

Carpatho-Rus'

Karpatska Rus'



SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT YONKERS, NEW YORK AND OTHER MAILING ADDRESSES

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An interesting in-depth analysis of the climatic events that began in 1985 in the former Soviet Union up to the present day. This is the Twelfth installment of the story from Moscow News.

The Crash and Rise of an Empire

A Colloquial Chronicle, Russia, 1985-. Part 12

The Big Bang

The reactor of the fourth unit of the Chernobyl ("Wormwood") nuclear power plant blew up on April 26, 1986. The time was 1:23:40 pm. For the first time in the history of man, the mushroom cloud of a nuclear explosion sprouted over the earth's surface as a result of human error. The immediate cause was later officially stated to be an "unauthorized experiment" -- which was a damn lie, for it lay in certain fatal defects of the reactor's design. If it hadn't happened at Chernobyl, it would have happened somewhere else, where the same RBMK (fast breeder) reactors were installed. I later learned that most plant managers walked in constant and very tangible fear of disaster, and on hearing that a nuclear explosion had occurred at some power plant, most of them automatically assumed that it had been at theirs.

All this came out much, much later, though. At the time, the first I heard of it all was through the BBC World Service, but the figures as to loss of life quoted there -- hundreds and even thousands dead -- amid the dead calm in the Soviet media left one guessing helplessly. What one felt most acutely was fury at an obvious attempt at a cover-up, the full scope of which only came out years later.

I read afterwards that the cover-up started from the very first telephone call from the Ukraine to Moscow: even the government was not told that the reactor had been destroyed -- "to avoid long questioning by telephone," as the official who made the call later put it. This continued all along the chain of command: Shcherbina, chairman of the government emergency commission, did not report fully to Moscow, and the Politburo imposed an almost total information blackout, except for bland and palpably untrue TASS statements, the first of which came out on April 28, two days after the explosion.

It was later rumored that the man primarily responsible for the clamp down on information about Chernobyl was Ligachev, and it looks like the truth, but the Politburo acted on the so-called "collective leadership" principle, at least in theory, so they are all collectively responsible for the untold misery of millions of people and the deaths of quite a few.

In real terms, Gorbachev could have put his foot down and put the facts that he himself knew before the nation and the world. Instead, he gave in to the Pavlovian dog's Soviet reflex of keeping all disasters under wraps until they are more or less dealt with. He thought of saving his political skin first, second and last, like perhaps every other politician in the world; unlike them, though, he

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Carpatho-Rusyn Society Holds Third Annual Rusyn Day Picnic

Pittsburgh. On Saturday, September 21 the Carpatho-Rusyn Society (CRS) held its third annual Rusyn Day Picnic on the hilly, forested Croatian Center Picnic Grounds. Located on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, the picnic grounds provided the CRS with the extra space it needed to accommodate expanding interest over the course of the last two annual Rusyn Day picnics. CRS member Jack Poloka, of both Carpatho-Rusyn and Croatian ancestry, was instrumental in providing the CRS with this new venue. The picnic grounds boasted two performance stages, a dance floor, a children's playground, three food pavilions, and picnic tables. The picnic festivities began at noon and lasted until sunset.

The day began with sunny skies and seasonably moderate temperatures. Ten or so CRS members came early to assist with set-up in the unexpectedly "rural" surroundings. The grounds were accessible by a long, steep, winding one-lane road that finally emerged out of the trees into the clearing that was the picnic grounds.

Among the CRS early birds was Mrs. Emma Lazorchick, 70, who was in charge of assisting admission to the picnic. Mrs. Lazorchick's ancestors came from the Rusnak villages of Čabalovci and Sterkovci in Zemplyn county. She was enthusiastic about the CRS and has been involved with the organization since its beginnings in 1994. The Rusyn Day picnics and other CRS events, she said, have an important educational value; they teach Rusyns about themselves and others about Rusyns.

