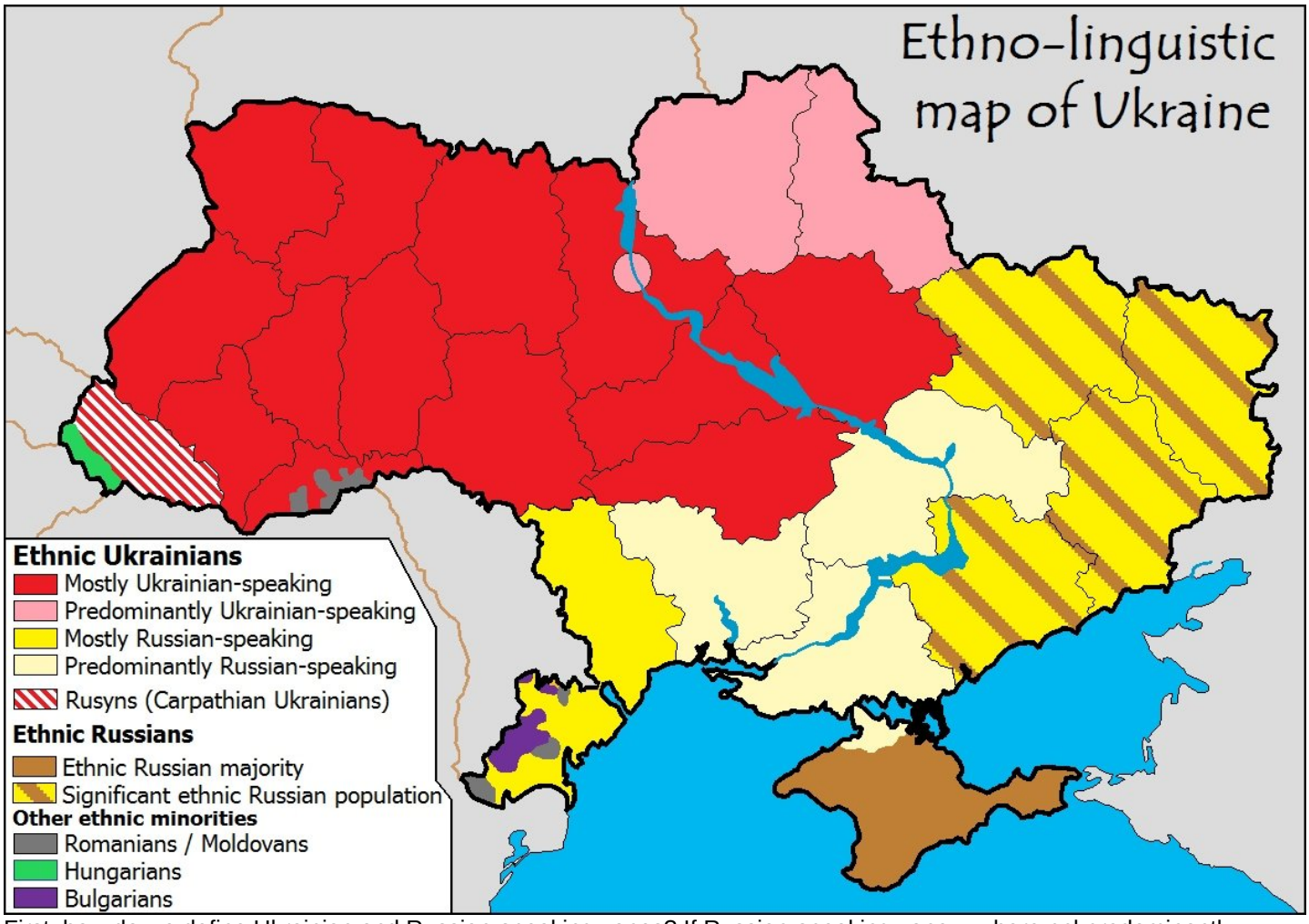
Twitter Thread by Kamil Galeev

Kamil Galeev
@kamilkazani

A crash introduction to the ethnopolitical situation in Ukraine ■

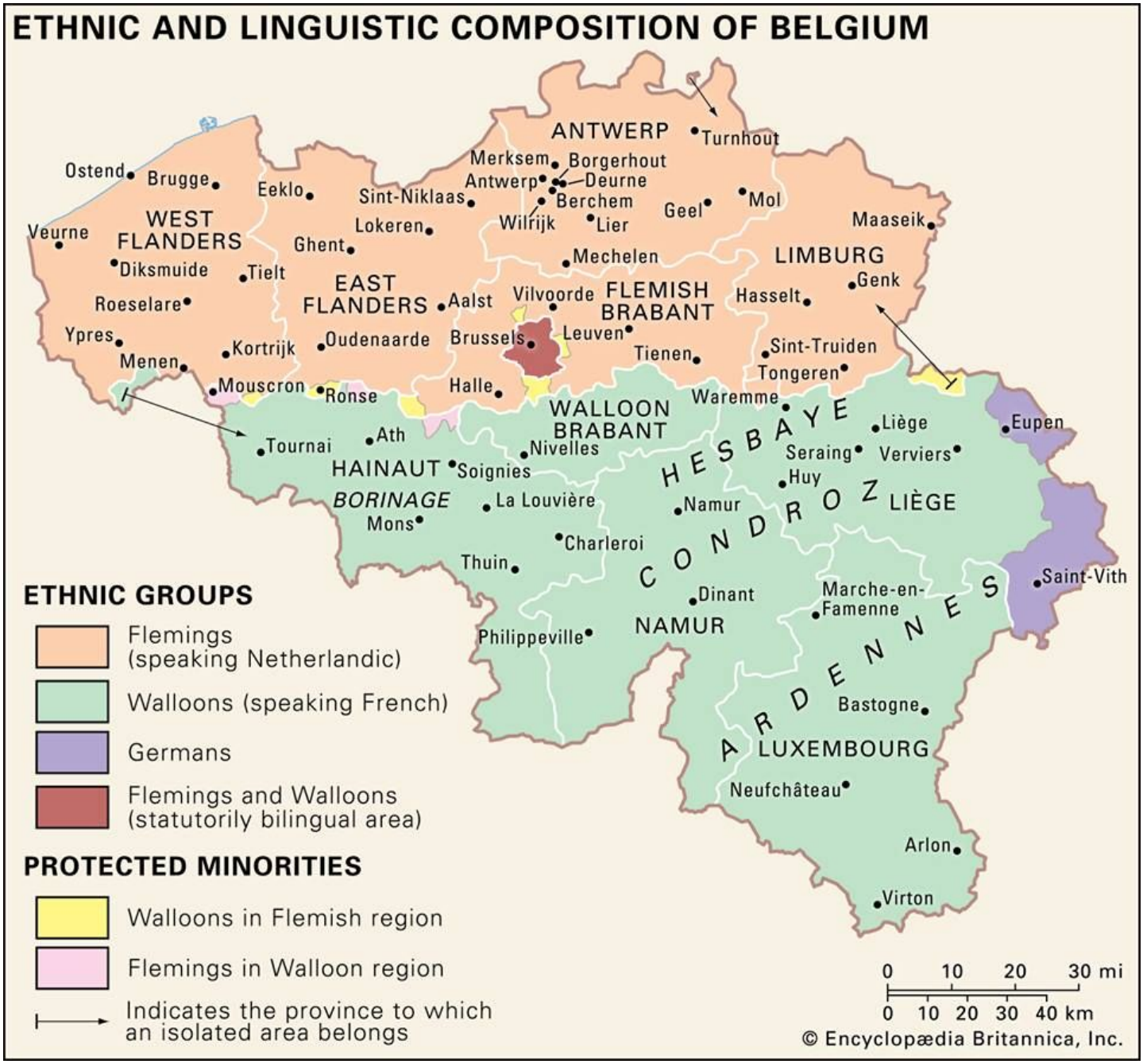
People know that Ukraine is divided to Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking areas. That's correct. And yet, people assume that political allegiances match up with ethnoligustic ones. That's wrong.



First, how do we define Ukrainian and Russian-speaking zones? If Russian-speaking zone = where ppl predominantly converse in Russian, it's far bigger than that. In February 2014 I was on Maidan, lived, slept there. Everyone I met spoke Russian, except for one woman from Ternopol

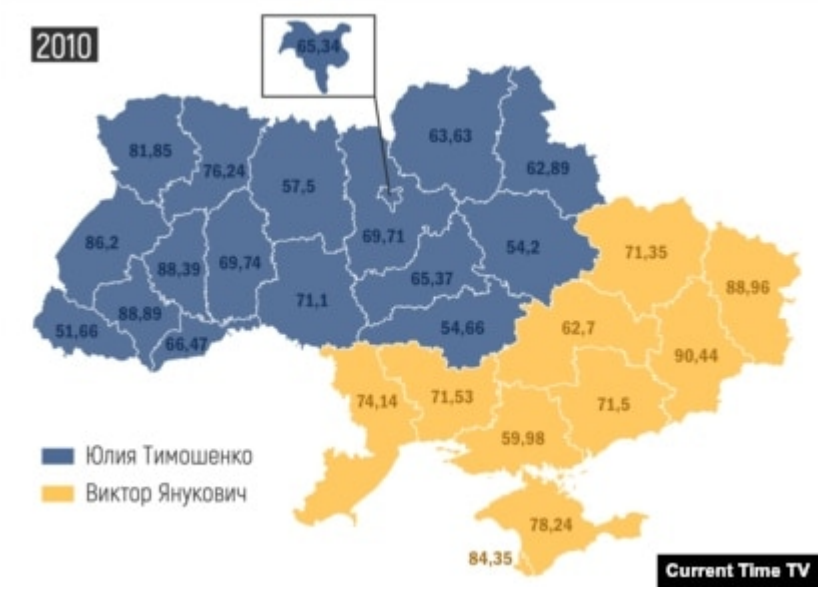


That's a very important fact. There are indeed some clearly divided countries like Belgium. Dutch-speaking, rich, conservative Flanders and French-speaking, poor, left-wing Wallonia. Here political divisions match up with ethnolinguistic ones. But not in Ukraine



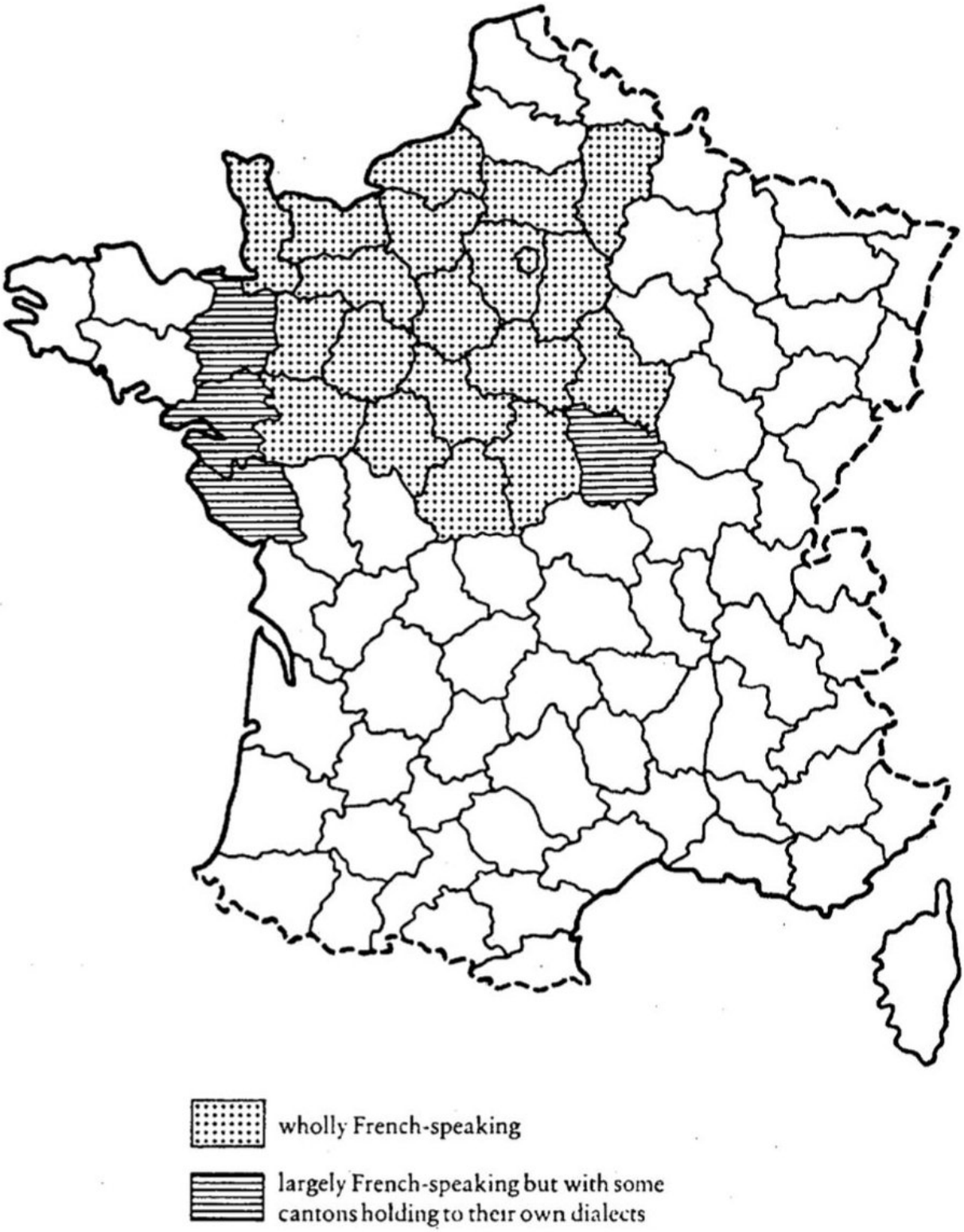
Almost everyone I met on Maidan spoke Russian among themselves. Many spoke very poor or no Ukrainian. And yet, they strongly identified as Ukrainians. Because ethnic identity and political allegiance in case of such mixed up areas as Eastern Europe are simply matters of choice

