Revista Română de Studii Baltice şi Nordice / The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies,
ISSN 2067-1725, Vol. 13, Issue 2 (2021): pp. 85-120.
Submitted: 28 June 2020; Published: 15 December 2021
DOI: 10.53604/rjbns.v13i2_5

The „soft" borders in the Baltic Sea Region, 1905-1940

Silviu Miloiu

Valahia University of Targoviste, E-mail: silviu.miloiu@valahia.ro
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0472-4212

Abstract

Borders as imaginary or physical lines that serve as elements of separation (exclusion) and unification (inclusion) are widely discussed in fields such as history, international relations theory, international relations history, strategic studies, political science, and political geography, to name a few. Recent advances in the study of border problems have reshaped the conventional research paradigm in the fields of geography and political geography. This is why, in a study on the contemporary meanings of borders co-authored by numerous famous European and North American academics, an analysis of research paradigms, concepts, and future perspectives in border studies is offered. Corey Johnson and Reece Jones see borders as a complicated network of political, social, and cultural influences as long as sovereign states dominate the planet.

This article will conduct an empirical examination of the Baltic Sea region's limits during the interwar period. It considers the complexities of borders as a twinning of political, social, cultural, economic, and psychological processes and occurrences, practically all of which are connected to a manifestation of power in its "hard" component. It is referred to as a "hard" border, pointing to the ones that divided Poland from Lithuania, or the Soviet Union from the Baltic States and the rest of the world, and as a "soft" or even "the softest" border, referring to the boundaries of the Scandinavian states during the same time period. As a

Rezumat

Granițele ca linii imaginare sau fizice care servesc ca elemente de separare (excludere) și unificare (includere) sunt discutate pe larg în domenii precum istoria, teoria relațiilor internaționale, istoria relațiilor internaționale, studiile strategice, știința politică și geografia politică, pentru a numi numai câteva. Progresele recente în tematica studiilor de frontieră au remodelat paradigma de cercetare convențională în domeniile geografiei și geografiei politice. Acesta este motivul pentru care, într-o abordare despre semnificațiile contemporane ale granițelor, în colaborare cu numeroși cercetători celebri europeni și nord-americani, a fost realizată o analiză a paradigmelor de cercetare, conceptelor și perspectivelor de viitor în studiile de frontieră. Corey Johnson și Reece Jones consideră granițele ca pe o rețea complicată de influențe politice, sociale și culturale atâta timp cât statele suverane domină planeta.

Acest articol va proceda la o examinare empirică a frontierelor din regiunea Mării Baltice în perioada interbelică. Vom privi complexitatea granițelor ca pe o îngemănare a structurilor, proceselor și evenimentelor politice, sociale, culturale, economice și psihologice, toate acesta fiind conectate la o manifestare a puterii în componenta sa „dură". Sunt denumite granițe „dure" cele care despărțeau Polonia de Lituania sau Uniunea Sovietică de țările baltice și restul lumii, și granițe „soft" cele ale națiunilor scandinave în aceeași perioadă de timp. Ca un complement al ideologiilor naționale, noțiunea

complement to national ideologies, the notion of political and surveillance checkpoints would be an extension of Anssi Paasi's dual vision of discursive and emotional spaces (encompassing acquisition, exclusion, protection, love, hate, and violence). Liam O'Dowd's case for the need of understanding the history of state-building processes is compelling. While our study will concentrate on state and supranational processes, it will also examine border-related activities at the local and regional levels.

de puncte de control politice și de supraveghere ar fi o extensie a viziunii duale a lui Anssi Paasi asupra spațiilor discursive și emoționale (cuprinzând achiziție, excludere, protecție, iubire, ură și violență). Argumentul lui Liam O'Dowd cu privire la nevoia de a înțelege istoria proceselor de construire a statului este convingător. Deși studiul nostru se va concentra asupra proceselor statale și supranaționale, va examina și activitățile legate de frontieră la nivel local și regional.

Keywords: Baltic Sea Region, 20th century, discursive and emotional boundaries, soft borders, hard borders

CC BY-SA License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0)

1. Introduction, concepts, objectives, periodization

Borders as imaginary or physical lines that fulfill the dual function of elements of separation (exclusion) and unification (inclusion) are widely addressed in fields such as history, international relations theory, history of international relations, strategic studies, political science, and political geography, to name a few. There is a rift in theories of international relations about how to define borders, for example, between realism and neorealism, liberalism and neoliberalism, as well as between the English school, Marxism and critical theory proponents, and constructivists. Those who disagree with the realists' conception of the border as a demarcation dividing the rule-based territory of the sovereign nation-state from the anarchic international environment have argued against it for over a century already. As long as we stick to the national state paradigm, scholars like Nicolae Titulescu, or Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, in their 1977 book "Power and Interdependence"[1], have talked about the "complex interdependence" that binds states, while others, like Karl Deutsch and Ernst Haas, have used the metaphors of ramifications to describe the transference of loyalty to a new centre which gradually assumes jurisprudence to the detriment of the

[1] Robert O. Keohane, and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977).

nation-state.[2] For example, the former, a long-serving Romanian foreign minister, diplomat, and politician who had long fought for peace and anti-revisionism, argued in a speech delivered in Cap Martin on April 11, 1937, entitled « L'Intangibilité des frontières est la condition première de la concorde internationale » (The intangibility of borders is the first prerequisite of international agreement) that:

> I have always held that it is not the revision of boundaries, nor the relocation of evil that creates the border, but the spiritualization of the border via the removal of the impediments that define the boundary that would bring countries harmony.[3]

Recently, new approaches to studying border issues have arisen in the domains of geography and political geography, reshaping the traditional research paradigm. This is why, in a scholarship on the modern meanings of borders signed by several eminent European and North American experts, an examination of research paradigms, ideas, and directions of development

---

[2] Ernst B. Haas, The Uniting of Europe, London: Stephens, 1958. Later adjustments of the theory in Ernst B. Haas, "Does Constructivism Subsume Neo-functionalism?," in *The Social Construction of Europe*, ed. Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jørgensen, Antje Wiener, London: Sage Publications, 2001, 22-31; Karl W. Deutsch, *Political Community at the International Level*, New York: Doubleday, 1954. Newer analysis of Karl W. Deutsch's perspectives, at P. Drulák, R. Druláková, "The richness of the liberal tradition in international relations: Karl Deutsch on political community and the European integration", *International Relations* 28, no. 3 (2014): 333-349.

[3] « J'ai toujours soutenu que ce n'est pas la révision des frontières, que ce n'est pas le déplacement du mal que constitue la frontière, mais que c'est la spiritualisation de la frontière par la destruction des entraves qu'elle représente qui fera le bonheur des nations. » He continue maintaining that « on arrive à la conclusion que ceux qui veulent changer les frontières sont une infime minorité par rapport à ceux qui veulent les conserver. Pourtant il est inconcevable que de vouloir provoquer un trouble planétaire pour donner satisfaction à quelques-uns au détriment de tous. » ("when it comes to the issue of borders, we find that those who desire to modify them are a small percentage of the population. However, it seems implausible to wish to wreak global havoc in order to appease a few."), Nicolae Titulescu, « L'Intangibilité des frontières est la condition première de la concorde internationale », in Nicolae Titulescu, *Opera politico-diplomatică 1 ianuarie 1937-31 decembrie 1937*, eds. George G. Potra, Delia Razdolescu, Daniela Boriceanu, Ana Potra, and Gheorghe Neacșu, București: Fundația Europeană Titulescu, 2007, 254.

in border studies is provided. As long as sovereign nations rule the globe, Corey Johnson and Reece Jones see boundaries as a complex web of political, social, and cultural forces. While some people in more developed countries believe that borders would disappear as a result of nation-state socialization and globalization in the early 1990s, others are more concerned about immigration, terrorism, and recurring economic, social and political crises that are affecting countries, leading them to adopt national policies to combat them, often in concert. However, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, many researchers still see borders as a means of separating or segregating people. In many cases, they are still "pools of emotions, anxieties, and memories that may be easily mobilized for both progressive and regressive objectives," as Anssi Paasi puts it. Borders also have the appearance of checkpoints and monitoring in addition to this emotional and discursive feature based on national ideologies and identities. Because of the rapid pace at which the world is changing, new ideas have had to be continuously cultivated and refined in order to remain relevant. Processes, practices, rhetoric, symbols, institutions, and processes associated with power constitute what we mean by the term "frontiers." There is a connection between them and procedures at all levels of government, including national and international.[4]

Northern Irish sociologist Liam O'Dowd has brought history back to the forefront of border studies by discussing the misunderstanding of the complexity of the border issue in an increasingly globalized society. Three major consequences of this "privilege of space over time" or "pseudo-history," as the author calls it, are addressed in the first section of his article: "exaggerated claims to novelty of contemporary border changes, the historical repositories of state formation processes," and "failure to recognise the distinctiveness of contemporary state borders and how they differ from other borders in their complexity and globality." To provide just one example, the debate over sovereignty and territorial integrity has always been a fluid one, with precedents in places like the Middle East and Eastern

[4] Corey Johnson, Reece Jones, Anssi Paasi, Louise Amoore, Alison Mountz, Mark Salter, Chris Rumford, "Interventions on rethinking' the border 'in border studies", *Political Geography* , no. 30 (2011): 61-69.

