Dear NYCTC participants,

Thank you for reading this paper—before you curse me for the page count, the last eight pages are images. This paper is a first draft of the planned Chapter 4 of my dissertation. It is also the first chapter that I have written. It is an attempt to reconstruct the work of the British High Commission in the Baltic Provinces in 1919-1920, and an experiment in trying to write the history of ephemeral Commissions like it.

I would like to turn this chapter into an article for publication. I think there is some awkwardness in the structure of the paper because it is in between an article and a chapter—the background section on the Baltic provinces and British power would probably go in the introduction to the dissertation but is necessary for an article, while the section on refugees and the concluding section on land would probably not fit in an article.

I am still working on some important questions that I hope you can help me with. The most important question is how to deal with the character of the authority exercised by the High Commission—what kind of power was this? It is nominally a "political" (as opposed to military or economic) commission, but how far should I follow these distinctions, and how far should I go in complicating or challenging them? The other, related, question is about how much I want to make this narrative of national viability and consolidation about property, property rights, and land reform. I am also still working to untangle the staffing hierarchy and the real roles played by other members of the High Commission. I look forward to hearing your feedback and welcome any and all comments you may have.

Sam

Places, Things, and People: Drawing New Borders in the Baltic Provinces between British Commissions and Soviet Diplomacy, 1919-1921

Drawing borders in the collapsed empires of Eastern Europe was a significant part of the peace settlement that followed the First World War. Research of the last two decades on the Paris Peace Conference has emphasized its creation of new forms of international order based on new conceptions of sovereignty and population politics.[1] Understanding the outcomes of the peace settlement also requires a focus on the role of local officials in creating these new political forms on the ground, as they shaped former imperial territories into new national states.

The British High Commission in the Baltic Provinces represented and reported on British political interests in the former western borderlands of the Russian Empire between 1919 and 1921, during which time it drew borders between the new states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Studying the work of the British High Commission allows us to move beyond questions about the shape of the postwar settlement (e.g. federated or independent states? National states or mandated territories?) by focusing on how the creation of these states and nations was practically carried out. A focus on these local practices ultimately reshapes our understanding of the postwar settlement at a larger scale. Because the new political formations of the postwar period were so fluid, impromptu innovations had far-ranging consequences. Allied leaders "experimented" with sovereignty not only in the meeting rooms of the Peace Conference but also on-site in former imperial lands, as their representatives' day-to-day activities pushed at borders and front lines and legitimized or disempowered would-be governments.[2]

[1] Eric D. Weitz, "From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions," *American Historical Review* 113:5 (Dec., 2008), 1313-1343.
[2] Leonard Smith, *Sovereignty at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

The creation of a postwar order was profoundly marked by exchanges between regions of the former Russian Empire.[3] Historians have not, however, attempted to address the interplay of processes of nation-building in different parts of the former empire, or even to compare the patterns of national-territorial construction in these interconnected and adjacent areas. Soviet nationalities policies developed in contest with other nation-building projects.[4] The multi-ethnic state eventually built on the basis of these policies has been compared to a communal apartment divided between a Russian common area and non-Russian national spaces.[5] The Soviet Union's next-door neighbors also influenced the creation of its constituent national units; rather than being separated from the Soviet family down the hall, they were claimants to space within the same house.

Focusing on the lands of the former Russian Empire, rather than on other areas of national state formation and territory-making, allows us to see how major elements of what became the nation-form evolved through the localized confrontation between British and Soviet power. At the Polish-German and Polish-Czechoslovak borders in the defeated German and Habsburg empires, and in parts of the former Ottoman Empire, nationalist forces struggled against, and represented themselves to, the single authority of the Allied powers, who despite their differences were at least fighting on the same side. In the former Russian Empire, by contrast—after a period in which the Soviet government was a relatively weak power among several others—new national entities were

[3] Cite new Ukraine – Caucasus 1917-1918 book ; Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: the Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908-1918* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[4] Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005). For the pathbreaking work on Soviet nationalities policies, see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*. For Soviet nationalities policies in the context of other imperial policies, see Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Adeeb Khalid, "Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective," *Slavic Review* 65 (2006): 231-251. For works addressing Soviet nationalities policies in an international and geopolitical context, see Alfred Rieber, *Stalin and the Struggle for Supremacy in Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Stephen Kotkin, *Paradoxes of Power*; Silvio Pons, *The Global Revolution: A History of International Communism, 1917-1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7-85.

[5] Yuri Slezkine, "The Soviet Union as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53:2 (1994), 414-452.

caught between two internationalist projects competing for world power at a local and national level. Would-be national governments sought to make use of this competition, playing these two competitors against each other, even as they were forced to accept intervention in their internal politics and to fight against common external enemies.

This chapter shows how British and Soviet officials created new national borders in what had been the Russian Empire's Baltic provinces between 1919 and 1920. What considerations led them to draw them where they did? How were these newly bounded spaces "filled in" with territory, people, and property? Following the movement of these officials across the former Russian imperial spaces of the Baltic coast, it reconstructs their daily activities and the practices of border drawing and political influence that inscribed new national borders on former imperial territory and in treaties between new states.

For British, Soviet, Latvian, and Estonian actors alike, the process of drawing borders was complicated by the question of what and who to put inside of them. Negotiations over new borders could not proceed without resolving questions of the repatriation of people and resources. Claims and counter-claims regarding refugees took up the first stages of treaty negotiations and often represented a stumbling block to more comprehensive agreements. Exchanging concessions on territorial resources by adjusting borders formed a central element of peace treaties. In order for borders to be drawn, their contents had to be known and produced. Drawing borders and filling them in with people, animals, resources, and territory were interrelated processes and involved interdependent practices.

The delimitation of boundaries and the creation of new states in turn transformed the qualities of people, territory, and things within and outside them. Refugees displaced by the German occupation, the collapse of the Russian Empire, and the Russian Revolution and Civil

War became Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians—as well as Soviet citizens—on the basis of their ability to make claims regarding their place of birth or their pre-war place of residence, or as a result of "their" government's desire to repatriate them. In conjunction with the delimitation of new borders, property in animals, forests, machinery, currency, and land was claimed and transferred by states and individuals on the basis of nationality.

In this chapter I make three claims based on an analysis of the work of the British High Commission and Soviet negotiations with the Baltic states. First, British power was preeminent in the Baltic, where it had replaced German authority after the Armistice and in directing the demobilization of German troops. British preeminence was not only based on military force but on the widespread ideological subscription to supposedly British values of national self-determination, liberal government, free trade, and the protection of property. Second, this preeminence allowed local British officials like those of the High Commission both to draw borders and to exert significant control over the internal affairs of these "independent" states, beyond their borders, though it also provided opportunities for new governments to put pressure on British and Allied authorities for concessions and aid. These forms of control were based in part on the extension and intensification of earlier British consular intervention in the Russian Empire. But, third, because of the independence of the new states, they could also appeal to and against the Soviet state in their search for recognition. After introducing the staff of the British High Commission, outlining their day-to-day activities, and revealing the power they could exert internally in the new states, independently of the Foreign Office or the Peace Conference, I turn to the work of the High Commission at the Latvian-Estonian border. Without British power, the borders between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania would not have been drawn where and how they

were. Without the contest between British and Soviet power over the recognition of the new states, their sovereignty would have been produced in different ways

The High Commission to the Baltic Provinces was headed by Stephen Tallents. Tallents's career at the Empire Marketing Board, the Post Office, the BBC, and in public relations is well known,[6] but leading the High Commission in the Baltic was an important event in Tallents's life. In his 1943 autobiography, *Man and Boy*, Tallents's time as High Commissioner occupies 14 of 32 chapters, 148 of 414 pages.[7] Many earlier episodes in the book foreshadow events from Tallents's appointment in the Baltic, which is unquestionably its climax.[8] Later, at the BBC, Tallents would record several programs recounting his Baltic "adventures" to Home Service listeners.[9]

Tallents's experiences in the Baltic ultimately shaped the techniques he would apply throughout his career. This article concludes by examining the ways in which Tallents's experiences in the Baltic shaped his understanding of the emerging boundary between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland, which he also helped to create. This legacy of the High

[6] See especially Scott M. Anthony, *Public Relations and the Making of Modern Britain: Stephen Tallents and the Birth of a Progressive Media Profession*.

[7] Stephen Tallents, *Man and Boy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943). Tallents noted that the Baltic part of his autobiographical narrative was "admittedly out of scale." Tallents, *Man and Boy*, Preface, vii.

[8] These signs repeat like totems or milestones throughout the text, pointing the way to the Baltic. From Harrow, where his main academic rival, Walter Duranty, left only to meet Tallents again "twenty years later on a bleak winter's morning in the town of Dorpat, where he had come to cover for the *New York Times* a peace conference between the Bolsheviks and the Baltic countries." Unsuccessful shooting trips on school holidays were to be redeemed by a Latvian boatman's help shooting a duck at dawn "many years afterwards on a lake near Riga." During his time at Oxford, returning from an excursion to Lundy Island, Tallents read on the stern of "a barque…heading for Appledore…as it rose and fell threateningly above our heads, my knowledge of Greek allowing me to decipher the Russian characters, the name of the port of Riga. That was my first introduction to a city which years after I was for five days to govern." Describing his sense of the beauty of the Northumberland coast on the eve of the First World War, Tallents recalled seeing "for the first time a wild seal. I was not to see another till a dozen years later, a thousand miles from Bamburgh, as my ship broke her way towards Reval, we passed on the ice a mother seal with her cream-coloured baby." See Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 106, 92, 136, 193, 292.

[9] See "Baltic Adventure," 27 March 1949, BBC Home Service, BBC Written Archives Center, FILM T533. Tallents also mentioned his experiences in the Baltic in almost every one of his "The Man from the Country" broadcasts.

Commission's work illustrates the transfer of methods evolved to combat Soviet revolution to other parts of the British Empire and sites of border and territory formation within it.

The Baltic "Provinces" and British Authority

The independent national states that emerged along the Baltic Sea after 1918 were carved out of the western borderlands of the former Russian Empire. Running south along the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea for 600 kilometers from Reval to Memel (in Prussia), this part of the empire—which would become the states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—included Estliand, Lifliand, Kurland, and Kovno guberniias, parts of Vil'no, Vitebsk, Pskov, and St. Petersburg (Petrograd) guberniias, and Suwalki guberniia in the Privislinskii krai (formerly the Kingdom of Poland). To the north, across the Gulf of Finland which led to St. Petersburg, was the Grand Duchy of Finland, ruled by the Tsar but governed by a separate parliament. The cities of Riga, Libau, Reval, Kovno, and Dvinsk had been some of the fastest growing ports and industrial centers of the Russian Empire in the years before the First World War. Having served as important outlets for the timber, wheat, flax, fish, and iron of Eastern Europe, the cities of the western borderlands had become centers of manufacturing. In the late imperial period, the Baltic provinces and Russian Poland were the site of the emergence of national movements both constrained and encouraged by Tsarist authorities experimenting with new ways of exercising power within a coherent imperial whole.[10]

When it was sent to the Baltic in 1919, the British High Commission viewed the region as composed of these imperial provinces. The telegram Tallents received in Warsaw from Paris in February 1919, which first brought him to the Baltic, asked for "first hand information situation

[10] Theodore Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on Russia's Western Frontier 1863-1914* (Dekalb: NIU Press, 1996).

food supplies Courland Lettland and Estonia."[11] It was only much later, after the process of nation-building, territory-making, and border-drawing had been completed at the international and at the local level, that Tallents was able to realize that this description of the region was "out-of-date."[12] Officials in the Foreign Office and at the Peace Conference had only a "hazy" understanding of the region.[13] Their ignorance was compounded by the absence of information flowing from the Baltic. Though other figures active in the region after the war would later write about their experiences there, "during the eighteen months in which [Tallents was] on the spot, there was no professional British or American press correspondent working regularly in the Baltic states."[14] Misinformation and historical distortion from national delegations and from German forces confused things further.[15] The Conference's ignorance extended to some not realizing that Tallents's mission was active in the Baltic nearly two months after he had arrived.[16]

Despite this unfamiliarity, the extent of British leadership and the stridency of its mandate in Eastern Europe and the former Russian Empire was almost absolute. Informal political and economic pressure allowed the British to exert power without a large occupying force, and to use "national" military forces for their own ends against the Bolsheviks and in enforcing the German withdrawal. During the war, the German army had pushed far into the Russian Empire, setting up military and civil occupation regimes in the Baltic, Poland, and parts of western Russia.[17] After

[11] Turner to Tallents via Balfour to Wade, 17 February 1919, TNA FO 608/58/539-540, 540. For a minor difference in wording see also Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 265-266.
[12] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 267.
[13] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 267-268.
[14] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 268.
[15] See eg Clive, Stockholm, 16 May 1919, TNA FO 608/186/395.
[16] Hankey to Dutasta (copies to Howard, Military Section, Naval Section, Grew, and Norman), 25 June 1919, TNA FO 608/186/87. See also the confusion in the Council of Four regarding a Baltic Commission described in TNA FO 608/186/40-44; Hankey to Secretary General of the Peace Conference, 26 April 1919, TNA FO 608/186/44.
[17] On the occupation and practical administration of the *Ober Ost* see Vejas Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). On the connected German occupation regime in Poland, see Jesse Kauffman¸ *Elusive Alliance: The German Occupation of Poland in World War I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, German armies occupied an even more enormous territory. Their withdrawal under the Armistice presented a complex and confused military situation in the Baltic. German forces occupied Lithuania, the Prussian coast, and south-western Latvia. As the German occupation receded and German influence waned (including over the promise of self-determination), though, British forces filled the military and ideological gap. As General Kisch wrote, "The arrival of our mission in the Baltic States has cut the ground from under the feet of the Germans."[18] British military aid in the Baltic would determine the viability of new governments in the Baltic more than any other power, partly because of the political presence of the High Commission. In the crucial months of summer 1919, during the formation of the independent Latvian state, French and Americans were not represented politically in Riga.[19] The representatives of the British High Commission and British Military Mission were there continuously. These Missions together represented "a determined British effort to set the Baltic countries on their feet."[20]

A British fleet patrolled the Baltic and the rivers of the Baltic coast, with French ships under its command.[21] Reval had been defended against the Soviet advance of late November and December 1918 with Russian destroyers captured by the British fleet and donated to the Estonian government.[22] The Latvian government had depended on the fleet for its survival. As German forces in Libau had tightened their grip in late April 1919, the Latvian Prime Minister Karlis Ulmanis had taken refuge inside the British Mission.[23] Latvian and Estonian armies had captured

[18] Kisch to Phipps, TNA FO 608/186/114-114ob.
[19] See Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 343.
[20] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 350.
[21] The British fleet would continue to be a factor in the Baltic until at least mid-1921, when it threatened to intervene in the Kronstadt rebellion. See Chicherin telegrams on this from March 1921
[22] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 279.
[23] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 306.

