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IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF THE POST-COMMUNIST DOMESTIC CONFLICTS*

Andrus PARK

In this essay I attempt to offer an interpretation of ideological aspects of the post-communist domestic political conflicts. More specifically, I argue that there is a proliferation and diversification of the "left–center–right" conflict patterns in the post-communist transition. The left-related conflict patterns ("left–left," "left–center," "left–right") already existed in a more or less public form at the very beginning of the transition, whereas the "center–right," "center–center," and "right–right" conflicts became important at later stages. The new emerging political factions fight first against the old regime and then between themselves, whereas power usually passes into the hands of more and more radical factions.

I will first try to clarify some key concepts, using examples from the recent developments in Russia and some other Soviet successor states. I will then apply these notions to clarify certain sides of the political dynamics in Estonia. The choice of Estonia is motivated, among other things, by the fact that its party-political and ideological structure is relatively transparent and is more developed than that of most other ex-Soviet republics.

AN EXPLICATION OF THE TERMINOLOGY

A *conflict* is understood here simply as a changing situation which depends on the actions of at least two actors, where the interests of these actors are partially or completely contradictory.[1] By conflicts I mean, for example, quarrels between communist and democratic political forces, between the governments of the former Soviet republics and the various separatist movements, between various ethnic groups, etc. These quarrels may proceed in the form of bitter public accusations, propaganda campaigns and scandals, public demonstrations, etc. In other words, "conflict" means not only violent and deadly clashes like those in Lithuania in January, 1991, or in Moscow in August, 1991, but also something more peaceful like the cleavages between the Russian President and the Congress of People's Deputies in 1992.

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By *violent conflict* is understood conflicts where force is used. Every violent conflict is obviously just an aspect or intensive phase of a larger controversy which may appear also in the non-violent form. In fact, most violent conflicts are first displayed in a more moderate fashion before the real bloodshed starts. Similarly, the end of violence does not necessarily mean the solution of the conflict–the quarrel is often just transformed into the non-violent form.

Violent conflicts are often (although not necessarily always) connected with human casualties. One possibility is to define *armed conflict* as a "prolonged combat between the military forces of two or more governments or of one government and an organized opposition's armed forces, involving the use of weapons and incurring battle-deaths of at least 1000 persons."[2] According to this definition, the Armenian–Azerbaijani war, the clashes in Georgia, the fighting in Moldova, and the skirmishes in Tajikistan all qualify as "armed conflicts" among the regional conflicts in the former USSR. No conflict in the Baltic area or in Russia (apart from the fighting in Northern Caucasus) in 1985–92 even came close to that definition of an armed conflict. As was reported at an academic conference in Moscow in June, 1992, there were about 180 potential local armed conflicts on the territory of the former USSR. Of these, 80 were connected with territorial claims and about one-third were located in the Russian Federation.[3] There were 30 million firearms held by the citizens of the former USSR in July, 1992. "This figure, published recently, has shocked the civilized world, not because weapons are in private hands, but because they are constantly being fired by these hands."[4] It was reported in October, 1990, that since 1985 about 1000 people had been killed and 8500 injured in interethnic strife in the USSR.[5] By the summer of 1992, 5000 people had been killed in conflicts, a figure which may have doubled by the end of 1992.[6] The casualty figures for the Baltic states were relatively small: 26 people were killed in Lithuania and 6 in Latvia as a result of the Kremlin's repressive actions in 1991, whereas Estonia did not suffer any casualties.[7]

In order to simplify terminology, I use here the words *post-communist conflicts* to mark not only the post-1991 quarrels on the territory of the former USSR, but also the clashes that occurred in that area during the 1985–91 period. By *ideological dimension*, I mean here an aspect of a political conflict that can be interpreted in terms of "left versus right," "left versus center," "center versus right," etc. In other words, from the point of view of the ideological dimension, political conflicts are conflicts between communists and liberals, communist and fascists, communists and socialists, liberals and fascists, etc. To put it differently, the concept of ideology is applied here in a very narrow and restrictive sense: various systems of religious, nationalist, and other similar ideas are considered ideological insofar as they can be interpreted in the context of the left–center–right differences.

