

**James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee**

**The Treatment of Armenians  
in the Ottoman Empire,  
1915–1916**

**Documents Presented to  
Viscount Grey of Falloden  
by Viscount Bryce**

**Uncensored Edition**

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edited and with an introduction by Ara Sarafian



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**Dedicated by Seda and Dr Rostom Stepanian  
to the memory of their illustrious father  
Dr Haroutune Stepanian  
(London 2000)**

## Introduction

In February 1916 the British government commissioned James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee to compile evidence concerning “recent events in Armenia.”<sup>1</sup> There was already sufficient information on the destruction of Armenians when Bryce and Toynbee embarked upon the proposed project “to establish the facts and to make them public.”<sup>2</sup> The subsequent report, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–16*, was printed in the British Parliamentary blue book series.<sup>3</sup> This work was in the form of a legal report and was composed primarily of documentation, as well as discussion and analysis. Nearly all of the evidence came from primary sources, which attested that starting in the spring of 1915, the Ottoman government had embarked on a systematic program to annihilate Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. This book was the first serious articulation of the Armenian Genocide thesis.

### Deviant Historiography

In recent years a number of partisan authors have argued that the Bryce-Toynbee volume was part of a British wartime misinformation campaign against the Ottoman Empire and its allies. Such authors have insisted that the work was based on forged documents and had no scholarly merit. Enver Zia Karal, a former dean of history at

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<sup>1</sup> This introduction is substantially based on an earlier article, “The Paper Trail: The Authentication of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–16*,” in *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard Hovannisian (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998). Lord Bryce was a former British ambassador to the United States, a law professor, a member of Parliament, and a longstanding champion of Ottoman Armenians. Arnold Toynbee, the main editor of this work, was a young historian and Foreign Office clerk who soon became a prominent historian in his own right. Toynbee sent out his first letters soliciting documentation for this work on 1 February 1916. See Public Record Office, Kew, file number F.O. 96/205, pp. 26–29.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce*, (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, Joseph Causton and Sons Ltd, 1916). This volume was accompanied, in the same year, by a confidential publication, *Key to Names of Persons and Places Withheld from Publication in the Original Edition of “The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce,” Miscellaneous No. 31 (1916)*. Toynbee stated that neither he nor James Bryce knew the British government’s reasons for publicising the plight of Armenians, and he maintained that the intellectual integrity of the work was never compromised by any external considerations. Arnold Toynbee, *Acquaintances*, pp. 149–51. Apparently the Foreign Office accepted to publish the report as a blue book only in June 1916. See Charles Masterman to James Bryce, communication dated Wellington House (London), 14 June 1916, Bodleian Library (Oxford), Papers of James Bryce 202/153.