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ARTICLES

Aleksandr Cherkasov: A Scholar, Publisher, and Organizer of Research Collaborations (to the 20th Anniversary of the Scholar's Research and Pedagogical Activity)

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Abstract

This paper addresses the research and pedagogical activity of Aleksandr Arvelodovich Cherkasov, Doctor of Historical Sciences, which spans the period between 1999 and 2019. The authors go over relevant biographical information on the scholar, discuss a set of key research findings by him, and describe his overall publication activity.

The authors note that over the 20-year period spanning his research and pedagogical career the scholar has worked real hard to lay the groundwork for his research school. Mr. Cherkasov managed to progressively work his way from a humble position as an instructor's assistant all the way up the actual administrative ladder, reaching the level of Candidate of Sciences and the rank of Prorector for Research and Innovation. Only after years of experience doing administrative work would the scholar actually go on to undertake the establishment of a research center of his own and engage in the implementation of a number of other projects, including commercial ones.

Keywords: Aleksandr Arvelodovich Cherkasov, research and pedagogical activity, the period 1999–2019, biographical information.

1. Introduction

September of 2019 will mark 20 years since Aleksandr Arvelodovich Cherkasov, Doctor of Historical Sciences, who is currently the editor-in-chief of *Bylye Gody*, a top Russian history-related magazine, embarked on his research and pedagogical activity.

Here is a brief bio of Mr. Cherkasov. Aleksandr Arvelodovich Cherkasov was born on April 23, 1974 in the city of Sochi. In 1992, he finished the OZSh No. 1 high school in Sochi. In 1994, Mr. Cherkasov entered the Sochi branch of the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, where he majored in History in the Department of History and Philology. In 1999, he graduated from that university with honors.

In 1998, the Sochi branch of the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia was merged with the Sochi Institute for Resort Operations and Tourism, which resulted in the establishment of Sochi State University of Tourism and Resort Operations.

2. Results

Right after his graduation from the university in 1999, A.A. Cherkasov was invited to work as an instructor's assistant in the Department of History at Sochi State University of Tourism and Resort Operations. In the following three years, Mr. Cherkasov would go on to work there as an instructor, and later as a chief instructor.

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In 2002, under the tutelage of Professor Valerii Evgen'evich Shchetnev, Aleksandr Arvelodovich completed at Kuban State University his candidate's thesis, 'The Peasant Movement in the Black Sea Region during the Revolution and Civil War'. After being awarded the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences, Mr. Cherkasov was appointed to the post of Associate Professor in the Department of National History. In 2005, he was awarded the title of Docent.

In 2003, based on a grant from the Russian Humanities Research Foundation, Mr. Cherkasov masterminded and produced a work entitled 'Collaborationism in Krasnodar Krai during the Period of German Occupation (1942–1943)'. A same-titled collection of documents would later be released based on the work's findings.

That same year, Aleksandr Arvelodovich undertook the release and editing of an annual collection of scholarly works from two departments (Department of National History and Department of Foreign History and Culturology), entitled 'History and Historians in the Context of Time'. Yet, the first publishing project by A.A. Cherkasov was *Vestnik Leib-gvardii* (Herald of the Imperial Guard newspaper), which was published between 1992 and 1993 and between 1996 and 1997. A total of 14 issues would be released (the paper is a bibliographical rarity). The release of this particular paper in August of 1992 is what would actually serve as a point of departure for the establishment of a publishing house, which is known today as Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o.



Fig. 1. Title pages for the 1993 and 1996 issues of *Vestnik Leib-gvardii*

In January of 2006, Aleksandr Arvelodovich was appointed to the position of Head of the Department of National History. As early as February 24, the departmental Student Science Club for Regional Studies through History was established, which four years later would be developed into the Student Science Lab for Regional Studies through History Named after Count Illarion Ivanovich Vorontsov-Dashkov, an honorable citizen of the settlement of Sochi. The student science club existed up until 2012, i.e. up until they stopped admitting students to the History major.

The lab's meetings would be held monthly in the third part of the month. They would hold a total of 10 meetings each year, nine general ones and an anniversary meeting. At general meetings, presentations would be delivered by the club's supervisor, its prefect, and two of its members, while at anniversary meetings it would be done by instructors solely (four persons). The club would engage schoolchildren, college students, and postgrads. It is worth noting that future human resources for the club would be spotted during contests for the best research work by a high school senior. Aleksandr Arvelodovich headed for several years the judging panel for the History and Regional Studies section at the First Steps into Science all-school conference held in Sochi. The event would help select for the major both the winners of city and krai contests and those of an all-Russian one. A detailed account of the lab's operation is provided in a paper by I.A. Ermachkov ([Ermachkov et al., 2018](#)).

