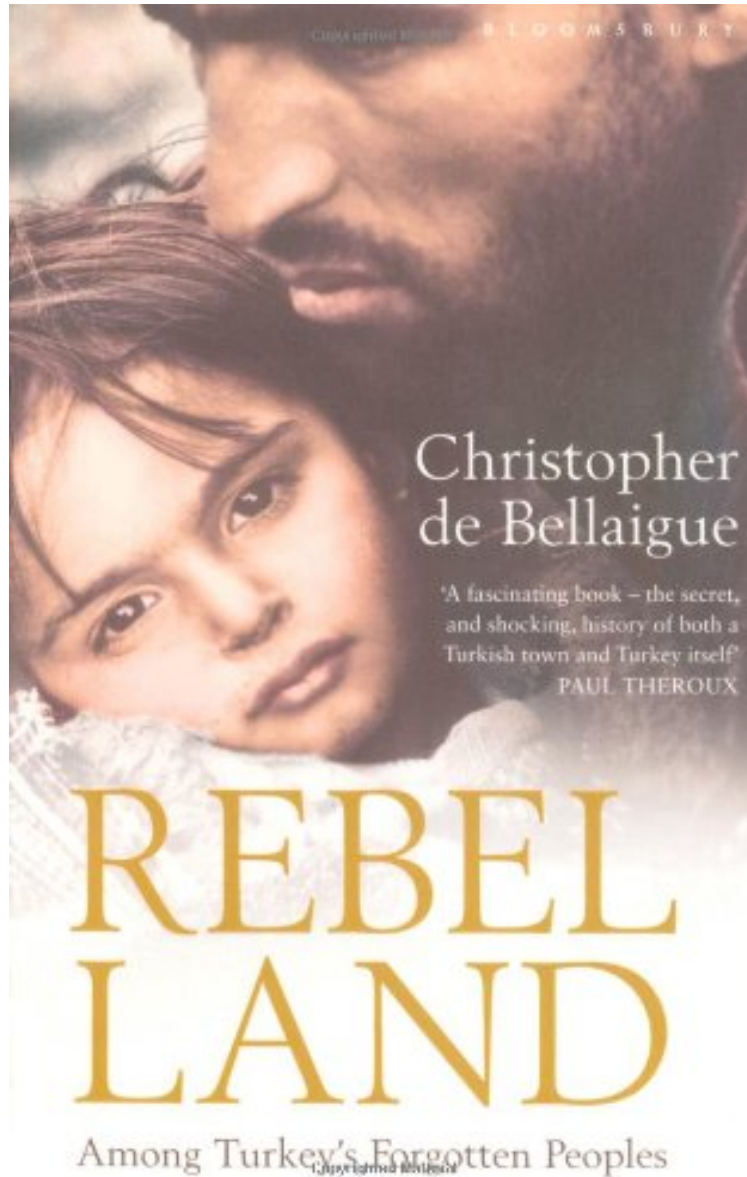


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Rebel Land: Among Turkey's Forgotten Peoples

Christopher de Bellaigue

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Christopher de Bellaigue : Rebel Land: Among Turkey's Forgotten Peoples before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rebel Land: Among Turkey's Forgotten Peoples:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This was not an easy book for me because of the minute detail By Winston Churchill All you want to know about east Turkey, and much more. This was not an easy book for me because of the minute detail. But because I am in Turkey 6 months a year, and as a gesture to my many Turkish friends, I

