey in 1916, for seemingly nothing he recorded during his sojourn in Constantinople serves to buttress such a view.

⁵⁸ AMS: p. 116. Labelled as the "central point of Turkish policy."

⁵⁹ AMS: p. 133. Sentiment attributed to Bedri Bey, the Prefect of the Police in the Capital.

⁶⁰ AMS: p. 174. Stated to be the aim of Djemal Pasha.

⁶¹ AMS: pp. 283-84. Stated to be the goal of the Young Turks.

⁶² AMS: p. 290. Given as a rationale for wanting to kill non-Turks.

⁶³ AMS: p. 292. Given as Turkey's wartime agenda.

4) In describing a meeting with Talaat on October 29, 1914, in which the topic of discussion was the Turkish-German alliance, Morgenthau relates the following discussion:

"At this meeting Talaat frankly told me that Turkey had decided to side with the Germans and to sink or swim with them. He went again over the familiar grounds, and added that if Germany won — *and Talaat said that he was convinced that Germany would win* — the Kaiser would get his revenge on Turkey if Turkey had not helped him to obtain his victory."⁶⁴

In other words, Talaat is portrayed here as an individual who has taken a *real politik* decision and decided to side with Germany on the grounds that in his own opinion she is going to win the war. While no family letter covering this meeting has survived, Morgenthau did record his actual impressions of his October 29, 1914 meeting with Talaat in his 'Diary,' presumably within hours of its occurrence. This is what he wrote:

"Called... on Talaat... We had a most interesting talk; He admitted frankly that they had decided to side with Germans; sink or swim with them; he said they had to have strong country to lean on and if they had not agreed to depend on Germans, they when defeated would have been first to suggest cutting up Turkey; they were prepared to swim or sink with them."⁶⁵

In the book, Morgenthau has twisted his 'Diary' entry to transform a very reluctant Talaat, one who has no opinion as to the likely outcome of the war, one who has simply embraced the lesser of two evils in a hope to stay afloat, into a calculating pro-German, who, having

⁶⁴ AMS: p. 124.

⁶⁵ LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for October 29, 1914.

weighed the alternatives, comes down on the German side because of a belief in German invincibility. Why? Because it hardly suits his thesis to have his key villain not firmly committed to the evil German war machine. Once again, Morgenthau has sacrificed any claim to historical accuracy for what can only be termed the short-term propaganda coup.

* * *

5) In discussing a late evening visit on the night of November 3, 1914 to Talaat's home for the purpose of protesting the treatment of English and French civilians, Morgenthau writes:

"Well, Talaat,' I said, realizing that the time had come for plain speaking, 'don't you know how foolishly you are acting? You told me a few hours ago that you had decided to treat the French and English decently and you asked me to publish this news in the American and foreign press...

A piece of news which Talaat received at that moment over the wire almost ruined my case... *Talaat's face lost its geniality and became almost savage*, he turned to me and said:

'The English bombarded the Dardanelles this morning and killed two Turks.'

And then he added:

'We intend to kill three Christians for every Moslem killed!'

...Finally the train was arranged. *Talaat had shown several moods in this interview; he had been by turns sulky, good-natured, savage and complaisant...*⁶⁶

⁶⁶AMS: pp. 141-146.

This account, which covers some six pages in the Morgenthau book, portrays Talaat Bey as some kind of eccentric child, beguiled by the candor of Morgenthau into eventually acceding to his every wish. A good part of it consists of alleged conversations given as direct quotations. Much is made of Talaat Bey, who started life as a telegraphist, "sitting there in his gray pajamas and his red fez, working industriously his own telegraph key,"⁶⁷ etc. etc. In point of fact, the entire source for this six page uninterrupted dialogue between Talaat and Morgenthau is the following entry in his 'Diary' for November 3, 1914:

"Schmavonian and I went to [Sublime] Porte and then to Talaat's house, he in pajamas, wife peeping through doors. Bedri appeared *phone working*. I put it strong that I had spread news all the world and if they balked condemnation follows; he admitted it was general German Chief of Staff who had just returned thought they were too lenient and interfered. There is already conflict between civil and military and Germans and Turks; troubles ahead; *Promised to try and let foreigners [stay in] interior unless Beirut, Smyrna, or other unprotected ports were bombarded, then all would be kept as hostages. Syrian Governor would inform our Consul that three Christians be killed for every Moslem that was killed. Dardanelles had been bombarded from 8:30 to 8:40 and two Turks killed. At 7:45 Talaat told us train could go. We returned to station about 8:10 when it was announced it could go. Such joy.*"⁶⁸

Here is an almost classic case of the account in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* bearing almost no resemblance to the passage in the 'Diary' upon which it should have been based. From the portrayal of Talaat

⁶⁷AMS: p. 144.

⁶⁸LC: PHM - Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for November 3, 1914.

"this huge Turk" hunched over his telegraph machine and "banging the key with increasing irritation,"⁶⁹ (when in point of fact he was speaking on the telephone), to his alleged response to the bombing of the Dardanelles which had resulted in two civilian deaths, of promising to 'kill three Christians for every Moslem killed,'⁷⁰ (combining two totally unrelated events out of sequence), that is, from start to finish, the entire section appears to be nothing more real than the rambling of an overactive imagination. Again, the question is why? Here too, it is Morgenthau's intent to portray Talaat Bey, as his prototypical Turk, as bestial, crude, and vicious in his actions. Only the cajoling influence of the American Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau can stem the unpredictable, dangerous Turk. In reality, the Minister of Interior, and *de facto* head of government of a state to which Morgenthau was accredited as Ambassador of a foreign country, received him in a crisis situation at home, and spent some time resolving the issue of foreigners who were citizens of belligerent nations wishing to leave the country without exit visas, via a series of phone calls. This act of gracious kindness is twisted into a parody of fact in which Talaat is depicted as an emotionally unstable, petulant schoolboy who can only be controlled by the firm-speaking Henry Morgenthau. While Burton Hendrick could be excused if he had misunderstood the laconic entries in the 'Diary,' it appears that all the fictional detail in this section of the book had to have been added in 1918 by Morgenthau himself.

⁶⁹AMS: p. 144.

⁷⁰AMS: p. 144.

6) Many times it is hard to find any linkage between the passages in the book and the 'Diary' references they are obviously supposed to be drawn from. One such example is the following. Morgenthau *et al.* write:

"I called on Talaat again. The first thing he did was to open his desk and pull out a handful of yellow cablegrams.

'Why don't you give this money to us?' he said, with a grin.

'What money?' I asked.

'Here is a cablegram for you from America, sending you a lot of money for the Armenians. You ought not to use it that way; give it to us Turks, we need it as badly as they do.'

'I have not yet received any such cablegram,' I replied.

'Oh, no, but you will,' he answered. 'I always get all your cablegrams first, you know. After I have finished reading them I send them around to you.'"⁷¹

Not only does Talaat Bey read other people's mail, he brags about it. Not only does he carry out the 'extermination' of the Armenians, he is so heartless that he actually dares to ask Morgenthau to give him the money which generous Americans have collected for the relief of these suffering people. It takes a careful reading of the Morgenthau 'Diary' to find the entry that served as the source for this statement. It reads:

"He [Talaat] asked me if I would take additional money offered by U.S. to me by cable received today; it was an

⁷¹AMS: p. 332.

admission that he had read or knew contents of my telegram."⁷²

There are several problems with the interpretation of this passage given in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*:

a) The 'Diary' entry for its source is dated *October 14, 1914*, a full six months prior to the onset of the Armenian deportations, and at least ten months prior to the arrival of any American aid earmarked for Armenians;

b) The 'Diary' entry makes it clear that Morgenthau has already received the telegram in question, i.e., Morgenthau does not suggest that Talaat is referring to a message he has not already seen;

c) Morgenthau only infers from Talaat's question that he has seen, or has been informed of a cable on the subject of funds; he is not so informed by Talaat himself who, in the book, brags of receiving all cables prior to Morgenthau ever seeing them.

Clearly, Hendrick, with the tacit approval of Morgenthau, has simply fabricated yet another discussion between Talaat and Morgenthau for the purpose of portraying the Turkish leader as a thoroughly disgusting and inhuman character.

7) On occasion, Morgenthau even goes beyond 'poetic license' and literally records alleged conversations which have no foundation whatsoever in either the 'Diary' or the 'Letters.' In perhaps the most damning indictment of this nature, Morgenthau writes:

⁷²LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for October 10, 1914.

"One day Talaat made what was perhaps the most astonishing request I had ever heard. The 'New York Life Insurance Company' and the 'Equitable Life of New York' had for years done considerable business among the Armenians. The extent to which these people insured their lives was merely another indication of their thrifty habits.

'I wish,' Talaat now said, 'That you would get the American Life Insurance Companies to send us a complete list of Armenian policy holders. They are practically all dead now and have left no heirs to collect the money. It of course all escheats to the state. The Government is beneficiary now. Will you do so?'

