

The Making of Modern Ukraine

10 - Global Empires

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wdn0zcCXjQY>

00:00 Okay, greetings. Happy Thursday.
Welcome. You guys have an exam a week from today.
We've been talking about the TAs, about the kinds of things that are going to be on the exam.
It'll be very straightforward.
Some IDs, some dates, some short answers, some essays.
You'll have a choice among questions.
You should think about, like...
Think about what question you would ask.
One way to study is think about what question you would ask.
Like, what sorts of things are the big themes? And then practice answering it.
Maybe, like, pair up.
Have three people. Divide.
Think about what the big questions are so far.
I'm not going to ask you about the first few lectures.
The first few lectures are to help you think about what it is like to be involved in history.
The subject of the exam are the events from roughly the ninth century to roughly the seventh century.

01:05 So the thing we're doing today is we're taking a deep breath.
We're taking a deep breath. Yeah.
I mean, at this point in this semester, maybe we should all physically take a deep breath, a few deep breaths.
I'm not going to do that because I'm very conscious about how that's going to look.
Professor leads cult at Yale.
(students laughing) Makes students perform breathing exercises.
But what we're doing is, to change metaphors, what we're doing is we're going to zoom back today and we're going to think about empire in general and empire in the world.
And the reason why there's no handout today is that this lecture is really much more about situating the events in Ukraine in world history, because without world history, it doesn't make a lot of sense, and let me just give you three reasons why I think this is true.

02:03 Number one is the point that we have reached in the class chronologically, where we are

now working in the period of 1500, 1600, where we are really in the Age of Exploration, right? We're in the Age of Discovery, which coincides with the Renaissance in European history.

We are in the period where Europeans are looking for trade routes, finding lands that are new to them, discovering them, from their point of view, of course, making claims on them, setting up these new trade routes, destroying states that already exist, doing all these very important things which for the first time make of the world a single unit.

So obviously the world is always a single unit.

There's always weather.

People are always moving.

But somewhere around the age of 15 or around the year 1500, the pace of this picks up, right? The pace of this picks up so that events on one side of the world can affect people on the other side of the world, not on the scale of thousands of years or hundreds of years, but on the scale of, let's say, one year.

03:12 So in your lifetime, multiple things that happened on the other side of the world could actually affect what happened to you, right? So there's a change in pace.

There's another change in pace in the 19th century, another change in pace in the 21st.

But this is a very important thing, a kind of first globalization, if you'll indulge that.

And I'll give you some examples of what I'm talking about from our own little corner.

When we think about, for example, the British trying to find a passage to China, to the East, through the Arctic Ocean, which, let's face it, shows creativity if nothing else...

And there isn't one yet.

I mean, you know, in you guys' lifetime, there are going to be plenty of passages through the Arctic that there aren't now.

But in 1555, there wasn't, and the British then stumbled upon Muscovy, and that opens up a trade route where suddenly Muscovy is trading with Britain, which means trading with the world in a westerly direction.

04:06 And then by 1647 or so, the Muscovites have reached the Pacific Ocean.

So in that century, suddenly, Muscovy, which is becoming Russia, of course, Muscovy is connected to both the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, and that's one of the reasons why Russia becomes the state that it becomes, is that Russia manages to have an Atlantic and a Pacific connection as the world is becoming connected, right? And that's one of the ways that Russia is distinct from, let's say, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or the Kazakh state that we'll be talking about on Tuesday.

By the way, on Tuesday, I'm going to pick up where we left off, roughly 1648, and we are going to talk about the Crimean Tatars.

We're going to talk about the Ottoman Empire.

We're going to bring that into encounter with Russia. Okay.

So the timeline that we are on is coinciding with a much bigger timeline.

If we think of 1648 as the moment of the Kazakh rebellion, 1648 is also roughly the moment when a Muscovite explorer, this guy Dezhnev, gets to the Pacific Ocean and actually crosses into North America as the first person to do so in that direction, at least in the modern period.

05:17 Obviously it'd been done before or there wouldn't be people in North America, but that's a different story.

So we are thinking about how our events connect to world history, and we don't really have a choice, right? It's not that I'm trying to be cool and avant garde with this global history thing, which is, by the way, it's not cool and avant garde anymore.

It's that these events don't actually make sense.

So in the next lecture, for example, in 1721, Russia is going to be, Muscovy is going to be renamed the Russian Empire at almost exactly the same time that Moscow bans Ukrainians from selling grain except through Muscovite ports, right? Those two events are connected, right? They're connected.

