

On the Process of Liberation of the Baltic Countries from the Soviet Domination in Years 1985-1991: Attempt at a Model

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze the beginnings and growth of civil movements in the Baltic republics in years 1985-1991, which led to their state independence. The Baltic countries rank among the few from post-Soviet republics which managed to build stable democratic systems. Lithuania covers the area of 65 303 square kilometers and its population amounts to 3.48 million consisting of Lithuanians 83.5%, Poles 6.75%, Russians 6.3%, and others nationalities 3.5%. Latvia covers the territory of 64.589 square kilometers, and its population amounts to 2.26 million consisting of Latvians 59.8%, Russians 28.1%, Belarusians 3.8% Ukrainians 2.4%, Poles 2.4%, Lithuanians 1.3%, and other nationalities 2.3%. Territory of Estonia has 45.227 square kilometers and its population amounts to 1.33 mln (67.9% -Estonians, 25.6% - Russians, 2.1% - Ukrainians, 1.3% - Belarusians, 0.9 – Finns, and 2.2% - other nationalities).

Process of liberation of Baltic societies will be analyzed according to the following criteria:

- (i) Size and range of the civil movement claiming and forms of its institutionalization;
- (ii) political concessions made by republican authorities (e. g. restoration of pre-war state symbols, proclamation of sovereignty);
- (iii) level of control over the republican structure of power exercised by the civil movements accelerating the split of the republican Communist Parties into faction remaining loyal towards Moscow and faction supporting independent statehood and gaining independence.

Finally, I will try to consider why evolution of the Baltic societies resulted in building stable democracies, whereas these same efforts are still unsuccessful in Belarus and were unsuccessful in Ukraine, not mention the post-soviet societies of Central Asia¹. The whole analysis and answering these questions will not be a chronicle's

* *dr hab. Krzysztof BRZEHCZYN, prof. UAM - Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Oddział w Poznaniu*

¹ See: K. Brzechczyn, *Paths to Democracy of the Post-Soviet Republics: Attempt at Conceptualization*, (in:) *Values and Norms in the Age of Globalization*, ed. E. Czerwińska-Schupp, Peter Lang, Berlin 2007, pp. 563-568.

presentation of events from current history of the Baltic States but will be based on a coherent theoretical framework achieved by employing models and conceptual apparatus of a non-Marxian historical materialism².

2. The Structure of Soviet Socialism

Baltic States in the period from 1940 to 1991 was a part of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the legacy of real socialism in the Soviet version has been a crucial factor influencing their political development. The Soviet version real socialism may be characterized by three basic features. Firstly, it was a social system where one social class, disposing means of coercion, production and indoctrination, controlled politics, economy and culture. Secondly, the main interest of this class of triple-lords consisted in the maximization of power regulation. Thirdly, this social system built up an empire consisting of the Russian metropolis and the external provinces, inhabited by non-Russian speaking citizens. Let us briefly characterize the three above-mentioned aspects of real socialism in the Soviet version.

2.1. On Three Class Divisions

Class divisions, in accordance with a non-Marxian historical materialism, exist not only in economy, but also emerge spontaneously in other spheres of human activity, such as politics and culture. In each sphere of social life it is possible to distinguish material level consisting of means of coercion, production and indoctrination. Relation to means of coercion in politics determines a division of a society into two social categories: the class of rulers, which controls the use of means of coercion, and the class of citizens, deprived of such possibilities. In economy, material level is made up of means of production, which determines a division into the class of owners and the class of direct producers. In cultural domain, material level consists of means of spiritual production – for example printing presses, radio and television.

Thus control over the material means provides the basis for a typology of societies in a non-Marxian historical materialism. Applying this criterion it is possible to distinguish class societies, where existing classes are separated, and supra-class societies, where the class divisions are overlapped. For example, one social class, keen on increasing the range of its social influence, may seize control over means

² Full presentation of this theory in: L. Nowak, *Property and Power. Towards a non-Marxian historical materialism*, Reidel, Dordrecht 1983, idem, *Power and Civil Society. Towards a Dynamic Theory of Real Socialism*. Greenwood Press, London 1991; the comparison of this approach to communism with other conceptualizations of this system existing in the Polish social sciences, see: K. Brzechzyn, *Polish Discussions on the Nature of Communism and Mechanisms of its Collapse. A Review Article*, (in:) *East European Politics and Societies*, 2008 (forthcoming).

of coercion and production and mass communication. A society with a triple class of rulers-owners-priests, monopolizing control over politics, economy and culture, exemplifies one type of supra-class systems. This social system refers to the structure of real socialism. The apparatus of the Communist Party, which controlled not only political life, but also economy and culture, was the counterpart of the class of triple-lords.

2.2. Political Nature of Socialism

Real socialism was the system of triple-rule in a political version because possession of the means of production and indoctrination by the class of rulers-owners-priests was subordinated to the enlargement of power regulation. This social system evolved according to developmental mechanisms of a purely political society, which constituted the second feature of Soviet socialism.

It is supposed that every citizen has a set of preferences, which direct his or her actions. Among citizens' actions it is possible to distinguish those that are autonomous and regulated. Regulated actions are undertaken under threat of repression from the ruler, but autonomous actions are not restricted by similar sanctions taken by those controlling means of coercion. The ratio of the sum of regulated actions to the sum of actions undertaken by citizens (universe of action) is called civil alienation. It is assumed that intensity of civil resistance depends on the level of civil alienation. When the number of regulated actions is low (and thus civil alienation is also low), social peace prevails as citizens have no reason to resist. When the level of civil alienation is high, the level of resistance is low as declassed and atomized citizens are unable to resist. A political revolution breaks out when civil alienation is moderately high; which means it is painful enough to evoke political reaction, yet not so painful as to paralyze citizenry.

There are two basic methods to subordinate social life: bureaucratization and terror. Bureaucratization replaces autonomous social relations (citizen – citizen type) by etatised ones (citizen - ruler – citizen type). This way, power gradually permeates into the structure of social life making it impossible to undertake any social action without its permission. Resorting to terror, rulers physically 'eliminate' from social life (death, long-term prison or isolation, etc.) those from the class of citizens who are centers of independent social relations. However, the state of declassification does not last forever. It is assumed that when bureaucratization of social life passes a certain threshold, there appears a tendency for revitalization of autonomous social bonds among citizens. It means that etatised social bonds are replaced by autonomous ones, social relations controlled by authorities shrink and the sphere of autonomous social life enlarges.

In the dynamic model of purely political society it is possible to distinguish, roughly speaking three stadia: the stadium of the growth of political regulation, the stadium of political enslavement, and the stadium of the gradual decrease of power regulation. In the first stadium the mechanism of political competition led to steady rise of power regulation. Those from the class of rulers, who do not compete, are eliminated from the political structure of power or, by process of trials and errors, learn to enlarge their sphere of control. In consequence, social autonomy shrinks and the sphere of power regulation enlarges. According to the static assumptions, the growth of civil alienation provoked outbreak of civil revolution. Its failure opened road to the total enslavement of citizenry by the class of rulers.

In the stadium of enslavement all domains of social life are subordinated by rulers. Because the mechanism of political competition forces typical rulers to enlarge their sphere of regulation, political competition proceeds at the expense spheres of social life controlled by other rulers. In the conditions of isolated political society, the only way to avoid political over-competitiveness which would destroy the whole political system is periodic purges. They eliminated the surplus candidates for power. This way enslavement of citizens turns into self-enslavement of rulers.

Since the state of enslavement, there appears a tendency towards a gradual revitalization of independent social bonds, which increases citizens' ability to resist. This leads to a civil revolution, which is crushed, but rulers - in order to avoid a follow-up, reduce the scope of their control. Yet, mechanisms of political competition lead once more to the growth of power regulation, triggering an outbreak of the next revolution on a greater scale. This forces rulers to make larger concession and makes it more difficult for them to repress rebels. Thus a political society evolves according to the following scheme: civil revolution - repression - concessions - growth of political regulation - next political revolution with a wider social base. Finally, mass protests erupt and their scale is so widespread that authorities instead of starting off with repression, have no choice but allow sweeping concessions, which reduces control of the rulers to the level acceptable by the class of citizens.

2.3. Imperial Structure of the Soviet Version Socialism

Imperial structure forms the third basic feature of the Soviet society. As a result of successful aggression, the ruling class of aggressor's society gained extraordinary growth of external power regulation: it ousted the authority of a conquered country and enslaved its citizens. Aggressiveness conceived in such a way occurs in certain phases of development of an analyzed society. It is possible to distinguish two ranges of aggressiveness. The society enters *the first range of aggressiveness* in the late stage of the stadium of the growth of political regulation. Owing to an extraordinary increase in power regulation, the class of rulers stabilizes relations with its own class

of citizens and averts the threat of revolution. In *the second range of aggressiveness*, a political society enters in the stadium of political enslavement. Then, external growth of power regulation allows for averting the threat of self-enslavement of the class of rulers.