Party Games

The day's events began under the direction of CRS member Marie Cosgrove. She had attended the Atlanta Games, and with this in mind organized a Rusyn Mini-Olympics of party games. The first competition required two "teams" of picnickers to race each other transferring a carrot down the line from one team member to another...but without using their hands. This left only the participants' bended knees, which required them to go through contortions that brought out laughter from both team players and observers. The next game similarly required teams to race each other transferring lifesavers candies (with the hole in the middle) from one team member to another - using only a toothpick sticking out of their mouths. The last game had individuals competing against one another throwing cotton balls into a hat. This game allowed the use of hands; the challenge here was the wind. The younger children were decidedly more skilled at these events than the adults!

One of the "Olympic" winners was Jim Badeaux, a Byzantine Catholic seminarian of Cajun heritage. Jim will complete his studies in several years. Once ordained, Jim expects to be serving in the eastern Pennsylvania or New Jersey area.

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Christ's Visit to Kermesh in Smerekovetz

(A Lemko Legend -- A Folk Tale)

When he awakened in the morning, Christ still had not come home. He was afraid of Christ's reaction and sorry for the farmer. To ease his conscience, Peter would have liked to pay the farmer for the wood. Peter realized that he had unintentionally committed a sin. He had just wanted to show off his knowledge of a good product, but it turned out he had helped the factors. Factors got paid for what they did; Peter should not have interfered; he couldn't stop feeling sorry for the farmer. After all, the farmer had to wait till the trees grow; then he had to cut the trees. Finally, getting up very early, he had to load the cart and take the load of wood to Gorlice.

All day Peter was preoccupied with these sad thoughts. He wondered what would happen if the farmer came to town and recognize Peter. Would he beat Peter? Peter shivered at the thought.

Christ came home with a lot of papers that had to be completed. Not taking time to eat, he went to work in the chancery. Peter was glad that Christ was too busy to hear his story.

Later, Christ asked, "How is everything going at home?" "Everything is fine," answered Peter. "I missed you Christ. The only news is that one stupid farmer from Gladishov, unable to sell his wood, threw it into the river." "Why didn't you buy that wood, Peter?" asked Christ. "The quality of the wood was such that it could have ruined our stove," Peter answered. "I read about the incident in the newspaper. Some factor started it; but his name was not in the paper," replied Christ.

"Oh yes, I was also there. I think the stupid farmer shouldn't have brought poor quality wood for sale" said Peter. "Don't call anybody stupid. Everybody has brains given to him by God. When you speak like that, you speak against God" said Christ."

"I feel responsible for what happened, because I did not offer to buy the wood. If I had a chance, I would redeem myself" said Peter. "Time will come and you will get your chance" said Christ.

St. Peter realized that Christ knew exactly what had happened. Peter was relieved, even though he knew that Christ had a day of punishment in store for him.

On the following Tuesday there was a fair in Gorlice. Lemkos brought eggs, mushrooms and many other products; farmers brought horses, ox and sheep. Peter nervously looked around to see if Gladishov's farmer was there. As he moved away from the window, he heard somebody knock on the door. Startled, Peter almost fell. The person at the door reminded him of the farmer from Gladishov. Although he did not want to open the door, Peter had to because Christ had never locked the door

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thought that he could get away with any sort of lie - and apparently still thinks so: on the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster he brazenly insisted that there had been no cover-up at the time!

The international outcry, especially in countries that were registering considerable radiation levels, like Sweden, and the media hysteria about corpses lying about in the streets of Kiev eventually put a stop to the attempted cover-up, and Gorbachev spoke to the nation on TV -- more than two weeks later, on May 14, looking a great picture of dismay. By that time, though, a great deal of harm had been done: the population hadn't been warned in time to take measures against radiation in the first days after the disaster, when the fallout was heaviest. Evacuation of the population from the contaminated area was inexcusable delayed. Inadequate measures were taken for the safety of the personnel sent to fight the consequences of the disaster. And so on.

