

The history of the formation of the Russian Diaspora in the Baltic States

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The article discusses the genesis of the Russian Diaspora in the Baltic countries and the main stages of its formation. The stereotype in the mass consciousness of this monolithic ethnic group, its social and cultural homogeneity is disproved. The selection criteria of the eight heterogeneous groups formed in the Russian Diaspora of the Baltic countries at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union are justified.

The Russian Diaspora in the Baltic countries is mainly formed in the late-Soviet period; and by the time of restoration of the independence in these countries it represented not homogeneous but heterogeneous ethnic-and-cultural commonality.

Key words: Russian Diaspora, migrant psychology, socio-cultural diffusion, interethnic relations, tolerance, adaptation

INTRODUCTION

The current Russian Diaspora was formed in the Baltic States in the twentieth century, and most of the Soviet period. Basically, the Russian community in the Baltic States was formed in the post-war period. For example, in Riga there had been 8.3% of Russians, 1.4% of Belarusian, and 0.2% of Ukrainians before the beginning of World War II. By the time of collapse of the USSR in 1991, the population of Riga had already consisted of 47.5% of Russians, 5.0% of Belarusian, and 4.7% of Ukrainians, while the proportion of Latvians decreased from 63.3% to 36.4% (*Natsionalnye...* 1996). Up to the year 1940, the Russian population of Estonia accounted for 8.4%, one half of which resided in near-border regions which after the World War II were transferred by the Soviet government to the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Thus, the proportion of Russians in the total balance of the population of Estonia within its current borders increased from 4.9% in 1934 up to 30.8% in 1991 (Isakov 1996). The rapid growth of the number of Russian-speaking migrants caused natural concern among local population¹. Besides, the emigrants were provided with permanent accommodation quite quickly, much to the annoyance of the locals who had to wait for decades in housing queues unless they were working for large enterprises. It is a well-known fact that in the Soviet period one had to work in construction or for a large

¹ Ukrainians are the second largest national minority group in Estonia. Their population dynamics is even more indicative in this country than the population dynamics of Russians. In 1934, in Estonia there were 92 Ukrainians, in 1959 – 5,769 Ukrainians, in 1970 – 28,086 Ukrainians, in 1979 – 36,044 Ukrainians, and in 1989 – 48,771 Ukrainians, which accounted for 3.2% of the total population.

manufacturing enterprise in order to be provided with permanent accommodation quickly, and it is those spheres in which the newcomers were chiefly employed. By the beginning of the 1990s, it had become possible to distinguish eight clearly differentiated groups within the social structure of the Russian community in the Baltic States, each of them having its own specific features in the relations with the majority population, its own orientations and goals.

The first and quite a large group was constituted by indigenous Russians. Russians are the oldest ethnic group of the historically formed multinational population of the Baltic States, and the most essential element of its multicultural environment. It is also important to emphasize that for Russians, who had been living in the Baltic States for centuries, the interpretation of the local history took on its practical importance only in the last third of the 19th century². The fact that the Slavic peoples are perceived by the collective consciousness of the Baltic peoples as equally ancient inhabitants of this region can be proved by the following: the Latvian word for Russians is *krievs*, which gets its stem from the name of a powerful East Slavic tribal union of the Krivichi that had settled in this region already in the beginning of the 6th century. Among modern Russians it is possible to distinguish quite a numerous community of the Russian Old Believers. From the beginning of the reformation of the Church in Russia, the Russian Old Believers started to settle down in the Baltic States. In Lithuania, they resided in eastern areas (Zarasai, the southern part of Kaunas area, Alytus area) where 49 Old Believers' communities were registered (*Ruskiye...* 1992), also 67 communities were registered in Latvian Latgalia and the estuary of Western Dvina (including a famous Grebenshikov community in Riga). In Estonia, the descendants of the Old Believers who settled on the western coasts of Peipus Lake now constitute the oldest Russian Old Believers' population that was formed in the beginning of the 17th century. Being a legal part of the Russian Empire, Lithuania, the Governorate of Livonia, and the Governorate of Estonia still remained provinces, into the domestic affairs of which Saint-Petersburg tended not to interfere. Therefore, the Old Believers in this region could not be afraid of persecutions on the part of the state. After the Riga Governorate and the Reval Governorate were ceded to Russia in the 18th century, the number of Russian merchants started increasing rapidly in these areas. They were attracted by the proximity to the sea, i. e. international trade opportunities which provided much larger and faster income than domestic trade. So, already by the end of the 18th century there had been more than 400 Russian merchant families in Riga. The first local Russian ship owners – Stepan Prokofiev and Moses Vlasov (Pukhliak 2003) – belonged to this group, too. The descendants of North-Western army of Nikolai Yudenich were also among the Russian inhabitants of this region. The army was raised in this area and advanced against Red Petrograd from here as well. In 1919 it came back together with thousands of refugees. The origins of the Russian community in Estonia in the 1920–1930s lie in the tragedy of the North-Western White Army in 1919–1920³. Besides, a fairly large group of the first emigrants from the Soviet Russia, who partly settled down in the Baltic States in the beginning of the 1920s, belongs here as well. The most

