

THE ROLE OF DIASPORA LATVIANS AND LATVIAN COMMUNITIES  
IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS  
SINCE THE MID-19TH CENTURY

# BALTIC PROPOSALS FOR EUROPEAN UNIFICATION DURING WORLD WAR II\*

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During World War II, post-war Europe was planned mostly along federalist lines. This article concentrates on four Baltic proposals by Kazys Pakštas, Alfrēds Bilmanis, Aleksander Warma and Jānis Volmārs for Baltic and/or European unification, which mostly have been ignored in the previous literature. The variety of the contents and mutual relations of these proposals demonstrate wide alternatives in political thinking even from such a small region as the Baltic States. Instead of grouping them as Baltic due to their origins, they can present different types of plans for unification: Nordic, Western, Central Eastern and Postwar.

*Key words:* Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, World War II, federalism, regionalism, European unification, political emigration.

The Baltic emigration entered a new phase when these countries were annexed to the Soviet Union and later occupied by Nazi Germany in World War II. Baltic diplomats, accompanied by those intellectuals who managed to escape to the West, faced the task of reminding the West of the rights and existence of their nations. At the same time, the former system of sovereign nation states was considered the reason for the failure of peace, as the small ones had fallen an easy prey to their expansionist neighbors. Instead of merely restoring their nation state, some of the diplomats offered closer cooperation among the Baltic States or even the possibility of creating a permanent system for European international politics.

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This paper introduces four proposals by various Baltic persons: Lithuanian Kazys Pakštas (1893–1960), Estonian Aleksander Warma (1890–1970) and Alfrēds Bīlmanis (1887–1948) and Jānis Voldemārs Volmārs (1900–?) from Latvia. Additionally, Estonian Kaarel Robert Pusta (1883–1964) was a renowned champion for a Baltic and European federation during the interwar period, and his publications have also been studied. Since the published proposals are the sources of this article and the method is to compare them, archival sources are used only sporadically. The article includes also occasional references to other Baltic politicians, such as Konstantin Päts (1874–1956), whose idea of Finno-Estonian union is mentioned in the earlier research literature. Other Baltic diplomats (for example Kārlis Zariņš and August Torma in London) did not produce such drafts.

The proposals for European federation were common during World War II. In addition to emigrant politicians, the planning took place in the committees of the Western allies and also within meetings of resistance movements. Everywhere the general trend was to bind neighboring states as federations, which would in turn constitute a European union within the prospective world organization. In the early historiography of the European Union, these plans were regarded as seeds for the subsequent integration, but nowadays the research does not see this link. The document collections by Lipgens<sup>1</sup> and Łaptos and Misztal<sup>2</sup> provide a variety of these plans, along with the relevant research articles, and thus it is possible to compare them to these proposals from the Baltic States, which have merely been mentioned in the previous literature.

After presenting more closely these persons, the article will continue to analyze the contents of their plans: which countries they were willing to unite, on what kind of authority the new federation would operate, how they perceived the relation between the member countries and the established center, and how their Baltic entity connected to the forthcoming world organization. Although the idea of increased regionalism and the necessities of European unification and global organization were widely agreed upon, it could be imagined in various ways, as these plans will show.

The idea of federations did not emerge just during World War II but had been, for example, an essential part of Giuseppe Mazzini's

plan for Europe in 1860s. He planned 14 groups “divided according to history, tradition, geography, and language.” Furthermore these groups would gather into “the great Graeco-Roman, Germanic, and Slavic families.”<sup>3</sup> A reader from the Baltic States immediately sees the lack of inclusion of Baltic and Finno-Ugrian families. During and in the aftermath of World War I the Baltic region became a model for the organization of peace in Europe. Proposals for unions were put forward and the diplomats worked together for the national goals. On the other hand, these visions gradually faded, when the national sovereignties were secured.<sup>4</sup> They reemerged only during the next crisis, the next World War. Once again, the Baltic idea presented itself as a platform to regain the lost independence.

#### PERSONS AND PLANS

To introduce the persons, it is perhaps most convenient to start with Kazys Pakštas, who undeniably is the most famous of these men but he is also an exception. He was not a diplomat but a professor of geography in Lithuania. He escaped to the USA in 1939. Politically Pakštas is renowned for, first, the plan of a Lithuanian colony in South America or Africa and, second, the Baltoscandian confederation. Although he gave lectures on this matter in several North European geographical societies and universities in 1934, the book was not published until March 1942 by Lithuanian Cultural Institute in Chicago.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to actual battles, there was an information war. The plans introduced in this article were not in the primary importance but were introduced within the main policy of publishing the national history. Pakštas wrote a pamphlet entitled *Lithuanian Situation*. A similar method was carried out in Washington by the Latvian legation and its director, envoy Alfrēds Bilmanis. He wrote numerous books and pamphlets, especially in 1943. Many of these small books included identical paragraphs and ideas. The most coherent presentation of his United Baltic States is given in *Baltic States in Post-war Europe* in 1943.<sup>6</sup> The same plan was published, for example, in *Baltic Essays* in 1945<sup>7</sup>. His *Baltic Problem and United Nations*<sup>8</sup> is another collection of his ideas although it remained only as a manuscript.<sup>9</sup>

The Baltic diplomats constantly needed to explain their position because the Soviet-related institutions continued to publish their own books to justify their point of view. For example, *The Baltic Riddle* by Gregory Meiksins was published by L. B. Fischer in 1943 in New York but behind it actually was the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship. The book found no reason for Baltic States, proclaiming: “The existence of the Baltic republics as ‘independent’ and isolated states has proven to be a pathetic fiction, false and harmful in effect.” Similarly it considered the Baltic region merely an immediate part of Russia, which “has always been only an index of the mutual relations between Russia and the West. It will be so in the future also.”<sup>10</sup>

