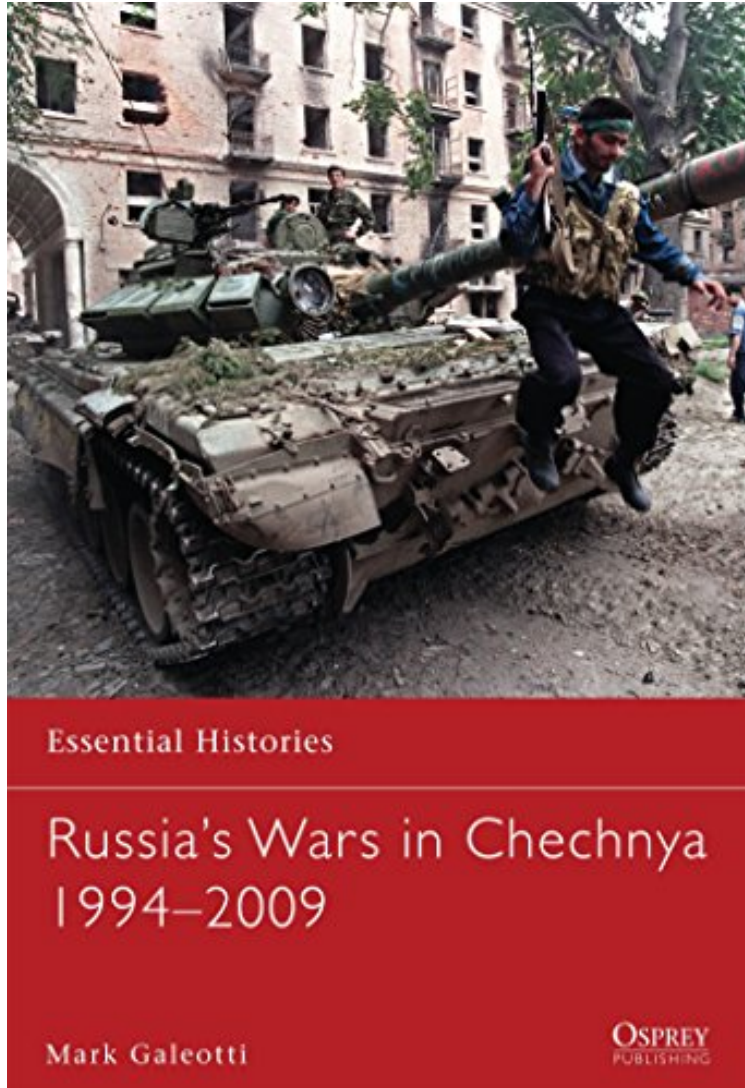


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Russia's Wars in Chechnya 1994–2009 (Essential Histories)

Mark Galeotti

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Mark Galeotti : Russia's Wars in Chechnya 1994–2009 (Essential Histories) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Russia's Wars in Chechnya 1994–2009 (Essential Histories):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Always Fighting the Last WarBy Jeffrey SwystunThe conflicts in Chechnya are fascinating. The fifteen years that encompassed two wars (1994-96 and 1999-2009) provide huge lessons in asymmetrical warfare and hinted at growing Muslim militancy. To say the Russians were tested and often

bested is an understatement. Their military was at a historic low point. It lacked funding, training, and discipline. Units were undermanned and inter-service and unit cohesion was nonexistent. The book suggests the military was operating on a budget at least 60% deficient. This allowed no modernization or progression in doctrine. That is why during the first war, they paid for a strict adherence to Cold War mass mechanized fighting. Meanwhile, the Chechens were innovative and determined. Chechens have historically been fierce mountaineers with a reputation as bandits and excellent guerrilla fighters. They harboured deep resentment towards Russia given Stalin had once deported their entire nation. That mass movement is known as The Exodus (Chechens now refer to Putin as Stalin). This did not stop many of them from serving in the Soviet and Russian forces and then using that expertise and knowledge in their favour. Chechens adapted their tactics including "hugging" Russian units to avoid airstrikes and setting up resistance in basements as Russian tank guns could not depress low enough to hit them. All the while, the Russians had forgot much of what they learned the hard way fighting in Afghanistan. Much of the Western powers enjoyed the fact that Russia experienced such difficulty. Unfortunately, they did not examine the conflict closely enough to get a sense of where the world was heading. Russia went through five commanders in two years in the first war and six in the latter. This lack of leadership impacted morale and failed to reward initiative. The first war came to an uneasy close but did not solve anything. It did not help that Russian refused to reparations. Reconstruction costs were pegged at \$300 million. Worse off was the economy as unemployment reached 80% sowing the seeds for the next war. In that conflict, Russia did not hold back and committed three times the number of troops to pacify the republic. Galeotti nails it when he calls the wars in Chechnya "an imperial conquest, a civil war and a terrorist campaign." The latter had several horrendous instances of large number civilian kidnappings and ham handed deadly attempts. These wars were costly to civilians with estimates of the dead ranging from 20,000 to 200,000. Russian forces peg their losses at close to 11,000 for both wars which many experts consider low. Chechen combat deaths are extremely difficult to substantiate. Regardless, it was a bloody, confusing and ruthless 15 years. This is a fine introduction to this piece of history. For a highly personal narrative, I recommend One Soldier's War by Arkady Babchenko and Nick Allen. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent account of the battles that Russia had with separatists and radical muslims in Chechnya. By Stephen P. Ford. Excellent account of the battles that Russia had with separatists and radical muslims in Chechnya. Essential History is a fitting title for this account replete with photographs [mostly Russian but some from the Chechens], charts, artwork and ample text. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Russian war in Chechnya. By Sarge. Educational and great read. It shows the kind of Russia of the 90s compared to what they are today and the condition they are in. Good descriptions of the key players and why the regions is important to Russia.

Featuring specially drawn full-color mapping and drawing upon a wide range of sources, this succinct account explains the origins, history and consequences of Russia's wars in Chechnya, thereby shedding new light on the history - and prospects - of that troubled region. Mark Galeotti, an expert on the conflict, traces the progress of the wars, from the initial Russian advance through to urban battles such as Grozny, and the prolonged guerrilla warfare based in the mountainous regions that is common to both wars. He assesses how the wars have torn apart the fabric of Chechen society and their impact on Russia itself, where they have influenced presidential elections and widened the gulf between the military and the rest of society. These were savage conflicts which combined at different times the characteristics of an imperial war, a civil war and a terrorist campaign. The rich tradition of banditry in Chechnya, exemplified by the disproportionately large numbers of Chechens in the Spetsnaz special forces, gave the conflict its particular character, as did the steady shift from the initial nationalism to being inspired by a wider Islamic jihad.

About the Author Professor Mark Galeotti, formerly senior lecturer in international history at Keele University, is Clinical Professor of Global Affairs, New York University. He is a former Foreign Office adviser on Russian security affairs, and for 15 years (1991-2006) wrote a monthly column on this for Jane's Intelligence. The author lives in New York, NY.