Riga with direct British naval support, and the Latvian and Estonian breakthrough after the defense of Riga in November 1919 was made possible under cover of the British squadron's bombardment.

After the siege of Riga was broken, Ulmanis and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zigfrids Meierovics, sent demonstrative letters of thanks to the Allied powers and their representatives in the Baltic. These letters were centered on national struggle and triumph and deployed the language of liberty, democracy, and property. Though Meierovics sent a letter of thanks to President Wilson, he sent several successive letters to Lloyd George, Admiral Cowan, the British Squadron, General Burt, the officials of the French military mission, and to Tallents.[24] The Latvian statesmen simply had more British officials to thank. If, in an abstract sense, Wilson's rhetoric had provided a moral support and inspiration to the Latvian national government, British arms had enabled the liberation of Riga.[25] Just as significantly, it was with *British* moral aims in the war that Meierovics and Ulmanis claimed to identify. These aims, they asserted, were actually fulfilled through the Latvian victory against "German militarism" and "the dark forces of Russian reaction."[26] Britain and Latvia were joined in a "brotherhood of arms," a joint struggle for "principles of liberty and civilization."[27] "The aims [Britain] has been fighting for during the last five years, are identical with those the Lettish nation is fighting for now," Meierovics wrote.[28] The fact that the defense of Riga had coincided with the anniversary of the German surrender allowed the Latvian statesmen

[24] Meierovics and Ulmanis to Wilson, 11 November 1919, Latvian State Historical Archive (LVVA) f2570, ap2, l35, i25; Meierovics and Ulmanis to Lloyd George, 11 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i33. Meierovics also transmitted letters of gratitude to Tallents and Burt, as well as to their French and American counterparts du Parquet and Cade, from the Town Councils of Grobin, Riga, and Mitau. See LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, 30-33, 57, 69-70, 76-79.
[25] Seen in the light of such declarations, the flowering of movements for self-determination after the First World War appears less as a "Wilsonian moment" based around the nation-state than as a moment of British imperial expansion and occupation, supported by "independent" national partners. Erez Manela, *The Wisonian Moment*
[26] Meierovics to Admiral Cowan, 13 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i22.
[27] Meierovics to Admiral Cowan, 13 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i22; Meierovics to Lloyd George, 11 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i33.
[28] Meierovics to the Commander of the British Squadron in the Gulf of Riga, 12 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i23.

to depict their "national" victory as the final stroke of German defeat, a contribution capping the international Allied war effort. Meierovics and Ulmanis made hay of this in all of their letters of thanks. But in his letter to Lloyd George, Meierovics also looked forward to future relations between Britain and Latvia. Meierovics expressed the "gratitude of Latvia and her Government for the assistance rendered by the British Squadron [and] for the supply of arms, munitions, and equipment sent to Latvia, thus enabling her to maintain herself against an enemy, whose superiority, both numerical and technical, is evident."[29] In the face of that superiority, he hoped that "in her desperate struggle, carried in the name of principles of liberty and civilization, which, during the last five years, have been and still are those of the noble British nation, Latvia can reckon with further assistance, both material and moral, from Great Britain and her Government."[30] The struggle for liberty and civilization, which the Latvian nation continued to wage alongside and in the service of Britain, formed "a link of a chain of future relations of friendship between Great Britain and Latvia,"[31]

British ideals motivated the Latvian national government and animated its rhetoric, intertwining with the material support of the British military intervention. Latvian nationhood existed under British protection. The Latvian government also claimed that the new nation would continue to exist *for* broader British ideals. The new Latvian government at Libau, in one of its first resolutions, called for British and Allied support in the creation of a strong national army.[32] British military aid was a condition of sovereignty not only in a material sense—to enable the

[29] Meierovics to Lloyd George, 11 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i33. Meierovics sent a similarly worded letter of thanks directly to the Commander of the British Squadron and his men. Meierovics to the Commander of the British Squadron in the Gulf of Riga, 12 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i23. Marten, Senior British Naval Officer at Riga, sent a letter of thanks in response from the H.M.S. "Dragon" in Riga's harbor. Marten to Meierovics, 14 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i24.
[30] Meierovics to Lloyd George, 11 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i33.
[31] Meierovics to Admiral Cowan, 13 November 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l35, i22.
[32] Grant Watson to Curzon, 3 June 1919, TNA FO 608/187/6-9a.

defense of the independent Latvian state against potential aggressors, in this case the Soviet state and the German forces—but also the conceptual basis of independence. British arms, money, and training to build up a Latvian national army were seen as essential components of an independent Latvian state worth the name. In order to combat "Bolshevism" both as an external foe and internally, within its own national body, Latvia needed British support; it would not receive that support unless it successfully committed itself to fighting Bolshevism.

Throughout 1919, new states justified their existence and their need for British and Allied support by a dual appeal to their indispensability in the fight against Bolshevism and their powerlessness to resist Bolshevism without British and Allied support. As Tallents telegraphed the points submitted to him by the Latvian government in another appeal for British aid, "1. Latvia is helping the Allies by fighting their two enemies (A) Bolshevists for 20 months. (B) Reactionary Germans. … 2. Latvia gratefully acknowledges help given. But…cannot carry on unequal fight without immediate Allied help."[33] Tallents's telegram (and others preceding it) led to the allocation and dispatch of 10,000 rifles, 1,400 machine guns, and 18 million rounds of ammunition to Riga for the Latvian Army.[34]

[33] Tallents to WO (repeated Astoria Paris and Helsingfors), Riga, 27 October 1919, TNA FO 608/187/14-18, 15. See also Polish Socialist requests for British aid to fight "Bolshevism" and expand the borders of Poland, Howard to Balfour, 24 March 1919, TNA FO 608/57/368-380.

[34] WO to Reval (repeated Riga and Astoria Paris), 6 November 1919, TNA FO 608/187/19-22, 20. The promised military aid began with a shipment of only ten percent of the total: 144 machine guns and 1000 rifles. The language of anti-Bolshevism was even deployed by new governments in campaigns against non-Soviet adversaries geographically distant from the Soviet frontier. For example, when appealing for military support in Poland's campaign against Ukraine, Paderewski warned that the fall of Lemberg (Lviv) would lead to revolution in Poland. TNA FO 608/57/143-146, 13-17 March 1919. The West Ukrainian Republic's representative in turn complained that Polish military pressure hampered its ability to fight the Bolsheviks. Paneyko to Secretariat General, 8 May 1919, TNA FO 608/56/388. Finnish troops used the threat of "Bolshevik excesses" as an excuse for their unilateral occupation of Repola in Karelia. Murmansk GOC to WO, 12 February 1919, TNA FO 608/187/215-217ob. The leaders of Czech troops advancing against Polish troops in Teschen argued to British Commander Rawlings that "their advance was essential to prevent Bolshevist agitation among the Polish miners"—in mines and territory which they intended to seize for the new Czech state. Wade to Howard and FO, TNA FO 608/57/327-328.

The British High Commission in the Baltic was one of several British commissions of oversight and occupation in the lands of the former Russian Empire. The work of the High Commission in the Baltic was inseparable from a broader program of British support for White forces led by Kolchak's government in Siberia and Denikin's in South Russia, coordinated through the British political and military missions. All of these governments were conceived as British partners in the war against the Soviet state, aligned, despite their many differences, by their commitment to the destruction of the Soviet regime. Decisions on British policy toward any given state were made on the basis of both local conditions and the global interests of this concert of anti-Soviet client governments.[35]

These concerted actions were directed explicitly against the Bolsheviks and Soviet power. Though the Allied intervention may have started out in an effort to stem the German advance to the east, it was ultimately organized against the new Soviet state.[36] It was the White Russian forces, not the Bolsheviks, who actually fought alongside German troops—and in the spring of 1919, the British and Allies who supported German troops, albeit reluctantly, in order to contain the spread of Bolshevism. Though it was overtly counterrevolutionary, British policy was determined by a variety of strategic considerations. Different "schools" within the British wartime and postwar establishment had different aims for the postwar reconstitution of British imperial power.[37] Despite

[35] For example, the Latvian representative in London's request for information regarding raising private loans—in other words, access to the London financial markets—prompted a response from Curzon on this "question of principle" which had also been raised by "similar requests from Poland, Finland, Esthonia, and Lithuania, not to speak of the request for financial facilities which they are receiving from General Denikin." 12 July 1919, TNA FO 608/187/78-83, 80.

[36] Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order, 1916-1931* (New York: Penguin, 2014)

[37] Winston Churchill, Note on "The Baltic Situation," 25 September 1919; Sean Kelly, "How far West?: Lord Curzon's Transcaucasian (Mis)Adventure and the Defence of British India, 1918–23," *The International History Review* 35:2 (April, 2013), 274-293; on the points of view of intellectuals and scholars, see Giannakopoulos

these differences, British leaders coordinated anti-Soviet forces in a common effort to eliminate the regime and guard against its emergence in other states.

Conversely, coordination between various White, national, and anti-Bolshevik forces was only possible through the British logistical, imperial, and financial apparatus. Setting up the new Latvian administration, Meierovics sent a letter to Latvian nationalists in Vladivostok inviting them to take posts in the new government through the British Mission in the Baltic via Kolchak.[38] Through the staff of the High Commission in the Baltic, the Allies attempted to coordinate the operations of Mannerheim, Iudenich, and Kolchak, though without officially committing themselves to specific orders—forwarding requests between the armies through their telegraph network and giving their blessing to whatever operations resulted.[39] Meanwhile, new governments sought permission for their own foreign policies within the framework of this British-led effort.[40]

Soviet strategy in the Civil War was partly based on the knowledge that new governments had to prove their continuing viability against the Bolsheviks in order to receive British support; as Lenin saw it, a key victory over Kolchak along the Kama would "*bring the war to a close, for the Whites will get no more assistance from abroad.*"[41] The early Soviet perception of this coordinating framework can be seen in agitational posters like "The Dogs of the Entente" and "Be on Guard!" in which the new nations or the White armies were portrayed as miniature capitalists on the territorial marches of the Soviet state or as dogs on the leashes of Uncle Sam and John Bull.

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[38] Chief of the Latvian Chancellery to British Mission, encloses letter from Meierovics to Vladisvostok Representatives of Latvia via Kolchak, 13 August 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l34, i4-5. On the organization of Latvian refugees in Vladivostok, see Aldis Purs, "Working Towards 'An Unforeseen Miracle' Redux: Latvian Refugees in Vladivostok, 1918-1920, and in Latvia, 1943-1944," *Contemporary European History* 16:4, Theme Issue: World Wars and Population Displacement in the Twentieth Century (November, 2007), 479-494.

[39] TNA FO 608/186/95-98 (June 30-July 1 1919); TNA FO 608/194/114, 115

[40] See Gough to Balfour, 27 July 1919, FO 608/186/20-24 on British permission for Finland's recognition of Estonia; see also Finnish request for permission to recognize Estonia de jure, 24 July 1919, FO 608/186/332-335.

[41] Lenin, "Letter to the Petrograd Workers on Aid for the Eastern Front," *Petrogradskaia Pravda*, 12 April 1919, in Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 29, 275. Emphasis in the original.

