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THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION ON THE ETHNIC DEMOGRAPHY OF THE BALTIC COUNTRIES

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The rapid industrialization of the Baltic countries since their reabsorption into the Soviet Union in 1945 is significantly consequential in at least three respects.¹ First of all, economic policies in the Soviet Union are determined from the point of view of the all-union interests, leaving the interest of the constituent republics as secondary. This hegemony of all-union interests constitutes the principal instrument of economic and, as a natural consequence, political integration of the republics into the all-union pattern. The political consequences (and motives) of economic integration tend to contain if not entirely negate centrifugal forces, creating a more tightly cemented multi-national state.

A second consequence of industrialization has been the transformation of the social systems of the Baltic countries, with rapidly rising educational level, an expanding middle class of technical and cultural intelligentsia, intensified horizontal and vertical social mobility, and rapid urbanization. The social revolution, produced by industrialization and intensified by collectivization, has radically altered the traditional relations of basically rural populations and made it easier to impose a new Soviet social system, modeled on that in Russia. Industrialization thus can be considered as functional for the introduction of Soviet norms of behavior and for the weakening of the traditional cultural and religious fabric of society.

Finally, industrialization, with its population mobility, significantly affected the ethnic demography of the Baltic countries, diluting their homogeneity and changing the cultural environment. It thus advanced the Party Program ideal of denationalizing peripheral republics through population dynamics.

While industrialization is the general goal of the Soviet regime, the unusually intense effort to develop economically the Baltic republics can be understood only in the light of the by-products of industrialization just enumerated. Political, social, and cultural motives of the regime must be considered along with the economic in Soviet economic policies. Consider the Soviet statistics that the gross industrial production in the Soviet Union as a whole increased 627% by 1962 (1940 = 100%), in Lithuania and Latvia almost thirteen times during the same period, fourteen times in Estonia, and eleven times in Moldavia. Growth of industrial production during the same period in other original republics of the Soviet Union range from 370% in Turkmenia, 580% in RSFSR, to 939% in Armenia.² While favorable circumstances and relatively undeveloped industry, at least in Lithuania, in part explain this differential increase in industrial production, its magnitude nevertheless suggests that the rapid industrialization may be explained only if political considerations are taken into account. Neither the natural nor human resources are sufficient in the Baltic countries for such a rapid development. The aim of this article is to suggest how the partly forced development of industry affects the demographic make-up of the Baltic countries, leaving the discussion of political and social consequences for another occasion.

Magnitude and Direction of Ethnic Changes

The magnitude and direction of ethnic changes in the populations of the Baltic countries is revealed by Table 1, which compares pre-1940 ethnic data with that provided by the 1959 census of the Soviet Union. The two sets of figures are, of course, not entirely comparable, for a number of territorial changes affected the ethnic composition of the population. Thus, for example, the 1923 census of Lithuania did not include the Polish held Vilnius area, which was inhabited heavily by Poles. Nevertheless, the data presented does give a reasonable sense of the scope and direction of changes.

The 1959 census of the Soviet Union has revealed a very marked increase of non-indigenous inhabitants in all three Baltic countries, and especially in the more industrially developed Estonia and Latvia where local reserves are already inadequate to meet the needs of industry. Only Lithuania has succeeded in maintaining approximately the same ratio of native and alien elements during the last thirty years or so.

The ethnic elements in Baltic populations also underwent great changes. The Russian element has expanded tremendously, as Table 1 indicates. At the same time other ethnic groups, important in pre-war period, declined. Thus the Baltic Germans in Latvia and Estonia practically disappeared. The Jewish population, due mainly to Nazi extermination, also declined to insignificance. At the same time, along the Russian minority, other Slavic minorities — the Ukrainians and Belorussians — increased their proportion in the populations. Actually, from a cultural point of view, the Ukrainians and Belorussians can be classified as Russians, since great majority of them use the Russian cultural forms and participate in Russian social circles. This fact increases the Russian cultural element in the Baltic countries beyond the actual figures. Russian cultural influence is intensified also by other factors. The Russians, as will be shown, tend to concentrate geographically mainly in the largest cities, are generally of younger years, and possess higher education than the population as a whole (see Table 3, for example).