- 06:00 The fact that it is Moscow that's controlling the world trade of grain from the most fertile part of Europe, namely Ukraine, is very important.
- The myth of what Russia is, which we're also contending with, has to do not just with claiming the name Russia.
- It also has to do with controlling the land.
- And I'm sure you can see the connection to the present war.
- It's 2022, and those two things are still very much connected.
- If it's Russia, then of course there's nothing wrong with Russia controlling the land and controlling the export of grain.
- Okay, so the first reason is that we can't really make sense of what's happening unless we connect it, at least in a very preliminary way, to world history.
- The second reason is that this is also a time of the intellectual reconfiguration of how people see themselves in the world, which I realize is a very, very big notion, and I'm going to have to give it to you very briefly.
- But thus far, when we think about geography, we've been thinking about geography in terms of what classical authors knew and how classical authors described the world and how land explorers in our part of the world describe the world.
- 07:12 But basically, the framework of the people who, you know, who we're talking about is an ancient Greco-Roman framework, and the maps of Ukraine, such as they were, were from, you know, Ptolemy or Herodotus.
- And if you remember, the ancient Greeks had this nice habit of projecting things onto Ukraine, like, so griffins and fields of gold and so on, which weren't, like...
- They had some basis in reality.
- The Scythians actually did make beautiful things out of gold, which are currently being plundered.
- But the notion is that the Greeks projected, you know, a lot of things that sort of happened onto the territories that they didn't know.
- The Age of Exploration is also a time when the Poles are mapping Ukraine.
- We're going to get...
- So we've talked about Polish colonization.
- You can't separate colonization from mapping.
- 08:01 The Poles and other people are mapping Ukraine in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- And by the way, the word they use for it is Ukraine.
- The Poles say Ukraine.
- The whole idea of Ukraine is not a new idea at all, as I'm sure you've already understood.
- But in this mapping which the Poles do, they are going beyond classical knowledge, going beyond classical knowledge, which is a very important thing locally but also globally, because classical knowledge did not include something which is very important about the world and which Copernicus, you know, was the person to actually get clear, which is that our world is actually not especially interesting.
- I mean, okay, it's interesting from our point of view, because here we are, right? But it's not interesting in the sense that it's the center of anything.
- The sun doesn't orbit around it.

Everything doesn't orbit around it.

It turns out we're not the center of the world, which is a discovery, frankly, that's still sinking in, you know, many centuries later.

But the age of discovery of the world is also the age of discovery that the world is not the center of everything.

09:03 So there are major intellectual transformation happening at the same time, right? There's a kind of loss of innocence.

The same moment when Europeans are discovering in the world, they're also discovering or trying to take in the reality that the world that they're discovering is not the center of the universe.

So that's a lot to happen, right? That's a lot to happen, and I think it's just, it's worth bearing in mind.

The third reason why I'm going to give you this very general introduction to empire as world history is that a thought that we're meant to be having over the course of this class is how Ukraine might bridge European history and global history.

A major theme of European history and global history is the theme of colonialism, and in this story, it's the Europeans who are colonizing and it's the rest of the world who is being colonized.

But do we want it to be that simple, or should we look closely about and see who is colonizing who in an empirical way? It's hard to get away from the impression that, both in the early modern and, as we'll see, the modern periods, the idea of being colonized applies pretty well to Ukraine, although it's sitting there in the middle of Europe.

10:20 When the Russian Empire becomes the Russian Empire, when it defines itself as an empire, well, what's the center, and what is the periphery? But of course, there are some interesting twists to all this too, which, again, are relevant to the present situation.

What does it mean to become an empire and to colonize Europe, right? What does that mean? There's a lot of ambiguity in that.

So there's no question from the point of view of the 18th century or, for that matter, the 21st, that Moscow's perspective on Ukraine is in some way colonial.

But what does it mean to colonize a place which you also recognize came before you in some important sense? What does it mean to colonize a place which you recognize as being more European than yourself? That is not so common, right? That is not so common.

11:11 And if you grasp that, then it's a little bit easier to get your mind around the weird ambiguities and ambivalences that are involved even in the discussion of Ukraine on Russian television in 2022.

And then the final thing is that when we get to the modern period, or the 20th century, the 21st century, which we will get to, I promise, a major question of world history is, and American history, for that matter, is what do you do after empire, right? What do you do after empire? And one way to look at this conflict that is happening now between Russia and Ukraine is in that framework.

What do you do after empire, where one answer can be "Let's have more empire," right? One answer can be "Let's concentrate all kinds of imperial thought and try them out in the 21st century." And then there can be another answer, which I think is the Ukrainian answer, which is "Look for something that is not anti-imperial but which is some way post-imperial." And I'll talk more about that, but it's worth thinking about that big question of what happens after empire.