Europe offering more clues than those in Western Europe or North America. "Sustained attempts to capture and develop linkages between four dimensions of infrastructural power: economic, politico-juridical, ideological-cultural, and military/policing," is how O'Dowd sees state boundaries. To understand the meaning and nature of boundaries is crucial in a context where military force and cultural relevance are prioritized by certain governments while others place more emphasis on their homogeneity, for example. According to O'Dowd, "the arbitrary power and coercion which went into the creation of state borders in the first place, as well as the subsequent processes of post-hoc legitimation, and nation and state formation" is to belittle historical border study.[5] Using the definition given by Mabel Berezin from Cornell University, borders are "metaphors of ownership" that include "acquisition, exclusion, protection," and "love, hatred, and violence."[6]

An empirical study of the Baltic Sea region's boundaries during the interwar era is the focus of this article. It takes into consideration the complexity of boundaries as a twinning of political, social, cultural, economic, and mental processes and phenomena, almost all of which are linked to a manifestation of power in its "hard" component. It is referred to as a "hard" border, that boundary that divided Poland from Lithuania, or the Soviet Union from the Baltic States and the rest of the globe, and "soft" or even "the softest" if we refer to the borders between the Scandinavian countries of the same period. The concept of political and surveillance checkpoints as a supplement to national ideologies would be an extension of Anssi Paasi's dual conception of discursive and emotional spaces (encompassing acquisition, exclusion, protection, love, hate, and violence). Liam O'Dowd's argument regarding the need to know the history of state-building processes is persuasive. Our research will focus on state and

[5] Liam O'Dowd, "From a 'borderless world' to a 'world of borders': 'bringing history back in'," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (2010): 1032-1049.

[6] Mabel Berezin, "Introduction. Territory, emotion and identity: spatial recalibration in a new Europe", in M. Berezin, M. Schain (editors), *Europe Without Borders. Remapping Territory, Citizenship and Identity in a Transnational Age* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 3.

supranational processes, but it will also include border-related activities at the local and regional levels.

The goal of our approach is not to put things in black-and-white terms, but rather to convey the "soft" meaning of borders, as was the case in Scandinavia until as late as World War II, before moving on to their "hard" meaning, and the Polish-Lithuanian border in particular. Finland is in a unique situation because of its progressive socialization amid an environment of cooperation and relative deterritorialization that Scandinavia was experiencing during the interwar period, as well as the realities of power and border tensions with the Soviet Union. Since the interwar period, we will also include the Åland Islands and their unique situation. The town of Valga/Valka, which was split in 1920 along a north-south line because of tensions between Estonia and Latvia during the interwar period is another peculiar case. Cases including Memel (Klaipėda) and Vilnius will also be examined, highlighting their historical, geographic, economic, and ethnic specificities.

The purpose of this study is to focus on the single theme of borders. Norway's peaceful secession from Sweden in 1905 marks the beginning of this timeline, which culminates in the whirlwind of World War II, when the equilibrium of the international system was destabilized by war machines.

Given the breadth of the approach, it was necessary to divide the article in two parts, which will be published in two successive editions of the journal. The first half of the article, which will be published in Vol. 13, Issue 2, will deal with soft borders in the Baltic Sea Region, while the second section will address the hard boundaries in the region.

When dealing with both Scandinavian and Baltic countries in the Baltic Sea Region, we adhere to the most current literature on regionalism in the geographical area.

2. Secession and border issues as a "soft" approach in the Baltic Sea region

One of the most war prone peoples of the early second millennium, Scandinavians had a long history of conflicts. Even though this picture has

been disputed by contemporary historians, it is impossible to wipe this image from the collective psyche because of medieval sources like monastery chronicles. Kings Gustav II Adolf (1611-1632) and King Charles XII of Sweden (1697-1718) both participated in European warfare, bringing Scandinavia into the contemporary realm of continental monarchies, with their regular inheritance disputes, religious wars, dynastic marriages, and "alliance revolutions".

The Napoleonic Wars, on the other hand, were a watershed moment in Scandinavian history. After the Napoleonic Wars, the defeat in the war with Russia, and as a result of reduced demographics and military power, Sweden first, under the leadership of the House of Bernadotte in 1810, chose to shed light on its negotiating power, culture, thriving economy, and ethnic homogeneity and relegate its military power to the background. On January 4, 1834, Sweden's King Charles XIV John addressed a secret memorandum to both the Russian and British governments that informed on Sweden's choice of complete neutrality in the event of a Russian-British conflict. According to the monarch, his kingdom became an islandic power when Finland was annexed and lost. In the west, south, and east, it was detached from the mainland. Sweden had given up any notions that would have challenged the country's survival or internal stability. The monarch said that Stockholm would avoid any war between Russia and the United Kingdom, but he hoped to build a relationship with the two countries:

> "We should not wish for anything else than to remain true to ourselves making political decisions, be ourselves maintaining our independence, and to make it quite clear that it is precisely because we have no hidden agenda."[7]

With this announcement, the king explained in the Parliament that the policy of neutrality could not be maintained unless there was a way to

[7] Ryszard M. Czarny, *Sweden: From Neutrality to International Solidarity* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 23

protect it.[8] As a consequence of insurmountable loss in 1864's so-called 2. Slesvigske Krig (Schleswig's Second War) against Prussia and Austria, Denmark took the same course.

Even before the emergence of pan-Scandinavian sentiments in the middle of the nineteenth century, the events in Denmark had a significant influence on the rest of Scandinavia. Supporters of pan-Scandinavianism, particularly among the affluent classes, argued that since Scandinavia was seen as a unified territory in terms of geography, culture, and politics, its policies should be based on consensus. However, this vision has lost some of its luster as the Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway declined to help Denmark in this battle.[9] Indeed, the origins of historical pan-Scandinavianism were equally disputed. This union, founded in the late 14th century and dissolved in the early 16th century, was re-heralded in the 19th century by the Nordic elites.[10] In Scandinavia, romantic nationalism would also take hold. For each country, there is a longing for national emancipation or a demonstration of cultural distinctiveness.[11]

It is difficult to argue that Norway and Iceland's secessions from Sweden in 1905 and 1944 were "gentle" secessions even if they were accompanied by rhetoric of ownership, exclusion, and violence. Furthermore, the argument over secession or the right to secede has resulted in more disputes than answers. Allen Buchanan examines the many pro- and con-secessionist arguments that have been put out over the years. When it comes to performing citizens' political responsibilities, it is necessary to reach a sense of unity, which in turn leads to the assumption that those who seek it have a right to secede. Of course, it's a hot-button issue. Secondly,

---

[8] Edward L. Killham, *The Nordic Way. A Path to Baltic Equilibrum* (Washington: The Compass Press, 1993), 18.

[9] Bo Stråth, "The Illusory Nordic Alternative to Europe," in *Cooperation and Conflict* , no. XV (1980): 104.

[10] C. S. Browning, P. Joenniemi, "From fratricide to security community: Re-theorising difference in the constitution of nordic peace." in *Journal of International Relations and Development* 16, no. 4 (2013): 502-504; R. Hemstad, "Scandinavianism," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 13, no. 1 (2018): 18–21.

[11] Harald Gustafsson, "A state that failed? On the Union of Kalmar, Especially its Dissolution", in *Scandinavian Journal of History* 31, No. 3-4 (September 2006): 206.

there is the notion of the right of peoples to self-determination, which acquired a lot of traction after World War One and was adopted by both the Entente and the vanquished states, including Soviet Russia. A similar notion was subsequently employed by totalitarian governments. If the concept is to be accurately interpreted, it must be used with care when describing pre-Wilson "14 Points" situations. Secession was also justified on the grounds of redressing historical injustices. A group of people who were inadvertently absorbed into another state has the right to secede. Finally, Buchanan argues that if the government's economic policies and programs persistently disfavor a group of individuals, then redistribution in the form of discriminatory redistribution is warranted. The right of the state to self-defense, the paternalistic notions of the tutelary state, the invocation of the risk of anarchy, and so on were all used as arguments against secession.[12]

Special studies have also been conducted on the mechanisms used to carry out secession. There are a number of researchers such as Robert A. Young who are interested in understanding how peaceful secession progresses. Young concludes from his empirical investigation that secession is a result of long-running constitutional or political disagreements, which lead to the secessionist state announcing its decision to separate. Despite the strong feelings that this choice evokes in the preceding state, a critical step is the acceptance of the notion of secession and the beginning of discussions between the two sides. There is a tendency for governments on both sides to expand and strengthen by bringing together a number of political groups in order to be better prepared to cope with the problem, and there is an incentive for avoiding turning to violence. As a result, there is a limited list of items for negotiation, and decisions are reached swiftly. Constitutional secession does not need considerable changes to the existing constitution as a result of the division between the two states. When it comes to secession, the Great Powers typically play a significant role.[13]

