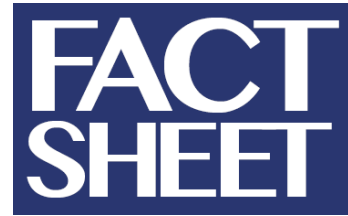




**AMERICA
WE THANK YOU**
An Armenian Tribute to Near East Relief



UNITED STATES PRESIDENTS INVOLVED IN THE NEAR EAST RELIEF EFFORT

The work of the Near East Relief spanned the duration of three U.S. Presidential administrations, including Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921), Warren Harding (1921-1923) and Calvin Coolidge (1923-1929). All three Presidents were deeply dedicated to the noble philanthropic work of the NER and believed that the U.S. must take a leading role in this humanitarian endeavor to help save the Armenian refugees and orphans during and after the Armenian Genocide.

Woodrow Wilson

Woodrow Wilson (1865-1924) was the 28th president of the United States, whose two terms from 1913 to 1921 spanned the years of the Armenian Genocide. Neutrality from 1914 to 1917 during World War I placed the United States in a position to intercede with the Ottomans on behalf of the Armenians. The Department of State, for example, instructed Ambassador Morgenthau to deliver the May 24 Allied Note warning the Young Turk regime that it would be held liable for crimes against humanity. U.S. neutrality also made the American Embassy in Constantinople the nexus of information arriving from the Ottoman provinces about the atrocities committed against the Armenians, much as it served as a distribution point for funds raised in the United States for relief to the refugees. President Wilson not only created Near East Relief but he also extended strong moral support for NER efforts by dedicating two days in October 1916 for a nationwide fundraising drive and continuously calling for public involvement in relief efforts.



These fundraising appeals—spearheaded by NER’s first president, Cleveland Dodge—proved immensely successful. In 1921, the organization’s annual report cited a six-year operating budget of approximately 70 million dollars. This money was used to save the lives of at least a million people amidst the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire, by treating several hundreds of thousands of patients in NER-run clinics throughout the region, and establishing orphanages and vocational schools for more than 132,000 Armenian children orphaned in the Genocide.

NER’s enormous impact in the region attracted the patronage of a host of the era’s most well-known public figures, including former U.S. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft, who set a trend for Presidential involvement that would later be continued by William Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and



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Dwight Eisenhower, among others, all of whom were all closely affiliated with the organization:

A devoted Presbyterian, Wilson infused a profound sense of moralism into his internationalism, now referred to as “Wilsonian doctrine” - an American foreign policy which obligates the United States to promote global democracy.

As World War I came to an end and the territories of the vast Ottoman Empire were going to be partitioned amongst the victors, the Republic of Armenia declared independence on May 28, 1918. The fledgling Republic, having to deal with hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Armenian Genocide, famine, disease, poverty, and lack of resources, sought recognition, protection and assistance from the victorious Allied Powers.

In 1919, President Wilson launched an official investigation through the King-Crane Commission (officially called the 1919 Inter-Allied Commission on Mandates in Turkey) to determine how the Ottoman Empire should be partitioned. The Commission expressed support for the creation of an Armenian State to be recognized by the international community and insured by the Allies and rejected the idea that Turkey would respect the rights of its remaining Armenian population after suffering such horrific massacres by the Ottoman regime. The same arguments used by the King-Crane Commission to justify the creation of an Armenian State were later used to create the State of Israel following World War II and the Holocaust.

On January 19, 1920, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers agreed to recognize the government of the new Armenian State on the condition that the recognition should not prejudge the question of borders. On April 23, 1920, the United States also recognized the Republic of Armenia on the same condition. Thereafter, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers requested two things of the United States:

1. That the United States assume a mandate over Armenia which needed protection from the Turks after suffering such a horrific trauma; and
2. That the U.S. President issue an Arbitral Award to fix the borders between Armenia and Turkey.

While the U.S. Senate rejected the proposed mandate over Armenia on June 1, 1920, it did approve the proposal for President Wilson to issue an Arbitral Award fixing the borders between Armenia and Turkey.

On August 10, 1920, the Treaty of Sevres was signed between the Allied Powers and Ottoman Turkey whereby the Ottoman Empire was to be partitioned. Article 89 of the Treaty included



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a provision for President Wilson to issue a legally binding arbitral award setting the boundaries between Armenia and Turkey. While the Treaty was under negotiation and then signed by representatives of Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire, a successful Turkish war for independence was led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who promptly stripped the Ottoman negotiators of their Turkish citizenship and doomed Turkey's ratification of the Treaty. Meanwhile, non-Turkish territories of the Ottoman Empire were divided up into mandates: Britain took mandates over Palestine and Iraq, while France assumed mandates over Syria and Lebanon, all of which remained in place until the end of World War II.

