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NATION, REGION AND HISTORY IN POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITIONS

Identity Politics in Ukraine, 1991-2006

With a foreword by Vera Tolz

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To my parents, Barbara and Peter

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List of Abbreviations

BYUT	<i>Blok: Yulia Tymoshenko (Block of Yulia Tymoshenko)</i>
KGB	<i>Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti (The Committee of State Security)</i>
KPU	<i>Kommunistychna partiya Ukrayiny (The Communist Party of Ukraine)</i>
NKVD	<i>Narodnyi kommissariat vnutrennikh del (The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs)</i>
OUN	<i>Orhanizatsiya Ukrayins'kykh Natsionalistiv (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists)</i>
SDPU-o	<i>Sotsial-demokratychna partiya Ukrayiny (ob'yednana) (The Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine–united)</i>
SPU	<i>Sotsialistychna partiya Ukrayiny (The Socialist Party of Ukraine)</i>
UNA	<i>Ukrayins'ka Narodna Respublika (The Ukrainian People's Republic)</i>
UPA	<i>Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiya (Ukrainian Insurgent Army)</i>
ZUNR	<i>Zakhidna Ukrains'ka Narodna Respublika (West Ukrainian People's Republic)</i>
ZYU	<i>Za Yedynu Ukrainu (For One Ukraine)</i>

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“(Re)inventing the Past: The Politics of ‘National’ History in the Ukrainian Classroom”, *Studies in Ethnicity of Nationalism, Special Edition*, 6, 2, October 2006: 40-55.

“Compliance or contradiction? Teaching ‘History’ in the ‘New’ Ukraine. A View from Ukraine’s Eastern Borderlands”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 59, 3, May 2007: 501-517.

Foreword

This book addresses a highly topical issue regarding the relationship of regional identities and an overarching national identity in contemporary Ukraine. This complex relationship is analysed in the book through the study of the teaching of Ukrainian history in Ukraine after the demise of the USSR and of the perception of the new historical narrative among teachers and schoolchildren in three *oblasts* of Eastern Ukraine.

The book argues for the importance of taking regional identities in Ukraine seriously. Demonstrating analytical skills and originality, it suggests that the focus on state-led nation-building often leads scholars underestimating the multiplicity of people's identities, particularly the significance of their regional identities. The author argues that many studies of the post-communist transition have overlooked the contribution to nation-building projects of 'ordinary people', who accept, reject or 'renegotiate' state-supported narratives. This book redresses this imbalance, providing a wealth of empirical evidence about varying responses from teachers and schoolchildren to new interpretations of Ukraine's history to be found in state-approved textbooks published in the last decade.

The author draws original conclusions about the formation of identities in Eastern Ukraine and convincingly shows that the wide-spread view that the people of Eastern Ukraine lack a sense of Ukrainian national identity is, in effect, erroneous. The author argues for Ukraine's unique form of regionalism, to be understood not in terms of divisions, but rather differences and diversity. Overall, this piece of research represents an original addition to our understanding of the complex and much discussed issue of identity change in contemporary Ukraine and provides an essential contribution to Ukrainian studies and more generally, post-Soviet studies.

Vera Tolz
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