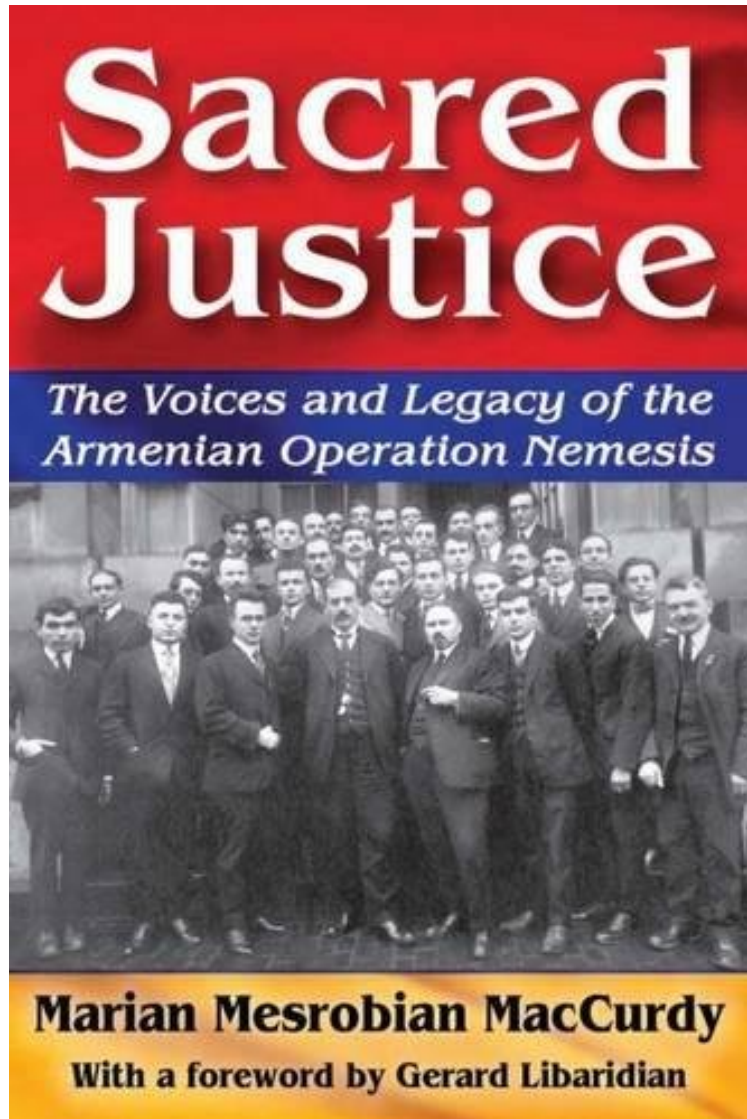


Sacred Justice: The Voices and Legacy of the Armenian Operation Nemesis (Armenian Studies)

Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy

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Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy : Sacred Justice: The Voices and Legacy of the Armenian Operation Nemesis (Armenian Studies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sacred Justice: The Voices and Legacy of the Armenian Operation Nemesis (Armenian Studies):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. "Sacred Justice" is superbly done, and mandatory reading about Operation Nemesis By Mogulmeister Sacred Justice hit my radar screen 9 months before it was published, and I was

