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# War and Intervention at the Baltic Sea

Soviet, German and British attempts at securing the Baltics,  
1917–1919



## ABSTRACT

As a result of World War I, Eastern Europe became a shatterzone of the former empires. The fall of the German, Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires created a vacuum of power in which many nationalities strived for their independence for the first time. Their struggle met or clashed with the interest of victorious powers like the United Kingdom or with powers like Germany and Soviet Russia which wanted to regain their dominant status in the region. This clash of interests culminated in the wars in the Baltics which was a strategically crucial gateway between Central Europe and the Russian heartland. While both the Germans and the Soviets tried to secure the region for their interest, the United Kingdom wanted to keep both powers from the Baltics to create a wall between them. The present study attempts to present the entangled conflict of the mentioned three great powers over the Baltics in which Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians struggled to achieve their independence.

## KEYWORDS

Germany, United Kingdom, Soviet Russia, Baltics, World War I

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## FROM THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION TO THE GERMAN ARMISTICE

The successful revolution gave great hopes to Russia's nationalities who in the beginning didn't seek full independence. The political groups urging autonomy were created before the war and their necessity was strengthened by the imperial policy in Russia. The attempt to liquidate Finnish autonomy,<sup>1</sup> and the reprisals in the Baltics after the 1905 revolution<sup>2</sup> greatly strengthened these movements. After the February Revolution the Baltic politicians submitted their proposals for autonomy one after another. On March 13, Latvians declared that the provinces inhabited by Latvians should be unified under the name Latvia which should become an autonomous state inside Russia. Lithuanians proposed their similar demands on the same day.<sup>3</sup>

The Provisional Government's reaction was disappointing. Although in May the Kadets promised to solve the question of nationalities they refused to grant autonomy because in them they saw a threat to the success of the revolution. In June the Petrograd Soviet also promised to give rights to the nationalities, but its statement was very vague. Both the Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government thought that the question can be fully solved only by the future Constitutional Assembly.<sup>4</sup> On July 3 the Estonian National Assembly stated that it's unnecessary to wait for the Constitutional Assembly while Latvians declared that Petrograd has no right above Latvians' matters. In June Lithuanians decided in favor of complete separation which was noticed by Germany as well. The German leadership saw potential in annexing Lithuania as a duchy.<sup>5</sup>

The fragile state of Russia gave the German leadership opportunities for additional conquests. The German army reached the Baltics first in March 1915 after the Russian incursion into the Memel region. Following a swift counterattack the Russians were pushed back into Lithuania and the Germans captured the port of Liepāja.<sup>6</sup> In July they breached the Russian defenses and on August 5 they captured Warsaw.<sup>7</sup> In mid-August the Germans captured Kaunas and on September 5 they unsuccessfully sieged Vilnius.<sup>8</sup> On September 17 Mikhail Alekseyev, the Russian Chief of Staff ordered the evacuation of the city which fell to the Germans the next day.<sup>9</sup>

After the failure of the Russian July offensive in 1917 new opportunities emerged for the Germans to kick Russia out of the war. The key for that was the capture of Riga which was the last major city under Russian control outside of the central Russian territories. The Germans

<sup>1</sup> HALMESVIRTA 2001. 187–193.

<sup>2</sup> EIDINTAS – BUMBLAUSKAS – KULAKAUSKAS – TAMOŠAITIS 2013. 20–25.

<sup>3</sup> THE RUSSIAN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT 1961a. 405–406.

<sup>4</sup> THE RUSSIAN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT 1961a. 317–319.

<sup>5</sup> THE RUSSIAN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT 1961a. 405–407.

<sup>6</sup> BUTTAR 2015. 176.

<sup>7</sup> LUDENDORFF 1919. 154.

<sup>8</sup> HINDENBURG 1921. 176–177.

