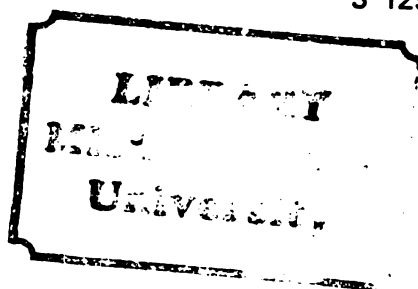




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FINLAND, FOOD, AND AMERICA

By

Fred B. Brown

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

FINLAND, FOOD, AND AMERICA

By

Fred B. Brown

Finland was one of many countries that sought food from America during the years 1917-1919. Factors like Russian rule of Finland, the World War, the Russian Revolutions, and the Finnish Civil War complicated U.S.-Finnish relations. America had opportunities to use foodstuffs to influence Finnish developments; to use "grain diplomacy", as it is called today. After many ups and downs in relations, the final result was U.S. recognition of Finland's independence, at the insistence of America's Food Administrator.

The importance of food, both in U.S.-Finnish relations and in Finland's internal affairs, is the subject of this essay, emphasizing the effects of American food policy from 1917 to 1919. Publications of the U.S. State Department supplied important sources, along with information compiled largely by Samuel Eliot Morison for the Inquiry. No Finnish-language sources have been used, though the works of several Finlanders in English have been consulted.

to my wife

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INTRODUCTION

Food is one of the most important resources possessed by the United States, a very useful resource in the conduct of U.S. foreign relations. "Grain diplomacy" - the use of food to influence other countries - is a familiar concept in modern American foreign policy. Food has played an important part in the development of relations between the United States and Finland, and those relations afford an early example of American grain diplomacy at work during the years 1917-1919.

That period was, of course, crucial in the history of the world at large, and Finland was directly linked to some of the most important questions of the day. The effects of food shortage and the Russian revolutions upon a troubled society are exemplified in Finland. As a part of the Russian Empire, Finland had difficulties with the Imperial government and with the succeeding Provisional Government, which contributed to destabilizing occurrences in both countries. Internal problems degenerated into civil war early in 1918, with one Finnish government backed by Russian Bolsheviki, and the other supported by German troops. Some persons saw a cause of the civil conflict in America's failure to supply food that Finland had purchased. Germany had a strong hold on Finland after the Civil War had ended, and the Allies feared a Finnish-

German move against the Murmansk Railroad, so important to Allied plans for Russia. With the end of the World War, there was reason to suspect both Bolshevik revolutionism and White Russian imperialism aimed at Finland. The Finnish government sought both food and recognition of independence from the Allies in order to secure its position both at home and abroad. Certainly the United States had ample opportunity to exercise grain diplomacy toward Finland, or to exercise charity, or to stand aloof entirely, and to some extent all of these possibilities came into play, as we will see.

Contacts between Finland and the United States were infrequent before 1917, but they had some effect on later relations, and the food supply question also figured in some of those earlier interactions. Therefore, this essay will consider Finnish-American relations before 1917, as part of the general overview of Finnish history necessary to an appreciation of the period 1917-1919. In addition, Finnish emigration to the United States will receive consideration, as a phenomenon that influenced the conception that each country had of the other, and as a phenomenon that occurred largely as a result of economic needs related to food supply. The overall purpose of this essay, then, is to demonstrate the importance of food in relations between Finland and the United States, and to examine the effects of American food policy on a country striving through grave difficulties toward independence.

CHAPTER I

A synopsis of the history of Finland provides the content of this chapter. Beginning with a consideration of the land itself and of the people who became known as "Finns", the synopsis will continue through the eras of Swedish and Russian rule to the end of the 19th century. The economic development of Finland is of primary importance for our concern with the question of food supply, but important social and political developments will also be considered.

Finland and the Finns

Finland has been described as a country made up of 11% water and 20% uncultivable marshes, having half of the remaining dry land covered with trees.¹ Less than 6% of the entire land surface came under the plow as late as 1901, with less than 3% in natural meadow.² The country lies in the latitudes of Alaska, and its soil is mostly thin and rocky. "Wheat cannot be cultivated successfully," wrote Samuel Eliot Morison about Finland in 1918, "and unseasonable frosts often spoil the other grain."³ Finland has never supported a large population.

The people we now call "Finns" entered their name-sake land hundreds of years ago. Their language was much like that of the Esthonians, a little like that of the Hungarians, and

nothing like anything else in Europe. Their early interest in Finland was as a place for hunting and fishing, and trapping for the fur trade. To them, agriculture meant the slash-and-burn procedure, rather than farmsteads or village plots. Besides being wasteful, slash-and-burn agriculture was more conducive to a sparse, semi-nomadic population than to settled communities. It was a method still in occasional use in Finland after the turn of the present century. Small wonder that medieval Finns were neither so numerous nor so well-organized as to effectively resist invasion.

Among western competitors, Sweden established a pre-eminent position in Finland through a 13th century crusade. Swedish colonists then arrived to push out along the largely uninhabited southern and western coasts. They never penetrated very far inland, but their presence constituted a threat to an eastern competitor for Finland: the Russians of Novgorod. After years of warfare between Swedes and Russians, in which Finns suffered much, peace came in 1323. The Finns living around Lake Ladoga - the Karelians, as they were called - were divided between East and West, while most of inhabited Finland became part of the Kingdom of Sweden. The next 500 years of Finnish history unrolled under Swedish hegemony, with never-ending problems on the eastern frontier caused by Russians, Swedes, or the Finns themselves.

Finland under Swedish Rule

Inevitably, Sweden brought new influences to Finland, but the idea that the Finns then developed a 'passionate

conviction' of their mission to 'stand as an outpost of western civilization against the barbarian hordes of the east' is overstated.⁴ According to Morison, on the other hand, the Finns who lived away from areas of Swedish settlement received only a "thin veneer" of Swedish culture, continuing to live after their own customs and traditions. Perhaps the "veneer" laid overtop of tradition was Swedish law, which gradually replaced customary law in Finland. This is rather an important contribution, which with the Catholic Church did tend to separate Finland from the Karelians under Russian rule and the Orthodox Church. Given the fact that the average Finn had a very limited, provincial outlook, though, too much can be made of his being a self-proclaimed guardian of western civilization. It is an idea born of 19th century romantic nationalism and 20th century politics. Long years of conflict were enough to breed hatred and fear of the Russians.

The Finnish people long remained very loyal to Sweden. They were treated much the same as the Swedish population, rather than being enslaved. Swedish control of Finland was originally intended to be a step toward control of Russia's western trade. No such control was obtained, but Finland could still be a source of revenue and soldiers. Furs furnished some income for the Swedish crown and its representatives, but the fur trade was already in relative decline by the 14th century, after hundreds of years of exploitation. A land tax paid mainly in agricultural produce became the basic assessment. In Sweden this tax was levied on freehold land, except that owned by nobles. The same system was

transplanted to Finland. It was therefore in the interest of the Swedish crown to encourage the formation of peasant freeholds in Finland. Nobles did receive grants of land, but apparently these were given most often in the form of several small tenant farms. Thus it is the proud boast of many Finnish writers that serfdom never existed in their land. That is perhaps true in the strictest of legal terms, but with the 17th century - when much land went to the nobility - the condition of smallholders and tenant farmers deteriorated.

The Finnish provinces had representatives in the Four-Estate Diet of the Swedish Kingdom when that consultative body was formed. Those provinces would have electors for the throne, too. The four estates were those of the nobility, clergy, burghers, and peasant freeholders. Swedish nobles held the administrative and military posts in Finland at first, and they were always prominent. Both Finns and foreigners could rise to high positions, however. The clergy, even the bishopric, was soon filled with Finns who could communicate with their countrymen, since Finns constituted a heavy majority of the population. The few towns and their trade were mostly Swedish. A good deal of Swedish-Finnish intermixture occurred in the coastal areas, though the interior remained Finnish.

As long as the people of Finland felt confident in Sweden's ability and willingness to protect them from Russia, their loyalty rested firm despite occasional difficulties. A primary problem is exemplified in the small population of medieval Finland, which one estimate put at less than

100,000 persons before the Reformation.⁵ To demand revenue and foodstuffs of these few people when the land seemed so unproductive might well put a strain on its inhabitants. Swedish colonists provided an initial answer to the problem, bringing methods of settled agriculture which increased productivity. The southwestern coastal strip is said to have paid 60% of the taxes levied on Finland in the mid-14th century.⁶ This was an area long under Swedish influence, an area of heavy Swedish settlement. Meanwhile, the crown urged people to pioneer permanent holdings in the wilderness, and more Finns began to take up settled agriculture, too.

Despite the increase in productivity, no large stockpiles of food were accumulated. Increasing taxes, tithes for the church, and the support and billeting of soldiers all kept the common farmers in Finland from getting rich. Taxes and the billeting of soldiers contributed to popular revolts in the 15th and 16th centuries. (It is important to note that these revolts aimed at the redress of certain grievances, not at independence from Sweden, where taxes also caused unrest.)

Furthermore, the climate was always a problematic factor for agriculture. A catastrophic famine in 1696-97 demonstrated how precariously human life in Finland was balanced upon uncertain conditions of agricultural production, and how dependent it could be upon outside aid. An early frost left people eating bread made of flour mixed with the shredded bark of trees. While this was going on, mercantilistic Sweden was selling grain from other parts of its empire to

foreign buyers. After about one-third of Finland's population had died, the government realized that it could not afford to lose more taxpayers and soldiers. Aid finally arrived, but not as charity; the debt was collected the following summer!⁷

Growth of Dissatisfaction with Swedish Rule

Remarkably enough, that episode did not bring an immediate outcry against Swedish rule. Fear of Russia was too great for that. The famine did show that Sweden would definitely put its own interests ahead of Finnish welfare. That fact was made apparent in other ways as well, and would eventually cause some doubt as to the advantages of being tied to Sweden.

There had been no serious separatist movements in Finland, but a particularist tendency to 'look out for Finland first' had often been in evidence. This tendency was reinforced so long as the administration of Finland, from the lowest to the highest levels, was in the hands of persons who gained a livelihood from their own holdings in that country. With the advent of King Gustavus Vasa, more administrative duties went to officers of the crown, supported from royal revenues. Gustavus Vasa sought more income and more centralized control over the realm, which is the main reason for his support of the Reformation in the Swedish Kingdom. (During the course of the 16th century, Sweden and therefore Finland established the Lutheran form of Protestantism as the state church.)

While Sweden emerged as a Great Power by way of the Thirty Years' War, officers and other state servants received much land in Finland. Some of them were undoubtedly Finlanders (the term refers to natives of Finland, whether of Finnish, Swedish, or mixed origin). Finlanders made a sizable contribution to the Swedish army. But most of the new owners were Swedes, and Swedish administrative officials also multiplied, with a concomitant increase in the use of both written and spoken Swedish. That language was commonly used in the army, and Swedish bishops took over leadership of the church in Finland. The Finnish-speaking population found its language subject to a gradually growing discrimination. This "language disability", as it has been called, represented a sort of "Swedification" of Finland that was sometimes consciously attempted, sometimes unintentional, never complete, but nevertheless a source of irritation. Again, as long as the kingdom's military forces were victorious, so that the Russians were kept at bay, the irritations were apparently deemed acceptable.

The Great Northern War started in the year 1700. It marked the end of Sweden as a Great Power, while Peter the Great's Russia came to the fore. While the war proceeded, the Russian army occupied Finland from 1714 to 1721, a period known to Finns as "the Great Wrath". Already in 1713 there were doubts that the Swedish-born commander of the forces in Finland had done all he could to defend the country. The reckoning afterward showed that some five-sixths of the Finnish soldiery on all fronts of the war were dead or

captured; that Finland was devastated while Sweden was relatively untouched; that the population of Finland was down to around 300,000 while that of Sweden approached 1.5 million, the largest disproportion in a long time.⁸ To Finlanders, it was obvious that their part of the realm had suffered disproportionately, even for a border territory.

The doubts expressed about a general in 1713 only grew to more general proportions over the course of the century. Sweden started another Russian war in 1741. Predictably, it ended in another occupation of Finland (called this time "the Lesser Wrath", being shorter and milder than the previous occupation). During this war, Russia broached the idea of an independent Finland under Russian protection. Peace terms did not work out that way, but the idea fueled Swedish suspicions of separatist aspirations in Finland. Among Finns, rumors abounded that Sweden would prefer to take Norway and leave Finland to Russia. Sweden's defense plan of 1785 called for withdrawing the army from most of Finland if Russia attacked, in order to cover the approaches to Sweden itself.

Against this backdrop of doubts and fears occurred the mutiny of 1788. Some officers who had homes and property in Finland thought it better to negotiate than to fight another apparently hopeless campaign. In reality, since Russia was more heavily engaged elsewhere, the mutiny achieved little militarily. But the attitude of hopelessness, of resignation to the superior strength of Russia, spread among the educated people of Finland. The Napoleonic Era brought yet another war between Sweden and Russia, fought once again in Finland. The

Finnish soldiery and peasantry still fought the old foe. Officers and other estates did not all exhibit the same desire. This time, in 1809, Finland passed under Russian rule.

Finland under Russian Rule

Russian rule had been dreaded for centuries. The reality proved to be quite bearable, because Russia gave largely autonomous status to its new Grand Duchy, where internal affairs were concerned. Externally, Finlanders were not forced to fight Russian wars, though some did voluntarily. Since Russians did not receive government jobs in Finland for almost a hundred years, educated persons found less competition for those jobs than when Swedish civil servants were present.

There were still those who feared, though, that little Finland must end in being completely assimilated by the Russian giant. Some hoped for reunion with Sweden, but they found little effective response in that quarter. Others thought the inhabitants of Finland should be awakened to a sense of self-identity and nationality. In this way, they could resist cultural absorption by Russia.

These goals spurred a movement to establish Finnish as the language of culture and government, in place of Swedish. As mentioned earlier, the Swedish language had come increasingly into use in government and military affairs during the 17th century, yet the vast majority in Finland spoke Finnish as their mother tongue. Then, too, Swedish had replaced Latin and Finnish in higher education, so that by the 18th century,

Swedish was a prerequisite for state service or any of the professions. In this manner the language difference opened a social gap between educated people and the rest of the country. It was not necessarily a racial gap; John H. Wuorinen said that the Swedish-speaking middle and upper classes of the 19th century were "in the main" of Finnish origin.⁹

The language disability grew to serious proportions. The majority of the population understood little of what went on in legal proceedings or in all but a few classrooms. Most of the people received basic reading skills through the Lutheran church, as confirmation in the church required reading from prayerbook and Bible, and any marriage required that the hopeful partners be confirmed! Writing, arithmetic, and practical application of reading were not necessary to the church's program. The Finnish-language movement (itself conducted at first in the only useful written language - Swedish) campaigned to correct these shortcomings.

The movement provoked a reaction from people who treasured the Swedish heritage. They feared that whatever culture Finland had would be lost if Swedish was ousted. Indeed, the first approximations of modern political parties in Finland were the Svecoman - partisans of the Swedish language, and the Fennoman - partisans of the Finnish language. The language question soon turned into a bitter controversy involving political leverage in the administration of Finland, where Swedish-speakers were in control.

Ultimate power rested, of course, with the Czar. The administration of internal affairs in Finland, as noted

before, was in the hands of native officials. The Economic Department became the chief central administrative organ. Under the name of the Senate, it also initiated legislation that went to the Czar, and later to the Diet when that body was reinstituted for Finland. The Senate governed according to the constitutions formerly granted by Sweden, under the eye of the Czar and his Governor-General. The old constitutions did not set exact boundaries to the rights and responsibilities of these various entities, which would become a cause of much dispute.

The Four-Estate Diet was re-established for Finland in the latter half of the 19th century. The Diet collaborated with the higher powers to produce some useful legislation, and also became the focal point of the language controversy. Owing to traditional voting methods, the Diet represented only a narrow group of nobles, property owners, and clergymen, so that the Swedish-language partisans controlled it. The Swedish-speakers were not necessarily blind to the needs and desires of the majority, but they certainly did not want to lose their position of influence. Besides, many government officials who were not fanatic about the issue simply did not want to bother with a new language.

Beginnings of Industrialization

In addition to the language question, there were many other developments during this period which deeply affected Finland. From 1856 onward, legislation and decrees were designed to improve transportation, remove impediments to the

lumber industry, open the way for incorporation of endeavor, and otherwise aid the growth of new industries. Travel restrictions were eased, bringing an internal migration to the towns and places where work was to be found. New jobs and new trade relations opened up, internally and externally.

Industrial endeavor in Finland grew steadily after the middle of the 19th century, both in terms of the range of production and the size of output. Growing factories meant a growing work force. At first, this kind of labor was a welcome alternative to bleak prospects in the agricultural sector. The first organizations for workers were reading clubs formed by middle class proponents of the Finnish language. They sought to raise the level of education among workers and perhaps stimulate patriotism at the same time. What might later be termed "proletarian" issues were much subordinate to Finnish-language nationalism.

Workers' associations concerned themselves more with working conditions when trade unions were formed in the 1880's and 1890's. Even these had middle class language nationalists for leaders at first, but the leadership changed as the strike came into use, and as frustration over lack of a political voice came to the fore. Labor wanted the Diet to pass suffrage reform laws in 1894. The move was blocked by Swedish-speakers concerned mainly with limiting the number of Finnish-speaking voters.¹⁰ Thereafter, labor was increasingly radicalized, and less interested in the language question as propounded by the propertied classes. Labor leaders were more likely to observe that most owners and managers of

big landholdings or industrial concerns spoke Swedish as a matter of choice, giving a dual emphasis to class differences. A separate Labor Party was formed in 1899, which became the Social Democratic Party of Finland in 1903.