² The founder of the Russian-Baltic historiography is considered to be J. F. Samarin (1819–1876) (For detailed info see *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 1986, Vol. XVII, No. 4, p. 321–328).

³ This episode is described in more detail in the collective monography *Intervention in the North-West of Russia* („Интервенция на северо-западе России“), Saint-Petersburg, 1996, and in A. V. Smolin's book *White Movement on the North-West of Russia* („Белое движение на северо-западе России“), M., 1999. The success of *Nimed Marmortahvlil* (Names in Marble), the film by Estonian film-makers released in autumn 2002, provides evidence of major concern of the local majority population with the events of the Civil War in this region of Russia.

prominent of them was Igor Severyanin. Boris Vilde, another Russian writer, journalist, and ethnologist who relocated from Estonia to France in 1937, became there one of the leaders of the French Resistance. The most famous Russian boxer of the pre-war Estonia was Nikolai Stepulov, the silver medal winner of the 1936 Olympics. It is worth pointing out that the proportion of native-born Russians is the highest in Estonia in comparison with other Baltic States. In some regions of Estonia, Russians are as autochthonous as Estonians regarding the history of their settlement that dates back to earlier periods of Eastern Slavic colonization. In 1030, Yaroslav I the Wise, the Grand Prince, founded Yuryev (Tartu), while from the middle of the 11th century a Russian merchant settlement in Kolyvan, which was on the site of contemporary Tallinn (Tvauri 2001), existed.

On the territory of Latvia, Eastern Slavic settlements and orthodox churches were found even before the Crusade of the 13th century. In the period between wars Russians were the largest ethnic minority in Latvia. According to the figures provided by 1930 Census, there were 204,178 Russians (10.8% of the whole population). The second largest group were the Jews (5.1%) followed by Germans (3.7%), the Poles (3.2%), the Belarusian (2.4%), the Lithuanians (1.4%), and the Estonians (0.4%). At that time, Riga was one of the largest centres of Russian émigré. From 1919 until 1940 the newspaper *Сегодня* (Today), one of the most prominent newspapers printed abroad in the Russian language which was famous far beyond the borders of Latvia, was published here. In pre-war Riga, the Russian intellectual elite was quite numerous. The following statesmen and public officials should be mentioned: M. Kallistratov, S. Kirillov, E. Tihonitsky, I. Jupatov, N. Savvich, V. Snegiryov. Such famous scientists as V. Preobrazhensky, A. Porohovschikov, I. Aleksandrovsky, I. Zavoloko, B. Popova, V. Klimenko, V. Trofimova, V. Bukovsky, R. Vipper, V. Sinaisky lived and worked here, as well as the following artists: N. Bogdanov-Belsky and S. Vinogradov, and such writers as I. Chinnov, L. Zurov, I. Saburova. Moreover, the only permanently functioning theatre outside Russia was also operating here. Mikhail Chekhov, a renowned actor and director, was working in that theatre for many years. Pyotr Leshchenko, a brilliant singer of Russian romances, performed in *Otto Schwarz*, a well-known café in Riga, while the singer's wife, a famous ballet dancer Zinaida Zakit, originated from Riga. Leshchenko recorded the majority of his popular hits in the *Bellaccord Electro* recording studio in Riga.

Mstislav Dobuzhinsky, a famous Russian artist, was living and working in Vilnius from 1924 until 1939, while Konstantin Vorobyev, one of the most prominent Russian novelists, had been living in Lithuania for almost all of his life. From the year 1928 and until the beginning of the war, Lev Karsavin, a well-known Russian philosopher, taught at Kaunas University. After the war, Karsavin, like many other Russians connected with culture who were living in Lithuania, fell victim to Stalin's repressions (known as the Great Purge).

