



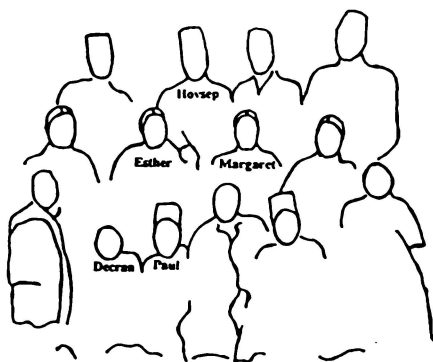
# Everyone's Not Here:

## *Families of the Armenian Genocide*

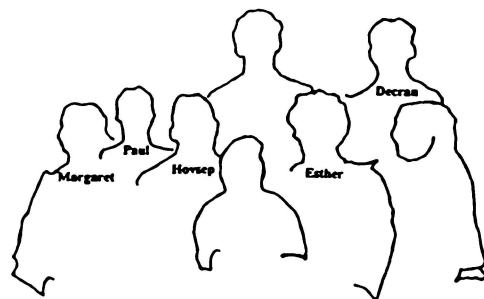


*A Study Guide*

*By William S. Parsons*



**ON THE COVER:** The Gulesians gathered for a family photo in 1892 in Marash, Turkey (pictured on left). After massacres that occurred in the ensuing years, the Gulesians left Marash and arrived at Ellis Island in 1897. When the family came together again in Boston for a portrait in 1902 (pictured below), only 5 of the 14 in the 1892 photo had been reunified in the United States. Photos provided by Project SAVE courtesy of Decran Gulesian.



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## ***Acknowledgements***

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Everyone associated with this curriculum development project is grateful to Dirouhi Highgas, Richard Parseghian, and Vartan Hartunian for relating their experiences of the Genocide and for introducing us to their wonderful grandchildren.

# ***Preface***

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This study guide has been developed primarily for use with the educational videotape **Everyone's Not Here: Families of the Armenian Genocide**. The videotape provides educators with an important tool for teaching about the significance of the Armenian Genocide, and this study guide enhances that effort. This history and its legacy is relevant to our lives today, for as Irving Horowitz comments in his book, *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power*, "...the umbilical cord between genocidal practice and state power has never been stronger."

In the mid-1970s, education about human rights and genocide gained momentum in the United States. Many educational conferences focused on the question, "Why teach about genocide or the Holocaust?" Curriculum development and teacher training programs tackled questions of content and methodology, and gradually these topics were incorporated into many school programs throughout the United States.

Central to this curriculum development project are universal themes, such as the importance of family, the capability of young and old to listen and learn from one another, and the importance of studying history. Through interviews with Armenian survivors and their grandchildren, the videotape and this study guide present a personal rather than a broad historical view of the Genocide. Survivors describe their efforts to remember and preserve their experiences. "Remembrance is a key to understanding the present," comments one survivor, "It's not only a weeping over the past. It is absolutely essential if we are ever to better the welfare of mankind." The grandchildren of these survivors express how important it has been for them to listen to the testimonies of their grandparents. In the words of one teenager, "Trying to annihilate a whole race of people will never work because as long as one survives, especially one as strong as my grandmother, when they survive, then that plan can never succeed." Even the title of this study guide and videotape comes from one of the teenagers interviewed when he says, "If we really think about it, everyone's not here. A lot of people are missing."

The availability of this study guide and videotape has been timely. States such as California, New Jersey, New York, Maine, Connecticut, Ohio, and Virginia currently recommend the teaching of human rights and genocide, and an increasing number of teachers in all states are including units which cover this topic. In California, teachers are required to incorporate a study of human rights and genocide; however, local educators decide which historical case studies they want to teach. One of the determining factors for including the Armenian Genocide in a course of study is the availability of effective and appropriate resource materials. At a recent teacher training workshop, Esther Taira, multicultural administrator for the Los Angeles Unified School District stated, "This video will not only encourage teachers to teach about human rights and the Armenian Genocide but will have relevance to a wide range of topics and disciplines. For example, English teachers could use this resource as part of a course on oral histories to encourage students to interview their grandparents."