<sup>9</sup> BUTTAR 2015. 323.

launched their attack on September 1 with overwhelming firepower. The Russian defenses quickly ceased to exist and the Germans marched into Riga on September 3 after which the offensive was halted.<sup>10</sup> The Russian leadership slowly realized the danger the city's loss meant: Kerensky informed the Northern Front's commander only on September 29 that the readiness of his troops in the region is critically important.<sup>11</sup>

The Germans planned a possible assault on the Estonian islands before capturing Riga. During the summer the navy and the army conducted talks about capturing the islands which would have enabled them to secure the Gulf of Finland. By the end of August it was decided that after capturing Riga they will invade the islands.<sup>12</sup> Operation Albion was launched on October 12 with goals of capturing the three Estonian islands: Saaremaa, Hiiumaa and Muhu. The first attack was launched on Saaremaa which was secured already on October 15. On that day the Germans launched their attack against the other two islands where it took only five days until the Russian defense collapsed. After the operation the Germans were basically at gates of the Russian capitol which probably contributed to the sudden downfall of the Provisional Government.<sup>13</sup>

The Bolsheviks, in order to consolidate their positions, began peace negotiations with the Central Powers in November. Negotiations between the parties began on December 1, but the Bolsheviks postponed it already on the 28th. On January 9, the negotiations continued, but the German side imposed much harsher conditions, which were presented as an ultimatum on February 9. Trotsky, who led the Bolshevik delegation, refused to accept the demands, so he left the negotiations.<sup>14</sup> The Germans launched an offensive on February 18, and the remnants of the Russian army ceased to exist. The Germans sent another ultimatum on February 22, which the Bolsheviks accepted on the 24th. Despite the severe conditions, a peace treaty was concluded between the Bolsheviks and the Central Powers on March 3.<sup>15</sup> The Baltics came under German control, and the future settlement of the region was a source of heated debate within the German leadership. Due to the conflicts that arose, the region was not settled, and remained under military administration throughout. In the Latvian and Estonian territories, they relied on the Baltic Germans, which greatly intensified ethnic tensions.<sup>16</sup> The Bolsheviks made no attempt to regain the territory until the German surrender, but afterwards they tried with great force to retake the territory.

## **ESTONIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE**

The Bolshevik leadership gained valuable experience in the spring of 1918. Already at the beginning of the year, the political spectrum in Finland had become polarized, and scattered clashes between the Reds and the Whites had escalated into a civil war. Carl Gustav Emil Mannerheim became the commander of the White Finnish army. The Finnish government, having no

<sup>10</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 204–209.

<sup>11</sup> THE RUSSIAN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT 1961b. 1628–1629.

<sup>12</sup> BARRETT 2008.38–43.

<sup>13</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 222–225.

<sup>14</sup> PIPES 1997. 192–196.

<sup>15</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 265–269.

<sup>16</sup> RAUCH – MISIUNAS – TAAGEPERA 1994. 37–39.

other option, asked for help from the Germans. Germany, to secure Swedish iron ore shipments, considered it important to have a friendly Finland, and was therefore willing to send soldiers to Finland under the command of Rüdiger von der Goltz.<sup>17</sup>

Mannerheim launched an attack to capture Tampere on March 15, but due to prolonged fighting, the city was only taken on April 6.<sup>18</sup> During this time, Goltz landed with his troops at Helsinki and began the siege of the city on April 11 which came under German control on the same day.<sup>19</sup> After the capture of Helsinki, another German detachment arrived in Finland, landing east of Helsinki with the aim of capturing Viipuri. After Mannerheim's troops arrived, the German-Finnish troops managed to capture the city on April 28, thus ending the war once and for all. It was a valuable lesson for Lenin. He realized that the local communists were not strong enough to seize power, so in 1919 the Red Army was tasked with pacifying the areas in the peripheral areas.<sup>20</sup>

At first, Lenin allowed the nationalities to secede from the empire, as he saw it as a significant weakening of the anti-Bolshevik forces. However, this was only a tactical consideration, similar to the peace of Brest-Litovsk, with which he wanted to gain time for the pacification of the interior areas. In the long run, he also considered the territorial integrity of the Tsarist empire important. After the German surrender, he denounced the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and prepared for a major offensive aimed at regaining the lost territories.<sup>21</sup>

A large German force was stationed in Estonia, but it was in the process of being withdrawn and did not wish to support the Estonian struggle. In addition to the Germans, the anti-Bolshevik North-Western Army under Nikolai Yudenich was stationed in Estonia. Alongside them, a new player appeared, Great Britain, which did not want to let the Bolsheviks reach the Baltic Sea and was afraid that a defeated Germany would make peace with the Bolsheviks. The War Cabinet accepted the proposal to support the local anti-Bolshevik forces with munitions and soldiers until they were able to hold off the Red Army on their own, which meant supporting fire from the Royal Navy's ships ordered to the region.<sup>22</sup> Another motivation for British intervention was to keep the French at bay. Many within the British leadership viewed France's influence in Poland and Czechoslovakia with suspicion and did not want the Baltic states to come under French influence.<sup>23</sup>

The defining point of the Estonian theater of operations was Lake Peipus, which divided the passable terrain into two relatively narrow corridors. The Red Army launched a major offensive at the end of November 1918, successfully capturing Narva on November 28, and Rakvere fell to the Bolsheviks on December 15. At the same time, an offensive was launched in the south, and Tartu was captured on December 24, but they were unable to advance further due to bad weather conditions.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> GOLTZ 1920. 47.

<sup>18</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 302.

<sup>19</sup> GOLTZ 1920. 59–60.

<sup>20</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 305–306.

<sup>21</sup> WANDYCYZ 1969. 65–68.

<sup>22</sup> KOPISTO 2011. 59–60.

<sup>23</sup> WANDYCYZ 1962. 4–5.

<sup>24</sup> MAIDE 1968. 23.

At the same time an Estonian delegation traveled to London to seek British support against the Bolsheviks. The British leadership, based on preliminary discussions, sent a large fleet to the area, consisting of 5 cruisers, 9 destroyers, and 7 minesweepers. In case they encountered enemy warships, several battleships were sent to Copenhagen. The convoy reached Tallinn on December 7, and on the 13th they destroyed a vital bridge at Narva.<sup>25</sup>

In support of the Red Army, the remnants of the Russian Baltic Fleet were sent against the British convoy. The fleet, weakened by the Russo-Japanese War and Operation Albion, could not compete with the British ships, the entire fleet consisted of only one aging battleship, one cruiser and two destroyers. On December 24, the destroyers tried to lure the British ships in front of the cruiser Oleg, but the operation was a huge failure, both ships fell into British hands, effectively ending the fleet's intervention.<sup>26</sup>

On January 4, 1919, the Estonian army, supported by British warships, launched its attack. On the 14th, they successfully retook Rakvere, and on the 18th, they also captured Narva with an amphibious invasion. Tartu was recaptured with a bold counterattack in the south, and on February 1, the Estonians captured Valga, thus establishing a railway connection with Riga. As a result, Bolshevik troops had to be withdrawn from central Estonian territories.<sup>27</sup>

In the north, the Red Army launched a new offensive, but their attack on February 18 was successfully repelled by the Estonian army, supplemented by White Guard forces. The Bolsheviks launched continuous attacks to capture the city until the end of April, but they failed repeatedly. In the south, in March, they pushed again into the south-eastern part of Estonia but the Estonians held out thanks to Finnish and Latvian reinforcements, swampy terrain, and well-functioning logistics.<sup>28</sup>

Russian and Estonian troops launched attacks in the north and south throughout May. The Estonians' only goal was to push the Bolshevik forces as far away as possible, but Yudenich wanted to capture Petrograd. On May 13, the attack began in the north, which almost immediately crushed the Bolshevik forces around Narva. Yudenich had a great opportunity when the fort of Krasnaya Gorka, which was very close to Petrograd, revolted. He quickly launched an attack to capture the fortress, but he could not reach it in time, and the Bolsheviks managed to crush the rebellion.<sup>29</sup>

In the south, Estonian-Russian troops launched an offensive on May 25 and succeeded in capturing Pskov. Instead of continuing the attack, the Russian troops searched for the Bolsheviks and their supporters, during which general looting began, which favored the Bolsheviks. The Red Army easily swept away the White forces on June 19.<sup>30</sup> Stalin recognized the favorable circumstances even before the battle and reported in a telegram on June 18 that there was no need to move reinforcements.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> MAIDE 1968. 21.

<sup>26</sup> BENNETT 1964. 41.