This was almost too much, and I lost my temper. 'You will get no such list from me,' I said, and I got up and left him."⁷³

Perhaps more than any single incident related in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, this callous disregard for human life and decency etches itself into the reader's memory. Surely, no one could have invented such a conversation. It must have occurred as related by Morgenthau. But did it? A careful examination of everything written by Morgenthau from the beginning of the Armenian deportations in April of 1915 to the date of his departure, on February 1, 1916, fails to locate a single reference to this alleged conversation. Given the fact that we have hundreds of references in the 'Diary' for this period to Talaat and to matters affecting the treatment and mistreatment of Armenians, this lacuna is difficult to explain. Morgenthau, in addition, filed numerous reports to the Department of State relating to Armenians, not one of which makes any reference to this discussion. Finally, for the period in question we have a complete run

⁷³AMS: p. 339.

of 'Family Letters,' comprising several hundred pages, which are literally filled with references to meeting with Talaat and discussion of the treatment of Armenians. Their contents refer to every single day during the last twelve months of Morgenthau's tenure in Turkey, and yet, they too, fail to make any reference to Talaat's callous request that the Turkish Government be recognized as the beneficiary of the insurance policies held by the very Armenians whose lives had been lost as a result of the treatment they had been accorded. More telling than this argument by 'absence' is the fact that this is the only alleged conversation between Talaat and Morgenthau mentioned in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* for which there is no basis, either in the 'Diary' or the 'Letters.' In short, this appears to be nothing more than an attempt to further darken the already fully tarnished image Morgenthau has painted of Talaat Bey.

It is upon closer examination of the Morgenthau Papers that an even more disturbing explanation for Morgenthau's having included this bit of fiction in his book, suggests itself. When one goes back over the 'Diary' entries prior to the period of the Armenian deportations, i.e., prior to April 24, 1915, one sees that Morgenthau did in fact discuss the affairs of one the companies named in his book with Talaat Bey. On April 3, 1915 (a full three weeks prior to the beginning of the deportations), we see the following entry:

"Called on Talaat at Minister of Commerce's Office; spoke to him about 'New York Life Insurance Company's funds.'" ⁷⁴

Can it be that it was this two line entry in Morgenthau's 'Diary' which served as the springboard from which Hendrick constructed the alleged conversation dis-

⁷⁴LC: PHM - Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for April 3, 1915.

cussed above? As in the discussion on Talaat Bey reading Morgenthau's cables and suggesting that money earmarked for Armenians be given to his government, is it possible that Hendrick has simply fabricated (presumably with the connivance of Morgenthau) this entire episode? Once again, the answer is, yes. While there was an issue involving funds belonging to the New York Life Insurance Company which had been frozen in Turkey, it had nothing to do with Ottoman Armenians. To the contrary, a series of entries in Morgenthau's 'Diary' for the months of March and April 1915 allow us to state categorically that the issue was just the opposite of what was portrayed in the book.

We may summarize the 'Diary' entries relative to the 'New York Life Insurance Company' issue, as follows:

1) On 24 March, a Mr. Feri, the Constantinople representative of the Insurance Company, paid a visit to Morgenthau and informed him that the Ottoman Government was refusing to release their bank accounts because their company headquarters was in Paris, France (a country with which the Ottoman Empire was then at war);⁷⁵

2) On 29 March, Morgenthau took up the company's problem in a discussion with Talaat Bey, who informed him of the following: "as to the New York Life funds, the company had never registered and they don't want them to withdraw their funds, as they fear that they would not pay their losses here;"⁷⁶

3) As noted above, on 3 April, Morgenthau's 'Diary' notes that he "called on Talaat at Minister of

⁷⁵LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for March 24, 1915.

⁷⁶LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for March 29, 1915.

Commerce's office; spoke to him about New York Life Insurance Company's funds;"⁷⁷

This then is the extent of references to the New York Life Insurance Company funds in the Morgenthau papers. The March 29, 1915 entry makes it clear that, far from wanting to serve as the beneficiary of deceased policy holders, Talaat's and the Turkish Government's interest was in making sure that the company maintained enough capital in Turkey, so as to guarantee their ability to pay any future claims which might arise under their coverage.

Simple logic tells us Morgenthau's account must be false, as his 'Diary' establishes that throughout his tenure in Constantinople, the New York Life Insurance Co. had its own representative in the Ottoman capital; that is, had Talaat Bey wanted a list of their clients he had only to demand it.⁷⁸

Once again, the question we must ask is: Why does this passage appear in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* in the first place? In addition to the by now obvious aim on the part of Morgenthau, namely, to blacken the reputation of Talaat Bey in every conceivable fashion and whenever possible, there may well have been an even more venal reason for the inclusion of this passage. A thorough reading of the Morgenthau papers shows that at the very time Morgenthau's book was being written he was also a member of the Board of Directors of

⁷⁷LC: PHIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for April 3, 1915.

⁷⁸LC: PHIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for October 5, 1915, records the following in regard to the status of the 'New York Life Insurance Company,' in Istanbul: "Representatives of the New York Life Insurance Company and their lawyer called for advice about what steps to take about registering under the new law." Clearly, with representatives stationed in Istanbul, any and all information which the Government might wish to obtain concerning the business affairs of this company was easily available. That Talaat Bey would ask Morgenthau for information on any matter concerning this Company is unlikely.

the Equitable Life Assurance Society of New York. ⁷⁹Indeed, his 'Diary' for the year 1918 shows that on March 21 he attended a meeting of the Equitable Life Assurance Company at 12:00 and then met with Burton J. Hendrick at 2:30⁸⁰ (presumably to work on the manuscript). Morgenthau, who had been elected a member of the Society's board at its December 1, 1915 meeting,⁸¹ was very proud of his being so recognized and even wrote his son Henry Jr. to the effect that: "I think my selection as one of the Trustees of the 'Equitable Life Assurance Society' shows that the financial powers are already realizing that my name and advise [sic. advice] will be of some value."⁸² It may well be that the passage in question was nothing more than a 'plug' for the life insurance business. By naming the 'Equitable Life Assurance Society' and praising Armenians for having the foresight to insure their lives, Morgenthau may simply have been throwing in a free advertisement for his fellow trustees who had the good sense to recognize back in 1915 that, in his words "my name and advise will be of some value." While there is no way to advance this suggestion beyond the realm of hypothesis, one thing is clear - there is nothing in the

⁷⁹Indeed, Morgenthau had a long-time relationship with Equitable, going back at least as far as 1905, when as a member of the 'policy-holders committee' he successfully fought to protect the Company from Edward H. Harriman. For a detailed account of his role with Equitable, see: Burton J. Hendrick, "Ambassador Morgenthau's Story - Introductory Article," *The World's Work*, April, 1918. pp.620-637. See: LC: PHM - Reel No. 7 for a letter of December 2, 1915 (while Morgenthau was still Ambassador in Turkey), appointing him a 'Director of the Society' of the 'Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States.'

⁸⁰LC: PHM - Reel No. 6: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for March 21, 1918.

⁸¹LC: PHM - Reel No. 7: Equitable Life's S.S. McCurdy letter to Morgenthau of December 2, 1915.

⁸²FDR: HMJ/Gaer - Box Nos. 1-2: In a letter addressed to "My Dear Children," of June 29, 1915, Morgenthau discusses his selection as a 'Trustee' of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, suggesting that he may initially have been chosen as a Trustee (prior to June 29, 1915), and then, subsequently, elevated on December 1, 1915 to the position of 'Director' of the Society.

Morgenthau papers to suggest that the alleged conversation between Talaat Bey and Morgenthau ever transpired.

8) Not satisfied with relating fictitious conversations between himself and Talaat, Morgenthau also at times simply brings together events which transpired on separate occasions, thereby creating a totally erroneous impression. A case in point of this technique concerns the most serious discussion Morgenthau ever had with Talaat on the treatment of the Armenians. This talk, which occurred on August 8, 1915, took place at the initiative of Talaat who sent word to Morgenthau (through their mutual friend, the Grand Rabbi Haim Nahoum) that he wanted to see the American envoy alone, that is, without his Armenian escort-interpreter Arshag K. Schmavonian as he desired to discuss "Armenian matters."⁸³

Morgenthau's version of this meeting in his 'Story' begins as follows:

"In the early of part of August...he sent a personal messenger to me, asking if I could not see him alone — he said that he himself would provide the interpreter. This was the first time that Talaat had admitted that

⁸³ Although Morgenthau fails to name the messenger in his book, the 'Diary' entry for August 5, 1915 makes it clear that, as was often the case, Talaat had chosen to communicate with Morgenthau via their mutual friend, the Grand Rabbi of the Jewish Community, Haim Nahoum: "When I returned I found Mrs. Nahoum who said her husband had a message for me from Talaat. I sent for him and they stayed for supper. Nahoum told me that Talaat wanted me to call on him without Schmavonian as he wanted to talk to me about Armenian matters." (LC: PHM — Reel No. 5) It may be that Morgenthau's failure to name Nahoum as the messenger stems from the fact that having systematically portrayed Talaat Bey as a less than desirable character, he did not want to have to answer queries from his co-religionists as to why the leader of the Jewish Community in the Ottoman Empire was on such intimate terms with evil incarnate.

his treatment of the Armenians was a matter with which I had any concern. The interview took place two days afterward. *It so happened that since the last time I had visited Talaat I had shaved my beard. As soon as I came in the burly Minister began talking in his customary bantering fashion.*

'You have become a young man again,' he said: 'You are so young now that I cannot go to you for advice any more.'