The early Soviet strategic focus on the British Empire went beyond Lenin's theoretical identification of the link between British imperialism and international capital to the direct struggle against British and Allied forces. The Soviet state provided a mirror framework for anti-British activity.[42] Soviet agents, consuls, and Informburos produced bulletins reporting on anti-imperial movements and coordinated forces fighting the Entente.[43]

Because of these interconnections, events in the Caucasus, Persia, Anatolia, or Afghanistan could decide the outcome of negotiations in Europe. The consequences of the British policy of anti-Soviet coordination under the rubric of self-determination meant that the recognition of one state, in relation to local circumstances and tactics, might entail new demands for the recognition of others. For example, the recognition of an independent Georgia in early 1920 made the question of de jure recognition for Latvia and Lithuania "more acute."[44] Events in the "east" shaped British policy at the conferences in western Europe, and setbacks in western Europe shaped British policy in Asia.[45] The Baltic Provinces were one of many interconnected theatres of the Russian Civil War in which British High Commissions oversaw the actions of anti-Soviet national governments.

Staffing the British Commission

Staffed by civilian, military, diplomatic, and consular officials, and operating alongside British and later inter-Allied military missions, the High Commission carried out its work in three

[42] See Samuel J. Hirst "Transnational Anti-Imperialism and the National Forces: Soviet Diplomacy and Turkey, 1920–23." Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East 33, Number 2 (2013), 214-226.
[43] Radiotelegram from Kristiania via ROSTA Moskva, 27 April 1920, Russian State Archive of Social-Political History (RGASPI) f159, op2, d37, l8; Telegram from Reval about article in Chicago Tribune describing the organization of Turkish nationalists in Strasbourg organizing to fight against the Entente RGASPI Fond 159, Op. 2, Delo 56, L 37, 1 April 1920; RSFSR Mission in Georgia (Erofeev) to Chicherin, 6 December 1920, RGASPI F159, Op.2, D56, L39.
[44] Conversation between Denby and Grosvald, in Denby to Curzon, 22 January 1920, TNA FO 800/152/217-217ob.
[45] See the communications between the Soviet and British governments in the spring of 1920 (and Soviet discussions over them) in Chicherin to Curzon, 9 January 1920, RGASPI F159, Op.2, D27, L5-8; Chicherin to Lenin, 26 April 1920, RGASPI F159, Op.2, D27, L18; Chicherin, draft note to Curzon, 5 May 1920, RGASPI F159, Op.2, D27, L23.

phases—an initial fact-finding phase in the spring of 1919, a military phase lasting until the end of 1919, and a civil phase of national reconstruction in 1920. After the Tallents's first phase of investigation and networking led to the creation of a fully staffed Commission, British officials worked to monitor Baltic governments and provide them with military aid. As the military situation stabilized, new national governments were created, their borders drawn, their territories made productive, their populations defined and restored, their people made into citizens.

As outlined in Chapter 2, British High Commissioners had been active in the lands of the former Russian Empire since early 1918, but their status remained ambiguous, especially in the eyes of the new Soviet government. The title of "British High Commissioner" smoothed interactions with other authorities on the ground when working to further British military and political aims. High Commissioner was a "political" appointment, and the High Commission was to have a political role in representing British political interests to local authorities, as opposed to a military role of commanding them for military operations. In the British-led struggle against the Soviet state within the former Russian Empire, though, the distinction was not always so clear.

The High Commission to the Baltic Provinces was led by Stephen Tallents. Born in 1884, Tallents situated his upbringing within the political and physical architecture of the 19th century. From Denbies, the mansion his great-grandfather Thomas Cubitt built in Surrey, Tallents called up a panorama of Victorian landmarks he had seen through the telescope in his childhood: the Crystal Palace, the Embankment, Windsor Castle. The timeless view was capped by the mysterious "signal of the red rockets over the Crystal Palace"[46] during the Liberal landslide of 1906, which would be "deciphered in a great programme of social legislation," in the mobilization of the war, in the land reforms Tallents saw implemented in the Baltic.[47]

[46] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 38; see also Tallents, "Baltic Adventure," 2.
[47] Tallents, "Baltic Adventure," 3.

Wounded by a sniper in Festubert, Tallents underwent five operations in nine weeks, followed by two more months in the hospital.[48] Tallents was "profoundly marked by the experience of the Great War" and his work on rationing at the Ministry of Food, where he pushed for the organization of rationing at the local level through existing Post Office branches and new local food committees.[49] More than the technical experience of the logistics of food provision and the managerialism he absorbed, the war confirmed his combined faith in egalitarianism and efficiency. Everyone had to take one's place within the work of the world among other workers, in the society the military necessity of the war promised to create.[50] Great things came out of small things, like potatoes, or commonly rejected things, like nettles.[51] For Tallents there was a formal analogy and an equal significance in digging potatoes at home and digging trenches at the front.[52] Tallents remembered the Armistice as a day he was "working in the Surrey garden of a Foreign Office friend;"[53]a few days before his death, corresponded with the physicist W. L. Bragg on gardening and how he was "getting on with the new scythe" Tallents had given him.[54]

Though Tallents was moved by the work of public administration, he claimed "the right occasionally to be purely a human being."[55] Tallents later claimed to have had trouble adjusting to

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[48] Tallents, *The Starry Pool*, 26; Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 219-224.
[49] Anthony, *Public Relations and the Making of Modern Britain*, 200; Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 240-241.
[50] See Tallents's story "The Christening," *The Starry Pool*, 104-107.
[51] Tallents, "The Potatoes," *The Starry Pool*, 121-127; Tallents, "The Man from the Country," 9 March 1946.
[52] Tallents, "The Exile," *The Starry Pool*, 168-173. Tallents also described growing potatoes at his house in Ladbroke Square, designed by Charles Holden, where Tallents, his wife Bridget, and their family moved after his work in the Baltic: in the back garden, which "measured thirty feet one way and twelve and a half the other," Tallents "studied long and anxiously what part this plot would best take in the national food production drive. Geologically, I discovered, it consisted of Taplow gravel. Following the counsels of the Board of Agriculture, I dug it to spits deep and applied fertilizers freely. I next consulted a potato expert. On his advice I bought and planted thirty tubers of Arran Chief." The yield was disappointing, but the next year Tallents made "an immensely detailed plan for intensive vegetable culture"; when this did not work, Tallents "switched my strategy over to the animal world." Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 411-412. Potatoes were a theme in Tallents's radio shows: Tallents, "The Man from the Country," 20 April 1946.
[53] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 251.
[54] W. L. Bragg to Dr. G. Taylor, 9 October, 1958, Royal Institution Archives, W. L. Bragg Papers, RI MS WLB/57A/143.
[55] Review of *The Projection of England*, in *The Spectator*, 16 April 1932, newspaper clipping in Stephen Tallents Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, ICS79/19/11.

"the strangely impersonal life which [he] led in the Baltic."[56] In his autobiography, Tallents juxtaposed a brief account of the peace conferences he observed and orchestrated—his "impersonal life"—with longer sketches of his personal encounters with individuals, "figures of interest" and "adventurers."[57] But to Tallents, romantically focused on the material world of bureaucratic administration, "even inanimate things had their adventures." By the time he arrived in the Baltic, Tallents had developed the interest in essential but unglamorous administrative tasks he referred to throughout his career and threaded through his autobiography.[58] Unable to master Plato and Aristotle at Oxford, when leaving school Tallents was relieved to find that a letter "to a real man about a real tine of condensed milk had some quality about it which no composing of Latin prose or Greek verses had ever yielded." Tallents favored "The sense of handling practical affairs, the knowledge that the pains which I put into my work might somehow make a difference."[59] Tallents's preference for practical work and experience, the real basis of his aestheticized desire for manual work and picturesque craft,[60] expanded over the course of the war. As Chief British Delegate of the Inter-Allied Commission for Supply and Relief in Poland, Tallents became interested in "the machinery for European relief," an extension of the wartime national rationing he had helped to organize at the Ministry of Food.[61] The "practical" work he valorized was also the work of imagination. Though he never went on board ship or interacted with sailors

[56] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 391.
[57] These "figures of interest" and "adventurers" included Monsignor Ratti, Enver Pasha, Keyserling, General Iudenitch, Gutchkov, Balakhovitch, Goldfeld, Paul Dukes, Arthur Ransome, the members of the Labour delegation, and his Soviet negotiating partner Adolf Ioffe, along with others he met identified only by their national origin. Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 388-402.
[58] Tallents had written and published many of the stories in his autobiography much earlier, including his accounts of the war, which were issued almost as they occurred, mostly in the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Saturday Westminster*, and collected in *The Starry Pool* in 1918.
[59] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 131-132, 169.
[60] Throughout his life Tallents recycled stories about his attempts at household and rustic crafts, like the baskets he made from willow osiers, the pottery he repurposed, the cart and the puppet theater he made for his children, the clock casing he made for an old watch, or the fur coat he made from moles he caught.
[61] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 252, 251. For Tallents's first report on the Commission and its journey to Poland, see Tallents, 10 February 1919, TNA FO 608/58/533-537.

while at the Marine Department, Tallents felt "with them in imagination" as there "drifted…along our dusty corridor vivid stories of strange doings in distant oceans and harbours" or a nautical phrase "rebuke[d] the official jargon in which we exercised our pens."[62] If imagination was "the chief bond of empire," as Frank Pick later advised Tallents, it was also glue for the administrative work that made empire run.[63]

The connection Tallents made between "imagination," knowledge, and administration expressed itself in his attention to landscape. Recovering from his wound, Tallents pictured the landscape around Bamburgh and Holy Island in deep detail, as on foot, to try to get to sleep.[64] Traveling from town to town on business for the High Commission, Tallents constantly compared the Baltic countryside and its plants to his memories of England.[65] Like Murray before him in Warsaw, Tallents also focused on food in his accounts of the Baltic: displayed in the markets of Poland and the Baltic, plentiful in the countryside but dear in besieged cities, enjoyed in gargantuan quantities at independence banquets, smuggled across the Polish, German, Latvian, and Estonian borders.[66] After his preliminary journey to the Baltic in March, Tallents wrote a detailed report on the stores the Commission should bring, paying special attention to food (as well as typewriters and field tools).[67]

British merchantmen carried theses supplies and stores to Riga and Reval. Urgently called to the High Commission on the basis of Tallents's early reports on the Baltic situation, the rest of

[62] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 169-170.
[63] Quoted in Scott M. Anthony, *Public Relations and the Making of Modern Britain*, 12.
[64] Tallents, "Bamburgh Sands," *The Starry Pool*, 34-37.
[65] Tallents also associated the appreciation of landscape with border disputes and violence in Ireland, where the journeys he made for occupied Pettigo "between Belfast, London, Dublin, and the Donegal border…opened for me, too, some of the loveliest stretches of the Northern Irish countryside." Tallents, "Pettigo and Belleek," Tallents private papers, Box: "Irish," Folder: "2. The Evacuation of Pettigo and Belleek (Nov. 1922 – Jan 1923)."
[66] See, e.g., *Man and Boy* 276, 282. Sometimes Tallents's interest in food overshadowed more public responsibilities, as when Tallents remembered of the 1932 Ottawa Conference that its "best feature" was "the pleasure of getting ices regularly" at the Conference and on the voyage there and back. Tallents. *Man and Boy*, 19.
[67] Tallents, Report on Preliminary Journey to the Baltic States, March 1919, Appendix A and B.

the staff "for the Mission's three centers at Riga, Reval, and Kovno had begun to arrive before the stores."[68] A letter from Assistant Commissioner Herbert Grant Watson to Ulmanis listed ten members of the British Mission who had arrived in Riga by 24 July 1919: Commander Smythies, Lt.-Col. Ward, Mr. Wm. Macduff, Mr. Wm. L. Cazalet, Lt. Rowell, Capt. Duggan, Mr. Collas, Mr. Berry, Mr. Williams (an orderly), and Lt. Malcolm (who had arrived earliest on July 17).[69] Lt. Col. Harry Pirie Gordon was put in charge as Tallents's deputy in Reval, though that branch of the High Commission was in practice led by Assistant Commissioner Vivian Bosanquet. Tallents placed Colonel Richard Barrington Ward in charge of the High Commission's often isolated branch in Kovno, the temporary Lithuanian capital. In Riga, the main center of the Mission, Tallents's administration was served by Grant Watson, Captain Norman Dewhurst, Berry (who had "a boyhood in Latvia behind him"), and Cazalet, who stood out for his "long experience of pre-war Russia" in a situation where it was difficult "to find men knowing both Russian and German" for the Commission staff.[70]

Tallents built the High Commission partly out of an existing British consular administration. Vivian Bosanquet, Assistant Commissioner in Reval, the second most important of the Commission's centers, had served as Vice Consul in Odessa from around 1900.[71] Bosanquet was the primary source of information about Estonia at the Peace Conference.[72] Bosanquet transmitted the results of Estonian elections,[73] gathered and forwarded reports on the military

[68] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 349-350, 350.
[69] Grant Watson to Ulmanis, 24 July 1919, f2570, ap2, l45, i21. The Riga Police also produced a list of the foreign missions in Riga, their addresses and telephone numbers, with the British Mission listed first, naming Grant Watson and Macduff, as well as General Gough, for the British. See f2570, ap2, l45, i13-14.
[70] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 351, 350.
[71] *Foreign Office List* ; TNA FO 65/1611 ; TNA FO 371/128/424 [check]
[72] See the telegrams from Bosanquet reproduced, minuted, and discussed in the British Delegation files in TNA FO 608/186/282-331ob, 365-380.
[73] Bosanquet, Reval, 15 April 1919, TNA FO 608/186/374-376. Bell in Helsingfors reported on the Finnish elections. Bell to FO, 29 January 1919, TNA FO 608/187/396; Bell to FO, 22 March 1919, TNA FO 608/187/401-403.

situation at the Estonian fronts from Estonian and White commanders,[74] and reported on the internal political situation in Estonia. At times, cut off from other British representatives or the network of the High Commission, Bosanquet was the only direct source of information about events in Estonia, Northwest Russia, and on the Soviet front, just as Tallents was left as the primary source on Latvian and German developments during the siege of Riga. Herbert Grant Watson, Tallents's main deputy in Riga, had served as Secretary of Legation in Brussels before being taken prisoner during the war and exchanged as part of an "exchange of consuls" in 1915.[75] Grant Watson later wrote his own account of the Mission, as well as a history of Latvia.

