

Carpatho-Rus' Karpatska Rus'

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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 Thirty Sixth installment of the story from Moscow News.

The Crash and Rise of an Empire

A Colloquial Chronicle, Russia, 1985-. Part 36

Rallies, Massacres and Incantations

May 11, 1987. My birthday. I was staying at my mother's in the North Caucasus. In the morning I started working on a batch of idiotic poetry awaiting to be translated into English, but then rebelled. What was I, a translation machine? Couldn't I give myself a present on my birthday? I hurriedly threw some things, including a tiny rubber dinghy, in an ever handy rucksack and set off by train for Samur on the border between Baghistan and Azerbaijan. Early next morning I was already paddling past the desolate, marshy Caspian coast of Azerbaijan, heading south. The weather was a bit rough, fresh water difficult to obtain, sturgeon poachers, not averse to taking a pot shot at a strange baidarka ostensibly heading for their nets, quite a nuisance, but as ever I loved it all, this swinging the paddle for nine or ten hours a day in absolute solitude while gorging my eyes in a trance like state on the beauty of the sea on my left and marsh, mountain or semi-desert on my right. On that trip, I reached Sumgait and swore to return there next year and sail on south past Baku toward Iran until frontier guards stopped me.

Well, I never did, not am I ever likely to do so now. Next year "Sumgait" became a word that dripped blood and inspired horror as it hit the world's papers and TV screens.

It all started peacefully enough. In February 1988 the population of Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Region, which was administratively part of Azerbaijan but ethnically 85 percent Armenian, demanded to be transferred to Armenia. The demand was not unreasonable, as the move would have established a sort of symmetry: There was already in existence a largely Azeri Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan separated from Azerbaijan by a wide belt of Armenian territory, much wider than the strip of Azerbaijani territory that separated Nagorny Karabakh from Armenia.

The move found instant support in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, where hundreds of thousands of people (some said nearly a million) staged rallies in front of the opera house. The rallies were perfectly peaceful and even graced with portraits of Gorbachev and Lenin, not to mention posters in support of glasnost. There was not a hint at excesses, riotous behavior or anything like that.

The rallies sparked off a response in Azerbaijan, where mass anti-Armenian demos were held--and that was the start of a conflict that eventually led to a bloody war and misery for millions of men, and gave the Soviet empire a

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To illustrate the ages old background of our people in the Carpathian Mountains we are repeating an article we published several years ago which should be of interest to our readers. Continued from Issue #17.

The VLESOVAYA KNIGA

Beliefs of Ancient Slavs

Documents Found?

Moreover, there is a description of the journey of Yaroslav the Wise from the borders of Galicia to Budapest, where he visited his daughter

who was the wife of the Hungarian king. The report, obviously, was written by a person who met Yaroslav at the border and accompanied Yaroslav to Hungary. To this time we knew nothing about this journey, which evidently had more of a private than a political character. This means that Russian princes did not sit like savages in one place but also visited neighboring countries.

Other, not less interesting documents, were also found. But unfortunately, according to the agreement concluded with the monastery

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Lemko Festival

Some of the audience filling ROVA Resort



front--Left to Right

Ms. J. Laychak, John Kostik and Veteran Lemko member since 1929, Dmytro Czan, 92, of Mich.

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mighty push toward disintegration, for what good is an empire which cannot keep the peace within its confines?

The roots of the Azeri-Armenian conflict are centuries, if not millennia, deep. Linguistically and ethnically, Azeris are Turkic while Armenians Indo-European. Religiously, Azeris are Moslem while Armenians are Christian--their church is one of the oldest Christian churches in existence. Culturally, Armenians have a much longer tradition than Turks or, for that matter, Slavs: Their alphabet is one of the oldest in the world. If we discount hoary antiquity, neither Azerbaijan nor Armenia had statehood before Soviet times: The territory inhabited by both peoples was for centuries looked upon as a legitimate hunting ground for, and a bone of contention between, Persia, Turkey and Russia. Even now, more Armenians live in Turkey than in Armenia proper, and more Azeris in Iran than in Azerbaijan proper.

In Czarist Russia, the territory that roughly equals present Azerbaijan and Armenia, was divided between three gubernias or provinces -- those of Baku, Erivan and Yelisavetpol, the latter comprising what is now known as Nagorny Karabakh. The endemic hostility between Azeris and Armenians erupted from time to time in bestial massacres said to be incited by the Czarist government on the immortal divide-and-rule principle, although I have my doubts about these allegations, having seen with my own eyes how eagerly bloodthirsty mobs tend to blame their own brutality on the dark designs of third parties, which may in fact be guilty of nothing more sinister than sloth, complacency and crass incompetence.

In Soviet times (in 1923, to be precise), Nagorny Karabakh was incorporated in Azerbaijan, although there was some talk at first of handing it over to Armenia. It would take special research to find out what was the decisive factor in that move -- *Stalin's deviousness* (that man, who was Nationalities Commissar in Lenin's government, did indeed practice the divide-and-rule principle rather extensively) or economic necessity. Azerbaijan with its oil resources being much stronger economically and more important strategically than Armenia. Azeris acted toward Karabakh Armenians in a way that was far from propaganda cliches about internationalism and warm friendship among Soviet peoples. The politically dominant Azeri minority in Karabakh usurped all the more important or, let's face it, more lucrative positions (graft and nepotism being about as all-pervasive in the Caucasus as in Central Asia), and Armenians' cultural, religious and linguistic rights were massively abused. Even Gorbachev remarked later that the Azeris' treatment of Armenians was often "inhuman."

It is clear in retrospect that there were at least two paths open to Azeris and Armenians at that juncture: the civilized Canadian one and the Asiatic (say, Pakistani-Indian) one. Both peoples being Asian, and brought up at that under the Soviet regime, in which the concept of "enemy of the people" was part of the totalitarian ethos, it is small wonder that they opted for the bloody Asiatic mode, and the conflict escalated in quick stages into pogroms and later open warfare.

The reaction of the Gorbachev leadership to these events was entirely in character. It wasn't as if they hadn't been forewarned: There had been the December 1986 unrest in Kazakhstan; the demonstrations of Crimean Tartars near the Kremlin wall in July 1987; the mass rallies on November 18 in Lithuania to mark the dates on which they declared their independence from Russia 70 years before. And still the Karabakh explosion came like a bolt from the blue for the Gorbachev team, catching them completely unprepared, without a firm policy, practical plans or resources.

The Politburo discussed the situation. Gorbachev talked more than ever, if that was at all possible. Envoys were sent to the two republics to study the situation on the ground, a few decades

too late. The positions of the leaders of the two republics, Bagirov of Azerbaijan and Demirchyan of Armenia, were sounded out and found to be irreconcilable. Politically, a zero option was adopted: Any border changes were ruled out. The logic of that decision was clear: It was motivated by the fear of a chain reaction setting in, with dozens of territorial and other kinds of conflicts festering in the Caucasus alone, kept under wraps by a repressive state machine. Now that massive reprisals were out of fashion, Gorbachev and the others wanted to use talk and more talk as an instrument of their policies on the nationalities issue. Seen from the sidelines, their efforts looked a bit like voodoo incantations used as a cure for cancer.

The Politburo decided to make Azeris and Armenians discuss the issue and come to a decision. Whatever they decided would be accepted by Moscow. Very noble -- and obviously doomed to failure. Involve Russian intellectuals and working people in their discussions. Still more idiotic, entirely in the spirit of the Alice-in-Wonderland view of the nationalities issues prevailing at the Central Committee ideological department. Gorbachev talked to two influential Armenian intellectuals, the poetess Silva Kaputikyan and journalist and writer Zory Balayan. Promises of money for a cultural renaissance in Nagorny Karabakh were made (the money, 400 million rubles, was actually allotted and duly misappropriated in the course of time by the Azerbaijani authorities). A couple of Politburo members were sent to each of the two republics, to do more talking in an effort to cool the passions. One wonders what line Ligachev took on the ground. Did he go on talking about "extremists" inciting internecine strife, as had been the initial, reflex reaction of the Kremlin? I shouldn't wonder.

Subsequent events showed how pitifully inadequate all these conversational measures were, and what a fat lot the Politburo knew about the country they lived in and were supposed to run.

As all this talk was going on, Azeri refugees started trickling from Nagorny Karabakh and Armenia to Azerbaijan, and they became the inflammable stuff that caused most of the subsequent trouble. Uprooted from a fairly comfortable life, they were left to their own devices in Azerbaijan: There were no refugee programs, no plans for settling them, no jobs, nothing. They were mostly peasants who found themselves in an alien urban culture where they had no hope of fitting in. So they became desperate men.

On February 26, 1988, Gorbachev called on the peoples of Azerbaijan and Armenia to show their "consciousness, responsibility and wisdom." Apart from just talking, he promised more talk: The leadership would not shrink from a frank discussion of various proposals, he said, but this would have to be conducted quietly, in the framework of law and of "democratic processes."

Curiously, in his 1995 memoirs Gorbachev insists that that appeal "contributed to a normalization of the situation. The continuous mass meeting Yerevan stopped, and the people, calmed, went home" (M.S. Gorbachev, "Life and Reforms," Moscow 1995, Book 1, p. 503).

