

Victimized Majority: Latent Politics of Ethnic Discrimination in post-Soviet Russia

*Kirill N. Babichenko**

Riassunto

Questo articolo analizza brevemente uno dei problemi più significativi della Federazione Russa e cioè i conflitti etnici. Tale fenomeno assume diverse dimensioni e differenti manifestazioni: dalla discriminazione nell'ambito del mercato del lavoro agli eventi estremi della pulizia etnica durante le guerre in Cecenia.

L'autore focalizza l'attenzione su di un aspetto alla base del problema: l'oppressione strutturale esercitata dalle minoranze contro la maggioranza culturale del paese con particolare riferimento alle repubbliche del Caucaso del nord ove l'obiettivo e l'intensità della lotta etnica hanno assunto forme assolutamente pericolose ed esplosive in grado di minacciare lo stato tramite la sua disgregazione.

Résumé

Cet article fournit une brève analyse de l'un des problèmes les plus importants de la Fédération Russe, c'est-à-dire les conflits ethniques. Ce phénomène se manifeste de plusieurs manières : de la discrimination dans le marché du travail aux événements extrêmes du nettoyage ethnique pendant les guerres en Tchétchénie.

L'auteur s'intéresse à l'un des aspects du problème jusque-là inexploré : l'oppression structurelle exercée par les minorités ethniques contre les communautés majoritaires du pays et en particulier le cas des républiques du Caucase du Nord où la portée et l'intensité des conflits ethniques ont présenté les formes les plus dangereuses et extrêmes pouvant menacer l'état par sa désintégration.

Abstract

This paper represents the brief analysis of one of the most important problems of the Russian Federation – the ethnic conflicts. Such a phenomenon has various dimensions and manifestations: from discrimination on the labor market to the extreme of ethnic cleansing during wars in Chechnya. The author focuses on the previously unexplored side of the problem: structural oppression conducted by minorities against the cultural majority of the country with a special regard to the republics of North Caucasus where the scope and intensity of ethnic strife found the most dangerous and explosive forms threatening with disintegration of the state.

* Ph. D., Attorney at Law. From 1998 to 2008 he has worked as a volunteering legal assistant in the “Migration and Law network” of the Human rights center “Memorial” under the aegis of UNCHR. From 2005 till 2013 has collaborated with various European, US and Asian NGOs including UNITED against racism, Federation of Young European Greens, Cooperation and Development Network, Asian-European Foundation as an expert and trainer. He was elected as Sakharov human rights fellow at Harvard University (2006). He has taught international public law at Russian State Humanitarian University.

1. Introduction. Soviet legacy of 'ethnic engineering'.

An ambitious revolutionary project set up by the Bolsheviks and continued by the Soviet government was not limited to the political dimension solely. Trapped with the need to pacify and unite an amalgam of cultural and religious groups of population (400 ethnic groups identified in the 1989), from Estonian Lutherans to Yakut Animists, the new rulers spent decades trying to solve these tasks¹. Among many theoretical constructs brought to life there were two most relevant for the purpose of this article: *reified ethnicity* and the 'titular' concept.

Ethnic status was reified through the state machinery: from the ethnic attachment in the internal passport² (one had to choose an ethnic origin from a limited list of options) to the ethnic quotas in the universities and armed forces, thus becoming an essential attribute of any Soviet citizen. Official ethnological studies³ were based on Marxist ideas combined with primordial theory (ethnicity is archaic, fixed and unchanging). In society ethnicity was roughly understood in most common terms: physical appearance and/or distinctive language. This simplified kind of understanding still persists in the nowadays Russian Federation while the author of this article

tend to analyze ethnicity as a social construct and more like an ethnic *identification* than a fixed *identity*.

The 'titular' status reflected the Soviet policy of positive discrimination: many ethnic groups "oppressed by the Tsarist regime" were promoted by the new revolutionary authorities in nearly every aspect of social life – mostly using politics of indigenization (until late 1930-s)⁴. Such a group was usually designated as 'titular' – i.e. having "special ethnic rights" for the certain territory, financial support, various social benefits and focused state care. From the legal point of view it is difficult to define 'titular' with mathematical precision and this term will receive a detailed explanation throughout the article. In the framework of political science and social anthropology 'titular' could be defined as "an ethnic minority privileged by the state on the expense of other groups".

Paradoxically this uneven treatment of Soviet citizens favoring 'titular' minorities⁵ co-existed with the concept of "friendship of peoples" which declared color-blind equality of all Soviet (and non-Soviet) people⁶. After the dissolution of the USSR the "friendship of peoples" has obviously disappeared after numerous armed ethnic conflicts but the deeply-embedded system of 'titular' privileges still goes on bringing about dangerous

¹ Martin T., Suny R.G. (eds.), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001; Kadio Zh., *Laboratoriia imperii: Rossiia / SSSR, 1860-1940*, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, Moskva, 2010, pp. 148–267; Marshall A., *The Caucasus under Soviet Rule*, Routledge, London, 2010, pp. 147–243.

² Interestingly the chosen ethnic origin in the *passport* not always coincided with the ethnic origin stated in the *Communist Party member card*. The Party had its own rules of self-identification and allowed politically secure "ethnic passing".

³ The seminal work: Bromlei Iu.V., *Etnos i etnografiia*, Nauka, Moskva, 1973.

⁴ Martin T., *Imperiia "polozhitel'noi deiatel'nosti". Natsii i natsionalizm v SSSR, 1923–1939*, ROSSPEN, Moskva, 2011. On the later period, including postwar ethnic turn see: Blitstein P.A., *Stalin's Nations: Soviet Nationality Policy between Planning and Primordialism, 1936–1953*, Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, Fall 1999.

⁵ Hosking D., *Praviteli i zhertvy. Russkie v Sovetskom Soiuze*, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, Moskva, 2012.

⁶ A classical analysis of this contradiction: Slezkine Y., "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No.2, Summer 1994, pp. 414–452.

and painful problems. Ethnic tensions took place in Soviet Union as well but only as incidental, short-lived and isolated events⁷ while after 1989 ethnic discrimination and ethnic conflicts were unleashed on a nationwide scale⁸ especially in the region of Northern Caucasus⁹.

2. Silent apartheid.

Analyzing vectors and dynamics of discrimination in the Russian Federation (RF), it is worth paying attention on peculiar “vow of silence” of the academic and human rights communities concerning a situation in some “ethnic” subjects of the state. This long-term (and politically caused) omertà was broken by rather recently when situation in the specified regions of Russia on many parameters became critical. And, it is

represented that studying of the specified problem needs to start with the cornerstone of political architecture defining development and the direction of public and administrative processes in a number of territorial subjects of the RF, with concept of “the titular nation”. So-called “the titular people”, “the titular nation” or “the state-building people” – concepts little-known the Western scientists¹⁰ and absolutely alien to the language of international law¹¹ (most approximately “titular” can be translated as ethnic seniority/superiority). But after disintegration of the Soviet Union, the term “titular nation” which is formally designating “native/dominating” population of the republics of the RF, began to mark not only a form of the social capital, but also a peculiar right to the legalized discrimination concerning “not titular” fellow citizens.

In texts of republican constitutions (“infused with the spirit of secessionism”¹²) there is no definition of “the titular nation”, but it is successfully

⁷ Laitin D.D., “The National Uprisings in the Soviet Union”, *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 1, October, 1991, pp. 139–177. Kozlov V.A., *Neizvestnyi SSSR. Protivostoianie naroda i vlasti 1953–1985*, Olma-Press, Moskva, 2006, pp. 187–233. Hale H.E., *The Foundations of Ethnic Politics – Separatism of States and Nations in Eurasia and the World*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2008, pp. 93–118. On dissident ethnic networks in the post-Stalin USSR see e.g.: Alekseeva L., *Istoriia inakomysliia v SSSR. Noveishii period*, ZAO RITS, Moskva, 2001, pp. 7–122; Zisserman-Brodsky D., *Constructing Ethnopolitics in the Soviet Union: Samizdat, Deprivation and the Rise of Ethnic Nationalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003, pp. 111–147.

⁸ Beissinger M.R., “Nationalist Violence and the State: Political Authority and Contentious Repertoires in the Former USSR”, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 4, July, 1998, pp. 401–422; Semionova E., *Na etnicheskoi voine... (Genotsid russkikh v byvshikh respublikakh SSSR)*, Traditsiia, Moskva, 2010.

⁹ “Relationships between nations and ethnic groups in the Caucasus throughout history have been extremely complicated, in many cases quite tense, if not outright hostile. Ancient feuds and land disputes abound in many regions. Under the Soviet regime, old passions were held in check by the tight control of Moscow authorities. Now, old grievances and latent animosities have surfaced, and the Caucasus has become one huge area of instability”. Mirsky G.I., *On Ruins of Empire – Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Former Soviet Union*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1997, p. 61.

¹⁰ In the Western researches the titular status [titul’nost’] is used as the specific term, relevant only for the former Soviet Union. See e.g. Locher L., “Migration in the Soviet Successor States”, IZA Discussion Paper No. 602, Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn, October 2002; Hazans M., Trapeznikova I., Rastrigina O., “Ethnic and Parental Effects on Schooling Outcomes before and During the Transition: Evidence from the Baltic Countries”, *Journal of Population Economics*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2008, pp. 719–494; Smith B., *Separatist Conflict in Eurasia and Beyond: Exploring Communist Bloc Exceptionalism*, Annual Meeting Paper, American Political Science Association, Washington, 2010; Gruzina I., “Relationship between History and a Sense of Belonging – Russian Speaking Minority Integration in Latvia”, *CEU Political Science Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 2011, pp. 397–432.

¹¹ Sokolovskii S., “Kontseptualizatsiia etnicheskogo v rossiiskom konstitutsionnom prave”, In Voronkov V., O. Karpenko O., Osipov A. (eds.), *Rasizm v iazyke sotsial’nykh nauk*, Aleteia, Sankt Peterburg, 2002, p. 99.

¹² Sharlet R., “Russian Constitutional Crisis: Law and Politics under Yel’tsin”, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 4, October–December 1993, p. 321.

replaced in some cases by such combinations as “the native nation” and “native ethnos”¹³. As all former Soviet republics are formed on the doubtful “ethnic” principle, they represent only radical ethnocracies¹⁴ with a claim for a democratic mode. But the situation in Russia is an exception, because despite the constitutional principle of equality of all citizens before the law, existence of special “unlawful” regions – the republics and autonomies (making more than a half of the territory of the country) where titular Russians “are more equal than others”, transforms the country in a kind of confederative archipelago composed from the separate subjects allocated with different status and rights. In the words of Ben Fowkes: “a hierarchy of autonomies (such as existed also in the Soviet Union) with places like Tatarstan at the top, enjoying very far-reaching autonomy, and with the purely Russian provinces at the bottom”¹⁵. One of the examples is a steady dictatorship of “ethnic legal personality”. Only “titular” persons have the right to hold positions in local administrations and parliaments: for example, in the Republic of Adygea “not titular” citizens (Russian Slavs) constitute nearly 60% of population but representatives of “the titular nation” hold practically all leading posts and places in legislature¹⁶.

It is extremely difficult for “not titular” citizens to be engaged in business, to get appointed/elected in republican bodies of power and even to live in the

respective territory¹⁷. Thus “today the all-Russian, Petersburg, Moscow elite of business and the power it is obvious not ethnocratic¹⁸”, unlike their ‘colleagues’ from North Caucasus. Like that, in titular territories many citizens are deprived of the political, civil, economic and social rights. The subject of a separate research is the discrimination of “not titular” population at receipt in higher education institutions. These discriminatory practices having institutional character and conducting to a unofficial ghettoization of the Russian population is possible to characterize as a soft regional apartheid. “Titular citizens” supervise not only authorities, but also possess all infrastructure while having no relation to its establishment. Here it should be noted that exactly “not titular” specialist built plants and factories, developed agriculture, created the metalworking enterprises, food, timber and wood-working industry. It is necessary to add that all scientific institutions in the Caucasus – from agricultural experimental stations to universities are an exclusive contribution of “not titular” experts.

Situation is aggravated with that the “titular” territories striving for the de facto economic and political sovereignty, in the majority appear to be depressive regions-recipients while many Russian donor regions, on the economic, demographic, social and intellectual potential repeatedly surpassing republics, have rather low political

¹³ Sokolovskii S., *op. cit.*, pp. 94–117.

¹⁴ See in detail: Toshchenko Zh.T., *Etnokratiia: istoriia i sovremennost' (sotsiologicheskie ocherki)*, ROSSPEN, Moskva, 2003.

¹⁵ Fowkes B., *Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Communist World*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2002, p. 147.

¹⁶ Polubota A., “Russkikh vydavlivaiut iz Adygei, chtoby sozdat' «Velikuiu Cherkessiu»”, *Svobodnaia pressa*, 25.11.2012.

¹⁷ Kazenin K., «Tikhie» konflikty na Severnom Kavkaze: Adygeia, Kabardino-Balkariia, Karachaevo-Cherkessiia, REGNUM, Moskva, 2009, pp. 13–55.

¹⁸ Arutiunov S., “Etnokratiia ili demokratiia? Traditsii Severnogo Kavkaza”, In *Traditsii narodnoi diplomatii i normy povedeniia vo vremia voyny i konfliktov na Kavkaze*, Kavkazskii Forum NPO, Tsakhkadzor, 31.05. – 2.06.2001.

status and are restrained in their possibilities¹⁹. In such a paradoxical way discrimination of “not titular” population is also sponsored by the federal center.

The cultural and linguistic majority making more than eighty two percent of the population, in many regions of Russia is declared “not titular” and contrary to the Constitution of the RF is exposed to a discrimination on ethnic and language basis²⁰. Thus, in legal sense, “titular” regions of the RF represent the encapsulated ethnic territories. In this regard a set of measures for elimination suppression concerning migrants (which number steadily grows in legal regions) has to be added with drastic measures on the termination of institutional discrimination of “not titular” population (which number, for example, in the North Caucasus, is steadily declining²¹) in ethnic territorial subjects of the RF.

3. Separatists’ ethnic cleansing and administrative dereliction.

Such discrimination got an extreme form in the Chechen republic in the late eighties – the beginning of the nineties. Many graffiti targeting non-titular citizens of Chechnya like: “Russians [go] to Riazan, Tatars to Kazan, Ingush to Nazran!”²² could be seen in Chechen cities and

villages²³. Other messages were more specific: on memoirs of inhabitants of Grozny (the capital of Chechnya), the most popular slogan of those years sounded as follows: “Russians do not leave – we need slaves and prostitutes”. Since 1989 the hate-motivated crimes: robberies, beatings, kidnappings²⁴, gang-rapes²⁵ and public murders of persons of Slavic and other non-Chechen origin steadily gained scope of the organized terror²⁶ under liberal accompaniment of “parade of sovereignties” and indifference of the democratic government of Boris Yeltsin.

Here it is necessary to emphasize, that not all ‘titular’ inhabitants of Chechnya took part in this terror: it was encouraged by Jokhar Dudayev’s warlords and supported by sympathizing Islamists and separatists, marginal youth, and also the criminals let out from prisons. But also the numerous facts of murders of the Russian families

¹⁹ Filippov V.R., “Etnopoliticheskie paradoksy i krizis rossiiskogo federalizma”, In Ismagilova R.N., Filippov N.R. (eds.), *Federalizm i regional'naya politika v politnichnykh gosudarstvakh*, XXI Vek-Soglasie, Moskva, 2001, pp. 23–38.

²⁰ Filippov V.R., *Op. cit.*, pp. 30–35.

²¹ Vladimirov A., “How many Russians are left in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia?”, *Vestnik Kavkaza*, 3.05.2010.

²² Riazan’ is a city generally and wrongly considered to be ancestral home of all Russian Slavs. Kazan’ is the capital of Republic of Tatarstan. Nazran’ was the capital of Republic of Ingushetia until December 2000.

²³ Sokirianskaia E., “Ideology and conflict: Chechen Political Nationalism Prior to, and During, Ten Years of War”, In Gammer M. (ed.), *Ethno-Nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder*, Routledge, New York, 2008, p. 116.

²⁴ About the Chechen “culture” of hostage-taking see: Tishkov V.A., *Chechnya: Life in a War-torn Society*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 2004, pp. 107–126. Consider historical description of Chechen territories: “travelers with no bona fide hosts were considered as hostile and were usually taken as prisoners or slaves” Jaimoukha A., *The Chechens: a Handbook* (Caucasus World, Peoples of the Caucasus), Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 142.

²⁵ Rape has been frequently used in various conflicts as a symbolical tool of domination over oppressed population of other ethnic origin when conditions guarantee anonymity and impunity of perpetrators: Thornhill R., Palmer T.C., *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 66, 134, 194. See in details: Sharlach L.B., *Sexual Violence as Political Terror*, Ph.D., University of California, Davis, September 2001, pp. 157–253; Herzog D. (ed.), *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009.

²⁶ Bugai N.F., *Russkie na Severnom Kavkaze: sotsial'noe polozhenie, transformatsii etnicheskoi*

by their ordinary Chechen next-door neighbors with whom “not titular” families lived in peace for decades were recorded²⁷. In total some tens of thousands of Russians were killed (not including victims during military operations) and more than 46 thousand Russian-speaking citizens were turned into slaves²⁸. Ethnic cleanings committed by Chechen separatists targeted also other representatives of not “titular” groups of the population: Jews²⁹, Armenians, Greeks, Tatars, Roma people. These tragic events for years were suppressed by mass media. But during the First Chechen campaign many Russian journalists romanticized the separatists, creating image of the “noble rebel” which has not occasionally coincided with the plans of Chechen propaganda. For example, prominent Russian scientist V.A. Tishkov after conducting field researches in Chechnya gave the following assessment to actions of a film crew of NTV Broadcasting Company: “Elena Masyuk and Pavel Luskanov’s reportings won on the party of the Chechen combatants for the whole [army] division”³⁰.

Only in July, 2000 the federal authorities admitted the fact of ethnic cleansing of the Russian population. In interview to the French weekly

Paris Match the president of Russia Vladimir Putin declared: “In recent years in the territory of Chechnya we observed large-scale genocide concerning the Russian people, concerning the Russian-speaking population. Unfortunately, nobody reacted to it. Nobody reacted even to the attacks on the Russian territory which were carried out all these years. The authorities did not react to mass kidnappings”³¹. In this statement the phrase “we observed” is remarkable – it means that authorities well knew about events taking place in Chechnya. It is characteristic that “in recent years” V. Putin served as the director of Federal Security Service and then as a head of the government of the RF. Why genocide supervision from such a high-ranking official was not beyond philosophical contemplation and for what reason “nobody reacted” in the state apparatus under his control remains unclear.

In 2002 V. Putin declared that in “result of ethnic cleanings in Chechnya up to 30 thousand people perished, and possibly even more”. “This will never happen again”, – added the head of the state³². Certainly that this political declaration was not followed by real actions on investigation and accountability of the perpetrators. Investigation teams and groups of experts were not formed; the permanent commission on investigation of acts of genocide concerning the Russian population in the Chechen Republic was not established in the federal parliament. This absence of political will is especially strange given that the RF is obliged to fulfill certain international obligations.

obshchnosti (1990-e gody — nachalo XXI veka), Grif i K, Moskva, 2011, pp. 210–225.

²⁷ Sokolov-Mitrich D., “Zabytyi genotsid”, *Izvestiia*, 28.01.2005. See also: Esses V.M., Vernon R.A. (eds.), *Explaining the Breakdown of Ethnic Relations: Why Neighbors Kill*, Blackwell Publishing, Malden, 2008.

²⁸ Bondarenko M., “Kazaki Chechni ishchut zashchity u Vladimira Putina. Vytesnenie russkogo naselenia v respublike prodolzhaetsia pri popustitel'stve federal'nykh chinovnikov”, *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 23.05.2003.

²⁹ About Chechen anti-Semitism incited under the influence of radical Islamism and a pro-Arab orientation see: Tishkov V. A., *Op. cit.*, pp. 207–209.

³⁰ Tishkov V.A., *Obshchestvo v Vooruzhennom Konflikte: Etnografiia Chechenskoi Voiny*, Nauka, Moskva, 2001, p. 181.

³¹ V. Putin’s interview to the French weekly magazine *Paris Match* on 06.07.2000 Available at: http://archive.kremlin.ru/appears/2000/07/06/0000_typ_e63379_125007.shtml

Authorities have to provide effective protection of citizens from racially motivated attacks even from unofficial persons, prevent similar manifestations of aggression, consistently make independent and effective investigation in case of committing such crimes. The *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* clearly obliges the signatory states to take all appropriate measures directed on prohibition and elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, carried out by any persons, groups or the organizations, including and protection of persons against violence or causing injuries from informal persons. The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* demands to provide protection of the right not to be exposed to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment even from the persons acting in their personal quality. Not casually the *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* establishes responsibility of the state for the acts of torture made “with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity”. Therefore, the unwillingness of the state to provide protection from racially motivated violence can be interpreted as criminal negligence of government bodies and indulgence to carrying out tortures.

The precedents of independent and effective investigation of such discrimination are available. In the decision of November 21, 2002 UN Committee against Torture held that the burning down of Roma houses by a mob of non-Roma neighbours in 14th of April 1995 constituted an act of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The

failure of the police authorities to take appropriate steps to protect the Roma amounted to acquiescence to these acts, since the police authorities were informed of the immediate risk facing the Roma and were even present at the scene of events – thus Article 16 of the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* was violated³³. Ethnic cleansing of “not titular” population of Chechnya as well continued in 1995 and nothing prevents Russian NGOs to provide legal support to the survivors to appeal to the international organizations but for the unclear reasons it still does not take place. Moreover, there is no consent concerning the recognition of ethnic cleansing. For example, the Chechen researchers do not agree with this assessment. In particular, the editor of the *Groznenskoe Obshchestvo* [Grozny Society] newspaper T. Aliyev considers that no genocide and even ethnic cleansings took place, evidences of the forcefully displaced Russian are fictions, and a mass exodus of non-Chechens from this republic before the war³⁴ happened without any particular reason³⁵. However, the same attitude is widely promoted in other editions of Chechens: *Vainakh, Orga, Dosh* – typical samples of journalism of ethnic offenses and revanshism. By the way, *Dosh* is the quarterly magazine with a circulation of 5000 copies. In this regard it is important to underline that the Chechen Diaspora in Moscow makes about 300 thousand people,

³² Vladimir Putin: Rossiia ne poidet na peregovory s banditami i terroristami v Chechne, 19.12.2002. Available at: <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=16758>

³³ Hajrizi Dzemajl et al. v. Yugoslavia, 21 November 2002. (Case No. 161/1999) UN Doc. CAT/C/29/D/161/2000.

³⁴ Sokirianskaia E., *Op. cit.*, p. 116.

³⁵ Aliev T., “Iskhod russkikh iz Chechni”, *Polit.Ru*, 17.12.2007. Available at: <http://polit.ru/research/2007/12/17/escape.html>

constantly increases and remains one of the most criminalized³⁶ and influential in the capital.

4. Subsidized oppression in other republics.

Unfortunately, in recent years the Republic of Ingushetia became a sad model of pushing out the persons of “not titular” origin with the methods which are not leaving any doubt in intention of the criminals. Addressed arsons, tossing of explosive devices and demonstrative murders are typical hate crimes justified and directed by “titular” status³⁷. According to the Human rights center “Memorial” only during the period from July 16 to November 12, 2007 twenty four persons of not titular origin were murdered in Republic of Ingushetia: Russians, Armenians, Roma and Koreans³⁸. The expert of “Memorial” notes: “These murders and attacks are a part of system pressure upon the non-Vainakh population of the republic”³⁹. It is indicative that precipitancy of flight from this republic long before the beginning of “titular terror” looks amazing even on the general background of an outcome of “not titular citizens”. In 1989 Russians constituted 13, 2% of

the population of Ingushetia⁴⁰ and in 2010 there were only 0,7% of them left⁴¹. It is obvious that the situation was extremely intense all these years and now only reached an extreme point⁴².

In Dagestan – “an overwhelmingly Muslim, and overwhelmingly non-Russian, republic⁴³” – there is an amalgam of “titular” groups⁴⁴ and languages⁴⁵ with a slight prevailing of Avars (27, 5 percent of the population). In this largest republic of the North Caucasus (2,5 million of inhabitants) replacement of the Russian population happens not so considerably⁴⁶, but ethnic profiling targeting Slavic people and dismissals on the basis of a “non-titular” origin accompanied with house racketeering helped to expel Russian inhabitants from the areas of traditional accommodation of the Slavic population – Kizlyar and Tarumovsky districts. The derussification occurred also in the multicultural city of Khasavyurt. This city became widely known in 1993 after the act of symbolical violence when ‘titular’ activists desecrated a Christian cemetery and using an excavator dug

³⁶ Chechens’ criminal impact after 1989 is described by one of the Western scholars in the following words: “In Moscow and other major cities, a powerful Chechen Mafia shaped up. [t]heir share in criminal activities in Russia has by far exceeded their proportion in the population. According to official data, one of every three people charged with counterfeiting has been a former resident of Chechnya, as well as 42% of the persons involved in embezzlement and machinations in the sphere of finances and credit operations. The protection racket was thriving, murders and kidnappings became a regular feature of life.” Mirsky G.I., *Op. cit.*, p. 84.

³⁷ The continuous chronicle of 2006–2014 terrorist acts, shootings and kidnappings: Ingushetiia: khronika teraktov, obstrelov, pokhishchenii. Available at: <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/122475>

³⁸ Ingushetiia: 2007 god. Kuda dal'she?, Memorial, Moskva, 2008, pp. 17–19.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Belozarov V., *Etnicheskaiia karta Severnogo Kavkaza*, OGI, Moskva, 2005. p. 247.

⁴¹ Data provided according to the All-Russian population census of 2010 [Section 4. “Population by ethnic origin”]. Available at: http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/Vol4/pub-04-04.pdf

⁴² According to the journalist and specialist in Caucasian studies O. Alenova: “The last Russians escape from Ingushetia. The situation there is now worse, than it was in Chechnya before the war. But nobody wants to restore order as it was made in due time in Chechnya”. Alenova O., *Chechnia riadom. Voina glazami zhenshchiny*, ID «Kommersant», ID «Piter», Moskva, Sankt Peterburg, 2008, p. 450.

⁴³ Fowkes B., *Op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁴⁴ But only 14 largest groups are presented in the State Council of Republic of Dagestan.

⁴⁵ Inhabitants of this republic speak twenty-six different languages and tens of local dialects.

⁴⁶ In fact unofficial practice of pushing out non-titular citizens was observed already in 1960-s.

out coffins with deceased⁴⁷. Similar tactics is applied in the republican capital Makhachkala and the ancient city of Derbent therefore the total number of the Russian population in Dagestan was reduced with twelve to four percent (about 80-90 thousand people). Remained became object of labor and household discrimination, representing the cheap service personnel which is completely dependent on a whim not only of a local government but also ordinary “titular” neighbors. Moreover, among these four percent mutual suspiciousness and informing with the purpose to avoid possible repressive measures are spread. Deputy head of the Makhachkala *Commission on problems of Russians* (sic!) Abdurakhman Guseinov frankly says that “in the mid-nineties Russians were simply kicked out out from their houses or were forced to sell them at the ridiculous price”⁴⁸. Traditions of a resolution of conflicts looked as follows: “For example, at banal car accident, even a minor one, the crowd of friends of the injured dzhigit [here – male “titular” person] immediately arrived (that he was not guilty was not discussed at all) and Russian was given the car keys with words: “Take this [car] away, I do not need it, tomorrow you will bring me a new one!”⁴⁹ It is quite obvious that authorities and public organizations had to pay attention to this scandalous discrimination of the Russian population – it is enough to imagine the reaction of the state and human rights NGOs on hypothetical exile of the Dagestan Diaspora from

Moscow. But, consider an opinion of a well-known historian who has conducted scientific researches in Dagestan for many years, “federal programs keep silence about *mass flight* [italics added] of Russians from this region to the Central and the Southern Russia and Mountainous Jews to Israel”⁵⁰.

These programs had been crafted for financial support of the Dagestan sportsmen and material security of the unemployed and unwilling to work population of a “titular” origin. But gradually Dagestan neo-tribalism gains character of a direct political challenge to the federal center. So, in February, 2009 Vladimir Radchenko, the new chief of the department of Federal Tax Service in Dagestan could not start fulfillment of his duty in Makhachkala because of aggressive local counteraction to its appointment. V. Radchenko's ethnic [Russian] origin did not suit ruling circles of Republic of Dagestan that caused the planned actions of “a national protest”, the false report on prepared explosion in the building of the republican office of the Federal Tax Service, threats of homicide and in the end – the kidnapping of Mr. Radchenko with the use of firearms⁵¹. It is worth emphasizing that the high-ranking federal official underwent such a treatment. The reaction of Kremlin did not follow and Mr. Radchenko was recalled back to Moscow. Thus, the informal contract of the federal center with the republican “elite” (ostentatious loyalty

⁴⁷ Karpov Iu.Iu., Kapustina E.L., *Gortsy posle gor. Migratsionnye protsessy v Dagestane v XX – nachale XXI veka: ikh sotsial'nye i etnokul'turnye posledstviia i perspektivy*, Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, Sankt Peterburg, 2011, p. 292.