12:13 Okay. So what is empire? What's an empire? Very briefly, we've talked about this, I'll give you two very simple ways to think about empire.

One is that it's the opposite of a republic.

So if you remember the last lecture, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth...

In Polish, it's the Rzeczpospolita.

It's a (speaking in Polish) or (speaking in Polish).

It's a republic, which means it's a common matter, right? Oh, America's supposed to be a republic, by the way.

And the thing about republics is that republics are meant to have a group.

Now, that group might not be everybody, and usually, it's not, but there is a group of people who have rights, as opposed to, for example, on autocracy.

This notion that a republic and an empire are in some kind of dialectic, of course, comes from Rome, right? This is a Roman notion.

You have a republic.

What happens to your republic? It falls and it becomes an empire.

13:04 So George Lucas didn't invent that, right? That whole pattern of politics where you have a republic and it's very flawed, and, like, the parliamentarism, it's really boring, and, like, there's all this bureaucracy, and then someone comes and he has quick solutions and maybe a cloak.

All plagiarized, right? Like, this whole notion of a republic, the republic that fails and becomes an empire, that's a classic historical trope.

And then even the notion that the people who want to restore the republic are doing so because of some kind of commitment to ideals, which is the whole theme of the movies I'm talking about, that is also very familiar from history, right? The notion that...

Well, maybe I can't actually justify the republic institutionally, but a republic has a moral advantage over an empire, right? That's an argument which is also 2000 years old at the very least.

Okay, so second definition of empire is that you can find a center and a periphery.

So in an empire, you know where the center is, and the center is politically superior to and economically exploitative of the periphery.

14:04 Okay. So Rome is the paradigm of all this.

I'm now going to spend just a few minutes reviewing some of the things that we know about the first thousand years of this class, but within this framework.

So the Roman Empire...

We did all this.

Does it fall? Does it not fall? Depends on your point of view, right? From the point of view of what the Franks say and then what, you know, the European Renaissance says, it fell and then it was recreated as the Frankish state and then intellectually as the Renaissance later on.

From an East European point of view, of course, Rome doesn't fall.

Byzantium is the Roman empire, and Byzantium lasts until 1453.

And in our class, the way we're thinking about the emergence of East European states and in particular Kyiv and Rus is that there's contact between these two empires, Byzantium, which is clearly an empire, the Frankish state, which later calls itself the Carolingian Empire, which just means the Charles-ian Empire, they're coming into contact, they're competing politically but also in terms of missionaries, conversion to Christianity, and that there's a third interesting force that comes in between them, which are the Vikings, right? That is our story of state creation, and it has to do with empire.

15:25 Now, here is where we get into a very important point which I'm going to emphasize later.

These empires are associated with a monotheistic religion.

And of course, the thing which makes Christendom or the thing which makes Europe is that it is one, it's one dominant monotheistic religion and not others.

The ancient world is a Mediterranean world, right? The ancient Christian world is a

Mediterranean world.

Christendom or Europe is the world which happens not only after Islam but after Islam in general fails to get through the Pyrenees on one side and through the Caucasus.

16:04 I say in general because of course there are huge exceptions, right? Like the Bulgar Tatar state, which then becomes later the Kazan khanate, which today is Tatarstan and Russia, right? But in general, the idea is that Christendom is going to be northerly and Islam is going to be southerly, in general.

And so these monotheistic states recognize one another as monotheistic states, and they recognize their own peoples as people who you do not enslave.

This notion of statehood is so fundamental that it often gets overlooked.

When we talk about the state, we often go very quickly into very reified things about what the state might be, but one basic notion of a state is that a state is a zone in which you do not enslave your own people, right? So the larger the state is, the larger the zone in which you do not enslave your own people, of course, which raises interesting questions about when the United States becomes a state, right? Or when the United States becomes a republic, just to give you a very familiar territory.

17:09 But one way to think about state formation is that you have elites that are no longer enslaving the people around them but instead are comfortable having them work the land and taxing them, right? Having some people work the land and be taxed, have other people work the land and become the warrior class, roughly speaking.

So that's what a state means, and that's going to be very important as we move through, because always in the back of your mind, you should have the theme of slavery, because slavery, it's not some kind of marginal topic.

It's not something you have to kind of sneak in at the end.

Slavery and statehood work together very carefully.

Slavery and recognition work together very, very carefully.

Like, this theme, which is a major theme still in the history of the United States in the 21st century, about who is recognized as belonging to the state, has everything to do with slavery and the history of slavery.

18:01 What I'm trying to suggest is that this is actually a very old theme.

It goes back to what the purpose of a state was from the start.

Okay, so now I want to remind you of the Mongols, but in a slightly different way.