<sup>27</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 358–360.

<sup>28</sup> SIBUL 2010. 117.

<sup>29</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 360–361.

<sup>30</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 362.

<sup>31</sup> SZTÁLIN 1950. 277–279.

In September, there were tentative talks about a possible armistice, but these were abandoned under British pressure. The British saw that there was still a realistic chance of capturing Petrograd, and therefore could not allow Estonia to conclude an armistice. On September 18, the Estonian and Finnish governments promised to adapt to British policy on the Russian question.<sup>32</sup> On October 10, Yudenich launched an attack on the capital and reached the outskirts of Petrograd on October 20. On October 21, the Red Army's attack drove the Whites out of the city, and by November 15, they had been pushed back behind the Estonian border, where the Estonians disarmed them for security reasons. On December 3, Estonian-Bolshevik negotiations began, but on the 7th, in order to gain a better negotiating position, the Bolsheviks launched an attack towards Narva. The attack failed, and by December 28, the Estonians had pushed the Bolshevik forces back. As a result, an armistice was signed on January 3, followed by an official peace treaty on February 2.<sup>33</sup>

## LATVIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

After the German surrender, the Red Army launched an attack on Latvia almost immediately, so the Latvian government's most important task was to field an adequate force. There were many German soldiers in the country, but they were too demoralized. Major Josef Bischoff gathered the reliable and usable part of the German force around himself and created the Iron Brigade, which was increased to division size during 1919. Lacking an alternative, the Latvian government turned to the Germans for support. August Winnig, Germany's Baltic envoy, made an agreement with the Latvian government that Germany could send officers and NCOs to the Baltic Germans' new force, the *Baltische Landeswehr*. They also agreed that all foreign soldiers who fought for at least 4 weeks would be granted Latvian citizenship. Calls appeared in Germany, promising several benefits, including land in Latvia for volunteers. Many *Freikorps* units responded to the call, which was also favorable to the German government. The promise of land, however, strained Latvian-German relations, as most of the Latvian lands were already in the hands of Baltic German landowners. The Baltic German leadership also aimed to increase the proportion of Germans in Latvia by settling German volunteers. The British, although suspicious of German intervention, accepted German troops to fight. In the eyes of the British, a defeated Germany was the lesser evil.<sup>34</sup> In addition to Germans, volunteers came from other countries, including Denmark.<sup>35</sup>

In the absence of adequate resistance, the Red Army advanced very quickly. On January 1, 1919, British warships had to be withdrawn from Riga, and on the 4th the city fell to the Bolsheviks. By the end of January, the area controlled by the Latvians and Germans had narrowed to the *Liepāja* area, but the Bolshevik advance was slowed down by poor logistical conditions.<sup>36</sup>

In order to resolve the situation, General Rüdiger von der Goltz was appointed as the commander of the German troops in Latvia, who already prepared his troops for an attack on February 28. He reorganized the remnants of the 8th Army and awaited the arrival of German

<sup>32</sup> DBFP 1949. 558–560.

<sup>33</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 366–369.

<sup>34</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 372 – 374.

<sup>35</sup> KIRKEBAEK 2019. 16–18.

<sup>36</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 374–375.

reinforcements, which resulted in the infantry being supplemented with cavalry, artillery, and aircrafts.<sup>37</sup> His goal was to capture Jelgava, which would put pressure on the Bolshevik forces in Riga. The attack began on March 3, and on the 10th, Šiauliai was captured, thus securing his advance from the south. On March 18, the Baltische Landeswehr units successfully captured Jelgava, after which there was a short lull on the battlefield.<sup>38</sup>

Goltz had a tense relationship with the Latvian and British governments. The British saw the German general's activities as a continuation of German imperial ambitions. It soon became clear that they had judged Goltz's presence correctly. The Latvian authorities detained several German officers, and a Freikorps unit attempted to overthrow the Latvian government. Latvian President Ulmanis and his government members successfully escaped on a British warship. Goltz did not intervene, but rather supported the appointment of a new government, the majority of whose members were Baltic Germans. On April 25, the British demanded the restoration of the Latvian government, but Goltz threatened to withdraw, so the British were forced to tolerate what happened. A few days after the incident, Goltz traveled to Berlin, where the German government assured him that it would not give in to the Allies' demands.<sup>39</sup>

