

Age of Rogues
Rebels, Revolutionaries
and Racketeers at the
Frontiers of Empires

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of Armenian dissent, discriminatory utilisation of the law against Armenians, and the withholding of punishment from official and civilian Muslims – sometimes even rewarding them – for their offences against Armenians in Sasun constituted some of the most influential, if not the earliest, precedents of Hamidian policy against Armenians. Sasun was also an important and early zone of contention for Armenian revolutionaries, who sought to assume the mantle of self-defence against the depredations of local actors such as landlords, gendarme officers and tax-collectors. They attempted to reorient localised Armenian grievances against these individuals to the Ottoman state writ large.

men of these tribes among them, and their loyalty is considered as different. They have fought with our Armenian neighbors and against the Russian and British armies.¹⁷

In the immediate aftermath of the 1905 revolution, the debate on the question of a revival of village and district autonomy in the region – which reflected among the different tribes – was again quite heated. The debate was not in any sense based on Armenian and ethnic divisions in the region. It sought the Armenian neighbors needed to be convinced that either the ethnic or Armenian character of the settlement of the new revolutionary village would allow the different tribes in the region, if needed, to contribute to the new state without any fearing the high state machine was not the intention to apply itself against the peasants.¹⁸ Besides, the government of Russia at that time in the region would be installed in the government, and not as a foreign agent or force imposed among its subjects.

There was also the case of the few regions in which Armenian revolutionaries sought to support a high machine. In Russia, in revolutionary times, ethnic tribal culture is well known, with strong roots in the life and soul of the people where they settled. The ethnic culture of the Armenians and others in the region has been the source of rich revolutionary experience. Perhaps even supporters of the high machine saw the continued presence of the peasants and subjects of Russia among the people of the region. The revolution of these new tribes is then related with particular focus on their own, and particularly on the fact that these tribes of the Middle East are loyal.

Many revolutionaries viewed the presence of such a martial culture among Armenian peasants as a blessing and an opportunity: the extant truculence and experience were to be refocused and redirected against the state.

Armenian revolutionaries sought the case of the few revolutionaries in order to focus the case on Armenian tribes. From the support given and received in a period which ended in the summer 1906 and 1907, the support for Russian revolutionaries from the late 1906 and throughout

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 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