Henry Morgenthau’s Voice in History

And a Brief Reflection on One Aspect of Improving Relations Post-Violence

Pamela Steiner

FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health &

The Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Harvard University

Author’s Note

This essay is based on a lecture I gave to the Euxeinos Club of Thessaloniki, Greece, in 2010, at an event honoring my great-grandfather, Ambassador Henry Morgenthau. Margaret Lavinia Anderson, Professor of History at the University of California at Berkeley, generously made important suggestions. I am grateful to David and Lucy Eisenberg, Helen Fox, Maria Hadjipavlou, Theodosios Kyriakidis, Ellin London, Rosemarie Morse, Elaine Papoulias, and Henry Steiner for useful comments.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Pamela Steiner, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, 14 Story St., Cambridge, MA 02138. E-mail: psteiner@hsph.harvard.edu
Abstract

Henry Morgenthau distinguished himself as the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, 1913-1916, and as chairman of the League of Nations Refugee Settlement Commission (RSC) for Greece, 1923-24. In this essay I describe some aspects of his early life that shaped the man he became, accomplishments in his posts, and his feelings about himself over time. My conclusion offers a brief reflection on an issue that may help resolve post-violence inter-communal relationships, such as those with which Morgenthau was involved.
The task assigned to me for this lecture was both welcome and challenging: talk about your great-grandfather’s contributions in Turkey and Greece and also tell us something about your related work. U.S. ambassador to Turkey, 1913-1916, and chairman of the League of Nations’ Refugee Settlement Commission (RSC) for Greece, 1923-24, Henry Morgenthau is still considered a pivotal figure in both countries. This essay, based on the lecture, starts with Morgenthau’s nine years after his birth in Mannheim, Germany through his mid-fifties, at which point he exemplified the path to financial success of a poor, immigrant Jew from the Lower East Side of New York City. We then concentrate on his two assignments: the ambassadorship to Turkey where he became known for his efforts to save Armenians, Greeks, and other Christians by pushing the boundaries of the usual behavior expected of an ambassador and his chairmanship of the RSC where his contributions included securing essential loans and helping establish constitutional democracy in Greece. At the end I briefly reflect on the question of dehumanization of the Other in relation to the need to build positive relations post-violence. The reflection grows out of my participation in conflict resolution efforts between Israelis and Palestinians and between Armenians and Turks.

In preparing the lecture, I had no critical biography of Ambassador Morgenthau to be guided by or to bounce off. Since I am a psychologist and not a biographer or historian, and since I was preparing just a single lecture, I decided not to do make use of the many references to Ambassador Morgenthau in works on history and genocide, although those portrayals and reports certainly remain valid historical sources. Instead, I
relied almost entirely on Henry Morgenthau’s own accounts -- *All in a Lifetime* (1926), *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (2003 [originally published in 1918]), and *I Was Sent to Athens* (1929). I presumed that these publications expressed how he wished to be understood as a man, an American, a Jew, a public servant, and a participant in and reporter of great events. As I turned my lecture into this essay, I continued to think that nothing better characterizes Morgenthau than his own words in their directness, clarity, and insight. I say this with conviction because, although he died at 90 when I was very young and so hardly knew him, his non-sectarian devotion to public service aiming at the good of all people and especially the direct way he expresses himself describe family traits recognizable down to my generation.

**Development of Morgenthau's Character: Trust and Self-Confidence; Sudden Uprooting; Ambition, Prudence, Success, and Communal Indebtedness**

Morgenthau's insistent reporting of horrendous wrongs and his commitment to making a better world can be understood among his important personal attributes. Some of these -- energy, stamina, and intellectual capacity -- were probably largely genetic in origin. But others that may well have been influenced by his family and upbringing -- ambition, competitiveness, courage, humanitarianism, likeability, prudence, responsibility, determination, self-awareness, and self-discipline -- even if in-born, were cultivated by him during his lifetime in response to both ordinary and extraordinary challenges. This combination of attributes made the man, and produced a remarkable voice.

In the list of Morgenthau’s attributes I did not yet mention the most fundamental: self-confidence and trust in life. From the moment of his birth in 1856 as the ninth of ultimately 11 children, he was loved, appreciated, and respected, especially by his
mother. He returned her feelings. His admiration for her rested on the “beautiful spirit…my mother had early given me good ideals and a love of purity…[and] an irrepressible ambition…to try to attain a standard of thought and conduct consonant with (her) fine concepts” (1926, 14). At some point his relationship with his father soured, but not in his all important early years.