⁴⁸ Kots A., Steshin D., “Vernutsia li russkie na Kavkaz?”, *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 07.06.2006.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Bobrovnikov V., “Islamofobiia i religioznoe zakonodatel'stvo v postsovet'skom Dagestane”, In Aleksandrov Iu.G. (ed.), *Etnicheskii natsionalizm i gosudarstvennoe stroitel'stvo*, Institut vostokovedeniia RAN, Natalis, Moskva, 2001, p. 250.

⁵¹ On “Radchenko affair” see e.g. Ionov O., “Radchenko shchitaet, chto za ego pokhishcheniem stoit syn prezidenta Dagestana”, *Kavkazskii uzel*,

and the necessary counting of votes on elections in exchange for federal subventions and inviolability) received the next – the extremely convincing confirmation. Certainly that the similar configuration of ‘division of powers’ takes place not only in Dagestan but in all republics of the North Caucasus. Herewith, subsidized North Caucasian clans become more and more isolated – both from Moscow, and from the population in the regions. It is important to stress that federal subsidies do not reach ordinary citizens and become a basis of illegal enrichment of the ‘pro-Kremlin’ ruling circles. Moreover, the ruling clans usurp access in executive, judicial and legislative branches of power; business and the sphere of the higher education which inevitably blocks all channels of vertical mobility especially for the North Caucasian youth. As a result, inhabitants are compelled to migrate to other (non Caucasian) regions, to look for an exit in extreme nationalism or to choose a ‘religious approved’ way of the armed violence under the leadership of the foreign Muslim instructors that leads to tens killed and wounded every week⁵².

09.02.2009; Poliakov S., “Lezginka pod dulom pistoleta”, *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 13.02.2009.

⁵² According to Grigorii Shvedov the editor-in-chief of “Caucasian Knot” news agency Dagestan is captured by civil war. The situation in this republic is the most intense. In 2011 in Dagestan violence growth was observed again: total number of victims of the conflict raised up to 824 persons, from them 413 got killed and 411 got wounded. (In 2010 the number of victims was 685 persons, of them 378 killed and 307 wounded) See: Shvedov G., Malashenko A., *Severnyi Kavkaz: itogi 2011 goda*, Moskovskii Tsentr Karnegi, Moskva, 19.03.2012. Available at: <http://carnegie.ru/events/?fa=3667> Weekly statistics on victims of violent struggle in North Caucasus is available at <http://voinenet.ru/voina/ezhenedelnye-hroniki/>

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5. “Titular” framework and defining.

Addressing the history of migratory processes, it is necessary to notice that replacement of “not titular” population from the republics of Transcaucasia and autonomies of the North Caucasus began in Soviet period and lasted decades. And after disintegration of the USSR this process only sharply amplified⁵³. And derussification process in the Caucasian region went with much higher intensity, than in any other territory of the country⁵⁴. Moreover, as a result of rash administrative-territorial transformations a number of the Russian areas become a part of the North Caucasian republics. Thus the indigenous Russian people in national autonomies underwent pressure and the discrimination considerably surpassing that test on itself ethnically ‘other’ in regions of Russian Ciscaucasia⁵⁵. And the expelled population is exposed to powerful processes of desocialization and marginalization: it was literally pushed out of society. It is necessary to underline that most actively “titular rights” are used and reproduced by the criminal (religious, extremist, separatist, politically active) part of certain cultural and linguistic group. Certainly, if this group has “the ethnic ownership” of a certain territory, resources, the constitution, quasi-state attributes, the paramilitary structures. Unfortunately, today “titular status” as the major socio-political identifier, and also the criminological phenomenon, is not limited any more to a geographical position of this or that republic and is perceived by its holders as essential attribute and the privilege. Now this status is repeatedly strengthened by new

⁵³ Belozarov V., *Op.cit.*, p. 186.

⁵⁴ *Op.cit.*, p. 187.

⁵⁵ *Op.cit.*, p. 211.

dimension – the radical Islam based on binary opposition “Muslims v. infidels”.

Here it is important to note that Islam as a complicated religious system is not necessary to the most fanatical “titular” activists. They distort and emasculate the rich cultural and historical background of Islam to the level of the primitive Salafi doctrine of the military-political character aimed at achievement of destructive, tactical results⁵⁶. Such ideology is the general religious and extremist dogma and an important condition of the ‘supra-ethnic’ unity which for the first time makes possible the steady consolidation of “titular” groups and further radicalization of the North Caucasus. Among radical Muslims in the North Caucasus self-identification as members of international ummah and fighters of Worldwide Jihad amplifies. And, anyway, they make part of accruing activity of religious extremism⁵⁷. Thus, Islam from the neutral and general denominator of the Caucasian groups of the population (the so-called “funeral Islam”) is intentionally distorted, adjusted to short-term objectives, becomes radical and turns into a dangerous point of assembly (“permanent jihad”) of the new consolidated underground. It became obvious during the Second Chechen campaign when researchers noted, “that some peoples of the North Caucasus developed a peculiar lifestyle, thinking, perception of reality in which Islam is shown as one of the main lines of self-identification

(including group identification) and nationalism”⁵⁸.

Here it is worth stating the main signs of a phenomenon of the “titular status” which is setting the principles of definition of social reality for separate groups of the population:

- i. Cultivated feeling of ethnic and historical superiority and “presumption of rightness” in any social transactions, including conflict situations.
- ii. Mountainous version of male supremacy and ‘body politics’ as a traditional way of life⁵⁹.
- iii. Primary following religious [“peoples’ Islam”, locally – Sharia⁶⁰] or traditional [e.g. *adat*⁶¹] norms instead of official legal obligations.
- iv. Translation of negative objectives of parents through family upbringing.
- v. Socialization through criminal practice of consanguineal complicity.
- vi. Long-term experience of successful and unpunished discrimination of “not titular”

⁵⁸ Avksent'ev V., Babkin I., “Islam i natsional'nye konflikty na Severnom Kavkaze”, *Ab Imperio*, No. 2, 2000, p. 203.

⁵⁹ See in details: Karpov Iu. Iu., *Dzhigit i volk: muzhskie soiuzy v sotsiokul'turnoi traditsii gortsev Kavkaza*, Rossiiskaia akademiia nauk, Muzei antropologii i etnografii im. Petra Velikogo (Kunstkamera), Sankt Peterburg, 1996, pp. 7–148.

⁶⁰ Official Sharia justice existed in the Northern Caucasus until 1927. See in details: Bobrovnikov V.O., *Musul'mane Severnogo Kavkaza: obychai, pravo, nasilie (ocherki po istorii i etnografii prava Nagornogo Dagestana)*, Vost. lit., Moskva, 2002, pp. 217–261.

⁶¹ A term borrowed from Arabic عَادَة [habit, custom]. For centuries in certain Muslim societies of Northern Caucasus Arabic was used as a language of religion, law and power. See e.g. Kemper M., “An Island of Classical Arabic in the Caucasus: Dagestan”, In Companjen F., Marác L., Versteegh L. (eds.), *Exploring the Caucasus in the 21st Century. Essays on Culture, History and Politics in a Dynamic Context*, Pallas Publications, Amsterdam, 2010, pp. 63–90.

⁵⁶ Wilhelmsen J., *When Separatists Become Islamists: the Case of Chechnya*, FFI/Rapport–2004/00445, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, Kjeller, 2004, pp. 9–45.

⁵⁷ Malashenko A., *Kak vybirali v Chechne*, Mosk. Tsentr Karnegi, Moskva, 2006, p. 30.

- (mainly Slavic or Christian) population in the USSR and RF.
- vii. Existence of the “ethnic” territory.
- viii. Pseudoscientific, political and publicistic legitimization of the “titular status” including consciousness of historical insults of “colonial oppression” and “deportation” (for separate groups of population)⁶².
- ix. Radical Islam (for Muslim groups of population)⁶³.
- x. Neo-tribal or religious community as a basic social unit: teip (or parts of teip – gar, nek”iy, tsa), tukhum, jamaat, vird and Diaspora.
- xi. Ethnic uniformity and inviolability of republican “elite”.

The following factors help to keep “a permanent titular status” outside traditional areas of dwelling:

- i. Diasporic support – within the country and from abroad (long-distance nationalism)⁶⁴.

⁶² Gadzhiev M.S., Kuznetsov V.A., Chechenov I.M., *Istoriia v zerkale paranauki: Kritika sovremennoj etnotsentristskoi istoriografii Severnogo Kavkaza*, IEA RAN, Moskva, 2006.

⁶³ Certain scholars and experts consider that radical Islamists can provoke religious war in the RF. See. e.g.: Silant’ev R., *Noveishaia istoriia islama v Rossii*, Algoritm, Moskva, 2007, pp. 470–96; Suleimanov Rais: “Vlasti Tatarstana navedut poriadok v respublike – shariatskii”, *Al’manakh «Na voine»*, 27.11.2012.

⁶⁴ On increased role of diaspora communities in violent intra-state conflicts see e.g. Demmers J., “Nationalism from Without: Theorizing the Role of Diasporas in Contemporary Conflict”, In Atabaki T., Mehendale S. (eds), *Central Asia and the Caucasus: Transnationalism and Diaspora*, Routledge, New York, 2005, pp. 10–20. On highly politicized activities of Circassian Diaspora see e.g. Grebennikov V., “Is Leviathan Back? Circassian Ethnic Mobilization after the 2012 Presidential Elections in Russia”, *CEU Political Science Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2013, pp. 234–256.

- ii. Use of the “contractual” authorities: from adjustment of “contact” with the local employee of police to lobbying in the Federal Parliament.
- iii. Passive, defeatist and often collaborative position of the local “not titular” people of Russia.
- iv. Actual colonization, including criminal and demographic of certain (non-Caucasian) regions/cities and monopolization of commercially favorable fields of activity.

Thus, the “titular status” is possibly to define as *the mobilizing form of affective group belonging based on a negative complex of cultural, ideological and educational practices, fixed in public consciousness, legislation and reproduced as a strategy of socio-political domination*. Certainly that the most educated, urbanized and secular representatives of North Caucasian groups of the population, as a rule, do not share “titular” dogmas. Unfortunately, such citizens can not influence domestic policy in the republics therefore not only ordinary life, but also law-enforcement practice in “titular” territorial subjects of the RF has sharply negative specifics⁶⁵.

6. Academic attempts to “respond”.

But why the problem of “titular” territories did not receive close attention of the academic and expert

⁶⁵ See e.g. Albogachieva M., “Iz istorii bor’by s krovnoi mest’iu v Ingushetii”, *Antropologicheskii Forum*, No. 4, 2011, pp. 3–21; Albogachieva M., “Osobennosti vzaimodeistviia rossiiskoi sudebno-pravovoi sistemy i traditsionnykh pravovykh institutov ingushkogo obshchestva (XIX—XXI vv.)”, In Karpov Iu.Iu. (ed.) *Obshchestvo kak ob”ekt i sub”ekt vlasti. Ocherki*

circles? The opinion of one of the most objective researchers of nationalism in Russia is characteristic: “Frequently those who speak and write about the Russian nationalism have been asked about why such attention is not paid to the nationalisms of ethnic minorities. Truly they are given disproportionately less attention”⁶⁶. Further he claims that “regional separatism ceased to be a real aim long ago” and “nationalisms of minorities pose a minor influence on a way of development of the country”⁶⁷.

Formally it is true: firstly, it is much more favorable for the “titular” regions to be parts of Russia under conditions of generously donated subjects of federation. Secondly, visible signs of nationalism are not present: consigned to the past ethno-xenophobic slogans of the “titular” authorities, demonstrative formation of ethnic paramilitaries, fighting dances on city squares and other attributes of primitive nationalist movements. Republican “elites” realized long ago that the current legislation and ostentatious loyalty to the federal center allow them to operate and discriminate “not titular” population with real impunity. Here Immanuel Wallerstein’s comparison is applicable: “The object of racism is not to exclude people, much less to exterminate them. The object of racism is to keep people within the system, but as Untermenschen, who can then be exploited economically and used as political scapegoats”⁶⁸. Repressive practices began

to be used by default and turned into an integral part of a political landscape. Thus, beating of the North Caucasian person in Moscow causes a predictable resonance in mass media and public condemnation as a hate crime whereas murdering of the Russian family in Ingushetia receives muffled interpretation in mass media and the irritated response of the republican authorities. It is worth giving opinion of the M.P. of the RF V.I. Alksnis: “The other day the group of deputies of the State Duma, representatives of all fractions, left in official journey, and during this trip we had a meeting with one high-ranking head, will tell so, regional level. And here this person with tears in the eyes told us that he was compelled to leave the national republic where he was born only because there Russians are not appointed to higher positions. If someone tells that it is slander, – I do not want to call here the republic, but... It is the practice which has developed in Russia. If someone thinks that it does not promote kindling of national discord and hostility in Russia, these people are mistaken. I can imagine that the young man who for years observes deprivation of rights of his nation ... He asks why family of his relatives was slaughtered in Chechnya and no criminal charges on this fact were brought? Why the murderers of this slaughtered Russian family were not punished? He asks why his friends had to run from Tajikistan and Moscow looks at this indifferently? He asks himself why even more often on the streets of his city he gets insulted by some ‘guests from mountains’? With radicalism peculiar to youth, having convinced that is useless to wait from the authorities that they will begin to pursue policy in interests of the majority of the people, he decides to restore social justice

politicheskoi antropologii Kavkaza, Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, Sankt Peterburg, 2012, pp. 142–208.

⁶⁶ Verkhovskii A., “Ideinaia evoliutsiia russkogo natsionalizma: 1990-e i 2000-e gody”, In *Verkhi i nizi russkogo natsionalizma*, Tsentr «Sova», Moskva, 2007, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Verkhovskii A., *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁶⁸ Wallerstein I., “The Racist Albatross. Social Science, Jörg Haider and Widerstand”, *Eurozine*, 14.09.2000.

independently, on his terms ... And all this forced certain radicals to see the only way to change something – that is to revenge, having taken a baseball bat, the weapon or explosive materials”⁶⁹. Such reaction in the form of protest extremism received definition of “the Russian nationalism”. But is it only such “nationalism” is worthy studying and condemning? Whether only crimes “majority v. minority” could be caused by hatred? And why administrative and political discrimination and direct exile of “not titular” population is considered normal, according to various researchers? For a long time there are all grounds to believe that “the constitutional nationalism” in “titular” territorial subjects of the RF is more dangerous both to society and to the state, than notorious “Russian nationalism/fascism”. After all even the North Caucasian scholar writes that: “This fascism is a pathological result of national humiliation of Russians, including the humiliation suffered by Russians in the Caucasian periphery... Possibly, not any other “colonial nation” in history happened to be so deprived, in comparison with the colonized natives as in situation Russians found themselves in the territory of the national republics of the North Caucasus”⁷⁰.

And what are the benefits of having these “national” republics within Russia? What is the price of keeping the “titular” territories as a part of the Russian state? Whether there is a way out from this inverted empire where remote ethnic regions colonize and exploit the federal center?

What kind of opinions is offered by the academic science?

Investigating a problem of “national” subjects, A.N. Malinkin considers that territorial subjects of the RF formed on an ethnic basis have to be liquidated with all their (artificial) borders and the quasi-feudal privileges stimulating formation of ethnocratic republican regimes⁷¹. In his opinion, withdrawal from the pseudo-federal state system which is based on ethnic federalism, and transition to originally democratic federalism allowing only administrative-territorial differentiations and guaranteeing the actual civil equality and observance of human rights is necessary⁷². However such a suggestion despite the visible argumentativeness does not take into consideration realities of modern Russia. In what way is it really possible to liquidate “ethnic” territorial subjects? Considering level and prevalence of the anti-Russian moods in these “titular” subjects such elimination will be impossible without consent of the local population. And this decision at all would not be peaceful. But even with a hypothetical agreement of “titular elites” to replace the status of their territorial subject from ‘republic’ with ‘region’ political ‘rebranding’ would not change administrative and ethnic balance in such extremely conflict region as Dagestan, religious and clannish character of the local authorities in Ingushetia, feudal and class stratification of society in Karachay-Cherkessia and anywhere would not eliminate deeply embedded traditions

⁶⁹ Vystuplenie na zasedanii Gosudarstvennoi Dumi Rossii, 15.11.2006. Available at: http://www.akdi.ru/gd/PLEN_Z/2006/11/s15-11_u.htm

⁷⁰ Tsutsiev A., “Russkie i kavkaztsy: po tu storonu druzhby narodov”, *Druzhba Narodov*, No 10, 2005.

⁷¹ Malinkin A.N., “«Novaia rossiiskaia identichnost’»: issledovanie po sotsiologii znaniia”, *Sotsiologicheskii zhurnal*, No 4, 2001.

⁷² Malinkin A.N., *Op. cit.*

of a “titular” superiority⁷³. And whether “originally democratic federalism” is eventually possible given existing political system?

Many practical scholars have learned by the experience the impossibility of such “liquidating reforms”. So, according to Nikolay Petrov, “many elements of political engineering, even seemingly easy gained, are absolutely irreversible. That is, if you created ethnic statehood, if you told that such ethnicity since now has any pseudo-statehood, it is almost impossible to take it back without blood, without disastrous conflicts. It is already unimportant further, whether there was once a history, – if it was not it is constructed. Already no matter how ethnically salient they are, how ethnically distant are these or those groups from their neighbors. If you made it you already started a certain mechanism which practically has no reverse motion. [e]thnic should never get attached with territorial. Because as soon as borderlines start, even if in heads of people, to get any ethnic content, instantly any most insignificant conflict can turn into inter-ethnic collision what we have witnessed in enormous quantity of cases in the territory of the former Soviet Union”⁷⁴. N. Petrov is absolutely right and it is necessary to add only that “the mechanism which practically has no reverse motion”, nevertheless continues the progress, and the territories being outside the republics, promptly are exposed to the “titular Reconquista” by means of migration from the North Caucasus.

Therefore other scientists offer radical options of overcoming of this problem. So, the known Russian geographer Vladimir Kagansky reasonably considers that “from the point of view of the positive spatial analysis, it is always possible to specify the territories which existence as a part of the state brings harm for this state. What has to do the responsible state in these cases? It has to declare off these territories at any cost. And not to wait when these territories will want to separate. You perfectly understand that there are a number of territories⁷⁵ which presence as a part of Russia is a burden. And what do we see? That the state tries to hold these very territories, which presence as a part of Russia is extremely harmful to it. The matter is that from history of the North Caucasus it is known: wars always take place there. The reason is not so clear to me: whether it is a civilization break, whether something else – wars always take place in this territory. The question is: did not Russia make a fatal mistake in the XIX century having annexed these territories? It did. What does it do now? It tries to repeat this fatal flaw. But at the same time we see a brilliant example of remarkable geographical engineering – abandonment of Alaska. It was that territory which was too costly to hold”⁷⁶. This radical option offers counter-separation – separation from burdensome territories and groups of the population corresponding to them⁷⁷. But abandonment of

⁷⁵ Better say – the local population of these territories.

⁷⁶ Kaganskii V., *Neizvestnaia Rossiia* (Publichnaia lektiia), Polit.Ru, Moskva, 19.04.2007 Available at: <http://polit.ru/article/2007/05/04/kaganskiy/>

⁷⁷ Similar views are characteristic not only for modern Russia. In Italy since 1991 there is North League for the Independence of Padania – the political party demanding separation from “undeveloped and criminal South” with formation of the independent state with the

⁷³ Kazenin K., *Elementy Kavkaza: zemlia, vlast' i ideologiia v severokavkazskikh respublikakh*, ID REGNUM, Moskva, 2012.

⁷⁴ Petrov N., *O regionalizme* (Publichnaia lektiia), Polit.Ru, Moskva, 9.02.2006 Available at: <http://www.polit.ru/lectures/2006/02/13/petrov.html>

Alaska which had the dubious colonial status supported only with a few hundreds of Russian hunters, besides being on the other continent and possible separation from integrated, strategic part of the Russian territory have not much in common. The North Caucasus is the frontier macro-region with the population of 17 million people which is an integral part of the vital infrastructures of federal level: military and logistic, energy, industry, finance and economics, transport, education, public health, not to mention inclusiveness in uniformed cultural and linguistic space. Hundreds of thousands of Russian “not titular” citizens live in the Caucasus with no place to come in the post-Caucasian Russia. Unclear what arguments of legal character will form the basis for such a suggestion, after all ideas of this sort have to be supplemented with detailed constructive program.

There is also some other doubts in correctness of a position of V. Kagansky. Will any Slavic enclaves remain in the North Caucasus? How to “exclude” Republic of Adygea which is territorially encircled by Krasnodar region? What will be reaction of ruling circles and the population of the mountainous republics and what will happen with

the numerous North Caucasian Diasporas which have been strongly fixed in the heartland of the Russian state? A final partition will logically require frontier arrangements which will demand huge funds on direct formation of the whole complex of infrastructure and not lesser sums of money for the inevitable corruption expenses: so-called “kickbacks” to federal and local bureaucrats. And transparency of internal borders in the CIS makes such isolation a mere formality – in the conditions of boundary transparency even similarity of the protected perimeter (limes) will be impossible. And the more so it is unclear how to consider the question of citizenship: “titular” inhabitants are citizens of Russia, and deprivation of nationality is forbidden by the current legislation (item 3 of Art. 6 of the Constitution of the RF) and norms of international law. Meanwhile “disposal” of “titular” regions is possible only in case of state disintegration. But the situation when the federal authorities financially support the constitutional discrimination of “not titular” citizens is in any case inadmissible and allocates “titular” citizens with the exclusive status of subsidized form of exterritoriality.

capital in Milan. Later, for better electoral appeal, the requirements were softened to the gradual federalization of the Italian state. It is remarkable that ideologists of North League are not limited to the arguments of populist and economic character, but also develop their own “political geography” and ethno-cultural mythology. See e.g. Huyseune M., “Imagined Geographies: Political and Scientific Discourses on Italy’s North-South Divide”, In Coppieters B., Huyseune M. (eds.), *Secession, History and the Social Sciences*, VUB Brussels University Press, Waverseesteenweg, 2002, pp. 207–26. Comparison of centrifugal regional tendencies in Italy and Belgium see in: Huyseune M. (ed.), *Contemporary Centrifugal Regionalism: Comparing Flanders and Northern Italy*, Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, Brussel, 2011.

