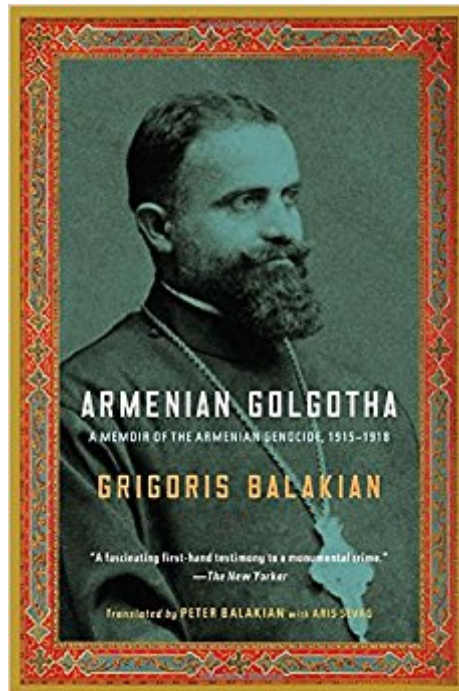




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# Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir Of The Armenian Genocide, 1915-1918



## Synopsis

On April 24, 1915, Grigoris Balakian was arrested along with some 250 other leaders of Constantinople's Armenian community. It was the beginning of the Ottoman Empire's systematic attempt to eliminate the Armenian people from Turkey—a campaign that continued through World War I and the fall of the empire. Over the next four years, Balakian would bear witness to a seemingly endless caravan of blood, surviving to recount his miraculous escape and expose the atrocities that led to over a million deaths. *An Armenian Golgotha* is Balakian's devastating eyewitness account—a haunting reminder of the first modern genocide and a controversial historical document that is destined to become a classic of survivor literature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

On the night of April 24, 1915, Grigoris Balakian, an Armenian priest, and more than two hundred other Armenian politicians and intellectuals were arrested in Constantinople. Soon, Armenians across Turkey were massacred or forced to join a death march to the desert of Der Zor. Balakian walked among the displaced for months before he fled, disguising himself variously as a German engineer, a soldier, and a worker in the vineyards; he began this book while in hiding. (It was published in Armenian in 1922 and in 1959; the translator is Balakian's great-nephew.) Both a memoir and an attempt at a history of the genocide, it assumes considerable familiarity with Ottoman politics, but remains fascinating first-hand testimony to a monumental crime. Copyright ©2008 Click here to subscribe to The New Yorker --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

â œA fascinating first-hand testimony to a monumental crime.â •â "The New Yorker"â â œGripping. . . A powerful and important book. . . It takes its place as one of the key first-hand sources for understanding the Armenian Genocide.â •â "Mark Mazower, The New Republic"â â œPowerful. . . Riveting. . . A poignant, often harrowing story about the resiliency of the human spirit [and] a window on a moment in history that most Americans only dimly understand.â •â "Chris Bohjalian, Washington Post"â œAn immensely moving, harrowing memoir that instantly takes its place as a classic alongside Primo Leviâ™s *Survival in Auschwitz* and Elie Wieselâ™s *Night*.â •â "Carlin Romano, The Chronicle of Higher Education"â œRead this heartbreaking book. Armenian Golgotha describes the suffering, agony and massacre of innumerable Armenian families almost a century ago; its memory must remain a lesson for more than one generation.â •â "Elie Wiesel, author of *Night*"â œAn appalling and magnificent book. . . It owes its existence to [Balakianâ™s] determination to survive to write it . . . a sacred task that gives him the strength to persevere through the impossible circumstances that killed well over a million of his countrymen.â •â "Benjamin Moser, Harperâ™s"â â œShocking and brilliant. . . Exquisitely rendered. . . This book has the feel of a classic about it, and I suspect that future writers on historical trauma and its representation will turn eagerly to Armenian Golgotha. Itâ™s a massively important contribution to this field.â •â "Jay Parini, The Chronicle of Higher Education"â â œAn extraordinary narrative . . . beautifully translated. . . Armenian Golgotha will influence Armenian genocide studies for decades.â •â "John A. C. Greppin, The Times Literary Supplement (London)"â â œMonumental. . . Balakian provides strong evidence that these gruesome proceedings were carried out under official orders from the highest level. . . For generations to come Armenian Golgotha will remain a first-hand documentation of a historic tragedy written from the perspective of a talented scholar.â •â "Henry Morgenthau, III, Boston Sunday Globe"â â œ[A work] of exceptional interest and scholarship.â •â "Christopher Hitchens, Slate"â â œThe translation and publication of Armenian Golgotha in English is long overdue. It constitutes a thundering historical proof that those who deny the Armenian Genocide are engages in a massive deception.â •â "Deborah E. Lipstadt, author of *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*"â â œGroundbreaking. . . Comprehensive. . . Sobering. . . Armenian Golgotha is replete with narratives that focus on collective suffering, marking this memoir as one of the few to explicate the true nature of the crime. . . Balakianâ™s memory is extraordinary, but so, too, are his intellect, his compassion and his ethical obligation to immortalize his beloved co-nationals.â •â "Donna-Lee Frieze, The Jewish Daily Forward"â â œAn Armenian equivalent to the testimonies of Holocaust survivors like Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel.â •â "Adam

Kirsch, Nextbook

• The descriptions of the Armenian genocide are striking and the author spares his readers none of the gruesome details. . . . A riveting and powerful indictment of a genocide that became a paradigm for future genocides.

• Holger H. Herwig, The Gazette (Montreal)

• An essential memoir, a lively and extraordinary life story. . . . This is more than an eyewitness account, it is a masterful history in its own right.

