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### **Anti-Semitism in new independent countries on post-Soviet space**

*(Review of Moscow bureau for human rights)*

Geographical framework of this report includes the member-states of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), Georgia and three republics of Baltia (being the members of NATO and European Community since 2004), i.e. 14 republics of the former Soviet Union. Russia remains beyond our attention for several reasons. Firstly, most part of studies on post-Soviet problems are concentrated on the very Russian subjects (and this can be explained by geopolitical domination of RF on the territory of the former Soviet Union, legal succession of RF to the USSR as well as its leading role in post-Soviet integration projects). Secondly, during examination of new independent republics their geopolitical position proves to be within the focus of attention. They are examined either in the context of their competition with Russia (Ukraine, Georgia and to lesser extent Turkmenistan) or on the contrary in the context of integration projects (Kazakhstan, Byelorussia), or in the context of Russian-American “Big game”. Internal political problems of other post-Soviet formations are studied insufficiently due to this. This regards also the studies of post-Soviet anti-Semitism outside RF not last of all.

### **Post-Soviet anti-Semitism: sources and preconditions**

Anti-Semitic theories and practices on post-Soviet space were formed under the influence of numerous factors of both historical past and up-to-date present. It should be started from the fact that the process of collapse of united union state itself was determined by the model of ethnic building used in 1922-1991 (time of existence of USSR) by the ruling party – CPSU (which had various titles: RCP (b) – VCP (b) – CPSU). This model was based upon politicization and institutionalization of ethnicity.

The Soviet state institutionalized the ethnic groups as a main subject of politics and public law in its ethnic-state project. Not the rights of separate person but the rights of nations (understood as the highest form of ethnos) were considered to be the priority. Thus the Soviet state fixed the ethnic differences upon the territorial foundation. In 1924 the famous Lithuanian Bolshevik Juozas Vareikis formulated a felicitous metaphor calling the Soviet Union a “communal apartment” where each room was assigned for a separate republic<sup>1</sup>.

On one hand, the official ideology (and humanitarian sciences based upon its foundation) treated anti-Semitism as a bad heritage and vestige of “great-power chauvinism” of the times of Romanovs’ empire. It should be also remembered that the Great Patriotic war of 1941-1945 was one of the central and even cementing elements of identity in the USSR. In this concern the fact

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<sup>1</sup> Slezkine Yu. The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism // Slavic Review. 1994. Vol. 53. No 2. P. 414-452.

that the Nazis executed the “final solution of Jewish problem” on some territories of the Soviet Union obliged the Soviet elite to implement the judeo-philic practices in a limited amount at least. It was easier to fit the image of the most principal fighter against Hitlerism with the help of them.

On the other hand, anti-Semitic practices proved to be called-for due to various internal and external political reasons. Creation of the Jewish state Israel being independent of the Soviet influence (both ideological and foreign-policy one) became a serious challenge for the USSR. Firstly, it promoted the growth of ethnic consciousness within the Jewish community. And this growth was not authorized from above by the Central Committee (CC) of CPSU and Political bureau; consequently it was beyond the control (or poorly controlled by the Soviet officialism). Thus the creation of Israel itself (as well as its successes, failures and problems) caused the local civil activity, and this was a danger for ideocratic Soviet state itself. Secondly, the existence of Israel enabled the conflict of identities (Jewish identity vs. Soviet one). And the minimization of identities was one of the most important priorities for the Soviet practice. All this incited the Soviet state to judeo-phobia.

As a rule the Soviet ideological practices were implemented using certain ideological disguise. Unlike Nazi Germany (and its satellites), the open combat against the “world Jewry”, “Semitic race” was not executed and proclaimed in the Soviet Union. At the same time anti-Semitic ideas (both everyday and ideological ones) were introduced into the masses by the ruling party in disguise of combat against “cosmopolitans”, “doctors-saboteurs” (1940-1950s), “Zionism” (most actively in 1960-1980s), departure of the Jews from the Soviet Union, and “aggressive foreign policy of Israel”. Atheistic policy of the Soviet power for eradication of Judaic religious tradition (closing of synagogues, prayer houses allegedly according to “desire of working people”) was the closest to “classical” anti-Semitism. However these activities were included into general context of atheistic propaganda and practice (closing of Orthodox churches and monasteries, Moslem mosques, persecution of Sufi brotherhoods).

Political liberalization of late 1980s – early 1990s that became one of principal consequences of “perestroika” affected seriously the anti-Semitism manifestations too. According to fair note of the historian Mordechai Altshuler, starting from 1988 the official policy of discrimination actually stopped to be in force though it was sometimes felt on the level of low bureaucratic circles. As a result of appearing of “glasnost” in the Soviet Union and especially in the process of democratization, the public opinion turned into one of the factors determining the politics in most independent states. Especial importance of public attitude towards the Jews was found out under the new available conditions”<sup>2</sup>. And the process of “Jewish ethnic revival” started indeed in second half of 1980s in former republics of the USSR. In 1987 the Estonian Jewish cultural society was registered in Tallinn. In 1988 the publication of first independent Jewish periodical in Soviet Ukraine “Informational bulletin of Chernovtsy Jewish public-cultural fund” began (it was published in the capital of North Bucovina Chernovtsy). At the same time the Society of Jewish culture in Chisinau and Jewish theatre-studio in Beltsy were created in Moldavia. In 1988 the Association of Georgian-Jewish relations was created under the Academy of sciences of Georgian SSR.

On May 21-22, 1989 the meeting of representatives of Jewish organizations from 34 cities of the Soviet Union took place in then-capital of Latvian SSR Riga. It actually became the first all-USSR meeting of Jewish organizations of the USSR where the decision to convene the all-USSR congress of Jewish communities and associations was made. According to Valery Engel, “the decisions of Riga conference actually urged the process of creation of Jewish organizations, and their number exceeded several hundreds in several months; everybody was

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<sup>2</sup> Cited after: Altshuler M. Jews of CIS on the threshold of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium //Acta Slavica Japonica. Hokkaido University. Slavic Research Center. 1998. Vol. 16. (in Russian)  
//<http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publicn/acta/16/alt/altshuler-3.html>

aspiring to enter the created confederation as only the organizations were admitted to it”<sup>3</sup>. On the same year the first Jewish secondary school was opened in Riga. In 1989 the Lithuanian radio started the weekly programs in Yiddish (language of Jews-Ashkenazi). At the same time the Society of culture of Jews of Lithuania was established.

But anti-Semitism, despite its “awakening” during political liberalization of late 1980s, did not become a dominant direction in the process of ethno-political self-determination of future independent states of CIS and Baltia. Its radical manifestations did not meet the support of new ethnic elites though after collapse of USSR in December 1991 separate anti-Semitic manifestations were heard from time to time in the countries that already got the membership of the European Community (countries of Baltia joined this organization in 2004) or have a claim on European way of development (Ukraine). There are several explanations of such course of events.

Late in 1980s – early in 1990s there were no former obstacles for departure of Jews to Israel (as well as to USA and European countries) yet. And this was one of positive achievements of the “perestroika” epoch. According to fair note of Mordechai Altshuler, up to early 1990s “departure “fever” (both for permanent and temporary residence) involved most broad circles of population: according to the estimates of some sociologists, more than 20 million people aspired to leave the country”. During two years (1990-1991) 373 thousand Jews emigrated from the Soviet Union, and this was a quarter of the Jewish population according to the last All-USSR census of 1989, and 89,3% of the emigrants came to Israel<sup>4</sup>. The emigration dynamics in 1989-1990 is impressive for each of union republics. While in 1989 just 466 Jews left Azerbaijan, in 1990 it were already 7 905 people. In Tajikistan ever bigger figures were recorded. During four years (1985-1989) 600 people left the republic, and in 1990-1994 it were almost 10 000 people. In 1989 3 673 Jews left Ukraine for Israel, and for Western countries (mostly USA) – 17 486 people. In 1990 the number of those who left for Israel was already 59 874 people and for USA – about 12 000 people. The following dynamics was observed in Lithuania on the eve of the collapse of USSR: in 1989 322 people left for Israel, in 1990 – 2 737 and in 1991 – 1 052. In 1989 and 1990 1 121 and 23 521 people correspondingly left Byelorussia. And from Moldavia 1 470 and 11 926 people emigrated correspondingly<sup>5</sup>. Thus the quantitative decrease of Jewish population itself made the “Jewish problem” less urgent.

## Ukraine

Despite considerable growth of Jewish emigration on the eve and after the collapse of USSR, the Jews are a numerous community in independent Ukraine. According to the data of All-Ukrainian census of 2001, they are among the first ten of nationalities. Number of Jews is 103,6 people or 0,2% of the whole population of Ukraine<sup>6</sup>.

After acquisition of independence the Jews got the access to high governmental posts and positions of local and regional level. Alexander Paskhaver occupied the position of the councilor of the president of Ukraine, Yefim Zvyagilsky – that of prime-minister (though his activity became of scandalous shade, he was accused of thefts and escaped from the country), and Yuri

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<sup>3</sup> Cited after: Engel V. Course of lectures on the history of Jews in Russia. Subject 21. Jews in the USSR during the perestroika and post-Soviet period (in Russian) // <http://jhistory.nfurman.com/russ/russ001-21.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Altshuler M. Op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> The figures of Jewish emigration by republics of the former Soviet Union are taken from Electronic Jewish encyclopedia (articles for corresponding countries) (in Russian) (see. <http://www.eleven.co.il>)

<sup>6</sup> See the data on ethnic composition of the Ukraine population: All-Ukrainian census of 2001 // <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/rus/results/general/nationality/>

Ioffe – position of vice-prime-minister of Ukrainian government. Dmitry Dvorkis occupied the position of mayor of Vinnitsa in 1992-2000 (he became the honorary citizen of this city), and Eduard Gurvitz became the mayor of Odessa.

At the same time a kind of instrumental attitude of Ukrainian elite towards the tolerance manifestations should be noticed. In this concern the following opinion is of interest: “deliberate desire to correspond to Western patterns is characteristic for Ukrainian elite to considerable extent, at least in those spheres where this does not require serious efforts. For example, it’s much easier to recommend the studying of subject of the Holocaust in higher educational institutions all around the country than to combat against corruption and money laundering, and at the same time it’s not clear which of these measures may promote formation of the image of a civilized state with bigger success. This does not mean at all that there are no enthusiasts in the Ukrainian ministry of education and science which recommended the studying of Holocaust who are positive that this step would help in upbringing of tolerant consciousness purposes and in the long run in building of civil society. But one should take into account also the momentary conjuncture, and it is the following: such symbolic demonstration of aspiration toward the standards of civilized society do not requiring any special efforts may not mean anything in fact. Roughly speaking, the idea that anti-Semitism is an evil itself is not strong in the consciousness of officials yet but the fear to pass for an anti-Semite is already understandable for them”<sup>7</sup>.

The steps of the third president of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko are even more ambivalent. On May 16, 2007 he (being the politician calling himself “democrat” and “adherent of European choice”) signed a Decree that supposes establishing memorial dates, naming the street in honor of Yaroslav Stetsko (and his wife Yaroslava Stetsko) – one of long-term leaders and ideologists of Ukrainian nationalists<sup>8</sup>.

On October 12, 2007 according to another Decree of the president of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko the title “Hero of Ukraine” was awarded to Roman Shukhevich “for outstanding personal contribution into national-liberation struggle for freedom and independence of Ukraine and in connection with centenary of his birthday and 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of creating of Ukrainian insurgent army”<sup>9</sup>.

Despite there is no unity in estimates of Roman Shukhevich by the historians, numerous accusations of participation in mass actions against the Jews were made against this man. In his interview to the radio station “Deutsche Welle” the head of Jerusalem memorial complex “Yad va-Shem” Iosef (Tomi) Lapid stated: “We have a complete file being the evidence that Shukhevich was one of those involved into mass murders. Up to this time the Ukrainian part did not address us with request to pass these documents. But if such a request would be received I think we would satisfy it”<sup>10</sup>.

The anti-Semitic subject is also used in internal political struggle. During confrontation of Leonid Kuchma and associations being oppositionist towards him, the thesis of ties of the second Ukrainian president with “Jewish oligarchs” was used. Even some respectable parties and organizations show some tolerance towards “their own radicals”. And this happens even in case the party-political leaders try to dissociate themselves from anti-Semitism. The nationalists (using anti-Semitic rhetoric) came into the parliament with support of Viktor Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko. Andrey Shkil being famous for his anti-Semitic statements joined the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko.

Not just marginal but also respectable editions are sometimes involved into anti-Semitic propaganda (journal “Personnel” published by Interregional academy of personnel management

<sup>7</sup> Cited after: Anti-Semitism in Ukraine (in Russian) // <http://antifashyst.narod.ru/ukraine.html>

<sup>8</sup> See the full text of the document: Указ Президента України (Decree of the President of Ukraine) «Про вшанування пам'яті Ярослава Стецька і Ярослави Стецько» (in Ukrainian) // <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=419%2F2007>

<sup>9</sup> See the full text of the document: Указ Президента України (Decree of the President of Ukraine) No 965/2007 «Про присвоєння Р.Шухевичу звання Герой України» (in Ukrainian) // <http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/6808.html>

<sup>10</sup> Cited after: “Yad va-Shem” invites // News of the capital. 2007. December 11-17. No 46 (483) (in Russian).

the editorial council of which includes some deputies, ministers, and diplomats of Ukraine). The Academy rector Georgy Tschyokin appeared with frankly anti-Israeli and “anti-Zionist” publications. The Academy has close ties with the embassy of Libya and Palestinian representation<sup>11</sup>.

A paradoxical situation is available also in educational policy of Ukraine. On one hand, as was mentioned above, the ministry of education and science recommends the course on studying the Holocaust. But at the same time the curriculums on the history of Ukraine in secondary schools and colleges include making heroes of Haidamaks of the “Koliivshchina” period, Ukrainian nationalists of first-half 20<sup>th</sup> century and even SS division “Galicia”<sup>12</sup>.

Anti-Semitic moods are supported by various nationalistic public associations. The cases of vandalism towards the monuments to the victims of the Holocaust are especially frequent in the regions of Western Ukraine. Except Ukrainian nationalistic movements, pro-Russian organizations (standing on the positions of “Slavic unity” or “imperial” point of view) also exploit anti-Semitic slogans.

The tragedy of airplane of the company “Siberian airlines” (executed the flight Tel-Aviv – Novorossiysk) that was shot down on October 4, 2001 by Ukrainian missile in the area of military maneuvers over the Black Sea (66 citizens of Israel were inside it) became an unpleasant incident that darkened the Ukrainian-Israeli relations. And though the authorities and the military men tried to deny involvement of Ukrainian armed forces into the tragic incident, Ukraine paid the compensations to the families of the aggrieved.

Thus, despite enormous success achieved in the course of strengthening of ethnic tolerance and interethnic peace in independent Ukraine, anti-Semitic excesses are still a serious challenge for this state. In the process of “nationalization” (according to expression of Alexey Miller), anti-Semitic discourse was minimized but not eliminated completely. The cases are frequent when politicians (even those considering themselves respectable and orientated at Europe) resort to anti-Semitism to any extent (if not openly but latently) for providing popularity among the voters. And on the contrary, motifs of tolerance and “judeo-philía” prove to be claimed not due to principal considerations but due to pragmatic reasons (turn to the West and aspiration to join NATO and European Community).

## **Byelorussia (Republic of Belarus)**

According to UN classification, today’s Byelorussia is a “mono-ethnic state”. According to the census of 1999, more than 81% of population are Byelorussians. Despite considerable (in quantitative respect) departure of Byelorussian Jews outside the republic, after the collapse of USSR they are still among five most numerous communities of independent Byelorussia (after Byelorussians themselves, Russians, Poles, and Ukrainians). The Jews make up 0,3% of the whole population of the republic (about 28 thousand people). During the Byelorussian history the Jews were the principal population in the cities, and in the countryside they also dominated together with Byelorussians. Meanwhile in 1939 (on the eve of the World war II) 375,1 thousand Jews resided yet just in the Eastern part of Byelorussia making up 6,7% of population (they were the second population group by their number). The Holocaust, postwar internal migrations within the USSR and then emigration to Israel, USA and Europe decreased the Jewish community of Byelorussia abruptly. At present the Jews reside in dispersed manner in

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<sup>11</sup> See in detail: Preladysheva S. Contemporary criminal ideologists of Ukraine (in Russian) // <http://www.courier.co.il/index.php?id=14559>

<sup>12</sup> “Koliivshchina” - a peasant-Cossack uprising in the Right-bank Ukraine in 1768 accompanied by mass elimination of Jewish and Polish population in Volyn and Podolia. SS division “Galicia” – 14<sup>th</sup> grenadier division of “Waffen-SS” recruited from “non-Nordic volunteers” of the “Galicia district” (this was the name of the territory of three regions of contemporary West-Ukrainian area occupied by Nazis).

Byelorussia forming no compact massive of habitation (they make up the biggest percentage in Orshanka and Mogilyov districts)<sup>13</sup>.

Meanwhile the problems of anti-Semitism remain urgent (despite abrupt decrease of the number of Jews in the republic) for home-policy (and foreign-policy) agenda in independent Byelorussia. Unlike neighboring Ukraine, Byelorussia is a state having no pluralistic structure of power system.

Attitude of the state (and this means that of Lukashenko in person) towards the problem of anti-Semitism can be reduced to the following formula: “Against anti-Semitism but not against separate anti-Semites”. Especially if they express their loyalty towards the principal figure.

In his public speeches the Byelorussian president condemned anti-Semitism manifestations more than once. On July 25, 2002 in his talk with mass media representatives Lukashenko stated that “neither anti-Russian nor anti-Jewish policy would be perceived in Byelorussia” and that “we have no soil for anti-Semitism”<sup>14</sup>.

More than once the president of Byelorussia called upon the Jews who left to Israel and to other countries to coming back in public. In October 2008 he made a speech at the meeting devoted to 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of destruction of Minsk ghetto.

Among those who actively stood on anti-Semitic positions in 1990-2000s, the writer Eduard Skobelev can be named (he was the editor-in-chief of journal “Informational bulletin of administration of the president of Republic of Belarus”)<sup>15</sup>, as well as the editors of leading newspapers Igor Osinsky and Vyacheslav Rostikov. Some support to this anti-Semitic “lobby” is also rendered by Byelorussian exarchate of the Orthodox church that published the newspaper “Church word” in 1990s and publishes the “Orthodox calendar” now. They included the stories with motifs of “Bloody calumny”. Early in 2000s the circles being close to the exarchate stood against turning out the kosher produce in Byelorussia. Also the publishers’ group “Orthodox initiative” being close to the exarchate published a collection of anti-Semitic materials (with edition of 30 000 copies) in 1999 including notorious “Protocols of the elders of Zion” and “Catechism of the Jew of USSR”.

Aspiration of Lukashenko and his team to protect the country from foreign influence also creates the problems for the Jewish community of Byelorussia (not always directly but always indirectly). On November 16, 2002 the new edition Law “On freedom of conscience and religious organizations” came into force in Byelorussia. The law did not permit the foreign citizens and persons without citizenship residing legally in Byelorussia to be the founders and members of religious organizations. Religious communities were deprived of the right to found their own mass media, create spiritual educational institutions and train the personnel of clergymen, invite foreign clergymen for meeting religious needs of the believers. Only religious associations received this right. This all created additional difficulties for religious contacts of Byelorussian Hebrews with their foreign coreligionists. Similar line directed at minimization of “external presence” can be traced also in educational sphere. On September 2, 2003 the

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<sup>13</sup> During inter-census period (1989-1999) the number of Jews in Byelorussia decreased by 84,2 people. See in detail about demography of Jews of Byelorussia: Shakhotko L.P., Kudelka D.N. Ethnic and language composition of population of Byelorussia // Voprosy statistiki (Problems of statistics) 2002. No 11. P. 30-37 (in Russian).

<sup>14</sup> Cited after: Basin Ya. Anti-Semitism and anti-Semites in Byelorussia. 21<sup>st</sup> century // Civil dignity. Bulletin. 2009. February 3 (in Russian) // <http://www.homoliber.org/ru/gd/gd091303.html>

<sup>15</sup> Eduard Skobelev called upon the journals’ editors in public to not publishing the works of a classic of Byelorussian literature Vasil Bykov calling them “politically backward”. He wrote in his book “Stalin’s testament” (2003): “The Jews always wanted to dominate and referred to their allegedly humble position with this purpose. But in present time when the Jews are at the head of a new International that already takes root in the Western soil, their aspiration to the world domination becomes a deadly challenge because the Jewish temper and Jewish faith do not know any reasonable restrictions” (Cited after: Kolomiytseva O. Lukashenko may break off with the civilized world because of anti-Semite Skobelev (in Russian) // [http://mignews.com/news/scandals/cis/050705\\_182328\\_42610.html](http://mignews.com/news/scandals/cis/050705_182328_42610.html)

International humanitarian institute was liquidated in Byelorussia (the only higher educational institution in the republic that was involved into the studies of Judaics).

Anti-Semitism was often found in the military circles and among “coercive structures” representatives. In July 2006 the journal “Special mission unit” presented the code of honor of the officer composed in 1941 in Nazi Germany as a model. In the national parliament Sergey Kostyan showed the greatest activity regarding anti-Semitism. During election campaign of 2000 he actively exploited the “anti-Zionist” rhetoric (he asserted that it were “Zion-fascists” who started the World War II), and in the parliament he was involved into dissemination of anti-Semitic literature.

And though too gentle response of Byelorussian law-enforcement structures and office of public prosecutor to anti-Semitism manifestations can be noted, one can't but see that the authority blocks the frank ideological extremes. There were some cases in early 2000s when Byelorussian ministry of information prohibited sale of anti-Semitic literature in the kiosks of “Soyuzpechat”. The trials against neo-Nazi groups also took place. In October 2007 the Union of writers of Byelorussia officially condemned the publications by Eduard Skobelev “The disputable and the indisputable in the ethnic problem” and “To understand history, to live in history”, and in August 2008 he was expelled from the creative writers' union and relieved from the position in administration of the president. On the eve of election to Byelorussian parliament (it takes place with tough administrative control of presidential team) the famous anti-Semite Sergey Kostyan was excluded from the party lists. However these actions are explained not by Lukashenko's humanism and his special tolerance. The matter is that extreme anti-Semitism destroys many fundamental ideas of the system of the Byelorussian president.

