

**ESTONIAN
WAR OF LIBERATION**

1918-1920

I

TALLINN, 1937

Est. A-18283

Summary

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POPULAR SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION
OF THE HISTORICAL COMMITTEE
OF THE WAR OF LIBERATION

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE OF THE WAR
OF LIBERATION
TALLINN, 1937

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Preface.

The War of Liberation 1918—1920 is the biggest and most important event in the history of the Estonian nation. In this war, fighting as a whole at the instance of the central power of a united national State, and under the guidance of a single army leader, the Estonian people finally won for itself freedom and independence. In the popular scientific publication „Estonian War of Liberation 1918—1920“ it was desired to give a comprehensive picture of this most momentous happening in Estonian history. As introduction is given a short survey of the endeavours of the Estonian people to gain independence during the period up to the Russian revolution of February, 1917. The main part of the publication embraces, however, events during the years 1917—1920, namely, events from the preparation of the struggle until the end of the war. Documents from the Estonian war archives have been used as the basis of this work, recourse having also been made to materials in other archives at home and in the Finnish and Latvian war archives and other appropriate literature. The work appears in two volumes. The first volume, which has already been issued, deals with events up to the offensive operations of the Estonian forces in May 1918, when the military activity was carried beyond the frontiers of Estonia. Subsequent events up to the successful conclusion of the war are reviewed in the second volume of the work, which will appear in the near future.

Preliminary events.

(Charts Nor. 1—4.)

Rebirth of Estonian independence.

(Pages 11—46.)

No nation has appeared on the stage of history as independent overnight. Cultural, economic, and finally political independence have been achieved by peoples only as a result of long historical development and struggle. The history of the Estonian people bears out this general truth.

The Estonian nation has lived and developed as a free people on its present site since prehistoric times. Seven hundred years ago the nation was politically still entirely independent. Alternating with peaceful evolution numerous warlike struggles developed with the neighbours in the East, South and West. The most stubborn were the sanguinary fights for independence lasting for two decades (1208—1227), which ended in the over-running of the land by the German Knights of the Sword.

Though conquered in war the Estonians did not submit in spirit to the German, Danish, Swedish, Polish and Russian authorities, who ruled the land in turn during the seven subsequent centuries. The Estonian lands and people have also never been completely joined as an integral part of those States and nations, either constitutionally, culturally or politically, the nation having preserved throughout this period to a great extent its own originality. The economic and political guidance of the country only had passed gradually from the original dwellers to the alien nobility and clergy, the Estonian national leaders being systematically suppressed and the people itself ground down to the level of peasantry. In spite of this the Estonian people remained the original source of the economic power and the upholders of defence.

Having lost the leading part in his own land, the Estonian was gradually deprived also of the rights of a free human being. He sank into a serf-like position — a condition which in those times was common throughout Europe. But even during those difficult times the Estonian preserved his own original language and heroic spirit. Outward expressions of this were the frequent uprisings, the most important of which occurred on the eve of St. George's Day in 1343. The ideas of freedom which came to the surface in Western Europe towards the end of the 18th century spread in the beginning of the 19th century also over Estonia. Under their influence and for other internal reasons the liberation of the Estonian peasants from serfdom set in from the beginning of the year 1816 in the Government of Estonia and from the year 1819 in the Government of Livonia. Having attained personal freedom, the Estonian embarked on the fight against the economic domination and cultural tutelage of the local nobility. The second part of the 19th century passed under the aegis of this fight, its most substantial result being the abolition of serfdom, and purchasing for permanent tenure of farms from the landowning nobility through which the Estonian peasant became economically independent. Thanks to the diligence, industry and thriftiness of the peasant the economic well-being of the nation grew, the educational level rising in consequence.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the Estonian people passed through a national renaissance in the development of its cultural life. During that time was laid the foundation of the national social life, the Estonian national epic „Kalevipoeg“ appeared (1857—61), the regular publication of the first Estonian newspaper was commenced (1857), and the struggle for social and political rights and spiritual independence of the Estonians inaugurated.

