

APPENDIX: CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS DURING PERESTROIKA

compiled by Boris P. Chichlo

1985

9 January — *Literaturnaia gazeta* publishes a major article by Valery Tishkov on the struggle of Native Americans in the United States to assert their rights and preserve their traditional values. In New York, he interviews Russell Means, one of the leaders of the American Indian Movement.

15–17 May — Experts consider Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Leningrad as the beginning of the *perestroika* period. During the trip, he repeatedly left his car – much to the alarm of his security detail – and appeared "very close to the people." On this occasion, he publicly stated for the first time: "We all need to restructure. All of us."

14 June — In *Soviet Russia*, writer Yuri Rytkheu argues that "in our socialist society there are striking examples of the provision of human rights in the broadest and most genuine sense of the term. This is clearly reflected in the fate of the peoples of the Soviet North."

28 June — At the 14th Moscow International Film Festival, Elem Klimov's *Come and See* received the Golden Prize. In this film, war (1943) is for the first time in the USSR portrayed as absolute Evil, featuring unflinchingly realistic scenes of apocalyptic horror for the viewer.

17 July — V. Boiko, Doctor of Philosophy, argues in *Science in Siberia* that "among the northern ethnic groups a [...] type of personality has formed, characterized by a high level of education, professional training, and a broad range of needs and interests in the spheres of everyday life, culture, socio-political activity and, it should be emphasized, labour."

10 August — A powerful explosion occurred on the nuclear submarine K-431 in Chazhma Bay (Sea of Japan, near Vladivostok). Information about the incident was strictly classified and only began to become available after 1991. As a result, precise data on the scale of radioactive contamination of the marine area, coastline, and its consequences for the population remain unknown.

4–6 September — Mikhail Gorbachev visited Siberia, specifically the Tiumen region. According to his account, he wished "to understand on site the causes of the unsatisfactory situation in oil and gas production, to see how people live, as there was con-

siderable dissatisfaction expressed in their letters.” He noted that the discussions with oil and gas workers were unusually frank and critical.

17 October — Issue no. 291 of *Izvestiia* published, for the first time, a major article addressing the issue of anonymous denunciations, on the basis of which many entirely innocent people had been prosecuted and convicted. The article prompted the issuance of a decree on 2 February 1988 prohibiting the consideration of unsigned letters by state authorities.

7 November — On the anniversary of the 1917 Revolution, Mikhail Gorbachev addressed delegations attending the celebrations: “Today the Party has revealed the greatness of our goals and shown all humanity that the CPSU Programme is a programme of creation and peace.”

10–12 November — A conference entitled “The Peoples of the North: Concepts for Social and Economic Development under Conditions of Scientific and Technological Progress” was held in Novosibirsk. The conference formed part of the broader state programme aimed at the “acceleration of the development of Siberia’s productive forces.”

19–21 November — In Geneva, the first summit meeting between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States took place. Mikhail Gorbachev later wrote: “My conversation with Ronald Reagan was intensive, substantive, and at times emotional. Most importantly, however, it was candid and, as we came to know one another better, increasingly cordial. [...] I felt that Reagan was someone with whom one could do business.”

20 November — Hans-Pavia Rosing, head of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, appealed to Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, leaders of the states bordering the Bering Strait, requesting the lifting of the “iron curtain” dividing the Inuit of Siberia and Alaska.

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In Moscow, a journal titled *Severnnye prostory* [Northern Spaces] began publication. Its central aim is the truthful documentation of the life of the Indigenous peoples of the Soviet North, their cultures, and their natural environment, which is increasingly affected by industrial expansion.

Under this title *Trevozhnyi Sever* [The Troubled North] a group of scholars affiliated with the Moscow Geographical Society launched an interdisciplinary research programme addressing the crisis of the natural and cultural environment of the Soviet Arctic. Key participants include Liudmila Bogoslovskaja, Dmitrii Bogoiavlenskii, Igor Krupnik, Alexander Pika, and Boris Prokhorov.

A rock band under the name *Instruktsiia po vyzhivaniuu* [Instruction for Survival] emerged in Tiumen. Their first performance at a medical college attracted approximately forty attendees. Following a major concert-performance the following year, the musicians faced repression.

In *Na severe dal'nem* [In the Far North], No. 2, Magadan, Yurii Rytkeu writes that, unlike the Inuit of Alaska and Canada “who live in fear and uncertainty,” the Chukchi are “real people,” “proud and looking boldly toward the future.”

The publishing house *Detskaia literatura* [Children's literature] issued a collection of poems by poets from different countries entitled *We Do Not Live for War*. The volume includes Samuel Marshak's poem “A Lesson in the Native Language,” written as early as 1950. In the poem, the words “We do not need war!” are repeated twice.

1986

15 January — Mikhail S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, declared: “The Soviet Union proposes, acting in a gradual and consistent manner, to carry through and complete the process of freeing the Earth from nuclear weapons within the next fifteen years, by the end of this century.

26 April — At 1:24 a.m., an explosion occurred at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, triggering the largest environmental disaster in history. The Soviet authorities did not publicly acknowledge the accident until two days later. In Kyiv, where radiation levels had risen sharply, the authorities nevertheless proceeded with the compulsory mass May Day parade, in accordance with established Soviet practice.

13–15 May — The Fifth Congress of Soviet Filmmakers, held at the Kremlin Palace of Congresses, became what many observers later described as “the first swallow of the storm wave of cultural *perestroika*.” For the first time, the country's leadership was confronted with sharp and public criticism of state policies that had long constrained the free development of culture and artistic expression.

29 May — The newspaper *Nauka v Sibiri* [Science in Siberia] drew attention to the widespread consumption of alcohol, not only in private life but also, as the article candidly acknowledged, in the workplace – what was described as “industrial” or workplace drinking. The publication constituted a predictable response to the CPSU Central Committee's anti-alcohol campaign and its resolution on combating alcoholism.

14 August — A resolution was adopted terminating all work on the proposed diversion of northern and Siberian rivers to Central Asia, a project that had engaged more than 160 Soviet institutions over nearly two decades. Specialists had long warned that its implementation would result in irreversible ecological transformations across a vast territory and would seriously disrupt the traditional ways of life of the Indigenous peoples of the Siberian North.

11 September — The newspaper *Izvestia* published a major article entitled “Territory.” Travelling by boat to visit Evenki reindeer herders, for whom this landscape of forests and rivers constituted their ancestral homeland, the journalist reflected on officially approved plans for the industrial development of the region. Having already

examined the relevant economic strategy documents, he noted that they were concerned exclusively with the exploitation of natural resources, while making no mention whatsoever of the Evenki population whose lives would be directly affected by these projects.

19 November — The *Law on Individual Labour Activity of Citizens of the USSR* granted Soviet citizens the right to engage in private economic activity in more than thirty categories of goods production and services. The legislation marked an important step toward the liberalization of the Soviet economy.

24 November — The ensemble *Atasikun* (“All Together”) gave its first performances in Anadyr. Its founder, Nina Akukyn, revived the songs and dances of the Naukan Eskimos (Siberian Yupik) from Naukan, the historic settlement where she was born.

8 December — In the prison of Chistopol (Tatarstan), Anatolii Marchenko died after a 117-day hunger strike. He was the author of *My Testimony*, a major account of Soviet political labour camps and prisons in the 1960s. The book circulated widely through *samizdat* [underground self-published literature] networks and was translated into numerous languages.

23 December — Academician Andrei Sakharov returned to Moscow after spending nearly seven years in exile in Gorki, where he had lived under daily KGB surveillance.

In December, the journal *Uralskii Sledopyt* [Urals Pathfinder] published a frank article on the relationship between oil workers and reindeer herders in Yamal. The new “owners” who were “developing” Nenets lands openly stated: “Reindeer herders leave the places where we arrive. About fifteen years ago, there was still contact: they gave us fish and reindeer meat, and we gave them firewood. At that time, we were not yet harmful to the tundra.”