'I have shaved my beard,' I replied, 'because it had become very gray — made gray by your treatment of the Armenians.'"⁸⁴

In actual fact, the 'beard incident' occurred not in the course of the August 8, 1915 meeting on 'Armenian matters,' but rather a month earlier on 3 July when Morgenthau's 'Diary' records the following:

"...Talaat teased me about having shaved beard and said I had become young and he would no longer take my advice...I told him I shaved it because it grew gray on account of treatment of Armenians."⁸⁵

By juxtaposing the banter of the 3 July conversation with the very serious appointment on the "Armenian matters" which occurred a month later, Morgenthau creates the impression that Talaat was not very serious in asking him to come discuss the Armenian Question on 8 August. How could he be serious when he began a talk about life and death matters by joking about Morgenthau's beard?

It is only when we read the actual 'Diary' entry for August 8, 1915, that we realize just how serious the talk actually was:

⁸⁴AMS: p. 336.

⁸⁵LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for July 3, 1915.

"I called on Talaat. He had his man there to interpret for me. First he spoke English but as Talaat himself noticed he was very slow, he asked him to try German which worked better. Talaat told me that he greatly preferred that I should always come alone when I had any Armenian matters to discuss with him. By this he admits that he was willing to discuss Armenian affairs with me. He told me that they based their objections to the Armenians on three distinct grounds:

- 1) that they had enriched themselves at the expense of the Turks;
- 2) that they wanted to domineer over them and establish a separate state;
- 3) that they have openly encouraged their enemies, so that they have come to the irrevocable decision to make them powerless before the war is ended.

I argued in all sorts of ways with him but he said that there was no use; that they had already disposed of three-fourths of them, that there were none left in Bitlis, Van, Erzeroum, and that the hatred was intense now that they have to finish it. I spoke to him about the commercial losses, he said that they did not care, that they had figured it out and knew it would not exceed for the banks etc. five million pounds. He said they want to treat the Armenians like we treat the negroes, I think he meant like the Indians. I asked him to make exceptions in some few cases which he promised to do; he also definitely promised that the people living in Constantinople could depart. I asked him about the removal of some sixty people, he said those are people who have come here from Izmid. It was simply impossible to move him. *He said they would take care of the Armenians at Zor and elsewhere but they did not want them in Anatolia.* I told him three times that they were making a serious mistake and would regret it. He said,

'we know we have made mistakes, but we never regret.'"⁸⁶

In tone and content that was a far more serious discussion than the account in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* implies. There is no hint of banter in the 'Diary' entry; far from it, Talaat emerges as being extremely candid. A close reading of his comments as recorded in Morgenthau's 'Diary' suggests that his comparison of their plans for the Armenians with the American treatment of the Negroes may have been, despite Morgenthau's suggestion, well spoken. It is in fact 'segregation' which he is referring to, as is clear from the final statement attributed to Talaat on this matter, to wit, "He said they would take care of the Armenians at Zor and elsewhere but they did not want them in Anatolia."⁸⁷

Why does Morgenthau not challenge Talaat on this statement? Because it is not out of keeping with what he is hearing at that time from others, including Zenop Bezjian, the 'vekil' (representative) of the Armenian Protestants in the Ottoman Empire. A month after the above-mentioned conversation with Talaat, Morgenthau receives a visit from Bezjian, which he records in his 'Diary' in the following terms:

"Zenop Bezjian, *Vekil* of Armenian Protestants, called. Schmavonian introduced him; he was his schoolmate. He told me a great deal about conditions [in the interior]. I was surprised to hear him report that Armenians at Zor were fairly well satisfied; that they have already settled down to business and are earning their livings;

⁸⁶LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for August 8, 1915.

⁸⁷LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for August 8, 1915.



those were the first ones that were sent away and seem to have gotten there without being massacred. He gave me a list where the various camps are and he thinks that over one half million have been displaced. He was most solicitous that they should be helped before winter set in."⁸⁸

All comments in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* notwithstanding, as late as September 1915, Morgenthau had not firmly concluded that the Armenians were the subject of an attempted 'extermination' by the Young Turk leadership.

9) In addition to inventing conversations, on occasion Morgenthau and Hendrick take unsubstantiated rumor, surround it with quotation marks and put it in Talaat's mouth as well. One such example is the following passage, which reads:

"Talaat's attitude toward the Armenians was summed up in the proud boast which he made to his friends: 'I have accomplished more toward solving the Armenian problem in three months than Abdul Hamid accomplished in thirty years.'"⁸⁹

Given the violent means by which Sultan Abdulhamid II responded to the Armenian uprising in 1895-1896, this boast attributed to Talaat can not help but send a chill down the spine of the reader. For what Talaat is implicitly saying is that he has killed more Armenians in three months than Abdulhamid did in thirty years. Once again, he has the criminal publicly boasting of his crime. One's

⁸⁸LC: PHM - Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for September 26, 1915. See also: FDR: HMS - Box No. 8: In his family 'Letter' of October 16, 1915 (pp. 5-6) Morgenthau adds the phrase: "in the interior" to his comment that Bezjian told him "a great deal about conditions..." - thereby clarifying the nature of their discussion.

⁸⁹AMS: p. 342.

only question can be who are the friends in whom Talaat thus confided, and which of them passed his boast along to Morgenthau?

Morgenthau's 'Diary' entry for July 18, 1915 provides us the answer to these queries, he writes:

"Gates told me Talaat had said that he has accomplished more in three months about crushing the Armenians than Abdul Hamid could do in thirty three years."⁹⁰

About the last person one would expect to see listed among the 'friends' of Talaat Bey is Caleb Gates, the former American missionary who served as President of Robert College during Morgenthau's tenure in Constantinople. Far from being 'friends' they were hardly acquainted, as is clear from Gates' own book: *Not To Me Only*. Not surprisingly, Gates does not choose to repeat the rumor he mentioned to Morgenthau in his own writing or to record it as fact.⁹¹ Morgenthau suffered from no such inhibition himself. If it served the general purpose of casting Talaat in a negative light it was deemed worthy of inclusion in his book. Even rumor, if dressed up with quotation marks and placed in the mouth of Talaat Bey, found its place in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. Understandably, this Gates-inspired rumor did not find its way into Morgenthau's weekly 'Letter' of July 22, 1915. For Morgenthau's views of Talaat in 1915 were far different than in 1918 when his book was written.

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⁹⁰LC: PHIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for July 18, 1915.

⁹¹Caleb Gates, *Not To Me Only*. Princeton (Princeton University Press), 1940. See pp. 188– for Gates' less than flattering portrait of Talaat. However, despite numerous anecdotes about his relations with Talaat during the war years, Gates makes no reference to the 'gossip' he passed on to Morgenthau, which the latter chose to present to the world as fact.

10) Discussing a chance meeting with the German Ambassador Wangenheim, which occurred on October 15, 1915, Morgenthau states:

"A few days after his [Wangenheim's] return, I met him on his way to Haskeuy; He said that he was going to the American Embassy and together we walked back to it. *I had been recently told by Talaat that he intended to deport all the Armenians who were left in Turkey* and his statement had induced me to make a final plea to the one man in Constantinople who had the power to end the horrors."⁹²

A close examination of Morgenthau's 'Diary' and 'Letters,' establishes that, contrary to the claim in this passage, Morgenthau had not seen Talaat Bey at all during the first half of October (nor had he been told anything resembling this during his four previous meetings on September 6, 13, 20 and 30, 1915).⁹³ What he had heard was gossip, passed on not by Talaat Bey as he alleges, but rather by his two Armenian staff members, Schmavonian and Andonian. His 'Diary' entry for October 7, 1915 includes the following comments:

Schmavonian today received two absurdly contradictory statements, one from an Armenian Deputy who said that Talaat Pasha had stated to him that nothing further would be done against the Armenians, that now they intended to take [up] the question of their Greek subjects; while another man told him that they contemplated to complete matter. Andonian reported to me about Armenian Patriarch's interview yesterday with Talaat. Talaat's statements to the Patriarch were not at all reassuring. He had said that all their measures against the Armenians were perfectly justified, had

⁹²AMS: p. 380.

