

Lecture Timothy Snyder (Yale University, Fall 2022)

The Making of Modern Ukraine

13 - Republics and Revolutions

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9ciocrFK8w>

- 00:00 Greetings, everybody. Happy Tuesday.
We are now making the transition into the 19th and the 20th centuries.
By the end of this lecture, we should be in 1918, 1919, 1920.
The the premise of this lecture is that we are talking about revolutions and republics.
The tricky thing about the revolution of 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution, like all revolutions, is that it pretends to start new.
And in some way, revolutions do start new.
Old elites are overthrown, violence is applied, regimes are changed, and so on.
But nevertheless, there is a weighty inheritance, which will have to be dealt with in one way or another.
- 01:06 And so before we get to the revolution, we are going to make sure that we have the 19th century down.
I'm gonna spend some time on the 19th century first.
Something similar could be said about republics, perhaps in a minor key.
The republics that are founded in 1918 are founded as new states, as states that have broken completely with their imperial past.
So the most important republic for us is going to be the Polish Republic, which we'll be talking about also on Thursday.
But are also two attempts to start Ukrainian states, there's a West Ukrainian National Republic, and a Ukrainian National Republic.
And Republics, as new state forums also a bit have this idea that we've broken with the past, we've started something new.
And naturally, as people studying history, we're going to be a little bit suspicious of this when we try to understand, for example, why the two Ukrainian attempts at founding republics failed it will help to know about the history, right? So, if we just talk about the principle of the matter, there's no reason why the Ukrainians wouldn't have had a republic when, say the Czechoslovaks did.
- 02:19 If we were just going to talk about measuring the political devotion of people in 1918, many more people died for Ukrainian independence in 1918, then died for Czechoslovak independence.
That can't be the explanation either, we're gonna need some other sort of explanation.
And whatever explanation it's going to be history is going to help.
It is true of course, that, and I'm sure you'll be sad to see their passing, the empires we've been studying do come to an end.

They are going to come to an end.

We're gonna bring them to an end in this lecture.

The Habsburg monarchy, which has existed in some form or another for more than 500 years, will come to an end in November of 1918.

The state based in Muscovy, which in some form or another, has existed since the 15th century, and as the Russian Empire has existed since 1721 will come to an end in 1917.

03:10 Those two state forms will come to an end and they'll be attempts at a fresh start.

But our thesis here is, there really isn't such thing as a fresh start.

So, I wanna try to begin by making really clear a point that I was making last time about the significance of the division of Ukrainian territory.

It would be really, really easy if we could teach classes, and you can kind of see, like in history textbooks sort of dream of this too, where there was one territory and there was one state, and there was one people, right? Of course, if I say that, it sounds rather fascist and it should, but it would be really simple if there were just one territory and the boundaries never changed, and there was one people there and there was a state the whole time.

That's never how it's been for any country.

And we've been trying to explore the idea that the divisions in what will later become the national territory are not just a problem, but also a source of friction, sometimes creative friction.

04:11 That the differences between different parts of a territory, depending upon what empire it belongs to, matter not just as differences, but sometimes as constructive components of what will later become a national society.

And so to follow this, to make this argument, we have to be really sure about which parts of the country belong to which territories.

We are now in the 19th and 20th centuries moving for the first time into the moment where what matters is the east-west division.

Where there is, you could reasonably say, there's something called Western Ukraine centered in Galicia, which has a different experience than the rest of Ukraine, which is the Russian Empire.

So, to review, you'll know that this is, I know it's so hard, like I still struggle with this and it's been 30 years, but the left bank, the left bank is the eastern part, and the right bank is the western part, right? Because you have to look at it from the point of view of the river.

05:17 And if you look at it, and the river's flowing south.

So if you can, you know, I was about to make a drug joke, but I didn't because the camera's on, but you can laugh anyway, thank you.

(student laughing) I appreciate that.

So you just look at it from the point of view of the river.

The left bank, the eastern part comes under Russian rule in the late 17th century, along with Kyiv.

The right bank, right, the western half comes under Russian rule a hundred years later.

So it's all under Russian rule, but there's a meaningful difference of a hundred years there.

And then of course, there's the third little part with Galicia, which never comes under Russian rule at all, but which falls under the Habsburgs.

06:06 So I wanna pause and say a bit more about some themes in the history of Ukrainian territory under Russia, because all we managed to really do last time was to get the territory straight, which is already a lot.

But there are a couple of important themes here, which I wanna make sure we get through.

Having to do with social history first of all.

In 1861, serfdom is brought to an end.

Russia has lost this war in Crimea, a period of great reforms follows.

The most important of these great reforms is the abolition of serfdom.

So the vast majority of the population is no longer compelled to work for the people on whose land they live.

There is a problem with the end of serfdom which you can probably anticipate, if you've ever thought at all about how, you know, capitalism works, it's kind of a familiar problem.

People are freed from their personal bondage to local landowners, but they're not given enough land themselves to survive, right? Or to do well in general.

07:08 So you have people who are, and so this raises this perpetual question about liberalism, right? Like, is negative freedom enough? If I say, "You don't have to do anything for me, but I own all the land," what's our relationship gonna be? Well, you are, on Monday, you are freed, you got negative freedom, but on Tuesday you have to come to me and like, take my conditions for working my land, right? So I'm simplifying a bit, but that's the problem at the end of Serfdom.

People are personally free, but how well they do and de facto how free they're going to become and what their political attitudes might be, will depend on how much land they get.

So from 1861 forward this land question is gonna be a major theme until industrialization, which is second half of the 20th century for most of this region, land reform is a major question.

In Ukraine in general, peasants got very small land allotments, smaller than the rest of the country, at a time of growing population.

08:02 So there was a lot of social economic pressure on the bulk of the population, which is in the countryside.

And most of the population, this is an important point, stays in the countryside.

So there's a stereotype that the Ukrainians are in the countryside, and that stereotype is generally true.

And there's a reason for it, which is that because the land is so fertile, it makes sense for me, I'll go back to being the landowner, it makes sense for me to keep you on that land working for me to export that grain if I can, because I can make a profit that way, right? And that means that when when industrialization takes place in what's now southeastern Ukraine, in the familiar part of Ukraine which we call the Donbas, you probably heard of the Donbas right? It just means the Donetsk basin.

Like a lot of these like apparently tricky, you know, Russian conglomerations, it just means Donetsk basin, right? So you can like impress your friends with that bit of of knowledge.

So, when the Donbas industrializes, beginning of the 1870s, most of the peasants who come to work there are actually not Ukrainian.

09:04 Most of the peasants who come to work there will be coming from Russia, where the land is less fruitful, where the landlords have less of an incentive to keep people on the land.

And this is at the beginning of a very important social and economic change in Ukraine, which is industrialization and urbanization.

There's coal in the Donbas, there still is, in the 1870s, 1880s, this becomes a source of most of the coal, about 70% of the coal for the entire Russian Empire.

In a familiar pattern, the coal is mined under the auspices of foreign companies, usually British or French, although one of the most famous of the industrialists of the Donbas was a man called John Hughes, who was Welsh.

And he got a city named after him, which is sort of cool, Iuzivka, right? Which sounds like sounds like a sort of deeply, Iuzivka, right? Like what could be more Ukrainian than Iuzivka, is named after John Hughes.

10:05 That city was later renamed Donetsk, and then later renamed Stalino and then later

renamed Donetsk.

And it's currently a few miles behind the lines in this war.

Another city which grows from nothing during the period of industrialization is called Kryvyi Rih, which, you know, just means kind of twisted corner.

It's a beautiful name, right? Kryvyi Rih is where Zelens'kyi was born, if that helps you at all.

It's in south central Ukraine.

And it was the, when the railroad was built from the Donbas to Kryvyi Rih, then Kryvyi Rih is where the iron was spelted.

So this gives you an idea of what this industrialization was like.

It was nationally or ethnically a bit strange because it was largely not the Ukrainian peasants who were working there, but largely Russian peasants.

And also it was constrained by internal tariffs.

11:02 So the Ukrainian part of the Russian empire was producing coal and it was producing iron, but it wasn't producing finished products.

The finished products were sold back into this part of the Russian Empire at higher prices, right? So this is a kind of classical form of colonial exploitation.

There were internal tariffs inside the Russian Empire, also applied to Poland, by the way.

Okay? So this industrialization combined with Catherine the Great's project of a new Russia earlier on, means that there are essentially new cities in what's now Ukraine.

Iuzivka, which becomes Donetsk, new city.

There's another city called Katerinaslav, which of course is after Catherine the Great.

Katerinaslav is later called Dnipropetrovsk and it's now called Dnipro.

And it's also also a major industrial city of the southeast.

So you have these, and Odessa, which is again, that's Catherine's, you know, delight for these Greek sounding things.

12:02 So Odessa is the, you know, the major port in Ukraine now, Odessa is a new city, Iuzivka new city, Katerinaslav new cities, and during the 19th century, Kyiv and Kharkiv, which are very old cities, are culturally Russified.

They move in the opposite direction of cities like Prague, which is very interesting.

In the same decades where Prague, the main city in the Czech lands, moves from being German speaking to Czech speaking, that is, it takes on the language of the countryside, in Kyiv it's the opposite.

In Kharkiv, it's the opposite.

In both of those cities in the middle of the 19th century, most people probably still spoke Ukrainian and the second most important language was probably Polish by the end of the 19th century the most important language in these cities is going to be Russian.

So as these cities grow, they become more culturally Russian.

And the new cities in the southeast also are largely Russian speaking. Okay? So that introduces you to an issue which you can see is still present more than a hundred years later.

13:05 Notice that in all of that, I am talking about the eastern part of Ukraine, right? The right bank.

In the left bank matters are a bit different.

There isn't much urbanization over there.