So we're going to talk more about this on Tuesday, but the...

If I'm going too fast, you can just stop me and say, "I need to take a breath because you promised deep breaths.

I need a deep breath." You can just say that and I'll...

Okay, sorry. Cult thing.

Gotta stop. All right.

But no, seriously, if you have a question, just, and need me to pause, just ask and I'll pause.

Yes? - [Student] So, like, these states, obviously they don't enslave people, but if they're doing things like Russia where it's, like, all serfdom- - Yeah.

- How is that much different? - Right, no, so that's a very interesting question.

So if you enslave... Good.

If you enslave, that generally involves, not always, but it generally involves mobility.

19:00 So I'm about to talk about one of the biggest slave markets in Europe, which is Kaffa in the 14th century in Crimea.

So slavery involves, not always, but often involves mobility and commerce, so I enslave you, which means I can take you somewhere and sell you, whereas serfdom fundamentally is about binding people to the land.

So if I own serfs or own souls, I don't actually have the right to round them up and sell them to my neighbor.

What I do have is the right to say they cannot leave my land.

But you're right to raise that.

I mean, that's another question which redounds over the centuries in these comparisons between Russia and the United States, where people who are concerned with serfdom were reading the American abolitionist literature and vice versa, and there's a whole interesting literary story there.

So thanks for that question.

So it speaks to what it means to belong to a state.

So did the serfs belong to the Muscovite state? Right? Okay.

20:00 So again, that's another...

A third way to think about republics and empires is, if it's a republic, then theoretically, you can belong to the state.

Not everybody does.

In an empire, mmm, there's not really, that promise is not really contained in the notion of the state.

All right, so let's think about the Mongols, but now in a slightly different way.

The Mongols, as you know, come in and lay waste to what remains of Kyiv and Rus in the 13th century, and then they stick around, and they stick around in their state, which is called the Golden Horde, breaks up into various other states, including the Crimean Khanate, which we're going to talk more about in the next lecture.

But the moment that I want to pause on here is in the 1340s where something very important happens, and it has to do with slavery.

So the most important or one of the most important centers of the slave trade was a city which used to be known as Theodosius but which at the time in the 14th century is known as Kaffa, K-A-F-F-A, Kaffa, on the eastern edge of the Crimean Peninsula.

21:08 And at this time in the 14th century, it is the Genoese who are trading in Crimea.

So when we do the history of Crimea, this is all going to become clear, but when people talk about, like, what Crimea always was, that's extremely suspicious, because Crimea has been a whole, even compared to the rest of Ukraine, it's been a whole lot of things in a very interesting sequence.

But in the 14th century, it is the Italian city states, and in particular Genoa, that are dominating the trade, and, you know, either by purchasing or by force, are trying to control some of the territory which belongs to the local khanate.

So there is a battle in the 1340s between Genoa and between the Golden Horde, and according to history, although it's a little bit too good to be true, it's one of these things that's a little bit good to be true, the way the Black Death spreads...

22:08 Have you heard this story? The way the Black Death spreads is that the people on the side of the Golden Horde are dying of the Black Death.

This is 1346, 1347.

And so in order to...

So they invent biological weaponry.

Again, as I say, slightly too good to be true, this story.

And they catapult the corpses of their own dead soldiers and commanders over the walls

against the Genoese.

And this spreads the Black Death, and then the Genoese spread it throughout Europe.

Okay, that happened, but the reason why it's a little too good to be true is that, of course, there were other routes by which the Black Death could enter Europe.

I'm sure there was...

There wasn't only one vector.

You've now all lived how this works.

Like, there isn't...

There doesn't have to be just one plane from China.

There are probably going to be more vectors of how the disease spreads.

Ah, nods of recognition.

But I want to spread this because I want to...

I don't want to spread it.

(students laughing) I want to convey this because it helps us to see a moment where we have the Golden Horde, we have the Europeans in the 14th century, and we have a very important change, which is that roughly a third of Western Europe is going to die of this disease.

23:19 So roughly a third of the population is going to be wiped out.

And this is very important for our Age of Exploration, which is what we're trying to set up now.

After so much of the European population is wiped out and avenues are cleared for innovation...

This is an optimistic story of what happens after a plague, by the way.

So after avenues are cleared for innovation and social advancement and after traditional barriers for changing ways of life are broken because of all of the death and disease, then you have this incredible European century of revival after the Black Death.

Meanwhile, dun-dun-dun! Something very important happens in Byzantium in 1453, which is that...

- The Ottomans take it over.

24:07 - Yeah, it falls.

Finally, right? Finally.

Okay, from the West European point of view, it's a thousand years late, but...

