

”Deliberately Planned Conquest of the World”

Ambassador Henry Morgenthau’s View of Germany’s Influence on the Outbreak of
World War I and the Ottoman Empire

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Introduction

Contextualization and Historical Background

Henry Morgenthau Sr. was the Ambassador of the United States of America¹ to the Ottoman Empire, from here on referred as Turkey in this thesis², from 1913 to 1916. After leaving Turkey in 1916, he wrote his memoirs of his time as the ambassador, titled *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. According to Morgenthau himself, the main motive for him to write his memoirs was to inform world about the horrific atrocities against Armenians that took place during his stay in Turkey, as well as to warn the world about Germany's plans for a world conquest. Morgenthau's story was dedicated to the President Woodrow Wilson, and thus influencing him and the American public can be seen as another motive for writing the book³.

The horrific series of events Morgenthau was referring to is the Armenian genocide⁴, which started in earnest in march 1915. These series of actions taken by the war time Turkish government have been researched extensively, and Morgenthau's memoirs have been used as a primary source for studying it. His memoirs were published in October of 1918, just before World War I hostilities ended in the German armistice.⁵

World War I was culmination of steady rise in rivalry and military build-up between major European powers, and the war and its aftermath in Turkey is the most important historical context to Morgenthau's memoirs. The First World War's roots can be traced to the rise of Germany as a Great Power in the end of the 19th century. Germany lead the alliance of the so called Central Powers, and Allied powers, were lead by the United Kingdom⁶. Germany took gradually over

¹ The United States (shortened as the US) is used to refer to The United States of America in this thesis.

² In this thesis, term Turkey will be used anachronistically to refer to the Ottoman Empire. Henry Morghenthau also referred to Ottoman Empire as Turkey and its muslim inhabitants as Turks most of the time in his story.

³ Morgenthau 1918, Preface.

⁴ Balakian 2003, xvii.

This thesis uses the term genocide to refer to the widespread massacres of Armenians which started in 1915 and lasted until the 1920s. Usage is justified by the fact that The Association of Genocide Scholars passed formal resolution in 1997 where the assosiation "reaffirms that the mass murder of over a million Armenians in Turkey in 1915 is a case of genocide which conforms to the statutes of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. It further condemns the denial of the Armenian genocide by the Turkish government and its official and unofficial agents and supporters" IAGF. <http://www.genocidescholars.org/resources/resolutions>

⁵ Winter 2003, 302.

⁶ The United Kingdom, shortened as the UK, is used to refer to The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in

France's role as the traditional continental rival and threat to the UK.⁷ The interests of the two great powers were bound to cross, and this led to increasing tensions. There was also friction between Germany and the Entente powers in the crumbling Turkey, increasing the distrust between them⁸.

The United States' Foreign Policy

The United States was following its isolationist foreign policy towards the Old World and focusing its foreign policy towards the Americas since the early 19th century, while excluding European powers from gaining too much influence there, as expressed in the so-called Monroe doctrine.⁹ However, American economic and diplomatic influence was gradually increasing all over the world as Americans began taking a much more active role in the world affairs after 1901.¹⁰ The US remained formally detached from European alliances, but in practice it was slowly aligning itself towards the UK and the Entente powers in general as World War I progressed, partly because of the British propaganda efforts against Germany.¹¹ The US was still largely following its traditional isolationist policy towards the Middle East as well, as dictated by the Monroe Doctrine.¹² But it was President Woodrow Wilson, who changed the American foreign policy like no other person before him, partly out of necessity, when the US got involved in the European conflict.¹³ As an idealist, President Wilson did not initially believe that Germany was to be blamed for starting the war, nor that it would be wise to do so¹⁴. Later on Wilson began to see Germany as more guilty for the start of the war than before and abandoned his policy of "peace without victory", but still preferred to seek "impartial justice" with Germany.¹⁵

this thesis.

⁷ Connors 1966, chapter "Public opinion of Germany to 1914"

⁸ Trumpener 1968, 5-6.

⁹ Monroe Doctrine is "A principle of US policy, originated by President James Monroe, that any intervention by external powers in the politics of the Americas is a potentially hostile act against the US."

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/monroe_doctrine, Herring 2008, 153-155.

¹⁰ Herring 2008, 376.

¹¹ Welch 2014, Part II chapter 2 "The Hun: Constructing image of the Enemy".

¹² DeNovo 1963, 86-87.

¹³ Herring 2008, 379.

¹⁴ MacMillan 2003, 6.

¹⁵ Herring 2008, 413.

The American Ambassador to Turkey, Henry Morgenthau

Henry Morgenthau senior was born in Germany into a Jewish family, and he immigrated with his family to United states in 1870. They settled in New York, and after two years he entered to study law in New York's City College, even though he did not speak a word of English when he arrived in the United States. He had a very successful career as an attorney and a businessman, and became a supporter of the democratic party.¹⁶ The reason why Morgenthau left the business world and entered politics, was because he felt that he was “released from the toils of materialism” by his economic success, and that he should “pay back in the form of public service”. Morgenthau was also an active member of the Reform Jewish community in New York and was one of the community's leading figures and had a daily habit, like Benjamin Franklin, to make a list of virtues to practice.¹⁷ Morgenthau was described as being energetic, direct, open and had straightforward, no-nonsense personality with strong sense of moral purpose who followed his conscience, not his pride.¹⁸ He was considered to be a religious man, but he himself said that his true religion and calling was to “serve democracy”. He was a one of the most important supporters of Woodrow Wilson from early on, and when Wilson rose to presidency in 1912, Morgenthau was hoping for a cabinet position in Wilson's government. The President, however, had different plans for him, and asked Morgenthau to become the US ambassador to Turkey.¹⁹

Morgenthau was not very enthusiastic about the thought of becoming the American Ambassador to Turkey. He had no prior experience in the diplomatic world, and had no prior special knowledge about Turkey. But Wilson had made up his mind. President's primary reason to make Morgenthau the ambassador was Morgenthau's Jewish background. Two prior US ambassadors to Turkey had been of Jewish faith, and the traditional view was that Jews could more easily work as middlemen between Muslims and Christians. Morgenthau reluctantly accepted the position, partially out of loyalty to Woodrow Wilson.²⁰

¹⁶ Oren 2007, 332.