Bosanquet and Grant Watson were among many British consular officials occupying important positions in the British and Allied postwar administration of the former Russian Empire. Just over the former Russian imperial border in East Prussia, Henry Beaumont helped to oversee the Allied imposition of self-determination through plebiscites in Marienwerder and Allenstein, having previously served as British Vice Consul in St. Petersburg. In Warsaw, Richard Edward Kimens continued the work he had done as Vice Consul in the decades before the war on the staff of the British Minister to independent Poland. In Omsk, where Kolchak's government was headquartered, Robert Hodgson, who had served as Consul in Vladivostok, represented the British Mission to Kolchak's government. Hodgson was later appointed as the first official British representative to the Soviet government after its formal recognition by Ramsay MacDonald's minority Labour ministry in February 1924. Oliver Wardrop, appointed by Curzon to head the British High Commission to Transcaucasia between 1919 and 1921, had served as Vice Consul in Kerch at the turn of the century and later moved through consular postings in Bucharest and Bergen, Norway. John Picton Bagge, who had worked as Vice Consul in Odessa and Nicolaev

[74] Bosanquet to Curzon, 9 August 1919, TNA FO 608/195/322-326.
[75] TNA FO 383/21

since the turn of the century, continued to represent the British under the many Ukrainian administrations that followed the war and the Revolution. Though the work of Tallents's High Commission was extremely messy and many-sided, it relied in part on these consular skills.

The British Military Mission to the Baltic, headed by Hubert Gough, worked together with Tallents's High Commission. Their work was also coordinated with the Inter-Allied Military Mission in the Baltic and its British representatives General Burt and General Turner, and, as mentioned above, the powerful naval force in the Baltic under Admiral Cowan. The High Commission was also armed: while assembling the stores for the Mission, Tallents received a cable "asking if 'lethal weapons' were really necessary," and he "assured London with a good heart that they were."[76] When, as Governor of Riga, Tallents considered separating military and civil authority in the city, "In practice [he] had to deal with military and civil questions alike."[77] Throughout his time in the Baltic, Tallents found that though he was "supposed to be on a political mission…there was little room yet for politics and none for civilian travelers."[78] The rank of Colonel he had been given for the purpose of the Commission allowed him to negotiate with German military leaders and to command Estonian and Latvian troops, invoking the authority of British military authority for the High Commission's daily work.

The High Commission included strictly civilian economic representatives led by William Macduff as Chief Economic Assistant. Tallents and Macduff hoped at one point to add as many as eighteen commercial representatives to the High Commission through the Department of Overseas Trade. Though the FO objected to the formal attachment of trade representatives to the Commission, especially in this number, it was in favor of making separate arrangements for travel

[76] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 313.
[77] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 334.
[78] Tallents, "Baltic Adventure," 4.

to the Baltic to take advantage of trade opportunities, and noted that once there they would "of course receive assistance from Col. Tallents to which no objection can be raised."[79] The High Commission, in other words, also existed to protect and further the economic interests of "private" British individuals in the newly independent region.

As mentioned above, the High Commission's staff acted as major sources of information for the British delegation and the Peace Conference as a whole, leading to fundamental changes in policy and new deployments of money, arms and troops, and political authority. It was partly the initial recommendations and reports of Gough, Tallents, and their staffs which led the Council of Four to decide to create a Baltic Commission in Paris in early May. Recommendations and reports from High Commission representatives could decide which armies and governments received British and Allied support. Because of Tallents's and Gough's telegrams of late June 1919, when Latvian and Estonian armies were precariously advancing against both Bolshevik and German forces, the Baltic Commission in Paris resolved that an immediate credit of 500,000 was "urgently necessary" to support the Baltic states and stabilize the resurgent Latvian government.[80] The British Delegation repeated this resolution on July 7, and a meeting of the Five Powers referred it to the Financial Commission on July 8.[81] Because this sum would only cover immediate military needs, the conference decided on the basis of Tallents's telegrams to determine "what securities in the way of timber, flax or other raw materials, the three Baltic states can give" as collateral for a larger loan.[82] The first credit was necessary to pay local troops which had previously been in the pay of German forces but had now been absorbed into the Latvian army; the second, longer-term loan was to stabilize the state's internal finances.

[79] TNA FO 608/186/456-463. Carr did not understand the FO's objections; quote is from Crowe, Minute, 456ob.
[80] TNA FO 608/186/99-100 ; TNA FO 608/186/101-108; TNA FO 608/186/109-124 ; TNA FO 608/186/125-133.
[81] British Delegation, Draft Resolution, 7 July 1919, TNA FO 608/186/106.
[82] Resolution of the Commission on Baltic Affairs [Paris], 30 June 1919, TNA FO 608/186/100, 108.

Typically for the Peace Conference, the financial question of the loan was repeatedly referred to the Treasuries of the individual Powers and then back to the Financial Commission for an entire month. The question was repeatedly skipped in meetings of the Supreme Council through July and August and eventually adjourned indefinitely.[83] Tallents and the High Commission staff on the ground, however, had to act quickly and independently of the decisions of the Foreign Office and the Conference. Tallents assumed the Governorship of Riga after British-led Estonian and Latvian armies captured the city from German troops, and on his authority, backed by the naval strength of the British Fleet, transferred power in the capital to the new Latvian government.

Acting on his own but with the authority of the British High Commission, Tallents intervened on substantive questions of Latvian and Estonian state policy. His decisions shaped the early constitutional and territorial form of these states. Tallents drafted, negotiated, and bullied through the armistice between Estonian and German forces that allowed for the reestablishment of the Latvian government at Riga, while keeping his signature off of the document and avoiding any British commitments.[84] After the armistice, Tallents used his authority to force the Estonian troops to halt their advance, and diffused threatening friction between Latvian and Estonian troops.[85] He reestablished civil administration and public services in Riga, and reconvened the City Council, while serving as Governor for five days.[86] As Governor, Tallents held authority during the period of transition between the armistice he had imposed and the establishment of the Latvian government, surrendering authority to Ulmanis when the latter arrived in Riga on July 8.[87] Even then, however, Tallents dictated the proportional representation of different national groups in the

[83] TNA FO 608/186/109 (minute); TNA FO 608/186/134 (minute); TNA FO 608/186/139 (minute); see also Minutes, 14-22 August 1919, TNA FO 608/187/86-88; no other power wanted to contribute funds for the 500,000, leaving Britain alone to deal with the request.
[84] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 324-331.
[85] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 335, 338.
[86] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 336-337.
[87] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 337-338, 340.

Latvian cabinet, altering a previous agreement made by Ulmanis, over Baltic German and later American objections, in the interest of Latvian "public opinion."[88] In this last case, Tallents made the Latvian government constitutionally more "national," eliminating a representative for Latvia's Russian community and reducing the number of Baltic German representatives from three to two on the new government's proposed ten-person cabinet.

Tallents's authority extended beyond the new national governments to their German adversaries. Fleeing Riga during the siege, Ulmanis and Meierovics asked Tallents to stay behind because his "presence would check atrocities in the city" if the Germans were to retake it.[89] Similarly, after the Latvian army took Mitau in November 1919, Tallents "drove at once towards it, with the idea that the presence of an Allied representative might prevent a massacre of the Balts."[90] In Mitau Tallents issued orders to deal with looting and other disorders that had accompanied the Latvian recapture of the town, and organized a police force to keep order.

Tallents exercised less martial forms of authority, too. He invited the Latvian statesmen to dinners and concerts.[91] He used old and new media to further enhance British prestige, staging "a display of British war films" immediately after the reestablishment of Latvian and British authority in Riga in July 1919.[92] As Estonian and Latvian armies, with the help of fresh British supplies and naval support, routed the German forces in November and December and finally caused their evacuation, Tallents's mission progressed from a military to a civil phase. After the defeat and evacuation of the German forces in late 1919, General Turner's section of the Inter-Allied Military Mission in Riga was ended at the beginning of 1920.[93] Tallents even switched over from military

[88] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 342-343.
[89] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 366. Tallents uses the word "Balt" to refer to Baltic Germans.
[90] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 369.
[91] Meierovics thanked Tallents for a September invitation to a show at Riga's "Palace Cinema Theatre," Meierovics to Tallents, September 6, 1919, LVVA f2570, ap2, l34, i10.
[92] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 361.
[93] WO to Turner, 1 January 1920, TNA ADM 116/2007.

to civilian rank as he shifted from military to civil tasks and military to civil authority, dropping the honorary rank of Colonel he had held in order to enable him to negotiate with military leaders.[94]

As immediate military conflicts receded, the work of building up the new nations could begin within the territories they had secured. Tallents referred to these nation-building efforts and the atmosphere that accompanied them in the spring of 1920 as a "returning cheerfulness": there was "quite a season in the Baltic that summer" of diplomatic balls put on by the new states to signal their independence. In the cities, "men were beginning to talk business." Tallents's Orientalized description of the countryside implied it also returned to life with Pagan fire-rituals to mark Midsummer.[95]

British support for the construction of these new states depended on their ability to fight Bolshevism on their frontiers as well as to suppress it within their own politics. Anti-Bolshevism was both a condition of British aid and a tool to receive more of it. Hardinge impressed on Meierovics the need for the new Latvian state to establish internal order before it could be recognized as an independent state.[96] Internal order meant first of all the elimination of "Bolshevism" and industrial and agrarian unrest (though it also included measures against banditry, crime, and the movement of demobilized armed men). Continued support for independent statehood was also predicated on the new government's ability to contain "the left" within its own parliament, though the threat of the possibility of a "swing to the left" could be deployed, again, as a lever to appeal for more aid.[97] Even legislation that seemed too egalitarian

[94] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 380.
[95] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 381-384.
[96] TNA FO 608/187/4-5ob, Hardinge to Balfour, 14 June 1919.
[97] Grant Watson to FO, Riga, 29 July 1919, TNA FO 608/187/41-44. For both dynamics at once, see also the conversation with Ulmanis reported in Grant Watson to Balfour (repeated Helsingfors), Riga, 30 July 1919, TNA FO 608/187/37-38. The threat of "radical speakers and journalists" in Riga led to the introduction of martial law and military censorship by the new government in the days following this conversation. Grant Watson to Balfour (repeated Helsingfors), Riga, 31 July 1919, TNA FO 608/187/39-40.

could be subject to British review and veto, as Bosanquet suggested with regard to the Estonian land reform bill of July 1919.[98] Although Carr cautioned against such a measure in practice because of its potential danger for "home politics," and Crowe groused that "we interfere much too much everywhere already," Bosanquet's intervention for the High Commission was real and constrained Estonian domestic policy.[99] Draconian measures like these were in character for Allied administrations that saw Mannerheim's record in Finland as grounds for the early recognition of Finnish independence.[100] In fact, when the Finnish elections of 1919 returned a Socialist plurality and "Republican" coalition majority even after Mannerheim's White terror and the disenfranchisement of "Red" supporters, and threatened to undermine his military bourgeois-monarchist government, J. Y. Simpson, who was later to lead the boundary commission for the Latvian-Lithuanian border, suggested the dispatch of a British Mission to increase British influence and help control the situation.[101]

The High Commission moved into a "civil" phase soon after the final defeat and evacuation of German troops, but this phase of reconstruction presented new challenges. On a trip to London for Christmas, 1919, Tallents met with Lloyd George, who showed "much more interest in the Baltic than anyone else." Lloyd George asked Tallents if he could "prevent fighting" between Estonians and Latvians, giving him "definite instructions to do everything that I could to prevent war."[102] War between the new states that the British had supported would waste the effort and funds sunk into their liberation; instead, the new states should be consolidated, mutually defining each other through their shared borders. When he returned in early February, Tallents found that

[98] Bosanquet to Balfour, Reval, 28 July 1919, TNA FO 608/187/64-66.
[99] Carr and Crowe Minutes, 30 July 1919, TNA FO 608/187/64.
[100] See TNA FO 608/187
[101] J. Y. Simpson, "Preliminary Notes on the Finnish Election," 14 March 1919, TNA FO 608/187/397-400.
[102] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 371. Part of the purpose of this trip was to find sources for investment in the Baltic and private financial support for the new governments. Memo to Lord D'Abernon, 11 November 1919, TNA FO 800/152/224-225ob.

the potential fighting between Latvia and Estonia concerned the disputed border town of Walk/Valka/Valga, which had been occupied by Estonian troops around the New Year. Tallents traveled there and convened a conference on March 22, 1920, to begin the process of settling the border dispute.