On September 1, 2006, Aleksandr Arvelodovich Cherkasov launched the quarterly journal *Bylye Gody*. The title for the journal was selected based on the results of a contest held through the efforts of the Student Science Club for Regional Studies through History. It was proposed by third-year student Dmitrii Kachula. The journal was created mainly because of the lack of space available for materials to be published. Note that at the time the university would normally hold two conferences a year, with the proceedings published in a collection of scholarly works. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the department had a yearbook in circulation, entitled 'History and Historians in the Context of Time'. The launch of the new departmental journal would help boost tangibly the department's publication activity. Moreover, a few years later the journal would develop first into a Black-Sea-region-wide journal and later into a nationwide one. In 2015,

it would turn from a generally historical journal into a publication focused on the history of the Romanov period (1613–1917).

In 2007, A.A. Cherkasov defended a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Historical Sciences. The thesis, entitled 'Kuban and the Black Sea Region during the Civil War (1917–1922): A Third Force in the Socio-Political Confrontation', was produced with guidance from Professor Valerii Nikolaevich Ratushnyak, Doctor of Historical Sciences. In 2008, Aleksandr Arvelodovich was awarded the degree of Doctor of Historical Sciences.

At different times during the period 2008–2012, Aleksandr Arvelodovich combined his pedagogical activity with administrative work, serving as Deputy Prorector for Research and Head of the Office for Research.

In 2010, Aleksandr Arvelodovich launched his first commercial project – a monthly journal entitled 'European Researcher'. By 2013, the journal was indexed by numerous international databases in the second-ranking category. The year 2012 saw the establishment of Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o., with A.A. Cherkasov becoming its CEO.

In 2011, Sochi State University of Tourism and Resort Operations was renamed again, becoming Sochi State University.

Between 2012 and 2013, Aleksandr Arvelodovich attended the Skolkovo Moscow School of Management via the 'New Leaders in Higher Education' program.

Between 2013 and 2014, A.A. Cherkasov served at Sochi State University as Prorector for Research and Innovation. Due to the discontinuation of student admission to the History major, A.A. Cherkasov had to leave the post of Head of the Department, and in February of 2014 he would leave the post of Prorector at the university as well. Up until 2017, A.A. Cherkasov continued to work at Sochi State University, where he was engaged in funded research work and, along with his team, in technical work related to the publication of The Proceedings of Sochi State University, a general college journal. A key reason behind the termination of his work at the university was an increasing workload at the publishing house, which by 2014 carried nearly 30 journals already. Concurrently, A.A. Cherkasov made time for his research activity as well.

On July 27, 2014 Mr. Cherkasov opened the doors of the International Network Center for Basic and Applied Research. The institution was established based on the idea of bringing researchers together not based on the territorial principle (e.g., researchers from one particular region gathered on one campus) but based on networked collaboration among researchers brought together by a particular research topic who come from different regions and countries (networked interaction). The center was comprised of three labs: Lab 1 – on world civilizations (headed by A.A. Cherkasov), Lab 2 – on military research, and Lab 3 – on economic and social cooperation. In 2017, the last two labs were merged into one to form the lab on professional and pedagogical training. As of July 2019, the US-registered center numbers 20 research officers from seven countries (Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Ghana, Ukraine, and Israel). Two of the center's members are also members of the American Historical Association (USA) (A.A. Cherkasov and A.Yu. Peretyatko). One of its members, T.A. Magsumov, is also a member of the History of Education Society (UK), and another, N.V. Mityukov, is also a member of the Royal Naval League of Spain (Spain). As of July 2019, the center has 178 publications in the international scientometric databases Scopus and WoS. Its Scopus h-index is 11.