¹⁷ Balakian 2002, 221.

¹⁸ Balakian 2002, 222.

¹⁹ Oren 2007, 333.

²⁰ Oren 2007, 333-334.

Past Historical Research, Research Literature and Methodology

As already mentioned, Morgenthau's memoirs have been extensively used as a primary source about the Armenian Genocide. Two examples such work is JAMES L. BARTON'S *Turkish Atrocities: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915–1917*, published in 1998, and PETER BALAKIAN'S awarded and best-seller *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*, published in 2003, which is also used as a source in this study.

There has also been many historical studies, in which Morgenthau's story has been passingly criticized, that have already debunked many of the claims presented in Ambassador Morgenthau's Story. These studies include such such as *Germany and the Ottoman Empire 1914-1918(1968)* by ULRICH TRUMPENER and *The Origins of the World War(1928)* by SIDNEY FAY, both also used as pieces of research literature for this study.²¹ It has been already found that the anti-German outlook of Morgenthau's book is not present in his his letters, diary and official telegraphs as with the United States Department of State²². In addition to the books mentioned earlier, the research literature for this thesis consist of many different books and articles such as, *Dealing in Hate: The Development of Anti-German Propaganda(1966)* by Dr. MICHAEL F. CONNORS, MICHAEL B. OREN's *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the present(2007)*.

Some scholars have gone even further, and have discredited the whole book as mere non-factual piece of propaganda, for example HEATH W. LOWRY wrote in his book *The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* that Morgenthau's memoirs is just a record of “*crude half-truths and outright falsehoods*”²³. Lowry was the Atatürk professor of Ottoman and modern Turkish studies in Princeton university, and is now retired²⁴. He has been considered to be the leading voice among the so-called Armenian Genocide denialists in the academic world, and he discredits the whole memoir as mere propaganda is his book. Respected Jewish German-born American historian GUENTER LEVY has defended Lowry's claims about inaccuracies and falsehoods presented in the Morgenthau's memoirs', as there seems to be many many factual differences

²¹ Fay 1929, 167-168. Trumpener 1968, 6-13.

²² Cook 1957, 129.

²³ Winter 2003, 302.

²⁴ Lowry is listed as holding status “Emeritus faculty” in Princeton university's homepage. https://www.princeton.edu/nes/people/display_person.xml?netid=aturk&display=Core%2520Faculty. Retrieved 1.11.2016.

between Morgenthau's book and Morgenthau's archives²⁵. Levy has also questioned in this whether the Armenian massacres could properly be defined as a genocide, but as noted, this thesis uses the term genocide in a more loosely defined manner to refer to the massacres and mass deportations of Armenians in Turkey from 1915 onwards. Morgenthau himself uses phrases like “the murder of a nation” and “the destruction of the Armenian race” to describe the massacres²⁶, so in this respect the use of the term genocide in this thesis also follows Morgenthau's lead.

J. M. WINTER also admits that Lowry raised legitimate questions about the discrepancies between Morgenthau's contemporary diary and the letters written in the story's time period compared to his story of 1918.²⁷ Opinion about the memoirs' truthfulness in describing the events in Turkey seems to have taken a political dimension, and discrediting the memoirs can be seen as a political act to help the cause of the Armenian genocide denialists.

In addition to these specific problems, source criticism will be the main methodological focus in this thesis. Why were Morgenthau's memoirs written, what was his motive? How well informed he was concerning the events he describes in his book? By comparing his claims to the information presented in the source literature, as well as analyzing them basic tools of source criticism, truthfulness of his allegations can be assessed.

Research Assignment and the Primary Source

The main focus of this thesis is to review Morgenthau's actual evidence presented in his story on why Germany should be blamed for inciting the Turks to “solve the Armenian Question” by massacring the Armenians, and for conspiring to start World War I. Were Morgenthau's accusations true? If not, as has been previously noted, was Morgenthau vilifying Germany on purpose and presenting fabricated evidence as true, was he merely misinterpreting the events?

The primary source for this thesis is the aforementioned book by Henry Morgenthau Sr., *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, published in October 1918. The story was dedicated to

²⁵ Levy 2005a, 140-142

²⁶ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter XXIV.

²⁷ Winter 2003, 302-303.

Woodrow Wilson. Morgenthau received help in writing his memoirs from Burton J. Hendricks, who was working as an editor in the *World's Work* ²⁸. While Morgenthau's ghostwriter Hendricks had been sometimes accused of being a fabulist, he won three Pulitzer prizes in the decade following the Morgenthau's story, in history and biography. Hendrick's entire career has been described as being marked with "accurate and detailed reporting" and "carefully researched works".²⁹

Apparently Morgenthau started to write down his story with Hendricks somewhere between the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918. This can be deduced by reading the first paragraph of the first chapter, where he writes:

*When I began writing these reminiscences of my ambassadorship, Germany's schemes in the Turkish Empire and the Near East seemed to have achieved a temporary success. The Central Powers had apparently disintegrated Russia, transformed the Baltic and the Black seas into German lakes, and had obtained a new route to the East by way of the Caucasus.*³⁰

Russia concluded an armistice with Central Powers in 17th of December in 1917³¹. The story is divided into twenty nine chapters with an introduction, and is written mostly in chronological order, but it is not a diary. Morgenthau examines everything from the years 1918 point of view, and admits this himself. This is an important methodological factor to consider, as it sets the context of the story to the year of its release in 1918, in the *World's Work* magazine in October 1918, just before the German Armistice in November 11th, after the US had joined the war, and after the Armenian Genocide had been going on for years. Thus it should be seen also in context of coming the peace negotiations which ended in treaty of Versailles in June of 1919,³² as Morgenthau would have been aware of a probable military collapse of Germany in next few months.

²⁸ Winter 2003, 302.

²⁹ Winter 2003, 302.

³⁰ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter I.

