

ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN POST-SOVIET BALTIC STATES: content, form, mechanisms of formation, external influences**Dr. Ec. Alexander Gaponenko****President of the Institute of European Studies, Latvia**

In the mid-80s of the twentieth century, the Soviet Union was faced with the need to privatize large-scale and highly inefficient used of public means of production. An attempt to solve this problem in during the so-called “the policy of perestroika” has caused conflict within the monopoly of the ruling Communist Party and weakened the centralized system of government in the country. The conflict took advantage of the titular power groups of the communist nomenclature in the Union republics and began to concentrate power in his hands. Particularly active national Communists acted in the Soviet Baltic Republics. It was they who initiated the beginning of the collapse of a single Soviet nation into its separate ethnic elements.

In 1988, the Baltic national communists created massive social movements: the Popular Front of Latvia, the Popular Front of Estonia and Lithuania “Sajudis.” The assets of these movements consisted mainly of humanitarian titular intellectuals. Intellectuals began to carry out the mobilization of the masses with the radical nationalist slogans. As a result of the mobilization of the rather amorphous Soviet nations began to crystallize quickly Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian nations.

In 1990, the titular Communist nomenclature, supported by its intellectuals, came to power in all three Baltic States. She uses this power for personal appropriation of state property and for the sake of properly organizing the process of privatization. The nomenclature is also interested in the preservation of a life-long positions and related income in state government bodies. Otherwise, the purpose of the ruling bureaucracy was the institutionalization of their positions. So she is trying to prevent the establishment of any control over the people its actions.

Communist slogans titular nomenclature has rejected as contrary to the essence of its ongoing socio-economic transformation, and it starts to position itself as national liberals advocating the change from an inclusive government to a pure market economy. In parallel with the privatization of state-owned Baltic communist nomenclature takes the strategic option of withdrawing their republics from the USSR in order to completely get rid of the control of the higher authorities.

In August 1991, after the acute political conflict in Moscow and with the active assistance of the West, the Baltic nationalist-communist implemented a strategy to get rid of external control. The Baltic republics become independent. Then they (the old German style) are beginning to call themselves the Baltic countries.

The main political opponent of the Baltic National Liberals after independence is the part of the local Communist elite, which remained standing on a socialist and internationalist positions. This part of the ruling group was based primarily on the

support of non-titular population. The proportion of non-titular population at the beginning of 1989 was quite large: in Latvia - 48.0%, Estonia - 37.9%, Lithuania - 20.4%. Non-titular population in its ethnic composition consisted of the Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russified minorities. In Lithuania, in addition, more than 7% of the total population was ethnic Poles.

Former National Communists hold against Communist Internationalists extensive lustration, fearing that they could rally the non-titular population. Communist Party prohibits, their property confiscated, key leading employees arrested party activists deny civil rights and do not take on any job. Prohibits Communist and Soviet symbols, cancel all the old national holidays; demolish monuments of the Communist and Soviet movements. In other words, the destruction are all the symbolic tools by means of which internationalists has mobilized the masses of the Soviet nation. All of these legal restrictions apply so far.

Another opponent for the former national communists became Latvian intellectuals, which has mobilized indigenous population and therefore enjoyed a great influence of his environment. The former nomenclature intercepts from intellectuals nationalist slogans and equips by them their own national liberal parties. So there is a party of "Latvian Way" in Latvia, the "Social Democratic Party" of Lithuania, "Reform Party" in Estonia. Titular intellectuals by former national communists skillfully pushed out of real power. By 1993, the massive popular movements completely disappear from the political scene of the Baltic countries. From the remnants of people's fronts and "Sajudis" the titular intelligence forms radical nationalist party. In Latvia, appear party "TB/LNNK" (For Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement), in Lithuania – "Conservative Party", in Estonia – "IRI". National Liberals then take these radical nationalist parties on the role of junior partner in the organized ruling coalition.