Morgenthau’s self-confidence and trust were further grounded in the secure, pleasant, even enchanting childhood in Mannheim, Germany. He wrote of those years:

…[t]hose were the days of idyllic simplicity … the highest pleasure of children was netting butterflies in the sunny fields….The recreation of elders was at little tables in the public gardens, where, while the band played good music and the youngsters romped from chair to chair, the women plied their knitting needles over endless cups of coffee, and the men smoked their pipes and sipped their beer and talked of art and philosophy -- of everything in the world, except world politics and world war…. My father was prosperous… my mother… [had a] passion for the best in literature and music. (1926, 1-2)

In Mannheim, Morgenthau’s father, Lazarus, made comfortable living exporting German cigars to the United States. When a large tariff was unexpectedly imposed, Lazarus was suddenly poor. Feeling humiliated and without prospects, he decided to move his newly impoverished family to New York City. Thus, as a nine year old, Morgenthau was uprooted and became an immigrant. From a home with servants, he now saw his mother doing the housework as well as taking in boarders to make ends meet. He became critical of his father who continued in New York to live above his reduced means. He held his father responsible for the family's financial situation because he had not saved while in Mannheim.

Morgenthau later saw these events as shaping his own ambition to make sufficient money to that his mother could again live comfortably. He believed that there was almost no hindrance in the United States to such ambitions despite his being a Jew. He became
self-disciplined about spending and saving money. As an adult he was cautious about not trying to push his own financial success too far. In 1905, when his instincts foretold economic downturn in the United States, he took appropriate action and lost little. At the same time, he felt intense gratitude for the opportunities in the United States and believed therefore that he owed a debt to his country.

Morgenthau of course did not make his name primarily as a financier, although his experience, knowledge, connections, and wealth were enablers for his development into a humanitarian on behalf of Armenians and Greeks. But it was primarily the circumstances under which the young Henry and his family left Germany for the United States that initially shaped his humanitarian development. Although incomparably less onerous than the losses experienced by Armenians during World War I and most ethnic Greeks (and ethnic Turks) in 1923 in the "Population Exchange", Morgenthau’s own sudden losses as a child -- the uprooting from Mannheim and the marked downward shift in socio-economic status – taught him much: what it was like to make a sudden forced move from one country to another, what it was like to lose worldly goods, community, and place in the community, and what it was like to begin again. As he grew older he also became aware of the reality and limits imposed by prejudice against those who are different, in his case anti-Semitism in Germany, and to a much lesser extent, in the U.S. Both his experience of loss and of prejudice help account for his unwavering commitment to protect Armenians, Greeks, and other Christians in Turkey and later to help settle those forced to move to Greece.

Sources of his Universal Humanitarianism

The adolescent Morgenthau encountered people of different backgrounds, his mind opening alike to unconventional Jewish and non-Jewish influences. "Pursu[ing] a
rather carefully ordered course….I formed the habit (mid-teens) of visiting churches of many denominations and making abstracts of the sermons that I heard …” (1926, 15).

He found mentors with open and compassionate minds, two of particular note. The first, a boarder, was a hunchbacked Quaker doctor, who demonstrated kindness to less fortunate individuals, in spite of or perhaps because of his own suffering. Morgenthau wrote that he was “a beautiful character, softened instead of embittered by his affliction…. [He] gave half his time to charitable work among the poor. I frequently opened the door for his patients …and we became friends. I remember his long, religious talks… (Ibid).

The other was Felix Adler, to become the major figure in the development of "secularized Judaism" (Morgenthau III, 63) in New York's Society for Ethical Culture. Adler demonstrated what it meant to give service to a people rather than to individuals. Probably Morgenthau was also inspired by how Adler “had voluntarily abandoned an honorable and care-free career…and undertaken the harassing and difficult task of satisfying the unexpressed yearnings of these people… discontented with the existing requirements of their religion and [who] …hopelessly sought for moral guidance” (1926, 96). Morgenthau retained his connection with Adler, in later years helping him establish New York’s first Ethical Culture School (1926, 97).

**Self-Discipline and Family**

Morgenthau formulated an ethical approach for his adolescent self and then tested himself against it:

I composed twenty-four rules of action, tabulating virtues that I wished to acquire and vices that I must avoid. I even made a chart of these maxims, and every night marked against myself whatever breaches of them I had been guilty of…. indulgence in sweets, departures from strict veracity, too much talking, extravagance, idleness, and vanity -- a heavy indictment!...

The fact is that I had acquired an almost monastic habit of mind and loved the conquest of my impulses…. (1926, 15-16)
The monastic side of his self-discipline gave way a decade later to uninhibited, blissful sensuality with his wife, Josephine, whom he married at age 26 (Morgenthau III, 1991, 84). Each of their four children was remarkable. The eldest, Helen, a great gardener, founded The Herb Society of America and published numerous books on garden design and history. Their second child was the one boy, Henry, Jr., who served for eleven years as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury. Not of his father’s temperament, he was alike in being willing to manifest from a high position humanitarian concern that was no part of his job description. Long before the U.S. entered World War II, he early and alone in Roosevelt’s administration voiced urgency about the Nazi threat to the Jews.

