

The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916

James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee

The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916

Documents Presented to
Viscount Grey of Fallodon
by Viscount Bryce

Uncensored Edition

Edited with an introduction by Ara Sarafian



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To the lost Armenian communities of Ottoman Turkey

Introduction¹

In February 1916 Arnold Toynbee began to compile, under the direction of James Bryce, a critical report concerning “recent events in Armenia.”² There was already sufficient information on the destruction of Ottoman Armenians for Bryce and Toynbee to embark upon the proposed project “to establish the facts and to make them public.”³ The subsequent report, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–16*, was printed in the British Parliamentary blue book series.⁴ 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 programme to annihilate Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. This book was the first serious articulation of the Armenian Genocide thesis.

The British government was keenly in need of such a critical publication. Throughout the Spring of 1915 reports of atrocities against Ottoman Armenians were filtering out of Ottoman Turkey and the issue was raised at the House of Lords at the

¹ This introduction is substantially based on the first “Uncensored Edition” of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916* (Princeton: Gomidas Institute, 2000).

² Arnold Toynbee sent out his first letters soliciting documentation for this work on 1 February 1916. See National Archives (United Kingdom), file number F.O. 96/205, pp. 26–29. Toynbee was working under the supervision of Lord Bryce, a former British ambassador to the United States, a law professor, a member of Parliament, and a longstanding champion of Ottoman Armenians. Toynbee, who remained the main editor of this work, was a young historian and Foreign Office clerk who soon became a prominent historian in his own right. Much has been made by deniers of the Armenian Genocide that Toynbee also worked for Wellington House, a British propaganda agency during World War I. However, as the present volume demonstrates, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916* was a Parliamentary report of superior intellectual pedigree.

³ Arnold Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 149.

⁴ James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–16: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon 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 Fallodon 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 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.

end of July 1915.⁵ The subsequent debate was sympathetic to Armenians but remained subdued due to a lack of reliable information (as well as a lack of policy options for the British government). The Ottoman Turks and their German allies were very much in control of information coming out of the Ottoman Empire, as Constantinople and Berlin exercised a strict regime of censorship and misinformation regarding the fate of Armenians. Furthermore, as British statesmen were aware, any unwarranted discussion of the Armenian issue had the potential to alienate Muslim opinion in the British Empire and play into the hands of the Ottoman and German governments.⁶ These considerations were even at play when the Russian government requested that the Allied Powers should issue a joint declaration holding Ottoman leaders accountable for their alleged maltreatment of Armenians in May 1915. As Foreign Office minutes attest, the British authorities were reticent to join such action due to a lack of information in London and the fear of possible complications that might follow suit.⁷

The turning point in the British position came after October 4th 1915, when the United States government began releasing information on the destruction of Ottoman Armenians. This was through a front organisation called the Committee on Armenian Atrocities (CAA), which had direct access to State Department files from Ottoman Turkey, including United States consular reports from the interior of the Ottoman Empire. The CAA soon developed into a broader organisation, the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR), and ultimately become the Near East Foundation by an Act of Congress. The October 4th press release by the CAA consisted of 25 accounts of the destruction of Armenians, most of which came from the records of the Department of State.⁸

The United States government released more information on the Armenian Genocide in order to pressure the leaders of the Ottoman Empire to desist in the destruction of Armenians. They wanted to do this by influencing public opinion in the United States, raise funds for relief purposes, and continue their clandestine relief programmes to save Armenians (and Assyrians) wherever survivors could be reached. For example, in the region of Harpoot, in central Turkey, close to 5,000 Armenian women and children had been gathered by American missionaries and fed with relief funds from the United States.⁹ The release of United States records on the Armenian Genocide was the latest development in a protracted cat-and-mouse game between United States

⁵ See *Hansard* (House of Lords), 28 July 1915, "Reported Massacres in Armenia." For a full transcript of this debate see Eric Avedian and Ara Sarafian, *British Parliamentary Debates on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1918*, (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2003), pp.1-5.

⁶ See Earl of Cromer (House of Lords, 6 October 1915), *British Parliamentary Debates on the Armenian Genocide*, p. 7; Lord Robert Cecil, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, (House of Lords, 16 November 1915), *British Parliamentary Debates on the Armenian Genocide*, p. 24.

⁷ See Sir E. Grey to Sir F. Bertie (British Embassy, Petrograd), 2 May 1915. F)371/2488/57956. For a critical discussion of the Allied declaration of 24 May 1915, which also had a British signature to it, see *British Parliamentary Debates on the Armenian Genocide*, pp. 59-60.

⁸ For a copy of the Committee on Armenian Atrocities press release of October 4th see *British Parliamentary Debates on the Armenian Genocide*, Appendix II, pp. 61-90.

officials in Ottoman Turkey, most notably Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, and the leaders of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰ The United States also leaked information about the destruction of Armenians to other bodies, such as the International Red Cross, to alleviate conditions.¹¹