Changes in Agriculture

For much of the 19th century, Finnish agriculture produced more as more land came under cultivation. It did not keep up with the population, however, especially after the great famine of the 1860's. The population of Finland tripled through the 19th century, despite the loss of thousands to the famine and tens of thousands to emigration. More people plus changes in agriculture made Finland "largely dependent on other countries for its bread," in Morison's words.¹¹ With Russia next door, and imported grain from America and Germany available, dependence on foreigners seemed to pose no problems.

A bigger problem was how to employ more people. At the turn of the century, about 88% of Finland's 2.5 millions still lived in rural areas.¹² Lumbering, railroad construction, and new urban industries raised expectations, but still could not put everyone to work. Division of landholdings was only a partial answer to population pressure, because this could proceed to the point of unprofitability if carried too far. It also presupposed a willingness to divide. There had always been tenant farmers and landless laborers, but the ranks of the landless increased rapidly, and were likely to be further reinforced due to changes in agriculture itself.

Such changes came from the desire to make agriculture more efficiently productive. The government began to push dairy farming as a way to make better use of the soil, and because fodder crops and cattle are not so vulnerable to untimely frosts as are grain crops. Dairying eventually became the second-largest exporting industry after lumbering. One result was a shift away from generalized production for agricultural self-sufficiency, toward specialization and entry into a wider market economy. Another result was a decrease in jobs for laborers, as dairying required less manpower than did traditional methods of food cropping. At the same time, the government encouraged use of modern labor-saving devices and scientific methods which, though slow to be adopted, would further tend to reduce the need for manpower. So at a time when the numbers of potential farmers, renters, and laborers were growing, opportunities for them could not keep pace.

It is true that complaints of local labor shortages did appear, but mostly in areas where lumbering was not a big business, where division of land had already gone about as far as possible, and where emigration took its heaviest toll. In other words, those areas were not very attractive to job seekers. Besides, contrary comments about the need for labor in those areas did also appear.¹³

The growing pressure on positions in the countryside made abuses even more likely than when Antti Chydenius, an 18th century clergyman, used the word "serfdom" while writing against the old mercantilistic system.¹⁴ Renters and laborers

could be subject to verbal agreements which put them at the landlords' mercy. No really effective regulatory or land reform legislation was forthcoming until after World War I, although the Socialist Party did try to recruit members among the rural landless, and was quite successful with renters in particular.

Along with everything else, saving money toward the purchase of land grew more difficult. The rise of lumbering and pulp processing brought a rise in land values, as did increased productivity from land enclosures and improved methods. Wages for laborers might keep relative pace, but so did rents for tenant farmers. The latter were generally the most likely aspirants to a farm of their own, as they already had many essential personal possessions. Since travel restrictions had been eased, emigration provided hope for those who wanted to save money for a farm, or who simply wanted to find steady work. From 1893 to 1914, nearly a quarter of a million Finlanders left for America.¹⁵

The history of Finland shows that although there had never been an independent Finnish nation before the 20th century, Finlanders had exercised varying degrees of self-government which gave them a separate identity. Economically, Finland supported only a small population, becoming partially dependent upon foreign sources of food by the later 19th century. Economic and social developments, particularly of the 19th century, brought at the same time growth to Finland and divisions to Finnish society.

Footnotes to Chapter I

1 - Samuel Eliot Morison, Inquiry Document No. 421, "Memorandum on Finland" (National Archives, Washington, D.C.), written in 1918, p. 7.

2 - Ibid., p. 218.

3 - Ibid., p. 7.

4 - Agnes Rothery, Finland the New Nation (New York: The Viking Press, 1936), p. 25.

5 - J. Hampden Jackson, Finland (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), p. 32.

6 - Eino Jutikkala and Kauko Pirinen, A History of Finland (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1962), p. 43.

7 - Ibid., p. 125.

8 - Ibid., p.p. 131-137.

9 - John H. Wuorinen, Nationalism in Modern Finland (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 42.

10 - Ibid., p. 176.

11 - Morison, op. cit., p. 239.

12 - A. William Høglund, "No Land for Finns", in The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives (Turku, Finland: Institute for Migration, 1975), p. 37.

13 - Ibid., p. 40.

14 - Jackson, op. cit., p. 43.

15 - Auvo Kostiainen, The Forging of Finnish-American Communism, 1917-1924 (Turku, Finland: The Migration Institute, 1978), p. 19.

CHAPTER II

Emigration was a response to an economic need felt by many Finlanders. Nearly 10% of the population went to America during the thirty years prior to World War I. Thus the United States exercised a strong economic influence upon Finlanders, though emigration would occur for other reasons, too. But this chapter will be concerned with emigrants from Finland in America mostly because the immigration side of the process gave Americans the opportunity to form opinions about Finlanders, and vice versa. The impressions formed would have some effect upon later relations between Finnish and American governments. (Here we will note that most of the emigrants to America were Finnish as distinct from Swedish Finns. As the following remarks are generally more appropriate to the Finnish emigrants, they are sometimes referred to as "Finns" or "Finnish".)

Finnish Emigration to the United States

Finnish newspapers poked occasional fun at the gun-slinging, gold-digging Americans. There was a consul representing the United States at Helsinki from 1856, but America's rowdy "get rich quick" image seems to have received little modification through the consulate. Preachers thundered against the supposed moral weakness of those who succumbed to the lure of America. They went anyway, to what

they hoped was a land of opportunity. After all, America fed its own people and sent its excess produce overseas where it often undersold what the European peasant could raise. And there were growing industries, mines and factories, all of which had to have workers. Steamship lines sent recruiters with attractive tales of America and good deals for passengers. Emigrants through the years sent good news and money back home, or returned richer than when they had left. Of course, some returned with nothing, and the "America letters" from emigrants to friends or relatives were not always positive. Mostly, though, they added to "America fever".

The great majority of Finnish emigrants left a rural, agricultural background. Few of them could afford to buy a farm upon landing in America, and not all of them wanted to do so. The ideal was perhaps to work and save enough money so that one could return to Finland and buy some land. The immediate necessity was to find work. This usually meant low-paying, unskilled labor in mines and factories, or work at lumbering or fishing in which many Finlanders had some experience.

Coming from similar backgrounds, and finding similar unskilled or semi-skilled work, did not mean consensus in outlook. For example, some of the emigrants were very religious, while others were glad to be "unchurched". This basic difference was the wellspring of much discord. In addition, political circumstances in Finland affected emigrants in different ways over the years. Some individuals had been forced to leave; several were Socialists. They added further

leaven to the ideas developing in the immigrant community.

Adjusting to Life in America

Like most immigrants, Finns were characterized in many ways, often conflicting. Hardworking, troublesome, clannish, individualistic, these are some of the descriptions.¹ Like other immigrants, too, there was a need for relaxation and association, found too easily in bars. Yet some Finns attracted a good deal of attention in this regard. Someone once wrote to a New England newspaper to ask about drinking, brawling Finns,

"Do those barbarians actually have human souls?"²

Oskari Tokoi worked some years in America before returning to Finland, where he rose to leadership in the Socialist Party. He tells of American and Finnish workers holding periodic drunken battles in a Wyoming mining town.³ He then relates what was truly peculiar about the Finns: how they organized a temperance society to combat the problem.

The question of alcohol abuse revealed two general characteristics of the Finnish immigrant community. One was a concern for the quality of life. The other was a penchant for organization. Churchgoing Finns soon had congregations formed, some complete with pastors from Finland. The churches gladly extended their activities into the field of temperance work. Drunkenness, after all, could mean degeneration of an individual, and a reputation that might reduce employment opportunities for all Finns. Temperance hall activities were supposed to keep the individual occupied and show America that

Finns were respectable, responsible people. When religious influence proved to be too restrictive for many immigrants, independent societies appeared.

The activities centered on temperance halls were extraordinarily varied, and halls "were built in practically every Finnish community",⁴ whether inspired by the temperance movement or some other impulse. They helped immigrants to adjust to life in America.

That life was often less than what was expected. Although wages might be higher and of greater worth in America, the reality was too often unemployment and miserable conditions for working and living. There is also the idea that conditions and expectations were relative to previous experiences. The suggestion was made to this writer that former serfs from Poland or southeastern Europe might find life in an American mining town to be not altogether unappealing. Finns, on the other hand, were supposedly accustomed to healthier surroundings and a somewhat better personal and social life. Therefore, dark and dangerous mine shafts, crowded factories, and flimsy shacks were something of a shock to the Finns.⁵

Temperance societies and social activities could ease the pain, but they could not solve the root problems. The libraries and discussion groups that were part of "hall activities" may even have helped to deepen dissatisfaction. It appears that a higher percentage of Finnish immigrants was literate than in any other immigrant group. This was due to the foundation given by the church in Finland, added upon

in educational programs fostered by the Finnish-language movement. Hall activities furthered the enlightenment. Several Finnish-language newspapers were founded, too. Finns were probably more aware than most recent immigrants - and maybe more so than most resident Americans, except for the muckrakers - of injustices that tarnished the golden myth of the "land of opportunity".

Finnish Immigrants and the Labor Movement

One way to cope was faith expressed through religion, through support of the nation and society which allowed immigrants to enter, through striving for upward mobility. Many Finns took this path, more in the succeeding generations born in America.

Another way to cope was to organize workers for mutual aid. This was not necessarily antithetical to the first-mentioned option, but strikes, violence, and politics opened a fundamental division among the Finnish immigrants.

For a variety of reasons, a very large number of Finnish immigrants joined the Socialist Party in America. In 1912, 10% of the party was Finnish, and theirs was the first and the largest foreign-language federation in the organization.⁶ Many of them later broke away to the International Workers of the World when the Socialists became too docile. Then after the Bolshevik Revolution, Finns gave crucial support to the Communist parties in the United States. All of this gave the Finns a red-tinged reputation in the eyes of other Americans, though there were at least as many church-going

conservatives as there were radicals, and probably more who were uncommitted in either direction. The radical reputation was much bigger than the miniscule percentage of Finlanders among the millions of immigrants.

Finns were involved in some of the most notorious labor disputes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They were leaders in a violent strike of fishermen on the Columbia River in 1896. Newspapers said that "a wave of anti-Finnish sentiment was unleashed in Oregon."⁷ The Finns were called "Russian Finns", partly in recognition of the fact that they entered the U.S. as former Russian subjects, but mostly to take advantage of the idea that a Russian was likely to be an anarchist.

The Minnesota iron miners' strike of 1907 brought such newspaper comments as this:

"...fully ninety per cent of those in line were Finlanders - fiery followers of the Red Flag ... The remainder of the motley crowd was made up of Austrians, Italians and Montenegros - not one American appearing in line."⁸

The obvious inference was that real Americans would not do such a thing; real Americans were not Reds. Thus anti-Finnish sentiment partook of rising anti-foreign, as well as anti-radical, feeling. The same newspaper did, however, distinguish between older Finns who were "good citizens" and "a set of lawless young men who will not work, who are infused with the lessons of Socialism and Anarchy."⁹ This is a reflection of real differences in political outlook between more recent Finnish immigrants and those longer in America.

The prevailing opinion about Finns in general was

perhaps better expressed by the attempt to block citizenship papers for one John Svan, allegedly a Socialist, because "being a Finn he is a Mongolian and not a 'white person'".¹⁰ The case appeared in the U.S. District Court at Duluth in 1908, where it was dismissed with the opinion that the Finns "are now among the whitest people in Europe."¹¹ To some, the case has represented an attempt of the Federal government to use immigration and citizenship laws to control socialism among immigrants. But though the case was dismissed, the epithet of "Mongolian" (read "inferior") was added to the anti-Finnish list.

The copper mining country of Michigan's Upper Peninsula had been the original gathering place for early Finnish immigrants. When the strike of 1913 erupted, it was bound to affect Finns on both sides of the picket line. This strike may have done more to divide church Finns and leftist Finns than any other incident. Again, those Finns among the strikers were called "Russian aliens, trouble-makers and socialists".¹² Murders and beatings occurred.

What brought nation-wide attention to this affair was a Christmas Eve celebration for striking miners and their families, a celebration that ended in disaster. (Woody Guthrie later wrote a song about it entitled Italian Hall Massacre.¹³) A shouted fire alarm interrupted the proceedings, which were held on the upstairs level of a cultural hall. There was only one escape route, and 74 people - men, women, and children - died in the stampede over those stairs. There was no fire. Whether the alarm was a mistake or not is unknown, but

suspicion of malicious intent was strong. Most of the victims were Finns, in an area where Finns appeared in support of the strike on the one hand, and of the conservative Citizens' Alliance on the other. Area residents did raise \$26,000 in relief funds, regardless of opinion about the strike, but the union representing the strikers rejected it. That only revived hostile feelings. It should be noted that those feelings were directed chiefly against union leaders and organizers, but as in Minnesota in 1907, it was chiefly Finns who were black-listed.

Some of the Finnish immigrants were ashamed of the Red-Russian-Socialist-Anarchist descriptions of their countrymen, and feared that all Finns would suffer the consequences. Indeed, job discrimination was practiced against individuals simply because they were Finns.¹⁴ To combat this, conservatives formed the "True Finns Movement". Their object was to shift the odium heaped upon Finns to the Socialist Party, as if their left-leaning fellow countrymen had simply been misled.¹⁵ Resolutions (called by Socialist Finns the "Judas Resolutions") gave assurance that the majority of the Finnish immigrants were Christians and hard-working people. They questioned prevailing economic and social conditions not at all.

Efforts like the True Finns Movement may have saved some jobs, but they served mainly to turn the gap into a breach between leftist Finnish-Americans and the church-going conservatives. People who were living at the time of the Copper Country strike recalled years later that Socialist folk and

"white folk", or church-goers, formed two different social groups. They allowed that while in Finland there were Social Democrats who went to church, that did not happen in America.¹⁶

The Finnish immigrant community was bitterly divided when America entered World War I. Not surprisingly, more headlines went to strikers and draft evaders than to Christians and soldiers. American military intelligence kept up surveillance of Finnish radicals that both fed upon and added to the radical image. The stories culminated during the post-war "Red Scare", with this one from the New York Times:

"Says 300,000 Finns In U.S. Are Reds."

As Carl Ross commented, that report would have had to include every person of Finnish descent in the whole country.¹⁷ Few Americans bothered to make distinctions.

Finnish emigration to the United States represented a significant proportion of Finland's population, though small in comparison to emigration from some other lands. While most Finns left in order to seek better economic opportunities, some left for political reasons. Those two streams combined in many immigrants to produce politically active Finnish-Americans, both conservative and radical. The radical reaction does not seem to have had a great effect upon the image of America held in Finland; at least, Finns continued to emigrate. But the American image of the radical Finn was magnified and generalized to the point that the Federal government took active notice of it.

Footnotes to Chapter II

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2 - Carl Ross, The Finn Factor (New York Mills, Minn.: Parta Printers, 1977), p. 19.

3 - Oskari Tokoi, SISU - "Even Through A Stone Wall" (New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1957), p. 36.

4 - Ross, op. cit., p. 24.

5 - Wilbert Salmi, interview, 17 July 1981, Hancock, Mi.

6 - Auvo Kostiainen, The Forging of Finnish-American Communism, 1917-1924 (Turku, Finland: The Migration Institute, 1978), p. 32.

7 - Michael M. Passi, "Fishermen on Strike", in The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives (Turku, Finland: Institute for Migration, 1975), p. 100.

8 - Karni, op. cit., p.p. 76-77.

9 - Ross, op. cit., p. 113.

10 - Karni, op. cit., p.p. 79-80.

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12 - Arthur E. Puotinen, "Copper Country Finns and the Strike of 1913", in The Finnish Experience in the Western Great Lakes Region: New Perspectives (Turku, Finland: Institute for Migration, 1975), p. 147.

13 - Ibid., p.p. 152-153.

14 - Karni, op. cit., p. 73, p. 78.

15 - Reino Nikolai Hannula, Blueberry God (San Luis Obispo, Cal.: Quality Hill Books, 1979), p. 167.

16 - Oral history project of Suomi College, Hancock, Mi.; Ida S. Erickson interviewed by Douglas Ollila, 9 August 1973; Reino Suojanen interviewed by Paul Jalkanen, 19 July 1972.

17 - Ross, op. cit., p. 160.

CHAPTER III

Finland at the end of the 19th century was a largely self-governing Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. At the turn of the century, Czar Nicolas II tried to extend Russian law to Finland, in place of the old Swedish constitutions. The attempt provoked resistance in Finland, including the General Strike of 1905, Finland's counterpart to the Russian Revolution of that year. These events will be reviewed in the present chapter, both to add necessary background information for the later Civil War period, and to continue the story of relations between Finland and the United States. Those relations were based upon three needs that Finland was developing: the need for food from abroad, the need for an outlet for an expanding population, and the need for political support against Russia.

Relations between Finland and the United States before 1914

"May the Lord bless and keep all these kind-hearted Americans..."¹

No, it was not an immigrant Finnish Socialist who wrote those words, but a Russian, Count Alexis Bobrinskoy, Marshal of the Nobility of St. Petersburg. He wrote in 1893 to thank the American public for aid sent to famine-stricken regions of the Russian Empire, including Finland. He wrote to the

public because it was a private venture. That is, the U.S. government acted mainly as liaison and shipper. The aid itself came from private citizens, as noted in this official communication:

"...a contribution, mainly, if not wholly, made by charitable citizens of Pennsylvania, amounting very nearly to 41,000 rubles."²

The money was turned into grain. Finland received the benefit of about one-quarter of the sum, in addition to grain that passed from America to Finland in the course of normal trade.

That was a significant example of the occasional contacts between Finland and America prior to World War I. The people of Finland did not forget this kind of charitable action. Newspapers carried articles about it, children wrote poems about it, people spoke of it years afterward.³ They grew to believe that America was a country sympathetic to the needs of Finland.

