A different opinion on the situation in Russia.

Shevardnadze: Civil War II USSR Reborn

Georgia's President Eduard Shevardnadze.

Georgia's president talks with Moscow News's Akaky Mikadze and Mikhail Shevelyov.

MN: We didn't expect to find you in Tbilisi on Mikhail Gorbachev's 65th birthday. Weren't you invited?

Eduard Shevardnadze: I sent a telegram.

Are you aware of his plans to run for president of Russia, or have elections in Russia become another country's internal affairs for you?

From the standpoint of Georgia's interests, Russia's elections are no less important than our own. Our interests are of a pragmatic character, since the outcome of the elections could have both a positive and a negative influence on the situation in Georgia.

What result would be good for Georgia?

This is a very delicate question because we are really talking about another state's affairs.

Please interfere in Russia's internal affairs.

I'll wait until Boris Yeltsin asks me to do so.

As a former member of the Soviet Communist Party's Politburo, do you take an interest in what the Communist Party of Russia has become?

My answer to this question has to do with a much broader problem: was perestroika all in vain? To me this process was the most important peaceful revolution of this century. The changes that have taken place on a global scale are

A Polish Scholar Views the Lemko Community

The numerous political changes undergone in Poland since the fall of communism have altered the situation and status of Lemkos in Poland. Among these changes has been the raised profile of the numerically tiny Lemko community within the larger Polish mainstream culture. To learn more about how Lemkos are perceived in Poland, Karpatska Rus' spoke with Dr. Andzej Zieba, professor of Polish history at Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland. A recognized specialist in ethnic minorities in Poland, Dr. Zieba has written on Lemkos and Carpatho-Rusyns in a wide variety of venues in both North America and Europe. Clarifications added to the text of Dr. Zieba's remarks are indicated by [brackets].

Karpatska Rus' (KR): Prof. Zieba, please describe the recent increase of interest in Lemko matters in Poland.

Dr. Andzej Zieba (AZ): The subject of Lemkos is actually only of marginal interest to the Polish political public. In recent years, however, Lemkos have in fact appeared with increased frequency - but only as part of the general democratization of Polish political life. The Polish press has been free from government censorship for the past few years, and as a result has undergone a revival. Newspapers and local television stations have improved in both quality and quantity. It is in this context that articles and television programming about Lemkos have begun to appear. This observation holds true, however, only for those regions of Poland where Lemkos reside: Silesia, and the southeastern corner of the country.

The main national newspapers carry only those stories about Lemkos which are related to some broader political question. They covered, for example, the [Second] World Congress of Rusyns in Knyica, but they did not relate the subject of Lemkos to the Carpathian Euroregion [Economic Free Trade Zone which approximates Carpatho-Rusyn ethnographic territory]. I mention this because I am aware of the hopes and apprehensions that the Euroregion initiative will in some way complement the aims of the Rusyn movement [to ease political and economic hindrances to Rusyn cross-border interaction]. Polish public opinion, however, has come to the conclusion that the Euroregion initiative is not in Poland's national interest.

Another [Lemko-related] issue which interests the Warsaw newspapers is the "repatriation" being blocked by a coalition of ex-communists and populist parties very negatively predisposed to economic reform. The repatriation question encompasses the "Lemko forest question," i.e., the demands by Lemkos to repose property in southeastern Poland lost in 1947 (a governmental decree promulgated in July, 1949 extended government ownership over Lemko properties in Cracow and Rzeszow provinces that were left unoccupied after the Lemkos' involuntary resettlement from their homeland in 1947).

What is new are the (Polish-language) television features about Lemkos produced by Cracow TV. Lemkos themselves are featured in these programs; as are current developments in the Lemko community such as the Vatras [Annual Lemko Folk Festival]. These programs are a regularly scheduled feature in the television series "U Siebie," a program about national minorities and ethnic groups.

In national political life, Lemkos are not visible and do not arouse much interest (aside from the aforementioned repatriation question). The Lemkos' small population and scattered settlement [throughout Poland] mean that they do not constitute a sizeable group of voters; consequently, no one fights for their votes. Some marginal politicians would like to play the Lemkos off against the Ukrainians. I read in the party newspaper of the National Democratic Party [Chu] that [party] activity directed toward the Lemko community was regarded as being unlikely to yield results. The party has no one [within the Lemko community] to work with, and the political climate itself has changed.

KR: How, if at all, is current interest in Lemkos different from past interest in Lemkos?

AZ: Interest in Lemkos does not exist on the political level like it did in the 1930s. At that time all activities, even academic research, in some way served to forward the desire of certain governing circles to pit the Lemkos against the Ukrainians by supporting the idea already present among Rusyn and Ruthenophiles Lemkos that Lemkos are not ethnic Ukrainians, but a distinct nationality.