³¹ Zetterbeg 1988, 718.

³² Zetterberg 1988, 721.

1. Germany's Conspiracy to start a World War

1.1. Secret Plans for a World Conquest

Germany's alleged plan for world conquest is one of Morgenthau's primary reasons to write his story, and he writes that it is becoming clear for all Americans as well, and that everyone “should volunteer this testimony”.³³ How had he been convinced about the alleged German plans during his stay in Turkey? There are several events that Morgenthau describes, which according to him, made him believe in a German plan for world conquest, the most important being the supposed secret Potsdam Conference of 1914.

According to Morgenthau, Turkey played a vital role in Germany's plans for world conquest. Morgenthau writes about the German Ambassador to Turkey, Von Wangenheim:

*Upon him, more than almost any diplomatic representative of Germany, depended the success of the Kaiser's conspiracy for world domination. This German diplomat came to Constantinople with a single purpose. For twenty years the German Government had been cultivating the Turkish Empire. All this time the Kaiser had been preparing for a world war, and in this war it was destined that Turkey should play an almost decisive part. Unless Germany should obtain the Ottoman Empire as its ally, there was little chance that she could succeed in a general European conflict.*³⁴

Morgenthau continues that with Turkey in its side, Germany could face the alliance of western powers and Russia by severing the connection between through the Dardanelles³⁵. Morgenthau's quotation is also interesting, as he uses terms like “conspiracy” and “world dominations”, which are quite value-laden terms. After all, every European power was preparing for a potential world war, if one should break out. Difference here, according to Morgenthau, seems to be that Germany was planning to start one, if it could win it. Ulrich Trumpener also notes in his book, that there are

³³ Morgenthau 1918, Preface.

³⁴ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter I.

³⁵ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter I.

no evidence to be found that Germany was in any way prepared for the start of World War I, and there was no contingency plan for Turkey if hostilities would broke out between the Great Powers of Europe.³⁶

Morgenthau's view about German plans for world domination could be also tracked to the British war propaganda against Germany. The change in the British view was also partly fueled by a book written by retired German general FRIEDRICH BERNHARDI, titled *Germany and the Next War*, published in English in 1912. Bernhardi wrote that a European war was inevitable, and Germany's only hope was to conquer or to perish. As the British public imagination was already filled with so-called “invasion literature” and general anti-German outlook, the image of Germany as a expansionist state took really hold in the British public view.³⁷ It should be noted however, that Bernhardi was never a “household name” in Germany. Nevertheless, especially after start of the war, the Entente propagandists promoted the theory that German thinking was dominated by such “prophets of war”³⁸.

1.2. Fictitious Potsdam Conference of July 5, 1914

One of the most important pieces of evidence in Morgenthau's memoirs about the German conspiracy to start the war was the secret Potsdam Conference of July 5, 1914. Morgenthau claimed that the German ambassador Wangenheim revealed to him about the supposed existence of the secret Imperial conference in Potsdam in fifth of July 1914. Morgenthau writes Wangenheim was himself personally present in the secret conference to inform Kaiser about the situation in Constantinople, which was regarded as almost the pivotal point of the impending war. According to Morgenthau, Wangenheim claimed that also present in the conference were the most senior representatives of the German army and navy, as well as most important German bankers, railroad leaders, industrial captains and other members of the elite from all the different aspects of the German society. Kaiser asked then if the nation was ready for war, and everyone else said yes, but the bankers. The bankers said that they needed two weeks to sell their foreign securities and to secure loans. This caused stocks to sink as Germans sold their in the two weeks period. Morgenthau offers this slump in the stock market in the two weeks period as a direct evidence to support Wangenheim's claims about a secret conference in Potsdam. This also seems to be the

³⁶ Trumpener 1968, 22.

³⁷ Welch 2014, Part II chapter 2 ”World domination”.

³⁸ Micheal F. Connors, 1966, chapter “Entente Propaganda”.

reason why Morgenthau claims to believe in Wangenheim's story himself. The reason why Wangenheim confided this secret to Morgenthau in private, according to Morgenthau, was partly because the German Ambassador was so proud of his nation's ability to plan ahead, and partly because of his own personal vanity. Wangenheim supposedly was very proud because he was summoned to attend such an important gathering. German arms were also making rapid progress in the early days of the war, and many believed that Paris was doomed to fall to Germans. Somehow, according to Morgenthau, German victories made Wangenheim prone to indiscretion and the day he revealed the secret about the Potsdam Conference to Morgenthau, he was "especially exuberated".³⁹

However, it seems very clear now that this conference never took place at all, and that either Wangenheim, or Morgenthau himself were simply making the whole thing up. Main evidence against the existence of such conference is that the alleged attendees can be proven to be elsewhere during the date the conference was supposed to have taken place.⁴⁰ Another nail in the coffin for the secret Potsdam conference is that in reality there was no such stock market slump, as described by Morgenthau, between 5th of July and the Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum to Serbia in 22th of July⁴¹.

It seems there are two different options explaining why Morgenthau wrote about the conference in his memoirs, which in all probability never actually took place at all. First option is that Wangenheim told him about the event as described in Morgenthau's memoirs, and Morgenthau genuinely believed Wangenheim. This would mean Wangenheim was giving him misinformation about the alleged secret conference on purpose. It is possible that Wangenheim wanted to make the American Ambassador believe that Germany was more ready for a possible outbreak of war, than it really was, or maybe he simply made up the story about the secret conference to boost his own importance in the eyes of the American ambassador. Second option is that Morgenthau himself made the whole thing up to promote anti-German propaganda and to make Germany seem guilty of starting World War I. Third option, quite frankly quite unconvincing, option is that Wangenheim just happened to make one of the biggest blunders in history of diplomacy.

Morgenthau's own words seem to implicate that the second option is the most probable one. It really doesn't make any sense that Wangenheim would make such a condemning reveal to

³⁹ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter VI.

⁴⁰ Connors 1966, chapter "American Scholars and "war guilt"".

⁴¹ Barnes 1926, 241-247.