The use of the term *left, right*, and *center* in post-communist politics has certain peculiarities. Communist political forces are sometimes treated as conservative and right-wing, whereas market-oriented and monetarist

activists are viewed as left-wing radicals. Some parties and movements that are quite market-oriented on economic issues–representing the interests of new rich entrepreneurs–may be considered leftist because of the communist past of some of their leaders. On the other hand, parties and groups that sound right-wing on ethnic and foreign policy issues, may advocate essentially socialist views on the economy, demanding social justice and equal starting positions in privatization for everyone.[8] With a considerable degree of simplification it is still possible to locate most of the parties and movements on the left–right scale (where the extreme points are Stalinism or fascism), taking into account the basic values on a number of issues: the nature and type of desired economic reform, privatization, relations with the Western world, democracy, human rights, religion, relevance of ethnic values, the ideological self-description of a particular party or movement, etc. For example, both the CPSU (before and after 1985) and varios post-1990 neo-communist parties are labelled as left, whereas various fascist groups are treated as on the extreme right.[9] The forces that favor a tough macro-economic stabilization and rapid transition to a market economy, while preserving and developing basic democratic institutions (for example, Democratic Russia and other similar groups in Russia), are from my point of view representing the center or the moderate right.

The *left–left* conflicts are here understood as clashes between various left-wing political forces: Stalinists and reform communists; communists and socialists, etc. Historically these conflicts played an important role in the Soviet Union. Since the USSR was a left dictatorship, we can classify most of the political fighting between various communist and socialist factions inside Soviet Russia after 1921 as "left–left" conflicts, be it between the supporters of Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin in the 1920s, between the followers of Lavrenty Beria and other of Stalin's successors in 1953, etc. On very few occasions some "left–left" conflicts assumed the form of an open violent struggle. For example, the anti-communist rebellion in Kronstadt in March, 1921, demanded freedom for "anarchists and left socialist parties" before a couple of thousand insurgents were crushed by the 50 000 Red Army troops.[10] The riot in Novocherkassk in June, 1962, over food prices (when soldiers fired into a crowd carrying portraits of Lenin) can also be interpreted as a "left–left" conflict.[11] It is only natural that "left–left" conflicts were the first to emerge within the CPSU in the early stages of *perestroika*. We can interpret the battles of Mikhail Gorbachev against his hardline colleagues from the 1985 March Plenum to the 1991 August coup as first of all a manifestation of the "left–left" conflict.

The notion of a *left–center* conflict is depicted by controversies between communist political forces on the one hand and liberal, social democratic, and other centrist market-oriented political movements on the other hand. The left–center controversy appeared in the USSR in a vivid form in 1988–89 when the political climate was relaxed enough to allow the creation of various non-communist parties, "fronts," and other political organizations,[12] although it is possible to date various "left–center"

conflict formations back to the dissident and human rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The "left–center" clashes reached a violent level on at least some occasions before 1992. For example, a part of the August, 1991, coup in Moscow (which resulted in four deaths) represented a clash between the left-wing communist hardliners and the centrist democratic forces, lead by Boris Yeltsin and his followers.

The *left–right* controversy is here defined as a quarrel between communist forces on the one hand and various right-wing parties and movements on the other hand. By right-wing in the Russian context I mean the whole spectrum of the right, including the monarchist, religious, fascist, etc., subtypes of the right. Many observers would argue that a democratic right in the Western sense is extremely weak or almost absent from the current Russian political scene.

Again, the patterns of the "left–right" controversy can be traced in the fight of various dissident and human rights groups against the communist regime long before *perestroika*. But one of the peculiarities of the recent Russian developments has been the feebleness of the "left–right" controversy, illustrated by the above mentioned alliance between the radical left and the radical right, between communists and nationalists. This symbiosis of nationalism and communism in Russia was already evident during the early years of *perestroika*: even the most extremist Russian organizations like *Pamyat* found some sympathy from the conservative CPSU *apparatchiks*.[13]

The *center–right* clash is taken here as a quarrel between the centrists (liberals, social democrats, etc.) and the right-wing. In the Russian context it means first of all disagreements between the above described monarchists and nationalists, and the market-oriented groups. For example, when the Christian Democrats (Viktor Aksyuchits), Constitutional Democrats (Mikhail Astafyev), and other similar right-wing political figures attacked the policy of the Acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar in 1992, it was first of all a "center–right" clash. Since the right and left were working together in Russia, the "center–right" conflicts often overlap with the "left–center" frictions.

The *right–right* conflicts can be discerned in Russia for example in differences between the extreme right (like *Pamyat* or Vladimir Zhirinovsky's fascist Liberal-Democratic Party) and the above mentioned Christian Democrats and Constitutional democrats. Should the right-wing come into power in Moscow, these right–right conflicts will certainly become quite important. On the other hand, the *center–center* strife over the pace of economic reform between the pro-market supporters of Yegor Gaidar and the cautious economic establishment (organized around the Civic Union) was very much in the center of the political struggle in Russia in 1992.[14]

I have referred already to the fact that individual conflicts often have several distinctive features simultaneously, and that the "left–right", "left–center", "right–center", etc. features overlap and fuse. By a *system of ideological conflicts*, therefore, is meant various clusters of conflicts between the political left, center, and right which appear in the mixed form

and tend to achieve some internal equilibrium. In fact most of the real conflicts represent such systems, and it is only for analytical purposes that we can focus our attention on some particular ideological dimension, and (for a moment) disregard the others.

MARGINALLY IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS

Practically every 20th century political conflict has an ideological dimension and can be interpreted in "left–center–right" terms. In many cases, however, the ideological interpretation has small conceptual or explanatory value;[15] I call such conflicts *marginally ideological*. As an example, we can refer again to many interstate and inter-ethnic conflicts in the former USSR. At least in 1992 it was not very helpful to characterize the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in left–center–right terms, since the ideological spectrum on both sides of the conflict was quite wide. Similarly, it does not much clarify matters if we interpret the quarrels between the governments of Russia and Estonia in 1992, over the disputed borders, the minority rights, or even the presence of ex-Soviet troops in the Baltic states, in ideological terms, since there was on both sides a wide "left–center–right" spectrum of political forces, sharing principally similar views on central issues of the conflict. At the same time, it makes sense to analyse the January, 1991, conflict between Gorbachev and the Baltic states in ideological terms, because it was then clearly a conflict between the reform-communist Kremlin leaders and the basically non-communist Baltic governments. Similarly, it may be meaningful to discuss the strife between Moldova and the "Dniestr Republic" in 1992 in "center–left" terms, since the government in Tiraspol was quite clearly pursuing a communist policy, while the leaders in Chisinau opted for a centrist market-oriented line.

As is well known, the USSR in the second half of the 1980s was an empire, comprised of 15 constitute republics, 20 autonomous republics, 8 autonomous oblasts, and 10 autonomous okrugs which were at least theoretically designed as territorial units, reflecting certain levels of self-determination of various nationalities.[16] In addition, there were other territorial–administrative units (6 krais and 111 non-autonomous oblasts) in the USSR, most of them in the Russian Federation.[17] In 1988–90 most of the autonomous units declared their sovereignty, and in September–December, 1991, the 15 original union republics gained independence. In December, 1990, the Russian Federation parliament upgraded 16 autonomous republics on its territory into "republics", and in July, 1991, four of the five autonomous oblasts in Russia were also given republic status. In June, 1992, the Russian Supreme Soviet accepted the separation of the Chechen–Ingush Republic and the creation of a separate Ingush Republic which brought the number of republics inside Russia to 21. By the summer of 1992 there had been no officially accepted change in the status of autonomous okrugs in Russia.

In 1989 there were 285 743 000 people living in the USSR. It is difficult to judge exactly how many different nationalities lived in the Soviet Union at the time of the census because some of these nationalities were very small, although usually all the estimates mention a figure of over 120. One of the official statistical handbooks published in Moscow gives a list of 138 nationalities according to the 1989 census,[18] but some experts identify up to 400 ethnic groups in the former USSR, most of them living in their historic homelands.[19] There were 22 nationalities in 1989 with a size of over 1 million. These were first of all the titular nationalities of all the 15 union republics: Russians, Ukrainians, Belarussians, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Georgians, Azerbiajanis, Lithuanians, Moldavians, Latvians, Kirgiz, Tajiks, Armenians, Turkmens, and Estonians. The seven nationalities without a titular union republic but still with a size of over one million were: Bashkirs, Jews, Mordvins, Germans, Poles, Tatars, and Chuvash. In addition, there were another 33 nationalities with more than 100 thousand members each (e.g., Chechens, Udmurts, Maris, etc.) In sum, 55 nationalities in the USSR had populations of more than 100 thousand.

A distinctive four-level structure of players in various local conflicts appeared in 1988–90: *USSR; republics; autonomous units; ethnic minorities without autonomy.* Correspondingly, a whole set of conflicts emerged: republics against the USSR; republics against each other; republics against autonomous units inside the republics; republics against ethnic minorities, and so on. There was also a special set of alliances: the USSR government often tried to side with the autonomous units and ethnic minorities in order to balance increasingly secessionist republican governments. For instance, in certain periods Gorbachev was supporting Tatarstan against the Russian government, Tiraspol against Chisinau, etc. When the Soviet Union collapsed, some of the USSR–republic and republic–republic conflicts were transformed into interstate conflicts. A new three-level structure of conflicts emerged inside the post-Soviet republics: state; autonomous unit; ethnic minority. The fighting between Abkhazians and Georgians, Ossetians and Georgians, Ingushes and Ossetians and so on, all provide cases of deadly clashes to illustrate this point. As mentioned above, practically all the conflicts in those four and three level structures can be interpreted in left–center–right terms, although such an interpretation often has a low explanatory value.

THE ESTONIAN CONFLICT TRANSITIONS: LEFT AGAINST THE CENTER AND THE RIGHT

The above conceptual outlines will now be illustrated with some data from the recent history of Estonia.

It is possible to trace the early left–left conflicts in Estonia during the initial phases of *perestroika*. Quarrels between the hardline (Karl Vaino, Rein Ristlaan, Bruno Saul, etc.) and reformist (Arnold Rüütel, Indrek

Toome, Enn-Arno Sillari, etc.) factions for the leadership of the Estonian Communist Party in 1987 and the first half of 1988 can certainly be interpreted in this manner, although they were fought mostly quietly and within the party *apparat*. The "left–left" conflict was highlighted in June, 1988, when the hardline First Secretary of the Estonian Communist Party Karl Vaino was, on Gorbachev's orders, replaced by reformist Vaino Väljas, the first native Estonian to hold that post since the early 1950s.[20] The row over the Estonian sovereignty declaration (adopted on November 16, 1988, by the Estonian Supreme Soviet with the support of the Estonian Communist Party)[21] between Gorbachev and the reform-communist leadership in Tallinn in autumn, 1988, also fits into this category. Another example may be the squabble between the reform-communist government of the Estonian SSR and the left-wing strike movement in the summer of 1989. After the communist-dominated Estonian Supreme Soviet adopted a two-year residency requirement for voting rights in the republic, the Intermovement, United Council of Production Collectives, and other left-wing organizations arranged strikes that affected between 3 and 4 per cent of the republic's work force, primarily in the defense industry.[22] The "left–left" features were also evident (although clearly mixed with tokens of the "center–left" controversy) in August, 1989, when the CPSU Central Committee triggered a crisis by issuing an anti-Baltic statement. That statement said openly that the "viability" of the Baltic nations may be questionable if the "nationalists" achieve their aims,[23] sparking a protest by those members of the Congress of the USSR People's Deputies elected from Estonia against the CPSU Central Committee. Finally, the split of the Estonian Communist Party in March, 1990, into pro-independence and pro-USSR factions[24] can also be interpreted as a "left–left" conflict over the issues of state independence and communist strategy.

The *left–center* clash was already quite vibrant in Estonia in 1987, when the hardline communist administration was publicly criticized by environmentalist activists, advocates of regional economic independence, and other similar groups. This conflict became central in public life when the Popular Front, the first, at least partially, non-communist mass movement, was created in Estonia in April, 1988. Some authors claim that a "dual" Communist Party–Popular Front power existed at that period in Estonia.[25] The above described replacement of Karl Vaino by Vaino Väljas in June, 1988 (beside being a manifestation of a "left–left" conflict), had also a clear "left–center" dimension. For example, when the Popular Front called a mass meeting on June 17, 1988, Vaino allegedly told the Kremlin that the situation was out of hand and asked for military intervention.[26] Since Vaino did not get Gorbachev's permission to use force, the possible violent clash between the communist authorities and the Popular Front demonstrators was avoided, but the high probability of such a conflict illustrates the nature of the 1988 political developments.

Let me repeat here again a well-known truth that almost all political labels are relative, and this applies especially to identifying something as a "center" in a volatile situation. Since the Popular Front at that time was at least publicly working within the framework of the Soviet communist

ideology,[27] it is also possible to argue that the spring, 1988, confrontation was to a large extent still a "left–left" conflict. Many Popular Front leaders (Edgar Savisaar, Marju Lauristin, and others) were communist party members which–as Rein Taagepera has rightly observed–led to the charge that the Popular Front was "a creature of the communist party."[28]

The "left–center" controversy was more explicit after the March 18, 1990, Supreme Council elections in Estonian, when the Popular Front emerged as "the single most political formation and formed a government with the support of some small parties."[29] By then the Popular Front had already clearly moved to centrist, non-communist, and pro-independence positions. The newly elected 105-strong parliament had at least 45 members who were considered to be Popular Front supporters,[30] giving the Front a dominant position in the parliament. The leader of the Popular Front, Edgar Savisaar, was nominated Prime Minister, remaining in this position until January, 1992. On March 30, 1990, the newly elected parliament declared USSR power in Estonia unlawful and proclaimed a period of transition to complete independence.[31]

The March, 1990, decision and the steps by the Estonian government which followed unleashed a strong counter-reaction by communist and pro-USSR political organizations such as Intermovement, United Council of Production Collectives, Communist Party on the platform of CPSU, strike committees, pro-USSR factions of the Estonian parliament (representing about a quarter of its deputies), etc. There were numerous "left–center" quarrels in 1990–1991 between the pro-USSR communists and the centrist Estonian government and its supporters. One of the peaks of this "left–center" imbroglio was reached on May 15, 1990. Following Mikhail Gorbachev's decision the day before to declare Latvian and Estonian pro-independence decisions legally void, a large crowd of communist and pro-USSR activists gathered on a square before the main government building in Tallinn. Although the demonstrators broke with force into the inner courtyard of the palace, and the Estonian national tricolor was taken down from the roof and replaced by the red Soviet banner, the attempt to take over the government offices failed.[32]

The Soviet crackdown in January, 1991, and the abortive coup in August, 1991, also had strong features of the "left–center" contest in Estonia, since the Popular Front and its allies still dominated the Estonian government and were organizing resistance to Moscow communist hardliners. At the same time, the relevance of the right-wing political forces was gradually growing, strengthening the right-related dimensions of the conflicts.

As in Russia, the *left–right* controversy had endured in Estonia for many years before *perestroika* in the form of a struggle by various small dissident and nationalist groups against the communist regime. Although many prominent right-wing dissidents and human rights activists (Lagle Parek, Heikki Ahonen, Arvo Pesti, Enn Tarto) were tried and sentenced in 1983–84, and their movement "appeared to have been crushed,"[33] it re-emerged with considerable vigor in 1987, when a number of political prisoners were released and the political climate became more relaxed. In August, 1987, an organization known as the Estonian Group for Making

Public the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was established,[34] which advocated the restoration of the pre-war independent Republic of Estonia and Soviet occupation. In August, 1988, the Estonian National Independence Party was formed and until 1991 remained the leading right-wing nationalist force in Estonia.[35]

The "left–right" controversy in Estonia was vividly displayed on August 23, 1987, when at least a couple of thousand people gathered in one of the parks in Tallinn and demanded the end of Soviet occupation. The meeting was organized by the above mentioned Group for Making Public the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. This gathering was denounced in the official press, and "campaigns of slander were started against its initiators and repressions were applied, to the point of banishments from the country."[36] From 1988 to 1992 the conflict between the left and right, between communist and right-wing nationalists in Estonia was always present, but became less visible in public life since the power of the communist party quickly melted away after 1988, and the right in Estonia began to target its criticisms more and more against the Popular Front and other centrists forces.