The two youngest were girls. Alma, who became my grandmother, was a fine singer and painter and became a “patroness of many of the arts” (Dec., 1953 obituary, New York Times). Music was her chief love. She founded the Cos Cob (music) Press, the Locust Valley Musical Festivals, and co-founded the League of Composers, identifying and helping establish such figures as Aaron Copeland and Virgil Thompson (see discussion in, e.g., Music in America). The youngest, Ruth, perhaps most literally reflected her father’s non-sectarian commitment to giving back to the community. In New York City, she founded a home where men leaving jail could live and restart their lives. The residence pioneered in providing psychological counseling. As a board member of the Manhattan School of Music, she established a fund to provide counseling for troubled music students. In the community where she had a country home, she conserved her acres in perpetuity, began a summer theatre workshop for teens, an organization that also offered
counseling for participants, co-founded a public library, and donated a baptismal font to a local church.

**Inner Conflict: Success at Making Money versus Humanitarian Values**

Although Morgenthau's formal education culminated in a law degree, he made his fortune in real estate development and finance. But by mid-life he became aware of an inner conflict:

…My spirit was in a never-ceasing conflict with itself… between idealism and materialism. My boyish imagination had been fired with a vision of life of unselfish devotion to the welfare of others…. But the necessity of earning a living had early thrust me into the arena of business. Once there, I became absorbed in money-making. It challenged all my powers of brain and will to hold my own and forge ahead in the fierce competition of my fellows. I lived business, ate business, dreamed business…. [but my boyhood vision] asserted itself during business hours and again and again demanded opportunities to exercise itself…. (1926, 94-5)

Eventually he resolved his conflict:

At fifty-five years of age, financially independent, and rich in experience … [my conscience] ceaselessly confronted me with my duty to pay back, in the form of public service, the overdraft which I had been permitted to make upon the opportunities of this country…. 

…I [had] found…that I had a special gift for making money. By the time I had attained the competency which had been my ambition, I had become fascinated with money-making as a game. … Like all my associates, [I] was deeply absorbed in the chase for wealth…. 

… [in 1905] I foresaw the Panic of 1907; and, while others all around me plunged onward to the brink, I paused and …began to sever my financial connections. This process of slowing down my business pace gave me time for other introspection…I was ashamed to realize that I had neglected the nobler path of duty. I resolved to retire wholly from active business, and to devote the rest of my life to making good the better resolutions of my boyhood. (1928, 128)

**Ambassador Morgenthau's Efforts to Save Armenians and Other Christians**

One of Morgenthau’s first steps in his "nobler path of duty", his new career path, taken in order to “repay the overdraft [made] upon the opportunities of this country”, was
to support Woodrow Wilson as the Democratic Party’s candidate for the U.S. presidency. Morgenthau regarded him as "a practical reformer" (1926, 130). Once elected, Wilson offered Morgenthau the ambassadorship to Turkey and then found he had to take months to persuade Morgenthau to it. Because of its proximity to the Holy Land and Zionists, and therefore the opportunity to oversee the interest of Jews settling there, it was considered the Jewish post. Morgenthau hesitated because he was aware that Jews he talked to let him know that they did not want Jews to be limited to one “Jewish” post only, and he felt the same way. Over some months, however, he changed his mind. He enthusiastically took up the ambassadorship in late 1913, nine months before the start of World War I. However, he did not regard his chief task as ambassador to look after Jewish interests, although he did not neglect them. When addressed by various officials as though he were representing only Jews, he let it be known that he represented all Americans, not just Jews. He would say, “I am not here as a Jew but as an American Ambassador. My country contains something more than 97,000,000 Christians and something less than 3,000,000 Jews. So at least in my ambassadorial capacity, I am 97 percent Christian” (Morgenthau III, 127).

Morgenthau’s account of his arrival in Constantinople, as the city was known until 1930 when it officially turned back to the Turkish name Istanbul (in this essay I use the name Morgenthau used), reveals him as successfully forging all the usual kinds of relationships and looking out for the usual kinds of interests. He rapidly built what in conflict resolution work is called "working trust"1 both with the large international

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1 Working trust is not the deep, unconditional general trust in life which (I hypothesized above) the young Henry acquired as an infant and child. Working trust permits collaborating with others meaningfully, and at critical moments enables one to gain immediate access to important players, not necessarily on one’s side, and they to him. It grants the psychological space to speak one's mind and feel confident of being heard. Such trust is conditional: as President Ronald Reagan was known to say, “Trust but verify,” and keep verifying.
community in Constantinople and locals, official and unofficial. It was with these usual kinds of collaborations that Ambassador Morgenthau was able crucially to keep himself so well informed. For example, he recorded meetings with Talaat Pasha and Enver Pasha. These two, together with Cemal Pasha, were the three leading Young Turks of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), by then the real governing body in Turkey. The Sultan was now only nominally head of government.