looking forward to reading it with tremendous anticipation. I can now say it was completely worth the wait. Sacred Justice is outstanding and very, very well done. But beyond that its also an extremely important book too. If the subject of Operation Nemesis interests you beyond the barebones outlines of the story, this is mandatory reading. Sacred Justice is not simply a well-done retelling of the Operation Nemesis story (which it is, by the way). Its also the publication of a treasure trove of Operation Nemesis communications between the key players. We get to hear in the voices of the Operation Nemesis players what was going on. The back story to this book is fascinating. Up until now, there has been very little historical documentation that existed about Operation Nemesis. Its well known that the ARF archives contain almost nothing about it which makes all the sense in the world because why would the ARF have left incriminating evidence for police to one day possibly find? (While there's no argument that what the ARF was doing was absolutely just and justice, it was also murder.) What we know about Operation Nemesis comes from a handful of memoirs from participants, from the writings of Shahan Natalie (one of the key Operation Nemesis players), and from oral knowledge that has been passed down which is potentially of questionable reliability. As Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy tells us in the book, her family discovered well after her grandfather Aaron Sachaklian died that Sachaklian was one of the leaders of Operation Nemesis. Sachaklian was a CPA and along with Armen Garo and Shahan Natalie, a key player in Operation Nemesis. His family found these documents when they were cleaning out his house one last time after both he and his wife had passed away, and were stunned to discover these communications and Operation Nemesis documents in his desk. While the ARF obviously made sure to destroy the documents in their possession, Sachaklian kept his, and these are those documents. From a historical perspective, these are probably the most significant original source Nemesis documents that have ever surfaced. In the voices of the key players through their letters to each other, we get to hear what was going on, what their concerns were, and the pressures they were facing. After reading these documents, it cant help but make one even more impressed that they were able to pull this off because the odds were way stacked against them. In the book, MacCurdy goes through each of the Nemesis documents one by one, offering context and commentary on each document, and then reproduces in translation its contents in entirety (all the original documents are in Armenian, but are re-printed here in English). Her commentary guides the narrative and is non-obtrusive. I wont get into whats actually contained in the documents themselves, interested readers should discover this for themselves. But I will say that its fascinating reading (and also mundane at times as one might expect). The letters of Shahan Natalie in particular burn through the paper. He paints a vivid and often heartbreaking picture of the difficult circumstances they were working in, and as I said above, it makes one appreciate even more how incredible their collective accomplishments were. Natalies communications are distinctive and paint a picture of him that is mostly flattering although its clear his unrelenting intensity was both his strength and probably his weakness. We also hear briefly from Armen Garo, with a particularly pointed letter that provides a lot of insight into his perspective and state of mind at the time. The book begins with a portrait of MacCurdys grandparents, Sachaklian and his wife Eliza. Its not gratuitous family history, because in the process of telling us who her grandparents were and where they came from, she brilliantly re-tells Armenian history up through the Adana massacres. She writes superbly and I found it to be riveting reading that was unexpectedly moving. Her sense of history and context is impressive and in some ways, she has written an effective prequel to Michael Bobelians Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-long Struggle for Justice, a brilliant and too-little-known book that I can not recommend enough. In quality, this is every bit the equal of Children of Armenia, which is high praise indeed. We get to know Eliza and Aaron through their letters to one another, and they are worth knowing. Eliza was a feminist before the word was even invented. She comes across as a three-dimensional, remarkable woman who is the unacknowledged hero of the Operation Nemesis story because she made it possible for Aaron Sachaklian to do what he did and to be absent from his own family. None of this came without a cost, however, and the letters make it clear what that cost was. This is an incredible portrait because its three-dimensional. The second part of the book is the Nemesis story and the publication of the communications. The third part of the book explores a question that MacCurdy asks: Why did the two sides of her family come out so differently as a result of the massacres and genocide? On the one side is the Sachaklian family of resisters, and on the other side is the Mesrobian side of survivors. The former lived engaged and fulfilled lives; the latter lived anxious, nervous, and fearful lives. Her exploration of why her maternal and paternal families had such different lifelong consequences from the same historical events will resonate for anyone who has interacted with survivors and their families. She draws on the scholarship of psychologists and trauma experts to credibly explain why these families turned out so differently. There are lessons on the consequences of trauma that are applicable to everyone and go far beyond the specifics of the Armenian Genocide. Its not hard to see the impressive research that went into the writing of this book. MacCurdy is simply a tremendous writer, and everything comes alive. She has synthesized so much disparate information into this narrative. Her writing is entirely approachable and engaging, and I was left with the feeling that this is impressive scholarship that still preserves tremendous intimacy. It doesnt come off as dense and impenetrable the way some scholarship reads. This is a book I am sure Ill return to. Theres a lot to take in, and its all incredibly interesting. There were extended sections of the book (not all) where I was so caught up in it that you couldnt have yanked the book out of my hands. The best compliment I can give is that the book took over my free time for the better part of a week. 6 of

6 people found the following review helpful. Mesrobian MacCurdy did a wonderful job. By James H. Menasian Wow... while I consider myself somewhat knowledgeable of the horrendous events leading up to April 24, 1915... the news about Operation Nemesis was a total surprise. Ms. Mesrobian MacCurdy did a wonderful job... in a very readable language. I hope she will write more. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. True story of Armenian Resistance and courage following Genocide By Marjorie Amazingly well documented story about the Author's family, grandfather and partners who took matters into their own hands and avenged the 1915 Genocide of over 1 1/2 million Armenians by the Turkish Ottoman Empire after the perpetrators were found guilty in a Berlin court trial and escaped their punishment. Marian MacCurdy, a distinguished Professor, Armenian Scholar and writer, discovered her grandfather's records and accounting of "Operation Nemesis" nearly 25 years after his death and reveals their contents along in "Sacred Justice". A must read for all Armenians and anyone interested in the history of the Armenian Genocide and the affects of Genocide and mass trauma on every generation.