There were certainly also some elements of the "right–left" controversy in the non-violent quarrels between the new Estonian government and the local authorities in predominantly Russian-populated Narva in the autumn of 1992 and winter of 1992/93, since (according to experts' estimates) the old communist ***nomenklatura*** was still holding "ruling positions" in Narva.[37]

THE ESTONIAN CONFLICT TRANSITIONS: CENTER AGAINST THE RIGHT

The center–right friction was becoming more and more vibrant in Estonia after March, 1990, when Edgar Savisaar's government and the center-dominated parliament was frequently challenged by the right-wing nationalist forces, organized under the umbrella of the alternative parliament–Estonian Congress. The Estonian Congress was a product of the activities of the Movement of the Estonian Citizens' Committees, organized in 1989 by the Estonian National Independence Party and some other right-wing groups. The Citizens Committees "rejected Soviet institutions, including the Supreme Soviet, as illegitimate"[38] and carried out a campaign to register the citizens of the pre-war Republic of Estonia and their descendants. About 592 000 registered citizens (and those who sought citizenship) took part in the elections of the Estonian Congress in February, 1990. The Congress in turn elected a 71-strong Estonian Committee. Although 18 members of the Estonian Committee belonged to the Popular Front, they were weakly represented in the highest leadership of the Committee and many of them did not participate actively in further actions of the Congress.

The Estonian Committee (and other right-wing political forces) frequently accused the Savisaar government in 1990–91 of compromising with Moscow and the local Russian organizations, attempting to establish a dictatorship, undermining the attempts to return property to pre-1940 owners, etc.[39] Whereas the "center–right" and "right–right" conflicts in some other places of the former USSR (in Georgia for example) produced widespread violence, in Estonia they were fought with peaceful political means, although competing para-military organizations (Kodukaitse, Kaitseliit) emerged also in Estonia.

Savisaar's government resigned in January, 1992, and parliamentary elections on September 20, 1992, produced a 101-strong parliament where the explicitly right-wing parties and electoral blocs (Estonian Citizen, Fatherland,[40] Estonian National Independence Party) won 47 seats and more or less centrist forces (Moderates, Popular Front, Royalists, Secure Home, and two small groups) won 54 seats.[41] The Communist Left Opportunity bloc failed to get seats in the parliament. The 14-member cabinet of the right-wing Prime Minister Mart Laar included four centrist ministers from the Moderates' faction (in the areas of social welfare, agriculture, environment, and economic reform), but all the key ministerial posts (foreign affairs, defense, internal affairs, etc.) were taken by the members of the Fatherland bloc and Estonian National Independence Party.[42] The additional 15th member of the cabinet–also representing Fatherland–was nominated on December 1, 1992.[43] The Popular Front and some other centrist groups launched bitter criticisms of the new government from the very beginning, signalling the start of a new turn in "center–right" political quarrels in Estonia.

One of the most interesting developments in post-communist transitions is the formation of *right–right* frictions. The controversy between two right-wing approaches surfaced powerfully before the June 28, 1992, referendum on a new Estonian Constitution when a group of right-wing activists (forming on May 24, 1992, a so-called Restitution-faction of the Congress of Estonia)[44] started to agitate against the new Constitution and proposed a return to the 1937 one. The ideology of "Restitution" was later used and developed by the Estonian Citizen electoral bloc, which sharply criticized the 1992 Constitution, electoral law, and political record of the mainstream right-wing politicians. The Estonian Citizen bloc was lead by a retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel Juri Toomepuu, who on September 20th individually won about 17 000 votes in his district, almost 45 per cent more than any other candidate nationwide.[45] One indicator of a conflict between Toomepuu's bloc and the other two main right-wing groups (Estonian National Independence Party, Fatherland) was the composition of Mart Laar's newly formed government. The National Independence Party and Fatherland preferred partnership with centrist Moderates, rather than with Toomepuu. The policy of Mart Laar's government has been characterized by Estonian Citizen leaders as "pink", i.e. having leftist overtones.[46]

Brief mention should also be made of the *center–center* quarrels. The discrepancies among the centrist Popular Front leaders were already obvious in 1988–1990 when they started to form different parties under the Popular Front umbrella. Some of the important landmarks in this respect were the formation of the Rural Center Party (April, 1990), Social Democratic Party (September, 1990) and People's Center Party (October, 1991). But the quarrel between the centrist forces themselves became especially vivid in January, 1992, when a part of the former Popular Front activists withdrew their support to Savisaar's government. The September, 1992, elections and their aftermath was another illustration of the "center–center" squabbles, since Moderates (i.e. an off shoot of the Popular Front) first distanced itself from the Popular Front and then entered a coalition with the right-wing parties.

