

International Refugee Relief on the Caucasus Front, 1915-16: Perspectives from the Rockefeller Archive Center

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Introduction

Humanitarian relief in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide is now frequently referred to by historians as a watershed moment in the history of humanitarianism. Keith Watenpaugh has suggested that the efforts of the American Near East Relief (NER), coming to the rescue of surviving Armenians in the aftermath of war and genocide, were representative of a shift to a distinctive “modern” form of humanitarianism.¹ Others have drawn upon the Armenian case to suggest that the shifts in humanitarian relief occurring around this time were more uneven. Rebecca Jinks, for example, draws attention to the way racialised and gendered colonial discourses shaped responses to displaced Armenian women.² The wave of scholarship connecting the Armenian Genocide to histories of humanitarianism has thus far focused on interventions in the former Ottoman territories of the Middle East (in particular, the French mandates of Syria and Lebanon). In contrast, the response to the hundreds of thousands of Armenian refugees who fled to the Russian imperial territories of Transcaucasia (the South Caucasus) during and in the aftermath of war and genocide remains relatively less well understood.³

The provision of relief by international actors in the South Caucasus began in 1915 with the work of American missionaries carried out under the auspices of the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR).⁴ Their work continued intermittently during and in the aftermath of the First World War, disrupted by revolution, imperial collapse, and the formation of new states. By March 1921, the Soviet Republics of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan had been established in the region. Perhaps surprisingly, this did not bring an end to the presence of international relief organisations. From mid-1921, representatives of NER re-established themselves in the region, providing emergency food, shelter, and medicine to orphans and refugees. They were joined in these efforts by a small number of Scandinavian missionaries and representatives of the British Lord Mayor’s Fund for Armenian Refugees (LMF). Over the course of the 1920s, their work shifted from the provision of emergency aid to broader efforts to reconstruct or “restore” Armenian society and economy. By 1924, the League of Nations and a variety of Armenian diaspora organisations (notably the Armenian General

Benevolent Union) were engaged in plans for the “development” of Soviet Armenia through the resettlement of refugees in agricultural colonies. By the second half of the decade, political shifts in the Soviet Union and changing international priorities meant that these projects did not come to fruition. The LMF began to wind up its work in 1926 and by 1930, NER had withdrawn from the region.⁵

The work of international relief agencies in the South Caucasus is documented in a number of the archival collections held by the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), in particular, the records of Near East Foundation (NEF).⁶ The NEF records are rich, yet fragmented and incomplete, representing only part of the records of the organisation’s various branches.⁷ Not all of the materials are fully processed and catalogued. For example, various photograph albums include undated and unidentified materials. Materials relating to the work of ACASR/NER in the Caucasus are not concentrated in a single set of folders; they are distributed across the NEF collection, in annual reports and correspondence files, as well as in personal materials like the diaries of Barclay Acheson, NER’s Overseas Director. Collectively, these documents shed light on the evolution of international relief in the South Caucasus from the first efforts of local missionaries to distribute emergency food and clothing to NER’s formal withdrawal agreements with Soviet authorities at the end of the 1920s.⁸

Beyond the NEF records, a number of other collections held at the Rockefeller Archive Center include materials relating to relief work in the South Caucasus. This report therefore examines the NEF records in conjunction with other RAC collections. Selected files from collections relating to the Rockefeller Foundation’s War Relief Commission, the International Health Board, and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial help to contextualise the work of NER within the wider landscape of displacement and relief during and after the First World War. They shed light on the relationships between local and international actors and organisations which shaped relief on the ground in the South Caucasus, foregrounding the importance of NER’s interactions with imperial and Soviet authorities, as well as with donor organisations like the Rockefeller Foundation.

The continued presence of international organisations in the South Caucasus after the Sovietisation of the region is one of the most striking aspects of the history of relief in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide. Examination of relief during the early years of Soviet rule opens new questions regarding the place of the Soviet Union in the history of post-war humanitarianism and the emergence of an international refugee “regime.” It also highlights the transnational dimensions of the building of socialism in the borderlands of the former Russian Empire. However, this short report focuses on the earlier period, examining the insights which the collections of the RAC offer into the origins of international relief in the South Caucasus in 1915. Analysis of the nature of early displacements, the practices and priorities of relief workers, and the interactions between local and international actors during this period is crucial for understanding how and why a prolonged period of international intervention developed, and could be sustained, in a Soviet “periphery.”