There was no mandate for Armenia, which struggled to maintain its independence against all odds, including continuing onslaughts by the Turkish army.

On November 22, 1920, President Wilson issued his final arbitral award which by its own terms was legally binding and non-appealable, conclusively and definitively setting the boundaries between Armenia and Turkey. The arbitral award gave Armenia full title and rights over the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Erzerum and Trebizond to give Armenia access to the port city on the Black Sea. The territory awarded to Armenia constituted less than half of the Armenian Homeland and was to be annexed to the newly independent Republic of Armenia which existed on the eastern frontier of former Russian-controlled territory. With the declaration of independence of the Republic of Turkey and Ataturk's rise to power, however, the Allied Powers were forced back to the negotiating table to sign the Treaty of Lausanne and abandoned their intent to protect Armenia in favor of adopting a policy of deeming Turkey to be a strategic ally. As President Wilson became debilitated by illness and incapable of following through his intentions and as the switch in American policy moved away from Armenia and toward Turkey, the Wilsonian Arbitral Award was never enforced. Nevertheless, it remains a legally binding decision to this day.

In 1921, having lost all protection from the U.S. and the Allied Powers, the independent Republic of Armenia succumbed to pressure to cede itself to the Soviet Union where it remained as the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic for seven decades. In 1991 when the Soviet Union dismantled, a second Independent Republic of Armenia was declared on one-sixth of the territory granted to Armenia by the Wilsonian Arbitral Award.

Despite the best intentions of President Woodrow Wilson to protect Armenia and to dispense justice to its People by punishing the perpetrators of the Genocide, the legacy of the failed Treaty of Sevres, the unenforced Wilsonian Arbitral Award, and the Allied Powers' refusal to ensure its protection, Armenia to this day remains blockaded in a chokehold on its western border by Turkey and on its eastern border by the Turkic Republic of Azerbaijan, while the consequences of the Genocide remain unpunished even 100 years later.

President Woodrow Wilson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1919 for his philanthropic and progressive attempts to create the League of Nations and to spread democracy worldwide.



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He is consistently ranked by scholars and historians as one of the top ten U.S. Presidents. Recognizing the pivotal role played by the United States in the relief efforts of Near East Relief, President Wilson's successors Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge carried on the philanthropic work of the NER that began under the leadership and vision of President Woodrow Wilson even after Americans were forced to leave Turkey in 1922-1923.



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Warren G. Harding


The NEW NEAR EAST

The Chosen Executives of America Adopt Orphans of the Near East



We reproduce on this page a letter received by Mrs. Cabot Stevens, Director of Near East Relief in Washington, from Mrs. Harding, testifying to her "keen interest" in our work. Frequently, by letter to national headquarters and by statement to the press, has President Harding expressed a similar interest.

Not to be outdone by his Executive Chief, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts has also adopted for a year a little Armenian child. He is here shown contemplating his coupon book



STANDING in the south portico of the White House, on a rug which formerly covered the floor of the room in the palace at Versailles in which the treaty of peace was signed, the First Lady of the Land and President Harding each pledged responsibility for the life of an Armenian child for a year, accepting Near East Relief coupon books substantiating their pledge.

President and Mrs. Harding, in both public and private life, have been staunch endorsers of Near East Relief.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 29, 1921

My dear Mrs. Stevens:

I am very glad, indeed, to testify to my keen interest in the work that is being carried on in behalf of relief of suffering in the Near East. I have had some occasion to acquaint myself with the gravity of conditions in that historic area, and earnestly hope that the efforts now on foot for its amelioration may produce results that will testify to the humane interest and sympathy of the American people.

Very sincerely,
Warren G. Harding

Mrs. Cabot Stevens
Bond Building
Washington, D.C.

Warren G. Harding (November 2, 1865 – August 2, 1923) was the 29th President of the United States (1921-1923). A Republican from Ohio who served in the Ohio Senate and then in the United States Senate, Harding continued the U.S. Administration’s support of the Near East Relief and the work carried on by his predecessor President Woodrow Wilson.

In fact, President Harding conceptualized the idea of the Armenian orphan “Coupon Book,” where citizens could sponsor the life of an Armenian orphan by purchasing coupons. Each coupon book, consisting of 60 coupons valued at \$5 each, supported the life of an

Armenian orphan for one year. These coupon books were sold throughout America, and eventually the world, to raise awareness of the plights of the Armenians. Thereafter, celebrities, laypersons, and U.S. government officials, including Presidents and First Ladies, went on to “adopt” Armenian orphans from NER orphanages. All segments of American society were mobilized into action. While government officials and even Congress called upon the American people to heed the call of NER, Armenian orphans were adopted by famous American families, including Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, Mrs. Oliver Harriman (widow of President Warren Harding), and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt (American womens’ suffrage leader).