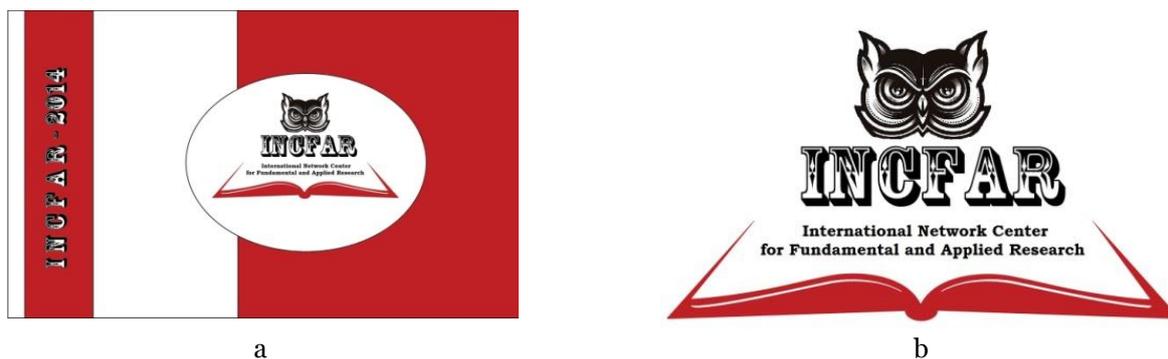


Fig. 2. The center's symbols (a – its flag, b – its logo)

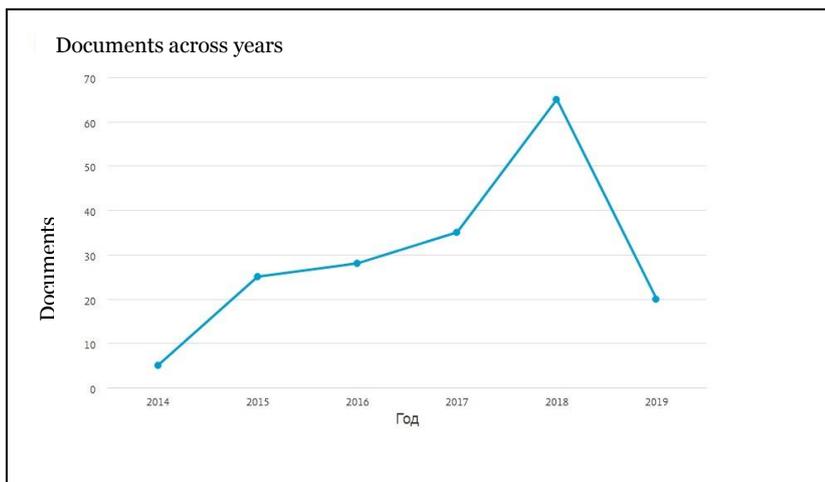


Fig. 3. Number of publications by the center based on data from Scopus (as of July 2019)

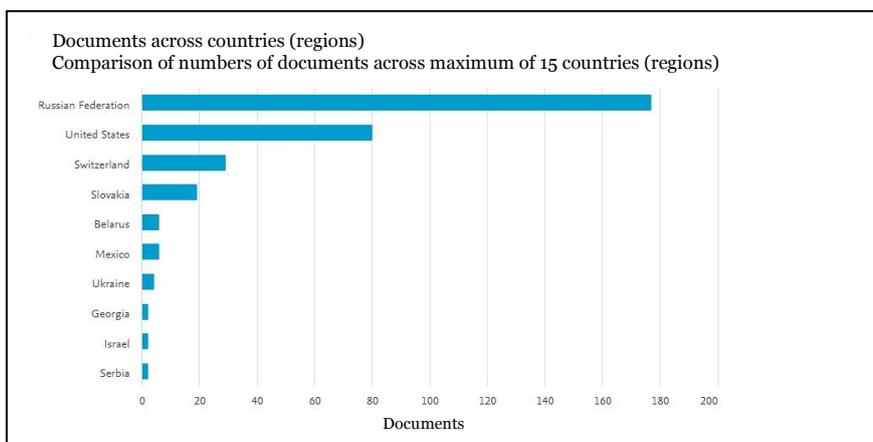


Fig. 4. Distribution of publications across countries based on data from Scopus (as of July 2019)

In the fall of 2017, Aleksandr Cherkasov switched to work at Volgograd State University, and in the spring of 2018 the network center and Volgograd State University entered into a partnership agreement and established a joint lab.

From 2016 to 2019, Aleksandr Cherkasov has taken part in four Arctic expeditions as part of the Arctic Floating University program (2016 – the western coast of Novaya Zemlya; 2017 – Franz Josef Land; 2018 – the eastern and western coasts of Novaya Zemlya; 2019 – Spitsbergen). As a result of these expeditions, scholarly ties were forged with researchers from Switzerland, Canada, and China.



