

Review: Grigoris Balakian, *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1918*, Vintage Books, NY, 2009 (2010 edn.)

Pages: 505

Amazing Tale of Islamic Evil

Grigoris has done a supernatural service to humanity by recording events of the Turk's genocide, all the while under a constant cloud of death. The strongest feeling throughout his eye-witness history of events is the ever-present risk of death; one false move and he would be discovered or killed. For this reason it is a miracle of God he survived, and that He wanted this atrocity documented.

Why care for 1.5M dead Armenians during WWI? For many reasons:

1. It was the template used for WWII extermination of the Jews and other genocides like Rwanda;
2. It gives a window into Islam's 1,300-year old Jihad against non-Muslims, destroying the false Romantic history [propaganda] of Western institutions; and
3. As a warning that given the right circumstances the same thing could happen again, especially when the perpetrator Turkey denies under veiled threats it ever happened.

One astounding fact is the Armenians seem deluded as to the true nature of Islam: lawyer, Armenag, "The Koran demands that you act with compassion toward non-Muslims, like brothers." [p84]

Another surprising revelation is how many Jews were Armenophobes, and betrayed many Armenians into Turkish hands.

Grigoris is also an able historian, documenting both major events and naturally their impact on Turkey and the Middle East. He is also minimally biased, castigating the Germans at large for their cruelty, but reserving praise for the minority who were caring and sympathetic (and helped save

his life). The Allies were said to be friends but in the end betrayed the Armenians in exchange for Turkish lucre. The only group for which no praise is given is the Jews; all the ones mentioned are Armenophobic, and ironically leaders in betraying many to their deaths to the Turks.

The indictment of Ottoman and Turkish ‘civilisation’ is brutal; a mean-spirited, evil people shaped by centuries under the grip of Islam and the false god Allah. This is multiplied by the Turkish government’s refusal to this day to own up to the Armenian genocide.

The whole work progresses like a novel and will be hard to put down despite its length.

Introduction (pp. xiii-xli)

Der Zor is a desert city in the north east of Syria.

The Turk’s Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) or *Ittihad* government legislated the Temporary Law of Deportation and Temporary Law of Confiscation and Expropriation.

Armenian tortures included eye-gouging, hair-plucking, beheading, genital mutilation, and disembowelling.

5-10% of Armenians converted to Islam.

400K Armenians were exterminated in Der Zor.

German soldiers called Armenians “Christian Jews”, and “ferocious leeches”.

The CUP used Turkey’s rocky terrain to kill hundreds of thousands.

Chronology

1912-3: The Ottomans lose 80% of European territory in the Balkan Wars suffering heavy casualties. This causes a mass Muslim refugee influx into Turkey.

8/1-4/1914: Turkey signs a secret military alliance with Germany.

11/9/1914, Constantinople: Sheikh-ul-Islam proclaims *jihad* against Christians.

1915: Armenians in the Ottoman army are disarmed and put into labour battalions after which they will be massacred.

5/6/1915: *NYT*: “The Young Turks have adopted the policy of [sultan] Abdul Hamid, namely the annihilation of the Armenians.”

11/7/1915: Bolsheviks kill the Tsar and his family and Russian troops abandon Armenians at the Anatolian front.

5/15/1919: Greece invades Turkey.

4/23/1920, Ankara: Turkish nationalists elect Mustapha Kemal as leader.

12/2-4/1920: the Soviets capture Yerevan, Armenian capitol collapsing the Armenian Republic. It will become the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia until 1991 and independence.

9/14/1922: Kemalists drive the Greek army out of Turkey.

7/24/1923: Treaty of Lausanne signed recognising Turkey but not Armenia.

I) The Life of an Exile: July 1914-April 1916 (pp. 1-28)

On 7/25/1914, Austria-Hungary issued a harsh 48-hour ultimatum to Serbia for the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo. Large portraits of Kaiser Wilhelm and Emperor Franz Ferdinand were displayed side by side in homes.

Russia was thought responsible for the assassination.

A German socialist: “We don’t want war because ... the entire burden of it shall be borne by us workers ... We don’t want war to become the tool of Austria-Hungary ... Down with war! Long live world peace, and the brotherhood of the working class!”

At Berlin, 150-200K socialists organised to protest.

“Socialists could not be blamed if their peaceful efforts were future, owing to a bellicose and adventurous Kaiser.”

The German military took measures to thwart all peacemaking efforts.