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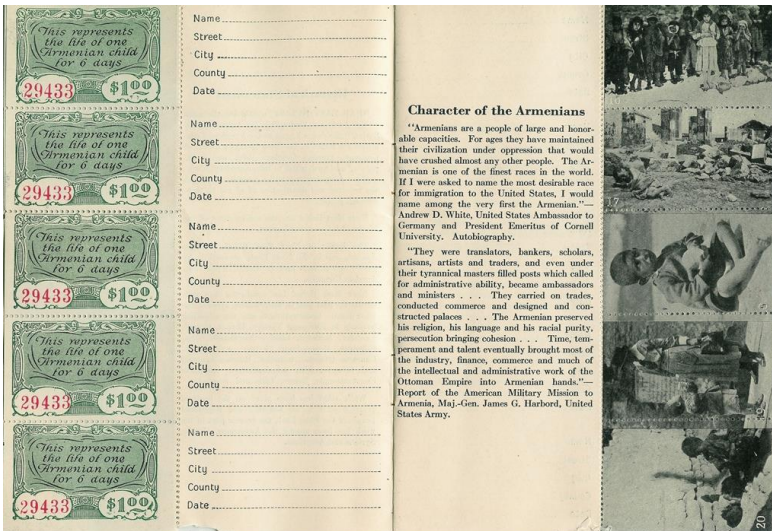


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John Calvin Coolidge Jr.

Calvin Coolidge (July 4, 1872- January 5, 1933) was the 30th President of the United States (1923–1929). A republican lawyer from Vermont, Coolidge worked his way up the ladder of Massachusetts state politics, eventually becoming governor of that state.



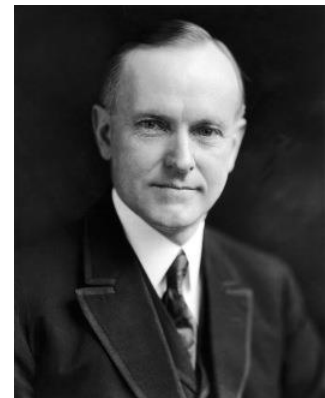
Character of the Armenians

"Armenians are a people of large and honorable capacities. For ages they have maintained their civilization under oppression that would have crushed almost any other people. The Armenian is one of the finest races in the world. If I were asked to name the most desirable race for immigration to the United States, I would name among the very first the Armenian."— Andrew D. White, United States Ambassador to Germany and President Emeritus of Cornell University. Autobiography.

"They were translators, bankers, scholars, artisans, artists and traders, and even under their tyrannical masters filled posts which called for administrative ability, became ambassadors and ministers . . . They carried on trades, conducted commerce and designed and constructed palaces . . . The Armenian preserved his religion, his language and his racial purity, persecution bringing cohesion . . . Time, temperament and talent eventually brought most of the industry, finance, commerce and much of the intellectual and administrative work of the Ottoman Empire into Armenian hands."— Report of the American Military Mission to Armenia, Maj.-Gen. James G. Harbord, United States Army.

President Coolidge felt it important to continue the Near East Relief's humanitarian and philanthropic work, and he ensured the continuing success of this American-led endeavor. One concrete example of his continued support of NER is the importance he placed on acceptance of and symbolic recognition of the "Armenian Orphan Rug."

This service to humanity has involved great sacrifice beyond the vast sums contributed by a willing people. Thirty American relief workers have laid down their lives in this service to mankind and their bodies lie in the soil of the land and amid the peoples whom their efforts and sacrifices have saved. No private enterprise ever undertaken by Americans and in the name of America has accomplished more to arouse, in the minds and hearts of all the peoples of the countries in which this organization has carried on its operations, a sincere regard and even affection for America. They have seen in this service a demonstration of a practical consciousness of brotherhood and good will toward all peoples. Those who dwell in the Near East have been impressed, through the work of this Committee, with what they regard as the true spirit of our people. They have not been able to detect in its years of service any ulterior motive, taint of politics, territorial ambitions, bid for spheres of influence, or sectarian propaganda. They can see embodied in the fifteen years of disinterested operations, the sincere desire and purpose to render help to peoples in extreme need, and to give it without expectation or even the possibility of return in anything except the expressions of gratitude from those helped and the consciousness of having responded to a call to duty. -Quotes from the text President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug by Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian.



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