

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

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Addition to Part I,  
Works by Arnold J. Toynbee

**1920**

Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *Armenian Massacres. Fixing the Responsibility*, Letter to the Editor, in «The Manchester Guardian», Friday, March 12, 1920, p. 6. The letter is dated «London, March 9».

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

THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES  
A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE «MANCHESTER GUARDIAN»

by Arnold J. Toynbee

Sir, – As the editor, under Lord Bryce's direction, of the Blue-book on the treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire published by the British Government in 1916, I welcome the suggestion made in your columns yesterday by members of the Indian Caliphate Delegation\*, «that an impartial commission of inquiry should proceed to investigate the whole question of responsibility» – of course under conditions which would make possible a genuine and thorough inquiry –, and that commission should contain Indian Moslem members.

«The fact», they add, «that no impartial international inquiry has been held into these matters since the armistice with Turkey has caused a painful impression in India». Here we are on common ground, for the absence of such an inquiry has caused an impression at least as painful in England, and those of us in England and India whose views on this question seem at present irreconcilable would have everything to gain by a further inquiry into the truth.

At the same time I must demur to the statement that «the only investigation which they [your correspondents] have heard has been that of the Armenian reports by professed partisans of the Armenians for a merely propagandist purpose». The British Blue-book was compiled by Lord Bryce and myself, without the collaboration of any other person connected with the British Government except the printers. The form it should take and the documents that should be included in it were decided by ourselves alone; and while it would be impertinent for me, as well as superfluous to bear witness to Lord Bryce's impartiality in

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\* Mohamed Ali, Syud Hossain, Syed Sulaiman Nadir, Members of the Indian Khilafat Delegation, *The Case of the Armenians*, Letter to the Editor, in «The Manchester Guardian», Monday, March 8, 1920, p. 4. The letter is dated «London, March 4» (T.T.).

weighing evidence of so serious a kind, I may say for myself that, so far from being a partisan of the Armenians, before examining this evidence I had had no relations with them, though the effect of the evidence upon me has been to make me, since then, an earnest advocate of their cause. I may add that the bulk of the documents we published came from American eye-witnesses (people long resident in Turkey, acquainted with local conditions, and belonging to a country which had no ambitions in the Middle East and no political interest to serve by the blackening of the Turkish Government), while four or five of our documents were from German sources (see p. XXXVII of the Blue-book). Since then our conclusions have received remarkable confirmation from two widely different sources: 1) from the revelations of Mr. Morghentau, American ambassador at Constantinople at the time the events recorded in the Blue-book occurred, in regard to confessions made to him by Talaat, Enver and other members of the Ottoman Government; and 2) from a German inquirer, Dr. Lepsius, a man thoroughly acquainted with Turkey and a citizen of a country which was one of Turkey's allies during the war. Dr. Lepsius has printed a mass of German and Turkish official documentary evidence in two books: a) *Bericht über die Lage des armenischen Volkes in der Türkei* (*Account of the Situation of the Armenian People in Turkey*), printed privately, at the author's peril, by the Tempelverlag, Potsdam, in 1916; and b) *Deutschland und Armenien, 1914-1918: Sammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke* (*Germany and Armenia, 1914-1918: A Collection of Diplomatic Documents*), a still further and more documented report, published as a result of researches by Dr. Lepsius in the archives of the German Foreign Office since the Revolution in Germany.

I do not think that this evidence can simply be dismissed as partisan or propagandist, but that is by the way, for I entirely agree with your correspondents that the more evidence we can get, and, above all, evidence on the spot, the better. The practical question is to secure conditions on the spot under which this evidence can be obtained. The one part of Turkey which the Allies (as I hold, greatly to their discredit) have omitted to occupy since the armistice is the part in which the events we are discussing are believed (on the present and, to my mind, conclusive evidence) to have occurred. But these districts are at this moment not even under the control of the Ottoman Government at Constantinople; they are in the hands of the Turkish Nationalist organization established at Sivas, which is in armed conflict

with the Allies in Cilicia. Supposing that an impartial mixed Moslem-Christian Commission of Inquiry were brought together, are your correspondents sanguine that the present regime would give them a fair field? Would they be able, under this regime, to inquire into the circumstance of the large numbers of Armenian women and children reported to have been kidnapped into Turkish households, or to investigate the disposal of Armenian property which is reported to have passed into Turkish hands? I fear myself that an inquiry on the spot will only be possible when the political and military conditions there have been altered radically. But meanwhile there is evidence elsewhere which it is equally important for us to pursue. My own investigations have convinced me that the Armenian people in Turkey has been the victim of a public crime, but they have led me to a further conclusion that I should be interested to discuss with your correspondents, because it seems to me the one hopeful feature in an otherwise appalling situation. I do not believe, on the evidence before me, that the prime movers in the attempt which I believe was made in 1915 and the following years to exterminate the Armenians in Turkey were the *loca*/Turkish or other Moslem inhabitants of the Ottoman provinces in which the atrocities occurred. My belief (as I stated in the preliminary memorandum in the Blue-book) is that an elaborate scheme was worked out by Talaat and Enver in the Ministries of the Interior and of War at Constantinople, and that this scheme was carried out locally by the orders of the central Government, generally, it is true, with the criminal concurrence but rarely by the initiative and occasionally against the wishes of the local Moslem inhabitants, and in a few cases even against the wishes of the local Government officials. If Enver and Talaat are brought to trial, and Mr. Morgenthau (at the head of a long string of American, neutral, and German witnesses) is summoned to give evidence against them, I think we shall learn further facts that ought to help us to see this matter in the common light of the truth. But I should be glad of an opportunity to discuss personally with the members of the Indian Caliphate Delegation their very fair and helpful proposal. – Yours, &c.,

16 Carlyle Mansions, Cheyne Walk,  
London, S.W. 3, March 9

Arnold J. Toynbee

