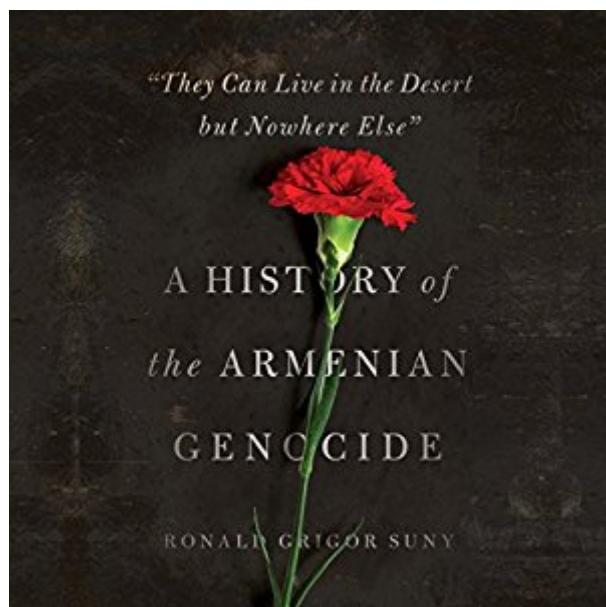


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They Can Live In The Desert But Nowhere Else: A History Of The Armenian Genocide



Synopsis

Starting in early 1915, the Ottoman Turks began deporting and killing hundreds of thousands of Armenians in the first major genocide of the 20th century. By the end of the First World War, the number of Armenians in what would become Turkey had been reduced by 90 percent - more than 1,000,000 people. A century later, the Armenian genocide remains controversial but relatively unknown, overshadowed by later slaughters and the chasm separating Turkish and Armenian versions of events. In this definitive narrative history, Ronald Suny cuts through nationalist myths, propaganda, and denial to provide an unmatched account of when, how, and why the atrocities of 1915-1916 were committed. As it lost territory during the war, the Ottoman Empire was becoming a more homogenous Turkic-Muslim state, but it still contained large non-Muslim communities, including the Christian Armenians. The Young Turk leaders of the empire believed that the Armenians were internal enemies secretly allied to Russia and plotting to win an independent state. Suny shows that the great majority of Armenians were in truth loyal subjects who wanted to remain in the empire. But the Young Turks, steeped in imperial anxiety and anti-Armenian bias, became convinced that the survival of the state depended on the elimination of the Armenians. Suny is the first to explore the psychological factors as well as the international and domestic events that helped lead to genocide. Drawing on archival documents and eyewitness accounts, this is an unforgettable chronicle of a cataclysm that set a tragic pattern for a century of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With the 2015 official centenary of the Armenian Genocide (dated from specific events in Istanbul in 1915), new, accessible scholarship on those events is welcome. As the grandson of Armenians who were deported during the Genocide, Ronald Grigor Suny writes with personal interest in the period but, as a scholar, he also writes with a non-partisan agenda and with an easy command of sources in Turkish, Armenian, Armeno-Turkish (Turkish written in the Armenian alphabet), German, French, and English. Without that range of primary sources, a credible history would not be possible. Modern Turkey can only deny the term "genocide" if the standard for using it is the Holocaust, since while the Ottoman agenda was not a world free of Armenians, it was an Ottoman Empire free of visible Armenians--meaning Armenian communities and Armenian political activity and economic influence. So, in contrast to what happened in Germany and Eastern Europe in the 1940's, the Ottomans did not murder everyone of Armenian heritage, but there was a government-ordered and government-sponsored campaign to murder Armenian men (and many women and children) and to dissolve the remaining women and children into Turkish society as servants or slaves. The story, as told here, is gripping and abundantly footnoted. Kindle technology makes it easy to toggle back and forth between a citation and its source. (Was a particular massacre ordered by Talat Pasha, or was it observed by the German ambassador, or was it reported as hearsay in a French newspaper? The difference is important, and with Suny's footnotes, you can tell.) As with most current books, better editing would make a better impression and make the text easier to read.

This is a very insightful and accessible synthesis by a scholar who for over a decade has been one of the organizers of international workshops which brought together leading Armenian Genocide researchers. This book draws on their work, as well as a large body of other literature on Armenian and Ottoman history. You can learn a good deal about those topics from it. The book is markedly different in nature from an earlier work about the Armenian Genocide written for a general audience, "The Burning Tigris". While Balakian's work is -- to quote Mark Mazower's review -- "understandably enough, a work of denunciation", Suny's book sets out to provide historical insight, and he succeeds admirably in that regard.

finally I did learn about the tragedy

Wonderful synthesis: Suny has spent many years working on this tragic series of events, and he has put together a clear, coherent, and cogent argument for the genocide's reality. Very likely, this is

the best book on the topic now.

Very detailed and very well written book on Armenian Genocide.

This is an exceptionally good book, written by Dr. Suny an academic and talented author, who has dealt with the history of all the Caucasian peoples and is especially qualified to deal with the Genocide of the Armenian people. As a text it is both informative and enjoyable to read.

Every person of Armenian heritage should read this extremely well researched exposition that focuses on the reasons for the Armenian genocide at the hands of the Turks in power in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dr Suny provides a brief, dense, but very engaging and readable scholarly review of the people and history of the Caucasus region, of course focusing on the Armenians. This is followed by an explanation of the different cultures, political views, histories, religions, and probable genetic and behavior characteristics of the peoples of this region he clarifies the reasons for conflict and eventual slaughter and deportation of the Christian Armenians. Dr. Suny speaks several languages, has for years been professor of both Russian and Armenian Studies, is an exceptional writer and speaker and therefore is uniquely qualified to research and write about this subject. For me it has been a privilege to read this book, likely to be treasured by many.

excellent book, one of the best about Armenian Genocide

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