

the focus on family in recent appointments—will further strengthen Kadyrov's position in Chechnya and in Moscow. In 2017, the Chechen Republic replaced Dagestan as the most insurgency-affected republic in

the North Caucasus. With 59 conflict-related fatalities (47 in Dagestan) in 2017, from Kremlin's perspective, Chechnya more than ever requires the strong leadership of Ramzan Kadyrov.

About the Author

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Further Reading

- Aliyev, Huseyn. "When informal institutions change. Institutional reforms and informal practices in the former Soviet Union" (University of Michigan Press, 2017).
- Russell, John. "Kadyrov's Chechnya—Template, Test or Trouble for Russia's Regional Policy?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 63.3 (2011): 509–528.
- Souleimanov, Emil Aslan, and Grazvydas Jasutis. "The dynamics of Kadyrov's regime: between autonomy and dependence." *Caucasus Survey* 4.2 (2016): 115–128.
- Souleimanov, Emil Aslan; Huseyn Aliyev, and Jean-François Ratelle. "Defected and loyal? A case study of counter-defection mechanisms inside Chechen paramilitaries," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, online first DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2016.1194270.

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

A New Publication on the History of the North Caucasus: *From Conquest to Deportation: The North Caucasus under Russian Rule,* by Jeronim Perović

(London/New York, [Hurst/Oxford University Press](#), 2018)

Despite the extensive Western media coverage of the North Caucasus since the outbreak of the Chechen wars of secession in the 1990s, there are still surprisingly few Western studies dealing with the complex history of this region and its peoples. The numerous books that have appeared over the last years have originated from an interest in understanding the roots of the Chechen wars, and mostly represent cursory historical overviews rather than in-depth historical investigations. Instead of drawing on original research based on sources from Russian and other archives, many of these studies, especially with regard to Chechnya, rely heavily on publications from Chechen émigré authors. As informative as these accounts are, they need to be treated with caution, since they frequently offer a monochromatic narrative, explaining each historical episode, up to the outbreak of open war between Chechnya and Russia in the 1990s, in the context of an epic struggle between an expanding Russian power and the resistance of an oppressed people. In a similar fashion, Western scholarship tends to portray the relationship between the predominantly Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus and Russia as a long history of "permanent warfare."

From Conquest to Deportation: The North Caucasus under Russian Rule, published in 2018 by Oxford University Press (New York) and Hurst & Company (London), seeks to rectify some of these shortcomings. Its author, Jeronim Perović, offers a major contribution about a region at the fringes of empire which neither Tsarist Russia, nor the Soviet Union, nor in fact the Russian Federation ever really managed to control. It analyzes the state's various strategies to establish its rule over populations that were highly resilient to change imposed from outside, and which frequently resorted to arms in order to resist interference with their religious practices and beliefs, traditional customs, and ways of life. However, this book goes beyond existing Western scholarship, which typically portrays developments in the North Caucasus in the context of an epic struggle between an expanding Russian power and the resistance of an oppressed

people. In contrast, the author argues for an approach which goes beyond this dichotomy, seeking to understand the trajectories in the framework of the specific North Caucasian cultural setting. Like other peoples in the Soviet Union, the mountaineer societies of the North Caucasus suffered from state repression and frequent cruelty at the hands of the security forces. Nevertheless, the creation of ethnically-defined territories and the introduction of new institutions—public schools, Communist Party organization and Soviet state structures—combined with industrialization and urbanization offered new social prospects and career opportunities. The questions that need to be addressed are thus not only why people took up arms against certain measures introduced by the state, most notably the disastrous attempt at collectivization and dekulakization in 1929/30. But also crucial is understanding how people perceived the new opportunities and the ways in which they eventually sought to take advantage of them. Rather than viewing the history of the North Caucasus only as a matter of subjugation or resistance to Bolshevik rule, what needs examining is the changing nature of state-society arrangements, the degree of stability these arrangements produced, and the question of why arrangements at times broke down and conflict erupted.

In order to arrive at a new understanding of developments in the North Caucasus during Russian imperial and Soviet times, this analysis includes not only the perspective of state and party representatives at local, regional and central levels, but also the views of people living through this time as direct participants and observers of events. Through the story of Musa Kundukhov, a Muslim Ossetian general in the Russian Imperial Army, the famous Chechen Sheikh Ali Mitaev, the memoirs of party functionary and later dissident Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, or the unpublished diaries of Chechen resistance fighter Khasan Israilov, we can get a better notion of how members of the indigenous society viewed Russian rule and what motivated their reactions to state policies, and thus come to a general understanding of how Russian rule affected the identities and loyalties of North Caucasian society over time and space.

While this book covers the whole of the North Caucasus, its focus is mainly on the eastern part of the region, and mostly on Chechnya, which constituted, from the state's perspective, the most troublesome spot. Although this book offers a longitudinal view of North Caucasian history from the times of war and conquest in the 19th century up to recent developments in the 21st century, the emphasis is on the early Soviet period. It was during the 1920s and 1930s that these societies came, for the first time, into contact with a modernizing state that sought not only submission and loyalty, but unconditional support and active participation in the new socialist project—demands that many of these peoples, in Moscow's judgment, failed to live up to. The Stalinist deportations constituted radical measures of a totalitarian state that was ultimately unsuccessful in enforcing its claim to power and authority over this difficult-to-govern part of the Soviet Union.

Unlike most of the extant scholarship, the account presented in this book relies on a wide range of unpublished archival material (namely from the Russian state and party archives located in Moscow), Russian-language document collections, memoirs, as well as new research in multiple languages. Most importantly, it connects the larger history with the stories of the peoples themselves, tracing developments through the accounts of state officials, religious leaders and resistance fighters. Only if macro-history is combined with concrete life stories and detailed accounts of key events can history be interpreted without the prejudice and ideology that has characterized the work of authors in both the West and Russia.