War, Genocide, and Displacement on the Caucasus Front

The Caucasus front has been relatively neglected in recent scholarship on the First World War, especially in terms of the experience of the civilian populations of the Ottoman-Russian borderlands. Conflict on the Caucasus front began at the end of October 1914 with Ottoman attacks on Russian targets in the Black Sea.⁹ As the Ottoman and Russian armies advanced and retreated over the following months, complex episodes of violence and displacement ensued. From spring 1915, the Armenian Genocide led to the flight of thousands of Ottoman Armenians determined to cross behind Russian lines into the relative safety of the South Caucasus. In summer 1915, the Russian retreat from the city of Van (the site of armed Armenian resistance earlier in the year) displaced thousands more Armenians into Russian territory.

The dynamics of Armenian displacement in the Ottoman/Russian borderlands are documented in Kevorkian’s region-by-region study, *The Armenian Genocide*:

A Complete History, and the experiences of some of those who suffered from this mass displacement are gathered in Verjine Svazlian's oral history collection, *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors*.¹⁰ Over the course of 1915, the Rockefeller War Relief Commission received multiple reports from the region from missionaries and representatives of ACASR. These reports make clear the scale of displacement and the extent of the suffering endured in the region. In March 1916, Samuel Wilson wrote from Dilijan that:

the children do not number as many as the grown people. Of the 234,000 refugees now enrolled in the Caucasus and Persia, but 88,000 are children under 15 years of age ... Rachel is indeed weeping for her children. The young lives could not stand the hardships of the terrible flight and weeks of terrible suffering and disease afterwards.¹¹

By mid-1915, the fate of the Ottoman Armenians had become a source of deep concern in British and American politics and society.¹² British attempts to provide relief for Armenians was constrained by the inaccessibility of enemy Ottoman territory. The Russian imperial territory of the South Caucasus to which thousands of Armenian fled was, however, accessible. From October 1915, the Lord Mayor's Fund for Armenian Refugees had sent funds raised in Britain to charities and relief committees in the region as well as to the Catholicos, the head of the Armenian Church, at Etchmiadzin. In spring 1916, the Rockefeller Foundation agreed to help fund an expedition to the South Caucasus organised by the LMF with the object of "acquiring information with a view to stimulating further contributions from the British public."¹³ A summary report from the expedition shared with the War Relief Commission, presumably authored by Harold Buxton, Honorary Secretary and leading light of the LMF, provided details on the scale and dynamics of population displacements in the region.¹⁴ This report described two principal groups of displaced Armenians who had taken shelter in the Caucasus. The first were around 100,000 refugees who "retreated into the Caucasus after the defeat of Keprikeni" and the Christian inhabitants of North West Persian. The second were a further 200,000 Armenians who retreated from the Van and Alashkert region with the Russian army in July and August 1915.¹⁵

While Armenians were the most numerous of those displaced across the Ottoman/Russian borderlands, the report did not focus exclusively on the Armenian population. It emphasised that “the numerous races and tribes who inhabit the regions on either side of the Russo-Turkish frontier” had all experienced a “common suffering.” It described, for example, how populations of the borderlands like the “Lazis,” described as “Moslem by faith, Georgian by race,” were caught between the two empires at war, “thrown, willy-nilly into the vortex.” In Batum province, around 25,000 people were said to have “lost everything”¹⁶ In the province of Kars, many of the local Muslim population were reported to have had remained in their homes but were still “practically destitute of the means of life.” In Erzerum, captured by the Russians in February 1916, there were reported to be around 2,500 Turkish refugees in or near the city who had been “driven hither and thither by the movement of armies.” A further 10,000 inhabitants of the city had been rendered paupers by the war.¹⁷

The report is also significant because it clearly demonstrates the complexity and interconnected nature of the episodes of violence and displacement which the Ottoman/Russian borderlands endured during the first years of the war. For example, in two sections dedicated to the displacement of Assyrians, “Mountain Syrians” from the “mountain country of Kurdistan,” were reported to have fled Kurdish attacks into the lowlands of the Urmia region, from which the local population had already fled north into Russian territory in the South Caucasus. The presence of these displaced “Mountain Syrians” was reported to be unwelcome, not least because they “frequently occupy the houses of Syrians and Armenians who are now refugees in the Caucasus and who would, but for the presence of the mountaineers, return to their homes in Persia.”¹⁸ Recognition of the interconnected nature of these early displacements is essential for understanding the prolonged nature of displacement across the region, the difficulty of ‘repatriation’ in the short and long terms, and the patterns of resentment and inter-ethnic violence which would persist across the region, in some cases even after the establishment of Soviet rule.