⁹³LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entries for September, 1915. See also: FDR: IIMS – Box No. 8: Morgenthau to family 'Letters' of September 13, 1915, and October 1, 10, 16, and 25, 1915.

expressed great resentment at Armenians having tried to secure European intervention to establish a proper government and introduce reforms in Anatolia and had said that they were just waiting for such a chance to punish the Armenians...When Patriarch answered that they ought to punish responsible parties and not women and children, he said these things are inevitable!"⁹⁴

In other words, Morgenthau's statement in his book relevant to his October 15, 1915 meeting with Wangenheim, should have read, "I had been recently told by Schmavonian that he had been told by an unnamed man that the Turks were contemplating to complete the matter and deport the remaining Armenians," rather than his claim that: "I had been recently told by Talaat that he intended to deport all the Armenians who were left in Turkey." Once again, we see Morgenthau take rumors passed on to him, this time by his Armenian adviser/interpreter as coming from an unnamed source, and credit them to Talaat.

11) Given the consistency with which Morgenthau has misquoted, modified statements of, and simply fabricated most of the remarks he has attributed to Talaat, it seems only fitting that his description of his final meeting prior to his departure from Istanbul with the Turkish leaders should also be noteworthy primarily for its lack of veracity. He begins his account by saying:

"I had my farewell interview with Enver and Talaat on the thirteenth of January."⁹⁵

⁹⁴LC: PHIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for October 7, 1915.

⁹⁵AMS: p. 390.

and even in this short sentence manages to incorporate two falsehoods: a) he did not hold a farewell interview with Talaat and Enver at all, but met each man separately; and, b) his separate meetings with Talaat and Enver actually occurred on January 29, 1916.⁹⁶

With this less than auspicious beginning, one might well wonder how Morgenthau is going to record his leave-taking from the Turkish leaders, Talaat Bey and Enver Pasha, with whom his 'Diary' and 'Letters' show he had enjoyed friendly social and professional relations. He begins with the following statement:

"But we hope you are coming back soon," he [Talaat] added, *in the polite (and insincere) manner of the oriental.*"⁹⁷

The reminder to the reader that Talaat was not even sincere in his leave-taking appears at first glance to be typical Morgenthau-Hendrick invective. However, an examination of other surviving documents relating to the book, establishes that in this instance the slander's author was none other than the Honorable Robert Lansing, the U.S. Secretary of State. As noted earlier, Morgenthau sent drafts of each section of his 'Story' to Lansing, who personally commented on them. Indeed, just prior to the book's publication, Morgenthau wrote Lansing asking permission to acknowledge the "trouble taken by Secretary of State Robert Lansing in reading the manuscript and of the many valuable and wise suggestions he has made."⁹⁸ Lansing declined the honor with "I'm sure that you will agree with me that on the whole it would be advisable not to mention my name in con-

⁹⁶LC: PHIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for January 29, 1916.

⁹⁷AMS: p. 391.

⁹⁸FDR: HMS – Box No. 12: Morgenthau to Lansing letter of September 22, 1918.

nection with the book."⁹⁹ Morgenthau agreed, and helped perpetrate an important omission which has lasted until today. For Lansing's comments (in his own hand), were taken seriously by Morgenthau and the present example illustrates their nature. In the Morgenthau-Hendrick draft of the closing chapters of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, the passage quoted above actually read:

"But we hope you are coming back soon,' he [Talaat] added. We feel almost as though you were one of us."¹⁰⁰

Lansing's contribution was to pencil in the phrase: "*with the usual insincere oriental politeness*,"¹⁰¹ an emendation which Morgenthau immediately instructed Hendrick to incorporate.¹⁰² Not only was Lansing's input totally uncalled for, but also a reading of Morgenthau's 'Diary' entry relevant to his final meeting with Talaat Bey fully illustrates the real nature of the relationship enjoyed by the two men:

"I also called on Talaat and requested his promise that he would not interfere with any American or other interests entrusted to me or [with] the Jews. He promised to everything except that he wanted to reserve the right to have a little fun with the British and French. He said that his promise only held good if I came back...

⁹⁹FDR: IIMS – Box No. 12: Lansing to Morgenthau letter of October 2, 1918.

¹⁰⁰FDR: IIMS – Box No. 12: Page 6 of 'Article Nine' appended to the Lansing to Morgenthau letter of October 2, 1918.

¹⁰¹FDR: IIMS – Box No. 12: Ibid.

¹⁰²FDR: IIMS – Box 12: Morgenthau to Hendrick letter of October 3, 1918 includes the following passages: "Enclosed please find suggestions of the Secretary of State. I have marked the pages upon which they appear in the typewritten article which we sent him. I think most of the suggestions are good... In regard to suggestion 3, I think it would be well to insert at the end of line 13, after the word 'ADDED,' 'WITH THE USUAL INSINCERE ORIENTAL POLITENESS!'"

I asked Talaat whether I should call on the Sultan to say good-bye and he said that I certainly should and that he would arrange it."¹⁰³

Anyone reading this passage realizes that, contrary to what Lansing implied, there was a frank and open friendship linking the American Ambassador and the Ottoman Minister of the Interior. Why does Morgenthau allow the inclusion of so much slanderous material regarding Talaat Bey two years after the fact? The answer is simple and relates to the fact that Morgenthau was writing a piece of wartime propaganda with the expressly stated purpose of mobilizing support for President Wilson's war effort. He consciously downplayed the close relationships he enjoyed with the Young Turk leadership throughout his sojourn in Constantinople and sacrificed truth for the greater good of helping to generate anti-Turkish sentiment which would transform itself into pro-war sentiment.

It is in the final section of Morgenthau's comments on his farewells with Talaat, that he establishes just how far he is willing to stretch the truth:

"And now for the last time I spoke on the subject that had rested so heavily on my mind for many months. I feared that another appeal would be useless, but I decided to make it.

'How about the Armenians?'

Talaat's geniality disappeared in an instant. His face hardened and the fire of the beast lighted up his eyes once more.

¹⁰³LC: PIIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for January 29, 1916.

'What's the use of speaking about them?' he said, waving his hand. 'We are through with them. That's all over.'

Such was the farewell with Talaat. 'That's all over' were his last words to me."¹⁰⁴

As we have seen, Morgenthau's 'Diary' contains nothing even vaguely resembling this closing harangue. Only one thing can really be said about the manner in which Morgenthau and Hendrick portrayed Talaat: it was consistent. It moved from slander to slander and when it seemed to lag near the end, Secretary of State Robert Lansing was on hand to pick up the level of the invective once again.

¹⁰⁴AMS: p. 392.

CHAPTER V

A CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY

Nor was the treatment accorded Talaat Bey by Morgenthau unique in any way. A similar comparison of the comments he made about Enver Pasha (and other Young Turk leaders), and the German Ambassador Wangenheim, with his actual opinions of their characters as recorded in his daily 'Diary,' in the 'Letters' to his family members, and even in the dispatches he sent to the Department of State in Washington, D.C., establishes a similar lack of veracity in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. The best that can be said in defense of Morgenthau's rewriting of history is that between his departure from Turkey at the beginning of February, 1916 and two years later when the book was written in 1918, he must have radically altered his opinion about the cause and effect of events on which he had reported. An alternative explanation, and one which seems far

more likely, is that he so truly believed in the justness of his goal to stir up public opinion in favor of President Wilson's war policies, that he convinced himself he was serving the greater good by making crude stereotypes of three individuals (Talaat, Enver and Wangenheim), whose friendship and confidence he had shared throughout his tenure in Constantinople. Therefore he portrayed them as evil incarnate, in his desire to 'personalize' the evil of the war.

Did no one comprehend the enormity of the injustice perpetrated by Morgenthau's book? This is the question which must occur to anyone who systematically compares the written records compiled by Morgenthau in the course of his twenty-six month sojourn in Turkey (a record which shows him to have been a fairly active participant in a very complex game of international politics), with the crude half-truths and outright falsehoods which typify his book from cover to cover. A single letter, fortuitously preserved among the Morgenthau papers in the Roosevelt Library,¹⁰⁵ addressed to the Ambassador by George A. Schreiner, proves that at least one of his contemporaries took strong exception to his efforts.

Dated December 11, 1918, the Schreiner letter, written by a distinguished foreign correspondent who had served in Turkey from February through the end of 1915, literally gives voice to all the queries we must have after this examination. We recognize Schreiner's name from references to him in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*,¹⁰⁶ in the 'Diary'

¹⁰⁵FDR: HMS – Box No. 12: Schreiner to Morgenthau letter of December 11, 1918.