Morgenthau, especially after Morgenthau himself describes Wangenheim as an intelligent and capable person, who was wholly dedicated to Germany and German Kaiser. A confession of this kind to a representative of a barely neutral Great Power would be comparable to high treason, and would have very damaging to Germany even if the statement about the secret conference would have been essentially true. This was clear to Morgenthau as well, and he explains Wangenheim's "monstrous indiscretion" by his exuberated mood because of seemingly imminent German victory. This, in addition Wangenheim's personal vanity and need to boast about his nations prowess, are supposed to be enough to explain his amazing reveal to the readers of Morgenthau's memoirs. But if we have a thought experiment about a possible outcome of the war, where Paris fell to German arms in early years of World War I. Then there might have been a general peace conference after a notional French armistice, and wouldn't Wangenheim's indiscretion have undermined the peace talks altogether and made the rest of the Allied Powers more determined to continue war to bitter end against "an evil conspiratory Germany", even after Paris would have fallen to Germans? Wangenheim must have naturally assumed that Morgenthau would report his information about any such enormously important meeting among German high leadership directly to Washington, even though it is clear that Morgenthau made no such report⁴².

If Wangenheim was simply making this all up to impress Morgenthau, wouldn't his misinformation still be damaging his own career, as he would have been making up false accusations against his own nation to boast his own importance in the eyes of a representative of the United States? This makes it very difficult to believe that Wangenheim could have made such a momentous reveal about Germany's real or made up plans for starting the war. One more important thing here to consider is that the Ambassador Wangenheim died unexpectedly on October 25th⁴³ or 24th⁴⁴. This means that the German Ambassador had no way of refuting the claims Morgenthau presented in his memoirs about his indiscretion and the content of the private discussions between these two men.

Morgenthau himself simply claims: "Why waste any time discussing the matter after that?"⁴⁵. This sentence could mean that Morgenthau himself realized how awkward his claim about Wangenheim's supposed indiscretion must have seemed to anyone who scrutinized his claim with any greater thought, and tried to defense his accusations with simple rhetorical means. This also

⁴² Barnes 1926, 236-237.

⁴³ Trumpener 1968, 125.

⁴⁴ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter XXVII.

⁴⁵ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter I.

matches the simple propagandistic rhetoric used in war time press in the US and the UK. The whole story about Wangenheim telling him about Germany's secret conspiracy to start a world war seems to be an propagandistic story to put the blame and guilt of starting World War I on Germany. This reinforces the view that Morgenthau was trying to change president Wilson's opinion about blaming the Germany for starting the war, as the president did not believe it to be true nor wise course of political action to take⁴⁶. As presented by Morgenthau, Wangenheim's alleged story about the secret conference is in accord with the previously mentioned propagandistic theme about the secret German plans for world domination, which features extensively in allied war propaganda before and during World War I.

Already in 1926, HARRY E. BARNES came into conclusion that Morgenthau did hear about the Potsdam legend only after he returned from Turkey in 1916, and it considered it to be “inconceivable that Morgenthau would have withheld such information for nearly four years”. Barnes also writes that Morgenthau did not offer any explanation or answer any to his critical inquiries, and even that the Kaiser had personally informed him that Wangenheim did not see him in July of 1914.⁴⁷ J. M. Winter's opinion is that the inaccuracies, differences between Morgenthau's written records and his story, as well as apparently invented events and untruth included in his memoirs, are there because Morgenthau wanted to settle scores with other diplomats and important persons presented in his book. According to Winter, this is quite common in memoirs such as Morgenthau's story.⁴⁸ This is of course one of the possible explanations for the apparent untruth in Morgenthau's story, but this thesis offers different reasons for Morgenthau to include many apparent untruths and invented events in his book, which will be presented in later chapters.

⁴⁶ MacMillan 2003, 6.

⁴⁷ Barnes 1926, 237-248.

⁴⁸ Winter 2003, 302.

2. Role of Germany in the Armenian Genocide

2.1. Germany's influence in the Turkish Empire

The Turkish state had lost much of its territory in years prior to World War I, and its internal situation was quite chaotic. Morgenthau himself comments how he had different expectations of the Turkish political system before he arrived in Turkey in 1913. He writes that he remembers reading years ago about the democratic-leaning Young Turk⁴⁹ revolutionaries, who deposed a bloody tyrant from his throne. However, after many lost wars, “Thus the Young Turks had disappeared as a positive regenerating force, but they still existed as a political machine”, and “Indeed, long before I had arrived, this attempt to establish a Turkish democracy had failed “. The democratic aspirations of the Young Turks was replaced by the Committee of Union and Progress with its new leaders, Triumvirate of Taalat, Djemal and Enver Pasha. Morgenthau describes CUP as being nothing but a band of criminals, and that “I must admit, however, that I do our corrupt American gangs a great injustice in comparing them with the Turkish Committee of Union and Progress”.⁵⁰ Morgenthau adds, that after mismanagement by the Young Turks, Turkey “had now reached a state of decrepitude that had left it an easy prey to German diplomacy.”⁵¹ It is true that Germany was increasing its influence in Turkey and the Baghdad Railroad can be considered to be the symbol of German power in Turkey. Recent studies suggest however, that Germany's role in this building project has been exaggerated, as has the Germany's later influence attained through it. The Baghdad Railroad Project and it is better understood as joint Turkish-German project, where Turkey was an equal partner, and German influence on the project was in fact diminishing after the rise of the Young Turks. In fact the railroad could be considered to have been more of liability.⁵²

So according to Morgenthau, Turkey had effectively become a German puppet state prior to the start of World War I, as was the German plan from the beginning⁵³. Morgenthau writes how

⁴⁹ Revolutionary party in the Ottoman Empire who carried out the revolution of 1908 and deposed the sultan Abdul Hamid II.

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/young_turk

⁵⁰ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter I.

⁵¹ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter I.

⁵² McMurray 2001, 137-139.

⁵³ Morgenthau 1989, Chapter I, Chapter IV.

