

FOREWORD

The Slavic Research Center of Hokkaido University held an International Symposium, titled “Construction and Deconstruction of National Histories in Slavic Eurasia,” at Sapporo, Japan, on July 10-13, 2002 under a Grant for International Symposia from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Sciences (JSPS). This volume presents revised and edited papers from the symposium.

This symposium is part of two ongoing research projects. One is the study project named “Modernity and Nation in Eastern Europe and Central Eurasia” by the grant-in-aid of JSPS (Scientific Research (A)(2), no. 12301020, FY2000-2003). The other is the Joint Research Project of the Japan Center for Area Studies (JCAS), National Museum of Ethnology titled “State and Ethnicity in the Slavic Eurasian World.” Formally these two projects are independent of each other, but the core members of the two groups are composed of almost all the same persons including this editor. This volume is one of the results of these joint research projects.

This volume is composed of three parts. The first part deals with the problems surrounding narratives of “national history” in the historiography of Slavic Eurasian countries (the Central and East European countries and the former Soviet countries) in the Post-Communist era. In 1989-1990, the Communist regimes of Slavic Eurasia collapsed. This was followed immediately by the disintegration of the three federal states, namely the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Since then we have observed the painful process of new state- and nation-building, often with ethnic wars, in this area. Even the countries which did not suffer from any changes in their borders were also compelled to remake national or state identification in the context of multifold transformations and changes of international surroundings.

Writing national history has been an important part of nation-building. In this regard, it seems that there is no difference between the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Examining how lo-

cal historians are (re)writing their national history under new conditions is useful for understanding recent trends in nationalism of the area.

The second part of this book analyzes some aspects of the relations between culture and national history. The organizer of the symposium invited some specialists working on the history of literature and art, as well as specialists of political and social history, in order to discuss these topics in the broadest possible context. Two authors of this part, Milena Bartlová and Hajime Kaizawa, having been expected to participate in the symposium, could not come to Sapporo for reasons of health. However, they contributed their papers to the conference as well as this book to realize the organizer's original plan.

The third part is composed of some case studies which examine the emerging process of nationalism and national consciousness in the modern history of this area. The last two decades of the 20th century saw remarkable developments in the theoretical study of nationalism. In addition, an enormous volume of historical materials, which had been closed, became available to historians under the new political conditions of the Post-Communist Eurasian countries. It may be said that the papers of this part, directly or indirectly, reflect these new theoretical trends and new conditions of archival study in this field.

Although I planned to publish this volume in six months after the symposium, it has actually taken almost one and a half years for publication. I apologize for this unexpected delay to the contributors, especially those who had sent their revised papers to the editor soon after the symposium.

I would like to thank Mika Osuga, an editorial assistant of the SRC, who spent endless hours editing and formatting the papers of this volume. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Garry Heterick and Mark Hudson for correcting the English written by non-native speakers of English.

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Editor
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