Is Putin's interpretation of Russian and Ukrainian history wrong?

Yes, Putin's interpretation of Russian and Ukrainian history is wrong

1.Russia, not NATO, sought to interfere in Ukraine's independence by supporting incredibly corrupt pro-Russian politicians like Viktor Yanukovych. Ukrainians who wanted democracy had to eject him by force in the Maidan revolution of 2014.

2. Ukraine does not have a long history of nationhood, because its agricultural land and strategic position means it has frequently been invaded and annexed by Russia and other empires. Russia is trying to do this once again.

3. President Zelenskyy demonstrates that Ukraine is not fascist or anti-Russian – He is Russian-speaking Jew! This helped him to unite Ukraine, even before Russia invaded. Putin's attack has further strengthened Ukrainian identity, even among Russian-speakers.

4. Of course, Ukraine has ties with Russia because they are neighbouring countries, just as Ukraine has ties with its other neighbours. But Ukrainians and Russians are different, distinct nations.

5. Under Stalin, Communists based in Moscow ravaged Ukraine with a famine called the "Holodomor" and repression of Ukraine's distinct language and culture.

Source 1 - A photograph of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych (left) and Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2014.

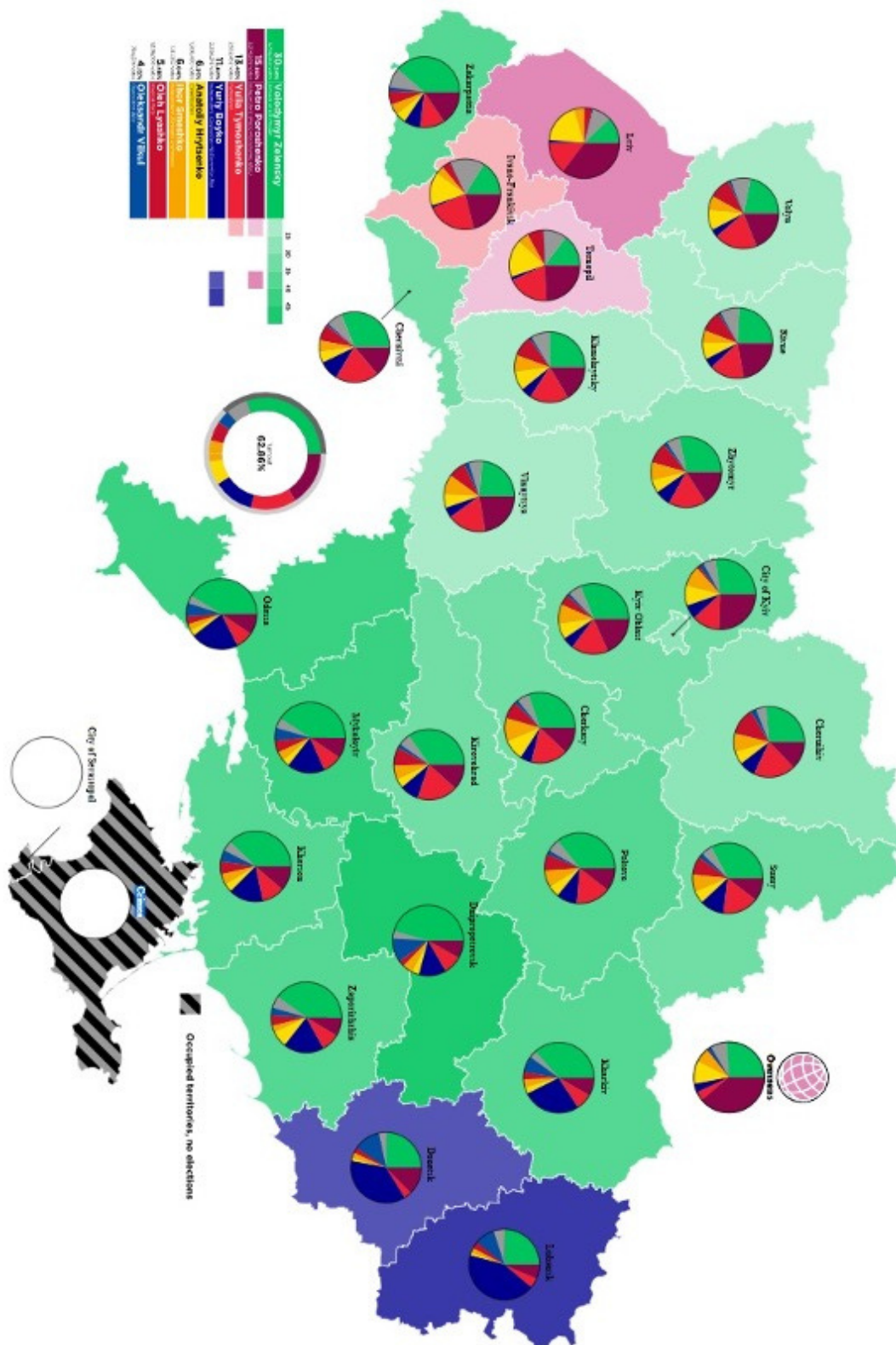https://www.rferl.org/a/putin-yanukovych-meeting-sochi/25257285.html