Fig. 5. Flags of the joint laboratory in Ny-Ålesund on the island of Spitsbergen (July of 2019) (A.A. Cherkasov is second left)

Concurrently with the implementation of the two principal projects – the publishing house and the research center – the scholar was involved with a few other projects as well. In 2013, an open-access database, OAJI (Open Academic Journals Index), was established (Figure 6), which by 2019 would number over 2,500 journals from over 100 countries. Conceived in 2013 as a database for scholarly journals, it was developed in 2014 into a full-text platform for the submission of peer-reviewed papers as well. The database is serviced by the center’s research information lab. In 2015, the Eastern European Historical Society was established. In 2018, the Eastern European Information Agency was set up, its current purpose being to inform the world research and pedagogical community about achievements in the area of research into the history of Eastern Europe.



Fig. 6. Logo for OAJI

By 2016, the number of journals carried by the publishing house exceeded 50. That same year, A.A. Cherkasov made his first trip to Eastern Europe. As a result of the establishment of scholarly contact with researchers from Eastern Europe, A.A. Cherkasov was appointed Visiting Professor at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia). Cherkasov went on to establish Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o. in Bratislava (Slovakia) in 2017.

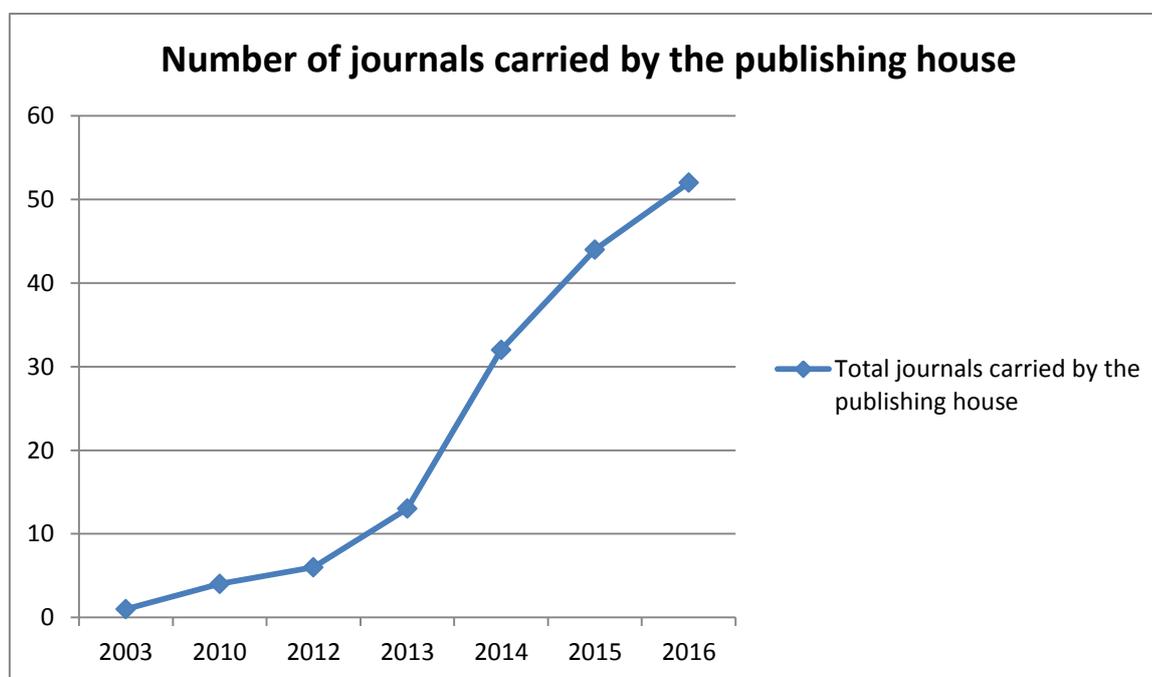


Fig. 7. Dynamics of the number of journals carried by the publishing house

Research activity

Subsequent to the defense of his doctoral dissertation in 2008, A.A. Cherkasov switched from the civil war to pre-revolutionary history, which has always been a favorite subject with him. In the final stage of his work at Sochi State University, A.A. Cherkasov was in charge of the implementation of a research project entitled ‘The Caucasus in the Dialogue of Civilizations: Mechanisms behind Global Change’. As part of the project, Mr. Cherkasov investigated the nature of change in people’s religious views, and established that Christianity had been supplanted in the Caucasus based on a set of external factors (his article on Georgia). In addition, Cherkasov provided convincing proof that the destruction of Christian temples in the Northwest Caucasus was caused by the activity of Islamic fundamentalists, not natural factors (Cherkasov et al., 2016).

