

***From Conquest to Deportation: The North Caucasus under Russian Rule.*** By Jeronim Perović. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. xxiv, 466 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Plates. Maps. \$90.00, hard bound.

***Resettling the Borderlands. State Relocations and Ethnic Conflict in the South Caucasus.*** By Farid Shafiyev. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018. xx, 330 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Index. Tables. Maps. \$39.95, paper.  
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Between them the two books under review here help fulfil a long-felt need for a more developed English-language historiography on the Caucasus under Russian and Soviet rule. Perović's book is a revised translation of his 2015 *Der Nordkaukasus unter russischer Herrschaft: Geschichte einer Vielvölkerregion zwischen Rebellion und Anpassung*, which aims to give a comprehensive account of the period from the Russian conquest to the Second World War. Shafiyev's is a revised version of his doctoral thesis, with a somewhat narrower focus on resettlement, colonization and the movement of the population. In geographical terms they complement each other more or less exactly—Perović concentrates exclusively on the North Caucasus, and indeed largely on Chechnya, with Daghestan, Ossetia, Kabardia and Circassia receiving less detailed treatment. Shafiyev meanwhile only looks at the lands south of the Caucasus range, largely what is today Azerbaijani and Armenian territory, with Georgia in the background. Both of them are interested in how the human terrain of the Caucasus has been forcibly shaped by Russian and Soviet state power, from the encouragement of Armenian, German, and Russian settlement in Transcaucasia in the 1830s and 1840s, to the exodus of hundreds of thousands of Circassians and Chechens in the 1860s, and the notorious deportations of the Chechens, Ingush, and Kabardians during the Second World War.

Writing the history of the Caucasus as a whole presents even greater linguistic challenges than the region with which it is often paired, Central Asia—mastering any or all of Georgian, Armenian, Azeri, Avar, Arabic, and Chechen is beyond the capacity of most scholarly lifetimes. Hence, there is a tendency either to focus on one particular region or linguistic group, or else to do what one can with Russian sources. Perović relies on these exclusively, and while Shafiyev uses some material in Azeri, the core of his source base is also Russian archives and publications. This limits their ability to write history from below, and means that the state looms large in both books, although neither is making historical claims beyond the limits imposed by their sources. If anything, Perović does a better job of emphasizing the importance of non-Russian agency. The best sections of his book are vivid character sketches of Musa Kundukhov, a Chechen noble who rose to the rank of general in Russian service before leading more than 23,000 of his compatriots into emigration in the Ottoman Empire, Sheikh 'Ali Mitaev, a religious leader who initially collaborated with the Bolsheviks and was then arrested and executed by them, and Khasan Israilov, a figure who may have led an armed rebellion against Soviet rule in the 1940s. As the first two examples suggest, Perović has no time for the lazy narrative of two (or in some versions four) hundred years of Chechen resistance to Russian and Soviet rule which was fostered by émigré narratives during the Cold War (252, 326). As Alex Marshall has also argued (*The Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, 2010) there were always members of the Chechen (still more the Ossetian and Kabardian) elite who were willing to be co-opted by Russian imperial power. Perović instead seeks to explain why these relationships broke down so disastrously at particular junctures, culminating in the deportations of 1943–44.

His answer, broadly speaking, is that state structures and integration in the region remained weak and vulnerable to fracture. By the 1930s, the key divide was not so much that between Russian and non-Russian, as between the urban world of Grozny, with its vital oil industry, and Chechen-populated rural areas. There were plenty of Chechen communist cadres by this date, but their influence still did not really penetrate the countryside. The nature of his sources also means Perović's account of internal party rivalries and worker politics in Grozny (where he was able to work in the Chechen Republican archives) is far more vivid and granular in its detail than his account of the countryside, much of which remained beyond the Soviet state's ken, and hence also beyond that of the historian relying on its records.

