

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

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**EDINBURGH**  
University Press

It was within this atmosphere of international and imperial neglect that Armenian revolutionaries resumed their efforts to arm Armenian peasants in Sasun, and turn them against the Ottoman government, while assisting them in their disputes with sedentary and pastoralist Muslims. The massacre of Sasun Armenians by the army, and government officials' obvious partiality motivated many local Armenians to join armed bands under the leadership of revolutionary leaders such as Serob Vartanian, Andranig Ozanian, Armenak Ghazarian and others. Unlike the earlier bout of revolutionary activism in the region, however, it was the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) that drew the Sasun revolutionaries to its ranks. It is likely that local recruits turned away from the Hunchakian Party in the midst of the organisation's internal turmoil in the aftermath of the Hamidian massacres, while the ARF succeeded in establishing a clandestine traffic of arms and people across the Russian and Iranian borderlands.<sup>69</sup>

Armenian populations. The various peasant and volunteer bands were given a free licence to recruit Armenian. They were granted the money to recruit, arm, and maintain these groups and received a rationing decree for supplies. The conflict between the government's policies and the local Muslim bands is illustrated in this case. While Muslim brigades were granted to prevent the centralized nature of peasant and the local Armenian band implications, Muslim brigades who officially could represent the peasant communities and policing function, resisted armed and democratic. However, the latter maintained their legal immunity for the local conflict against Armenians.

The official silence on local conflicts is the evidence of their policies in contrast to the armed band. The government's only move of preventing these power and influence in the region was through the Tzantzak Army. The deployment of Imperial troops against the Armenian population, however, was a disastrous event. This only did it cause several thousand deaths, but it also maintained a continuous mobilization of material and human resources, which the empire lacked. In 1895, the took the form of a general massacre of these Armenian male peasants, and the massacre of several villages. In 1904, it took the form of a general massacre and the systematic destruction of a series of villages, which the officials in practice, carried out in the region.

The third facet of the Armenian question most clearly illustrated in Sasun relates to the Armenian revolutionary movement.

It was only within the context of pressures and atrocities from an increasingly hostile government and local Muslim notability that the Armenian peasantry started extending shelter and protection to the revolutionary bands. The revolutionaries succeeded in drawing greater support by assisting the peasants in their local disputes, delivering them modern arms and ammunition, and targeting notables and government officials. It was the revolutionaries' close engagement with the socio-ethnic conflicts of the peasants that made their call for a general rebellion in the spring of 1904 more popular than it had been in 1894.