This is wishful thinking of Zhirinovsky proportions, for it was exactly the following day, February 27, that saw the first massacre of Armenians by Azeris in decades. Azeri mobs, including quite a few bloodthirsty refugees, rampaged through the streets of Sumgait, an industrial hell-hole of a place, killing, raping, maiming, beating up Armenians and plundering their homes. Horror stories quickly reached Moscow of pregnant women's bellies being ripped up, and similar atrocities. It was later reported that some 30 people died, and 197 wounded and beaten up. The Azeri police let the pogrom run its bloody course for three days, before unarmed federal troops were sent in - only to be attacked by mobs armed with knives and iron bars. There were more casualties, this time among the troops. Eventually peace was restored, and 42 people were arrested.

There was a great wave of public revulsion at the atrocities and of indignation at the government's inadequate handling of the situation, but it soon blew over. After all, Azerbaijan was somewhere on the empire's outskirts, and one did not honestly expect the government (or rather the Party) to be more competent at handling ethnic strife than it was at anything else. This combination of public indifference and the ruling class's stark incompetence has to be borne in mind in any explanation of the swift collapse of a once monolithic superpower.

Sergei ROY--Moscow News

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IN APPRECIATION

We extend our thanks for help in producing this week's issue of Carpatho-Rus to Svetlana Ledenieva.

Notice

Passaic Branch 5--16; Lemko Assoc.

1997 Schedule of Events

October 19	Fall Banquet, 2 PM	\$15.
	Birthday Meetings	
September 14	2 PM	
December 7	2 PM	

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

Press Fund Contributions

Ms. Anonymous	\$100.
Vasil Mlynar	50.
Total	\$150.

Continued from Page 1, Column 3
administration, the texts cannot be published before 1968¹. Thus, we stand on the threshold of the most interesting findings, even though we must wait at least five years for their publication. Concerning the *Vlesovaya kniga*, the author of these lines, with the support of interested persons, will begin publishing them serially.²

The study of all these sources will undoubtedly greatly advance our knowledge with reference to the history of Carpathian Rus in its most ancient period. Carpathian Russians played a prominent role in various historical events, but they have remained in the background, as if in a shadow. The reason for this was because the Carpathian Mountains not only united but also divided the people on its various sections. The neighbors of the northern slopes of the Carpathians differed from those on the southern slopes; the eastern section of the Carpathians adjoined a region of peoples altogether differing from the peoples adjoining the western Carpathians.

These circumstances made for such conditions in which various parts of the Carpathians belonged to diverse nations, each having its own history. But notwithstanding this, the mountains served as a treasury, preserving the most ancient remnants of the Rus, namely, its language, customs, rites, songs and probably its physical and spiritual qualities. In this regard Carpatho-Russians obviously appear to be the core of *Slavianstvo* (Slavicism) and the keepers of its most ancient and original features.

In connection with the political rise of Slavicism, which finally threw off the yoke of the Germans, scholarly interest in it will also grow. In this respect, Carpatho-Russians undoubtedly will be in the center of attention because the Carpathians stand squarely between the Baltic and Aegean Seas, and besides this, they define the borders separating the Western Slavs from the Eastern.

The rise of national consciousness, suffocated for centuries (particularly by the Germans) promises a full flowering of the study of all Slavicism and of the Carpatho-Russians in particular.

To write the history of the Carpatho-Russians--this is in effect to write the history of all the Slavs, because whatever took place in the Slavic world was somehow generally echoed also in its central *oblast* (region) --- in the Carpathian Mountains.

End -- Sergei Lesnoi*

S. Lesnoi is pen name of Prof. S. Ya. Paramanov, a historian who lived in Australia. He published, in Russian, ten volumes of a history entitled *History of the Russes in Unperverted Aspect*. He died in 1968.

¹ Apparently the author is referring to the year Askold and Dir arrived and began ruling in Kiev. Slavic historians only recently have concerned themselves about the prehistory of the Rus. -- Ed.

² S. Lesnoi cited and translated only 8 of the boards; the translations were far from complete. Nonetheless, there are two complete and one partially complete translations extant in the Russian language. -- Ed.

The Cooking Corner

Our tours to the Carpathian Mountain area of Eastern Europe coincide with time of grape picking. Most homes outside the large cities have grape vines covering large areas of the yard. Our relatives always give us grapes which we enjoy eating on our bus travels. These freshly picked grapes bring to mind, eating grapes from the small arbor of grapes we had in our garden when I was

young. We picked enough to make grape jelly. We always complained about the jelly because it was too runny and not like store bought. Would you believe that store bought is now runny and must be put on toast with a spoon?