From the Estonian side, the information war was fought in the USA by former Foreign Minister Kaarel Robert Pusta, who had gone into exile already in the late 1930s and lacked an official status. He wrote the counter-pamphlet *The Soviet Union and the Baltic States*<sup>11</sup> against *The Soviet Union, Finland and the Baltic States*, which was published in London by the Soviet information bureau in 1941. With his altered title, Pusta implicitly included Finland into the same region as Estonia and other Baltic States. This expansion was not an accident but he constantly emphasized Estonian relations across the Baltic Sea. In November 1941, he proposed to the director of Council on Foreign Relations in the British Foreign Office, Hamilton Fish Armstrong, that “the possibilities of a future collaboration between the Scandinavian and Baltic countries” be surveyed.<sup>12</sup>

According to Łaptos and Misztal<sup>13</sup> in April 1941, Pusta wrote an article entitled ‘Federation for Eastern Europe’ in the journal *New Europe*. The issue has an article with such a title, not written by Pusta, but by “Group of American Military Experts”. Pusta actually attributed the article to Karl Ast (1886–1971), his old partner from Estonian Foreign Ministry and the Estonian Paneuropean Society in 1929. Pusta did not speculate with the content of the article but he concentrated on possible authors. His attention was drawn to the expanded Lithuania and, thus, he suspected Lithuanians or even Germans of building counterbalance to Poland.<sup>14</sup> Bilmanis also read the same article and he accused the writers of an obvious attempt

“to appease Soviet Russia by sacrificing Latvia and Estonia.” Their plan of a Central European federation would leave these countries with the Russians.<sup>15</sup> Pusta did write a total of four articles to *New Europe*, which rarely touched the Baltic question but defended Estonian sovereignty. Only his last article could “visualize the pooling of the industrial inventory and productive resources of the countries of the Baltic” with American financial assistance.<sup>16</sup>

Pusta had been a strong advocate for Baltic and European unification in the 1920s but he withdrew from this trend during World War II. His writings on the Baltic did not consider it as a political unit but merely a region distinctive from Russia. Neither does his correspondence refer to a Baltic federation. Pusta expressed regret to Ast regarding the failed Baltic cooperation and wanted to promote “collective thinking”, merely in that group with few references to the wider world. “We shall show that the Baltic system, which depends on the new global peace system, is possible.”<sup>17</sup> In late 1942, Pusta, with Lithuanians Pakštis and Kazys Grinius, Latvian Harry W. Lielnors and Estonian Johannes Markus, was establishing a Baltic Committee in New York, which published booklets and brochures on the Baltic issue, such as *Estonia and Her Right to Freedom. The Soviet Union and the Baltic States and Soviet Autonomy Degrees*.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore he declined invitation to the fifth Congress of Paneuropean Union in New York in March 1943, although he had participated in this movement in the interwar period.<sup>19</sup>

Although Pusta had changed his mind, other Estonians considered European federations. As the prospects for Estonian independence within the German occupation proved to be wishful thinking, Admiral Johan Pitka (1872–1944?) wrote to Finnish President Risto Ryti about the situation in Estonia and proposed a union (“*valtiyhdistys*”) between the two countries to guarantee their security, economy and culture for a brighter future. The union would be decided by referendum and it would consist of a common head of state, common foreign policy, and a common commander-in-chief who would lead the joint army forces. Furthermore, it would entail “unified economic life with common monetary system which, as such, would also take place in the new European economic system”. Curiously enough, Pitka sent two copies to Ryti and the last sentence did

not appear in the other one.<sup>20</sup> Apparently the issue of the European economic system was not considered vital so it could be ignored.

Even President Konstantin Päts, who had isolated the country, tried to break out from the deadlock in his last day in office on 30 July 1940. The main point of his so-called political testament proposed a Finno-Estonian personal union and federation but it was intended to take place in a larger context of European reconstruction after the war. Only if the winning nations would promote guaranteeing the security of the Baltic States would the proposed union be comprehensible. Furthermore, this was an essential part of reconstructing the Estonian state as well. The last and tenth point in Päts's proposal alluded to the union of Latvia and Lithuania with Poland to foster their security and provide Poland with harbors.<sup>21</sup>

The plan was delivered directly to the Finnish legation, but only a year later envoy P. J. Hynninen showed it to the last envoy of Estonia in Helsinki, Aleksander Warma. Although a career diplomat, he had arrived in Finland in 1939. In summer 1940, he disrupted rather than canceled the legation after the incorporation of Estonia into the USSR. He remained in Helsinki and continued to keep contact with Finnish authorities, which was not easy when Finland tried to maintain relations with the power (the USSR or Nazi Germany), which was occupying Estonia. Warma also kept contact with other foreign diplomats and discussed with them the problems of the post-war situation. After a suggestion by the US Minister H. F. A. Schoenfeld, Warma drafted his own "Questions relating to the consolidation of peace in post-war Europe" in December 1942. The paper was sent to the US State Department.<sup>22</sup>

The American State Department had considered European federations long before contacting Warma. The Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy was initiated in January 1940 and from the beginning it favored regional federations as the frame of further policy in Europe<sup>23</sup>. A year later Estonian diplomats in Washington and New York were encouraged to take steps towards regional unions, as small states could not regain their lost sovereignty at least in the same way<sup>24</sup>.

The last of the men to be discussed is Jānis Voldemārs Volmārs, an economist who worked for the Latvian Ministry of Finance since

1922. He was involved with the customs union in Estonia and wrote his first dissertation and an article<sup>25</sup> on the topic. Probably based on this work he received the Estonian Order of the Cross of the Eagle in February 1936. During the Nazi occupation he worked in a liqueur factory and was transferred to Göttingen in 1944. After the war he defended his second doctoral work *Europäische Zollunion und Planungsgemeinschaft* [*European Customs Union and Planning Community*] in Göttingen in January 1948. He adapted this as a book *Europäische Zusammenarbeit und die Europäische Zollunion* [*European Cooperation and the European Customs Union*],<sup>26</sup> which was most likely finished in March 1949. During the same year, he moved to the USA.<sup>27</sup>

Despite its late publication date, it is justifiable to include Volmārs's book with the proposals of World War II because it must have been in planning for several years. Volmārs relied on, for evident reasons, statistics from the interwar period but he also used them as basis for current calculations; most visibly he showed the map of 1937 as the borders of his European customs union. Additionally he battled at length against the most-favored nation system presented by Louise Sommer in 1935. Surprisingly he occasionally also referred positively to German plans of Great Economical Space as models for building networks of roads and rail-roads across Europe. However, he explicitly rejected the autarchic tendencies of his union because Europe is not self-sufficient in most raw materials and is dependent on trade with other continents.

