

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.

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.