As for Americans, insofar as they thought of Finland at all, it was as a part of Russia; a part that occasionally needed famine relief, that increasingly suffered from a form of persecution called "Russification". Primarily, it was the home of those "Russian Finns" who came to work and go on strike in America. These three strands of physical need, political problems, and emigration, figured prominently in the thin fabric of Finnish-American relations before World War I.

The Russification of Finland

Americans could read about the beginnings of Russification in 1899 in newspapers and articles like "The Constitutional Conflict in Finland" which appeared in The North American Review, or "The Downfall of Finland: An Object Lesson in Russian Aggression" from Blackwood's Magazine. As the titles suggest, Finland was portrayed as a country of outmanned but staunch defenders of western constitutional government, victimized by a bullying, despotic, oriental giant. Even so, there was no official or important public response from Americans to the plight of Finland, though several well-known Europeans protested to the Czar. One cannot help but wonder if 'Russian-Finn-Anarchist' immigrants tempered American enthusiasm. (Some Americans recognized that Russian oppression might have affected the Finns on the picket lines, but that recognition did not soften feelings toward strikers.⁴) More likely, most Americans simply did not trouble themselves about Finland's situation.

The situation was that Czar Nicolas II had taken the traditional pledge of his predecessors to rule his Grand Duchy according to the fundamental laws of Finland. In other words, he was to leave Finland to the Finlanders, except for questions of foreign affairs. But the February Manifesto of 1899 brought new legislative rules which stripped the Finnish Senate and Diet of any but consultative rights. Finlanders called the manifesto unconstitutional; Russians called it a needed clarification.

There were many reasons for the Russian move, including

discrimination against Russians in Finland, while Finlanders received all the benefits of Russian citizenship. They could do anything a Russian could do, in any place. Russians could not enter Finland's civil service, and needed special licenses to undertake business affairs in Finland. But Russification - the centralization of government institutions and the integration of subject peoples - was the order of the day for the whole empire. Finland did not suffer alone, indeed suffered less than most.

Finland's response was an act glorified in Finnish history. Some 523,000 people signed a petition to the Czar, asking him not to break the traditional pledge, but to observe the law. The figure is said to represent nearly half the adult population of Finland at the time, and it was attained in a little over a week.⁵ Here is Tokoi's comment on the matter, in relation to his neighbors in a northern agricultural parish:

"No one was quite sure what that petition really was and what it implied, but it was explained that every adult must write his name on it or draw his mark; and that when this pile of paper was shown to the Czar everything would return to its proper order."⁶

Everything did not return to its proper order.

The next step for Finland came from abroad. Luminaries from all over Europe to the number of 1,063 signed another petition to the Czar, entitled "Pro Finlandia". This likewise brought no noticeable result.

From a little further abroad, sons and daughters of Finland in America tried to enlist the U.S. government in support of their homeland. They drew up an appeal to President

McKinley, in which he was asked to "exert influence on behalf of Finland at the Hague Peace Conference".⁷ (The conference was of course a pet project of Czar Nicolas, whose external policy in this instance stood in somewhat incongruous contrast to his internal policy.) The appeal to McKinley may have been delivered in person through the voice of Oscar J. Larson, one of the leaders of the movement. He then held the elective office of county attorney in Houghton County, Michigan. Soon he was trying to win Finnish-American votes for McKinley, and he landed in Congress in 1921. There is no indication that McKinley or the U.S. government ever brought up the case of Finland at the Hague Conference, despite the accession of Finnish-American conservatives to the Republican Party.

Another scheme for Finland, one that may have involved some of those same Finnish-Americans, seems to have originated in the home country. According to this plan, an international jury was to consider the conflict - which was, arguably, just a difference of legal interpretation - and the ambassador of the United States was to deliver the verdict to the Czar. This would be a daring way to line up the United States officially behind Finland. However, "several influential Finns" in the U.S. suggested abandoning the plan when a Finnish emissary missed seeing McKinley at a resort on Lake Champlain.⁸

After the great petition drive, the people of Finland were generally slow to respond further to the Russian measures. The agricultural population has been described as

mostly provincial in outlook rather than nationalistic, and loyal to the Czar while blaming his evil advisors for whatever might go wrong.⁹ The head of the church in Finland, who was appointed by the Czar, ordered the clergy to obey Russian dictates.¹⁰ The labor movement was cool at first toward participating in resistance with the bourgeoisie, but eventually came forward. A reading of Tokoi's autobiography gives the impression that the constitutional battle aroused the Swedish-speaking population much more than it did the Finnish-speakers.¹¹

Among the middle and upper class elements, there was a split between Constitutionalists and Compliers. The nascent political parties from the early days of the language controversy had later split into three: the Svecoman or Swedish Party, the Old Finns, and the Young Finns. (There was also, briefly, a Liberal Party.) The Swedish Party was Constitutionalist, meaning that they resisted Russification. Their method was passive resistance, refusing to carry out what they regarded as illegal measures, but avoiding violence. The Young Finns tended to follow the same path. Most Old Finns believed that it was better to comply with Russian decrees. They hoped that loyalty would ease Russian pressure, bring favors to them at the expense of the Swedish-speakers, and keep Russians out of Finnish government posts. The Old Finns gained the name of Compliers, or Retreaters. The split between Constitutionalists and Compliers was taken so seriously that it extended into social affairs.

Nowhere among these non-labor political parties was

there evinced a majority desire for independence, or any outline for a new departure in the form of government. There existed, to be sure, a small active resistance group that encouraged acts of violence and spoke of political changes. But Hannes Ignatius, who was a prominent member of a similar group in 1917, said that these early Activists "did not have popular approbation..."¹²

While the trial of Finland's position in the Russian Empire proceeded, the three strands of Finnish-American relations came together in 1902. Famine again swept the north countries, and again we hear of a message of thanks to Americans for needed assistance. It came this time from the governor of a Swedish province.¹³ He voiced what he thought to be the feelings of his countrymen, as well as those of Norwegians and Finlanders. Apparently the latter, with the Russians, were too distracted to speak for themselves.

Ample reason for distraction existed in the form of an imperial edict given in 1901, an edict calling for conscription of Finlanders into the Russian army. This brought Russification home to many more people. The Constitutionalists were quick to point out that the existing military law of 1878 had been violated. They counselled a boycott of the draft: eligible young men were not to report, clerks not to take names, doctors not to give examinations. The boycott was very effective in 1902, and it was no coincidence that emigration figures were higher that year than ever before or since. Tokoi relates,

"No one spoke of evasion or escape. In conversation,

it was merely remarked that so-and-so had gone to America too...¹⁴

The boycott weakened over the next couple of years, but no one from Finland was forced to serve in the Russo-Japanese War. The Russian Governor-General, previously endowed with dictatorial powers, was assassinated in 1904. This was the celebrated deed of Eugen Schaumann. The victim was General Bobrikov, "the notorious Russifier of the Baltic Provinces".¹⁵ Faced with problems enough elsewhere, the Czar stopped trying to enforce conscription in Finland. The leader of the Constitutionalists proposed an end to conscription, in exchange for an annual subsidy. The Czar accepted.

Events of 1905 and 1906

The basic issue of unconstitutional Russian rule was not resolved. Therefore, with the Czar's army busy fighting Japan, Finland joined in the disturbances that rocked the Russian Empire in 1905. Constitutionalists, Activists, the Labor Party now known as Socialists - all took part in the November General Strike. The Compliers had already lost much prestige. They were in no position to oppose the strike movement, even if they had wanted to. As the Czar granted a constitution to Russia under similar circumstances, so he retracted all measures deemed unconstitutional in Finland. A further concession promised reform of the Diet on a basis of universal suffrage. Old divisions overcome, a victory so complete, "there seemed something holy about it," said one participant.¹⁶

But the unity was achieved more by compromise than by inspiration, and the "victory" meant different things to different people. The parties that mattered at the moment were the Constitutionalists and the Socialists. They had the greatest support. They also had differences to work out before the strike was brought to an end.

For their part, the Constitutionalists agreed to end the strike when the Russians promised a return to pre-Russification conditions. The Constitutionalists wanted to avoid change. To them, the proper political order was a division of powers between the Senate, Diet, and monarch, a division not necessarily equal. The Senate should be the seat of administrative activity, without responsibility to the Diet, and with powers both to initiate legislation and to pass upon whatever work the Diet was allowed to do. The Diet could act as a sounding board of public opinion and have a limited role in legislation. The monarch should act as a check on innovations, but not on the system itself.

Constitutionalists were monarchists because a monarch could perform a useful role if he did not overstep his bounds. Significantly, the Swedish Constitution of 1772, that treasure which the Constitutionalists defended and for which they were named, was designed to strengthen the king against an unruly Parliament. It had been put into effect through a coup d'etat backed by military force! (Sweden had since moved on to something more democratic, but not until after losing Finland.) The Czar really had nothing to fear from these bourgeois Constitutionalists, so long as he observed their

Constitution. That is why Finland had been his quietest, most loyal province throughout the 19th century.

The Socialists wanted a national constituent assembly. For the next dozen years, it was their naive assumption that any such body would give them majority support. Then they could change constitutional law to make government responsible to a reformed Diet (for internal affairs, anyway). The new Diet would have no property qualification for membership and would be elected through universal suffrage. This body would take the country through the period of bourgeois republicanism prescribed by history, and up to the revolution that should someday occur.

The Socialists did not really believe that the old Four-Estate Diet would reform itself, or give in to universal suffrage. They remembered the defeat of 1894 on a similar question. The Constitutionalists insisted that any change must be constitutional, of course, meaning that the old Diet must approve it. In order to bring the strike to an end, the Constitutionalists and the Socialists had to make a compromise that would allow them to maintain a united front toward Russia, from which concessions were sought. Terms of the compromise were that Diet reform would be accomplished constitutionally, and there would be universal suffrage in Diet elections. The Socialists were convinced when the new Governor-General also promised a reform along the same lines. The new Diet was to be a unicameral body of 200 members elected by all citizens 24 years old and above. Anyone who could vote could also stand for election, male or female.

European liberals hailed the reformed Diet as the most advanced in the world. The point of importance, however, is that nothing really changed. The reformed Diet really had no more power in relation to the Senate and the Czar than did the old Diet. The Senate was still appointed by the Czar, was still responsible only to him, and was still in charge of the administration of Finland. The Diet's legislative role was very limited, and their petitions for new laws were subject to the Czar's approval before further action could be taken. Initiative rested with the higher powers, which were non-elective. The Constitutionalist thought they had re-established their check on the Czar, while keeping him and the power of the Russian state as a check on the Diet.

Not all of the Socialists were prepared to compromise. The hard-liners were found mostly in the national guard, a group organized to keep order when the police forces were disrupted or disarmed through the strike. The national guard had a large working-class element, especially after the university students broke away to form a bourgeois guard. Later observers have put the names Red and White on these organizations.

The anti-compromisers in the national guard threatened to continue the strike into 1906, but outside of encouraging the old Diet to carry through arrangements for the new, they did not have the strength to alter the situation. The unions had come out in support of the Socialist compromise, putting "unorganized" radicals in the national guard somewhat outside

the pale.¹⁷

In July of 1906, the radicals made another bid to carry out their program. The Russian garrison at the Sveaborg Fortress in Helsinki mutinied against its officers. The so-called Red Guard asked the Socialist Party to proclaim another general strike in support of the mutineers, and for a constituent assembly. The party leadership refused. The Red Guard called their own strike, and went to the aid of the mutineers anyway. The "White Guard" was called out with loyal military units to restore order. The mutiny failed, but not before Red and White clashed, with the loss of a few lives. Dedicated radicals were forced to go underground or abroad, while Finland prepared for elections to the reformed Diet rather than to a constituent assembly.

Some of those who went abroad went to America, as had most of the draft evaders and other political exiles of the period. More would follow when Russian repression set in again. The most notorious of the political exiles in America were those who would join the labor movement in their new country, or who had already done so in Finland. They influenced the Finnish-American labor movement, and no doubt added to the revolutionary image of the Socialists, especially the Finnish Socialists, in America.

But there were differences of political opinion among these exiles, too. A.F. Tanner was a political organizer whose Myrsky ("Storm") group is thought to have been the first Finnish-American Socialist party. He later wrote and organized for the Socialist Party of America. Matti Kurikka

set up a utopian society in British Columbia. Leo Laukki turned from educating Finnish-Americans about Socialism to urging them into the I.W.W. Johan Kock, the Red Guard commander when the Sveaborg Mutiny occurred, founded in America the "Society for Revolution in Finland and Russia". This obviously focused on European rather than American politics, but the exiles and Finnish affairs in general had a great impact on Finnish immigrants. Union organizer Eemeli Parras said that the General Strike of 1905 brought a "new energy for action" to radicals in America.¹⁸

After the events of 1905 and 1906, Finland seemed to have found the means to maintain self-government and to unify the greater part of its people. Looking back upon that period, however, some would say that the first blood of the Finnish Civil War was spilled in 1906. The Red Guard at that time was not a Socialist Party organization, and the Socialist Party was not at all revolutionary, but during the Civil War period these distinctions were blurred. Thus it could be "proven" historically that the Socialists had always wished to subvert law and order and bring bloodshed to Finland.

Meanwhile, America received many political exiles or escapees from Finland, among those others who still sought a better livelihood. The U.S. also supplied grain to Finland, through both trade and charity. These contacts enhanced America's image in Finland, but the U.S. government did not feel compelled to create any definite Finnish policy as yet, despite the hopes of some Finnish immigrants.

Footnotes to Chapter III

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16 - Ibid., p. 54.

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CHAPTER IV

The period of experimentation with the reformed Diet, from 1907 to 1914, started with high hopes in Finland. Those hopes were not justified, as Russification and class differences frustrated the work of the Diet. Finland sought support against Russia from other nations, especially those with whom there were economic and cultural ties. The demands of alliance limited the response of Entente nations to the plight of Finland, while America listened but preferred not to become involved. As the severity of Russification increased with the passing years, it seemed to overshadow class differences as the chief threat to Finland. At the same time, Germany appeared to be the most likely friend in Finland's time of need.

Finnish Politics and Renewed Russification

The first sitting of "the world's most democratic legislative body" attracted reporters from far and wide. They came not least to see the world's first female legislators be seated. This was a most heartening event for American suffragettes. Madame Aino Malmberg - novelist, educator, and determined proponent of woman suffrage in Finland - drew large audiences as a lecturer in America. She delighted listeners with tales of the usefulness of skirts in concealing

inflammatory literature from circumspect male authorities. She was not allowed to cross the Russian frontier, so dangerous was Madame Malmberg.

The first Diet election in 1907 gave 80 seats to the Socialist Party. The Old Finns had an amazing recovery, gaining 59 seats, a little more than the combined total won by the Swedish Party and the Young Finns. Minor parties split 11 seats. The Old Finns have often been accused of "going radical" in order to compete for votes with the Socialists among laborers and small farmers. Actually, the Old Finns just stuck to their old principle of seeking to raise Finnish-speakers to self-awareness and to equality with Swedish-speakers. By 1907, they realized that it was not only a Finnish literature or dictionary that would help their people, but economic progress, too. In this they and the Socialists better reflected the people's desires than did the Young Finns and Swedes with their emphasis on a supposedly dead issue, that of protecting the constitution.

Unfortunately, the Diet did not live up to popular expectations. It started with very little real power. It had even less when a Russian reaction set in, intended again to erase Finnish particularism. The Russians dissolved the Diet every year, claimed Tokoi, and twice in 1910.¹ Much useful legislation was frustrated in this manner, or through party disagreements. Especially galling to the Socialists was the Czar's refusal to endorse legislation for local government reform. Communal and municipal assemblies were open only to tax-paying property holders, and a person had as many votes

as taxable units of income. Therefore, local affairs were not just controlled by propertied people, but perhaps by just a few propertied people, depending upon local circumstances. The result was that neither on the local nor on the national level did non-propertied persons have a consistently effective voice or field of political operation.

It was only too easy to blame the difficulty on class differences at the local level, and to imagine that the upper classes secretly supported Russia's obstruction of the national Diet. Many have said that faith in parliamentary procedure could not but be undermined in Finland during these interwar years from 1905 to 1914. This could be true of persons from any class of society, but particularly true of the people without property. The strike had proved to be their most useful tool; small wonder that emigrants of this class and time would be found among strikers in America.

Contacts with the Great Powers before World War I

America and other nations heard of renewed Russo-Finnish difficulties, but most paid little attention. French wine merchants asked their government to intervene in Russo-Finnish relations, Finland having a most favorable tariff situation for them. Wine, though important to the French government, was not important enough to upset the Russian alliance. Until Britain also entered the Entente, English protests for Finland were sometimes heard.

Besides the Asian rivalry with Russia, Britain had direct economic reasons to pay attention to Finland. Because

of political ties, a preferential tariff, and sheer proximity, Russia was long the chief figure in Finland's foreign trade during the 19th century. Russian grain was of particular importance, in exchange for forest and dairy products. Around 1890, the advent of the icebreaker in Finnish waters meant that sea lanes were no longer closed for nearly half the year. A direct sea connection with England gave a sharp boost to the Finnish dairy industry. Soon three-quarters of Finland's butter went to England, though milk and cream as exports still went mostly to St. Petersburg. Finnish forests also provided timber and wood products for Britain. There were more British ships calling at the ports of Finland than from any other nation shortly before the year 1900.

American trade with Finland is harder to measure because American goods were mostly re-exported to Finland through intermediary countries that traded with the U.S. For years the single U.S. consular representative in Finland was not even an American.² A Finlander who had come to the U.S. to obtain food in 1918, said that Finland had gotten most of its wheat from America until the Russians put a prohibitive tax on it about ten years previously.³ This is hard to verify, though wheat was undoubtedly the largest single item of American export to Finland. Other sources would seem to indicate that Russia was the biggest supplier of grain in general at least until 1905, and of wheat thereafter.⁴ Germany then took an increasingly large share of the market, Finland becoming its best customer for rye flour, and second best for wheat flour.⁵ Since rye, not wheat, was the staple

grain in Finland, perhaps there is no discrepancy in the statements made above. America was probably an important source of wheat, but Finland did not depend upon American wheat as much as upon grain from other places.