Yeah, I know, it's hard, pause.

I don't know what to do. It's tricky.

The western part, right? I may have even reversed it, sorry.

But the western part, right? The right bank is a different story.

There the Polish landlords still own most of the land.

There the key crops are things like beets.

This is before sugar is being exported from the Caribbean all over the world and so on.

So beets are raised to make sugar and this is a world center of that.

The old land structure, in other words, is largely preserved in the right bank, in the western part, with the Polish landlords pretty much all the way through.

14:00 With severe land hunger and all the rest.

After 1861, the next important turning point in the Russian Empire is the revolution of 1905, which we can't skip over.

So there's a pattern here, it's a pretty important historical pattern, if you want to have your country reform, lose a war.

It's kind of a difficult plan, like it's a difficult plan to follow because you rarely say, "Let's go out and lose a war." But if you wanna lose a war there's a trick, which is start one.

That's like, that'll usually get you there.

No, I mean, well, okay, at least half the time it'll get you there.

So this may sound slightly familiar, in 1904, I have to shorten this a lot, but in 1904, the Russian Empire was sure that it would defeat Japan because Japan was an Asian country, obviously inferior from the point of view of the Russians.

So they sent their fleet all the way around Africa, all the way over to Asia in order to be sunk by the Japanese right away.

15:00 And they didn't do much better on land, they lost the war with Japan, which set off, and the war itself set off protests.

So when people talk about how this war is a risky business for Putin this is what they often have in mind, that Russia lost the Crimean War and reformed, that Russia lost the war with Japan, and then was forced to reform, that Russia was about to collapse under the weight of the First World War and that led to revolution, right? So when people say like this, like the Russian state historically has been, has faced pressure during war time, these are the examples they have in mind.

The Japanese example's very important.

So under the pressure of this defeat the Russian state forms a parliament, which lasts for a couple of years.

The restrictions on Ukrainian newspapers and publishing houses are released, there are student strikes by Ukrainian students which lead to the introduction, over the short term at least, of Ukrainian subjects in universities at Kharkiv and then Odessa. Okay? So that's the Russian Empire.

16:01 Many, many, many more Ukrainians than in Galicia.

Much, much more territory.

The specific forms of Russian rule, mostly peasant country, and I should have said this before, almost completely illiterate, which is very important for national self consciousness.

It's very hard to do national politics without the written word, right? You can have the printing press, you can have the political parties and so on, not that Russia had the political parties, but you can have all the apparatus, but you also need literacy.

In the Habsburg monarchy you have much greater rates of literacy than the Russian Empire. Okay? So, now let's do the Habsburgs, again, very, very quickly.

Circa 1700, the Habsburg's shift from being a world power to being a European power.

And the key turning points here are 1526, which is unbelievably complicated, I probably rushed through it a little bit last time.

There's a marriage compact, it's made by this guy, Vladislav Jagelović, his son, who was going to inherit the crowns, instead dies under his horse at the Battle of Mohacs in 1526, which allows the son's brother-in-law, a Habsburg, to lay claim to Hungary and Croatia and so on.

17:09 That claim is eventually realized by 1699, the Habsburgs then become a European power just at the moment when they cease to be a world power.

They're enabled in that by the Poles in 1683, who save Vienna from the Ottomans.

Less than a century later, 1772, the Habsburgs nevertheless take part in the first partition of Poland, which gets them this territory of Galicia.

Which is important for us because Galicia, the Poles call, okay, this is like even the TAs are allowed to answer this one, what do the Poles refer? How do you refer to that territory in Polish in the 18th century? I'm raising the stakes.

It's like, now there's somebody out there who's like watching this on YouTube who's tortured because they know and they're like in their living room, raising their hand at the screen. Ruthenia, right? Rus, the Poles said Rus, they said Czerwona Rus, they called this Red Ruthenia, right? So that word Rus is also in Polish, century, century, centuries later to designate, designate Eastern Orthodox territories.

18:18 Galicia is the Habsburg term for these territories.

Okay, so the Habsburgs control Galicia, they also control a territory I didn't mention before, a smaller territory called Bukovina.

Bukovina is a mixed at this time, Ukrainian speaking, Yiddish speaking, Romanian speaking territory.

If you've ever, I'm gonna try to make this familiar the best I can.

If you've ever heard of the poet, Paul Celan, who wrote the most famous poem about the Holocaust which is called "Todesfuge", death fugue, Celan was from Czernowitz, or Chernivtsi, which is the main city in Bukovina.

Bukovina is like the, it's now like the south, the southern part of western Ukraine, a little bit of the southern part of western Ukraine.

19:02 The point is that Bukovina, like Galicia was also under the Habsburgs, also like Galicia, there were politicians, there were parliamentarians, the language was allowed to be used.

There were newspapers.

All of these things that I said about Galicia also apply in lesser measure to Bukovina.

