

## Lecture Timothy Snyder (Yale University, Fall 2022)

# The Making of Modern Ukraine

## 18 - Before and After the End of History

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7nM9SetN50>

- 00:00     Okay everyone, greetings.  
Happy, happy Thursday.  
This is really a day when I would have loved to take you outside.  
And I'm feeling more constrained than usual by the camera, which is making me stay inside.  
I try not to be constrained by the camera at all but there are a few things that I can't do because of the camera and one of them is like, call out your names when I know that you're my class and you're not sitting here.  
Like which I would totally be doing right now with some of you, but I can't because then like, you know, 3 million people would email- Oh, one of them just showed up. (laughing) (audience laughing) Okay, good.  
Okay, here's what I wanna talk about.  
I wanna talk about time.  
So if we were outside, I could do this with the trees, and I could talk about how the seasons are changing and the years go by and each year is a bit different than the one before.
- 01:03     And some things remind us of previous years, like the leaves changing, right? I could talk about time because the argument that I want you to get from this lecture is that history doesn't actually end.  
And if we can get that down, a whole lot of the politics of the 21st century we'll see will make more sense than it does.  
History doesn't actually end.  
Okay, why am I starting so grandly? I'm starting so grandly because I really think it's the case that the decline in history and the decline in the humanities in the last 30 years have a great deal to do with the collapse of democracy and the rise of other forms of politics.  
I really think it's the case that the absence of bearings in the past mean that people are easier to manipulate.
- 02:00     Or at the very least, the absence of bearings in the past opens the way for myth-makers who focus on the innocence of our group as the only thing which matters from the past.  
I think also the idea that history has come to an end is a way of flattening or stultifying the imagination.  
If history is over, then this is the one thing that you just kinda get, and there's not any point practicing your imagination and trying to imagine how, trying to work with your own minds to see how things might be different.  
There are, you know, you are- Don't worry, I'm gonna talk about Ukraine within like three minutes.  
You can set a timer if you want.  
But, you have already been exposed to various kinds of ideas about how history comes to an end in your lifetime, right? So one version of how history comes to an end is nationalism, right? So everybody's sorted out into their own place and like we're all

ethnically homogeneous, and then history comes to an end, right? That version of history coming to an end is implied in any notion which says the outsiders are the problem and only if we had fewer of them and it was just us, then everything would be fine, right? History would come to an end.

03:06 This hasn't really been a class about nationalism but if you think way back to the beginning, there's implicit in the idea of ethnic nationalism, is the idea, is the assumption that, well, once we finally have our own state and it's just our people, then history comes to an end.

All tensions will come to an end, history will be over.

Another version of history coming to an end is consumerism, right? Fundamentally, it's all just Homo economicus, there's just supply and demand.

They're just desires that can be fulfilled.

The market will fulfill them.

History is over, right? We're all basically the same, it's just a matter of like getting rid of the last few trade barriers.

History is over.

Marxism is also an idea about the end of history.

Marxism says that there is a way that humans are supposed to be.

We do have a kind of human nature.

Human nature has been corrupted by the wrong form of technology.

It will be corrected by the right form of technology.

04:01 Human nature was corrupted when private property entered the scene.

We were alienated from ourselves.

But once we build up industry, once we build up high technology, the working classes will inherit all of that, and we'll be restored to our own nature and everything will be fine.

And yes, history will come to an end.

Now, this is all, okay, maybe not in three minutes, gimme three more minutes.

I'm gonna get to Ukraine.

This is all relevant to this larger trajectory that we're trying to follow in the 20th century of how Ukraine gets treated in the Soviet Union.

Because Leninism was a very special form of Marxism.

Marxism says there's a special role for the working class in bringing history to an end.

Marxism says the working class, because of its special place in history, absorbs, as it were, the suffering of everyone, it has a special position, positionality, which allows it to see, as it were, objectively all the harm of capitalism.

05:00 And when the working class takes over, all that harm will disappear.

Now, one of the problems in Marxism is that you never know exactly when you're supposed to make the revolution.

If the revolution is really about the working class becoming big and powerful, isn't it then just gonna happen on its own? If capitalism is gonna produce more and more injustice, then maybe there'll be more and more alienation and more and more workers, and the revolution will happen on its own.

But surely the revolution is not gonna happen on its own.

There must be somebody who does something.

And Lenin took the view that somebody has to do something.

And he took this view which is called volunteerism.

He took it to kind of an interesting extreme where Lenin argued that actually what is needed is a disciplined avant-garde party, basically political experts working in the shadows, who know what they're doing, who understand reality better than the workers.

And that those people should make a revolution happen as soon as there's an opportunity.

Wherever there's a weak point in the world capitalist system, we should push on it, make a revolution.

06:03 So with Leninism, you get this weird mixture of determinism and volunteerism.

If there weren't Lenin, like if Lenin had tripped over the furniture in one of those cafes in Zurich and broken his neck, or less demanding counterfactual, if Lenin had gotten off that train which was going to Petrograd in 1917, and like, you know, I don't know, got off the train.

The train left without him, I don't know.

But invent it yourself.

But if Lenin is not on the train to Petrograd, it's like that one guy is not on that one train at that one time, there is no Bolshevik Revolution and the 20th century looks an awful lot different.

So in that sense, you can say he's right.

Individuals certainly matter in history.

