

A Teacher's Guide to
Facing History and Ourselves Resource Book

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND CIVILIZATION:
THE GENOCIDE OF THE ARMENIANS



Photo from: Facing History and Ourselves

NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

**A Teacher's Guide to
Facing History and Ourselves Resource Book**

**CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND CIVILIZATION:
THE GENOCIDE OF THE ARMENIANS**

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PREFACE

Former President Theodore Roosevelt was critical of President Woodrow Wilson for his inaction upon the delivery of news that the Armenian people in Ottoman Turkey were in mortal danger of extermination. Unprepared for war and at first without a stake in the conflict, President Wilson hoped to keep the United States neutral and out of the First World War. The dilemmas he faced, and the choices he made, played a major role in shaping the world as we know it. American presidents continue to be confronted with the same questions that confronted President Wilson in 1915.

In this particular instance, U.S. foreign policy opted for humanitarian assistance. The delivery of aid and relief to survivors made all the difference in staving off the disappearance of the Armenian people. Americans of all stripes joined the relief effort. Congressmen and Senators called attention to the atrocities being committed. Religious leaders raised greater public awareness of the plight of the Armenians. U.S. ambassadors encouraged, and participated in, campaigns to collect funds. U.S. diplomatic officers personally distributed the aid to refugees. Relief workers and medical professionals from across the United States traveled all the way to Armenia and other parts of the Middle East to care for tens of thousands of orphans and hundreds of thousands made destitute.

The American response to the Armenian Genocide marked an exceptional instance of publicly supported efforts to come to the aid of an endangered population. It remains a critical case study of the challenges posed to the international community by the outbreak of genocide and a model of humanitarianism on behalf of a people living half a world away from American shores.

Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians, a resource book published by Facing History and Ourselves Foundation expressly for classroom teachers, explores the subject of genocide and human rights in the context of American history and international relations. It frames the questions and probes the explanations in a sequence that helps students and educators alike to explore a difficult and complicated subject such as genocide, while drawing important lessons about conflicts, war crimes, and international responsibility.

Dr. Rouben Paul Adalian, Director
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ORGANIZATION AND BASIC TERMS IN THE RESOURCE BOOK:

Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians

Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians is a Facing History and Ourselves resource book that studies the Armenian Genocide within the context of human behavior. The Armenian Genocide that took place in the Ottoman Empire during World War I has been considered the first genocide of the twentieth century. Even though the word "genocide" did not exist in the early decades of the twentieth century, the pattern of state-sponsored mass violence in the Ottoman Empire became the prototype for what became known as "genocide" in the aftermath of World War II.

Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians follows a scope and sequence found in all Facing History publications.

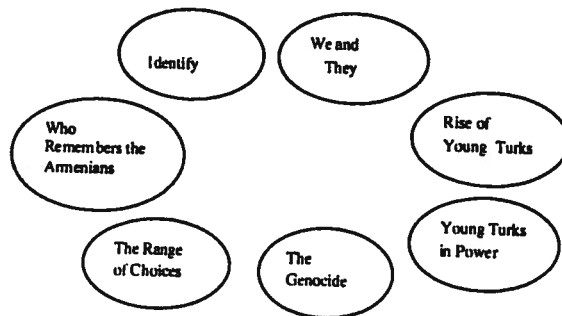
The resource book opens by looking at the identity of Armenians historically and contemporaneously and the place of Armenians as a minority within the Ottoman Empire. Basic questions considered are: What factors influence how we see ourselves? How can we keep our individuality and still be part of a group? What roles does group and family history play in shaping the way we see ourselves and the way others see us? How do all facets of identity influence the choices that people make?

Then, the resource book proceeds to look at the origins of the Armenian Genocide and the actual process of the genocide during the course of World War I. Major questions asked are: When and how did the tensions between Ottoman Turks and Armenians escalate to genocide? What role did pan-Turkic ideology play in sharpening the tensions? What role did outside powers play in heightening the tensions? Why did the world community fail to intervene on behalf of the persecuted minorities, Armenians in particular?

Concluding sections of the resource book examine the legacy of the Armenian Genocide and contemporary efforts of the human rights movement to avert future genocides while promoting efforts to respect the dignity of all human beings.

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The graphic below highlights the main sections of the scope and sequence



Certain fundamental terms are used throughout the resource book. An understanding of these terms not only helps gain insights into the Armenian case but also provides a basis for studying all violations of human rights.