Sacred Justice is a cross-genre book that uses narrative, memoir, unpublished letters, and other primary and secondary sources to tell the story of a group of Armenian men who organized Operation Nemesis, a covert operation created to assassinate the Turkish architects of the Armenian Genocide. The leaders of Operation Nemesis took it upon themselves to seek justice for their murdered families, friends, and compatriots. Sacred Justice includes a large collection of previously unpublished letters, found in the upstairs study of the author's grandfather, Aaron Sachaklian, one of the leaders of Nemesis, that show the strategies, personalities, plans, and dedication of Soghomon Tehlirian, who killed Talaat Pasha, a genocide leader; Shahan Natalie, the agent on the ground in Europe; Armen Garo, the centre of Operation Nemesis; Aaron Sachaklian, the logistics and finance officer; and others involved with Nemesis. Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy tells a story that has been either hidden by the necessity of silence or ignored in spite of victims' narratives the story of those who attempted to seek justice for the victims of genocide and the effect this effort had on them and on their families. Ultimately, this volume reveals how the narratives of resistance and trauma can play out in the next generation and how this resistance can promote resilience.

Mesrobian MacCurdy has done an admirable job in bringing together different genres to tell an important story one she is personally connected to. This, coupled with her engaging writing and beautiful use of language, is vital to the success of the book. Sacred Justice is the result of meticulous, years-long research and study. Not only has Mesrobian MacCurdy been able to offer a comprehensive historical account of an important aspect of modern Armenian history, but through the personal narratives of her grandparents and those directly involved with Operation Nemesis, she has given readers a look into the details, which were previously unavailable. . . . Nearly 100 years later, Mesrobian MacCurdy's book proves to be another significant work in the quest for justice for the 1.5 million victims that were killed a century ago. Rupen Janbazian, The Armenian Weekly "Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy's enlightening masterpiece 'Sacred Justice' is a chilling account of how undercover Armenian agents tracked Talaat to Berlin where he was hiding out with a new identity. But professor-author MacCurdy's published research is more than an account of the genocide and Tehlirian's life. It includes top secret letters, some etched with coded words by ARF agents. . . . The letters reprinted in Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy's must read book are so addictive they draw one's soul into the clandestine mission." Mitch Kehetian, Groong How could a secret plot to murder the perpetrators of the Armenian genocide be viewed as sacred justice? Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy explores this troubling question in her brilliantly researched and deeply moving book about Operation Nemesis, the secret organization created to assassinate the unpunished Turkish leaders responsible for the massacres of Ottoman Armenians during World War I. Through previously unpublished letters, which will be a treasure trove for historians and political scientists, and her keen memories of her maternal grandfather, one of the key figures of the clandestine group, she brings to life one of the most tragic struggles of the early twentieth century. She shows how calamities such as genocide are passed on intergenerationally, influencing second- and third-generation survivors. The Armenian tragedy passed virtually unnoticed, as Hitler cynically observed when he asked, Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians? Professor MacCurdy does, we might respond. Combining archival research, trauma theory, writing studies, and personal memoir, Sacred Justice took a lifetime to write and will be read for generations to come. Jeffrey Berman, author of Dying in Character: Memoirs on the End of Life A riveting, important book. With deep and cogent analysis, Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy reveals her grandfathers secret involvement in Operation Nemesis, a small cadre of individuals who avenged the Armenian genocide through assassination in 1921 and 1922. In this book are secret documents that have not been seen before. MacCurdy then explores the complex relationships and interactions between generations that have inherited the legacy of an unspeakable crime. This book is significant in more than one way: it reveals the inner-workings of an incredible secret organization while exhaustively investigating how genocide and its denial infects its victims and the children and grandchildren of those victims. There are revelations in this book that cannot be found anywhere else. Eric Bogosian, actor, playwright, and novelist Sacred Justice is a magnificent synthesis of familial memory, history, outrage, witness, and mourning. It is also a celebration of the resilience of people who refused to be erased, whose lives were dedicated to the restoration of moral balance, and whose legacy is a

kind of recipe for survival. What a rich, flavorful, exciting, and deeply satisfying book this is! Richard Hoffman, author of *Half the House* and *Love Fury* "Sacred Justice reads like a taut spy thriller and invokes vivid images of the people and what they endured. . . . I highly recommend 'Sacred Justice' for anyone interested in the subject because of the wealth of new source material valuable to students studying the history of genocide." Sharon Mills, SJ2B House Of Books

About the Author Marian Mesrobian MacCurdy, retired professor and chair of the Department of Writing at Ithaca College, is currently visiting professor at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Gerard Libaridian is a retired professor of history and Alex Manouqian Chair in Modern Armenian History at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He served as advisor to Levon Ter-Petrosyan, first president of Armenia, in the 1990s.