TRENDS IN THE CONFLICT PATTERNS

Although it is difficult to formulate any general theory of domestic conflict transitions in the post-communist developments, we can at least say that the recent experience of Estonia gives support to the assertions which follow.

There is proliferation and diversification of the "left–center–right" conflict patterns as the political power passes from the left to the center and then to the right. In Estonia's case the "complete" pattern of the "left–left," "left–right," "left–center," "center–center," etc. "conflict combinations" was created basically in the interval 1987–92.

The left-related conflict patterns ("left–left," "left–center," "left–right") already existed in a more or less public form at the very beginning of the reforms and transition processes. In Estonia, there were traceable political conflicts within the communist party, as well as between the communists and centrists and between communists and the nationalist right already in 1987.

The "left–left" conflict (which is important at the beginning of the transition from communism) soon loses its dominant role, and is taken over by the "left–center" controversy. In Estonia it happened mostly in 1988 when the Popular Front was created.

The next stage is reached when the "center–right" conflicts start to play a central role. In Estonia it happened in the course of the establishment of the Citizens' Committees in 1989 and the elections of the Estonian Congress in February 1990.

One sign of the "maturity" of the political transition is the emergence of the "right–right" friction. This trend appeared in Estonia quite strongly in 1992, when the right-wing Estonian Citizen targeted its pre-election criticisms against the other two main right-wing blocs.

Although the case of Estonia (and the examples of some other former Soviet republics) seems to support the radicalization thesis ("in every revolutionary transition, the new emerging political factions fight, first

against the old regime and then between themselves, whereas power passes into the hands of more and more radical forces"), the variations between the different post-Soviet republics in this respect are ample. The "left–right" relationship, for example, is different in Estonia and Russia, being more confrontational in the first case and cooperative in the second.

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3 *Rahva Hääl*, July 2, 1992, p. 1.

4 *Moscow News*, No. 28, July 12–19, 1992, p. 4.

5 *The Economist*, October 20, 1990, p. 3.

6 For example George Breslauer estimated in the middle of 1992 that almost 5000 people have been killed in Moldova, the Caucasus, and the Ferghana Valley since 1987. See George Breslauer, "Reflections on the Anniversary of the August 1991 Coup," *Soviet Economy*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1992), p. 167.

7 *The Baltic Independent*, January 17–24, 1992, p. 5.

8 Some critics have argued, for example, that the right-wing Estonian National Independence Party (which is dominated by prominent anti-communists and former dissidents, and has radical nationalist right-wing positions on ethnic issues) advocates essentially left-wing steps in other areas (state programs in agriculture, etc.). See *Seitse Päeva*, December 18, 1992, p. 7.

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13 Tolz, *ibid.*, p. 14.

14 About the Civic Union and the Russian political spectrum in 1992 in general see for example: Elizabeth Teague and Vera Tolz, "The Civic Union: The Birth of a New Opposition in Russia," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 30 (July 24, 1992), pp. 1–11.

15 Charles Tilly has powerfully argued that the great majority of European revolutionary situations from 1492 to 1992 fall into five categories or combinations of them: (1) communal; (2) patron–client; (3) dynastic; (4) national; (5) class-coalition. Charles Tilly, "Singular Models of Revolution: Impossible but Fruitful," *Center for Studies of Social Change. New School for Social Research. Working Paper*, No. 138 (June 12, 1992), pp. 21–22. Since every revolutionary situation can be taken here as a particular subtype of a domestic political conflict, Tilly's classification shows the possibility of classifying political conflicts, without using the "left–center–right" terminology.

16 I agree with Alexander Motyl, that the term *empire* is not a pejorative designation for the Soviet Union, but the source of insight into its dynamics and collapse, something which makes it easier to compare the USSR with the empires of Romanovs, Hohenzollerns , Habsburgs, and Ottomans. See Alexander Motyl, ed., *Thinking Theoretically About Soviet Nationalities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 264–265.

