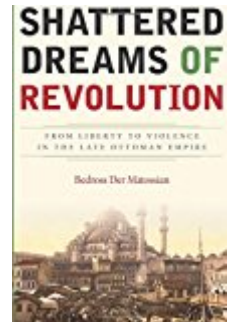


Bedross Der Matossian. *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014. 264 pp. \$24.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8047-9263-9.



Reviewed by James N. Tallon

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Commissioned by Margaret Sankey (Air University)

Der Matossian's *Shattered Dreams of Revolution* adds effectively to the growing literature concerning the late Ottoman Empire. The author offers a study which focuses on the “non-dominant” groups in the Ottoman Empire. The work describes the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and in six chapters the author follows the chronology of events. *Shattered Dreams of Revolution* expertly blends together Armenian, Ottoman Turkish, Ladino, Arabic, and Hebrew sources as few works do. This succinct, well-argued volume is an excellent discussion of late Ottoman society and politics. For military historians it provides essential background for understanding the course of Ottoman affairs in the First World War and motivations on the part of the Turkish nationalists during the Greco-Turkish War/Turkish War of Independence (1919-22).

Chapter 1 describes the aftermath of the Revolution of 1908, with a particular emphasis on commemorating the Revolution. This is tied into loyalty and pronouncements of loyalty by the minority communities as revealed through periodical

literature. A thought-provoking discussion about the meaning of the Revolution in regards to language and symbolism is laid out. Additionally, Der Matossian gives the Revolution a human face by highlighting Patriarch Madteos II Izmirlian, General Fuad Pasha, and Prince Sabahaddin as exemplars of the revolutionary ethos.

Chapter 2 addresses the issue of what “freedom” meant in the context the early twentieth-century Ottoman Empire. The role of ethnicity in this concept is explored as well as the discussions in the various ethnic presses about an Ottoman identity not based on ethnicity, but on universal principles. Der Matossian also delves into what comprised the Ottoman Empire's *ancien régime* and its opposition towards the new revolutionary order.

The third chapter investigates the impact of the Revolution principally on Armenians and Jews during the period in question. This narrowly focused chapter first summarizes the reaction on the part of Armenians in eastern Anatolia and the

internal politics of the Armenian community. Later, Der Matossian discusses the reaction to the Revolution from the perspective of the Jewish community, particularly the Jews of Salonika. He also discusses the Zionists' reaction to the Revolution. The end of this chapter provides an overview emerging political activities amongst the Arab communities in Syria and Lebanon.

The fourth chapter illustrates the electoral process leading up to the parliamentary election. Der Matossian fleshes out the thought processes and strategies of various ethnic groups. The author offers significant analysis of the platforms and debates amongst the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) and the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti). He also provides insights into the electoral process and the results of the first election.

The last chapter focuses on the so-called Counterrevolution of 1909 and its ramifications for Ottoman society. A large portion of the chapter deals with the events in Adana in 1909 where terrible violence erupted as a result of the Counterrevolution. Utilizing numerous sources Der Matossian argues that the Counterrevolution was not simply an outburst of fanaticism, but a more complex phenomenon. He sees the Adana massacres as an end to the euphoria of the Revolution of 1908. After the Counterrevolution, the heady dreams of constitutionalism began to fade.

Shattered Dreams of Revolution is a welcome addition to the literature on the late Ottoman Empire. It relies primarily on a vast array of periodical literature in numerous languages, principally Armenian, Ottoman Turkish, Ladino, and Arabic. Postcards, pictures, and other ephemera are included in this work, which add a human element to the work. A small point of criticism of this volume is that it lacks a bibliography, which would be useful considering the significant number of sources Der Matossian draws upon.

Der Matossian's extraordinary linguistic abilities make this an exceptional work. It provides in-

sights into the Young Turk Revolution in a unique way. It provides a multivocal approach to Ottoman history, which has tended to be based solely on Ottoman/Turkish sources. Der Matossian delivers a very readable account which is of great benefit for Ottoman historians and provides an excellent account of the Young Turk Revolution.

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