

66. {HARPOUT}: MEMORANDUM* FORWARDED BY A FOREIGN RESIDENT AT {HARPOUT} (THE AUTHOR OF THE PRECEDING REPORT); COMMUNICATED BY THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR ARMENIAN AND SYRIAN RELIEF.†

On the 1st June,‡ 3,000 people (mostly women, girls and children) left {Harpout}, accompanied by seventy policemen and a certain Turk of influence, {Faiké} Bey. The next day they arrived at {Hankeui}, safely. Here {Faiké} Bey took 400 liras from the people, "in order to keep it safe till their arrival at Malatia," and promised to accompany them, for their protection, as far as Ourfa; but that same day he ran away with all the money.

The third day the convoy of exiles reached {Toutlikeui}. There the Arabs and Kurds began to carry off the women and girls, and this went on till they reached the first railway station at Ras-ul-Ain, on the Bagdad line. The policemen given to them for their protection incited the half-savage tribes of the mountains to attack them in order to rob, kill and violate their women or else carry them away, and they themselves many times violated the women openly.

The fourth day they arrived at {Keumer Han}, where the policemen killed three of the prominent men. The ninth day they came to {Izoli Hadji}, where the horses, hired and paid for in full for the journey as far as Malatia, were taken and sent back. So they had again to hire ox-carts to carry them to Malatia. Here many were left without any beast of burden, only a few being able to buy donkeys and mules, which were also stolen in their turn.

At {Izoli Hadji}, a policeman carried off Mrs. {Araxie Göldjikian} and her two daughters and ran away.

The thirteenth day the caravan was at Malatia, but for one hour only, for they returned to the village of {Tchutlug}, two hours from Malatia. Here the policemen deserted them altogether, after taking from them about 200 liras in toll for the protection they had given them that far, and the people were left to the mercy of the beastly Bey (claw-chief) of the Kurds of Aghja-Daghi.

* Name of author withheld. {The author of this report was Mary W. Riggs. See Mary Riggs to James L. Barton communication dated Auburndale, Mass., 15 August 1916, HL/ABC/16.9.7/25d/385. —A.S.}

† {Memorandum forwarded to the State Department at Washington by the American Consul at Harpout (the author presumably being one of the members of the convoy)}. {This report was actually forwarded by U.S. Consul J. B. Jackson. ORIGINAL: J. B. Jackson to Secretary of State communication dated Aleppo, 16 October 1915. NA/RG 59/867.4016/225. —A.S.}

‡ July?—EDITOR.

On the fifteenth day they were again toiling on their way through the steep mountain*, when the Kurds rounded up 150 of the men of all ages from fifteen to ninety year». They took them some distance off and butchered them; then they came back and began to rob the people.

That day another convoy of exiles (only 300 of whom were men) from Sivas, Egin and Tokat, joined the convoy from {Harpout}, thus forming a bigger convoy of 18,000 people in all. They started again on the seventeenth day, under the so-called protection of another Kurdish Bey. This Bey called out his people, who attacked the convoy and plundered them. They carried off five of the prettiest girls and a few Sisters of Grace from Sivas. At night some more girls were stolen, but they were returned after being violated. So the journey began once more, and on the way the pretty girls were carried off one by one, while the stragglers from the convoy were invariably killed. On the twenty fifth day they reached the village of Geulik, and all the villagers pursued the convoy for a long distance, tormenting and robbing the exiles. On the thirty-second day they found themselves at the village of Kiakhta. Here they remained two days, and again many girls and women were carried off.

On the fortieth day the convoy came in sight of the river Mourad, a branch of the Euphrates. Here they saw the bodies of more than 200 men floating in the river, with traces of blood and blood-stained fezes, clothes and stockings on the banks.

The chief of the neighbouring village took one lira in toll from each man, as a ransom for not being thrown into the river.