The fact of possessing external provinces prolonged the process of liberalization of the whole imperial society. The class of rulers could exploit national divisions among citizenry through maintaining different national groups of the class of citizens at different levels of enslavement. As a result, the class of triple-lords, instead of quelling protests of the whole class of citizens, dealt with isolated citizen protests, occurring at different time and in different parts of the empire.

It is worth characterizing social consequences of aggression for its victims. The class of rulers of an attacked society is removed and the whole country is incorporated into the empire. The class of citizens of a conquered society becomes enslaved, irrespective of the developmental phase it achieved. A successful conquest has the same consequences as a lost civil revolution - it leads to the enslavement of the class of citizens. After some time, the process of revitalization of independent social bonds occurred in provincial society. However, the process of revitalization of autonomous social links in the province of empire is mostly limited to citizens of a given ethnic origins. The civil protests and revolution have character of the national revolution in which the goals of national autonomy and defense of national culture (perceived as an integrative part of civil liberties) play crucial role.

3. On Political Development of the Baltic Societies

Baltic countries were compulsory incorporated into the Soviet Union in June 1940.³ At that time the Soviet Union entered the second wave of aggressiveness conquering eastern Poland, Romania and being at war with Finland. The Soviet rulers removed the authorities of conquered states and imposed own control over political, economical and cultural life of incorporated societies. On June 13, 1941 at least 48 thousand people belonging to social elites of the three Baltic societies were deported to Siberia. During the first year of Soviet occupation 129 thousand people were executed by occupational forces (60 thousands Estonians, 35 thousands Latvians and 34 thousands Lithuanians). Prior to German troops encroaching on the Baltic territory, NKWD managed to execute 5 thousand people.

³ This subsection is based on empirical research conducted by: G. Błaszczuk, *Partie polityczne Litwy w latach 1988-1992 [Political Parties in Lithuania from 1988 to 1992]*, "Obóz", 1993, no. 25/26, p. 57-77, J. Krawulski, *Estonia, Litwa, Łotwa. Przeobrażenia polityczne i gospodarcze [Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia. Political and Economical Transformations]*, CBW UW, Warszawa 1996, J. Lewandowski, *Estonia [Estonia]*, Trio, Warszawa 2001, A. Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1994; P. Łossowski, *Tragedia państw bałtyckich 1939-1941 [Tragedy of Baltic States 1939-1941]*, Novum, Warszawa 1990.

The second wave of deportations took place immediately after the victory over the German army in years 1944-1946. At that time about 205 thousand Lithuanians, 105 thousand Latvians and 20 thousand Estonians were deported. The last wave of deportation took place in spring of 1949 as a result of mass collectivization of agriculture. Most of the deportees were farmers: 60.000 Lithuanians, 70.000 Latvians and 80.000 Estonians. It is estimated that overall number of the deportees amounted to 600.000 people out of 6 million of Baltic population. Political repressions after the World War II provoked partisan war lasting in wooded regions of Lithuania and Latvia to the beginnings of the 50's.

The economical integration with Soviet Union changed the national structure of the republics' populations. The development of heavy industry made Russians migrate to take important posts in all-union enterprises and new sectors of economy. As a result, the percentage of native Estonians and Latvians in the total population declined. During the period of 1939-1979 the percentage of native Estonians dropped from 88% to 65%; Latvians – from 76% to 54%. It was only in Lithuania where the percentage of native population remained relatively constant.

The pressure of political control was weakened during Khrushchev's 'thaw'. However, since the second half of 60. the central authorities tightened its control over social life provoking the second wave of civil resistance at the turn of the 70's. In Lithuania, the central and republican authorities tried to impose stricter control over religious life. Therefore, civil resistance in this republic took a shape of the defense of religious autonomy and the rights of the Catholic Church. The central authorities in Estonia, in turn, tried to accelerate the processes of Russification. In this republic the civil protests in defense of national culture prevailed.

In Lithuania citizens signed petitions and wrote public letters in defense of the Catholic faith. On average, each protest was signed by one thousand people. Other expressions of resistance were secret religious instruction among children, underground seminary, as well as printing and distribution of independent periodicals. Since 1972, "The Chronicle of Catholic Church in Lithuania" was published. Additionally eight other catholic independent periodicals were published. In 1978, The Catholic Committee of the Defense of the Rights of the Believers was founded and coordinated the action of collecting signatures under petitions send to the authorities. In 1979, the petition claiming the return of church built in Klaipėda by ordinary citizens was signed by 148.000 people. This kind of pressure brought about certain results: the authorities augmented the number of candidates to Kaunas catholic seminary from 5 to 25 and allowed for printing of catholic catechism in 65 thousands copies.