By 1905 Germany had passed everyone as chief supplier to Finnish markets as a whole, and remained so until the First World War got started. Russia still topped the list of markets for Finnish goods in 1913, but England was a close second and Germany third. This is of some importance, as the Entente would search for signs of previous penetration and influence after German troops were invited into Finland in 1918. Samuel Eliot Morison, writing a memorandum on Finland for the U.S. government in 1918, observed that German dominance of the Finnish market had nothing sinister about it, as Finnish-German economic relations dated back to the Hanseatic League. He could not resist a dig at contemporary Germans, however, saying that shady business tactics were "no doubt" used in gaining the markets.⁶

In the field of investment, native capital predominated in Finland's industries, though Norwegian and English interests were strong in lumbering and textile operations, respectively. Somewhat surprisingly, Germans were not much involved with investments of this nature. German bankers were relatively more important than other foreigners in the funding of Finland's national debt.

Overall, Germany was the most important supplier to Finland, but England was a very prominent buyer, and Russia still a large factor in both markets, though in relative

decline. In writing about the effects of the World War on the Finnish economy, Leo Harmaja said that the loosening of commercial ties between Russia and Finland, coming during years of mounting political pressure from Russia, made it easier for Finlanders to consider independence later on.⁷

German Cultural Influence

Culturally, there is no doubt that educated Finlanders had strong ties with Germany. As Swedish upper class circles looked to Germany for inspiration, so did many Swedish-Finns. And Morison found that outside of Russia, only German universities offered any study of the Finnish language and literature, a definite attraction for Finnish-speaking students. A Finnish historian has said that ever since the Reformation, Finnish theological students in particular and proponents of culture in general had shifted their sights from Paris to the German universities.⁸

Morison thought Germany took advantage of its cultural contacts to hatch plots concerning the future of Finland. He tells of the visit to America of Rudolph Eucken, "the great German moralist and philosopher," Eucken being a Harvard exchange professor in 1911. In the course of a conversation between Eucken and another professor, it developed that "a large number of Finns" studied at Jena with the German philosopher. Said Eucken,

"Well, they are not exactly studying philosophy. I am very interested in Finland, and I am helping these young men to cast off the Russian yoke. I have also been at Helsingfors (Helsinki) and Stockholm to lecture, where I have been in

consultation with those who desire the same end. You see, it will be very important for us Germans to have a hold on Finland when we are at war with Russia."

The question was asked, "Does your government know about this?"

"Of course!" came the reply. "It is much easier to do at Jena - a little place, away from Berlin."⁹

Morison did not credit the Germans with stirring up separatist feelings in Finland. But in unusual circumstances, like a war, Germany would be willing to protect Finland, and more than happy to have a base next door to St. Petersburg. At the least, a Finland in which Germany had friends might prove to be a useful lever against Russia.

Finland and Russia

The charge of separatism "was vehemently denied by Finlanders of the bourgeois parties."¹⁰ All they wanted were their just and legal rights, they said. Whether that was true or not is a question, considering the revelations from Morison about Professor Eucken. Still, as long as Russification consisted more of obstructing the Diet than of introducing a new administrative rule, the propertied classes really had little to complain of.

Russification turned more active in 1912 with a law called the Parity Act. Passed without any kind of consent from Finland, the new law gave equal rights to Russians in the Grand Duchy, something that Finnish constitutional rule had never countenanced. The ultimate consequence was that administrative posts in Finland were opened to Russians. The

new law did not affect most Finlanders enough to stir up a general resistance, but a few officeholders were imprisoned or packed off to Siberia for refusing to carry out the law.

Hoping to interest Americans in the "struggle for freedom", Madame Malmberg visited the U.S. in 1912. Woman suffrage struck a more responsive chord. Lenin pointed out that Western Europe, too, showed less support for Finland than usual. Of the Finnish "proletariat" Lenin wrote,

"It knows that the Western European bourgeoisie, flirting with the autocracy, will not involve itself in the affair..."¹¹ (meaning the affair of Russification).

The demands of alliance required less criticism of Russia from the other members of the Entente. As the world prepared for war, Finland's biggest problem appeared to be Russia, and Germany appeared to be the best hope for support against Russia.

Finland had contacts of varying importance with several nations before World War I. Admiration for America and the European democracies was not unusual. But the failure of the reformed Diet and the inability of the Entente nations to protest against Russification, plus the nature of ties with Germany, led an important section of Finnish opinion to see in Germany the only hope of help for Finland. This outlook would reinforce pro-monarchist feelings in some Finnish Constitutionalists, at the expense of liberal democracy; the more so since the Socialists advocated more direct democratic procedures than already existed in Finland, threatening the established order from the left.

Footnotes to Chapter IV

1 - Oskari Tokoi, SISU - "Even Through A Stone Wall"
(New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1957), p. 115.

2 - Foreign Relations of the United States - 1918
("Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States", Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), Russia, Vol. II, p. 800.

3 - New York Times, 22 February 1918.

4 - Leo Harmaja, Effects of the War on Economic and Social Life in Finland (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1933), p.p. 32-33.

Samuel Eliot Morison, Inquiry Document No. 421,
"Memorandum on Finland"(National Archives, Washington, D.C.),
written in 1918, p.p. 274-277.

5 - Samuel Eliot Morison, *Ibid.*, p. 80.

6 - *Ibid.*, p. 278.

7 - Harmaja, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

8 - Eino Jutikkala and Kauko Pirinen, A History of Finland (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1962), p. 56.

9 - Morison, *op. cit.*, p.p. 351-352.

10 - *Ibid.*, p. 63.

11 - D.G. Kirby (ed.), Finland and Russia 1808-1920
(New York: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1975), p. 131.

CHAPTER V

The World War aggravated Finland's problems, externally and internally. The need to secure the approaches to St. Petersburg led to a stronger Russian presence in Finland, with more direct control of Finnish affairs. This further alienated the Finns from Russia, while at the same time the war fostered the hope that the Finno-Russian relationship might somehow be altered. Internally, the war created unusual economic conditions which deepened class divisions in Finnish society.

Finnish attitudes toward the Contending Powers

Entente propaganda gave Russia a greatly enhanced image in the world, an image of which Russia fell short in Finland. For example, the large Polish-American community was euphoric and other Americans were impressed when Russia promised autonomy to Poland, with independence to follow. Finland, so much more docile than Poland for so many years - but so much closer to St. Petersburg - received "police rule", as one native described it.

Finland receded far into the background of events as the war got underway. Professor Julio N. Reuter arrived in New York seeking sympathy for Finland in 1915, and he received a hearing; but he received nothing more than that. Reuter,

Madame Malmberg and others felt that Finland's position was generally misunderstood, though they did not always agree on what that position was. A case in point is a rather sharp exchange of letters that appeared in the New York Times.

The first letter appeared on November 15, 1915. Allan V. Tornudd wrote it, he being a Master of Philosophy at the university in Helsinki. He wanted to combat the propaganda in favor of "liberal, progressive, democratic Russia", but the Times went rather overboard by giving his letter the misleading heading of "FINLAND SIDES WITH GERMANY". Tornudd wrote,

"It seems to have become an axiom with too many people here (in the U.S.) that this is a war about 'principles', where all small nations should, in their own interest, stand by the Allies."

On the contrary, Tornudd asserted that Finland's experience left no room for doubt about Russia's true character. As Russia was being whitewashed to appear as liberal as its allies, Tornudd felt much corresponding doubt about the Allies' true motives. Finlanders felt sorry for Belgium and Serbia, he said, and were no friends of the German annexationist party. But just because the Allies found it momentarily expedient to side with a couple of smaller countries, they were being hypocritical in proclaiming that all small nations should look to them, when they would do nothing for Finland. Tornudd observed that the Germans were not alone, either, in breaking international treaties, or in committing atrocities during wartime. He ended with,

"To us the downfall of the Russian Empire, the most

notorious stronghold of reactionism in Europe, would be a greater victory for civilization than the crushing of Germany..."¹

In reply there appeared a letter on November 21 over the name of Ivan Narodny, said to be managing director of the Russian Chamber of Commerce, presumably in New York City. With this letter went the heading, "WHERE FINLAND'S SYMPATHIES LIE". The writer began by noting that his mother was Esthonian ("practically the same as a Finn"), and his wife was a Finn, and he had lived for some time in Finland. He then developed a racial-historical argument against Tornudd.

"First of all, Allan V. Tornudd is a Finnish Swede, whose 'Kultur' has, naturally, a Prussianized tinge. And, second, he speaks for the Finnish Swedes, who represent probably hardly more than 7 per cent of the country's population."

Narodny continued with some ethnological background, then explained how Germans and Swedes had enslaved Esthonians and Finns. Of course no intelligent Finn or Esthonian liked the current bureaucratic Russian regime, but they loved the Russian people, he said. Narodny admitted that many Finnish artists and scholars got their education in Germany, but he asserted that England was more in sympathy with Finland's struggle for independence than any other nation. His conclusion stated that the sympathies of Finnish-speaking Finland, about 90% of the population, were with the Allies, a fact that one "can hear openly" in Finland.²

There followed two short letters in refutation of Ivan Narodny. One remarked that Finland and the Finns had enjoyed the same rights and privileges as the Swedes when part of the Swedish kingdom, and that slavery never existed in that

kingdom. The second letter took the Russian to task on the subject of ethnology, claiming that recent research refuted Narodny's argument at many points.

There came a rejoinder to Ivan Narodny from Tornudd himself on December 23. He stated,

"The object of my contribution to the war discussion was to call attention to the great injustice done to one small nation in quarters to which we used to look for sympathy and encouragement, through the current misrepresentation of facts intimately connected with our case. If I had not accurately stated the feelings of a majority of Finlanders, I should be thankful for corrections - but not from Mr. Narodny. Russians who have lived 'some time in Finland' and talk about what they 'can hear openly' are not fit to bear witness against natives of the country who know things which, on account of police rule and censorship, are not heard in the open.

"Mr. Narodny's false ideas about Swedes and Finns have led him to the insinuation that I speak only to a ruling class which looks to Germany for help in oppressing the great masses of the people. ... As it happens that all my sympathies are with the democratic movement in Finland, (which is not directed against Swedes as such), his attempt to explain away my standpoint as that of a privileged minority breaks down completely."³

The first lesson the United States might have learned from that exchange is that Entente "principles" had their weak points, that 'making the world safe for democracy' might be a rather naive reason for getting into this particular war. As for Finland, the letters contained much that would reappear in the propaganda generated during the coming civil war; the idea that the middle and upper class party of law and order could get help only from Germany, the claims that Swedish-speaking Finlanders were Prussianized while the proletariat consisted of pro-Entente republicans, etc. It is possible that the letters themselves were calculated instruments of propaganda ("Ivan Narodny" smacks rather of a Russian

"John Q. Public"), but they sound more like the work of men with personal axes to grind, and perhaps Narodny was a pseudonym.

Tornudd's axe was the "Russification Program of 1914", proclaimed within a few months of Russia's entry into a war to protect little Serbia. The excuse for a re-ordering of Finland had finally arrived. A state of emergency was declared and civil rights and activities severely regulated, while reinforcements supplemented the Russian garrison, and Helsinki was made the advanced base of the Baltic Fleet. Tornudd was not saying that Finland sided with Germany as a result of the latest Russian move, though there were undoubtedly pro-Germans in Finland. What he gave was essentially the same lesson that American consular personnel tried to teach their government three years later: most Finlanders were pro-Finland. They were much more concerned about their own land than about the World War, except for the question of how the war would affect their land. If they were democrats as Tornudd claimed to be, the World War made their position very difficult. As another of them said,

"We have wanted the impossible thing. We have wanted Germany to go to Petrograd, and the Allies to win the war."⁴

Thus there were Finlanders who believed in the Entente principles that Tornudd complained of, though they were not very vociferous early in the war. Tornudd was more pragmatic, or more disillusioned with America and with the Allies. He and many more like him would take help where they found it.

Narodny was wrought up over his half-Esthonian heritage

and his personal Finnish alliance, but he, too, had a message of importance. The other letter-writers might discount his arguments, but it was possible that Russia was only part of the problem in Finland. There could be internal difficulties as well, difficulties that many Finlanders would like to solve in accordance with the very principles for which the Allies supposedly fought.

And notwithstanding Tornudd's accusations of hypocrisy, the Allies did try some gentle persuasion with Russia, at the behest of friends in Finland. Morison said that "leading Finlanders" (probably from the merchant circles of ship owners and traders where pro-Allied sympathy was strongest) made efforts to have England and France influence Russia on behalf of Finland. In conversation with Morison, Professor Reuter related,

"Representations were accordingly made at Petrograd by the British and French governments, which had the desired effect of restraining the application of this program."⁵

Russification seems not to have been applied in its full vigor.⁶ But unfortunately for the Allies, their efforts brought them little praise. Morison commented,

"As the success of these representations depended on their secrecy, England and France received no credit for them from the Finnish people. Hence the effect of the (Russian) Program of 1914 was to swing public opinion in Finland, which had been rather bewildered and on the whole neutral during the early months of the war, into anti-Russian and pro-German channels."⁷

Another barometer of public sentiment was that early in the war there were Finlanders who joined the Russian military service, but after the Russian occupation, the opposite occurred. An underground movement commenced, with the purpose

of sending young men outside the country to obtain military skills for use against Russia. Though Germany agreed to be the host country for this "Jäger movement", the movement was not originally an expression of pro-Germanism. Sweden was first asked to train the young Finlanders, but refused. Socialists like Tokoi supported the program for awhile, and they were certainly not pro-German. In fact, Tokoi warned Jäger organizers that elements of his party might try to turn a war of liberation into a civil war.⁸ This shows what end was originally intended for the Finnish Jägers, who ultimately numbered some 2,000. It also shows, again, that Russia was not the only problem in Finland.

Finland and World War I - Internal Affairs

Despite the oft-painted image of Russia as the "traditional enemy", bourgeois Finland had resisted Russification rather than Russia. It was the peasant population that fought when Finland passed under Russian rule in the 19th century. The educated people were, for the most part, more interested in peace and government offices. Their attitude did not change until their peace and their offices were threatened. The events of 1914 were threatening, and the war gave the possibility that Russia could be defeated or influenced and the whole problem solved. Closer contact with Russians also brought racism to the surface. Anti-Russian sentiment rose.

The Socialists, with the industrial workers, rural laborers, and tenant farmers, faced a more complex problem. Insofar as Russian autocracy appeared to uphold the "herrat" -

the masters, or gentry, nationalism could be a strong force among working class Finns. On the other hand, Russians could be friends, like the Social Democrats who sometimes brought party conferences to Finland. Friends and enemies were likely to be chosen on the basis of relationship to the class struggle.

The doctrine of the class struggle was deeply instilled in the mainstream Finnish Socialists -

"They have been fed on class hatred for years, and the danger of a social revolution like that of 1918 was predicted long before," said Morison.⁹

The danger was predictable because little was accomplished politically for working class Finlanders. But revolution was by no means inevitable. Protest in the form of strikes had declined by 60% from 1907 to 1913.¹⁰ The decline may have been due in part to discouragement, as Russian soldiers were sometimes used to break strikes. Yet although strikes were even fewer in 1914, workers won a third of them and drew a compromise on almost all of the rest.¹¹ This is not to say that they were winning all that they desired. Statistics from 1908-09 concerning 350 "typical industrial workers' families" showed that one-quarter could not live on their earnings.¹² The point is that no revolution was made to help them out, nor was one planned for them to look forward to. The Finnish Socialist Party did not believe in creating revolution. If it came, it must be spontaneous, because conditions drove the people to it. Conditions, though poor, had not driven the people that far before World War I.

The war brought dizzying economic highs and lows to Finland. Unemployment hit heavily at first, owing to the loss of export markets and sources of raw materials. By 1915, Russian war orders put people back to work and even created new jobs. The Russian military planned extensive fortifications for Finland. The need for workers then exceeded the available supply, and laborers were brought in from as far away as China. Everyone had to eat, and farmers found food prices rising.

That was no boon to industrial workers. Inflation cut the value of their pay, while wartime restrictions on labor organizations left them powerless. As Tokoi wrote,

"The efforts of the unions to secure increased pay for skilled labor had to cease - at the very time when many employers were taking advantage of the situation to cut wages."¹³

Housing had already been inadequate; the situation worsened with the arrival of Russian soldiers, laborers, and war refugees. Few new buildings went up because wages and material costs were deemed too high. Rents went up instead, until the government put a lid on them. Housing was little better for rural laborers, often worse for overcrowding and uncleanness.

On the other end of the scale were factory owners, operators of businesses, speculators in goods and money exchanges, and those engaged in contraband trade with Germany, or in trade between Allied and neutral countries. Again, Morison had a comment to make on the subject after an interview in 1918:

"In Helsingfors there was a riot of luxury and profiteering. Dr. Kaarlo Ignatius, one of the present Finnish envoys to the United States, and a person who evidently himself secured a good slice of this war prosperity, boasts that 200 Rolls-Royce cars are now owned in Helsingfors. In the remote country districts, privation increased with each year of the war."¹⁴

Those farmers who were largely self-sufficient did not feel the privation so much, and dairymen had lucrative markets in Finland and Russia. Lack of needed imports gradually hurt them, though, along with the loss of livestock to military requisition, and difficulties in transportation of farm produce. In Finland at large, a food shortage 'increased with each year of the war'.