But, so there's this extreme volunteerism, which is confirmed by experience, right? Lenin knows that he is right, that without him and Trotsky and Stalin and, you know, Kamenev and Zinoviev and a few other characters, there wouldn't have been that revolution.

On the other hand, they believe that all their volunteerism, all this willfulness is justified by their knowledge that history has to go a certain way.

07:08 That there has to be feudalism, capitalism, socialism.

And now that they've carried out their willful act, they have to balance that willful act by pushing the Soviet Union through these stages of history.

Because there's only one way that history can go.

There's only one way that history can go.

And the Soviet Union is behind, so we're just gonna have to push it very quickly.

The consequences of this view for Ukraine are dramatic, right? The whole idea that there has to be collectivization, that agriculture has to be collectivized is a result of the idea that there's only one way that history can go.

And collectivization then is the precondition for the famine and the death of around 4 million people in 1932 and in 1933.

You see a similar issue with the national question itself, right? In the national question itself, you have the same swinging back and forth between determinism and volunteerism.

08:05 Where on the one hand, we are confident we know what's gonna happen, and therefore, because we're confident in the 1920s, we're gonna let the Ukrainian writers write, we're gonna let the Ukrainian artists paint, we're gonna have affirmative action for Ukrainians to drive them into the bureaucracy and as loyal administrators into the Soviet system.

We're confident that that's the way history is going to work.

We're confident that capitalism is gonna produce nationalism anyway, and so, therefore, we're gonna do it ourselves.

We will contain it and we'll channel it and we'll sublimate it, and it will sublimate into loyalty to the Soviet system.

But then in the 1930s, they lose their confidence.

And instead of being sure that history is on their side, Stalin shifts back into this volunteerist mode.

What's wrong with collectivization? What's wrong with collectivization is that individuals are doing the wrong thing.

Polish spies, Ukrainian nationalists, individual records, people who for whatever malicious reason are trying to block by way of their own volunteerism, the way that history actually

has to go, right? So the swing from determinism to volunteerism also helps you to understand how they're trying to understand or how they're dealing with the national question.

09:16 As we get into the Second World War with the national question, we see a new turn. And the new turn is possible because the existence of the Soviet Union is itself in question.

So during the Second World War, Stalin and others take a much more benign view of Ukraine.

Why did they do this? Because the war is being fought largely in and for Ukraine, and they need Ukrainians to stay loyal to the Soviet Union.

The Germans, of course, do them an enormous favor by exercising more Terror in a shorter period of time than the Soviets did, thereby turning most people inside the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, back towards the Soviet Union, at least in the sense that it is less bad than the Germans.

So during the Second World War, there's a lot of nostalgia.

10:02 Ukraine is called a great nation.

Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi is characterized as a hero of the Ukrainian past.

The simple fact that a Ukrainian is even mentioned as a kind of hero is striking.

Then as we've seen in the immediate postwar period, there's another turn in which the way the national question is handled is not just by nostalgia, right? Which is characteristic of nationalism.

It's also handled by ethnic cleansing.

It's handled by taking right-wing nationalist solutions and making them Soviet policy.

And not just right-wing ones, perfectly mainstream ones like the Ukrainian idea of (speaking Ukrainian word) which means in a political context, it means (speaking Ukrainian word) means all of the territory of Ukraine inside the boundaries of a Ukrainian state, right? A (speaking Ukrainian word) is a Ukraine that contains all the territory that should belong to it.

That's what Stalin creates by extending the boundaries of Ukraine, Soviet Ukraine, to the west.

But also there are these rather extreme right-wing solutions, which we talked about in the last lecture as ethnic cleansing, where it's not just that lots of people get deported to Siberia, that's traditional, right? From it's been since the 1920s, people have been deported to Siberia.

11:16 It's not just that a quarter of a million Ukrainians are deported to Siberia right after the war.

That's notable but it's not what I'm talking about.

What I'm talking about is something else, which is the deportation of Poles and Jews into Poland.

Because the deportation of Poles and the Jews into Poland suggests that the system no longer believes it can assimilate everybody.

So if you're deported to Siberia, there's a very good chance you're going to die.

But there is also at least the idea in principle that your body is going to be redeemed for the Soviet system, right? You're gonna be a laborer while you're there, after 5 years or 7 or 15 or whatever it is, you're going to come back and you will have been reformed.

There's at least that idea.

But if you were expelled across the border of the Soviet Union into another country, the system's given up on you, right? And that is an even less confident system, an even less internationalist system, an even more nationally-minded system than one had in the 1930s, as we now get into the 1940s.

12:20 This logic is extended in a way, and, again, now I'm recapitulating, last time, but this logic is extended in a way under Zhdanov and under this logic of the two camps, where,

you know, you can see this subtle shift in the second half of Soviet history, away from economic dynamism and towards a kind of cultural conservatism, right? Where the economic dynamism of Stalin, of Stalinism, is actually over.

But no one of course can say that, right? You can't wake up in the morning and say that.

But the economic dynamism has already happened.

The economic dynamism happened, the mines have been dug, the factories have been built, the big cities have been built.

The countryside has been collectivized.

13:00 All those things have been done.

And then there was this war.

And now we have to think of a new way to justify the state.

And the way to justify the state after the Second World War has a great deal to do with suddenly Russian culture, where the class war is defined.

Zhdanov defines the class war as Us and Them, two camps, communists, capitalists, or as they would say, the democracies and the capitalists, communists and capitalists.

