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John Hiden, **Patrick Salmon**. *The Baltic Nations and Europe: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the Twentieth Century.* London and New York: Longman, 1994. viii + 227 pp. $21.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-582-25650-7.

Reviewed by Gary Hanson (University of Saskatchewan)

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The three *Baltic Nations* were the best organized and most effective in seizing the opportunities created by Gorbachev's glastnost' and perestroika to win their independence from the Soviet Union. The work, *The Baltic Nations and Europe*, has a major strength in its treatment of the three independent Baltic nations 1918-1940. Hiden and Salmon cover the economic, trade, and international policy of the three states as well as their domestic political and social history. This material provides a useful background for the chapters that deal with independence from 1991 to 1994.

The three republics won their independence with the almost simultaneous collapse of the Russian and German Empires and lost it, not through internal collapse, in the aftermath of the Nazi- Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1939. One strength of the work is the portrait of economic success coupled with a vital share of the international trading network and a vital element in the balance of power in Eastern Europe. The authors give considerable attention to the dark years of Stalin, Khrushchev,and Brezhnev and conclude with two chapters on the political awakening under Gorbachev. At the time of first publication (1991) the final section of the book was speculative on independence. For the revised edition (1994) the authors provide a new final chapter which takes the story up to March 1994 when the three Baltic nations were again politically independent.

John Hiden is Professor of Modern History and Director of the Baltic Research Unit at the University of Bradford. Patrick Salmon is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Hiden and Salmon have expertise on the international relations of the period between the wars as well as British and German foreign and trade policy in regard to Scandinavia and the Baltic region. They work with the Baltic Research Unit at Bradford where they are involved in current Baltic affairs.

The longest section of the book, comprising some four chapters, is "Part Two: States of Europe 1918-1940." The work emphasizes the zeal with which the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians sought to preserve their rule in a small corner of Europe since prehistoric times. The work begins with the important caveat that the people of the Baltic have been there far longer than any of the people who have ruled over them, whether Scandinavian, German, Poles, or Russians. By the Middle Ages the Baltic People had evolved pagan tribal societies which fought and traded with their neighbors. Cultural differences among the three peoples are noted, such as the Lithuanians remaining faithful to Roman Catholicism and the Estonians and Latvians to Lutheranism.

Throughout their histories the Baltic peoples had to share their lands with other peoples, some of whom dominated them for centuries. This work is a valuable study showing how small states have to survive economically, politically and culturally in the international system. Secondly, the work is valuable in showing the strength of nationalism among the three peoples in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries. The reviewer remembers the preservation of historical memory shown in the Baltic citizens joining hands forming a human chain stretching across the territories of these republics on August 23, 1989, the fiftieth anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939.

Hiden and Salmon are deeply indebted to the many Baltic specialists among these peoples who found themselves refugees from their homelands during and after World War II in Germany, England, Sweden, Canada, and the United States. This work is a well-written synthesis of a vast body of literature and is a model for the study of small nations.

The British, German, and Soviet presence in the Baltic area is well documented during the Russian Civil War of 1918-1921. Yet, the authors correctly accent the drive of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians to assert national

independence. They are shown in the work of state building, constructing new political systems, restructuring their economies and settling their frontiers. The authors do a good job of discussing the treatment of national minorities, even where the treatment was negative as in the case of the Polish and Jewish minorities in Lithuania. The three Baltic states are shown initially to have adopted constitutional systems similar to that of the Weimar Republic, with single chamber parliaments elected on the principle of proportional representation. By the late 1930's they had shifted to authoritarian dictatorships. Land reform is shown to have been a successful policy of the new regimes. Differences are noted with Lithuania where authoritarian rule came in 1926. This difference is explained by the authors largely by the ramifications of the Vilna questions between the wars.

The authors do not condemn Pats, Ulmanis, and Smetona as fascist dictators and even note Pat's opening to other political parties in Estonia in the late 1930's. They do suggest that the internal and external problems of the 1930's provide lessons for the Baltic states in the 1990's. The role of Britain, France, Weimar Germany, Scandinavia, and Soviet Russia are stressed in the interwar period.

The work is valuable in showing that the post Cold War Baltic nations could draw upon lessons learned in attempting alliances in the interwar years. The authors compare Weimar Germany's Ostpolitik with that of the Federal Republic in the 1990's. A high point of the work is the author's discussion of the triangular trade between Britain, The Baltic states and Germany which provided advantages for all in the pre-Depression era.