On the other hand, Volmārs recognized the beginning of the new age, especially with the introduction of the materials (plastics) and energy source (nuclear power). These both would improve the possibilities of the European cooperation and vice versa, only through European cooperation could these new possibilities be properly harnessed. What was previously impossible can be possible tomorrow, he wrote on several occasions. Underlining the planning, Volmārs's book clearly belongs to the post-war Europe<sup>28</sup>. Despite these projections, Volmārs failed to see the political changes after World War II and the beginning of the Cold War. Finnish reviewer Esko Timonen rightly considered the book either outdated despite its only two years of age, "or it is a lot ahead of its time"<sup>29</sup>.

Another example of Latvian proposals after World War II is a memorandum by A. Lamberg written in a DP camp in Western Germany in 1948. He wanted to take the best out of the bad situation because the time in the camps has “created a unique possibility for all the Balts to come together and have a heartfelt discussion about our future constitutional, cultural and economic problems.” Lamberg rightly saw that the emigrants “are only the minor part of the nation” but it was their duty to draft the program for “Baltic United States” and “then to mold the public opinion for the benefit of the Baltic Union”. For Lamberg, the Baltic people between the Narva and Neman rivers were “real brethren and fellow countrymen”, who could form a “state out of common past and for common future”. This spontaneous support, nevertheless, had to be organized and it was crucial because “the Baltic Union will not grow to become a political factor in the European Union, unless it will be the Baltic peoples’ heart’s desire and conscious purpose”.<sup>30</sup>

Like Volmārs, Lamberg seems to have had few contacts with the rest of the exile community. He nevertheless exceptionally referred to previous proposals and he wholeheartedly supported the idea of Baltic federation by Bilmanis. Lamberg also regretted Latvian activities for European unification, mentioning especially *Eiropas Ūnija* proposed by Kārlis Gulbis<sup>31</sup>, as there was no similar organization for the Baltic unity. His short paper does not clarify the relationship of the Baltic United States and a European Union but he was confident that the three Baltic States could have defended themselves together against the Soviet Union in 1939 and could continue to do that in the future as well. The foreign threat remained the central factor behind the cooperation, because “not freedom and welfare is uniting nations, but, indeed, deadly peril and fear”.

## THE NATIONS IN THE REGION

Although all these proposals were clearly elite projects, they were presented as manifestations of the will of the Baltic peoples. Like Lamberg, Pakštis was confident of “moral support and passive approval” of the people of the Baltic States and, moreover, many in the intellectual and political leadership had much favor for this



kind of project. The general orientation was to the West, and not East.<sup>32</sup> Neither did Bilmanis suspect the strong support of the “large majority of the Baltic peoples” for closer cooperation. He became even more confident after the war: “The peoples of the Baltic yearn for the closest possible union between their nations.” It had “always been desired and sought by the Baltic peoples themselves.”<sup>33</sup>

Pakštas regarded it “sacred duty” of representatives of small nations of Central Eastern Europe “to plan for a future free, independent and peaceful life” in addition to striving for the restoration of freedom.<sup>34</sup> Also Bilmanis demanded small nations to “actively take part in the creation of the coveted community of nations”. Occasionally Bilmanis could generalize the Baltic case and use it as an example for other small nations: “Like Belgium, and others, the Baltic States have the same right to existence. There cannot be a Europe half enslaved and half free.”<sup>35</sup>

Warma as well considered it essential for small states to look after their own interests and to keep the topic open to discussion because the larger states clearly would not do it. He used roughly a third of his plan to answer various allegations of the European small states’ obsolescence and their weakness or inability to defend themselves. He provided much statistical evidence to show that small states were doing relatively better than larger concentrations of power. Similarly Pakštas searched for theoretical support for benefits of small states. The theory of microstatism considered small states as the necessary balancing factors between the larger nations and more efficient in economic terms. Despite evident facts, the opposing theory of megalostatism had succeeded better due to extensive propaganda of dictatorships.<sup>36</sup> Bilmanis considered World War II as the last evidence of the failure of politics of balance and demanded new perspective on the persistent question of whether or not: “It is evident that the only solution of the international problem posed by the rivalries for the domination of the Baltic is the re-establishment in their full rights of the Baltic peoples, natural guardians of the freedom of the Baltic Sea.”<sup>37</sup>

The plans by the Central European emigrants concentrated on restoring the independence of their occupied country and, thus, they were rather nationalistic in essence.<sup>38</sup> Bilmanis seems to

follow this description best. His books drew the most examples from Latvian statistics and national history. According to Bīlmanis, “there is no doubt that the Baltic national states incarnate the soul of the Baltic people, which is sentimental, idealistic, and truly democratic.” He was confident that the national basis of international politics will remain. Even after the war “Europe will continue to be a conglomeration of states based on ethnographical principles”. Among European nations, “Baltic States are undoubtedly indigenous and homogeneous national entities”.<sup>39</sup> As an unfortunate example, Bīlmanis referred also to Belgium. Furthermore he published an article ‘Baltic States – Belgium of Eastern Europe’, which compared the violations of neutrality of these countries: the actual event was the same but only the Western example was internationally condemned. Little did he know that Estonian Ants Piip had in a similar fashion used Belgium as the point of reference during World War I for the British public.<sup>40</sup>