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The 1986 children’s board game *Ot Baikala do Amura* [From Lake Baikal to the Amur] required players to travel by diesel locomotive, develop mineral resources, construct industrial enterprises, and so on. The winner was the player who reached the end of the route first. It can be understood as an example of Soviet propaganda: in reality, the “completion” of the construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) and the broader project of “development” were still far from being achieved.

By the middle of the year, the price of oil had fallen to US \$10 per barrel. In the Soviet Union, this triggered a severe economic and social crisis. In the following years, the country was forced to borrow from Western lenders, which resulted in a rapid increase in its external debt.

V. Boiko identified the aim of his book *Social Problems of Labour among the Indigenous Peoples of the North* as understanding how to “optimize employment in social production and improve attitudes toward labour,” for example, in the field of reindeer herding.

1987

1 January — Academician D. Likhachev published an article entitled *Trevogi sovesti* [Anxieties of Conscience] in *Literaturnaia gazeta*. He wrote: "In recent years, we have become particularly aware of the lack and deficit of civic conscience [...] because we remained silent. [...] We saw everything – and... remained silent. Our conscience was silent. What were we afraid of? There is no fear in truth. [...] We must have only one fear: the fear of falsehood."

27–28 January — The Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) took place, becoming a concrete step in the process of democratic reform. A. Yakovlev, often described as the "ideologist of *perestroika*," stated that at this Plenum and in its aftermath the party elite "fell into a neurotic state. Oh, how afraid it was of holding free elections!" At the January Plenum, "the interests of the party apparatus itself were affected, and a genuine political struggle began."

8 February — In an interview with the newspaper *L'Humanité*, Gorbachev stated: "We have no political prisoners; in our country, people are not tried for their convictions." However, already on February 2, the first political prisoners had been released under two secret decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. At the beginning of February, approximately 200 "prisoners of conscience" were freed.

13 April — For the first time under pressure from scientists and the public, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted Resolution No. 434, "On Measures to Ensure the Protection and Rational Use of the Natural Resources of the Baikal Basin in 1987–1995." For the first time, the resolution placed primary emphasis on measures aimed at protecting the natural environment of the unique lake.

28 May — Mathias Rust, a young German amateur pilot, took off from Hamburg in a small Cessna aircraft and, flying via Reykjavík and Helsinki, reached Moscow without interference. He landed on the Bolshoi Moskvoretskii Bridge and taxied towards Red Square. Before being arrested, he managed to hand out a considerable number of autographs. It was the Day of the Border Guard Troops of the USSR.

12 June — During his speech in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, US President Ronald Reagan addressed Mikhail Gorbachev with the following appeal: "If you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalisation, open this gate [...], Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

25 July — a large demonstration by Crimean Tatars took place in Moscow. Around 800 people gathered in Red Square. They carried portraits of Lenin and Gorbachev, as well as banners reading "Return the homeland to the Crimean Tatars" and "Homeland or death." For 36 hours, they chanted their slogans, demanding the restoration of national autonomy, which they described as having been "granted by Lenin" in 1921.

1 October — Mikhail Gorbachev stated in Murmansk the need for a radical reduction in the level of military confrontation and called for international cooperation in the Arctic, “so that all northern countries would never again become an arena of war, and so that a genuine zone of peace and productive cooperation could be established here.” This statement was one of the six “Murmansk Initiatives.”

22 September — The newspaper *Sovetskaia Rossiia* reported that Cubans had arrived in the small settlement of Sukpai (located 200 km from Khabarovsk) to cut timber on the traditional lands of the Indigenous Udege people and export it to their island. Plans also included the construction of a wood-processing plant there.

22 November — The first mass protest demonstration took place in Irkutsk, demanding that the construction of a pipeline for discharging industrial waste from a pulp and paper mill into the Irkut River be halted. Its organiser, Anatolii Sosunov, stated: “Today we [...] have defeated the spirit of servility within ourselves. This demonstration has shown that we have begun to drive the slaves out of ourselves.”

12 and 15 December — The newspaper *Poliarnik* published an article by Mikhail Chlenov and Igor Krupnik devoted to the problems of Novoe Chaplino (Chukotka), a settlement whose main population consisted of one of the groups of Siberian Eskimos (Siberian Yupik). This was the first professional and fully candid examination by prominent anthropologists of the problems facing Indigenous peoples.

14 December — Mikhail Gorbachev stated on television that the treaty signed in the United States on the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles represented “a historic opportunity for all of humanity to begin freeing itself from the heavy burden of militarism and war, which not only caused enormous human suffering but also hindered economic development” and “restricted the freedom of peoples.”

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Magadan: *Two Worlds at the Same Latitudes*. The book, whose title is also presented in English, consists of two parts. The first describes the supposedly prosperous life of the Indigenous peoples of the Soviet North as a result of “Lenin’s national policy” and the efforts of the Soviet Communist Party. The second part consists of a “Dossier of the Crimes of Imperialism,” in which Indigenous peoples of the United States are portrayed as “outcasts on their own land.”

Yakutsk. In the book *The Great October Revolution and the Peoples of the Soviet North*, it is “shown how Lenin’s ideas about the transition of previously backward peoples to socialism, bypassing capitalism, were implemented in the North; the transformations of economic and social relations, as well as the spiritual life of the Indigenous population, are examined.”

Issues 1–3 of the journal *Sibirskie Ogni* [Siberian Lights] recognised that the personal experience of the [peasant] had always played a central role in agricultural production. The Soviet-style collective experience, however, appeared as follows: mass cattle

disease and the death of calves in the collective farm *Zavety Il'icha*. The loss of means of production in the collective farm The Path to Communism due to mismanagement was "greater than the total amount of state subsidies received."

1988

7 January — The Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the Fundamental Restructuring of Environmental Protection in the Country" was adopted. It was undoubtedly prompted by the Chernobyl disaster. As a result, the State Committee of the USSR for Nature Protection (*Goskompriroda*) was urgently established on January 16.

7–9 May — Human rights activists founded the first opposition political party in Moscow, the "Democratic Union," with the aim of peacefully transforming the country's political system and establishing representative democracy.

15 May — The Soviet Union began withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan. The last forces would leave in 1989, after ten years of a futile and costly military intervention.

25 May — The first environmental protest rally took place in Tiumen, organized by the "Public Committee for Nature Protection."

29 May — Four US citizens representing an Indigenous people of the country arrived in Moscow. According to their own statement, they intended "to hold, if possible, a detailed discussion with Reagan and Gorbachev about human rights in the United States."

31 May — At Moscow University, US President Ronald Reagan spoke about freedom, explaining that "progress is not predetermined from above; the key to it is freedom – freedom of thought, freedom of information, freedom of communication."

5–12 June — The USSR celebrated the Millennium of the Baptism of Rus'. Orthodox churches were reopened, the Bible became available for purchase, and people were permitted to freely perform religious rites.

13–14 June — For the first time, a group of Indigenous people from Nome, Alaska, was permitted to visit their relatives in the settlement of Provideniia in Chukotka, from whom they had been separated for forty years by the Stalinist "Iron Curtain."

28 June — The writer Alitet Nemtushkin wrote in the newspaper *Sotsialisticheskaiia industriia*: "Alongside all the other problems facing us, the residents of Evenkia, there has emerged a new concern – anxiety over the fate of our native land in connection with the proposed construction of the Turukhansk Hydroelectric Power Station."

10 July — For the first time in Altai, the traditional festival "El Oiyn" ("People's Games") was revived in the village of Yelo in the Ongudai District, thanks to the

efforts of journalists from the newspaper *Zvezda Altaia*. Since then, it has been held every two years.

4 August — Members of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, representing Inuit communities from Greenland, the United States, and Canada, arrived in Chukotka, where they met their Indigenous relatives there for the first time.