In Constantinople the ambassador often cited the American ideals of tolerance, decency, and opportunity for all peoples. He must have come across as what many would call an idealist, but in him such beliefs were likely the expression of the same sort of practicality he saw in Wilson. In a speech to an audience that included Talaat Pasha in February, 1914, some six months before the start of war, he later recalled, "I felt I could point out to them in my address, by indirection, the path along which they might lead Turkey to regeneration…” (1926, 198). It was a bold intervention at a time when Talaat and Enver were open to American counsel. No doubt pleased with his metaphor, he cited his speech, which included the following:

'… being in Turkey I want to say that I have shown you the wonderful, national rug that we have produced in the United States. It was woven by the millions that inhabit our land, natives and foreigners, whites and blacks, people from the North, South, East, and West, men and women, and from materials produced in our own soil and imported from all countries…it makes a fine, harmonious whole…. "(1926, 201-2)

Morgenthau was reflecting on a fledgling theme in American foreign policy, that American values, democracy, and the multicultural, multiethnic American experience were right for other peoples (Moranian, 2008).

Instead, Turkey moved in the opposite direction and Morgenthau acted to protect besieged Christian minorities. Thus, when shortly before war started and ethnic (Christian) Greeks in Turkey were being persecuted or forced to leave for Greece, as the
*New York Times* characterized it\(^2\), Morgenthau used his influence to protect them. He persuaded the Young Turks to grant a temporary stay on the order that Greeks employed in Smyrna must leave the country. For Greeks who were already being held for deportation without food or drink “with greatest brutality”, he was able to order “a boat to Prinkipo [Island] with barrels of water and boxes of crackers...”(1929, 20).

Once the war began, American consuls and missionaries, teachers, and medical people from the United States and elsewhere, already deployed throughout Turkey, sent Morgenthau corroborating reports on the massacres, deportations, and abominations of the Armenians' fate as well as that of the Greeks and Assyrians residing in Asia Minor. The first reports he received did not immediately convince him, however, that there was a systematic effort to exterminate this people (1918, 2003, 224). Once convinced and with reports continuing to come to him, Morgenthau stepped outside the usual ambassadorial role. He protested on different occasions to the Young Turks and became more public about his concerns.

Morgenthau’s wife Josephine had never been an enthusiastic diplomat’s wife. An independent person, she did not accompany him to Constantinople initially (Morgenthau III, 1991, 110). And she departed before he did, at least in part because she was so distressed by the reported massacres and the inability to stop them. She returned alone to the United States, stopping in Bulgaria en route. There she informed the country’s receptive queen about the situation so distressing her. Bulgaria was then deciding with whom to become an ally. But Mrs. Morgenthau and Queen Eleonore were no more

\(^2\) Just a few weeks before war started, the *New York Times* reported that: 
...relations between Turkey and Greece have reached high tension over the alleged persecution of the Greeks in Asia Minor, and it is because of these persecutions that many thousands of Greeks have left Turkey or been forced out of the country and are returning to the home land. (6/15/1914. ProQuest Historical Newspapers (1851, 4)
successful than her husband with the Young Turks. Bulgaria soon joined with the Germans and Turks, becoming another colluder in mass murder.

Morgenthau’s telegrams to the U.S. State Department about the massacres were frequently cited, not only but especially in the U.S., leading to an on-going American humanitarian response. In protesting the Armenian fate, Morgenthau did not lose the awareness that his country, still a neutral, feared pushing any concerns about Armenians too far. Protest not backed by military force could easily backfire and ignite even stronger anti-Armenian measures. Beyond these protests and reports, there was little more he could do. The only other action he took was behind the scenes when he provided different forms of aid to certain individuals.

Morgenthau’s reporting went beyond Ottoman actions. He made sure that Americans became aware of German complicity with the CUP's anti-Armenian policy. If they did not already know, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* informed them that the Central Powers were led by a "turcophile" (Anderson, 2010) Kaiser. A mutually beneficial German-Ottoman connection was not new. The Kaiser's focus on securing a "place in the sun"\(^3\) for Germany had led him to look the other way when the Red Sultan massacred Armenians in the 1890's.

\(^3\) "A place in the sun’ was first used politically by Germany's then Foreign Minister (later Chancellor) Bülow in 1897: other European countries have their place in the sun (colonies in the tropics), so we should have them too. And…they were not going to do it militarily -- they gave no sign of going to war with anyone else over a colony (unlike England and France!), but by buttressing the Ottoman Empire they got a cozy position inside for their investors, advisors, etc. Everyone knew that the Germans were doing in reality what all the Powers gave lip service to: preserve the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire. Germany's 'place’ in the Empire depended on the Ottomans remaining independent, because otherwise, the Russians, French, and British, all much better positioned, would move right in. Germany befriended the Ottoman Empire in hopes of getting, eventually, some kind of commercial priority; but, more important, in fears of being locked out, commercially, if another power got there first (Anderson, private correspondence, April 2010).
Morgenthau took a leave of absence from Constantinople in early 1916, shortly before the United States entered the war. At the very moment of disembarking in New York City, he again went out on a limb. At the dock he received specific instructions from Secretary of State Lansing not to speak publicly "in view of the international situation", nonetheless he made a much publicized speech (Morgenthau, 1991, 173 ff).