The primary impetus for a British Parliamentary Blue Book on the Armenian Genocide thus came from the United States, which provided crucial eye-witness accounts for British authorities to address the Armenian issue in a forthright manner. Already by October 6th 1915, James Bryce was discussing the substance of the CAA press release at the House of Lords, while a similar debate followed in the House of Commons a month later.¹² It was during the October 6th debate that the need for a Parliamentary report on the Armenian Genocide, based on the new accounts from the United States, was made by the Earl of Cromer. The subsequent critical compilation which was published as *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916* followed as a matter of course. Unlike many other wartime propaganda publications, the strength of the British Parliamentary report on the Armenian Genocide lay in its detailed and scholarly nature, which lends itself to critical scrutiny even today. Writing many decades later, Arnold Toynbee singled out this work for special mention, when he recorded in his twilight years: "The collection and collation of the evidence from which the Blue Book [on the Armenian Genocide] was compiled had occupied most of my working time for a number of months; and, after the Blue Book had been published, I could not dismiss its contents from my mind. I was not only haunted by the victims' sufferings and by the criminals' deeds; I was exercised by the question how it could be possible for human beings to do what those perpetrators of genocide had done. My study [on 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... My study of the genocide that had been committed in Turkey in 1915 brought home to me the reality of Original Sin."¹³

⁹ See Maria Jacobsen, *Diaries of a Danish Missionary. Harpoot, 1907-1919*, (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute) 2001. Also see Hilmar Kaiser, *At the Crossroads of Der Zor: Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915-1917 [2nd Edition]*, (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute).

¹⁰ Ara Sarafian (comp., ed. and intro.), *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*, (Gomidas Institute: Princeton and London, 2004) and Henry Morgenthau, *United States Diplomacy on the Bosphorus: The Diaries of Ambassador Morgenthau, 1913-1916*, Ara Sarafian (comp. and intro.), (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2004). Also see Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, (London: Sterndale Classics, 2003).

¹¹ See R.G. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910–1929, National Archives, Washington D.C., document number 83. For a printed copy see Ara Sarafian, *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*, p. 75–76.

¹² See House of Lords, *Hansard* (5th series) Vol. XIX, 6 October 1915, cols. 994-1004 and House of Commons, *Hansard* (5th series) Vol. LXXV, 16 November 1915, cols. 1770-1776. Also see these debates in *British Parliamentary Debates on the Armenian Genocide*, pp. 5-13 and 14-28.

¹³ Arnold J. Toynbee, *Acquaintances*, (New York: Oxford University press, 1967).

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 with no scholarly merit. Enver Zia Karal, a former dean of history at Ankara University, dismissed the report as merely “one-sided British propaganda” which was “not worth dwelling upon.”¹⁴ Ismet Binark, the former general director of the State Archives in Turkey, claimed that “the events described in the reports presented as the records of the so-called Armenian massacre . . . [were] all falsified information taken from the English’s files relating to the East.” *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* was “ornamented with massacre stories, unrelated with the truth, biased, written with Armenian fanaticism, and misleading the world’s public opinion.”¹⁵ Mim Kemal Oke said it was based “on Armenian sources and documents gathered by Armenian supporters from second and third hand sources. . . . Toynbee created hair-raising scenes of massacres without mentioning his sources, without comparing his sources, and without giving the names and surnames of his witnesses. He described the alleged massacres in great detail as if he had been one of the victims.”¹⁶ Sinasi Orel even postulated that “German, American, Austrian and Swiss missionaries and charitable organizations were present in almost every corner of Anatolia throughout this period [and] this factor alone would have been sufficient to ensure that any ill-treatment to which the Armenians were subjected would have been broadcast worldwide immediately.”¹⁷ His inference was that there were no such reports or “broadcasts.” However, as this introduction demonstrates, foreign nationals in the Ottoman Empire did indeed report on the destruction of Armenians, and such reports provided the core evidence in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*.¹⁸

¹⁴ Enver Zia Karal, *Armenian Question (1878–1923)* (Ankara: Imprimerie Gunduz, 1975), p. 18.

¹⁵ See Ismet Binark’ foreword in *Ermeni Olaylari Tarihi* (Huseyi Nazim Pasha’s papers) (Ankara: Turkish Prime Ministry General Directorate of State Archives, 1994), p. xl.

¹⁶ Mim Kemal Oke, *The Armenian Question 1914–1923*, (Nicosia: K. Rustem & Brother, 1988), pp. 106–7; also see Kamuran Gurun, *The Armenian File: A Myth of Innocence Exposed* (Nicosia: Rustem & Brother, 1985), pp. 42–43; Salahi R. Sonyel, “Turco-Armenian Relations,” *Belleten* (Turkish Historical Society), August 1994, pp. 381–449.

¹⁷ Sinasi Orel and Surreyya Yuca, *The Talat Pasha Telegrams: Historical Fact or Armenian Fiction?* (Nicosia: K. Rustem & Brother, 1986), p. 121.

¹⁸ For example, Committee on Armenian Atrocities, “Press Release” (New York, 4 October 1915); American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, “Latest News Concerning the Armenian and Syrian Sufferers” (New York, 2 January 1916); Comité de l’Oeuvre de Secours 1915 aux Arméniens, *Quelques Documents sur le sort des Arméniens en 1915* (Geneva).

Method and Sources

The most accessible record describing the authenticity of the British thesis was actually the published work itself and its supporting sister 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."*¹⁹ These two works gave a meticulous account for each record printed in the main volume and listed the identities of the primary sources and communicants who forwarded them to Bryce and Toynbee (see tables 1 and 2).

The Toynbee Papers, which are today located at the British National Archives (formerly Public Record Office) in Kew, provide further information on the compilation of the wartime publication.²⁰ These papers include Arnold Toynbee's original working copy of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, his daily correspondence soliciting information from intermediaries and actual sources, as well as scores of pamphlets and journal cuttings he consulted. The Toynbee Papers account for the origins of the records, as well as the criteria by which they were accepted in the final publication.²¹

Since most of the materials came from the United States, the records of the American State Department, and those of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), contain many of the original accounts that were copied and forwarded to Great Britain in 1916.²²

Thus, one can locate a whole spectrum of published and archival records pertaining to this publication, including the reports themselves, the correspondence between the different parties involved in procuring them (i.e. between sources and communicants), and the actual manuscript of the original book in question. Any balanced discussion of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* has to account for the aforementioned records, as each document is clearly connected to others, and these, as a whole, demonstrate a clear trail between the Ottoman Empire, the United States, and Great Britain.