The British High Commission Draws the Latvian-Estonian Border

The British prestige that marshalled the support of the post-imperial Baltic governments also allowed Tallents and the British High Commission to draw new borders between them. Arriving at the Latvian-Estonian border in Walk in March 1920, Tallents and his staff replaced a prior commission that had attempted to delineate an acceptable border for the two new states.[103] This boundary commission had already produced an inquiry into the drawing of the border and the ethnographic composition of disputed areas along it. Under the paradigm of national states coterminous with ethnic populations, borders were by their nature drawn in areas of the greatest ethnic heterogeneity, where one "majority" shaded into another. The Estonian-Latvian Boundary Commission had conducted statistical surveys of the border population, and household to household inquiries into ethnicity, in an effort to draw the border along Estonian-Latvian ethnic lines.[104] The Boundary Commission created hand-drawn maps of the farmsteads surrounding Valka and other towns, and of the households in the towns themselves, labeling each by surname and by ethnicity (see Figs).[105] On one map, a Latvian household was indicated by a red dot, an Estonian household by a grey dot, and a mixed household by a blue dot; on another, Latvian households were indicated by dots, Estonian by triangles, and mixed by both symbols. This data was produced almost a year earlier, in the summer of 1919. As the maps show, towns at the

[103] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 372.
[104] The statistics are held in LVVA f1313, ap2, l146.
[105] See the maps in LVVA f1313, ap2, l146, i3, 8, 18, and 19.

prospective Latvian-Estonian border were almost equally Latvian and Estonian, marriage between the two nationalities was common, and the two groups were completely mixed together. Because of the heterogeneity of this former imperial region, the two states had not been able to agree on a clear border to divide their national spaces.

Tallents's conference of March 22 produced an Estonian-Latvian Convention creating a joint border Commission.[106] Article 1 of the agreement bound the Latvian and Estonian governments to "entrust the final determination of the frontier between their territories" to the Commission, consisting of a representative of each government and the British Commissioner, as Chairman. Article 3 of the Convention gave Tallents the unilateral authority to decide any points of disagreement about the border: "in default of agreement upon any point the decision of the chairman shall be final and will be loyally accepted by both Governments."[107] Tallents's authority and British prestige rated so highly that if Tallents was personally unable to act as the final arbiter on the questions of the Boundary Commission, that role could be played by *any British subject*.

Again acting on his own, Tallents claimed that the clause on final decision resting with the British Commissioner "was the pith of my draft" of the agreement. Decked around this central point, however, "in deference to the two argumentative delegations," Tallents added an Article 4 regarding the criteria by which the border was to be determined, and "larded it freely with references to the ethnographic and historical considerations which must guide the Commission, as well as to their political interests, regarded from military, strategic, economic and communicational points of view, [and] the interests of the local population."[108]

[106] Convention made between representatives of the Estonian and Latvian government at a meeting held in Walk on March 22 under the chairmanship of Mr. Tallents, the British Commissioner, LVVA f1313, ap2, l211, i113-114.
[107] Convention, LVVA f1313, ap2, l211, i113-114, Articles 1 and 3.
[108] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 373. See also Article 4 of the Convention.

British preeminence and prestige—not to say domination—allowed the border to be traced on the map, eliminated disagreement, and imposed its international acceptance. The Foreign Office approved Tallents acting as President of Boundary Commission, and also secured "from the War Office the loan of military officers to survey the frontier territory in detail."[109] After the first meeting of the Boundary Commission in Walk at the end of April, Tallents realized that though "something like agreement could be secured for a part of the line…for quite sixty miles of borderland the decision would rest with me."[110] Because of Tallents's absolute authority, secured by British prestige and backing, he was able, and in a sense required, to decide on the final shape of the border. After the negotiations over his partition of Walk and his award of the town to Estonia, Riga's Russian newspaper *Segodnia* published a cartoon titled "The Solomon of our days" depicting Tallents about to divide the town with personifications of Latvia and Estonia looking on, Latvia crying out for the High Commissioner to give the town to Estonia "alive" and whole (see Fig).[111]

Tallents divided his British officers into two groups, each accompanied by an Estonian and a Latvian assessor, and had one group walk south from the town, surveying the border as it went, while the other walked north. The surveying parties were controlled by Colonel H. Rowan-Robinson, stationed with Lord Caledon in Walk. After the assessors returned their findings, Tallents was only able to get the Estonian and Latvian representatives to agree that they were unable to agree. Tallents, accordingly, drew the border and assigned contested areas. Tallents awarded land to the new states and finalized the border on July 2, 1920.[112]

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[109] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 373.
[110] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 373.
[111] *Segodnia*, 11 July 1920. Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 376. Clipping in Tallents private papers, Box: SGT Baltic, Folder: "The Baltic. 9. The Latvian Estonian Frontier. Supporting Papers."
[112] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 373-375.

The border that Tallents drew between the two new states made adjustments to the former Russian imperial *uezd* boundaries of Lifliand *guberniia* which it took as its loose basis. To compensate for giving the town of Walk/Valga/Valka to the Estonian state, Tallents sought to adjust the new international state border to give Latvia "a generous supply of forest land" (see Fig).[113] Tallents assumed that natural resources formerly divided across imperial administrative units could be assigned to national states for their national economies. In this case, forestry resources surveyed as part of the border delimitation could offset ethnographic and historical claims to people and cities. Latvia's national patrimony would not include Valga, but it would include additional forests, rendered as "Latvian" as the mixed border town was now "Estonian."

Tallents's border was not popular. Both the Latvian and Estonian governments resigned in protest of his decision, but the border was imposed and accepted nonetheless. Even as late as December 1921, after he had left the Baltic and was working in Ireland, the Latvian government appealed to Tallents to resolve a dispute in the delimitation of the border, having been referred to him again by the Foreign Office.[114] Still, after the criticism he received while serving simultaneously as British Commissioner and as the President of the Boundary Commission, Tallents delegated J. Y. Simpson to serve as Chairman and President of the Latvian-Lithuanian Frontier Arbitration Commission charged with drawing the border between Latvia and Lithuania, thinking that it was wiser to separate the two functions. Though it was not directly headed by the British High Commissioner, the Latvian-Lithuanian Commission took the same basic form as the one Tallents had headed for the border between Latvia and Estonia.[115] Simpson assigned land to

[113] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 376.
[114] Bisseneek to Tallents, 24 November 1921, Tallents private papers, Box: "SGT Baltic," Folder: "The Baltic. 9. The Latvian Estonian Frontier. Supporting Papers."
[115] For the reports of Simpson's Commission and Court of Arbitration, and presentations delivered to it, see LVVA f1313, ap2, l211, i1-112. See also Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 378-379.

each of the states, transferring territory from one state to another and providing for its evacuation.[116] Apart from Simpson, Tallents liked to say that he was "the only living Englishman who had a European frontier to his credit."[117] A number of others could claim credit for frontiers outside of Europe; the High Commission's creation of the Latvian-Estonian and Latvian-Lithuanian borders testifies to a critical postwar moment in which the creation of national units was a central element in the British-managed European order as well.

The Estonian and Latvian governments signed a Convention on the border in October 1920, after a month of negotiations starting in September.[118] The Convention set out that the border should be marked by visible signs and provided for the creation of customs and crossing points within it, prohibiting any crossing at unmarked points.[119] A later Instruction outlined how the border was to be realized in the actual landscape and on printed maps by groups of triangulators, topographers, and draftsmen.[120] The Convention on the border also outlined the rights of the Latvian and Estonian people now separated and bounded by it. Latvians and Estonians living on the "wrong" side of the future border before it was drawn, in the lands of the other state, would have two years to change their citizenship by writing to the consul of the state whose citizenship they would like to adopt; those who did not do so would receive the citizenship of the state on the territory of which they lived.[121]

[116] LVVA f1313, ap2, l211, i11.
[117] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 378.
[118] Convention between Latvia and Estonia, 19 October 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l142, i48-51ob.
[119] Convention between Latvia and Estonia, 19 October 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l142, i48-51ob, Articles 3-5.
[120] Instruktsiia dlia smeshannoi komissii po provedeniiu v nature ganitsy mezhdu Latviei i Esti, LVVA f1313, ap 2, l142, i78-80.
[121] Convention between Latvia and Estonia, 19 October 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l142, i48-51ob, Articles 6-7.

Peopling the Border

Borders weren't finished when they had been drawn, and drawing borders didn't begin with tracing a line on the map. As the original Estonian-Latvian boundary commission maps indicate, the new borders ran through populous towns inhabited by diverse populations, affecting neighbors living on different sides of the street. Claims to the national composition of populations within envisioned national territories were a familiar feature in representations made to the Paris Peace Conference (see Fig).[122] The assignment of national populations also proceeded in treaties between states, and through boundary commissions on the ground. Preparations for delimiting the new borders were preceded by negotiations over ethnic identity and resettlement. Drawing a border depended on the production and disposition of men and material property confined on either side of it. The rights written into the Estonian-Latvian Convention offered one way to incorporate people within national populations enclosed by borders. Another method was population exchange. This section examines claims made by the Latvian government and newly defined Latvian citizens on their national belonging in the course of peace treaty and border negotiations with the Soviet state taking place at the same time as Tallents's Estonian-Latvian Boundary Commission.

At the same time that the British High Commission was securing Baltic territory and drawing borders between the new Baltic states, Soviet NKID officials were negotiating peace with the Baltic governments. The Soviet government had explored the possibility of peace negotiations with the Estonian government as early as April, 1919, but had renewed their proposals in late August and early September. The British Mission in Helsingfors reported the Finnish government's receipt of Chicherin's peace proposals by radiotelegraph on September 11, and noted the likelihood of joint negotiations with Latvia and Estonia.[123] Tallents reported the Latvian

[122] "The Population of Latvia According to Nationalities," May 1919, TNA FO 608/185/185.
[123] Britmis Helsingfors to WO (repeated Astoria Paris), 16 September 1919, TNA FO 608/187/49.

government's receipt of the Soviet peace offer on September 12.[124] As Tallents conveyed to the FO, Latvian leaders were once again anxious to know how the British government would view the opening of peace negotiations with the Bolsheviks, and whether they would lead to a blockade, the withdrawal of British support for Latvia, or the termination of financial negotiations with English private capital.[125] Meanwhile—again playing both sides against the other—Latvian leaders claimed that only British recognition of Latvian independence would allow the Latvian government to justify its rejection of the Soviet peace offer to the Latvian people after so many years of war.[126] Tallents asked for "any possible indication that part expected from Baltic states in strategy of allies against Bolsheviks would be confined to defence of their frontiers," in the hope that such a declaration would strengthen the position of the national Latvian government.[127]

When it eventually traveled to Moscow the following June, the Latvian Peace Delegation was anxious to secure "the property interests and rights" of the citizens of both countries and "the return to Latvia of extracted [*vyvezennykh*] property and wealth, as of state and societal institutions, and of corporate and private persons." Goods evacuated from Riga during the war and held in Moscow were expected to be returned.[128] A furniture workshop evacuated to Moscow from Riga in 1915 and the Riga Chemical Laboratory evacuated to Omsk, for example, were claimed for Latvia. These enterprises had been municipalized (by the Derevootdel) and nationalized, respectively, in May 1920, during the Latvian delegation's visit, when, it claimed, the expropriation of "Latvian" property should have been suspended.[129]

[124] Tallents to FO (repeated Astoria Paris), 12 September 1919, TNA FO 608/193/181-183.
[125] Tallents to FO (repeated Astoria Paris), 12 September 1919, TNA FO 608/193/181-183, 182.
[126] Tallents to FO (repeated Astoria Paris), 12 September 1919, TNA FO 608/193/181-183, 183.
[127] Tallents to FO (repeated Astoria Paris), 12 September 1919, TNA FO 608/193/181-183, 183.
[128] LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i53.
[129] Head of LMD to Ioffe, [4?] June 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i162-162ob.