And a thousand years, let's face it, as a long time.

A thousand years late, but it finally falls in 1453.

And it falls to the Ottoman Empire, which is an entity which we're going to cover in the next lecture.

The Ottoman Empire is very important for Ukraine.

In all these relationships, which in our reading tend to look like Poland and Russia, you know, west and east, the hard part to force into the story is the southern part, which is the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate, and I'm going to try to force that in in the next lecture, because none of it makes sense without the Ottoman Empire.

But the Ottoman Empire takes over Byzantium, replaces Byzantium.

Istanbul becomes Constantinople, and I was reminded by one of, like, the many people who now email me about this class that They Might Be Giants did not write that song.

25:08 Okay, I know they didn't write the song.

I was looking for, like, some reference which maybe you guys would possibly get.

Probably failed.

But anyway, Istanbul rather than Constantinople, and what this means for Europe...

And this is where we get to our world historical turning point.

What this means for Europe is that the Ottoman Empire now controls the standard trade routes to Asia.

And because the Ottoman Empire controls the standard land routes to Asia, if you're in a reviving Europe and you need those trade routes, what do you do? You do crazy things.

Like, if you're England, you say, "Hmm, maybe I could find a passage to China through the Arctic Ocean," right? And then you find Russia instead.

Oh, and by the way, I mean, this is another example of globalization.

When the Russians sweep through Asia, basically in a hundred years, I mean, it's incredibly fast, they're doing that in part because they have access to European technology, namely the musket, right? The musket. Very simple gunpowder weapons.

26:15 They have access to that because they also have contact with the Atlantic World.

The Atlantic World comes in and then they make their way all to the Pacific with a very simple technological advantage.

I mean, summarizing it, they go with muskets and they collect tribute in furs, mostly sable.

That's simplifying it, but that's a big part of the truth.

And then they sell those sables to China and around the world.

And so it's the...

And that is, in a microcosm, a big part of the history of the Age of Discovery.

You have a technological edge and you use that technological edge to control a lot of territory really quickly while that technological edge lasts.

That technological edge will eventually wear itself out, and when it wears itself out, then the tables are going to be turned on you, and all of your stories about how you're superior are going to turn out not to be so true, right? It was the technological edge, really. Okay.

27:05 So you do crazy things.

Like, you might, like, okay, so you go over the Arctic Ocean.

Why not? That didn't work out.

But two other things did work out which you've probably heard of, like Vasco da Gama going around the Horn of Africa and finding his way and defeating Arab sailors and landing in South Asia, in India, right, for the Portuguese, and Christopher Columbus, with the even, if possible, wackier idea of going across the Atlantic Ocean to make his way to China, or the Indies, rather, and discovering, you know, something else which he called the Indies.

And so it's now still called the Indies, weirdly, or it's now called America.

So all of these things, right? The British, the Portuguese, the...

Columbus wasn't Spanish, but it was a Spanish mission.

All of this is because of Ottoman Empire blocking trade routes, and the trade routes then in turn generate new things.

28:03 So after these unexpected encounters with new places in America, there are new supplies of precious metals, and of course there are new people to colonize and to convert.

Now, I realize this isn't really our main story, but the reason why we have to have this in the back of our mind is because we are in, as I've said, we're entering into this world of empires, and you can't understand Ukraine inside empires unless we understand what empires are at this particular moment in history.

Okay, so some of this history is going to be familiar to you from other classes.

The leading imperial powers at the very beginning are Portugal and Spain.

They divide the whole world between them ambitiously.

Spain destroys some other really important states, the Aztecs, the Incas, kill maybe 10 million people in the New World.

The Dutch rise and replace to a large degree the Portuguese in Asia.

29:02 They take over the Cape of Good Hope in 1652.

The Portuguese are pushed back to Brazil. Okay.

And then this brings me to a theme which I'm sure you've kept in mind the entire time, which is slavery.

So the nature of slavery...

Again, you know, it's not like I'm going to ask you this on the exam.

It's just that our history fits into this larger history and it helps the larger history make sense.

So if you remember, our history is partly about how slavery in a certain part of the world comes to an end.

The conversions to Christianity are about slavery coming to an end.

When you convert to Christianity, that is one of the first things that happens.

Other Christians...

I mean, rules are broken, but in principle, other Christians are not going to enslave you and your neighboring Christian powers are not going to think they can raid your country and enslave the population.

It's not the most glamorous thing about Christianity, and this is not the thing that rises to the top in the narrative of conversion, right? But it's perhaps the fundamental thing.

30:06 If you create a Christian state, other Christian states are not going to enslave your people.

You've decided not to enslave your people.