Now, another thing which I didn't talk about though enough, I made this argument, which I hope we all got, about how secular politics flourishes in Galicia, in part because the moment when the Russian Empire is most repressive towards the Ukrainian language, remember Valuev, Ems, 1863, 1876, is during that moment, the Habsburg monarchy is opening up new basic law, quasi constitution 1867.

And so at that moment, these very intelligent politically, very sophisticated political intellectuals move from the Russian Empire to Galicia and stay there for the next several decades, right? But that's all about secular politics and secular politics is not the only story.

20:02 There's also a very important story in Galicia, which has to do with religion and with another east west division, right? East west divisions are like, that's new, right? East west divisions are 19th century, 20th century.

There's an east west division now in Eastern Christianity, okay? So Eastern Christianity, right? You remember Byzantium, it's Byzantium that converts Kyiv.

Kyiv is the historical center of Eastern Christianity in the world.

It is where the Metropolitanate, the Metropolitan sat for hundreds of years.

It was also where orthodox theology and orthodox thinking, along with, along with Chernihiv, Kyiv is the place where orthodox thinking, orthodox theology, orthodox disputes became very impressive, especially in the 17th century.

21:00 And interestingly, this is just, I mean a fascinating thing, which is in the dissertation of a Yale PhD, actually, Levgeniia Sakal, I don't have her name on the sheet, but her name is Geniia Sakal.

But in her PhD she shows how a lot of the ways that the Russian church now identifies itself emerged in the need to carry out disputes with Kyiv.

So in the late 17th century, I mentioned this earlier, in the late 17th century Kyiv and Chernihiv are suddenly within Russia and in Moscow they have orthodoxy, but they don't have theology, right? They don't have dispute, they don't have that tradition.

Whereas in Kyiv, they have a lot of it because of reformation, counter reformation, renaissance, having to deal with the Poles, having to deal with all of Europe, having to deal with all of this mess.

All possible variations of Protestantism, the counter reformation, having to deal with the Jesuits.

I mean, probably some of you went the Jesuit schools, but having to deal with the Jesuits always, you know, tends to sharpen the mind, right? So, I'm gonna get an email about that.

22:03 (students laughing) So, but the point is that all of these, all of this necessity of disputation over the generations meant that Kyiv was a center of religious dispute whereas Moscow was not.

In Moscow, they learned to argue about religion from Kyiv and they came up with the arguments which now characterize what they say about the Russian church, namely that the Russian church is a kind of pure continuation of Byzantine traditions, blah, blah, blah.

Which is not true at all.

It's simply not true.

But it's a kind of cool position to take, like we are the pure, unadulterated version of the way Christianity was supposed to be.

We got it directly from Byzantium a thousand years ago with this baptism and so on.

That argument, they made up as they were disputing with Kyiv.

And in order to make that argument, they of course borrowed all kinds of arguments from Kyiv and from Europe, and they learned languages.

In other words, they became very sophisticated European, you know, theologians in order to make this argument that they weren't sophisticated European theologians.

23:06 So, okay, but that's, anyway, it's really, it's an interesting thing about the Russian church, right? And all of these stories about how we are pure, and we've been the same way forever, right? Those stories usually emerge in contact with someone else.

In fact, they always do, interestingly enough, Okay? So, but so the point here is that we also have an east west division now in Christianity because the Metropolitanate in Kyiv, the center of Eastern Orthodoxy in Kyiv is gonna be liquidated in 1721.

Kyiv becomes, in a very complicated story, subordinate to Moscow.

Moscow takes on the role, which you're probably familiar with as the center of Eastern Orthodoxy.

But meanwhile, there's another church, another eastern right church, which exists, but effectively only in the Habsburg monarchy.

And that's the church which is called Greek Catholic, or Uniate, U-N-I-A-T-E.

24:03 It was formed in 1596 by the Union of Brest as an attempt to bring all of eastern and western Christianity together.

It failed to do that, but it succeeded in creating a third church.

So, the people who stayed with this project were called Uniates and they were and are characterized by an Eastern rite, you know, so icons and song, right? Whereas, but they were subordinate to the Pope in Rome.

They're part of the Catholic Church, right? The Catholic Church is not the same thing as the Roman Catholic Church.

Roman Catholics may be many of the Catholics, but technically Roman Catholicism is only one way to be Catholic and there are many other ways to be Catholic.

And so the Greek Catholic Church is inherited by the Habsburgs.

They actually rename it Greek Catholic, it's called Uniate.

They rename it Greek Catholic.

They create an academy in Vienna to educate these Greek Catholic priests. Very important.

25:04 And then for decades, they use the Greek Catholic priests as the kind of informal messengers of small enlightenment in the Galatian countryside.

Spreading literacy, spreading general knowledge, spreading knowledge about politics, right? And so that makes the Habsburgs very different.

And it creates a tradition which becomes a kind of Ukrainian tradition, especially thanks to the work of one man whose name was Andrei Sheptyts'kyi.