The people reacted with fury to the facts that gradually came out, passed on by word of mouth, inevitably garbled, and gradually even penetrating the press. The Ukrainian Party bosses, having packed off their own offspring to safety, calmly allowed the May Day celebrations to proceed, smiling benignly on thousands of children marching past on a sunny spring day, amid flowers, music and flags, through heavily contaminated streets. From then on, heavily contaminated nomenclatura among the masses soared. It was probably in those days that the jingle, so often chanted at later mass rallies, was made up:

*Pust zhivoyt KPSS
Na Chernobylskoy AES!
(Long live the Communist Party
At Chernobyl Power Plant!)*

Like all things in Russia, the issue became highly personalized, and Gorbachev's credibility, what there was of it, was wrecked by the whole episode -- another fact about Gorbachev that the folks in the West, whose relatives never suffered from the rabid self-interest displayed by that individual, do not seem to appreciate, as they accuse the ex-Soviet people of ingratitude toward the great man. Even at that time, though, his duplicity must have struck some Westerners who heard Gorbachev's call, in his May 14 address to the nation, for measures for swift notification of nuclear accidents -- a feat of impudence that brought me to the point of apoplexy: the guy was "notifying" his own people about the disaster a solid three weeks after the event -- and urging others to be "swift"!

A couple of years later, all sorts of damning facts about the antecedents of the disaster surfaced in the press. Some of the plant's construction defects were apparently due to the universal practice of doing things in a hurry in order to report to the Party superiors completion of construction by some celebration date.

But even releasing these facts to the press was yet another move in the cover-up campaign to conceal the defectiveness of all nuclear reactors of the Chernobyl type, not just the one in Chernobyl. A prominent nuclear physicist named Valery Legasov committed suicide after numerous unsuccessful attempts to convince the top leadership of the threat they posed, insisting that unless certain measures to change the design were swiftly taken, the world could expect two or three Chernobyls in the near future.

I learned of this from Ales Adamovich, the writer from Belorussia, the republic which, along with the Ukraine, was worst affected by the catastrophe, with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, suffering now from disaster-related diseases. Adamovich and Stanley Kramer wanted to make a film about Chernobyl and, as I translated Adamovich's script into English, we had some of those endless political arguments, but mostly I pumped the writer for facts that had not at the time been made public. Adamovich was then pursuing a career as a major anti-nuke campaigner in the

Soviet Union, he had been Belorussia's representative at the United Nations, he was Director of the Institute of Cinematography in Moscow and knew quite a few people close to the top, so he was quite useful as a source of information in a country that still made do with the twin tools of rumor and bland, bare-faced official statements for hard news.

The facts of the disaster and the handling of it are all fairly well known by now, so I need mention only the most salient points. The first people that went in to deal with the catastrophe were ordinary firemen who fought the fire at the nuclear plant after the explosion as just another fire without a thought for radiation. Naturally, most of them died soon after. Then the soldiers went in, about 340,000 of them, to deal with the aftermath of the disaster, gathering and burying radioactive debris with spades and sometimes bare hands. I wonder if there is a single one among these people, called "liquidators," who have not suffered the consequences, sometimes fatal, of those days of heroism, incompetence and sometimes plain stupidity. Other major events; there were the building of an outer shell, called the "sarcophagus," over the destroyed reactor and the (belated) evacuation of first 130,000 and then, a further 100,000 people from the contaminated areas.

According to expert estimates, the Chernobyl disaster cost the country, in all the years since it happened, some @200 billion. No economy, least of all the Soviet one, could stand the strain -- and it didn't. No political system that first made the disaster possible and then bungled the rescue effort, with reckless disregard for the expectations, feelings and very lives of millions, could stand the debacle, either -- and the Soviet system didn't. It was plainly doomed.