¹⁰⁶AMS: p. 225: Interestingly, Morgenthau claims to have "secured permission" for Schreiner to visit the war-zone in the Dardanelles, a statement strongly contradicted both by the testimony of the Morgenthau 'Diary' entries dealing with his relationship with the journalist, and, in the Schreiner letter as well. In regard to Morgenthau's claim, Schreiner wrote: "Such minor matters as that you were responsible for my trip to the Dardanelles, when that was not at all the case, I can afford to overlook..." (FDR: HMS – Box No. 12) – Schreiner to Morgenthau letter of December 11, 1918.

entries for 1915,¹⁰⁷ and from mention in the weekly family 'Letters' as well.¹⁰⁸ There can in fact be no question that Morgenthau and Schreiner saw quite a bit of one another in 1915 as the 'Diary' records the two men met on no less than thirty occasions between the dates of 9 February and 31 May.¹⁰⁹ In his book, Morgenthau refers to Schreiner as "the well-known American correspondent of the 'Associated Press,'"¹¹⁰ while in the 'Diary' entry for February 9, 1915, he adds the information that Schreiner was a "special travelling correspondent of the 'Associated Press of America'" whose stories were carried in "937 daily papers."¹¹¹

Schreiner, whose letter to Morgenthau was occasioned by a chance meeting in the State Department (in December, 1918) as well as by the fact that he had recently read *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, addressed him in the following terms:

"...I am writing this letter under the impression that the peace of the world will not gain by such extravagant efforts as yours. Before there can be understanding

¹⁰⁷LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entries for 1915 show that Schreiner visited on the following dates: 2/9, 2/10, 2/11, 2/14, 2/15, 2/16 (twice), 2/18, 2/20, 2/22, 2/23, 2/25, 2/26, 2/27, 3/2, 3/16, 4/5, 4/6 (twice), 4/9, 4/13, 4/14, 4/15, 4/16, 4/17, 4/18, 4/22, 5/23, 5/24, 5/31, 6/8, 7/2, 7/12, 8/9, 8/27, and 8/29/1915.

¹⁰⁸FDR: HMS – Box No. 7: Family 'Letter' of March 15, 1915, p. 9, where Morgenthau comments on Schreiner, who was covering the Dardanelles campaign at the time of Morgenthau's two-day visit, in the following terms: "We then returned to our ship where I was met by the two American reporters, one representing the American Associated Press, and the other the Chicago Daily News, and I willingly submitted to an interview. They acted like a couple of young fellows off on a fishing trip. They told me they were being very well treated and given every opportunity to witness the fight. They are both strongly pro-German. Schreiner, of the Associated Press, was born in South Africa and fought against the English there. The other one, Swing is the grandson of a former President of Holyoke College." (LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: 'Diary' entries for February–March, 1915).

¹⁰⁹LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entries for dates between February 9, 1915 and May 31, 1915.

¹¹⁰AMS: p. 225.

¹¹¹LC: PHM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for February 9, 1915.

among peoples each must have the right perspective of things, and that perspective consists of knowing the true proportions of right and wrong..."

"Since I knew Baron Wangenheim probably better than you did, I do hope that future historians will pay little attention to what you said of the man. But it has ever been easy to slander the dead. You know as well as I do that the German ambassador was not at all the figure *you and your collaborator have fashioned.*

"Nor did you possess in Constantinople that omniscience and omnipotence you have arrogated unto yourself in the book. In the interest of truth I will also affirm that you saw little of the cruelty you fasten upon the Turks. Besides that you have killed more Armenians than ever lived in the districts of the uprising. The fate of those people was sad enough without having to be exaggerated as you have done. I have probably seen more of the Armenian affair than all the Armenian attaches of the American embassy together.

"...To be perfectly frank with you, I cannot applaud your efforts to make the Turk the worst being on earth, and the German worse, if that be possible. You know as well as I do, that Baron Wangenheim all but broke relations with the Turks on one occasion, when to his pleas for the Armenians he was returned a very sharp answer by Talaat Bey, then minister of the interior. Has it ever occurred to you that all governments reserve to themselves the right to put down rebellion? It seems to me that even Great Britain assumed that stand towards the Fathers of the Republic. That the effort of the Turk went beyond all reasonable limits is most unfortunate, but have you ever considered for a moment that in the East they do not view things with the eye of those of the Occident?

"...I wonder what your erstwhile friends in Constantinople think of that effort. Enver especially fares poorly, and this after you had made so much of him. Is it not a fact that Enver Pasha was as enlightened a young leader as could be found? Of course, he was rather inexperienced, as you know, somewhat impulsive and

given to being confidential, often in the case of untrustworthy characters. Apart from that he was in no respect what you picture him. Of course, if we are to take it for granted that we of the West are saints, then no Turk is any good. You will agree with me, no doubt, that the Turks count among the few gentlemen still in existence.

"I do not want you to look upon this as a declaration of war. My purpose in mentioning these matters is to let you know that there is at least one human being not afraid to break a lance with an ex-ambassador of the United States. Ultimately truth will prevail. I have placed my limited services at her command... Of diplomatic events on the Bosphorus more will be heard as soon as I can get at my notes and documents now in Europe. I do not rely on memory in such cases, as my book may have shown to you already. Being a newspaper man, instead of a diplomat, I must be careful in what I say."¹¹²

Almost seventy-two years were to pass before Schreiner's claim that "ultimately truth will prevail," was to even begin to tarnish the self-image of "omniscience and omnipotence" which Morgenthau attributed to himself in his 'Story,' and, before Morgenthau's efforts "to make the Turk the worst being on earth," were to be queried. Ironically, it was Morgenthau's penchant for keeping old letters that accounts for the fortuitous survival of the Schreiner letter.¹¹³

Schreiner's analysis of Morgenthau's aims and objectives was correct. Without being privy to the Wilson-Morgenthau correspondence prior to the Ambassador's

¹¹²FDR: HMS – Box No. 12: Schreiner to Morgenthau letter of December 11, 1918.

¹¹³While scattered throughout several reels of the 'Library of Congress: Papers of Henry Morgenthau' material, there are letters dealing with the book, most are clearly in the nature of congratulatory notes. Schreiner's is the only example of a letter written by a close acquaintance of Morgenthau in the Constantinople period expressing strong disagreement with the views set forth in the book.

decision to produce his book, Schreiner realized and rejected the rationale that such a work could in any way contribute to the "peace of the world," due to its failure to distinguish the "true proportions of right and wrong."

Likewise, he understood and rejected Morgenthau's efforts to blacken the reputation of the deceased German Ambassador Wangenheim, as well as those of Talaat Bey and Enver Pasha, and the Turks in general. And he did so on the grounds that from first hand experience he knew that this was not the way Morgenthau actually felt while in Constantinople. Further, Schreiner rejects Morgenthau's treatment of the Armenian persecutions, and charges him with having "killed more Armenians than ever lived in the districts of the uprisings." In so doing, Schreiner makes the interesting point "that I have probably seen more of the Armenian affair than all the Armenian attaches of the American embassy together." That he had indeed been an eyewitness to events in Anatolia is shown by an examination of Schreiner's book on his experiences in Turkey: *From Berlin to Baghdad: Behind the Scenes in the Near East*,¹¹⁴ in which he details meeting the first convoy of Armenian deportees (those who had revolted in Zeytun), on the road near Adana on April 26, 1915.¹¹⁵ Upon his return to Constantinople he

¹¹⁴ Among the numerous publications of George A. Schreiner, that dealing in greatest detail with his assignment in Turkey, is: *From Berlin to Baghdad: Behind the Scenes in the Near East*. New York (Harper & Brothers), 1918. Strangely, this 350 page detailed diary-like account of the nine month period in 1915 which Schreiner spent in Turkey, seldom if ever is mentioned in 'Bibliographies' of books dealing with the period of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. It is an eyewitness account to some of the most significant clashes of the Dardanelles campaign and many other interesting events. (Hereafter: Schreiner, *Near East*).

¹¹⁵ Schreiner, *Near East*: pp. 183–213, a chapter titled: "Armenia's Red Caravan of Sorrow," is evidently the earliest eyewitness account of the 1915 Armenian deportations.

wrote up these experiences and presented them to Morgenthau, thereby providing the Ambassador the first eyewitness account of the deportations he received. Indeed, the original of this document, dated and signed by Schreiner on May 24, 1915, is still preserved in the Morgenthau papers.¹¹⁶

Perhaps we owe the survival of the Schreiner letter in the Morgenthau material to the veiled threat with which it ends. When Schreiner states: "of diplomatic events on the Bosphorus more will be heard as soon as I can get at my notes and documents now in Europe," Morgenthau may have taken it as a sign of Schreiner's intent to place before the public the kinds of charges found in the letter. If that was the case, his fears were not rewarded. Schreiner did indeed write a book attacking Wilson's habit of sending untrained individuals as Ambassadors to European capitals in wartime, and, as might be expected, Morgenthau is one of his case studies of this practice. However, *The Craft Sinister*, as his book was titled, adds little detail to the charges contained in the letter.¹¹⁷ This despite a comment in his 'Preface' which leads the reader to think otherwise:

"It is to be hoped that the future historian will not give too much heed to the drivel one finds in the books of diplomatist-authors. I at least have found these books remarkably unreliable on the part played by the author. It would seem that these literary productions are on a par with the 'blue books' published by governments for

¹¹⁶LC: PIIM – Reel No. 22: A two-page single spaced typewritten document, bearing the title: "Statements concerning Armenians met on road from Bozanti to Tarsus" and signed: George A. Schreiner – Constantinople, May 24, 1915.