---

[12] Allen Buchanan , "Toward a Theory of Secession," in *Ethics* 101, No. 2 (Jan., 1991): 322-342.
[13] Robert A. Young, "How Do Peaceful Secessions Happen?", *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 27, No. 4 (Dec., 1994): 773-792

Norwegian independence from Sweden-United Norway's Kingdom is best understood, according to the essay of Young, in light of romantic nationalism's aspirations in the second half of 19th century and of redressing historical injustices claimed by Norwegian intelligentsia. There was a tight relationship between Norway and Denmark that was severed by the Treaty of Kiel of January 14, 1814, when King Frederik VI renounced Denmark's authority over Norway, a territory that now belonged to Sweden. In spite of Norway's wide range of autonomy (each nation kept its citizenship, ministries and parliaments as well as bureaucracy and the administration of justice), the Norwegians never intimated that they would reconcile this annexation by Sweden. An attempt by Sweden in the sixth decade of the 19th century to create an integrated parliament failed in 1871.[14]

It has been more common for Norwegians to fight for the repeal of the Act of Union since the 1890s. Especially in terms of foreign policy, Sweden was determined to maintain the major decision-making levers based in Stockholm. In the 1891 election, the Norwegian Venstre (Left) Party's manifesto included the establishment of a distinct consular service for Norway. The King of Sweden, who felt harmed in his duties, used his veto right in 1893 to reject a law of the Norwegian parliament that corresponded to a declaration of independence in the field of foreign affairs.[15] Emil Stang (1834-1912) and his Conservatives formed a new administration from 1893 to 1895 when the Liberals went into opposition. When Norway closed its borders to import Swedish cattle in 1892, despite a free trade agreement signed between Stockholm and Oslo in 1874, it was a stressful time in Norway-Sweden ties. Although the decision was made out of combined concern for the development of foot-and-mouth disease in Sweden, economic considerations, and nationalist emotions, it was likely to redraw the boundary between the two countries and destroy their union. [16]

---

[14] Ibid., 778.

[15] Arnold H. Barton, *Sweden and Visions of Norway: Politics and Culture, 1814-1905* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 75.

[16] Guðmundur Hálfdanarson, "From one, to two, to five. On the break-up of political unions in the Nordic Region ", in *Scandinavian Journal of History* 31, No. 3-4 (September 2006): 202-203.

A governmental coalition was created as a result of rising tensions between Norway and Sweden. In the last three years, the Norwegian parliament had enacted legislation that would allow the country to fly a flag without the union with Sweden's flag insignia in the canton.[17] On the third ballot in 1898, the act became law without the king's permission. Norwegians also wanted their own foreign ministry, with Sigurd, the son of writer Henrik Ibsen, leading the charge.[18]

The Swedes reacted angrily to Norway's actions since they had the backing of Norwegian conservatives. When the Norwegians refused to give up their aspirations to independence, the Swedish General Staff threatened them with military action. In 1895 and 1898, the Norwegians started building defenses along their border and took command of four sophisticated vessels. It appeared as though war was looming on the horizon.[19]

Despite the threats, Norwegians persisted in their demand for a distinct consular service, and some of its most prominent leaders initiated a worldwide press campaign on their behalf. Similarly to the notion of consensus as the foundation of interactions between an ethnic community and the guardianship state previously discussed, Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930) remarked that any union in which a people was restrained from expressing their freedom was and would stay in danger.[20]

A naval entrepreneur in Bergen, Christian Michelsen (1857-1925), came up with a political approach that eventually led to independence and the union was dissolved quietly. The Norwegian representatives at the court of King Oscar II (1872-1907) used Michelsen's strategy to present the king with a bill establishing a consular service. Because Oscar II believed the law was unconstitutional, he refused to approve it on May 27, 1905. This led to

---

[17] Roald Berg, "Norway's Foreign Politics during the Union with Sweden, 1814-1905: A Reconsideration," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 31, no. 1 (2020): 8-9.

[18] Barton, 70-78.

[19] Tony Griffiths, *Scandinavia* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 1993). 2nd revised edition, first edition 1991, 71.

[20] Raymond E. Lindgren, *Norway-Sweden: Union, Disunion, and Scandinavian Integration* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 103-104; Olav Tysdal, "The dissolution of the union between Norway and Sweden and the Scandinavian Americans," *Scandinavian Studies*, 79, no. 2 (2007), 167-196.

the resignation of the whole Norwegian government, and the monarch took no action to nominate a successor.[21] By adopting a statement on June 7, 1905, the Norwegian parliament stated that the king had failed to create a new cabinet and was thus unable to perform his constitutional monarchy obligations. Because of this, the monarchy had ceased to exert power and the union based on a common ruler, as seen by the Norwegians, had ended. It had been requested by the parliament of Norway that Michelsen stay in office and accept the responsibilities of monarch.[22]

In 1905, the separation of Norway from Sweden had a significant impact on the rest of Europe. For example, in Transylvania, which was then under the control of Austria-Hungary, Romanian Transylvanian people hailed it as a sign of good fortune for their own aspirations for national liberation. The Romanian Transylvanian newspaper *Gazeta Transilvaniei* noted that:

> If we examine the subject more closely and objectively, we must recognize that the success of Norwegian liberation speaks more in favor of the Romanian, Slavic, and German peoples than it does in support of the ultimate Hungarian race's dominance and domination. In Norway, it is first and foremost a question of satisfying the people, who are homogenous and unified in their national traditions and postulates.[23]

Other Romanian publications, such as *Tribuna*[24] and *Telegraful Român*[25], echoed the sentiment.

When it came to preserving the reign over a foreign people, several Hungarian publications sought to minimize its significance[26] or to confine themselves to an investigation of Norwegian-Hungarian ties.[27] Others, such

---

[21] Lindgren, 489-494.
[22] Griffiths, 113-114.
[23] *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, iunie 1905 (Anul 68, nr. 120-142), 1905-06-01, nr. 120.
[24] *Tribuna*, mai 1905 (Anul 9, nr. 81-101), 1905-05-28, nr. 100.
[25] *Telegraful Roman*, 1905 (Anul 53, nr. 1-140), 1905-05-31, nr. 58.
[26] *Az Ujság*, 1905. június/2 (3. évfolyam, 166-180. szám)1905-06-16, 166. szám
[27] *Magyar Kereskedők Lapja*, 1905. július-december (25. évfolyam, 26-52. szám)1905-07-01, 26. szám

as *Pesti Hírlap*, contended on December 1, 1905, that the crowned heads of state needed to rule their citizens well enough in order to maintain allegiance and devotion.[28]

During a referendum held on August 13th, 368,208 Norwegians voted for independence, while just 184 individuals favored keeping the country together at a participation rate of 84%.[29] Senior Swedes had spoken out against waging war to keep the country together. A general strike by Sweden's Social Democrats, led by Hjalmar Branting (1860-1925), was threatened if the government used force to defend the Union, and King Oscar II stated in Parliament that "the Union is worthless if it is to be maintained by force".[30] A conflict was avoided because of the likelihood that the Great Powers would isolate Sweden if it went to war with them as the Swedish Conservative cabinet came to recognize.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, specialists were interested in the issue of post-secession peacekeeping in light of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. However, as Jaroslav Tir points out in his examination of these topics, disputes may occur even in the event of peaceful secession. For example, a change in administration or attitude on the side of the country from which a peaceful secession took place might lead to conflict.[31]

Sweden and Norway, on the other hand, did not confront this problem. On August 31st-September 22nd, the Karlstad discussions took place, which included a wide range of topics related to Norway's new sovereign status and the fortifications along its border.[32] The Swedish king abdicated on October 26, 1905, when his claim to be Norway's ruler was denied. To succeed him, the Norwegians requested that the Danish Prince Christian Frederik Carl Georg Valdemar Axel take over the crown as Haakon

---

[28] *Pesti Hírlap*, 1905. december (27. évfolyam, 332-360. szám). 1905-12-01, 332. szám
[29] Lindgren, 491.
[30] Young, 781.
[31]Jaroslav Tir, "Keeping the Peace after Secession: Territorial Conflicts between Rump and Secessionist States," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 9, No. 5 (Oct., 2005), 735-737.
[32] Lindgren, 172-194.

VII of Norway (1905-1957).[33] He would turn out to be one of Norway's most beloved kings. Other than that, though, the discussions worked out well for both parties. Accordingly, Norway agreed to destroy its border fortifications with Sweden, create a neutral border zone, sign an arbitration agreement to avoid future conflicts, and provide equal rights of passage and access to cross-border waterways.[34]

Roald Berg and Eva Jakobsson believe that the signing of the Convention on Watercourses (agreed on September 23) on behalf of the Swedish government helped to keep peace during Norway's independence. Watercourses that originate in one nation and flow through the territory of another country, as well as surrounding lakes, were addressed in the six articles of the Convention in a way that ensured no one was impacted. Other hydrotechnical activities, such as embankment construction, were also regulated. This controlled the flow of five main rivers from Sweden and ten important rivers from Norway. This agreement also regulates how local communities make use of these waterways. Water regime conventions signed by Norway and Sweden helped to a pluralistic security system in Scandinavia that precluded violence as a method of settling problems and tensions between nations in the long term.[35]

Iceland has likewise used a constitutional approach to secession in the process of separating from Denmark. One of Gumundur Hálfdanarson's articles on this topic points out that the long process of secession from Iceland, which had been an integral part of Denmark for about four centuries, claimed only one victim in 1849. A Danish district governor (amtmand) died of a stroke just days after a group of 70 Icelanders gathered outside his headquarters demanding national freedom. The central government and the people of Iceland had coexisted peacefully for a long time. Because it was a remote, thinly inhabited province distant from the royal seat of power, the Danish authorities had little control over implementing an effective administrative strategy. On the other hand,

[33] Barton, 82.