¹⁹ This confidential key was printed separately because many documents were provided by sources who were still in the Ottoman Empire in 1916. These sources had to be obscured in the main publication. Bryce and Toynbee communicated this confidential information to a number of trusted individuals in Britain and the United States (p. xl), and promised to print that same list of names as soon as possible (pp. xxi–xxii, xl–xli). The confidential key was printed that same year (1916).

²⁰ F.O. 96/205-11 (Toynbee Papers, six boxes), National Archives, Kew.

²¹ The Bodleian Library (Oxford) also provides similar information in the private papers of James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee housed there.

²² The archives in question are the National Archives (Washington, D.C.) and Houghton Library (Cambridge, Mass.).

Denialist Historiography

In view of the printed and archival trail that is readily discernable to scholars today, the aforementioned authors, who call *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* a forgery, may also be termed “denialists.” This is because their argument is based on the deliberate disregard of pertinent records on their subject matter, the wanton misrepresentation of such records when they are cited, and the use of innuendo and outright falsehoods to make contentions that are otherwise unsustainable by scholarship. Salahi Sonyel, for example, who has addressed *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* in a number of publications, has never acknowledged the existence of Bryce and Toynbee’s *Key to Names of Persons*, even though this supporting publication is an important accompaniment to the main volume and its existence is a matter of record.²³ Sonyel simply disregards this published key when he questions the authenticity of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*. Furthermore, while Sonyel has cited the Toynbee Papers at the National Archives (United Kingdom), he has never acknowledged their content.²⁴ The Toynbee Papers alone are enough to cast aside all the questions he raises regarding the British thesis. Similarly, while he cites the United States National Archives in his bibliographies, he does not acknowledge the American consular despatches on the Armenian Genocide in these archives—copies of which appeared in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* (see table 2).²⁵ Sonyel simply ignores these key materials and asserts that the documents comprising the Bryce and Toynbee volume constituted “second or third-hand sources.”²⁶ Similarly, other partisan commentators, such as Justin McCarthy and Sukru Elekdag choose to speculate that the British volume was simply British wartime propaganda without actually disclosing the content of the work.

²³ The *Key to Names of Persons and Places Withheld* has also been reprinted several times with the republication of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, for example by G. Doniguian and Sons, Beirut, 1988. Copies of the original publication of this key also appear in other archives, such as document number 307, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910–1929, National Archives, Washington D.C.

²⁴ Sonyel acknowledges the Toynbee Papers in a passing footnote, but does not discuss their content. See Sonyel, “Turco-Armenian Relations,” p. 444 n. 168.

²⁵ Sonyel, “Turco-Armenian Relations”; idem, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire*, (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 1993).

²⁶ At least forty-one reports that appeared in the British volume can still be found in U.S. Department of State archives. Most of these were signed statements, and all of them were sent from the Ottoman Empire. Fifteen of these reports were written by American consuls, ten by American missionaries, and eight by other nationals (four of whom were German). Six were from undisclosed sources and two were from an Armenian political party.

Key Informants, Key Communicants: The United States and Reverend James L. Barton

The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire can be examined at three critical levels: (1) Who actually communicated reports on the Armenian Genocide to the British in 1916? (2) Who were the original eye-witnesses who wrote these reports? (3) How can we examine the authenticity of these materials?

Most of the key accounts in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* were communicated from the Ottoman Empire via the United States. The main conduit in the transmission of these materials was Reverend James Barton, the head of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the Committee on Armenian Atrocities (October 1915), and the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (November 1915).²⁷ Barton, who was highly respected in President Wilson's administration, had direct access to American consular reports from the interior of the Ottoman Empire. Since the United States was still a neutral power in 1915, its nationals—including diplomatic and consular officials—resided in the Ottoman Empire and many of them witnessed the genocide of Armenians. Though the United States government could not openly intervene in the internal affairs of the Ottoman state, it did support a clandestine relief effort on behalf of surviving Armenians. Part of this effort was working with humanitarian organizations and channeling relief funds wherever possible.²⁸ Consequently, James Barton had direct relations with the State Department and consulted American consular reports on the genocide of Armenians. In one communication to Bryce, Barton explained, "Our State Department allows me to make public use of the material if I can conceal the source of information. The Consuls in Turkey have been warned [by the Turkish authorities] against reporting the local conditions. There is a danger that if publicity matter can be traced to the Consuls they may be sent out of the country."²⁹ Several months later Barton described a similar meeting when he "procured a large amount of material, freely given me by the [State] Department, reporting the condition of things in different parts of the Turkish empire." He also added that he was sending "a considerable quantity of this material to Mr. Toynbee . . . for the forthcoming publication now in preparation."³⁰

²⁷ Reverend Barton was the Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, an American missionary organization based in Boston, with longstanding interests in the Ottoman Empire. Barton was also the secretary of the *ad hoc* Committee on Armenian Atrocities (CAA) and the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR). The ACASR was the forerunner of Near East Relief.