The readings, lessons, and activities presented in this study guide are designed to provide educators with flexibility. Suggestions range from a single class presentation, to a series of lessons which enhance existing courses, to a separate unit of study. There are four parts to this study guide. Part I suggests lessons for establishing a context before viewing the videotape and is divided into two sections: the first section provides four sample lessons for introducing the videotape, and the second section contains readings, questions, and activities for developing an historical background to the Genocide. Part II provides lessons for discussion activities after viewing the videotape along with suggestions for reading and writing assignments. Part III is a transcript of the videotape, and Part V describes sample course outlines which incorporate the videotape and the issues it raises.

After studying the history of the Armenian Genocide and viewing the videotape **Everyone's Not Here**, a student at Hunterdon Central High School responded, "There is nothing we can do now that will change the pain and abuse that so many people have been subjected to in this history, but it is only right that we at least acknowledge it."

# LESSONS FOR INTRODUCING THE VIDEOTAPE "EVERYONE'S NOT HERE"

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## Establishing A Context

The purpose of this section is to provide sample introductory lessons for teachers who have decided to use the videotape "Everyone's Not Here," but have minimum class time available. These lessons are designed to give students some context for viewing the videotape; they do not necessarily represent a sequential series. This section is followed by a series of lessons for teachers who want to provide students with more historical background before viewing the videotape.

### **Lesson 1: Introducing the Concepts of Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

Objectives: -to help students identify a vocabulary for explaining what is meant by a conflict and conflict resolution.

-to create diagrams which illustrate different ways to solve a disagreement.

#### Activities and responses:

1) Students in one class were asked what words they would list when thinking about "conflict" and "resolution." As hands were raised the list on the blackboard grew to include:



problem	confusion	anger	frustration
disagreement	war	battle	compromise
argument	peace	quiet	leaders
struggle	persuasion	treaty	heroes
struggles	turmoil	relief	traitor
freedom	meetings	declaration	opposition
countries	solution	hate	fear
defense	quarrels	violence	unhappiness

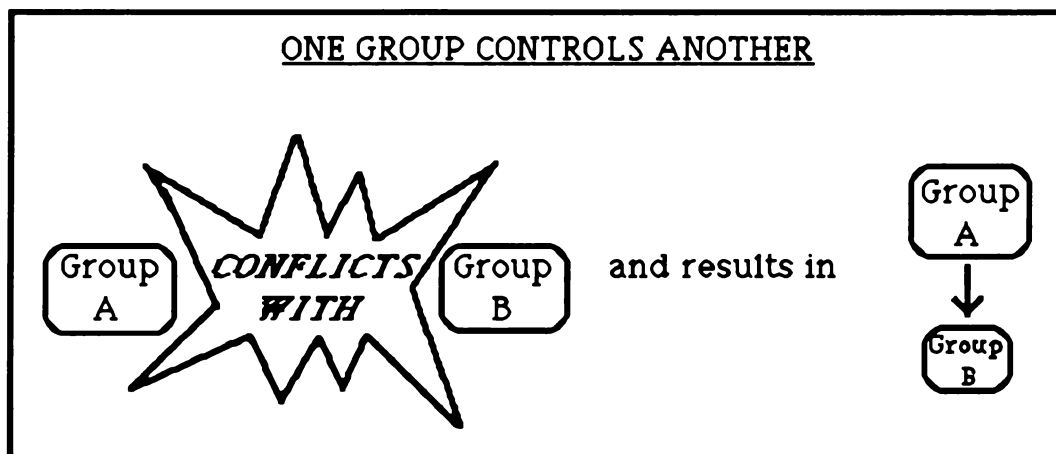
.) Students were asked to choose words from the list which refer to resolution." Responses included:

treaty	compromise	agreement	meetings
persuasion	solution	peace	

.) The teacher then asked for various ways to handle a disagreement or conflict. The discussion resulted in:

- |                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| a) persuasion   | e) one destroys the other  |
| b) compromise   | f) both destroy each other |
| c) new solution | g) one controls the other  |
| d) stalemate    |                            |

.) Students were asked to diagram the above solutions, for example:



.) For homework, students were asked to complete diagrams for all the above solutions to a conflict.

## Lesson 2: Introducing the Concept of Genocide

- Objectives:**
- to identify student questions with regard to the topic.
  - to introduce some distinctions when defining the topic.