Even though a new chapter covers 1991-1994, some of the earlier chapters read as if Gorbachev's Soviet Union still exists; they should be changed to fit Yeltsin's Russia. One subject ignored in this book is the possibilities of trade between the Baltic states and the non-Russian independent states carved from the former Soviet Union. Nothing is said of Lithuanian trade with Belorus or Ukraine, for example.

The reviewer quibbles with the statement that "However cynical the Soviets may have been in the promotion of popular fronts in the Baltic Republics, the new governments could draw on a measure of genuine support from the left-wing democratic forces which had been repressed under the regimes of Pats, Ulmanis, and Smetona" (p. 114). This statement about events of 1940 is quoted from Kirby, "The Baltic States 1940-1950," p. 30. This reviewer feels that these governments were hand picked by the Soviets and contained many non-politicals rather than active politicians from the 1930's. Social democrats stood by the nation. Many of the men hand picked by the Soviets joined the Communist party by July 1940 and were hardly objective voices. Many of the artificial crowds supporting incorporation with the Soviet Union were Soviet citizens working in building bases in the summer of 1940.

The author's might note that Antanas Snieckas's lengthy rule of the Lithuanian Communist Party from 1936 till his death in 1974 prevented the massive industrialization and Russian immigration found in the other Baltic republics.

The history of the Popular Fronts which began in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are shown as domestic variants of Gorbachev's glasnost' and perestroika. They first sought autonomy with cultural and ecological self-determination rather than independence. The authors show that no opposition was given to the well liked communist Brazauskas in the Supreme Soviet elections of March 26, 1989 in Lithuania. In Estonia CP members Vaino Valjas, Arnold Ruutel and Indrek Toome were all endorsed by the Popular Front. The CP is shown to have been divided along nationalist lines; under popular pressure, native Baltic leaders responded as nationals rather that as party men. In all three republics in the Soviet period manufacturing developed at the expense of agriculture and housing. By 1989 the percentage of Latvians fell to 50.7%, a bare majority. In Lithuania by contrast the proportion of ethnic Lithuanians stood at 80%. The work accents the persecution of religion: the Catholic Church in Lithuania and the Lutheran Church in Estonia and Latvia as well as the Orthodox church in the Baltic states.

The role of 'national communism' as a persistent direction in all three Baltic Communist parties is discussed. Members of minority nationalities in the Baltic states were active in the campaign for civil rights from the 1970's onward. National, religious and human rights merged with one another as demands. Hiden and Salmon detail how Western governments, other than the United States, which consistently supported the Baltic peoples, refrained from identifying themselves with the Baltic cause.

The work rather too quickly discusses the events of 1988 to 1991, which appear almost as an outline of fast moving events. On March 11, 1991 the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet declared Lithuanian independence. As early as December 1989 the USSR Supreme Soviet de-

clared the Nazi-Soviet Pact null and void. Gorbachev imposed a blockade of Lithuania April 27, 1991, which Yeltsin condemned. The work shows that on May 12, 1990, the three Baltic republics renewed the Baltic Entente of 1934. The day after the attempted coup against Gorbachev on August 20, 1991, Estonia proclaimed independence. In 1991 the Baltic states received international recognition, 70 years after it was first achieved.

The authors note mistakes of the newly independent countries, such as the citizenship law of February 1992 that effectively disenfranchised most of the Russian living in Estonia. In Lithuania, where the Russian minority was much smaller, a more liberal citizenship law generated less resentment from Russia. Estonia modified the law in 1993 partly in response to international advice, partly in the hope of receiving a rapid removal of Soviet troops. The work concludes by noting that a Baltic Trade Treaty came into effect April 1, 1994, creating a single market for industrial goods with agriculture to follow later.

The annotated bibliography is very useful for the reader to obtain more detailed works in English. Works omitted are A.E. Senn, *The Great Powers, Lithuania and the Vilna Question 1920-1928*, Lejden, 1966, and *Res Baltica: A Collection of Essays in Honour of the Memory of Dr. Alfred Bilmanis*, Lejden, 1968.

This book is a useful work for courses in Scandinavia and the Baltic States and for courses in the Nationalities of the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet Union.

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