²⁸ Prior to World War I, American missionaries enjoyed excellent relations with the American Department of State. For a detailed discussion of Reverend Barton's access and dissemination of American consular and diplomatic reports on the destruction of Armenians, see Ara Sarafian, "The Paper Trail: The American State Department and the Report of Committee on Armenian Atrocities," *Revue du Monde Armenien* 1 (1994), pp. 127–60. See memorandum dated 17 Sept. 1915, Yale University Library, Manuscripts and Archives, F. L. Polk Papers, Box 22, Folder 0112.

²⁹ James Barton to James Bryce, dated Boston, 11 November 1915. Papers of James BryceUSA/reel69/167/MSS 143

Many State Department records on the Armenian Genocide had already been published in 1915. The first batch of such reports appeared in a press release issued in New York on 4 October 1915, prior to the compilation of the British volume. This press release, which was composed of American diplomatic, consular, and missionary accounts from the Ottoman Empire, had been compiled by Barton with the help of the United States government.³¹ The British were well aware of these American records on the destruction of Armenians and the October press release provided the opening for Arnold Toynbee's correspondence with James Barton.³² This correspondence resulted in Barton and his aides forwarding most of the key reports in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*.³³ As table 1 shows, the single most important source was Barton's American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR), followed by the American-Armenian journal *Gotchnag*, then the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (BFMPC).

Modus Operandi: A Critical Appraisal

One can trace Toynbee's *modus operandi* when assessing the reports he received on the destruction of Armenians through his working papers at the National Archives (United Kingdom). Toynbee attempted to collect as many accounts on the treatment of Ottoman Armenians in 1915–16 as possible. He made a concerted effort to establish direct contact with witnesses to obtain supporting or additional documentation.³⁴ The least problematic of these materials, in Bryce and Toynbee's estimation, were reports from American consulates and missionaries in the Ottoman Empire. Their authenticity was not in question. However, even in these cases, when documents had omissions of detail, Toynbee asked for further information before accepting them for serious consideration.³⁵ For example, on 15 February 1916 Toynbee wrote to Barton and requested details regarding the reports printed in the 4 October press release of the Committee on Armenian Atrocities (New York). Toynbee's primary interest was to authenticate the reports in the press release and to ask for additional information. He asked Barton for specific materials from Mr. Ernest Yarrow (Van), Dr. James

³⁰ James Barton to James Bryce, dated Boston, 7 March 1915. Papers of James BryceUSA/reel69/167/MSS 153

³¹ See Ara Sarafian, "The Paper Trail," pp. 127–60.

³² Reverend Barton was among the first people to be contacted by Toynbee regarding the situation of Ottoman Armenians, on 1 Feb. 1916. See F.O. 96/205, pp. 26–29.

³³ For example, F.O. 96/205 26, 63, 85, 108, 141, 145, 176, 186, 204, 205, 226, 230; Toynbee and Barton also communicated through third parties such as Lord Bryce and Reverend Barton's aides in the United States. See, for example, Barton to Bryce, letter dated 7 Mar. 1916, Houghton Library, ABC 2.1/292/339.

³⁴ F.O. 96/205-6. These two volumes are comprised entirely of Toynbee's correspondence regarding the collection of materials on the destruction of Armenians.

³⁵ See, for example, Toynbee to Barton, correspondence dated 12 Apr. 1916, F.O. 96/205, pp. 207–8.

McNaughton (Bardizag), and Miss Olive Vaughan and Dr. William N. Chambers (Adana). He requested a fuller version of the 1915 “Statement of the Medical Department at Urmia” (BFMPC). He also requested Barton’s mediation in obtaining the co-operation of the Swiss publishers of a collection of documents on the Armenian Genocide (*Quelques Documents sur le Sort des Arméniens, 1915*).³⁶ Toynbee wanted to authenticate the documents printed in the Swiss publication—where some of the reports were said to have originated in the United States—and to request additional materials.³⁷

Each report communicated to Toynbee was individually examined, and the Toynbee Papers at the National Archives (United Kingdom) clearly indicate this point. Often the American communicants themselves provided important commentaries on the materials they were forwarding. Many communicants clearly wanted to give a forthright appraisal of the reports they were sending. For example, on one occasion, Reverend William Rockwell sent Toynbee a copy of an “amazing article” that had appeared in the *Boston Sunday Globe* on 23 April 1916 entitled “German’s Kick Caused the Fall of Erzerum.” Rockwell cautioned Toynbee that the report was grossly exaggerated in the opinion of Reverend Robert Stapleton, an American missionary who was in Erzerum at the time of the events described in that report.³⁸ In the absence of further supporting materials on the authenticity of this article, Toynbee did not include it in his compilation. On another occasion, Toynbee himself investigated the claim of a certain Eleanor Franklin Egan, who wrote an article entitled “Behind the Smoke of Battle” in the *Saturday Evening Post* (15 February 1916).³⁹ This report was also not included in the British volume because of insufficient information on the location of the author at the time of the events described.⁴⁰

By June 1916 Toynbee had 138 documents that he regarded as genuine accounts, and he was still appraising twenty-nine more.⁴¹ When *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* was published, Toynbee still had questions about twenty-two entries (out of 150) because of incomplete information regarding sources or locations. Each of these entries was clearly identified and included in the work because of the detail it presented, and because it could be verified by other “core” materials that were authenticated by Toynbee. As Toynbee pointed out, these 22 reports were not essential to

³⁶ Toynbee to Barton, correspondence dated 15 Feb. 1916, F.O. 96/205/63.

³⁷ Toynbee succeeded in establishing relations with M. Leopold Favre, the Swiss compiler of these records. Favre provided Toynbee with invaluable information and documents that were subsequently included in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*. For the Toynbee-Favre correspondence, see Toynbee Papers, F.O. 96/77–79, 80–81, 114–115, 158–160, 164–165, 198–199, 202.

³⁸ Rockwell to Toynbee correspondence, 1 July 1916, F.O. 96/206, pp. 50–51.

³⁹ Toynbee to Barton correspondence, 8 Mar. 1916, F.O. 96/205, pp. 108–10.

⁴⁰ Barton to Toynbee correspondence, 1 Apr. 1916, *Toynbee Papers*, F.O. 96/205, p. 226.

⁴¹ Arnold Toynbee to James Bryce, dated Wellington House, London, 20 June 1916. Papers of James Bryce/202/166.

the case set forth in the volume.⁴² For example, the work contained several reports communicated by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), even though these reports did not disclose the full identities of the actual witnesses. While these materials supplemented the information provided in the “core” materials, they were not essential for the Bryce-Toynbee thesis. The published volume clearly distinguished the different classes of eye-witness accounts, the critical interrelationship between them, and their relevance to the thesis on the Armenian Genocide. It even provided an insert for readers listing “forty or fifty of the most important documents.”⁴³ This was to focus on key records because “in publishing a more or less exhaustive collection of materials it is almost impossible to make the essential things stand out clearly.”⁴⁴

Most of the accounts compiled in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* were written by nationals of neutral countries who resided in the Ottoman Empire in 1915. These “core” materials, sent to England through trustworthy intermediaries, formed the basis of the Bryce-Toynbee thesis on the destruction of Armenians. Bryce and Toynbee also obtained a smaller number of original statements from individuals who had been in the Ottoman Empire in 1915.⁴⁵ Finally, the work included a number of original translations from Armenian, French, German, and Italian sources.

While the British thesis did not rely on “native evidence” when constructing its argument, as these witnesses could have been “excited” and prone to “exaggerate” points of detail, Bryce pointed out that “the most shocking and horrible accounts” were corroborated by the “most trustworthy neutral witnesses” and that the removal of “native evidence” would only have changed the minor details of the British thesis. Table 1 identifies most of the key informants as American missionaries, such as Mary Graffam and Ernest Partridge at Sivas, William Dodd and Wilfred Post in Konia, Mary W. Riggs and Ernest Riggs in Harpoot (Kharpert), Francis Leslie in Urfa, and Edith Cold at Hadjin. A second group were American consular representatives, such as Leslie Davis at Harpoot, Oscar Heizer at Trebizond, Jesse Jackson at Aleppo, Edward Nathan at Mersina, and Greg Young at Damascus. These consular representatives also forwarded many of the aforementioned missionary accounts to the United States through official channels. The last category of key informants were nationals of neutral countries or those allied to the Ottoman Turks, such as Giacomo Gorrini, the Italian consul general in Trebizond, Alma Johannsen, a Swedish missionary in Moush, and Schwester Mohring, a German missionary in Syria. Most of these sources were obscured in the main volume and recorded in *Key to Names of Persons and Places Withheld*.

⁴² Memorandum by Editor in *Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1916), p. xli.

⁴³ This “Guide to the Reader” insert specifically pointed out the reports numbered 2, 12, 15, 18, 22, 23, 24, 31, 40, 43, 47, 53, 59, 62, 64, 65, 66, 69, 72, 73, 78, 82, 87, 88, 89, 96, 102, 104, 108, 114, 117, 118, 121, 122, 123, 126, 130, 133, 137, 139, 141, 143, 144, 145.

⁴⁴ Arnold Toynbee to James Bryce, dated Wellington House, 22 July 1916, Papers of James Bryce/203/6.

⁴⁵ For example, Miss H. E. Wallis, 9 May 1916, Report number 129.

American Consular and Diplomatic Reports

Toynbee's success in collecting eyewitness accounts on the destruction of Armenians can be best demonstrated by locating original copies of the sources he cited. Since most of the materials were communicated via the United States, and since a significant number of these reports came from the American Department of State, such reports can still be found in the National Archives in Washington D.C.⁴⁶ An actual examination of these depositories yields significant results (see table 3) and demonstrates the fidelity with which Reverend Barton and his associates copied and transmitted eye-witness accounts on the Armenian Genocide to Bryce and Toynbee in 1916. These original materials show the careful manner used to collect and print the American documents in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*.⁴⁷ Though Barton was selective in the records he sent Toynbee from American consular files (presumably he could not send everything), the reports that he did send represented a fair sample. The addition of the remaining American materials to the British volume today would only lend additional support to the central thesis of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*.⁴⁸ Table 3 lists 41 reports from American State Department records that were received from the Ottoman Empire and subsequently published in the British volume.

Conclusion

Unlike the compilers of other documentary publications during World War I, Bryce and Toynbee left a clear account of the methodology of their work, both in published and archival records. As these materials show, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* was significantly based on primary sources written by nationals of neutral countries who resided in the Ottoman Empire in 1915, during the Armenian Genocide.

⁴⁶ For example, see R.G. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910–1929, National Archives, Washington D.C.; The Papers of Henry Morgenthau Sr., Library of Congress, Washington D.C. Both of these collections are microfilmed and readily available to scholars. The Gomidas Institute has recently published the substance of both sets of the above records in Henry Morgenthau (comp. and intro. By Ara Sarafian), *United States Diplomacy on the Bosphorus: The Diaries of Ambassador Morgenthau, 1913-1916* (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2004) and Ara Sarafian (comp., ed. and intro.), *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917* (Gomidas Institute: Princeton and London, 2004). Also see the memoirs of the last United States ambassador to Ottoman Turkey, Abram I. Elkus (Hilmar Kaiser ed. and intro.), *The Memoirs of Abram Elkus: Lawyer, Ambassador, Statesman*, (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2004).

⁴⁷ Toynbee made minor stylistic changes in the reproduction of these reports, which he discussed in his introduction to *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, p. xlii. In some cases, Toynbee also withheld some key passages to safeguard his sources. These passages were included in *Key to Names of Persons and Places Withheld*. There are very few cases where some paragraphs or sentences were omitted altogether. These passages had no bearing on the subject matter of the British book and their removal was of no consequence to the reports in question.

⁴⁸ Ara Sarafian (comp., ed. and intro. by Ara Sarafian), *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*.

These persons communicated to the American Embassy in Constantinople, the American Department of State in Washington D.C., as well as various missionary organizations in Europe and the United States. Subsequently, some of these reports were released to the American and British public during the period in question.

The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and its supporting publication, *Key to Names of Persons and Places Withheld from Publication in the Original Edition of "The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–16,"* provide details on the procedure used to collect these documents, and the manner in which these materials were arranged to demonstrate the systematic destruction of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. These details can be examined today in the National Archives (United Kingdom), Rev. Barton's correspondence at the Houghton Library (Harvard University), and the National Archives in Washington D.C. Many of these archival sources have been microfilmed and printed in documentary publications and are readily available at major university and research libraries.⁴⁹ These records support *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* as an exemplary academic exercise that documented, verified, and accounted for its methodology—a task undertaken under extraordinary circumstances in 1916.⁵⁰ This publication showed that the Ottoman government had embarked on a systematic policy to destroy Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

Given the compelling documentation at hand, the denial of the Bryce and Toynbee work as "Armenian propaganda" cannot be accepted as a matter of "interpretation" or "scholarly debate." The evidence shown above is too overwhelming to be dismissed in such a fashion. *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* remains a milestone in the historiography of the Armenian Genocide.

⁴⁹ For example, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915, Supplement, The World War* (Washington D.C., 1928); Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910–1929, National Archives, Washington D.C. (also available on microfilm); Henry Morgenthau, *The Papers of Henry Morgenthau, Sr.*, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (also available on microfilm). These diaries have recently been published in Henry Morgenthau, *United States Diplomacy on the Bosphorus: The Diaries of Ambassador Morgenthau, 1913–1916* (comp. and intro. By Ara Sarafian), (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2004); Armen Hairapetian, "Race Problems and the Armenian Genocide: The State Department Files," *Armenian Review* 37, no. 1 (Spring 1984), pp. 41–145; Rouben Adalian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide in the U.S. Archives, 1915–1918*, (Alexandria, Virginia: Chadwick-Healey, 1991) (microfiche compilation); Sarafian, *United States Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide*. Also see R. G. Hovannisian, *The Armenian Holocaust; A Bibliography Relating to the Deportations, Massacres, and the Dispersion of the Armenian People, 1915–1923*, 2d ed., (Belmont, Mass.: Armenian Heritage Press, 1980).

⁵⁰ The British thesis of 1916, carefully documented and authenticated by archival evidence, can be contrasted with the Ottoman government's *White Book*, also published in 1916, to vilify Armenians as a seditious minority. There is no indication of who compiled or printed this latter work; no account of the method by which its constituent elements were put together; and there are no archival collections today which provide the background to this Ottoman wartime publication. This *White Book* has been republished and disseminated as a primary source by those who still deny the Armenian Genocide today.

**Table 1. Communicants of Reports Appearing in
*Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915–16.***

American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (76 reports); 2, 3, 10, 11, 14, 23, 26, 44, 51, 52, 54, 59, 61, 65, 66, 69, 70, 71, 72, 77, 80, 85, 86, 87a, 87b, 88, 89, 90, 91, 93, 96, 97, 101, 102, 104, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115a, 115b, 115c, 115d, 115e, 115f, 115g, 116, 117a, 117b, 117c, 117d, 118, 120, 121, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 133, 136, 138a, 138b, 139a, 139b, 139c, 139d, 140, 141, 143, 149, 150
Gotchnag (New York) (11 reports); 4, 5, 17, 60, 63, 68, 84, 98a, 98b, 98c, 134
 Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (10 reports); 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 38, 41, 42
 Boghos Nubar Pasha in Egypt (8 reports); 6, 7, 8, 9, 87c, 119, 131, 132
Ararat (London) (5 reports); 19, 25, 36, 43, 45
 Lord James Bryce (4 reports); 57, 64, 67, 82
Horizon (Tiflis) (4 reports); 46, 55, 105, 106
 Leopold Favre in Geneva (4 reports); 13, 62, 94, 123
Sonnenaufgang (4 reports); 12, 18, 142, 145
 British Foreign Office (3 reports); 48, 49, 50
Balkanian Mamoul (2 reports); 83, 99
 Rev. F. N. Heazell (2 reports); 39, 147
Mschak (Tiflis) (2 reports); 56, 58
New Armenia (New York) (2 reports); 81, 103
Times (London) (2 reports); 76, 100
United Press (2 reports); 1, 146
 Mr. Trowbridge (2 report); 122, 130
Le Journal (Paris) (1 report); 144
Arev (Alexandria) (1 report); 74
Arev (Baku) (1 report); 47
Associated Press (1 report); 34
Assyrian Mission Quarterly (1 report); 148
 Mr. J. D. Bouchier (1 report); 75
 Rev. I. N. Camp (1 report); 137
The Churchman (Oxford) (1 report); 37
Egyptian Gazette (1 report); 135
Gazette de Lausanne (1 report); 21
Manchester Guardian (1 report); 16
Il Messagero (Rome) (1 report); 73
Missionary Herald (Boston) (1 report); 78
 Mr. G. H. Paelian (1 report); 79
Pioneer Press, St. Paul, Minnesota (1 report); 20
 Mr. A. S. Safrastian (1 report); 22
Van-Tösp (1 report); 24
 Mrs. Margoliouth (Oxford) (1 report); 40
 Miss Grace Higley Knapp (1 report); 15
 Rev. F. N. Heazell (1 report); 33
 Rev. H. J. Buxton (1 report); 53
 Prof. Thoumanian (1 report); 92
 Prof. Xenidhis (1 report); 95
 Miss H. E. Wallis (1 report); 129