• Seth J. Frantzman, The Jerusalem Post

• Weighted with eyewitness accounts and distinguished by Balakian's prodigiously sharp memory, this book is not a scholar's history, of course, but an educated prelate's, with an enviable grasp of Ottoman and European history. . . . Memory and hope for the future live in seminal texts such as Armenian Golgotha.

• Keith Garebian, The Globe and Mail (Toronto)

• A powerful, moving account of the Armenian Genocide, a story that needs to be known, and is told here with a sweep of experience and wealth of detail that is as disturbing as it is irrefutable.

• Sir Martin Gilbert

• Extraordinary. . . . This book will become a classic, both for its depiction of a much denied genocide and its humane and brilliant witness to what human beings can endure and overcome.

• Robert Jay Lifton, author of The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide

• Witness literature of the highest order, to be put aside the great testimony from the Shoah. . . . Required reading for those who wish to comprehend the 20th century.

• Robert Leiter, The Jewish Exponent

• An astonishing memoir. . . . An important primary document concerning the Armenian Genocide. . . . A major addition to the literature of witness and testimony.

• Robert Melson, Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal

Absolutely worthwhile reading! Eyewitness account by an Armenian priest, later bishop, of a genocide bitterly denied by Turkey to this day. The English translation is by his grandnephew, a professor of Humanities at Colgate University. Why the Turkish denial, is not clear to me. No one is accusing anyone alive today in Turkey of having participated in the torture, murder, or rape of (Christian) Armenian babies, children, women, and men more than 100 years ago. Unfortunately, though, the Turkish foundation myth by Kemal Ataturk encompasses not only a great forward-looking side, the belief in a democratic laicist secular state with a division of religion and government, but also a dark side, a fundamental nationalism inherited from the Young Turks and which became almost a substitute for the former power of Islam as a state religion and the sultan as both caliph, Islamic religious head and secular head. One can still see that tendency today in the blindness with which many Turks wave Turkish flags and support their 'leader' Erdogan's every move with unquestioning loyalty, including his incarcerations of thousands of jurists, teachers,

journalists, and civil servants whom HE calls supporters of the coup--without requiring any of the evidence necessary if democratic due process were to be maintained. I am NOT of Turkish extraction, by the way, nor of Armenian roots.

I second the thoughtful reviews of this book. I read it when it was re-released 8 years ago, and breezed through what at first seemed an imposing tome. Balakian's writing, and the translation, is thoughtful and brisk, and his insights into not just the Turkish actions but the reactions from Armenian leadership that did not help the situation are illuminating. The word "genocide" was coined in 1924 to describe what the Ottoman Empire did to the Armenians, and Hitler cited the episode as a salve to followers who fretted over the world's reaction to his plans for the Jews and others. This is a must read for anyone who wants to know how such tragedies occur, and how apathy is the ally of genocide.

I live in one of the most populated Armenian towns in the U.S. and have become friends with a number of Armenians through my local coffee shop. Last year was the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and I felt so ignorant about the history that I picked up this book to learn more. This book is incredible in its detail, it's portrayal of human suffering and the historical context in which these tragic events occurred. It will make you question humanity and it's propensity toward barbaric violence alongside the true nature of why and how wars are fought (spoiler, it is never for liberation or justice). This first hand account of the systematic genocide of the Armenian people will shake you to your core and, if you are student of history, terrify you because it will reiterate the cyclical/repetitive nature of scapegoating populations in order to gain power and resources through the most inhumane and violent means without any hesitation. The scapegoats names change, but the violence and outcomes do not. I now realize and have a deep reverence for why my Armenian friends hold so dearly onto their language, their religion, their culture and their traditions here in the U.S....after reading this book you cannot call what happened anything else but what is was... genocide. I highly recommend this book.

Definitely demonstrates a genocide against the Armenians during and after first World War. There was the intent to exterminate a people. What is not clear are the reasons. You could choose one of the following: Young Turks did not trust armenians, by marching Armenians from Istanbul to Syria the motive for steadily murdering them on the way could have been the enrichment of government leaders such as Enver Pasha or showing Germans the kind of cowardly war and extermination

which the government could accomplish. Hunger, beatings, knifing, extenuation were all weapons used during the marches.

If you have wondered what happened to the Armenian leaders and intellectuals that were rounded up by the Ottoman Turkish authorities and marched into oblivion on April 24, 1915, under cover of World War I, then this is your book. Kudos to Peter Balakian for seeing the project of translation through and bringing us this priceless memoir of an important event in world history. Peter's great-uncle Grigoris amazes with his steadfastness and ingenuity in serving his fellow exiles. You will discover the providential way in which this story found its way into print.

The Armenian Golgotha is a well written account of the Armenian genocide by the Turks during World War I. The descriptions of the brutal massacres of innocent men, women and children are often heartrending and painful to read, but describe in detail the reality of the atrocities perpetrated by the Turkish government. Grigoris Balakian was an eye witness of the deliberate annihilation of an entire ethnic group, the Armenians in Turkey. It is a very long book, but well worth reading, especially for those who need to be educated about genocide in general and the Armenian genocide in particular.

One of the most horrifying chapters in modern history described in harrowing detail by an eyewitness. It is important to keep these records of history at the forefront of our minds lest the awful truth be forgotten. It is not an easy book to read due to the details of the wholesale slaughter of the Armenian people and also due to the awkward translation. But this tale should be read and understood to grasp the realities of the modern world so they are never revisited.

This was an absolutely horrible event and the fact that there has never been any justice is tragic and blood boiling. There were parts of the book I struggled with because I don't have a lot of knowledge on Turkish history and this is the first book I've read on the Armenian Genocide but it is a very well-written, heartbreaking book and I would recommend it to anyone wanting to learn more about this horrible event

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