Source 2 - Map of Europe predicting that World War II will start in Ukraine, from the American magazine, Look, published in 1939.

https://www.reddit.com/r/europe/comments/f8wsd0/the_next_european_war_will_start_in_the_ukraine/

Source 3 - A map of the results of the first round of voting in the 2019 presidential election in Ukraine. Areas where Zelenskyy won a majority are shown in green.

Source 4 - An extract from "The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives", published in 1997 by American diplomat Zbigniew Brzezinski

Ukraine, a new and important space on the Eurasian chessboard, is a geopolitical pivot because its very existence as an independent country helps to transform Russia. Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire. Russia without Ukraine can still strive for imperial status, but it would then become a predominantly Asian imperial state...However, if Moscow regains control over Ukraine, with its 52 million people and major resources as well as its access to the Black Sea, Russia automatically again regains the wherewithal to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia.

https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound/BD/BD4CE651B07CCB8CB069F9999F0EADEE_Zbigniew_Brzezinski_-_The_Grand_ChessBoard.pdf

Source 5 - Photo of Ukrainian poet Vasyl Stus from his official file after his arrest by Soviet authorities in 1972

The case of Vasyl Stus
Persecuted poet

Vasyl Semyonovich Stus is a noted poet and translator who first fell victim to official wrath twelve years ago, in 1965, when he took part in a meeting in Kiev to protest against the suppression of Ukrainian literature and culture. As a result of that gesture, Stus was forced to abandon his doctorate, his poems were banned, and in 1966 he was sacked from his post at the State Historical Archives in Kiev. Stus found a job on a building site, but was dismissed for 'working outside his profession'. He continued to protest publicly against the persecution of

other writers, including his fellow-Ukrainian Valentyn Moroz, who was arrested in 1970. Two years later Stus was himself arrested and charged with 'the distribution of false ideas harmful to the Soviet order'. In September 1972 he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and three years' exile.

https://euromaidanpress.com/2018/01/10/how-ukraines-vasyl-stus-used-poems-to-fight-the-soviet-regime/

Source 6 - A caricature titled "World Peace in Ukraine" from 1919. The caricature shows Ukrainians surrounded by a Bolshevik (to the north, man with hat and red star), a Russian White Army soldier (to the east, with Russian eagle flag and a short whip), and to the west a Polish soldier, a Hungarian (in pink uniform) and two Romanian soldiers.

https://theconversation.com/ukraine-as-a-borderland-a-brief-history-of-ukraines-place-between-europe-and-russia-178168

Source 7 - A news report, 'For Russian speakers in Ukraine, a candidate talking their language' from France24, 2019

