

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

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Ladins, whom they viewed as agents of the west, and expelled the rest after searching their houses.<sup>17</sup> According to Ottoman reports, they also took their eggs from the Muslim population.<sup>18</sup> Second, several revolutionary bands were placed across towns to ensure the Armenian withdrawal of the nearby villages in the height of battle, where they would be safe from the advancing troops and persecution. They searched Armenian villages in order to deny food and lodging to the advancing Ottoman troops.<sup>19</sup>

Many made promises from the doors of houses, which became the centre of the rebellion, they joined the revolutionaries' armed rebellion. According to Çene İsmail's testimony, some thousand promises fought against the imperial troops.<sup>20</sup> The governor of Bitlis stated that a local Muslim preacher in town estimated that 1,000 promises had joined the revolutionaries.<sup>21</sup> The comment made in 1894 is clear: whereas promises had been reluctant to fight against imperial troops a decade before, they were willing to average a defence of their villages in 1894. The experience of the 1894 massacre ultimately motivated many Armenian promises to join the revolutionaries. Moreover, the revolutionaries

had succeeded in cultivating a network of supporters in the Armenian villages, who had provided them with food and shelter in the previous years. Finally, the chances of success – if not of outright victory over the Ottoman troops, then a prolonged defence until the mediation of the Great Powers – must have seemed higher with the presence of some 200 experienced fighters.

When news of these developments reached the palace, the French Army command was ordered to organise an offensive against the revolutionaries before they could seek the intermediary of foreign governments or diplomats. The palace also sent clear instructions not to involve the Muslim population in the military offensive, the rulers feared the involvement of the Great Powers.<sup>22</sup> Despite the efforts of the French Army command and the local authorities, however, the bulk of the troops only reached the village under the revolutionaries' control by late March due in part to the hostile climate.

<sup>17</sup> *Osmanlı Arşivi* (Ottoman Empire Archives), 402, no. 1, 2, 1873, 27076, 10 April 1894.

<sup>18</sup> *Osmanlı Arşivi*, 402, 27076, 28 February 1894.

<sup>19</sup> *Osmanlı Arşivi* (Ottoman Empire Archives), 402.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>21</sup> *Osmanlı Arşivi*, 402, 27076, 8 April 1894.

<sup>22</sup> *Osmanlı Arşivi*, 402, 27076, 28 February 1894.