On the fifty-second day they arrived at another village, and here the Kurds took from them everything they had, even their shirts and drawers, so that for five days the whole convoy marched completely naked under the scorching sun. For another five days they did not have a morsel of bread, not even a drop of water. They were scorched to death by thirst. hundreds upon hundreds fell dead on the way, their tongues were turned to charcoal, and when, at the end of the five days, they reached a fountain, the whole convoy naturally rushed towards it. But here the policemen barred the way and forbade them to take a single drop of water. Their purpose was to sell it at from one to three liras the cup, and sometimes they actually withheld the water after getting the money. At another place, where there were wells, some women threw themselves into them, as there was no rope or pail to draw up the water. These women were drowned, and in spite of that, the rest of the people drank from that well, the dead bodies still remaining there and sinking in the water. Sometimes when the wells were shallow and the women could go down into them and come out again, the other people would rush to lick or suck their wet, dirty clothes, in the effort to quench their thirst.

When they passed an Arab village in their naked condition, the Arabs pitied them and gave them old pieces of clothes to cover themselves with. Some of the exiles who still had money bought some clothes, but some still remained who travelled thus naked all the way to the city of Aleppo. The poor women could hardly walk for shame; they walked all the trouble.

Memorandum on a Convoy, Town of jHarpoutj

Even in their nakedness they had found some means of ²⁹⁵ preserving the little money they had. Some kept it in their hair, some in their mouths and some in their wombs; and when the robbers attacked them some were clever enough to search for money in those secret places, and that in a very beastly manner, of course.

On the sixtieth day, when they reached Viran Shehr, only 300 exiles remained out of all the 18,000. On the sixty-fourth day they gathered together all the men and the sick women and children and burned and killed them all. The remainder were ordered to continue on their way. In one day's journey they reached Ras-ul-Ain, where for two days, for the first time since they started, the Government gave them bread. The bread was uneatable, but for the three succeeding days they did not have even that.

Here a Circassian persuaded the wife of the Pastor of Sivas, as well as some other women, with their children, to go with him to the station, promising to send them to Aleppo by train. In spite of all the warnings of their friends, these women followed the man, as they and their children were no longer capable of finishing the journey on foot. The man took them in the opposite direction from the station, explaining that he would borrow money from his friend, near by, for the tickets; but after a short time he came back to where the convoy was halted. The women and their children were no more.

The governor of the place demanded three liras for himself and one lira for the railway ticket from each of them, before he would let them go by train.

On the seventieth day, when they reached Aleppo, 35 women and children were left out of the 3,000 exiles from {Harpout}, and 150 women and children altogether out of the whole convoy of 18,000.

Even in their nakedness they had found some means of preserving the little money they had. Some kept it in their hair, some in their mouths and some in their wombs; and when the robbers attacked them some were clever enough to search for money in those secret places, and that in a very beastly manner, of course.

On the sixtieth day, when they reached Viran Shehr, only 300 exiles remained out of all the 18,000. On the sixty-fourth day they gathered together all the men and the sick women and children and burned and killed them all. The remainder were ordered to continue on their way. In one day's journey they reached Ras-ul-Ain, where for two days, for the first time since they started, the Government gave them bread. The bread was uneatable, but for the three succeeding days they did not have even that.

Here a Circassian persuaded the wife of the Pastor of Sivas, as well as some other women, with their children, to go with him to the station, promising to send them to Aleppo by train. In spite of all the warnings of their friends, these women followed the man, as they and their children were no longer capable of finishing the journey on foot. The man took them in the opposite direction from the station, explaining that he would borrow money from his friend, near by, for the tickets; but after a short time he came back to where the convoy was halted. The women and their children were no more.

The governor of the place demanded three liras for himself and one lira for the railway ticket from each of them, before he would let them go by train.

On the seventieth day, when they reached Aleppo, 35 women and children were left out of the 3,000 exiles from {Harpout}, and 150 women and children altogether out of the whole convoy of 18,000.