[34] Lindgren, 172-194.

[35] Roald Berg, Eva Jakobsson, "Nature and diplomacy: the struggle over the Scandinavian border rivers in 1905", *Scandinavian Journal of History* , 31, No. 3-4 (September 2006): 271-273.

Iceland was able to maintain its autonomy due to the fact that Icelandic is the primary language of the church and the court. The bulk of the administrative staff was made up of Icelanders. Even the Danish monopoly on Icelandic commerce was credited to the merchants who put it in place rather than the central authority in Copenhagen, which had made the decision.[36]

Romantic nationalism had a significant role in shaping Iceland's national character and influencing the interplay between central and peripheral authority, much like in Norway. Icelandic students at the University of Copenhagen - in a Danish milieu - were the first to develop a romantic nationalist movement that emphasized Iceland's cultural history (Icelandic medieval language and literature, rich culture, glorious past). Prior to the mid-19th century, Denmark's control had been seen favorably, but now it was regarded as the primary cause of decline and poverty. Regaining Iceland's national freedom - the key to economic and social growth, as Liberal nationalist Jón Sigursson [Jón Sigurðsson] argued in 1841.[37] After 1851, a growing number of people called for Iceland to become a sovereign country, as the only option to stop the decline that began with Iceland's loss of independence in 1262.[38] As a result, a statute on the coming into effect of the Danish Constitution of 1849 was rejected by the Constituent Assembly sitting in Reykjavik in the summer of that year.[39] Iceland's autonomy was therefore declared under the Assembly's own constitutional statute. For the better part of two decades, relations between Denmark and Iceland have been at a standstill. The Icelanders succeeded entirely on their own. As Iceland's internal affairs grew increasingly independent from

---

[36] Guðmundur Hálfdanarson, "Iceland: A Peaceful Secession ," in *Scandinavian Journal of History* 25, No. 1-2 (2010): 89.

[37] Hannes H. Gissurarson regards Jon Sigurdsson as Iceland's first liberal and a staunch proponent of free trade on the British model, Hannes H. Gissurarson, "Liberalism in Iceland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, " *Econ Journal Watch* 14, no. 2 (05, 2017): 242-247.

[38] Guðmundur Hálfdanarson, "Severing the ties - Iceland's journey from a union with Denmark to a nation-state", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 31, No. 3-4 (September 2006): 242; Kristín Loftsdóttir, "Becoming Civilized: Iceland and the Colonial Project during the 19th Century," *Kult* , no. 7 - Special Issue: Nordic Colonial Mind (Spring 2010): 47-48.

[39] Gissurarson, 245.

Denmark, it was granted its own constitution in 1874 and full autonomy in 1904.[40] An Icelandic Foreign Minister was to be part of the Danish government, but to reside in Reykjavík and be accountable to the Icelandic Parliament, Alþingi.[41]

It was only after the conclusion of World War I in 1918 that the Act of Union was signed, which made Denmark a dual monarchy with two independent nations ruled by the same king. In the summer of 1918, a committee of Danish and Icelandic politicians negotiated the agreement. Not only did the Icelandic arguments aim at accentuating the nation's unique culture, customs, and history, but they also insisted that this was the only path to the country's full development and prosperity. The Icelanders stressed the uniqueness of their country from the start of their meetings with the Danish delegation:

> The Icelandic nation is the only Germanic nation that retains its old language that was used in all the Nordic countries 900-1000 years ago […] Along with the language, the people have kept a separate nationality, customs and a distinct culture. And, through language, the consciousness of the special status of the country in relation to our related nations has always survived within the [Icelandic] nation. We believe that these circumstances […] give us the historical and natural right to total independence. [42]

Iceland's departure from Sweden was less difficult than Norway's because of the monarchical bond between the two countries, the signature of the Act of Union, which gave the king broad constitutional powers, and factors such as geographical remoteness and lower economic importance. In a conciliatory tone, Carl Th. Zahle, Denmark's prime minister, highlighted the official attitude of Denmark on the Icelandic claims:

> It may never be in the interest of a small nation like Denmark to try to oppress one that is even smaller. We must, as firmly as possible, uphold

[40] Eva Marín Hlynsdóttir. "Autonomy Or Integration: Historical Analysis of the Debate on the Purpose of Icelandic Local Self-Government." *Stjórnmál Og Stjórnsýsla* 14, no. 1 (2018): 88.
[41] Hálfdanarson 2006, 244-247.
[42] Hálfdanarson 2010, 91.

> the right of every nation to lead its own independent and autonomous life. Since Icelanders now claim that they have enough strength, because of their growing population, their economic situation, their political development and the status of their culture, to live their own national life, then only they, and not us or anyone else, they have the right to decide if they are right in their assessment.[43]

While elsewhere in Europe the Great War for dominion and territorial gains had just concluded and the spirit of retribution had already taken root in the hearts of the losers, Denmark's Parliament ratified the Union Act in late November (it entered into force on December 1, 1918).

Later, Iceland's political life would be independent until the onset of World War II, when British and American troops settled in the country in 1940 and 1941, respectively.[44] At Þingvellir, where Alþingi's millennium celebration had taken place in 1930, Iceland declared its independence on June 17, 1944. On the same day, the Republic of Iceland's Constitution was ratified.[45] It was only during World War II that Iceland was completely cut off from Denmark; nevertheless, a provision in the Union Act permitted for the unilateral termination of that Act if the latter state chose to do so. Furthermore, a nationwide vote approved the decision.[46]

Icelandic historian Guðmundur Hálfdanarson concludes on Iceland's secession process:

> [...] The nationalist secession was […] a rather painless process. The heroes of the struggle were middle-class intellectuals, few of whom had to make a personal sacrifice for their cause. These were strategists and polemicists, but fighters only in a metaphorical sense. This has led Icelanders to generalize their experience and approach all secessionist and nationalist struggles as a no-brainer - hence the Icelandic government's

---

[43] Hálfdanarson 2006, 247.

[44] Thor Whitehead, *The Ally who came in from the Cold. A survey of Icelandic Foreign Policy* , Center for International Studies (University of Iceland Press, 1998), 13-17.

[45] Silviu Miloiu, *O istorie a Europei Nordice și Baltice. De la era naționalismului la Războiul Rece* [*A History of Northern and Baltic Europe. From the era of nationalism to the Cold War*], (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2004), 176.

[46] Young, 788.

> pride in being one of the first to recognize some of the new nation states in Eastern Europe.47

The Åland Islands dispute also serves to illustrate Northern Europe's peaceful record of conflict settlement.[48] An international organization established in the wake of World War I with the express purpose of halting international hostilities and encouraging international collaboration, the League of Nations achieved success in resolving this dispute. The Åland Islands, which are midway between Stockholm and Turku on the Kingdom of Sweden's commerce route, were part of the Grand Duchy of Finland after Russia's annexation of the country in 1809. The Åland Islands had representatives in the Porvoo Diet that consented to the annexation of Åland territory [Ahvenanmaa]. After Russia's loss in the Crimean War, the Paris Peace Treaty (signed on March 30, 1856) mandated in Article 33 that these islands be demilitarized.[49] A German air raid on the islands on July 25, 1916, affected the islanders during World War I.

In mid-February 1918, Sweden deployed a military expedition to the Åland Islands to "defend" the local inhabitants from Russian soldiers stationed there together with a Finnish Civil Guard division. The conflict between Sweden and Finland over the Åland islands started in earnest. Disarmament was carried out after Russian forces retreated from an island. As a result, despite Foreign Minister Johannes Hellner's assurances to the contrary, there was concern that Sweden intended to annex the archipelago. Finland, Germany, and Soviet Russia all voiced their displeasure with the Swedish government's policy. The Germans arrived on the islands in early March, and the Swedes departed in May. Eventually, a petition signed by

---

[47] Guðmundur Hálfdanarson, "Iceland…", pp. 100.

[48] Silviu Miloiu, „Suveranitate şi autodeterminare în relaţiile internaţionale: Finlanda, Liga Naţiunilor şi contenciosul Insulelor Åland (1919-1920)", in *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Contemporană. Serie Nouă* X (2011): 92-103

[49] Andrew C. Rath, *The Crimean War in Imperial Context, 1854-1856* (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 198.