Identity: Understanding how Armenians as individuals and as members of a particular ethnic group see themselves and others provides a point of departure for studying their place in the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent Turkish state. The resource book encourages readers to prepare identity charts for themselves as well as figures mentioned in the resource book. (See page 8 in the Resource Book for a sample identity chart.)

Universe of Obligation: This term, originally defined by the sociologist Helen Fein, refers to "a circle of individuals and groups toward whom obligations are owed, to whom rules apply and whose injuries call for amends. The term is especially useful in studying how Armenians became a group outside the universe of obligation of the Ottoman Turks as well as a group outside the universe of obligation of the international community. Both during the massacres of Armenians in the mid 1890s and again during the genocide of Armenians during World War I, the international community failed to intervene on behalf of the persecuted Armenians. We can use this same term today in discussing international response to contemporary mass violence and genocide.

Nationalism: This is the belief in a collective identity and destiny determined by membership in an ethnic, linguistic, or religious group. During the nineteenth century, nationalistic aspirations among non Turkic minorities in the Ottoman Empire led to sharp tensions and hostilities between the Turks and their non Turkish subjects. As certain national groups broke away from the Empire, the Ottoman leadership became increasingly concerned about future nationalistic movements that might further diminish the size and power of the Empire.

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Bystander: This term refers to an individual, group or nation that witnesses violations to human rights and injustice and responds by not getting involved. The absence of response is in itself a decided course of action. In the case of the Armenian Genocide, there were individual leaders and national governments that failed to take action against the persecution of the Armenians. Even the daily news coverage of atrocities against the Armenians failed to elicit action on behalf of the victims of the Ottomans.

Upstander: This term was recently introduced by Samantha Power in her *A Problem from Hell*. It refers to an individual who takes a risk to speak out against human rights violations and the failure of his or her own government to take a decided stand against these violations. Samantha Power recognizes Henry Morgenthau, Sr., as an upstander during the Armenian Genocide for his persistent efforts to call attention to the plight of the Armenians.

Humanitarian Assistance: This term refers to the individuals and groups that offer resources to people threatened with persecution and genocidal policies. During World War I the American-led Armenian relief campaign organized by Henry Morgenthau, Sr., and leading American philanthropists provided millions of dollars worth of food and other necessities. However, this aid did not include military assistance for the Armenians.

Humanitarian Intervention: This term refers to a determined governmental policy, including military force, to protect persecuted groups within a sovereign nation-state. No such intervention occurred during the genocide of the Armenians in World War I. According to Samantha Power in *A Problem from Hell*, humanitarian intervention remains rare to the present.

Genocide: This term as originally coined in Rafael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* refers to a "coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves." Since World War II, there have been numerous efforts to revise the original definition and government leaders and scholars still have not found consensus on the exact definition of the term. However, most scholars will agree that the mass violence against the Armenians during World War I was genocide and presaged the Holocaust of World War II.

Denial: This term refers to efforts of certain individuals and groups to deny an act of genocide despite irrefutable evidence that the genocide did take place. Hate of the victims of genocide often prompts such interpretations. In the case of the Armenian Genocide, the Turkish government to the present in the twenty first century denies that there was a genocide during World War I.

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vides a good vehicle for the teacher to use to encourage the students to explore the topic of their own history as well as the events of history. Consider the source of names, relations, customs, traditions, etc. Encourage the students to talk to family members. Devise positive tactics and strategies for the students to share and compare this information and to learn from and about each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration.