17 August — The *Vserossiiskoe Obshchestvo invalidov* [All-Russian Society of Disabled Persons] was finally established. Its founders and initiators had previously faced persecution from the Soviet authorities. The statement “There are no disabled people in the USSR!” became a symbol of the official denial of disability issues (London, 1986).

12 September — Khakas people who had arrived from Siberia erected a *yurt* outside the US Embassy in Moscow, demanding a review of the case of Leonard Peltier, a leader of the Indigenous movement who was imprisoned.

2 October — The Estonian Popular Front was founded. On October 7, the Latvian Popular Front was established. On October 22–23, the founding congress of Sąjūdis (“The Movement”) took place in Lithuania. All three Baltic states would soon declare their sovereignty.

3–5 October — The First All-Union Conference “Ecology of the Oil and Gas Complex” was held in Nadym (Yamal). There, the future writer Nina Yadne spoke in defence of the problems and concerns of the Nenets reindeer herders.

7 December — Mikhail Gorbachev presented at the United Nations the new principles of Soviet foreign policy and recognised the priority of universal human values over the interests of individual powers. This was seen as a sign of the end of the “Cold War.”

19 December — An order was signed by the Minister of Communications “On the termination of jamming of foreign radio stations broadcasting to the Soviet Union,” including Voice of America, the BBC, Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Europe.

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Yuri Vella, a Nenets hunter, reindeer herder, and poet, published “News from My Camp” in the journal *Sibirskie Ogni*. He reflected on the causes of mutations in nature after an unusual pike was caught. He addressed people with the question: “Could it be that a mutation has already occurred in our actions, our relationships, and our feelings?”

Sibir² – Poiski istiny [Siberia – In Search of Truth]. A three-part documentary film was released. The second part, *At the Crossroads*, features the writer Anna Nerkagi, who discusses the difficult life of the Nenets people of Yamal, caught at the crossroads of cultures and historical eras.

Issue No. 16 of the journal *Kommunist* published an uncensored article *The Great Problems of Small Peoples*. The authors of the article were the anthropologist and demographer Alexander Pika and the specialist in human ecology Boris Prokhorov.

1989

8 January — In the newspaper *Moscow News*, the Khanty writer Eremai Aipin stated: “If I am elected a People’s Deputy of the USSR, I will do everything in my power to save my people. From what? From extinction.”

28 January — The society Memorial was established in Moscow. Its objectives were to research political repression in the USSR, rehabilitate and preserve the memory of its victims, as well as to engage in human rights advocacy.

5 February — In the village of Kovran on the Kamchatka Peninsula, the Itelmen announced the creation of their own organization, which was given the name *Tkhsanom* (“Dawn”). This was the first genuine council established through the will of an Indigenous people themselves.

15 February — The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan was completed. The operation, initiated in accordance with the Geneva Accords, was one that the Soviet Union had undertaken to carry out within a period of nine months.

9 April — A peaceful demonstration in Tbilisi was brutally suppressed by soldiers sent on orders from Moscow. Two years later, Georgia would proclaim its independence and designate this date as “National Unity Day.”

4 May — At the Institute of Ethnography in Moscow, members of the Department of Northern Peoples discussed the issue of participating in the expert assessment of the Turukhansk Hydroelectric Power Station construction project, the implementation of which would result in the flooding of a vast area of taiga – the homeland and traditional territory of the Evenki people.

25 May — The First Congress of People’s Deputies of the USSR opened in an atmosphere of complete *glasnost* and open debate. For the first time, the entire country was able to follow its proceedings for two weeks through all television channels. It was there that viewers saw Academician Sakharov for the first time.

3 June — Pink Floyd gave their first performance in Moscow. There, Soviet citizens “quietly went mad from the sense of unreality surrounding everything that was happening.” In Ferghana, on the same day, Uzbeks carried out a pogrom against the Meskhetian Turks, whom the Stalinist regime had deported from Georgia to Uzbekistan, where they had previously lived peacefully.

26 June — The “Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries” (Convention No. 169) was adopted in Geneva. Russia has still not ratified this document.

11 August — Participants in the founding congress of the Association *Spasenie Yugry* (“Salvation of Yugra”) stated that “the barbaric exploitation of our land is leading to its destruction, and along with it our peoples are also dying, as is their culture.”

23 August — Approximately two million residents of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia joined hands to form a human chain stretching nearly 600 kilometres from Tallinn to Vilnius. In this way, they commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and demanded independence for their countries.

27 September — In the settlement of Tura, the administrative centre of the Evenki Autonomous Okrug, the Association of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, *Arun* [Revival], was established on the initiative of Zinaida Pikunova, an educator and linguist.

8 October — Psychotherapist Anatolii Kashpirovskii began broadcasting healing sessions for citizens of the country on Soviet Central Television. It was claimed that he had cured approximately 10 million people of a wide range of illnesses in just six hours of television broadcasts.

October — The *Zelenyi mir* [Green World] association, founded in Krasnoiarsk, described in figures and facts in the first issue of its *Ekologicheskoi vestnik* [Ecological Bulletin] the environmental conditions created by the industrial city. It warned its citizens that a real catastrophe was already approaching and that the time had come to take action.

9 November — Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the countries of Eastern Europe began to free themselves from the Soviet bloc.

20 November — The association *Ekologiia Severa* [Ecology of the North] was established in Arkhangelsk and began its campaign to protect the environment.

1990

18 January — The government of Armenia declared war on Azerbaijan. Moscow supported Yerevan in the conflict. In connection with this, the Soviet leadership sent ammunition and its helicopters to Armenia. Two days later, Soviet troops entered Baku.

24 January — In Anadyr, the capital of Chukotka, a founding conference of Indigenous peoples was held, during which the initiators proposed the creation of their own association. However, its official registration took almost four years: it was not completed until November 23, 1993.

4 February — The first major civic demonstration in Moscow took place, bringing together several hundred thousand participants. The demonstrators demanded the repeal of Article 6 of the USSR Constitution, which affirmed the leading role of the

Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The article was abolished several days later.

16 February — A regional public organization, the Association of the Peoples of the North and the Amur Region of Khabarovsk Krai, was established at a founding conference in Khabarovsk. Its first president was Yurii Samar, who moved to Moscow a year later.

11 March — Lithuania became the first republic to declare independence and the restoration of its 1938 Constitution. Several days later, Mikhail Gorbachev, elected President of the USSR, would send a detachment of Soviet troops to Vilnius and initiate an energy blockade of Lithuania.

30–31 March — The Small-Numbered Indigenous peoples of Northern Siberia and the Far East established their own association at their first congress, held in the Kremlin. It became known internationally by the acronym RAIPON (Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North).

16 May – 22 June — The First Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) took place. On May 29, Boris Yeltsin was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic. On June 12, the Congress adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the RSFSR: 907 votes in favour, 13 against, and 9 abstentions.

2 July — The 28th Congress of the CPSU began its work – the last congress held under Soviet rule. Boris Yeltsin publicly and symbolically left the Party.

14 July — The State Committee of the RSFSR for the Socio-Economic Development of the North (*Goskomsever*) was established.

2 August — In the settlement of Provideniia (Chukotka), the Yupik Eskimo Society was established with the aim of promoting the preservation of the culture, language, and traditions of the people living in Russia and beyond its borders. In 1999, Governor Alexander Nazarov dissolved the society, but the Yupik succeeded in having it reinstated two years later.

6 August — Yeltsin's slogan, proclaimed in Kazan – “Take as much sovereignty as you can swallow. I do not want [...] to be an obstacle to the development of the national consciousness of each republic” – became a catalyst for the “parade of sovereignties” across the entire territory of the USSR.

11 September — The Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR adopted the resolution “On the Programme for the Stabilization of the Economy and the Transition to Market Relations” (the 500 Days Programme).

29 September — The Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (within Magadan Oblast) declared its sovereignty and demanded that it be granted the status of an autonomous republic.