Turkey's bad economy and need for foreign loans to develop the country was one of the other important factors forcing Turkey in the arms of Germany⁵⁴. But according to Trumpener, French, British and Austro-Hungarians all had greater economic control of Turkey prior to the Great War⁵⁵, so Morgenthau's view seems quite flawed.

However, the German military mission, especially after the arrival of Liman von Sanders, was the final victory for Germany, according to Morgenthau. His arrival meant that Turkey had become a German puppet, and Morgenthau writes that

*The appointments signified nothing less than that the Kaiser had almost completed his plans to annex the Turkish army to his own. To show the power which Von Sanders' appointment had given him, it is only necessary to say that the first army corps practically controlled Constantinople. These changes clearly showed to what an extent Enver Pasha had become a cog in the Prussian system.*⁵⁶

However, the British military mission in Turkey was almost as large as the German one, and the Germans themselves concluded that it is most inappropriate to think “Turkey as an asset for Germany”. Germany had even reserved the right to recall the mission in the event of a European war. This means that Ottoman alliance in Germany's side was not taken for granted in Berlin.⁵⁷

All in all, Germany's influence in Turkey was becoming much more important, but still not nearly overwhelming enough to call Turkey a mere German satellite state prior to the start of the War. Relations between Germany and Turkey were cordial, even though Turkey still had not completely abandoned its traditional policy of maintaining balance between the great European powers to further its own ends. But Germany was spearheading pro-German and anti-Entente propaganda through newspapers with Turkey's blessing, promoting alliance between Germany and Turkey.⁵⁸ The rising influence of Germany and general support of Germany in Turkey culminated in November 2, 1914, as Turkey formally joined the War against the Entente Powers alongside Germany. After attacks by German lead Turkish Navy against Russian Black Sea coast and Russian naval forces, Russia was forced to declare war against Turkey⁵⁹. It is true however that

⁵⁴ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter II.

⁵⁵ Trumpener 1968, 6-13.

⁵⁶ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter III.

⁵⁷ Trumpener 1968, 13-14.

⁵⁸ Balakian 2002, 169.

⁵⁹ Trumpener 1968, 58-61.

eventually Germany somewhat forced Turkey's hand to join the war, but not so strongly as Morgenthau claimed⁶⁰, but this would have been impossible without the quite large support of the interventionists, who thought that an alliance with Germany would benefit Turkey, had in the Turkish government.⁶¹

The perceived rise of German influence in Turkey was surely part of the growing fear of Germany in the UK, as Germany seemed to be a threat to British interests in Turkey and the Middle East as well. This rising Germanophobia and changing image of Germany would naturally increase the British propaganda efforts against Germany, and German people in general, which would influence American propaganda efforts against Germany as well. It becomes clear that Germany's power and influence in Turkey was in fact quite limited, and without strong support for joining an alliance in the Turkish leadership Germany's plans would not have worked. Turks seem to have thought that Germany would win the war and an alliance with Germany would thus be beneficial for Turkey. This line of thought is also present in Trumpener's book, as he noted how Turkish affairs added to the distrust between the competing alliances⁶².

2.2. Germany and the Armenian Genocide

2.2.1. Germans Teach Turks how to Solve the Armenian Question

The central context of Morgenthau's story, in addition to World War I, was the Armenian genocide. It was preceded by the so-called Armenian Question. The ailing Turkish Empire was also shaken by ethnic conflict after losing the western parts of the empire in the Balkan War. There was a sizable Armenian minority in eastern portions of Anatolia, and Armenian nationalistic movements had already started to increase in power and took a more radical outlook especially after the 1860s. Armenian radicals tried to gain western support for their aspirations, but this proved eventually a futile effort. In the middle of the 1890s, Sultan Abdul Hamid II responded to the growing

⁶⁰ Morgenthau 1918, chapter XI.

⁶¹ Trumpener 1968, 6-13.

⁶² Trumpener 1968, 5-6.

radicalization among the Armenians by ordering them to be killed in their thousands, to solve this so-called Armenian Question, but European Powers resorted only to protest diplomatically to this massacre.⁶³ After the Young Turks rose in power, there were some hopes among Armenians that they would get political equality, but this was not to be. It is true that Armenians gained some improvement in their legal status, but in practice the traditional harassment and acts of violence towards them continued. There were even bigger atrocities, biggest one being the killing of thousands of Armenians in 1909 in Cilician Vespers, event though the new central Turkish government wasn't necessarily directly involved in this.⁶⁴ On the other hand, Balakian writes that Turkish officials didn't do anything to stop the massacres, even if they started spontaneously at first⁶⁵.

The question about the German role in the Armenian Genocide has been studied for long time. Contemporary view held in American public, *the Times* referred to the Germans as “masters of the Central Ottoman Administration”, who even encouraged the Turks to massacre Armenians in their thousands⁶⁶. As been noted, Morgenthau also thought that Germans were really in control in Constantinople, and therefore Germans could be held accountable for the Genocide, because they chose not to interfere.⁶⁷ This view has been contested by Trumpener, as he writes how persecution of Armenians during war-time was not instigated nor welcomed by Germany or by Austria-Hungary, but both governments were concerned in keeping the Turks in the war, and thus chose not to do anything drastic to stop the Turks. However, according to Trumpener, there were many German and Austro-Hungarian officials who tried to stop or mitigate the persecution and massacres the Armenians were facing.⁶⁸

Morgenthau claims in his memoirs that Germany incited its ally Turkey to “solve” the supposed threat of Armenians by using forced deportations. According to Morgenthau, “idea of deporting peoples en masse is, in modern times, exclusively Germanic. Any one who reads the literature of Pan-Germany constantly meets it.”⁶⁹ But as noted, Morgenthau incorrectly claims that the Pan-Germanic ideology was somehow the predominant force in the German state, or even that Germany as a state was behind the idea of “solving” the Armenian Question. It is true however,

⁶³ Balakian 2003, 35-36.

⁶⁴ Trumpener 1968, 200-201.

⁶⁵ Balakian 2002, 150-153.

⁶⁶ Balakian 2002, 285.

⁶⁷ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter XXVII.

⁶⁸ Trumpener 1968, 205.

