

of the book lies in the fact that it never remains at the simple expository level, but always tries to apply its findings in a useful and practical way.

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FROM CONQUEST TO DEPORTATION: THE NORTH CAUCASUS UNDER RUSSIAN RULE, by Jeronim Perović. London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd, 2018. Pp. xxiv+466. ISBN: 9781849048941.

For more than two centuries the remote and mountainous region of the North Caucasus has been either partly or wholly under Russian rule. Of all the frontier lands of Russia's vast empire – known for seven decades as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – this has often been the most troublesome to its masters. The topography of the North Caucasus, with mountains and valleys dividing it into a great number of separate communities often with separate languages, makes it a complex area to study and a difficult one to write about as a totality. Each of the main indigenous ethnic groups, which include the Ingush, Chechen, Dagestanis, Kabardino-Balkars, Karachais, and Ossetes, has at least one distinct language of its own, as well as dialects. More important still are the differences – not always defined by ethnicity – in culture, religion, social traditions and organisation, and political thought.

Perović is Professor of Eastern European History at the University of Zurich and a specialist in Russian and Soviet history. His book was originally written in German; it gives the impression of having been very ably translated. The author writes both lucidly and succinctly, taking the reader through two centuries of Russian influence, rule, or domination in a skilfully composed, well-documented text. It is to a great extent a story of conflict, as it remains today despite current appearances. The deportations referred to are the exile of great numbers of North Caucasians to Ottoman territory in 1864, and the more lethal mass transportations of Chechens, Ingush and others to Central Asia by order of Stalin in 1943–1944. Russian policies vis-à-vis Islam and Muslims do feature in the book, though not very prominently. The majority of references to the subject occur in the discussion of the Bolshevik movement. It is not, perhaps, widely known that at one stage, in the early 1920s, the Bolshevik leadership tolerated the existence of *Shari'ah* courts and the exercise of local *'adat* laws, as well as permitting 'Muslim clerics' to stand for local election. Such latitude, which harked back to Tsarist days, was of course purely for reasons of expediency.

Perović does not set out to cover the entire history of the whole of the North Caucasus for the period, a general monograph on which remains a desideratum.

His intention, rather, is to provide an insightful overview of the main events and developments, dealing in rather more detail with some key incidents. As is explained in the introduction, the main focus is on Chechnia (the eastern part of the North Caucasus) and the Chechen people, and on the period between the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Stalin's mass deportations during World War II. Perović is particularly concerned with (i) the policies of central government towards the local population and its strategies aimed at acquiring and maintaining control, attempting at times to make use of local élites; (ii) the North Caucasians' (or, in Russian parlance, "mountaineers'") perceptions of and responses to those policies; and (iii) the consequences for society and its various subgroups, and for changes in loyalties and identities wrought by Russian rule. The author draws on a wide range of sources, although for the Soviet period the material comes largely from state archives in Russia, which since the 1990s have been partially accessible to outsiders.

To provide a better idea of the contents of *From Conquest to Deportation*, here is a list of the chapters, together with their respective page numbers. Introduction [1]-20; 1: Conquest and Resistance, 21-51; 2: Musa Kundukhov and the Tragedy of Mass Emigration, 53-74; 3: The North Caucasus within the Russian Empire, 75-102; 4: Revolutions and Civil War, 103-143; 5: Illusion of Freedom: Chechnia in the early 1920s and the Case of Ali Mitaev, 145-184; 6: State and Society (mainly on Chechnia in the 1920s), 185-225; 7: The North Caucasus during Collectivisation, 227-254; 8: At the Fringes of the Stalinist Mobilising Society: the Path to Deportation, 255-288; 9: Conformity and Rebellion: the Case of Khasan Israilov, 289-314; 10: After Deportation: History, Memory, and War, 315-328.

These chapters apart, pp. 329-406 of Perović's study are devoted to notes on points of detail and references, 407-435 to the Bibliography, and 437-466 to the excellent Index (the name of Vladimir Putin appears on only two pages and Imam Shamyl on over thirty; but that is of course because of the time period covered in the book). There are six good maps in colour, often a weak point in books on the region; the absence of a map (aside from the one all-purpose physical map) covering the region before 1900 is surprising. Ten other illustrations (mainly photographs) help bring the subject matter to life.

Perović's book deserves to be read by anyone with a serious interest in the modern history of this fascinating and complex part of the world – a predominantly tragic story the consequences of which are very much with us today, however little known to most of the outside world.

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