But what is the Us in this? The Us in this, under Zhdanov's reasoning, is something like the purity of Russian culture, right? The purity of Russian culture.

And Russian writers are now being purged because they are quoting Charles Dickens, or somehow they are too cosmopolitan, to use the word of the day, right? Cosmopolitan.

And that word, and this is something I wanted to mention last time but failed to, that word in the last few years of Stalinism, especially from 1948 to early 1953 when he dies, that word cosmopolitan is very often used as a code for Jews.

14:03 So the Stalinist reasoning takes up a Nazi or fascist trope, namely that, it is the Jews who are responsible for the permeability of culture.

It's the Jews who open up culture to being perverted and influenced by outside forces.

That is what they do.

And this means that, especially after the foundation of the state of Israel, there's a turn in Stalinism against the Jews.

The last national action which was being prepared as Stalin fell ill and died was to be against the Jews.

And one of you asked me, and it's an important question, what does all this mean for the memory of the events that we refer to the Holocaust and the Soviet Union? The events that we refer to as the Holocaust could not be referred, could not be defined as such in the Soviet Union.

In fairness, it took decades for that term to actually emerge as important in the United States.

I mean, deep into the 1980s, the Holocaust in the "New York Times" still meant nuclear holocaust, right? It's only actually fairly recently, basically in your lifetimes plus a few years, in which Holocaust has the meaning that it does to you today, that is, the attempt at exterminating all the Jews.

15:10 So that's just, you know, just to keep perspective.

But in the Soviet Union, the notion was that the Jews who were murdered were peaceful Soviet citizens.

And if you were a Jew and tried to draw attention to the fact that Jews were murdered as Jews, and many more of them were murdered than other groups, then you were treated as someone who was a nationalist perhaps, or a cosmopolitan.

But in any event, you were going to be punished.

The very people who Stalin sent to the United States in 1943 to raise money, Soviet Jewish activist writers, he sent them here, Madison Square Garden, they were in a fundraising campaign all across the United States precisely on the logic that Jews are suffering under the Nazis.

Let's raise money for the Soviet Union.

Those people were then purged and several of them were killed on the logic that they had stood out, (chuckling) and that they had done something they weren't supposed to do.

Okay, so this brings me to the first end of history that- So I've already given away the game, right? So if I don't get to the end, you know that history doesn't actually ever come to an end, right? So when I talk about these ends of history, I'm trying to give us some perspective on things which were presented as ends of history.

16:11 So my first end of history is the end of Ukrainian history.

And what I have in mind is a kind of dialectical solution that Nikita Khrushchev is associated with.

By dialectics, so, I mean, for all of you, you know, Anglo-Saxons out there who are used to thinking in a straight line, the dialectic is the idea, you know, if at all, the dialectic is the idea that something can persist even as it is transformed, right? So that things don't just move in a straight line, but rather something can meet its contrary and be overcome.

And in being overcoming, it becomes a kind of higher reality, which preserves elements of what it was before, but which is nevertheless qualitatively different.

So, right.

So you needed like a- Okay.

17:03 Drug joke cut right out of the lecture, right there.

Never happened. There was no drug joke at all.

Yeah so, it didn't happen. Never happened.

I didn't make a drug joke.

That was me not making a drug joke.

(audience laughing) Okay, so.

Okay. You needed to wake up an hour earlier.

You need coffee.

So the example of the dialectic, which many people will be roughly familiar with, would be the Marxist dialectic, right? So the idea that class conflict, capitalism is both good and bad, okay? It's both good and bad.

It's good because it builds up the structures that you need for socialism, but it's bad because it makes the workers suffer.

So if you say capitalism is bad, that's not quite true because in the seeds of that suffering is the good of the revolution, right? And the revolution is gonna maintain, when the revolution happens, it's gonna preserve elements of capitalism, but at a higher level, right? Transformed. Okay.

So Khrushchev has a dialectical idea about the Ukrainian nation, which I'm going to explain to you in just a moment.

18:04 But before I do that, I have to say a word about church history.

The incorporation of Volhynia and Galicia, but especially Galicia, poses a durable challenge to Soviet Ukraine.

Volhynia and Galicia are these westerly districts that had belonged to Poland, whose citizens have been Polish citizens in the '20s and '30s, and who had been exposed to many repressions on the Polish side, but who had not been exposed to Soviet Terror and Soviet famine.

In Galicia, there was still a Greek Catholic Church.

And the Greek Catholic Church, what the Greek Catholic Church is, you know, it's a quintessentially Ukrainian institution.

I was at a fundraiser for the Ukrainian Catholic University on Sunday.

Ukrainian Catholic Church is the institution which was founded in 1596 by the Union of

- Brest, which was known as the Uniate Church for a couple hundred years after that.
- 19:05 After the partitions of Poland, the Habsburg took this church under their wing and they renamed it the Greek Catholic Church.
- They educated the priests, they treated the priests as a kind of a conduit for enlightenment in a larger population.
- So this Greek, and then this Greek Catholic Church especially under Metropolitan Andrii Sheptyts'kyi, became something like a national institution under the Habsburgs and remain so under the Poles.
- Sheptyts'kyi by the way is, well, he's remembered for a lot of very interesting things, but one of the things that he's remembered for and that we ought to know him for in this class is that he probably rescued more Jews during the Holocaust than any non-diplomat.
- So there were diplomats who rescued more people, but Sheptyts'kyi rescued more than a hundred Jewish children in the St. George's complex in Lviv.
- He died in 1944.
- He died just as Soviet power was returning.
- When the Soviets reenacts what had been Western, what had been Western Ukraine is now Western Ukraine again, what had been Poland, they dissolved the Greek Catholic Church in March of 1946 and they subordinate the Greek Catholic Church to the Russian Orthodox Church based in Moscow.
- 20:19 The Greek Catholic Church continues to exist in hiding as they save themselves in the catacombs.
- There continued to be sacraments, there continued to be priests until the end of the Soviet Union.
- Now a striking thing about this little incident which I just want you to note, is that when the Soviet Union dissolves the Greek Catholic Church, they do it in March of 1946, I'm not expecting any of you to like do the math in your head but that's the 350th anniversary of the Union of Brest.
- No, it's not my joke.
- This is on purpose because there's something about these round numbers which is starting to draw the Soviet imagination, right? Something about these kind of negative anniversaries.
- 21:01 I say negative because when it was 1596 and the Union of Brest was made, nobody said, "Hey, in 350 years there'll be a Soviet Union which is gonna undo this." It's a negative anniversary 'cause it only makes sense looking back, right? So in 1946, the logic was, a mistake was made 350 years ago, which we are now, yes, it's weird, which we are now going to correct.
- I just wanna note this kind of secular thinking, right? This treatment of the past, this non-historical treatment of the past as a kind of source of anniversaries where we confirm something or where we undo something.
- This hasn't been a class on Marxism but that is not a Marxist way of looking at history, right? That's not a Marxist way of looking at history at all.
- It's a very conservative way of looking at history.
- Okay, so this brings me to what Khrushchev did, which is very interesting.
- So Nikita Khrushchev is the last leader of the Soviet Union/Russia who you could say really knew something about Ukraine.
- 22:01 We talked about this a few lectures ago, this phenomenon of Russian workers who went to the Donbas.
- Sorry, Russian peasants, Russian workers working in the Donbas.
- That was Khrushchev's family.
- He was from, you know, as soon as I say this, you know, one of my TAs who shall remain nameless, will google it, but he was from a little place I think called Kalinovka, and his family went into the Donbas and worked, like a lot of Russian workers, right? Then in the party, he was in Ukraine, Soviet Ukraine, during the Terror.

He was in Soviet Ukraine during and after the war.

His, ugh, I'm not sure if concubine is the word if you're a communist but his longtime partner, later his wife, was a Ukrainian from the far, far, far west, from Vasylkiv, or Vasilkov, which is now actually in Poland.

So she was a Lemko.

Lemkos being Ruthenian speakers of a language which can be seen as a dialect of Ukrainian.

23:01 Although if you speak Polish, it's strikingly easy to understand Lemko dialect of Ukrainian.

So she was a Lemko.

There were the Lemkos, the Boykos, the Hutsuls, these are the Ruthenians from the extreme west of, you know, what's now considered Ukraine.

Also in Czechoslovakia, also in Poland.

So she was a Lemko from the far, far, far west of what you'd think of Ukrainian territory, who moved to Odessa, became a communist.

And then she was in the West Ukrainian Communist Party, inside Poland in the interwar period.

So she was someone who understood Ukrainian politics from all the way from the west.

So why am I telling you all this detail about Khrushchev? Oh, Khrushchev was also involved in the suppression of Ukrainian partisans after the Second World War, right? So Khrushchev knew that there was a Ukrainian question.

He knew there was a Ukraine, he'd been deeply involved with it in many angles for decades.

So it's a little bit, it's a little bit like after the First World War, when the Bolsheviks realized, okay, of course we have to deal with Ukraine in some way because we've just realized Ukrainians can field an army and, you know, they lost, but they're real.

24:05 After the Second World War, and Khrushchev comes to power after Stalin's death which is 1953, he is someone who's been dealing with the Ukrainian question one way or another, on and off his entire life.

So he finds a solution to this question of how Ukraine can both exist and not exist.

Here's the solution.

It has to do with an anniversary, okay? So imagine it's 1954 and Khrushchev has just come to power.

1954- See, it's like so handy that you've taken this class, like, it goes back centuries, right? Because you're immediately thinking 1954, that's the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereiaslav, right? That's what you're thinking.

You're like, you guys were right on that.

And so was Khrushchev.

So the official interpretation which is given of Ukrainian history, and this is clever and it is very influential and it has something to do with the war that's going on now, the official interpretation which Khrushchev gives is, yes, of course, Ukraine exists, ancient history, distinct nation, Cossacks, all of that.

25:10 But in 1654, Ukrainians chose to forever bind their own history with that of Russia, right? So they existed in order not to exist, or they existed in order to exist at a higher level, right? Ukraine existed, but it flowed into Russia and thereby exist at a higher level as part of now the Soviet Union, right? That's dialectical thinking.

If you kind of stretch your neck a little bit, it's easier.

So this is kind of a brilliant solution and it's connected with, 'cause it seems to solve this ideological problem the Soviet Union keeps having.

Ukraine is real, but then like, we're afraid of it.

What are we gonna do? What's its future? Its future.



Its future was chosen in 1654, exactly 300 years before.

The way this was done marks a couple of trends in the communist world.

26:02 The first I've already suggested, which is this anniversary business, right? The nostalgia, the justifying things on the basis of hundreds of years ago.

The second is consumerism.

So in 1954, to mark this grand anniversary, which they just, you know, invented.

I mean, it's not that anybody was celebrating the 100th or the 200th, right? Only the 300th (chuckling) was somehow important.

So they produced consumer goods marked 300 years, 200, 200,000 I think it's Yekelchik who writes about this in your reading, 2 million packs of cigarettes with 300 years written on them, which is kind of mysterious.

It's like the opposite of the health warning you get now, right? 200 pairs of men's socks, 200,000 bras and nightgowns.

And I just like leave it to your imagination what impression it makes when a bra says 300 years on it.

(audience laughing) But I mean, in fairness, this was the beginning of consumerism in the Soviet Union.

27:00 Okay, the other thing which happens in 1954, and this is, again, very, this is pregnant with meaning for what comes next, is that Khrushchev, again, someone who understands the Ukrainian question and knows that, unlike a lot of, you know, unlike Brezhnev who's gonna come, unlike other people, he knows that it would make sense to appear to be doing something for Ukraine.

Khrushchev has the idea that the Crimean Peninsula will be transferred from the Russian Federation to Ukrainian Republic, right? When I say Russian Federation, I mean the Russian- The RSFSR, I mean the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Russian Republic of the Soviet Union.

Trends because none of these are independent states at the time.

Of course, there's a Russian Republic, Ukraine Republic.

It's gonna be moved from the Russian Republic to the Ukrainian Republic.

Why did that happen in reality? Two reasons.

The first is practical.

As you all know from reading the news, Crimea is a peninsula, from the point of view of Ukraine.

It's connected by land.

But it's an island, from the point of view of Russia.

28:00 There's no connection to Ukraine from Russia by land.

Hence the big bridge.

And so if you're going to, so in terms of just sheer administration, the connection of water and electricity, the grid, work much better from Ukraine obviously than from Russia.

And so administratively, it made a lot of sense.

The second reason why this sort of thing was plausible is the ethnic cleansing of the Crimean Tatars.

Because up until 1944, the reason why Crimea had a special status, it wasn't just in the Russian Federation, it was an autonomous unit of the Russian Federation, because of the Crimean Tatars.

Once the Crimean Tatars were ethnically cleansed, as they were, that reason for that status disappears.

In fact, that status itself becomes a bit of an embarrassment.

Why was it an autonomous republic? Because, you know, they're not even supposed to speak about the Crimean Tatars at this point, right? All the Crimean Tatar, like the

toponyms, just like Catherine did, the toponyms, the place names, are now being renamed.

Crimean Tatar war heroes are being described as Dagestani.

29:00 They're being given other ethnicities in Soviet press, just because the idea of the Crimean Tatars is supposed to go away, it's supposed to disappear.

And so that's another reason why the transfer of Crimea could seem plausible.

And it suggests a kind of, look, it suggests two interesting things at once.

That Ukraine is getting something, so Ukraine should be grateful.

Russia is giving something.

But the idea that Russia is giving something suggests that it was Russia's to give, right? And here you find the origin of this notion that Crimea was always Russian.

Because how could Russia have given it to Ukraine if it hadn't been Russia's to give? But maybe in some pretty profound senses, it wasn't Russia's to give, right? Maybe in some fairly profound senses, Crimea had a diverse history, all of its own.

Okay, so this moment in 1954 with the gift of Crimea, the gift of Crimea from Russia to Ukraine, you can see how that matters now.

Because the idea that Crimea was always Russian is based upon two things, the ethnic cleansing of the Crimean Tatars, and then the idea that Russia could give it to Ukraine, right? That's the basis of that notion.

30:10 Okay, so.

But this from Khrushchev's point of view, of course, this is meant to be a kind of pro Ukrainian gesture.

And towards the end of Khrushchev's period, we actually do move into a period of something like national communism in the Ukrainian Republic under a man called Petro Shelest.

Shelest.

I think I'll put his name on there for you.

Shelest.

Shelest was a Ukrainian, native of Ukraine.

Unlike Khrushchev, he had nothing to do with Stalinist crimes.

He was perceived as protective of Ukrainian culture, or at least not as interfering with Ukrainian culture.

The 1960s saw a minor renaissance of Ukrainian culture led by young writers uncreatively known as the Sixtiers group.

31:01 One of the figures here who's gonna appear in a couple of different junctures in your reading is Ivan Dziuba who wrote an interesting text called "Internationalism or Russification?" which raises the questions which I've been talking about here like, you know, for example, well, it's about these tensions, right? About how you handle Ukraine.

And is Moscow actually internationalist or is Moscow actually Russifying? Dziuba also in 1966, and this is in your reading, gives a little informal speech at the site of Baby Yar.

Baby Yar is the largest single massacre site in the Holocaust in terms of mass shootings.

In September of 1941, about 34,000 Jews were murdered over the course of two days over this ravine, Baby Yar, at the edge of Kyiv.

And Ukrainian Jews, survivors, other Jews, had been gathering informally at this site.

And in 1966, Dziuba gave this speech, which was, you know, which was a kind of breakthrough in Ukrainian-Jewish relations.

32:01 And that was all part of this moment of relative freedom of Ukrainian culture.

Okay, so Ukrainian history came to an end, right? You got it, 1654 Ukraine merged into Russia.

Its only purpose was to merge into Russia.