6. Reword the questions to the appropriate vocabulary and inquiry levels for middle school students on those readings you select to use with them. You may wish to use the readings as guided "read alouds" in the classroom rather than for independent reading so that the discussion and exploration of ideas and information may occur concurrently with the reading. Continuing the learning experience through an assignment involving group work or writing and working alone may follow the initial introductory lesson and reading.
7. Thought-provoking questions are valuable for use with any age group, children through adults. It is the use of vocabulary and nature of the discussion that needs to be tailored to the needs of the group. Consider Reading 7 (p. 45), "Humanitarian Intervention" and the description of Clara Barton's role in events. Many middle school students will be familiar with the name "Clara Barton" in the context of her work in the United States but be unaware of her work on an international level or the duration of her commitment to humanitarian work. This brief reading and the Connections questions that follow are an excellent way to connect the familiar and the unfamiliar in the students' knowledge and to use the connection for a deeper exploration of humanitarian issues and responsibilities.
8. Middle school students frequently study and learn through the organization of skills and knowledge around themes. Using materials and readings from the resource book, themes that can be addressed include such topics as neighbor v. neighbor, making choices, responsibilities and obligations, civil and human rights, customs and traditions, religious persecution and religious tolerance, one-to-one relationships and connections and the meaning of friendship, silent bystanders v. the moral courage of rescuers, the many sides of resistance, the use of language to humanize and dehumanize, treatment of minorities, etc. Make connections between the events and issues of the Armenian Genocide and the events and issues that plague our world today, the issues and concerns that confront the world in which the students must mature and live. Consider the historic and current situation in the recurring role of religion(s) in the human experience. Examine how the recurring questions of poverty and the distribution of world resources affect

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the students here and around the world. What is a community? What do people mean when they refer to the "World Community"? What are the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of members of a community to each other? The topics and themes are many and varied and of compelling importance to the growth of students as humane individuals.

We have offered here only a few thoughts and suggestions for the use of Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of Armenians in the middle school classroom. Your creative teaching skills will find many more uses and applications as you judiciously select and adapt readings and materials for your students. Keep in mind that you are not going to use all of the readings to be found in the resource book but only those that are appropriate and adaptable to your classroom and students.

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Using Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Whenever teachers gather, the topics of the skills and knowledge that must be taught and the constant frustration of finding the time and the materials to "do it all" inevitably arise in the conversation. In addition, we constantly strive to deepen and broaden our own knowledge in order to guide our students in their educational development. The demands of time, knowledge, and choices to be made are constants in our lives. Yet, the importance and the absolute necessity of these values cannot be overstated. Amid all of these wonderful skills and the thirst for knowledge that we hope to impart to our students, what could be more important than the basic skills of being a "good" person, a good citizen and neighbor, a humane individual capable of thinking and making wise, compassionate decisions in our daily lives?

Our schools stress the need for character education and good peer group relations as well as addressing issues of prejudice and discrimination, everyday bullying and hate crimes, genocide, and the Holocaust. In our curricular goals and objectives and in the state core curriculum content standards, we find requirements to teach about the ills and destruction that people and nations have visited upon each other over the centuries and the acts of compassion, courage, and construction that people and nations have exhibited in the face of those evils. The issues that arise in the study of such good and evil are compelling as are the individual stories that comprise the historical times and events. How do we teach our students how to make good, humane decisions? To show compassion and empathy to others? To find moral courage in ourselves as we face ordinary and extraordinary circumstances? It is a daunting challenge but it is one that we must accept and strive to meet in our classroom and in our relations with our students and colleagues every day.

Facing History and Ourselves has developed many resource materials and strategies that can be of tremendous assistance to educators in addressing issues of humanity and inhumanity. Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians is such a resource. The Armenian Genocide is often cited as the first genocide of the twentieth century yet it is too frequently forgotten and overlooked in the study of tragic chapters in human history. Facing History has developed in this resource book a guide that may be of considerable assistance to the teacher in correcting this long neglect.

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While initial skimming of the resource book indicates it to be appropriate primarily for high school students, a more careful review reveals that there also is much in it that is appropriate and helpful for use in the instruction of middle school students. Rich in primary as well as secondary sources, the book offers the teacher a wide range of materials from which to select as well as thought-provoking and challenging questions to assist teachers and students in their study and discussion of the Armenian Genocide and related issues. For the middle school teacher, the question is "How can I adapt this resource book to the interest and maturity levels of my students and make it a valuable teaching tool for my use in the classroom?". In the following space, we offer the middle school teacher some suggestions and guidelines in response to that question. It is only a starting point and we are positive that the many creative teachers found in our classrooms will find many more ways to adapt and skillfully use this resource book.