7,000 Ålanders for unification with Sweden was presented to the Swedish King.[50]

In the spring of 1919, the Swedish government summoned the Paris Peace Conference to resolve the issue in a referendum without contacting its Finnish counterpart. In its declaration, Sweden said unequivocally that Finland did not have any political, linguistic, or economic foundations for this region. Despite Sweden's assertions, the Finnish government rejected them and maintained that the archipelago's residents were not subject to any kind of linguistic tyranny, as claimed by the Swedish government. Following that, the League of Nations was requested to take a look at the situation.[51] In May of the same year, the Finnish Eduskunta passed a bill providing the islanders their own legislative assembly as well as a slew of other rights and responsibilities. It also guaranteed that the Swedish language would be taught in schools, that people would retain ownership of their property, that a governor would be appointed by the inhabitants, and that voting rights would be restricted to those who were born on the archipelago less than five years before the declaration took effect.[52] Ultimately, the Ålanders turned to Sweden once again, despite the fact that they had previously attempted it once before. Under these conditions, the Finnish government imprisoned two of its settlers for treason. In the fall of 1920, the Council of the League of Nations appointed an impartial three-member committee to determine the territorial dispute between the two countries. In its May 1921 report, the

---

[50] Elena Dragomir, Silviu Miloiu, *Istoria Finlandei [History of Finland]* (Târgovişte: Cetatea de Scaun, 2010), 168-169.

[51] The Finnish view was made public by John Uggla, *The Åland Question. The summary of arguments and points of view in defense of Finland's right to the Åland Archipelago* (Helsinki, 1919) and *The Åland Question and the rights of Finland. A memorandum by a number of Finnish jourists and historians* (Helsingfors, 1920). Among the arguments put forward by the Finnish side in the last paper (many of which are common in both volumes) was the fact that 385,000 Swedish speakers lived in Finland, of which the population of Åland, numbering 25,000, was 1/15 percent. By 1909, the social and intellectual ties of the people of Åland had been made with Finland, not with Sweden. From the moment the notion of Finland crystallized (19th century), it had also incorporated Åland, etc., 4-10 et seq.

[52] Myntti Kristian, Martin Scheinin, "The Right of Domicile in the Åland Islands in the Light of Human Rights Treaties and the European Integration Process", in *Autonomy and Demilitarization in International Law: The Åland Islands in a Changing Europe*, ed. Lauri Hannikainen and Frank Horn (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997), 131-133.

panel determined that the territory belonged to Finland. Islanders were entitled to equitable treatment from Finland, but they were not allowed to secede from one state in order to become a member of another state:

> To concede to minorities ... the right of withdrawing ... because it is their wish or their good pleasure, would be to destroy order and stability within states and to inaugurate anarchy in international life; it would be to uphold a theory incompatible with the very idea of a state as a territorial and political unity.[53]

As a result, the Council of the League of Nations ruled in favor of Finland in June of 1921. Ten nations signed the Geneva Convention on Demilitarization and Neutralization of the Territory on October 20, 1921, allowing and guaranteeing the neutralization of Åland.[54] Following the signing of an informal agreement between Finland and Sweden, the Åland Self-Government Law came into force. It was later amended in 1922 and modified between 1951 and 1993, with the most recent revision being in 1993.[55]

As a result, the conflicts were resolved peacefully, despite the high level of collective emotion sparked by the short Swedish-Finnish spat that had occurred earlier. When it came to this particular disagreement, it was necessary to bring in an external arbiter who had the moral authority to address the issue at hand. The façade of the League of Nations also concealed some of Europe's most powerful nations, thus validating Robert A. Young's assessment of their role in peacefully settling international problems.

Throughout the interwar period, institutions such as the Scandinavian Parliamentary Union, founded in 1907, the Nordic Association (*Foreningen*

---

[53] Lorna Lloyd, "The League of Nations and the Settlement of Disputes," *World Affairs* 157, no. 4 (Spring, 1995): 164.

[54] Holger Rotkirch, "The Demilitarization and Neutralization of the Åland Islands: A Regime 'in European Interests' Withstanding Changing Circumstances", in *Journal of Peace Research* 23, No. 4 (Dec., 1986): 365-370.

[55] *Act on the Autonomy of Åland*, http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/1991/en19911144.pdf (accessed 22.07.2011).

Norden or Föreningen Norden[56]), created in 1919, regular meetings of Northern Europe's heads of state and government, collaboration within the League of Nations, and other initiatives aimed at fostering Nordic cooperation were established and strengthened.

Figure 1: Carl Larssons Fotografiska Ateljé AB, *Föreningen Norden Utställning i Stadshuset April 1938* [Föreningen Norden' Exhibition at City Hall April 1938], Europeana & Länsmuseet Gävleborg , https://digitaltmuseum.se/021016760564/foreningen-norden-utstallning-i-stadshuset-april-1938

This had a beneficial effect on the progress of regional cooperation. Nicolae Iorga saw a consequence of this collaboration towards the end of the third decade when traveling across Scandinavia: while crossing from Norway to Sweden, the traveler had no impression that he was entering another

[56] The organization's centennial was celebrated with the release of a monograph, Svein Olav Hansen, *Vennskap og kjennskap i 100 år: Foreningen Norden 1919–2019* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2020).

country. 'A new definition of the border has been developed,' he said, "which is the least imposing, but by no means the least restrictive."[57]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Scandinavian region's "soft" handling of disputes was distinctive. Norway and Iceland achieved independence without exchanging a single gunshot in 1905 and 1918, respectively. In Scandinavia, there were twice as many sovereign nations as there had been 13 decades earlier. Finland, which gained independence in 1917, would ultimately become a member of the Scandinavian group of states (meanwhile known as "Nordic"). David Singer and Melvin Small's analysis of interstate conflict between 1816 and 1992 revealed that northern Europe was particularly tranquil throughout that time period.[58]

The eastern Baltic area was far from tranquil throughout the interwar period. The Great Powers, primarily Germany and Russia, and the still-developing nationalist movements and institutions in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, fought several conflicts in this area. However, this does not rule out the possibility of finding a solution to a difficult problem via discussion and compromise. To provide only two examples, in the first situation of Memel (Klaipėda), the League of Nations was engaged, whilst in the second case of Valga/Valka, a Great Power was involved. Taking into consideration the willingness of the ruling class to make concessions is also crucial.

Memel has long been associated with German politics and culture, despite the province's mixed ethnic makeup, which is dominated by Lithuanians in the province's rural parts and by Germans in the town of Memel. There were calls for recognition of the Memel (also known as Klaipėda in Lithuania) by the Lithuanian delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference. According to Lithuanian delegates, Memel had been part of the Lithuanian state's tradition until 1442. President Wilson contacted the Polish Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941), who acknowledged that the area and the port were particularly important to Lithuania since they served as a sea outlet for the country's trade. A strategic role was also played by the incorporation of this

---

[57] Nicolae Iorga, *Ţeri Scandinave: Suedia şi Norvegia. Note de drum şi conferinţe* [*Scandinavian countries: Sweden and Norway. Road notes and lectures]* (Bucureşti: Ed. Casei Şcoalelor, 1929), 21.
[58] Quoted in Clive Archer, "The Nordic Area as a 'Zone of Peace'", in *Journal of Peace Research*, 33, No. 4 (Nov., 1996): 453-455.

area into Lithuania, since Niemen was an advantageous border for Lithuania. Memel was taken away from Germany by Article 99 of the Treaty of Versailles and handed up to the Allies for administration, with the intention of having it returned to Germany. It was revealed in a letter from Georges Clemenceau to Berlin that the Allies and Associating Powers refused to recognize that the temporary separation of Memel from the German state was incompatible with nationality, which was held by the vast majority of Germans at the time of the split. The French premier went on to explain that this did not legitimate the German occupation of the whole region, considering that Memel was a natural port for Lithuanian exports. In a similar vein, Supreme Allied Commander Marshal Ferdinand Foch argued for Lithuanian natural interest in the harbor.[59]

On January 10, 1920, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Japan seized control of Memel.[60] In October 1922, a special committee constituted by the Conference of Ambassadors started work on a Memorandum of Understanding, and an initial draft anticipated the signature of a 15-year Memel statute, which would transfer sovereignty of Memel to the League of Nations when Memel was established. It was agreed that a combined commission comprised of representatives from Lithuania, Poland, and the Memel Territory would be responsible for managing the port of Memel.[61]

This solution, on the other hand, did not please either side. During the month of January 1923, Lithuanian army troops joined forces with members of the Šiauliai paramilitary group to establish a special unit that was stationed near the border with Memel. On January 10, Lithuanian forces pushed into the Klaipėda area in a coup that was widely tolerated, if not applauded, by the international community. The takeover of Klaipėda took place at the same time as the advance of Franco-Belgian soldiers into the Ruhr basin, and as a result, it was cast in the shadow of this larger event. On the 17th of February,

---

[59] Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (London: John Murray Publishers, 2019), 187.

[60] AF Frangulis, ed. *Dictionaire Diplomatique,* vol. I, 1933, article on Memel (Klaipeda); see also Georg von Rauch, *The Baltic States: the years of independence. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 1917-1940* (London: Hurst, 1995), 105.