To be continued

Sergei ROY -- Moscow News

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Genealogy Conference Held

The disagreement between the two clerics had no immediate consequences. Father Toth appealed to his superiors in Prešov. He wished his superiors to intercede on his behalf with Archbishop Ireland. No intercession was forthcoming and Father Toth felt that the Uniate tradition was being threatened. He appealed to Orthodox Bishop Vladimir Sokolovsky of San Francisco to be accepted as an Orthodox priest and he and his congregation returned to Orthodoxy (1891). Father Alexis ultimately initiated the return of some 25,000 Carpatho-Rusyns.

Eventually, Saint Mary's Russian Orthodox Church received Cathedral status. A seminary was also established in Minneapolis to train American-born clergy. Orthodoxy was thus firmly established in the United States.

By 1908, Minneapolis had become the destination of still more Rusyns from the aforementioned villages of the Prešov region, as well as from Sub-Carpathian Rus'. These newcomers initially attended Saint Mary's, but some were not content to attend an Orthodox church. They began to organize a Greek Catholic church; the result was Saint John the Baptist Greek Catholic Church. This time around, the Archbishop gave his complete blessing.

Further immigration from Galicia enlarged the parish of Saint John's. Some of these Galicians professed a Ukrainian ethnolocal identity which was at odds with that of the earlier immigrants. Dissatisfaction between the two groups led to the formation of Saint Constantine's Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church. Such religious disputes have often risen out of ethnolocal identity disputes. Such conflicts were and are common among Our People in the twentieth century. Regrettably, neither the ethnolocal identity debate nor the related religious question offer much room for compromise.

A second lecture of interest was that of George Soldatow. A noted scholar, Soldatow describes himself as being of Russian, Ukrainian and Carpatho-Russian ancestry. Soldatow has done research in the Orthodox Church in America Archive and has published many booklets on related topics. He has just finished translating and editing a collection of writings by St. Alexis Toth titled, *The Orthodox Church in America and Other Writings by St. Alexis*. The collection draws on primary source materials, and is available from AARDM Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Soldatow's contribution to the Conference was "A Survey of Archives For Americans of Eastern European Descent: Where Genealogical Information Can Be Found in North America." The lecture covered archives of interest to Russians, Carpatho-Rusyns (-Russians, -Ruthenians, -Ukrainians), Bulgarians, Rumanians, Galicians, and Ukrainians.

I myself presented a lecture, "Lemko Genealogy: Case Studies Emphasizing Procedures and Pitfalls." After a brief introduction, I laid out the groundwork: the U.S. record sources to consult about our immigrant ancestors and their families [for a previous, detailed discussion of these U.S. sources and how to access them, see Susyn Mihalasky's interview with Tom Peters in KR, "Researching Our Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage," March 31, 1995, pp. 1,3.] Following this discussion of domestic sources, I detailed the procedures for determining if record sources from your ancestral village in Poland are available to you here in the United States via the Mormon Church (LDS) Family History Libraries. If sources are unavailable, I outlined procedures for corresponding with Polish archival and record offices.

With this background, I then presented selected case histories dealing with Lemko ancestry. Many of these examples dealt with surname changes. For example, many people possess surnames that reflect town names, such as: Prislowsky ("of Pryslop village"). This ancestral line will ultimately be traced back to a person born with an entirely different surname! The "adoption" of a place name surname suggests that the individual held some important status: the person adopting the name Prislowsky may have been the village mayor. He may have had a birth surname that was very common in the village. In order to distinguish himself from others with the same surname, he took the name of his village. The end result is often two families with different surnames (because of the new surname adoption) that share the same ancestry.