After returning from Berlin, Goltz launched his troops to capture Riga on May 22. During this period, the Bolsheviks' attention had waned, so the attack was a resounding success, and the Germans captured the city that same day.<sup>40</sup> In the city, the German troops, searching for Bolsheviks, staged a massacre, which only exacerbated the tense Latvian-German relationship.<sup>41</sup>

On May 29, Goltz continued his attack in the northeast, towards Estonia. Latvian and Estonian troops then considered the Germans, not the Bolsheviks, to be the greatest threat. Baltische Landeswehr units opened fire on a passing Estonian armoured train near Cēsis on June 5, and on June 6 German troops began the siege of the city. The fighting dragged on for several days, but the Germans were unable to take the city, so an armistice was signed on June 10. The British government, which had been distrustful until then, demanded that the German troops be withdrawn to the vicinity of Riga, but Goltz refused. The British then demanded that half of the German troops be sent home and that the Ulmanis government be reinstated. Goltz wanted to put an end to the matter with a quick attack. On June 19, the German troops launched a new offensive, but were stalled on the first day due to Estonian resistance, and were pushed back to their original positions on the 22nd. The Germans continued to fight for days without success, and finally signed an armistice on July 3, which ordered the German troops back to the Jelgava area. On July 5, the Latvians entered Riga, and on July 8, the Ulmanis government returned.<sup>42</sup>

Goltz looked for a new ally and found one in the Russian general Bermond-Avalov. Bermond-Avalov was originally under the command of Yudenich, but refused his orders to go to Estonia and instead fought in Latvian and Lithuanian territory. On September 26, disregarding Berlin's definite order, Goltz transferred the German troops under the command of Bermond-Avalov, as his stay had become very uncertain. On September 27, the situation changed

<sup>37</sup> GOLTZ 1920. 120–137.

<sup>38</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 378–379.

<sup>39</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 380–384.

<sup>40</sup> GOLTZ 1920. 195.

<sup>41</sup> HATLIE 2014. 124–126.

<sup>42</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 387–395.

significantly, as the British government issued an ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of German troops, otherwise the wartime blockade would be restored. As a result, the German government acted much more forcefully against Goltz's move.<sup>43</sup>

Goltz and Bermond-Avalov took a risk and launched an attack on Riga on October 8, but Goltz handed over command on the 14th and returned to Germany. The attack of the German-Russian troops stalled, and the Latvian army, supported by British and French warships, pushed them back. On November 16, the German-Russian army was pushed back to the Jelgava area, and the Latvian army began to push them back. The last enemy formation was chased across the Lithuanian border on November 30, but they stopped there, at the suggestion of the Allied delegation.<sup>44</sup>

After the German-Russian army had left, the Bolsheviks continued to occupy Dvinsk. To resolve this, a joint Latvian-Polish operation was planned, as Piłsudski did not look favorably on the presence of Bolshevik forces in the Dvinsk area. The attack took place on January 3, 1920, and the 40,000-strong Polish-Latvian force (30,000 of which were Poles) swept away the Bolshevik troops, and the fighting ended by January 5. Piłsudski ceded the area to Latvia, allaying Latvian fears that Poland would retain the area.<sup>45</sup>

## LITHUANIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Lithuania was highly isolated when the Germans withdrew. The German involvement in the establishment of the Taryba resulted in it being seen by many as an illegitimate government. It was not until September 23, 1919 that the British government recognised Lithuania as a de facto state, like Estonia and Latvia.<sup>46</sup>

The German troops in Lithuania were of low combat value and did not want to participate in the anti-Bolshevik battles. Due to the Bolshevik and Polish threats, the Lithuanian government ordered the formation of an army as early as November 23, 1918. Seeing the opportunity, Stalin sent Lithuanian communists under the leadership of Vincas Mickevičius-Kapsukas to Vilnius. On December 8, they reached the city and established the Provisional Lithuanian Revolutionary Government, which requested the Red Army to intervene on their behalf. The use of this scenario was an important tool of Soviet foreign policy throughout the existence of the Soviet Union.<sup>47</sup>