Aspiration to get rid of some anti-Semitic ballast is also explained by the attempts of Byelorussian authority to diversify the foreign policy of the country (this tendency strengthened with the start of global financial crisis in 2008). Meanwhile combat against anti-Semitism the same like support of this phenomenon in Byelorussia is not an orderly system and is not based upon any institutions. Many things in this problem are determined by moods and will of the principal figures of the state which first celebrates the anti-Semite Skobelev in honor of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and then makes no obstacles for his expelling from the Union of writers and dismisses him from the presidential administration. Thus, until fundamental change of the system of authority and administration in Byelorussia, anti-Semitism and combat against it will reproduce the previous experience to considerable extent.

## **Republic of Moldova (Moldavia)**

According to the census data, 3 mln. 581 thousand people reside on the territory of Moldova, and the Jews make up 0,7% of them (about 21 thousand people). These data do not consider the population of Transdnistria<sup>16</sup>. In correspondence with the data of census conducted in 2004 in TMR, 555,5 people reside there, and the Jews make up about 0,5% of them (i.e. 3 thousand people at the most)<sup>17</sup>.

On the eve of collapse of the USSR the Law “On functioning of languages on the territory of Republic of Moldova” (September 1, 1989) adopted by the Supreme Soviet of then-Moldavian SSR played a contradictory role in the history of Moldova. Representatives of the left bank of Dniester (future Transdnistria) as well as those of ethnic minorities of the republic (Russians, Ukrainians, Gagauzes) saw nationalistic and “romano-phile” manifestations in it. At

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<sup>16</sup> See data on population of Republic of Moldova: National bureau of statistics of Republic of Moldova. Census of 2004. Demographic, ethnic, language and cultural characteristics  
<http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=ru&idc=295&id=2234>

<sup>17</sup> Diakonova L.V. Results of census in Transdnistrian Moldavian Republic // Economy of Transdnistria. 2006. No 8 (in Russian).

the same time, this law spoke about use of the Hebrew and Yiddish with the purpose of meeting cultural-language needs of the Jewish population. 12 years later, already in independent Moldova, the republican authority provided educational guarantees to the Jews covering the educational sphere from preschool to college and post-college level. It dealt with education in native languages (Hebrew and Yiddish). On the year of conduction of the first national census, the Concept of ethnic policy came into force in Moldova where the Jews (together with other ethnic communities) were treated as a political-civil entity of the “people of Moldova” “for which the Republic of Moldova is the common motherland”. Thus, according to the fair note of Roman Aronov, “for the first time during the whole history of contemporary Moldova the Jews started to be treated as an element of the state-forming nation. The Moldavian legislation did not know such a thesis before”<sup>18</sup>.

In 1990s various Jewish organizations started working actively in the Republic of Moldova. In 1997 the association of Jewish organizations and communities of Republic of Moldova was created (by the way, it included also the organizations from Transdnestrrian cities Tiraspol, Bendery and Dubossary). A network of educational institutions (schools, pedagogical college), libraries and mass media appeared. Representations of influential international Jewish organizations opened their branches. In 2003 the tragic jubilee was marked in Chisinau (100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chisinau pogrom), and the president of the republic Vladimir Voronin as well as official figures from Israel took part in this. The Jewish state was represented then by a famous Israeli politician, creator and leader of the party “Our house - Israel”, native of Chisinau Avigdor Liberman who left Moldavia in 1978 at the age of 20 (now minister of foreign affairs and in 2003 – minister of transport). Diplomatic relations between Moldova and Israel were established in 1992. The official Chisinau aspires to maintain constructive relations with its former compatriots. In 1998 the republican government even made a decision about holding of international Congress of Jews – natives of Moldavia. During the period of independence the authorities also made serious steps for liberalization of religious life (including the activity of Judaic communities).

At the same time it's impossible to speak about complete elimination of anti-Semitic manifestations in the political life of Republic of Moldova. For a long time there was no mentioning of the tragedy of Holocaust in textbooks for school and colleges in Moldavia. And this happened while during the World War II from 300 to 400 thousand Jews suffered from genocide on the territory of contemporary republic of Moldova. Actually first manuals where this subject was reviewed were introduced only in 2003 at the initiative of the Jewish congress of Moldova and Association of Jewish organizations and communities of Moldova (and only after that the initiative was supported by the core ministry). Anti-Semitic rhetoric is used by the leaders of nationalistic parties and organizations (standing for political integration of Moldova with Romania). They justify their “Romano-philism”, other considerations apart, by radical revision of history of Romania (trying to rehabilitate the Romanian leaders of 1940s).

Afterwards the anti-Semitic rhetoric was used by the political successor of NFM – Christian-democratic people's party led by Yuri Roshka (he occupied the position of vice-speaker of the parliament of Moldova in 2005-2009) in 1990s – early 2000s in the course of various mass actions and publications in their party press. Anti-Semitism was also manifested in academic and educational spheres. In this concern the university professor and one of leaders of the Society of historians Anatol Petrencu (Petrenko) especially succeeded – he made the attempts to find justifications for anti-Semitic policy of marshal Antonescu in his monographs and manuals on contemporary history of Romanians. In the opinion of Petrencu, the marshal had “his own motives for negative attitude towards the Jews of Bessarabia” as the Jews actively

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<sup>18</sup> Aronov R. Anti-Semitism in Moldova (2003-2004) (in Russian)  
[//http://www.eajc.org/program\\_art\\_r.php?id=48#top](http://www.eajc.org/program_art_r.php?id=48#top)



participated in “Sovietization of this Romanian province”<sup>19</sup>. Early in 2000s acts of vandalism took place all around the republic (pogroms at Jewish cemeteries as well as damaging of bas-reliefs to famous figures of culture and science of the Jewish origin).

Thus, the situation in post-Soviet Moldova shows that positive tendencies of restraint of anti-Semitism, introduction of elements of tolerance and European standards into interethnic relations are possible. Moreover, the republic demonstrated visible successes in this direction. But there are many preconditions for appearing of anti-Semitic moods. These are both the Transdnestrian conflict that was not finally solved (and this mobilizes the nationalistic energy), and complicated relations with the neighbors (Romania and Ukraine), and poverty. At present Moldova is the poorest country in Europe. Early in 2009 real income of republican population made up just a half of the level of 1989<sup>20</sup>. All these factors make populism claimed in its various forms and manifestations including anti-Semitism.

## Azerbaijan

According to the data of the first (after independence acquisition) General census of 1999, 7 mln 953 thousand people resided in Azerbaijan. First results of the second census conducted in Azerbaijan were announced in April 2009. According to preliminary data, number of population of this republic is 8 mln 820 thousand people. But the process of preparation of the census report (including the ethnic composition) will be completed only in mid-2010.

Unfortunately it is most problematic to determine the number of Jewish population of Azerbaijan exactly basing upon official statistic data. Azerbaijani Jewish community is a conditional notion including three groups of Jews at the minimum. These are Jews-Ashkenazi (European Jews whose appearing is connected historically with the process of colonization of the Caucasus by the Russian empire), highland Jews and Georgian Jews. It happened historically that some Jews (natives of Oguz, Gyandja, Geokchay) registered themselves as Azerbaijanis in the passports and some highland Jews of Kuba and Baku – as Tats (highland Jews speak the Tat language so they are also called Tats-Hebrews in ethnographic literature). The number of all the groups of Jews reached the maximal index in 1939 (41,2 thousand people that made up 1,3%). According to the data of the last All-USSR census of 1989, 30,8 thousand Jews resided in Azerbaijan including 5,5 thousand people of highland Jews. According to the famous Baku ethnologist Arif Yunusov, “this figure caused great doubts. And it was considered that in fact, together with highland Jews, 60 thousand Jews at least resided in Azerbaijan in that time”. Such version appeared because in 1989-1999 31,3 thousand Jews emigrated from Azerbaijan according to the data of the Jewish agency “Sohnut” (i.e more then the number of Jews that resided in the republic!). But the first census after collapse of the USSR (1999) recorded 8,9 thousand Jews (this time the census executors did not divide the Jews of Azerbaijan into subgroups)<sup>21</sup>. The expert estimates of number of the Jews in contemporary Azerbaijan vary. A figure from 16 to 26 thousand people is provided. The republican capital Baku is considered to be the place of compact residence of Jews-Ashkenazi and Georgian Jews and highland Jews are concentrated in the Northern part of the country (famous Krasnaya suburb near Kuba city)<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Bessarabia – historical area between the Black Sea and rivers Dniester, Prut, Danube. In 1812-1917 it was within the Russian empire, in 1918-1940 – within Romania. In 1940 it was annexed to the USSR. Cited after: Magder T. Anti-Semitism in Moldova (2006) (in Russian) // [http://www.eajc.org/program\\_art\\_r.php?id=89](http://www.eajc.org/program_art_r.php?id=89)

<sup>20</sup> Cited after: United Nations Organization. Economic and Social Council. Economic situation in 2008-2009 in the region of European economic commission: Europe, North America and Commonwealth of Independent States // <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/331/46/PDF/N0933146.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>21</sup> Yunusov A. Ethnic composition of Azerbaijan (according to census of 1999) (in Russian) // <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2004/0183/analit05.php>

<sup>22</sup> Bekker M. Jews in Azerbaijan: history and prospects // Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis in the world. 2007. No 1. P. 39 (in Russian).

The state policy of Azerbaijan towards the Jews is characterized by accentuated tolerance and respect. In Soviet Azerbaijan the Jews made up considerable part of scientific-technical and humanitarian intellectuals. At present Azerbaijan shows considerable interest towards military-political cooperation with Israel. Such cooperation is motivated by three factors. Baku is interested in overcoming of mighty Armenian lobby impeding development of American-Azerbaijani relations, with the help of Israel and Jewish lobby. The Southern neighbor of Azerbaijan is the principal strategic opponent of Israel – Iran, and Baku also has complicated relations with it. These relations are complicated by the problem of division of Caspian Sea as well as numerous Azerbaijani minority in the North of Iran (according to various expert estimates, these are 20-30 mln people making up three times more than the population of the whole Azerbaijan). And finally this is the energy security. According to the fair note of Ivan Danilin, “even before the oil pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan was put into operation, in 1990s, Israel became the second among the biggest customers of Azerbaijani oil. ... It should be noted at the same time that the port Ceyhan to which the laying of oil pipeline was planned from the very beginning is located relatively close to Haifa being the large Israeli port with oil-loading terminal, and this made the project doubly convenient for Israel”<sup>23</sup>.

All these factors created positive preconditions for development of Jewish communities of Azerbaijan. Since early 1990s the Center of Azerbaijani-Israel friendship is actively functioning here as well as religious schools (yeshivas), youth clubs, representations of influential Jewish organizations and agencies, and Jewish mass media are published here. In 1992 Azerbaijani branch of International association of Judaics and Jewish culture was created. In April 2000 the Jewish communal cultural center (and scientific center under it) was created. The fact that the Hebrew is taught in the Baku state university is also an evidence of attention of official republican authorities towards the Jews. In 2004 the Jewish comprehensive school for 400 pupils was created in the Azerbaijani capital.

Annually since 1995, on the Jewish New Year (Rosh-a-Shana), the holiday congratulations of the president of the republic are broadcasted in all the synagogues of Azerbaijan. During the meeting with representatives of Jewish communities on November 15, 1998 the president of Azerbaijan Geidar Aliyev stated speaking about anti-Semitism that in the republic “this phenomenon is not available, and we would never admit it. This is our firm position and it remains inviolable”<sup>24</sup>. In 2005 the current president of Azerbaijan Ilkham Aliyev accepted the delegation of Jewish communities in the presidential palace and congratulated them with the New Year.