FRANCE 24

For Russian speakers in Ukraine, a candidate talking their language

In his startling run to become Ukraine's next president, comedian Volodymyr Zelensky has enjoyed a key advantage over his rivals: strong support from the country's Russian-speaking regions...A native Russian speaker himself from the central city of Kryvyi Rig, Zelensky appears on track to deal an upset defeat to incumbent Petro Poroshenko in Sunday's second round of voting...That has set him apart from Poroshenko, who has used patriotic slogans and mocked Zelensky's spoken Ukrainian.
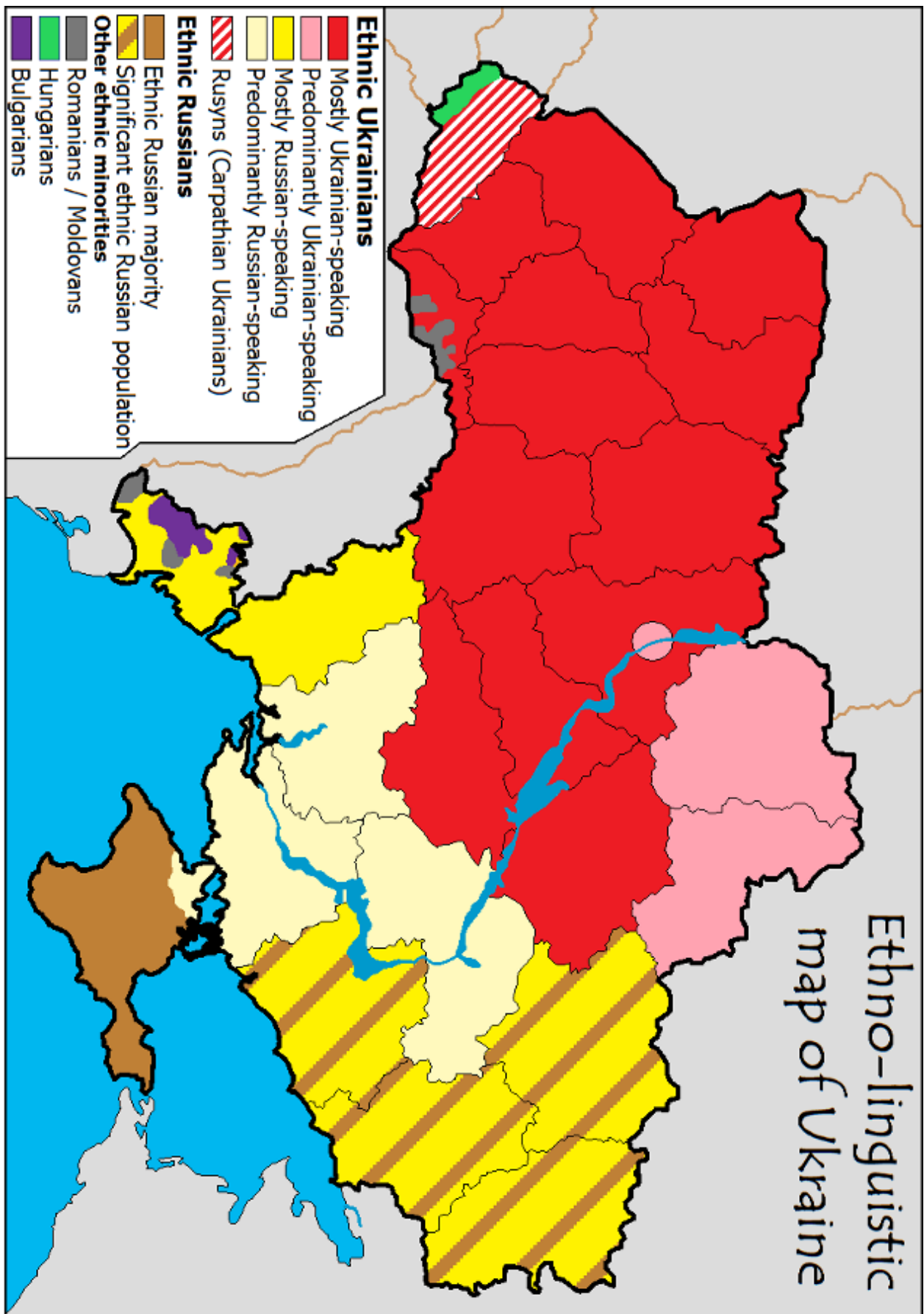
Source 8 - An extract from an article published by an online academic website, *The Conversation*, by Neil Bermel, Professor of Russian and Slavonic Studies, University of Sheffield.