From Relief to Repatriation

International relief in the Ottoman, Russian, and Persian Empires began with the work of American Protestant missionaries working under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. As long as the USA remained neutral, these missionaries were able to work with displaced populations on both sides of the Ottoman/Russian frontier. The outbreak of war had led to displacements in the region from the outset, but co-ordinated intervention by American actors began in earnest when the scale of displacement increased during 1915. In May 1915, a report from the Persian War Relief Board described widespread destitution across the region and a desperate need for funds.¹⁹ In September 1915, the missionary boards and other agencies concerned with relief in and around the Ottoman Empire came together to form the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR).²⁰ Over the following months, the War Relief Commission made a number of appropriations to ACASR including a grant of \$25,000 for relief in the region of Tiflis (Tbilisi) at the end of 1915.²¹ Further funds were raised by ACASR by public subscription. By 23 December 1916, ACASR had disbursed \$700,747.96 to Tiflis and the Russian Caucasus – more than any other region in the Ottoman Empire and bordering regions.²² After America entered the war, the Rockefeller Foundation channelled funding through the Red Cross rather than to organisations like ACASR. ACASR/NER would depend on public donations, but would continue to appeal to the Foundation in times of crisis.

During this period, it seems that despite the development of the ACASR infrastructure in the USA, the provision of relief on the ground was largely a process of improvisation, with the missionary relief-workers relying on their pre-existing local knowledge and networks. During late summer 1915, in the aftermath of the retreat from Van (during which a number of American missionaries including Dr. Clarence Ussher and Ernest Yarrow had fled with the refugees from Van into the Caucasus) appeals were made for international assistance to support overwhelmed local relief efforts. An American relief committee had been formed in the region, with the missionary Samuel G. Wilson (from the mission station in

Tabriz, Persia) and the American consul in Tiflis, Felix Willoughby-Smith playing leading roles. Their work over the following months included distributing clothes and bedding to refugees sheltering in villages, as well as providing supplementary rations.

From the start, an emphasis on self-help and labour common to American Protestant missionary work informed the relief work. Wilson described having “started a number of artisans in their trades, furnishing kits of tools to carpenters, cobblers, silversmiths, etc., as well as having helped a refugee previously employed at the hospital in Van with Clarence Ussher to find work as a nurse.”²³ The willingness of refugees to “help themselves” as well as their “enterprising” nature is a recurring theme in the reports from this period. The importance that these missionary relief-workers attached to labour, “self-help,” along with the underlying fear that prolonged reliance on charity could result in idleness and moral degeneration among the refugee population would continue to inform the much more large-scale projects undertaken by NER in the Soviet Republic of Armenia.

By the time the Lord Mayor’s Fund for Armenian Refugees expedition travelled through the region in late spring 1916, the initial emergency relief work, they reported had come to focus on three main areas– orphanages, industrial work, and hospitals.²⁴ By spring 1916, as the Russian military had advanced west and occupied territory previously inhabited by the displaced Armenians, the emphasis had shifted somewhat from the provision of emergency relief to the project of repatriation. The LMF report suggests that this shift to repatriation responded to the wishes of the refugees themselves. They noted that a “Madame Soghme” of the Van Women’s Union of Vaspoutagan (Vaspouragan) had informed them that the eyes of the refugees were directed “towards Van” and that the Union were training young girls in dressmaking and other skills, so that they could be useful members of society when they returned to the “fatherland.”²⁵ Similarly, the report emphasised that by the time official permission for refugee repatriation was granted by the Russian authorities around Christmas 1915, some refugees had already taken matters into their own hands and the more “venturesome or more reckless than the rest” started to return to their former homes in Van from