There is indeed a political division between the East and the West. As shown on this electoral map - yellow voted for pro-Russian Yanukovich, blue - for Timoshenko. And yet, many 'blue' regions are largely or predominantly Russian speaking. Language =/= identity or allegiance



Now let's go a big deeper. During the discussion on Ukraine or on many other countries, you can often hear that this or that nation is 'artificial'. By symmetry, existence of 'artificial' nations implies the existence of 'natural' ones. And yet, that's BS

I'd say that the most exemplary nation-state in Europe and in the world is France. Unified, centralised, homogenous. And yet, here is the map of French-speaking regions in France in the early 19th c As you see, only a part of the country was actually French-speaking



How did the French talk then? Well, historically France was very heterogenous. Even if we ignore Bretagne, Alsace and the Basques, it was still very diverse. The North spoke on the northern dialects - langues d'oil, south - on southern ones. They were mutually ununderstandable



Ofc, it's difficult to draw a line between a dialect and a language. Honestly, it's purely political. And yet, there was a continuity of southern dialects stretching from Provence to Catalonia - across all political lines. Southern France and Catalonia were very much alike



Well, how did homogenisation happened then? Through state centralisation. It really started in 1539 when Francis I ordered the Paris dialect to be used in all official documents all over the country. That's how the dialect of the capital started becoming a national language



Later kings continued these homogenising policies. For example, after Louis XIV annexed a Catalan-speaking Roussillon from Spain in 1700, first thing he did was prohibition of the Catalan language in official use

Interdiction officielle de la langue catalane

(2 AVRIL 1700)

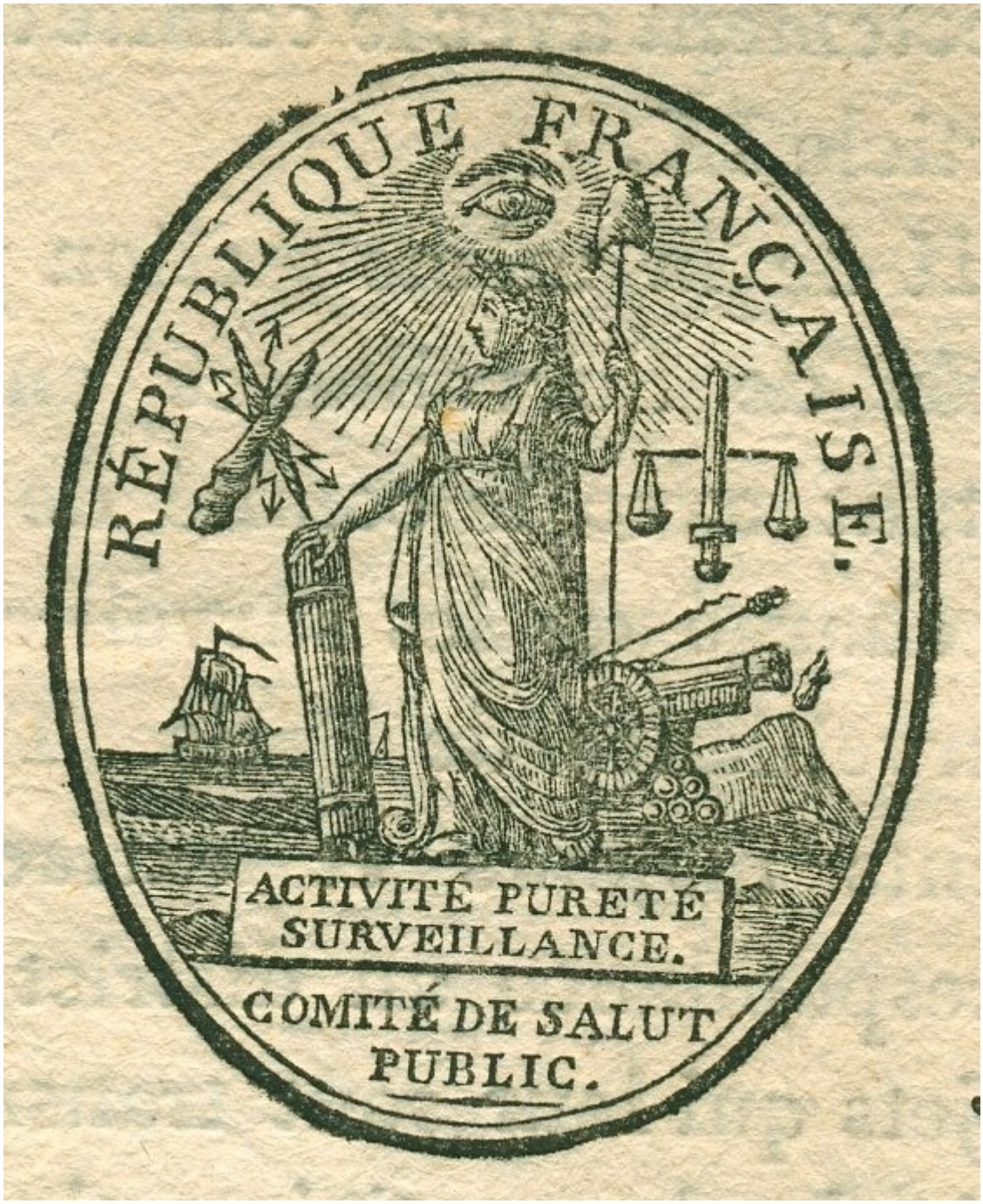
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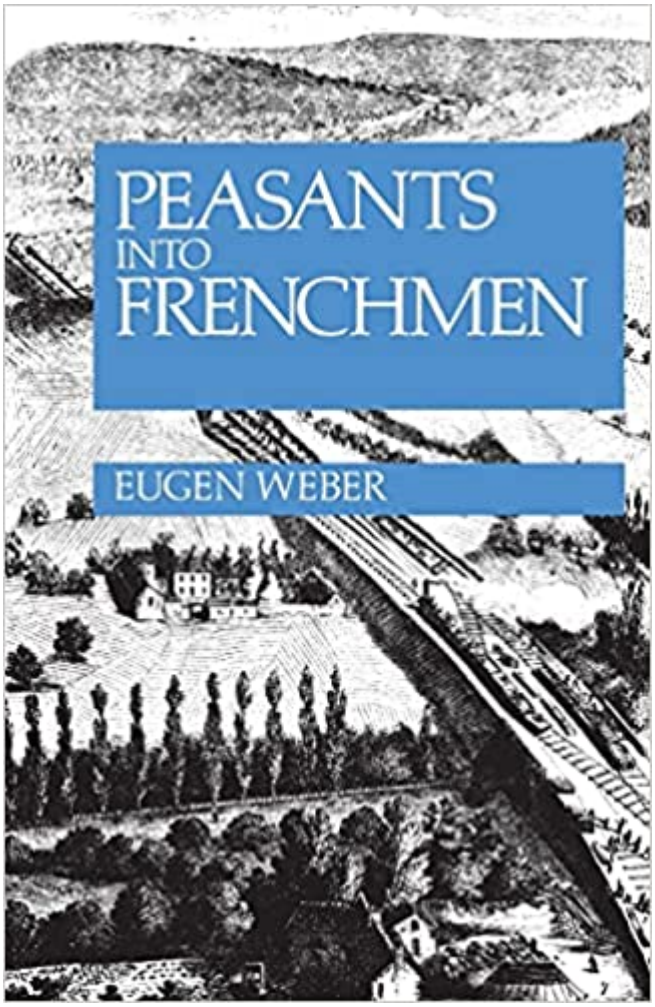
LOUIS PAR LA GRACE DE DIEU, ROI DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE : A tous presens & à venir. SALUT, depuis plus de quarante ans que Nous possédons en pleine Souveraineté les Comtés & Vigueries de Roussillon & Conflans, qui nous ont été cédés avec une partie du Comté de Cerdaigne, par le Traité de Paix des Pirennées, les Procédures des Justices Subalternes desdits Païs, les Délibérations des Magistrats des Villes, les Actes des Notaires & autres Actes publics, ont continué à y être couchés en Langue Catalane, par un usage que l'habitude seule a autorisé : Mais comme outre que cet usage répugne & est en quelque façon contraire à Notre Autorité, à l'honneur de la Nation Françoise & même à l'inclination des Habitants desdits Païs, lesquels en toutes occasions ne témoignent pas moins de zéle et d'affection pour notre service que nos anciens Sujets : Ils en reçoivent d'ailleurs beaucoup de préjudice, en ce que pour faire instruire leurs Enfans dans ladite Langue Catalane, & les rendre par là capables d'exercer les Charges de Judicature & de Magistrature ; Ils se trouvent obligés de les envoyer étudier dans les Villes de la domination d'Espagne, ce qui leur cause de grands frais. Nous avons jugé que pour remédier à ces inconvéniens, il était à propos d'ordonner qu'à l'avenir toutes les Procédures & les Actes publics qui se feront dans lesdits Païs, seront couchés en Langue Françoise : SÇAVOIR