The FEEFHS assists people with Eastern European ancestry who wish to better understand their ancestry. Those with a computer and modem are invited to contact our World Wide Website at: <http://www.feefhs.org/> or you may write to me directly at:

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The Cooking Corner

Baked Pumpkin with Eggs (Tikva s Yaitzami)

1	lb	fresh pumpkin
1/2	tsp	salt
1/2	cup	flour
2	tbls	butter plus butter to grease baking dish
5		eggs
1/2	cup	milk
		salt and pepper to taste, for eggs
		dill

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Peel the pumpkin and cut it in thin slices. Salt it and lightly roll in flour. Fry in butter until cooked. Arrange in a buttered oven-proof dish which can be brought to the table. Beat the eggs well, add the milk, salt and pepper and pour over the pumpkin slices. Sprinkle with dill and bake in the oven until the eggs are cooked. Serve immediately. 4 servings.

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and the people were always welcome

Peter opened the door and quickly went to the kitchen. He watched from behind the curtains. The farmer approached Christ, greeted him, and said: "Dear Christ, our teacher, the petition that you wrote to the military officials was accepted; my boy was given a postponement to join the army. We know that it is due to your efforts, yet you refuse payment for your services. To show our gratitude, my son and I want to invite you to come to our Lemko Kermesh in Smerekovitz."

Christ rubbed his forehead, delighted; "Jesus Christ, invited to your Kermesh?" (He learned the English words, "Jesus Christ" in America). "When is it going to be?" "On St Michael's Day" answered the farmer.

"On St. Michael's Day..hm...Thank you very much for the invitation. I can see and appreciate the love and faith you have for me which every man needs so much. I have so much work to do that I really should not take the time off. Because of your love and faith in me, I will put off my work and attend your Kermesh. I would not like to show favoritism. I have already decided to accept complaints on Pokrova, and, to tell you the truth," continued Christ in Russian, "Time will come when many of God's helpers, such as Michael, Jury, Pantelemon and Paraskeva will be expelled from church; but Pokrova will stay in church. Let us shake hands, please; I'll attend the Kermesh on St. Michael's Day."

The poor farmer from Smerekovitz had a habit of moving his hands while speaking. It was especially obvious when he spoke with such a respectable person. He moved his hands from side to side, forgetting that he had a whip in his hands.

Christ's talking about expelling some of God's helpers upset him and made him angry and more nervous. He clenched his fists, and when Christ said that they won't be able to throw Pokrova out of church, he furiously hit the table with his fist.

Peter was still behind the curtain trying to listen to the conversation, but he couldn't see or hear everything well enough. The sight of the farmer waving hands with the whip frightened him. He even opened the door for a speedy escape through the fence and over the bridge.

After the farmer left, Peter asked Christ what the farmer wanted from him. "Nothing," replied Christ. "He just invited me to Kermesh in Smerekovitz." "Did he ask about me?", asked Peter. "Not a word", answered Christ. "Did he also invite me?" asked Peter. "No he didn't", said Christ. "Before we go to Smerekovitz, I will clean the rooms and sweep the floors so everybody will see our chancery is in good order," said Peter.

"Christ asked, "Are you also going to Kermesh? You will need help and protection to get to Smerekovitz. You have to cross Magura, (?) where wolves have appeared. Suppose they attack you? It is not good! What would people think if I let you go by yourself?" "I can't let you go alone," answered Peter. "If we go, we'll go together."

Christ did not respond to that; he just shrugged his shoulders. "You have 3 weeks before Kermesh to think about it." "We'll see how it goes," said Christ.

During those 3 weeks Peter was busy cleaning, sweeping and scrubbing until everything sparkled.

Early in the morning on the day of Kermesh, Christ was awakened by the noise Peter was making in the kitchen. Christ got up. --"Are you ready to go, Peter? We ought to leave now to get to Smerekovitz by 1:00 pm. You don't want to miss the mass and neither do I."

It was so quiet outside that their footsteps could be heard across the street. They took a short cut instead of going through Shimbar, Ustie Russke and Visovo, and turned at Yan to Repitza.

From there to Russke, Malastov and above Panka they went across to Magura. Peter had been talking continually since leaving home. In Magura, Peter stopped talking, he was exhausted and they climbed the mountain in silence. As they reached the top of the mountain, the rising sun lit up the mountains and the beauty of the Carpathians fascinated Peter. He had never been so high and he enjoyed the view below him.