[61] Robertas Žiugžda, "Lithuania in international relations in the 1920's", in *The Baltic in international relations between the two world wars*, eds. John Hiden and Aleksander Loit (Stockholm, 1988), 64.

the Conference of Ambassadors handed to Lithuania the right of sovereignty over this province, while also requesting that Lithuania provide it extensive autonomy and grant more protections for national minorities than had previously been offered. Germany, still reeling from its military loss in 1918 and unable to respond, backed Lithuanian action, preferring the presence of Lithuanian troops in the province to the French forces.[62]

It was on May 8, 1924, that the Paris Convention on the Territory of Memel and the Statute of Memel were signed, thereby recognizing the position of the province and providing it autonomy, as desired by the Great Powers. The texts of the two papers had been written by a special committee created by the Conference of Ambassadors, and they were both signed by the president of the United Nations. Specifically, Article 2 of the Convention stated that the Memel Territory was to be treated as a unit under the sovereignty of Lithuania and that it would have legislative autonomy, as well as judicial, administrative, and financial autonomy. The Declaration on the Protection of Minorities, which was adopted by the Lithuanian Government before a meeting of the League of Nations on May 12, 1922, also applied to minorities living in the Memel Territory, according to Article 11. The treaty also addressed concerns such as the transfer of ownership, citizenship, and other such rights. According to Article 17, any member of the League of Nations has the authority to bring any crime committed against or in violation of the Convention before the League for the Prevention of Genocide. [63]

The Statute of the Memel, which has 38 articles, outlined the legal grounds of the province's autonomy in detail. The Memel Statute, according to its preamble, emphasizes "the wisdom of granting autonomy to the Memel Territory" as well as the need to "preserve the traditional rights and culture of the residents." Article 1 of the Statute is essentially a reiteration of Article 2 of the Convention. Article 2 of the Constitution of Lithuania granted the President of Lithuania the authority to select the Governor of the Memel Territory. According to Lithuanian electoral law, the residents of this province had the right to elect representatives to the Lithuanian Diet, which represented

[62] Ibid, 64-65.

[63] http://domino.un.org/pdfs/AAC25ComJerW13.pdf (accessed 5.07.2011).

their interests (Article 3). If Lithuanian law on the execution of international treaties and conventions does not in any way conflict with the Statute of the Territory, it will come into effect in Memel. Articles 10-18 provide a detailed description of the institutional decision-making procedures. The House of Representatives was to be chosen for a three-year term by a universal, equal, direct, and secret ballot system, with one representative elected for every 5,000 residents, and to wield legislative authority over the state. A limited number of seats were available for election, with only inhabitants of the Memel Territory entitled to run. The president of the chamber, as well as the members of its governing bodies, were all chosen by the members of the chamber. Following their approval, the House of Representatives' legislation had to be promulgated by the governor within a maximum of one month (or 15 days if they have been designated urgently), after which they were to be countersigned by the President of the Directorate. The governor, on the other hand, had a veto authority if these measures went beyond the scope of autonomy as outlined by the Statute. The Memel Territory Economic Council was likewise expected to continue its operations unless the House of Representatives decided otherwise. Unless they committed a heinous crime, members of the House of Representatives and members of the Economic Council were not subject to arrest, prosecution, or harassment for their conduct, save in the instance of a blatant offense. It was decided that the executive authority would be exercised by a Directorate constituted of no more than five members who would be chosen from among the residents of the Territory. The Governor selected the President of this forum, and he continued in that position as long as he had the trust of the House of Representatives in his ability to lead. Both the House of Representatives and the Directorate were endowed with the authority to bring about legislative change. The sentences handed out by the courts in the Memel Territory were applicable across the whole country of Lithuania.[64]

The local authorities' powers in exercising the autonomy of the province are defined in Article 5, and include areas such as: organization and administration of communes and districts, worship, public educational

[64] Ibid.

institutions, social assistance, health care, labor law, local railways, road transportation, regulations on foreign nationals in accordance with Lithuanian law, local police, civil and criminal law, property rights, the right to obtain citizenship, and administration of justice, direct and indirect taxes levied in the territory excluding customs duties, excise duties, monopolies on luxury goods, alcohol, cigarettes, navigation on other rivers except Niemen (Nemunas), registration of merchant vessels, and many others. The legislatures of Lithuania and Memel had the authority to enact legislation to harmonize their respective legal systems. The Memel Territory residents are defined in Article 8 of the Memel Territories Constitution, as is the process by which they might achieve the status of citizens of this province. The people of the Memel Territory were to be entitled to all of the civil rights enjoyed by their countrymen in the rest of Lithuania. Lithuanian residents living in the area of Memel were subjected to the same restrictions (Article 9). In order for people of this province to be considered Lithuanian nationals, their passports had to include a statement stating that they were citizens of the Memel Territory (Article 34). German and Lithuanian were the official languages of instruction in the Memel educational system. Aside from that, it explicitly laid out the procedures to be followed in order to alter the Statute, which can only be accomplished by expressing the will of the population in this regard.[65]

Later, on February 10, 1925, an agreement between Germany and Lithuania was reached, granting people willing to move into the Weimar Republic the opportunity to do so. A greater number of people than the German government had hoped for, around 10% of the territory's population (15,000 people), will choose to become German citizens. The Germans, on the other hand, proved to be more organized and ran on a single list (Einheitsliste) in the first elections for the House of Representatives (Seimelis) in the Memel Territory in October 1925, winning 27 seats to only two seats won by Lithuanian parties.[66]

[65] Ibid.
[66] Žiugžda, 67.

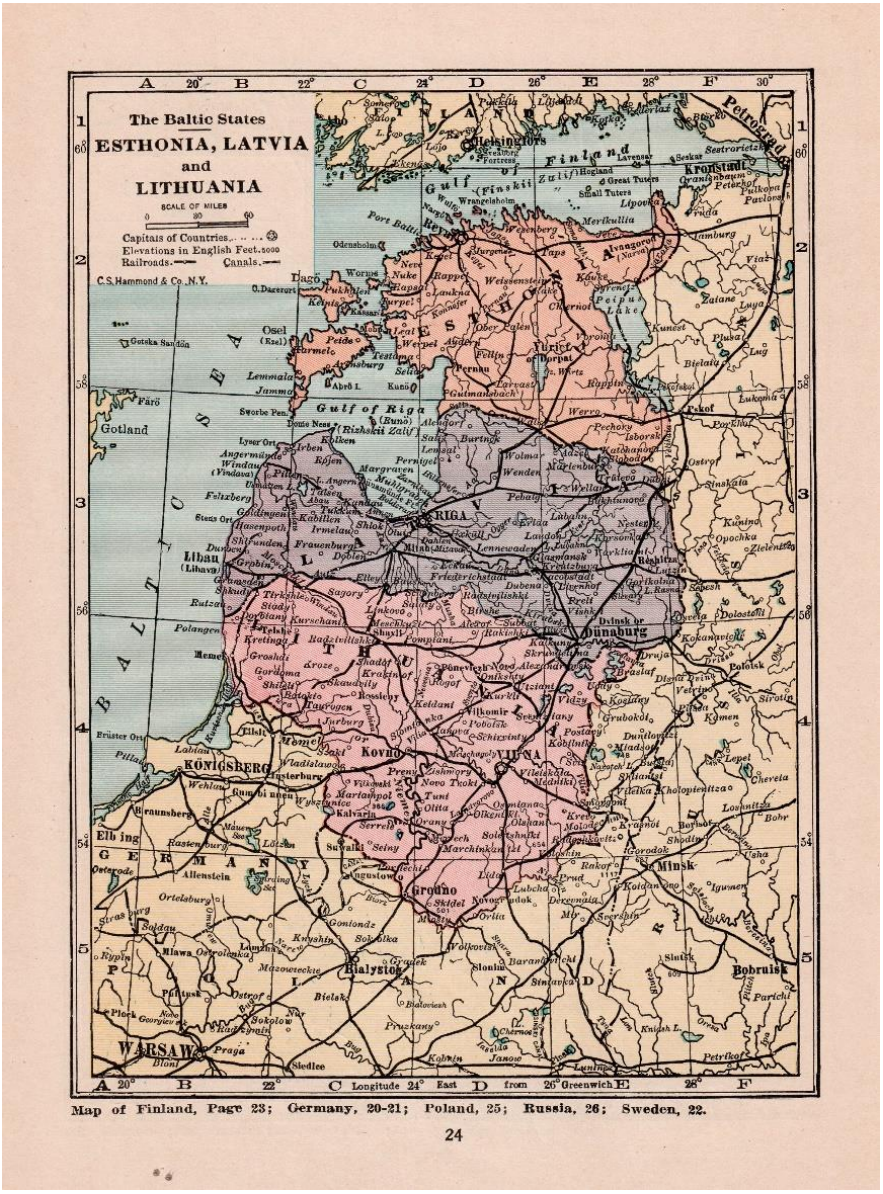

Figure 2: The Baltic states in 1923.

Source: C.S. Hammond & Company, *1923 Atlas of the World and Gazetteer* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co, 1923).

