

Familiar strangers: the Georgian diaspora and the evolution of Soviet empire

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Abstrak

Familiar Strangers tells the story of a remarkably successful group of ethnic outsiders at the heart of Soviet empire and, in so doing, offers a new interpretation of Russian and Soviet history in the twentieth century. While past scholars have portrayed the Soviet Union as a Russian-led empire composed of separate national republics, Scott makes the case that it was actually an empire of diasporas, forged through the mixing of a diverse array of nationalities. Concealed behind external Soviet borders, internal diasporas from the Soviet republics migrated throughout the socialist empire, leaving their mark on its politics, culture, and economics. Among the Soviet Unions internal diasporas, the Georgians were arguably the most prominent group. The roles they played in the Soviet empires evolution illuminate the opportunities as well as the limitations of the Bolshevik Revolution for ethnic minorities. Looking at the rise and fall of the Soviet Union from a Georgian perspective, this book moves past the typical divide between colonizer and colonized that guides most scholarship on empire and argues for a new theory of diaspora, with implications far beyond the imperial borders of Russia and Eurasia.