Prior to the annexation of the Baltic States by the USSR, the proportion of Russians in the total population balance of those countries had not exceeded 10–11%. Just like the representatives of other ethnic minorities (Germans, Belarusians, the Jews, the Poles), Russians were preserving their culture (language, education), and also representation in local governing institutions. A characteristic example of that could be ethnic composition of local legislative bodies in Latvia in the pre-war period.

The peculiarity of the first group consists in the fact that it is the most integrated part of the Russian Diaspora with all characteristic features: language competence, high level of tolerance, adoption of accepted norms of social behavior, interest towards culture of the country of residence. Moreover, being the permanent residents of the Baltic States, the

representatives of the Russian community embraced the culture of western Europe quite rapidly and differed substantially from the Russians living in Russia. Here is a description of an industrialist of a Russian origin in Riga through the eyes of a reporter from Moscow who visited Riga in the second half of the 19th century: "Riga merchant is a distinct type. He is neither Kit Kitych nor a modern Moscow merchant of the newest formation who has enjoyed the charms of operetta in suburban theatres. It might be suggested that the local Russian merchant originates from the natives of Pskov or Novgorod. He has absorbed many German cultural traits, which could not have been otherwise, but has overworked them in his own way in accordance with his own national formation. As a result, there appeared a type with the following peculiar features: considerable moral independence, resilience, self-respect, and complete lack of that fussy accentuation which is typical of many of our compatriots; no one can ever make them be at someone's beck and call. They know what they are worth and represent the indigenous Russian community here in their own way, yet with dignity" (Dimenshteyn 2004).

According to the data published in spring 1922, in 1918–1921, Lithuania accepted about 200,000 refugees from Russia, among whom there were many representatives of Russian intelligentsia (Ter 1922). But not all of them stayed here for long. That is why if we start comparing Lithuania with Latvia and Estonia, we shall see that in the former in the 1920s and the 1930s (between the wars) the Russian cultural environment was less substantial.

The fact which is less known, if not hushed up, in Russia should be mentioned here. A considerable number of Russians living in the Baltic States were repressed in 1940 not only alongside with the representatives of local majority population but often even much more than the majority population since in this region Russians suffered under Stalin's repressions most of all. Their fates were especially tragic, for very often they were not even taken to hearings but shot dead on the way, just like the members of the White movement. In fact, this is how the cream of Russian intelligentsia in the Baltic States was destroyed. Besides, the whole developed cultural infrastructure here also turned out to be ruined. Almost all Russian political and public figures living in the Baltic States were killed in repressions, which started in 1940. This is why the figures provided by the pre-war censuses of 1934–1938 need serious correction if we want to gain more or less accurate perception of the proportion of Russians in the total population balance in the Baltic States, whereas the evaluations of Stalin's repressions and deportations in the 1940–1950s existing in the collective consciousness of Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians, who view them as being exclusively ethnically oriented, are absolutely unfair. In those years, the Russian elite were destroyed even more fiercely than that of the majority population. The persecutions were political and ideological rather than national. Considering the ethnic factor, we shall observe that the Jews were the ones who suffered most of all since they were the most affluent group, i. e. socially "foreign" in the opinion of the new authorities.

Emphasis should be placed on the fact that the representatives of the first group actively participated in the life of the local community, but at the same time fully preserved their national culture. According to our estimates, the proportion of this group in the Russian community accounts for 8–9%.

The *second* group consisted of the representatives of the Russian artistic intelligentsia who settled down here after the war. For those people, relocation to the Baltic States, where the pressure of the governing party was not as intense as in Russia, was a peculiar way of emigrating to the West. This group was not numerous, yet highly reputable. B. F. Jegorov,

Y. M. Lotman, L. N. Stolovich, D. S. Samoïlov, L. Volpert, R. Blum in Estonia, A. I. Kletskin, Y. I. Abyzov, V. A. Dozortsev, R. Timenchik, and L. P. Koval in Latvia, K. N. Vorobyev and J. S. Kanovich in Lithuania were the most prominent representatives of this group. Notably, the first representatives of this group had not yet had an objective of getting rid of ideological pressure. Due to various reasons (including the notorious “fifth paragraph”), there was no call for them in Moscow, Leningrad, or other scientific and pedagogical centres of the USSR, whereas here they were employed very willingly as qualified professionals. Definitely, Yuri Lotman had more chances to actualize himself as a great scientist in Tartu than in Leningrad.