Several synagogues function on the territory of Azerbaijan. After 1996 two synagogues that stopped their existence as the buildings for public worship in Soviet time were returned to the community of highland Jews of Krasnaya suburb. In 1997 the synagogue of Georgian Jews also revived in Baku with financial support of “Joint”. On March 9, 2003 one of largest synagogues of Europe was also opened in Baku (it was built on the place of old basement floor schools of Jews-Ashkenazi and Georgian Jews). The chairman of religious community of Georgian Jews of Baku Mikhail Karelashvili describes it as follows: “Wonderful three-storey building “with all improvements”, with two spacious halls of worship, library, well-equipped training premises, kosher kitchen and canteen”<sup>25</sup>.

But despite the above-mentioned achievements of Azerbaijani authorities, it’s impossible to say that post-Soviet Azerbaijan is the “territory without anti-Semitism”. Anti-Semitic slogans are periodically voiced by some opposition parties and their press (in editions “Yeni Musavat”, “Yeni Esr” the articles of such contents appeared from time to time). But these are not opposition nationalists who are the bearers of anti-Semitic views but Islamists. At the same time one can

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<sup>23</sup> Danilin I. Israel: “invisible gambler” in Transcaucasia // Caucasian collection. Almanac. 2006. Vol. 3 (35). P. 343 (in Russian).

<sup>24</sup> Cited after: Bekker M. Op. cit. P. 39.

<sup>25</sup> Karelashvili M. Georgian Jews of Azerbaijan // Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis in the world. 2007. No 1 (in Russian) P. 45.

speak about two variants of Islamism: Shiite one orientated at Iran and getting support of Tehran, and Salafite (or “Wahabit”) one<sup>26</sup>. Both of these projects stand at that for change of model of state system in Azerbaijan (rejection of secular statehood in favor of Islamic republic).

Anti-Semitic slogans were available on the banners of Islamic party of Azerbaijan (IPA) founded in 1992. This party sets the objective of creating the Islamic state. Broad anti-Semitic campaign took place in Azerbaijan in February 2008. On February 16, 2008 the Islamic party of Azerbaijan accused “international Zionism” of arrangement of suppressions of the Moslems. On February 22 the participants of mass action in Nardaran settlement (near Baku) burnt the Israel flag. In March so-called “Azerbaijani organization of unity” disseminated the reports about “cruel and inhuman actions of Zionist regime” and “genocide in Palestine” in some local mass media. IPA activists spoke with demand to break off diplomatic relations of Azerbaijan with Israel during execution of operation of Israeli army and special services “Cast lead” against HAMAS movement in sector of Gaza (December 27, 2008 – January 18, 2009).

On June 28, 2009 the visit of the president of Israel Shimon Peres to Azerbaijan took place.

Thus the situation in post-Soviet Azerbaijan confirms the following rule: no problem can be solved without favorable context. On one hand, Azerbaijan is a successful (almost the most optimal) example of good co-existence of Jews and Moslems as well as of absence of policy of state anti-Semitism with expressly respectful attitude of authorities towards all the Jewish communities. But by-products of Azerbaijani “stabilization” (when secular opposition is almost completely suppressed and handover of power takes place in correspondence with monarchic principle, from father to son) block the possibilities for full-fledged opposition activity. In its turn this provokes extremism acquiring radical-Islamist shape at the Islamic East. Meanwhile the ideology of radical politicized Islam develops hand in hand with anti-Semitism in contemporary world. Consequently, in Azerbaijan, unlike Ukraine or Byelorussia, strengthening of anti-Semitic tendencies (as well as their weakening) depends not so much on the policy of authorities towards the Jewish communities as on complicated home-policy and foreign-policy context.

## **Armenia**

Armenia was one of the most mono-ethnic republics already in Soviet time. In October 2001 the census was conducted in independent Armenia. The initial index of population as a result of taking census was 3 mln 358 thousand people. After additional checkup and subtraction of those who were absent during census, the population size was determined as 3 mln 276 thousand people. Share of ethnic minorities (taken together!) made up about 3%. Armenia is the most mono-ethnic formation in the South of the Caucasus in CIS (97,7% - Armenians). In Nagorny Karabakh (according to the data of census of 2005) a little more than 137 thousand people reside (other minorities amount to dozens people at the best: Russians – 171 people, Ukrainians – 22 people, Greeks – 21 people).

And though the presence of Jews on the territory of today’s Armenia can be fixed as long ago as during ancient and medieval history (in early 2000s a group of scientists from the Hebrew university of Jerusalem is studying the Jewish cemetery of 13<sup>th</sup> – early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries), number of Jews in post-Soviet Armenia is small. It varies within 800-900 people. These are mostly Jew-Ashkenazi though there are several families of Georgian Jews. The Jews are mostly concentrated

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<sup>26</sup> Salafiya (after Arabic “salafa” – “the initial”) – direction in Islam the adherents of which stand against “innovations” (that they consider to be the adoptions from other religions) and treat themselves as advocates of initial Islam (its foundation). In Russian political journalism they are identified as “Wahabits”. The Salafites themselves consider the term “Wahabit” to be an abusive nickname or political label.

in Yerevan, Vanadzor. There is also a community of Hebrews in Sevan being Russian by nationality. Very few of them remained, and they are mostly the aged people.

The Jewish community of Armenia was founded and registered by the republican ministry of justice in 1991 (in nine years the registration was prolonged). It became a kind of a center of Jewish life in this republic of Transcaucasia. In the same 1991 the Jewish Sunday school was created and in 1992 – evening yeshiva. In 1999 a synagogue was opened in Yerevan. The Jews of Armenia have their own mass media. A memorial stone to the victims of Holocaust is installed in Yerevan.

This all does not mean however that anti-Semitism is excluded from internal political life of Armenia. The whole set of factors affects the anti-Semitism in Armenia (as well as in Armenian diaspora, “spyurk” meaning “dispersion” in Armenian).

First factor is the problem of genocide of Armenians in Ottoman Porte in 1915 and its international recognition. Up to the present this problem is one of central points in attitude of Armenia (and diaspora having mighty positions in USA and European countries) towards Turkey (Armenia has no diplomatic relations with it). Long-term strategic partnership of the Turkish Republic with Israel creates a negative background for Armenian-Jewish relations. The fact that Israel does not recognize the genocide of Armenians of 1915 on official level should be also added here. The certain “jealousy” is spread among Armenian historians and politicians towards recognition of the Holocaust as an exclusive genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately the statements of some Israeli politicians and diplomats being not well-thought completely enable this jealousy.

Second factor is the long-term conflict of Armenia with Azerbaijan. As Azerbaijan also cooperates with Israel for years (and at the same time pursues the “judeo-phile policy” on official level), this affects the perception of the Jewish state and the Jews in general in Armenia negatively too.

Third factor is that of Iran. Israel considers the countries of the Southern Caucasus to be its potential allies in the course of deterrence of Iran (which is treated by the Jewish state as the principal strategic challenge to the security). At the same time Armenia cooperates with the Islamic republic intensely in a wide range of problems (energy, transport, cultural sphere).

And though anti-Semitism is not welcomed and on the contrary suppressed on the state level, some reasons for anxiety do exist. The cases are frequent when some officials make anti-Semitic statements.

Anti-Semitic tendencies are also available both on the level of civil society and in educational sphere. In February 2002 the presentation of book by Roman Yepiskoposyan “Ethnic system” took place in Yerevan House of writers. In this work the Turks are called “nation-murderer and the Jews – nation-destroyer”<sup>27</sup>.

Meanwhile positive signals were also heard recently in Armenian-Israeli relations. On November 22, 2005 the chief rabbi of Ashkenazi Jewish community of Israel Yona Metzger visited the Memorial in commemoration of victims of genocide of Armenians in Yerevan and stated: “It’s impossible to recollect what happened with Armenians in Turkey without tears”<sup>28</sup>. In May 2009 discussion of the problem of recognition of genocide of Armenians took place in

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<sup>27</sup> Cited after: Moisey Bekker: Anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Armenia – this is not a myth but the regretful reality similar to the ideas of racial superiority of Armenians-“Aryans” over representatives of Turkic, Semitic and other nations //<http://www.day.az/news/armenia/106459.html>

<sup>28</sup> Cited after: The rabbi recognizes the genocide (in Russian) //<http://news.genocide.ru/2005/11/22/141.htm>

the Knesset (parliament) of Israel. And though the positive decision in this concern was not achieved, many observers in Yerevan considered the very fact of discussion to be a serious progress. In the opinion of the Israeli political scientist and politician (native of Yerevan, deputy of 15<sup>th</sup> convocation Knesset in 1999-2003) Alexander Zinker, “two peoples that lived through genocide must become allies objectively”<sup>29</sup>.

Thus, the dynamics of anti-Semitism in Armenia depends first of all on geopolitical contexts. The process of reconciliation of Turkey and Armenia that started in summer 2008 would likely enough make the problem of genocide of Armenians (and the events of the historical past in general) less urgent (and this would decrease in its turn the importance of Israel too). Perhaps this complicated problem would turn from the range of instruments of foreign policy into humanitarian problem. It may well be so that some progress in relations of Yerevan and Ankara would actualize reconciliation of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

## Georgia

Ethno-political situation in post-Soviet Georgia is the bright reflection of practically whole range of contemporary ethno-political and religious problems of the states of former Soviet Union.

The population of Georgia is characterized by the biggest diversity in the Southern Caucasus. According to the data of census of 2002, ethnic Georgians make up 83,3%. Azerbaijanis (6,5%), Armenians (5,7%) and Russians (1,5%) also reside in Georgia<sup>30</sup>. The Jewish population of Georgia is represented by Jews-Ashkenazi and Georgian Jews (“Ebraelebi”). According to the data of the last All-USSR census of 1989, 24 800 Jews (Ashkenazi and Ebraelebi) resided in Georgia. Census of 2002 determines the number of Jews in Georgia as 3 541 people but according to various expert estimates the number of Jews in this Trans-Caucasian republic is high (from 8 to 12 thousand people). Most Jews reside in Tbilisi (according to official data, these are 2 320 people) as well as in Kutaisi (about 600 people) and small groups – in Gori, Akhaltsikhe<sup>31</sup>.

The Georgian Jews are one of the most ancient ethnic entities of Georgia. Original Jewish community having its own self-identification and own ethnonym “Georgian Jew” speak Georgian but not other Jewish languages. The Georgian Jews adopted names, surnames and many cultural traditions from the Georgians preserving the religious identity (Judaism) at the same time. Traditionally the Georgian society treated the Jewish problem with tolerance. Anti-Semitism was not characteristic even for the periods of ethno-nationalistic mobilization in Georgia in early 20<sup>th</sup> century or in 1989-1991 (despite availability of anti-Russian, anti-Ossetian, anti-Armenian and anti-Abkhazian moods).

Two communities function in Georgia since early 1990s: Georgian community of Jews-Ashkenazi (“Rahamim”) and Association of Georgian Jews (“Dereh yehudi”). At the same time the state did much for restoration of religious and cultural life of Jewish communities of Georgia. In 1990-2000s two synagogues were returned to the Jews in Tbilisi, three synagogues – in Kutaisi, two synagogues – in Akhaltsikhe and two – in Batumi. Mass departure of Jews to Israel, USA, and European countries made close the returned synagogues in Akhaltsikhe and Batumi (correspondingly in 1995 and 1998). History and culture of Jewry are broadly studied in curriculums of colleges (department of Judaics is working in Tbilisi university named after I. Djavakhishvili), Jewish mass media are also active.