As for the individual appropriation of state property latter-day National Liberals were weak, and also make little sense in a market economy, they began to look for allies. The most suitable for the role of an ally they had the titular emigration. This emigration was formed mainly of people who had fled to the West after World War II, for fear of to be punished for their crimes against the people or for collaborationism. This emigration was large, well-organized and had the experience of the capitalist economy. For assistance in the implementation of western emigration authorities demanded from the National Liberals return of their property, which was confiscated by the Communists in 1940. However, immigration did not apply for privatization of state property created in Soviet times, although much larger in scope. Immigrants are not interested in positions in the state apparatus, as they intended to continue living in the West, which had long been a home for them.

The interests of western emigration at home have come to represent parties of the radical nationalist wing. These parties are actively immigrants fueled both ideologically and materially.

Western emigration has brought to the Baltic's aggressive anti-communism and revanchist sentiments. However, former secretaries of the Central Committee of

the Republic, party committees, districts, cities, representing the titular nation, it is quite satisfied because it allowed distracting people's attention from their own sins and initiated by them the process of privatization of state property. Therefore, the radical nationalists openly and National Liberals secretly have adopted the emigrant's slogans of building ethnically pure societies – “Latvian Latvia”, “Lithuania Lithuania” and “Estonian Estonia.” These slogans supplemented by the provisions of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, Russian accusations of genocide titular nations, estimates of equivalent of the crimes the Communist and Nazi regimes. This ideological construct is theoretically enabled to substantiate the claims of former national communists to the power and to find common ground with the emigration. The new ruling elite ideology of ethnically pure societies is adopted as a state.

Seriously consolidating its position after the withdrawal of Russian forces in 1993, the new ruling elites in all three countries began to build ethnic hierarchy, on top of which was the titular bureaucracy, the middle of the rest of the titular population, and at the bottom of the social ladder - the mass of foreigners. For the construction of such societies were selected four instruments.

First, it was carried out forceful ousting of the non-titular population abroad. This occurred by depriving foreigners the right to reside in the country through their eviction from the denationalized housing, by not preventing to a number of professions and jobs, by restricting the opportunities to engage in private business. The policy of forced extrude of aliens was quite effective. The share of non-titular population in the period from 1989 to 2011 in Latvia decreased from 48.0 to 37.9%, in Estonia - from 37.9 to 31.0%, in Lithuania - from 20.4 to 15.8 %. The most intense ousting aliens came in the first decade after the separation of the Baltic republics of the USSR. In the second decade of emigration began to wear to a greater extent character work, and has already captured the titular population.

Second, the remaining aliens in the Baltic States were forcibly divided into citizens and non-citizens, with the deprivation of the last of a number of fundamental rights. The basis for this kind of division has been selected criterion for membership in a community of citizens that existed before the restoration of Soviet power in 1940. In 1991, Latvia's citizenship has lost two thirds of the foreign population. In Estonia, in 1992, non-citizens became nine-tenths of all foreigners. The Lithuanian ruling elite did not enter the institution of non-citizenship. The reason for this was that all the seven percent of Polish population had pre-war roots and deprive him of his citizenship is not possible. On the other hand, twelve percent of Russian population, which rapidly start traveling abroad became small and did not represent for the new Lithuanian elites great danger.

Non-citizens are completely excluded from political decision-making, they are not admitted to the public service, they could not build the party, could not deal with such profitable profession as a lawyer, notary, detective, surveyor, etc. During privatization non-citizens received fewer certificates, invoiced them less pensionable service, they could not work in senior positions in banks and joint-stock companies, to acquire the land. In total in Latvia and Estonia was introduced and is still in effect for

more than 70 restrictions on the rights of non-citizens.

Since the late 90-s the Latvian and Estonian non-citizens had the opportunity to become naturalized. However, the requirements for naturalization were so high that many people could not meet them. Part of the aliens took Russian citizenship, and some - the citizenship of other countries. However, in Latvia is still 14% of the population is non-citizens in Estonia such 7%. Estonia has granted non-citizens the right to vote in municipal elections. After that, the naturalization process in both countries is almost completely stopped.

Third, all new non-titular population of the Baltic countries subjected to direct ethnic discrimination. The main means of discrimination has become the language of the titular nation, which got the status of a single state, but almost all of the titular population at that time spoke Russian fluently. In all three Baltic countries, people not owning the official language was dismissed from the civil service and state-owned enterprises and institutions. Those who worked in the private sector were subjected to linguistic inspections, fines, and urge business owners to their dismissal. With the establishment of high-level requirements for knowledge of the state language aliens were not allowed to prestigious and high-intellectual professions, although for their occupying positions such knowledge was not so necessary.

Russian language was forcibly removed from the official sphere: it was impossible to apply to state and local government agencies, receive their solutions, to conduct business documents, to carry on its meetings and conferences. All state-owned media have been translated into the languages of the titular peoples, and for the private media have set mandatory quotas for broadcasting in titular languages. In case of violation, these quotas media owners fined and repeat offenders edition closed. For example, in Latvia in violation of the language of quotas was indicative closed "Russian Radio". The "First Baltic television Channel" repeatedly fined for a breach of linguistic quotas, and for criticizing the official interpretation of the history of the Baltic States. It was impossible to put up more signs with the name of streets, squares, cities, rivers, and lakes, mountains, duplicated on Russian or Polish. There is a subject to a mandatory Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian spelling of names and surnames of non-titular population in all official documents.

Another important component of the policy of discrimination in the Baltic States was the elimination of social institutions that reproduce the national identity of the non-titular population. Immediately after the declaration of independence it was forbidden to teach in state higher education institutions in Russian. It was dismissed from universities overwhelming part of Russian teachers. Latvia has established a private high school in the humanities with teaching in Russian - Baltic Russian Institute. Branches of this university opened in Lithuania and Estonia. However, the authorities of the last two republics under false pretexts shut down these branches. According to them, even for their money Russian had no right to be taught in high school in their native language. By the beginning of the 2000s, teaching Russian children in the public schools were forced to convert to Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian. In Lithuania, the Lithuanian language is forcibly injected into the

education of Polish children. From school programs of non-titular population was purposefully withdrawn every native ethnic component, and instead imposed the value of titular nation.

Practically it was ceased funding from state and municipal budgets institutions of Russian and Polish culture. It was disappeared from the museum expositions artifacts testifying to the life of the non-titular population of the Baltic countries during the last millennium. The authorities began to publish books and magazines, in which the story of non-titular population is presented in a distorted way. The most famous was the book "Latvia: the history of the twentieth century." In this book, the facts of mass destruction non-titular population in a concentration Salaspils camp were presented as an ordinary practice of the labor camp. Public libraries have stopped buying books, magazines and newspapers in Russian and Polish, and the old collection of books in these languages were purposefully destroyed.

Russian and Polish population of the Baltic countries cannot freely restore old and set up new monuments of their politicians, scientists, cultural representatives. This undermines the value system of representatives of the non-title nation. For example, in Vilnius authorities had demolished the monument to Russian General I. Chernyakhovskij; the monument to the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz was not allowed to recover. In Tallinn barbarously was transferred from the center to the outskirts the monument of the Liberator Soldier. In Riga, it was repeatedly made numerous attempts to blow up the monument to the Liberator Soldier. In all three countries are impunity desecrated graves of Soviet soldiers, Russian, Polish, and Jewish cemeteries. Of special note is the discriminatory attitude of the authorities to the Russian Orthodox Church: it does not return the confiscated by the state cult and outbuildings; are not allowed to make a weekend of Easter and Christmas holidays. All these actions can be characterized as an attempt to erase the collective memory of the non-titular population.