persisted in reading, and I'm glad I did because I now have a better understanding of the Armenian affair. I thought the author was biased toward the Armenians, and disliked Ataturk. But I can recommend it to any one interested in the events in eastern Turkey in the first part of the 20th century, and how those events effect current events here. PS I got the book on my Kindle because it easier reading for me than the book.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Alternate HistoryBy David ChackoRebel Land is a well written book that presents a personal view of an area and a people that everyone but the Turkish state seemingly has forgotten. The tragedies here are soaked in blood and nurtured in the soil that was once Armenian, now Kurdish, and always contested. The consistent factor, however, is that since the turn of the twentieth century whatever people have inhabited this rebel land have been rebels of necessity. No matter what the government, what the party or what era, the oppression that has visited the people of Eastern Turkey is thoroughgoing and barbaric. The only flaw in the book--and it's a small one--is that that author thinks he sees in the current government a lurch in the direction of hope. That should be allowed but simply cannot be.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good read but could have been edited betterBy Steve MarloweGood read but could have been edited better, the second half of the book became a chore to read which is a shame as I make a point of searching out this author. The history and very complex relationships resonate to this day. Still a book people should read to better understand today's current events.

An esteemed journalist travels to Turkey to investigate the legacy of the Armenian genocide and the quest for Kurdish statehood. In 2001, Christopher de Bellaigue, then the Economist's correspondent in Istanbul, wrote a piece about the history of Turkey for The New York Review of Books. In it, he briefly discussed the killing and deportation of half a million Armenians in 1915. These massacres, he suggested, were best understood as part of the struggles that attended the end of the Ottoman empire. After the story was published, the magazine was besieged with letters. This wasn't war, the correspondents said; it was genocide. And the death toll was not half a million but three times that many. De Bellaigue was mortified. How had he gotten it so wrong? He went back to Turkey, but found that the national archives had sealed all documents pertaining to those times. Undeterred and armed with a stack of contraband histories, he set out to the conflicted southeastern Turkish city of Varto to discover what had really happened. There, de Bellaigue found a place in which the centuries-old conflict among Turks, Armenians, and Kurds was still very much alive. His government escort began their association by marching with him arm in arm through the town's shopping district to show his presence; the local police chief, sent by the central office in Ankara to keep an eye on the Kurds, was sure he was a spy. He found houses built from the ruins of old Armenian churches, young boys playing soccer with old skulls, and a cast of villagers who all seemed unwilling to talk. What emerges is both an intellectual detective story and a reckoning with memory and identity that brings to life the basic conflicts of the Middle East: between statehood and religion, imperial borders and ethnic identity. Combining a deeply informed view of the area's history with the testimonials of the townspeople who slowly come to trust him, de Bellaigue unravels the enigma of the Turkish twentieth century, a time that contains the death of an empire, the founding of a nation, and the near extinction of a people. Rebel Land exposes the historical and emotional fault lines that lie behind many of today's headlines: about Turkey and its faltering bid for membership into the EU, about the Kurds and their bid for nationhood, and the Armenians' campaign for genocide recognition.

From BooklistTurkey is still hoping to join the European Union, but the issue of Turkish treatment of minority Kurds, as well as the ongoing refusal of the government to acknowledge the mass slaughter of Armenians in 1915 are issues that refuse to disappear. De Bellaigue, a former foreign correspondent for the Economist and the New York of Books, found himself ensnared in controversy when he wrote a pro-Turkish article that seemed to diminish Armenian claims of genocide. Startled by the negative reaction, de Bellaigue decided to reconsider his acceptance of the usual Turkish narrative of past and current controversies. He chose to leave behind cosmopolitan Istanbul and Ankara and repeatedly visit the town of Varto in southeastern Turkey, where the cultures of Turks, Armenians, and Kurds have intermingled and clashed for centuries. The result is a revealing and stunning examination of Turkey's past and present that also poses interesting questions about ethnic and national identity. De Bellaigue utilizes oral stories of villagers, government propaganda, and various primary sources and makes a strenuous effort to sift truth from fiction. --Jay FreemanAbout the AuthorChristopher de Bellaigue was born in London and spent the past decade in the Middle East and South Asia. He has worked as a foreign correspondent for a number of publications, including the Financial Times, The Economist, and The New York of Books. His previous book, In the Rose Garden of the Martyrs, was shortlisted for the 2004 Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize.