EDITOR’S NOTE

The centennial perspective from which we look at past events today raises new questions about the fundamental changes that took place in the Baltic region during and after the First World War. Some of them have already been covered in previous volumes of *Acta Historica*. The 34th volume suggested reassessing the cultural and social impact of the First World War. In the 36th volume, we raised the question of whether the war in this region really ended in 1918. The overall aim of the current volume is to remind readers that a large number of modern political communities in the Baltic region consider 1918 as the year of their liberation. The ‘natural’ entities on the present-day political map, nation-states, are not ancient phenomena. Although the emergence of the first modern nation-states in Europe is usually associated with the Westphalian system, in the Baltic region they prevailed roughly 300 years later, following the collapse of the imperial order at the end of the Great War. These entities fundamentally changed the old political and social order of pluricultural empires, and accelerated the embodiment of expectations associated with the creation of new societies. All this is addressed in this set of articles.

The international conference ‘Openness to the World and the Birth of a Modern Nation in the Eastern Region of the Baltic Sea’ held at Klaipėda University on 20–21 September 2018 facilitated its preparation. As the initiative of the historians Silva Pocytė and Vygantas Vareikis, the conference was dedicated to the centenary of the restoration of Lithuania’s independence. Generous contributions from our partners, Klaipėda City Municipality, the Lithuanian Institute of History (Vilnius), the Nordost-Institute (Lüneburg), and the Thomas Mann Cultural Centre (Nida), made it possible to bring together a dozen researchers from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Poland, Germany and Ukraine. Most of the articles in this collection derive from ideas presented at the conference and the discussions that took place.

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