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Letter from Mark H. Ward and Forrest D. Yowell to the American Consul at Aleppo, 5 April 1922

Aleppo, April 5, 1922.

Mr. Jesse B. Jackson¹,
American Consul,
Aleppo.

Dear Sir:

The signatories to this statement, Mr. F. D. Yowell, of Washington, D. C., and Dr. Mark H. Ward, of New York City, have just arrived from Harpoot, Turkey in Asia, and feel it their duty to bring to your attention certain conditions existing there concerning which we think you should be informed.

Mr. Yowell is Director of the Harpoot Unit of the N. E. R.² since last October and was forcibly sent out of Harpoot on March 5th for reasons that the Turkish officials refused to divulge and Dr. Ward was connected with the Harpoot Unit for the past two and a half years as Medical Director and for a short period as Acting Director. Dr. Ward was given to understand by the Turkish authorities that unless he left Harpoot voluntarily he would be sent out by the Government. The only reason given in his case was that he was formerly connected with the Mission Board.

All of the Americans in the Harpoot Unit normally about 200 have been consistently treated by the Turkish officials with the utmost discourtesy and injustice and in our opinion the Americans are only tolerated in that Vilayet³ (Marmouret ul-Aziz) for what personal gain the officials are able to secure by whatever means possible from the presence of the N. E. R. there.

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... 21 years of age and then make them pay the usual exemption fee of 300 Banknotes for one year. Several cases of this sort have come under our personal knowledge.

We have been able to prepare some figures on the deportations of Greeks who were sent from Konia, Afion-Karahissar and the war front and from the entire Black Sea coast and hinterland which apply only after they had reached Sivas. These deportees began to reach Harpoot last June. Of 30,000 who left Sivas, 5,000 died before reaching Harpoot (one American saw 1,500 bodies on the road between the two places); 3,000 died in Malatia during the winter; 2,000 now (March), remain in Malatia and 20,000 reached Harpoot.

Of this remaining 20,000, 2,000 died in Harpoot during the winter, 3,000 are now scattered in Harpoot Vilayet (Marmouret ul Aziz), as follows: 500 in Eghin, Arabkir and Baker-

¹ Jesse B. Jackson served as United States consul in Aleppo, Syria. Jackson forwarded this letter by Ward and Yowell to the United States Secretary of State in Washington on 6 April 1922 along with other related documents

² NER is an abbreviation for the American relief organization Near East Relief

³ "Vilayet" is a Turkish word of Arabic origins for "province"

⁴ The second page has not been located

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Maden, 500 Mezre and Harpoot, 1,200 in villages of Harpoot Plain and 500 in Paloy villages. The remaining 15,000 were sent on to Diarbekir, en route to Bitlis.

Of this 15,000, 3,000 died on the way, 1,000 died in Diarbekir, 2,000 remained in Diarbekir and the remaining 9,000 were sent on toward Bitlis.

The N. E. R. have given aid to these deportees from Sivas to Diarbekir, both inclusive, touching the intervening cities and towns of Malatia, Harpoot, 42 villages in Harpoot Plain, Gemush-Maden, Osmanie and also along the second route via Eghin and Arabkir. In the Vilayet of Marmouret-ul-Aziz all relief was given in opposition to the wishes of the Government, who did practically everything in its power to prevent any relief to the deportees and it is not coincidence only that in the big majority of cases deportees were sent on from Harpoot during severe snow storms during the entire storm period. The N. E. R. was not allowed to employ any Greeks nor to take any orphans into its institutions. Sick Greeks could only be accepted in our hospital by written order from the Turkish Director of Sanitation and the sick person was compelled to call in person for such an order. Usually when such an order was secured it was too late to avail the recipient any good.

Contrary to the policy regarding children and orphans in the vilayet of Marmouret-ul-Aziz, in the city of Malatia, which is a separate Mutiseriflik⁵, we were compelled to take in over 600 Greek children.

Of the entire number of Greeks deported, about two thirds of them were women and children and the main causes of death were, starvation, exposure, typhus, and dysentery. The Turkish authorities were frank in their statements that it was the intention to have all the Greeks die and all of their actions – their failure to supply any food or clothing – their strong opposition to relief by the N. E. R. – their choice of route, weather, etc. – concentrations in unhealthful places, and last of all their deliberate choice of destination BITLIS, a place almost totally destroyed, with no industry and located far up in the mountains, seem to fully bear this statement out.

All along the route of the deportees, Moslems visit the various groups and take of the women and girls whomever they want for immoral purposes.

If American aid be withdrawn from the deportees scattered along the places between Sivas and Diarbekir practically all of them will perish and for those who have been sent beyond Diarbekir we see no hope of life whatever.

Along all the routes taken by the Greeks are strewn the bodies of the dead which are being consumed by dogs, wolves and vultures. The Turks make no effort to bury the Christian dogs, as they call them, and deportees who remain alive have not the strength to bury their dead, even if they were allowed to do so.

⁵ "Mutiseriflik" (more commonly spelt "Mutessariflik") is Turkish for a *sanjak* or district of a *vilayet* of the Ottoman Empire as ruled by a *mutasarrıf*

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The figures given have been carefully prepared from information gathered by Americans actually in charge of relief of the Greeks and we believe them to be under the number of actual deaths if they err at all.

Respectfully yours,

(Sgd.) Mark H. Ward, M. D.⁶

(Sgd.) F. D. Yowell⁷

Medical Director – Harpoot Unit
Near East Relief, Constantinople
Care N.E.R – New York City.

Director – Harpoot Unit
Near East Relief,
Constantinople,
4444 – Alton Place, N. W.,
Washington, D. C.

⁶ Dr Mark Hopson Ward (Newton, Massachusetts, 21 Oct. 1884 - Newton, Massachusetts, 23 Dec. 1952) graduated from Amherst College in 1906 and from the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University in 1911. He went to Turkey as a medical missionary in 1915. During World War I he also served in France as a captain in the United States Army Medical Corps. His wife, a medical missionary who served alongside her husband in Turkey, died 23 January 1950 at the age of 63. Dr Ward died 23 December 1952 in Newton, Massachusetts at the age of 68.

⁷ Major Forrest D. Yowell was born in Upperville, Virginia on the 12 October 1882. He moved to Washington D.C. and in 1906 married Cora L Bowling. He later joined the Near East Relief (NER) and from October 1921 became director of the Harpoot unit.