Fourth, non-titular population of the Baltic countries is intimidated and demoralized by the ruling elite title. Russian population is imposed guilt for the "Soviet occupation" of the mythical repression of Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians who were at one time. These repressions were purely social, not ethnic in nature. With the same purpose, Russian and Polish activists of public organizations are harassed by the police and security services. As an element of political pressure towards the non-titular population it should be considered the inclusion of the attributes of a state ideology of National Socialism. For example, at the state level are honored national heroes of the SS formations, their days of education Nazi troops, provided government benefits and privileges to former Waffen SS legionnaires and national partisans who had fought on the side of the Nazis. In contrast, participants in the war on the side of the anti-Hitler coalition forces benefits do not receive any benefits and privileges. Some of them, such as Vasily Kononov in Latvia, were brought to trial and convicted for having fought with the local Nazi forces in the war.

Under the influence of the assimilation pressure of the ruling elites from non-

titular Soviet population of former Baltic republics began to form new independent ethnic communities. In Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia arisen Russian communities, which included almost all ethnic Russians, Belarusians and Russified ethnic minorities. The process of formation of Russian communities burdened the fact that the composition of their intellectuals dominated by technical specialists who did not own the skills to manage the masses of the population. In Lithuania, the Polish formed an independent entity. By the beginning of the 2000s, the Baltic Russian and Polish communities began to be structured. In their structure it was stood out its own political, economic and intellectual elites. These elites have to take care of the creation of social institutions that ensure the reproduction and the mobilization of national identity. Thus, in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia arisen independent Russian community, and in Lithuania - Polish community.

After the formation of independent Russian and Polish communities, ethnic conflicts in the Baltic countries have moved from a latent into the open manifestation. The most pressing of these conflicts were the following.

In 2003-2004, in Latvia there was a movement of protest against the forcible transfer of Russian schools in Latvian. Spontaneously formed Defense Headquarters of Russian schools gathered activists who organized meetings and demonstrations, gathered the tens of thousands of students and their parents. Parents held meetings, signed petitions, and staged a multi-day hunger strike. So-called "reform of Russian schools" was managed to stop. However, the authorities deported Russian leader of the resistance movement A.Kazakov and subjected to criminal and administrative prosecution of other activists of the Staff of protection of Russian schools. In 2011-2012, in response to a referendum of Latvian national radicals with a proposal to prohibit public school instruction in their native Russian language, society, it was initiated by organization' "Mother Tongue" a referendum for granting the Russian language in Latvia status of second state. For this initiative in a referendum voted absolutely all Russian population of legal capacity.

In 2012-2013, the Russian activists initiated and conducted the election of deputies to the Parliament of unrepresented. The Parliament claims to be the central institution of representation in government as 300,000 non-citizens of Latvia and the whole Russian population.

In Estonia in 2008-2009, the activists of the society "Night Patrol" organized mass protests of the Russian population against humiliating actions of the authorities in respect of their shrines - a monument to the Liberator Soldier in Tallinn. The protests were brutally suppressed by the police, and activists were prosecuted, some of them are forced to leave the country.

In 2012, the Estonian Russian society created "Russian School", which defends the right of children to learn Russian in high school in their native language. For the protection of the right to the preservation of national identity Estonian authorities were again used against activist's society tools of intimidation and prosecution.

In 2008-2009 in Lithuania Association of Teachers of Russian schools held a protest against the forced transfer of Russian schools in the Lithuanian language teaching. Including the mass hunger strike was organized by the teachers.

In 2012-2013, the Polish community in Lithuania organized protests against the deprivation of the rights of national minorities to learn their mother tongue. These meetings were supported by members of the local Russian community.

For two decades in power, the bureaucratic elite the titular established in the Baltic republics classic ethnocratic regimes. These regimes are characterized by three main features. First, they are irremovably dominate the titular power elite. Second, the titular population formally controls his elites through the standard democratic procedures, and non-titular population is deprived of such opportunities. Thirdly, the ruling elite controls the titular society through provoking ethnic conflicts and thus away from the real political control by the masses of the titular population.