Ukrainian and Russian: how similar are the two languages?
Published: March 7, 2022 3.01pm GMT

As Russian and Ukrainian diverged from each other relatively recently (less than a millennium ago), they still share a lot of basic and core vocabulary – but not enough to be considered dialects of a single language.

One frequently cited figure is that Ukrainian and Russian share about 62% of their vocabulary. This is about the same amount of shared vocabulary that English has with Dutch, according to the same calculations.

Source 9 - Map showing that Ukraine has several minorities in addition to Russians

Ethnic Ukrainians
- Mostly Ukrainian-speaking
- Predominantly Ukrainian-speaking
- Mostly Russian-speaking
- Predominantly Russian-speaking
- Rusyns (Carpathian Ukrainians)

Ethnic Russians
- Ethnic Russian majority
- Significant ethnic Russian population

Other ethnic minorities
- Romanians / Moldovans
- Hungarians
- Bulgarians

Ethno-linguistic map of Ukraine

Source 10 - Extracts from articles published by British journalist Gareth Jones, who travelled across Russia and Ukraine in the 1930s, published in the Sunday American / Los Angeles Examiner on 13th and 14th January 1935

The snow lay deep around as I began my tramp through the villages of the North Ukraine, the part of Russia which once fed Europe and was known as the granary of the world...The first words I heard were ominous, for an old peasant woman moving with difficulty along the track answered my greeting with that phrase, "Hleba nietu" ("there is no bread").

"For two months we have had no bread here," she added in that deep crying voice which most of the peasant women had.
***
"The Communists came and seized our land, they stole our cattle and they tried to make us work like serfs in a farm where nearly everything was owned in common" – the eyes of the group of Ukrainian farmers flashed with anger as they spoke to me – "and do you know what they did to those who resisted? They shot them ruthlessly."
***
...in Kharkov (Kharkiv)...My journey through the villages was over and I was in the chief city of the Ukraine, where all I saw confirmed my views of the Russian famine.

In the streets there were peasant beggars from all parts of the country who had fled from the hunger of the villages to seek food in the towns, and their pale children stood with outstretched hands crying: "Uncle give us bread!"

***

I saw a bread line of over a thousand nerve-wrecked people.

"We have been waiting here for nearly two days," one of the women in the queue said to me, "and perhaps the supply will run out before we reach the first place."

In another street I saw police driving away a hundred ragged men and women who had formed a bread line outside a store.

"We want bread," they cried. "There is no more bread left," yelled the police, but the crowd did not give up hope and would not.

