

Radčenko: What is the reason for Polish inferiority complex in Lithuania?

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Polish schools are a way to make Polish identity maintain its position in Lithuania. It is one of the few issues on which I actually agree with the activists of the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania. The point on which we disagree radically is what are the priorities when it comes to preserving Polish education in Lithuania.

For them, the priority is to maintain school buildings and workplaces for teachers, whereas for me – the quality of teaching and attracting the biggest number of students. Of course, it is great that in Šalčininkai district there are 13 junior high schools with Polish as the main language of instruction and in Vilnius district – over 30. But how can we be sure that in a couple of years these schools will not be empty if we do nothing to make it more attractive to the parents? In the city of Vilnius, where over 50% of Lithuanian Poles live, there are only 6 junior high schools (and two of them had been accredited only last week) and, despite the fact that Polish schools in Vilnius are considered the best Polish schools in Lithuania, only 33% of children from Polish families attend them. I have always said that their low popularity resulted from the lack of ability to sell out their achievements.



I still stick to that statement. Although, it is widely known that Poles living in Lithuania have a huge inferiority complex – formerly towards Russians and now towards Lithuanian. The same complex that in Soviet times “forced” people to enrol their children in Russian-speaking schools and today – to Lithuanian-speaking ones. Because of that inferiority complex, in spite of clear evidence to the contrary, in spite of statistical surveys and scientific research, we do not believe in the attractiveness of Polish education and, at the same time, we believe in a “better start” after Lithuanian school.

Each and every year, I have to “fight” with my family and my friends to convince them to enrol their children in a Polish school. Sometimes they agree. I know a lot of people that

graduated from Polish schools and did really well at the university (and really often the reason they got into Polish universities was the fact that they had finished a Polish school) – a lot of them ended up like working in business, in public service, in politics and still, majority of them enrolled their children in Lithuanian schools. There is plenty of such people in the management of European Action of Poles in Lithuania – at the same time they are willing to give their life for the “legendary five” – and there is plenty of such people among the representatives of the opposition. For me, the only way to explain such behaviour is the inferiority complex. And the fact is that majority of them would transfer their kids from Lithuanian to Polish schools if they could think of a less or more spectacular career in Poland.

Probably, it is the inferiority complex that forces people to change their first names and surnames. Of course, the Lithuanian law does not allow people to use the letter “w” in spelling, but it does not force national minorities to use Lithuanian endings. And there is a lot of people with Lithuanian names amongst the main activists of European Action of Poles in Lithuania. No one forces us to use Lithuanian first names or surnames in private life – in e-mails or social networks, and a lot of people do that. Why? Because, you know, Lithuanians will not be able to read my name... Are you serious? They are able to read “George Bush” or “Justin Timberlake”, but they will not be able to read “Sylwia” if it is not written as “Silvija”? No one will be able to read “Anna” if it is not spelled “Ana”? The only

reason why we explain our behaviour is that we want to hide our inferiority complex.

I have no idea where does it come from. Maybe it is the fact the after World War II we lost all Polish-speaking well-educated people? The inferiority complex is one of the most popular complexes even while discussing individual psychology. The notion was introduced by Alfred Adler, a well-known physician and psychoanalyst, in XX century and it consists in a lack of self-worth and feelings of not measuring up to standards. What is important, the inferiority complex can be understood in a negative or in a positive way. The inferiority complex can manifest as a kind of escape from the real world into fantasy world, but it can also give the power to pursue the excellence, to be successful in professional or in private life.

When it comes to Poles in Lithuania – if we consider that a half of our society suffers from that social phobia – in most cases it leads to the escape into fantasy world: we think that other people or guilty of our failure (Lithuanians, freemasons, Jews, nationalists) or we want to make ourselves invisible among Lithuanians. Both ways are bad. In the first case, the escape into the fantasy world consists in a harmful alienation, protests against Lithuanian and support for extremists of a different kind and in the second – in a slower or quicker loss of national consciousness. In both cases, it leads to frustration, because neither extremism nor protesting will solve our problems. Neither Lithuanian names nor Lithuanian school will give you a “better start” if you are not naturally gifted. The frustration goads the inferiority complex and the results are visible – in 2011 only 200 thousand people declared Polish nationality and nowadays only 163 thousands.

Source: <http://zw.lt/opinie/radczenko-z-czego-wynika-polski-kompleks-nizszosci-na-litwie/>

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