Formed in that manner, the community created a unique “free creative zone” around itself that became very attractive for other independent-minded people from different parts of the USSR. The representatives of this group exerted major influence over the cultural development of this region. “Many scientists, whose native language was Russian and who happened to settle down in Estonia, did a lot of good for the development of science. The cultural and spiritual life of Estonia would have suffered a significant loss without these people”, remarks Tiit Matsulevičs, one of the leaders of Res Publica, a right-wing political party in Estonia (*Estonia* 2002).

The representatives of this group were respected by the local population. As a rule, they did not have language problems, which in its turn increased the liberal potential of these people even more. In the Baltic States, literature, theatre, and journalism in the language of the majority population have always remained distanced from ideological authorities. Quite moderate size (not more than 1.5–2% of the community) of this elitist group was compensated over and above by its high social status. The influence of its representatives among local population created additional motivation and unique psychological comfort in their activities. The dominant orientation of the representatives of this group was creative self-expression. They also exerted significant influence over the development of democratic ideas in the Baltic countries. Rein Veidemann, one of the leaders of the Popular Front in Estonia, writes: “We owe a lot to Russian intellectuals living in Tartu in those years. As a matter of fact, it was Russian, or I would even say partly Decembrist thought developing in our subconsciousness that was extremely humane and deeply intellectual. And even those who refuse to acknowledge that still hold within themselves, however, deeply and secretly it might be, the truth that they have taken the roots of democracy from Tartu. Our frequent trips to Moscow in 1988–1989 can also be explained but what has remained within us. Estonians even went to the Congress of Soviets of the USSR. How could such a fantastic contact with Moscow democracy have been established without that excellent background which we received thanks to Russian and Jewish scholars and intellectuals from Tartu? Besides, the influence of humanist sociological theory, the discoverers of which here in Estonia were Rem Blum, Leonid Stolovich, and, of course, Yuri Lotman with his fantastic environment among which there were historians, philosophers, and linguists who were brought to Tartu from Moscow and Leningrad, was also great. Each of those prominent figures had his own circle of scientists, and all of them had extremely interesting individualities. Thanks to them, we obtained the school of theoretical democracy which in my opinion was the best” (Veidemann 2000).

The *third* and the most numerous group (5–6% of the community) included engineers, doctors, teachers, employees of scientific research institutes, theatre personalities, journalists etc. The formation of this group was particularly influenced by the invitation of specialists, planned job allocation for graduates etc. Thus, the management board and technical and engineering personnel of the largest port in Latvia, the Port of Ventspils, have so far mainly

consisted of the graduates of Odessa Institute of Maritime Fleet, while the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant in Lithuania has been staffed by the graduates of educational institutions of Moscow and Kharkiv. The same is also true about the editorial boards of all Russian-language newspapers and magazines published in the Baltic States. Today their personnel mainly consists of the graduates of the Faculty of Journalism of Leningrad University. Accordingly, the second and the third groups represented Russian, or rather multinational Soviet intelligentsia, which might have not been integrated into the new society, but had a high level of tolerance and was always ready for co-operation with the new community.

The *fourth* group (about 7–9%) included highly qualified labor force involved in the development of new technologies on large enterprises. Their relocation to the Baltic States, which contributed to an increase in professional and technical potential of the republics, was caused by operational needs. The representatives of the third and the fourth groups were united by the idea that their knowledge and professional qualification were in demand here, while living and working conditions corresponded to their expectations. On the whole, the representatives of the four above-mentioned groups perceived the new ethnic environment in a very friendly manner and aroused among the majority population quite favorable or at least neutral attitude.

The works of local historians and political scientists, especially those published in the beginning of the 1990s, often reflected the thought that in the post-war period the Russians in the Baltic States constituted a mass of undereducated *sovoks*, the carriers of Communist ideology and Russian chauvinism, who were indifferent, if not hostile, towards the local culture and did not care where to settle down at all. Even though in the end of the 1990s such judgments were rarely expressed, still such evaluations often existed in the subconsciousness of many representatives of the local population. The truth lies in the fact that the Russian community in the post-war period was not homogeneous either in its educational or cultural levels, or its ideological orientation, i. e. the community was a socially differentiated formation. Each observed group was distinguished for its own more or less pronounced group consciousness.