Nietzsche held the doctrine of brute force was the dominant factor in Germany's present and future glory.

On the second day after WWI began, all foodstuffs became more expensive then disappeared. Conscription had also begun.

England declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914, which the Germans didn't expect.

By the seventh day, 5M soldiers were gathered on two fronts against French and Russian armies. In Berlin, every foreigner had to wear a flag of his country. Americans were treated with great respect to attract their neutrality and sympathy.

Once German ironically stated: “When we enter Paris this time ... we will demand thirty billion, so that France will not be able to afford ... new wars of revenge.”

Movie theatres, racetracks, etc, were immediately closed.

In the name of frugality all meals were now prepared at home.

In Germany, “secret police have been assigned to arrest those who speak against the war”. Soldiers' wives could not live in the ten marks' government pension per child.

Poor, young girls crowded the streets and prostituted themselves.

The military began recruiting 35-46 year olds.

Germany had little confidence in Austria-Hungary, and saw Italy as an “unfaithful ally” who would defect to the most powerful force.

The German government was Turcophilic. It believed half a million Armenians in the Russo-Turkish border must be moved south towards Mesopotamia and swapped with Arabs.

Romania was a neutral country.

After two months in Constantinople, the 120K Armenians had forebodingly stirred Armenophobic feelings in the Turks. They believed the Allies would take the city within days.

II) The First Deportation: April 1915-February 1916 (pp. 32-136)

Italy's 30-year treaty with Germany and Austria-Hungary obliged it to enter the war.

The CUP emptied the prisons and used criminals to form the *chetes*; brigands and death squads.

Interior Minister Talaaat had a secret army of Armenian and Turkish traitor spies supplying daily intelligence.

Young Turks were also called "Ittihadists". Their genocidal plan:

- i. All Armenian males 20-46 were conscripted; 50K were initially given arms, but later all were disarmed.
- ii. All intellectuals and political activists were arrested.
- iii. Disarm the general population.
- iv. Disarm the Zeytoun mountain stronghold.

CUP believed the world war was their golden opportunity to destroy the Armenian cancer for good. [p46]

The Germans saw Asia Minor as their future colony and a vassal state at best. They built the Baghdad railway as part of this plan.

"All the Armenians of Zeytoun, Hajin, and Deort-Yol, as well as Adana, will be deported, and their wealth will be confiscated." [p51]

Abdul Hamid II was the Red Sultan who carried out the Hamidian Massacre of 1894-96 killing 250K Armenians.

“We passed out days monotonously, consumed with worries about tomorrow.” [p73]

CUP in 1915 for Armenians:

- i. Forbidden to travel.
- ii. The influential imprisoned in every town.
- iii. Not allowed to even possess kitchen knives.
- iv. To be deported to Der Zor under pretence of exile.
- v. Women could be taken into Turkish harems.
- vi. Conversions to Islam were disallowed as it was seen as a ploy to escape persecution and death.
- vii. Entire wealth to be confiscated.
- viii. Blacklisted individuals to be murdered.

CUP’s secretary Yunuz, May, 1915: “Without mercy and without pity, kill all from the one-month-old to the ninety-year-old, but see to it that the massacre is not conduction in the towns and in the presence of the people.” [p79]

Talaat: “Telegraph us immediately as to how many Armenians have already died and how many are left alive.”

In the event Germany lost the war, Talaat and co. were planning to flee to Germany.

Axes, cleavers, paddles, and large knives were to be used for slaughtering.

Armenian lawyer, Armenag, “The Koran demands that you act with compassion toward non-Muslims, like brothers.” [p84]

Talaat gave the order to exterminate Ankara's Armenian Catholics: "They dashed the little children against the rocks before the eyes of their mothers while shouting, 'Allah, Allah'." [p84] 42K Armenians were killed and left unburied in the valleys. The German ambassador brushed aside the affair.

Armenian leaders saw Ittihad leaders as their ideological comrades.

Khoursid the *chavush*: " 'First I dug out the eyes of Dr Pashian, then I broke his neck. Here is his gold watch and chain' ... Khourshid said that he gave praise to Allah that, having been fortunate enough to participate in the *jihad*, he had now become worthy of the *jennet* of their holy prophet." [p95]

Governor Reship Pasha asserted Armenians were pillar of the Ottoman state; without them there would be extreme poverty.

Yanuz to the Chankiri police chief: "If you cannot find weapons in the Armenian households, can you at least take some weapons with you and plant them." [p107]

"In paying the bribe, we knew we had only temporarily avoided the whirlwind."