8 October — The Greenpeace vessel approached the Novaia Zemlia archipelago in protest against nuclear testing. It was intercepted by the border patrol ship XXVI Congress of the CPSU. The final explosion was carried out on October 24.

30 October — The *Solovetskii kamen'* [Solovki (island) stone] – a granite block brought from Solovki Island in the White Sea, one of the first sites of the Gulag system – was installed in Moscow's Lubyanka Square, opposite the statue of Felix Dzerzhinskii.

12 December — The Supreme Soviet of Tuva declared state sovereignty, stating that the land, its subsoil, and other natural resources “with the exception of objects under joint administration and use” constituted the exclusive property and national heritage of the Soviet Republic of Tuva.

25 December — The Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR adopted the resolution “On the General Concept of a New Union Treaty and the Procedure for Its Conclusion,” which was to be based “on the will of the peoples and the principles set out in the declarations of the republics and autonomous regions on state sovereignty.”

1991

13 January — The KGB's secret Alpha unit stormed the television centre and the parliament building in Vilnius, which were being defended by supporters of Lithuanian independence. In Tallinn, Boris Yeltsin called on military personnel and citizens of the RSFSR not to participate in “armed conflicts affecting the sovereignty of other countries.”

22 January — At 9:00 p.m. Moscow time, a monetary reform was announced, according to which 50- and 100-ruble banknotes issued in 1961 were to be withdrawn from circulation within three days. A severe panic broke out across the country.

January — The journal *Severnye prostory* [Northern Spaces], primarily addressed to residents of northern Russia, published an Ecological Map and articles by leading specialists describing the catastrophic condition of the natural environment in the oil and gas extraction regions of Western Siberia (No. 37).

12 February — By decision of the deputies of the Soviet, the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug became the Chukotka Soviet Autonomous Republic and withdrew from the Magadan Oblast. However, under the 1992 Federation Treaty, Chukotka remained an autonomous okrug, but without subordination to Magadan.

11 March — The Council of Ministers of the RSFSR adopted two resolutions: “On the State Programme for the Development of the Economy and Culture of the Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples of the North in 1991–1995” and “On Additional Measures to Improve the Socio-Economic Conditions of Life of the Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples of the North.”

17 March — An All-Union referendum on the future of the state was held. More than two-thirds of those who took part in the vote expressed support for preserving the Soviet Union. The referendum was boycotted by the three Baltic Soviet republics, as well as by Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia.

26 April — The RSFSR law “On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples” was adopted. It recognized their rights, including the restoration of territorial integrity, and provided for compensation for the damage inflicted upon these peoples by the state.

12 June — In the first free presidential election in the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin won in the first round with 57.3% of the vote. On the same day, Gavriil Popov was elected mayor of Moscow, while Anatoly Sobchak was elected mayor of Leningrad, supporting the restoration of the city’s original name – Saint Petersburg.

1 July — The *Sakha Omuk* [Yakut Nation] Union, initiated by the political elite of Yakutia, was finally granted legal recognition.

3 July — The Russian Federation law “On the Privatization of State and Municipal Enterprises in the Russian Federation” was adopted.

19 August — In the settlement of Provideniia (Chukotka), the first Soviet-American discussions on a project for an international park took place. The park was intended to promote the joint protection of natural and cultural heritage on both sides of the Bering Strait.

19–21 August — An attempted political coup in Moscow, aimed at removing Gorbachev and restoring the traditional Soviet system, was defeated. Boris Yeltsin emerged victorious as a charismatic leader from whom everyone now expected change.

27 October — Dzhokhar Dudaev, a Soviet general, was elected President of the Chechen Republic. He proclaimed the independence of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.

20 December — Mikhail Nikolaev was elected President of Yakutia, and this former Soviet autonomous republic became known as the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), pursuing greater sovereignty.

25 December — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev announced his resignation on television. The Soviet flag was lowered over the Kremlin and replaced by the flag of Russia.

1992

2 January — The government of Yegor Gaidar announced a market reform programme (“shock therapy”), which would present enormous difficulties for the majority of Russian citizens. On the same day, Russia’s leading television channel began broadcasting the first “real American television series,” *Santa Barbara*, which became, for Russian viewers, an endless series of hypnotic viewing sessions.

18 January — The Government of the Russian Federation published the “Concept for the Socio-Economic Development of the Northern Regions,” taking into account the requirements of radical economic reform and addressing the situation of the small-numbered Indigenous peoples of the North. Among the competent organizations entrusted with preparing relevant decisions, RAIPON was also named.

9 March — *Izvestia*, No. 58, published a statement by former U.S. President Richard Nixon: “If the reforms in Russia fail, a dictatorship could be established in this country on a scale the world has never known before.”

11 March — Reindeer herders of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug demanded that the Russian authorities ratify the 1989 Geneva Convention on Indigenous Peoples and adopt laws guaranteeing the exercise of these peoples’ rights in the country.

6–21 April — The 6th Congress of People’s Deputies revealed irreconcilable contradictions between the President and his government – the driving force behind the necessary innovative reforms – and the conservative Supreme Soviet, which remained rooted in the pre-*perestroika* era. The Congress demonstrated an open struggle for full political power in the country.

22 April — The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation “On Urgent Measures to Protect the Places of Residence and Economic Activities of the Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples of the North” was issued. It was intended to safeguard their rights and interests, recognizing that territories of traditional land use “constitute an inalienable heritage of these peoples.”

5 May — New amendments to the “Subsoil Law” were adopted, which “ensure the protection of the interests of the state and citizens of the Russian Federation, as well as the rights of subsoil users.”

12 May — The Government of the Russian Federation adopted the resolution “On the Socio-Economic Development of the Northern Regions and Equivalent Areas.” The proposed measures were designed for a period of 15–20 years.

1 June — Russia signed the Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund and became a member of the organization. It received its first loan (approximately US\$1 billion) two months later.

22 June — The All-Russian Scientific Centre for the Integrated Study of the Problems of the North, the Arctic, and the Livelihoods of the Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples of the North was established.

18 August — Georgian troops entered Sukhumi, triggering the Georgian-Abkhaz ethno-political conflict, which escalated into a bloody war in which approximately 16,000 people were killed, including 4,000 Abkhaz, 10,000 Georgians, and 2,000 volunteers from other areas of the Caucasus.

25 August — Evdokia Gaer established the “International League of Small-Numbered Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Groups” to support government decisions and initiatives aimed at promoting the well-being of these peoples both in Russia and in other countries. The League existed until 2007.

19 September — The 14th Dalai Lama visited the Republic of Tuva for the first time. Among other places, he visited the ruins of Tsögchen Ustuu-Khuree, the largest temple complex, which was destroyed in 1937 following recommendations from Soviet advisers to the government of the Tannu Tuva Republic.

1 October — The distribution of privatization vouchers to the population of Russia began, allowing participation in auctions where various enterprises were transferred into private ownership. This led to the rapid enrichment of a small group of individuals who purchased up the vouchers.

14 December — The constitutional crisis that emerged at the 7th Congress of People’s Deputies led to a change in the head of government. Viktor Chernomyrdin was appointed Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation, replacing Yegor Gaidar.

25 December — The Committee of the Russian Federation for the Socio-Economic Development of the North was established “to promote the revival of the economy and culture of the peoples of the North and to oversee the implementation of decisions concerning the protection of their places of residence.”

1993

12 February — At the All-Russian Conference on Combating Organized Crime and Corruption, convened in the Kremlin, Boris Yeltsin stated that crime in Russia had become a direct threat to the country’s strategic interests and national security.

24 February — The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation adopted the resolution “On the Preservation of the Natural Environment of the Udege, Nanai, and Oroch Peoples’ Habitat in the Pozharskii District of Primorskii Krai.” It also adopted a decision “to classify the Shors, Teleuts, and Kumandins as small-numbered Indigenous peoples of the North.”

