

## RATIONALE:

In its curriculum guide for grades 9-12, the N. J. Commission on Holocaust and Genocide Education asks, "What does the mandate require?" The answers direct us to teach tolerance, encourage a depth of conscience in our pupils, and provide a focus on personal responsibility against prejudice. The Commission also asks us to assure that students grasp the consequences of ignoring those who hate. The sum of those ideals leads us to prepare a response to those who would question the authenticity of facts that document the Armenian Genocide.

This guide for dealing with questions surrounding the occurrence of the Armenian Genocide is intended to add to the classroom teacher's approach to applying the lessons of 20<sup>th</sup> century genocides while meeting the New Jersey core curriculum standards for social studies. It should hopefully promote discussion as to how the Ottoman Empire victimized their Armenian populace in 1915. Folded into lessons designed to teach tolerance, recognize prejudice, or preclude bigotry, it should help students synthesize historical facts and interpretations to reach personal conclusions about significant historical events (6.3.13).

## HELPFUL SOURCES/SITES:

Museum/Research Center:

[http://genocide-museum.am/eng/armenian\\_genocide.php](http://genocide-museum.am/eng/armenian_genocide.php)

Online Exhibition: [http://genocide-museum.am/eng/online\\_exhibition.php](http://genocide-museum.am/eng/online_exhibition.php)

Armenian National Institute:

<http://www.armenian-genocide.org/>

The Armenian Research Center:

<http://www.umd.umich.edu/dept/armenian/>

Text: The Armenian Genocide 1915-1923: a handbook for students and teachers / Zetlian, Garine.

Select Bibliography:

<http://www.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/places/armenia/bibliography>

Zoryan Institute Bibliography of Genocide Denial:

[http://www.zoryaninstitute.org/Genocide/genocide\\_biblio\\_denial.htm](http://www.zoryaninstitute.org/Genocide/genocide_biblio_denial.htm)

New Jersey Commission on Holocaust and Genocide Education;  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/>

## A RESPONSE RESOURCE FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS:

FIELDING COMMON  
QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE  
HISTORY THAT DOCUMENTS  
THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE



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## **QUESTIONS SURROUNDING DENIAL OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE:**

**Q: Who were the Armenians in the days of the Ottoman Empire?**

**A: The Armenians were a Christian people living in the predominantly Muslim Ottoman Empire on land that was part of their home for almost 3,000 years.**

**Q: Is there any evidence to prove that the Armenian Genocide took place?**

**A: Yes. Reports to the American Consul General, Ottoman government documents, telegrams confirming orders, and photographs depicting forced evacuation and torture are all accessible for research.**

**Q: How do we know that the Ottoman government of 1915 was behind the oppression of Armenians living under its control?**

**A: In May of 1915, government leaders legalized the deportations on paper and justified for the record their plan to exterminate Armenians under their domain.**

**Q: Were there any eyewitnesses to the events comprising the Armenian Genocide?**

**A: Yes. One, a man named Armin Wegner then in Anatolia with the German Army, photographed both massacred Armenians and those being deported.**

**Q: How did the Ottoman government rationalize violence against minorities in their own territory in 1915?**

**A: Excuses included the risk of Ottoman Armenians siding with enemy armies in World War I, the prior Armenian self-defense effort when attacked by Ottoman forces, and the purported disloyalty of Armenians to Ottoman governance.**

**Q: Did the U.S. government attempt to help the Armenian victims in 1915?**

**A: Not really. Despite first hand reports of atrocities and pleas from the U.S. Ambassador, President Wilson clung to the protocols of his era & his hope to remain neutral in WW I. No U.S. citizens were being harmed & no U.S. institutions were threatened. Those facts limited formal U.S. involvement to requests & inquiries, leaving any true aid for the victims to come from private citizens and charitable entities. Many of those responded generously.**

**Q: Do we know how many people were killed in the Armenian Genocide?**

**A: Generally, but not exactly. Most scholarly estimates are between 1.2 & 1.9 million, but some Turkish government figures are as low as 600,000.**

**Q: Was anyone ever brought to trial as a perpetrator in the Armenian Genocide?**

**A: Yes. Although the highest-ranking Ottoman government leaders during WW I had fled, the victorious Allies prosecuted & convicted them in absentia with trials that began in February of 1919. Political considerations brought the process to an early end in 1921, but the evidence verified the identities of the perpetrators and the extent of their crimes.**

**Q: Why should we study the Armenian Genocide?**

**A: To make certain that there is not even a minor debate over whether or not it occurred.**

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