**Table 2. Original Sources Informing
*The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.***

Reports Provided by Neutral and Belligerent Nationals: 102 reports

Sonnenaufgang (12)
ACASR (14, 44)
Ainslie, Miss Kate (121)
Barby, M. Henry (144)
Barnard, Mr. J.D. (148)
BFMPC missionary (Urmia) (35)
Birge, Mrs. (108)
Bouchier, Mr. J. D. (76, 100)
Briquet, M. Pierre (123, 124)
Buxton, Rev. H. J. (53)
Chambers, Rev. William (128)
Christie, Mrs. (114, 120)
Cochran, Mrs. J. P. (32)
Cold, Miss Edith (126, 127)
Davis, Leslie A. (Kharpert) (65, 66)
Dodd, Dr. William S. (109, 125)
Elmer, Prof. Theodore A. (87a, b)
Frearson, Miss (137)
Gage, Miss Frances C., (88, 89, 96)
Geddes, Mr. Walter M. (118, 136, 141)
German missionary (Marsovan) (91) [Hubecke, German]
Gorrini, Commendatore G. (73)
Graffam, Miss Mary L. (78)
Heizer, Oscar (54, 72)
Holt, Miss (102, 103)
Hoover, Dr. (104)
Jackson, Jesse (139a, b, c, d)
Jessup, Rev. F.N. (30)
Johannsen, Miss Alma (23)
Knapp, Grace H. (15)
Kurd Ali of Aghazade of Faro (58)
Labaree, Rev. Robert M. (28, 29)
Leslie, Mr. (133)
Lewis, Miss Mary E. (31)
Marcher, Miss Hansina (64)
McDowel, Rev. E. W. (41)
Member of US diplomatic service (101)
Members of US mission station, Urmia (38)
Mohring, Schwester L. (145)
Montenegrin kavass of Ottoman bank (74)
Morgenthau, Henry (2)
Muller, Mr. Hugo A. (42)
Nathan, Mr. Edward (115a, b, c, d)
Nisan, Rev. Y. M. (33)
Partridge, Rev. Ernest C. (77)
Partridge, Mrs. (79)

Peet, Mr. W. W. (10, 90, 150)
 Post, Dr. Wilfred M. (110, 111, 112)
 Price, Mr. Philip M. (45)
 Riggs, Miss Mary W. (66)
 Riggs, Ernest W. (69, 70, 71)
 Rohner, Fraulein Beatrice (117b, 142)
 Ryan, Mr. Arthur C. (13)
 Schafer, Fraulein Schwester P. (117a, b, c)
 Sewney, Mrs. (80)
 Shane, Miss Myrthe O. (26)
 Shedd, Rev. William A. (27)
 Shephard, Dr. (116)
 Sporri, Herr (18)
 Stapleton, Rev. Robert (149)
 Stevens, Mr. (48, 49, 50)
 Wallis, Miss H. E. (129)
 White, Dr. George E. (86)
 Wilson, Rev. S. G. (51, 52)
 Wingate, Henry K. (85)
 Wood, Henry (1, 146)
 Yarlesberg, Miss Flora A. Wedel (62)
 Young, Greg (143)
 Young, Mrs. J. Vance (135)

Reports Provided by Armenian and Other Native Sources: 66 reports

Arev correspondent (47)
Gotchnag journal (63, 84, 98 a, b, c)
Horizon journal (60, 106)
New Armenia journal (81)
 Aivazian, Mr. (8, 87c)
 Andreassian, Rev. Dikran (122, 130)
 ARF Balkan Section (3, 11, 61, 107, 113)
 Armenian Colony (Egypt) (119)
 Armenian Patriarchate (Constantinople) (4, 5, 6, 7)
 Armenian refugee (Moush) (24)
 Armenian refugee (Moush) (25)
 Armenian refugee (Harpout) (66)
 Armenian refugees (75)
 Armenian resident (Aintab) (138a, b)
 Armenian resident (Aleppo) (140)
 Armenian traveller (Kaisaria) (83)
 Armenian victim (Eski Shehir) (105)
 Artounian, Mr. Sampson (46)
 Baroutjibashian, Mrs. Victoria (59)
 Comrade Serko (99)
 Demirdjian, Miss (94)
 Essayan, Rev. Haroutioun (9)
 Gazarian, Mrs. (20)
 Gherberos, Mr. (67)
 Kedjedjian, Mrs. Maritza (68)

Khounountz, Mr. B. H. (55)
Letter, extract (Angora) (97)
Minassian, Dr. Y. (56)
Muggerditchian, Mr. Tovmas (132, 134)
Murad of Sivas (82)
Roupen of Sassoun (21, 22)
Rushdouni, Mr. Y. K. (16, 17)
Safrastian, Mr. A. S. (19, 57)
Sargis, Rev. Jacob (34)
Sargis, Rev. Jacob's wife (43)
Shimmon, Mr. Paul (36, 37, 147)
Surma (39, 40)
Thorgom, Mge. (Egypt) (131)
Xenidhis, Prof. J. P. (92, 93, 95)