You're going to tax them instead.

Very important, very important transition.

So our class in a way starts with this riddle of slavery, because you have to, like...

You can't get away from slavery.

If you're going to study human history, you can't get away from slavery, because at any moment where you try to start history almost anywhere in the world, you then have to ask the question of when you get from this form of economic organization to another form of economic organization and why and under what ideological and political premises and auspices, which is a way of understanding the first few lectures of this class.

This doesn't mean that slavery comes to an end, of course.

What it means is that the slave markets, like the Genoese one that I mentioned in Kaffa, the slave markets are trading different people, from the Caucasus, for example, from Asia, and then, of course, from Africa.

31:08 The Ottomans are increasingly going to be getting their slaves from Africa, not that they won't enslave Europeans occasionally, but increasingly, they're going to be getting their slaves from Africa.

And so this all connects, right? Because the demand for slaves, it's going to be present, but where the slaves are coming from is going to change.

And so again, I realize I've, like, pounded this point into the ground, but the language can help you remember something which subsequent events will then bury.

So our word for slave, right, the English word for slave, which comes from the German Sklave, Sklave, which comes from the Arabic (speaking in Arabic), and (speaking in Arabic) comes from Slav, right? Following the language can remind us of an origin of something, or an early phase of something, let's call it, that we might otherwise forget.

32:01 So this is connected to our class because of the formation of states and because of the spread of Russian power southward, which is going to be in the next lecture.

But as the Russian state moves southward, enforcing serfdom, to be sure, it becomes harder and harder to raid for slaves in that direction.

So the slave markets or the source of slaves, in general, it's going to move southward.

And this coincides, this shift coincides with the emergence of the demand for slaves in the New World, right? And so then the slave markets are going to shift to the New World.

The demand for slaves is coming from the New World as the slave trade in general has moved southward towards Africa.

So again, this is not a connection that we need to push too far.

It's just that I want you to see that there is a kind of logical chain of events, and this larger question of who belongs to the state and who can be enslaved is a question which you can follow if you want.

33:04 You don't have to.

I'm not going to make you do this.

But it's a question that you can follow from the 10th century in Eastern Europe to the 18th century in the United States if you want to, right? It's not just a logical question.

It's not just a kind of similarity.

It's also a chain of events over time that one can follow.

Okay, so the African slave trade...

Yeah, so of course, like, the expansion of the slave trade to Africa involves massive death and trauma, including by suicide, the destruction of local states and local cultural groups, the destruction of the position of women.

It slows down.

The trade slows down in the late 18th century, early 19th century, as first the French and then the British end the African slave trade.

The slave trade in the Ottoman Empire comes to an end in 1882.

The Civil War in the United States is in 1863.

34:01 Okay, so what I...

The last thing that I want to do is to try to bring the history of empire through the period where we are now a little bit into the 18th and 19th centuries so that you can then, as we do the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries in Ukraine, you'll have a kind of world perspective of what's going on.

I'm going to again pause and ask if I'm going too quickly and see if there are any questions.

Just taking the feel of the room here.

Okay, you're all at the edge of your seats. That's good.

The camera can't see whether you're on the edge of your seats or not, so I can just, like, say stuff like that.

Okay, so after Spain...

So the first wave, Spain and Portugal, are the most important, and then the Netherlands is the most important, and then it's going to be the British and the French who are the most important colonial powers.

In the 18th century, it's going to be the British and the French who are competing for world

domination.

35:00 A side effect of the British-French competition for world domination is this country, right? If you remember the sort of general thesis that states can come into existence because of a sort of friction between two greater powers, in the case of the United States of America, that would be the friction between the British and the French empires.

It's particularly a side effect of what the world calls the Seven Years' War but which American history calls the French and Indian War, slightly obscurely.

So that war, 1756 to 1763, which is also a European war, and we'll get to it, is when the French and the British redive and where it's going to be clear that the British control Canada, the British control India.

It was the threat of the French that kept these colonies, the American colonies, close to Britain.

When the French threat was removed, then, structurally, the colonies could start to relax their attitude towards the British.

36:03 It made rebellion possible.

And then, of course, the French came in at the end of the Revolutionary War.

Now, why is that interesting? I mean, because, you know, American history, I don't know about you guys, but okay, well, okay, maybe it's really interesting.

Okay, I find it more interesting all the time.

I admit it.

I find American history more interesting all the time.

But one of the things which is interesting about 1776 is that it's Europeans liberating themselves from Europeans, Europeans who are defined as colonists liberating themselves from a European empire, right? And as they liberate themselves, they of course preserve longer than the imperial power one of the features of the empire, which was slavery, right? But so it's an interesting moment where Europeans are, people of European origin define themselves as an independent state and they actually win.