The four above-mentioned groups, which amount to about one quarter of the Russian community in the Baltic States, enriched the social potential of this region not only professionally but also spiritually – this fact is nowadays recognized by all respected sociologists of the Baltic States with no exceptions. The representatives of our community also played an important role in democratic transformations taking place in this region. The Russian sections of the Popular Fronts of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia made a significant contribution into the development of national identity of these republics, which is proved by a number of convincing facts. For example, first illegal dissident organizations in Estonia, which had elaborated their own large-scale ideological programmer that was afterwards used in the course of democratic transformations, were formed by Russians⁴.

⁴ The organization named the *Association of Fighters for Political Freedom*, formed in 1968 by the military sailors of Paldiski headed by Gennadi Gavrilov, and the Democratic Group in Tallinn, formed within the period of the Khrushchev's Thaw, were among them. On its basis, the organization named the *Democratic Movement of the Soviet Union* was formed in 1968 headed by a notable dissident theorist Sergei Soldatov. The programme and tactical objectives of the Democratic movement exerted strong influence over the program documents of the first Estonian dissident movements, which has been acknowledged by Estonians themselves (See V. Niitsoo. *Vastupanu 1955–1985*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 1997. p. 75–98). S. Soldatov emigrated to England and wrote a book *The Lightning of Revival. The Experience of Political Struggle and Moral Enlightenment* („Зарницы возрождения. Опыт политической борьбы и нравственного просветительства“). London: Overases Publications Interchange Ltd, 1984.

Naturally, there is also another truth lying in the fact that the majority population had the same differentiated attitude towards the representatives of the Russian community. While the first four groups aroused friendly, or at least indifferent attitudes on the part of the local population, the arrival of the officers of the Soviet Army to their territory was perceived by the natives in a completely different manner.

Together with the members of their families, those military servants constituted a numerous and quite a noticeable segment of society which can be classified as the *fifth* group (its number and size changed, but on the average its representatives made up about 13–16% of the Russian community). The psychological peculiarity of this specific group was connected with the professionally “nomadic” way of life of its representatives, and the corresponding disposition.

But while temporary presence of the Baltic Military District Officer Corps was subject to the special order, and the people who had been executing that order were in fact very dependent on the authorities of a higher rank, the retired officers, who constituted the *sixth* group, moved to the Baltic States because of personal preferences. That, of course, aroused a very negative attitude among the natives. Besides, the retired officers perceived themselves as the liberators of the Baltic States and were fairly proud of that, what, alongside with an increase in recessionary phenomena in the Soviet economy, only caused annoyance among a significant majority of the population of these republics, including the Russian-speaking community. Moreover, in the social sphere the retired officers and their family members were notable for their energy and activeness, and they also had a number of privileges. This group accounted for at least 15% of the community.

And, finally, the two groups with the lowest status. The *seventh* group consisted of the rank and file of involuntary service, who managed to remain and settle down in the Baltic States after undergoing conscription in this region. Afterwards, they brought their relatives here as well (“immigration trail”). In addition to Russians, a large proportion of this group was constituted by the representatives of other Slavic peoples, such as Ukrainians, Belarusians, and other peoples of multinational Russia. Tens of thousands of soldiers managed to escape the “serfdom” of the post-war kolkhoz in the end of 1940s – beginning of the 1950s through military service. The share of this group was about 10–12% of the community.

People who relocated to the Baltic States due to the system of managed recruitment, or limit to build large economic objects of national importance (New Port of Tallinn, chemical plant in Olaine, the Popov Plant in Riga, the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant in Sniečkus (now – Visaginas), various buildings constructed in Estonia before the 1980 Olympic Games, etc.) constituted the *eighth* group which was the most numerous. The proportion of Russians in this group was larger than in the previous one, since as a rule, the inhabitants of the poorest regions in Russia, such as the adjoining territories of the Russian Non-Black Earth region, recruited into this group. The managed recruitment was nearly always followed by the relocation of relatives. Thus, 11.5% of rural population of the Leningrad oblast and 12% of rural population of the Pskov oblast moved to Estonia within 1960–1990 (Raduga 1993). The Baltic countries were the only region in the Soviet Union where the influx of Russians was constantly increasing prior to the Union’s collapse. Naturally, the fact that the emigrants got permanent accommodation quite quickly since they were employed at large factories which had funds for the construction of residential premises did not contribute to the development of a positive attitude towards them among the natives. For example, by 1991, more than 90% of Russians living in Tallinn had resided in their own apartments (*Estonia...* 1995), while it need not be reminded that the housing problem was extremely acute in the