Bīlmanis took the three Baltic States as a region mostly for granted. The Baltic nations were industrial people, who had the right to reparations for their sufferings like other European nations. His texts included various justifications for the Baltic Union: “They are closely related, not only geographically, but culturally, economically and politically.” Whilst the sea was an obvious border in the west, the waterways of lakes and bogs constructed a barrier in the east. They had also similar anthropological features: “[..] women are generally handsome.”<sup>41</sup>

Pakštas started to define his Baltoscandian region by using Sten de Geer’s typology. Accordingly, a region ought to be characterized by several features all over its territory and its borders could be defined by relative intensity where an absolute boundary could not be found. Pakštas then edited de Geer’s characterizations to meet his purposes because de Geer did not include Lithuania in his Baltoscandia: the idea of the Northern race was replaced by anthropological type, the two languages expanded to the 3+2+2 (Scandinavian, Finno-Ugric, Baltic) model of small languages and protestant Christianity to Western Christianity. As a result, Pakštas agreed with de Geer only on environment of moraine. Condemning Khrushchev’s corn plans ten years ahead, he described the limited fertility

of the Baltic soil: "Maize does not thrive in this climate." In Pakštas's opinion, his Baltoscandia was "a harmonious and definite geographical unit", "complete family of nations", which would seriously be harmed by exclusion of one of its members. Furthermore, the differences and variety supported the development of "its imaginative and creative spirit".<sup>42</sup>

Pakštas put a lot of hope in Sweden's role initiating the Baltoscandian confederation. He was aware of Nordic reluctance in the past to engage in cooperation with the Baltic States but hoped that something positive had followed from the occupation of Denmark and Norway by the Nazis and that their minds had changed. Pressure from their governments and also from Western powers could affect Sweden to take the Baltoscandian confederation into discussion.<sup>43</sup> Sweden nevertheless remained cold to such calls to change her policy of neutrality but, on the other hand, cherished the idea of the Nordic as separate entity from Europe<sup>44</sup>.

Warma did not specify the exact nature of the regional unions he hoped for, but he posited that such unions should have economic, ethnic, cultural and historical ties. Needless to say, the criteria for building a functioning union of small states were hard to meet, and Warma refrained from naming any regional unions. In a private letter, he expressed doubts that a Baltic bloc of three states or a combined Finland and Estonia would be large enough. He favored integrating Estonia with Scandinavia, and Lithuania and Latvia with Poland.<sup>45</sup>

Volmārs was indifferent to the regional approach. The book was written to the European/German public, thus, there was no need to emphasize Baltic region; Lithuania is barely mentioned. Naturally he referred at length to the Estonian-Latvian customs union but did not present it as a model for further developments. Quite to the contrary, Volmārs considered abandoning regionalism as one of the key lessons of the failures of the interwar period.<sup>46</sup>

For him the cooperation and customs union of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg was "an isolated phenomenon without greater meaning for Europe, which success or failure does not have to be overestimated". The Benelux Union as such was too small to function as the embryo to the European unification. His

plan required the membership of France and Germany (and Italy) as the Nucleus States for initiating the customs union, or alternatively France and the Benelux. Other European “central states” could join in their own pace. His plan also included Border States, (Turkey, Ukraine and Belarus) which would have special relations to the customs union.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, on the practical method towards European unity, Volmārs could recognize the benefits of “regional associations and realistic peace policy” which would be supported “mentally by propagation of the European idea.” These were nevertheless only briefly mentioned in his book.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, during the war Estonian geographer Edgar Kant defined Europe as a perplexing puzzle between national and European commitments without regional middle-levels.<sup>49</sup>

Bilmanis was in his plan cautious about the relationship to Russia and characterized the Baltic region as a cultural-economic bridge between Eastern and Western Europe and addressed how Russia would be protected as well by the Baltic federation. On the other hand, in the historical part he emphasized the essential difference between the Baltic and Russians and also referred to the heavy burden of both occupations and, thus, awaited reparations from both Germany and Soviet Russia. After the war, the blame was placed solely on the latter, and Bilmanis questioned the Soviet membership in the United Nations and called it a travesty. Instead the Soviet Union aimed for world domination and was a kind of reversed King Midas, turning everything “into dust and ashes”.<sup>50</sup> His anti-Soviet sentiments became clearer and clearer as time passed.<sup>51</sup>

Pakštās had similar ideas on distinct division towards Russia. Strong Baltoscandia did not have any territorial or aggressive claims and could shield Russian from German threat. But he similarly and indisputably separated Baltoscandia culturally from Russia, especially on the basis of religion because “the Orthodox church created its own passive type of culture and a less organized religious life.”<sup>52</sup> Pakštās failed to notice that 20% of Estonians at the time were Greek Orthodox and, furthermore, they had official status as State Church in Finland. Neither did he mention the Jewish population at all, which, in retrospect, has a grim resonance. Bilmanis instead

presented statistics of religious diversity in the Baltic region but the Holocaust is left unmentioned in his historical reviews as well after the war<sup>53</sup>.

Warma attempted to give his plan a universal tone, leaving Estonia unmentioned and writing about small states in general. On the other hand, he explicitly mentioned both Germany and Russia as menaces to the European peace. Apparently he suggested decentralization for both of these great powers. Thus Russia is, in his plan, an essential part of Europe.