Ofc it all greatly exacerbated after the revolution. In 1794 the Committee of Public Safety declared:

Federalism and superstition speak Breton, emigration and hatred speak German, Counterrevolution speaks Italian and fanaticism speaks Basque'

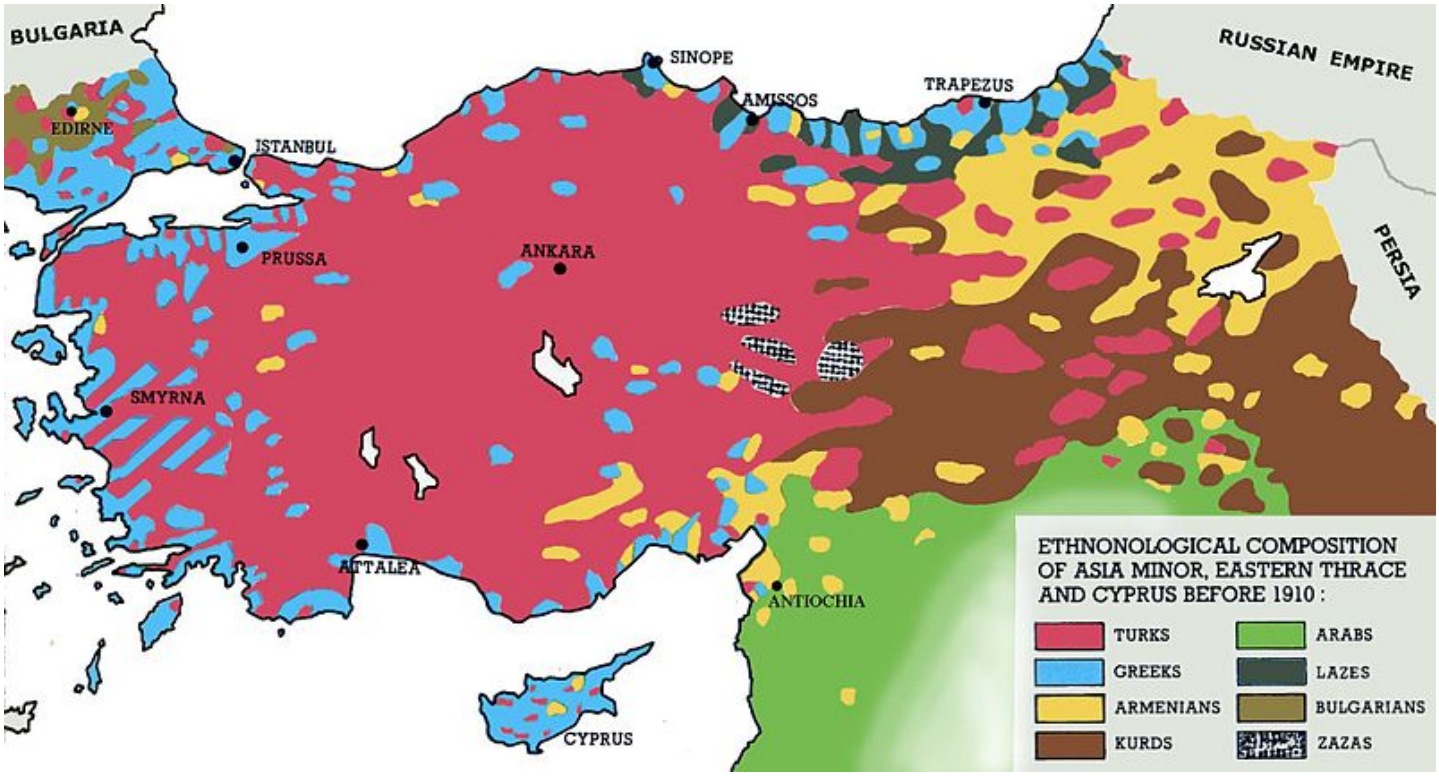


Only much later, through the organised state efforts such as centralised education, media, propaganda, necessity of the French for career and ofc crackdown on any minority tongues, the homogenisation was achieved. I strongly recommend this book on why France looks how it looks



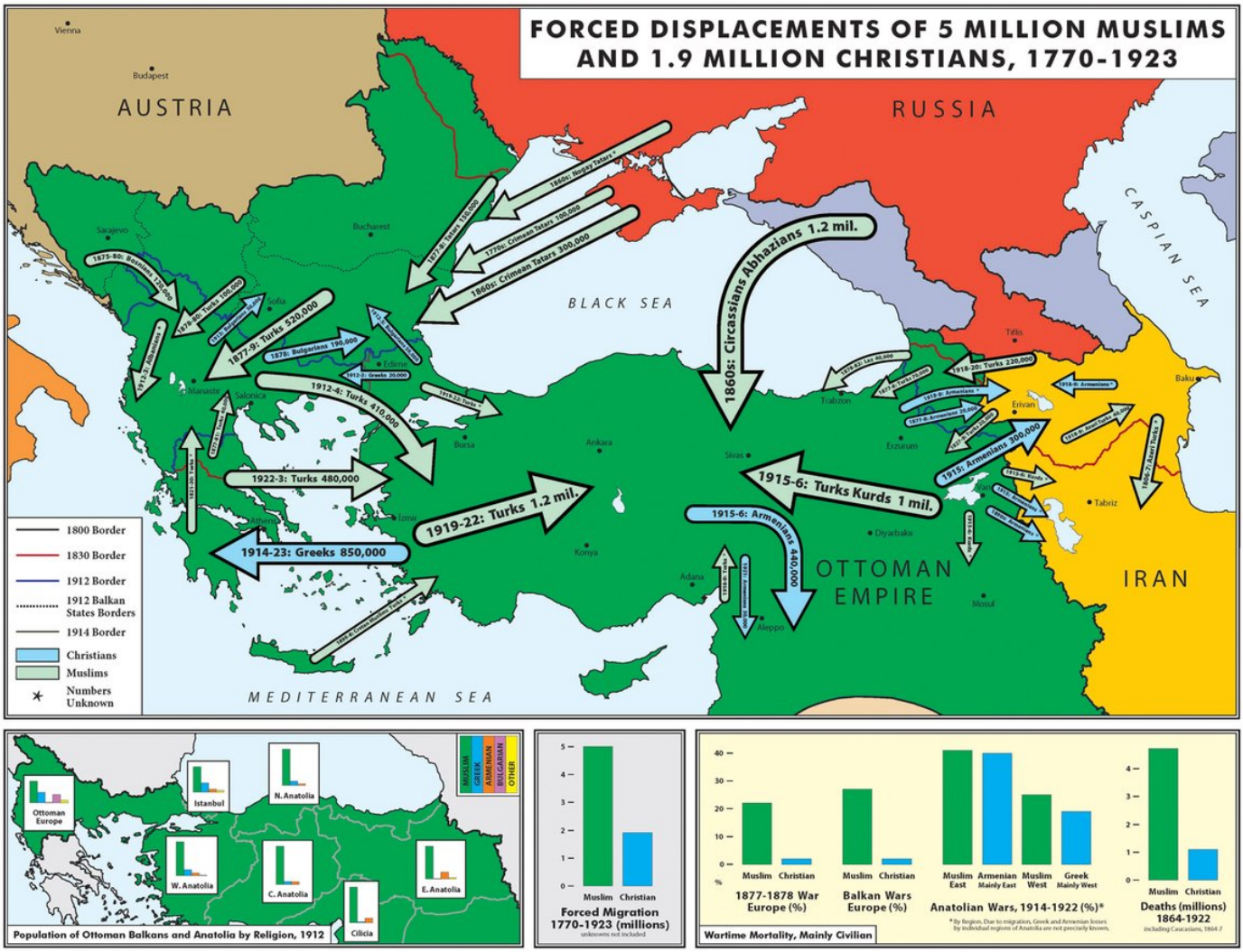
So, contrary to the popular belief it is the diversity which is 'natural'. While homogeneity is artificial. Wherever you see monoculture, be it in language, religion, identity, it is a result of ruthless social engineering. And vice versa: diversity reflects the lack of it

For example, taking a glance at the linguistic map of Anatolia in 1910 (this is simplification, it was much more complicated - google Karamanlides), one can conclude - this is a territory which hasn't gone through a forced homogenisation. Yet



That's important for understanding both Ottoman and post-Ottoman history. What is known as the tolerance of the Ottoman Empire can be reconceptualized more neutrally as the lack of willingness to homogeneise everyone culturally. As a result Ottoman lands were incredibly diverse

And once nationalism came here, this non-homogenised land turned into a battlefield between nationalist movements *all* of which aimed to forcibly homogenise "their" territory. So the space between the Austro-Hungarian and Iranian borders was swept by ethnic cleansings



Which is why you should be cautious when Balkan, Middle Eastern, Caucasian and so on activists start talking about "our" land. "It's our land" = we want to impose French concept of a nation-state on this non-homogenised territory. Which is possible only through ethnic cleansings

"Our land" = the land on which we are not only allowed to do genocide, but should be supported in this noble endeavour by the entire humanity

But let's return to Ukraine. By this point we established that "natural" situation is diversity. While homogeneity is a result of social engineering by the centralised state. The state chooses one faith, one tongue, one identity and pushes them through everyone's throat

And yet, which identity will the state choose to push? In most cases - identity of the capital city. But that's not necessarily the case. When the Left-Bank Ukraine (the Hetmanate) became a Russian protectorate in 1654 - rather the opposite happened