https://www.garethjones.org/soviet_articles/hearst2.htm

Yes, Putin's interpretation of Russian and Ukrainian history is wrong

No, Putin's interpretation of Russian and Ukrainian history is not wrong

1.NATO expansion was an unnecessary provocation of Russia. NATO has steadily moved towards Russia's borders and Ukraine was next on the list.
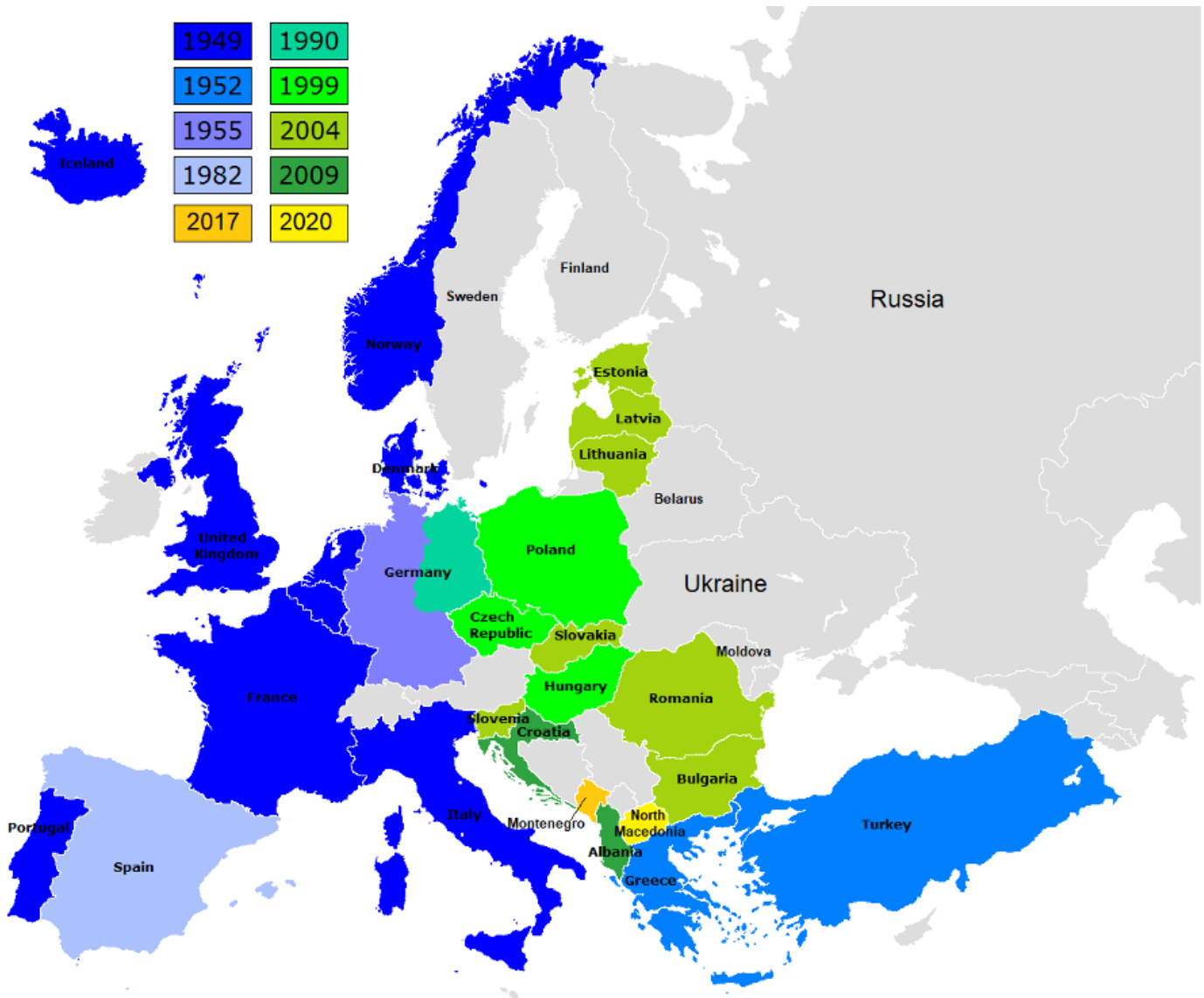
2. The West started the interference in Ukraine's domestic affairs by supporting the illegal, chaotic "Maidan" revolution in 2014 that overthrew the legitimately elected, pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovych

3. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Ukraine was left as an independent country, even though it was never designed to be one. As a result of its accidental borders, Ukraine is deeply divided between the East and the West in politics, religion, and between Russian and Ukrainian speakers.