Soviet period. The share of representatives of this particular group in our community was the most substantial – at least 30–35%. Thus, the two groups with the lowest status constituted almost half of the Russian-speaking diaspora in the Baltic States. Outright rejection of the local culture virtually excluded even the slightest level of social diffusion between those two groups and the representatives of majority ethos, which proves R. Park's observations that the longer the social and cultural distance between the ethnic group and receiving environment is the larger the relative restraint and closeness of the community gets (Park 1950).

Therefore, by the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian community in the Baltic States had been distinctly fragmented and inhomogeneous in all respects – social, ideological, cultural. Besides, lack of internal integrity was also present. Nowadays, a considerable stratification of the community still exists.

An increase in the share and subsequent domination of low-status groups, primarily of the 7th and the 8th, in the Russian Diaspora exerted a significantly negative influence over its image in the Baltic countries. Within the course of the four decades (from the 1950s until the beginning of the 1990s) it has been continuously deteriorating⁵. Jekaterina Fishkina, the Estonian researcher, observes: "It should be acknowledged with bitterness that the general cultural level of the Russian population in Estonia is quite low. It can certainly be explained by historical reasons. The old Russian intelligentsia in Estonia was almost completely destroyed in Stalin's concentration camps. At the same time, the working class, which was not always highly qualified, predominated in the huge influx of migrants. Unfortunately, this is why there are too many individuals among Russians in Estonia who do not care about any culture at all" (Fishkina 2000).

In habitual patterns of their behavior, the low-status, or rather, marginal groups demonstrated specific elements of social, rather than national culture, which had been acquired by the representatives of these groups in the course of preceding socialization. It is the interiorized culture, which sets goals and forms social perceptions that lead to violation of "reciprocity of perspectives" and differences in "typifications" (terms by Schütz 1998) between the immigrants and the majority population, create fertile ground for voluntary or forced segregation.

Tensions which built up between these marginal groups and the majority population on the basis of everyday activities were not so much interethnic, but intercultural. Wherever they were observed (in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Vologda, or Riga), such collisions between groups did not have any significant ethno-national trace. The notion of ethnicity in this case serves only as the outer shell of contrasting cross-cultural (e. g. "educated–uneducated", "town dwellers–countrymen", "locals–newcomers" etc.) differences. Discrepancies between different social groups must not be put down to interethnic differences, which is occasionally done by some researches. If we presume that a citizen of Kaunas has a habit of educating his or her children in public transport in a loud voice, or of throwing rubbish in his or her own block of flats, then he or she will probably generate a negative attitude in the people around not because he or she is Russian or Lithuanian, but because this person is unintelligent and ill-mannered. Ethnic and cultural must never be confused since these two categories are very different.

Similar social oppositions between the holders of different types of everyday culture in its pure "laboratory" form could be observed in the end of the 1960s in Cherepovets, when the construction of the metallurgical complex, a famous *Northern Magnitka*, was started there.

⁵ Unlike Moldova and the muslim republics of the Soviet Union, where the Russian diaspora was constituted chiefly by the representatives of intelligentsia and highly qualified workers.

Among the labor force consisting of thousands of people that were brought into that region by personnel allotment from all parts of the country, by no means all of them were peaceful and law-abiding. There were many criminals, the so-called *chemists*, who were serving their sentence in the form of labor service on the Union-wide construction sites of heavy and chemical industry, farmers trying to escape the kolkhoz breakdown, the representatives of the lowest strata of society, and mavericks. Extreme tension, which often escalated into bitter confrontations, emerged between the locals and the newcomers straightaway. It was an overt social conflict of different cultures. Originally, the problem of coexistence of the locals and the newcomers is always interpreted in the oppositional categories of *we-they*, where *they* embody everybody who differs from the population of the host country in any objectively observable (or imaginary) attributes – anthrop physical type, behavioral patterns, social and cultural traits etc.