Ofc their language was difficult - Muscovites had to use interpreters to converse with [redacted]. But that wasn't a problem, because it wasn't politicised yet. Religious differences however, were very, very problematic. They soon discovered that the Ukrainian rites are different

If Muscovite and Ukrainian rites are different, which ones are correct? Ukrainians argued the Muscovite rites were just Greek Orthodox which degenerated over time. Muscovites thoight that the Ukrainian (and Byzantine) rites are corrupted by the Catholic influence

Which was a terrible threat. The Second Rome, Constantinople, stood for a thousand years and would stand another thousand if the true faith was preserved. But in 1438 Byzantines submitted to the Pope. And in 1453 Constantinople fell. Which was clearly a sign of the God's wrath



So now Moscow, the Third Rome, is the last bastion of Orthodoxy, the rest of the world being swept either by infidels or by the Latin heresy. And if the Third Rome falls to this heresy, it will share the fate of the Second Rome. Which will literally trigger the Domesday



Which kinda explains why Muscovite scholars were so sceptical of both Byzantine and Ukrainian rites. Byzantines compromised themselves by the Union with Rome, while Ukrainians spent too much time under the Catholic Poland (and had their own union with Catholics, too)

With Muscovite and Ukrainian rites being so different, and Russian state centralising quickly, which ones will it adopt at its own and impose ruthlessly? Counterintuitively it may seem, Muscovite elite wholeheartedly chose Ukrainian ones

There were good reasons for that. First of all, Old Muscovy was destroyed in the Time of Troubles by a Western power. And the new one which emerged from the ashes was different. It was oriented westward rather than eastward. It craved for Western culture and Western connections



And Ukraine had so much more of this culture than Muscovy. Just an example. Old Muscovy doesn't have any confirmed educational institutions at all. Apparently there was private tutoring, education in small groups. But not a single institutionalised and documented school

First Eastern Slavic and Orthodox educational institutions evolved not in Muscovy but in Poland-Lithuania. In 1576 an Orthodox magnate founds Ostrozhskaya Academy, recruiting ex-professors of Krakow University. Here Ivan Fyodorov printed the first Bible in Old Church Slavonic



In 1580s they establish an Orthodox school in Lviv, in 1613 one of its alumni founds one in Kyiv. All of these Eastern Slavic and Orthodox schools were modelled after the Jesuit collegia. Because all the intellectual life in Poland-Lithuania was highly influenced by Jesuits

In fact, being educated in Catholic or Jesuit schools was a norm for Ukrainian or Belarussian Orthodox establishment. Meletii Smotritsky - who authored the first grammar of the Old Church Slavonic - graduated from the Jesuit Collegium in Vilnius



Out of five Uniate (Orthodox rites + submission to Rome) bishops of Kyiv before 1654, three graduated from the Jesuit colleges. Out of four purely Orthodox ones - all four received Catholic-modeled education in institutions I described. Then two of them got purely Catholic one

So Ukraine had strong intellectual and religious culture, which though being formally Orthodox was heavily influenced by Catholic, specifically Jesuit models. Clerical establishment either directly got Catholic education, or studied in schools following Jesuit model

Contacts between the Ukrainian and Muscovite culture destroyed the latter. Even before Ukraine was annexed, Alexis Mikhailovich invites Ukrainian scholars to "correct" (■■■■■■) the Bible. That was unprecedented. Tsar thinks the Muscovite Bible is wrong and needs to be corrected



These guys were printing tons of Ukrainian books in Moscow. That included Catechism by Peter Mohila, the grammar of Old Church Slavonic by Smotritsky, texts on politics, pedagogy, medicine, first ever manuals on Greek and Latin available in Moscow, anthologies of Classic authors



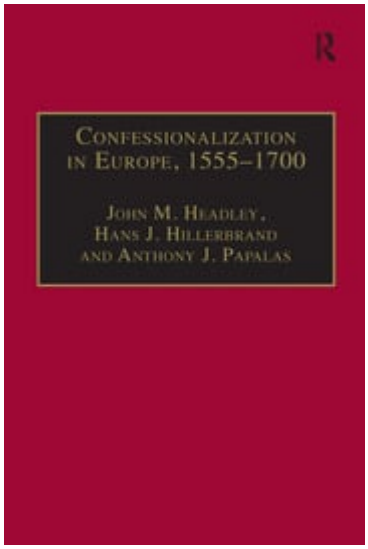
Epiphany Slavinetsky (who reportedly studied in a Jesuit college) translated texts of Church Fathers, wrote sermons, consulted Muscovite clergy on all rel■gous matters, edited protocols of the Moscow Church councils and so on. And that's before Ukraine was annexed



After the annexation in 1654, Muscovy was flooded by Ukrainian clergy and intellectuals. First of all, to integrate Muscovy and Ukraine, existing differences had to be eliminated. Second, annexation gave Tsar a pool of administrators whom he delegated this standardisation

Btw I find the concept of "confessionalisation" by Heinz Schilling really useful to describe these and other trends when religious differences were politicised by authorities and opposing forces

(not this book though, I didn't read it)



The Church reformed followed. All the rites were standardised by Ukrainian model. Previously you spelled Jesus as I■yc, now - as Iicyc. Previously, you crossed yourself with two fingers, now - with two. And so on. If you do it old way, they're gonna burn you "with no mercy"



There were many recusants of course. Here you see Bojaress Morozova from the upper aristocracy, who kept the old ways - and even raising two fingers as a sign of disobedience. They're gonna deal with her accordingly

(a beggar in the lower right angle also raises two fingers)



The recusants were called Old Believers. In religious strictness, in work and business ethics they were just Russian Puritans. Some Russian teachers when explaining Puritanism tell - just imagine Old Believers. They were key players both in Industrial and in Socialist revolutions



I'll certainly cover Old Believers later, but for now I wanna stress. When Ukraine was annexed by Muscovy, it was Ukrainian creed and Ukrainian style which was chosen as the new standard by the Russian Tsar. And he imposed this new creed mercilessly, breaking any opposition



In this context, brutality of Peter I, Bolsheviks and some would argue - reformers of 1990s seems much less unprecedented. Russian supreme power acts like a bulldozer (using Vitalik Buterin's term). It enforces "progress" at any cost, and defines progress as imitating foreigners



Progress moves in mysterious ways. Consider Simeon Polotsky. Originally a Belarussian, he studied in Kyiv. Then converted and entered the Jesuit college in Vilnius. Then repented, returned to Christianity and moved to Moscow where was appointed as the teacher of Tsar's children



What did he teach them? Literature. Latin. Polish. By the late 17th c Polish was the court language. In a sense Peter I not so much westernised Russia as protestantised it. Previous era was very Polish and very Catholic. While Peter preferred the Protestant North of Europe



Just to give you some example. In his poem "Russian Eagle" commemorating the capture of Kyiv, Polotsky wrote:

"Rejoice Russia, the Sarmat Progeny!"