You also get that that's not really the end of history.

All right, so the third end of history, I've already suggested, is the end of Crimean history, right? The end of Crimean history, which is implied in this transfer.

You know, as you know in this class, especially from that lecture of a couple weeks ago, actually a lot of the oldest attested material we have from this region is from Crimea or from the southern coast.

The oldest attested peoples, not the oldest peoples but the oldest attested peoples who left behind a written trace are in or around Crimea, and they're the Greeks and the Jews.

We know that the Golden Horde and the Crimean Khanate had a state in Crimea for about 600 years.

And that that came to an end in 1783 when New Russia, when Russian Empire takes over and New Russia is declared.

33:06 At that time, the population of Crimea was about 100% Crimean Tatar.

By 1944, it was 0% Crimean Tatar, right? After the deportation.

And so, you know, as I mentioned before, this is a kind of end of history.

Because it's not just that the people are removed, it is also that their property is given away, the names of sacred sites, the names of towns, the names of everything are changed.

The Crimeans are not only deported, this might seem obvious, but they're not allowed to come back.

And although Khrushchev generally condemns Stalin's deportations of people, he does not change the rule that the Crimeans are not allowed to come back.

And, of course, in this transfer of 1954, this grand, you know, gesture between Russia and Ukraine, the Crimeans are totally absent.

Nobody goes to Uzbekistan and asks the Crimeans what they think about any of this, right? And so this is a kind of end of history too, the end of the history of Crimea or the end of history of the Crimean Tatars.

34:11 And the notion that it was always Russia, which, you know, has its intellectual origins around this 1954 transfer, it also is very appealing to Soviet citizens who come to settle in the Crimean Peninsula.

The Crimean Peninsula remains and becomes a even more important Soviet naval base.

And so it has that demographic.

It also becomes a place where Soviet notables can retire for the very simple reason that it's warm and most of the rest of Russia is not.

And when you're a recent arrival in a colonizing position, the notion that a place has always been yours (chuckling) is very attractive, right? Very attractive.

See, look, you're getting better at dialectics all the time, right? So like, precisely because you're new, the idea that you've always been there is very attractive.

35:00 Because the thought that you're just there colonizing, literally taking someone else's property after they've been ethnically cleansed is not very appealing.

So the idea that you were always there is attractive precisely because you weren't, right? So that's the end of Crimean history.

Now the final end of history that I wanna do, actually there's two more, the next one is the end of Soviet history, okay? And the end of Soviet history, we're gonna talk more about this in a lecture to come, but the end of Soviet history has to do with Brezhnev, Leonid Brezhnev who supplants Khrushchev in 1964.

He makes his debut on the world stage really in 1968 when the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies invade Czechoslovakia to put to an end a reform movement known as the Prague Spring.

In 1968, he inaugurates what's called the Brezhnev Doctrine.

The Brezhnev Doctrine is the idea, and this has resonance today too, that whenever a fellow socialist state is threatened by counterrevolution, the Soviet Union can arrive with

fraternal assistance, right? So this metaphor of brothers is a very interesting thing.

36:18 I mean, again, not to put too fine a point on it, but like being someone's brother is not a very Marxist idea, (chuckling) right? At least not in this sense, right? I mean, fraternite, okay, that could be a revolutionary idea.

But the idea that I'm your big brother and then when something goes wrong, I get to come in and pound you, that is not an especially Marxist idea.

And that's the idea of brotherhood which is meant here.

And it also raises interesting questions.

Like, if you're my little brother, who are the parents? Like, where's mom and dad? Like, where are they in all of this? Right? So like, this move into the family, like it's actually a very conservative move, right? It's kinda mysterious, right? There are just these brothers and there aren't new sisters and there aren't parents, but there are brothers.

37:01 And the little brother's always doing wrong and the big brother's always gonna come and help.

That idea in 1968, but even more importantly than that in 1968 about the Brezhnev Doctrine is that it's no longer really about ideology.

So Brezhnev doesn't care about Marxism.

He cares about it much less than we have in this lecture.

You know, Brezhnev, doing that thing about dialectics, he also would have like raised his, you know, eyebrows, which is more of an effort for him than for you guys.

And, you know, would have said, "Oh, what are you talking about" right? Brezhnev was not interested in Marxist theory at all.

The Brezhnev Doctrine is not really about Marxism, it's about power.

And the Brezhnev Doctrine defines what is, as what should be, right? So, you just follow the line, whatever it might be, and that's it.

We're not gonna justify it theoretically anymore.

That's a big important breakthrough in the 1970s in the Soviet Union, and not only.

Because what it suggests is that we are no longer moving into a future where these dialectics are still doing their work or into a future where Stalinist industrialization is still producing dynamism and economic change and social mobility, which it did, for a couple generations.

38:10 But no longer.

Social mobility is basically halted, right? In the Soviet Union in the 1970s, if you're an engineer, very likely your father was an engineer, right? If you went to university, probably your parents did.

In the early days of the Soviet Union, it wasn't like that, right? It wasn't like that.

The nice apartments in Kyiv, with all due respect, like in the late Communist period, they were owned by families that were elite families.

Okay, owned is maybe the wrong word.

But in the early period, that wasn't true.

There was lots of dynamism because of the economy, but also because of Terror, right? Also because of Terror.