The present-day Polish government has no such "divide and conquer" policy. The question of Lemko ethnonational identity is today a much less politicized issue. I say "less" because some Ukrainian academic and political publications still continue to politicize it. Some Ukrainians continue to interpret the present political climate through the eyes of the past. In a throwback to the 1930s, they reason that if Poles speak about "Lemkos" [rather than referring to Lemkos as "Ukrainians"], this is undoubtedly because Poles want to divide and diminish the Ukrainian community. These particular Ukrainians don't seem to have noticed that the political situation has changed [since the 1930s]. Simply put: there are new national borders, new political priorities, and new realities!

KR: Please describe the typical student of Lemko studies: what is his/her age, ethnonational/professional background, educational level, gender?

AZ: There are no "typical" people - every person is a real character! But seriously, we number only about a dozen or so. There are old and young, male and female, ethnic Poles, Ukrainians, and Lemkos. All have university backgrounds, or are employed at specialized ethnographic, archival or other research institutions. In a word, there is a wide variety of people having in common a high degree of academic expertise. Our academic disciplines are also varied, but complementary: archeology, ethnography, history, art history,
continued from page 1, column 1

obvious, we have gotten rid of nuclear confrontation. The changes affecting the internal scenario are much more complicated because some things are still unclear. But I am convinced that if this process had not been set in motion, we would have had to face much more serious consequences.

What kind of consequences?

Civil war, not in some of the former Soviet republics but throughout the Soviet Union. We managed to avoid the worst scenario.

Aren't you afraid that a victory for the Russian communists will mean a return to the old days?

If the plans to resurrect the Soviet Union are backed by any actions, this will mean the communists, aren't thinking of the most peaceful revolution. But what kind of scenario are much more complicated because some things are still unclear. But I am convinced that if this process had not been set in motion, we would have had to face much more serious consequences.

We'll teach them everywhere, and at home too. After all, we haven't broken off contact with anyone. We've managed to maintain good relations with everybody.

As we sat waiting in your reception room we saw the U.S. ambassador leave your office looking very happy.

Are you jealous?

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Another recipe for the popular Poppy Seed Roll

The Cooking Corner

Papry Seed or Walnut Roll

Dough:
1 1/2 cups lukewarm milk
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter or margarine
3 cups flour
2 whole eggs

Filling:
(see below)

Glaze:
1 beaten egg yolk (optional)

Dissolve yeast with sugar in milk. On a floured surface crumble butter together with flour; then work in egg yolks together with the yeast mixture. If dough is too hard to work, add a little more milk.

Knead until dough does not stick to fingers or surface. Divide in two and let rise in warm place for 45 minutes to one hour. Roll one ball out into a 10 x 12-inch rectangle about 1/4 inch thick and spread with either of the following fillings. Roll out second ball, fill and roll up (like a jelly roll). To make one poppy seed and one walnut roll, use only half the amounts for each filling. Place rolls well apart on an ungreased baking sheet and allow to rise for half an hour or so in a warm place. They will look risen but will not have doubled. Brush tops with egg yolk; bake at 350 degrees until nicely browned, about 30 to 40 minutes. Remove from oven, cover loosely with a dish towel and let cool.

Yield: Two rolls, 8 to 10 servings each.
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literature, sociology, and linguistics. The only major discipline which lacks representation is political science.

KR: How are Lemkos generally viewed by these students of Lemko studies? What are their opinions on matters important to Lemkos, such as the legal questions surrounding the "Vistula" Operation or the ethnornational question?

AZ: The Vistula Operation is a political question. It appears at present nothing will be done in this case. Such is the political atmosphere. I can appreciate the historical weight which this issue carries for Lemkos, but in light of recent stormy discussions, this question tends to be viewed more in the context of Polish-Ukrainian relations than Polish-Lemko relations. This is the first point to keep in mind.

Secondly, academic research on Lemkos focuses disproportionately on the historical past. The Vistula Operation has been the subject of several "exposes," for example the just recently published brochures by Edward Prus [whose writings are widely regarded in the academic community as inflammatory, methodologically substandard, and strongly biased in a pro-communist, anti-Ukrainian direction]. These types of publications are not in academe; there are little more than political diatribes. They do not contribute anything new to our knowledge of Lemko history. Instead, they serve only to push the biases of their authors. This is not research; it is just opinion.

Regarding the views of researchers on Lemko issues, most of the research is anthropological and sociological and takes place in Cracow at the Jagiellonian University's Institutes of Sociology and Polonian Studies. In my opinion, these studies are conducted in accord with professional academic standards, i.e., without the involvement of the researcher's own private biases. For this reason, it is difficult to say whether this research in some way takes a stand regarding the current range of ethnonational orientations found today among Lemkos in Poland. These researchers simply describe and interpret what they see happening. I have not noticed any researcher who would presume to tell Lemkos what they should think or do. Any researcher who did so would expose him/herself to ridicule in the academic community.

KR: How does the average Pole view Lemkos and this interest in them? Has his/ her view on these matters changed recently?

