

Brief History of Ukraine

After the three partitions of Poland at the end of the 17th century, western Ukraine became Russian, with the exception of Eastern Galicia, which became part of the Habsburg Empire. At that time, **core Ukraine was referred to as "Little Russia"**.

In the **Congress of Vienna in 1814/15**, after the defeat of Napoleon, the Great Powers negotiated, among other things, on the territorial order of Europe, whereby the Ukrainians did not succeed in creating a permanent nation state.

But at the **end of the 19th century/beginning of the 20th century**, forces began to form in Kiev **demanding independence from Russia**. And during the First World War, the German Reich supported Ukraine's separation efforts. Nevertheless, Polish nationalists, but also Russia, theorized that the Ukrainians or Ukraine did not exist. The **First World War** led to the internationalization of the Ukrainian question, but also brought Ukraine between the fronts of Austria-Hungary and Russia. The **Ukraine became a war zone**, so Russian troops conquered the east of Galicia in September 1914 with the capital Lviv, but the Russians were subsequently pushed back by the Germans, and on December 5, 1917 there was an armistice.

As early as March 1917, representatives of political, cultural and professional organizations gathered in Kiev to form a provisional government instead of the abolished tsarist government authorities. In the **All-Ukrainian National Congress at the beginning of 1917**, 115 deputies were elected to the Central Rada, which demanded autonomy for Ukraine within Russia in June, whereupon the Central Rada proclaimed the **Ukrainian People's Republic as an autonomous state within the new Soviet Russia** in November 1917. After that elections were held.

As a result, in mid-December **1919, the Bolsheviks organized an uprising** in Vinnytsa and the conquest of eastern Ukraine by Russian and Ukrainian Red Guards began. At the end of December, **the Central Executive Committee of Soviet Ukraine proclaimed the "Ukrainian People's Republic of Soviets"**. And on January 25, 1918, the Central Rada proclaimed the full state independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic. **On February 8, 1918, however, the Bolsheviks captured Kiev**. But soon after, almost the entire Ukraine fell into the hands of the Central Powers. In November 1918, the Ukrainian units withdrew the German troops.

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In **January 1919, the Bolsheviks conquered Kiev** and founded the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, with the first constitution adopted in March. The Soviet government established collective farms as part of collectivization, whose grain supplies were confiscated in 1933, leading to a **de facto genocide** by the Soviet Union, later called **Holodomor**.

In the **2nd World War** Germany invaded the Soviet Union as well as the Ukraine. According to the National Socialist ideology, Ukrainians as well as the other Slavs were considered "subhumans". **Hitler's plan was to settle Germans in Ukraine**. And from 1942 all school classes above the 4th grade were closed, Ukrainian books and magazines were no longer allowed. In addition, **a mass murder of Jews by the SS** began, as well as mass public hostage shootings and the destruction of about 250 villages in response to the activities of the Ukrainian partisans.

After the victory of the anti-Hitler coalition at the end of World War II, **the borders of Ukraine were expanded** in various conferences, at the expense of Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia.

In Galicia, the **first movements of a Ukrainian national movement** became visible as early as 1987, and on July 16, 1990, the Supreme Soviet proclaimed the sovereignty of Ukraine. Triggered by the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR, large protests took place on the Maidan from 2 to 17 October, with Leonid Kravchuk and Boris Yeltsin signing a treaty of friendship on 1 November 1990, and on 24 August 1991 the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine decided to withdraw from the Soviet Union. And the Ukrainians decided in a referendum on December 1, 1991 with 90.3% for the independence of Ukraine. **Leonid Kravchuk** became the first president (1991-1994) in the first direct election. And on December 2, 1991, Ukraine was recognized by Russia. On the other hand, the status of Crimea as an autonomous republic, but as an integral part of Ukraine, was controversially debated and negotiated.

In the wake of the presidential elections of **autumn 2004**, there were protests against electoral fraud in the wake of the **Orange Revolution**, with **Viktor Yushenko becoming president** after the run-off election was repeated. After the presidential elections of 2010, Viktor Yanukovych became the new president of Ukraine until February 2014.

From November 2013, there were **protests against Yanukovych's regime** under the name **Euromaidan**, where he fled to Russia, which led to the Crimean crisis: Russia infiltrated guerrillas, supplied weapons and the **Russian army attacked Ukraine** on 24 February 2022 in violation of international law. Whereupon Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyj** declared a state of war. Since then, war has been raging.

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