2 March — In Moscow, on the initiative of Dmitrii Rogozin, the Congress of Russian Communities convened – an association with an imperial-nationalist orientation, described as a “foundation for the revival of Russia.” Its stated goal was the “protection of Russian citizens in the states of the former USSR.”

4 March — The head of the administration of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug declared “a state of emergency in the reindeer-herding sector.” The decree stated that there had been a catastrophic decline in the number of animals and a sharp increase in the deaths of reindeer herders.

1 May — In Moscow, during a May Day demonstration, opponents of Yeltsin and *perestroika* engaged in a violent confrontation with law enforcement forces. On the same day, Eduard Limonov (far-left) and Alexander Dugin (far-right) announced the creation of the National Bolshevik Front.

5 May — The international non-profit foundation *Nadezhda* [Hope] held a Russian-American charitable telethon in the twin cities of Khabarovsk and Portland. The event raised US\$1,200,000 and over one hundred million rubles. These funds were directed to aid children with severe illnesses.

3 June — The Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Buriatia adopted the resolution “On the Rehabilitation of the Peoples of Buriatia,” in which the 1937 act on the partition of the unified Buriat-Mongol Republic was declared unlawful and unconstitutional.

17 June — The Presidents of Russia and Ukraine, Boris Yeltsin and Leonid Kravchuk, reached an agreement on the “formation of the Russian Navy and the Ukrainian Naval Forces on the basis of the Black Sea Fleet of the former USSR, and on the basing of the Russian Navy in Sevastopol and other locations in Ukraine.”

26–29 September — The Norwegian Sámi Reindeer Herders’ Association (NRL) organized the First World Reindeer Herders’ Festival in Tromsø, where reindeer herders from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, and Alaska (USA) met for the first time. A protocol was signed there establishing the World Union of Reindeer Herding Peoples. Its first five-member working committee included representatives from Norway (1), the United States (1), and Russia (3).

4 October — In Moscow, opponents of Yeltsin – supporters of the Supreme Soviet – seized the city hall building, blockaded the Ministry of Defence, and attempted to take control of the television centre. The President declared a state of emergency, and army units loyal to him stormed the Moscow White House. Addressing the citizens of Russia, Yeltsin described the events in Moscow as a “premeditated fascist-communist rebellion.”

22–24 November — The Second Congress of the Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North was held in Moscow. In the elections, the Khanty writer Eremei Aipin was elected. Becoming President of RAIPON, he succeeded the Nivkh writer Vladimir Sangi in this position.

30 November — By decree of President Boris Yeltsin, the coat of arms of the Russian Federation was changed. The Soviet hammer and sickle on a globe were replaced by a golden double-headed eagle under three crowns, holding a sceptre and orb in its talons, placed on a red heraldic shield.

12 December — The Constitution of the Russian Federation was adopted by popular vote (58.43% of those voting, with a turnout of 54.81%). On the same day, Zhirinovskii’s nationalist party won a majority of votes in the elections to the State Duma and the Federation Council.

...

Article 69 of the new Constitution proclaimed: "The Russian Federation guarantees the rights of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples in accordance with the universally recognized principles and norms of international law and the international treaties of the Russian Federation."

1994

10 January — On the eve of the first session of the new Russian parliament, a meeting of the Siberian Accord association was held in Moscow. Founded in 1990, it united 14 of the 19 Siberian territories. Their leaders were elected to the Federation Council. From the moment of its creation, the association positioned itself as a significant counterweight to the central government and sought to become a force shaping regional policy.

14 January — A meeting of the Presidents of the United States, Russia, and Ukraine took place in Moscow, concluding with the signing of a Trilateral Statement on Ukraine's agreement to transfer all nuclear warheads to Russia. This act led to the Budapest Memorandum, which guaranteed respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and the inviolability of its borders. The guarantors of this document were Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

14 March, — A fatal gunshot was fired at the president of the joint-stock company *Kominternneft* in Perm, marking the beginning of a series of high-profile murders of oil company owners. These killings reflected a criminal struggle for control over this key sector of foreign-exchange wealth. In the absence of an incorruptible judicial system, most of these contract killings remained unsolved.

27 May — Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia. His journey across Siberia (Magadan – Vladivostok – Moscow) lasted nearly two months, with stops in many towns and villages, where the writer observed the lives of his compatriots following the collapse of the country that had expelled him twenty years earlier.

30 May — The First Conference of Public Environmental Organizations of Russia opened in Moscow. The resolution "On Sustainable Development" emphasized that the criterion for the country's development should be the human being, his health, safety, and spirituality, rather than national income.

15 June — Boris Yeltsin arrived in Tuva. Near Lake Chagytai, a "Noah's Ark" was recreated for him: all types of livestock found in Tuva were brought there, including reindeer from Todzha, camels from Erzin, yaks from Mongun-Taiga, as well as horses, goats, and sheep. Yeltsin tasted the nomads' vodka (*araka*), made from milk, comparing it with other, more familiar beverages.

25 June — A sensation took place in Moscow. On Red Square, one of Russia's cult musical groups, *Mashina Vremeni* [Time Machine], led by its founder Andrei Makarevich, celebrated its 25th anniversary. The songs and experiments of his "rock machine" had been well known throughout the country long before perestroika. This was confirmed by the 300,000 fans who attended the concert.

4 August — Sergei Mavrodi, the founder of the financial pyramid scheme MMM, which had bankrupted millions of citizens, was arrested in Moscow.

9 August — The International Day of Indigenous Peoples was observed for the first time in Russia as well, following a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly.

4 October — A devastating earthquake in the Kuril Islands led to an outflow of an already sparse population and sparked a new wave of heated debates about the fate of the country's peripheral regions, the corruption of the entire system, and the issue of Russian-Japanese relations.

11 October — The day became known in the country as "Black Tuesday." The exchange rate of the US dollar on the Moscow stock exchange rose by more than 27% in a single day. Many ordinary citizens were impoverished, while private banks became enriched. The head of the Central Bank, as well as the Minister of Finance, were dismissed.

17 December — The Teleuts, a small-numbered Indigenous people gathered at the Third Congress of their association, appealed to the Government of Russia for assistance, stating that their homes in the settlement of Teleut were being burned down in order to expand the industrial zone of the city of Novokuznetsk (Kemerovo Oblast).

31 December — The assault on Grozny on New Year's Eve, intended to bring a swift end to the Chechen war, turned into a devastating defeat for Russian forces, primarily due to the inadequate professional preparation of the planned intervention.

1995

19 January — After heavy losses, Russian forces managed to seize the presidential palace in Grozny, which had been subjected beforehand to heavy aerial bombardment. The Russian flag raised over its ruins, however, did not signify the end of the first phase of the bloody Russian-Chechen war.

19 January — The administration of Chukotka registered in Anadyr the association *Doveriye* [Trust], initiated by the franchise organization Doctors of the World, aimed at combating alcoholism – the main cause of illness and mortality among Indigenous peoples. The association existed until March 23, 2007.

1 March — Vladislav List'ev – described as a "legend of Russian television," who was the first general director of the newly popular television company Public Russian Television – was killed. This high-profile crime has not yet been solved.

14 March — B. Yeltsin signed Federal Law No. 33-FZ “On Specially Protected Natural Territories.” Many of these areas are lands of traditional economic use by the Indigenous peoples of Siberia. By 2018, the law would be amended 27 times.

12 April — The movement Student Defence gathered approximately five thousand students for a rally in front of the White House in Moscow, demanding the repeal of a number of government decrees that infringed upon their rights.

26 April — A law of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug authorized the formation of an Assembly of representatives of the Indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, granting it voting rights in decision-making.

22 May — The organization *Nash dom – Rossiia* [Our Home – Russia], which had emerged ahead of the parliamentary elections as the President of Russia’s political party, was headed by Viktor Chernomyrdin. Its branches were established throughout the territory of the Russian Federation. It existed until May 26, 2006.