Soon after his return to the United States, Morgenthau tendered his resignation as ambassador. His reasons included his "failure to stop the destruction of the Armenians" (Morgenthau 1918, 2003, 264), his wish to inform and discuss the situation with President Wilson in a way that he could not from abroad, and to raise money for Wilson's re-election (Morgenthau III, 173-4). By now, also, his own ambition had grown. If re-elected, Wilson would presumably put him forward for a different role in U.S. diplomacy. With the exception of his important work in Greece for the League of Nations, his political ambitions thereafter were not greatly realized.

Whatever came next, Morgenthau had earned a place in history. His courageous, committed behavior when it counted was to engender a broader public awareness of the crimes against humanity that Raphael Lemkin would, in 1944, label “genocide.”\footnote{In 1943 Raphael Lemkin coined the word “genocide” to characterize the intentional mass murder of a whole people, basing the concept on the Nazi extermination of Jews and the Ottoman massacres of Armenians. He worked tirelessly to achieve the United Nations Convention against Genocide.} But if Morgenthau should be remembered for his courageous breaking of new ground for diplomats through his humanitarian attempts to prevent the mass murder of innocents, he did not. Instead he became a rare and rarely imitated example of acting outside the strict role -- one state's representative manifesting universal, non-sectarian humanitarianism.

Psychiatrist Robert Lifton, a writer on the psychology of war and mass violence, reflects on Ambassador Morgenthau's voice:
Faced with the overwhelming evidence of the mass murder of Armenians by Ottoman Turks, Henry Morgenthau refused to remain a detached bystander. He chose instead to become a profoundly compassionate witness, to abandon diplomatic coolness, to open himself to grievous suffering, and to tell the story to his countrymen, and the rest of the world. (Lifton in Morgenthau, 1918, 2003, Forward, xix)

**Morgenthau as Chairman of the Refugee Settlement Commission (RSC) for Greece**

With the promise of certain lands post-war, the World War I Allies, Britain, France, and Russia, had persuaded Greece to fight with them against Germany and Turkey. But since the Treaty of Versailles did not deal with “the East,” the Sevres Treaty of 1920 was meant to accomplish that. It was imposed by the Allies on Turkey, much as was the Versailles Treaty on Germany. This Treaty fatefully divided Greeks. To the followers of the legendary Eleftherios Venezilos, who before then, at that moment, and often thereafter, served as prime minister of Greece, the treaty was a triumph as it integrated eastern Thrace, the islands Imvros and Tenedos, legitimized a Greek presence in Asia Minor, and promised to include most Dodecanese Islands. But to Greeks led by King Constantine, the treaty represented a betrayal by the Allies of promises for other lands.

King Constantine and his followers won out. Shortly after negotiations on the Sevres Treaty concluded, Venizelos was voted out of office. Greece did not ratify it. Now a debacle for Greece, already in the making, was fully realized -- with the different players acting out of different motives. The year before, the United States, Britain, and France had authorized a military invasion of Smyrna by King Constantine with the understood aim of maintaining order in the region and protecting the Christian population until the conclusion of final peace agreement. But the historical record shows something less noble: the British and French were using the Greek army to pursue their own territorial interests. King Constantine, despite promises made during the election to
withdraw the army from Turkey, nevertheless stayed on attempting to reach Ankara in pursuit of his "Megali Idea."

The Ottoman government accepted the Sevres Treaty, but its authority was short-lived in Turkey. Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, then a soldier, reacted to the invasion by King Constantine and to the Ottoman government’s acceptance of the treaty, by mobilizing the troops for a Turkey for Turks, challenging and retiring Ottoman rule, and replacing it with the secular Turkish state, thus nullifying the treaty. During this war, 100,000 Armenians and Greeks perished in the Smyrna fire, believed widely to have been started by Turks. The Greek troops under King Constantine suffered finally a humiliating defeat by troops led by Ataturk.

With the death of the Sevres Treaty, Great Britain, France, Greece, Italy, and Turkey were forced to re-engage in what were intense, extremely difficult negotiations that resulted in the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. The Lausanne Treaty decreed the compulsory, often bloody "Population Exchange." It specified that well over a million ethnic Greek Orthodox living in different parts of Anatolia were to leave for the Greek mainland, while some 400,000 ethnic Turks were to move to Anatolia.5

For both population sets, it was a continuation of the expulsions, losses, and miseries of preceding years. While both Venizelos and Ataturk pushed to achieve this “Exchange,” neither of the peoples who had to make the move sought the changes. Ethnic Greeks had lived in Asia Minor for centuries as had ethnic Turks in Macedonia.

