

---

Subject: Re: Empire

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 21 Apr 2025 18:27:11 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

There are some things that are near every Ukrainian heart that we in the U.S.A. would not immediately recognize. To know these things helps understand the relationship between Russians and Ukrainians.

1. Prior to WWII, the population of Ukraine was approximately 42 million. After WWII, its population was 27 million. So Ukraine lost fully 1/3rd of its people.
2. Consider the fact that the German advance went through Ukraine. Ukraine was completely occupied.
3. The population of the Soviet Union (including Ukraine) before WWII was 195 million. After WWII its population was 170 million. So you can see by these numbers that the vast majority of losses were actually Ukrainian.
4. In modern times, many Ukrainians prefer to speak Russian, or at least they did before Putin invaded them. They are proud of both their Russian heritage and their independent Ukrainian citizenship. They lean heavily pro-Western and want relationships with Europe and the U.S.A. as much or more than having ties with Russia. It appears that the population of large cities tends to speak Russian and rural areas are more likely to speak Ukrainian. One exception is the city of Kiev, where most people speak Ukrainian.
5. Ukrainians have complicated emotions about their ties to Russia. In modern times, many Ukrainians consider themselves to be Russians even after Ukrainian independence in 1991. But do not mistake this to mean they wish to be Russian citizens. They prefer their independence, and their "Russian-ness" is purely cultural.
6. This goes back and has ties to the early days of the Soviet Union, up and through the period of the second world war. Ukraine, like many other former Soviet states, did not want to be part of the Soviet Union. During the Bolshevik revolution - when the Tsar and his family were imprisoned and shot - Ukraine declared independence. But since it had so many natural resources, it was attractive to the Soviet Union, so Russian troops invaded Ukraine. It eventually fell and became part of the Soviet Union in 1922.
7. Ukraine had been part of the Russian Empire when it was ruled by the Tsars, so it already had ties to Russia. But it did attempt to gain independence in the period between 1917 and 1922. It was unable to maintain its independence because political and economic conditions were too chaotic and unstable. So the people of Ukraine must have felt some of the same Russian/Ukrainian ambivalence 100 years ago as they feel today.
8. For a brief time in 1941 - because of the desire to be independent of Russia - some people in Ukraine thought Nazis might act as liberators rather than conquerors. This hope was quickly dashed when the Nazis invaded. The Nazis were especially brutal, because there were a large number of Jews in areas of Ukraine. Massacres at Babi Yar and in Kiev are still remembered by

all Russians and Ukrainians, to this day.

9. A Nazi resistance was formed in Ukraine while it was occupied, much like the one in France. In particular, the city of Odessa has 1600 miles of underground tunnels that acted as home base for "partisans" that fought the Nazis.

10. So the ties between Russians and Ukrainians are deep and complicated. They are definitely kindred spirits in many ways. But Ukrainians are proud to be independent of Russia, which is evident by their tenacity in war after the modern Russian invasion.

---