One of the things, one of the attractions of Terror, if you're young, I don't mean to give you ideas, but one of the attractions of Terror if you're young is that it- Stop nodding in the front row, it's troubling.

You're right like only a few feet from me.

One of the attractions of Terror if you're young, is that it clears up space above, right? So the Great Terror of '37, '38, among other things, cleared up a lot of room up above for people to move through the ranks quickly and make careers.

39:04 But both Khrushchev and Brezhnev, and this is one of the few things that Brezhnev kept from Khrushchev, said we're no longer to have mass Terror, at least that affects other

communists, right? So that was another way that social mobility was halted.

So what Brezhnev is doing in the 1970s is he is proclaiming something like what he calls really existing socialism.

And really existing socialism, it's like that- There's a Jack Nicholson movie in which he says like, "This is as good as it gets." I've even forget the movie, like maybe that was even the title, but he is in a dentist's office and he's like looking around.

It's like there was an old guy sitting next to him.

He's like, "You know, this is as good as it gets." It's like that. Like, this is it.

Like, this is it. There's nothing else.

We told you there was gonna be communism, there isn't gonna be communism.

This is it, right? Your little apartment, you know, whatever, that's it.

This is it. This is real existing socialism.

This is what we've got.

And we're gonna defend it.

And it's not gonna change.

40:01 We'll keep it going, we'll tinker with the economy, but no major reforms, certainly no theoretical discussion.

This is it.

And this has basic implications for the Ukrainian issue because, if everything is just the way that it is, all you gotta do is kind of borrow from the West, and this is how the Soviet Union gets itself into trouble.

Talk about it next time.

But you borrow money from the West, you borrow gadgets from the West, you steal gadgets from the West, you steal technology from the West as best you can, and you try to make the system, as it is, function smoothly.

How does it function smoothly? Suddenly Technocracy is what matters.

Not revolution, technocracy.

We all have to speak the same language.

What language is that gonna be? Russian.

And so here you have, you're in this old imperial tension where the center says, I need you all to speak Russian.

But it's not because I don't like, you know, Bashkir.

It's not because I don't like be Belarusian or Estonian.

It's because it's efficient.

Whereas you, from your point of view, in Mongolia or the Baltics or whatever, you say, actually I kinda like my own language and I think it's plenty efficient.

41:05 You know, I think it works very well.

It's very efficient in my own life, right? And so that tension, which is built into all these projects emerges in 1970s with particular reference to Ukraine.

So Shelest is replaced in 1972 by Brezhnev's man who's called Shcherbytsky.

And the 1970s then become a decade of a kind of administrative Russification of Ukraine.

No one says Ukraine doesn't exist, no one says Ukraine high culture doesn't exist, but Ukrainian language disappears slowly from schools, the Ukrainian textbooks are printed in far lower print runs.

It goes down to about 25% by the end of the 1970s of what it had been at the beginning.

Russian becomes very much the language of prestige.

To take an example you guys will understand, everybody will understand this example.

You theoretically- Okay, I'm just gonna put it to you, right? Theoretically, you could take

your university exams like the equivalent of your SAT, whatever, university entrance exams in Ukraine, you could theoretically take them in both Ukrainian or Russian, because we're tolerant, right? But the difference is, if you take them in Ukrainian, you're not gonna pass.

42:14 (audience member laughing) So what do you do, right? I mean, what do you actually do, right? So no one is saying Ukraine doesn't exist.

Look, here's the entrance exam, right? Here, it's right there in front of you.

You wanna take it? But if you want social advancement, if you want to go to college, you're gonna take it in Russian, right? So that's the kind of dynamic we're talking about here.

So I'm referring to this as an end of history because of this idea that this is as good as it gets.

That, you know, everything is now just about the- It's about the consumerism.

You know, we're gonna kind of imitate the capitalist that way.

We imitated them with the transformation, now we're gonna imitate them with consumerism.

And with the nationalism.

But this is where things get tricky.

In the '70s and '80s all over the Soviet Bloc, regimes begin to resort to nationalism.

43:04 But how do you do that in the Soviet Union? The Soviet Union's a multinational state.

The way that they do it is with nostalgia about the Second World War, which is referred to as the Great Fatherland War.

When Brezhnev takes away the future, he substitutes in the past, right? He's actually very, I mean, he gets mocked a lot but these are very intelligent political techniques which plenty of capitalists in the 21st century have copied, right? So you take away the future and you slide in the past.

And the past is a view of the Great Fatherland War in which the Soviet Union is the innocent victim, and the Soviet peoples defend the world from the horrors of fascism, led, of course, by the Russians.

So there's an ambiguity here.

Is it a myth about all the Soviet Union, or is it a myth about Russia? And it's in this myth that present-day leaders like Lukashenko in Belarus or Putin in Russia were raised.

44:04 And it's another building block in trying to understand this war of 2022.

Because the idea of the Second World War in which, you know, Stalin's alliance with Hitler is totally forgotten, the Russians are totally innocent and, you know, won the war with nobody else's help, you just have to simplify that a few more steps to get to the way Putin thinks about the Second World War.

And also, it helps to explain, you know, why he would think that he could fight this war the way that he has done.

You know, who is in fact- The Mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, who was an anti-Semite, he said, you know, "Who is a Jew, I decide.

I decide who is a Jew," right? Putin's notion is like, "Who is a fascist, I decide," right? If it's anybody but me.

Because by definition the fascist are the other side.