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<sup>29</sup> Alexander Zinker: “Our countries should be natural allies”. Interview with the director of Institute of countries of Eastern Europe and CIS in Tel-Aviv (in Russian) // <http://www.noev-kovcheg.ru/mag/2006-08/122.html>

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of foreign affairs of Georgia. Facts // [http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=RUS&sec\\_id=24](http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=RUS&sec_id=24)

<sup>31</sup> Eichis L. Jews in Georgia. 26 centuries together

// <http://www.georgianjews.org/stat.php?id=762&lang=ru&PHPSESSID=c6b5737689473e28f001c64085d7757a>

Celebration of 26 centuries of joint residence of Georgians and Jews (September 1998) on the state level played a big role in cultural and political life of Georgia.

In independent Georgia the Georgian Jews were among influential politicians and officials.

But low level of anti-Semitism does not mean its absence. Georgian society did not avoid vandalism towards Jewish monuments. This required special presidential interference in 1994 and 1999. Anti-Semitic subjects were attracted in 1990s in the problems of property disputes (disputes around old synagogue the building of which proved to be owned by a theatre). Anti-Semitic publications also appeared in 1990-2000s.

Perhaps the scandal around the figure of Badri Patarkatsishvili during election campaign of late 2007 – early 2008 became the most celebrated anti-Semitic story. On December 17, 2007 the head of his election campaign Valery Gelbakhiani accused the government of Georgia of anti-Semitism and stated the readiness to bring an action against the Georgian state in the Hague international criminal court. Insulting statements of representatives of Georgian law-enforcement structures concerning the ethnic belonging of Patarkatsishvili became the reason for it.

The Jews did not avoid involvement into interethnic conflicts in Georgia in spite of themselves. During the Georgian-Ossetian conflict the Jewish quarter of Tskhinvali (Tskhinval), capital of South Ossetia (that was the South-Ossetian autonomous region in Soviet time), proved to be destroyed. Meanwhile this quarter is already known by medieval historical sources beginning from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Early in 20<sup>th</sup> century the Jews were the most numerous ethnic group in Tskhinvali (there number was almost equal to aggregate number of Georgians and Ossetians). These were the Georgian Jews, “Ebraelebi”. Then the number of Jewish population decreased steadily during the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the initial period of the conflict (1989-1990) many quarter residents left it. After the start of military phase of conflict in January 1991 the quarter suffered from the fire of Georgian artillery (that was used more than once during unsuccessful attempts to storm the city). The quarter suffered seriously also during the “five-day war”.

Jewish communities of Abkhazia also underwent serious trials. In 1989 2,5 thousand Jews resided in the capital of Abkhazia Sukhumi (Jews-Ashkenazi and Georgian Jews). About 500 Jews else were dispersed in Western (Gagra, New Athos) and Eastern (Tkvarcheli, Ochamchira) parts of the republic. After the start of military conflict in August 1992 most Jews left Abkhazia by airplanes that were sent by Israel. During the conflict the Jews suffered from the excesses both on Georgian (1992) and Abkhazian (1993) parts. As the Georgian Jews used Georgian language as a native one, they left Abkhazia almost completely with representatives of Georgian community. Up to early 2000s about 100 Jews remained in Abkhazia (Ashkenazi in overwhelming majority). Up to 2004 they received the citizenship of RF (as well as Russian pensions). The “Shalom” society was created, and the aid to this small community began on the part of Jewish charitable organizations.

Thus, acknowledging high extent of tolerance of Georgian society and authorities towards the Jews, one can't but notice that these outstanding achievements were devaluated due to committed inadvertences, mistakes and sometimes frank crimes towards other communities of multi-ethnic Georgia. General internal political instability, military conflict zones, unrecognized republics and interethnic purges created the feeling of lack of safety for Jewish communities of Georgia and predetermined the choice of most of their representatives in favor of emigration.

## **Kazakhstan**

Having considerable area of territory, Kazakhstan has the population being small quantitatively. In February-March 2009 the second national census took place in the republic.

According to preliminary data, the population size is 15 847 952 people<sup>32</sup>. Already in times of the USSR Kazakhstan was called “Soviet Union in miniature”. Deported peoples were sent to exile here (Chechens, the Ingush, Germans, Koreans etc). Forced industrialization of the republic attracted Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, and Jews to Kazakhstan. As a result of this up to 1959 the number of Kazakhs within general composition of population decreased down to 30,02%. After collapse of USSR number of Kazakhs within general composition of population increased considerably due to numerous emigration (of Germans, Russians, Ukrainians, Azerbaijanis, Koreans) but today Kazakhstan remains a multiethnic state yet. Kazakhs make up 67% here and Russians – 21%.

History of Jewish community of Kazakhstan has its originality. The Jews-soldiers taken to recruits in times of Nicolas I, their descendants as well as the Jews who were permitted to reside outside the “Pale of Settlement” were the first Jews on the territory of today’s Kazakhstan. During pre-war period Jewish community of Kazakhstan grew due to the specialists sent to the “construction sites of national economy” as well as political exiles. During the Great Patriotic war mass reinforcement of the community due to evacuation took place. The quantitative peak of Jewish population of the republic was reached in 1959 (28 thousand people). Then its steady decrease begins. First census in independent Kazakhstan determined the number of Jewish community as 6800 people. Data of the second national census of 2009 (by ethnic composition) are under checkup and specification.

In 2003 the First international conference of peace and consent took place in Kazakhstan where the subject of Jewry was one of key ones. Integration of Jewish communities of Eurasia is also actively supported by Kazakhstan authorities.

After collapse of the Soviet Union the republican center of Vaad of USSR transformed into Vaad of Kazakhstan. Early in 1990s Jewish schools, preschool institutions and society of friendship “Kazakhstan-Israel” were opened in the republic. In 1997 the Jewish community house with library and synagogue was opened. Jewish international organizations are active in the republic and Jewish mass media are published.

In 2002 Alexander Mashkevich (president of Jewish congress of Kazakhstan, president of Jewish industrial association, chairman of Board of directors of Eurasian bank) was elected the president of Eurasian Jewish congress (EAJC) at its founding convention in Moscow. With his active support the largest synagogue in Central Asia was opened in new Kazakhstan capital Astana in autumn 2004. He also helped in opening of synagogue in Pavlodar and five else cities of the republic.

Meanwhile the anti-Semitic tendencies also become apparent in Kazakhstan though feebly. They are connected not so much with the Kazakhstan “soil” itself as with dissemination of Islamist ideology from the neighboring Central-Asian republics. The anti-Semitism manifestations were recorded yet mostly in the South of the country (in districts bordering upon Uzbekistan) where Islamist organizations are active. It deals with “Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami” (Party of Islamic liberation) that took strong root in the region of Central Asia recently. This organization disseminates anti-Semitic leaflets and brochures. Meanwhile the authorities suppress the attempts of activation of Islamist activity toughly.

## **Kirghizia (Kyrghyzstan)**

According to the Census of 1999, 4 mln 823 thousand people reside in Kirghizia including the Kirghiz – 64,9%, Uzbeks – 13,8%, Russians – 12,5%. Other ethnic communities are not numerous (1% and less)<sup>33</sup>. Jewish community of Kirghizstan is not numerous. According

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<sup>32</sup> Agency of Republic of Kazakhstan on statistics. Population (in Russian) // <http://www.stat.kz/digital/naselsenie/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>33</sup> Haug V. Demographic tendencies, formation of nations and inter-ethnic relations in Kirghizia // Population of Kyrghyzstan / Z. Kudabayev, M. Guillot, M. Denisenko, ed. Bishkek, 2004. P. 109-157 (in Russian).

to the census data these are 1,5 thousand people (in 1989, on the eve of the collapse of the USSR they made up 6 thousand). According to some expert estimates, the number of the Jews is higher (4-4,5 thousand people). Jews-Ashkenazi and Bokharan Jews (Middle-Asian Jews, Bukhori or Isroil, speaking the Jewish patois of Samarkand-Bokharan dialect of farsi, Uzbek and Russian languages) live here. The Ashkenazis concentrate mostly in Bishkek. Besides, the Bokharan Jews live in some cities of Fergana valley.

After the collapse of the USSR and formation of independent state, the authorities did not make obstacles for social and cultural life of the Jews of Kirghizia. Moreover, its official representatives treated anti-Semitism as a danger threatening the state and national consensus of Kirghizia. The presidents of the republic Askar Akayev (1991-2005) and Kurmanbek Bakiyev (since July 2005 - incumbent head of state) and other officials spoke against anti-Semitic manifestations.

In independent Kirghizia the religious community, society of Jewish culture “Menorah” exist, and the Jewish education is developing. Since 1994 the Jewish school is functioning and since 1997 the Center of Jewish cultural studies is working under the Russian Slavic university of Kirghizia. The Jewish mass media are available (with small number of copies).

But there are many anti-Semitic manifestations in post-Soviet Kyrghyzstan. They are connected both with the growth of Islamic fundamentalism using anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli rhetoric and with manifestations of traditional (nationalistic and racist) anti-Semitism. Early in 1990 the “traditional anti-Semitism” manifested more often (the case is known when in January 1992 the “bloody calumny” was brought forward – a Jewish family was accused of ritual murder). Since mid-1990s and especially in early 2000s the Islamic anti-Semitism started dominating. The leader of so-called “Human rights movement of Kirghizia” Tursunbek Akunov showed considerable activity in this regard. Omurbek Tekebayev (the parliament deputy, leader of party “Ota-Meken”) also showed himself in the anti-Semitic sphere – even in the supreme representative body of the country he stated that the Jews “headed by Soros boys” (i.e. employees of the Soros Fund - *MBHR*) “are involved into subversive activity”<sup>34</sup>.

In 2004 50 thousand copies of textbook by Boris Shapiro “Healthy life-style” were published for distribution in the Kirghizia schools according to recommendation of the ministry of education. But publication of this manual was accompanied by protest actions of students of Islamic universities of Bishkek. In their opinion, the textbook was harmful as it was written by a “Zionist”. During the meeting the students called to “burning the Zionist textbook”. This all became the reason of examination on the level of the parliament of Kirghizia where some representatives of creative intellectuals tried to justify the motivation of Bishkek students.

Some mass media (like newspapers “Kyrghyz Ordo”, informational-advertizing edition “Pyramid Plus”) also afforded some anti-Semitic statements. Anti-Semitic rhetoric also proved to be called during events of March 2005 (so-called “tulip revolution”) when mass disturbances and plunders took place in the capital of Kirghizia in the course of overthrowing of the president Askar Akayev. During mass meetings of opposition in November 2006 accusations addressed to the Jews were also heard.

So small number of Jews is not a reason for the decrease of anti-Semitic moods. Not the real Jews are necessary for radical extremist ideology but a myth about the Jew as an organizer of the “world evil”. The situation in Kyrghyzstan confirms this thesis as the quantitative decrease of Jewish population under growing Islamization of the society leads to the growth of anti-Semitism manifestations. It should be noted that availability of the civil society itself is not a guarantee against judeo-phobia dissemination. In the republics of Central Asia the authoritarian authority standing for the secular development model can restrains anti-Semitism much more successfully than radical (or moderate) Islamist opposition using the democratic rhetoric.

