

ADDITIONS, INTEGRATIONS, CORRECTIONS AND SUPPLEMENTS
TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ARNOLD JOSEPH TOYNBEE*

by Teodoro Tagliaferri (University of Naples Federico II)

Nos. 329-332
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Additions to Part I,
Works by Arnold J. Toynbee

1917

329) A.J. Toynbee, *The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks*, in «The New Armenia. A Semi-Monthly Periodical», IX, no. 18, September 15, 1917, pp. 277-280.

330) A.J. Toynbee, *Status Quo and Smaller Peoples*, *ibid.*, no. 19, October 1st, 1917, pp. 296-298.

331) *The Position of Armenia*, *ibid.*, no. 20, October 15, 1917, pp. 307-308 (dated «London, England, September 25 [sic], 1917»).

NOTE

«The New Armenia», edited by Arshag Mahdesian, was published in New York City by The New Armenia Publishing Company.

Nos. 329-330 were reprints of excerpts from Item 966 (Arnold J. Toynbee, «*The Murderous Tyranny of the Turks*», with a Preface by Viscount Bryce, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1917).

No. 331 was a reprint of No. 973 (Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Position of Armenia*, in «The New Europe. A Weekly Review of Foreign Politics», IV, no. 50, September 27, 1917, pp. 329-335, text below).

332) Item 973 was also reprinted in «The World Court. A Magazine of International Progress», Published Monthly by The World's Court League, New York City, November 17, pp. 551-556.

* *A Bibliography of Arnold J. Toynbee*, compiled by S. Fiona Morton, with a Foreword by Veronica M. Toynbee, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980.

THE POSITION OF ARMENIA (1917)

By Arnold J. Toynbee

The Armenians, like the Jews, have hitherto been a nation in dispersion. Their colonies are scattered from Chicago to Singapore, but the majority of the four million Armenians in the world were subject, at the beginning of the war, to two foreign empires – Turkey and Russia. They were divided between them in approximately equal proportions – something like two million Armenians under each.

In this partition the Armenians themselves had had no voice. Turkey acquired her holding in Armenia by conquest, in the sixteenth century, Russia hers in the nineteenth – again by conquest, only in this case at Turkey's and Persia's expense. The Russo-Turkish frontier that divided Armenia before the present war was delimited, after the last Russo-Turkish war, in 1878; and this is an important year in Armenian history, for the Treaty of Berlin, by which the delimitation was ratified, also guaranteed political reforms to six vilayets (governments), mainly inhabited by Armenians, which Turkey still retained. The guarantees were vague, and have never been enforced; but the document was signed by all the European Powers, and though it has brought Armenia no material redress, it remains of capital importance for her political future. The Berlin Treaty gave the Armenian problem an international status in the Turkish provinces, and established the precedent for an international solution of the problem as a whole.

From 1878 down to the outbreak of the present war, there is a melancholy parallelism between Turko-Armenian and Russo-Armenian relations. The Armenians had an ancient historical tradition, a pronounced national individuality, and an active social life. They could neither be assimilated nor ignored, and for despotic empires the alternative was repression. Both Turkey and Russia had already placed restrictions on the Armenian national (Gregorian) Church – Turkey as early as the fifteenth century, when she set up an Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople as the semi-official head of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire; and Russia in 1836, after the Katholikos at Etchmiadzin – the supreme head of the Gregorian Church in all countries – had become a Russian subject as a result of the last Russo-Persian War. After 1878 the Armenian policy of both empires became harsher, and overstepped the

ecclesiastical sphere. Abd-ul-Hamid's system in Turkey is notorious. He armed and licensed the unsettled elements among the Kurds, inflamed Moslem against Christian, and brought about the Armenian massacres of 1894-6¹. Russian methods cannot fairly be compared with Hamidian, but it must be recorded that British attempts at joint intervention in Turkey in 1894-6 were checkmated by the Tsardom's diplomacy; and that in 1905-6 the Tsar's viceregal government in the Caucasus tolerated, if it did not instigate, a racial war between the Caucasian Tatars and Armenians as bloody as the racial war in Macedonia under the Turkish *régime*. In general, however, the Russian Government was more European in its methods. Armenian schools in Russia were closed in 1884, and in 1903 the whole Armenian church and school property in the Caucasus was confiscated by an Imperial decree.