And that's just a couple of steps away from this view, the Soviet view of the Second World War.

So it's an end of history in which now you're looking back to the past.

All right, where I wanna close is just with a few minutes about Poland.

45:01 In Poland, and here's where you get all these funny names that are at the end, like all these names of like Polish thinkers and Ukrainian thinkers.

And the reason why they're here is because in Poland, or rather from Polish thinkers, you

get a very interesting moment of Polish Ukrainian conversation, which is actually about how history's not over. (chuckling) It's about how something new is coming and we have to be ready for it.

Which is so different and fresh in its time, that many people can't deal with it, right? Even from the point of view of the West, in the '70s and '80s, the idea that there was gonna be anything but more of this was almost impossible to process, right? By the '70s and '80s, it really did seem like Brezhnev was forever, the Soviet Union was forever, the Eastern Bloc was forever.

Ukraine had been pretty much completely forgotten about, except by the emigre institutions, the Canadians in Alberta, the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, the diaspora.

46:03 But with the exception of that, Ukraine was basically gone from the Western imagination. But there was a very interesting project inside Poland or among Poles which worked against this.

And it operated against this notion that history was over, which was also true in Poland too.

In Poland, there was everything I talked about.

There was, 1968 as a turning point, shift to consumerism and nationalism.

In the 1970s, the Polish state actually declares itself to be ethnically homogeneous, which is a way of saying history is over, right? All these national things, it's all Poles now.

No Jews, no Russians, no Ukrainians, no Belarussians, no Germans.

It's just Poles and that's the triumph of communism.

It's a very interesting version of the triumph of communism, right? But history is over.

There was a group of people around a journal called "Paris Kultura." And I need you guys to know this name so much that I'm going to give you a hundred percent guarantee that it's on the exam. (chuckling) "Paris Kultura." "Paris Kultura" was formed by a group of Polish emigres.

47:11 Jerzy Giedroyc was the most important.

Juliusz Mieroszewski also very important.

Jozef Czapski.

And what "Kultura" said was, about the Ukrainian question, very interesting things.

But in 1952, they printed a letter to the editor which said, "Let Lvov be Ukraine." Actually, it said, "Let the blue and yellow flag fly from Lvov." Now if you're Ukrainian, you're thinking like, what's radical about that? What's radical about that is that Poland had just lost half of its territory seven years ago under conditions which could only be seen as completely illegitimate, right? The Soviet Union had taken half of Poland's territory in a war in which Poland had lost millions of its own population, right? In those conditions, saying, "Oh yes, let's just like. Oh, fine." You know, Poland only had four major cities.

Warsaw was destroyed, Vilnius went to Lithuania, Lviv went to Ukraine, right? And so you're saying, "Oh, legit." It was like saying in 1952, "Let the Ukrainians have it," was incredibly radical.

48:09 And they went from there to the argument in the '60s and '70s- Again, the crucial thing about this, guys, the crucial thing is they were thinking ahead, right? They didn't think history was over.

They thought at some point communism was gonna come to an end.

Even more essentially, they thought that imperialism had to come to an end.

And they didn't just mean Russian imperialism, right? They meant imperialism as a whole, which meant their own imperialism, their own Polish imperialism had to come to an end.

So their strategic argument for the existence of Ukraine was, we need Ukraine because without Ukraine, there will be Russian imperialism and there will be Polish imperialism.

And both of those things are bad for us.

Russian imperialism bad for us, Polish imperialism also bad for us.

49:01 So there was a calculated strategic argument which they made in the '60s and '70s, totally in the wilderness.

Totally in the wilderness.

Other Polish immigrants did not necessarily go along with this view, right? In the West, the idea that communism have come to an end, Ukraine, all this, pretty marginal.

But along with this, and all these names that I don't have time to mention anymore, unfortunately, but along with this, what "Kultura" did was seek out and publish exceptionally talented Ukrainian writers like George Shevelov, like Borys Levyts'kyi.

They found the Ukrainian writers and they befriended them and they published them.

The Ukrainian writers who were executed in the '30s or committed suicide, the term Executed Renaissance for those writers comes from Jerzy Giedroyc.

He made that term up.

And he published a thousand-page book collecting the works of these Ukrainian writers, right? No one else did that, but "Kultura" did that.

50:02 And in this and many other ways, they pushed Ukrainian culture towards the center of at least of Polish culture and they made friendships.

I'm gonna finish now, but you get the point.

By the time of Solidarity in Poland in 1980, the "Kultura," which was regarded as the best Polish publication, had already started this argument.

And so during the Solidarity period in '80, '81 where there was some space for free discussion, the Ukrainian question was already discussed.

And many leaders of Solidarity, such as Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuroń issued statements which were very friendly to the idea of Ukrainian independence during that period of 1981.

And then when Poland becomes an independent state in 1989, this argument has already been won.

And one of the first things that Poland does is that it begins a foreign policy which is friendly to Ukraine.

Now the reason why any of this was possible was because this milieu of intellectuals had been making this argument that history was not over, that communism was gonna come to an end, that imperialism does have to come to an end, and we have to be ready for it with arguments, right? So, my Plato A here at the end is one for the history of ideas.

51:12 And I'll explain more about this in lectures to come, but the fact that some people recognized that history couldn't come to an end, and that imperialism might come to an end, actually had a great deal of influence on how imperialism did come to an end after 1989.

Okay, that's it.

Thanks.