Pakštas and Bilmanis envisioned also Eastern Prussia as part of their federation. Pakštas would solve the problem of the Polish Corridor by granting the East Prussia status as a “recognized autonomous unit of the Confederation”. The two million Germans would find their place among other small nations. According to Bilmanis, “the kernel of Prussia purified of foreign German element could be the fourth Baltic state and could become also the fourth canton in the potential United States of the Baltic”. Bilmanis referred to ancient Baltic elements in the region but does not reveal what purification would entail.<sup>54</sup>

The motive for the Lithuanian Cultural Institute to publish Pakštas’s lecture was the discussion on Central European Confederation “with a possible inclusion of the Baltic States”. Pakštas himself tried to undermine this idea. While there were common features and he agreed on close cooperation, the idea of such a large concentration was “much too new, and would require a careful study and comparison of opinion before we could evaluate its possibilities.” Furthermore Pakštas recognized the Nordic character behind the peaceful solution of border issues, like Valka-Valga between the Latvians and Estonians, and Åland Islands between the Finns and the Swedes.<sup>55</sup> The absence of Vilnius, the crucial border question between Lithuania and Poland, from his list was a silent accusation towards the Poles, who presumably lacked this character and were, therefore, unsuitable to join a union with the Lithuanians.

There were attempts to that direction by the Poles. Pusta’s correspondent Karl Ast had ended up in Rio de Janeiro, where he acted as Estonian consul. During the summer of 1941, he was frequently contacted by enthusiastic Poles, who wanted to promote Estonian

attitudes towards the forthcoming European federation and regional unions. According to their plan, Estonia and Latvia would join in a union with Finland and they would coordinate security and economy with Scandinavia. Lithuania would become part of federation of Poland, Belorussia and Ukraine. Ast could not say whether this plan was the brainchild of the local Polish community or whether it originated from the Polish embassy and, consequently, from their government in exile in London.<sup>56</sup> At the moment, Ast did not contribute to the idea of federations himself, but later in the 1950s he would underline Estonia as a European nation and the eventual membership in a European union after the liberation.<sup>57</sup>

Additionally the Polish-Lithuanian committee was established in Chicago in June 1941 to promote the idea of including Lithuania in the Central European federation. Lithuanian exiles showed willingness to restore the old alliance by the declaration of 23 January, 1942. Polish Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski cherished this Jagiellonian dream. Also Churchill seems to have supported Lithuanian membership in his talks with Stalin in July 1941. Other Baltic States were hardly ever mentioned and it looked difficult also for Lithuania, as the status of the Baltic States was ignored by Czechoslovak Prime Minister Edvard Beneš, who was disinclined, in general, toward federations and looked for Russian assistance. On the other hand, there were divergent opinions within the Czechoslovak government, as Foreign Minister Hubert Ripka envisioned three federations in Central Europe: Polish-Baltic, Danubian, and Balkan.<sup>58</sup>

In spring 1942, Polish Foreign Minister Edward Raczynski tried to invite Pusta to sign a Baltic declaration for Estonians, the intention being to join the Polish-Czechoslovak federation. This wish was repeated by the US State Department. Eventually Lithuanians could not, however, join the union with Poland and their hesitation destroyed the joint Baltic declaration by June 1942.<sup>59</sup>

Later, after the war, Pakštas, nevertheless, would join with the Poles in the Central European Federal Club in Chicago. At the same time, Pusta also changed his preferences and rejoined the Pan-European Union. He criticized the Club because there were already similar efforts. More importantly, the cooperation among the Central Europeans was futile as it had to involve the whole of Europe.<sup>60</sup>

Pusta joined with Warma, who continued to promote European unification as a method to regain Estonian sovereignty in the European Movement until the mid-1950s when he comprehended the poor results of this undertaking.<sup>61</sup>

### TASK OF THE FEDERATIONS

According to Bilmanis, the Baltic Sea had lost its meaning as a natural border, and he credited this change to development of aerial warfare. This made it impossible for a single nation to control the shores of the sea so another solution was needed to deal with this international problem; in general, the system of balance of great powers had proven to be disastrous. The only way to avoid using areas in the Baltic region as springboards was to declare it a neutral zone with international guarantees creating “real collective strategic security”, where the use of force was permitted only for defense or to maintain order.<sup>62</sup>

To achieve these ideals, Bilmanis had developed a detailed blueprint for his “closest possible union of the Baltic nations”. He favored the Swiss model, “a real cooperative state organization based on a self-governing cantonal system.” His United States of the Baltic would have the Federal Board, which would consist of delegates of equal number from each member country. They would come together on an Estonian island, which he later defined as Saaremaa. That would be named “District of Baltia”. English would be the common language.<sup>63</sup>

In Bilmanis’s plan, the authority of the Federal Board would be quite large. It would handle common matters in at least foreign affairs, communications, foreign commerce, finance, and shipping. It would also coordinate common industrial, agricultural and shipping policy, where artificial competition had disturbed mutual interests. Furthermore, “Autonomous Central Federal Bank would be founded to manage common finances, assume the national debts, and supervise the forthcoming rebuilding. This would mean “a complete tariff, monetary and economic union” with a common currency, “Balt”, which would be pegged to US dollar. The common state emblem would mix the current ones.<sup>64</sup>

On the other hand, to protect and supervise national interests and affairs, Bilmanis proposed each member state its own local diet. Also, for the same reason, decisions of the Federal Board would have to be unanimous. If the decision could not be reached, a referendum would settle the affair. To avoid supremacy of one nation, the presidency of the board would rotate.<sup>65</sup> The federal aspiration by Bilmanis is contradicted by the aim of the organization, which was “the independence and self-government of the Baltic States”, or in other formulation, “free and sovereign states”.<sup>66</sup>

According to Pakštas, proud Baltoscandian nations would reject a close federation, so Pakštas favored Confederation or Association as compromise. In the latter, there would be only a Baltoscandian Committee selected from the parliaments, which would direct common defense and foreign policy. States would continue to have their own representatives in international organizations but they would follow a common policy. A Confederation would include a Congress of 241 representatives in relative portions and a Senate of 70 senators, ten members from each member country. The Swedish King would become also Emperor of Baltoscandia. Pakštas did not want to give detailed structure of the confederation but did demand four general ministries: Foreign Affairs, Defense, Communications, and Finance. English would be the common official language, perhaps accompanied with Swedish.<sup>67</sup>