¹¹⁷George A. Schreiner, *The Craft Sinister: A Diplomatic-Political History of the Great War and its Causes—Diplomacy and International Politics and Diplomats as Seen at Close Range by an American Newspaperman who Served in Central Europe as War and Political Correspondent*. New York (G. Albert Geyer), 1920. For American diplomacy in Turkey, see: pp.110–135 in particular. (Hereafter: Schreiner, *Craft Sinister*).

the edification of the public and their own amusement, as in some cases I will show."¹¹⁸

What Schreiner contents himself with doing, in a chapter titled "Diplomacy in Turkey," is to detail the close relationship which existed between Morgenthau and his German counterpart, Baron Wangenheim, and, likewise, the very warm friendship in which Morgenthau held Enver Pasha. He prefaces his remarks on the Wangenheim-Morgenthau relationship by saying:

"But the books of diplomatists must not be taken too seriously. The ambassador who avers that from the very inception of trouble he was with this or with that side may be doing nothing more than presenting just one side of his attitude, with slight exaggerations, possibly. The fact in this case is, Mr. Morgenthau was well liked by the German diplomatists in Pera, and, long after the outbreak of the War, was not averse to being known as a friend of Baron Wangenheim."¹¹⁹

As for Morgenthau's contacts with Talaat Bey and Enver Pasha, Schreiner writes:

"Among the men who especially cultivated the new United States ambassador was Enver Pasha, who was a welcome guest at the teas or luncheons of Mme. Morgenthau long after Turkey had entered the War. Talaat Bey, too, was on the best terms with the American ambassador, and so were a number of other officials and officers."¹²⁰

Anyone doubting the accuracy of Schreiner's statements in this regard has only to peruse the pages of Morgenthau's 'Diary' and family 'Letters.' As late as

¹¹⁸Schreiner, *Craft Sinister*: p. xxi.

¹¹⁹Schreiner, *Craft Sinister*: p. 126.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*

January 12, 1916, just two weeks before he left Constantinople for good, Morgenthau records the following exchange with Talaat Bey:

"I then tried for Talaat Bey and he agreed to receive me. We called on him and found him in very good humor... In speaking about our not seeing each other, I told him he should come to see me. He told me he could not come until he was invited. So I asked him for what he wanted to be invited, lunch or supper. He preferred luncheon, so I invited him and asked whom else I should invite. He said Halil [Minister of Foreign Affairs]. I said alright and he said you need not invite him, I will bring him, I can answer for him."¹²¹

Three days later, on 15 January, Morgenthau recorded his reaction to the luncheon in the following terms:

"At 12:30 Talaat and Halil came and we went over our business and then we had lunch at which Philip and Schmavonian joined us. It was a very strange proceeding so to say to have the government come to me to transact business.

"We had a very elegant luncheon, and they both, as I told them 'the stout members of the Cabinet,' displayed extraordinary appetite..."¹²²

It is simply impossible to reconcile the above bantering tone, which a scant two weeks prior to Morgenthau's final departure from Turkey still marked the two men's relationship, with the portrayal of Talaat Bey as a devil incarnate which permeates *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* from beginning to end.

The fact is, as Schreiner said so openly in his letter to Morgenthau, and as a comparison between the facts as

¹²¹LC: PHIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry of January 12, 1916.

¹²²LC: PHIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for January 15, 1916.

recorded in Morgenthau's 'Diary' and 'Letters' and the text of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* so clearly illustrates, the book is a fictionalized account woven around real events and real characters in such a manner as to give it the gloss of factual history.

CHAPTER VI

WHY BOTHER WITH AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY TODAY?

Were this book to have remained simply the memoirs of a successful real-estate developer, turned campaign fund-raiser, who was rewarded for his efforts not with the cabinet post of Secretary of the Treasury, which he sought, but with the lesser political plum of Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, we could forget Henry Morgenthau as the world would have done half a century ago. But this is not the case. In 1990, seventy-two years after its initial appearance, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* is still in print. In the same year it has been repeatedly cited on the floors of the U.S. Congress, by a host of

well-meaning Senators, as proof of the fact that the Young Turk Government planned and carried out a 'genocide' against its Armenian minority.¹²³ Currently, a number of 'Genocide and Holocaust Studies Curricula Guides' which are in use in high schools in the U.S. expose students to passages from the book as furnishing examples of the twisted minds that can plan and perpetrate a genocide, etc. etc.¹²⁴ In short, far from having found the well-earned rest it deserves, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* remains today a lynch pin in the body of literature which has and continues to present the Turks as some of the unrepentant genocidal villains of history.

While the purpose of the present study is less an examination of the question of whether or not the fate of the Ottoman Armenians ought to be described as 'genocide,' and more of an attempt to distinguish between the reality and the fantasy in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, we must need be cognizant of the broader implications it suggests.

In addition to his role as the U.S. envoy in Constantinople, Morgenthau must be seen as the key figure in

¹²³The 'Congressional Records-Senate' for the dates of February 20-22 and 27, 1990 are full of references to Morgenthau's 'Story' as proof of contention that the Ottoman Armenians were victims of a Turkish perpetrated 'genocide' during World War I.

¹²⁴A good case in point (one of many) is the Margot Stern Strom and William S. Parsons, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Watertown, Massachusetts (International Education), 1982, a curriculum which is widely used in a variety of states throughout the country. In pp. 316-382 of this guide a chapter titled: "The Armenians - A Case of a Forgotten Genocide - Do We Learn From Past Experiences?," makes frequent use of *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, including lengthy quotations on pp. 322-323, 367-68 and 372.

disseminating reports to the rest of the world about the wartime suffering of the Ottoman Armenians. Indeed, there are three names generally associated with spreading the Armenian saga while the war continued. They are Lord Bryce, whose 1916 compilation of documents entitled: *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*,¹²⁵ sounded the first alert; the German Protestant Pastor Johannes Lepsius, whose 1917-18 *Le Rapport Secret du Dr. Johannes Lepsius sur les Massacres D'Arménie*,¹²⁶ spread word to the rest of Europe; and, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, which appeared simultaneously in Europe and the United States in 1918. What is less known is the relationship between these three works, and, in particular, the role played by Henry Morgenthau in each of them.

On July 31, 1915, Morgenthau's 'Diary' contains the following account of the first meeting between the American envoy and the German Pastor Lepsius:

"At 3 p.m. Dr. Johannes Lepsius, from Potsdam, called. He told us a great deal about the Armenian matters and was anxious to know what we knew... Lepsius seems to be really in earnest to do something. He suggests going to Geneva from here and appeal to the International Red Cross, heads of the neutral nations, and Pope join in universal protest."¹²⁷

The family 'Letter' which discusses this meeting repeats the above and adds the following: "I arranged an inter-

¹²⁵ Great Britain: *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs*. With a Preface by Viscount Bryce. London (Hodder & Stoughton), 1916. This tome of over 700 pages in length was actually compiled by the historian, Arnold Toynbee. (Hereafter: Toynbee: *Treatment*).

¹²⁶ Lepsius, Johannes: *Le Rapport Secret du Dr. Johannes Lepsius sur les Massacres d'Arménie*. Paris (Payot & Cie.). 1918.

¹²⁷ LC: PHIM - Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for July 31, 1915.

view between Tsamados, the Greek Chargé d'Affaires and Lepsius, as the Professor wanted to know how the Greeks were treated."¹²⁸ So impressed was Morgenthau by this meeting that on the very same day he sent a cipher telegram to the State Department requesting permission to provide all the information the Embassy had on file to Lepsius. In his words:

"The Doctor [Lepsius] proposed to submit matter to International Red Cross for common action to try to induce Germany to demand a cessation of these horrors. *He earnestly requests access to information Embassy has on file. Will give him if Department has no objection.*"¹²⁹

Though the request for access to information originated with Lepsius, the tone of Morgenthau's cipher makes it absolutely clear that he concurred with it.

As a follow-up to their 31 July meeting, Morgenthau invited Lepsius to dinner on the evening of August 3, 1915. Morgenthau's 'Diary' entry for that day records the following on their discussion:

"We had a long and full discussion about Armenian affairs. Lepsius told us about his past activities in the matter... Lepsius thinks little can be done at present to stop the deportations but that he will go to Switzerland, Geneva, to stir up International Red Cross. I told him that he should see Helfferich, and explain to him that this will be the economic destruction of Turkey and that

¹²⁸FDR: HMS – Box No. 8: Morgenthau 'Letter' of August 9, 1915, p.9.