Andrei Sheptyts'kyi was a fantastically interesting fellow from a Polish aristocratic family who converted to both Greek Catholicism, technically not a conversion, shifted to Greek Catholicism, converted to being Polish, okay also not technically a conversion but became Polish, right? Went from being a Polish aristocrat, Roman Catholic to being a Ukrainian churchman man of the people with great success.

It's a long story, I wish I had more time for it.

But one of the things that he succeeded in doing was connecting the idea of the people with the church.

26:05 And the people as a kind of national idea with the the Greek Catholic Church. Okay.
Watch this segue.

At the beginning of the First World War, he was abducted by the Russians. Okay? It's about, that's as good as my segue is gonna get here.

So he's, so you have to imagine Sheptyts'kyi, so you already have in your mind, right, that there are these secular Ukrainian politicians who are operating the 1880s, 1890s.

And you have to think alongside that there's also this Greek Catholic church, which is headed by this man Sheptyts'kyi, which is becoming more Ukrainian by the year.

That's important too.

Both the secular part and the religious part of the national movement in Galicia are important.

And they're both different as you see, significantly from what's happening in the Russian Empire.

Russian empire, more important, more Ukrainians, will always end up being more important, but they're these specificities about Galicia, which we have to know. Okay.

27:02 So this brings us to, now I'll do it entirely without a segue.

This brings us to the First World War.

Very briefly, what was the First World War? This is not one of these questions where I'm gonna make you answer.

The First World War was a kind of sorting out of European empires.

So if you think back to the earlier lecture about the four or 500 years of empire where I was trying to just establish the basic principles and realities of European empire.

The First World war was the moment when basically the countries which governed the planet, ruled the planet, decided to have a terrible war on the tiny bit of territory they were from, kill each other on the scale of millions, and then tens of millions and then see what would happen, right? That's the First World War.

If you think about it, it's like if you were looking at the history of earth or the history of humans from an alien point of view, there would admittedly be many strange moments, but this moment is one of the stranger ones.

I mean, you have a handful of countries who are profiting from ruling the rest of the world.

Economic growth is actually doing quite well.

28:02 The first globalization is basically a big success for the Europeans.

And nevertheless, they decide to fight each other and kill each other for four years with the most modern weapons they can think of over trenches, right? That's the First World War.

So the First World War is a kind of sorting out of empires in which, I can't tell the whole story, but in which by the end, the maritime empires are winning, France, Britain, the United States and the land empires are losing.

And this is despite the fact, this is despite the fact that the land empires weren't all on the same side.

So the Russian empire loses in the sense that it falls apart in 1917, the Russian Empire was on the side of the French and the British.

The Ottoman Empire falls apart, the German empire falls apart, the Austrian empire, the Habsburgs all fall apart.

They are allies, the Habsburgs, the Germans and the Ottomans, they lose, they fall apart.

29:01 So, the basic story here is the story of a kind of sorting out of empires.

Now, the interesting question here, just like if you were gonna write an exam, well, maybe not for this class, but something to think about is this, this is what historians ask, in the 19th century they asked, "Did the Habsburgs have to fall apart because of nationalism?" And basically everybody said yes.

Then a 150 years later, people ask the same question and they basically, they say no.

So, it's something to think about, right? There's good evidence on both sides.

But was the nation state a result of some kind of long national trajectory and the First World War just sort of an occasion? Or was it rather that entities like the Habsburg monarchy could have trundled along for a while longer, but the First World War was such a horrible cataclysm that it broke them apart and then nation states emerged as kind of a default alternative, which weren't really that interesting just nobody could think of anything else. Okay.

30:07 So in the Ukrainian question, I'm gonna be specific about this for a minute.

The Habsburgs, oh, we can't have this, we can't do this without Franz Ferdinand. Okay.

So Franz Ferdinand, he's in love, he marries, you know who Franz Ferdinand is, he's the heir to the throne.

He's the heir to the Habsburg throne.

He's not the monarch, he's the heir to the throne.

He falls in love.

He's in love with somebody who's of lower status.

They're in Vienna.

They can't even like walk together holding hands because of procession protocol.

She's all the way back here. It's very awkward.

Not making any yell jokes at all right now, in the least.

So in order for him to be together with his wife, who he loves, he goes to Sarajevo.

In Sarajevo, they can ride around in a car in public and sit together in the front seat, which is very nice.

Everybody loves it, especially if the car is open.

But if the car is open, that makes it a lot easier for the young university students who happen to be Serbian nationalists to throw bombs at them.

31:07 Which in fact is what happens.

Serbia at this time is making claims to Bosnia Herzegovina, which is the last European territory which Serbia doesn't have that might want.

And as a result, an organization called The Black Hand, I know it sounds like I'm making this all up, but I'm not.

This is how it actually happened.

An organization called the Black Hand recruits Serbian students inside Bosnia, so inside Austria, one of them was a fellow called Gavrilo Princip.

At the moment when the procession was riding by a bomb was thrown, it bounced off the hood of the car and it exploded somewhere else. Other people were hurt.