October 1915.²⁶

By the time the LMF's expedition visited the region, the ACASR relief workers had shifted some of their initial emphasis on material relief to supporting the repatriation process. In April 1916, Dr. Macallum and George Gracey had travelled to Van to help with the establishment of the returning refugees. In particular, they worked with other local committees to supply returning families with cattle. In May 1916, James Barton of ACASR wrote to Jerome Greene, sharing a report from Samuel Wilson in the Caucasus. He noted that 12,000 refugees had already returned from the Erivan region to Van. 5300 more had returned from Russian Basen to Turkish Basen.²⁷ Based on what they witnessed of this process, the LMF planned to expand its own work into supporting repatriation. Following a meeting with Aneurin Williams (MP and Chair of the LMF) and Harold Buxton, Warwick Greene of the Rockefeller War Relief Commission suggested there was an "excellent opportunity" for repatriation and that the Rockefeller Foundation should consider an opportunity to support this work in co-operation with the LMF.²⁸ Reports from this period are striking for their optimism regarding repatriation and the possibility of resolution of the Armenian refugees' predicament. The LMF's report compared the situation of the Armenians favourably to that of Polish refugees, whose lands were "firmly occupied by the invading German army."²⁹

This optimism would prove to be short lived. The following year, the Russian Revolution transformed the situation on the Caucasus front, leading ultimately to Russian retreat from the territories which had been occupied over the previous two years. Copies of ACASR cables, forwarded to the Rockefeller Foundation by Samuel Dutton of ACASR, indicated that in the aftermath of the February Revolution, conditions in the Caucasus deteriorated sharply. George Gracey reported from Alexandropol that the situation was once again "very bad," that all of the outlying districts were "extremely needy." From Erivan, ACASR representatives Reynolds, Yarrow, and Maynard reported that the conditions of the refugees had reached "critical stage," after two years of exile from their homes.³⁰ Under these circumstances, the situation of the Armenians who had repatriated to their former homes became increasingly precarious. At the

beginning of April 1918, the repatriated population of Van was forced to flee a new Ottoman advance.³¹ The question of repatriation would recur over the following years, with hopes raised by Ottoman defeat and the creation of an independent Armenian Republic and then shattered once again by the advance of Turkish nationalists towards the South Caucasus. Ultimately, repatriation of Armenians to their former homes would be rendered impossible after the formation of the Turkish Republic. In this context, the Soviet Republic of Armenia came to represent an alternative homeland to which some Armenians were able to “repatriate.”³²

Co-operation?

When ACASR sought to formalise its work in the Caucasus in late 1915, extensive relief work was already being undertaken across the region. The American Committee therefore had to negotiate a space for itself in a complex landscape of Armenian and imperial agencies already providing emergency food, shelter, and medical aid to the displaced. In the final months of 1915, Consul Willoughby Smith was working to secure official permissions to work in the region from the Russian authorities.³³ By spring 1916, Samuel Wilson reported that the ACASR relief committee had been granted official permission from the Viceroy to work in the province of Erivan, where there were around 105,000 refugees. He noted that on the advice of Mikhail Tamamshev, the Russian General charged with responsibility for refugees in the Caucasus, Northern Persia and occupied regions of the Ottoman Empire, they were now concentrating their work on the provision of clothing and bedding in regions of Nor Bayazid (Novo Bayezid, now Gavar) and Cagakh (perhaps Gazakh, now Azerbaijan, but this is unclear) where there were 20,000 refugees.³⁴

Around the same time, Harold Buxton, travelling through the region as part of the LMF expedition, met with Grand Duke Nicholas, Viceroy of the Caucasus, in Tiflis in May 1916 as well as with General Tamamshev.³⁵ Fundraising materials circulated by ACASR and by other Anglo-American organisations concerned with the fate of the Armenians tended to downplay the presence of local relief agencies,

presenting their own work as both unique and indispensable. Similarly, historians of humanitarianism have focused on Anglo-American rather than local responses to the Armenian Genocide.³⁶ The NEF and other collections of the RAC were produced by international rather than local actors and focus on their own work. Nonetheless, these records still give a sense of the scale of the local relief effort, referring to the work of a plethora of agencies - the Armenian Central Committee in Tiflis, the Central War Victims Relief Committee, the Armenian Benevolent Society, the Unions of Towns and Zemstvos, as well as the work carried out among refugees by the Russian military in the regions that they occupied.³⁷