¹²⁹NA: Record Group 59: 867.4016/83 for text of Morgenthau to Secretary of State telegram of July 31, 1915. See also: LC: PHM – Reel No. 7: 'Paraphrase' in Morgenthau papers of cipher telegram to the Department of State, dated July 31, 1915.

the Germans would find empty husk when they obtained possession. I sent for Schmavonian and he came and participated in the discussion after supper."¹³⁰

On August 6, 1915, Morgenthau received a cipher telegram from Secretary of State Robert Lansing in Washington which stated that: "You are authorized to use your discretion in matter of giving Lepsius access to files."¹³¹

Then on August 11, 1915, Lepsius once again visited Morgenthau and informed him that he "had expected to have interview with Enver that afternoon but had little hopes of accomplishing anything; that the authorities seemed set upon carrying through their scheme."¹³²

On 14 August, Lepsius visited Morgenthau once again. The 'Diary' provides the following account of their meeting:

"Lepsius called, I gave him some of the reports to read and a translation of an Arabian pamphlet. He told me all about his interview with Enver. [He] was surprised how freely Enver talked to him about their plans to rid themselves of the Armenians. Enver told him that this was their opportunity and they were going to use it. He told him about the same thing that he had told me."¹³³

The family 'Letter' of August 23, 1915 contains a passage which serves to clarify somewhat the opening sentence of the 'Diary' entry, due to the fact that from the 'Diary' it is unclear whether Morgenthau simply let Lepsius look

¹³⁰LC: PIIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for August 3, 1915.

¹³¹NA: Record Group 59: 867.4016/83 telegram of August 4, 1915 from Lansing to Morgenthau. See also: LC: PIIM – Reel No. 7: 'Paraphrase' in Morgenthau papers of cipher telegram from Lansing in Washington dated 4 August and received August 6, 1915.

¹³²LC: PIIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for August 11, 1915.

¹³³LC: PIIM – Reel No. 5: Morgenthau 'Diary' entry for August 14, 1915.

over some reports ("I gave him some of the reports to read"), or whether he actually was given copies of the reports from the Embassy files. The 'Letter' indicates that in fact Lepsius was provided copies of the materials:

"Dr. Lepsius called and I gave him some of the reports we had received from our various Consuls and also the translation of a pamphlet written in Arabic."¹³⁴

Even without the above passages, a simple comparison of the accounts published in the Lepsius books with the reports submitted to Morgenthau by his Consuls and the American missionaries alike, would serve to establish that Morgenthau was a key source for the Lepsius work. Given the fact that Lepsius spent only a month in the Ottoman capital during the war, and that the number of German missionaries in the interior of Anatolia was relatively small, it is not surprising that much of his material on the deportations should have been derived from American Protestant missionary sources. The fact that Morgenthau's "discretion" consisted of giving Lepsius open access to his Embassy's files and copies of their contents, suggests that he may well have been stretching the intent of Lansing's instructions to their limit.

Even more interesting is the fact that Morgenthau apparently chose to interpret Lansing's semi-approval in the case of Lepsius to mean that he was free to use his "discretion" whenever the occasion arose. And arise it did. Less than a month after receiving Lansing's cipher, Morgenthau received a letter from Lord James Bryce, with whom he had become acquainted in the course of a 1914 trip to Palestine.

Bryce, who had already lent his name to Wellington House's propaganda usage of atrocity stories, in the case of the *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Out-*

¹³⁴FDR: HIMS – Box No. 8: Morgenthau 'Letter' dated August 23, 1915, p.5.

rages, or the 'Bryce Report,' as it was commonly known, after commenting on the reports of "shocking massacres committed on the Armenians," comes to the real purpose of his letter. He asks:

"If any reports come to your Embassy from the American missionaries scattered through Asiatic Turkey which would cast light on the situation, possibly you would allow me to see them occasionally. Your own consular reports would of course be sent to your own Government only."¹³⁵

If Morgenthau bothered to request permission in this instance, a thorough examination of his papers and of the General Records of the U.S. Department of State, where, presumably copies of his cables should be, has failed to uncover it. But he certainly wasted no time in responding to Lord Bryce's request. Even a preliminary comparison of the documents in Bryce's 1916 *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, with the preserved copies of the reports submitted to Morgenthau, clearly establishes the extent to which he served as a source for Bryce.¹³⁶ Nor was he bothered by Bryce's reminder (or was it a hint to the contrary?) that his own 'consular

¹³⁵LC: PHM – Reel No. 7: Bryce to Morgenthau letter of August 7, 1915. For a discussion of the manner in which Lord Bryce lent the credibility of his name to the propaganda efforts of Wellington House which were designed to bring the United States into the war, see: Michael Sanders & Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda During the First World War, 1914–1918*. London (The Macmillan Press), 1982. pp. 143–144. (Hereafter: Sanders/Taylor, *Propaganda*).

¹³⁶Morgenthau's papers, in particular: LC: PHM – Reels No. 7 and 22, contain copies of a large number of missionary, consular and traveler reports, submitted to Morgenthau between early May and the end of 1915.

reports' should of course be sent only to the State Department. For, within a few months of their submission the reports of the American Consul J.B. Jackson from Aleppo were published, albeit anonymously, in the Bryce volume.¹³⁷

That this was no coincidence, i.e., that the British had not gotten hold of this material from other sources, is confirmed by no less an authority than Morgenthau himself, who, writing in the *Red Cross Magazine* of March, 1919 said the following about his role in supplying material to Bryce:

"I took occasion, in order that the facts might be accurately recorded, to have careful records kept of the statements which were made to me by eye-witnesses of the massacres. These statements included the reports of refugees of all sorts, of Christian missionaries, and of other witnesses... *Much of the material which I collected has already been published in the excellent volume of documentary material collected by Viscount Bryce.*"¹³⁸

When one realizes that this material which forms the backbone of what was one of the most effective pieces of wartime propaganda directed against the Turks was supplied to British intelligence by a neutral United States Ambassador where it was published as part of the British efforts to stir up the American public opinion against the

¹³⁷See, for example, Toynbee, *Armenians*: p. 547: 'Aleppo: Series of Reports From a Foreign Resident at Aleppo; Communicated by the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief: Report dated 12th May 1915.' The "foreign resident" at Aleppo was none other than the American Consul J.B. Jackson, and the passage in question is taken directly from a report he submitted to Morgenthau (See: LC: PHM - Reel No. 7).

¹³⁸Henry Morgenthau, "The Greatest Horror in History," *Red Cross Magazine* (March, 1919), p.8.

Turks and Germans, with an eye to getting America into the war, one can not help but wonder about the discretion of Morgenthau himself.¹³⁹ Nor was the Bryce report the only British propaganda effort to make use of the Morgenthau material. Arnold Toynbee, described in one study on British propaganda during the First World War, as "the distinguished historian and member of Wellington House who became something of a specialist in atrocity propaganda, described and condemned the Turks in *Armenian Atrocities: Murder of a Nation* (London, 1915) and *The Murderous Tyranny of the Turk* (London, 1917)."¹⁴⁰ What is not mentioned is the fact that many of the atrocity stories published by Toynbee in the 1915 work, were supplied by none other than Henry Morgenthau.¹⁴¹

Leaving aside the all important question of the value of the material supplied by Morgenthau, one fact is indisputable, namely, his key role in the genesis of all the wartime atrocity books relating to the Turkish treatment of Armenians. Through his role as a conduit for material flowing to the German Lepsius and England's Lord Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, et.al., Henry Morgenthau was a major factor in the shaping of American public opinion vis-à-vis Turks and Armenians long before he ever approached President Wilson late in 1917 with the project which ultimately became *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*.

¹³⁹ Sanders/Taylor, *Propaganda*: pp. 144-46.

¹⁴⁰ Sanders/Taylor, *Propaganda*: pp. 145-46.

¹⁴¹ A comparison of the contents of Arnold J. Toynbee's: *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation*. London (Hodder & Stoughton), 1915, and *The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks*. London (Hodder & Stoughton), 1917, with the missionary, consular, and traveler reports preserved in the Morgenthau papers (See: LC: PHM - Reels Nos. 7 and 22) establishes this fact. On the basis of the surviving record it is impossible to state with certainty that Morgenthau passed the material directly to Bryce/Toynbee. He may have done so through intermediaries.

That such an important book has not until this monograph ever been the subject of a single published study, would be inconceivable in any historical field except that narrow subfield known as 'Turco-Armenian History,' where all too often, raw emotion serves as a substitute for dispassionate scholarship, and propaganda passes for history.

What can be said of scholars working on the Armenian 'genocide,' who, in publication after publication, over the past decades quote the outright lies and half-truths which permeate Morgenthau's 'Story' without ever questioning even the most blatant of the inconsistencies?¹⁴² This, despite the fact that their bibliographies indicate that they have utilized the Morgenthau Papers in the Library of Congress collections wherein the 'Diary' is preserved.¹⁴³

¹⁴² A case in point is the Armenian-American scholar Richard G. Hovannisian, who from his early works such as: Richard G. Hovannisian, *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, 1918. Berkeley (University of California), 1967. p.52 until the recent: Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*. New Brunswick (Transaction Books), 1986: pp.29-30 (in his article entitled: "Historical Dimensions, 1878-1923," and, again on p.112 in his article: "The Armenian Genocide and Patterns of Denial"), makes frequent use of quotations from Morgenthau. Clearly, Hovannisian, whose current activities focus on lecturing and writing on those who attempt to deny the historical reality of the Armenian 'genocide' (most recently, his: "Patterns of Denial Fail to Veil Genocide," in *Armenian International Magazine*. Volume 1., No. 1 (July, 1990), pp. 16-17), might benefit from a more careful examination of the sources upon which he bases his characterization of the fate of the Ottoman Armenians.