⁶⁹ Morgenthau 1918, chapter XXVII.

that German high-command was aware of the killings and decided not to interfere, and some of them saw the killing as necessary to strengthen Turkey and its war effort.⁷⁰ This fact could have made Germany at least partially morally responsible for the genocide in Morgenthau's view, because he apparently thought, or at least claimed, that Germany had the power to stop it because Turkey was a German puppet. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the view that Turkey was a German puppet was already present in the American press in 1915⁷¹, as mentioned earlier, so Morgenthau's claim that Turkey was a German puppet was not a new revelation in 1918, but reinforced the existing view about the Turkish-German relationship in the American public. But there were practically no German troops in Turkey, and no German officers in the eastern provinces had a command function in the Ottoman Army. This means that Germans had no concrete way to protect Armenians even if they had wanted to.⁷²

Germany's responsibility for the Armenian massacres in Turkey had been widely debated in the American press and the State Department in years 1915-1918. Ambassador Wangenheim's official proclamation that "I do not blame the Turks what they are doing to the Armenians. They are entirely justified.", caused an outrage in the US, as the suffering of Armenians was very important topic in the US that time. The German Ambassador to the United States, Von Bernstorff comments also had similar impact, when he said that the Armenian atrocities were "greatly exaggerated" and had been provoked by the Armenian side.⁷³ According to Morgenthau, Wangenheim made similar comments about the plight of the Armenians to him in their conversations when Morgenthau tried to persuade Wangenheim to try to make the Turks to stop the massacres.⁷⁴ German strategical situation during the war and not alienating the Turkish government was deemed more important than helping the Armenians, despite the damage this caused to German reputation. This means that Germany could not have stopped the Armenian Genocide without damaging its own war effort. This common theme has been repeated in geopolitics many times before and after, and Machiavellian view about international politics seems to have been right in this regard. Altruistic morality seems to be far away from "the Great Game", and geopolitical necessities and power struggles seem to always prevail over them. Even the US president Barack Obama was constrained by political realities, as he refused to refer to the deaths of over million of Armenians

⁷⁰ Trumpener 1968, 268-269.

⁷¹ Balakian 2002, 285.

⁷² Trumpener 1968, 269.

⁷³ Balakian 2002, 285.

⁷⁴ Morgenthau 1918, chapter XXVII.

in 1915-1920s as a genocide, despite the promises he made during his presidential campaign in 2008⁷⁵.

The German inaction as well as during the Armenian Genocide could have really changed Morgenthau's image of Germans and Germany in general, if his view about Turkey being a German puppet was really his genuine view. Morgenthau thought, according to his memoirs, that Germany as a state, and Germans in general as well, to certain extent, were “fundamentally ruthless, shameless, and cruel”⁷⁶. This could also partially explain Morgenthau's book's anti-German sentiment, and perhaps in Morgenthau's view, end could have justified the means in when writing his memoirs. Even a man with a strong moral background can resort to partial truths or even lies in the face of witnessing a genocide of a people. As it is apparent in light of modern research on this subject, Turkey was not a German puppet, and if Morgenthau really knew this, it partially undermines the story's principal claim about German guiltiness for the Armenian genocide. Morgenthau was in the heart of Turkish capital for years and talked with the leading figures of the Ottoman administration almost weekly and he was also extensively informed by the many Americans working in Turkey in different positions. And despite his lack of experience in diplomacy and politics, as an apparently capable man he must have had quite clear understanding about how much power Germans really had and how much the German power in Turkey depended on the Turkey's shared goals with Germany. This in turn would make the claim about Germany's guiltiness for starting the war, as expressed in his story, a conscious choice to vilify the Germans and to produce propaganda against to influence the president, the public and members of the administration back home. Morgenthau's image of then modern Germany might played a role as well in Morgenthau's inclination to see Germans guilty in starting. The Causal link, however, between these factors can be hard to determine. Morgenthau's image of Germans and Turks is an interesting topic, but remains outside of this thesis' scope.

Much of Morgenthau's direct information about the Armenian Genocide came from western, mainly American⁷⁷, consuls, missionaries and other officials stationed in various parts of Turkey. Missionaries' humanitarian efforts as well focused in helping the persecuted Christian minorities in Turkey, and the Armenian Question rose to be the most important human right topic in the public life of the USA from the late 19th century onwards.⁷⁸ The Armenian massacres of 1890s

⁷⁵ Politifact. <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/promises/obameter/promise/511/recognize-armenian-genocide/>

⁷⁶ Morgenthau 1918, Chapter I.

⁷⁷ The US was still officially a neutral country during Morgenthau's stay in Turkey as the Ambassador. British and French diplomats had been expelled.

⁷⁸ Balakian 2002, xvii-xx.

were even shaking the Monroe Doctrine, as there were calls for direct involvement against Turkey to protect the Armenians, although congress chose to maintain its neutral stance⁷⁹. Armenians' special place in American consciousness was also reason for Americans strong presence in the eastern provinces where Armenians lived, and therefore Morgenthau was very well informed about the massacres, and Morgenthau was also informed about the true German involvement in the atrocities against Armenians. There were also many American businessmen in Turkey which added to the American presence as the US was also an important trading partner of Turkey, and trading between the two countries had been rising steadily in the years before World War I.⁸⁰ This means that Morgenthau was well informed by people who were there in first place partly because of the mistreatment of Armenians, and who can be assumed to be good sources of information for Morgenthau.

2.2.1. Silence About Disagreeing Messages

However, as noted, none of these reports by consuls and other diplomats include anything that would make Germany or Germans directly responsible for the atrocities, even though it was clear that and in fact individual Germans were trying to help the Armenians, even if Germany as a state refused to intervene, thus passively permitting Turkey to continue the massacres. One example is a German lieutenant in Field Marshall Von Der Goltz retinue, Armin T. Wegner, who took hundreds of photographs, took notes and letters from deported Armenians, and delivered part them to Morgenthau in Constantinople to be send to the US. Wegner's photographs comprise the core photographic evidence today about the Genocide, and Wegner, and he risked his life when he smuggled the negatives of the photos he and other Germans had taken back to Germany.⁸¹

Later on in march 1919, after Morgenthau's story had been already published, Armin T. Wegner even wrote an open letter to Woodrow Wilson about the events he witnessed in Turkey. In his letter he refers to Wilson's demand to American congress for the liberation of all non-Turkish people of the Ottoman Empire, and tells the president how he is writing on behalf of one these, the Armenians. Letter consists of Wegner's description of horrible crimes against the Armenians

⁷⁹ Balakian 2003,71-72.