Some suggestions on use of the resource book in the middle school:

1. Select and customize the materials to the ages and grades of the group.
2. Select and customize the materials to your particular class. You know your class, the skills and maturity levels of the students in the class. Adapt the materials to those levels. You will have the opportunity to introduce the use of primary and secondary materials in the learning process. You may encourage your students to consider and examine the importance of the individual experience in the larger human story, in the broader history. It is a process where they can begin to see that history is the human story and that they are part of that continuing story.
3. You will find in working with your students that the concepts are understood even if the word level is not. Work with your students to overcome the difficulties of word levels to address the true significance of the materials - the concepts.
4. The questions found in the Connections are challenging and thought-provoking. While most may not seem appropriate as writing assignments for middle school students, reworded and rephrased by the teacher, the questions become excellent tools as starting points for discussion. Follow up to the classroom discussion can be implemented through creative writing assignments, debates, poetry, and other modes of thoughtful expression of issues, impressions, and insights gained from the study.
5. Students in the middle school are beginning years of many life changes as they explore their own identities. Chapter 1, "Identity and History", pro-

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Using Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians in the High School

Each of us, as teachers, recognizes and believes in the importance of the knowledge and skills that we attempt to instill in our students. If anything, we are often concerned and frustrated that we cannot do more in the time that we are given. Constantly, we make choices about what to teach, how to teach it most effectively, and when to teach it. Yet, of all of the things we teach and study in our individual disciplines, what could be more important than teaching and stressing a basic understanding and appreciation of the value of each human life and a genuine respect for life? On the surface, it seems such a simple, basic thing to do and all too often we assume that it is something that all of our students have learned or are learning as they grow and mature. It is perhaps a natural thing for us as teachers to assume, to hope, but the sad evidence of prejudice, discrimination, bias, and hate confront us everyday in the behavior and attitudes of those around us in our personal lives as well as in the wider world. How can our students not be affected and influenced by these same human tensions and conflicts? That is one of the most pressing reasons why it is so essential for each of us to integrate into our work with our students the knowledge and understanding of the destructive consequences of bias and prejudice to all humans, personally and collectively.

In the State of New Jersey, we acknowledge the importance of teaching about the consequences and human cost of prejudice, discrimination, and bias and the importance of respecting and valuing each human being through the subject core content standards adopted by the New Jersey Board of Education, through the legislative mandate to teach about Holocaust and genocide in our schools, through local curricula and programs in the schools, and through the efforts of individual teachers in their classrooms on a daily basis.

Facing History and Ourselves is a non-profit organization that has developed many materials and strategies that may serve the teacher as valuable tools to use in the classroom in teaching their students about human nature, hatred, bias, prejudice, discrimination, and their consequences. One of those tools is the important resource book *Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization: The Genocide of the Armenians*.

Too long and too often neglected in our studies of inhumanity and humanity, the Armenian Genocide occurred during the years of World War I before the term "genocide" had even been coined. It was, however, the start of the problem of genocide in the twentieth century. Already, in the

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early years of the twenty-first century, we see the ugly, haunting face of genocide reappearing. In Chapter 6, Reading 12, "The Crime of Genocide," in the resource book *Crimes Against Humanity: The Genocide of the Armenians*, the origins and historical background to the coining of the term "genocide" is detailed. Following the reading, in Connections, activities, issues for discussion and research, and additional information are provided that would be appropriate to use in a language arts class, a world language class, or a sociology class as well as in a history class. Through this reading, connections and links may be made not only across the school curricula, but also across time between past and present as language and issues are addressed in the classroom.

The resource book offers teachers and students a wealth of information in the readings in the forms of primary and secondary materials, maps and charts, photographs, additional resources referenced in the notes, and in the activities found in the Connections after each reading. Through the use of this variety of resources and materials, skills and knowledge valuable across the curriculum, as well as life skills, are addressed and may be developed. Critical thinking, weighing and evaluating information as part of a good decision-making process, "reading" and interpreting visuals such as photographs and illustrations, research skills, propaganda and the use and misuse of language to make the "unacceptable" acceptable, and gaining insight into human behavior are a few of these extremely valuable skills addressed. These skills and knowledge are not exclusive to the teaching of social studies but are part of teaching and learning across the entire educational process.

In Chapter 5, "The Range of Choices," individual and group choices, international reaction and response, the role of diplomacy, and relief efforts are examined. Again, the historical perspective is enriched with an examination of issues relating to the motivations and actions of nations and individuals, the roles of the bystander and rescuer as well as the perpetrator, legal and economic questions, and the impact of remembrance and denial. These and other issues addressed are applicable to an examination not only of the Armenian Genocide but other genocides and atrocities that have occurred in the previous century that has followed into the present day.