4. Ukrainian nationalism has a history of fascism, anti-Semitism and collaboration with Nazis. These principles are continued today by the Azov battalion, which was incorporated into the Ukrainian military in 2014

5. Russia and Ukraine have deep cultural and historical ties, from medieval times all the way to World War II and beyond.

Source 1 - Map of NATO expansion by year

Source 2 - Anti-government protesters clash with police in Kyiv on 20th February 2014 by Jeff J Mitchell, Getty Images

https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/maidan-massacre-anniversary-ukraine-remembers-bloody-day-protests-n973156

Source 3 - Red Army soldier removing a German sign in Kharkiv, Ukraine in 1943 after the Red Army liberated it from Nazi occupation

https://waralbum.ru/319114/

An extract from the diary of Ukrainian scientist Mikhail Usyk as the Red Army's liberation of the city of Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine grew near.

"The fascists are facing their final hour. Our hearts are filled with joy... Our own people are close. We are waiting impatiently for them, the liberators."

https://www.times-media.de/download/GT_MAR-2020_screen.pdf

Source 4 - Extract from an article published in the American left-wing political magazine, Jacobin, on 7th February 2022.

JACOBIN

But righteous though their cause may have been, the movement's critics had a point, too…Whatever one thinks of the Maidan protests, the increasing violence of those involved was key to their ultimate victory. In response to a brutal police crackdown, protesters began fighting with chains, sticks, stones, petrol bombs, even a bulldozer — and, eventually, firearms, all culminating in what was effectively an armed battle in February, which left thirteen police officers and nearly fifty protesters dead. The police "could no longer defend themselves' from protesters' attacks," writes political scientist Sergiy Kudelia, causing them to retreat, and precipitating Yanukovych's exit.

…outside Kyiv…members of the far-right Svoboda party — whose leader once complained Ukraine was run by a "Muscovite-Jewish mafia" and which includes a politician who admires Joseph Goebbels — were the most active agents in the protests.

https://jacobinmag.com/2022/02/maidan-protests-neo-nazis-russia-nato-crimea
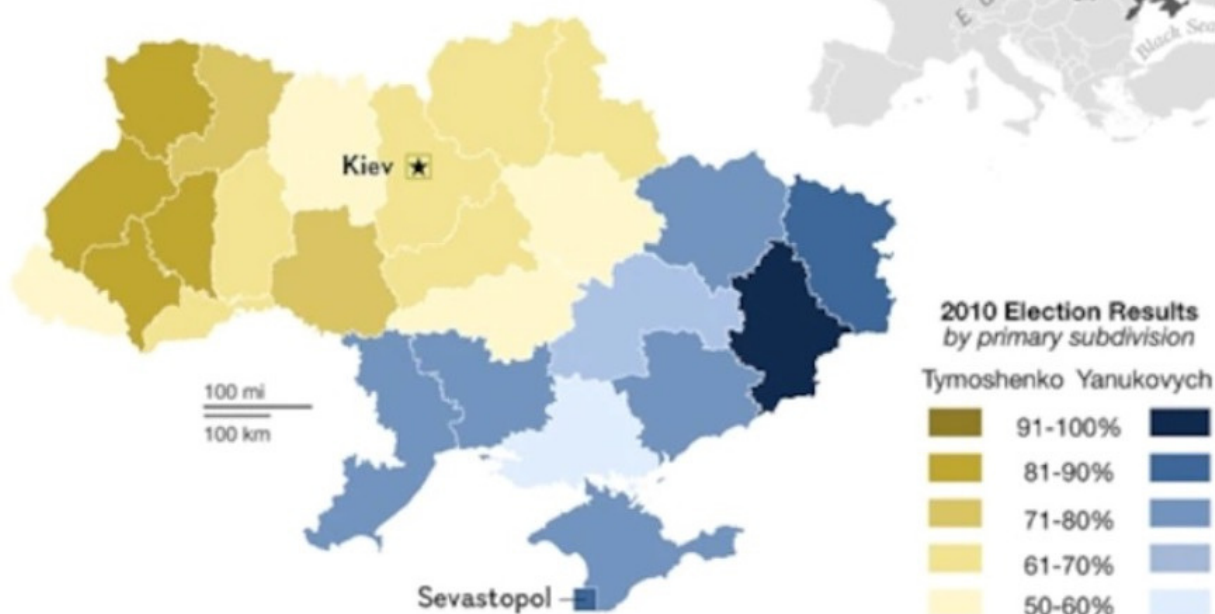
Source 5 - An extract from the National Geographic titled 'How History, Geography Help Explain Ukraine's Political Crisis
The country rests precariously between East and West.' by Eve Contant, 2014

