The Tsar, The Empire, and The Nation

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“The relationship between empire and nation was among the thorniest of questions in the late Russian Empire, and the complications proved most acute in the country’s western regions. This volume assembles a truly international team of scholars to explore these matters in a range of different contexts, from education and religion to censorship, tourism, and right-wing political mobilization. The chapters reveal an exceptional set of challenges that statesmen, reformers, and imperial subjects of diverse nationalities and confessions faced in conceptualizing and actualizing their projects in the context of new forms of association and altered political frameworks. As the authors reveal, the greatest casualty for imperial policy was consistency. Full of new research and compelling insights, The Tsar, the Empire, and the Nation represents the latest word on this important problem in Russian and East European history.”

—Paul W. Werth, Professor of History, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

“By investigating western borderlands from the Baltic provinces in the north to Ukraine in the south, this volume creates a meso-level between the macro-perspective on the Russian empire as a whole and the micro-perspective on a single region, paving the ground for comparative insights into the empire’s responses to national questions. What I admire the most about this book is its very balanced discussion of national questions which still bear the potential to become politicized.”

—Martin Aust, Professor of History, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn, Germany

This book addresses the challenge of modern nationalism to the tsarist Russian Empire that first appeared on the empire’s western periphery. It was most prevalent in the twelve provinces extending from the Ukrainian lands in the south to the Baltic provinces in the north, and in the Kingdom of Poland. Did the late Russian Empire enter World War I as a multiethnic state with many of its age-old mechanisms run by a multiethnic elite, or as a Russian state predominantly managed by ethnic Russians? The studies seek to answer this main question while covering diverse issues such as native language education, interconfessional rivalry, the “Jewish question,” and the emergence of Russian nationalist attitudes in the aftermath of the first Russian revolution. The overall finding of the contributors is that although the imperial government did not really identify with popular Russian nationalism, it sometimes ended up implementing policies promoted by Russian nationalist proponents.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Darius Staliūnas is Research Fellow at the Lithuanian Institute of History and teaches at Vilnius University. His publications include: Making Russians: Meaning and Practice of Russification in Lithuania and Belarus after 1863 (Brill, 2007), Enemies for a Day: Antisemitism and Anti-Jewish Violence in Lithuania under the Tsars (CEU Press, 2015), and (with Dangiras Mačiulis) Lithuanian Nationalism and the Vilnius Question, 1883–1940 (Herder Institute, 2015).

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