The couple was fine.

Franz Ferdinand goes to the hospital, visits the people who are wounded.

Coming back from the hospital, his driver gets lost stops to ask for directions.

One of the Serbian national students is sitting in a cafe drinking because he's missed his chance to assassinate Franz Ferdinand.

He looks up, there's Franz Ferdinand, shoots him dead.

32:02 That's how we get the First World War. Okay? Just like when you're in political science and international relations and they're telling you about the structures and like, just remember that, just remember that, remember that story.

'Cause that's like the First World War is the most important thing that happened in the world in the 20th century.

And if like Franz Ferdinand doesn't go to the hospital to visit the wounded and the driver doesn't get lost, probably no First World War. Okay.

So, but the point then, I had a point and the point is that the Habsburg monarchy begins the First World War by attacking Serbia.

But the very next part of the First World War is in Galicia because Russia comes in on the side of Serbia and then everyone comes in, right? Then France comes in with Russia and Germany comes in on the side of Austria.

But for our class, what's important is Russia comes in on the side of Serbia and invades right away Galicia, invades Galicia right away, September of 1914.

Takes it, treats it as part of one of the United Russia.

33:03 Oh, and they take, Okay, Sheptyts'kyi, that was my segue.

Sheptyts'kyi along with the hundreds of other Greek Catholic priests, gets exiled deep into Russia.

The Habsburgs then take Galicia back in May of 1915.

And in 1917, the Habsburgs are able to go on the offensive along with their German allies and take much of what is now Ukraine. Okay.

How are they able to do that? Lenin, okay? So there's a reason why this theme, there are many reasons why this theme of empire is so important in this class.

One of them is that you can't understand the Bolshevik Revolution or why anybody thought it could happen without a concept of world empire.

Lenin thought that Marx was right.

You guys know about Karl Marx, right? I'm sorry, Thank you.

So Lenin thought that Marx was right, that capitalism had created this kind of homogenizing monster, which went around the world, flattening cultures, turning social groups into classes, making everything basically the same everywhere, leading to a tension between workers and property owners.

34:15 Lenin thought that was all correct, but, said Lenin, and this is a really interesting move, says Lenin, "Marx thinks we have to have a revolution where there are lots of workers in factories," but, says Lenin, "Marx also says that the whole thing is one big world system.

So if it's one big world system and we're revolutionaries, we are therefore allowed and indeed required to push wherever the capitalists are weakest." And how do you know where the capitalists are weakest? You push and you find out, right? And applying that logic in 1917, it was acceptable for Lenin and his Bolsheviks to try to overthrow the existing order in Russia.

Russia at that time, from the point of view of the Marxists themselves was backward.

35:00 It was a country of peasants and nomads.

There were very few workers.

Marx did not think there would be a revolution in Russia.

But with this argument, you could say, well, Russia's part of the world's system, if it's a weak point, then we're allowed to push on it.

And then, here comes the next very important thing, we'll be like, it's like a powder keg.

We start the revolution and then the English and the Germans and all the more advanced comrades will have their revolutions and then they'll come and rescue us.

So the people who made the Russian Revolution never intended to make a Russian revolution they intended to make a world revolution.

They believed that what they were doing was starting a world revolution.

How does Lenin, okay, how does this guy Lenin, I mean, what is? Lenin is like drinking coffee in, you know, he's drinking coffee in Zurich during the First World War, which is a perfectly, you know, reason, well, Zurich's kind of boring, but it's a perfectly reasonable thing to do.

What does he, how does he get? So the German, again this is not quite as good as the Franz Ferdinand story, but it's still worth knowing when you wanna think about, like, if someone's telling you it's all about structures and things have to be the way they are and be a realist.

36:05 So, Lenin's drinking coffee, the foreign minister of Germany is a man called Arthur Zimmerman, like Zimmerman, Zimmerman.

He convinces the German emperor, the Kaiser, that this fellow Lenin can disrupt the war effort.

And the Germans arrange for this fellow Lenin to be transported across Germany, into the Russian, into Russia in April of 1917, famously in a sealed train, whatever that means.

I don't think the train was actually physically sealed.

It's just like once you hear the phrase sealed train, it sounds cool.

And so it like survives and the historiography down to this day.

But that train was not physically sealed.

Like people got off, they got on, they went to the bathroom, they bought snacks, you know, but you get the idea.

They put Lenin on the train, he didn't get out the train until they got to Russia.

By this time, the Russian State had already collapsed.

The Tzar had already abdicated.

37:00 There had already been one revolution, a kind of undefined revolution.

What Lenin succeeded in doing was turning this revolution, which had led to a provisional government into a new form of revolution in November of 1917.

It's called the October Revolution because of the different datings, Julian and Gregorian.

But it actually happened in November, just like the previous revolution, which is called the February Revolution from the western point of view happened in March.

Lenin made this revolution because he believed he was allowed to do so because of his own ideas about globalization, right? Ideas matter quite a lot.