As they crossed the top of the mountain, Peter began talking again: "Why are those mountains high, while those others are smaller? Why are some mountains green and others golden? "It is because the trees that grow there are evergreen, without leaves, they do not change during the year. The trees over there have leaves which are green in summer, yellow in the fall and then drop off in the winter. It has been this way since the beginning of time," answered Christ.

"You know what, Christ, why don't you make poor and wealthy people equal? Why not make the mountains level with the valleys? It was so difficult to climb the mountain. I was out of breath and could not talk to you."

Christ grinned, tapped on Peter's shoulders and said: "You'll be the God all this day until midnight." Christ took off his red cape and put it on Peter's shoulders. He put Peter's yellow cape on his own shoulders.

Peter jumped with joy and began whistling, dancing and singing his favorite song, which he had learned from Jewish children marching to school in pairs, "Zumzei, zumzei, anahalnebaben..." He thought it was the most beautiful song because he did not know any other.

As they proceeded down the mountain, Peter, happy to be God, was humming and jumping as it was easy to walk. Birds were singing in the woods; somewhere a crow cried. This produced a happy sound that Peter thought was just for him, since he was God.

Soon they reached the fields. Through the trees they could see other fields and the village Gladishov, behind which were Smerekovitz, Lug Zhdynya, Konechna and Berehov's woods.

As they came out of the forest, Christ asked Peter: "So, Peter, are you going to level the mountains with the valleys?"

"You know, Christ; I changed my mind about it. It was difficult climbing the mountain, but easy to descend. It was as if my angels carried us. I walked dancing."

Christ grinned and said: "You will change your mind more than once before midnight!"

Translated by Larissa Ivanova

To be Continued

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1996 Schedule of Events

October 20 Fall Banquet, 2:00 PM \$15.

Birthday Meetings

December 8

All functions are held at the Lodge, corner of Ann Street and Lanza Avenue, Garfield, NJ.

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"The Passaic Diocese runs from Main to Florida," Badeaux explained, "...but most of our churches are in this area." He came to the CRS picnic to learn more about the Carpatho-Rusyn people who will make up the bulk of his future parishioners. How does the Carpatho-Rusyn cultural experience compare to the Cajun one?

"It's a bit different," Jim answered. "Whenever we 'did something Cajun,' we didn't deliberately go out and say, 'Hey, let's do something Cajun.' It just came naturally as a part of our daily lives."

John Righetti's Welcoming Remarks

John Righetti, president of the CRS, began by welcoming picnickers. He then spoke briefly about the Rusyn Cultural Garden in Cleveland, which was renovated by members of the CRS's Cleveland branch in preparation for the 50th annual One World Day celebration at the Cleveland Cultural Gardens. The Rusyn Garden, first dedicated in 1939, features a pillar dedicated to Fr. Alexander Duchnovyč, Rusyn priest, patriot, poet, educator, and author of the Rusyn national anthem. Around the pillar is a landscaped garden. On One World Day, September 8, the Rusnak singer Beata Geginova performed for the public. A banner made by the Cleveland CRS branch to commemorate the occasion was hung on display over the dance floor.

Righetti then introduced the Slavjane Rusyn Folk Ensemble:

"Slavjane is well known, not only throughout western Pennsylvania, and this country, but even in Europe. They annually represent Rusyns to standing ovations at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival and were the first American-Rusyn ensemble to perform back in the Old Country after the fall of communism [at the Festival of Dance and Sport in Medzilaborci, Slovakia.]"

Jack Poloka, director of the Slavjane Folk Ensemble, had earlier informed me that Slavjane has just this summer received 25 new applications for membership. The ensemble presently numbers fifty performers.

"What's so unique about this is that not everybody's Rusyn. We do the entire range of Slavic dances - Bulgarian, Macedonian, - all of it,"

To be Continued
Susyn Mihalasky

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