**Table 3. American State Department Records in
*Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*⁵¹**

867.00/783 Edward Nathan, U. S. Consul, Mersina, September 22, 1915.
 867.4016/92 Mr. Leslie, U. S. missionary, Ourfa, June 14, 1915.
 867.4016/95 Miss Hunecke, July, 1915.
 867.4016/95 A.R.F. communique, June 7, 1915.
 867.4016/95 Pierre Briquet, Tarsus, no date.
 867.4016/95 undisclosed source, Aintab, letter, April 6, 1915.
 867.4016/95 undisclosed source, Aintab, letter, May 17, 1915.
 867.4016/95 undisclosed source, Aleppo, memorandum, June 18, 1915.
 867.4016/106 Dr. White, Marsovan, 1915.
 867.4016/122 Mrs. Victoria Baroutjibashian, American widow, Harpout.
 867.4016/124 Edward Nathan, U. S. consul, Mersina, August 7, 1915.
 867.4016/126 J. B. Jackson, U. S. Consul, Aleppo, August 3, 1915.
 867.4016/127 Leslie Davis, U. S. Consul, Harpout, July 11, 1915.
 867.4016/128 Oscar Heizer, U. S. Consul, Trebizond, July 28, 1915.
 867.4016/148 J. B. Jackson, U. S. Consul, Aleppo, August 19, 1915.
 867.4016/187 Miss Mary L. Graffam, American missionary, Sivas, August 7, 1915.
 867.4016/188 Dr. Post, American missionary, Konia, September 3, 1915.
 867.4016/189 Dr. Dodd, American missionary, Konia, September 8, 1915.
 867.4016/193 Edward Nathan, U. S. Consul, Mersina, September 11, 1915.
 867.4016/200 Edward Nathan, U. S. Consul, Mersina, September 27, 1915.
 867.4016/212 Gregory Young, U. S. Consul, Damascus, report, September 20, 1915.
 867.4016/220 Mr. Peter, U. S. Consular Agent, Samsoun, August 26, 1915.
 867.4016/225 unknown author, Harpout [probably Miss Mary Riggs].
 867.4016/226 Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Bukarest, October 15, 1915.
 867.4016/226 Dr. Post, American missionary, Konia, October 27, 1915.
 867.4016/226 undisclosed source, Konia, letter (resume), October 2, 1915.
 867.4016/226 Miss Alma Johannsen, Swedish missionary, Moush, November 1915.
 867.4016/226 undisclosed source, Angora, letter (extract), September 16, 1915.
 867.4016/238 Edward Nathan, U. S. Consul, Mersina, October 30, 1915.
 867.4016/239 Edward Nathan, U. S. Consul, Mersina, November 4, 1915.
 867.4016/240 Edward Nathan, U. S. Consul, Mersina, November 6, 1915.
 867.4016/243 Walter M. Geddes, Smyrna-Aleppo-Damascus, November 1915.
 867.4016/252 Miss Gage, American missionary, August-September 1915.
 867.4016/254 Miss Myrtle Shane, American missionary, Bitlis, October 14, 1915.
 867.4016/260 Schwester Schafer, Cilicia, November 16, 1915.
 867.4016/260 Schwester Rohner, Cilicia, November 26, 1915.
 867.4016/260 Schwester Schafer, Cilicia, December 1, 1915.
 867.4016/260 Schwester Schafer, Cilicia, December 13, 1915.
 867.4016/285 Rev. Robert S. Stapleton, Erzeroum, March 21, 1916.
 867.4016/72 J.B. Jackson, U. S. Consul, Aleppo, May 12, 1915.
 867.48/271 J.B. Jackson, U. S. Consul, Aleppo, February 8, 1916.

⁵¹ Citations indicate original decimal file numbers in Record Group 59, Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910–1929. These documents can also be found in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*.

Editorial Note

The whole text of *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* is included here from the original 1916 volume. The present critical republication also includes the contents of the volume's confidential key (*Key to Names of Persons and Places Withheld from Publication*), as well as further annotations. Information from the confidential key is placed in angular brackets (with no further notations), and editorial notes also appear in angular brackets but they are followed by the initials of the present editor (A.S.). Thus, readers should be able to readily discern between the original text as it appeared in 1916, information that was withheld in the confidential key, and further annotations. This volume presents, for the first time, the British government's complete thesis on the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

Certain names have been abbreviated for purposes of brevity: ACASR (American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, also called "Armenian Relief Committee" by Bryce and Toynbee); BL (Bodleian Library, Oxford); HL (Houghton Library, Cambridge, Mass.); LC (Library of Congress); NA (National Archives); PHM (Papers of Henry Morgenthau); NA (UK) (National Archives, UK).

The present volume should be consulted alongside the following two publications which constitute its intellectual compass: Ara Sarafian (comp., ed. and intro.) *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917* (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2004) and Henry Morgenthau, *United States Diplomacy on the Bosphorus: The Diaries of Ambassador Morgenthau, 1913-1916* (Ara Sarafian, comp. and intro.), (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2004).

I wish to thank all those individuals who made this edition of the 1916 British Parliamentary Blue Book on the Armenian Genocide possible. Needless to say, all shortcomings are my own.

Ara Sarafian
Gomidas Institute, London.
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