⁸⁰ DeNovo 1963, 38-40.

⁸¹ Balakian 2002, 258-259.

conducted by the Turkish government, but he doesn't blame the ordinary Turks or other Muslims for these atrocities. Nevertheless, Armenians should be liberated from the Turkish rule. Wegner also stresses how Germany has been unjustly accused of these atrocities against Armenians because of their alliance with Turkey, despite "German people know nothing of these crimes". Instead, he claims that all six European Great powers, who signed the Berlin treaty of 1878 July and thus gave guarantee to protect Armenians, as well as the US, should be held equally responsible for not protecting Armenian people against the Turkish state.⁸² Wegner's letter can be seen as a response to Morgenthau's story, discrediting Morgenthau's view that the Germans were responsible for the Armenian Genocide. It can also be seen in context of peace negotiations between Germany and the Entente Powers, which was signed later 28th of June in 1919. Morgenthau's story naturally contributed to and reinforced the view that Germany had planned and started the Great War, as well as helped Turkey to massacre over one million Armenians.

Why doesn't Morgenthau mention Wegner in his story? Even if he acted against Turkish (and German) orders, wouldn't it be important to mention this courageous German's deed if his story was objective and not tendentious? Morgenthau's opinion about the German guilt for the genocide seems to be grounded on the inaction of German state during the massacres, and because Turkey was supposedly just a German puppet state. Actions by benign Germans seem not to be worth of mentioning, and omitting facts that would undermine his story's primary support the aforementioned propagandistic motives for Morgenthau to write his story the way he did.

There were also other reports reaching Morgenthau, which would seem to indicate that at least some of the Germans stationed in Turkey were in fact trying to prevent the killings. American consular agent Charles E. Allen, stationed in Adrianople, wrote to Morgenthau in march 1916, describing the ethnic cleansing taking place in Thrace. Greeks were the biggest Christian minority there, and had been deported to Greece in large numbers. Unlike elsewhere in Turkey, local Armenians had converted to Islam and were "required to intermarry with the Turks", thus avoiding death. Allen's opinion was that this method was promoted by the Germans in order to prevent the similar massacres that took place elsewhere in Turkey in 1915.⁸³ Morgenthau doesn't mention this piece of information either in his story at all, which would mean that the Germans, even in official positions, tried sometimes to prevent the killings when they could. However,

⁸² Wegner 1919.

⁸³ Balakian 2002, 269-270.

Morgenthau does write briefly about a few Germans who were speaking against the official German policy, but who could not make a difference in the end⁸⁴.

It should be noted that it doesn't mean that if there are some untrue claims to be found in Morgenthau's memoirs, that it would prove that the Armenian Genocide did not take place at all in the first place, as has been claimed by the Armenian Genocide denialists⁸⁵. There seems to be ample evidence from many different sources apart from the memoirs that prove the genocide did happen, and any evidence that Morgenthau's memoirs contain certain untrue propagandistic elements and other made-up descriptions of events doesn't change the fact that there were massacres and forcible removals of Christian population in Turkey during the years of World War I, as J. M. Winter writes in his book *America and the Armenian Genocide*. Winter also writes that Lowry could not find any made up things about Morgenthau's description about the mass killings.⁸⁶ Conscious choice will be made here, and the Lowry's book will not be used as a direct reference to assess Morgenthau's claims about in this thesis, because of the obvious political bias and lack of objectivity expressed in Lowry's writings on this subject, although references made by other, more objective scholars to Lowry's books will be used. This decision not to use Lowry's research is supported by fact, that that notable scholar of genocide denialists Professor Deborah Lipstad's opinion is that scholars who are denying the Armenian Genocide are supported by modern Turkish government with financial and other resources, and cannot thus be considered to be genuine legitimate scholars at all. Modern Turkish government still denies the Armenian Genocide, and runs a campaign to promote the view that there are two sides to the Armenian genocide, neither of which are objective views.⁸⁷

In light of this, it would seem that Morgenthau was well informed about the Armenian Genocide, and knew that Germany was not directly involved and could not even protect the Armenians if it had wanted to. Of course it is understandable that Morgenthau would have been rightly furious about the German inaction in the face of a genocide, and this could have caused him to write his story with the claims about special German wickedness. Morgenthau was not used to the immorality of the world politics, as it could have shocked him, especially so because his Presidents strive to change how the world of geopolitics worked.

⁸⁴ Morgenthau 1918, chapter XXVII.

⁸⁵ Armenian Genocide Debate, Article "Ambassador Morgenthau's Story"
<http://www.armeniangenocidedebate.com/ambassador-morgenthau-story>

⁸⁶ Winter 2003, 302

⁸⁷ Balakian 2003, xxii-xxiii.

This brings us to interesting questions. We could ask ourselves would a similar book have been released and would it have gathered as much attention in the US if the Turkey had been allied to for example Britain and would conducted similar atrocities against Armenians? Even the choice of what to publish and write is a conscious act, and if general public chooses to write about some atrocities and not about others, that is also use of propaganda. The moral integrity of Henry Morgenthau concerning Armenians should not be questioned, but the reason for the book to be published is not only to do justice for the victims of the genocide, but to further the US political ends after the war. In this light the memoirs' focus on blaming Germans, and not Turks, is very reasonable, as Germany was the main rival of the United States. Turkey's future in the larger geopolitical sphere after the war still ambiguous, as a potential neighbor of the emerging Soviet Russia. If a refusal to stop serious crimes against humanity, when one is able to do it with great sacrifices could be considered to be as bad as conducting a genocide oneself, then Americans and European Powers (including Germany) could be held partially responsible for the massacres of 1909 in Armenian Cilicia, as the Great Powers had extensive naval presence and ability to force Turkey stop those massacres⁸⁸.

