

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

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387) *The Near East. A Way Out. Interview with Prof. Toynbee*, in «The Oxford Chronicle», Friday, September 22, 1922, p. 11.

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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 NEAR EAST**  
**A WAY OUT**  
**INTERVIEW WITH PROF. TOYNBEE**

The Near East, through Colonel Lawrence, Dr. Hogarth, and the Oxfordshire battalion who served at Gallipoli, the Balkans, Syria, and Mesopotamia, has had a special interest for Oxford in these few years. Few English students of Near Eastern problems are more intimately informed than Professor Arnold Toynbee, who saw last year's fighting in Asia Minor and has spent some time in Turkey in a special study of the post-war position. He has been staying in Oxford this week, and was kind enough to defer an appointment for half-an-hour one evening in order to discuss the present position with a representative of the «Oxford Chronicle». He is a son [*sic*] of the social reformer after whom Toynbee Hall was named, and is a son-in-law of Professor Gilbert Murray. His book on the antecedents of the impasse has just been published by Constable.

**BAD DIPLOMACY**

Asked what he thought, as a close observer of the Government's handling of affairs during the last year or so, Professor Toynbee said he had been driven more and more to the conclusion that not merely had the British diplomacy been bad –very bad – but that the British Government was itself primarily responsible for the crisis.

«We have simply backed the wrong horse», he said. «Our calculations were bad, as we were told from the start by our men on the spot. The French and the Italians saw how things were going to work out, and they were right. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the thing may have been, our diplomacy was bad and no amount of bluster will hide that from the French or the Turk».

«There is the freedom of the Straits, and a good deal of difference about Thrace?».

«You may depend upon it, the real inwardness of it is the position in Thrace. This bombastic note calling on the Dominions to safeguard the freedom of the Straits has raised opposition in France, has deepened, if possible, Turkey's mistrust, and has aggravated the military position. France says there is no need for force, and she knows things need not have come to this but for our bad diplomacy».

### **AN OFFER**

«France knows what the Dominions don't know. A few weeks ago Mustapha Kemal sent Fethi Bey, Minister of the Interior and a man who counts in Turkish affairs, to London. He was to see the Foreign Office and suggest an arrangement which at all events you would hardly call frivolous. The Straits were to be free from troops of any sort, either Turkish or Allied, and were to be entirely free. In return, the sovereignty of Turkey in Thrace, where the Greeks are in a small minority, was to be recognized».

«Were there any guarantees?».

«The suggestion made by the Turks was that the whole of the neutral zone was to be placed under the perpetual vigilance of the League of Nations, which was to have resident inspectors. Now whatever you may think about the merits of the scheme, it was at least a basis for discussion, and you cannot say that the Turks have simply threatened the freedom of the Straits. But what happened? Fethi Bey went to the Foreign Office, he went to this and that office, and the Government would have nothing whatever to do with him. He was seen, indeed, by one or two junior officials and was sent away, and the London papers were circulated and told that his visit was purely formal and was not on Near Eastern business at all!».

### **THE RESULT**

«And then?».

«He went back, and within about a week of his arrival the attack began, and what happened was what everybody expected who knew anything about the position there. Now

that that attack has succeeded and the Greeks have been thoroughly beaten, a note like Saturday's manifesto is a strong temptation to Kemal to strike and strike now. The Allied forces there are quite inadequate to resist an attack, and he is sure to suspect that with Allied forces in command of the situation they will tell him he can't have Thrace either. The temptation therefore to strike now is a very strong one. Our men on the spot told the Government what the dangers were, but they were ignored. Meanwhile France and Italy, who know about Fethi Bey's visit, know also that Kemal is not concerned primarily about the Straits, and they say that the much-desired freedom can be secured quite well by diplomatic means.

A war with Turkey now would be a long, wearisome business. The Prime Minister is definitely partisan on the Greek side, and at Versailles it was his doing, against the advice of the experts, that the Greeks were sent to Smyrna. They were on the aggressive last year, and they found what everybody finds who fights Turkey in Turkey – that she has the sympathy of her own people, and that there is a vast hinterland full of resources. Yes, Greece bit off more than she could chew, as the French military authorities told her. Foch thought so, and he was right.

### A SUGGESTION

«What do you make of the stories of French officers and batteries with the Turkish armies?».

«I saw the fighting out there last year, and each side was accusing the other then of having help from various Allies. It wasn't true then – I can vouch for that – and I doubt it now. Old war stuff has changed hands, no doubt, but there is no serious participation in a primary sense».

«What do you suggest as a way out?».

«The whole difficulty would disappear if reliable assurances were given to Mustapha Kemal now, that the Turkish claims in Thrace would be considered. He doesn't want a war, but he has a strong advantage if he strikes now, and relatively his position is stronger than

ours. If this visit of Fethi Bey's were known generally the Government's note of Saturday would be opposed everywhere».

«If he refused an offer now, and advanced on the Straits?».

«Then, of course, we should have to resist. But he wouldn't».