Diran Kelegian: "You don't know the Turks; I've been among them for thirty years, and I have been a teacher of Turkish history for many years ... These people are criminals. They have had thirty-six sultans, and they have killed fourteen of them ... was it worth it for me to have worked diligently for thirty years for such an ungrateful people." [p111]

The wiser Turkish sultans had commissioned Armenians to build all the imperial palaces, castles, and famous mosques on the Bosphorous.

CUP thought eliminating Armenians would create a huge Islamic state.

Talaat: "it is necessary to eliminate the Armenians." [p119]

A Turkish sultan might issue an edict, or a minister swear on the names of his children, but it would mean nothing.

"Everyone knew by now that exile to Der Zor meant death." [p125]

“Talaat ordered by telegram across the dying empire to take Armenians outside into the wilderness and massacre them.” [p135]

III) The Second Deportation: February-April 1916 (pp. 137-257)

86K Armenians were killed in Choroum.

The *Kaymakam* of Boghazliyan: “I have made a vow on the honor of the Prophet: I shall not leave a single Armenian alive in the *sanjak* of Yozgat”/

“We found thousands of gold pieces sewn into the women’s clothing ... I amassed great wealth from ... the massacres.”

“Officials of Yozgat sent ,, to all ... villages and in the name of holy *jihad* invited the Muslim population to participate ... all were to be massacred.” [p144]

Grigoris to police Captain Shukri: “Won’t you remain accountable for this innocent blood spilled, before God, the Prophet [Muhammad], and you conscience? ... Not at all, on the contrary, I carried out my sacred and holy obligation before God ... A *jihad* was proclaimed ... The Sheikh -ul-Islam had issued a *fatwa* to annihilate the Armenians ... after this massacre ... I spread out my prayer rug and said my prayers, giving glory to Allah and the Prophet who made me worthy of ... holy *jihad* .” [p146]

“After the Germans protested ... massacres stopped for a short time, and when they resumed, they were done with a bit more discretion ... Germany made us understand that unless we reduced ... subject races within the ... Empire to twenty percent ... we would not be free.” [p147]

“The Turkish mob of 10K attacked 6,400 defenceless women, girls, and children, wildly shouting, *Allah, Allah* . Using axes, hatchets.” [p148]

When Talaat visited Berlin, Kaiser Wilhelm honoured him with the black eagle insignia!

Turks would tie up Armenians so tightly their arms would become numb making them incapable of self-defence.

A few armed police could easily disperse a crowd of hundreds.

Turkish villagers would roam for days slitting corpse stomachs to find jewellery.

The CUP when unable to punish the guilty retaliated against the innocent.

The Armenians of Chat resisted from 8/1915-10/1918.

All orders to annihilate Armenians were issued with duplicity and deception.

“If you can survive from Boghazliyan to Kayseri, don’t be afraid from there on.”

Phrygian king Tantalus was condemned to Tartarus, chin-deep in water with fruit-laden branches above but unable to drink or eat.

“Cursed be they-if only the Young Turks didn’t exist ... they have neither faith nor religion; they’re all Masons.” [p183]

Avhars were Muslim ex-Armenians.

“If you want to build something, hire a Christian worker, but if you want to have a house razed or demolished, then hire a Turkish worker.”

Hajin, an Armenian town of 28K was in ruins.

Alexandropol was an Armenian city of 30K.

The Turks told an old Armenian man: “it’s better if you get sick and die.” [p201]

“If we had jobs for the railway, the Turkish government would have no authority over us.”

At the 1900 Adana massacre of Cilician Armenians, Europeans photographed and considered their work done.

Turkish women neighbours went to authorities and accuse Armenian women of having cursed Muhammad.

The Germans were intent on tunnelling through the Taurus and Amanos mountains as quickly as possible. To transport materiel to Palestine and Mesopotamian fronts where 300K Turks were fighting.

Kanle-gechid was a passage point for Der Zor.

Many Armenians thought the German no less cruel or merciless than the Turk and they deserved each other.

Those who had riches didn't want to risk escape, but those who had nothing wanted escape at any cost.

Locomotives used wood as fuel during the war since there was no coal.

The Turks: "Which government doesn't punish a rebellious people?"

Not even 5% of exiled Armenians reached the Armenian Golgotha of Der Zor alive.