Warma's plan had four main points. The first two are the most important and yet somewhat contradictory to each other: first, the decentralization of Great powers into quasi-federations and, second, the inclusion of the smaller nations into larger regional unions. A federation and a regional union would both have a similar “permanent collective central organ”. These alliances would be interconnected so that an attack against one member state would mobilize not only its own alliance but the neighboring alliances as well. His third main point called a “higher international controlling organ” to supervise these networks by imposing sanctions. The final main point was the fair and ineluctable adaptation of the Atlantic Charter. Warma's idea of simultaneous decentralization and unification was quite exceptional during World War II. Only Belgian baron Herve de Gruben proposed a similar solution for the peace in Europe.<sup>68</sup>



Volmārs wrote about the European customs union but he used the term in a very broad way. According to him, customs union would almost automatically result in deeper economic integration. “We do not consider the customs union as the final objective, but as a basis and precondition for the European Planning Community.” Volmārs took for granted that a political decision would start the customs union and that further political changes would follow. A supranational organization would be necessary. He envisioned a European system of two chambers, where one would have equal numbers of members from each member country; the other, numbers according to population.<sup>69</sup>

Volmārs was not afraid to use the concept of economic planning because state intervention had already become the rule in post-war politics, and additionally there were subventions and tax reliefs. The planning was considered to be raised to the next European level because its economy had grown bigger than those of nation states. Most crucial was to guarantee the transport between the factories and cities. This was feasible only by starting customs union on a limited field of economy. The small steps in production and later on financing (investing and loans) would lead to deeper integration.

Warma on the other hand, rejected categorically all state intervention in economics with his basic idea of decentralization. Warma’s individual states would continue to have their own religious organizations, parties, police forces, legal systems and armies; cooperation in military affairs was allowed only in education, material and defense.

Warma incidentally referred to Wilhelm Röpke, a German economist who had gone into exile first to Turkey and later to Switzerland and who supported state intervention in the German economy. Yet the importance of Röpke to Warma was more political than economic: he was one of the few emigrant Germans who defended a European federation and, furthermore, proposed regional unions. Röpke’s Europe was a “true worldwide community of nations which can only take the form of a genuine federation, which means that it must be composed of regional and continental sub-groups”.<sup>70</sup> In addition to Päts’s testament, Röpke’s ideas behind Warma’s thinking cannot be underestimated.

The experience of “double occupation” and the desire to prevent it from repeating are evident in these plans. The methods, however, differed also here. Warma’s plan is essentially designed for a network of mutual defense unions, and Bilmanis hoped for “a legalized procedure for the settlement of disputes”, which would limit aggression for maintaining order.<sup>71</sup> While they wanted to enclose the probable aggressor, Pakštas sought to isolate it. He put “the greatest emphasis on the need for a common defense against aggression”. In his confederation each state would continue to have its own army but it would be placed under a common general staff, which would have authority to transfer troops around the common territory.<sup>72</sup>

Bilmanis regarded his union “as part of the European Community of Nations” and “an integral part of the European family of nations”. Also after the war he continued to write about “an association of regional federations of European nations” and “rebuilding the life in Europe along the lines of a federal organization”. On a broader view, Bilmanis preferred now “Universal World Organization” to a European federation due to colonies. This text also included regional groups as “pillars of European security” as they were already acting as mediators. During the war, Bilmanis only briefly agreed on “the principle of universal membership” but once the United Nations was organized, his union was “regional security organization, in accordance with Article 52 of the Charter” and the Federal Board would represent the Baltic States in the United Nations.<sup>73</sup>

Pakštas tried to ignore the question of “reorganizing Europe into a half-dozen or more political units” and possibilities of a global organization by the topic of his small booklet, which was “to discuss here the post-war reorganization of only one European region”.<sup>74</sup> Obviously he wanted to avoid dealing with the disputes with Poland.

Pakštas was not, however, for isolation. Whereas Bilmanis had proposed strict neutrality of the Baltic Sea, Pakštas desired the Western powers (back) to the region as guarantors of the Baltoscandian security. He even offered Danish and Estonian islands as British and American naval and air bases. Also in the field of economy Pakštas wanted close partnership with the Western powers, trading raw materials and industrial products in both directions. On a

more ideological level, he considered seas as binding, not dividing; waterways and seafaring as improving activity in political thinking and human character. Therefore, the Western powers had much in common with the Baltoscandia, and that was what made them natural partners. Pakštas called the former Great Thalassocracy and the latter Thalassocracy Minor.<sup>75</sup> Also another Baltic geographer in exile, Estonian August Tammekann in Helsinki, used the experience of the sea in reference to human relations and as a climate factor to define a region. For him, however, the region was the whole of Europe.<sup>76</sup>

In addition to improved defense, Pakštas considered common economic interests as an important reason for regional alliances. He did not require a Tariff Union but expected lower tariff among member states. This would increase economic activity, and in the Baltic case, Swedish and Danish entrepreneurs would invest in the Baltic States, improving standard of living and general welfare. Even the common Ministry of Finance would handle only external duties and customs, and other branches of finance would remain in local governments. This would mean a monetary union where each currency would have the same value but maintain its national name.<sup>77</sup>

Volmārs's motivation was mostly economical in claiming that prosperity would bring peace. Others had more universal and eloquent goals. Pakštas wanted to fulfill the desire to "peaceful, constructive life" and remain "in the European society of nations".<sup>78</sup> Bilmanis's plan was "political and economical common welfare", or by other formulations "to advance their security, welfare and progress" or to "promote and guarantee their welfare, human personality and political liberties".<sup>79</sup> His emphasis on democratic values is undermined by his justifications of Ulmanis's actions in 1934 as defense of democracy.

For Warma, the reorganization of Europe into federations of small states was closely connected with the preservation of peace. This is obvious in the title and in the way he describes peace as a general natural law and war as a disturbance. Moreover, "general European peace preservation requirements" should be a basis for the way in which regional unions would be formed. Economic

improvements would be obvious after the coordination of production and trade, but Warma considered diminishing of “so-called own-corner patriotism” a significant result of his plan.