International relief was, in practice, dependent on the structures and preliminary work undertaken by these local and imperial actors. Samuel Wilson was clear about how the work of the American Committee distributing clothes and other supplies relied on that of local committees and the Russian government, “who have listed and classified the refugees.” He described his American Committee as acting “in cooperation with but independently of them and with their cordial goodwill and later observed from Dilijan that it ‘is a great and good work which the Russian and Armenian people are doing.’”³⁸ His reports from the Caucasus thus demonstrate a level of respect and appreciation for local work which is much less evident in reports and correspondence relating to the post-1918 relief effort. Similarly, Harold Buxton’s observations in the LMF expedition’s final report struck a similarly balanced and appreciative tone, “no doubt it may be said that it is much easier to criticise than to act in such an emergency, and we wish to give full credit to all those whose labours have accomplished so much over the past year.”³⁹

Paying attention to relations between local and international actors reveals a remarkable willingness to co-operate and desire to co-ordinate the multiplicity of agencies at work in the region. Whether this “cordial” cooperation was a product of the comparatively greater level of trust that American missionaries and British relief workers placed in the Russian imperial authorities than in the independent Armenian and Soviet governments that followed, or relations simply deteriorated as a result of increasingly strained conditions is not clear. In the aftermath of revolution and imperial collapse, the presence of ACASR/NER relief workers in

the region would have to be repeatedly renegotiated. Attempts to define the scope and the terms of international relief work continued into the Soviet period, when agreements became increasingly formalised and detailed.⁴⁰

During these early years, co-operation between local and international relief agencies, even if viewed as desirable, was not always straightforward. The logistics of distributing aid in a region with poor rail infrastructure were a constant concern. While local and international workers were invested in making research efficient, and in tracing the numbers and distributions of refugees, this did not always work in practice. For example, on one occasion, Samuel Wilson reported that the American missionary relief workers found that lists the distribution of bread allowances prepared by the imperial authorities had not been updated, and they had thus conducted their own “personal inspections” of villages in the Etchmiadzin region.⁴¹

The LMF expedition, while generally providing a positive assessment of what they found in the region, did not refrain from critiquing elements of the local relief effort. The expedition’s medical unit, which was dispatched to the hospital in the city of Van (run by the Union of Towns), was particularly critical. Aspland’s report raised questions about efficiency and the unnecessary duplication of medical relief work. He was clear that the medical work would have been better if administered by British or American agents and suggested that his team had “inculcated with great difficulty, English methods of cleanliness in hospitals, regularity and persistency of duties, as well as discipline.”⁴² This framing of the British presence, in terms of expertise and improvement of local practices, was strongly rooted in colonial and missionary discourse and would remain a familiar part of Anglo-American relief among Armenians even after the war. This hierarchical framing was asserted once again in strongly gendered terms in the report’s summary comments, which implied that the feminised and unpaid work of childcare represented the best of local relief: “we should like to say that the work which has impressed us as most efficient, and most genuinely Christian, is the work of the orphanages, in which so many ladies work untiringly with no reward but the returning health and happiness of the children.”⁴³

Conclusions

The Rockefeller Archive Center's archival collections, especially the NEF records, reveal the range and scope of relief work undertaken by international actors – for the most part Americans – in the South Caucasus, during and in the aftermath of the First World War and the Armenian Genocide. This short report has focused on the initial stages of international relief work in the region, which was small in scale but by no means insignificant. Paying attention to this period reveals how American missionaries and British relief agencies found a place for themselves in the wider landscape of relief in the Caucasus, based on their abilities to access much-needed funds from Anglo-American donors and prior knowledge of the region's Armenian and other displaced Christian communities. In some cases, specific expertise – e.g., in medicine - made these international actors a welcome presence in the eyes of the Russian imperial authorities. Co-operation between local and international actors was cordial, but even at these early stages was the subject of formal agreements between the local administration and international agencies.

However, the line which seems to emerge between “local” and “international” actors in the South Caucasus in this report is, in part at least, a product of the nature of the collections examined here. The collections held at the RAC were produced by and reflect the perceptions of the British and American relief organisations. The perspectives of local relief-workers and imperial administrators are absent. Relations between Armenian charitable organisations, the Church, and the regional branches of empire-wide organisations like the Unions of Towns and Zemstvos were themselves complex and contested. To what extent the Russian imperial and military administrations could or should be considered “local” is open to question - the lines between occupation, humanitarian relief, and colonial expansion were blurred on the Caucasus front.⁴⁴ Addressing these issues and, through this, developing a more rounded understanding of relief in the South Caucasus during the First World War,

demands connecting the RAC collections with local archival collections in the region.