The Greeks who survived the Smyrna fire and the Greeks and Turks who had to move under the Population Exchange crossed the sea in different directions under terrible conditions. Altogether there were more than one million who constituted the refugee

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5 Although the Treaty of Lausanne spoke about approximately one million Greeks, only 200,000 reached Greece after 1923. The majority had already fled.
crisis in Greece, which Morgenthau agreed to address. Morgenthau’s judgment about this entire episode manifested his ability to understand the Turkish perspective. Although he remained profoundly appalled by the CUP’s aims and methods during World War I, he understood what the move would mean to the Turks who, he asserted, “felt that their very existence was now threatened” (1929, 25). He wrote that the invasion was "… frightful mismanagement of the situation by Constantine and his government" (1929, 7). A recent account acknowledged that Morgenthau "quite correctly… sensed that Greek expansionism in Anatolia would have terrible consequences for the Ottoman Christians" (Clark, 156).

In the opening pages of his book, I Was Sent to Athens, Morgenthau explained how he saw his mission in Greece. He expressed great sympathy for the refugees from Asia Minor. They must have reminded him of his own early move from Germany to the United States and the misery of being a member of a persecuted minority. As he similarly had committed himself to do for his mother decades earlier, he now committed himself to laying a foundation on which the refugees could thrive. Surely he saw them as needy, but in his soaring admiration for and belief in the Greeks and in their recovery, he also saw them as descendants of the ancient Greeks, as well as a contemporary people he had come to know and admire prior to this appointment.

In these pages, Morgenthau also expressed feelings that reflected more than his own personal early-established self-confidence and trust in life. Those foundational attributes now expanded into a general confidence and overall optimism about what a whole people could achieve. He described his mission through a highly rose-colored philhellenic lens, with himself as one of the heroes. In this idealization of the Greeks and of his role with them, he resembled many of the Europeans and Americans who had
fought a century earlier in the Greek War of Independence (St. Clair, 2008). I do not know if he exaggerated his influence on various people and events, nor, for that matter, if he did as ambassador. In the rest of his book about his time in Greece, he described accomplishing difficult tasks.

The Refugee Settlement Commission of the League of Nations was brought in by the Venizelos to deal with the consequences of the Population Exchange for the Greek side of the Aegean Sea. Before Morgenthau arrived, a committee of Greeks, headed by Epaminandas Chariloas and Etienne Delta, had begun to address the problem with the founding of the Greek Refugee Treasury Fund. Accepting the appointment by the League of Nations to chair the RSC, he arrived in Greece in October, 1923 to take up the new role, stopping first in Thessaloniki before travelling to Athens.

Acknowledging and building on this organization's work (1929, 71ff), Morgenthau held the RSC position for just over a year. He early recognized that much more funding and large-scale planning was needed. When he resigned in December, 1924, Morgenthau felt that he had accomplished both – and more. A Greek, an engineer named Sgouta, for whom he expressed the greatest respect and confidence, took over the post (1929, 237ff). Morgenthau noted that his own part in this success story rested on the energetic, creative, and honorable responsibility that the Greek people, its leaders and refugees alike, took throughout for the project.⁶

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⁶ “By the time of its dissolution in December 1930, the Refugee Settlement Commission … had installed 570,000 refugees - about half the total number - on smallholdings in northern Greece. It had built over 50,000 new houses for these farmers, and refurbished a similar quantity of homes abandoned by recently expelled Muslims. Thanks to the combined efforts of the RSC and the Athens government, these newly settled farmers had received about 145,000 horses and cattle, and 100,000 sheep and goats. In urban areas where refugees lived, the RSC [Refugee Settlement Commission] had by 1929 constructed over 27,000 houses, and the Greek state a comparable number” (Clark, 206)
Although little known outside of Greece, Morgenthau's achievements in his fourteen months as chairman reflected his lifetime’s experience as well as emotional commitment. One achievement, a personal project of husband and wife, and completely outside the role of RSC chairman, was to fund construction of schools for refugees in Athens and elsewhere in Greece. Some of these schools are in use today. His other, interdependent achievements were a consequence of his carrying out the tasks as chairman. The first was the raising of loans to finance settlement costs, beginning with the "million dollar advance," an interim loan from the Banks of England and Greece. Morgenthau comments on how important it was to the bankers to feel that he "was confident of success." “My career in finance and diplomacy gave them some assurance of my qualifications, but they had to feel that I was heart and soul in the undertaking, and [that] I realized its difficulties from their point of view (1929, 183)."