There had been large stocks of grain in Finland just before the war. These arrived when wholesale buyers tried to beat a pending Russian duty on grain imported from other countries. The stocks helped after the war started, but they were not managed with the idea that hostilities would continue for a long time. Russia alone remained of the usual foreign sources of foodstuffs, and transportation problems made deliveries from there increasingly uncertain. Kaarlo Ignatius told Americans through the newspapers that Finland normally consumed about 800,000 tons of breadstuffs in a year. Finland normally produced less than half of that, he said.¹⁵

Finnish production generally declined after 1915.¹⁶ Government price fixing and projected requisitions did not create a desire to increase harvests. There was no consistent, all-encompassing plan for production and distribution of food. It was not long before a healthy black market appeared, and workers were no happier to know that food was

held off the open market for those who could afford it. The typical middle class Finlander was not so much better off, however, as these figures for average consumption of staple foods per capita would indicate: for 1913, 63.3 kilograms of wheat flour, 187.7 kgs. of rye flour, and 115.1 kgs. of potatoes. By 1917 the numbers were 8.6 kgs. of wheat flour, 61 kgs. of rye flour, and 113 kgs. of potatoes.¹⁷ From figures like these, Anthony F. Upton concludes,

"As long as the war continued the prospect was that the situation would get worse, and the fear of actual mass starvation was ever-present during the events of 1917-18 and must be reckoned one of the most powerful causes of social and political instability."¹⁸

The Diet Election of 1916

Because parliamentary activity had become an exercise in futility during the years before the war, membership in the Socialist Party had decreased. Hard times for the workers reversed the trend, especially since the party took care to compare the workers' lot with that of the bourgeoisie, as it was imagined. Supposedly, the rich got fed and the farmers got rich while the workers suffered. The Socialists had no answers, but their slogans were appealing, and in the scheduled Diet election of 1916 they won an absolute majority with 103 of the possible 200 seats.

Their victory meant little to the other parties and classes of society at the time, for the same reason that the election itself seemed meaningless: the Russians had suspended the Diet for the duration of the war. Just over half of the

eligible voters went to the polls. Tokoi's statement, "To the bourgeoisie it seemed much better not to have a Diet at all,"¹⁹ is probably extreme. It does indicate who went to the polls, and more importantly, it shows grave mistrust growing between different parts of society.

We have seen that the World War sharpened antagonism between Finland and Russia, and also sharpened antagonism between social classes in Finland. The desire to ease Russian pressure extended through all classes to some degree, however, and of course there could be no social revolution as long as Imperial Russia remained strong and bent upon controlling Finland. Russia was therefore the primary object of attention for most Finlanders, which is why the enthusiasm for Russia's allies was dampened somewhat among Finns. If Russian power was broken, and the harsh economic conditions of wartime remained unchanged, then social questions would assume a more important, and more serious, aspect.

Footnotes to Chapter V

- 1 - New York Times, 15 November 1915.
- 2 - New York Times, 21 November 1915.
- 3 - New York Times, 23 December 1915.
- 4 - Samuel Eliot Morison, Inquiry Document No. 421, "Memorandum on Finland" (National Archives, Washington, D.C.), written in 1918, p. 88.
- 5 - Ibid., p.p. 86-87.
- 6 - D.G. Kirby (ed.), Finland and Russia 1808-1920 (New York: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1975), p.p. 135-138 for details of the Russification Program of 1914.
- 7 - Morison, op. cit., p.p. 87-88.
- 8 - Eino Jutikkala and Kauko Pirinen, A History of Finland (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1962), p. 249.
- 9 - Morison, op. cit., p. 299g.
- 10 - Ibid., p. 299j.
- 11 - Ibid., p. 299k.
- 12 - Ibid., p.p. 299i-299j.
- 13 - Oskari Tokoi, SISU - "Even Through A Stone Wall" (New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1957), p. 129.
- 14 - Morison, op. cit., p. 91.
- 15 - New York Times, 11 November 1917.
- 16 - Leo Harmaja, Effects of the War on Economic and Social Life in Finland (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1933), p. 10.
- 17 - Kirby, op. cit., p. 215.
- 18 - Anthony F. Upton, The Finnish Revolution 1917-1918 (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p. 18.
- 19 - Tokoi, op. cit., p. 130.

CHAPTER VI

Russia's March Revolution of 1917 came to Finland through the Russian soldiers and sailors who were stationed there. The Provisional Government dropped Russification measures in favor of a return to internal autonomy for Finland. As a working relationship between Russia and Finland was not agreed upon until autumn, that relationship remained a primary concern. But the granting of internal autonomy, plus the lack of discipline in the Russian military, allowed class and party differences to surface in Finland. Even the question of relations with Russia was affected by party maneuvering and internal conditions. Economically, those conditions continued to deteriorate. The food shortage grew quite serious, and became a factor in foreign relations as well as in Finnish politics. The Provisional Government, abetted by the United States, tried until the end of its existence to use food as a lever with which to move Finland in desired directions.

Finland and the March Revolution of 1917

"In Helsinki the 13th of March, 1917, dawned like many another March day before and since. ... But the day's work had scarcely begun when strange rumors were circulating, claiming that something out of the ordinary had happened."¹

Thus did Oskari Tokoi recall the beginning of Russia's

March Revolution. There was no great convulsion in Finland, only Russian soldiers and sailors hunting down their officers.

Finlanders did nothing to bring the revolution to their land; the soldiers and sailors did it for them. Similarly, the new Provisional Government eased the reins on Finland of its own accord, but the Russian moderates wanted to give Finlanders a part in their own affairs. Therefore, a few days after the Czar had abdicated, the Provisional Government drew up a manifesto with the help of a delegation representing the different political parties of Finland. The manifesto restored the "Finnish Constitution" and Finnish internal autonomy, and voided once again all unconstitutional measures since 1899. Finlanders were encouraged to submit proposals for a new constitution, in order to ameliorate internal conditions and clarify future relations between Finland and Russia. Through the manifesto, the Provisional Government released all political prisoners and convoked the Diet for April.

The Socialists could now do what no one had expected, not even themselves: form a government. The Diet majority gained in 1916 entitled them to submit a list of their members to Russia for approval as the governing Senate of Finland. The opportunity provoked disagreement over whether to form an all-Socialist Senate, or whether to participate at all. A majority of party leaders and Diet members opted for a coalition Senate with four bourgeois parties. The Socialists would get half of the seats, the bourgeois parties half, and Tokoi was named Deputy Chairman, or Premier. That gave him another vote in Senate decisions, except when the Russian

Governor-General participated as Chairman, which happened infrequently. The Socialists could therefore expect to keep the Senate from blocking legislation approved by their Diet majority.

Being under no necessity to force concessions from Russia at this early stage, Finlanders had no real need to form the kind of united front that had briefly prevailed during the General Strike of 1905. The desperate solution by direct action - which was embodied in the Jäger movement - was no longer required, allowing all to lapse back into their normal political attitudes. For this reason, the March Revolution was at first a disappointment to the Finnish Activists. (They were less a political party than a cross-section of parties made up of individuals who advocated armed action.)

Hannes Ignatius, a member of the Military Committee that worked with the Activists, expressed some thoughts about the revolution and the different political groups in Finland. He wrote of the bourgeois parties (Old Finns, Young Finns, Swedes, and Agrarians) that they saw a chance to develop autonomy in union with a more co-operative Russia. The Activists came to view the revolution as an opportunity for separation because of the breakdown of discipline in the Russian military. The Socialists saw a chance, said Ignatius, to realize the "final goals of Socialism in Finland; all of these who had supported the Jäger movement and aspirations of independence now retired completely from the struggle for liberty."² Actually, even the Socialists were not yet ready for full Socialism. Their first demands were for social

reforms and a more truly democratic constitution. "Liberty" in the sense in which Ignatius used the word, writing after the Civil War, meant breaking all ties with Russia. To the Socialists, the desire for liberty in that sense depended upon who ruled in Russia. They certainly did not withdraw from a struggle with the Provisional Government.

For the most part, the foregoing remarks may be taken to show that the basic objectives of the different parties had changed little since 1905, except that the Agrarian Party had been organized to represent small farmers and rural laborers who preferred capitalism to socialism. (Regarding relations with Russia, the Agrarians generally aligned themselves with the other bourgeois parties when a decision was to be made, though their ideas represented something of a middle ground between bourgeoisie and Socialists.) The lack of immediate direction or pressure from Russia allowed the differences between the parties to surface and widen.

Internal Conditions, Spring and Summer of 1917

"The fairest summer of the Finnish proletariat is dawning."³ So wrote novelist F.E. Sillanpaa, himself the son of a tenant farmer, though educated in bourgeois circles. Russian power left the side of the masters in 1917. The March Revolution was an important first step, yet there was more to be done, as Sillanpaa knew:

"But in the Fatherland and its inhabitants were other aches than Czarist oppression, and these aches were not cured by the revolution; so the revolution had to continue."⁴

After the March Revolution, the sentiment of the Russian

garrisons leaned toward support of the workers in Finland. The Provisional Government was preoccupied for the time being. Finnish workers, with nothing to fear, gave their attention to the masters.

"Strikes in all branches of industry throughout Finland are reported in a dispatch from Helsingfors. In some districts the strikes have been accompanied by acts of violence against the employers."⁵

The labor movement was free of the former wartime ban on its activities. Membership of major trade unions increased by 89,571 from March 30th to June 30th. A low estimate of the number of strikes and work stoppages for 1917 comes to 478 or seven times the number recorded for 1913.⁶ These figures refer to organized workers only. Loggers and agricultural workers held many a wildcat strike, and violence was more common in rural areas.

Not only was the ban lifted, but the soldiers and sailors occasionally gave active assistance to the Finnish workers. Industrial workers had gone on strike for the eight-hour day in April. During settlement talks, Russian sailors walked in with drawn pistols to back the workers' demands. Bourgeois Finland was outraged at this interference in internal affairs, though it was just a reversal of roles from previous years. The Socialists and the labor unions were surprised, too, as they apparently did not invite the visit. Nevertheless, it was quite clear where the sympathies of the soldiers and sailors lay.

They had served as police during the revolutionary days of March, until they gave the task to Finnish workers'

militias. Naturally, the militias were also sympathetic to the proletarian cause, so strike activity could be expected to increase. Most of this activity was unorganized, and expressive of immediate grievances: the desire for more liberal unemployment compensation from the communal governments (there was no national plan), seats in those governments, and food.

Unemployment problems arose again because the revolution dislocated the military supply industries and the fortifications works. The lack of means with which to buy the necessities of life then aggravated the shortage of those necessities.

Rationing cards for bread grains came into use in the summer. The ration dipped down to 4.3 ounces per person per day.⁷ That was less than half the allowance in Russia, where the cry for bread had been a cause of demonstrations in March. Furthermore, food prices skyrocketed. In Helsinki the price of butter, one of the more plentiful food items, was up 184.5% from what it had been in 1913. The price of potatoes was up 417.5%, of hard rye bread 225.6%, of salt herring 302.3%, of coffee 441.9%.⁸ These items constituted the usual fare for a working class family.

The outlook for the future was no better. Imports were still down, and 1917 did not bring a good harvest in Finland. A late frost followed by a drought is sometimes given as the reason.⁹ Leo Harmaja said,

"Summer weather conditions were favorable, and the harvest prospects would have been good but for the human coefficient."¹⁰

He referred to the widespread rural strikes of the season.

Whatever the cause, food was not plentiful, at least not at affordable rates for workers (it is not clear whether the prices quoted above were decontrolled market prices after rationing was introduced, or black market prices, but one suspects the former). Workers rioted and went on strike for lower prices.

Tokoi wrote that working class "order guards", even more extra-legal than the workers' militias, sometimes confiscated grain if farmers did not obey the government's collection orders.¹¹ The farmers disliked any kind of forced levy, so they were further embittered at the workers. If the latter thought farmers intended to starve proletarians into submitting to the old order, farmers thought workers preferred the handouts of unemployment compensation to productive effort.

The Search for Food, and Strained Relations with Russia

The need for food caused Finland to turn once again to the United States. When it did so, America was no longer a neutral onlooker with a benevolent public free to act as it wished. The U.S. was proud to be the first nation to recognize the Provisional Government as the legal ruling authority in Russia, as well as in all the territories of the old Empire. Less than a month later, the two governments were comrades-in-arms. America had obligations to all of its associates among the Allies, which included supplying them with foodstuffs. In any question regarding Finland, Russia

and the war effort would receive first consideration.

In the month of May, the Finnish government contracted with W.R. Grace and Company of New York for 50,000 tons of wheat flour. The order was paid for immediately and application made to the Interallied Supply Committee in Petrograd for importation licenses. The Supply Committee, headed by the Russian General Michelson, suggested that Finland buy rye flour from Russia. Accordingly, no licenses for importation from the U.S. were forthcoming. The credit was left in America for possible future use. Finland then paid the Provisional Government for the rye flour, to be delivered in August or September.

The promise did not fill empty stomachs. The last thing the United States or any of the Allies wanted was the dissolution of the Russian state, and they believed that Finland was disaffected. The American consul at Petrograd concluded a long telegram on Finland with these lines, written on June 2:

"The present shortage of export from Russia to Finland has caused hardship in Finland which, since the war, is dependent to a large extent on Russia for cereals. If the shortage continues it may increase the growing Finnish dissatisfaction with the Russian revolutionary government."¹²

Despite the warning, the U.S. made no move to supply Finland's shortage. Perhaps it was not possible, as the American grain harvest was not as big as desired; or perhaps it was a way of supporting the Provisional Government. Minister of War Guchkov gave Finland to know in March that if it wanted favors, it must pay for them - that is, support the war effort.¹³ Guchkov was probably thinking primarily of

monetary contributions toward support of the enlarged Russian military establishment in Finland, but he may have had more in mind. There had been no conscription in Finland since 1904, when the draft was abolished in exchange for the institution of a monetary subsidy. The subsidy had increased sharply in succeeding years, and opposition to it had increased accordingly. Expenses could not have decreased since the war started, so Guchkov certainly wanted money. He may have wanted men as well.

But though proposals on a form of government, division of powers, and other questions passed from Finland to Russia, there was no suggestion of help in the war, and not much good will expressed toward the Provisional Government, either. Such impolitic behavior did not make the Russians any more willing to deliver food, and convinced the Provisional Government that any final solution for Finland's status should simply wait for the All-Russian Constituent Assembly.

Among the general populace of Finland, procrastination only fed the desire for an immediate solution, and "independence" became an increasingly popular term. The bourgeois political parties took note of the sentiment, but still recognized the authority of the Provisional Government. They decided to negotiate whatever concessions could be obtained toward the fullest autonomy possible. The Socialists now appeared to be the champions of independence. They preferred to believe that the revolution had given the Czar's prerogatives to the Russian people, so likewise the Czar's powers as Grand Duke of Finland should go to the Finnish people.

The Provisional Government might participate in Finnish legislation, but the actions of an avowedly temporary authority should not be taken as precedents for the establishment of sovereign powers.

The Provisional Government had encouraged the Socialists from the very beginning to use their Diet majority in pursuit of internal reforms, like the eight-hour day and local government reform. The implication was that such legislation would receive quick approval. The Socialists' more independent stance in the matter of approval and authority quickly soured relations between them and the Provisional Government. Questions of internal reform and external relations were held up, and then there were the problems of Finnish support for the Russian war effort, and Russian aid to hungry Finlanders. The Socialist Party Congress of June labelled the Provisional Government "bourgeois", and pronounced it "incapable of adequately guaranteeing the inviolability of Finland's freedom".¹⁴

The "July Days" in Finland

The Russian military forces in Finland loomed large in the plans of Allied strategists. The Russian forces were regarded as a key to Petrograd, to the stability of the Provisional Government, and therefore to the entire eastern front.

They were a key factor in Finnish affairs, too. Having brought the revolution to Finland, they gave support to the workers, and received the blame for all the unrest and riotous activities that offended the bourgeoisie. Stories abound of anarchical behavior that set a bad example for 'irresponsible

elements' of Finnish society. Unemployed - if not necessarily irresponsible - elements abounded when the war industries and fortifications work collapsed following the March Revolution. Bourgeois commentators would commonly place the blame for the Finnish Civil War on jobless drifters, and the corrupting influence upon them of the undisciplined, revolutionary Russian military. That claim has been disputed, though the unemployed and the Russian military were certainly unsettling influences who contributed to a rise in crime.

One reason for the military's anti-social activities was probably financial. Their money was worth much less after Finland re-established its own currency, in order to break the connection with the devalued ruble. A prominent Socialist explained the switch:

"Our connection with Russia has injured the Bank of Finland to the amount of about twenty-four million dollars, because we have been compelled to put the exchange value of the ruble higher than it was in reality."¹⁵

The figure was given in dollars because it came from Yrjo Sirola, who had lived in the United States, where he had been a well-known figure in the Finnish-American labor movement. His comment was intended for reading in American newspapers. It was given not only to justify breaking away from the ruble, but also to justify breaking away from the Provisional Government, and this at the very time when the United States was trying to prop it up with a loan.

In July of 1917 the Provisional Government faced a threatening situation at home, made worse by what amounted to arrears in payment to the soldiers and sailors in Finland.

They did not want rubles because Finland would no longer accept rubles at par, as forced to do before the revolution. The Provisional Government did not have sufficient Finnish currency with which to make the payments. Finland made no move to ease the problem. The Socialists would not do anything to reconcile the military with the Provisional Government, and bourgeois Finland would rather have seen the armed forces withdrawn altogether than make a loan to keep them happy. Then there was the food question. As the American consul at Petrograd had warned a month earlier,

"So long as Russia refuses or is unable to send flour to Finland no steps will be taken to relieve the rate of exchange."¹⁶

Elihu Root was then in Russia as an American envoy on special mission. He believed that the pay problem endangered the Provisional Government and the entire Russian position in the war. He recommended a credit of \$75,000,000, supposed to be sufficient until November. He asked the U.S. Secretary of State for a reply by July 14, which was pay day for the military forces.