During the events of the Russian revolution in 1905, the Estonian national leaders formulated a claim for Estonian autonomy, but owing to the resistance of the higher Russian authorities and Baltic nobility it was impossible to realise this aim. More actual prospects for the obtaining of autonomy were held out only by the Russian revolution of 1917. On the 12th April 1917, it became possible to obtain from the Russian Provisional Government confirmation of the law of self-governing autonomy for Estonia. The national representation — National Council — elected by the people on the basis of this law, entered on its activities on the 14th July, 1917, at Tallinn. This was a big achievement. But the development of the Russian revolution took a turn which held out no expectations for the Estonian people; the disorder and lawlessness, which grew from day to day, were further aggravated

when the Bolsheviks assumed power. The Estonian national leaders now began to look about for ways to dis sever Estonia from the disintegrating Russian State, which task was formally facilitated by the fact that the right of self-determination of nations had been proclaimed by the Russian Bolshevik Government. At its meeting on the 28th November, 1917, the National Council declared itself the supreme power in Estonia, thus embarking on the way to national independence.

The National Council, in fact, was unable to take up the Government of the land as the supreme power, for towards its conclusion this meeting was dispersed by the Bolsheviks. The period of power of the Bolsheviks, supported by the bolshevised Russian troops still in the country, followed. The National Council, however, continued to act in secret, and carried on its work for Estonian independence. In February, 1918, the general political situation had become such that the advance of the German army with the aim of conquering the Baltic countries was now inevitable. It was the last moment for the proclamation of Estonian independence, if Estonia were to be enabled to stand aside as a neutral State from the conflict between the two great powers Germany and Russia.

This step was taken on the 24th February, 1918, by the proclamation of Estonian independence, which was preceded by the actual taking over of the power from the Bolsheviks. At the same time a Provisional Estonian Government was formed to govern the land under the leadership of the Prime Minister Konstantin Päts.

Organisation of the Estonian National Defence Forces.

(Pages 47—86.)

For the protection of order and public safety before the War of Liberation, special national military units incorporated in the Russian army were organised on Estonian territory for self-defence, and as national defence forces.

Self-defence sprang into being spontaneously as the people's undertaking at the time of the Russian revolution, its aim being to guarantee the safety of citizens in the revolutionary disorder. The Tallinn Self-Defence was deprived by the Bolsheviks of the power to act on the 24th November, 1917, but this did not put a stop to its activities, and the organisation continued to exist underground. The taking over of the power from the Bolsheviks at Tallinn before the German invasion was effected by the national military units and the again active self-defence forces. During the subsequent German occupation self-defence organisations outside Tallinn were strictly prohibited, the national military units dispersed, and the Tallinn self-defence forces subordinated to the Germans and converted into auxiliary police forces. As a result of this some Estonians withdrew from the self-defence organisations, but others, however, continued to co-operate with the aim of procuring weapons, which might in future be used in the Estonian national interests. Parallel with legal self-defence, officers of the Estonian national military units began to meet together and to organise reliable men, who, in case of necessity, would support the Estonian Provisional Government.

A big national achievement during the days of the Russian revolution was the assembling at home into national military units of Estonian soldiers scattered throughout the Russian Army. The total number of soldiers serving in

the former Russian Army may be estimated at 100,000 men. The infiltration of officers from the former Russian Army into the Estonian national Army rose to 2,132 men, 13 of whom with higher military education, and 117 belonging to the peace time regular Army.

For the organisation of Estonian soldiers, it became possible after various difficulties to obtain from the Russian authorities permission for the formation of Estonian national regiments within the composition of the Russian Army. With this object in view a start was made in April 1917 for the assembling of Estonian soldiers at home, and of these primarily was the first Estonian regiment formed. Later as the flow of Estonian soldiers back home continued, the organisation of the national forces was expanded to a Division. At the beginning of 1918, the Division consisted of 4 Infantry Regiments, one Cavalry Regiment, a Brigade of Artillery and a Company of Engineers. The chief of the Division was Colonel J. Laidoner. Efforts were made by the Russian chauvinists and Bolsheviks to put obstacles in the way of the creation of national forces. After the advent into power of the Bolsheviks as a consequence of the October revolution an especially difficult period set in for the national forces. Despite the subversive agitation of the Bolsheviks the national Army constituted the force which prevented wide-spread pillaging by the Russian forces evacuating the country.

On the landing of the German occupation troops, the national Army, as the military force of a neutral State, stood apart from the Russo-German War. Actually the occupation authorities tolerated the existence of the Estonian Division for a whole month after the landing of the German forces. Orders for disarming were then issued, and all weapons and other supplies had to be handed over to the German occupation authorities.

German occupation in Estonia.

(Pages 87—112.)

After the interruption of the German-Russian peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk in February, 1918, the German Army began to press forward with a view to final liquidation of the Russian front. Owing to the disintegration of the Russian military units, the German advance took the form of an easy occupation of the desired regions. The occupying of the Estonian territory took from the 20th February until the 5th March.