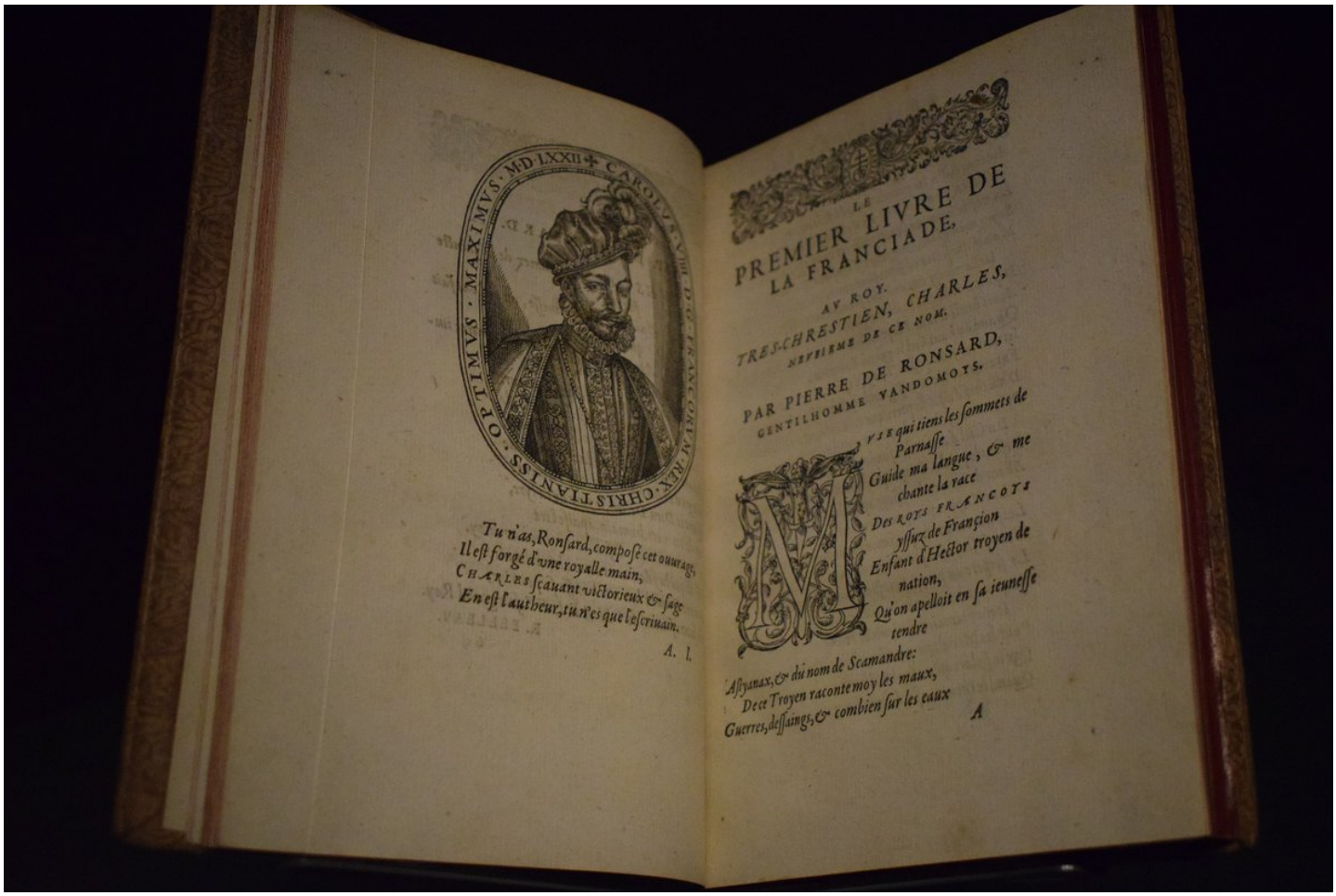


Why *Sarmat* progeny? Because Poles, specifically Polish elite considered themselves to be Sarmats. And Russian elite lived within the discourse created by the Polish elite. It not so much adopted Polish ideas as was infected by them


Antoni Stanisław ze Szczuk
Szczuka Marsz. Gnieźn.
Podkanclerzy W. Xięst. Litew.
skiego Starosta Lubelski Oby.
dwóch Generalnosc Koronney
zmarły R. 1704.

I would argue that these elite cultural dynamics are crucially important for understanding the current ethnopoliticao situation in Ukraine or Belarus. It's not whether they speak Russian or not - most of Ukrainians and almost all Belarussians do. It's who they choose to be

Identity is a matter of choice. And considering that ancestry is constructed to match identity, ancestry too, is a matter of choice. You choose who you want to be and then choose or make up the ancestors you need. Like Poles made up their Sarmat roots or French - Trojan ones



So it's ultimately a question of who you want to be. Which is especially clear in such mixed area as Eastern Europe, with tons of mixed marriages, and various regimes purposefully relocating people from one place to another to uproot them and construct new community

Anecdotally - and I can't prove this with data - I have the following observation. In the entire Ukraine and Belarus identity very much correlates with education level. The more educated a person is, the more eagerly they tend to support identity and statehood of their countries

Thus this problem has not only linguistic, but sociohierarchical dimension. Education is a good predictor of being pro-Ukrainian politics and identity-wise, no matter which language do you speak. And that covers all of Ukraine, including the East and the Donbass

Again - I can't prove this with data but that's my own observation and observation of many Russian nationalists who observed and lamented it. While Russia certainly has tons of sympathisants in East and in South, its support among

intelligentsia and the educated is minuscule

Let me get it straight. Russian irredentism in 2014 found many supporters among the 'commoners' - workers, miners, and most importantly cops. It's funny that they picture this guy (Strelkov) as the driving force of irredentism. That's like a Great Man Theory reduced to absurdity



Talking to locals, I got a different impression. What happened in Donbass in 2014 was largely local law enforcement switching colors - with Russian help and guidance. Involvement of Russian regulars was initially small and increased when