¹⁴³ Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Armenian Holocaust: a Bibliography Relating to the Deportations, Massacres, and Dispersion of the Armenian People, 1915-1923*. Cambridge, Massachusetts (Armenian Heritage Press), 1980. On page 13, in a listing of collections of papers preserved in the U.S. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Hovannisian makes the following reference to the Morgenthau papers: "Henry Morgenthau, Sr. (includes hundreds of reports about the massacres and the Ambassador's futile attempts to intercede)." Despite the fact that such 'reports' number in the dozens rather than the hundreds, Hovannisian's statement implies (given the absence of published studies in 1980 based on these papers), that he must indeed have examined the 'Papers of Henry Morgenthau' preserved in the Library of Congress.

One can not help but wonder how many of the young Armenians who turned to the terrorist assassinations of Turkish officials (and bystanders) in the 1970's and early 1980's, were influenced by reading *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*? How many of them came to view innocent individuals not even born at the time of the First World War as fair game for terrorist attack simply because they were ethnic descendants of Talaat Bey, who (according to Morgenthau) bragged that he had "accomplished more toward solving the Armenian problem in three months than Abdul Hamid accomplished in thirty years."

The duty of scholars is to find, nourish and preserve truth. It should not be to help perpetuate hate by disseminating fantasy as fact and outright lies as truth. Henry Morgenthau, Sr. has been dead for forty-four years. It is long past the time that his book should likewise be laid to rest. His legacy rightfully lies in the 'Diary,' his family 'Letters' and his cabled dispatches and written reports in the form of letters submitted to the U.S. Department of State during his twenty-six month stay in Turkey. They, and they alone, are the real *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*.

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LIBRARY AND PRIVATE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS:

I. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT LIBRARY, HYDE PARK, NEW YORK:

The Roosevelt Library houses the 'Papers of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.,' son of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau. As such, they contain two 'series' (Nos. 8 and 10), with direct relevance to the elder Morgenthau:

a) *Series 8: GAER FILE*: Boxes 1 and 2 of this 22 box series, compiled by Joseph Gaer who was assisting the younger Morgenthau in writing his unpublished autobiography, contain a typed transcript of correspondence between Morgenthau father and son, of which pp. 54-330 consist of copies of letters written by Ambassador Morgenthau during his tenure in Constantinople, November 1913 - January 1916; Cited herein as: *FDR - HMJ/Gaer + Box number*;

b) *Series 10: PAPERS OF HENRY MORGENTHAU, SR.*: Consisting primarily of business and personal letters of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, this collection contains a great amount of material dating from Morgenthau's tenure in Turkey. Of particular importance is a set of the weekly family letters Morgenthau sent to relatives in the United States (these are

scattered throughout Boxes 5, 7, 8, and 10); Cited herein as: *FDR: HMS + Box number*.

II. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON, D.C. – MANUSCRIPT DIVISION:

This facility houses a collection of approximately 30,000 items, called: 'The Papers of Henry Morgenthau.' I have utilized a microfilm edition of these papers consisting of 41 reels. The collection comprises material from all periods of Morgenthau's life, from his early childhood in the 1860's to shortly before his death in 1946. Of primary interest for the years of his Ambassadorship in Turkey, is Reel No. 5, which contains a typed transcript of his daily 'Diary' covering literally every day of his twenty-six month sojourn in Turkey. Material from this collection cited in the present study is given as: *LC: PHM + Reel number*.

In addition, the papers of Woodrow Wilson preserved in this collection were examined.

III. COLLECTION OF HENDRICK PAPERS IN POSSESSION OF MR. AND MRS. ROBERT RUSNAK, WINFIELD, ILLINOIS:

The 'Papers of Burton J. Hendrick,' the individual who wrote the book: *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, are in the possession of his granddaughter Mrs. Martha Rusnak. Her husband, Professor Robert Rusnak, a historian specializing in American studies, supplied the photocopies of numerous documents relating to the Hendrick-Morgenthau relationship from these papers. They are cited herein as: *Hendrick/Rusnak + a description of the actual item referred to*.

IV. U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.:

In particular, a number of Decimal Files in Record Groups 59 and 84 were used for consulting reports filed by Morgenthau. Particularly useful, were the materials

preserved in Decimal File 867.4106 (Microfilm Publications 353: Reels 43 through 48) on Race Relations in Turkey, 1910-1929, wherein the bulk of Morgenthau's Armenian related reports are found. When cited in this study the Record Group number and Decimal File data are provided.

V. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY: BUTLER LIBRARY – 'ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE:'

The interview conducted by Professor Alan Nevins with Burton J. Hendrick which is entitled: 'The Reminiscences of Burton J. Hendrick,' was obtained from this collection in New York City.

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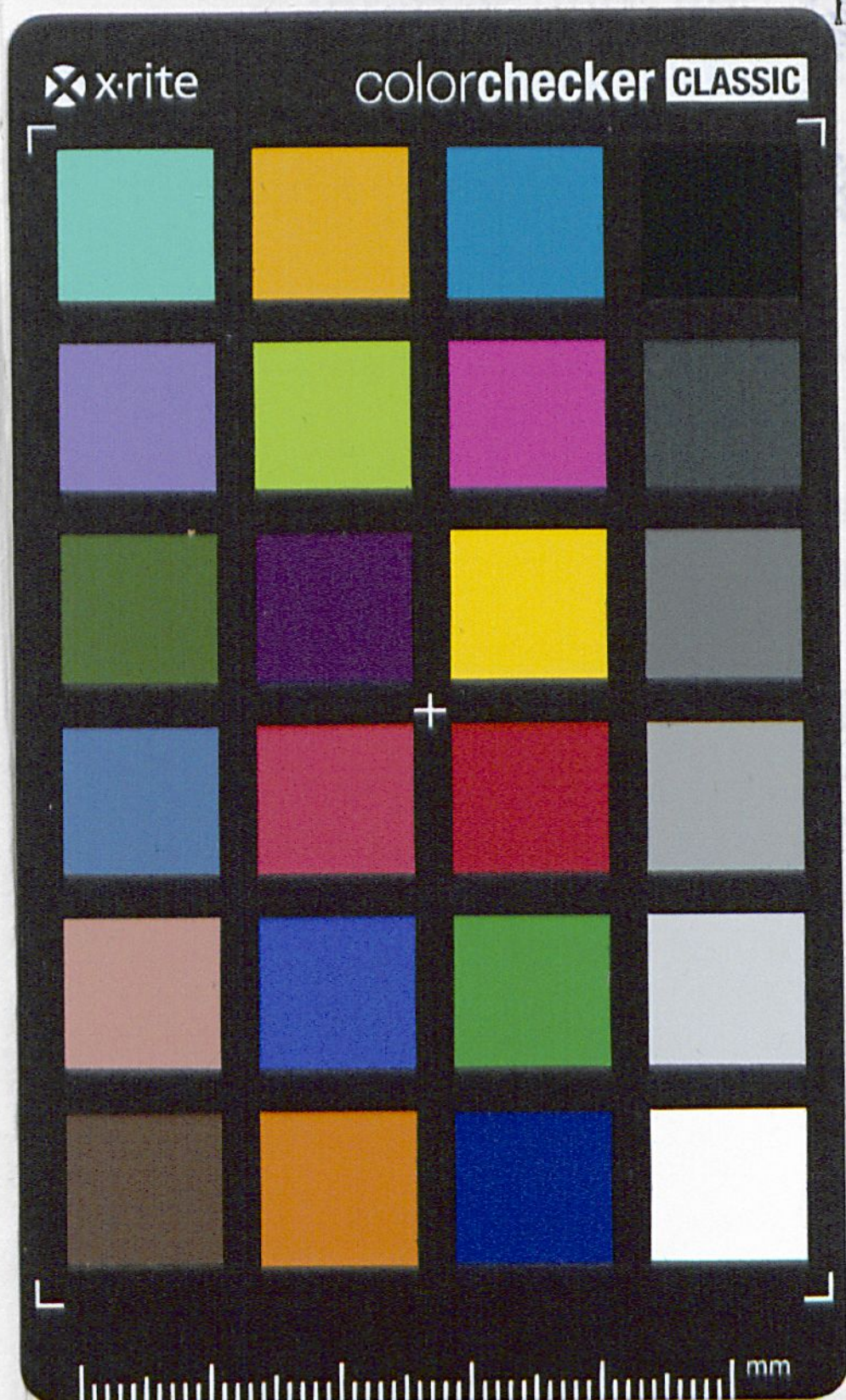
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PREFACE

THE STORY BEHIND AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S STORY

Heath W. Lowry



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