The occupation authorities imposed a very severe military order on the land. The activities of the Estonian National Council and Provisional Government were suspended. Official institutions were created anew or remodelled. As language for the conducting of affairs in the official institutions and in the schools the German language was made compulsory. The freedom of the press was limited by a strict censorship. Side by side with the occupation authorities the Baltic German nobility, insignificant in number, commenced to play a leading part. From the standpoint of foreign policy, the endeavours of the Germans were directed towards the unification of Estonia and the other Baltic countries with Germany. Efforts were made to suffocate Estonian national opposition by means of detention of the national leaders and their incarceration in concentration camps. Among others, the German occupation authorities interned also the Prime Minister of the Estonian Provisional Government, Konstantin Päts. Parallel with political pressure the Germans systematically denuded the country of property and especially

of foodstuffs, which were transported in large quantities to impoverished Germany.

The German occupation lasted over eight months. The end came as a result of the defeat of the German forces on the Western front and the German revolution in 1918. On the basis of the World War armistice agreement the occupation forces were bound to quit the country and to hand over the power to its lawful owners — the Estonian Provisional Government.

Conditions at the beginning of the War of Liberation.

(Charts Nor. 5 and 6.)

Russian Civil War.

(Pages 115—128.)

The civil war broke out in Russia soon after the advent of the Bolsheviks into power. The revolution of October, 1917, resulted in the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia, where the supreme power of the State had to be vested in a single political group — the communist party. The new Bolshevik State order incited a wide-spread anti-Bolshevist or so-called „White Movement“ in Russia. This degenerated into civil war, which split the Russian State into two inimical parts. The anti-Bolsheviks were supported by the Allied States, especially France and England, which countries, owing to the repudiation of foreign debts by Soviet Russia, had sustained big financial losses in the form of loans granted to former Russia. The Russian civil war influenced conditions in the Estonian War of Liberation.

Military plans of Soviet Russia after the World War.

(Pages 129—144.)

The military plans of Soviet Russia after the World War consisted in the liquidation of the anti-Bolshevist fronts in South Russia and Siberia, conquering of the new States which had arisen on the Western frontier of Russia, the creation of direct connection with revolutionary Germany and Austria-Hungary, the bolshevisation of these countries and ultimately the whole of Europe. Thus the plan of campaign of Soviet Russia was influenced apart from the idea of World Revolution also by the historical urge to expand the Russian possessions. The leaders of Soviet Russia tried to hide their imperialistic designs from the workers of Western Europe by endeavouring to give their forward push to the West the appearance of class warfare.

External political situation of Estonia.

(Pages 145—156.)

During the German occupation, an Estonian foreign delegation was active in Western Europe and Scandinavia, the foremost task of which delegation lay in the obtaining of recognition and support of Estonian independence by the Allied Powers. As a result of the labours of the foreign delegation England, France and Italy in May 1918 recognised de facto the Estonian National Council as the supreme power in Estonia pending the assembly of the General Peace Conference where the question of the recognition of the indepen-

dence of Estonia had to be finally decided. The defeat of the Germans in the World War created a situation whereby in the shaping of the fate of Estonia the final part could be played by the Allied Powers friendly to Estonia. By the Autumn of 1918, Estonian diplomatic relations with the more important Western European countries were regulated. Clear relations were lacking only with Soviet Russia. Representatives of the Russian Whites were working towards securing from the Allied Powers co-operation in the reconstruction of a „unified indivisible Russia“, and were unwilling even to hear of the independence of Estonia. Bolshevist Russia was making preparations for a military onslaught. Against the first enemy a diplomatic fight was in progress, and against the second military operations were set on foot by the Estonian Provisional Government after the attack on Estonia by Soviet Russia.

Internal political situation of Estonia

(Pages 157—166.)

The Estonian Provisional Government resumed its interrupted activity on the 11th November, 1918. There was no properly constructed machinery of government at its disposal. This still had to be created. It was necessary to organise Government institutions and to establish stable order in the State. Owing to the presence of the German occupation authorities in the country the work of the Provisional Government was impeded and made difficult in many ways until the second part of December, 1918, when the withdrawal of the occupation forces was completed. The Provisional Government had thus to organise the machinery of government, to fight for wresting of the power from the Germans, to combat the Bolshevist agitation at home, and commencing from the 28th November, 1918, to battle with the invading Red Army of Soviet Russia.