7. State’s aggressive professional impotence.

Whether there is a probability of a social protest of the oppressed Russian population in the North Caucasus – a stigmatized community of “loosing and suffering”? Most likely, no: years of discrimination proved that people prefer flight to resistance. Leaders, the positive program and high level of consolidation of suspect group are necessary for fight. Thus it is necessary to consider that the discontent which has accepted

organized forms, was already presented in mass media as manifestation of “the Russian nationalism” and even fascism. If the direct protest is excluded, there is a need of the all-Russian campaign in protection of the rights of “not titular” population. Unfortunately, this option too is unpromising as serious efforts of non-governmental organizations (having absolutely other priority) are for this purpose necessary and continuous covering of events in mass media (now it partially occurs in “the black market of information” – in a blogosphere accessed by a few percent of the population of the RF)⁷⁸. While the problem of “the internal abroad” of Russia (and not only the North Caucasus, but also, for example, Republic of Tyva where the considerable part of the Russian population was expelled at the beginning and the middle of the 1990-s) continues to be aggravated, creating new preconditions for reaction of protest extremism in regions and reproduction of *hate culture* in society.

Reaction of the federal authorities continues to remain sporadic and declarative. Consider an example from the Dispatch of the President of Russia V. Putin of December 12, 2012 to the Federal Assembly: “We will not allow emergence of the closed ethnic enclaves in Russia with the

informal jurisdiction, living out of uniform legal and cultural framework of the country, provocatively ignoring the standard norms, laws and rules”. The abovementioned enclaves in the form of the republics and Diasporic “branches” comfortably exist over twenty years out of a uniform legal and cultural framework of the country and with an accruing challenge ignore the standard norms, laws and rules enjoying at the same time systematic budgetary support from the federal center. It is doubtful to believe that the next presidential performance will cause cardinal change of current situation or at least will serve as a signal for revision of policy of “titular privileges” in the RF. On October 5, 2013 during XIV Congress of “United Russia” governmental political party prime-minister of the RF Dmitry Medvedev underlined that: “[w]e should not let ethnic enclaves to appear, especially in the cities”⁷⁹. In other words it means that Russia got even more disunited since 2012.

8. Conclusion. Russian prospects and European political risk management.

It seems that the possible solution of abovementioned problems (again linked with terrorism as the end of 2013 has gruesomely proved) manifests itself not in the isolated regional approach⁸⁰ but in the careful process of

⁷⁸ On political exploitation of blogosphere see e.g.: Aday S. et al., *Blogs and Bullets: New Media in Contentious Politics*, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, August 2010. Analysis of Russian protest capacity managed online: Alexanyan K. et al., *Exploring Russian Cyberspace: Digitally-Mediated Collective Action and the Networked Public Sphere*, Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University, Cambridge (MA), March 2012. Overview of extremist activity in social networks: Berger J.M., Strathearn B., *Who Matters Online: Measuring Influence, Evaluating Content and Countering Violent Extremism in Online Social Networks*, International *Rivista di Criminologia, Vittimologia e Sicurezza* – Vol. VIII – N. 2 – Maggio-Agosto 2014

Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, London, March 2013.

⁷⁹ Stenogramma S"ezda. Available at: <http://er.ru/news/2013/10/6/xiv-sezd-partii-edinaya-rossiya/>

⁸⁰ See e.g. Vassilieva O., “Conflict Management in the Caucasus via Development of Regional Identity”, In Koehler J., Zürcher C. (eds.), *Potentials of Disorder: Explaining Conflict and Stability in the Caucasus and in the Former Yugoslavia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2003, pp. 174–192.

nation-building⁸¹ – taking into account North-American and European experiences, rethinking traditional understanding of ethnicity⁸², migration and citizenship⁸³. To begin with there is a need to grasp the initiative from extreme forces and start a public dialogue, bringing together the antagonists as it takes place in other countries⁸⁴. The next step – is to revise the educational programs imbedding positive unification over shared symbols and ideals (if it is ever possible without strong common ideology or desired secular utopia). One of the most difficult and explosive tasks is to bring back the tradition of laïcité freeing society from explosive and opposing religious ideologies (first of all – to stop radical Islamist expansion⁸⁵). Logically it is crucial to replace ethnic dimension from mass media and public consciousness with other forms of identity and representation. And it is very important to underline that because of the international obligations of the RF all these objectives have to be implemented liberally – according to the high standards of human rights so

strictly monitored by Western partners⁸⁶. The last but not the least is the new conditions of nation-building. Old instruments of XIX century might not work properly in the age of fading nation-state, globalization, mass migrations and alternative discourses of influential non-state actors.

It is hard to say whether the RF is capable to manage this heavily complicated task of political engineering combined with multi-leveled social constructivism given the fact of twenty-three years lost in transition and snowballing problems. One should also keep in mind the disastrous brain-drain of nineties and general degradation of humanities in the country, including inertia of meanings, simulation of thought move and absence of independent scientific analysis. But if the government has desisted from attempts of solving these problems being preoccupied with organizing international sport events, political parties remain merely commercial entities and the third sector is invalid – who remains in the position of a (collective) ‘crisis manager’? Could it be an external actor? The answer is unclear but the time is short for the RF and the next decade will ultimately demonstrate either serious improving either a failing state with the violent disintegration of the country. Such a catastrophe will obviously affect not only post-Soviet republics so probably the EU in its political strategy towards the Russian Federation should take a closer look at this explosive situation directly facing European borders.

⁸¹ On persistent yet unsuccessful nation-building efforts in post-Soviet Russia see e.g. Shevel O., “Russian Nation-building from Yel'tsin to Medvedev: Ethnic, Civic or Purposefully Ambiguous?”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, No. 63 (2), 2011, pp. 179–202.

⁸² See e.g. Brubeiker R., *Etnichnost' bez grupp*, Izd. dom Vysshei shkoly ekonomiki, Moskva, 2012.

⁸³ An attempt of such a holistic view: Malakhov V., *Kul'turnye razlichia i politicheskie granitsy v epokhu global'nykh migratsii*, Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, Institut filosofii RAN, Moskva, 2014.

⁸⁴ See e.g.: Roleff T.L. (ed.), *Hate Groups: Opposing Viewpoints*, Greenhaven Press, San Diego, 1999.

⁸⁵ Though RF is not a country with the dominant Muslim population the Russian government could learn some key lessons from the positive experience of de-radicalization in various Muslim societies from Algeria to Malaysia: El-Said H., *De-Radicalising Islamists: Programmes and their Impact in Muslim Majority States*, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, London, January 2012.

⁸⁶ On general contradictions between nation-building based on human rights and cultural peculiarities see e.g. Weston H.B., “Human Rights and Nation-Building in Cross-Cultural Settings”, *Maine Law Review*, Vol. 60, No. 2, 2008, pp. 318–346.

Clearly, these concepts and suggestions need further development and improvement. This can only be done, nevertheless, with the help of serious interdisciplinary ‘titular’ studies conducted by criminologists, sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, economists and balanced with reports of human rights activists. Hopefully, this article has provided some usable directions for this kind of research.

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