Table 1: CHANGES IN ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE BALTIC REPUBLICS, IN PERCENTAGES³

Ethnic Groups	Estonia		Latvia		Lithuania	
	1934	1959	1935	1959	1923	1959
Estonians	88.2	74.9	—	.2	—	—
Latvians	—	.2	75.50	62.0	.73	.2
Lithuanians	—	—	—	1.5	83.88	79.3
Russians	8.5	20.7	11.97	26.6	2.70	8.5
Ukrainians	—	1.3	—	1.4	—	.7
Belorussians	—	.9	—	2.9	—	1.1
Germans	1.5	—	3.19	—	1.44	—
Jews	.4	.5	4.79	1.7	7.58	.9
Poles	—	.2	2.51	2.9	3.23	8.5
Others	1.4	1.3	2.04	.8	.44	.7

Industrial Basis of Migration

Original influx of non-natives into the Baltic countries (after 1945) was in the main a consequence of so-vietization policies. The Baltic Communist Parties were neither numerous nor tested to take over the countries and carry out sweeping social and economic changes in face of a general resistance of the populations. So the Kremlin sent in thousands of functionaries and specialists to establish Soviet regimes in the formerly independent countries.⁴ Data is not available how many people migrated into the Baltic countries during the period of intense sovietization, nor do we know how many remained after their task was well on the way (circa 1953). All that can be said is that in the long run the sizeable influx of Russian population was in the main a consequence of economics, i.e. of industrialization (and, perhaps, a higher standard of living). This can be inferred from a number of facts.

First of all, the 1959 census indicates that the non-indigenous population has settled mainly in the cities and is in the productive age category. In Latvia the non-natives in the country as a whole constitute 38%, while in urban areas they comprise 48%. In Estonia the respective figures are 25 and 38.⁵ In Lithuania, the minorities comprise just over 20% of the population, while in the urban areas this element amounts to about 30%. Of the 227,038 Russians in Lithuania in 1959, 175,304 lived in urban areas (68,993 in Vilnius and 24,405 in Kaunas).⁶

Another indicator of the industrial-orientation of immigration is the age of non-indigenous population, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: RELATIVE WEIGHT OF VARIOUS AGE GROUPS OF NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE POPULATIONS IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA, IN PERCENTAGES⁷

	Age categories		
	0-19	20-59	60
Estonia:			
1) Estonians	28	54	18

2) Non-Estonians	34	59	7
Latvia:			
1) Latvians	28	53	19
2) Non-Latvians	33	58	9

The data certainly suggests that young people with growing families are migrating into the two countries. This is consistent with the industrial orientation of migration and, no doubt, desirable from the standpoint of colonization.

A more specific indication of industrial orientation of non-indigenous elements is provided by the ethnic composition of the labor force in Lithuania. According to the 1959 census, 69% of the industrial workers were Lithuanians, 15% were Russians, 9.5% were Poles, 3%—Belorussians, 1.5%—Jews, 2%—other nationalities.⁸ Thus the Slavs contributed a disproportionate percentage to the ranks of industrial personnel, presumably including the workers as well as skilled and managerial elements.

There is a significant indication of the level of occupation of alien elements, as provided by the educational data of the various nationalities in Lithuania. The tendencies of the data in Table 3 can probably be applied also to Latvia and Estonia.

Table 3: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN LITHUANIA, 1959.⁹

[No. of people with higher and secondary (including incomplete secondary) education per 1000 population, employed persons only].

Ethnic Group	Total Population	Urban	Rural
Total Population	250	472	127
Lithuanians	222	438	127
Russians	503	595	225
Poles	151	308	88
Belorussians	533	570	359
Jews	703	703	693
Ukrainians	715	739	572

The data of Table 3 suggests that the new immigrants are usually of the skilled or managerial category, and not unskilled labor. Unskilled labor, as will be shown, is still abundant in Lithuania, thus discouraging migration of unskilled Slavs. Many of the better-educated Slavs, no doubt, have remained in the country from the first influx after the war. There is no indication, however, that the educational quality of immigrants have changed since. The tendency of better-educated Russians to migrate into Lithuania has aggravated national relations. After the war the Russians established themselves in the best positions and held on to them. Furthermore, their education continues to favor them in managerial positions. The Lithuanians after Stalin attempted to reduce Russian influence by sponsoring a campaign to promote native cadres. This produced serious charges of incorrect cadre policy — appointment on nationality grounds. Many of the Russian bureaucrats were pushed out by the more self-assured Lithuanian bureaucrats, or the Lithuanians were favored. For example, in 1959 the Rector of the University of Vilnius was dismissed from his post and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania exactly for cleansing the ranks of Vilnius University faculty from undesirable foreign element.¹⁰

Influx of aliens is closely correlated with degree of industrialization and labor needs. Latvia and Estonia have been industrialized more than Lithuania even during the pre-war years. This difference in degree of industrialization persists to this day, Lithuania still remaining one of the least industrialized areas in the Soviet Union. For example, the value of total production per person (USSR = 100%) in 1955 was 59.7% for Lithuania, 119.0% for Latvia, and 124.0% for Estonia.¹¹ No doubt, greater labor needs and opportunities in Estonia and Latvia attracted more immigrants than the still predominantly agricultural Lithuania.

This raises the problem of distribution of labor reserves in the Baltic area. The above indirect indications of industrial pressure for immigration will be confirmed if, indeed, there is a shortage of labor in Latvia and Estonia. Such data is provided by a survey of labor reserves, made under the direction of the Baltic Economic Coordinating Council (before abandonment of regionalism under Brezhnev - Kosygin),¹² The survey included not only the Baltic countries but also the Kaliningrad Oblast (formerly Königsberg and East Prussia), which was merged for economic management with Lithuania. Table 4 summarizes the survey data.

Table 4: DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE IN THE BALTIC ECONOMIC REGION, 1962, IN PERCENTAGES¹³

	Lithuania	Latvia	Estonia	Kaliningrad Oblast
Distribution of Total	41.4	31.4	17.9	9.3

Population				
Distribution of Total Labor Force	40.3	32.1	18.4	9.2
Employed in Material Production, Total	41.7	32.8	17.6	7.9
a. Industry	30.8	37.6	21.3	10.3
b. Agriculture	53.0	28.8	12.7	6.3
c. Construction	39.0	34.1	19.5,	7.4
d. Forestry	36.2	21.3	34.0	8.5
e. Transport and communications	31.9	34.3	22.0	11.8
f. Commerce, food service, etc.	33.9	38.6	20.5	10.0

The data does, indeed, show the greater labor reserves still available in Lithuania, in its agricultural countryside, and the pressures of industrialization upon the Latvian and Estonian countryside for labor. While it may be argued that labor reserves are still available in the Latvian and Estonian countryside, their availability can be fully utilized only by distribution of industry to the less populous centers. Other data suggests that most of the additional labor needs in Latvia and Estonia have to be met through migration. Evidently, collective agriculture requires so much labor that Estonia and Latvia have almost reached the limit of labor reserves from the countryside.

The Latvian and Estonian republics cannot meet labor needs by natural population growth as well, as the data of Table 5 suggests.

Table 5: NATURAL AND MECHANICAL GROWTH OF POPULATION IN THE BALTIC COUNTRIES, 1959-1963.¹⁴

	Population Increase, 1959-1963	% of Growth Natural	No. of Immigrants
Lithuania	168,000	92%	14,000
Latvia	94,000	60%	56,400
Estonia	47,000		

The growth of population naturally and mechanically is thus different among the Baltic countries. In Lithuania, natural increase is over 13 per 1000 population, while in Estonia and Latvia only about 2 per 1000 population. Obviously manpower needs in Latvia and Estonia cannot be adequately met through natural growth of population. In fact, the cited survey claimed that the labor force would decline if only natural growth was supplementing it in Estonia, and would be stabilized in Latvia. Hence, as industry is continually expanded, additional labor needs must be met through employment of the elderly or the young, automation, and immigration.¹⁵ In Estonia the pressures for labor are so great, due to the rapid industrialization, that in the period between 1960 and 1962 mechanical growth of population was already highly inadequate and additional labor needs had to be met by employment of the elderly. In that period the elderly supplied 70% of the additional labor demand.¹⁶ Obviously, the situation in Latvia is about the same.

The intense and continuing industrialization is thus producing conglomerative pressures. From an ethnic stand-point the situation is alarming especially in Latvia. If present trends continue, during the next two decades about 300,000 aliens would move into Latvia and Estonia alone. This influx, combined with the higher birth rate among the immigrants, would be sufficient to shift the ethnic balance in Latvia, making the Latvians a minority in their own country.

In Lithuania this process is slower. After the initial influx of Russians and others after the war, the present annual mechanical increase of population amounts to about 3,500 people (8% of the annual population increase), a relatively small increase explainable in the main by the availability of labor reserves in the country.

Dispersal of Industry as One Answer to Immigration

The threat to national identity as a result of unchecked immigration became too obvious even for the Communist Parties in the Baltic to disregard. The case of Latvia is of special significance. As is widely known, the Latvian Communist leadership was purged in 1959, with Khrushchev himself taking a part. Arvids Pelše, now a member of the Kremlin Politbureau, was appointed First Secretary. In one of his indictments against the deviants, he stated:

Some of our comrades, induced by completely baseless worries that our Latvian Republic might lose its national identity, wanted to stop the objectively natural process of population shifts. In their speeches they repeatedly

maintained, for instance, that the mechanical increase of the population of Riga should be prevented by all means. Such an attitude is not only harmful, but also politically dangerous. By cultivating national isolation they identify themselves with bourgeois nationalism, they impair not only the interest of all other peoples of the Soviet Union, but endanger also the vital interest of the Latvian nation.¹⁷

One way in which the republic leaders could maneuver to contain immigration without at the same time being charged with bourgeois nationalism, is to advocate dispersal of industry to smaller population centers, where the still untapped country labor force is more easily accessible. This is consistent with the announced Kremlin policy to develop industry rationally in relation to natural and human resources. One of the first to advocate and practically test such policy were the Lithuanian economists. Recently a study was published on the supply of labor and personnel for new factories, built in smaller provincial centers.¹⁸

The Lithuanian economists made a study of the sources of labor for five new industrial enterprises, located in smaller cities. The factories considered were: 1) Electronic parts factory in Tauragė (15,900 inhabitants in 1965); 2) Electro-technical factory in Mažeikiai (10,300 inhabitants); 3) Chemical combine in Kėdainiai (15,300 inhabitants); 4) Fertilizer factory in Jonava (7,600 inhabitants); 5) Experimental paper combine in Grigiškės (3,300 inhabitants). The last is a suburb of the largest Lithuanian city, Vilnius. These factories were set up since 1959, two of them, in Jonava and Tauragė, in 1963 and 1964.

The survey of sources for labor of these factories revealed that over 90% of all labor needs are supplied from internal sources of the republic, and from 3 to 10% from other republics (see Table 6). The experimental paper combine in Grigiškės is an exception. In this case over 40% of laborers are immigrants from other republics. The case of Grigiskes strongly suggests that even in a republic where labor reserves are abundant, the establishment of a factory in a metropolitan area with high industrial concentration results in an extensive influx of labor from other republics. The large cities of the Baltic evidently are attractive places to live, despite the high density of population in the Baltic countries as compared to that of the RSFSR or the Soviet Union as a whole. One possibility is that the standard of living and culture is generally higher than in Russia.

Table 6: SOURCE OF LABOR FOR FIVE NEW FACTORIES IN LITHUANIA, IN PERCENTAGES

Source of Labor	Tauragė	Mažeikiai	Kėdainiai	Jonava	Grigiškės
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
From the same city	72.1	52.9	52.5	21.4	3.5
From the same raion	5.1	16.8	11.6	7.4	37.4
From other Lithuanian cities	9.8	15.5	20.5	43.0	8.3
From other Lithuanian raions	9.5	9.8	11.5	18.5	10.6
From other republics	9.5	5.0	3.8	9.7	40.2

In concluding the study, the Lithuanian economists in effect argued for the policy of dispersal of industry to medium sized and small cities. The advantages they enumerated were: labor needs can be supplied by local sources, very little new housing is needed, smaller initial capital investment, the employment of labor surplus of the countryside, the containment of migration of young people to the large cities, etc. The authors concluded that "Further intense industrialization of medium and small cities will help effectively to realize the tasks raised by the directives of the 23rd Congress of the CPSU for the new five year plan." would not be as conclusive in Latvia and Estonia, where, as we have seen, the employment of rural population is more intense.