Economic situation

(Pages 167—178.)

During the World War, Estonian territory had been considerably devastated by the frequent requisitions and pillaging of the Russian armies. Of what remained the major part was commandeered by the German occupation authorities and sent out of the country. The economic position of the young State was, therefore, exceedingly difficult when the Provisional Government commenced to act. The agricultural industry had been crippled by the requisitions of the Russian and German Armies, industrial life was dislocated, and the State treasury empty. The first outlays of the Provisional Government were covered by voluntary donations and loans from private institutions and persons. Later foreign assistance had inevitably to be resorted to for laying the foundations of the economic life. The strictest economy had to be observed in satisfying requirements of secondary importance.

Creation of the Estonian Defence Forces and organisation of State Defence.

(Pages 179—204.)

As the first armed force the Estonian Defence League placed itself at the disposal of the Estonian Provisional Government on the 11th November, 1918, commencing its public activities simultaneously with the Government. The Estonian Defence League was a voluntary, armed organisation composed of

citizens and led by officers. Thanks to the preliminary work carried out in secret by the officers of the Estonian national military units during the German occupation, the Estonian Defence League was already in a position to offer support to the Provisional Government during the first days of its work.

The Estonian Defence League was in the first place adapted for internal defence. Against the threatening danger from beyond the frontier a regular army had to be created, and on the 16th November, 1918, a proclamation for the enlistment of volunteers was issued. For various reasons, the more important of which were the internal political conditions and general war weariness resulting from the World War, the volunteers did not come forward in the numbers expected. At the beginning of the War of Liberation on the 28th November, 1918 about 2.000 volunteers assembled. Immediately after this general mobilisation was proclaimed, results commenced to show only in December. The War of Liberation had thus to be embarked on with an army in the initial state of mobilisation.

Of the men who had joined, an Infantry Division consisting of six Infantry Regiments, one Artillery Regiment, one Cavalry Regiment and one Pioneer Battalion was formed under the command of Major-General A. Tõnisson. In support of the infantry a number of armoured trains were organised, and for the protection of the Capital, Tallinn, from the sea, plans had to be made for the organisation of coastal defence and creation of naval forces. The former Russian gunboat which was renamed „Lembit“ became the nucleus of the naval forces, of which Captain J. Pitka was appointed the chief. The armed forces were subordinate to the War Minister and to act under him a General Staff was created with a Chief of General Staff at its head for leading and organising the Army.

The position was very difficult as regards supplies for the army and particularly armaments. On the disbanding of the Estonian National Division in the Spring of 1918, the German occupation authorities had commandeered the entire stock of armaments and supplies, the main part of which was consigned to Germany. After the Army of occupation had evacuated the country, of the armaments left behind in the former local stores were only rifles of various systems mainly damaged and without bolts, a small number of machineguns and 4 field guns in good order.

Approaches were made to Great Britain and Finland for military assistance and war supplies.

On the whole the general position of Estonia on the eve of the War of Liberation was extremely complicated. No preparations had been made for the defence of the State, the lack of which in itself was already a temptation for the enemy to attack. The utmost efforts had to be made to organise the machinery of the Government of the State and the Army, and at the same time to prosecute a war against the outside enemy.

Invasion of Estonia by the Red Army.

(Charts Nos. 7—12.)

Military activity on the Viru Front

(Pages 209—248.)

Opening the attack, the Command of the Seventh Army of Soviet Russia, stationed at Petrograd, directed the main blow for the conquest of Estonia, supported by the Fleet, in the Narva-Tallinn direction, with a subsidiary

attack from the South by the Lake of Pihkva, Võru-Tartu and Võru-Valga-Viljandi. Against the Sixth enemy Division (2800 bayonets, 16 cannon, 1 armoured train and 2 armoured cars) invading the North of Estonia, supported by the Fleet with a landing party of 700 men, it was possible to bring up sections of the 4th Regiment, still in process of formation, and units of the Defence League, 114 officers, 481 men, and 150 members of the Defence League, altogether 745 men. On the 28th November, the German rear-guard in Narva and partly on the line of the River Narva amounted approximately to the same number, but they did not all participate in the fighting. The attack of the Reds commenced on the 28th November, 1918, but was repulsed by the defenders. On the evening of the 28th November, Narva was, nevertheless, abandoned, as the landing party which descended at Narva-Jõesuu threatened to cut off the retreat of the defenders of Narva.

