



# A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland

By Kate Brown

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**A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland** By Kate Brown

This is a biography of a borderland between Russia and Poland, a region where, in 1925, people identified as Poles, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, and Russians lived side by side. Over the next three decades, this mosaic of cultures was modernized and homogenized out of existence by the ruling might of the Soviet Union, then Nazi Germany, and finally, Polish and Ukrainian nationalism. By the 1950s, this "no place" emerged as a Ukrainian heartland, and the fertile mix of peoples that defined the region was destroyed.

Brown's study is grounded in the life of the village and *shtetl*, in the personalities and small histories of everyday life in this area. In impressive detail, she documents how these regimes, bureaucratically and then violently, separated, named, and regimented this intricate community into distinct ethnic groups.

Drawing on recently opened archives, ethnography, and oral interviews that were unavailable a decade ago, *A Biography of No Place* reveals Stalinist and Nazi history from the perspective of the remote borderlands, thus bringing the periphery to the center of history.

We are given, in short, an intimate portrait of the ethnic purification that has marked all of Europe, as well as a glimpse at the margins of twentieth-century "progress."

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

*A Biography of No Place* is one of the most original and imaginative works of history to emerge in the western literature on the former Soviet Union in the last ten years. Historiographically fearless, Kate Brown writes with elegance and force, turning this history of a lost, but culturally rich borderland into a compelling narrative that serves as a microcosm for understanding nation and state in the Twentieth Century. With compassion and respect for the diverse people who inhabited this margin of territory between Russia and Poland, Kate Brown restores the voices, memories, and humanity of a people lost. (Lynne Viola, Professor of History, University of Toronto)

Samuel Butler and Kate Brown have something in common. Both have written about Erewhon with imagination and flair. I was captivated by the courage and enterprise behind this book. Is there a way to write a history of events that do not make rational sense? Kate Brown asks. She proceeds to give us a stunning answer. (Modris Eksteins, author of *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*)

Kate Brown tells the story of how succeeding regimes transformed a onetime multiethnic borderland into a far more ethnically homogeneous region through their often murderous imperialist and nationalist projects. She writes evocatively of the inhabitants' frequently challenged identities and livelihoods and gives voice to their aspirations and laments, including Poles, Ukrainians, Germans, Jews, and Russians. *A Biography of No Place* is a provocative meditation on the meanings of periphery and center in the writing of history. (Mark von Hagen, Professor of History, Columbia University)

#### From the Inside Flap

This is a biography of a borderland between Russia and Poland, a region where, in 1925, people identified as Poles, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, and Russians lived side by side. Over the next three decades, this mosaic of cultures was modernized and homogenized out of existence by the ruling might of the Soviet Union, then Nazi Germany, and finally, Polish and Ukrainian nationalism. By the 1950s, this "no place" emerged as a Ukrainian heartland, and the fertile mix of peoples that defined the region was destroyed. Brown's study is grounded in the life of the village and shtetl, in the personalities and small histories of everyday life in this area. In impressive detail, she documents how these regimes, bureaucratically and then violently, separated, named, and regimented this intricate community into distinct ethnic groups. Drawing on recently opened archives, ethnography, and oral interviews that were unavailable a decade ago, "A Biography of No Place" reveals Stalinist and Nazi history from the perspective of the remote borderlands, thus bringing the periphery to the center of history. Brown argues that repressive national policies grew not out of chauvinist or racist ideas, but the very instruments of modern governance - the census, map, and progressive social programs - first employed by Bolshevik reformers in the western borderlands. We are given, in short, an intimate portrait of the ethnic purification that has marked all of Europe, as well as a glimpse at the margins of twentieth century "progress." Kate Brown is Assistant Professor of History at University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

#### About the Author

Kate Brown is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

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#### **Rachel Robbins:**

Here thing why that A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland are different and reputable to be yours. First of all reading a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content than it which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland giving you information deeper including different ways, you can find any e-book out there but there is no reserve that similar with A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland. It gives you thrill reading journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing this happened in the world which is possibly can be happened around you. You can easily bring everywhere like in area, café, or even in your method home by train. When you are having difficulties in bringing the branded book maybe the form of A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland in e-book can be your substitute.

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