As tactics, it turned out not to be bad, they did manage to make a revolution.

And in their revolution, they entered into a larger conversation, which was going on about what happens after empire, in which everybody gave the same answer and they were all insincere, but in slightly different ways.

The answer to the question, what you do after empire? Is national self-determination, right? So this is why the imperial background is so important here, because then there's this big question of, okay, empires fall and they break, and then what do you do next? Lenin, with Stalin actually, has been working on this problem, and he has the answer.

38:14 The answer is national self-determination.

"Every nation" says Lenin "has the right to its own sovereign existence, unless", it's a pretty big unless, "unless such aspirations interfere with the class struggle" in which case, no. Right? And this is a very important, you know, this is a very important solution, It like, it runs through the whole Soviet project actually, that we declaratively, we accept that nations are real and we declaratively support them but we're always gonna be trying to use those national energies in ways that suit us.

But if they don't suit us, i.e. they're not consistent with the class struggle, it's the same thing, then we're allowed to crush them.

We're allowed to starve them, we're allowed to have terror, whatever it might be. Okay? So that's, so Lenin is saying, yeah, national self-determination, Poland, Ukraine, Finland, you know, whatever, it's all fine.

39:06 Meanwhile, at the same time in the United States, the Americans are also talking about national self-determination.

When the Americans come into the First World War, the ideological cover which is given, and an argument from principle had to be made in America for why there could be a war, was for national self-determination.

But the American idea of national self-determination was basically limited to Poland and to countries of the Habsburg monarchy.

And it's tactical design was to break apart the Habsburg monarchy.

So notoriously, and it's notorious because the Japanese actually brought this up later and made a thing about it, notoriously, Wilsonian self-determination did not apply beyond Europe.

But, for the purposes of this class, you should note that it also didn't apply to everywhere in Europe.

So it did not apply to Ukraine.

Nobody was making the argument for national self-determination for Ukraine on the entand side, but on the other side they were.

40:09 The Germans, meanwhile, right? So isn't it really, it's interesting how like national self-determination, like it seems like it would be somebody's, like, it's just Wilson's idea.

Maybe it's just Lenin's idea, but actually it was everybody's idea.

It was just a question of how it was applied.

So in 1917, when the Bolshevik Revolution breaks the Russian Empire and the Germans then experience terrific battlefield success on the eastern front because the Russian revolution has just taken place and they push all the way deep into Ukraine, Belarus the Baltics, and they sign a peace treaty with the Ukrainian National Republic in February of 1918, they do this according to the principle of national self-determination.

They say, look, no one else is recognizing you Ukrainians, but we recognize you because we believe in national self-determination.

41:03 The Bolsheviks are obviously just joking, the Americans don't care, but look at us, we recognize you.

But that agreement, the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, February, 1918 is contingent upon something very important, which is Ukraine delivers millions and millions of tons of food stuffs to Germany immediately. Okay? So it's a peculiar kind of national self-determination where you're not actually determining, for example, your own trade policy, your own economic policy because the first thing you have to do is you have to give all of your food to Germany and Austria.

Now, if we can just get the timing of the war right we'll be in business.

This is early 1918, the Germans and the Austrians are winning on the eastern front because of the Russian Revolution.

Meanwhile though, the Americans have entered the war, 1917, the Americans are gonna bring, and this is a formidable number, a million men to fight in Europe.

The Germans make a last ditch attempt to defeat the Americans, the British and the French on the western front and their idea is they're gonna do it with Ukrainian food.

42:08 That's the idea.

The Ukrainian food is gonna make this possible.

So they make the effort, they mount a huge offensive in late summer of 1918 and they lose and the First World War comes to an end.

Or, so this is famous, if you study west European history, 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the guns fall silent, the war is over.

A new chapter in French and German history begins, et cetera.

But if you're studying Eastern Europe, like the fighting just continues.

It just continues for another several years after that.

And because you're in this power vacuum, there's been a revolution in Russia and there's chaos.

The Germans who had been dominant are just, they pull back, right? And then suddenly what's going to happen? And what happens, and you have to read about this in detail in the reading because it's just too much for me to get into here.

But what happens here is that in this chaos, two Ukrainian states are formed.

43:08 Two Ukrainian states are formed.

According to different logics, which are themselves dependent upon the different empires.

Within the Russian Empire, there's something called the Ukrainian National Council, which is largely young people, sometimes very young and largely educated people, intellectuals, but the Ukrainian National, oh, and the Chair of the Ukrainian National Council, so the defacto president or head of state is Mykhailo Hrushevsky.

So the historian, the person who wrote this kind of social history of Ukraine.

I don't know whether this is true, but supposedly while he was basically the president of the country, he would take his phone off the hook in the mornings 'cause he needed to do his reading.

Which again, I don't know if it's true, but it's like, it's a lovely thought.

Like I kind of wish I, you know, like wouldn't it be cool? Like if you were the President, but no, I actually have to finish my, you know, I gotta do my historical work. Okay? You guys are not as seduced by this as I am.