Morgenthau had to return to these bankers a number of times to negotiate a second, much larger loan. Each time they challenged his confidence that the domestic political situation in Greece could be counted on to be stable enough for successful settlement and hence loan repayment. They insisted that he ensure that the Greek government not spend the loan on rearmament, a distinct possibility. The bankers’ requirement that Greece be reliably able to repay the loans engaged Morgenthau in a more challenging purpose, that of helping to establish a constitutional democracy.

A constitutional crisis was already upon the Greeks. As is the perennial task and duty of all relief workers and agencies, Morgenthau moved among the three main parties, Royalist, Liberal, and Republican, during this critical period. His prior diplomatic experience had prepared him well. His public speeches and frequent private interventions
in the changing political scene, often very bold, buttressed the re-establishment of
democratic rule.

On behalf of this grand goal, Morgenthau began by getting acquainted with all
players. He was careful to follow the correct form, meeting first with the young, weak
King George. Next he met with Colonels Plastiras and Gonatas. Morgenthau called them
"the real rulers of Greece" (1929, 121). He found that both had genuine concern "for the
welfare of [their] country" (ibid) and were "anxious for Greece to resume normal
constitutional government, which would make non-constitutional control of the state
unnecessary" (1929, 122). Finally, Morgenthau met with the various political leaders of
different factions. Although his energy and efforts were unflagging, Morgenthau's
optimism sometimes deserted him:

With 1/5 of their population in misery, and facing destruction, even the
sincerest patriots among the Greeks seemed unable to agree upon a policy
that would satisfy a consistent majority, and a swarm of lesser politicians
seem blind to everything but the selfish scramble for place and power.
(1929, 162)

Negotiations went on for many months before "the big loan" was actually
secured, with Morgenthau moving by train between Athens, London, and Geneva like a
jet-setter. He was at his best cleverly arguing his case with the then powers of the
international monetary scene. At last successful, he recalled the moment just post-
triumph:

As I walked away from "the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street" [the
location of the Bank of England in “the City,” the financial center of
London] it gave me a glow of satisfaction to think that this greatest bank
in the world was not just a cold-blooded, impersonal, exacting money-
lender, but was, instead, endowed with a heart as well as a brain capable
of acting the part of good Samaritan by lending a helping hand to a sister
nation staggering under a crushing load. (1929, 205)
Although Morgenthau then convinced the international bankers that the loans would be well-used and repaid, we now know that the road to permanent stabilization of Greek democracy was to go on for decades, and that sound fiscal practice would remain elusive. On the day that the Republic was declared March 25, 1924 (for a second time - the first occurred in 1832 after the Greek War of Independence from the Ottomans), Morgenthau was honored for his efforts. During the ceremonies, the new Premier, Alexander Papanastasiou, spontaneously passed him a card on which he wrote, "This is for the Father of the Republic" (1929, 166).

Neither peaceful transition from monarchy to constitutional democracy nor the floating of a large enough loan would have meant much without land on which to locate, cultivate, and feed the enormous number of landless, moneyless refugees. The last of Morgenthau's achievements was his role in the Greek government’s acquiring title to lands, mostly in Macedonia, on which many hundred thousand refugees could settle. Morgenthau was a creative force in working out the complex deal that finally satisfied the Greek government, the League of Nations, and the Bank of England.⁷

**A Brief Reflection on One Aspect of Improving Relations Post-Violence**

I have stressed Morgenthau’s humanitarianism and promotion of American democratic values, which he believed to be universal. We know that he had been deeply horrified and disturbed by the suffering and wrongs he encountered, close up, in Turkey

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⁷ At the time of the founding of the Refugee Resettlement Commission, the Greek government had promised absolute title to over a million acres. Those acres, improved by settlers, it had been understood, were to form part of the collateral for the loan. It turned out, however, that there was no clear title to the land. Moreover, the land was anything but unencumbered. Some of it had been settled some time before the so-called Exchange and was owned by Greeks. Much was still owned by Turks from the time it has been conquered centuries before. Those titles had yet to be worked out by the signatories to the Lausanne Treaty.
and Greece, above all by the genocide\textsuperscript{8} of Armenians. As a result, he had acted outside the boundaries of the official mission that required him only to represent America’s interests as conceived of by his state department. His feelings and conscience had become his guide.

When in Greece his responsibility for the Greek refugees was laid down by the League of Nations. But as a humanitarian, should Morgenthau have been more widely solicitous of the suffering of both peoples making the enforced move? Bruce Clark, in his recent book on the Population Exchange, raises that question. Clark praised Morgenthau "as an international 'trouble-shooter' with personal charisma that cut across the barriers of citizenship and culture." He quoted Morgenthau's observation of the pitiable sight of

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{8} For five years and until the last months, I conducted myself based on my role as a facilitator of off-the-record dialogue between Armenians and Turks. Facilitators do not offer their own opinions on issues in dispute between the parties they bring together. As a facilitator, therefore, my team and I explained our neutral stance on the major issue in dispute: whether what happened to the Armenians during the war was genocide. Most of the Turks who participated in these dialogues were unconvinced that the last Ottoman government had committed genocide, but were open to learning.