Teachers of classes in psychology, sociology, health and family life, as well as those in language arts and history will find the opening chapters of the resource book particularly useful as it encourages the students to examine their own sense of identity and family history, the concepts of "we" and "they", and the concepts of human rights and human responsibilities. The readings encourage the students to make connections between their personal world and the larger world, between past and present. Within the social studies, a random selection of strands and indicators from

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the state core content standards for the social studies stress the role that teaching about the Armenian Genocide and the use of this resource book can play in addressing the standards. A few examples include the following:

Standard 6.1: (by the end of Grade 12 students will:)

5. Evaluate current issues, events, or themes and trace their evolution through historical periods.

Standard 6.2: (by the end of Grade 12 students will:)

E. 7. Participate in events to acquire understanding of complex global problems.

11. Participate in activities that foster understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures.

13. Analyze how the media presents cultural stereotypes and images and discuss how this impacts beliefs and behaviors.

14. Connect the concept of universal human rights to world events and issues.

15. Compare and contrast current and past genocidal acts and other acts of hatred and violence for the purposes of subjugation and exploitation and discuss present and future actions by individuals and governments to prevent the reoccurrence of such events.

Standard 6.3:

F. 2. Analyze the background and global consequences of actions leading to World War II, including:

Σ Other twentieth century genocides, (e.g. Turkey/Armenia, Soviet forced collectivization in the Ukraine, Japan's occupation in China and Korea).

The preceding paragraphs offer only a few points and suggestions for making links and connections with a study of the Armenian Genocide and this resource book across the curriculum. Certainly, its applicability and appropriateness for use in the social studies classes is obvious and immediate after only a cursory perusal. However, upon closer examination of the resource book, teachers of other disciplines will be able to use their own knowledge, creativity, and insights to recognize its applicability to their classes also. As teachers, we understand and recognize that, while each of us may have been led to study a particular discipline out of our own interest and talents, that first and foremost what we are all trying to do is teach young people to be thoughtful, respectful, educated human beings interested in contributing to the creation of a better world for all of us, now and in the future. It is a common goal we share and must work together to achieve regardless of our particular discipline and area of instruction. It is also one of the highest goals we have as educators. Only by working together, by joining and reinforcing our efforts, can we hope to find any measure of success.

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SUGGESTED LIST OF INTERNET RESOURCES

Facing History and Ourselves - www.facing.org/facing/fhao2.nsf

The non-profit organization Facing History and Ourselves website offers lesson plans and readings on the Armenian Genocide. It also provides a variety of sections on programs and workshops, scheduled events, research and development, and educator resources.

Armenian National Institute - www.armenian-genocide.org

On the Armenian National Institute site, there are fact sheets, photo collections, a resource guide, sample press coverage, a chronology of events, archival documents, bibliographies, model curricula, reference maps and additional information for use by educators, students, scholars, and many other groups and individuals.

Armenian Genocide Class Project Ideas from Cobblestone Publishing - www.cobblestonepub.com/pages/TGCOBBArmenia.html

www.cobblestonepub.com/pages/TGFACEArmenia.html

www.cobblestonepub.com/pages/armenianamer.html

On their sites, Cobblestone Publishing includes a K-12 Teacher's Guide and Lesson Plan for teaching about the Armenian Genocide. The assortment of activities and information is extensive offering questions for discussion, field trip ideas, and many web links for teachers and students to investigate. The site is based upon the COBBLESTONE' Armenian Americans Issue of May, 2000.

Armenian Genocide Institute-Museum - www.armenocide.am/

The National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia established and maintains this site. It provides historical-documentary materials from different countries of the world, archival documents, photographs on the Armenian Genocide from 1915-1923, eye witness accounts of massacres, reports and records from international conferences, maps and tables, notable quotations, and art from a genocide survivor as well as a variety of other sources of information.

Why Teach Genocide? - www.teachgenocide.org

Designed specifically for use by schoolteachers, this site offers many resources for teaching about the Armenian Genocide. There are survivor accounts, teaching guides, documents and maps, a history of genocides, and educational posters.

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SUGGESTED LIST OF INTERNET RESOURCE

The Forgotten - www.theforgotten.org

Based upon an ABC broadcast of "The Century" on April 24, 1999, the site provides photos by Arvin T. Wegner, survivor testimonies, a timeline of the years 1893-1939, and other information as well as the broadcast video segment.