It is thus fair to say that participation in the League of Nations had indeed an important role in determining the legal status of the region of

Memel (Klaipėda). This conflict, on the other hand, will have a negative impact on Lithuania's ties with Germany in the long term. The German government approved the transfer of the Memel Territory to Lithuania in the same way as the predecessor nations eventually consented to the secession of several provinces, as detailed above. Nevertheless, Berlin was never able to come to terms with the loss of Danzig and Memel, as well as the loss of other provinces that were surrendered at the conclusion of World War I or via later deals. The significance of Memel for the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, on the other hand, should not be overestimated. The continuation of the battle with Lithuania on this region was, first and foremost, a means for the Reich to exert pressure on the Lithuanian government in Kaunas. For its part, Lithuania had difficulty reconciling itself with the constraints imposed by the Klaipėda Statute, and made many efforts to circumvent the provisions of the law. The Permanent Court of International Justice will hear a case on the Statute of the International Criminal Court on June 24, 1932, concerning some interpretations of this document. The parties were the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Japan on the one hand and Lithuania on the other. All of these countries were signatories to the Paris Convention.[67]

The resurgence of German military might in the fourth decade made it difficult to maintain the Lithuanian region of Memel. Adding to the complexity, a segment of the German minority identified with National Socialism. Lithuania did all in its power to keep the region afloat and to thwart German secession. When these tensions spread across the area, it caused a weakening of the Baltic Agreement, which was finally ratified in 1934.[68] The British ambassador to Berlin admitted in a telegraph to the Foreign Office that saving Klaipėda for Lithuania was "too much" after German candidates on the Volksdeutsche Liste had won the December 1938 elections with a substantial majority. The German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop

[67] "Interpretation of the Statute of the Memel Territory (Preliminary Objection)", http://www.worldcourts.com/pcij/eng/decisions/1932.06.24_memel1.htm (accessed 3.08.2011).

[68] Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter, AMAE), fund 71 / 1920-1944, Lithuania, 1927-1939, Vol. 4, Tel. no. 450 dated November 25, 1935 from Constantin Vălimărescu (Riga) to Nicolae Titulescu.

handed a German ultimatum to Juozas Urbys in Berlin on March 22, 1939, asking the surrender of Memel to Nazi Germany. [69] A week had passed since the Nazi conquest of the ruins of Czechoslovakia, when the ultimatum was handed out, and Lithuanian leaders realized that there was no way to mount a successful resistance campaign if they could not count on military assistance from any major power.[70] As long as Germany was unwilling to fight for Klaipėda, British diplomats deemed it pointless to resist its occupation, and on May 10th, they ultimately acknowledged its annexation by Germany.[71] This was seen as a setback by the Soviet Union, which had taken on the role of defender of Lithuania. It was, however, unwilling to engage in any military action in support of the independent state of Lithuania.[72]

In spite of the fact that Lithuanians were likely to experience intense collective emotions and a sense of national humiliation at the time of its surrender to Germany in 1939 and rejection when it was transferred from Germany to the League of Nations, and then from the League of Nations to Lithuania, the event was accompanied by a series of political tensions at the national and regional levels. In addition to a *manu militari* intervention and an ultimatum, the case of Klaipėda comes under the category of international crises that are handled using "soft" rather than "hard" measures. The Klaipėda Statute itself - despite its intermittent operation between the central government and the autonomous authorities - had been, for at least some time, a compromise solution that had contributed to the preservation of the distinctive characteristics of this province as well as the unity of the country of Lithuania. For its part, the situation in this region does not fit into the model

---

[69] Česlovas Laurinavičius. "The Lithuanian Reaction to the Loss of Klaipėda and the Combined Gift of Soviet "Security Assistance" and Vilnius" in *Northern European Overture to War, 1939-1941 From Memel to Barbarossa*. eds. Michael Hesselholt Clemmesen, and Marcus Faulkner (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 165-187. Alexander Dallin, "The Baltic States between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia," in *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917–1945*, eds. V. Stanley Vardys, Romuald J. Misiunas (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), 100-101.

[70] Bernhard Kroener, Hans Umbreit, and Rolf-Dieter Müller, *Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 31.

[71] David M. Crowe Jr., "Great Britain and the Baltic States, 1938-1939," in Vardys & Misiunas, 114-115.

[72]AMAE, Fund 71 / 1920-1944, Lithuania, 1927-1939, Vol. 4, Confidential Report of April 5, 1939 signed by Gheorghe Davidescu (Moscow) to Grigore Gafencu.

of international tension resolution described by Robert A. Young, but rather recalls Jaroslav Tir's warning about the possibility of re-opening an international crisis that had been resolved as a result of status change in 1924, and the intervention of a respected authority from the 1920s that would lose a significant amount of power until 1939: The League of Nations. Germany, under the authority of a revisionist and imperialist state, rejected the principles that had guided the political choices of the Weimar Republic and ruled in its favor by threatening with military force in the 1930s.

In contrast to the controversy over Klaipėda, which strained ties between a tiny Baltic state and a big extra-regional European power, the disagreement over Valga / Valka's affiliation stretched relations between two minor Baltic nations, Estonia and Latvia, both of which were small Baltic republics.

It has been since the interwar period that realistic and liberal schools of thought have been at odds over the issue of resolving international tensions through mediation and arbitration, with realists denying that states are willing to accept international arbitration on matters of national security. The validity of these conclusions is called into question by Todd L. Allee and Paul K. Huth, who examine the resolution of international conflicts between 1919 and 1995 and find that national leaders who anticipate significant popularity costs as a result of voluntary or negotiated surrender will resort to international mediation to avoid this image loss; the same thing happens when rivals are democratic states, when disputes involve states that have been rivals for a long time, and when disputes involve states that have been rivals for a short time.[73]

Estonia and Latvia gained their independence as a result of the same historical process, and the relationships that existed between the two adjacent countries were strong, as we shall see. The Estonians supplied military assistance to their southern neighbors during the early stages of their independence war, and the creation of diplomatic relations between the two independent republics was founded on the most auspicious of

[73] Todd L. Allee, Paul K. Huth, "Legitimizing Dispute Settlement: International Legal Rulings as Domestic Political Cover," *The American Political Science Review* 100, No. 2 (May, 2006): 221-232.

considerations. However, there is one element of their relationship that will cause tensions: the route of the boundary between the two states will be contested. During the Soviet period, the Russian governorate of Estonia encompassed only the northern portion of the area inhabited by Estonian people, which included the provinces of Tallinn and Western and Eastern Virumsaa, Raplamaa, Järvamaa, Läänemmaa, and Hiiumaa, among others. The Russian governorate of Estonia was dissolved in 1917. The remainder of the ethnic Estonian regions had been a part of the Livonia Governorate until the late nineteenth century.

The majority of these districts had a reasonably homogenous population in terms of ethnicity. However, there were few instances that resulted in competing territorial claims on particular locations, the most significant of which was the city of Valga (Estonian) or Valka (Latvian), which served as a major railway junction and was the subject of a disputed territorial claim. It did not take long for the battle to spiral out of control, and neither of the two administrations, yet unseasoned in foreign affairs and fearful of making compromises, seemed inclined to back down. When the controversy was finally presented to the British Commissioner for the Baltic Provinces, Colonel SG Tallents (1884-1958), he simply drew a line across the city, splitting it into two halves, one belonging to Latvia and one belonging to Estonia.[74] Despite this, a number of issues remained that caused tensions between the two countries for a period of time, one of which was the choice of citizenship by ethnic Latvians who had been forced to live on the Estonian side of the border and by ethnic Estonians who had been forced to live on the Latvian side of the border. These difficulties were ultimately overcome, and the conflict was brought to a close, with Estonia and Latvia continuing to be allies in international combat after the war.

We examined a number of situations of secession and boundary conflicts that were settled by discussion, negotiation, or mediation in the preceding section. Geographically, the majority of these peaceful settlements took place in the Scandinavian region, and two of the examples that have been revealed are from the Baltic region. With the exception of the Memel

[74]Andreas Kasekamp, *The Baltic States* (London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2010), 105.

dispute, they followed the procedures established by Robert A. Young in his examination of international dispute resolution. As Todd L. Allee and Paul K. Huth have noted, the Valga /Valka case has shown the significance that international mediation may have in some situations when used properly. When it came to watercourse regulation, the "pools of emotions, fears and memories" that Anssi Paasi described were subsequently utilized constructively in most situations, with the Swedish-Norwegian Convention for the Regulation of Watercourses being just an illustration.

References:

Archives:

Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter, AMAE), fund 71 / 1920-1944, Lithuania, 1927-1939, Vol. 4.

Books and articles

Allee, Todd L., Paul K. Huth, "Legitimizing Dispute Settlement: International Legal Rulings as Domestic Political Cover." *The American Political Science Review* 100, No. 2 (May, 2006): 221-232.

Archer, Clive. "The Nordic Area as a 'Zone of Peace'". *Journal of Peace Research*, 33, No. 4 (Nov., 1996): 453-455.

Barton, Arnold H. *Sweden and Visions of Norway: Politics and Culture, 1814-1905*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003.

Berezin, Mabel. "Introduction. Territory, emotion and identity: spatial recalibration in a new Europe ." In *Europe Without Borders. Remapping Territory, Citizenship and Identity in a Transnational Age.* Ed. M. Berezin, M. Schain. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2003.