On the Russian North, which had always been notable for its peculiar moral purity, and where houses had never been locked, since there were no thieves, the *limitchiks* quickly carried out a unique “cultural revolution” which destroyed the local way of life completely. A strange impression was created by special signal lamps which were placed on tops of buses in the beginning of the 1970s so that the drivers could attract the attention of militia in case of fight in the bus. People coming on business trips were warned in advance not to leave their hotels after 8 p. m. since it was too dangerous.

Such a situation can be deemed typical since by the end of the 1960s, a huge mass of social outcasts had been formed in the country, which was roaming from one construction site to another. Therefore, the accelerated pace of industrialization brought about not only ecological but also social and cultural problems. In connection with the developing socialist economy crisis, those problems were acquiring increasingly sharp and conflicting forms, which can also be easily traced on the example of the Baltic States.

The crisis of Soviet distribution economy, which served as a powerful catalyst for social crisis, fits into the global tendencies of growth of the industrial potential of the mankind. The matters in question are world-wide social processes. Everywhere the basic part of unskilled labourers is made up of yesterday farmers, who have not yet broken off their spiritual and affinity ties with the countryside. But as they gradually abandon the link with the past, the majority of them slip into the marginalized stratum. The psychological core of this stratum is the behavioral instability of its representatives. They have almost lost contact with their roots, but are still surrounded by hostile environment, the holders of which are perceived by them as enemies. This is why their minds are more open to destructive ideas. The minority which succeeded in attaining the new status, i. e. stand on their own two feet more or less steadily, have acquired a certain psychological stability. It takes more effort to carry them away along the path subversion. This type is already much closer to the social model of a migrant who has been residing in the new environment for at least three decades. Here are the figures related to Latvia and provided by A. I. Ivanov, Riga professor and sociologist: 15% of Russians arrived in the 1940s, 21% in the 1950s, 30% in the 1960–70s, 14% in the 1980s (*Natsionalnye...* 1996), i. e. by 1990, only 36% (15 + 21) of the newcomers could not be assigned to the late migrants.

A vast majority of our community in the Baltic States is constituted by the representatives of these two low-status groups. However paradoxically it may sound, but the representatives of these two marginal groups were the ones who on 11 March 1991 voted for the independence of Latvia and Estonia most actively, presuming that it would be much better to live in rich and comfortable Baltic countries than in united but poor

Russia⁶. (They voted in the same manner in Ukraine.) The national patriotic reasoning in making the existential decision was weaker than the pragmatic one. Change in opinions was caused by them feeling nationally aggrieved (or they understood that had played the wrong card after finding themselves in a poorer country – Ukraine). The realization of profitability of that decision among Russian Diaspora was increasing in proportion to degradation of all-Union authorities. According to the data cited by M. Basinger, while in August 1989 less than 10% of the Russian-speaking population supported the independence of Estonia, by March 1991 that viewpoint had been supported by 30%, and by 38% in Latvia (Beissinger 2002). According to S. Savoskul, 27% of the Russian population in Lithuania advocated strict visa requirements imposed upon the trips to and from Russia (Savoskul 2001). The following table shows the dynamics of this process. The results of the research conducted by P. Vihalemm and M. Lauristin demonstrate that less than within a year the share of supporters of Estonian independence increased from 30% up to 72%, i. e. nearly by 2.5 times. The proportion of citizens who preferred to and were ready for living outside the USSR increased by more than 5 times.

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⁶ In March 1991, a referendum about the restoration of independence was held in Estonia. In Narva with only 4% of Estonians, 25.5% out of 70.1% of the total number of those participating in the elections voted for independence. In Sillamäe with even lower number of Estonians (only 3%) 40.5% voted for independence (See Sovetskaja Estonia, 1991, 5 March). It should be agreed with the Estonian sociologists that the proportion of Russians voting for the independence of Estonia made up at least 30% of the total amount. Similar situation was in Latvia. In Riga with 47% of Russians, 60.7% voted for Latvian independence, while in Daugavpils the independence was supported by 51.8% out of 58.3% of Russians. In Lithuania, according to the information provided by the sociologists, the opinion poll held on 11 March 1991 revealed that the independence was supported by 38.2% of Russians. This phenomenon was also typical of the Russian population of Russia. In 1997, for the full autonomy of Tatarstan voted not only 66% of Tatars but also 50% of the Russian population of Tatarstan, who believed that by that they would be able to provide themselves a higher level of welfare than in the rest of Russia (See Sigitova L. V., *Этничность в современном Татарстане*. Казань, 1998).