Now, I just want you to mark the 1776 date because the 1776 date, that's when the Revolutionary War took place in the United States.

37:09 Then you're in the same world historical moment not just as the French Revolution, okay, I admit that's important too, but you're also in the same historical moment as the end of the Kazakh state, which we're going to get to in the next lecture, and you're in the same historical moment as the end of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

So back in Europe, you're in a moment where this question of European empires controlling Europeans is also relevant but in a slightly different direction.

So one way to think about the end of the 18th century is that it's an interesting moment of exchange involving European empires and European empires controlling Europeans.

It's also an interesting moment about...

So roughly at the same time is the moment when the Ottoman Empire starts to withdraw from Europe.

The first couple of decades of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire is going to be withdrawing from Europe, and that power is going to cease to be an imperial power over part of the Balkans, Greece, and Serbia.

38:08 Okay, the next thing...

And I realize this is a lot.

I hope this, like, feels more like entertainment than, you know, than oppression, or at least ideally entertaining oppression.

But the next thought that I want you to have, it has to do with how empire continues to work in the world in the age of nationalism.

So it's very easy to say the nation is against the empire, right? And that's a very convenient sort of position to be in because in that case, empire bad, nation good, right? Empire big, nation small.

Empire old, nation new. Right? The nation can start fresh, has no historical baggage, all of that.

But the truth is that in the 19th century, empire and nation are very much entangled with one another.

39:02 So when Jefferson describes the United States, for example, as an empire of liberty, that doesn't, I mean, that doesn't really make any sense conceptually, but you can see why he's saying it.

It is because the United States is an empire, and you know, the liberty part is restrained to a certain group, of course.

On the European continent, maybe the best example of this entanglement are the Napoleonic Wars.

On the European continent, the idea that you can start fresh is most closely associated with the French Revolution.

The idea that we're now in a new period where we understand humanity and we have a science of humanity and we can start fresh, we're enlightened, is most strongly associated with the French Revolution.

And when the French Revolution leads to Napoleon Bonaparte, the notion of his wars across Europe is that these are wars of national liberation.

And that's not entirely false.

All over Europe, he, you know, dispatches his various brothers-in-law and they start new countries with new names and new currencies, and Napoleon is seen by many people as a national liberator.

40:09 But at the same time, what Napoleon is building is also an empire where the metropole is clearly going to be Paris.

So you have this ambiguity about what is national and what is imperial and how the two work together.

And you also have this very powerful idea which is characteristic of the 19th century and forward that I can build an empire by talking about your national liberation.

The French pioneer that, not just Napoleon Bonaparte, but actually Napoleon III in the 1860s, 1870s.

1859 is really when it starts.

I can create an empire by liberating you nationally.

41:00 I mean, I don't even have to tell you how much continuity that idea has had, right? Right down to the war in Ukraine, because after all, what is one of the core Russian arguments for why they're invading Ukraine? That in fact, Ukrainians need to be liberated nationally from other empires, that what's really happening in Ukraine is that...

Okay, it's not the Habsburgs anymore, but it's still the Poles and it's also the Americans and the European Union and so on.

Someone else has made an empire, and I'm going to liberate you nationally.

You may not be aware that this is what is happening, but this is what is happening.

And so it's not really an empire.

I'm actually liberating you nationally.

And so that argument, which comes out of the middle of the 19th century and particularly out of France, is very powerful.

And another connection between the national and the imperial is the economic one.

So Marx and Engels, who you may have heard of, had this idea that the workers of the world would unite.

42:01 You've heard of that, right? 1848, "Communist Manifesto." One of the problems with this, as Marx and Engels had to wrestle with, is that the workers of one country could be very much in favor of imperialism because from their point of view, imperial control over other territories kept prices down, created other economic opportunities, opportunities for immigration and so on, right? So you could be a worker, but you wouldn't necessarily sympathize with a worker in another country because your country is exploiting another country and that has improved your standard of living.

And so in that way, nationalism and imperialism could work together because the working classes could become more national because their countries were empires, which is something which got tangled up in Britain and is still before our eyes being disentangled.

Empire could be seen...

In other words, as mass politics comes into existence and as workers and others get to vote and as workers and others can take part in politics, empire could be seen as a solution to social problems.

43:01 And so in this way, nation and empire also get tangled up.

Okay, let me just bring this through the 19th century and say a word about land empires and sea empires, and then I promise you we will be done.

By the time we get to the late 19th century, who is a land empire and who is a sea empire has more or less been sorted out.

Russia is a European and Asian land empire.