The collections of the Rockefeller Archive Center offer great insight not only into the structures and practices of humanitarian relief in the early South Caucasus, but into the experiences of the British and American men and women who were present in the region during this turbulent time. Though the records from this period are largely made up of formal reports and correspondence (unlike later NEF materials which include personal diaries), they incorporate some quite personal and emotional reflections on the extreme suffering that the missionaries/relief workers encountered. In December 1915, Richard Hill wrote from Tiflis:

But why go on, the tale is an endless one and grows more horrible as the details slowly filter in. I have seen some myself, have looked into the faces of hunted, haunted children prematurely old through the months of horrors that they have gone through ... I have seen just a little, but that little is enough to give me an idea of what the future holds in this line and quite enough to sicken and sadden.⁴⁵

However, the RAC archival holdings do not provide similar insight into the experiences and perspectives of the refugees who endured the sufferings the relief workers witnessed. Summarising his experience at a dispensary in Van Graham Aspland described how 60 patients, “the flotsam and jetsam of refugees” would attend every day, their individual stories, he noted “would fill volumes.”⁴⁶

¹Keith David Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015); for a related argument regarding the development of human rights see Michelle Tusan, “‘Crimes against Humanity’: Human Rights, the British Empire, and the Origins of the Response to the Armenian Genocide’, *The American Historical Review* 119: 1(2014).

² Rebecca Jinks, “‘Marks Hard to Erase’: The Troubled Reclamation of “Absorbed” Armenian Women, 1919–1927,” *American Historical Review* 123:1 (2018).

³ The Russian imperial territories of Transcaucasia correspond roughly to present day Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. I use the term “South Caucasus” throughout, avoiding

the imperial connotations of “Transcaucasia.” For one study of relief in the Caucasus, see the RAC research report: Shaloma Gauthier and Davide Rodogno, “The Near East Relief’s Caucasus Branch Operation (1919-1920)” <https://rockarch.issuelab.org/resource/near-east-reliefs-caucasus-branch-operation-1919-1920.html>.

⁴ American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR) changed its name to the Armenian Committee for Relief in the Near East (ACRNE) and then, in 1920, to Near East Relief (NER).

⁵ On LMF and the resettlement schemes see Jo Laycock, “Saving the Remnant or Building Socialism? Transnational Humanitarian Relief in Early Soviet Armenia,” *Moving the Social* 57, no. 0 (31 May 2017) and ‘Developing A Soviet Nation’, in *Empire and Belonging in the Eurasian Borderlands*, ed. Krista A. Goff and Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018).

⁶ NER changed its name to the Near East Foundation in 1930 as the emphasis of its work shifted to a more explicit focus on development.

⁷ Other records related to the organisation are held at, for example, the Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University, New York.

⁸ On the not-uncomplicated process of withdrawing aid: Agreement for the liquidation of NER in Soviet Armenia, 1930, “Russian Contracts,” Box 9, NEF, RAC

⁹ On the Caucasus front see Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *The First World War in the Middle East* (London: Hurst, 2014), 53-72.

¹⁰ Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Verjine Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors* (Yerevan: Guitoutyouun Publishing House of NASRA, 2011).

¹¹ Report on Armenian Relief Work, Wilson (Dilijan) to Dutton, 1 March 1916, Folder 723 – Turkish Relief General Correspondence Jan-June 1916, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, RG 1.1. Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC.

¹² For the British engagement with the Armenian cause J. Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); on the USA Charlie Laderman, *Sharing the Burden: The Armenian Question, Humanitarian Intervention and Anglo-American Visions of Global Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019)

¹³ Letter, Greene to Dutton 26 April 1916, 723 Turkish Relief General Correspondence Jan-June 1916, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, Record Group 1.1 Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC. The expedition consisted of Harold Buxton; two assistant agents, Mr. Backhouse and Mr. Hodgkin; an English doctor, Graham Aspland; three English nurses, Miss Kerr, Mrs. Armstrong, and Mrs. Barber.

¹⁴ The document is a page proof of the report which would be published in the British journal *Ararat*. Copies of this journal are not available to check publication details at this point. Caucasus Unit Report, 1916, 726 Turkish Relief – Armenian Refugees Fund, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, Record Group 1.1 Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC.

¹⁵ Caucasus Unit Report, “Introductory.”

¹⁶ Caucasus Unit Report, “Moslem Victims of the War.”