In Shafiyev's book, the state often seems to be the only actor with any agency at all: Armenian and Azeri voices do regularly punctuate the text, but usually in the form of petitions to state power, either requesting land or resisting relocation. Shafiyev is frank about what sparked his interest in this topic: his own youthful experiences growing up in Azerbaijan and serving in the Soviet army, and the never-ending, debilitating dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the region of Nagorno-Karabagh—a dispute that has ensured a continued Russian presence in the region as a supposedly neutral broker. He provides a meticulously-researched account of the numerous state-sponsored population movements which followed the Russian annexations of territory from Persia and the Ottoman Empire in 1813, 1828, and 1878. Shafiyev notes an initial phase in the 1830s and 1840s that focused on strengthening Russian control through the settlement of Christians: Armenians (many of whom migrated from Persian and Ottoman lands), Germans, and Russian schismatics such as the Dukhobors. This was followed by a greater emphasis on settling Russian Orthodox peasants in the later nineteenth century. In both cases, the strategic priority was to fortify what was seen as a vulnerable frontier with Russia's Muslim neighbors. In the Soviet period the focus switched to making the newly-drawn national borders of the region accord with the much messier reality of ethnic diversity on the ground, which led among other things to a little-known resettlement (Shafiyev describes it as a deportation) of Azeris from the border regions of the Armenian SSR to the Azerbaijan SSR in the 1940s and 1950s. Overall, he argues that Russian state intervention was vital in creating Armenian majorities in Karabagh and what had been the khanate of Yerevan. The wider context, of course, was the far more brutal and devastating massacres and deportations of Armenians from eastern Anatolia in 1915 by the Ottoman authorities, (Shafiyev studiously avoids referring to it as a genocide), which had the effect of turning the fledgling Soviet republic of Armenia into the sole remaining homeland for the minority who survived.

In both these books, the account of tsarist rule in the Caucasus is based on relatively little archival material. Given how easily accessible they are, the failure of either author to work in the Georgian State archives in Tbilisi, which house most of the records of the Caucasian Viceroyalty, is baffling. For Perović in particular, Fond 545—the *Kavkazskoe Gorskoe Upravlenie*—would have allowed him to provide a far more detailed account of tsarist administration in the North Caucasus, which instead is treated more as a prelude to the upheavals of the Soviet period. Shafiyev devotes more attention to tsarist rule, and provides exhaustively detailed statistics of changes in the composition of the population in different regions, but it is not entirely clear what conclusions he seeks to draw from these. Quite often, the numbers are suspect in any case: for instance, Shafiyev notes (65) that in the 1830s “around 14,000 or 90,000” Armenians and Greeks moved from the Ottoman to the Russian empire, which seems a rather large margin of error. He also in my view overestimates the agency of the

Russian state in producing many of these changes, and the consistency with which it supposedly favored Armenian interests.

Colonization and population movement across the empire was a much more haphazard and less controlled affair than either legislation or what Peter Holquist has called the technocratic ideology of the late Imperial Resettlement Administration would suggest, but Shafiyev insists that it was a carefully-planned, top-down process (112–13). He also seems to be suggesting that Russian (and later Soviet) movement and manipulation of populations in Transcaucasia is primarily responsible for the ongoing conflict and national tensions in the region today—but to me this seems more like the inevitable result of applying the national principle to a region with a mixed population, with the same unfortunate consequences that have been seen in many other parts of the world. It says a lot for the normative grip of the idea of the nation-state that we have been so quick to forget that the creation of the map of Europe, supposedly its natural home, also required deportations, forced assimilation and massacres, many of them within living memory: the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s, the expulsion of Germans from the Sudetenland and Poland, and of Italians from Istria and Dalmatia after 1945 are only the most obvious examples. Seen in this context, not to mention the far more radical ethnic cleansing and genocide which took place in the neighboring regions of Anatolia and the North Caucasus during the twentieth century, Transcaucasia, if anything, seems to have got off quite lightly by comparison.

On the technical side, although *From Conquest to Deportation* has been beautifully typeset and produced, a leaden translation from the German does Perović's research few favors. McGill's proof-reading of Shafiyev's book leaves a great deal to be desired, with typographical errors scattered throughout the text.

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**Screening Auschwitz: Wanda Jakubowska's *The Last Stage and the Politics of Commemoration*.** By Marek Haltof. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 2018. x, 197 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Filmography. Index. Photographs. \$34.95, paper.

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Marek Haltof's latest book illuminates the cinematic origins of concentration camp iconography. *Screening Auschwitz* continues his incisive scholarship from previous books, including *Polish Film and the Holocaust: Politics and Memory* (2012). Its chapter on *The Last Stage* (1948, also known under the title *Ostatni etap* [The Last Stop]) is expanded here into a succinct monograph.

Based on true stories, the film recreates how a group of female prisoners working in the Auschwitz hospital resisted the Nazis. Despite language barriers—the Russian doctor speaks Russian; the French nurse, French; the Polish assistant, Polish—they banded together to disseminate information to other inmates about Nazi military losses.

Haltof places *The Last Stage*—which was co-written by Gerda Schneider, a German communist—in a number of fruitful contexts. In addition to being the first dramatization of both horror and transcendence in Auschwitz, it inaugurated post-1945 Polish cinema. For example, Aleksandra Slaska (who plays the blond *Oberaufseherin*) would go on to star in films by Andrzej Munk (*The Passenger*, which