Since then, I have been made aware that this facilitator stance is seen by many Armenians and Turks (1) as something it is not; (2) as if Morgenthau’s great granddaughter doubts if genocide occurred. As a result of both misunderstandings, I keep asking myself if the time is ripe for dialogue between members of the two communities who disagree on whether what happened was genocide, at least with me as facilitator. This is painful and difficult for me, especially because of those Turks who are genuinely open to learning and exploration and because of being misunderstood in opposite ways by Armenians and Turks.

What I have decided to date is that I will use “genocide”, since that is what I am convinced happened. It is not a suddenly acquired conviction: in 2005 well before I became a facilitator between Armenians and Turks, I gave a talk at the National Association of Armenian Scholarship and Research (NAASR). On that occasion, I voiced my view that there was an Armenian genocide by the last Ottoman government. My view is based on the work of most genocide scholars, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, Armenians, their sympathizers, and some Turkish scholars and intellectuals. I was well aware that successive governments in Turkey, some scholars of the late Ottoman period, and others hold that the events cannot be characterized as genocide.

I would like also to be clear that I have never had reason to doubt the occurrence of genocide and that there can therefore be no claim that Morgenthau’s great granddaughter might support the official Turkish stance, as has been indicated in some Turkish press.
"7000 people … [Greeks from Anatolia who] came ashore in rags, hungry, sick, covered with vermin, hollow eyed, exhaling a horrible odor of human filth -- -- bowed with despair." Clark then comments:

… there is no reason to doubt that this man of the world was genuinely moved by the suffering he witnessed at the outset of this commission's work to alleviate the refugees' plight. … What Morgenthau somehow fails to mention, however, is the other human drama that was unfolding in Salonika Harbor around that time [my italics]. A few days after [my italics] [Morgenthau] witnessed the arrival of that boatload of human misery, consisting of destitute Christians of Anatolia, a small fleet of creaky Turkish passenger ships and freighters began taking people in the other direction. (161)

Clark correctly asserts that Morgenthau failed to mention this other human drama. However, my study of Morgenthau’s account of his time in Thessaloniki indicates that he may well not have seen it. He was there for only "two days" (1929, 161). During that short stay, he was not always in the city but taken to visit refugee camps and factories, etc., away from the sea (1929, 97-100). It seems plausible to me that had he witnessed the scene Clark describes, he would have noted compassionately, as he did in Constantinople, the suffering of ethnic Turks, like the ethnic Greeks, helplessly caught in events utterly out of their control (1919, 2003, 43).

Morgenthau’s humanitarian values and Clark’s important question draw attention to a goal in the work of conflict resolvers, that of helping each side in a conflict humanize the Other by showing awareness and compassion toward the Other’s suffering and by showing understanding of the Other’s need for security and respect for their identity, as well as communicating their own such need to the Other and feeling understood by that Other. In most conflicts, wholesale devaluation of the Other, often shading into actual dehumanization, is characteristic. We all know how easy it is for politicians or other
individuals with the public ear to whip up support for themselves by over-generalized condemnation.

Morgenthau himself held a complex view of Turks (which I intend to explore elsewhere). Nevertheless in his books about his experiences, particularly in Turkey and Greece, his statements included over-generalized if not wholesale devaluation of them. At the same time it is easy to understand major condemnation of that government and of many individuals; major condemnation was certainly appropriate.

Today is a different time and it is very discouraging that many Turks use condemnatory language about Armenians, at times speaking as if Armenians had caused the massacres! Let me note that blaming the victim is quite commonplace and certainly not confined to any one national group or individuals. Rather it is a move of the more powerful asserting just their power and avoiding responsibility and, beneath, shame. Nevertheless, those judgments of Morgenthau that are sweeping have made it difficult for many Turks to read Morgenthau with openness. Yet those Turks who attack Armenians as if Armenians had harmed them are surely also not helping improve a climate for resolution of the relationship.

Once violence between communities has ended, there is a need to find ground on which to build relationships good for both communities. Justice is surely a key component, but how to bring it about? Are there countries that voluntarily submit themselves to the international court? Germany had initially to be forced by the Nuremberg Trials to admit its crimes, though since then it has initiated many acts of justice and reparations.
Humanization of the Other may be one way to lay groundwork for achievement of some justice. It might open up more capacity to see why justice is needed. On the other hand, the achievement of justice on its own is no guarantee of mutual humanization.

The task of humanization is extremely difficult if it is to go beyond political correctness or the mere pronouncement of accepted human rights norms. In my efforts as a facilitator to bring Armenians and Turks together, I have certainly been learning that one major challenge in conflict resolution work is how to foster emotionally felt humanization of the Other while not seeming to be promoting the relativization of historical realities or ignoring the need for justice.

REFERENCES