As described in Chapters 1 and 2, the desperate military and economic circumstances of western Russia after four years of war transformed the consular practice of monitoring remount resources within imperial regions into a method for evaluating national strength and national possessions. This process of describing and enlisting the "contents" of the national unit was directly tied within the British Foreign Office, War Office, Admiralty, and Peace Conference bureaucracies to evaluating the nation's viability and its need for external aid. Calculating remount resources was an intensive local practice that determined global decisions by the inter-Allied leadership. The logic of "nationalizing" resources by their location, and people by their place of birth, also generated claims from the residents and former residents of new states regarding their property, their property's national belonging, and their own national identity. In the summer of 1920, the Baltic noblewoman Sofie Pavlovna Lieven (whose brother Anatol had led a campaign against the Bolsheviks in Latvia and later fought alongside Iudenich—the British gave him 700,000 marks for his trouble)[130] wrote to the Latvian Peace Delegation then in Moscow to request the return of twelve horses to their "homeland" in Latvia.[131] Lieven, now a "Latvian citizen" according to the Chairman of the Latvian Delegation—who forwarded her letter to the Soviet delegation's chairman Adolf Ioffe—claimed a right to the horses under the terms of the recent Russian-Latvian agreement on the repatriation of refugees and their property.[132] Lieven had read the agreement after it was published in *Izvestiia* on June 22, 1920. Lieven's horses and their "carriages and tack," which had been evacuated from Lifliand gubernia in August 1915, should be

[130] General Burt to Balfour, 21 July 1919, TNA FO 608/192/18-19, 19.
[131] Letter from Sofia Pavlovna Liven to the Chairman of the Latvian Peace Delegation, Moscow, 10 July 1920, LVVA 1313, 2, 38, 13-13ob.
[132] Chairman of the Latvian Peace Delegation to Ioffe, 11 July 1920, LVVA 1313, 2, 38, 12. For the published agreement see "Russian-Latvian Convention on Refugees" ["Русско-латвийская конвенция о беженцах"], *Izvestiia* No. 134 (981), 22 June 1920, page 3. The leader of the LMD had complained to Ioffe about the ten day delay in the publication of the convention. LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i117-118, Predsedatel' LMD to Ioffe, 22 June 1920.

returned to Latvia on the basis of the agreement, Lieven claimed. Ironically, as a part of the land reform carried out by the Latvian state, the Lieven estates were nationalized, an expression of a different vision of the relationship between national identity and property.

According to the Russian-Latvia Convention on Refugees of June 12, people of Latvian identity "wishing to return to their homeland" could do so with the support of the Soviets. After the signing and publication of the convention, the Latvian Peace Delegation received letters of appeal for repatriation and collective lists from self-described Latvian citizens of more humble station than Sofie Lieven, which it then forwarded to the Soviet peace delegation or the NKID. On July 9, for example, while the Latvian Peace Delegation was in Moscow, it forwarded three such lists—"a few of the most characteristic cases"—to Ioffe enclosed in a single letter summarizing the petitions. 30 workers at the Gomel railroad works asked for "reevacuation…in the shortest time to the place of our former residence—to Latvia, and to provide us with the necessary quantity of wagons…for the journey and [for the] transportation of our household property, brought from Libau during the evacuation." This list included the name, job, and number of family members of each of the workers. Printed at the bottom of the list was an incredulous resolution from the boss (*nachalnik*) and the commissar of the Gomel Workshops, dated July 2, who protested that "to second out such well qualified workers at the present time does not seem possible. This is possible to do only after this workshop will have been given different well qualified workers." Another petition listed 31 "persons (Latvians) evacuated from Latvia and now in the ranks of the Red Army on gun-train No. 17 'Death or Victory', wishing to return to their homeland—Latvia as agreed in

the Russian-Latvian convention on refugees of 12/6/1920." The list included each individual's year of birth, year of evacuation, profession, and place of permanent residence.[133]

The Latvian government produced lists of "citizens of Latvia" in Soviet territory, whether "forcefully removed to Russia" by the Soviet or prerevolutionary imperial military administration, or left there for some other reason.[134] The logic of the lists was not, or not yet, purely "national." Russians born in Lifliand and Kurland, now independent Latvia, were not being sent to Soviet Russia to make room for Latvians, and the refugees repatriated to independent Latvia were not only "Latvians" but included Russians, Belarussians, Jews, Germans, Swedes, and Estonians. Appeals the Latvian delegation and from refugees referred to the right of refugees to return to their "homeland" (*rodina*), their "former place of residence," or their "place of permanent residence." They were often identified by town or city, or by region.[135] The people were referred to as refugees, "refugee-citizens," "natural Latvian citizens" (*prirodnymi latviiskimi grazhdanami*), and "native-born" (*urozhentsy*). Instead of all ethnic Latvians, the lists included individuals born in territory of the Russian Empire that was now encompassed by the independent state of Latvia, or those who had lived there and been conscripted or evacuated to what was now Soviet territory during the war. Potential Latvian nationals with real or suspected Bolshevik sympathies were not welcome.[136]

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[133] Head of LMD to Ioffe and enclosed lists, 378, 9 July 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i21-24ob. When leaving Moscow, the leader of the LMD protested to Ioffe that he had not received a reply to this letter. Head of LMD to Ioffe, 417, [] July 1919, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i7

[134] See the lists in Meierovics to Chicherin, 9 June 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, 183-183ob; and Meierovics to Chicherin, 8 June 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, 184-184ob.

[136] [[cite LVVA on this if possible]] See also Aldis Purs, "Working Towards 'An Unforeseen Miracle' Redux: Latvian Refugees in Vladivostok, 1918-1920, and in Latvia, 1943-1944," *Contemporary European History* 16:4, Theme Issue: World Wars and Population Displacement in the Twentieth Century (Nov., 2007), 479-494, 485.

Meanwhile, Soviet citizens with "continuous local habitation" wishing to return to their "homelands" were repatriated from Latvia over the border to Soviet Russia.[137] Meierovics sent word to Chicherin of the departure from Dvinsk "of the first party of Soviet citizens railway workers, wishing of their own free will to go to Soviet Russia" on June 20.[138] In early June, the leader of the Latvian Delegation claimed that "2 echelons of railroad workers and 3 echelons with other citizens of Russia" had already been sent to Soviet territory.[139]

Peter Gatrell has referenced the Soviet side of the materials regarding the repatriation of Latvian subjects, describing them in terms of refugee movements.[140] These were refugee movements, but they were also two-way population transfers. Focusing on the Soviet materials overemphasizes the Soviet refugee evacuation effort for Latvia at the expense of the Latvian refugee administration for repatriating Soviet citizens. Seeing the Russian-Latvian refugee agreements as a population exchange shifts Matthew Frank's narrative of the history of population transfer both temporally, to another set of instances almost simultaneous with the Greco-Turkish forced migration, and spatially, to provincial sites within the former Russian Empire.[141] It also presents a different aspect of population exchange as a "tool of statecraft"—as a way to consolidate the territorial existence of states, especially in the context of treaty negotiations, in addition to being a way to manage differences within their populations.

To be sure, these population exchanges were inseparable from the desire to resolve a refugee crisis. According to both Latvian and Soviet reports and protests, the situation was

[137] Meierovics to Chicherin (via Moscow Latvian Peace Delegation), 20 June 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i129. See also LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i257; see also the repatriation of Soviet citizens approved in Head of LMD to Ioffe, [late] June 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i102.
[138] Meierovics to Chicherin (via Moscow Latvian Peace Delegation), 20 June 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i129.
[139] Head of LMD to Ioffe, June 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i180.
[140] Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).
[141] Matthew Frank, *Making Minorities History: Population Transfer in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

desperate. In Tambov, "almost 500 individuals" in difficult conditions were "all impatiently waiting for the moment of return [*otpravki*] to their homeland."[142] Refugees experienced conditions of starvation, exposure, and disease.[143] Reports regarding the intensity of the refugee crisis and alleging that the Bolsheviks were starving prisoners on the Dvina in 1919 had led Cecil Harmsworth to send Tallents and the High Commission to the Baltic earlier than planned, before it was fully staffed up.[144]

The complex of interlinked treaties arising out of the negotiations of summer 1920 fed directly into the stabilization of the foreign policy of the Soviet state and the consolidation of new national states along its borders.[145] Refugee agreements were central to the signing of the peace treaties and the creation of new states behind newly drawn borders. As the petitions above indicate, the Latvian and Soviet states, and individuals desiring incorporation into both of them, saw the borders delimiting new national spaces as simultaneously producing claims on people and property as well, both inside and outside of a given state's boundaries. The Latvian border, created by identifying the territorial distribution of Latvian people, created Latvians abroad.

Southern and Northern Ireland

Tallents left Riga in October, 1920, and his mission formally ended in February 1921. In April 1921, Tallents accepted an appointment in Dublin as the Private Secretary of Lord Edmund Talbot. As Tallents phrased it, drawing the two postings together, he "crossed another sea next

[142] Head of LMD to Ioffe, June 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i180.
[143] See the protests against such conditions in Head of LMD to Ioffe, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i26; Head of the Department for the Repatriation of Refugees under the LMD to the Head of the Central Administration for the Evacuation of Refugees, July 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i31; Head of the Department for the Repatriation of Refugees under the LMD to the Head of the Central Administration for the Evacuation of Refugees, July 1920, LVVA f1313, ap2, l38, i43.
[144] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 303.
[145] On the Soviet-Polish Peace, see Jerzy Borezki, Borezki does not make use of the Latvian materials on the peace or the preliminary negotiations and agreements that led to the peace treaties.

spring to another troubled country as private secretary to the last Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."[146] Tallents's work in Ireland forms part of an extraordinary but revealing 20th century "imperial career."[147]

Tallents's diary, private letters, and administrative correspondence at the post of Imperial Secretary reveal that he and his interlocutors frequently compared conditions in Ireland to his previous posting in the Baltic provinces. When, just after leaving Riga, he "passed from the Baltic to work in Southern Ireland," Tallents wrote, he "was struck at once by the similarity of some of their problems, especially those due to racial differences between those who had owned and those who tilled the land."[148] Describing border skirmishes at Rosslea and Pettigoe two years later, Tallents wrote to Anderson that "It all reminded me very much of the Estonian-Bolshevik border." To Tallents, what the Free State/Ulster boundary resembled most—with its trenches, its "bandits" and irregulars, its uneasy stasis and rumors—was "the Estonian-Bolshevik border."[149]

Tallents was not the only one to see the similarity. Meierovics wrote to Tallents to express his regret that the latter had not returned to Riga and to wish him luck in his new posting. Tallents would be missed, Meierovics wrote, and his work in Latvia would not be easily forgotten. That work would stand him in good stead, too. As Meierovics wrote, "I fully understand the difficulties which had to be surmounted in the Baltic, and your experience most certainly will be of the greatest help to Lord Talbot." Meierovics worried that Tallents's new "job in Dublin, I am afraid, will not only be difficult, but also risky."[150] Tallents also hoped that the experience he gained "among the

[146] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 403.
[147] David Lambert and Alan Lester, eds. *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
[148] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 343.
[149] Tallents to Anderson, Letter of 5 March 1923, TNA HO 317/68, 2.
[150] Meierovics to Tallents, 12 May 1921, Tallents private papers, Box: "SGT Baltic," Folder: "Baltic. 12 Epilogue to the Baltic. Supporting papers."

difficulties in the Baltic" would help him be useful in his new post.[151] Tallents met Lloyd George again in April, 1921, after having been asked to take the Irish job. In his diary, Tallents reported that Lloyd George "said, laughing, that my time at Riga had given me a good experience in dealing with Bolsheviks and Sinn Feiners 'and such lunatics.'" For this reason the Prime Minister was "'glad you are going to Ireland,'" Tallents reported, "'very glad.'"[152]

In 1920 and 1921 it was fashionable to refer to the Battle of Warsaw, which stopped the Soviet advance against Poland, as a new Battle of Tours, a second defense of Vienna. Ireland and the Baltic were similar postings not only because they were both "troubled," or both being partitioned, or both involved in national struggles for independence, but also because both faced a revolutionary threat. The Baltic countries had acted as the "bulwark of Europe" against barbarism in the past; now, with British support for their national independence, they could do so again. With the techniques that had allowed for the reimposition of order in the Baltic, statesmen like Lloyd George and Meierovics hoped—and assumed—that Tallents could help to impose order on Ireland.

And the Baltic kept resurfacing in Ireland. At the Gairloch Conference, a correspondent from the *Daily Mail* whom he had known in Warsaw gave Tallents an inside account of the Sinn Fein delegation.[153] Colonel Woods, whom Tallents "knew slightly in Lithuania," stood for by-election in Belfast and won, prompting congratulations and reminiscences about their joint service three years earlier.[154] Throughout his career in Ireland, in the midst of his work there, Tallents was forced to deal with a dispute over his handling of the purchase and disposal of stores for the High

[151] Tallents to Meierovics, 29 April 1921, Tallents private papers, Box: "SGT Baltic," Folder: "Baltic. 12 Epilogue to the Baltic. Supporting papers."
[152] Stephen Tallents, Diary (April 1921-February 1922), Tallents private papers, Box: "Irish," entry for April 1921, page 3.
[153] Tallents, Diary, Tallents private papers, Box: "Irish," 26 September 1921, 40.
[154] Tallents to Anderson, 7 May 1923, TNA HO 317/68.

Commission that dragged on into 1924.[155] In 1921, in addition to the continuing disputes over the Latvian-Estonian border he was asked to adjudicate, the consulates in Reval and Kovno kept Tallents informed on Baltic events and involved him in an unsuccessful scheme for the emigration of Baltic Germans to Quebec, a last quixotic plan to address the region's national heterogeneity.[156]

Tallents, unsurprisingly, had seen the Baltic, as he helped organized its struggle against the Soviets, through the political and pastoral prism of his upbringing in England. But returning to Britain and Ireland, he could not help interpreting conditions there in light of his experiences in the Baltic. Administering the High Commission interposed the experience of revolutionary civil war in the former Russian Empire on a part of the British Empire also engaged in a civil war.