The response was affirmative, with the consideration that David R. Francis, America's Ambassador to Russia, wanted certain restrictions placed on the money. As it was to be used to obtain Finnish marks for the payment of Russian soldiers and sailors, he wished to make certain that Finland did not manage to take some advantage of the situation. He telegraphed the Secretary of State,

"Thinking Finland might have designs (to) use this credit for purchases in the United States, I have definitely informed Russian Government that the extension of this credit

carries no obligation on our part to permit any kind of exports to Finland or elsewhere."¹⁷

Maybe it was a normal precaution, but it looks more like the continuation of an undeclared embargo, on foodstuffs in particular, designed to encourage Finnish support for the Provisional Government.

The first installment on the credits did not go through on pay day; the necessary financial exchanges were not made in time. Troops had to be sent to Finland to "subdue obstreperous sailors in the Baltic Fleet". The sailors constituted another threat to the Provisional Government, in which changes were made due to the "July Days" disturbances from the 15th to the 20th. A note from Francis dated July 24 revealed one of the complications in delivery of the paychecks -

"Finland announced severance of diplomatic relations with Russia."¹⁸

Francis did not have his facts quite right, but he had the general idea.

The move toward independence was not exactly a bolt from the blue. The final Diet vote that passed the "Law on Authority" was taken on July 18. A month earlier, the Provisional Government had approved a bill on the separation of powers between Russia and Finland. The Finnish Senate submitted the bill, under the name of Tulenheimo, from the Old Finn Party. His proposal gave most of the former Grand Ducal prerogatives to the Senate, including the final sanction of legislation, except in matters that affected Russian interests according to the opinion of the Governor-General. The

Provisional Government would have a veto in those matters, and would retain the right to appoint the Governor-General and the Senate.

That was a fine proposal from the old Constitutionalist point of view. The Socialists were having none of it. Their Diet Committee on Fundamental Laws amended the bill "past recognition", in Morison's words, then submitted its own proposal. The Socialist "Law on Authority" gave supreme power to the Diet in all questions except defense and foreign policy, which were to remain in the hands of Russia. Tokoi referred to those departments as "the last vague bonds with Russia", and could not promise that they would remain unbroken in the future.¹⁹ Article 2 of the law said, in part,

"The current session of the Seim (the Diet) is called without special summons and is to last until a new form of government is established."²⁰

The bourgeois parties were torn between popular sentiment for independence and fear of putting supreme power in the hands of a Diet with a Socialist majority, a Diet that could not be legally dissolved under the current system if the "Law on Authority" was passed through that system. The Socialist bill went through three readings in the Diet. A report in the New York Times for July 18 spoke of "extreme tension and nervousness" over the outcome of the Diet vote. Also contributing to the tension were the payment situation in the military, knowledge of disturbances in Petrograd, and "a threat of a general strike if the Diet postpones the passage of the new communal bill abolishing property qualifications (for holding the franchise). The latter was the subject

of a demonstration in the Senate Square last night."²¹ That was a clear demonstration to the bourgeois parties that local as well as national authority was on the line.

The final vote on July 18 passed the Socialist bill into law by a tally of 136 to 55. Thus some of the bourgeois members saved face with their constituents on the independence issue, but there was still a move to be made. On the bourgeois motion to submit the law to the Provisional Government for approval, the constitutional thing to do if that government was really heir to the Czar, the vote was 104 to 87 against submission, a strictly party vote. The Socialists were to be held responsible for whatever action Russia chose to take in answer to the law.

Governor-General Stakhovich observed that the law violated Finland's own constitution. He predicted that the Finns might suffer from it. The bourgeois parties took the same line. They claimed to support the principle of independence, but as of old, they could not accept anything that might threaten their system. Constitutional rule was preferable to an independence based on what seemed to be lawless irresponsibility. Bourgeois Finland was not entirely convinced, and some of their newspapers gave favorable comment to the Socialists on this one issue of independence. The Socialists did not have support where it counted, however. The Russian Socialist Tchkeidze, at a Congress of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, declared that only a Russian-Finnish agreement sanctioned by the Constituent Assembly could bring Finnish independence. Unfortunately for the Finnish Socialists, most of their

Russian proletarian brothers agreed with Tchkeidze, except for the Bolsheviks. But after the July Days came to an end, the Bolsheviks were not heard from for a time.

Tokoi had said when the bill was passed,

"The only obstacle in the way of such a solution of the question was the Russian Temporary Government. According to the latest information this obstacle does not exist anymore."²²

This statement has been taken to prove that a conspiracy existed between the Bolsheviks and the Finnish Socialists to bring down the Provisional Government. This is unlikely. Arguments against the conspiracy theory have also been made, including the idea that since the Bolsheviks were taken unawares by the July Days movement in Petrograd, they could scarcely have had anything planned simultaneously for Finland.

At any rate, the Provisional Government was not dead yet. Its manifesto for dissolution of the Diet (a prerogative of the Czar) came before the Senate on August 1, the Senate having the right to promulgate decrees in Finland. Governor-General Stakhovich made sure to attend this session of the Senate, and his vote broke a tie. The Diet was to be dissolved, and new elections held in October, if the Provisional Government could muster the strength to back its order. Otherwise, the Socialists would claim that since the Diet had passed a law making itself the supreme authority in Finland, no other entity had the right to dissolve it. In fact they did make the claim, but a meeting that included soldiers' and sailors' representatives at Helsinki gave assurance of noninterference if force had to be used to keep the Diet from sitting. One of the arguments used against Finnish independence at that meeting was

Finland's refusal to help pay the military forces, a refusal that was connected with the food problem.

Finland had not been very co-operative, it is true. But the idea that America should have contributed to more amicable Russo-Finnish relations through a positive response to the food problem seems not to have occurred to anyone. Unless, that is, the cupboard was truly so bare that there was no food to spare. The American opinion of the whole affair may be summed up in the words of North Winship, the oft-quoted consul at Petrograd, written before the Diet was dissolved:

"A further evil result of the mutiny (the July Days) lies in the excuse it gave the Social Democratic majority in the Finnish Seim to pass its law declaring Finland's independence of Russia..."²³

Tokoi's recollection of the Socialist defeat in July was a very gloomy one. He wrote,

"This outcome broke the ties which had held the coalition cabinet and the Diet together. It led to civil war."²⁴

Further Efforts to Obtain Food

The Socialist Senators were not forced to vacate their posts, since somebody had to run the country. The party debated pulling their people out of the government, anyway. In the midst of food strikes and a controversy over the price of butter, the Socialist Senators resigned, glad at this point to be rid of responsibility.

August came to an end, and the promised flour from Russia did not appear. In early September, Russia stopped all grain exports, reneging on the deal of the previous spring. Finnish harvests were below normal by two-thirds. Finland

thought again of the United States and got an import license from the Inter-Allied Supply Committee for 60,000 tons of American wheat flour. Payment for most of it had already been made. Again the order went through Grace and Company, which chartered three Swedish vessels and applied to Washington for export licenses in late September. The application was refused.

Meanwhile, some 15,000 tons of flour arrived in east coast warehouses, with another 30,000 tons on the way. The United States Food Administration stepped in on October 6, asking Grace and Company to stop buying flour for Finland. The Food Administration gave a rather peculiar reason for its action, declaring that more purchases at that period would "mean that millers would be putting on their books or in transit a quantity of flour which, if it was not cleared, would merely cause confusion and congestion."²⁵ Why it should not be cleared when the order was made, the money paid, and the ships available, was soon explained. The U.S. wanted approval from the Provisional Government for Finland's efforts to feed itself.²⁶ All parties waited a month, only to find that when the approval came through in November, the Provisional Government was no more. The U.S. did not consider itself to be under any further obligation to ship the purchased flour to Finland.

Results of the October Elections

For the October elections, the Old Finn and Young Finn parties banded together on a law-and-order program. They turned to their own advantage the strikes, lawlessness, and venomous Socialist rhetoric of the time, all of which had

strong roots in the food shortage. As there was little chance of cross-over voting between the Swedish Party and the Socialist Party, the bourgeois groups were virtually united against the Socialists (though the Swedes still made more of the language question than any other issue). Even the Agrarians, who considered themselves socially radical, held the Socialists partially responsible for the violence of strikes and riots.

The Senate, now without any Socialist members, scored propaganda points by getting a promise from the Provisional Government of wider autonomy and, possibly, some food aid. This bit of encouragement came less than two weeks after Russia had cut off all grain exports. Whether or not Russia had grain to spare, there was no display of scruples over political speculation with foodstuffs.

The Socialist Party increased its number of votes again, but the turnout at the polls was so much greater than in 1916 that the Socialists lost seats in the Diet. They were still the largest single party, with 92 seats, but they no longer held a majority. Upton contends that the Socialists had "room for political maneuver" if they desired it, in a number of directions. For one thing, the Agrarian Party came out for a modified form of the Socialist Law on Authority, and the Agrarian share of the Diet was up to 26 seats. Instead, the Socialists refused to take part in the Senate or any coalition, and reassumed the role with which they were most comfortable, according to Tokoi - that of opposition party. Actually, the Provisional Government limited the Socialists'

"room for maneuver", though the Socialists themselves may not have realized it at the time.

The new government busied itself immediately with plans for a delimitation of powers between Finland and Russia, until the Constituent Assembly should meet. The Socialists' latitude for action was now limited by Kerensky's threat to prevent any foodstuffs from going to Finland if there was an attempt to pass again the Socialist Law on Authority, whether or not the Agrarians or anyone else wanted it, too. The Socialists may never have known about the threat, but it was enough that the Finnish government knew of it. It was an added weight to existing arguments against the Socialist version of a delimitation of powers. The foodstuffs to which Kerensky referred may have been the American grain, the delivery of which required the approval of the Provisional Government, or it may have been the Russian food that was the subject of enticing promises to the Senate after the Socialists had left that body the previous summer. Kerensky used foodstuffs from whatever source as a tool to control the work of the Finnish government.

The projected new basis for Russo-Finnish relations turned out to be somewhat like the Law on Authority, with the notable exception that the Senate, not the Diet, was to exercise the former Czar's prerogatives. It was conceded that the Diet would appoint the Senators, but that was not enough to win over the Socialists. They held to supreme authority not for the present Diet, which the Agrarians would have accepted, but for the previous, Socialist-dominated Diet. The Socialists

viewed everything that had happened since the dissolution of that Diet as illegal, even though they had taken part in the October elections. In other words, they wanted everything that Kerensky had refused by dissolving the Diet after the affair of July, 1917. The new project went ahead without them.

The day after the Provisional Government had agreed to this new act, the Bolshevik Revolution began. Russo-Finnish relations were up in the air again, and the many internal problems - notably food supply - remained unsolved.

From the March Revolution to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Finland experienced much conflict in both internal and external affairs. The common threads in those affairs were (1) differences in philosophy between Finnish political parties, and (2) the question of food supply, against the continuing question of relations with Russia. The Finnish Socialist government proved unacceptable to the Provisional Government, and the other Finnish parties ultimately supported the Russians. By the time a more acceptable government was formed in Finland, the Provisional Government was gone. Meanwhile, the food shortage grew worse, a grievance felt very acutely among workers. In combination with the bitterness of Socialists and their sympathizers over the dissolution of "their" Diet in July, and the election defeat of October, much ill-feeling was produced.

The attempt to use food to influence Finland did finally succeed, but success came too late either to help the Provisional Government, or to get food to Finland. The unrelieved

food shortage contributed over the summer of 1917 to the growing rift between Finnish political parties and social classes. In addition, hungry Finns turned away from local authorities and toward direct action to obtain what they wanted. Workers' militias and "order guards" gave way to a re-emerging Red Guard as the leading arm of proletarian activists. The next step was to extend direct action to the national level. Thus the efficacy of Russian and American grain diplomacy in Finland up to the Bolshevik Revolution is questionable; particularly questionable is the negative approach of withholding foodstuffs in order to gain control over a people.

Footnotes to Chapter VI

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Footnotes to Chapter VI, cont.

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Finland, (Helsinki, Finland: The Finnish Historical Society,
1965), p. 57.

CHAPTER VII

The Bolshevik Revolution in November of 1917 put Russo-Finnish relations up in the air again, but by that time, internal difficulties were taking precedence in Finland. The food shortage, in particular, was the cause of much hardship, and a source of much suspicion and recrimination between classes. Finland tried to redress the food problem by obtaining foodstuffs from foreign sources, notably the United States. The U.S., however, requisitioned the grain that Finland had previously purchased in America. Real and imagined grievances, the unsettled situation in Russia, and a corresponding absence of any threat of armed action by Russian forces all combined to produce a general strike of Finnish workers in November. The strike created more problems than it solved. The food supply question remained unanswered. When a bourgeois government declared Finnish independence in December, the new nation was in a very unstable condition. The government hoped that food and recognition from abroad would contribute to a settlement of internal problems, but those hopes fell short of realization.

Effects of the Bolshevik Revolution on Finnish Politics

Having ousted the Provisional Government, the Bolsheviks called for an uprising in Finland, too. "Rise, rise at once

and take power into the hands of the organized workers," Lenin exhorted.¹

Taking over the American consular post at Helsinki in November, Thornwell Haynes reported,

"Owing to temporary overthrow interim government no authority existing in Finland. ..."² But Finland did not experience a Bolshevik-style revolution, although Lenin's representatives promised aid in whatever form was suitable.

With the benefit of hindsight, one can see that the most favorable moment for the workers was indeed at hand. The Finnish Socialists, however, like everyone else at the time, thought the Bolshevik takeover could well be an ephemeral occurrence. They did not feel confident about trusting to Bolshevik support, nor did they feel that Finland had reached the proper historical-economic stage for a socialist revolution and a dictatorship of the proletariat. If forced to take power, the Socialists thought it would be for an interim only, until a constituent assembly of Finlanders was called to settle matters. Rather, the Finnish Socialists hoped to win agreement to their demands in the Diet, backed by the threat of a general strike.

Their major political demand was that the Law on Authority be recognized. Then after the Socialist-dominated Diet of the previous summer was seated again, they would appoint a Socialist Senate, confirm the eight-hour day and the communal government law (both of which the Provisional Government had approved, but which had never been enforced), and otherwise prepare the country for a constituent assembly. This and

other demands made up the "We Demand" program presented in the Diet.

The Diet first wanted to solve the latest quandary in Russo-Finnish relations. The political parties did a turn-about from their positions of the previous summer. Then the bourgeois parties had called for negotiations with the Provisional Government as heir to the Czar, while the Socialists wanted separation. Now the bourgeois parties wanted separation from Bolshevik Russia, while the Socialists called for negotiations with the supposed representatives of the Russian people. The bourgeois parties arrived at an interesting - and of course constitutional - solution: on the basis of the Swedish-Finnish Constitution of 1772, they declared that since the ruling house had vacated the throne, the ruling powers fell to the Diet. (Nobody explained why that solution did not apply to the Socialist Diet after the March Revolution; some separatists at the time thought it did.) This was not a victory for a sovereign Diet. The old Constitution gave power to the Diet only until a new ruler could be found. A good deal of maneuvering went on before the Diet decided on November 9, by a strict bourgeois - Socialist vote, against the "We Demand" program and for a directorate of three men to exercise sovereign authority. The Socialists and the Agrarians combined to block the nominations to this directorate (an Old Finn, a Young Finn, and a Swede), and the resulting political impasse had not been resolved when a general strike was declared.

Efforts to Obtain Food before the General Strike

After Russia reneged on the promised rye flour in September, the United States refused immediate shipment of wheat flour in October, as seen in the last chapter. The Provisional Government seems never to have made good on its hints of possible aid. Finland was forced to try different approaches.

From conversations with Bolsheviks in the soldiers' and sailors' committees, Finnish Socialists were led to believe that another revolution was coming to Russia, before it actually occurred in November. They considered the possibility of a similar undertaking in Finland. Food was a key factor. The promise of it could win credibility for a Socialist government. Late in October, Socialist leaders expressed to the Bolsheviks their hope of obtaining food from Russia. The reply was that if power passed to the workers in Finland, food might be obtained.³ Thus the Bolsheviks hoped to spur the Socialists to lead a revolution in Finland. Even among comrades there was speculation in food.

Faced with the dilatory response of the Provisional Government on the question of food from America, Finland's bourgeois government set out to ease what it considered to be a cause of Allied doubts about shipping food to Finland. A Finnish envoy, Professor von Wendt, took a proposal to Ira Nelson Morris in Stockholm, Morris being U.S. Ambassador to Sweden. The Finnish proposal was designed to prevent Germany from seizing provisions sent by the United States "in the event that she (Germany) occupied Finland". Unloading was to occur at Narvik in Norway, whence foodstuffs would be shipped by

rail to Karunki, Sweden, on the Finnish border. The provisions were to remain in warehouses there under American control, and were to be rationed out weekly to Finland. Sweden, which was often at odds with the Allies over blockade and trade questions, had agreed to forego any compensation for its part in the plan, asking only that the U.S. supply coal and lubricating oil for the trains.⁴

The plan was discussed in Stockholm on November 3. Herbert Hoover, as U.S. Food Administrator, had already requisitioned part of Finland's flour on October 27, even though no word of approval or disapproval on shipments to Finland had yet arrived from the Provisional Government.

Dr. Kaarlo Ignatius, who spoke to Morison of the Rolls-Royces in Helsinki, painted a different picture of Finland for the American press on November 11.

"...we are within sight of literal starvation. Many communes have practically no reserves. Their population has been obliged to resort to an expedient painfully common in Finnish history - the mixing of ground pine bark with grain flour..."

Ignatius was in the United States to appeal for export licenses in order to facilitate the plan presented by von Wendt. Ignatius appealed further to the declared ideals of the Allies when he stated,

"The supplying of Finland's needs will materially serve the Entente cause, as it will prove to my countrymen that they, too, are included among the small nations which the Allies are attempting to help."⁶

Some Finlanders had long been doubtful of Allied ideals, as Allan V. Tornudd showed us. It did not help matters when the rest of Finland's flour was requisitioned on November 30.

