This account of historical politics in Ukraine, framed in a broader European context, shows how social, political, and cultural groups have used and misused the past from the final years of the Soviet Union to 2020. Georgiy Kasianov details practices relating to history and memory by a variety of actors, including state institutions, non-governmental organizations, political parties, historians, and local governments. He identifies the main political purposes of these practices in the construction of nation and identity, struggles for power, warfare, and international relations.

Kasianov considers the Ukrainian case in the context of a global increase in the politics of history and memory, with particular emphasis on a distinctive East-European variety. He pays special attention to the use and abuse of history in relations between Ukraine, Russia, and Poland.

"What happens when imperial narratives fall, and new national ones try to take their place? Memory Crash provides answers to this and many related questions in a way that combines an analysis of a historian with the sensibilities of one of the key participants in the historical debates. A reflection and a report from the trenches of the historical wars at the same time, this book is an essential read for anyone who wants to understand today's Ukraine and the battles it is involved in."

Serhii Plokhy, Harvard University, author of The Frontline: Essays on Ukraine's Past and Present

"This is an excellent book about the power of discourse, the discourse of power, and the extraordinary complex ways in which they mingle, fight and intertwine. Focusing on Ukraine while maintaining European and comparative perspectives, Georgiy Kasianov has produced an exemplary work in the contested but increasingly central field of East European memory studies."

Alexander Etkind, European University Institute, Florence

"This is a fascinating analysis of history politics in Ukraine over the last forty years written by one of the best experts in the field. Kasianov tells an intriguing story about the way in which both governments and civil society actors have functionalized history in order to promote various versions of Ukrainian national identity. He explores the links of this mnemonic war to the Soviet era and also contextualizes it fluidly within a wider European and Russian history politics. This is a book that will be read with great benefit by anyone interested in the complex interactions between history and politics."

Stefan Berger, Ruhr University Bochum, author of The Past as History: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Modern Europe

"The most comprehensive, critical-minded, and witty analysis of Ukrainian memory politics today, Kasianov's new book will surprise everyone who is interested in Eastern Europe's politics and future."

Vladislav M. Zubok, London School of Economics and Political Science

About the Author

Georgiy Kasianov is Head of the Laboratory of International Memory Studies, Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Lublin, Poland. He is an author, co-author, and co-editor of more than twenty books on the history of Ukraine from the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries.