

Dans les media : France Elizabeth Willard : elle a agi pour les victimes du sultan Abdul Hamid

Frances Elizabeth Caroline Willard (28 septembre 1839 - 17 février 1898) est une enseignante [américaine](#), [suffragette](#) et [militante féministe](#). Elle eut une influence majeure sur les mouvements qui menèrent à l'adoption des [XVIII^e](#) et [XIX^e](#) amendements de la Constitution américaine. Elle fut présidente de la Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) pendant 19 ans.

source : wikipedia

In the 1890s, news of the Ottoman Empire's large-scale massacre of Armenians evoked a strong humanitarian response in the United States...especially among women. Along with many leading women's suffragists such as Julia Ward Howe, Willard was deeply appalled by the tragedy. On January 13, 1896, she noted in her diary "Nothing in all my life - not even our Civil War has outraged my spirit like the fate of that martyr nation." She made the Armenians a *cause celebre* for the WCTU because she considered them as representing the same ideals that her organization stood for: "the sanctity of home life, the faithful loyalty of one man to one woman" and they had done this, she said, "like no other nation on the face of the earth." According to her British counterpart, Lady Isabel Somerset, Willard did not cease "with pen and voice" to plead for the Armenians and to warn the international community "of the terrible retribution that is sure to follow if this colossal crime against humanity" was "allowed to pass unatoned."

The official organ of the WCTU, the *Union Signal*, argued that the "American spirit and example" had "stimulated the Armenian spirit of independence" which led to their repression. It was therefore an American "duty" to provide aid to the Armenians. Outraged by inaction of the western powers over the Armenian atrocities, Willard made a strong appeal to Americans "as a nation just, brave and generous" to mobilize their efforts to provide relief to the distressed Armenians and to assist in securing passage of resolutions of protest. Clergymen began to devote a Sunday for intercessions and collections for the starving Armenians. Many American media outlets rallied to the rescue. Businessmen and religious societies gave most generously, providing the president of the American Red Cross (ARC), Clara Barton, sufficient funds to head a humanitarian relief mission to the Armenian survivors of the massacres. It became the ARC's first major foreign mission, giving rise to what Peter Balakian calls "the modern era of American international human rights relief."

Willard's political protests augmented and paralleled her humanitarian appeals. Under Willard's guidance, the WCTU sent a strong petition to Congress in January 1896 which read in part:

"We, the officers of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, representing a membership and following of not fewer than a million people, who believe that the protection of the home is the supreme duty of statesmen, do hereby most earnestly and solemnly beseech you to take such action as shall put our home-loving Republic on record as having used its moral and material influence for the relief of Armenia, the martyr nation, in the time of its supreme distress. We respectfully urge that our country should no longer remain a silent spectator of the agony and outrage inflicted ... upon our brother and sister Christians, whose only fault is their devotion to Christ and their loyalty to a pure home ... We beg you, therefore, as the legally constituted representatives of the wives and mothers of our nation, to give heed to our devoted prayer and aspiration that America may, through her highest legislative authorities, give expression to all the world of her abhorrence of the atrocities in Armenia, and may make an appropriation from the people's money for the relief of our



source : The Armenian Weekly