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Eesti tuleviku heaks

Ethnic relations and ethnic policy in the Baltic States Part II

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Spring 2009



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Ethnic conflict – how and why it was prevented?

- Why situation was solved in non-violent way?
 - Russian minority wasn't unified - different fractions. Estonians/Latvians unified camp neither.
 - International factor. Even national radicals should accept Western organizations and their prescriptions.
 - Social factors – transition hit both Russians and indigenous people. Since 1993 it was clear that Estonia and Latvia would be economically more successful than Russia – reduced separatism
 - Cultural factors – Estonians/Latvians more respected among Russians (“Western people”) so Russians accepted them as leaders of transition, as reform-makers (diff. from Moldova)

How radical is Estonian/Latvian citizenship policy?

- Ethnic policy in Latvia and Estonia – main factors:
 - Demographic situation – therefore Latvia most radical
 - Political – excluding Russians from political process, to prevent them to retard the reforms or act as “5th column”
 - Pragmatic – some parties afraid that their main rivals would be successful among Russian electorate (Estonia).
- Apartheid in Estonia and Latvia?
 - Ethnic criteria not a basis for granting the citizenship
 - Russian minority have all social and civic rights, only political rights are restricted (Parliament elections)
- No international law demands automatic citizenship for all
- In European context Latvian/Estonian citizenship laws quite liberal.

Ethnic relations – today's situation

- Repatriation strategy failed (peak of remigration 1992-1994, Estonia 100 000, Latvia 115 000).
- Assimilation will be utopian.
- Positive developments:
 - Language – competence in local languages much better than in 1989, especially among younger generation.
 - Labour market: transition hit Russians a little bit harder, today differences between wages are decreasing. For Russians in Latvian economic situation even better
 - Identity and loyalty: new Baltic-Russian identity, loyal to Latvia and Estonia, less to Russia.
- Problems:
 - Under-representation in public administration and no influence on every day politics
 - Pace of naturalization is slow and after 2007 dried up

Naturalization in Estonia/Latvia

Year	Estonia	Latvia
1992	5 421 (passed the language exam 0)	-
1993	20 370 (passed the language exam 3013)	-
1994	22 370 (passed the language exam 5679)	-
1995	16 672 (passed the language exam 10 689)	984
1996	22 762 (passed the language exam 16 740)	3 016
1997	8 124 (passed the language exam 2099)	2 992
1998	9 959 (passed the language exam 3236)	4 439
1999	4 534 (passed the language exam 1910)	12 427
2000	3 425 (passed the language exam 1297)	14 900
2001	3090 (passed the language exam 1107)	10 637
2002	4 091	9 844
2003	3706	10 049
2004	6523	16 064
2005	7072	19 169
2006	4753	16 439
2007	n/d	6 547

Demographic situation today

- Estonia:
 - 120 000 non-citizens,
 - 120 000 Russian citizens.
 - 90 000 Russian-speakers have obtained citizenship.
- Latvia:
 - 42% of Russians Latvian citizens,
 - 430 000 non-citizens (19%),
 - 60 000 Russian citizens.
 - Naturalization slow in 1990's. 2000 – 2006 quite fast.
- Non citizens are not allowed to work:
 - in public administration,
 - in police,
 - to establish political parties,
 - run for elections, etc.

Bronze soldier affair

- Bronze Soldier – a monument for commemorating Red Army soldiers in the city center of Tallinn
- Different meanings:
 - For Estonians – a monument of occupation
 - For Russians – a monument of World War II and struggle against fascism (Monument of the Liberation)
- Tensions since May 2006
- Reform Party and IRL promised to relocate the monument in electoral campaign 2007
- Bronze Night in April 2007
 - Archeological excavations - a tent was erected.
 - Confrontation: police versus Russian demonstrators
 - The demonstrators were dispersed by police and moved into city and started to loot shops and break windows
 - Estonian embassy was sieged in Moscow

Exercises

- Compare the citizenship policy and ethnic policy in Latvia and Estonia! What was similar, what was different?
- Compare the ethnic policy and citizenship policy of Lithuania with Estonia and Latvia! Why it was so different?
- Discuss the question: Whether Estonia and Latvia made right decisions introducing quite exclusive citizenship laws in the early 1990s or the “zero-option” (granting citizenship for all) would have been the better solution?
- Search for German Citizenship Law and compare it with Estonian Citizenship Law! Which of them is more liberal towards immigrants?
- Compare the problems with immigrants or ethnic minorities in your own home country with the Baltic States!

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