

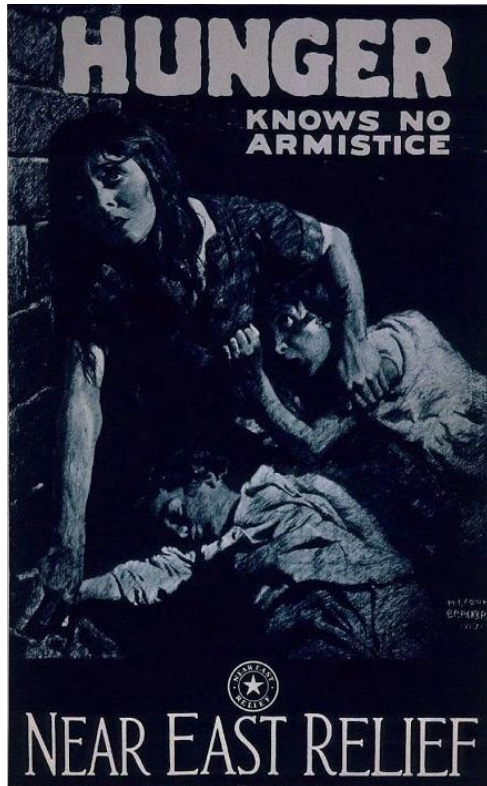


AMERICA WE THANK YOU

An Armenian Tribute to Near East Relief

ARIZONA FACT SHEET

Arizona was a staunch supporter of Near East Relief (NER), the American-led campaign that quickly sparked an international response with its unprecedented humanitarian endeavor, mobilizing all segments of American citizenry including elected officials, celebrities and laypersons alike, to help rescue victims of the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey from 1915-1930.



100,000 Armenian girls and women sold to Turkish harems where they were taken and being held captive against their will.

- Arizona facilitated its relief efforts from its NER state headquarters located at 42 East Monroe Street in Phoenix with Charles F. Willis as its state director.
- As reported in *St. Johns Herald* in 1920, the state of Arizona was asked to provide funding to feed, clothe, and educate 1,000 orphans of the NER at cost of \$15 per month for each child.
- Gilbert E. Greer of the Latter Day Saints Church was acting Chairman of the committee responsible for receiving donations. Boxes were placed in all the stores to collect nickels and dimes to help the fundraising effort. Local newspapers made appeals to Arizona citizens to “adopt” 1,000 orphans explaining that Armenia is the oldest Christian nation and that centuries of cruel persecution by Turks has not destroyed Armenian’s faith.
- *The Bisbee Daily Review* published a similar appeal. The articles noted that funds were needed to keep 250,000 orphan children alive and to free the over

- *The Mohave County Miner* and *Our Mineral Wealth*, a newspaper published in Kingman Arizona, printed an article on February 7, 1920 reporting that an Armenian family was touring Arizona under the auspices of NER to raise awareness on the conditions in Armenia. Gen. Mesrop N. Azgapedian, his wife Lady Ann and their daughter, little Araxi visited Phoenix and Tucson to talk about the deplorable conditions they witnessed in Armenia and to relay the needs of the Armenian refugees and orphans under the care of NER.

- *The Bisbee Daily Review* in October 1920 published an urgent appeal made by Charles Vickery, National Secretary of NER to the residents of Arizona requesting that they donate all the clothing they can spare given the impending harsh winter in the Near East. The article published the names of prominent Arizona residents endorsing the NER efforts.



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- Among the aforementioned names were Governor T.E. Campbell, Ex-Governor G.W.P. Hunt, and W. K. Janes.
- Tucson native, Miss Sabra Bradley traveled across land and sea leaving her life of comfort to work for NER's humanitarian efforts. Upon her return in 1921 after years of service, she described Armenia as the "land of the living nightmare" in reference to the death and destruction in the immediate aftermath of the Armenian genocide.
- In January 1921, NER's official publication, *The New Near East*, which boasted a monthly readership of over 100,000 person, reported that Arizona voluntarily doubled its fundraising quota from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Every National Bank and recognized Trust Company was an authorized NER depository. On every desk and cashiers' window prominent notices were placed stating, "Contributions for Near East Relief can be made at this bank."
- Year after year, daily papers in Arizona made appeals for help and encouraged its citizens to donate to NER so orphaned children and refugees could be saved and sustained. As one paper described it, "the prospect for the future of the adult population seems almost desperate as they are carried off by disease and starvation." The same article noted that the need to care for orphans are more than what NER orphanages could take. However, the number of orphans needing care had decreased from prior year due to starvation and disease.
- *The Bisbee Daily Review*, on March 3, 1921, published facts about NER describing the situation in Armenia stating that Armenia had been totally devastated both by organized Turkish efforts and by roving Kurdish bandits. Quoting Herbert Hoover, the article noted "the situation in the Near East is the most desperate in the world." The article made mention that every dollar raised by NER went directly to the relief efforts as the committee's overhead costs were being underwritten by gifts from independent financiers.

Arizona, We Thank You!

Thanks to the generosity of the Near East Relief, its participating organizations and entities, the U.S. Government and State Governments, and especially the American people at large, over 1,000,000 refugees and 132,000 orphans of the Armenian Nation and other Christian minorities were rescued, fed, clothed, and educated. We have survived, thrived, and prospered from the horrors of Genocide at the hands of Ottoman Turkey.

For your unwavering support and unprecedented generosity in donating to Near East Relief's humanitarian efforts, Arizona, We Thank You!



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