

# **Grandson of Ambassador Morgenthau to İstanbul appallingly misrepresented 1915 Armenian events in Anatolia**

**By Ferruh Demirmen, Ph.D.**

In his Wall Street Journal opinion article on January 25, 2018, Mr. Robert M. Morgenthau, the grandson of Henry Morgenthau Sr., the U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, 1913-1916, displayed appalling bias when he referred to the 1915 events in Ottoman Anatolia as “genocide.” He said President Trump should recognize “Armenian genocide.” Mr. Morgenthau is a former U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/will-trump-tell-the-truth-about-the-armenian-genocide-1516925489>.

## **The faked quote**

Mr. Morgenthau started his tirade by citing the so-called “Hitler quote,” “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians,” attributed to Adolf Hitler. The quote was purportedly made by the dictator during a speech he delivered to his top commanders at Obersalzberg, Bavaria on August 22, 1939, 10 days before his invasion of Poland. It is claimed that the indifference of the world to the annihilation of Armenians in Ottoman Anatolia during World War-I gave Hitler motivation to exterminate Jews in Nazi Germany.

What Mr. Morgenthau avoided to mention is that the Hitler’s speech allegedly containing this quote was not submitted as evidence during the Nuremberg trials post World War-II. There were four versions of Hitler’s Obersalzberg speech. None of these versions, except the so-called L-3 version, contains the “Hitler quote.” Hitler’s speech used by the prosecution as evidence in the Nuremberg trials was a memorandum in two parts designated as Document 798-PS and Document 1014-PS.

The L-3 version first appeared in a book published in New York in 1942 authored by Louis P. Lochner, the then-Berlin bureau chief of the Associated Press, at a time when the war sentiments in America were high. Lochner stated that the typed manuscript, written in German, was delivered to him by an informant. According to British military officer W. Byford-Jones, Lochner had received the document from a confidant of German Colonel-General Ludwig von Beck, an opponent of Hitler. The version re-appeared again in a November 24, 1945 Times of London article, and excerpts from the speech were published the same day in NY Times.

The 3-page document, unsigned and unmarked as to its preparer and time of execution, was discussed at Nuremberg 2 days later on November 26, but was not offered into evidence. The prosecutor had doubts about its provenance and authenticity. He thought the document had somehow been leaked to the press.

The 1939 speech was about invasion of Poland. The reference to Armenians in the L-3 document is out context, and there is also no mention of Jewish people. The German manuscript is crudely

cut out in places, the text doesn't follow the normal punctuation in German, and contains not one single sharp S(ß) common in German alphabet. The document also contains weird, hard-to-believe comments such as "miserable worms Daladier and Chamberlain," and Hermann Goering "dancing around like a savage and jumping on a table" at the end of the speech. Other versions of the Hitler speech are internally consistent and do not contain such outlandish comments.

The indications are that L-3 was drafted by British intelligence officers to paint the dictator in a most malicious way to incite the war flames in America against Hitler. Given the bizarre statements and incongruity of the text with the German alphabet and language, the likelihood that it was drafted by a disillusioned German general is extremely low. Lochner, in his younger days in 1916, was engaged in peace activism that advocated an "Autonomous Armenia." This raises the possibility that Lochner may have "embellished" an already spurious Hitler speech by inserting the "Hitler quote."

So, for all practical purposes the "Hitler quote" is a forgery. The world has been misled by this baseless document for more than 70 years. It is a disgrace that an inscription of "Hitler quote" is on display in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. No doubt intense Armenian lobbying and a pledge of one million dollars to the Museum by Set Momjian, an American of Armenian origin, played a major role in decision to display the infamous quote at the Museum.

### **Ambassador Morgenthau**

It is no surprise that Mr. Morgenthau also used his grandfather Ambassador Morgenthau's narrative of the 1915 events as proof of "Armenian genocide." He quotes the ambassador: "I, a Jew, have done everything in my power to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of Christians."

This is a most lamentable quote with unmistakable undertones of deep-seated anti-Muslim prejudice, a mindset that was well entrenched in those days, and still continues till today in various degrees. During his 26 months of tenure in Istanbul, Mr. Morgenthau virtually never ventured into Anatolia. His dispatches to Washington were based on news from U.S. consular offices and Christian missionaries, handled and probably doctored by his two aides, both Armenian. The ambassador himself was a Turk-hater, and believed Turks were "primitive," possessing "inferior blood." In contrast, he profusely praised Armenians. He made sensational claims such as "more than 2 million persons were deported" (vs. the actual 438,750).

"Ambassador Morgenthau's Story," another major source used to justify "Armenian genocide" allegations, is a book vilifying Turks and Germans. Ghost-written by a journalist, it is full of distortions and contains major contradictions with the ambassador's own Diary. The motivation for writing the book was to induce America to enter the war. The enormity of the injustice perpetrated by the "Morgenthau's Story" was such that the Associated Press war correspondent George A. Schreiner, a contemporary of the ambassador, and who travelled extensively in the war zone, upon reading the book wrote a biting letter to the ambassador in December 1918 in which he stated "... *Nor did you possess in Constantinople that omniscience and omnipotence you have arrogated unto your self in the book. In the interest of truth I will also affirm that you saw little of the cruelty you fasten upon the Turks. ... 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 Turks the worst being on earth, and the German worse, if that be possible."*

### **Genocide label improper**

But perhaps the most astonishing aspect of Mr. Morgenthau's genocide assertion is that he is a man of law. Yet, given his prejudice, he ignored legal underpinnings surrounding the crime of genocide. The 1948 U.N. Convention on Genocide stipulates that to name a crime "genocide," specific intent to harm or kill must be proven. There was no such intent on the part of the central Ottoman government when it issued the relocation orders. The so-called "Andonian files" (Talaat Pasha telegrams) used to prove malintent on the part of the Ottoman authorities have been proven to be forgeries.

The Convention also stipulates that any determination as to genocide can only be made by a competent tribunal. Parliaments and governments have no authority to judge genocide. There exists no court verdict on "Armenian genocide;" hence an allegation to this effect is baseless.

The European Court of Human Rights has noted, in its 2013 and 2015 judgments (re: Switzerland vs. Perinçek case), that "Armenian genocide" remains unproven. The high court made a distinction between the 1915 events and the court-proven Holocaust. In 2016 France's Constitutional Council ruled similarly.

Mr. Morgenthau should also take note of the fact that when the British weighed evidence against 144 high Ottoman government detainees held for prosecution in the Malta Tribunal during 1919-1921, among the documents they examined were U.S. State Department files in Washington D.C. They disregarded these files, as they did the "Morgenthau's Story," as being unreliable. All the detainees were subsequently released.

Next time Mr. Morgenthau writes an opinion article on the Turkish-Armenian conflict, hopefully he will tone down his bigotry and take note of the above facts.