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<sup>34</sup> Cited after: Dan M. “Zionist plot” in Kirghiz // Jewish observer. 2004 (March) No 5/72 (in Russian) // [http://www.jewukr.org/observer/eo2003/page\\_show\\_ru.php?id=538](http://www.jewukr.org/observer/eo2003/page_show_ru.php?id=538)



## Tajikistan

Tajikistan is the only Persian-speaking state in the Central Asia. According to the census of 2000, 6 mln 127 thousand people reside in the republic. At the same time the Tajikistan population grows with quick rate (despite destructive civil war of 1992-1997 and mass emigration). In 1989 5 mln 100 thousand people resided in Tajikistan. Today Tajiks make up 79,9% of population, 17% - Uzbeks, 1,3% - the Kirghiz and 1% - Russians<sup>35</sup>. The Jews appeared on the territory of contemporary Tajikistan in 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries (these were the Bokharan Jews). Up to 1920-1930s it was this very community that “represented” the Jewry on the territory of today’s Tajik state. In 1940-1950s many scientific workers from Moscow and other Russian cities found their refuge here from campaign against “homeless cosmopolitans”. These were the Jews-Ashkenazi.

On the eve of the collapse of the USSR and civil war (according to the data of the last All-USSR census) 14 800 Jews resided in Tajikistan (including 4 900 Bokharan Jews). The civil war led to complete collapse of safety. United Tajik opposition was one of participants of the civil war (in early 1990s they were called Islam-democrats). Meanwhile up to summer 1992 the Islamists had rejected their democratic rhetoric of the 1990-1991 model and passed to terror and violence towards their opponents (who responded with similar violence). The Islamists actively used anti-Semitic slogans in the struggle. This all led to mass departure of Jews to Israel, USA, and European countries. Only in 1990-1994 about 9,5 Jews left the republic. But even the departure abroad was accompanied by considerable danger (flight to Israel or USA was possible only via Moscow or Tashkent) so the relatives who remained in Tajikistan were subject to serious danger. Starting from 1993, Israel organized direct flights for arrangement of departure of the Jews from Tajikistan. In 1995 the Jewish agency “Sohnut” started implementation of the program “Aliah-2000”. As a result, for today only about 400 Jews remained in Tajikistan (they are mostly lonely people of declining years). Actually this community has no serious prospects. And though in 1997 a part of radical Islamists agreed to reconcile with the authority, and this enabled the termination of the civil war, activity of other radical groups does not cease after achieving the peace either. In 2003 two underground publishing houses of the movement Hizbut-Tahrir were discovered in Khodjent (Khudjand), and brochures and leaflets containing anti-Semitic slogans and appeals were printed there. In August 2006 an anti-Israeli meeting took place in front of the office of Party of Islamic revival of Tajikistan with slogans “Death to Israel!”.

But except anti-Semitic activity of Islamists, some anti-Semitic tendencies are also noted in the actions of authorities. Unlike the authorities of other countries of Central Asia, Tajik authority gives causes for accusations of judeo-phobia to much greater extent. In 2006, during the visit of the president of Iran Mahmud Ahmadinejad and the president of Afghanistan Hamid Karzay to Dushanbe, both these leaders and Emomali Rakhmonov adopted the joint statement where they condemned the entering of Israeli troops into the territory of Lebanon within the campaign of Tel-Aviv against the “Hizballah” movement. Meanwhile complicated social-economic situation in the republic as well as irremovability of the principal figure of the state (in 2003 the president of the republic prolonged his power authorities) create serious preconditions for the growth of protest activity (including its radical extremist forms too).

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<sup>35</sup> Results of census in Tajikistan (in Russian) // <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/037/evro04.php>

## Uzbekistan

Unlike in other former Soviet republics the all-national census was not conducted in Uzbekistan in 1989-2009. The data concerning the number and composition of population are annually provided by the state statistical bodies. At present the number of population in Uzbekistan is about 27 million people (the most peopled country of Central Asia). The majority of Uzbekistan population (about 80%) are Uzbeks, 5,5% - Russians, 5% - Tajiks (it is considered in the neighboring state that this figure is not relevant), 3% - Kazakhs, 2,5% - Kara-Kalpaks, 1,5% - Tatars, 1% - the Kirghiz.

The history of the Jewish community on the territory of today's Uzbekistan numbers more than one century. Historical sources fix their appearing here in 8-10<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Jews appear in Bukhara (the ethnonym "Bokharan Jew" that spread later for designation of the Jews of Central Asia originates from this). Unlike the European part of Russian empire and the Jews-Askkenazi, the Bokharan Jews were perceived by the Russian military imperial administration (that came onto the territory of contemporary Uzbekistan in 1860s) positively as after coming of Russia the Bokharan Jews were at first almost the only loyal political force. The situation changed to the worse in early 20<sup>th</sup> century but the state judeo-phobia was not considerably wide-spread here. Penetration of Jews-Ashkenazi onto the territory of contemporary Uzbekistan began in late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their number increased during the civil war (escape from pogroms in European part of the former Russian empire) as well as during the Great Patriotic war (evacuation). According to the data of the last All-USSR census, 89 thousand Jews resided in Uzbekistan in 1989 (including 26 thousand Bokharan Jews). According to estimates of Institute of contemporary Jewry under the Hebrew university in Jerusalem, up to mid-1990s about 25 thousand Jews remained in Uzbekistan<sup>36</sup>. Today's number is also estimated differently (from 5 to 15 thousand people).

Attitude of the state towards the Jewish problem is determined by peculiarities of home and foreign policy pursued by unchanged president of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov since early 1990s. In home policy this is the course toward authoritarian-type secular model of power. Practically since the moment of independence acquisition, the new state had to counteract to attempts of Islamist political movements to replace the secular power with Islamic republic. With this purpose the state began pursuing tough repressive course towards both Islamic and secular opposition. In its foreign policy Uzbekistan implements the aspiration towards domination in the region of Central Asia (in competition with Kazakhstan, Turkmenia, via "containment" of Afghanistan). This is the reason for active interference of Uzbekistan into the civil war in neighboring Tajikistan, construction of allied relations with Uzbek movements in Afghanistan, balancing between USA and RF, constructive relations with Turkey, secular regimes of Islamic East and Israel. Diplomatic relations between Israel and Uzbekistan were established in 1992. Bilateral relations are developing dynamically in various spheres (especially in gas industry and agriculture). This all determined the policy of authorities towards the Jewish community of Uzbekistan being well-disposed in general. Up to early 2000s 6 synagogues functioned in the republic (Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand). Except religious life, Jewish education is executed in Uzbekistan (schools are available as well as gymnasiums, yeshiva, Jewish preschool institutions), the clubs, libraries and community centers are working. Association of Jewish communities (being the member of Federation of Jewish communities of CIS) is the main organization of the Jews of Uzbekistan. "Judeo-philism" of authorities was minimized after tragic events in Andizhan<sup>37</sup>. After these events the administration of Islam

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<sup>36</sup> Electronic Jewish encyclopedia. Uzbekistan (in Russian)

//<http://www.eleven.co.il/?mode=article&id=14202&query=УЗБЕКИСТАН>

<sup>37</sup> Mass disturbances in Andizhan on May 12-13, 2005. The essence of these events is not clear completely. According to official version, Uzbek army used the force on May 13 against Islamic radicals who provoked the disturbances. In USA and EC countries the version dominated for several years about suppression of opposition and

Karimov was subject to tough criticism on the part of USA and European countries for “authoritarian methods” (this was unavailable before and Karimov was considered to be an a companion-in-arms in “anti-terrorist coalition”). This all made the president of Uzbekistan introduce some corrections into his home-policy approaches. Late in 2006 the authorities demolished the building of Jewish ethnic cultural center in Fergana without compensation. However the authorities deny the “ethnic motive” proposing their version: the demolition was executed basing upon the plan of city reconstruction. But in 2008-2009 USA and EC eased their positions towards the Uzbek president, and this gives hope that the republican authorities would pursue the well-disposed policy towards the Jewish communities at a later date too.

Much more serious danger not only for the Jews and for Uzbekistan – is the increasing Islamist movement of this republic. Already in 1989-1991 the movement “Adolat” (“Justice”) made itself known in Namangan opposing the “praying” Islam to “ritual” Islam, and introducing the norms of “real Islamic life” among its adherents. Since that time a long-term struggle of Uzbek authorities against radical Islamist groups started. In 1996 the leaders of Uzbek Islamists Takhir Yuldashev (Yuldash) and Djuma Namangani created the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan. Attempts to destabilize the situation in Uzbekistan and Kirghizia in 1999-2000 were connected with their activity.

Such group as “Hizb-ut-Tahrir” (“Party of liberation”) is most active in Uzbekistan. These organizations see their objectives in return to “fundamentals of Islam” and counteraction to “infidels” (the West, Israel).

But except theoretic and dogmatic treatises, the Islamists of Uzbekistan carry on the subversive and terrorist struggle. On July 30, 2004 a terrorist-suicide (shahid) exploded himself near the building of the embassy of Israel in the capital of Uzbekistan Tashkent and other terrorist-suicide bomber exploded himself near the American embassy (5 people – Uzbekistan citizens perished as a result).

In June 2006 the secretary of the chief rabbi of Central Asia Karina-Rivka Loifer (1986-2006) and her mother were killed in their house. And though various versions were advanced (religious, ethnic motivation), the official authorities of Uzbekistan did not voice the anti-Semitic motivation in the deed of the killers.

Thus anti-Semitism in Uzbekistan like in other republics of former USSR is determined to a great extent not just by the will of authorities by also by other factors. Moderate judeo-phile policy of official Tashkent that is not backed by more qualitative policy in the “Islamic direction” (the repressions predominate here being often poorly-targeted involving broad masses of those discontented with the policy of authorities) may not achieve its goal just because it does not guarantee the minimal level of safety. Tashkent is in front of a complicated problem of securing the continuity of supreme power today (Islam Karimov was born in 1938, and the time of his retirement from the politics is close anyway). Would the retirement of the Uzbek “elder” be the beginning of “Islamization” of the republic (and anti-Semitic tendencies would prevail in this case) or would his successors be able to find more qualitative methods of maintaining the secular model of power? No definite response to this question is available today.

## **Turkmenistan (Turkmenia)**

In 1990-2006 the social-political development of Turkmenia passed under the sign of one man – Saparmurat Niyazov.

Creation of totalitarian state was accompanied by closing of practically any information concerning internal situation in Turkmenia. The census was conducted for the first and the only time in 1995. It fixed considerable growth of population during 6 years (from 3,62 mln in 1989 to 4,46 mln in 1995). In September 2004 Niyazov signed the enactment on conduction of census

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breaches of human rights by “authoritarian regime of Karimov”. According to official data, 170 people perished and about 500 people were wounded during the disturbances.

in Turkmenia in 2009 but after the death of the “leader” this arrangement was postponed and the next census is to take place in Turkmenistan only in December 2012<sup>38</sup>.

Historical sources fix the presence of the Jews on the territory of contemporary Turkmenia already in the early medieval period, and on the eve of collapse of the USSR, according to the data of the last All-USSR census, 2,5 thousand Jews resided here. After acquisition of independence by Turkmenistan, Jewish religious or cultural organizations were not registered here. Ban for dual citizenship (according to the laws of Turkmenistan, such persons have no right to own real estate in the republic) also created serious inconveniences for the Jews of Turkmenistan.