Whether the Baltic countries can solve the problem of immigration through dispersal of industry and thus preserve ethnic identity, of course, depends on whether the Kremlin planners will go along in practice in setting up new industrial enterprises in provincial towns, instead of expanding existing facilities or undertaking new construction in the large metropolitan centers of the Baltic countries. The political implications of this are evident to all. It is not impossible that under the new branch management of industry, which tends to concentrate authority in the center, the policy of dispersal will be neglected. It is not accidental that the Chairman of the Lithuanian SSR Gosplan, in discussing the new management and planning, warned against development of industry without regard to the republic's labor and resource profile.¹⁹ The republic planners obviously are concerned that the all-union or union-republic ministers may disregard the arguments for dispersal of industry, even if these arguments are based on such studies as cited in this article.

The conclusion that offers itself is this: although dispersal of industry could contain or even stop immigration, most likely this policy will only be partially implemented. Only such republics as Lithuania, with still substantial labor reserves, can hope to keep immigration that is economically motivated limited in scope. For such republics as Latvia and Estonia the prospect of losing ethnic identity as a result of mechanical population increase indeed appears ominous. It is unlikely that the Kremlin will tolerate any artificial blocks to inter-republic migration, especially since this ethnic conglomeration advances the goal of a mono-national state.

Notes:

- 1 In this article Baltic countries include Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania only.
- 2 Tsentralnoe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR, *SSSR v Taifrakh v 1962 Godu: Kratkii Statisticheskii Sbornik*, Moskva, 1963, p. 91.
- 3 Sources of Table 1: The pre-war census data, as given in *The Baltic Review*, No. 26 (April, 1963), pp. 49-50; the 1959 data taken from official report of the 1959 Census: Tsentralnoe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, *Itogi Vseoyuznoi Perepisi Nase-leniya SSSR 1959 Goda: SSSR; Svodnii Tom*, Moskva, 1962, pp. 207-208.
- 4 For indication of this see Thomas Remeikis, *Communist Party of Lithuania: A Historical and Political Study*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Illinois, 1963, esp. chapters XVII and XVIII. The Communist Party of Lithuania had about 6,000 members in 1945. The figures for Latvian and Estonian parties were probably about the same.
- 5 Calculations, based on the 1969 Census report, by Arturs Landsmanis, "The Population of the Baltic States", *Reports on Communist Activities in Eastern Europe* (Stockholm), No. 439 (Oct. 1963), p. 29.
- 6 *Itogi Vsesoyuznoi Perepisi Naseleniya 1959 Goda: Litovskaya SSR*, Vilnius, 1963, pp. 160-162.
- 7 According to calculations of Landsmanis, *op cit.*, p. 30.
- 8 K. Surblys, "Qualitative Changes in the Workers' Class Structure of the Republic", *Liaudies Ūkis* (National Economy), (Vilnius), No. 2, 1964, p. 49.
- 9 1959 Census data for Lithuania; as cited in note No. 6, p. 166.
- 10 *Tiesa* (Vilnius), March 2, 1960, p. 4; *Komunistas* (Vilnius), No. 1 (January, 1969), pp. 9-10. For more details on the purge, as well as the rise of national cadres in Lithuania, see Thomas Remeikis, *op. cit.*
- 11 K. Meškauskas, *Tarybų Lietuvos Industrializavimas* (Industrialization of Soviet Lithuania), Vilnius, 1960, p. 140.
- 12 B. Mezhgailis, "Problemi izpolzovania trudovikh resursov Pribaltiki v perspective", *Latvijas PSR Zinatnu Akademijas Vestris*, Riga, No. 8, 1964. The report is also summarized by R. Blažys, "Labor Force Reserves in the Republic", *Liaudies Ūkis* (Vilnius), No. 10, 1964, pp. 294-296.
- 13 Blažys, *op. cit.*
- 14 *Ibid.* p. 294.
- 15 No specific data was available to the author to indicate the impact of automation on labor force problems in the Baltic republics.
- 16 Blažys, *op. cit.*
- 17 *Padontju Latvijas Komunistis* (Riga), Sept. 1959, pp. 7-14.
- 18 R. Blažys and V. Januškevičius, "New Factories and Their Sources of Labor Force", *Liaudies Ūkis*, No. 4, 1966, pp. 115-116.