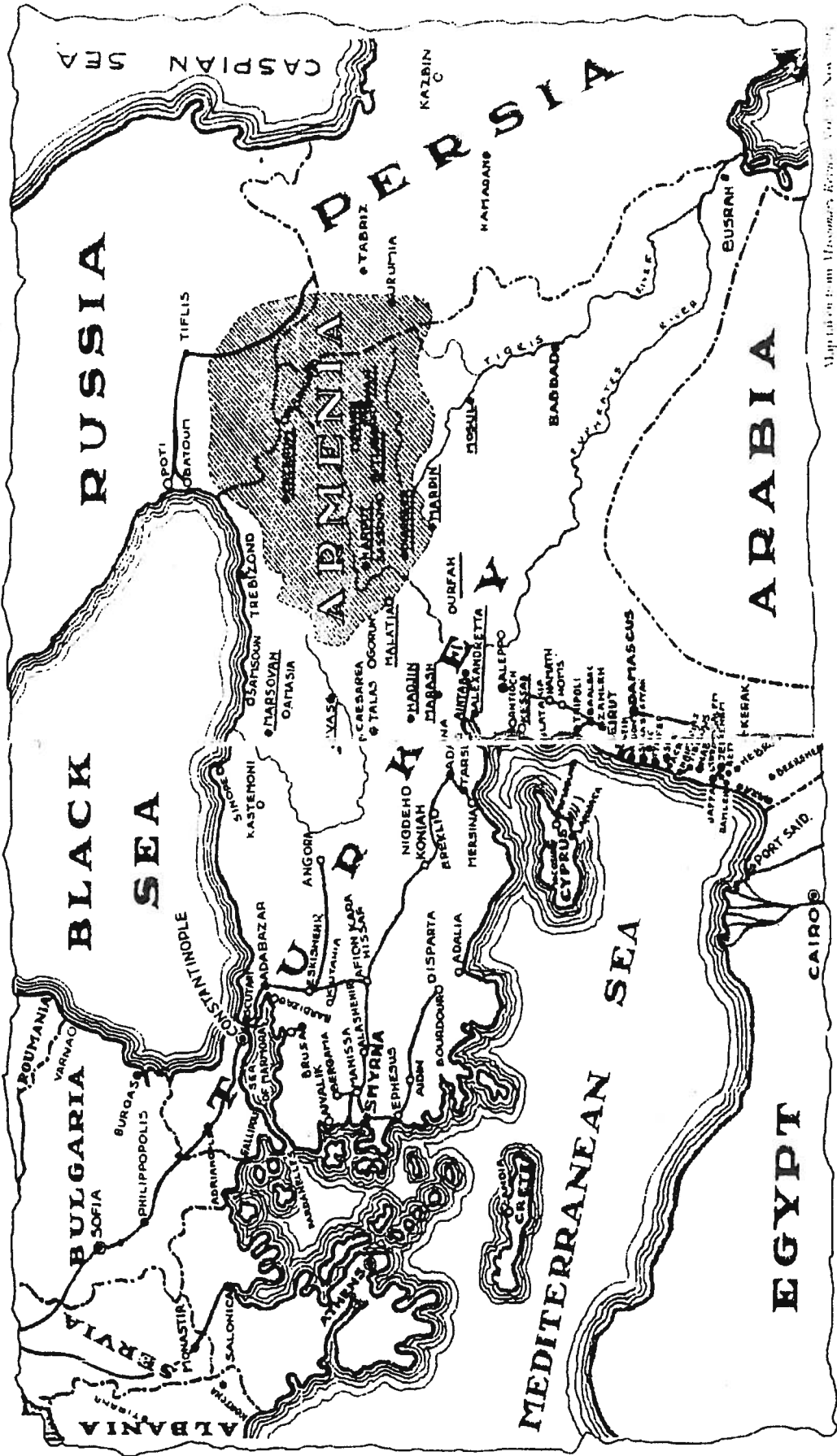
Legacy Project - www.legacy-project.org/

The Legacy Project examines violent traumas of the 20th century offering virtual exhibitions, virtual symposiums, a filmography, creative art and scholarship on this site.

Cilicia Armenia - www.cilicia.org

This site includes information on 3000 years of Armenian history as well as information about the Armenian Genocide.

Scene of the Armenian Persecutions



Map taken from Missionary Review, Vol. 17, Nov. 1894

Shaded territory indicates Armenia. Towns where massacres and deportations of Armenians have been reported are underlined. • Mission Stations. — Railroads.