These concentrated attacks on their national existence led the Armenians to form political organisations a generation earlier than any neighbouring nationality and on individual lines. The most important of them has been the Dashnakzutiun Party (dating from 1890), which organised defence against massacre, first in Turkey in 1894-6 and then in the Caucasus in 1905-6. Founded to fight against extermination, Dashnakzutiun was naturally revolutionary in its origin, but it has proved itself adaptable to new conditions. After participating in a secret congress of Russian nationalities in 1904, the Dashnakists adopted a Socialist programme for the Caucasus; and in 1908, when the Turkish Committee of Union and Progress (with which Dashnakzutiun had co-operated in exile) came into power in the Ottoman Empire, the Dashnakists there transformed themselves into a constitutional party and worked with the C.U.P. in the Ottoman Parliament from 1908 to 1915.

It is remarkable that though the Armenians were repressed by both empires, and by Turkey the more bloodily, they gravitated towards Turkey during this period and away from Russia. Dashnakzutiun was founded for action in Turkey alone, but became active in Russia too after the confiscations of 1903. Between 1908 and 1915 the Party was actually legitimised in Turkey and banned in Russia. The Armenian conscripts fought bravely for Turkey in the Balkan War; and in 1913 the Ottoman Government at last accepted a scheme of reforms for

¹ * The 1909 massacres in Cilicia must also be placed to his account, though they occurred after his fall.

the Six Vilayets², which had been worked out by the Russian and German Foreign Offices on the basis of the Treaty of Berlin. In 1913 the centre of gravity of the Armenian problem lay in Turkey, but it has swung violently back to Russia again through the consequences of the present war.

The first factor in this has been the alienation of the C.U.P., who, after the Balkan disaster, threw their liberalism overboard and abandoned themselves to their "Pan-Islamic" and "Pan-Turanian" proclivities. In this mood they regarded the reform scheme imposed on them in 1913 as a mortal offence. After the outbreak of war their resentment was increased by the refusal of Dashnakzutiun to raise volunteers (in addition to the Armenians in the regular army)³ for the invasion of the Caucasus, while the Caucasus Armenians volunteered for Russia. The breakdown of the Concert of Europe gave the C.U.P. the opportunity for revenge, and the "deportations" of 1915 (the facts of which are too well known to need repetition here) were an organised attempt on their part to exterminate the Armenian race in the Ottoman Empire.

The second factor has been the occupation of the major part of Turkish Armenia – about two-thirds of the Six Vilayets and half the Vilayet of Trebizond – by the Russian Army of the Caucasus. The beginning of the Russian advance was simultaneous with the deportations, and it reached its present limit with the capture of Erzinjan in the summer of 1916. But the Tsar's generals did not come as liberators. They were as complacent as Abd-ul-Hamid to the predatory Kurds. They refused to allow the Armenian peasants to return unless they could produce title deeds to their lands (a condition which the circumstances of their flight from the Turks made it impossible for them to fulfil); and in the Plain of Alashkert they settled four Russian "labour battalions" of a thousand men each, from which natives of the Caucasus were excluded. These settlers were allowed to send for their families, and the intention was to split Armenia (more effectually than by the old Russo-Turkish frontier) by a new Cossack line, like the lines which had secured previous extensions of Russian territory north of the Caucasus and across Siberia. This policy was terminated abruptly by the Revolution.

² With the addition of Trebizond.

³ In Turkey, as in Russia, the Armenian conscripts liable to service in the regular army responded loyally (more loyally than the Kurds) to the mobilisation order.

The Revolution is the third factor which has removed the centre of gravity of the Armenian problem from Turkey to Russia. The Revolution made a clean sweep of the Tsarist system and the Tsarist personnel, both in the Caucasus and in the Occupied Territory. The Southern Caucasus is now governed by a Commission of the Provisional Government, consisting of six Duma deputies for the Trans-Caucasian Provinces; the Occupied Territory is governed by a civil commissioner administering the provisions of the Hague Convention; and in both regions local administrative organisations are being built up in the Caucasus, naturally, for the moment on more democratic lines. The survivors of the Turkish deportations are still languishing in Mesopotamia, and the loss of those who perished has struck the Armenian nation a heavy blow, but it is broadly true that the soil of Armenia is now free from both the oppressions which have lain upon it for the last forty years. Behind the front which is being held by the Russian Revolutionary Army, Tsardom and Turkdom have disappeared alike, leaving the indigenous nationalities face to face. The problem of this zone of nationalities, lying between the Russian and Ukrainian areas on the north, and the Arab area on the south, has been added by the Russian Revolution to the nationality problems of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and will call for solution at the general settlement. The Armenian problem, in its present phase, is inseparable from this wider question.