Ukraine could've potentially won

The story makes more sense if we assume that the goal is to keep a necessary level of chaos in Ukraine. That's why Russia allowed a bunch of warlords to emerge from nothing. They 1) maintain chaos 2) can be presented as heroes of "popular rebellion" better than turncloak-cops



But the chaos should be controllable. The problem with this guys that the chaos they create could potentially infect Russia as well. So a big cleansing followed - with those pro-Russian field commanders dying under mysterious circumstances



During the big battles Russian involvement (= "manoeuvres in Rostov Oblast") was big, impossible to hide. And yet, they didn't advance - they simply beat off the Ukrainian offense. Because they are not supposed to destroy Ukraine, just prolongue the war for as long as possible



At this point Donbass is in very sorry condition. The only social class happy with the war are pensionaries, they collect pay checks both from Russia and Ukraine, get generous humanitarian aid and live like kings (in comparison to the working age people, whom nobody helps)

That makes initial supporters of the war disillusioned. In Russia I met some ex-miners from Donbass who participated on the initial stage of the conflict. They were especially sad to see that Russians treat them no better than Central Asians (to be fair, they were very poor)

So "commoners" indeed often feel disillusioned because they felt exhilarated in the beginning. But that's not the case with intelligentsia. Russian irredentism never found real support among educated classes. When they fled, they fled west, not east

This sociohierarchical dimension of the conflict is important for predicting its future. While Russia probably still has some support among common folk of the East (and it had much, much more in 2014) it never got any support from the cultural elites and educated classes

This is not just some random observation. We talk of the will of the people. But who are "the people"? In Russian, and in Polish languages they use the word "narod" which means both ethnic identity and political nation. But though using the same word, they mean different things

When Russians say "narod", they usually imagine something like this. The poorest, the most ignorant, the most underprivileged. So whereas "narod" can mean the political nation as a whole, its truest, the most real part are the most dispossessed, the bearers of its spirit



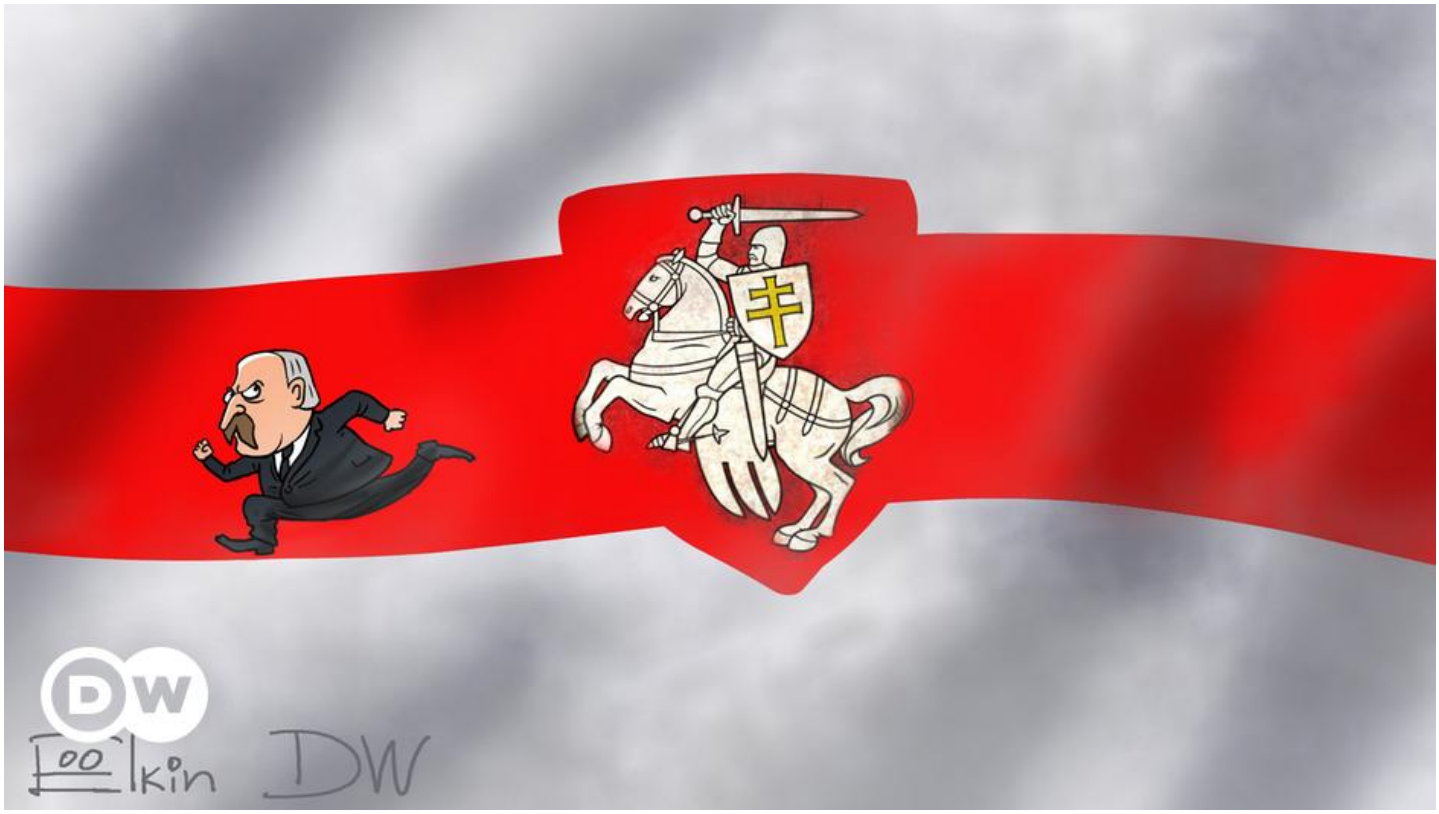
In Poland it was historically the opposite. Whereas "narod", could mean the whole political nation, too, in its truest sense - it was usually the upper class, szlachta. Which created many funny misunderstandings between Russian and Polish revolutionaries in the 19th century

While the term for the "nation" is the same in Polish in Russian and the difference in connotations isn't obvious, the difference between Russian and Polish terms for the "state" is just too clear

In Polish it's "panstwo". In Russian - "gosudarstvo". "Pan" = gentleman, an upper class person. "Gosudar" now means "sovereign" but originally it's how slaves ■■■■■■ addressed their owner. So while being a neutral term for the state, technically Gosudarstvo is the "Slavelordship"



May be that's why idea of integrating with Russia meets so huge aversion of educated classes both it in Ukraine and Belarus. And why intelligentsia protesters overwhelmingly weaponise symbolics and heritage of pre-Muscovite polities that once existed in their countries. End of ■


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