The fall of the Provisional Government may have complicated Finland's case before the United States, but probably did not affect the eventual outcome. The requisitioned flour was destined for France. The Allies had spoken for all of the exportable wheat America had, and whatever else could be gained through restriction of consumption in the United States. Pressure was increasing on oats, rye, barley, and corn, as well. In January of 1918, the British Food Controller told Hoover's representative in London,

"Unless you are able to send the Allies at least 75 million bushels wheat over and above what you have exported up to January 1 and in addition to the total exportable surplus from Canada I cannot take the responsibility of assuring our people that there will be food enough to win the war."⁷

The pressure on American produce was apparently not made known in Finland, a lack of communication which hurt America's image and the cause for which it fought. Juhani Paasivirta writes of a bitter reaction in Finnish newspapers toward "empty Wilsonian idealism". "American cynicism" became a catchword, he says.⁸

The November General Strike

Ambassador Morris telegraphed to the Secretary of State,

"...Wednesday Socialists presented Conservatives ultimatum either renounce Conservative moderate directorate or accept consequences general strike..."⁹

That was the political reason for the strike that started on November 14. The unions were mainly responsible for organizing the movement, and the motivations of rank-and-file members come forth in the following comments from union meetings:

"There are a lot of workers with large families who have

not had butter for months on end, and they have also had to go without bread for a number of days, not to mention milk, which for many is already a distant memory of the past..."¹⁰

"The meeting took up the question of what could be done to prevent our having to eat lichen, which the bourgeoisie are starting to feed us with. It was resolved to make it clear to members that there was no other way but to seize power once and for all and if we have to eat lichen, then the bourgeoisie will have to eat the same helping as the worker..."¹¹

"We know that the shortage of foodstuffs has brought matters in this country to the point where we have to decide whether we submit through hunger to bourgeois rule or take up a struggle which will either take us to victory or defeat. In any case, grim death lies before us if we do not fight against it. We will die in any event... The workers of our locality are behind any decision that is taken here. They feel that we cannot stand this general starvation any more. Farmers and others there are so overbearing towards the workers who appeal to the provisions boards and individual landowners that it is said of them that they are used to feed corn and meal to their pigs. ..." ¹²

Those statements show a willingness in some quarters to do more than just go on strike. The so-called Revolutionary Central Council, supposedly the directors of the strike movement, did not go along with radicals, but they did know what motivated the masses. In the list of strike demands put forward by the Council on November 14, the very first stated,

"The government must organize effective means to combat the shortage of foodstuffs and unemployment, bearing in mind the proposals of the Trade Union Council and the demands of organized labor."¹³

Then followed demands for recognizing the Law on Authority, and for confirming and passing social legislation. The food shortage, the black market, and the attitudes of farmers and bourgeoisie on these subjects were emphasized and embroidered upon in Socialist publications, because they aroused emotions. Yet it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the food shortage was indeed the most important cause for

unrest among the workers of Finland.

The strike was assured of general success in stopping work, because the revived Red Guards were able to buy or obtain the loan of rifles from the Russian military in many (though not all) places where garrisons or bases were located. This gave the workers a distinct advantage. Nowhere did the Russians intervene against the strike movement. The New York Times reported on November 18 that the Socialists, supported by armed workers and Russian Bolshevik soldiers, controlled the country. Only provisions trains were operating. And,

"...The Socialists, aided by Russian soldiers, are searching the houses of non-Socialist citizens in various places for provisions and weapons. ..."¹⁴

Later on, the Times carried a report on Finland under this heading:

"FINLAND A PREY TO WILD ANARCHY - Red Guards, Organized by Socialists, Rove About, Murdering and Pillaging at Will."¹⁵

Those quotations gave Americans an exaggerated impression of Socialist leadership in strike activities, and of active participation by Russian soldiers. On the other hand, they do tell why the general strike did more to bring on a full-scale civil war than to resolve existing difficulties.

The strike started quietly enough, with work stoppages organized by local committees and Red Guards. Government employees mostly walked off the job to protest the strike, and the bourgeois Civil Guard units - organized for local defense - were not well-enough armed to offer any resistance. The Socialists were able to get confirmation of the eight-hour day and local government laws in the Diet. They also

supported an Agrarian proposal to give sovereign authority in Finland temporarily to the Diet, in order to break the impasse over the Directorate. These successes bolstered the radical desire for a complete takeover of governmental authority. But first the Socialist Party leadership, and then the union leadership, rejected the idea of a Socialist or proletarian takeover. Their excuse was that such a move must usher in a socialist society, and they argued that Finland was not yet ready for socialism, that more preparation was needed.

Instead, they instructed the Red Guard to institute thorough searches for hoarded food. The leaders knew what was most in the minds of the rank-and-file, and sought thus to channel energies away from outright revolution. The institution of systematic food searches coincided with a rise in violence. The total of 34 people killed during the strike period, which lasted about a week, caused extreme indignation when it became known across the country. The leaders of the labor movement were themselves very much sobered, if not terrified, by their evident lack of control over the Red Guard units. It strengthened their resolve to seek gains through parliamentary procedure. They called for an end to the strike with the promise of forming a Socialist government, or a favorable coalition, through action in the Diet. This government was to protect the gains already made, and protect the Red Guards from reprisals. In sum, the Socialist Party switched from its former position of allowing revolution to proceed without preparing for it, to halting revolution due to a lack of preparation.

Results of the General Strike

The strike did end, but the Socialists could neither form their own government nor join a coalition. None of the other parties wanted anything to do with them, and there could be no question of renewing the strike in order to force an entirely Socialist government upon the country, since labor "leaders" might be unable to keep control. When they refused to join the bourgeois parties in condemning the activities of the Red Guard, the Socialists were called accomplices to murder. What was worse, the Socialists and the workers in general had been in unofficial league with the Russian soldiery. The latter was now considered to be the "enemy" in bourgeois circles, stirring up revolutionary sentiment, supplying workers with arms, blocking the road to independence. The Socialists could only answer with charges of bourgeois provocation, accumulated over the years.

The persistent food shortage also plagued the Socialists. It was an excuse for the continuing activities of the Red Guard units around the country (though not the only excuse. They often tried, for example, to force payment of wages missed during the strike, with a little extra in addition.) As the Red Guards refused to disband, the bourgeois Civic Guards renewed their efforts to organize and obtain arms.

Labor leaders and Socialists had nothing positive to offer the workers in regard to food, so they resorted to the tried-and-true method of blaming someone else for the problem, while still hoping to restrain a revolution. When the Revolutionary Central Council called an end to the strike, their

proclamation trumpeted the bourgeoisie's failure "to win the Imperial powers for their Senate or their three kings", and emphasized the gains in social legislation. Then it was admitted that the food shortage had in no way been alleviated, but the proclamation declared that a general strike would not help the workers to obtain bread. Rather, "...the fight must be continued in a different guise, in the Diet and outside it, not simply in the form of a general strike."¹⁶

With their proclamation, labor leaders tried to dissociate strike activity from the food question, which had been the major reason for calling a strike in the first place. There existed perhaps the hope of getting food from the Bolsheviks, even though no Finnish revolution had occurred, as the New York Times reported a promise from Russia to Finland of 16,000 tons of grain per month. This would bring a peaceful solution to Finland's most pressing problem, which is what most of the workers and their leaders desired. A Socialist named Aronen remarked in the Diet that what were called "hooligan gangs" in the bourgeois press were really "hungry workers, who would be wholly peaceful if they could get the bare necessities of life."¹⁷

But, the Times report noted that only 700 tons of grain came through in November, and that military exigencies stopped shipments thereafter.¹⁸ Later developments lead one to doubt that Russia could really spare 16,000 tons of grain per month, though transportation difficulties rather than poor harvests were the immediate causes of shortage there. In any case, the result for Finland was not changed. If the Diet or the

government could not provide an answer to the food problem, and the strike was deemed useless, radicals would contend that revolution was the only remaining option, playing upon the added fear that the bourgeois "Butcher Guards" might act first.

Declaration of Independence

The bourgeois parties stood together to nominate a government in opposition to the "Red Senate" or "Red Government" proposed by the Socialists after the strike. The bourgeois list passed in the Diet vote. The new government had as Premier Judge P.E. Svinhufvud. He was of the old Constitutionalist school, and had been highly critical of Russification. His speeches as Speaker of the Diet had led to several of the dissolutions of that body before World War I. A period of exile in Siberia had made him a national hero. Naturally, a high priority for his government would be independence from Bolshevik Russia. Svinhufvud's Constitutionalist background indicated that a second priority would be settlement of a form of government without the Diet as supreme authority. He had only agreed to accept appointment from the currently-sovereign Diet when that body agreed to leave the actual prerogatives of government to the Senate. A third priority could be predicted from Svinhufvud's occupation as a judge: law and order. These were in fact the major points of his program as presented before the Diet on November 24.

The Svinhufvud government did not forget the need for food, either. Professor von Wendt saw Morris again in

Stockholm on December 3, intimating that Germany was inquiring about the amount of food needed in Finland. Supposedly, the Germans were soon to make proposals in the matter, and unless the U.S. quickly released a shipload of food for Finland, von Wendt feared the consequences. He was anxious to obtain food from America, though his country must have it and could not quibble about who supplied it. He added that if Finland "is obliged to accept German food she will undoubtedly be more in sympathy with Germany than she is at present."¹⁹

Apparently, Finland still had no idea why its foodstuffs had been requisitioned, and thought the U.S. was still holding the goods. Von Wendt's latest approach was made either in sincere fear of German influence, in ignorance of facts that Svinhufvud knew about, or in a deliberate attempt to pressure the United States - to use a little reverse grain diplomacy. Finnish Activists had asked the Germans for food, and Svinhufvud was in touch with the Activists. But General Ludendorff's reply to them, made on November 26, was as follows:

"The question of foodstuffs must be taken up with Berlin. It must not be forgotten that foodstuffs could easily fall into the wrong hands, as long as Finland is not free of Russian troops. Support will only be continued after the country is freed of those troops."²⁰ (Ironical that Ludendorff balked at the very same thing that von Wendt tried to overcome in his earlier proposal to Morris!)

The support to which Ludendorff referred was mostly in the form of arms for the Activists. Even in the months ahead, German aid in the form of foodstuffs was never very great. But it is possible that Berlin had made favorable gestures toward the Finns, and certainly the requisitioning of purchased wheat by the United States gave a wonderful opportunity

for propaganda, at least. Consul Haynes at Helsinki noted as much when he recommended food for Finland in order to combat pro-German propaganda there.²¹ Whatever the reality of the situation, von Wendt used it as a lever against the United States. Still there was no reply from America.

The Svinhufvud government declared Finnish independence on December 4, to which the bourgeois majority in the Diet responded favorably two days later. (The Socialists did not support the declaration.) Svinhufvud drew up an official appeal for recognition to be sent to the Scandinavian nations and to the western Allies, and delegations were sent out to seek recognition from all the Great Powers. The appeal gave constitutional grounds for independence and observed that no foreign recognition had been given to the latest Russian government. Complaints were voiced particularly against the Russian troops and their baneful effect upon the "hot-headed and unstable elements of society".²² It was assumed (without any thought for strategic considerations) that foreign recognition of Finnish independence would force Russia to withdraw its troops from Finland.

The largest paragraph in the document rehashed the food shortage, in which relations with Russia, its rapacious troops and the presence of war refugees, and the need for American food all received mention. To end the shortage and stabilize the country, it was "vital" that Finland's "truly isolated position" should be opened up.²³ It was a well-conceived statement, considering that the Allies were likely to be sensitive about breaking up the Russian Empire, and recognizing

that America was still the best source of foodstuffs, which would have to pass through the British blockade. Giving aid to Finland would be a humane thing to do, and in effect would bring de facto recognition from the Allies, which might lead to an act de jure.

Several nations did recognize Finnish independence. Russia was the first to do so, early in January of 1918, in accordance with the principle of self-determination of nations. Lenin felt, too, that a demonstrated willingness to grant Finnish independence would encourage the Finnish labor movement to make a revolution by disposing of any nationalistic sentiment that might remain against Russia, throwing the light squarely on economic issues. The Scandinavian nations and Germany soon extended recognition, also.

France gave recognition in a precipitate fashion that upset Russian exiles, in the hope of beating Germany to the punch and thereby winning Finnish sympathies for the Allied cause. The plan did not work, because the Svinhufvud government had long counted on German action, no matter when it was taken. And besides, France by itself had nothing to offer Finland, and the United States and Great Britain were not disposed to extend recognition to Finland until after the long-awaited Russian Constituent Assembly had a chance to act upon the issue. With the demise of that body, the British "indefinitely postponed" formal recognition. They proposed to the U.S. that the two nations should formally recognize Finland "as soon as the Finns express by some unmistakable method such as an election their sanction of their own

independence."²⁴ Until then, the British would treat the present Finnish government "as the de facto authorities in Finland". The United States followed Britain's suggestion in the matter, though when the British proposal arrived, Finlanders were already using bullets rather than ballots to decide their political preferences.

While the U.S. waited for the Constituent Assembly to meet, Kaarlo Ignatius spoke with Secretary of State Lansing in Washington. He reviewed Finnish attempts to get grain since May of 1917, and the necessitous condition of Finland. If the U.S. would release part of the requisitioned goods according to the transportation plan previously outlined, "...there is not the slightest possibility that any portion of this flour will reach the enemy," he said.²⁵ (Again, it was assumed that the requisitioned flour was merely being held, not used elsewhere.) In addition, there was soon a telegram from Svinhufvud explaining again Finland's declaration of independence, and stating that relations with the United States were the most urgently desired of all, owing to the food shortage.²⁶

Lansing relented, in regard to foodstuffs. Haynes, von Wendt and the rest had made an impression, and the State Department was ready to use food to counteract suspected German influence in Finland. Lansing instructed Hoover to find the provisions, which did not please the Food Administrator. He did not feel that America should play at grain diplomacy with nations like Finland if it hoped to fulfill previous obligations to the Allies. Nevertheless, he managed to

arrange for 45,000 tons of oats and corn to be shipped immediately. If wheat was preferred, it would have to be obtained in Australia, he said, and Finland would be responsible for shipping. Ambassador Francis in Russia had advised that food be sent to Finland without recognition of independence, and Lansing informed him that foodstuffs were being gathered. He also reported to Francis,

"Food Administration has requisitioned for France flour purchased by Finnish Senate. Conditions so urgent as to offer no other alternative."²⁷

If the U.S. Ambassador to Russia did not know why the flour was requisitioned until December 19, when the note was sent to him, one may wonder if Finland ever found out.

With American produce being gathered for Finland, the next requirement was British co-operation. Britain reported "...to all intents and purposes open trade between Germany and Finnish ports..."²⁸ Furthermore, rice sent from Sweden to the Finns had been seized by Russian soldiers. The British reminded America of Allied food requirements, and expressed concern over the diversion of neutral shipping to the project for Finland. They were piqued over the lack of "full consultation" in the matter, and advised careful organization of distribution if the shipment went forward. Lansing fell back on the Narvik-to-Karunki plan proposed by von Wendt. Morris was to iron out everything with the Swedish government and the British minister at Stockholm, according to instructions sent from Lansing on January 16, 1918. On January 29, Morris wired back that all was arranged, or almost all. "However," he said,

"I respectfully suggest that no shipments be sent forward until order is once more restored in Finland, as under present conditions it would be impossible to control their distribution."²⁹

The Finnish Civil War had begun.

The general strike of November, 1917, illustrated the gravity of Finland's food problem, it being the chief grievance of the strikers. As no solution was attained - and no effective authority was established by the Finnish government, the Finnish labor leaders, or the Russians - further disturbances followed the end of the strike. Bourgeoisie and proletariat were less able to work out problems peacefully than before, and both sides accelerated efforts to organize armed guards.

The strike period also illustrated the fact that Finland was not among the small nations that the Allies were trying to help. Poor organization of American resources had allowed a private firm to deal with the Finns when the U.S. government had no intention of sending food to Finland for the sake of Finland. Food might have been sent to support improved relations between the Finns and the Provisional Government, but even before that government fell, part of the wheat purchased by Finland had been requisitioned. The rest was requisitioned after the Bolshevik Revolution, although Finnish envoys and the strike all showed the importance of getting food to the country. Not until Lansing was convinced that German influence was on the rise did the U.S. move to find foodstuffs for Finland, while the British remained skeptical

of the project. Reactions to the Finnish declaration of independence showed that the Allies were not hostile to Finland; rather, they were divided over the importance of Finland as opposed to the importance of deferring to Russian feelings, and they were also unsure about the security of any provisions that might be sent to Finland. By the time the details of shipment had been worked out, a state of civil war discouraged completion of the project.

Footnotes to Chapter VII

1 - Anthony F. Upton, The Finnish Revolution 1917-1918 (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p. 141.

2 - Foreign Relations of the United States - 1918 ("Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States", Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), Russia, Vol. II, p. 732.

3 - D.G. Kirby (ed.), Finland and Russia 1808-1920 (New York: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1975), p.p. 190-191.

4 - New York Times, 4 November 1917.

5 - New York Times, 11 November 1917.

6 - Ibid.

7 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1933), Supplement 1, Vol. I, p. 536.

8 - Juhani Paasivirta, The Victors in World War I and Finland (Helsinki, Finland: The Finnish Historical Society, 1965), p. 58.

9 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932), Russia, Vol. II, p. 731.

10 - Kirby, op. cit., p. 216.

11 - Ibid., p. 216.

12 - Ibid., p. 217.

13 - Ibid., p.p. 193-194.

14 - New York Times, 18 November 1917.

15 - New York Times, 29 November 1917.

