

May 11, 1989

**CPSU Politburo Discussion of the Memorandum of
Six Politburo members on the Situation in the Baltic
Republics**

Citation:

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Summary:

Discussion of separatist and nationalist sentiment in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Meeting of the Politburo on 11 May 1989. Discussion of the Memorandum of Six Politburo members on the situation in the Baltic Republics.

Medvedev. Formal data on the outcome of elections of the people's deputies of the USSR in the Baltic republics (participation in elections, percentage of communists among deputies, etc.) should not create illusions. Most of the elected deputies are members and active participants of Popular Fronts, they share a separatist and nationalist mood, and the Popular Fronts themselves ran as a force opposing the CPSU, opposing interests of their nation to all-Union interests... Tactics of so called flexible tacking [lavirovaniie] by the leadership of the Republics have been leading so far to continuous concessions, affecting negatively the unity and combat-readiness of the Party... In the emerging situation the party and state leaderships of the Republics need political will, determination to fulfill the course of the CPSU towards the renewal and consolidation of socialism. At the same time the republican leadership badly needs our assistance and moral-political support.

(...) Gorbachev. We should look into the roots of the situation. Without them we will not figure it out. In the framework of perestroika there goes a stormy process of growing national self-consciousness in those Republics. And a very serious issue arises - about a more modern and complete interpretation of the notion of 'sovereignty.' This is a real issue. When a people has intelligentsia, it digs in history and bares roots. By itself this is a multi-faceted [bogatii] process. But it has negative repercussions...

The roots of the situation is in the specifics of history. In particular of the history of 1930-1940s. And this requires precise ideological characterization. But we are laggings behind. Meanwhile newer and newer armfuls of wood are being thrown into the fire. And we are not giving answers to the people.

Perestroika has demonstrated how many deformations had accumulated in everything - in culture, in language, in productive forces. Earlier we could somehow muddle through [obkhodilos], but now we will not. And force does not help in this business. We have accepted that even in foreign policy force does not help [nichego ne daiet]. But especially internally - we cannot resort and will not resort to force...

[The leaders of communist parties of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia who were present at the Politburo meeting. After they left]

We trust all three of them, there is no question... Well, our comrades are at the end of their patience! Omissions [upushcheniia] had been made at the stage when their predecessors ruled. Let us consider that not everything is lost. And we should be careful in our assessments. So as not to push them into despair, into the open break.

Voices from the Politburo members: Maybe we should really agree to hold referendums in these Republics? None of them will secede.

Gorbachev concludes. We cannot equal the Popular Fronts which are supported by 90% of the population of the Republics, with extremists. And we should learn how to talk with them... Trust the people's common sense... Do not be afraid of experiments with full economic self-accounting [khozraschet] of the Republics... Do not be afraid of differentiation among the Republics according to the level of practiced sovereignty... And after all: think, think how in practice to transform our federation. Otherwise everything would really collapse... The use of force is out of the question. We excluded it from foreign policy, and especially against our people [force] is out of question..."