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Abstract of the PhD dissertation entitled

**The Ukrainian politics of history between 1991 and 2013**

The objective of this PhD dissertation is to analyse the Ukrainian politics of history between 1991 and 2013. In this period for the first time within their own independent State Ukrainians attempted to develop its own form as a combination of the post-Soviet legacy with a vision of national history, taking into consideration regional differences. The research focussed not only on the influence of the Ukrainian authorities on historical memory and on the development of historiography and the teaching of history. Through analysing legal regulations, political commentaries and school course books of the period, an attempt was made to identify the main characteristics of the Ukrainian politics of history. The discussion covered the reactions of the opposition, the regional authorities and society as a whole. The discussed topics included opinion-making activities of Ukrainian Churches. It was also crucial to cover historians' commentaries on the then interventions in the area of politics of history. Deliberations on the Ukrainian politics of history would be impossible without taking into consideration the impact of neighbouring countries, approaching the subject in their own ways or reacting to measures taken by Ukraine.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, a list of abbreviations and bibliography. The chapters were built according to the chronological and problem-based criterion. They were arranged according to the terms of office of the first four presidents of Ukraine. Such chronological division results from the fact that in the then structure of the State power in Ukraine, this was the Head of the State who had the greatest influence on creating and implementing the State's politics of history.

The first chapter defines politics of history, its impact on historical (collective) memory, explains why discussions on the politics of memory were initiated, and what influenced the specific characteristics of Ukrainian politics of memory, etc. The understanding of the unique process of shaping the Ukrainian politics of history can be achieved on the basis of the analysis of socio-political processes, and indications of the direction of its development can be found in changes in the area of symbolism. Therefore, in this part of the dissertation a lot of attention was devoted to the influence of historical tradition and the processes of shaping the contemporary Ukrainian nation.

The second chapter describes the Ukrainian politics of history during the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk between 1991 and 1994. This was a transitional period originating in the

War II independence movement. In the politics of history Cossackship was still the symbol of the *national awakening* and identification with Ukraine, the *Ukrainian Revolution* of 1917-1921 personified national pride and sorrow, the Great Famine of 1932-1933 was a symbol of lies and silence of Soviet authorities, and World War II exemplified heroism and hatred towards the *enemy*. These emotionally charged points of memory were to consolidate society and strengthen its national awareness. Between 2006 and 2007 the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance was established, but it remained fully dependent on Government's decisions, thus being unable to independently create the Ukrainian politics of history. Furthermore, in the mentioned period attempts were made to continue the decommunisation initiated in early 1990s at the regional level. Specific attention was drawn to the celebrations of the 1020th anniversary of the Christianisation of Kievan Rus'. They were an attempt to support the creation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which, however, ended in a failure due to the continuing strong influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

The fifth chapter analyses the politics of history during the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich (2010-2013). It was a continuation of the post-Soviet politics of memory trend from the times of Leonid Kuchma, with such distinguishing features as the lack of "modernising reforms", balancing between the East and the West and the radicalisation of the aspiring political powers (both the Ukrainian right wing and pro-Russian forces). In the Yanukovich times the post-Soviet vision of World War II dominated the Ukrainian politics of history. At the same time, the citizens' initiative strengthened its pursue to commemorate the victims of the Great Famine, the heroisation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and decommunisation. The politics of history of Yanukovich's political camp did not reflect the moods of the supporters of the pro-State vision of history. The authorities' loss of contact with the active part of the Ukrainian society and strong Russian influence led to dissatisfaction with the President's policy starting from 2010.

The Ukrainian politics of history between 1991 and 2013 constitutes a certain whole. Thus, the research covered the period from the proclamation of independence by Ukraine to the outbreak of the *Revolution of Dignity*. After that period the Ukrainian political scene, and society at large, entered a path of crucial changes. These changes are not the focus of this dissertation, but the basis for them was prepared in the studied period.

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