When the masses of the titular population tired of the empty promises of the National Liberal politicians, the last one closed and opens another party, spend the next parliamentary and municipal elections, but retaining all of the same set of people in power. Essentially there is a realized dream of the former national communist nomenclature: it irremovably in power and retains the integrity of their social status and income.

In the framework of the Baltic ethnocratic systems develop political parties claiming to express the interests of that part of the non-titular population, which has a right of citizenship. This is the party of “Harmony Centre” in Latvia and the Centre Party in Estonia. However, they are mostly only simulating the activity in solution Russian question. More active Latvian party “ForHRUL” (For Human Rights in a United Latvia), Russian Party of Estonia and the Russian Party of Lithuania, unable to cope with the tasks, lost the support of Russian communities. Polish election initiative more effectively protect the interests of Poles in Lithuania and enjoys continued support of the Polish and Russian voters. Almost all of the parties are constantly in the opposition and did not significantly affect the nature of the Baltic ethnocratic regimes.

The constant emphasis by the ruling National Liberal Party of the public attention on the problems of ethnic issues allows them to avoid responsibility for the poor implementation of the socio-economic functions. Not accidentally during the economic crisis of 2008-2012 the decline in production and the level of unemployment in the Baltic States were the most significant in Europe. The severity of the crisis lay down solely on the shoulders of ordinary working people. But there were no protests by ordinary Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians were not. The ruling titular elite intimidated its workers so that their grievances can take advantage of foreigners, and it would undermine the foundation of nation-states.

Along with the large Russian and Polish communities in the Baltic States there is small Jewish community. Large indigenous Jewish population was killed during the war by local and German Nazis. By 1991, as part of the Jewish population of Latvia is dominated by immigrants from other Soviet republics. After the establishment of ethnocratic regimes the bulk of the Jews emigrated from the Baltic countries, fearing that once again might be persecuted. At present, the proportion of Jews is not more than one tenth of one percent of the total population of each of the Baltic countries.

Most of the Jews living in the Russian cultural and linguistic basis and only partially support its national identity while participating in some religious and secular activities of their own community. Jews were subjected to mass ethnic restrictions, as members of the Russian community. However, there are specific ways of

discrimination against Jews. Thus, in all the Baltic countries openly anti-Semitism is flourishing. It exists in the statements of the radical nationalist politicians and media publications. Jewish cemeteries are desecrated. There have been numerous attempts to blow up a synagogue. Jewish communities have not returned their pre-war property in full.

Ethnic Jews are active in human rights activities within the Russian community, and this activity is supported by the members of this community.

Titular peoples of the Baltic States are not ethnically homogeneous. For example, along with Latvians- balts in Latvia independently lives quite a large ethnic group - Latgallians. Balts formed on the basis of Lutheranism, and under the influence of German culture. The basic religion among Latgallians is Roman Catholicism, and dominating factor at their formation was a Polish cultural influence. Latgallians have their own language and, more ancient than among the balts, writing. In this language, published thousands of books, magazines and newspapers. Latgallians have their own writers, artists, historians, musicians and teachers. In Lithuania, along with the Lithuanians, there is a separate ethnic group Zhemaitians. In Estonia, among Estonians is living separate ethnic Setu. Recently, there is an active emigration Setu into Finland, and its numbers in Estonia declined significantly. Ethnic self-identification Latgalians is high enough but the process of forming an independent community they had not yet ended. Processes for the development of identity in Zhemaitians and Setu are going slowly.

In hierarchical systems of power created by the titular Baltic elites Latgallians, Zhemaitians and Setu occupy a lower social status than the actual Latvians- Baltieshi, Lithuanians and Estonians, but higher than the Russian and Polish. Higher social status they provide citizenship and a good knowledge of the language of the titular nation. However Latgallians, Zhemaitians and Setu are not able to send their children to schools in their native language and to familiarize them with the basics of the history and culture of the people. In the languages of these peoples are not published magazines and newspapers; they do not have the ability to create their own radio and television programs at the state's expense. In respect of Setu and Zhemaitians this can be explained to their low number. For Latgalians case is a fundamental unwillingness Latvians to give them the opportunity to develop their national identity. In the political elite Latgalians can enter only if they completely abandon their distinct ethnic identity.

