

**Andrej Kotljarchuk and Olle Sundström**, eds., *Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Stalin's Soviet Union: New Dimensions of Research* [Södertörn Academic Studies, Volume 71] (Stockholm: Södertörn University, 2017), 292 pp.

The terror evoked during Stalinism is a continually discussed topic that never ceases to attract historians. This anthology focuses on individual policies toward ethnic and religious minorities during Stalinism. Though Stalin's oppressive policies have been generally analyzed within established works by Robert Conquest, Oleg Khlevniuk, Timothy Snyder, Norman Naimark, Orlando Figes, and many others, this book adopts a unique viewpoint that looks at areas not fully considered until now—Stalinism in the Russian North, Siberia, and the Far East. Supported by various Swedish academic institutions, the editors of this book have organized several research projects. In doing so, they brought together contributors from several countries for further study of the Great Terror, specifically looking at ethnic and religious minorities who mainly lived in the borderlands or in sparsely populated areas. Most of the contributors have uniformly decided to adopt a microhistorical approach, prompting them to focus primarily on the everyday life of the aforementioned minorities.

This volume is organized into three parts. The first part discusses the general issues of the operations of the NKVD (the interior ministry of the former Soviet Union) targeting "foreign" ethnicities. The editors mention that two relevant approaches are discussed by the historians here. While some of them focus on the security dilemma in the borderlands, others argue that the national operations were in fact a form of genocide. This anthology maintains a well-balanced stance, publishing articles from both approaches. On the one hand, Hiroaki Kuromiya (Chapter 1) underlines the counterintelligence struggle of NKVD operations. On the other hand, both Andrey Savin (Chapter 2) and Victor Dönninghaus (Chapter 3) highlight the NKVD's ethnic cleansing activities. While Savin focuses on the German operations in West Siberia, Dönninghaus analyzes the NKVD's firm conviction about the existence of the "fifth column" and the process to "find" it among the ethnic minorities whose nation states were outside the USSR.

The second part is dedicated to the oppression faced by mixed ethnic minorities. Analyzing the Swedish and Finnish minority areas, Andrej Kotljarchuk demonstrates the essential role of the propaganda campaign for the stigmatization of national minorities. Kotljarchuk points out that local newspapers, under the strict control of Moscow, prompted the national operations of the NKVD (Chapter 4). Marc Junge and Daniel Müller tackle the repression faced by several nationalities in Georgia based on new archival materials. Focusing on the relationship between the central and local powers, these historians argue that the Georgia's intentions toward Tbilisi for Georgian nation-building might have accelerated the national operations of the NKVD (Chapter 5). In chapter 6, Eva Toulouze examines the oppression against the Finno-Ugric intellectuals in the Volga region who were accused of nationalism and a conspiracy to create a "Great Finland." Toulouze argues that the systematic attack against ethnic intellectuals during the late 1920s and the early 1930s acted as a precursor to the national operations of the Great Terror.

The articles found in the third part discuss the fate of religious minorities in Ukraine and the Russian North. Oksana Beznosova states that the oppression against Evangelicals took place in the Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia oblasts, which were an

active center of Evangelical groups. Based on the biographical materials of the rehabilitated victims, Beznosova analyzes the systematic attacks on these religious groups (Chapter 7). Chapter 8 discusses the role of the “culture bases” (*kul'tbaza*), centers of sovietization in the Russian North, and the indigenous resistance they encountered. Researchers Eva Toulouze, Laur Vallikivi, and Art Leete focus on hidden racial prejudice under the shadow of the culture bases and natives' critical relations with sovietization. Tatiana Bulgakova and Olle Sundström discuss the attacks on shamanism in the Khabarovsk region, relying on archival and oral sources. According to their research, the extent of the repression is hard to gauge, because the accusation of being a “shaman” could have been used to disgrace and betray personal antagonists (Chapter 9). Yana Ivashchenko explores the extinction and revival of shamanism in the Amur River region over a longer time span. The changes and innovations during Soviet modernization made shamanism unpopular, particularly in Siberia, where shamanism was born. However, after the collapse of the USSR, not only an ethnographic interest in protecting native tradition but also curiosity about occultism underpinned the renaissance of the so-called “Siberia boom.”

Unfortunately, this book does not sufficiently explain some general terms and concepts for the students of the Great Terror, though it does cover specific terms (national operations, the NKVD orders, and culture bases). If the first part were to draw a more general picture of the Great Terror and clarify the most disputative points of the history, this book should get a larger readership. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, most of the chapters used newly obtained archival materials, and make the most of such original documentation by focusing on microhistory. Shedding light on hitherto less-researched issues, this book helps us understand the complexity and multiplicity of Stalin's terror.

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