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Eastern Ukraine fell under Russian imperial rule by the late 17th century, much earlier than western Ukraine. This helps to explain why, after the fall of the Soviet Union, people in the east have generally supported more Russian-leaning politicians. Western Ukraine spent centuries under the shifting control of European powers like Poland and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The western third of Ukraine was even part of Poland for several years leading up to World War II. That, to some degree, helps explain why people in the west have tended to support more Western-leaning politicians. The east tends to be more Russian-speaking and Orthodox, with parts of the west more Ukrainian-speaking and with heavier Catholic influences.
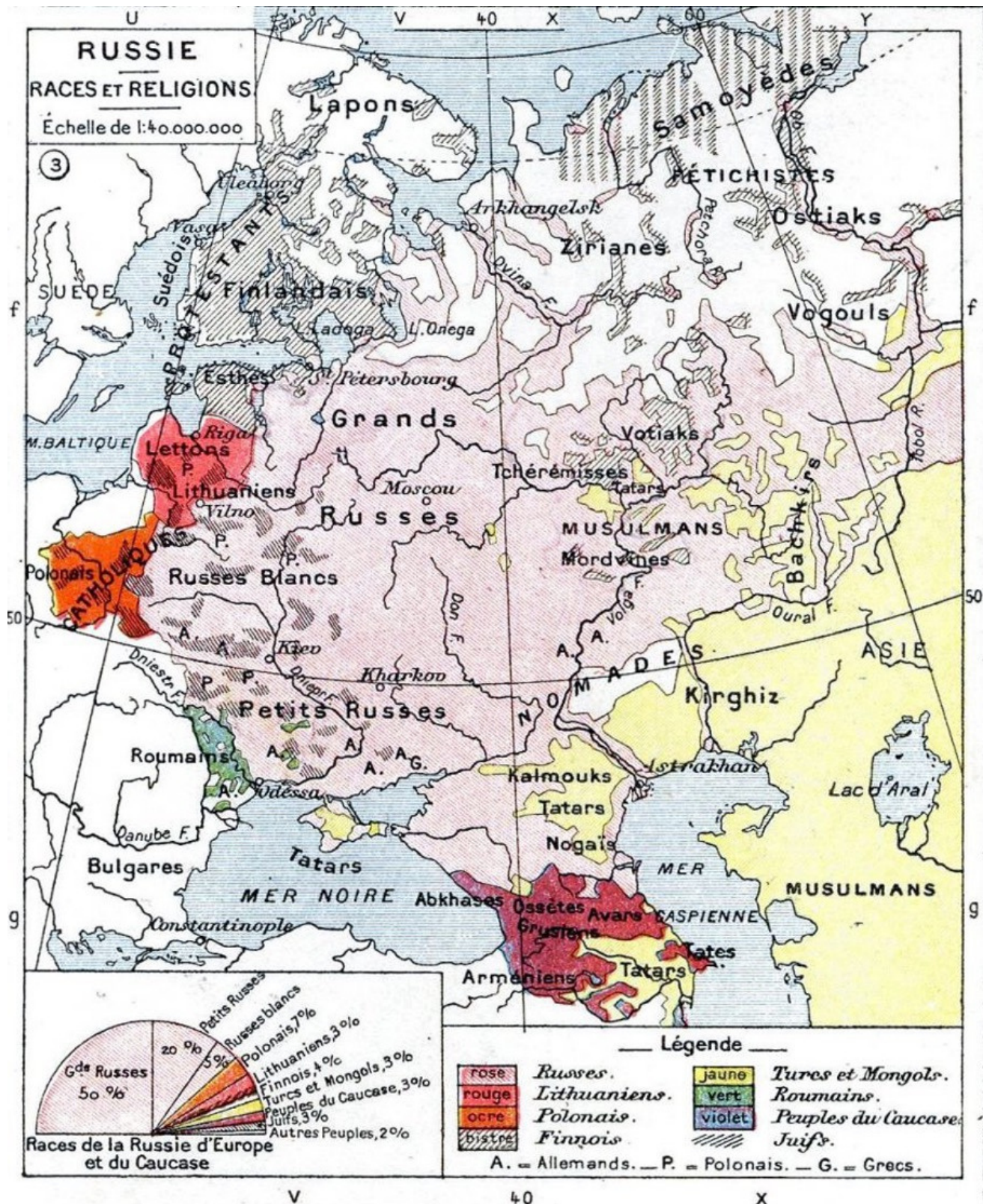