AZ: Lemkos are numerically too small and too poorly organized to have generated any strong opinion from the majority of the country. Poles have strong opinions regarding Jews, Germans, or Russians, but do they have any opinion of Lemkos? I doubt it. Some know something about Lemkos, others don't. Some have a particular opinion, but most in general have no interest. Some associate Lemkos with Ukrainians; others regard them as a kind of hybrid tribe - something like Gypsies or Cossacks. More research needs to be done to seek answers to these questions. [A survey inquiry into knowledge of ethnic minorities among Polish students was conducted by sociologists in 1989-1990. The survey found that 80% had never heard of the name 'Lemko'; virtually none knew the origin of the eastern rite churches around Krynica; nor could they identify the Vistula Operation SYM.]

There has been a definite transformation, however, in how Poles view minorities in general. We are living in a time of transformations...or revolts...or both. What is in the air - something like Gypsies or Cossacks. There views on many things are undergoing dramatic changes. But it is difficult as yet to see where these changes will lead. In opinion, they are heading in a positive direction.

Am I being too optimistic? Intolerance has appeared in both western and eastern Europe. Will this influence the evolution of Polish attitudes toward minorities? Probably. These European trends will strengthen elements of intolerance and nationalism already present within Poland. It is still an open question whether or not the European community (both east and west) will be able to overcome these sicknesses.

KR: Do you see any historical correlation between the state of Lemko studies in Poland and the fate of Lemkos themselves?

AZ: In the 1990s the evolution of Lemko studies was affected by [the authorities' perceptions of the] Lemko community's political significance. [Research on Lemkos in the 1990s] was driven by a hidden agenda: enemies of the Lemkos, and to avert their possible unification with the Ukrainian minority. I should also note the eruption of Ukrainian academic interest in Lemkos during this same period, which was likewise politically motivated and geared to influencing the Lemkos. This same political agenda continues to characterize Ukrainian scholarship [on Lemkos] up until the present day. Ukrainian scholars specializing in Lemko studies are usually also activists in [Ukrainian oriented] Lemko organizations.

In addition, current Polish research indicates that Lemkos as a group are disappearing through assimilation [into the Polish majority culture]. The imminent disappearance of a group often stimulates academic interest.

Lemkos themselves have undoubtedly benefited from this interest in themselves. All studies, regardless of whether they are academic or popular in nature, inspire new debates and currents of thought among Lemkos and sustain their interest in themselves and their own culture.

One cannot predict, however, whether Lemkos will survive as a distinct community, or whether they will flee to the American or Canadian fate as the Karaites. The Karaites were a distinct religious and ethnic community originating in the east and confessing their own distinct brand of Judaism. While residing on the territory of the old Polish commonwealth, they produced a wide range of high caliber scholars specializing in their own culture and in general eastern studies. Nevertheless, this period of intellectual vigor preceded the Karaites' demise as a distinct culture and people.

KR: How do you assess the future of Lemkos and Lemko studies in Poland?

AZ: That depends on Lemkos themselves. Poland is beginning to resemble the West with the extensive freedom allowed its citizens, and rights accorded to ethnonational minorities. Will Lemkos learn to maximize their opportunities in this new political climate? Will Lemkos take advantage of the many opportunities created by the economic reforms? A Lemko community that is wealthier, freer, and living in a pluralistic society will have more opportunities to develop its own ethnonational identity. Of course, Lemkos will also have more opportunity to assimilate.

KR: Thank you, Dr. Zieba, for a most informative discussion.

Susyn Mihalsky

audio and video tapes

Item #1 Karpati-Rus' Folk Songs; 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, Chardash 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 Sandovych; 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 Askafat Male Choir 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 Alexs Toth; St. Alexs' biography and canonization ceremony are preserved on this video which was filmed at St. Tikhon's Monastery.

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Schedule of Events

1996 Schedule of Events

Passaic branch #5-16

May 5 Spring Banquet, 2:00 PM $15.
July 21 Annual Picnic, 1:00 PM $15.
October 20 Fall Banquet, 2:00 PM $15.
Birthday Meetings

June 9 Item #4 ...
September 15 Item #5 ...
December 8 All functions are held at the Lodge, corner of Ann Street and Lanza Avenue, Garfield, NJ.

C.R.A. Center, Lemko Hall, Yonkers

Schedule of Events, 1996

Spring Dance * May 11, 9:00 PM $15.
Annual Picnic Sun. July 14, 9:00 PM $20.
NOTICE

To all Lemko Lodges in the New Jersey and New York vicinity, please elect delegates to the First District Conference which will be held on April 28, 1996, at 1:00 P.M. at the Carpatho-Russian Center, 556 Yonkers Avenue, Yonkers, NY. There are many important matters to be up for discussion. Bring your own ideas as how our Association can raise revenues, recruit new members, spur activities in the Lodges and other items of interest.

First District Committee