It controls Poland and Finland as well as all these territories down through the Pacific.

Actually, it controls California into the 19th century.

The Americans after 1823 and the Monroe Doctrine see themselves as controlling the Western Hemisphere.

The Russians are stopped from becoming a world maritime empire by the Japanese, who are a non-European country which defeats a European country in war in 1904 and in 1905.

44:07 That's one of the kinds of lines when empires run out of territory, is when the Russians lose to the Japanese.

The very last thing which happens in the European imperial history is the race for Africa.

So Japan is a line which isn't crossed by the Europeans.

The Japanese defend themselves and promptly build their own version of empire in East Asia.

The very last step in European empire is the race for Africa, which is the late 1800s, the late 19th century.

And the way the race for Africa works is that...

It's interesting.

After slavery is no longer profitable because the slave trade has been banned, the countries which are on the West African coast push further into Africa in pursuit of other things to trade and make different kinds of arrangements, very often also involving domination, with the states that they find there.

45:08 And so the end of the slave trade, in this kind of historical irony, leads to a different form of exploitation which now involves territory, because if you're trading agricultural goods or mineral goods, then you want to control territory.

If you're trading slaves, you just have to have connections on the coast.

But so what happens is the slave trade morphs into trade in minerals and agricultural goods, which requires control of territory, and so then we have this race for Africa which takes place 1870s, 1890s, 1900s.

And it's at that moment when Germany joins the French and the English and also the Portuguese and the Spanish and so on, the Dutch, as an imperial power beyond the boundaries of Europe.

Why does that matter? And this is really the closing thought.

Of course it matters in and of itself.

I mean, the history of Africa is absolutely fascinating.

But it also matters because of the way that Africa affects the European imagination of what empire is going to be.

46:06 And now, you know, now we're getting towards the end of the class.

The purpose of this lecture has been to kind of just prepare the way for thinking about empire in the context of Ukraine.

But because the race for Africa happens in the late 19th century, it influences the way that Europeans think about how they're going to colonize Europe when Europeans start to colonize Europe again in the 20th century.

In the First World War, when the Germans and the Austrians control Ukraine, they will have no hesitation whatever in seeing Ukraine as a breadbasket, which is the phrase which is used, Kornkammer.

"Ukraine is a breadbasket.

Ukraine is going to feed us.

The peasants will have no trouble with this.

They're going to love it," which turns out not to be true, incidentally.

The peasants don't love it.

So the German and Austrian plan for winning the First World War was "We're going to take the grain, we're going to take the grain from the Ukrainians, and then we're going to feed our own civilians, they'll be happy, and we're going to feed our soldiers and they'll win on the Western Front." That's the plan.

47:05 It doesn't work out because the Ukrainian peasants don't play their role.

But to make a long story short, and don't worry, I'll tell the longer version, Hitler thinks this too.

Hitler thinks that Ukraine is a Kornkammer.

It's a breadbasket.

It's an unlimited supply of food.

He thinks that the Ukrainian peasants are, in his imagination, the way that the Africans are, and his analogies towards Ukraine, although he has many, he uses India, he uses America, he applies India and America as well, but the main way he thinks about Ukraine is from a colonial imaginary that comes from Africa.

So he describes the Ukrainians in Africanizing terms for a very simple reason.

This is when Hitler grew up.

This is the kind of European imperialism which was going on.

Those are the colonies that Germany lost in the First World War, were African colonies.

So all down the line, until we get to the end of this class, it matters, you know, it matters in three ways, as I've been trying to say, that the period between, let's say, 1500 and 1950 is a period of European empire.

48:12 It matters because events happen on a different pace, that things simply are connected in a way that they aren't before 1500.

It matters because of the various ways people can think about the world now that the world is all connected.

But thirdly, it also matters because of the kind of empire or the ideas of empire that are relevant.

Neither Hitler, and we'll get to this, nor Stalin could've thought about Ukraine the way that they did without the European domination of the rest of the world.

Hitler thinks of Ukraine in an Africanizing way.

When Stalin thinks of Ukraine, he says, "We don't have far-flung maritime empire the way the British and the French do.

Therefore, we have to carry out something called internal colonization," right? So that thought, how everyone judges that thought, that thought is not possible without the existence, the transparent example, the simple everyday facticity of European empire.

49:15 Okay, so as I say, I hope that that wasn't too oppressive and that if it was oppressive, it was also at least somewhat entertaining.

This is background, right? This is structure.

These are things that, if we have them in mind, it will help make some of the events in our region make more sense.

And don't worry.

I'm going to get back to the Kazaks and the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Tatars in earnest on Tuesday.

I'm looking forward to it.

Thanks for being here.