In the beginning of December, the Sixth enemy Division resumed the attack with its main forces in the general direction of the Narva-Tallinn railway line despatching one Brigade, approximately 1000 men in number, via Vasknarva-Mustvee against Paide. In spite of the stubborn resistance of the Estonian forces and gradual arrival of new units (5th Infantry Regiment, 2nd armoured train, and 2 batteries) at the front, the enemy continued to push forward. Rakvere fell on the 15th December, Tapa on the 24th. The enemy detachment, which had invaded via Vasknarva-Mustvee took Koeru on the 25th December, and continued its advance on Paide, which, however, it did not succeed in taking. The retreat of the Estonian forces in the direction Narva-Tallinn continued until the last days of December. On the 2nd January 1919, the retreating forces reached the general line Valkla-Priske-Vetla, the nearest point of which was only about 40 kilometres distant from Tallinn. But this proved to be the ultimate limit of the retreat, for here the military operations underwent a change in favour of the Estonian forces.

Military activity on the Southern Front.

(Pages 249—272.)

On the 25th November, 1918, the Red Army launched an attack on Pihkva. After taking the town, the Red military units halted to await reinforcements. On their arrival the Soviet Russian forces turned upon the region Pihkva-Põtalovo, their objective being the occupying of Southern Estonia and North Latvia. The units of the independent Northern Corps of Russian Whites, which had been formed in Pihkva on the initiative of the German occupation authorities and with their support, on retreating from Pihkva became demoralised, the main body falling back on Estonian territory. On the basis of the agreement concluded with the Command of the Corps, the Estonian Provisional Government took over its maintenance, the Corps becoming subordinate to the Estonian Commander-in-Chief.

For the defence of Southern Estonia, the organisation of the 2nd, 3rd and 6th Regiments was being carried on in Tartu, Võru and Viljandi respectively, but progress was very slow owing to lack of armaments and supplies, and obstacles put in the way by the German occupation authorities on the spot. The 3rd Regiment in Võru was too small to stem the forward movement of the superior invading Bolshevist forces.

Estonia was invaded in the direction of Petseri-Võru-Tartu by the 49th Rifle Regiment of the 2nd Novgorod Division (1500 bayonets and 4 cannon)

and in the direction of Petseri-Võru-Valga-Riga by the 2nd Latvian Red Rifle Brigade (2850 bayonets, 2 armoured trains and 8 cannon). The German occupation forces retiring from the country took no part in the fighting, the Soldiers' Councils in the German Army even concluding agreements with the Red units on the basis of which the Germans left Võru on the 7th and Valga on the 17th December, 1918, without offering resistance.

In the middle of December, the Reds resumed their forward push from Tartu. By this time the strength of the 2nd Regiment, in process of formation at Tartu, was 111 officers and 710 other ranks, but it was unable to hold up the enemy's advance on Tartu, and abandoned the town on the 21st December. The units of the 2nd Regiment and the Defence League retreated into the Põltsamaa-Puurman region.

The meagre forces of the 3rd Regiment, which were also skirmishing with the enemy in the Nõo area, were compelled to retreat owing to the fall of Tartu, and fell back on Vaibla-Leie. On the 27th December, the Bolsheviks resumed their advance from Valga in the direction of Pärnu and took the Mõisaküla junction. Generally with these gains the enemy successes came to an end in Southern Estonia.

Organising of interior State Defence during the retreat.

(Pages 273—312.)

The general war weariness and over estimation of the enemy strength at the beginning of the War, coupled with the retreat of the feeble home forces on the fronts, paralysed the resisting capacity of the nation. The most active and conscientious element to stand up against the enemy in the first instance had been the officers and school-boys. The example set by them was an important factor in drawing over the larger masses to the work of State Defence, which the Bolshevik agitation was endeavouring to undermine. On the 17th December, 1918, an uprising of communists took place at Tallinn with the object of overthrowing the Estonian Provisional Government, but this outbreak was suppressed. Henceforward, the Provisional Government began to take a firmer hand against the internal anti-State elements, thus creating a more stable situation behind the lines.

Disregarding the setback on the fronts, the organising of the Army and the obtaining of supplies was carried on, new units being formed. The forces at the front were supplemented and reinforced with armoured trains and artillery. In the Higher Command the office of Commander-in-Chief was created on the 23rd December, 1918, to which post Colonel J. Laidoner was appointed, Colonel J. Soots being made Chief of Staff. To facilitate the leading of the armed forces a 2nd Division was created, Colonel V. Puskar being given the Command of this Division. The 1st Division was fighting on the Viru Front, and the 2nd Division on the Southern Front.