¹⁷ Caucasus Unit Report, “Moslem Victims of the War.” For a broader perspective on Turkish displacement see Yiğit Akın, *When the War Came Home: The Ottomans’ Great War and the Devastation of an Empire* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2018), chapter 6.

¹⁸ Caucasus Unit Report, “Mountain Syrians.”

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- ¹⁹ War Relief Activities of the Rockefeller Foundation, January 1916, Folder 5 – War Work General Correspondence, Subseries 100-N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, Record Group 1.1 Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC, 46.
- ²⁰ The formation of the committee is outlined by Davide Rodogno in “Non-state actors humanitarian operations in the aftermath of the First World War: The case of the Near East Relief,” in Johannes Paulmann (ed.), *Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
- ²¹ War Relief Activities of the Rockefeller Foundation, January 1916, 49.
- ²² Cablegram from ACASR via State Department 22 Nov. 1916 (copy), Folder 724 – Turkish Relief General Correspondence July-Dec 1916, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, Record Group 1.1 Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC.
- ²³ Report on Armenian Relief Work, Wilson (Dilijan) to Dutton.
- ²⁴ Caucasus Unit Report, “Refugees in the Caucasus.”
- ²⁵ Caucasus Unit Report, “Refugees in the Caucasus.”
- ²⁶ Caucasus Unit Report, “Repatriation of Armenians.”
- ²⁷ Letter J. Barton to J. Greene, 3 May 1916, Folder 723 – Turkish Relief General Correspondence Jan-June 1916, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, RG 1.1. Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC.
- ²⁸ Letter W. Greene to J. Greene, 17 May 1916, Folder 726 – Turkish Armenian Relief Fund 1916-22, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, RG 1.1. Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC.
- ²⁹ Caucasus Unit Report, “Introductory.”
- ³⁰ ACASR recent cablegrams (enclosure to letter from Dutton to Embree) April 1917, Folder 724 – Turkish General Correspondence July-Dec 1916, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, RG 1.1. Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC.
- ³¹ Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 706.
- ³² On repatriation in the long term, Jo Laycock, "Belongings: People and Possessions in the Armenian Repatriations, 1945–49," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, no. 3 (2017).
- ³³ Letter, Hill to Dutton, 12 December 1915, Folder 723 – Turkish General Correspondence Jan-June 1916, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, RG 1.1. Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC.
- ³⁴ “A General Report on the Relief Work Among the Armenians in the Transcaucasus,” Samuel G. Wilson, 1916 (no date, probably Feb) Folder 723 – Turkish General Correspondence Jan-June 1916, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, RG 1.1. Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC.
- ³⁵ Copy of Letter Hodgkin to Williams, forwarded to RF, 22 May 1916, Folder 726 – Turkish Armenian Relief Fund 1916-22, Subseries N, War Relief, Series 100 – International, RG 1.1. Projects, Rockefeller Foundation, RAC.
- ³⁶ British and Americans did not always use the names of these organisations correctly or consistently. On local Armenian humanitarian relief in Syria during the same period, Khatchig Mouradian, "Genocide and Humanitarian Resistance in Ottoman Syria 1915-16," *Etudes Armeniennes Contemporaines* 7 (n.d.).
- ³⁷ On this issue see new research by Asya Darbinian, “Humanitarian Crisis at the Ottoman-Russian Border: Russian Imperial Responses to Armenian Refugees of War and Genocide,” in Jo Laycock and Francesca Piana (eds), *Aid to Armenia: Humanitarianism and Intervention from the 1890s to the Present* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920), forthcoming.

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- ³⁸ “A General Report on the Relief Work Among the Armenians in the Transcaucasus,” Report on Armenian Relief Work, Wilson (Dilijan).
- ³⁹ Caucasus Unit Report, “Armenian Refugees in the Caucasus.”
- ⁴⁰ Agreements or mandates for NER’s work in Soviet Armenia are found in in “Russian Contracts,” Box 9, NEF, RAC.
- ⁴¹ Report on Armenian Relief Work, Wilson (Dilijan).
- ⁴² Caucasus Unit Report, “The Hospital at Van.”
- ⁴³ Caucasus Unit Report, “Armenian Refugees in the Caucasus.”
- ⁴⁴ Darbinian, ‘Humanitarian Crisis at the Ottoman/Russian Border’ addresses some of these issues.
- ⁴⁵ Letter, Hill to Dutton, 12 December 1915.
- ⁴⁶ Caucasus Unit Report, “The Hospital at Van.”