The famous British philosopher and social commentator Bertrand Russel also had an opinion about the alleged German responsibility for the Armenian Genocide, and about the general relationship between geopolitics, morality and human rights as well. Russel wrote in 1917 that

The fact that the Turks had for ages displayed supremacy in cruelty and barbarism by torturing and degrading the Christians under their rule was no reason why Germany should not, like England in former times, support their tottering despotism by military and financial assistance. All considerations of humanity and liberty were subordinated to the great game."⁸⁹

Thus in Russel's view, official German inaction in regards of the Armenian Genocide was nothing new, as Germans put their strategical needs in war time before helping the Armenians as they were massacred, just as the UK had done in previous decades.

⁸⁸ Balakian 2002, 157.

⁸⁹ Balakian 2002, 296.

Conclusions

Findings of this thesis are summarized here for better clarity. First of all, in all probability Morgenthau, or his ghostwriter made up several things that would place the guilt of starting the war on Germany. The Potsdam legend, German contingency plans in Turkey or other such claims about German conspiracy to start a world war are simply not true as described in the book. It has been also shown that it is not reasonable to think either that Morgenthau was misled by Wangenheim or other Germans on purpose, as it is inconceivable that he could have withheld such evidence about Germany's plans for so many years. Nor it is reasonable to think that Wangenheim, who conveniently died before Morgenthau published his story, would have shared secret information about a secret conference with Morgenthau in the first place.

Morgenthau's view that the Germany helped Turkey to massacre Armenians is not accurate either. Turkey was not a German puppet, and Germans could not had actually stopped the genocide even if they had wanted to, because there were no German troops in eastern Anatolia. It is true however, that Germany decided not to interfere with the genocide, but Morgenthau's moralist condemnation of Germany's inaction seems not to be justified, as many scholars agree that this it would be unprecedented if Germany would have alienated Turkey during wartime because of that. However, Morgenthau was highly moral person, and he was not used to the world of diplomacy and international politics, and thus Germany's inaction could have seemed especially aggravating to him, especially so because President Wilson himself was striving to change how the “Great Game” worked Also, Morgenthau's was a firm believer in liberal democracy, and his apparent contempt for autocratic Germany as a state could have cause even more anger.

Further research about Morgenthau's image of Germans and Turks could prove fruitful in order to better understand if geopolitical reasons alone can be considered the main reason for Morgenthau to write untruthful propaganda against Germany. Morgenthau's negative image of Germans and Turks could be one of the reasons he felt that Germany should be punished for starting the war, even if it was not strictly true. Analyzing Morgenthau's image of Germans and Turks by methods of historical image research, as well as comparing his image of Germans and Turks to the general propaganda image of them in the west during and before the war, could shed more light to question why Morgenthau apparently wanted Germany to be punished. Was he promoting

negative view of Germany because Morgenthau thought he was just pursuing American and democratic interests by doing so? As noted, Morgenthau was a firm believer in liberal democracy and with a strong moral background. Of course it is understandable that Morgenthau would have been rightly furious about the German inaction in the face of a genocide, and this could have caused him to write his story with the claims about special German wickedness, to try to ensure that Germany would get punished after the war by influencing President Wilson, who had been quite conciliatory towards Germany.

It has also been shown that it doesn't seem plausible that Morgenthau would have himself genuinely believed in those claims presented in his story, but that he, or his ghostwriter, apparently made up those claims to further the story's propagandistic purpose of showing the world how Germany was uniquely guilty for conspiring to start World War I. So, Morgenthau's book can be considered to contain propagandistic elements. This doesn't mean that the whole story could be considered false. Morgenthau's descriptions about the Armenian Genocide have been found to be accurate, and he was widely reported about it from many consuls in various locations in the Turkish state.

It is shown that Morgenthau had a clear mission to influence other people by his story, as he himself admitted, but also more importantly, that the story contained untruthful propaganda to vilify Germany. He chose not to mention too many events and persons that would have put Germany in a positive light, and strongly focused on the negative facts about Germany. This apparent lack of objectivity and striving for a certain goal while refraining from mentioning things that would compromise this goal, are all attributes of propaganda. Also the fact that Morgenthau intentionally used fictitious claims to drive his point makes his story seem even more just a piece of propaganda against an enemy state. This view is also supported by the fact that the anti-German outlook of Morgenthau's story was missing from Morgenthau's letters, diary and official telegrams with the United States Department of State. These are all later interpretations, or most probably just later additions to influence his readership. However, the wider propagandistic evaluation of Morgenthau's story is out of scope of this thesis, so this view remains within a considerable amount of uncertainty.

The truth is usually the loser in this kind of situation, and political needs often supersede it. On the other hand, it seems when geopolitical needs call for it, moral condemnation and human rights breaches are used in full force to further those ends. However, this kind of duplicity by making

truth subjective is only helping populists and demagogues, as this in part causes the people to lose their faith in the established political system. These kind of issues should not be put into limelight only when it is convenient for some greater objective. In the end, findings in this thesis show that simplified tendentious story and untruthful claims can undermine one's whole undertaking, despite the general respectable motives behind it. Geopolitical needs influence what topics are brought up into general discussion, which facts are highlighted and which are overlooked. Objectivity and facts are often drown in political quagmires, when major powers are involved.

All in all, it seems that Morgenthau just wanted to use this horrible background of the Armenian Genocide to cast a slur on Germany and same time erroneously and on purpose claiming that Germany conspired to start the war. Morgenthau was possibly motivated by political ends, and partly his own moralistic personality, as he witnessed the German inaction in the face of a genocide. Same time by doing he compromised his whole story's message about the horrible crime of the Armenian genocide, and partly helped to reinforce the view that Germany should be punished after the war. In hindsight, the peace treaty of Versailles can't be considered to be a great success, and later on the Armenian genocide denialists have been able to use his story's falsehoods in denying the Armenian genocide.

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