A major factor in the economy of the Caucasus in the period between the 18th and first half of the 19th centuries was slave trade. Slaves were quite expensive at the time. For instance, as noted by A.A. Cherkasov in his work ‘The List of Captives from the Turkish Vessel ‘Belifte’ as a Source of Information on the Slave Trade in the Northwestern Caucasus in the early 19th Century’, the 66 slaves discovered by a Russian corvette aboard a Turkish slave-trading ship it intercepted were valued equal to as many as 2,500 cows (Cherkasov et

al., 2017). To develop his research further, Mr. Cherkasov went on to focus on the situation of slaves in the Caucasus, and his cooperation with Dr. M. Šmigel' helped the research group compare the situation of slaves in the Caucasus with that in the United States (Smigel, Cherkasov, 2016; Šmigel et al., 2017). Subsequently, A.A. Cherkasov would come to the conclusion that it is the economic lucrativeness of taking captives from the Russian side that was one of the key reasons behind the long duration of the Caucasus War. This conclusion is based on an analysis of all losses incurred by the Russians during the Caucasus War between 1801–1864, with one half accounted for by raids by the mountaineers and the other by Russian expeditions (Cherkasov et al., 2017a). In the end, the Russian administration realized that as long as the mountaineers were engaged in slave trade with the Turks and Persians raids onto the Russian area would never stop, which would go on to serve as the reason for the establishment of a buffer zone on the Black Sea coast.

However, as noted by A.A. Cherkasov, it would be totally wrong to assume that the Russians were met in the Caucasus with outright antagonism on the part of all the mountaineers. It is worth taking into account that subsequent to the Civil War of 1785, touched off by the uprising of Shih Mansur, the Circassian aristocracy would end up losing their grip on power, with the circulation of the Quran eventually becoming possible in the area, where it had been forbidden previously (Cherkasov et al., 2014). This would fragment society, and through virtually the entire Caucasus War most of the Circassian princes, along with their vassals and serfs, would seek to engage in meaningful dialogue with the Russian administration, while many members of the mountaineer aristocracy would also become Russian officers (Cherkasov et al., 2015; Cherkasov et al., 2015a; Cherkasov et al., 2018b). A.A. Cherkasov has also conducted research into the traditions and demography of Circassian society (Cherkasov et al., 2014; Cherkasov et al., 2016b; Cherkasov et al., 2018a; Ivantsov et al., 2015).

Apart from the Circassians, A.A. Cherkasov has explored other mountaineer and Caucasian tribes as well, including the Jigets (Cherkasov et al., 2015b), the Abkhaz (Cherkasov et al., 2016a), and the Mingrelians (Cherkasov et al., 2018). The scholar has also conducted some research into the events of World War I in the Caucasian theater of military action (Cherkasov et al., 2016c; Cherkasov et al., 2016d) and some into the Russian Empire's youth policy during the period between the two revolutions (Molchanova et al., 2013).

Another noteworthy area of research tapped into by A.A. Cherkasov is the history of pre-revolutionary pedagogy. In 2011, the scholar wrote a paper in which he not only challenged the Soviet narrative about rampant illiteracy in Russia at the time but managed to prove that on the eve of the February Revolution the Russian Empire was actually about to introduce compulsory primary education (Cherkasov, 2011). The establishment of Soviet power would only postpone the introduction of compulsory primary education by 13 years, i.e. all the way until 1930.

A.A. Cherkasov has also researched the regional characteristics of the system of public education in various provinces of the Russian Empire (Cherkasov et al., 2019; Cherkasov et al., 2019a; Cherkasov, Smigel, 2016).

It may also be worth saying a few words about the scholar's tutelage over dissertation-related research. So far, A.A. Cherkasov has served as a thesis advisor for a total of three candidates. Under Mr. Cherkasov's guidance, K.V. Taran defended his dissertation, 'The Black Sea Governorate during the First Russian Revolution', in 2011, I.A. Ermachkov did his, 'Sochi during the Perestroika (1985–1991)', in 2016, and L.G. Polyakova did hers, 'The Black Sea Governorate during World War I', in 2018.

3. Conclusion

Over the 20-year period spanning his research and pedagogical career, the scholar has worked real hard to lay the groundwork for his research school. Mr. Cherkasov managed to progressively work his way from a humble position as an instructor's assistant all the way up the actual administrative ladder, reaching the level of Candidate of Sciences and the rank of Prorector for Research and Innovation. Only after years of experience doing administrative work would the scholar actually go on to undertake the establishment of a research center of his own and engage in the implementation of a number of other projects, including commercial ones.

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