### Activities and responses:

1) Write the word genocide on the blackboard and open the class with a question, "What do you think of when you hear the word genocide?" As students respond, write a word or phrase on the board to remind the class of what was said. For example, one high school class responded with the following list:

Nazis	Armenians	Cambodians	Indians
Jews	Hitler	kill an entire group	

2) Ask students to explain these words and phrases, and arrive at an initial working definition of the word genocide such as, "a plan to destroy an entire group of people."

3) Ask the class to respond to the idea of genocide. Focus the discussion on conditions which increase the possibility of genocide occurring. One class responded as follows:

Student: "It's stupid, because why would a government kill people when it could use them to help build up the country?"

Student: "Maybe the government believes the group is a threat to the country?"

Teacher: "One of the problems we face in studying genocide is how victims are often perceived as extremely dangerous, and how killing a group can be carried out in the name of self-defense."

The class then discussed historical examples of how groups have been labeled as dangerous, such as, when Jews were blamed by history textbooks in Nazi Germany for all of the world's problems, and when Cambodians with eyeglasses were often labeled by the Pol Pot Regime as intellectuals who threatened the establishment of a new order in Cambodia.

The discussion became focused on how governments can perceive a group as a threat and can label a group as an enemy. The teacher explained that in the genocides carried out against the Armenians, Jews, and Cambodians the governments were at war.

Teacher: "So what are some of the conditions which can increase the likelihood of a genocide happening?"

Student: "Didn't Hitler hate Jews because of a doctor who treated his mother?"

Teacher: "Historians give various interpretations of what formed Hitler's opinions and hatreds; what difference does it make?" After no response from the class, the teacher drew a stick figure on the board and asked, "This represents Hitler or any leader who wants to commit genocide, what difference does it make? What important questions does this raise for us?"

Student: "Why did people follow him?"

Student: "One person isn't able to carry out a policy of genocide."

Student: "Did people know what they were doing?"

The teacher drew a diagram of concentric circles on the board to help students discuss the last question, "What did people know?" The smallest inner circle represented people who carried out the actual killings, while other circles depicted businesses which profited from the policy, to clerical workers who kept records, to individuals who were offered jobs to replace those who had been removed.

4) Show a five-minute videotape excerpt entitled, **Reflections**, from the series, **Witness to the Holocaust**<sup>1</sup>, which focuses on the statement that, "...bystanders always help the victimizers, never the victims." Ask students which statements in the video stand out the most for them? Which statements are confusing? With which do they agree or disagree?

5) For homework, students could summarize and respond to some of the main points made in class.

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<sup>1</sup>Available from the **Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation** (25 Kennard Rd. Brookline, MA 02165. 617-969-1220). The videotape is distributed by **Cinema Guild**, 1697 Broadway, NY, NY 10019.

### **Lesson 3: Exploring Conditions Which Increase the Possibility of Genocide Occurring**

**Objectives:** -to introduce information about genocide which encourages students to want to learn more about this topic.

-to demonstrate that the study of genocide raises important and complex questions of human behavior.

#### **Activities and responses:**

1) Ask students, "Is it important to study the capability of governments to commit genocide?"

2) The following list<sup>2</sup> can be used to demonstrate that genocidal acts are not uncommon in the twentieth century. According to this source, an estimated 119 million people have been killed by genocidal acts in the last 90 years.<sup>3</sup> This list is very simplistic and lacks careful historical distinctions; however, it is effective in engaging students in an introductory lesson.

#### **SOME GENOCIDAL ACTS IN THE 20TH CENTURY**

- 1904 - Germany massacred Hereros in southern Africa.
- 1915 - Ottoman Turkey deported and massacred Armenians.
- 1919 - Ukrainians killed Jews.
- 1932-33 - Soviet Union starved to death Ukrainians.
- 1943-46 - Soviet Union deported whole nations of people.
- 1941-45 - Nazi Germany tried to destroy all Jews and massacre many other groups of people.
- 1950-59 - China killed Buddhists in Tibet.
- 1965 - Indonesia killed people labeled as "communists."

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Totten, editor, **Genocide: Issues, Approaches, Resources** (New York: State Council for the Social Studies, Fall 1987), p.94.

<sup>3</sup> Totten, **Genocide: Issues, Approaches, Resources**, p.2.