At the end of the 60's the authorities tighten its control over cultural life in Estonia. They changed editorial boards or closed down independent journals and dismissed more independent-thinking scholars from the university posts. They also implemented

the policy of Russification. The Russian language was to be an official language of the republic. Therefore, Estonian civil resistance objected to the attempts of Russification of that country. In 1972 two independent organizations were founded: Estonian National Front and Estonian Democratic Movement. Each of them has about 20 members and publishes two independent periodicals: "Estonian Democrat" and "Estonian National Voice". In October 1972 these organizations prepared "The Memorial on the Issue of Baltic Countries" send to the Organization of United Nations. At the turn of 1975 the KGB arrested members of these groups. Another form of protest consisted in demonstrations of the Estonian youth held in 1972, 1976, and 1979. These demonstrations expanded to two other republics: in Latvian Liepāja (1977) and Vilnius (1977 and 1982). Generally speaking, in years 1966-1977 there were 94 demonstrations what made up 18.9% of all public protests in Soviet Union (the Baltic population consisted of 2% of all Soviet population). In one third of demonstrations participated on average over five hundred people, and in one half demonstrations participated over one hundred people, on average.

Next wave of demonstrations broke out in Tallinn, in February 1980. They were brutally pacified because in the capital of Estonia yachting competitions were organized during Olympic Games. Once more, protests broke out in September 1980 when the republican authorities cancelled the concert of the rock music band "Propeller". The youth shouted slogans like "Freedom for Estonia" and "Soviets go home". Although Estonian intellectuals supported the protests, their participants were removed from schools and universities. Furthermore, the most active oppositional groups were broken up and their leaders arrested. However, this civil unrest enforced the authorities to abandon the most rigorous plans of Russification.

On the eve of Gorbachev's perestroika, the organized opposition did not exist in Baltic countries. However, reforms of Gorbachev stimulated the next wave of social protests. In Estonia social protests began from ecological discontent. In 1986 Estonians protested against construction of phosphorus mines in Kabala-Toolse. These protests had a political context because implementation of new investments meant migration of Russian workers. Finally, the ecological demur made central authorities in Moscow resign from the construction of new mines. Also, Estonians commemorated tragic anniversaries of the Soviet-Estonian relations. One of the largest demonstrations took place at the time of the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement commemoration, on 23 August, 1987, in Tallinn, capital of Estonia. Very soon, these demonstrations gained momentum and acquired a massive following. For example, at that time in Estonia from 150 to 300 thousand people used to participate in different kinds of manifestations and forms of protest (Estonia had 1.3 million inhabitants).

Mass civil movement in Estonia began to institutionalize itself. One of the first independent organizations Society of Preservation of Historical Monuments and National Legacy which was registered on December 12, 1987. At its height of activity

it amounts to 10.000 members. The Popular Fronts that officially supported Gorbachev's perestroika was founded in April, 1988. Estonia was first republic in the Soviet Union where this kind of organization was established. Very soon, the Popular Front became the biggest organization in republics. Apart from these structures, there emerged other independent groups and political parties that overtly called for restoration of full state independence and complete political freedom.

Self-organized civil movement took control over some legally existing organizations and enforced political concessions from the authorities of republic that had to enlarge their sphere of autonomy from Moscow. In Estonia, at the beginning of April, 1988, the participants of a joint session of the Boards of Writers and Artists Associations demanded the dismissal of Karl Vaino, 1st secretary of the Estonian Communist Party, and of Brunon Saul, Prime Minister of the republican government. Moreover, the participants of this assembly wanted to have full rights to the Estonian language granted and punish those guilty of crimes against the Estonian nation committed during the Soviet occupation. Under social pressure, K. Vaino was dismissed in late spring 1988 and B. Saul resigned from his post in autumn.

The Supreme Council of the Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic restored the traditional flag of the Estonian pre-war independent state. In October and November 1988, the Popular Front collected 800 thousand signatures under a petition for amendments in the Estonian republican constitution. Under civil pressure, on November 16, 1988, the Supreme Council passed amendments to the republican constitution and admitted 'The Declaration of Sovereignty' granting, in practice, priority of the republican law over the federal (Soviet) one. In January 1989, the republican parliament also bestowed on the Estonian language the status of the state language of the republic.