Ukraine's east-west divide

Ukrainians voted their regional identities in the 2010 elections, with the east staunchly supporting the pro-Russian winner for the presidency, Viktor Yanukovych.

2010 Election Results
by primary subdivision

Tymoshenko	Yanukovych
91-100%	91-100%
81-90%	81-90%
71-80%	71-80%
61-70%	61-70%
50-60%	50-60%

JASON TREAT, KELSEY NOWAKOWSKI, NG STAFF
SOURCE: OFFICE FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/140129-protests-ukraine-russia-geography-history

Source 6 - Pre-World War I French map of Russia with Ukrainians listed as "Petits Russes" - "Little Russians".

https://vividmaps.com/old-maps-of-russia/

Source 7 - A photograph of Ukrainian veterans of the Azov Battalion at a rally in Kyiv on March 14, 2020. It was formed by a white supremacist and was once banned from receiving U.S. aid because its extreme Ukrainian nationalist politics. In 2014, the Azov Battalion was integrated into Ukraine's official armed forces.

https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/ukraine-has-nazi-problem-vladimir-putin-s-denazification-claim-war-ncna1290946

Source 8 - Comments by American diplomat George Keenan, published in the New York Times on 5th February 1997 and 2nd May 1998.

"expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-cold-war era. Such a decision may be expected to inflame the nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion; to have an adverse effect on the development of Russian democracy; to restore the atmosphere of the cold war to East-West relations."

https://archive.is/20220228180807/https://www.nytimes.com/1997/02/05/opinion/a-fateful-error.html

"There was no reason for this whatsoever. No one was threatening anybody else... Don't people understand? Our differences in the cold war were with the Soviet Communist regime. And now we are turning our backs on the very people who mounted the greatest bloodless revolution in history to remove that Soviet regime."

https://archive.is/20220402112118/https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/02/opinion/foreign-affairs-now-a-word-from-x.html#selection-475.385-475.619

Source 9 - A map of territories annexed to Ukraine between 1654 and 1917

Territories annexed to Ukraine...

by the Russian tsars in 1654-1917

Chernihiv

KYIV

L'viv

Poltava

Vinnytsya

by Vladimir Lenin
in 1922

Luhans'k

Ukrainian territory
in 1654

Odesa

by Josef Stalin
in 1939, 1945

by Nikita Khrushchev
in 1954

Sevastopol

https://www.quora.com/Who-decided-the-current-borders-of-Ukraine

Source 10 - "Glory to Hitler! Glory to Bandera! Long live the Ukrainian Independent State! Long live our leader S. Bandera" - Banners at the entrance to Zhovkva Castle, Western Ukraine, July–August 1941.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stepan_Bandera#/media/File:UNRA_sl.jpg