We always made apple cake during this season. How better to use a part of that runny grape jelly?

Apple Cake

4	cups	flour
1/2	cup	sugar
1	tsp	baking powder
1/2	cup	nut meats
		sugar, jelly and apples
1	cup	shortening
3/4	tsp	salt
2		eggs, separated
2/3	cup	sour cream

Mix flour, 1/2 cup sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut in shortening as for pie crust until the mixture is like a meal of pea-size lumps. Mix the 2 egg yolks with 2/3 cup sour cream. Beat well. Add to flour mixture. Knead well. Divide into two parts. Roll out half to fit a cookie sheet (10 by 15). Spread with grape or tart red jelly. Cover with layer of peeled thinly sliced apples. Roll out other half of dough and spread over apples. Beat the 2 egg whites until stiff and spread on dough. Sprinkle lightly with granulated sugar and finely chopped nuts. Bake in 375 degree oven 35 to 40 minutes or until brown.

Optional: Try other fruits -- blueberries, plums, etc. and other jellies or jams.

The Orthodox Herald

AUDIO and VIDEO Tapes

Item #1 Karpati-Rus' Folk Songs;

Eighteen folk songs from the Carpathian Mountains! Transcribed from 78 rpm discs recorded in 1910, this audio cassette tape presents wedding, christening and Christmas songs...the way our ancestors did them.

Item #2: Russian Balalaika and Polkas, Chardashes and Gypsy Eclectic;

This audio cassette tape contains Russian polka and balalaika selections, Slavic chardashes and gypsy melodies. Several folk songs provided here were originally recorded in 1910 on 78 rpm discs.

Item #3: East European Folk Festival;

Each year, the Lemko Association of the U.S. and Canada sponsors a festival of East European dancing and singing. This video offers highlights of the 25th festival which was held in 1993. It includes excerpts of an Orthodox Catholic prayer service and concert of Karpati-Rus., Ukrainian, Russian and Slovak folk songs and dancing.

Item #4: Canonization of Father Maksym Sandovich;

This video includes a biography of Saint Maksym, the first Orthodox Catholic saint of the Karpati-Rus;. The major sites and events of his glorification which occurred in Gorlice, Poland in September, 1994 are uniquely recorded.

Item #5: Video Recording of the Akafist Male Chamber Choir of Moscow and the Slavic Male Chorus of Washington, D.C.;

Recorded at St. Luke's Serbian Orthodox Church in McLean, Virginia on March 12, 1992, this video includes 17 classic liturgical songs and shows the interior and exterior of all Slavic Orthodox Catholic churches in the Washington, D.C. area.

Item #6: Canonization of Father Alexis Toth;

St Alexis' biography and canonization ceremony are preserved on this video which was filmed at St. Tikhon's Monastery.

Item #7: Folk Songs from the Uzhorod Region: "Muse Zakarpatskaia through 12 folk songs that were recorded in Soviet days in 1955.

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Item #7.....\$12.

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Reminder--39th Lemko Convention September 6 at CRA Center, Lemko Hall 556 Yonkers Avenue Yonkers, NY 10704

This year the Convention will convene at Lemko Hall where previous Conventions were held for about 25 years, to the 1960s. Registration of delegates will begin at 9:30 AM with the Convention to begin at 10:00 AM. Dependent on progress during the day's proceedings, the delegates may be able to conclude all activities, including the election of officers in one day. A banquet will then be served by the staff of the Center upon completion of all deliberations.

AGENDA FOR THE 39TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION OF LEMKO ASSOC., TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1997 AT CRA CENTER,

- 1) Registration of delegates at 9:30 AM on September 6.
- 2) Opening of the Convention at 10:00 AM by the President, Alexander Herenchak.
- 3) Roll call of the delegates.
- 4) Election of Chairpersons and Recording Secretaries of the Convention. Appointments to the Resolution, By-Laws, Editorial, Grievance and Nominating Committees.
- 5) Reading of the minutes of the 38th Convention.
- 6) Reports of the Executive Board; President, Vice-President and General Secretary/Treasurer.
- 7) Delegate discussion of the Board reports.
- 8) Reports of the Editorial Board and the Controlling Committee.
- 9) Report of the 1st District Organizer.
- 10) Reports, written, from Delegates of each Branch.
- 11) Reports from the following Committees: Lemko Relief, Carpatho-Russian American Center, Lemko Festival and Talerhof.
- 12) Delegate discussion of the various Committee reports.
- 13) Reports from the following Committees: Resolution, By-Laws, Editorial, Grievance and Nominating.
- 14) Election of the Executive and the Planning Boards.
- 15) Establishing the date of the next Convention.
- 16) Closing of the 39th Convention.