Berg, Roald, Eva Jakobsson. "Nature and diplomacy: the struggle over the Scandinavian border rivers in 1905," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 31, No. 3-4 (September 2006): 271-273.

Berg, Roald. „Norway's Foreign Politics during the Union with Sweden, 1814-1905: A Reconsideration." *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 31, no. 1 (2020): 8-9.

Browning, C. S. and P. Joenniemi. „From fratricide to security community: Re-theorising difference in the constitution of nordic peace." In

Journal of International Relations and Development 16, no. 4 (2013): 502-504.

Buchanan, Allen. "Toward a Theory of Secession." In *Ethics* 101, No. 2 (Jan., 1991): 322-342.

Crowe Jr., David M. „Great Britain and the Baltic States, 1938-1939." In *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917–1945*. Ed. V. Stanley Vardys, Romuald J. Misiunas. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990.

Czarny, Ryszard M. *Sweden: From Neutrality to International Solidarity*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018.

Dallin, Alexander. "The Baltic States between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia." In *The Baltic States in Peace and War, 1917–1945*. Ed. V. Stanley Vardys, Romuald J. Misiunas. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990.

Deutsch, Karl W. *Political Community at the International Level.* New York: Doubleday, 1954.

Dragomir, Elena Silviu Miloiu. *Istoria Finlandei [History of Finland].* Târgovişte: Cetatea de Scaun, 2010.

Drulák, P., and R. Druláková, „The richness of the liberal tradition in international relations: Karl Deutsch on political community and the European integration." *International Relations* 28, no. 3 (2014): 333-349.

Frangulis, A.F. *Dictionaire Diplomatique,* vol. I, 1933.

Gissurarson, Hannes H. "Liberalism in Iceland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." *Econ Journal Watch* 14, no. 2 (05, 2017): 242-247.

Griffiths, Tony. *Scandinavia*. Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 1993.

Gustafsson, Harald. "A state that failed? On the Union of Kalmar, Especially its Dissolution." In *Scandinavian Journal of History* 31, No. 3-4 (September 2006): 206

Haas, Ernst B. „Does Constructivism Subsume Neo-functionalism?." In *The Social Construction of Europe*. Ed. Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jørgensen, Antje Wiener. London: Sage Publications, 2001.

Haas, Ernst B. *The Uniting of Europe*. London: Stephens, 1958.

Hálfdanarson, Guðmundur. " Iceland: A Peaceful Secession." In *Scandinavian Journal of History* 25, No. 1-2 (2010).

Hálfdanarson, Guðmundur. "Severing the ties - Iceland's journey from a union with Denmark to a nation-state." *Scandinavian Journal of History* 31, No. 3-4 (September 2006): 242.

Hálfdanarson, Guðmundur. „From one, to two, to five. On the break-up of political unions in the Nordic Region." *Scandinavian Journal of History* 31, No. 3-4 (September 2006): 202-203.

Hansen, Svein Olav. *Vennskap og kjennskap i 100 år: Foreningen Norden 1919–2019.* Oslo: Gyldendal, 2020.

Hemstad, R. „Scandinavianism." *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 13, no. 1, (2018): 18–21.

Hlynsdóttir. Eva Marín. "Autonomy Or Integration: Historical Analysis of the Debate on the Purpose of Icelandic Local Self-Government." *Stjórnmál Og Stjórnsýsla* 14, no. 1 (2018): 88.

Iorga, Nicolae. *Ţeri Scandinave: Suedia şi Norvegia. Note de drum şi conferinţe* [*Scandinavian countries: Sweden and Norway. Road notes and lectures].* Bucureşti: Ed. Casei Şcoalelor, 1929.

Johnson, Corey, Reece Jones, Anssi Paasi, Louise Amoore, Alison Mountz, Mark Salter, Chris Rumford. "Interventions on rethinking' the border 'in border studies." *Political Geography* , no. 30 (2011), 61-69.

Kasekamp, Andreas. *The Baltic States.* London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2010.

Keohane, Robert O. and Joseph S. Nye. *Power and Interdependence.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977.

Killham, Edward L. *The Nordic Way. A Path to Baltic Equilibrum.* Washington: The Compass Press, 1993.

Kroener, Bernhard, Hans Umbreit, and Rolf-Dieter Müller, *Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.

Laurinavičius. Česlovas. "The Lithuanian Reaction to the Loss of Klaipėda and the Combined Gift of Soviet "Security Assistance" and Vilnius"" In *Northern European Overture to War, 1939-1941 From Memel to Barbarossa*. eds. Michael Hesselholt Clemmesen, and Marcus Faulkner. Leiden: Brill, 2013, 165-187.

Lindgren, Raymond E. *Norway-Sweden: Union, Disunion, and Scandinavian Integration*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Lloyd, Lorna. "The League of Nations and the Settlement of Disputes." *World Affairs* 157, no. 4 (Spring, 1995): 164.

Loftsdóttir, Kristín. "Becoming Civilized: Iceland and the Colonial Project during the 19th Century." *Kult* , no. 7 - Special Issue: Nordic Colonial Mind (Spring 2010): 47-48.

MacMillan, Margaret. *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World.* London: John Murray Publishers, 2019.

Miloiu, Silviu. „Suveranitate şi autodeterminare în relaţiile internaţionale: Finlanda, Liga Naţiunilor şi contenciosul Insulelor Åland (1919-1920)." In *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Contemporană. Serie Nouă* X (2011): 92-103.

Miloiu, Silviu. *O istorie a Europei Nordice și Baltice. De la era naționalismului la Războiul Rece* [*A History of Northern and Baltic Europe. From the era of nationalism to the Cold War*]. Târgovişte: Cetatea de Scaun, 2004.

Myntti, Kristian, Martin Scheinin. "The Right of Domicile in the Åland Islands in the Light of Human Rights Treaties and the European Integration Process." In *Autonomy and Demilitarization in International Law: The Åland Islands in a Changing Europe*. Ed. Lauri Hannikainen and Frank Horn. The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997.

O'Dowd, Liam. „From a 'borderless world' to a 'world of borders': 'bringing history back in'." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (2010): 1032-1049.

Rath, Andrew C. *The Crimean War in Imperial Context, 1854-1856.* New York: Palgrave, 2015.

Rotkirch, Holger. "The Demilitarization and Neutralization of the Åland Islands: A Regime 'in European Interests' Withstanding Changing Circumstances," *Journal of Peace Research* 23, No. 4 (Dec., 1986): 365-370.

Stråth, Bo. "The Illusory Nordic Alternative to Europe." In *Cooperation and Conflict* , no. XV (1980): 104.

The Åland Question and the rights of Finland. A memorandum by a number of Finnish jourists and historians. Helsingfors, 1920.

Tir, Jaroslav. "Keeping the Peace after Secession: Territorial Conflicts between Rump and Secessionist States." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 9, No. 5 (Oct., 2005): 735-737.

Titulescu, Nicolae. *Opera politico-diplomatică 1 ianuarie 1937-31 decembrie 1937*. Ed. George G. Potra, Delia Razdolescu, Daniela Boriceanu, Ana Potra, and Gheorghe Neacșu. București: Fundația Europeană Titulescu, 2007.

Tysdal, Olav. „The dissolution of the union between Norway and Sweden and the Scandinavian Americans." *Scandinavian Studies* 79, no. 2 (2007), 167-196.

Uggla, John. *The Åland Question. The summary of arguments and points of view in defense of Finland's right to the Åland Archipelago.* Helsinki, 1919.

von Rauch, Georg. *The Baltic States: the years of independence. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 1917-1940*. London: Hurst, 1995.

Whitehead, Thor. *The Ally who came in from the Cold. A survey of Icelandic Foreign Policy.* Center for International Studies. University of Iceland Press, 1998, 13-17.

Young, Robert A. "How Do Peaceful Secessions Happen?." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 27, No. 4 (Dec., 1994): 773-792

Žiugžda, Robertas. "Lithuania in international relations in the 1920's." In *The Baltic in international relations between the two world wars*, eds. John Hiden and Aleksander Loit. Stockholm, 1988.

Newspapers:

Az Ujság, 1905. június/2 (3. évfolyam, 166-180. szám)1905-06-16, 166. szám

Gazeta Transilvaniei, iunie 1905 (Anul 68, nr. 120-142), 1905-06-01, nr. 120.

Magyar Kereskedők Lapja, 1905. július-december (25. évfolyam, 26-52. szám)1905-07-01, 26. szám

Pesti Hírlap, 1905. december (27. évfolyam, 332-360. szám). 1905-12-01, 332. szám

Telegraful Roman, 1905 (Anul 53, nr. 1-140), 1905-05-31, nr. 58.

Tribuna, mai 1905 (Anul 9, nr. 81-101), 1905-05-28, nr. 100.

Websites:

„Act on the Autonomy of Åland," http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/1991/en19911144.pdf (accessed 22.07.2011).

„Interpretation of the Statute of the Memel Territory (Preliminary Objection)",

„United Nations", http://domino.un.org/pdfs/AAC25ComJerW13.pdf (accessed 5.07.2011).

http://www.worldcourts.com/pcij/eng/decisions/1932.06.24_memel1.htm (accessed 3.08.2011).