As important as these perceptions were, Tallents also carried out the same kind of work in Ireland as he had in the Baltic. Though the appointment carried a large increase in salary and good contacts, Tallents insisted to Talbot and Malcolm Smith that he only wanted the job if it "would involve real work."[157] An array of practices and practical considerations borrowed from his time on the ground in the Baltic informed Tallents's work in Northern Ireland. Tallents used personal contacts among the local population as his informants, gathered from politicians, travelers, "figures of interest" and ordinary people he met by chance, like "the Boots at the Enniskillen Hotel," who provided Tallents with valuable information he relayed up the bureaucratic chain.[158] "Like a fisherman round all my crabpots," Tallents collected information to deliver to FitzAlan and

[155] Tallents to Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 17 January 1924, Tallents private papers, Box: "SGT Baltic," Folder: "The Baltic. Baltic Mission. Row about stores."
[156] Leslie to Tallents, 8 June 1921, Tallents private papers, Box: "SGT Baltic," Folder: "Baltic. 12 Epilogue to the Baltic. Supporting papers."
[157] Tallents, Diary, Tallents private papers, Box: "Irish," April 1921, 1-2
[158] Tallents to Anderson, 5 March 1923, TNA HO 317/68. See also Tallents to Anderson, 22 June 1923, 2.

Talbot.[159] As he had in the Baltic, Tallents reported on the state of the border to the central authority of the Home Secretary, who thanked him for his useful letters.[160]

As in Latvia and Estonia, Tallents also had to supply the Irish Boundary Commission with the material required for its daily operations. Paper was in high demand and paper stocks had to be continually resent to the Commission at the border for its everyday work.[161] In order to support the Boundary Commission's surveying work on the ground, and to allow for the creation of a Land Registry covering the territory of the Northern government, Tallents had to arrange for the transfer of Land Registry files from Dublin, which demanded a large amount of time, money, and legal creativity.[162] Tallents sent the Commission maps and surveys to compare against their work on the ground.[163]Along with these papers and files, the Commission again needed typewriters, which Tallents acquired and sent by train to the areas where the Boundary Commission was conducting surveys and hearings.[164] Tallents's office had to provide the Boundary Commission with access to its car for it to tour the border areas.

The Boundary Commission that Tallents supported as Imperial Secretary also conducted similar work to the two Boundary Commissions he had supervised in the Baltic. Because "At ground level, between North and South, there was little discernible social or geographic difference in the districts and communities adjacent to the boundary," the Commission again had to walk the border, meet with local leaders and interests, conduct interviews house to house, and construct a

[159] Tallents, Diary, Tallents private papers, Box: "Irish," 19 July 1921, 23.
[160] Maxwell to Tallents, 23 August 1923; Tallents to Maxwell, 22 August 1923; Tallents to Maxwell, 3 August 1923, Tallents private papers, Box: "Irish," Folder: "May to Dec 1923."
[161] Tallents to Bourdillon, 14 March 1925, 5-9, 8; Note for 2 reams foolscap and 2 boxes carbon foolscap, 9 March 1925, TNA HO 267/211/12; Note for 2 reams foolscap and other items, 6 March 1925 TNA HO 267/211/15.
[162] See the extensive correspondence from November 1922 – August 1923 in TNA HO 267/13/39-138; see also the correspondence on the transfer of files from the Registrar-General and other departments, February 1923 - December 1924 TNA HO 267/80/3-59;
[163] See notes on maps, 6 March 1925, TNA HO 267/211/19-21.
[164] See Bourdillon to Tallents, 15 May 1925, TNA HO 267/211/2-4; Note for typewriter and carriage, 12 March 1925, TNA HO 267/211/11.

new border in hearings and on paper.[165] As he had in the Baltic, Tallents toured the border districts and "front" areas in Ireland in 1923,[166] and sounded out local leaders and the Northern and Free State governments on their desires and expectations for the Boundary Commission and the new border it would produce.[167] This time, though, Tallents was not in charge of the Commission—and more importantly, there was no supreme third party to break deadlocks. Tallents expressed his dissatisfaction with the work of the Commission both as it carried out its work and when it eventually failed. Still, despite his frustration with the Boundary Commission, Tallent's work as Imperial Secretary helped to bring the border into institutional being by enforcing and adjudicating customs violations.[168]

A convincing case can be made that the discipline of public relations Tallents would later develop represented an effect of the welfare state that emerged within the massive societal changes of the First World War. Just as Beveridge's experience with food provisioning would inflect his later ideas on social provision, Tallents's experience with publicity work in making the case for rationing at the Ministry of Food shaped the "style" and objectives of his propaganda work for the Empire Marketing Board, the Post Office, the BBC, and at the Institute of Public Relations.[169] In a similar way, Tallents's work in the Baltic, elaborated in the uncertain conditions of imperial collapse and civil war—the long end of the First World War—shaped his approach to the Irish border.

Imperial practices derived within one set of reference points moved from place to place within the British Empire, and ideas of imperial governance developed in parallel at multiple sites

[165] Leary, *Unapproved Routes*, 14.
[166] See Tallents to Anderson, 22 June 1923, and Tallents to Anderson, 5 March 1923, TNA HO 317/68; Tallents to Maxwell, 22 August 1923, Tallents private papers, Box: "Irish," Folder: "May to Dec 1923."
[167] Tallents to Lionel Curtis, 15 October 1922, TNA HO/267/48/3-8.
[168] See the correspondence on customs infractions in TNA HO 267/49.
[169] Scott M. Anthony, *Public Relations and the Making of Modern Britain*, 6.

independently of the imperial center. The literature on the multidirectional circulation of British imperial practices and ideas of imperial rule has often emphasized the influence of policy in Ireland on India, and of India on Ireland.[170] Two decades ago, Chris Bayly drew attention to the proliferation of approaches to imperial rule that emerged from an earlier moment of imperial crisis and global revolutionary struggle [171] If the exchange and adaptation of practices within Bayly's "quadrilateral of Britain, India, Ireland, and then Egypt" shaped British rule in the 19th century, then the transfer of border drawing techniques and the practices of boundary commissions through Tallents's imperial career reveals the influence of a different "East," and a novel Soviet revolutionary challenge, on the shape of British imperial power in the postwar and interwar period.[172]

Conclusion

Boundary commissions had a way of fructifying and multiplying, producing new, urgent, serially unavoidable questions. Inquiries into the laying and location of borders produced an almost fractal proliferation of issues. The Latvian-Estonian boundary commission produced a special inquiry into the town of Valka/Valga. Tallents watched as the Northern Ireland boundary commission ramified into separate commissions on several towns and on the fisheries of Lough Foyle and Lough Erne. Each of the committees addressing these emergent questions required provisioning: with paper, typewriters, horses, cars, wood, and food. Bodies like the British High Commission and administrators like Tallents helped organize these resources and to distribute them within their administrations to keep their own operations running. The High Commission's work of

[170] S. B. Cook, *Imperial Affinities: nineteenth century analogies and exchanges between India and Ireland* (Newbury: Sage Publications, 1993).
[171] C. A. Bayly, "Ireland, India and the Empire: 1780-1914" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 10 (2000), 377-397, especially 379-387.
[172] Bayly, "Ireland, India and the Empire, 384. See also Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*.

administration was a component and an outgrowth of its work of producing information about available resources and stores.

"Conferences broke up: visitors and adventurers departed," Tallents wrote wistfully of the end of his time in the Baltic, "but all the time the strength of the countryside was renewing itself."[173] The renewal of the countryside was not only significant in relation to Tallents's preoccupation with landscape and vegetable growth. After the recognition of Latvian independence, Tallents and Ulmanis visited an agricultural fair on a former estate near Mitau. Though the fair was "organized by the local agricultural society," it had international stakes. The fair was "more than a mere exhibition of country produce—it was an historic event.," Tallents wrote, because it was "the first show to be held in Courland since the war had begun over six years ago and the first to be held in a free Latvia."[174] The fair showcased the specifically Latvian produce of an independent Latvian national territory, now able to recover and develop. "Inside a big farm building," Tallents wrote, "were exhibits of rye, barley and oats, of apples and plums, of mangolds and sugar beet and tobacco, of honey, of homespun linen and cloth," while outside on the farm there was "a show of horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and rabbits." In the livestock exhibition, "the marks of war were evident" in the quality and number of the animals.[175] Still, English aid and assistance could solve this problem. While Tallents felt that "few of the horses or cows would have found favor in an English countryman's eye," Ulmanis flatteringly discussed the "possibility of introducing better breeding strains from England."[176]

The agricultural fair Tallents described attending offered an expression of Latvian national culture overseen by a British authority. Similarly, the exhibition of British war propaganda films

[173] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 394, 400.
[174] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 400.
[175] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 401.
[176] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 401.

Tallents had organized in July 1919 after the capture of Riga had been accompanied by a simultaneous "exhibition of peasant handiwork" staged by the Latvian government.[177] Along with Tallents at the agricultural fair was George Lambert, who also gave a speech on "how at home in England precisely the same animals were bred and the same roots grown as he had seen that morning." Lambert wished the Latvians "good fortune in getting their fields and farms into shape again after the years of war."[178] Ulmanis's speech at the agricultural show made the same reference to the relationship between the war and nation-building. The nation now faced "a harder task than war…They had to reconstruct their peaceful life in a ravaged and despoiled country." Between the speeches, a "choir sang folk songs of Lettland"[179]

Ulmanis's also speech tied together the land question and the question of national independence. The agricultural fair was not only a demonstration of resurgent Latvian national strength and the nation's claim to its land and produce, it was also an epochal change in the nationality of the owner of the land, the relationship between people, land, and production, landowner and laborer: "Henceforward the peasant would be working not for a baron of alien blood but for his own free country."[180]

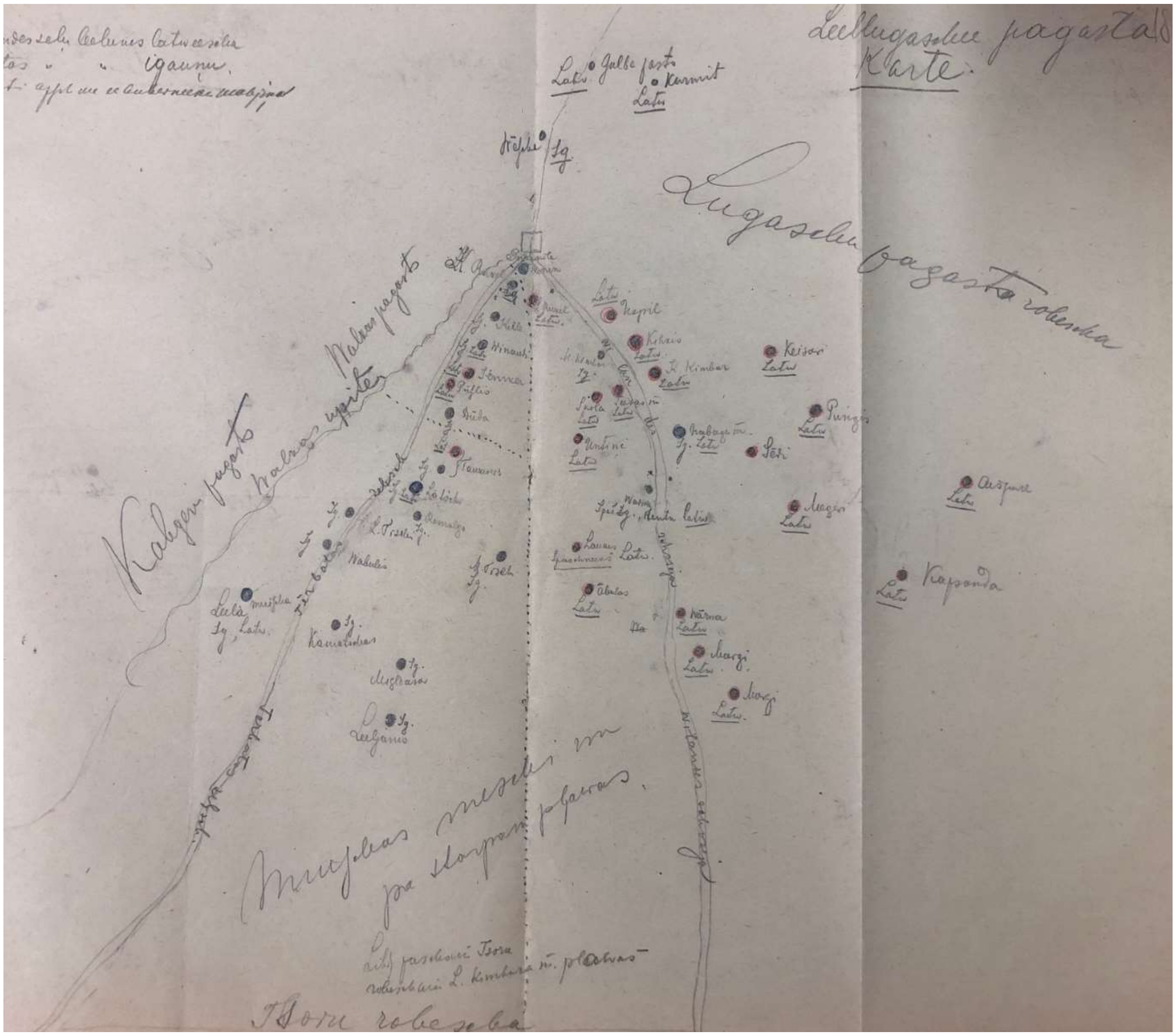
In the next chapter, we will see how similar displays of agricultural produce were used by local Soviet officials and researchers to demonstrate Soviet national territories' identity and importance. The production of national territory through information about agricultural production and characteristic local species proceeded hand in hand with the consolidation of Soviet power. As Soviet and national activists in the Caucasus produced volumes about their national territories, their flora, climate, geology, topography, and culture, they also struggled over the billeting and

[177] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 361.
[178] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 402.
[179] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 401.
[180] Tallents, *Man and Boy*, 401.

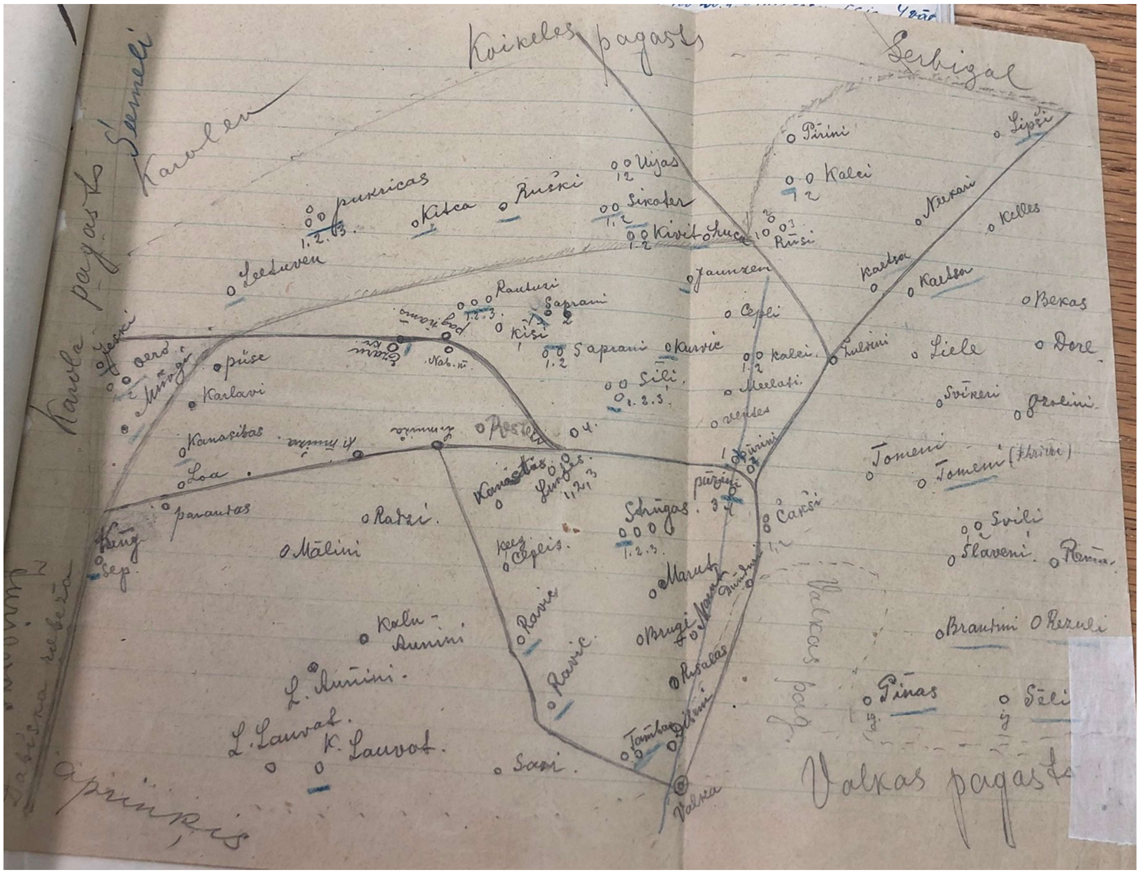
demobilization of Soviet troops needed to secure these successive national spaces against the British and clear them of White forces.

Images:
1. Photograph of Stephen Tallents c. 1920.
2. Households map
3. Valka households map
4. “The Solomon of Our Days”
5. The new border
6. The new border (detail)
7. “The Population of Latvia According to Nationalities”

Photograph of Stephen Tallents c. 1920. Courtesy of the Valga Museum, Valga, Estonia

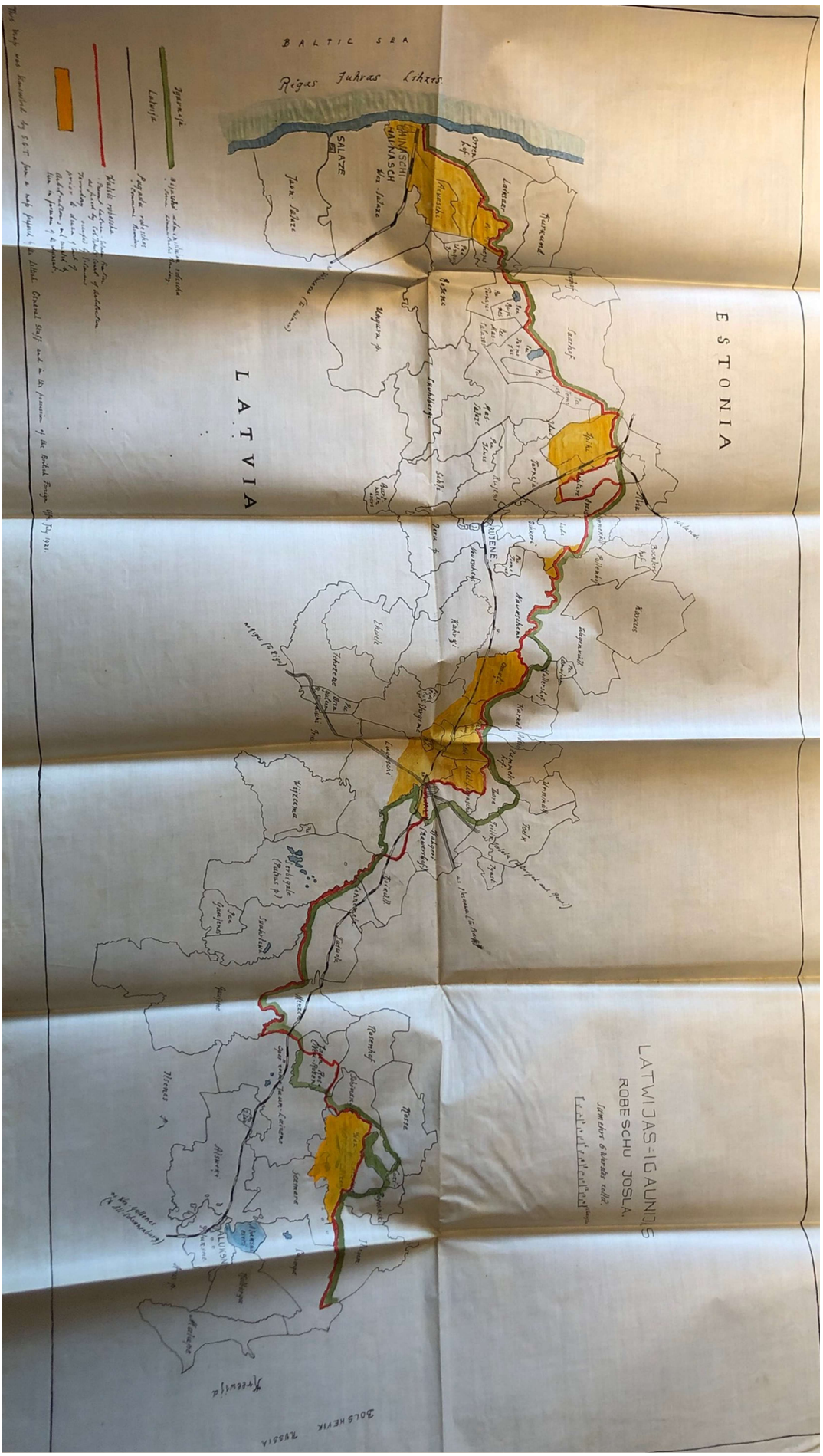


Map, LVVA f1313, ap2, l146, i3, 18

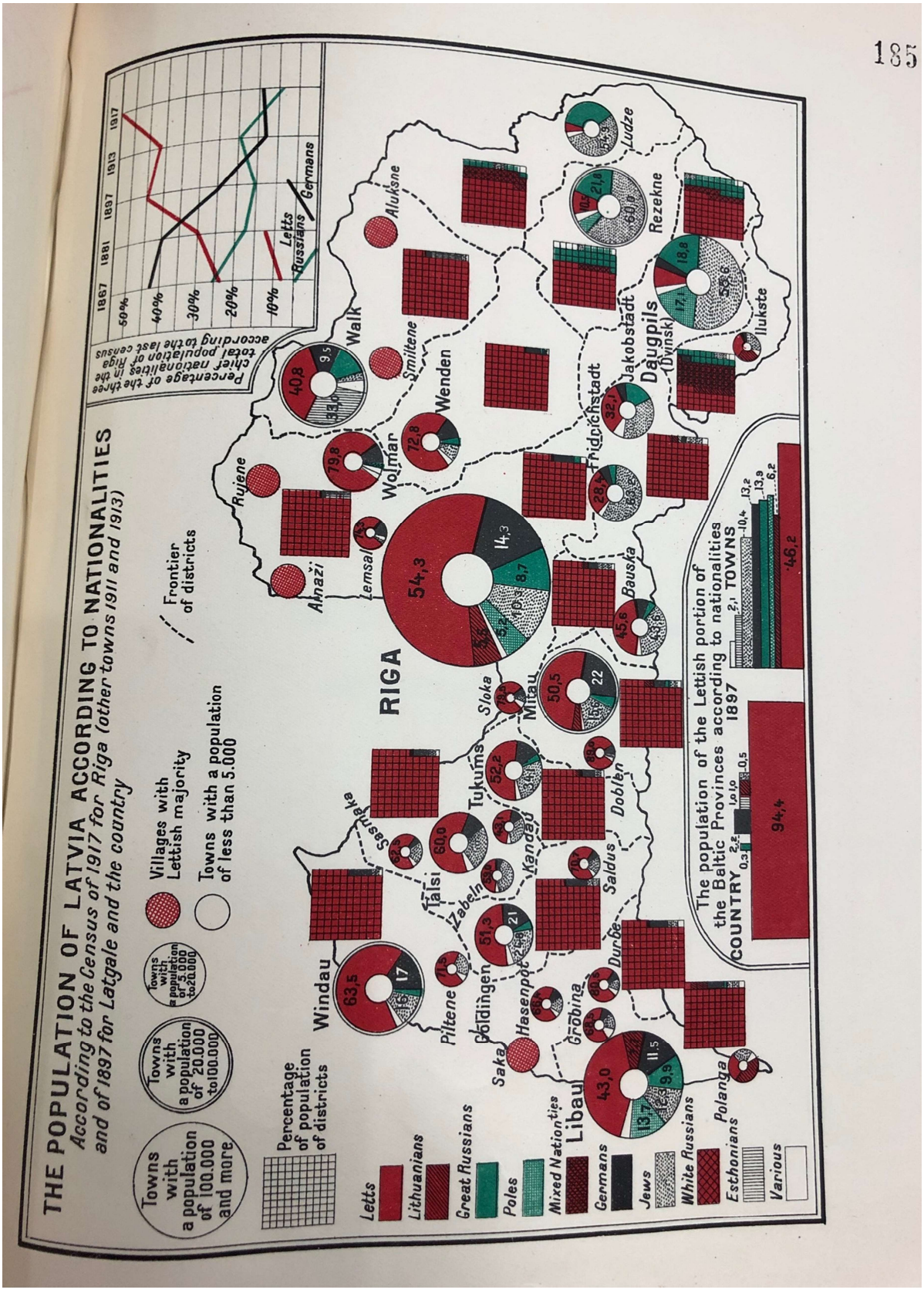


Map of Valka, LVVA f1313, ap2, l146, i3, 8

“The Solomon of Our Day,” *Segodnia*, 11 July 1920. Clipping in Tallents private papers, Box: SGT Baltic, Folder: “The Baltic. 9. The Latvian Estonian Frontier. Supporting Papers.”


BALTIC SEA
Reigas Juhras Lahzis
ESTONIA
LATVIA
LATWIJAS-IGAUNIJAS
ROBESCHU JOSLA.

Detail of Valga from the Estonian-Latvian Boundary Commission, 1920, with the new border in red and the old uezd border in green. Tallents private papers.



"The Population of Latvia According to Nationalities," May 1919, TNA FO 608/185/185