In Lithuania, civil revival commenced from an independent celebration of the 600th anniversary of Lithuanian Baptism (1986). The largest demonstration was held on 23 August 1989. Then, 2 million people (the 2/3 of the population of the Baltic republic) formed a human chain from Tallinn to Vilnius to protest against the results of the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement.

In Lithuania, the Popular Front (*Saiudis*) was established on June 3, 1988. As in Estonia, it became the biggest independent organization. Self-organized civil movement in Lithuania enforced political concessions from the republican authorities that had to enlarge their autonomy from Moscow. Also, the grass root members of different official republican organizations became more independent in their support of civil movement. In November 1988, members of the Lithuanian Union of Artists dismissed own authorities, loyal towards the Communist Party, and choose democratically more independent representatives. On October 18, 1988, the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic granted the Lithuanian language the status of the state language and restored traditional symbols of the independent state

(flag and national anthem). Over half a year later, on May 18, 1989, the Supreme Council declared sovereignty of the Lithuanian Republic.

The development of the Latvian civil movement was influenced by events in Lithuania and Estonia. On April 1986, the official Union of Latvian Writers claimed more rights for the national language. One year later, the same demands were restated by the organization of the Latvian teachers. The first demonstration commemorating the 1940 deportations was held on 14 June 1987. Several weeks later, on 23 August 1987 the people commemorated the anniversary of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact. One of the biggest manifestations was organized on 18 November 1988 – anniversary of Latvian Independence Day. In Latvia, the Popular Front was established on 8 October, 1988. It associated 250.000 members. Under increasing civil pressure, the Supreme Council of the Latvian Socialist Soviet Republic proclaimed sovereignty of Latvia on 28 July, 1989 and granted to its national language the status of the state language.

Growing civil movement was one of the most important causes of divisions in republican Communist Parties. The Communist Party of each Baltic republic split into a faction remaining loyal towards Moscow and a faction supporting greater republican autonomy from the centre of the Soviet Union. In Estonia, this division revealed in the first half of 1989, during the 20th Congress of the Estonian Communist Party. In Latvia, the Communist Party had just declared that it is not part of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This declaration was an impulse to establish a faction that still remained obedient to Moscow. In Lithuania, in December 1990, the Lithuanian Communist Party renamed into the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party and openly supported republican sovereignty, which brought about the rise of a pro-Moscow faction.

As a result of elections held in the first half of 1990, citizens' movement took control over the legislature of the Baltic republics. In Lithuania (February 24, 1990) *Saiudis* gained 73 seats in the 133-seat Supreme Council. In Estonia (March 19, 1990) the Popular Front gained 49 seats in the 105-seat Supreme Council. Finally, at the end of April, the Latvian Popular Front and its allies gained 133 seats in the 201-seat Supreme Council.

Electoral victories of opposition accelerated the process of achieving independence. On March 11, 1990 the Lithuanian Supreme Council declared restoration of state's independence and the 1938 constitution. In reaction, Moscow decided to cut off oil and gas supply. The economical blockade was lifted in June 1990 when Lithuanian authorities withdrew from immediate implementation of the declaration. The Estonian Supreme Council was more careful because it declared, on 30 March, 1990, that the Soviet occupation did not cease *de iure* the existence of the pre-war Republic of Estonia. Therefore, the Estonian parliament proclaimed the onset of the restoration

of the Republic of Estonia. The transitory period should come to an end with the establishment of all institutions and prerogatives of an independent state. A similar strategy was adopted by the Supreme Council of Latvia that on May 5, 1990, declared restoration of an independent state, constitution from 1922 as well as reestablishment of the pre-war name of the state.

Aspirations to independence were confirmed by referendums held in each Baltic country at the turn of February and March in 1990. In the Lithuanian referendum 90% of voters supported an independent state. In Latvia and Estonia, respectively 74% and 78% of electors voted for independence. At the same time the Baltic nations boycotted the federal referendum on the future of the Soviet Union, held on March 18, 1991.

The Soviet Union was forced to recognize state independence of the Baltic countries after the unsuccessful coup d'état in August 1991. On the 20th of August the Supreme Councils of Estonia and Latvia proclaimed full restoration of independence. This decision was accepted by the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union that on September 6, 1991, annulled the 1940 annexation of the Baltic States and announced ratification of treaties with each Baltic state defining the status of Russian army and schedule of its withdrawal. In the second half of 1991 the Baltic States outlawed the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other organizations supporting federation with the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, the newly independent countries began to build own armies. In the years 1992-1993, in all Baltic countries presidential and parliamentary elections were held. In the first half of the 90s, Estonia and Lithuania proclaimed own constitutions and Latvia amended its own constitution from 1938. This way instigation of stable democracy in the Baltic societies was completed.