In Turkmenia, unlike other countries of Central Asia, there is not a single officially registered Jewish organization as well as branch of the Jewish agency “Sohnut” (but its representatives visit Turkmenistan). Dynamics of departures of Jews from Turkmenistan to Israel was the following: 1996 – 465 people, 1997 – 400 people, 1998 – 279 people, 1999 – 246 people, 2000 – 193 people, 2001 – 157 people, 2002 – 110 people, 2003 – 105 people<sup>39</sup>. According to various estimates, number of the Jewish population of Turkmenia is from 500 to 800 people for today. Here is the description of situation in Turkmenia given by one of repatriates from Ashkhabad (came to Israel in 2004): “The policy of Russo-phobia cultivated in the country also hit the Jews. We, as Russian-speaking, were removed from the positions in public agencies long ago – not a single Jews remained either in the government or in the presidential staff or in the management of ministries. In Turkmenia that is swearing from all the tribunes it is committed to democracy, there is no Jewish cultural center, Judaic community, Jewish preschool and educational institutions and newspaper. Well, what are we talking about if there is not a single functioning synagogue in the whole country!”<sup>40</sup>. Meanwhile the facts of Israeli-Turkmen cooperation in gas industry were recorded in 1990-2000s.

## Lithuania

According to the data of General census of 2001, 3 483 972 people reside in Lithuania. They include: Lithuanians – 83,45% of the whole population, Poles – 6,74%, Russians – 6,31%, Byelorussians – 1,23%. The Jewish population of Lithuanian republic, according to the data of census of 2001, is 4 007 people or 0,12% of the whole population. Their considerable part is concentrated in Vilnius (2 769 people) and in Kaunas (about 400 people)<sup>41</sup>.

Historical sources fix the presence of Jews on the territory of contemporary Lithuania in 10<sup>th</sup> century but one can speak about a community that played considerable role in the history of Lithuania beginning from 14<sup>th</sup> century. Up to 18<sup>th</sup> century Vilno (today’s capital of Lithuanian republic Vilnius) became one of the most important cultural centers of the whole East-European Jewry. It was in Vilno that the founding congress of the famous left Jewish party “Bund” took place in 1897. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century this city was called “Northern Jerusalem”. And though in 1920-1939 today’s capital of Lithuania (and Vilno region) were included into Poland, in independent Lithuania (1918-1940) the Jews made up considerable percentage of population. According to the data of census of 1923, the Jews made up 7,6% of the whole population of Lithuania and in then-capital of Lithuania Kaunas – 27%, and in some cities this figure was close or even higher (Siauliai – almost 25%, Panevežys – 36%). The Jews of Lithuania occupied high state positions in the period of independence (there were 3 ministers-Jews in the first Lithuanian

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<sup>38</sup> Turkmenistan. Wait for truth till 2012? (in Russian) //<http://vlasti.net/news/7893>

<sup>39</sup> Electronic Jewish encyclopedia. Turkmenistan (in Russian) //<http://www.eleven.co.il/?mode=article&id=14181&query=ТУРКМЕНИСТАН>

<sup>40</sup> Cited after: Dan M. The country of Turkmenbashi // Jewish observer. 2004. No 5/72 (March) (in Russian) //[http://www.jewukr.org/observer/eo2003/page\\_show\\_ru.php?id=537](http://www.jewukr.org/observer/eo2003/page_show_ru.php?id=537)

<sup>41</sup> Statistikos Departamentas prie Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės //<http://www.stat.gov.lt/en/pages/view/?id=1731>

government after acquisition of independence)<sup>42</sup>. Up to June 1941 (i.e. already after Sovietization of Lithuania and inclusion of Vilno region into it), about 250 thousand Jews resided on the territory of this republic. As a result of tragedy of the Holocaust, Lithuania lost almost 95% of the whole pre-war Jewish population. The census conducted in 1959 in then-Lithuanian SSR (within the all-USSR campaign) recorded just 25 thousand of Jews (one-tenth of pre-war Jewish community). Since that time the number of Jewish community only decreased permanently. Numerous facts of participation of local population in Nazi actions for “final solution of Jewish problem” add the tragedy of the situation.

As contemporary home and especially foreign policy of Lithuania that obtained independence in 1991, is pointedly historical, these are the very subjects of the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (and especially of the period of the World War II) that determine the interpretations of “Jewish problem” existing in this country in many respects. There are most serious contradictions available in these interpretations.

The Lithuanian leaders condemn anti-Semitism in all its manifestations in every possible way on the state level. Already in early 1990s then-speaker of parliament of Lithuania Vitautas Landsbergis stated addressing to the chairman of the 12<sup>th</sup> Knesset of Israel Dov Shilyansky: “Your pain is my pain because so many innocent lives were lost, because my fellow tribesmen participated in those murders, because the Lithuanian people who lost their statehood in 1940, were occupied again and again, could not diminish the genocide of Jews or efficiently withstand it. This is the common part of our tragic and painful history”<sup>43</sup>. Except personal apologies of Lithuanian officials, many symbolic actions were made on the part of the state institutions (adoption of parliamentary declaration with condemnation of genocide of the Jews). In 2000 the national parliament of Lithuania introduced the norm according to which fulfillment of trials against Nazi criminals (Lithuanians by their origin) became possible even in cases they could not attend the trial in person (due to their age or state of health). Most serious advances concerning attitude towards the “Jewish problem” took place also in the position of the Catholic church dominating in Lithuania. In 1996 and in 2000 religious leaders of Lithuanian Catholics condemned the participation of their fellow tribesmen in crimes against the Jews during the Holocaust. The Scientific academy of Lithuanian Catholics also made its contribution into the studies of the Holocaust history.

During the period of independence the academic science contributed considerably into the studies of Holocaust. Archival materials were published as well as evidences of those who survived, representative scientific forums were held. In October 1993 in Vilnius the international conference took place devoted to 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of destruction of Vilnius ghetto, then international conference “History and genocide”. Since that time such forums became regular. Department of Judaics was opened in Vilnius university.

The state initiated restitution of property that belonged to the Jewish community before 1941. In independent Lithuania the system of Jewish education is developing, mass media are published, and international Jewish charitable organizations are operating.

At the same time anti-Semitism is available in independent Lithuania. To considerable extent this is caused by idealization of the republic of 1918-1940 eliminated by Soviet occupation (afterwards in 1941 many Lithuanian anti-Communists supported the Third Reich and its activities including genocide towards the Jews). It is the very Soviet occupation that is considered in today’s Lithuania to be the bigger evil (as compared to the German occupation though the materials on the history of two occupational regimes are presented in the Museum of occupation). This all caused undesirable anti-Semitic excesses more than once.

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<sup>42</sup> Electronic Jewish encyclopedia. Lithuania (in Russian)  
[//http://www.eleven.co.il/?mode=article&id=12474&query=ЛИТВА](http://www.eleven.co.il/?mode=article&id=12474&query=ЛИТВА)

<sup>43</sup> Cited after: Byaryanis V. Evidence about the Holocaust in Lithuania in English // Lithuanian Jerusalem. Vilnius, 2007 No 7-8 (in Russian).

Firstly, these are anti-Semitic statements of some political figures. In 1996 Vitautas Sustauskas was elected the mayor of Kaunas (capital of the “first republic” and second city of today’s Lithuania by its size; it suffered very much from the Holocaust). Meanwhile this politician, representative of nationalistic Lithuanian union of freedom expressed his anti-Semitic views in public more than once. In 2005 the deputy of Siauliai city council, leader of extreme right National-Democratic party Mindaugas Murza spoke at the meeting in Vilnius with appeal “to send the whole world Jewry to the scrap-heap of history”<sup>44</sup>. In April 2003 representatives of the European Community criticized Lithuanian authorities for failure to take measures towards the citizens occupying responsible posts and stating their anti-Semitic views.

Secondly, these are acts of vandalism. During the whole independence period Jewish cemeteries and memorial places devoted to the victims of Holocaust were subject to attacks and destructions more than once. The cases of celebrations of Adolph Hitler’s birthday were frequent, putting-up the flags with Nazi swastika and masquerades with images of leaders of the Nazi Germany.

Thirdly, informational anti-Semitism manifestations. Scandalous contents articles appeared in Lithuanian mass media from time to time (national daily newspaper “Republic”). In 2004 the material titled “Who rules the world?” was published in it (its main thesis – the subject of Holocaust should not be “exaggerated”)<sup>45</sup>. In 2005 the newspaper “Lietuvos aidas” published a portrait of the head of security police of Vilnius district during the Nazi occupation with characteristic inscription “On September 26, 2000 A. Lileikis terrorized by Zionists-racists died. Even after his death there are attempts to slander and calumniate him” and comment: “He revealed many destructors of independence of Lithuania and collected information about them. Trial against him is the vengeance of dushanskys, rozhanskys, zaxes and similar traitors”<sup>46</sup>.

Fourthly, this is the “liberal attitude” of judicial instances towards Nazi criminals of Lithuanian origin who took part in actions for elimination of the Jews. In 2000s there were the cases of passing unfairly gentle sentences in the proceedings of participants of “final solution of Jewish problem” in Lithuania.

Thus, contemporary anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Lithuania demonstrate most evidently that anti-Communism is far from being always identical with democracy, human rights and moreover ethnic and religious tolerance. And indiscriminateness in the choice of “heroes of the past” and “ideals” for imitation as well as political oversimplification (when the whole picture of the world is reduced to two-colored scale) turn out to be the injustice towards the present.

## **Latvia**

According to the data of General census of 2000, 2 375 339 people reside in Latvia (in 1989, according to the data of the last all-USSR census, 2,6 mln people resided in the republic). They include: Letts – 57,65%, Russians – 29,58%, Byelorussians – 4,09%, Ukrainians – 3,45%, Poles – 2,27%, Lithuanians – 1,3%. According to the census data, number of Jews in independent Latvia is 10 376 people (this makes up 0,44% of the whole Latvians population). Unlike Lithuania that granted its citizenship to everyone without settlement qualification, the Latvian Republic granted its citizenship after acquisition of independence “automatically” only to ethnic Letts (including Lettish diaspora) and representatives of those ethnic minorities that resided on the territory of Latvia before 1940 (i.e. before the Soviet occupation). As a result, only 74,8% of permanent residents of Latvia (according to the data of census of 2000) had the Latvian citizenship. This index was practically equal to 100% among the Letts, among the Jews

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<sup>44</sup> Khersonsky M. Anti-Semitism in Lithuania (2006) (in Russian) // [http://www.eajc.org/program\\_art\\_r.php?id=90](http://www.eajc.org/program_art_r.php?id=90)

<sup>45</sup> USA revealed many anti-Semitism and xenophobia manifestations in Lithuania. 2005. January 8. (in Russian) // <http://www.regnum.ru/news/386385.html>

<sup>46</sup> Khersonsky M. Op. cit.

– 54,2%, Russians – 42%, Byelorussians – 22,4%<sup>47</sup>. Thus, far from all the Jews of Latvia got the status of citizens of this republic after acquisition of independence. This fact itself may be treated as a certain element of the state discrimination.

Presence of the Jews on the territory of contemporary Latvia is fixed in the medieval period (14-16<sup>th</sup> centuries). But considerable growth of Jewish population within today's Latvian borders dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century (it increased up to 27 thousand people in the province of Livland up to late 19<sup>th</sup> century). On the eve of the World War II 93 400 Jews resided in independent Latvia making up 4,9% of the whole population.

In the period of Nazi occupation the Jews of Latvia (as well as refugees from neighboring Lithuania) became the victims of the “final solution of Jewish problem”. At the same time Lettish nationalists, former officers of Latvians army and police of the “first republic” took part in punitive actions of German Nazis. As a result, number of Jews in Latvia decreased considerably. According to the data of All-USSR census of 1959, 36,6 thousand Jews resided in then-Latvian SSR (1,75% of the whole population). At the same time only 10 thousand of them were the natives of Latvia (the others came after 1945 from other parts of the USSR). Since that time the Jewish community was reducing though not as impetuously as in the neighboring Lithuania (the last census of 1989 in the Soviet Union determined their number as 22 900 people)<sup>48</sup>.