14–19 June — Chechen terrorists seized more than 1,600 residents of Budyonnovsk and herded them into the local hospital. A failed Russian counter-operation cost the lives of many hostages and led to the resignations of the heads of the FSB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

7 September — Five Eskimo residents of the settlement of Sireniki and four scientists working on issues related to the Indigenous peoples of Chukotka and Alaska within the framework of the Beringia Park programme (three from the United States and one Russian – Alexander Pika) mysteriously died in the Bering Sea. The boats were travelling in calm and clear weather from Sireniki to Provideniia.

14–15 November — The First Founding Congress of Reindeer Herders of the Russian Federation was held in Moscow. It drew the government’s attention to the catastrophic situation in this traditional sector of the economy of many of the country’s Indigenous peoples. The congress resulted in the establishment of the Union of Reindeer Herders of Russia.

17 November — The Norilsk Nickel mining and metallurgical combine, the world’s largest producer of this metal, was acquired by Vladimir Potanin through the “loans-for-shares” scheme, which became a lucrative mechanism for the privatization of other industrial giants as well, such as *Yukos*, *Sibneft*, *Lukoil*, *Surgutneftegaz*, and others.

8 December — The State Duma adopted the Federal Law on Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs). Indigenous communities also made use of this law, which was amended until the end of 2010 without altering its core provisions. Fundamental changes would begin to transform NPOs starting in 2012.

17 December — Elections to the State Duma of the second convocation, held ahead of the presidential elections in Russia, were assessed by European observers as free and fair. They revealed the political preferences of the country’s electorate: the Com-

munists received 157 seats, *Nash dom – Rossiia* [Our Home – Russia] 55, and Zhirnovskii's party 51.

1996

1-2 February — A strike by Russian coal miners, in which 87% of workers in the coal industry participated, ended in their victory: the government fulfilled all their demands. Among other measures, the government permitted up to 50% of earned revenues to be allocated to the wage fund.

6 February — The FSB arrested Alexander Nikitin, a retired captain first rank, accusing him of treason. Two months later, he was due to present a report entitled “The Northern Fleet: Potential Risk of Radioactive Contamination in the Region,” prepared for a Moscow meeting of the Group of Seven on nuclear safety.

23 March — In Novosibirsk, staff of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences wrote in an open letter to the President of the Russian Federation that “funding for science in the country has decreased sevenfold over the past five years,” which, in particular, led to the departure of a large number of highly qualified specialists.

1 April — Presidential Decree No. 440 of the Russian Federation states: “Guided by the programmatic documents adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, I hereby decree: to approve the Concept for the Transition of the Russian Federation to Sustainable Development submitted by the Government of the Russian Federation.”

14 May — The Federation Council Committee on Northern Affairs and Indigenous Peoples considered the issue “On the problems of medical and social rehabilitation of the population affected by nuclear weapons testing on the Novaia Zemlia archipelago.”

23 May — The Parliament (Duma) of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug discussed and adopted Law No. 97, which introduced the programme “On the Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug for 1996–2000.”

1 June — The last two railway trains carrying two hundred nuclear warheads departed from Ukraine to Russia. The country thus officially relinquished its nuclear status. In total, within less than two years, approximately two thousand nuclear warheads were transferred from Ukraine to the Russian Federation in accordance with the Budapest Memorandum and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Ukraine thereby fulfilled its obligations.

19 June — The Law “On the Fundamentals of State Regulation of the Socio-Economic Development of the North of the Russian Federation” provides the following definition: “Indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North are peoples residing in the territories of their ancestral traditional habitation, preserving a distinctive way of

life, numbering fewer than 50,000 persons in Russia, and identifying themselves as distinct ethnic communities.”

3 July — Boris Yeltsin, following the second round of the presidential election, was re-elected President of Russia. He received 53.8% of the vote, while his opponent, Gennady Zyuganov, leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, received 40.3%. B. Yeltsin received overwhelming support in the autonomous districts of Siberia where natural gas and oil are extracted: 79% in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (more than in Moscow) and 74% in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (the same as in Saint Petersburg).

11 September — Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov issued Order No. 844-RP: “In order to acquaint Muscovites with the finest representatives of foreign musical art [...] to hold a concert by the popular American singer Michael Jackson at the Dynamo Stadium on September 17, 1996.”

13 September — The Government of the Russian Federation approved the programme “Economic and Social Development of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North up to 2000,” with guaranteed funding from the federal budget. However, it was not implemented, as it received only about 7% of the planned funding.

23 December — The law of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (YaNAO No. 51-ZAO) “On Subsoil Use...” provides for the protection of the interests of Indigenous peoples and possible restrictions on subsoil use in specially protected areas.

31 December — Russian troops were fully withdrawn from the territory of Chechnia. This outcome of the First Chechen War resulted from a series of failed military operations and the forced signing, in August of that year, of the peace agreement in Khasaviurt.

1997

1 January — Kamchatka Oblast, “recognizing the rights and freedoms of the individual and citizen as the highest values,” adopted its Charter, Article 4 of which proclaims the “rights of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North.”

29 January — The State Duma adopted the Forest Code, which defines the “legal framework for the rational use, conservation, protection, and reproduction of forests, as well as the enhancement of their ecological and resource potential.”

6 February — The Governor of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug approved the programme prepared by experts, “Environmental Education of the Population of the Okrug up to the Year 2000.”

12 February — In Novosibirsk, the Director-General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, inaugurated a chair on sustainable development, environmental science, and social issues.

3–4 March — The First World Congress of Reindeer Herding Peoples was held in Nadym (Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug). The association Reindeer Herders of the World was established there with the aim of supporting professional, cultural, social, and economic relations among reindeer herding peoples.

17 March — In order to advance necessary reforms, B. Yeltsin appointed A. Chubais and B. Nemtsov as First Deputy Prime Ministers, forming a government group known as the “young reformers.” Their efforts were directed toward establishing a market economy and improving social policy.

27 March — The Federation of Independent Trade Unions organized a nationwide protest action under the slogan “For Work, Wages, and Social Guarantees.” The highest level of participation in the strikes was recorded in the Siberian regions, particularly in Omsk and Irkutsk oblasts, as well as in Krasnoïarsk Krai and Altai Krai.

16 April — The Parliament of the Russian Federation, in a resolution following the March 27 protest action, noted that its main cause was the non-payment of wages.

27 April — The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) adopted the law “On the Legal Status of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North.”

5 June — The State Duma adopted a resolution “On the Progress of Privatization in the Russian Federation and Violations of Russian Legislation...,” stating that its outcomes had been primarily exploited by criminal structures, and that the country itself had suffered enormous material losses.

24 June — The Association of Indigenous Peoples of the Far North of Kamchatka refused to take part in the celebration of the “300th anniversary of the accession” of their lands to Russia, stating that there had been no “accession,” but rather a standard colonial conquest.

5 November — President Boris Yeltsin dismissed B. Berezovskii from the post of Deputy Secretary of the Security Council. Two weeks later, A. Chubais would lose his position as Minister of Finance, while retaining his post as First Deputy Prime Minister, and B. Nemtsov would be relieved of his duties as Minister of Fuel and Energy. Subsequently, S. Shatalov, the author of the Tax Code, which had been rejected by Parliament, was also dismissed.

5–6 November — The first forum “Days of Beringia” was held in Anchorage (Alaska), intended to establish regular meetings of specialists and ordinary Indigenous residents of Alaska and Chukotka to promote environmental, cultural, and other shared issues in the area of the proposed transcontinental Beringia Park. The project was organized by the United States National Park Service.

1998

18 March — The Parliament of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) adopted the law “On the *Suktul* of the Yukaghir people.” *Suktul* means “local self-government” in the Yukaghir language.

18–19 March — An international conference entitled “Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples in the National Policy of the Russian State” was held in Moscow under the auspices of the United Nations.

23–25 March — The conference “Indigenous Peoples. Oil. Law” was held in Khanty-Mansiysk, with the aim of discussing “ways of survival for Indigenous ethnic groups in the context of the development of oil and gas resources.”

30 March — Russia ratified the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by the Council of Europe. Russian citizens thus gained the right to apply to the European Court of Human Rights.

1 May — Coal miners in Kuzbass declared a hunger strike, which soon became widespread. On May 14, after the government refused to pay outstanding wage arrears, they blocked railway traffic.

12 May — In the settlement of Mys Shmidta (Chukotka), a group of soldiers from a local military unit seized weapons and a vehicle and carried out killings and robberies over several days. A detachment sent to the area eventually neutralized them.

10 June — The Federation Council adopted a resolution “On Urgent Measures to Overcome the Crisis in the Economy and Social Sphere of the North of the Russian Federation.”

18 June — Coal miners from Vorkuta staged a picket on the Gorbaty Bridge in Moscow, demanding the resignation of Yeltsin. For a time, the bridge became a focal point for all opposition forces.

12 July — The “Summer School on Environmental Issues” opened in Novosibirsk. Its work was attended by professors and students from the Catholic University of Belgium, which also initiated the school.

17 July — Boris Yeltsin, on the advice of V. Yumashev, appointed Vladimir Putin as Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB). Putin in turn appointed N. Patrushev, V. Cherkesov, and S. Ivanov as his deputies.

19 July–2 August — The international symposium “Siberia in the Panorama of Millennia” was held in Novosibirsk, organized in honour of A. P. Okladnikov, known primarily for his work in Siberian archaeology. Only a few of the 160 papers presented by archaeologists, ethnographers, anthropologists, and historians were devoted to contemporary issues concerning Indigenous peoples.

17 August — The Government of Russia and the Central Bank announced that they were unable to meet their debt obligations. The state default, the collapse of the ruble, the bankruptcy of enterprises and banks, rising prices, and a decline in production all fell upon the country's citizens, whom the President had assured just three days earlier: "There will be no devaluation. I state this clearly and firmly..."

20 November — In Saint Petersburg, Galina Starovoitova, an anthropologist and prominent political figure, was killed near her home. She was one of the most authoritative and respected personalities, who had a major influence on the process of democratization in Russia.

25 November — Greenpeace reported an environmental and social disaster in Khabarovsk Krai, where fires destroyed more than 600,000 hectares of forest. The Ulchi, an Indigenous people whose way of life is closely linked to the well-being of the forest environment, were the most severely affected.

2 December — The government of the Koryak Autonomous Okrug (Kamchatka) approved the resolution "On the organization of a territory of traditional natural resource use for the Itelmen *obshchina* [community] *Tkhsanom*." This became possible thanks to the Decree of the President of Russia "On Urgent Measures to Protect the Places of Residence and Economic Activities of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North."

5 December — UNESCO inscribed the Golden Mountains of Altai on the World Heritage List, designating under this name three sites in the territory of Russia: the Altai and Katun nature reserves and the Ukok Plateau. The selection of these areas was based on the fact that they encompass diverse landscapes with unique flora and fauna requiring special protection.

1999

20–21 March — The second seminar "Indigenous Peoples and the Environment of the Russian Arctic," held in Moscow, brought together many representatives of Indigenous peoples from various regions of Siberia. It was organized by RAIPON and international organizations.

24 March — Yevgenii Primakov, the Prime Minister of Russia, departed for Washington on an official visit. Upon learning that NATO had decided to begin the bombing of Yugoslavia, he ordered the pilots to turn the aircraft around and return to Moscow.

30 April — President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin signed the Federal Law "On Guarantees of the Rights of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation," the drafts of which, prepared by specialists, had been repeatedly rejected. This law would undergo significant amendments during the Putin era.

30 April — The newspaper *Kommersant*, in an article titled “Murders by Advertisement,” reported that in Moscow “highly effective, fast-acting poisons” were being openly advertised, sold by chemists who guaranteed their reliability against “undesirable individuals.”

11 June — The Parliament of Russia adopted the law “On the General Principles of the Organization of Communities of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East.” The law, which had been in preparation for several years, did not take into account significant remarks, proposals, and amendments put forward by members and experts of RAIPON.

12 June — A covert airborne deployment of Russian troops, who took control of Slatina Airport in Pristina, came as a complete surprise to NATO forces conducting an operation in Yugoslavia against Serb units accused of involvement in the genocide of Albanians in Kosovo. Participants in the “dash to Pristina” were awarded a special medal.

9 August — B. Yeltsin proposed a new Chairman of the Government – V. Putin: “I am convinced that, working in this high office, he will bring great benefit to the country, and Russians will have the opportunity to assess Putin’s personal and professional qualities. I have confidence in him.”

22 August — In Irkutsk, on the initiative of the organization Baikal Environmental Wave, the first “Lake Baikal Day” was held, attended by delegations from Buriatia, Chita, and the Ust-Orda Okrug. From that time on, Baikal Day has been celebrated annually on the fourth Sunday of August.

4–16 September — The population of Russia was plunged into panic following a series of apartment bombings in Buynaksk (Dagestan), Moscow, and Volgograd, in which 307 people were killed and more than 1,700 were injured. To this day, two explanations for these attacks persist: that they were carried out by Islamist terrorists, or by the FSB in order to boost Putin’s approval rating and provide a pretext for introducing Russian troops into Chechnia.

14–16 September — At the Third Meeting of Indigenous Leaders (Arctic Leaders Summit III) in Moscow, urgent health issues affecting Indigenous populations of the Arctic were discussed. Alongside a growing incidence of cancer and alcoholism, alarming resurgences of tuberculosis were again observed, most notably among the Indigenous peoples of the Russian North.

17–18 September — An international seminar entitled “Priority Research Areas for Addressing the Key Problems of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North” was held in Moscow. It was organized by the International Arctic Science Committee, RAIPON, and the Russian Academy of Sciences, with the support and active participation of the State Committee for the North of the Russian Federation.

23 September — The Second Chechen War began with the bombing of Grozny. Putin stated that he would “pursue terrorists everywhere [...] we will wipe them out in the outhouse, in the end.” This phrase became an “election slogan” of its author, whom the “ordinary people” were expected to accept “as one of their own” and who would soon be elected President of Russia.

3–5 December — The National Congress “Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of Russia on the Threshold of the 21st Century: Problems, Prospects, Priorities” was held in Moscow, bringing together representatives of Indigenous peoples, scholars, legal experts, and administrators.

31 December — Boris Yeltsin delivered his farewell address: “The day has come... today I am addressing you for the last time as President of Russia. I have made a decision, and I have reflected on it for a long and painful time. Today, on the last day of the outgoing century, I am resigning.”

2000

6 February — After several days of bombardment of Grozny, Russian federal forces established control over the capital of Chechnya. The Acting President of Russia, V. Putin, stated: “The last stronghold of terrorist resistance has been taken [...], the operation to liberate Grozny has been completed.”

18 February — In Irkutsk, following a meeting of the interregional association “Siberian Accord,” V. Putin instructed the Government of the Russian Federation to develop, by September 1, 2000, a programme for the conversion of the Baikalsk Pulp and Paper Mill, which was polluting the unique Lake Baikal.

24 March — The Government of the Russian Federation published a resolution “On the Unified List of Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the Russian Federation.” The new official list now includes 40 peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East, who are granted the status of “small-numbered,” meaning they number fewer than 50,000 persons.

26 March — In the presidential elections held, V. Putin achieved a predictable victory, receiving 53% of the vote, with voter turnout at 68.7%. Putin’s weakest support was recorded in certain regions of Siberia; for example, in Kemerovo Oblast it was even lower than in Chechnia (just over 25%).

7 May — In his inauguration speech, Vladimir Putin stated: “I can assure you that in my actions I will be guided exclusively by the interests of the state. [...] I promise that what I truly can promise and do promise is that I will work openly and honestly.”