44:03 So there's Ukrainian National Council, which as the situation in the Russian empire radicalizes itself takes more radical positions until it finds itself basically backed into declaring full national independence with the so-called Fourth Universal in early 1918.

Meanwhile, there is also a different progression in the Habsburg monarchy, where the state is functioning till the, really till the very end.

But the moment the state is over, Ukrainian soldiers and Ukrainian bureaucrats immediately declare the night, actually right around now, the last night of October to the first day of November, they declare a west Ukrainian National Republic with a capital in Lviv, fly the flag, declare that they exist and immediately begins a war with the Poles.

And the Ukrainians do okay in this war with the Poles until essentially the whole Polish army shows up, or in particular an army of Poles, I know the First World War, it's a mess, but an army of Poles who had been prisoners of war from the Russian Empire, right? 'Cause most of Poland is in the Russian Empire.

45:10 So Poles who were taken prisoner, Poles from the Russian empire, Poles from all over the place.

Poles end up fighting, so it's a much bigger country, right? And the Polish army, when it gets rid of its other distractions, is able to concentrate its force in Galicia.

Where they basically, you know, so all in all, Poland out numbers Galicia by a lot.

So the West Ukrainian National Republic lasts for about half a year.

But the West Ukrainian army is still the best Ukrainian army in the field because the, you know, not to be too blunt about it, but because, I will be blunt, because the left wing, you know, is basically like PhD student, sorry, intellectuals who ran the Ukrainian National Republic, they were not so big on administration and the army, right? There were other reasons too, but they didn't, their first priority was not setting up an army, it took 'em a while to figure that out.

46:10 So when the West Ukrainians lose and they move east which is the middle of 1918, sorry, middle of 1919, they're still the most important Ukrainian fighting force in the field.

They find themselves in this incredibly complicated situation because in 1918 to 1919 the territory of Ukraine is being contested by a Ukrainian State which has gone through various permutations, which I'm gonna have to let you read about, but which slowly builds up its own army, its own army is very confederated and disorganized and generally run by local warlords, many of whom carry out terrible, terrible mass killings of Jews, that's part of this history as well, and it's part of the history that the reading doesn't do a good job with, and I'm gonna assign some more reading.

47:00 Another contestant is the Red Army, which invades Ukraine not once, not twice, but three times before it finally succeeds.

And then there's another contestant, which is the so-called White Army, which means the pro restoration of Russian Empire Army, right? And there's the Poles.

So the Whites, the Reds and Ukrainians fight it out in Ukraine.

And you can see how difficult, I mean, apart from anything else, the fact that you're fighting the Red Army and the White Army and the Reds and the Whites are fighting on your territory, it's a very complicated situation.

And the murders of the Jews have a great deal to do with that chaos.

But, so by the end of 1918, by the end of 1919, the Ukrainians have basically lost, the Reds have basically won, and then the Poles intervene.

So, and this is just, that's just an interesting thing to think about.

Like we're now a hundred years on and there's another war in Ukraine and the Poles are not intervening.

48:01 Like as a historian, I always think, I mean like you guys all think this is normal because like Poland is just a normal bourgeois country and of course they would, but you know, that's a very recent development.

Like the Poland that exists today, where the life expectancy is longer than in America. And the roads are much, much better than American roads.

That's only existed for a few years, right? So the historical Poland is a much more east European country, deeply involved in Belarus, deeply involved in Ukraine.

But anyway, just the very last thought here.

In late 1919, the Poles agree to ally with the remnants of the Ukrainian Army for one last attempt to take Ukraine, and they succeed for a while.

In May of 1920, they capture Kyiv, the Poles then do a very characteristically Polish thing, which let's face it, it's kind of cool.

They take their, so the main avenue in Kyiv is called Khreshchatyk.

At the end of it is the thing which is now called Maidan.

49:03 So what the Poles did after they arrived in Kyiv, was they took all their calvary and they marched it down Khreshchatyk, very impressive.

And then they like went around the block a few blocks, came back and made a circle.

So it looked like they had just like these endless, endless, endless troops invading Ukraine, which they didn't in fact.

And they were quickly driven back out by the Bolsheviks.

By August of 1920 the Red Army was actually in the suburbs of Warsaw, which was defended by the Polish Army, but also by the Ukrainians, which is why if you visit the Polish military cemetery in Warsaw there will be quite a few Ukrainian graves, which would be otherwise mysterious.

At the end of all that and now we really are at the end, at the end of all of that, it will be Poland and the Soviet Union which sign a treaty at Riga.

And that treaty will create a new east west division, but again, east west division, where Galicia and another territory called Volhynia are gonna be part of Poland and the rest of what's now Ukraine is gonna become part of the Soviet Union.

50:06 So I've taken you as far as I can take you this time, I realize this is hard going.

I appreciate you guys paying attention and we'll pick up again on Thursday.

Thanks.