Like in Lithuania, the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century proved to be extremely politicized in Latvia after the collapse of the USSR. To a great extent the estimation of the events of the previous century (pre-war Latvia and anti-Semitic manifestations in it, World War II, Soviet and German occupation, Holocaust) affects the today's situation in Latvia.

On one hand, one can't but notice that the authorities of the “second republic” do their best to demonstrate their categorical rejection of anti-Semitism. Already before the collapse of the USSR, on September 19, 1990 the Supreme Soviet of Latvia that was aspiring to independence adopted the Declaration “On condemnation and non-admittance of genocide and anti-Semitism in Latvia”. It contained such important provisions as unconditional condemnation of the Holocaust, acknowledgement of the fact that the statute of limitation for crimes of the World War II times did not exist. Later on the sixth president of Latvia (in Latvian republic all the presidents are counted starting from the period of the “first independence”) Vaira Vike-Freiberga (July 1999 – July 2007) stated in public more than once that Jewish population “actively participates in solution of most urgent problems of the state, ... being loyal towards the Latvian state”<sup>49</sup>.

In 1990s the Jewish education began developing actively in Latvia. Since 1995 the conference “The Jews in the changing world” takes place in Riga once in two years. In 1998 the center on Judaics was opened in the Latvian university. The subjects connected with the history of Holocaust are actively studied by the academic science. In 2003 the council of Jewish communities of Latvia started its work.

But on the other hand the construction of the state ideology and post-Soviet identity basing upon contrasting with the Soviet occupation leads to serious “extremes” also regarding anti-Semitism. The problem is that most part of Jewish population of contemporary Latvia came here after 1945 (overwhelming majority of “native” Jews was eliminated during the Nazi occupation). Consequently, these Jews (like Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians) were treated as a tool of Soviet policy for change of ethnic composition and “colonization” of Latvia. In 1991 they got refusal in automatic grant of citizenship. To receive it, they had to go through the “naturalization” process (passing the exams in Lettish language). Up to 2000 (time of conduction of the census) a little more than a half of Jews of Latvia passed the procedure of receiving the

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<sup>47</sup> Tulsy M., Ushatskis U. Results of population census in Latvia (in Russian)

//<http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/033/evro01.php>

<sup>48</sup> Electronic Jewish encyclopedia. Latvia (in Russian)

//<http://www.eleven.co.il/?mode=article&id=12335&query=ЛАТВИЯ>

<sup>49</sup> Cited after: Electronic Jewish encyclopedia. Latvia.

citizenship. For today this problem is not so critical, the naturalization process was speeded up recently. But in 1990s it created considerable psychological discomfort.

Under today's conditions other problems go to the forefront. They include extreme tolerance of official authority and of a part of intellectual elite towards the Letts who cooperated actively with Nazis during the World War II. Their participation in combat against the Red Army and the Soviet Union is treated in many cases as defense of national independence (and this is considered to be an indulgence itself that justifies ethno-political "excesses"). This happens in the situation with Lettish SS legion (reappraisal of its role, making this sub-unit heroic, its positioning as a defender of independent Latvia). The parliamentarians, famous politicians and public figures attend at the memorial activities devoted to legionaries.

Anti-Semitic statements of politicians and public figures are as important problem.

Interpretation of the Holocaust in mass media as well as in academic science also plays big (and not always positive) role. Desecration of Jewish cemeteries and memorials remains a serious problem for Latvia.

## **Estonia**

According to the data of General census of 2000, 1 371 835 people reside in Estonia including Estonians – 71,8%, Russians – 21,6%, Ukrainians – 2,1%, Byelorussians – 1,3%, the Finnish - a little less than 1%. The Jewish population of Estonia is about 3,5 thousand Jews and most part of it is concentrated in Tallinn. Like for Latvia, except ethnicity, the citizenship problem is important for Estonia as after acquisition of independence the Estonian citizenship was granted automatically only to ethnic Estonians as well as to those who resided on the territory of the republic before 1940 (i.e. before the Soviet occupation). About 15% of population of Estonia (according to the census of 2000) are not its citizens. More than a half of Jews who resided on Estonian territory on the eve of collapse of the USSR came here after 1945 from other regions of the Soviet Union so they did not receive the citizenship automatically<sup>50</sup>. They had to go through the process of "naturalization" (passing the exam in the official Estonian language etc).

During inter-war period it was in the very Estonia that the only department of Judaics in the Baltic region existed. The Jews of Estonia suffered from the Soviet occupation in 1940 (basing upon the class principle, as representatives of "bourgeoisie" and "exploiting classes") and then found themselves under the Nazi wheel of "final solution of Jewish problem". Up to November 1944 the Jewish community of pre-war Estonia practically finished to exist (mostly those who were evacuated already in 1941 escaped). In 1950s the Jews from other regions of the USSR came to Estonia. The Jewish community of Estonia reached its quantitative peak in 1959 (5500 people). Since early 1960s the Jewish community was gradually reducing.

In today's Estonia anti-Semitism is manifested to a great extent in the same way like in Latvia and Lithuania - in interpretations of historical subjects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is first of all the Holocaust, Soviet and German occupation and cooperation of Estonians with Hitler's Germany.

On one hand, official authorities condemned anti-Semitism manifestations as well as genocide of Jews during the World War II more than once. Memorial plates perpetuating the memory of victims of genocide of the Jews are installed in the republic. Jewish religious community and Jewish religious community of progressive Judaism function in today's Estonia, and mass media are published.

On the other hand, complicated solution of the problem of citizenship (rejection of automatic grant of citizenship to "newcomer Jews") created problems for adaptation of this part

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<sup>50</sup> Statistics Estonia.2000 Population and Housing Census //http://www.stat.ee/censuses



of population of Estonia to the new social-political realities. The cases are frequent when some representatives of Estonian authority try to stand on revisionist positions underestimating the consequences of the Catastrophe of East-European Jewry. Thus, in 2004, on the day of commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, the minister of education of Estonian republic Toivo Maimets advised to mention the tragedy of Jews during the World War II simultaneously with Stalin's deportations of Estonia residents (1940 and 1949). Soon after that it was stated at the press conference in the Museum of occupation in Tallinn that "it is fundamentally incorrect and narrow-minded to understand the Holocaust as the purely Jewish tragedy"<sup>51</sup>. This revisionist tendency is wide-spread also in mass media of Estonia. The Council of the Jewish community had to make a special statement on September 21, 2004 in this concern where it was especially noted that "recently in mass media of Estonia various speculations appeared regarding implementation of the project of perpetuation of places connected with the Holocaust on the territory of our country. In particular it is said about installation of additional monuments, reconstruction of existing ones, and the number of deceased during mass murders is called in question"<sup>52</sup>.

The special problem is the attitude towards cooperation of ethnic Estonians with German occupation authorities during the World War II. Meanwhile the Estonian collaborators are made heroes in some way in the independent Estonia. They are represented as anti-Communists and fighters for independence of their motherland. In 2006 the Estonian government made a decision to allocate 375 thousand kronas to the Museum of struggle for freedom in Lagedi village (a monument portraying a soldier in uniform of 20<sup>th</sup> Estonian volunteer SS division is located in front of the museum). In 2004 the cross in memory of an Estonian Alfons Rebane was installed in Laene-Virumaa district (being the SS Standartenfuhrer, he received the chivalrous iron cross in 1944). In 1999 he was reburied with honor in Estonia. As a rule, the parliamentarians and famous public figures attend at such activities. Anti-Semitism proves to be also claimed by youth nationalistic subcultures of Estonia. Consequently, the Estonian experience shows that to be the European Community and NATO member-state does not mean to become a civilized European country completely. The Estonian authorities and intellectuals have to overcome lots of nationalistic and racist phobias and stereotypes on this way.

## Conclusion

Thus, anti-Semitism (both theoretically-ideologically and practically) is diverse and many-colored on post-Soviet space (from brown color of Nazism, red Stalinism to green banner of "pure Islam"). But all these tendencies are united by one thing – xenophobia, militant unwillingness to perceive the alien, coexist with it and find common points of contact as well as political maximalism and banal misanthropy (however covered up with intellectual constructions). Meanwhile it does not look possible to see just a manifestation of morbid xenophobia in post-Soviet anti-Semitism. Today's anti-Semitism is not just a transmission of hatred towards the Jews. This is a destructive political behavior aimed at fundamental weakening of any state as anti-Semites break up bilateral relations between the countries, various ethnic and religious groups, sow instability, kill the belief in legislation and law (and the state can't be legally capable without this).

Analysis of anti-Semitic practices on post-Soviet space also demonstrates the practical lesson for Russian diplomacy. The contemporary Russian state and the "Jewish world" (including Israel and diasporas in former republics of the USSR) have much more common points of contact than contradictions. Weren't these the extremes of ethnic nationalism and "Ukrainization" that became the subject of recent letter from Dmitry Medvedev to the president Yushchenko? Isn't it the revisionism towards the history of the World War II (turning

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<sup>51</sup> Anti-Semitism in Estonia (prepared basing upon materials of newspaper "Hashafar") (in Russian) [http://www.eajc.org/program\\_art\\_r.php?id=70](http://www.eajc.org/program_art_r.php?id=70)

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

everywhere into justification of the Holocaust organizers) that worries today's Russian elite as well as Russian people having in fact the only uniting event of the past left – victory in the Great Patriotic war? Aren't these the ideas of global jihad that Russia is combating today in the North Caucasus (while in other areas of the former USSR the same ideas are turned against the Jews)? Here is the credo of Islamist "Caucasian Emirate" from its founder Doku Umarov: "We are the integral part of Islamic Umma. Position of those Moslems upsets me who declare only those kaffirs to be the enemies who attacked them directly. At the same time they search for support and sympathy from other kaffirs forgetting that *all the infidels are a single nation. Our brothers are fighting today in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somali, and Palestine. Anyone who attacked the Moslems wherever they would be - are our enemies, common enemies*" (italicized by us – MBHR)<sup>53</sup>. But aren't these the same views that are transmitted by Islamists in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kirghizia while accusing the secular leaders of these countries of "Jewry"? Weren't the Jews of post-Soviet Turkmenistan discriminated as the "Russian-speaking"? Aren't the Moldavian anti-Semites the most radical Russo-phobes in their country?

So it is high time to throw away the "spectacles" of Soviet diplomacy of "stagnation" epoch and look at the new reality. And the reality is the following: suppression of anti-Semitism on CIS territory is a part of Russian national interests as overwhelming majority of anti-Russian projects (from Ukrainian and Baltic nationalists to radical Islamists) has very strong anti-Semitic filling. "The anti-Semite, Jean-Paul Sartre notes, is reliably immunized against logics and experience"<sup>54</sup>. Consequently, logics and experience as well as empiric knowledge should be used for minimization of this danger. Both in Russia and on the whole territory of the former USSR.

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<sup>53</sup> Cited after: Doku Umarov renounced Chechnya and proclaimed the Caucasian Emirate. 2007. November 1. (in Russian) //<http://news.bigmir.net/print/world/12076/>

<sup>54</sup> Sartre J.-P. Portrait of anti-Semite. M.: Azbuka, 2006. P. 46.