In general, we can say that the Latvian-Latgal, Lithuanian-Zhemaitian and Estonian-Setu conflicts are of secretive nature. For Russian and Polish considered small ethnic groups occupy the position of titular elites, though not as aggressive.

On the situation of ethnic conflict in the Baltic States have a certain influence “mother states” of non-titular ethnic groups, particularly Russia and Poland, to a lesser extent Israel.

Russia considers neutral Russian compatriots, but supports it in the reproduction of Russian identity. Russian children are provided quotas to free higher education in Russia; they are actively invited to various seminars and courses, and organized by the Russian embassies. On the Baltic countries in Russian language are broadcasting the First Baltic television Channel, channel REN TV Baltic, “Voice of Russia” and “Russian radio”. Financial aid is provided to support the Russian culture and the Russian language. To finance these activities in Russia has been specially created fund “Russian world”. Non-citizens of Latvia and Estonia have the right to visa-free entry to Russia.

Prior to the 2000s, Russia is closely linked the development of political and economic relations with the Baltic States to the position of the Russian population. Following this milestone, under pressure from of a major Russian capital employed export of hydrocarbons; these two topics had been separated. In all conflicts concerning mass statelessness Russian population, infringement of its rights to receive education in their native language and the use of the Russian language in the official sphere, Russia has expressed diplomatic statements. Recently, the Foundation began to act legal support to Russian compatriots living abroad. It provides assistance in protecting the rights of compatriots from discrimination in national and international courts.

Poland demonstrates greater political activity in support of their communities abroad. This is reflected in the intensive political pressure on the Baltic States in protecting the rights of Poles to teach children in their mother tongue and to use the Polish language in the public sphere. Poland provides financial support for the development of Polish culture and its language. Poland has introduced a “map of the Pole”, which gives living abroad almost the same rights as Polish citizens.

Israel supports the Jewish community in questions of education for children in Hebrew, gives you the opportunity to get in it higher education in their ethnic homeland, fights for the return of property to Jewish communities, against the resurgence of neo-Nazi sentiment in the Baltic States. In solution of the last two problems are actively involved international Jewish organizations.

Independent players influencing the development of ethnic conflicts in the Baltic countries are the United States and the European Union.

U.S. secretive supports the radical nationalists who preach anti-Russian, and even neo-Nazi moods. Managed through the activities of the radical nationalists ethnic conflict can worsen the relationship between Russia and the European Union, which since 2004 include Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. As a result of this ethnic conflict, these two important geopolitical opponents United States weakens their position.

The European Union considers the organized Russian communities of the Baltic States as a factor in the potential of Russian influence. Therefore the European bureaucracy does not impedes Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian ethnocrats the political line on the assimilation of the Russian population. Emerging ethnic conflicts involving Russian population it prefers not to notice.

In general, it should be noted that the development of ethnic conflicts in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in the post-Soviet period has initiated the former Communist nomenclature, which provided the appropriation of state property, complete preservation of positions of power and income security. Titular bureaucracy implements its power through ethnocratic regimes that include mechanisms of displacement non-titular population abroad, deprivation of citizenship rights, linguistic and cultural discrimination, intimidation of non-titular population and the destruction of its social institutions.

Open form is being acquired Latvian-Russian conflict in Latvia, the Russian-Estonian in Estonia, Russian-Lithuanian and Polish-Lithuanian in Lithuania. Latvian-Latgalian, Lithuanian-Zhemaytiskian and Estonian-Setu conflicts are still hidden, but also slowly developing.

Russia and Poland are putting pressure on the Baltic ethnocratic regimes, but the latter afford to ignore the pressure. The reason for this is to support ethnocratic Baltic regimes like the U.S. who are interested in maintaining the ethnic conflicts in

the heated state and the European Union, which has a negative attitude towards residing in it Russian population.