### CONCLUSION: FOUR TYPES OF PROPOSALS

The four proposals by Pakštas, Bilmanis, Warma and Volmārs had a common goal of increased international cooperation in an organized form. However, the actual content of their schemes as well as the prospective unions differed greatly from each other. To use Pakštas’s expression, these plans do not constitute “a harmonious and definite unit”. They did not even agree on the region of the Baltic. Additionally, they proposed a very different union ranging from a full scale federation to a planning community. While they were wise to generally avoid giving details prematurely, the lack of mutual coherence is evident.

In addition to these four more elaborated blueprints, the idea of federation emerged in visions of several other Baltic politicians, such as Karl Ast and Konstantin Pāts. This demonstrates the popularity of federative ideology during World War II. On the other hand, these ideas only briefly appeared in their texts. The national ideology and restoring the nation state remained dominant aspirations. The previous discussions about the Baltic League twenty years earlier were occasionally mentioned, both as a legacy to continue but also as a failed attempt. The only personalities to return to the topic were Estonians Kaarel Robert Pusta and Konstantin Pāts<sup>80</sup>. There naturally were similarities but, in comparison, the discussion was concentrated in London during the first time and during World War II it was scattered around Europe and even across the Atlantic.

There is some evidence of cooperation between Baltic diplomats in London for a common declaration of their situation, and a Baltic committee was founded in New York. But this cooperation did not include founding a federation. Nothing implies contacts between the plans introduced here. Quite illustratively Bilmanis did refer twice to Pusta’s counter-book and to Pakštas’s two books but used them only for information and did not refer to their plans.<sup>81</sup> Due to the uncertain outcome of the on-going war, permanent cooperation

was considered unnecessary when the return to home was still feasible in the evident peace. For the same reason, contacts to the host countries were not as developed as in the Cold War. Most of the persons presented here had shown interest in the Baltic cooperation before World War II and, even in Warma's case, there are clear models for him as texts by Pāts and Röpke. This research cannot show similar contacts by Bilmanis but his devotion to the Baltic federation could not have been merely a demonstration to the American audience, who were already dealing with the questions of federalism. Nevertheless, he clearly benefited from the fruitful American atmosphere while Warma lacked this kind of support in Helsinki. On the other hand, even in the right environment the adapted attitudes changed slowly and only gradually Bilmanis expanded from the Baltic area to a wider cooperation. Pakštas and Pusta did this only after the war.

The first three plans and, for example, calls by Pitka and Pāts, saw the Baltic unification only as part of a larger area. For them Baltic unity was comprehensible only within a wider European unity. On the other hand, Pusta concentrated on the limited Baltic cooperation without comments on European dimension and probably there were other similar proposals. To the contrary, Volmārs provided an example of proposals for European unification without a regional solution.

The proposals demonstrate wide alternatives in political thinking even from such a small region as the Baltic States. Instead of grouping them as Baltic due to their origins, they can present different types of plans for unification: Nordic, Western, Central Eastern and Post-war. Kazys Pakštas wished to take distance from the continental system and this was the dominant feature in the Nordic discussion as well, although the territory was crucially different. Aleksander Warma thought in similar streams as Belgian Herve de Gruben, which, despite different particularities, connects Warma to the Western European federalist discussion. Alfrēds Bilmanis represents the discussion by the Eastern European emigrants with strong emphasis on the national foundation of the European federation. The book by Jānis Volmārs reflects compelling the ideas of the post-war era of planning and controlling the national economies. This

functionalist paradigm was promoted among others by Robert Schuman and it was consequently carried out in the European Coal and Steel Community. Evident similarities with the Schuman declaration place Volmārs into the same category.

The rapid downfall of the Baltic States to the arms of the Soviet Union was a shock to the Baltic diplomats. When the fate and the official situation of their states remained vague, they struggled to keep their agenda alive. As contacts were weak, the idea of European unification provided conveniently a desired common context with the Western allies. Despite their motivation, their plans are part of history of the European unification.

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- <sup>65</sup> Bilmanis. *The Baltic States in Post-war Europe*, p. 80; Bilmanis. *Baltic Problem and United Nations*, pp. 50, 51.
- <sup>66</sup> Bilmanis. *Baltic States – Belgium of Eastern Europe*, pp. 37, 38; Bilmanis. *Baltic Problem and United Nations*, p. 32.
- <sup>67</sup> Pakštas. *Baltoscandian Confederation*, pp. 20–23.
- <sup>68</sup> Lipgens. *Documents on the History of European Integration*, pp. 424–427.
- <sup>69</sup> Volmārs. *Europäische Zusammenarbeit*, pp. 113, 119, 233, 234.
- <sup>70</sup> Wilhelm Röpke (1942). *Die Gesellschaftskrisis der Gegenwart*. Zürich: E. Rentsch. p. 378.
- <sup>71</sup> Bilmanis. *The Baltic States in Post-war Europe*, p. 79.
- <sup>72</sup> Pakštas. *Baltoscandian Confederation*, pp. 20–23.

- <sup>73</sup> Bilmanis. *The Baltic States in Post-war Europe*, pp. 79, 80; Bilmanis. *Baltic Essays*, pp. 203, 205; Bilmanis. *Baltic States and World Peace and Security Organization*, pp. 52, 54; Bilmanis. *Baltic Problem and United Nations*, pp. 33, 50, 51.
- <sup>74</sup> Pakštas. *Baltoscandian Confederation*, p. 14.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17–21.
- <sup>76</sup> August Tammekann (1942). Euroopan maantieteellinen suurjako. *Terra*, 1/2, pp. 199–211.
- <sup>77</sup> Pakštas. *Baltoscandian Confederation*, pp. 17, 22, 23.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- <sup>79</sup> Bilmanis. *The Baltic States in Post-war Europe*, p. 80; Bilmanis. *Baltic Essays*, p. 205; Bilmanis. *Baltic Problem and United Nations*, p. 51.
- <sup>80</sup> Lehti. *A Baltic League*, esp. p. 113.
- <sup>81</sup> Alfrēds Bilmanis (1943). *The Baltic States and the Problem of the Freedom of the Baltic Sea*. Washington: Latvian Legation; Bilmanis. *The Baltic States in Post-war Europe*.

