

The Tsar's Armenians: A Minority in Late Imperial Russia. By Onur Önoł. London: I. B. Tauris, 2017. xii, 275 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$95.00, hard bound.
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The history of the encounter between Russians and Armenians is deep and rich, starting in the context of interregional trade in the southern outposts of Kievan Rus' and blossoming over the next millennium into a multifaceted relationship. The final years of the Romanov era experienced some of the more dramatic vicissitudes of that association. Onur Önoł's important study traces the evolution of Russia's political ties with its Armenian subjects from 1903 to 1914, highlighting the experiences of three Armenian social elements: the national church, the bourgeoisie, and the largest nationalist party, the Dashnaksutiun. The author argues that "the key Russian policies regarding the Russian Armenians were mainly the results of a rational decision-making process based on the deliberations between St. Petersburg and Tiflis rather than on personal inclinations of the key individuals" (10). Published sources and archival material from St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Tbilisi—some of them never before used by Anglophone historians—buttress this cautious thesis.

The eleven years under examination cover a unique episode of Russo-Armenian ties. In June 1903, after more than a century of mostly amicable political relations, the tsarist state launched an assault on the Armenian Church, the spiritual and often political headquarters of the stateless Armenians, in response to what reactionary imperial officials interpreted as growing Armenian nationalism and its links to the clergy. After years of strife between Russians and Armenians and among tsarist statesmen, Russia's Armenian policy by the start of World War I in August 1914 reverted to its traditional, cooperative rhythm of the pre-1903 era.

Önoł's chapters employ both chronological and thematic arrangements. The book opens with the tsarist confiscation of the Armenian Church's properties in 1903 and the Armenian backlash to this drastic step, but this reviewer is not convinced that the apparently isolated incidents of Armenian violence against tsarist agents in the aftermath of the seizure constituted a "total Armenian rebellion against Russia" (183). In Chapter 2, Önoł traces the government's pursuit of Dashnak revolutionaries from 1907 to 1912, emphasizing the disagreements over policy between the conciliatory viceroy, Ilarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, and the feisty Prime Minister, Petr Stolypin. The third chapter analyzes the state's shifting attitudes toward the Armenian clergy, with which the government reconciled in 1905 by returning the properties of the church and facilitating Vorontsov-Dashkov's rapprochement with Armenians.

One of the book's strengths is Önoł's contextualization of these events within wider Caucasian developments. In Chapter 4, the author examines Georgian desires for ecclesiastical independence and the belated rise of nationalism among Azeri intellectuals. This chapter also touches on the post-1910 tsarist concerns about pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism. Önoł concludes that, "although Stolypin and Vorontsov-Dashkov were usually at odds on the formulation of policies concerning the Russian Armenians, they agreed on the threat of the pan-Islamist movement" (121). The final chapter argues that by 1912 the main foci of the Russo-Armenian engagement turned to the plight of Western Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Russia's Eastern Armenians pleaded with their government to assist their brethren across the border. These Armenian efforts elicited a measured response from tsarist authorities, who rejected calls for a military occupation of eastern Anatolia but pushed for an Ottoman reform effort in Armenian-populated provinces, hoping to "consolidate the sympathies of the Ottoman Armenians and cement their own good relations with the Russian Armenians" (143). Even Armenian literati who were tried and acquitted

during the Dashnak hunt maintained a pragmatic outlook in which the tsar stood as the only savior of the sultan's besieged minorities. The celebrated poet Hovhannes Tumanian insisted that, "historical circumstances demonstrate that the Armenian people had to be with the Russian people and must tie all their hopes to the success of the Russian state" (152). On the eve of the Great War, "the friction between the Dashnaks and Russia was fading as the former channeled their energies toward the Ottoman Armenians" (180), tsarist authorities permitted small shipments of weapons across the Russo-Ottoman border for the purposes of Western Armenian "self-defense," and Nicholas II pardoned all of the remaining convicts from the Dashnak trials of 1908–12.

A skilled storyteller, Önoł must be commended for presenting a complex chapter of Russian, Armenian, and Caucasian history in an accessible, persuasive manner. The book's narrow chronological scope, moreover, affords it a level of detail that is elusive in most studies of this or related topics.

STEPHEN B. RIEGG
Texas A&M University

Vladimir Burtsev and the Struggle for a Free Russia: A Revolutionary in the Time of Tsarism and Bolshevism. By Robert Henderson. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. xii, 353 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustration. Photographs. \$50.99, hard bound.
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With this book, Robert Henderson adds his name to the list of recent historians who have attempted to illuminate the history of imperial Russia through biography, often of lesser known figures. Vladimir L'vovich Burtsev (1862–1942) is familiar to historians of the Russian revolutionary movement as the compiler in 1896 of the first chronicle of that movement (*Za sto let*) and the founder in 1906 of the legendary journal *Byloe*, whose first number went through three separate print runs of ten thousand each, and still stands as an essential document of the times. He was also the person responsible for exposing the Azef, the notorious police agent who had penetrated the inner circles of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, as well as Malinovsky, a figure close to Lenin in Social Democratic circles. Yet he is hardly a household word, even with historians of Russia in general.

In his own time, Burtsev was celebrated in London in the 1890s as a persecuted but noble exile and opponent of the tsarist autocracy, while in Russia he "was now so feared by the police that his name had become synonymous with that of a 'dangerous terrorist'" (130). In his early years Burtsev argued that "kill the tsar and everything will fall in place," (83) and refused to join the SR Party when it was established because it was not "terroristic enough" (88). Paradoxically, as the author points out, Burtsev was actually an armchair revolutionary—although the author of this book never uses the term—and while for the tsarist authorities his "name had become synonymous with that of a 'dangerous terrorist'" he was considered by his comrades "to be too meek and gentle to mix into current terrorist plotting, was never admitted into revolutionary councils and indeed was never involved in any assassination conspiracies" (130). Later in life, at great peril to himself, Burtsev returned home from exile with the outbreak of World War I, became a prominent "defensist" standing with the monarchy in the war effort and later siding with Lavr Kornilov in August 1917 as well as Pyotr Wrangel in the last acts of the bloody civil war. From the start, he too found the SD Party to be an "abomination" (107) and loathed Vladimir Lenin (neither did he get along with Aleksandr Kerenskii). He spent his last years once again in penurious