"Our moral values had also diminished. The panic imminent death engendered had made us all more selfish and less sympathetic toward our wretched companions." [p254]

IV) In the Tunnels of Amanos (pp. 258-305)

The Rubenid Kingdom lasted 1100-1400.

German and especially Austrian railway engineers treated the Armenians kindly. However, all military officers were hostile ("you deserve your punishments").

All Armenian rail workers had to register in special government ledgers and have documents (in reality these were used to prepare blacklists). Under false pretence of legal protection, many formerly hidden Armenians openly declared their identities.

German policy called for using Turkey to win over the Islamic orient and ultimately reach India and wrest its control from the British.

Many German officers had no qualms turning over Armenians to their deaths.

Jews were hateful towards Armenians.

In 1920 after the Armistice, Greece took Smyrna.

Turkish officials planned crimes in the day and went hunting at night.

Captured British officers recounted frightful scenes they witnessed at Der Zor; vast deserts with piles of human bones, crushed skulls, and skeletons stretched everywhere.

A Jew at Injirli, Blanck, was an informant who caused the arrest of many Armenians.

“Kegel told me that the head of the food warehouses under the local German railway, who happened to be a Jew was a terrible Armenophobe who had betrayed many Armenians.

V) In the Tunnels of Taurus Mountains (pp. 306-343)

Turks never dared to confront their German masters.

“After almost two and a half years ... the Germans had become deeply convinced ... Turks were roguish, ill-intentioned, treacherous, and xenophobic.” [p325]

“On the line at the Taurus tunnels I had met Turcophobic German engineers who had named their dogs Ahmed, Mehmed, Abdullah, Ismail, Ali, and so on.” [p325]

The bloodthirsty Zeki lodged the patriarch as his personal guest for three days, then bade him farewell with great honour, setting him on the road from Der Zor to Baghdad.

“For a piece of bread, Armenian mothers sold their dear children.”

V) In Adana January 1917-September 1918 (pp. 344-433)

Lord Kitchener had transported 7M to the Western Front, gradually neutralising the Germans.

Bolshevism had exploded in St Petersburg thanks to German assistance.

Christians were the artisans, Turks and other Muslims peasants, soldiers, and government workers.

Lord Asquith, 1917: “ The Turkish state shall not only be expelled from the territory of Europe but it will also not be able to maintain its independence on its Asiatic territories either. The Turkish government officials are personally responsible for the blood of the more than one million innocent Armenians massacred. This is the last massacre of Armenians, and this civilized and oldest Christian people shall, once and for all, be liberated from the despotic rule of the Turk, as our little ally.”
[p361]

CUP officials had been arrested and exiled to Malta.

During the Revolution, ignorant Russian peasants laid waste to cities and looted houses. Lenin took control on 11/6/1917 and signed a truce with Germany.

Britain's 0.5M army failed to take the Dardanelles, and was also losing on the Palestinian front.

In September 1918, Allenby's army at Palestine beat the Turks at Megiddo and took 25K prisoners at Nazareth. The French soon occupied Beirut and Damascus.

Der Zor is six day's journey on the banks of the Euphrates from Aleppo.

The U.S. joined the Allies in 1918.

Turkey ended up losing Arabia, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon.

Kaiser Wilhelm fled to Holland and Germany became a republic.

“During their six-hundred-year rule, the Turks have left no trace or memory of civilisation except massacre, plunder, forced Islamisation, and abduction.” [p419]

Glossary/Appendix/Notes (pp. 437-505)

Osman Bedri compiled the CUP blacklists.

On 12/25/1914, Pasha Ismail Enver led an attack on Russia with 95K; after two weeks 20K were left and he blamed defeat on the Armenians.

Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1842-1918) was the “Bloody Sultan”.

Dr Mehmed Reshid described Armenians as, “filthy microbes”.

“The foreigner ... don’t put your hopes in him anymore ... he only has the ulterior motive of ... wresting ... vast stretches of Asia Minor.” [p456]

The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 5/16/1916 carved up the Ottoman Empire; France was given Cilicia, Syria, and Lebanon.

Pledges of the Allies for an independent Armenia proved to be hollow as they preferred economic agreements with the Turks.

Woodrow Wilson, speech as conjectured to appear in an Armenian newspaper: “Of all the countries in the war, Turkey is the most vulgar ... with a marvellous talent for evil ... Turkey became a veritable garbage heap of shameless and lying persons, murderers, brazen thieves and bestial oppressors ... The Armenian massacres make it necessary that this ignorant and dirty horde be expelled from the European continent.” [p467]