## OTRĀ PASAULES KARA LAIKĀ IZTEIKTIE BALTIEŠU IEROSINĀJUMI EIROPAS APVIENOŠANAI

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Otrā pasaules kara laikā tika izteikti priekšlikumi veidot pēckara Eiropu galvenokārt uz federācijas principiem. Rakstā pievērsta uzmanība četru baltiešu – Kaža Pakšta, Alfrēda Bilmaņa, Aleksandra Varmas un Jāņa Volmāra – priekšlikumiem Baltijas un/vai Eiropas apvienošanai, kas agrākajā literatūrā lielākoties tikuši ignorēti. Šo ierosinājumu daudzveidīgais saturs un savstarpējās attiecības liecina par plašām alternatīvām politiskajā domāšanā, kas vērojamas pat tādā nelielā reģionā kā Baltijas valstis. Šos plānus iespējams attiecināt ne vien uz Baltiju, bet arī iedalīt dažādos tipos: Ziemeļeiropas, Rietumeiropas, Centrāleiropas un pēckara Eiropas apvienošanas plāni.

*Atslēgas vārdi:* Igaunija, Latvija, Lietuva, Otrais pasaules karš, federālisms, reģionālisms, Baltijas apvienošana, politiskā emigrācija.

## Kopsavilkums

Otrā pasaules kara laikā pēckara Eiropa tika plānota galvenokārt kā federācija. Rakstā analizēti četru baltiešu (Kaža Pakšta, Alfrēda Bilmaņa, Aleksandra Varmas un Jāņa Volmāra) priekšlikumi Baltijas un/vai Eiropas apvienošanai, kam agrākajos avotos lielākoties nav pievērsta uzmanība.

Kazis Pakšts bija lietuviešu ģeogrāfs, kurš reģionālisma idejas bija apsvēris jau starpkaru periodā, bet viņa grāmata *Baltoscandian Confederation* (Baltoskandijas Konfederācija) tika publicēta tikai 1942. gadā Čikāgā. Pakšts saviem plāniem bija atradis vairākus pamatojumus, sākot ar valodniecības un beidzot ar ģeogrāfijas jomu. Viņa izraudzītās septiņas tautas veidotu “harmonisku un noteiktu ģeogrāfisku vienību”, “pilnīgu tautu saimi”, kurai nopietni kaitētu viena vai otra locekļa izslēgšana. Īsti ziemeļnieciskā manierē Pakšts ar šā reģiona izveidi vēlējās attālināties no Eiropas notikumiem un it īpaši no strīdiem ar Poliju.

Alfrēds Bilmanis Otrā pasaules kara gados darbojās kā Latvijas sūtnis Vašingtonā, kur viņš publicēja daudz grāmatu un brošūru par situāciju Latvijā. Daudzās no tām ir runāts par Baltijas savienotajām valstīm, triju valstu savienību, kam būtu sava centrālā federālā banka un kopīga monetārā sistēma, naudas vienība, ko sauktu par baltu. Federālā padome ar plašām pilnvarām noteiktu starptautiskās attiecības un kontrolētu savstarpējo tirdzniecību. Tomēr Bilmaņa federālismu iedragāja viņa nacionālisms, kurā virsroku guva vietējās konferences, apspriedes, referendumu un vienbalsīgi lēmumi.

Igaņu diplomāts Aleksandrs Varma kara laikā turpināja dzīvot Helsinkos Somijā, kur viņš nevarēja piedalīties vispārējā diskusijā par Eiropas federālismu. 1942. gada decembrī Varma iesūtīja Amerikas Savienoto Valstu Valsts departamentam rakstu “Miera nostiprināšanas problēmas pēckara Eiropā”. Viņš ierosināja pārveidot Eiropu par reģionālo apvienību un federāciju tīklu, kuru pārraudzītu augstāks starptautisks kontrolorgāns. Varma netika tieši nosaucis valstis, bet lika noprast, ka Baltijas valstis ir pārāk mazas, lai pastāvētu vienas pašas, tāpēc tās jāiedala vai nu Ziemeļvalstu, vai Polijas grupā.

Jānis Volmārs kopš 20. gadiem bija strādājis Latvijas Republikas Finanšu ministrijas muitas savienībā ar Igauniju. Pēc Otrā pasaules kara viņš šo modeli izvērta plašāk savā grāmatā *Europäische Zusam-*

*menarbeit und die Europäische Zollunion*. Lai gan viņš lietoja terminu “muitas savienība”, Volmārs tomēr uzskatīja, ka sākotnējā sadarbība attīstīsies un aptvers arī citas sfēras. Jauni izejmateriāli, piemēram, plastmasa, un enerģijas avoti, piemēram, atomkodola šķelšanās, prasīja jauna veida starptautisko sadarbību un tās pienācīgu īstenošanu. Pret reģionālajām idejām Volmārs bija vienaldzīgs un jau no paša sākuma vēlējās daudzu valstu līdzdalību.

Šo priekšlikumu satura un savstarpējo attieksmju lielā daudzveidība liecina par plašām alternatīvām politiskajā domāšanā pat tādā nelielā reģionā kā Baltijas valstis. Minēto priekšlikumu autori nespēja vienoties pat par lēmumu, kādas valstis būtu jāiekļauj šajā savienībā, un neatsaucas cits uz citu. Viņi negrupē savus plānus pēc to izcelsmes un nesauc tos par Baltijas valstu apvienošanas plāniem, bet gan runā par dažādu tipu plāniem valstu apvienošanai Ziemeļeiropā, Rietum- eiropā, Centrāleiropā vai pēckara Eiropā.

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