

AID FOR ARMENIANS BLOCKED BY TURKEY

Attempts to Send Food to Refugees Frustrated, Says the American Committee.

PUTS VICTIMS AT 1,000,000

Careful Survey Shows 55,000 Persons Killed in the Vilayet of Van Alone.

The American Committee on Armenian Atrocities, among the members of which are Cardinal Gibbons, Cleveland H. Dodge, Bishop David H. Greer, Oscar S. Straus, Professor Samuel T. Dutton, Charles R. Crane, and many other prominent citizens, issued a statement yesterday in which it was said that authentic reports from Turkey proved that the war of extermination being waged against the Armenians was so terrible that when all the facts were known the world would realize that what had been done was "the greatest, most pathetic, and most arbitrary tragedy in history."

Attempts to furnish food to the Armenians ordered deported to distant parts of the empire were blocked by the Turkish authorities, the committee said, the Turkish officials stating that "they wished nothing to be done that would prolong their lives."

In the statement the committee makes public a report received a few days ago from an official representative of the neutral powers, who, reporting on conditions in one of the Armenian camps, says:

"I have visited their encampment and a more pitiable sight cannot be imagined. They are, almost without exception, ragged, hungry and sick. This is not surprising in view of the fact that they have

been on the road for nearly two months, with no change of clothing, no chance to bathe, no shelter, and little to eat. I watched them one time when their food was brought. Wild animals could not be worse. They rushed upon the guards who carried the food and the guards beat them back with clubs, hitting hard enough to kill sometimes. To watch them one could hardly believe these people to be human beings. As one walks through the camp, mothers offer their children and beg you to take them. In fact, the Turks have been taking their choice of these children and girls for slaves or worse. There are very few men among them as most of the men were killed on the road. Women and children were also killed. The entire movement seems to be the most thoroughly organized and effective massacre this country has ever seen."

"They all agree," adds the committee, referring to the reports, "as to the method of procedure, the thoroughness and cruelty of the destructive work, and the confessed purpose of the plan to wipe out the Armenian nation. The fact that the central government at Constantinople refuses to permit Armenians to leave their country is further evidence of their purpose of extermination."

"The Turks do not deny the atrocities, but claim they are a military measure to protect them against a possible attack of a race that is disloyal."

"It is impossible to estimate how many have already perished. A careful survey in the Van Vilayet gathered the names of 55,000 persons who had been killed. Others were able to escape by flight to Persia and Russia. An eyewitness who has recently made an extended journey across Asia Minor saw over 50,000 poor, dazed, helpless, starving refugees camped by the roadside in a region almost desert, with no provision for their food supply. Probably it is not an overestimate to say that 1,000,000 of the possible 2,000,000 Armenians in Turkey at the beginning of the war are either dead or in Moslem harems, or forced to profess Mohammedanism, or are on their sad journey to the desert and death."

The committee says it has cabled \$106,000 to Ambassador Morgenthau at Constantinople, of which \$100,000 was for relief of Armenians in Turkey, and the remainder for Armenians who had escaped into Egypt. The office of the committee, of which Mr. Crane is Treasurer, is at 70 Fifth Avenue, New York.

From the Encyclopedia of Genocide, Editor-in-Chief Israel W. Charny,
Published by ABC-CLIO, December 1999.