

**MODERATE REGIONAL POLITICS AS A CONDITION FOR TERRORISM
BACKGROUND ELIMINATION.
ODESSA REGION EXPERIENCE (UKRAINE)**

Nowadays the international terrorism is regarded as one of the most acute and alluring problems, which ought to be solved by world community in its aspirations for secure and sustainable future.

In searches of probable answers for many hard and sharp questions arising in this connection, question about basics and circumstances provoking formation of such socially dangerous behavior inevitably becomes one of principal importance. And problems in interethnic connections traditionally are viewed as one of the most important agency of terrorism origin, dissemination, maintenance and survival. Discrepancies in interaction and mutual relationships among representatives of different ethnic groups are an environment favorable for production of various extremist moods and growth of their displays and are fruitful basis for functioning of the terrorist organizations. Traditionally such environment is skillfully used by terrorist actions organizers and promoters for their ideas dissemination. Thus, if trying to eliminate or, at least, minimize terrorists' chance for the success in their antihuman activity, interethnic relations are worthy to become subject of special studies.

Odessa region (Ukraine) being one of the most multiethnic in the country (representatives of over 50 ethnoses are living there) could be used as unique laboratory for such case study. It is even more interesting, that multinational structure of this population is reflected also in confessional mosaic of the region: adepts of Christianity in its different versions (Orthodox Church (connected with two different Patriarchies – one of Moscow and one of Kiev), Russian Old-Believers (Lipovans), Catholic, Greek-Romans, series of Protestant branches) are living here side by side with adepts of Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and other religions. Many national communities are officially framed and are acting regularly towards promotion of their native language, culture and, thus, development of social and national identity.

Last 10-15 years are marked in the region by rather intensive migration of population from Caucasus (the Georgian, Armenians, Azerbaijani, Chechens and so on), Southeast Asia (Chinese and Vietnams) and from countries of the Arabian East and Central Asia. Newcomers differ significantly in their social and economic position.

It seems that the essential ground for ethnic and confessional conflicts is available. At the same time, one can mark absence of any serious conflicts on racial or national ground in Odessa region during several last decades.

The latest tragic fact in this field in Odessa's history is the Jewish pogrom organized by so-called "Black Hundred" movement (Chernaya Sotnya) took place as early as 1915, i.e. during

well-known political and economic crisis connected with the First World War and October Revolution.

What are the reasons of stability existing now in frames of administrative which is characterized by high cultural, ethnic, linguistic and confessional variability?

First of all, it is necessary to mention the tolerance traditionally inherent to local population. In medieval time the only permanent inhabitants of the region were nomads (Turkish groups of Nogaitzy). Primary settling of the region implied formation of permanent settlements took place only during late 18th century when it becomes part of Russia Empire. Population from different part of Russian Empire, Ottoman Empire and adjacent territories searching for 'better life' came here. Therefore no 'aboriginal' population pretending for certain special rights and privileges could be detected here. Administration of Russian Empire strictly delineated place where particular groups of newcomers could live on its new border zone, trying to avoid aspirations for national agglomerations, which could bring to separatist movements.

One can trace certain washing of ethnic and cultural identity, which partly was substituted by its territorial form. It resulted in formation of cumulative image of "Odessits", good-natured and hospitable people, at the same time clever and enterprising, which were respected on all territory of the former USSR. This obviously positive image easily becomes basic in self-identification of population of Odessa region, simultaneously influencing their inner perception of representatives of other nationalities and religions.

One more reason of formation of the non-conflict situations is moderate and rational ethno- confessional policy of authorities in the Odessa region. During 15 years of existence of Independent Ukraine the regional and local authorities and peoples deputies didn't try to adjust ethno-confessional situation artificially, allocating separate ethnic groups and giving them certain exemptions and privileges. Ethnic liberalism results in actual equality of various groups of the population in their human, political and administrative rights. The various excesses arising on this ground are considered as infringement of the administrative and criminal legislation, and punishment for such actions is motivated not by ethnic attribution of sides but by law.

Equal opportunities for development and self-expression which are given in real practice to all ethnic and confessional groups of Odessa region give are one more guarantee of interethnic conflicts and rivaling elimination. There is no obstacles for national cultural societies activity in all their variety, cult constructions of all faiths are functioning, thus authorities treat no one of them positively and as well as negatively.

Nevertheless, one can't say that problems in interethnic relations in Odessa region are totally absent. One of them potentially is connected with current a little bit overestimated rates of introduction of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of life in the region, where the

overwhelming majority of the population traditionally speaks Russian as language of interethnic dialogue. Odessa always favors to any languages if it is not imposed. However such speeding up of Ukrainian language introduction is promoted mainly by local non-experienced officials who are not yet deeply familiar with features of the region. Nowadays the situation is turning to non-conflict solution. Odessa never disapproved language plurality, and current task is to make Ukrainian language attractive for population traditionally speaking other languages.

Concerning general topic of the ISODARCO Winter School, Adalo-2007, it is worthy to cite here well-known historical fact: compulsory or even just looking so introduction of any language always results in formation of negative image of this language and discredit the sources of this process in mass consciousness of the population.

Thus, on the basis of experience of the Odessa region, it is possible to conclude with several general reflections.

First, if ethnic issue is used by authorities of all levels as a key for solution of their own political problems, it inevitably results in springing up and further quick aggravation of interethnic conflicts and, in a final stage, to the common destabilization of the situation. Figuratively speaking, a gin of nationalism being once released from the jug, hardly could be driven and never would be imprisoned back. Hard administrating actions “from the top” usually don’t give chance to solve the problem: to the contrary, the situation will aggravate and new problems will arise. Appointment of “the first among equal” ethnic group and exaggerated political correctness usually are the background for such non-rational administrating.

Second, tolerance in interethnic relations is a sweet fruit of long-term, if not centuries-old, efforts of all participants of the process. Thus, on the one hand, it is necessary to appreciate interethnic and inter-confessional consent if it is successfully achieved, and to make all efforts for its preservation. On the other side, in the case of occurrence of the interethnic conflict it is necessary to remember, that it could not be quickly solved and forgotten: reconciliation of all parts might be achieved even through decades.

*For contacts: Valentin Smyntyna
Phone: +38-067-480-66-10;
+38-048-723-52-54
Fax +38-048-723-35-15
e-mail: oguint@paco.net*