

**Andreas Kappeler, Zenon E. Kohut, Frank E. Sysyn, and Mark von Hagen, eds.** *Culture, Nation and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter, 1600–1945*. Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003. xiv, 381 pp. \$39.95, cloth. \$29.95, paper.

Based on four international conferences, sponsored by the Seminar for East European History at the University of Cologne, the Harriman Institute at Columbia University, and the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta, and held at the University of Cologne and at Columbia University in 1994 and 1995, this collection of essays builds on *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*, co-edited by Peter J. Potichnyj, Marc Raeff, Jaroslaw Pelenski, and Gleb N. Zekulin, and published by CIUS Press in 1992. In organizing these conferences, the editors sought “to encourage scholars in traditional Russian studies to pose questions than to present ready-made answers” if they had not investigated issues dealing with culture, nation, and identity in the past and “to urge specialists in Ukrainian studies to shift their focus from the impact of Russia on Ukraine in order to consider the significance of Ukrainian issues for Russian identity, the tsarist empire, and the Soviet state” (pp. viii–ix).

As in the 1992 volume, historians constitute the overwhelming majority of contributors to this new symposium. In the current volume, Viktor M. Zhivov, David A. Frick, Zenon E. Kohut, Hans-Joachim Torke, Frank E. Sysyn discuss aspects of the early modern period; Paul Bushkovitch, Andreas Kappeler, Olga Andriewsky, George G. Grabowicz, Serhy Yekelchuk, Christine D. Worobec—the imperial period; and Dieter Pohl, Oleh S. Ilnytzkij, Yuri Shapoval, Stanislav Kulchytsky, Mark von Hagen -- the twentieth century. Marc Raeff provides the afterword to this collection of sixteen essays.

Inasmuch as the authors sought to “understand the construction, destruction, and reformulation of identities among Russians and Ukrainians of all social origins” (p. ix), they succeeded admirably. Each nuanced essay complements the others. But despite the high quality of each of these essays, the volume as a whole possesses a number of limitations. The editors and authors, for example, do not clearly define the terms “identity” or “encounter.” In light of this book’s chronological organization, it is unclear why Dieter Pohl’s article on “Russians, Ukrainians and German Occupation Policy, 1941–1943” precedes other chapters in the section on the twentieth century. Although von Hagen provides an excellent, but short, summary of World War One in his overview of Ukraine in the first half of the last century, this collection remains incomplete without a thorough assessment of the Great War and of the revolutionary period, 1917–1920, which accelerated the number of the Russian-Ukrainian “encounters” and forced Russians as well as Ukrainians to exchange their multiple identities for a single identity. This volume, moreover, might have enhanced its arguments by including maps, which would have visually represented the political changes Muscovy/Russia, the USSR, Ukraine and East Central Europe experienced over the past four centuries.

Despite these problems, this excellent collection of essays is a milestone in Ukrainian Studies as well as in Slavic Studies. Most importantly, it raises more questions than answers, especially about the field of Slavic Studies after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and after the emergence of its fifteen independent successor states on the Eurasian continent.

Notwithstanding the explosion of nationality studies and research on the non-Russian peoples in North America over the past two decades, many historians of Russia, the Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union have yet to incorporate these findings into their scholarship and teaching. One only needs to peruse the latest editions of textbooks on

Russian/Soviet history written by Nicholas Riasanovsky or David MacKenzie and Michael W. Curran to see how these authors have underplayed the importance of multiple loyalties and identities in multi-national states and how they have changed over the past centuries.

The dominant interpretation of “Russian” history as a unitary state with a static Russian national identity influenced the composition of this volume. More specialists in Ukrainian studies than in Russian studies and more North American scholars than German scholars accepted invitations to join this project. Inasmuch as the questions these conferences posed became politically charged in the 1990s, the organizers experienced problems “in finding colleagues from Russia willing to participate” in them (p. x). Despite these difficulties, this volume effectively challenges the prevailing way most scholars imagine, research and teach “Russian” and East European history in North America.

In light of their call for specialists on Ukraine to conduct their research in a new comparative framework, might not the four co-editors of this volume consider the possibility of co-authoring a textbook dealing with the Russian Empire and its development of multiple identities?

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