During the retreat, at the request of the Estonian authorities, several British war-ships, under Command of Admiral E. A. Sinclair, arrived in the Tallinn Roads on the 12th December, 1918, and assured to Estonia the free use of the sea. The Soviet Russian Fleet had to withdraw into the eastern region of the Gulf of Finland. Some rifles and light machine-guns were supplied by the British Fleet. On the 26th and 27th December the British Fleet captured two Soviet Russian destroyers at sea near Tallinn, which after reconditioning

and manning were absorbed into the Estonian Fleet at the beginning of 1919 under the names of „Lennuk“ and „Vambola“.

In the beginning of December, 1918, Estonia was able to purchase from Finland 20 pieces of light out-of-date cannon, 2000 rifles with ammunition and several machine-guns. A loan of 10 million Finnish marks was also secured from Finland in December, 1918, and a further 10 million marks in the beginning of 1919. A band of volunteers was organised by social circles in Finland, of which two units were formed: one Battalion comprising 4 Companies, and one Regiment of 2 Battalions equipped with 10 cannon. The first unit arrived in Estonia and went into action at the beginning of January, 1919, and the other at the end of January of the same year.

Counter-offensive of the Estonian forces for liberation of the Homeland.

(Charts Nos. 13—23.)

Battles which turned the tide.

(Pages 315—334.)

As a result of indefatigable and successful organisation, it was possible during the first days of January to reinforce the front line by newly formed units (1st Infantry Regiment, the Kalev Battalion, 1st Cavalry Regiment, Järva-maa Defence Battalion, Kuperjanov Partisan Battalion, Viljandi Defence Battalion, Scouts' Unit, and 3 batteries). Reinforcing the front, the Commander-in-Chief, Colonel J. Laidoner called for active operations by the units. On the coming up of new reinforcements, the total strength of the Estonian forces on all fronts was, on the 3rd January, 1919, approximately 4800 bayonets and swords, 147 machine-guns, 21 cannon, 3 broad-gauge and one narrow-gauge armoured trains. At the same time on the opposite front and in the immediate districts were 6200—6500 bayonets and swords, 79 machine-guns, and 34 cannon. The numerical superiority of the opponents on the fronts was thus not very great.

Between the 2nd and 7th January the breaking point was reached in the War of Liberation. In the direction of Tallinn-Narva on the front at which the 1st Division was operating, the Estonian forces with a counter blow in the region of Valkla-Priske-Kehra and before Paide repulsed the attack of the 6th Division of the Red Army and forced it into a defensive position. In the Põltsamaa-Tartu direction in the region of Aidu-Puurman, and in the direction Viljandi-Valga in the vicinity of Kärstna-Taagepera, the units of the 2nd Estonian Division finally held up the attack of the 2nd Novgorod Division. On the whole, during the first days of January 1919, the Estonian forces broke down the opposition of the attackers and wrested the initiative from them.

General counter-offensive.

(Pages 335—426.)

The victories which turned the tide in the War of Liberation created favourable conditions for a general counter-offensive. An attack was launched on the front of the 1st Division on the 7th January, supported by landing parties on the north Estonian coast, which came ashore at the Bay of Hara

on the 8th January under screen of fire from „Lembit“ and „Lennuk“ and joined the units of the 4th Regiment on the Tallinn-Narva route. In the direction of the railway, Tapa was taken by armoured trains on the 9th January. On the same day orders to take Rakvere were issued to the 1st Division by the Commander-in-Chief, Colonel J. Laidoner. The Fleet co-operated in this movement by putting a landing party ashore at Kunda on the 10th and 11th January. At the same time a successful offensive was continuing on the front of the 1st Division. The enemy was compelled to leave Rakvere during the night of the 11th/12th January. Armoured trains and units attacking from Paide simultaneously arrived at Rakke on the Tapa-Tartu railway line.

On the 14th January, orders were given to the 1st Division by the Commander-in-Chief for taking Narva with the support of the Fleet. During the night of the 16th/17th, the 1st Division captured Jõhvi Junction. On the 18th January, the enemy position at Vaivara Sinimäed fell into the hands of the 1st Infantry Regiment. On the 17th and 18th January, an Estonian landing party, strength one Battalion, and the 1st Finnish Volunteer Battalion, on whole 1000 men, were disembarked at Utria under screen of fire from the Fleet. In the evening of the 18th January, two Companies of Finns, together with a detachment of Narva school-boys, entered Narva and took the northern part of the town up to the Tallinn road. Detachments of the 5th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Regiments arrived at Narva on the morning of the 19th January and occupied the remaining part of the town. After the taking of Narva, the 1st Division took over the defence of the eastern frontier on the general line of the River Narva, and on a semi-circular position before Narva.