Among the many tribes and tongues of the Caucasian region, two nationalities besides the Armenians have come to the front – the Georgians and the Tatars.

The problem of the Georgians is comparatively simple. They are a compact nationality, of one language and one religion (the Orthodox Greek Church). They are a small nationality – about two millions – with no kinsmen, so that they can hardly stand alone. They all live within the present frontiers of Russia, so that the question of Georgian autonomy within a larger whole can be settled between Georgia and Russia with no third party; and in bargaining with Russia they can appeal, like the Ukrainians, Finns and Poles of the Congress Kingdom, to positive rights secured by treaty, for Georgia united herself with Russia, no longer ago than 1783, by a voluntary contract, which guaranteed her ecclesiastical and political home-rule. The contract was swept aside by the Tsardom in 1801; the right remains.

The position of the Tatars, on the other hand, is singularly undefined. They have no written charter, no historic rights, no native culture, and they are divided into hostile sects. Their

strength is in their potential affiliations. Their Turkish speech links them, on the one hand, with the Ottoman Turks (whose literary language they use), and with fourteen million other Turkish-speaking people in Russia on the other. Their Moslem religion (in spite of sectarianism) links them, firstly, with the non-Tatar Moslems of the Caucasus, who double the Tatars' numbers, and form, with them, a Moslem bloc equal, numerically, to the Georgians and Caucasus Armenians combined. In the second place, it links them with all the Moslems in the world. The Caucasus Tatars have seen where their strength lies, and have started to organise themselves on a very ambitious scale. Whether they will succeed is more than doubtful, for with the least political experience of all the Caucasian nationalities they are attempting the most difficult political task.

The Armenians must reach a settlement with these two nationalities before their own problem, and with it the whole problem of the Caucasian area, can be solved. Their differences with the Georgians should not prove formidable. During the nineteenth century the Armenians have tended to encroach on Georgia, through their cultural and numerical superiority and through the current of migration from the Turkish to the Russian side of the frontier, which Turkish atrocities set up. With the liberation of Turkish Armenia the current is already beginning to flow the other way, and thus the friction should automatically disappear. The relations between the Armenians and the Tatars are far more difficult to settle. They are interlocked territorially, and Armenia constitutes a geographical barrier between the Tatars of the Caucasus and their Osmanli kinsmen in Anatolia. This is a stumbling-block to the Pan-Turanian movement, and the deportations were an attempt to remove it from the Ottoman side, but the Islamic sensitiveness of the Tatars is a more serious irritant still. Since the Russian revolution the Tatar press at Baku has plunged into the controversy, in the Occupied Territory, between the Armenians and the Kurds, and this has had an adverse effect, in the Caucasus itself, upon Tatar-Armenian relations.

The Armenians stand midway between the Georgians and Tatars in their political position. They are less isolated than the Georgians, poorer than the Tatars in relationships; less compact than the Georgians, less scattered than the Tatars. Like the Georgians they have a historical tradition, but they are destitute, like the Tatars, of valid historical rights, for there has been no United Armenia since A.D. 387, and no independent Armenian State since 1375.

On the Russian side of the frontier their claims rest simply on the inherent rights of nationality; on the Turkish side, on the contrary, they are not merely documentary but international, for they rest on the Berlin Treaty of 1878, which was signed by the European Powers.

The claim of Armenia to national independence is three fold – the sanction of the Berlin Treaty, the wrongs Armenia has endured, and the capacity of her people to hold their own in the world, which they have proved by their miraculous survival. The cause of Armenia may be compared with the cause of Poland. In Armenia, as in Poland, no one disputes that frontiers are hard to delimit and mixed populations hard to provide for; but everyone agrees that an independent Armenia must arise as a result of the war. The Allied Governments proclaim it in their public pronouncements; the Germans still mutter the formula of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but dare not demand in terms the restoration of Armenia to the Turks since the world has learnt what happened in 1915.