The Lithuanian government expanded its military recruitment and took out a loan in Germany to recruit German soldiers. The call attracted most of the soldiers from Saxony, and their number was constantly increasing. The Bolshevik offensive began on December 22 and Švenčionys and Zarasai fell into their hands. On January 5, they reached Vilnius, where the local Polish resistance organization was still successfully fighting the Lithuanian communists, but it no longer had a chance against the Red Army. In order to allow a free retreat, the regular German forces remaining in Lithuania did not intervene, so the Red Army practically had no significant forces in front of it. Despite this, the offensive slowed down greatly, as the multi-front war did not allow the Bolsheviks to exploit their positional advantage. The first attack

<sup>43</sup> DBFP 1949. 127.

<sup>44</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 395–400.

<sup>45</sup> DAVIES 2003. 76–77.

<sup>46</sup> DBFP 1949. 567.

<sup>47</sup> TARULIS 1959. 20–32.

on Kaunas was launched only on February 13, but it was stopped by Lithuanian and German volunteer units.<sup>48</sup>

The Poles saw an opportunity to capture Vilnius. Polish troops attacked the city on April 18 and took it on the 21st. The capture of the city put a huge strain on Polish-Lithuanian relations, but the Lithuanians, due to the military balance of power, temporarily accepted the loss of the city. The Lithuanian army launched an offensive on May 3 and by the end of June practically managed to drive the Bolsheviks out of the country, leaving only the Zarasai area in their hands. There were no major clashes there, and the Red Army was forced to retreat due to a lack of reinforcements.<sup>49</sup>

In June 1919, Bermond-Avalov's troops appeared in Lithuania and took control of several cities. They lacked supplies, so their activities were limited to the capture of a few northern cities. As in Latvia before, the Allies proposed here to allow the Russian-German troops to march through the country towards Germany. The Lithuanian government agreed, because the only important thing was that the army should not be in Lithuania. The last German soldiers left the Baltics.<sup>50</sup>

The most problematic issue that remained was the status of Vilnius. The French, in their proposal of June 28, 1919, proposed drawing a demarcation line that would have left Vilnius in Polish hands. Naturally, the Lithuanians considered the proposal unacceptable.<sup>51</sup> The dispute was finally settled by Polish arms. During Tukhachevsky's Vistula Campaign of 1920, the city fell back into the hands of the Bolsheviks. Lithuania concluded peace with Soviet Russia on 14 July 1920, and then provided military support, in return for which it would have received Vilnius. The Polish-Lithuanian Compromise was finally concluded on 7 October. Before it came into effect, Lucjan Żeligowski led a detachment to Vilnius where he launched a coup and proclaimed Central Lithuania. Similar to the Bolshevik method, he requested the help of the Polish state, which finally annexed it in 1922.<sup>52</sup>

## SUMMARY

Between 1914 and 1919, three major powers tried to assert their will in the Baltics, but none of them achieved complete success. Soviet Russia attempted to regain the territories lost in 1918, but the multi-front engagement, as well as the losses caused by the World War and then the Civil War, did not allow them to successfully occupy the territories. Germany, despite losing the war in the west, did not want to give up the territorial gains in the east. According to its logic, it had already won the war in the east in March 1918. Despite having the will and the ability to gain territory in the Baltics, the Allies did not want to compensate the defeated Germany with eastern territories, its status as a defeated state did not allow it to take advantage of the opportunity. Great Britain saw the territory as part of an anti-Bolshevik intervention. It only partially achieved its goal. The area did not fall under Bolshevik rule, but the operation to capture Petrograd failed. At the end of the war, Great Britain did not have the financial resources to exploit the advantages of the victory. The failure of the great powers gave the Baltic peoples

<sup>48</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 405–417.

<sup>49</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 416–419.

<sup>50</sup> BUTTAR 2017. 422–423.

<sup>51</sup> SEEN 1966. 20.

<sup>52</sup> DZIEWANOWSKI 1969. 313–333.

the opportunity to establish their own states. The events between 1914 and 1919 fundamentally determined the relations between the states of the region, which did not change significantly in the interwar period.

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