By the time the counter-attack was launched on the fronts of the 1st Division, the general position of the Estonian forces on the front of the 2nd Division had also become favourable.

Taking this into consideration, the Commander-in-Chief, General J. Laidoner, charged the 2nd Division with the task of taking Tartu. But before the 2nd Division could proceed with this operation Tartu was taken by an unexpected blow delivered by the armoured trains and Kuperjanov partisans on the 14th January.

After the capturing of Tartu the offensive was continued by the 2nd Division for the final liberation of Southern Estonia. Attacks in the direction of Mõisaküla-Valga and Viljandi-Valga went on with, alternative success during the whole of the second half of January, Ruhja being taken on the 19th January and Tõrva on the 30th. Units attacking Tartu in the direction of Valga took Rõngu and Puka on the 25th, and Sangaste railway station on the 28th January. The battle for the Paju Estate on the 31st January was a decisive factor in the fate of Valga. Severe fighting lasted the whole day, but a common assault launched by Estonians and the Finnish Volunteers resulted in the capture of the Estate before nightfall.

Valga was taken on the 1st February. In the direction of the Tartu-Võru high road the Tallinn Defence Battalion broke down the resistance of the enemy at Tilleoru on the 30th January, and reached Võru on the 1st February. In the direction of Tartu-Petseri, the advance guard of the 2nd Regiment arrived at Tuderna on the Võru-Petseri railway line on the 30th January and took Petseri on the 4th February.

By means of the offensive resumed in February, it became possible to move the Southern Front to the general line: Salatsi and Säde River, Egle-Marienburg-Pangevitsa-Kosselka and Irboska railway station. At the same

time it was evident that the forces on the other side were increasing and becoming continually stronger, so that the resistance grew until the enemy managed to seize the initiative.

The effect of the counter-offensive on the military, and the internal and external situations.

(Pages 427—440.)

In January, 1919, the Estonian forces with a swift attack liberated their homeland from the might of the enemy, saving thus the lives of many citizens. As sacrifice to the Red terror had already fallen 450 citizens.

By their counter-blow, the Estonian forces completely smashed 8 enemy regiments, while the remaining hostile units who had fought against Estonia lost 20 to 50 per cent of their men. Among the more important booty captured were 35 cannon, 7 naval guns, 118 machine-guns, 2000 rifles, 2 aeroplanes, 9 railway locomotives, 180 railway carriages, 4 ships, 13,000 shells, and a large quantity of rifle ammunition, which contributed to a considerable extent towards the replenishing of the scanty stock of Estonian munitions.

The moral results of the victory were also great. Quick success in battles banished the lack of self-reliance which had been felt in the army at the beginning of the war, and fortified belief in its own strength.

The big success of the Estonians influenced also the position on the other fronts of Soviet Russia. The Red Army Command was compelled to bring up against the Estonians large forces from its strategical reserves as well as from other fronts. The Estonian victories especially influenced the activity of the Red Army in Courland. The Latvian Red Rifles, which at that time were preparing to deal a final blow against the German and Latvian national forces before Libau fell themselves under the thrust of the Estonians from the North. The right wing of the army was endangered and the Command was compelled to move the major part of its forces before Libau to Valga and Võru. The victorious counter-offensive of the Estonian forces in January, 1919, did not thus only save Libau, but helped to a considerable extent towards preventing the communistic military forces of Soviet Russia reaching out a hand to the revolutionary movement in Germany.

The victories of the Army had a favourable influence also on the internal political situation. Increased optimism at home and the growing spiritual tie between the nation and the Army paved the way for the victorious conclusion of the war. But the military success on the fronts had also a negative effect on the internal political situation. This was due to the fact that after the danger had passed the political groups of the left wanted to weaken the order enforced by the martial law inland and to restrict the powers of the Commander-in-Chief expecting to gain by these measures the support of the masses during the pending elections for the Constituent Assembly. Intrigues were on foot against the Commander-in-Chief. But thanks to the wisdom of the leading politicians these machinations were brought to an end without their producing any noteworthy results.