[17] See for example: *Atlas SSSR* (Moscow: Glavnoye upravleniye Geodezii i kartografii, 1988), p. 16.
[18] See *SSSR v tsifrakh* (Moscow, Financy i statistika, 1990), pp. 38–42.
[19] *Report on the USSR* (July 14, 1989), p. 30.
[20] Toivo Raun, *Estonia and the Estonians* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1991), p. 224.
[21] Georg Sootla and Margus Maiste, *Tähtaasta 1988 (1988–the Outstanding Year* (Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1989), pp. 135–138.
[22] See Jan A. Trapans, ed., *Toward Independence: The Baltic Popular Movements* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), p. 73.
[23] *Pravda*, August 27, 1989, p. 1.
[24] See Marje Jõeste and Ülo Kaevats, eds., *The Baltic States* (Tallinn: Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers, 1991), p. 62.
[25] Sootla and Maiste, *op. cit*., note 21, pp. 40–50.
[26] See Rein Taagepera, "Estonia in September 1988: Stalinists, Centrists and Restorationists," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 2 (Summer 1989), p. 181.
[27] The Popular Front First Congress in October, 1988, asked all its adherents to support "the resolute and consistent implementation of the CPSU perestroika-course in every region and town in every working collective, in the Estonian SSR as a whole." See J. Nõmm and A. Ottenson, eds., *Rahvakongress* (*People's Congress*) (Tallinn: Perioodika, 1988), p. 198.
[28] Taagepera, *op. cit*., note 26, p. 178.
[29] Sten Berglund and Jan Åke Dellenbrant, "The Evolution of Party Systems in Eastern Europe," *The Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March 1992), p. 153.
[30] Jaan Laas, ed., *Eesti kroonika 1990* (*Estonian Chronicle, 1990*) (Tallinn: Esintell, 1991), p. 33.
[31] Advig Kiris, ed., *Restoration of the Independence of the Republic of Estonia. Selection of Legal Acts, 1988–1991* (Tallinn: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1991), pp. 22–23.
[32] Laas, *op. cit*., note 30, pp. 35–36.
[33] Romuald J. Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, "The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1986–1986," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 1 (Spring, 1989), p. 84.
[34] Taagepera, *op. cit*., note 26, p. 176.
[35] Among the other right-wing parties, established in 1988–91, were for example Christian Democratic Party (July, 1988), Christian Democratic Union (June, 1989), Conservative People's Party (January, 1990), Liberal Democratic Party (March, 1990), Republican Coalition Party (September, 1990). (Source: Information Department, Foreign Ministry of Estonia).
[36] *Revue Baltique*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (February, 1991), p. 131.
[37] Aksel Kirch, Marika Kirch, and Tarmo Tuisk, *The Non-Estonian Population Today and Tomorrow: A Sociological Overview*, manuscript (Tallinn: December 1992), p. 11.
[38] *Elections in the Baltic States and the Soviet Republics,* compiled by the Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1990), p. 38.
[39] Some of the main criticisms of Edgar Savisaar's government were well summarized for example in the letter by the Estonian Committee on December 19, 1991. See *Eesti Komitee Dokumendid, 1990–1991* (*Documents by the Estonian Committee*) (editor, publisher, place and year of publication not given, although generally available in Estonia in 1992), p. 73.
[40] Fatherland was an electoral bloc of five right-wing parties: Conservative People's Party, Christian Democratic Party, Christian Democratic Union, Republican Coalition Party, and Liberal Democratic Party. Four of the parties (except the Liberal Democratic Party) merged in November 1992, forming a new united right-wing party. See *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 48 (December 4, 1992), p. 63.
[41] After some post-election re-groupings, there were seven officially registered factions in the Estonian parliament at the beginning of October 1992. See *Postimees*, October 13, 1992, p. 2.
[42] See the list of the key officials in Estonia in: Riina Kionka, "Free-Market Coalition Assumes Power in Estonia," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 46 (November 20, 1992), p. 11.
[43] *Riigi Teataja*, No. 51 (December 9, 1992), p. 1614. According to the law, there may be up to 15 cabinet members in the government of Estonia. See *Riigi Teataja*, No. 45 (November 18, 1992), p. 1457.
[44] *The Monthly Survey of Baltic and Post-Soviet Politics* (June, 1992), p. 24; (July–August, 1992), p. 23.
[45] Kionka, *op. cit*., note 42, p. 10.
[46] See for example *Eesti Aeg*, December 16, 1992, p. 6.