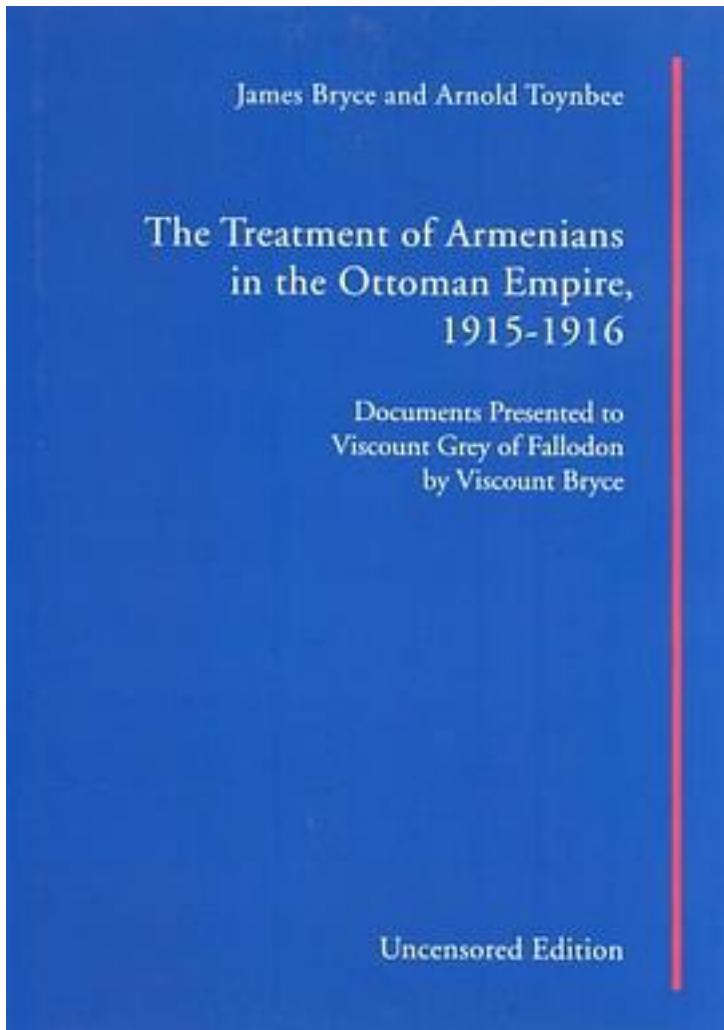


The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-1916



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In 1916 the British Parliament published a "Blue Book" that identified the events of 1915-16 as a systematic effort to exterminate the Armenian people. The Blue Book has been one of the most solid and influential sources on the Armenian Genocide. A critical, uncensored edition, edited and with an introduction by Ara Sarafian, has now been published by the Gomidas Institute.

Viscount James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee were commissioned to prepare the Blue Book, which is formally known as "The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916." Toynbee carefully compiled and verified dozens of eyewitness accounts from different parts of the Ottoman Empire. These accounts provided the basis for Bryce's brilliant thesis on the Genocide, published while the crime was still in progress.

The book includes eyewitness accounts from United States consular and missionary sources, as well as the testimony of German, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Greek, Kurdish, and Armenian witnesses.

The original publication was full of blanks: the names of many people and places were obscured in order to safeguard sources still in the Ottoman Empire. The names remain obscured in facsimile editions that have been published over the years. Now Sarafian has restored the obscured names.

In his introduction, Sarafian takes issue with the repeated assertions of Turkish nationalist authors, who claim that the Blue Book was a British propaganda fabrication. He demonstrates the intellectual pedigree of the work. He shows exactly how testimonies were collected, authenticated, and then used in the book.

Generations of official historians of Turkey, such as Enver Zia Karal (Ankara University), Salahi Sonyel (British historian and public activist), Ismail Binark (Director of Ottoman archives, Ankara), Sinasi Orel (director of a much publicized project on declassifying documents on Ottoman Armenians), Kamuran Gurun (former diplomat), Mim Kemal Oke, Justin McCarthy, and others have cited the Blue Book and have insisted that it lacks credibility.

Sarafian has located Toynbee's original manuscript, Toynbee's correspondence with his sources, and most of the original reports, which were copied and sent to London. They can still be found at the Public Record Office (Kew), Bodleian Library (Oxford), National Archives (Washington, D.C.), Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), and the Houghton Library (Cambridge, Mass.) He has established that the compilers were meticulous in their verification of sources.

According to the "Times Literary Supplement" (London), "This work emerges from Ara Sarafian's examination as documentation of a high order.... Sarafian convincingly rebuts the claims that there was any falsification, or that any of the documents was one-sided British propaganda."

Toynbee, who went on to be a major historian in his own right, was deeply moved by his research on the Genocide. In his 1967 memoir, *Acquaintances*, Toynbee wrote: "My study [of the Armenian Genocide]... left an impression on my mind that was not effaced by the still more cold-blooded genocide, on a far larger scale, that was committed during the Second World War by the Nazi.

"Any great crime--private or public, personal or impersonal--raises a question that transcends national limits; the question goes to the heart of human nature itself. My

study of the genocide that had been committed in Turkey in 1915 brought home to me the reality of Original Sin," Toynbee concluded.

The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-1916 complements the Gomidas Institute's Armenian Genocide Documentation Series, which to date includes four volumes of eyewitness accounts: "Days of Tragedy in Armenia" (Rev. Henry Riggs, Harpoot); "'Turkish Atrocities'" (twenty-one reports compiled by James Barton); "Marsovan 1915" (the diary of Bertha Morley); and "'The German, the Turk and the Devil Made a Triple Alliance'" (the diary of Tacy Atkinson, Harpoot).

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