The counter-offensive had also an influence on the external political situation. The military success of the Army brought the name of Estonia before the Western European public to a greater extent and more effectively than could have been possible otherwise. As propaganda it helped best to gain sympathy outside.

The offensive of the Soviet Russian Red Army to reconquer Estonia.

(Charts Nos. 24—30.)

The military position of Soviet Russia in February, 1919.

(Pages 443—448.)

In the beginning of 1919, the activity of the Soviet Russian Red Army on other fronts had on the whole been successful. The more remarkable, therefore, was its misfortune on the Western fronts against Estonia. Whereas the Supreme Command of the Red Army could estimate conditions on other fronts as being generally satisfactory, its concern for the Western front was all the greater. Apart from the Estonian and Finnish Armies, the Bolshevik Army Command on the Western front was in fear of the German volunteers still active in Courland at that time, and of the gradually increasing Polish forces. The importance of the Soviet Russian Western front had grown considerably in the beginning of 1919. In the view of the High Command of the Red Army it had even become more vital than the other fronts. These circumstances caused the Red Army to launch attacks on a large scale against the Western front beginning from February 1919. As the detachments of volunteers of General R. von der Goltz in conjunction with the Latvian National Battalion were able to keep engaged only a meagre portion of the Red Army, and Finland withdrew from the war with Soviet Russia, the bulk of the fighting had subsequently to be carried on by the Estonian and Polish Armies. The period which followed in the Estonian War of Liberation was the most difficult of the whole war.

Military activity on the Viru front.

(Pages 449—460.)

Paraded
The enemy commenced attacks on the Viru front on the 18th February, 1919, with the object of re-taking Narva. Thanks to the stubborn resistance of the Estonian forces the attacks ceased on the 25th February without yielding any results. The enemy struck again on the 4th, 5th and 29th March and 25th April. Though these attacks were not of any consequence to the front, the losses sustained by the inhabitants of Narva from the bombardment were considerable. On the 25th April, 161 buildings were destroyed by artillery fire from the enemy. The position on the Viru front enabled the Commander-in-Chief, Major-General J. Laidoner, to transfer certain Estonian units from there to the Southern front, and to replace them in the meantime by reorganised units of the Northern Corps of White Russians. In March 1919, the 1st Finnish Volunteer Battalion which had been operating on the Viru front left Estonia. The front was maintained on the line of the River Narva until May, 1919, when a joint offensive was launched by the Estonian forces and the Northern Corps.

Military activity of the Southern front.

(Pages 461—512.)

The general attack of the Red Army begun in February proved especially forcible on the Estonian Southern front. By the middle of February the Red

Army had attained nearly a twofold preponderance, but the Estonian 2nd Division had also been strengthened in the meantime. The enemy counter-attack commenced on the 16th February. On the 28th February, the Estonian forces were compelled to abandon Marienburg and to withdraw to the line Riia-Pihkva high road. Petseri fell also on the 11th March. In spite of the enemy's considerable superiority in numbers (21.000 bayonets against the Estonian 11.000) the Estonian forces launched an attack on the 14th March, as a result of which Petseri was retaken on the 29th March, the Estonian forces again advancing up to Marienburg. On the 17th April the enemy commenced a fierce attack for the possession of Võru. By this operation the enemy was pursuing also political aims with a mind to hinder the convening of the Estonian Constituent Assembly, which nevertheless took place in Tallinn on the 23rd April, 1919.

By the evening of the same day the Estonian forces were pressed back to the outskirts of Võru, but counter-attacking later pushed back the enemy from Võru. The final effort of the enemy to take Võru, which commenced on the 5th May, ended similarly without results. In May 1919, the last two Battalions of the Finnish Volunteers left Estonia.

On the right wing of the Southern front, the enemy succeeded in taking Heinaste and Salatsi in February, and on the 25th April, by a surprise attack, Ruhja. But the Estonian counter-offensive launched on the 1st May liquidated the enemy's success, and took the Estonian forces up to the line Salatsi and Säde River, where the front became stabilised. In this region the Estonian 3rd Division, under the Command of Major-General E. Põdder, had been fighting since the beginning of April.

During May the attacks of the enemy ceased on the whole Southern front. Weary and exhausted by the big losses sustained, the Red Army was compelled again to relinquish the initiative in action to the Estonian forces.

Thus in May, 1919, the Estonian Army had reached a stage where on all the fronts, in the East as well as in the South, it could in turn take up the offensive in order to carry the military activity beyond the confines of the homeland.

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