

THE  
NORTH  
CAUCASUS  
BARRIER

*The Russian Advance towards  
the Muslim World*

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In the twentieth century the Russian empire suffered two military and political defeats in the East: in Manchuria in 1905, inflicted by the Japanese, and in Afghanistan in 1989, at the hands of the Afghan *Mujahidin*. Both debacles preceded major internal upheavals and revolutions which marked the end of an imperial tradition and of an era — the tsarist empire of the Romanovs in the first case, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the second. However, one multinational empire remains, albeit a much reduced one — the Russian Federation led by President Boris Yeltsin.

This book deals with the history of the Muslim North Caucasus, one of the remaining and most rebellious colonial dominions left to Russia. The writings presented here cover a span of four centuries, including Ivan the Terrible's strategic alliance with Circassian noblemen, the holy wars and conquest of the nineteenth century, the 1917 October Revolution, through to the present crisis in Chechnia and Ingushetia which may well presage the disintegration of the Russian Federation as we know it. It is argued that the North Caucasus, repeatedly conquered but never subdued, has played a key role in shaping Russian colonial policy and mistrust of Islam, which has been a powerful inspiration to the resistance of the North Caucasian Mountaineers to Russian rule. The book will be indispensable for understanding the future of ethnic relations and national politics in Russia.

*For a note on the authors, see back flap*

## THE AUTHORS

ABDURAHMAN AVTORKHANOV is a Chechen by birth. One of his first books, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Chechnia*, was published in Grozny in 1933. He was arrested in 1937 during the Stalinist purges as 'an enemy of the peoples'; he was released in 1942 and emigrated to the West in 1943. His books, long forbidden in the Soviet Union, were read assiduously by Soviet dissidents. Among the most recent are *Strength and Weakness of Brezhnev: Political Studies* (1980), *The Enigma of Stalin's Death: Beria's Conspiracy* (1981), *The Origins of the Partocracy and Technology of Power* (1983) and *The Empire of the Kremlin* (1986). A hero in his native Chechnia, he has recently been rehabilitated.

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