4. Conclusions

Political development of the Baltic societies may be interpreted in the categories of a victorious civil revolution. In these societies the level of civil mobilization was higher than in neighboring societies of Belarus or Ukraine⁴. Therefore, mass civil protest movements were able to enforced political concessions on the part of republican factions of the class of rulers. Those factions fearing impending loss of political support, sided with own citizens' fight for independence, which was testified by democratization of the republican political systems and increasing

⁴ See: K. Brzechczyn, *Paths to Democracy of the Post-Soviet Republics: Attempt at Conceptualization*, (in:) *Values and Norms in the Age of Globalization*, ed. E. Czerwińska-Schupp, Peter Lang, Berlin 2007, pp. 555-557 and 559-561; idem, *Between Limited Democratization and Limited Autocratisation: Political Development of the Ukrainian Society*, (in:) *Etyka i współczesność [Ethics and Modern Times]*, eds. R. Kozłowski, K. Cern, Wyd. UAM, Poznań, pp. 33-50.

autonomy within the Soviet Union. This strategy allowed for smooth transition to independent statehood and peaceful exchange of ruling elite that under new conditions respected democratic rules of political game.

Stabilization of democratic system in these societies was also strengthened by the direction of economic transformation in the Baltic countries. The governments of these states unhesitatingly implemented free-market reforms. Estonia is recognized as a regional leader in the process of de-regulation of economy. The important aspect of this policy was privatization of economy, especially decollectivization of agriculture. By 1995 the most of the arable lands in Latvia and Lithuania is in hands of private proprietors. This way, the socialist system was dismantled completely and the class of owners supporting the democracy and independent existence emerged.⁵ Moreover, the membership of those states in the Council of Europe and European Union points to the stability of built democracy.

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⁵ J. R. Davis, *Understanding the Process of Decollectivisation and Agricultural Privatisation in Transition Economies: The Distribution of Collective and State Farm Assets in Latvia and Lithuania*, "Europe-Asia Studies", 1997, vol. 49, no. 8, pp. 1409-1432; J. Reardon, *An Assessment of the Transition to a Market Economy in Baltic Republics*, "Journal of Economic Issues", 1996, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 629-638; J. Reardon, P. Lazda, *The Development of the Market System in the Baltic Republics*, "Journal of Economic Issues", 1993, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 537-545.

Summary

The aim of this paper is to analyze the beginnings and growth of civil movements in the Baltic republics in years 1985-1991, which led to their state independence. Process of liberation of Baltic societies will be analyzed according to the following three criteria: size and range of the civil movement and forms of its institutionalization (i), political concessions made by republican authorities (ii) and level of control over the republican structure of power exercised by the civil movements (iii). Finally, I will try to consider why evolution of the Baltic societies resulted in building stable democracies, whereas these same efforts are still unsuccessful in Belarus and were unsuccessful in Ukraine. The analysis will not be a chronicle's presentation of events from current history of the Baltic States but will be based on a coherent theoretical framework achieved by employing models and conceptual apparatus of a non-Marxian historical materialism.

Streszczenie

O procesie wyzwolenia krajów bałtyckich spod sowieckiej dominacji. Próba modelu

Celem artykułu jest analiza genezy i rozwoju niepodległościowych ruchów obywatelskich w republikach bałtyckich w latach 1985-1991, które doprowadziły do zdobycia państwowej suwerenności. Proces wyzwolenia społeczeństw bałtyckich będzie analizowany według trzech kryteriów: zasięg i wielkość ruchu obywatelskiego oraz formy jego instytucjonalizacji (i), ustępstwa polityczne dokonywanej przez władze poszczególnych republik (ii) poziom kontroli republikańskich struktur władzy sprawowany przez ruchy obywatelskie (iii). W końcowej części artykułu rozważam dlaczego ewolucja społeczeństw bałtyckich zakończyła się budową stabilnego systemu demokratycznego, podczas gdy podobne wysiłki okazują się być nieskuteczne na Białorusi i częściowo skuteczne na Ukrainie. Prezentowana analiza nie będzie kronikarskim zapisem wydarzeń z historii najnowszej społeczeństw bałtyckich, lecz oparta będzie na modelach i aparaturze pojęciowej pewnej teorii rozwoju społecznej – nie-Marksowskim materializmie historycznym.

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