17 May — In order to “enhance the investment attractiveness of the Russian economy by reducing environmental requirements and barriers,” Putin abolished the State

Committees for Northern Affairs (*Goskomsever*) and for Environmental Protection, as well as the Federal Forestry Service.

20 July — V. Putin signed the Federal Law “On the General Principles of the Organization of Communities of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation.” The law established the legal foundations of self-government, promising guarantees for its implementation. However, subsequent revisions deprived the communities of their autonomy.

28 July — The United Nations Economic and Social Council adopted a decision to establish a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as a subsidiary body, composed of sixteen members, eight of whom are elected by the Council and eight appointed by its Chairperson following consultations with Indigenous peoples’ organizations.

12 August — All 118 crew members aboard the submarine *Kursk* died in the Barents Sea. Russian media outlets that critically covered this tragedy also became its victims. This marked the end of *glasnost*.

25 August — The Government of the Russian Federation approved, among the priority presidential programmes, the federal targeted programme “Children of the North,” which promised to address one of the problems faced by the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North.

4–6 September — An international youth conference entitled “Indigenous Peoples and the Environment of the North, Siberia, and the Far East” was held in Tomsk. Oil and gas companies operating in the territory of Tomsk Oblast ignored the invitation to participate in the conference.

9 September — Putin approved the Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation. *Novaia gazeta*, whose journalists would soon become affected by the Doctrine, concluded that it “frees the hands of the authorities while tying the hands of journalists” and opens up “punitive possibilities” for the state.

24 December — The oligarch Roman Abramovich was elected Governor of Chukotka. The near-unanimous support for this figure (90.6%), previously unknown to local residents, particularly the Chukchi and Eskimos, was explained primarily by his personal financial injections into the severely weakened post-Soviet system of the region, which is the most remote from the Kremlin in both space and time.

30 December — Putin instructed S. Mikhalkov, the author of the Stalin- and Brezhnev-era national anthem, to revise the lyrics for the new Russia. The court poet’s text appealed to the country’s new leader, who decided to retain the old melody. This decision brought an end to debates over the national symbol but did not eliminate the divisions within society, which were further deepened by the “old-new” anthem.

2001

6 March — V. Putin on the Internet: this “form of communication, of obtaining information, [...] interests me very much, I must say frankly, although unfortunately I use it little. On the one hand, due to innate laziness, and on the other hand, because at present I have many [...] staff members and assistants who deal with this professionally and provide me, as it were, with a ready-made result.”

7 March — The Governor of the Koryak Autonomous Okrug, V. Loginov, annulled the decree “On the organization of the territory of traditional land use of *Tkhsanom*,” adopted by the previous governor, thereby provoking strong protests from the Itelmen and Koryak – Indigenous peoples of the North of the region – as well as from the leadership of RAIPON and international organizations.

12–13 April — The Fourth Congress of RAIPON was held in Moscow. Its delegates called on the Government “to ensure the protection of the rights of the peoples of the North to land and natural resources in the areas of their historical residence and traditional economic activity, in accordance with generally recognized norms of international law, international treaties, and the Constitution of the Russian Federation.”

14 April — During the night of April 13–14, the Kremlin carried out a forcible takeover of NTV, the largest private and popular television channel. Later, its former General Director, Yevgenii Kiselev, stated: “In a country governed by former KGB officers, [...] I find it difficult to imagine the existence of independent television operating according to the standards of the rest of the civilized democratic world.”

7 May — Federal Law No. 49-FZ “On Territories of Traditional Nature Use of the Indigenous Small-Numbered Peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation” was adopted, ostensibly defining the legal foundations for the establishment and functioning of such territories. However, amendments in subsequent years would distort the original provisions, which had been developed through joint work by RAIPON experts.

2 July — The State Committee for the North, in essence stripped of its former powers, organized a meeting on the topic “On the Participation of Representatives of the Indigenous Peoples of the North in the Activities of Legislative Bodies of the Subjects of the Russian Federation and Elected Local Self-Government Bodies.”

18 July — V. Putin held his first major press conference for journalists. Speaking about military reform, he stated that the army should not be overly costly and emphasized the inadmissibility of repeating a situation in which the arms race “to a significant extent was one of the causes that undermined both the economy itself and, as a consequence, public trust in the state.”

9 August — The Itelmen, Kamchadal, Koryak, Even, and Aleut gathered in front of the administration building to celebrate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. To their surprise and dismay, they heard the Governor of Kamchatka, M. Mashkovtsev, accuse them of separatism and extremism.

11 September — V. Putin stated after the terrible terrorist attack in the United States: "What happened today once again underscores the relevance of Russia's proposal to unite the efforts of the international community in the fight against terrorism, this plague of the 21st century."

21–22 November — At the first Civic Forum in the history of Russia, V. Putin assured the country that "the authorities as a whole can have only one task – to create the most favourable environment for its [civil society's – *B. Sh.*] development; this task is the main and, in essence, the only one."

17 December — Federal Constitutional Law No. 6-FKZ was adopted, providing for the "formation of new constituent entities of the Russian Federation through the merger of two bordering entities." On the basis of this law, the Koryak Autonomous Okrug would cease to exist as a constituent entity of the Russian Federation as of July 1, 2007.

22–26 November — A Congress of Indigenous Peoples of Circumpolar Countries was held in Yakutsk under the theme "A Healthy Lifestyle as a Path to the Survival of the Indigenous Peoples of the North."

27 November — The Duma of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug adopted a Law on the Languages of Indigenous Peoples, aimed at the preservation and development of their culture.



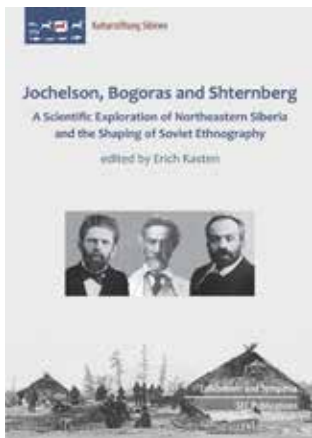
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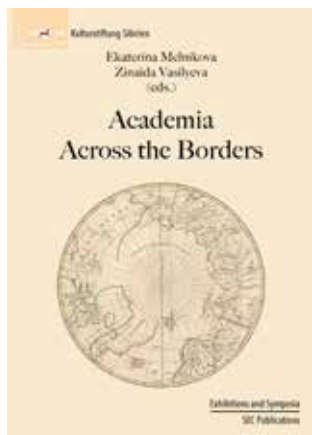
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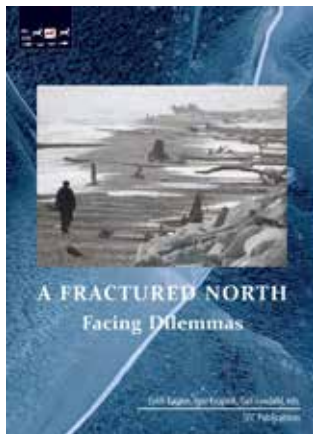
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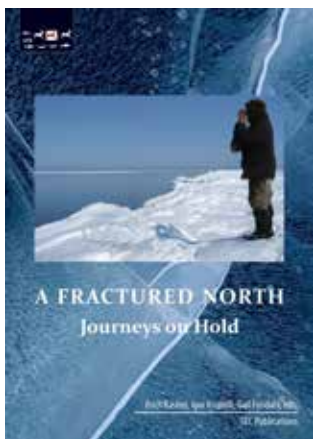


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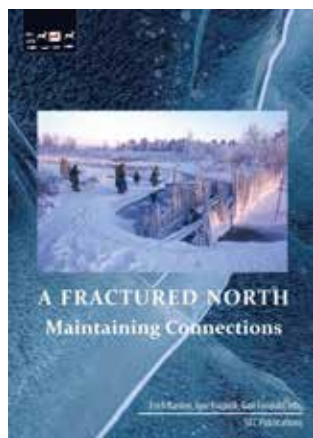


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