

Kocsis, K., Rudenko, L. and Schweitzer, F. (eds.): Ukraine in Maps. Institute of Geography National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Geographical Research Institute Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Kyiv–Budapest, 2008. 147 p.

The second volume of a series prepared in the Geographical Research Institute Hungarian Academy of Sciences (GRI HAS) focuses on an East European state, Ukraine. The first member of the series presented South Eastern Europe (2005, 2007) whereas the third book will introduce Hungary as it were to give the public a foretaste of a new edition of the national atlas of the country. This series of publication is aimed at presenting a comprehensive overview of regions and countries in English richly illustrated by maps. The volumes might have an importance for geographers, be informative for experts in foreign affairs and politicians, and they are also to serve business, especially firms with intentions to invest in the regions and countries in concern.

The launch of the series (and the fact that already the third volume is in preparation) is clear evidence that research of the foreign countries and territories have a firm place in academic institutions including the GRI HAS. Studies on areas beyond the national boundaries is going to have an increasing strategic importance making classic regional geography face new challenges at the same time promoting its revival.

Ukraine in Maps is a publication accomplished by adaptation of the aspects of classic geographical description to the contemporary conditions in Ukraine and purposed for general orientation. It means that it is not the new achievements of the scientific research that have been placed in the focus, instead the volume offers essential knowledge for the broad audience in the form of an atlas: maps with textual comments. A high level outward appearance is at par with similar publications in the west and might have a place on the bookshelf along with standard atlases.

The volume is a product of cooperation between two workshops in geography: Institute of Geography of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and GRI HAS. Beside the publication of the book this collaboration has made a substantial contribution to the development of links and deepened scientific relations in geography. Preparations, editing and finalization required exchange of experts i.e. study trips to Kiev and Budapest. In the wake of *Ukraine in Maps* new publications came into being and cooperations were initiated so joint activities have proven to be a good start.

The actuality and novelty of the pictorial textbook is that it is a pioneer edition, since no similar publication was hitherto issued on Ukraine either in Hungary or abroad. Certainly there was a previous attempt (e.g. Ukraine. Industry and investment activity) but beside map inscriptions it contained only very short explanations in English. A new National Atlas of Ukraine (NAU, 2008) is a rather prestigious volume but only map titles appear in that language. Another specific feature of the joint Hungarian-Ukrainian album is its approach stemming from confers of Hungarian geographers with the Ukrainian colleagues, consequently it contains both external and internal reflections.

The work is subdivided into three parts and further into eleven chapters. A short historical overview is followed by the analyses of natural environment and social conditions; they form the background behind the state of economy which is in the focus of the book. An introduction into the national economy of Ukraine might rely on eager interest of the reader; this is why such an emphasis has been put on this topic.

77 maps and 21 tables are accompanied with the explanatory notes. Part of the maps was constructed by Ukrainian geographers but the Hungarian contribution is significant as well. The latter maps as a rule are of illustrative in character, striking and easy to survey. They are chiefly associated with human geographical phenomena, such as ethnic

composition, languages, population change, incomes, urbanization and also appear in the chapter on agriculture. For some figures the spatial patterns are shown by raion instead of the oblast level, which is a pioneer undertaking; similar maps of detailed resolution does not even appear in the new NAU. The differences between the approaches represented by the Ukrainian and Hungarian schools of geography are clearly discernible in the chapter on economy which praises the efforts made overwhelmingly by the Ukrainian party. These maps often require long analyses and less interpretable at first glance because they reveal intricate spatial structures relating to e.g. privatization, gross value added (GVA) or foreign direct investment (FDI). Ukrainian human geography is dominated by industrial geography still based on the spatial distribution of productive forces, epitomized in a heavily descriptive chapter. Factors putting the country in an international context as its transit position with a special reference to the pipelines in hydrocarbon transport were mainly presented by the Hungarian experts.

The introductory chapter is aimed at positioning Ukraine in Europe. Beyond the classic aspects such as geographical setting, territorial extension, borders, administrative divisions, an assessment of the economy is presented in European context with an emphasis on aspirations of the country to the integration in the EU. Participation of Ukraine in TACIS programme is also referred to.

A short outline of the country's historical evolution also allows a brief insight in ethnogenesis of the Ukrainians. It is supported by a spectacular map series depicting the change in statehood on the territory what is now Ukraine during the past more than one thousand years, initially in Kievan Rus, then within the Polish-Lithuanian Union, later in the Ottoman Empire then under the Russian czarism and more recently in the Soviet Union.

Natural conditions are addressed to a relatively minor extent in the album. Nevertheless after tackling topography and geological structure it is the soils, followed by solid mineral fuels (coal, peat) and metal ores (iron, manganese, chrome, nickel) of utmost economic significance that are introduced in detail. There is an extensive description of climatic conditions which have a key importance for the country with high agroecological potential. Following landscape types and physical-geographical divisions the ecological situation comes to the fore. A general assessment made by the Ukrainian geographers is accompanied by a map of air pollution and by another one of the Chernobyl aftermath.

Social conditions start to be displayed with population: ethnicities, languages and religions. Along with the actual patterns this chapter presents an analysis of changes during the 20th century and shows (eastern and western) diasporas of the Ukrainians. Chapter on the demographic features along with population patterns and change also include level of education, economic activity and unemployment. These characteristics are shown on raion level as well. The chapter on the settlement system focuses on the urban network; rural Ukraine (in spite of its high relevance) has a regrettably subordinate part to play in this account. Beyond the historical development size categories and urban functions are described. Urban population is outlined on raion level too.

The most extensive chapter deals with the national economy. Apart from the general characteristics (privatization, GVA, investment including FDI) it focuses on the power industry and infrastructure as a strategic sector. Most of the pipelines transporting liquid and gaseous hydrocarbons cross Ukraine and the country also is a zone of encounter between the European and Russian electric power systems. Further the chapter describes machinery engineering, chemicals and food industries with long traditions but nowadays suffering from a sharp decline. Farming has a particular importance and summarized in a special chapter. Agricultural production, structures and ownership patterns are presented along with crop cultivation and livestock breeding.

There are three chapters left to depict transport and telecommunications, R&D, recreational potential and tourism turnover. Beside the characteristics of transport performance and traffic volume (public roads, railways, pipelines, waterways) a separate map shows international transport corridors. Wired and wireless systems of telecommunication, cellular network and mobile phone services are described. The chapter on tourism lists places worth to visit by categories such as natural attractions (forests, watersides, mountains, mineral springs including medicinal waters) and cultural heritage (e.g. monasteries, UNESCO World Heritage sites). Tourism infrastructure and the international tourist flow are also presented within this increasingly important sector of economy.

The volume is a worthwhile undertaking to complete the literature on the geography of Ukraine available in English. Its comprehensive and versatile approach brings the reader closer to the understanding internal structures and conditions of Ukraine. The album can be recommended for study in general orientation and in a starting phase of any research.

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