16 - Kirby, op. cit., p. 196.

17 - Upton, op. cit., p. 179.

18 - New York Times, 7 December 1917.

19 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932), Russia, Vol. II, p. 733.

20 - Kirby, op. cit., p. 200.

21 - Paasivirta, op. cit., p. 58.

Footnotes to Chapter VII, cont.

22 - Kirby, op. cit., p. 202.

23 - Ibid., p. 203.

24 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932),
Russia, Vol. II, p. 745.

25 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1933),
Supplement 2, p. 574.

26 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932),
Russia, Vol. II, p. 734.

27 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1933),
Supplement 2, p. 574.

28 - Ibid., p. 575.

29 - Ibid., p. 577.

CHAPTER VIII

The Finnish Civil War was short but costly. The bourgeois (White) government, with the aid of German intervention, defeated the proletarian (Red) government. Thousands of lives were lost on both sides. The militant labor movement was crushed. Reasons for the outbreak of fighting were varied, but the food shortage was prominent among them. Some of the Finnish Whites would blame the United States and Great Britain for causing the fighting, because of the foodstuffs requisitioned in 1917. Nonetheless, both Reds and Whites sought recognition as well as foodstuffs from the U.S., whose co-operation could have been crucial for either side.

The Finnish Civil War

"The bourgeoisie can either begin their attack or carry on concentrating their forces. If the red guards go into action, this can be used by the bourgeoisie as an excuse for attacking. An action could start of its own accord just to relieve the tension."¹ - Yrjo Sirola, 13 January 1918, soon to be Foreign Minister of the Finnish Socialist Workers' Republic.

"That ended the Sunday quiet for me. I had known nothing of these developments, for I was not a member of the Revolution Committee, but now I hurried to the committee headquarters. There I found an indescribable confusion."² - Oskari Tokoi, 28 January 1918, soon to be Minister of Food in the Workers' Republic.

The first quotation above explains why the shooting started in the Finnish Civil War. The second quotation explains the eventual outcome. The facts and figures say that

on January 9 the Diet supported the government's desire for law and order by granting the authority to create an official, and obedient, armed force. As the negotiations for a separate peace with Russia were dragging, Germany soon agreed to arm a Finnish government force. (These talks led eventually to active German intervention.) The workers felt threatened at these actions by the bourgeois government. Red Guards in Viipuri commenced a search for weapons on January 19, and attacked a factory where arms were being produced and stored for the bourgeois Civic Guard. In the midst of the crisis at Viipuri, the Civic Guard - or White Guard - was recognized as the official government peace keeping force, superseding the ineffective militias. This had the effect of putting the Red Guard at Viipuri, and anyone else who might resist the White Guard, in a position of rebellion. Lenin ordered up Russian arms for the Finnish proletariat on January 27, and the handbills announcing revolution appeared the next morning.

The Socialist Workers' Republic, or Red government, soon controlled about one-fifth of the country, the southern region where all the major population centers were located. White Finland took in all the rest of the country - but only about half of the total population. Part of the Senate escaped to Vaasa on the west coast, which became the new seat of the White government. Most of the other high government officials went into hiding, while clerks and secretaries walked off the job.

Vaasa was already headquarters for General Mannerheim, Commander-in-Chief of whatever armed forces the Whites could

raise. Mannerheim was a Swedish-Finn, and a former general of Russian Imperial forces, distinguished in actions against the Central Powers during the World War. He left the Russian service after the Bolshevik Revolution. He was joined by other Finnish professionals, as well as Swedish and German volunteers, and the Jägers who were released from duty in the German army. Though this group did not always see eye to eye among themselves or with the government they represented, owing to differences of opinion on the World War, they gave the White army a leadership and organizational advantage which offset the initial Red advantage in arms.

The Reds did indeed receive arms from Russia and from remaining units of the Russian garrison. The Reds did not, however, receive the benefit of a formal Russian intervention. The negotiations at Brest-Litovsk between the Germans and Bolshevik representatives produced pressure to withdraw Russian forces from Finland. The process was well under way when the Finnish Civil War began, accompanied by much outright desertion. The Bolsheviks asked for volunteers to remain and fight for the proletarian revolution, and there was a modest response, even including a few officers such as one Colonel Svetchnikov, who took a hand in strategic planning. But on the whole, Russian volunteers were more of the type who arrived at the front by train from Petrograd and returned after a day or two of fighting.

The Finnish Civil War was not a long one, but only with the landing of 12,000 German troops in April did the end come definitely into view. Mannerheim's White army held a victory

parade in Helsinki on May 16. The war did produce scenes of ferocious fighting, and even more ferocious retribution wreaked upon captives. Some 10,000 persons died in the Terrors, both Red and White. The last word in retribution went to the victorious Whites. They put 80,000 prisoners into concentration camps, where nearly 12,000 died over the next few months. Such an end could hardly be surprising, considering that the whole country was still short of food.

Causes of the Civil War

At the American consulate in Helsinki, Thornwell Haynes shared his duties in February of 1918 with a new Vice-Consul. The new man was Mortimer A. Waldo, fresh from two years of service with the Y.M.C.A. in Russia. Owing to that experience, Ambassador Francis had asked Waldo to go to Finland where a vice-consular post would be created for him, rather than returning home to service in the army. Young Waldo often remarked in his letters upon the good fortune he had experienced in housing arrangements, and his stay in Helsinki was no exception. He was taken into the apartment of Mr. Ernst Krogius, general manager of the Finnish Steam Navigation Company. His shipping line had opened up the butter trade with England and later took over the carrying of Finnish emigrants to English ports, from where they re-embarked for America. Krogius had sent his family to Sweden when the Civil War broke out, and with his pro-Ally sentiments he did not hesitate to take in a boarder, in return for placing his apartment under the protection of the American flag.

This proved to be an interesting and useful arrangement. It was Ernst Krogius who contacted the White government at Vaasa, and obtained assurance that the German intervention "had nothing whatever to do with the war (World War I), and that consequently the representatives of the countries in war with Germany had nothing to fear from the Germans, and stood in this matter under the protection of the legal Finnish government."³

It was to Lars Krogius that Kaarlo Ignatius reported on the prospects for U.S. recognition of Finland before the Civil War began. Ernst had a brother by that name, perhaps one and the same person, who was a former member of the Diet.

It was to the Krogius apartment that a fugitive member of the White government came after bribing his way out of jail. This was Sir Henrik Ramsay, holder of an English title and dual citizenship, and also involved in shipping concerns. He stayed for weeks, meeting his wife who would disguise herself as a boy, and forming a close friendship with Vice-Consul Waldo.

They became such good friends all around that Krogius later wrote a letter to the U.S. government in which he vouched for the reliability of Waldo's views regarding Finland, which were essentially the same as his own. In a report to the U.S. ambassador in Sweden, Vice-Consul Waldo agreed with Krogius and the White government by assigning the immediate cause of the fighting in Finland to Russian influence. Then, commenting on the German ascendancy in Finland following the Civil War, he wrote,

"Concerning the actions which have led to the present critical condition in the relation of the allies with Finland it is well known of course that Finland (appealed) long ago to America for food relief, to prevent the hardships among the poor classes, which in the absence of the relief have undoubtedly been the causes of the irritability and uprising of those classes. Had the government been able to furnish food for this part of the population the revolution could probably have been avoided entirely, for as it was in Russia so in Finland the slogan of the revolutioners was 'give us bread'..."⁴

Consul Haynes had been asking his government to send food to Finland ever since his arrival in November of 1917. In May 1918, he gave his opinion on the Civil War:

"The principal cause for the present revolution was the hopeless state of food question and distrust of laboring class against bourgeoisie not providing food either from Russia or the United States. Had food arrived according to my November and December telegrams, the Red Guard, amounting to 10,000, including Reds from Russia, would have been easily controlled by legal Finnish government and no German help would have been needed."⁵

Haynes therein referred to earlier telegrams in which he had asked for food in order to combat pro-German propaganda. (His figures for the Red Guard may have been meant to describe pre-Civil War hardliners. As the war progressed, the Red and White forces both grew much larger than that number.) Haynes later posed a rhetorical question to Secretary of State Robert Lansing:

"Is it true that Finland is in the hands of Germany today because the Allies refused her food?"

His admission that "the western front is of vastly more importance than Finland's paltry three and a half million inhabitants" had a touch of sarcasm about it, as Haynes went on to tell why Finland itself was important. He ended by prudently assuring Lansing of his loyalty to government policy.⁶

Despite that assurance, one might easily rephrase his

question to read,

"Is it true that the Allies were responsible for the Finnish Civil War?"

Ira Nelson Morris dismissed the idea, but even in doing so he showed that it had attained some currency. He told of the mission of two lieutenants during the Civil War, one American and one Englishman, sent to Vaasa to help some American citizens to cross the White lines and leave Finland. Morris related,

"Their reception was more than cold; it was discourteous and unpleasant. They found not merely a strong pro-German sentiment, which was natural and understandable in the circumstances, but also an equally strong anti-American and anti-British sentiment. Police and military authorities both reproached them with their governments' alleged responsibility for the Civil War, declaring that it would not have broken out if America and England had sent the food which Finland had bought and paid for. This was of course, nonsense, but it was true that Finland had some time earlier bought and paid for 40,000 tons of food in America, and that it had been requisitioned by the American Food Administrator."?

Morris was one of the many who traced the cause of the Civil War to unruly Russian soldiers and scheming Bolsheviks. This was a favorite theme of White Finland, which through its victory was long able to propagate the notion of the "War of Liberation" that was fought in 1918, rather than a civil war. The Finnish Reds could thereby be painted in the garish hues of the traitor in collusion with a foreign enemy, rather than in the respectable colors of the defender of a legitimate government.

Samuel Eliot Morison subscribed to the same belief. His contacts with Finlanders in America revealed that radicals had planned for a proletarian dictatorship since March of 1917. The masses were thought to be growing impatient while

the favorable moments passed. Lenin called for a revolution before the general strike of November, Stalin called for one afterward. By January it was "now or never" as the Russian troops were leaving. The Bolsheviki exhorted once more, via telegram on January 26 or 27,

"Arrest the government. We promise help."

Morison further commented,

"A representative of the Bolsheviki in this country (Jack Reed) admits that the Helsingfors coup d'etat was timed to suit Trotsky, and that he delayed his return to Brest-Litovsk in order that he could tell the Germans that the Finnish bourgeoisie were down and out."⁸

Morison found that the Finnish Reds, like the Russian revolutionaries, believed that uprisings were imminent all over Europe. Particularly did they count upon German Socialists to block aid to the Finnish Whites, and start their own revolution. Therefore, Morison concluded that the Reds acted in Finland because they thought they could get away with it. Yet he also noted,

"Several Finlanders in this country, who were recently in Finland (Morison finished his memorandum in July of 1918), assure me that the real cause of the Red Revolution was hunger. The lower classes, unsatisfied with their rations, suspected that the peasants and bourgeoisie were hoarding food, and revolted in order to obtain it. There is probably something in this. Domiciliary searches for foodstuffs were one of the first acts of the Red government."⁹

Different persons have posed different contributory causes for the Civil War ever since it occurred. The two that most often recur are the Russians and the food shortage. Bourgeois Finland simply did not believe that sufficient grievances existed to drive the workers to revolt on their own. What was obvious was that no unruly activities occurred until

revolution in Russia removed discipline among the Russian forces in Finland. That is why the bourgeois Civic Guard, both unofficially and later in its role as a recognized arm of the government, was aimed primarily against the Russians - despite the fact that Russian troops were being withdrawn from Finland before the Civil War started. If bourgeois insistence upon blaming the Russians thus appears shortsighted, it is nonetheless true that the region surrounding Vaasa, where the White government established itself in exile, was home mainly to Swedish-speaking small farmers. Russian garrisons were more of a potential threat there than was organized Red Finnish activity, even though the garrisons were reduced in strength. The reality in that region was not so different from the rest of White Finland, having so few of the major population and industrial centers in it. With leaders like Svinhufvud in the government, and Hannes Ignatius in the military (he was quartermaster general of the White army), the White cause became suffused with the idea of liberation from Russia, although the great majority of their armed foes were Finns.

The Finnish Socialists did not themselves get along well with the Russian military. Their arms were welcome, but Tokoi remarked that the appearance of active intervention would strengthen opposition to the revolutionary movement, as it had stirred opposition to the Socialists over the past months. The Socialists urged Russia to withdraw its troops as fast as possible, said Tokoi. Indeed, the old question of paying the military forces came up again, and they ended by virtually

extorting a large sum from the Finnish Socialist Workers' Republic!¹⁰

But along with the breakdown of law and order, among the troops and then in Finland generally, there was always the food question. They went together, as a letter from a Socialist student testifies, dated 25 January 1918:

"Anarchy has again burst forth. The bread is coming to an end soon. They are using the seed now. Robberies and murders are the order of the day. Trains are stopped and fired at. ... We have hopes that we can get peaceful conditions in a few months if we can only get rid of the Russian soldiers."¹¹

Undisciplined soldiers meant no restraints on the workers. The question is whether or not restraints would have been necessary, on more than the level of police action, if there had been sufficient food. If we rely upon the statements above and those quoted from the time of the general strike in November 1917, the answer must be "no". But the Allies were not entirely to blame for the situation.

In all fairness to the United States and Great Britain it must be repeated that they did decide to send food to Finland, but they did not work out the details in time to head off the Civil War. Even after the fighting had begun, they did not immediately give up the project. They did modify it, however, with a pronounced American bias against any dealings with the "usurping Socialist government", as Consul Haynes called it. On the other hand, Secretary of State Lansing could say on February 13 that since "the party of law and order is now in control of north Finland", foodstuffs should go forward to them. Ambassador Morris had given assurance of arranging matters so that he could stop delivery of food "if

the Whites should not make proper use of it", a reference to the fear of smuggling to Germany.¹²

Within two weeks there were 8,000 tons of oats ready for shipment to northern Finland, where it was least needed. Citing an American traveller, the New York Times reported on February 18,

"The American saw no indication of a food shortage in Northern Finland. Peasants who had flocked to the banner of General Mannerheim, the White Guard leader, were furnishing him with considerable stores of provisions."¹³

Upton explains the situation in this manner:

"...the suspicions voiced by the Socialists were correct, the farmers had had large stocks that they had been concealing, and since the cities did not have to be supplied, White Finland in general experienced no food shortage and the army was always fed adequately."¹⁴

He goes on to say that some remote areas did suffer, and that there were no food reserves adequate to feed the southern cities on a normal, or even on the previous rationed, scale. The bread ration was cut in half after Helsinki was taken in April, "and a period of real crisis began".¹⁵

Finland had a real food shortage, but it is obvious that everyone did not share in it to the same extent. Food from the Allies in November or December might well have defused an explosive situation, but it was not they alone who could have done something, at least for immediate needs.

The Great Powers and White Finland

As usual, the same day that the oats were ready for shipment to White Finland, a complication arose. Finland was to receive the goods if there was agreement to Allied control of

distribution, and if there was agreement to end the export of wood products to whomever Finland pleased, namely Germany. White Finland did not feel that it could so limit its freedom of trade, especially since Germany was the source of much-needed munitions. Ambassador Morris observed that the Finnish government was undoubtedly pro-German, and the foodstuffs were held up while the Allies contemplated their position. As they did so, White Finland made a treaty with Germany on March 7 by which the Germans promised to uphold Finnish independence and give whatever aid possible. Secret clauses that made Finland a virtual German protectorate were not known (in the U.S. anyway) for several months, but the Allies immediately suspected that White Finland would serve German interests.

By way of explaining their choice of friends, Finnish Whites claimed that they could have won the war on their own, but Red brutalities, lack of food, and "the daily arrival of large hosts of Bolsheviks" necessitated acceptance of aid from a powerful friend.¹⁶ (They neglected to mention that if some Bolsheviks arrived every day, others were leaving every day.) The argument has often been made that Sweden was first approached, but refused even to ship arms. The Allies could not be expected to intervene against Russia and thus drive the latter into Germany's arms, so that left just one choice. It is the Tornudd argument all over again, and many Finlanders were quite sincere in it, some even while maintaining a pro-Entente stance as far as the World War was concerned. Ernst Krogius took pains to declare that there had never been any

thought of a German occupation of Finland, that indeed there was no such thing, but only the friendly assistance of one country to another.¹⁷ (Finlanders would perform a similar service later on when they went off to Esthonia to fight Bolsheviks.) Those who worked explicitly for German intervention in the Finnish Civil War appear to have been relatively few in number, but they were very influential; like Svinhufvud and his closest associates in the White government.

The Swedish question is a complicated one. Morison spoke for several who have held that the Swedish government feared being drawn into the war on Germany's side if it intervened where the Germans wanted to make a friend, the Swedish upper classes being largely pro-German and in favor of actively supporting the Central Powers. Lieutenant Commander John Gade, of U.S. Naval Intelligence, said that the Swedes stayed out of Finland because the Allies refused to support them in such a venture.¹⁸ In fact, the British Ambassador at Stockholm recommended Allied support for Swedish intervention, but nothing was done.¹⁹ But apart from the desire to adhere to neutrality, Sweden had an important Socialist movement of its own, and there was probably fear of a native reaction to an intervention against Finnish Socialists. A further excuse was possible anti-Swedish feeling in Finland. Sweden's Prime Minister recognized that "certain circles" in Finland desired Swedish intervention, but stated that "a considerable part of the Finnish people strongly oppose the idea."²⁰ Hjalmar Branting, a leading moderate Socialist and cabinet minister in Sweden, went further. He declared that certain Finlanders

(he did not name anyone) had agreed to deliver their country to Germany even before World War I.²¹ Certainly there was much German influence in pre-war Finland, as we have seen previously. Morison cited this quotation from Svinhufvud, which appeared in a German newspaper in early 1918:

"All of us had a feeling that our liberation could come only through Germany."²²

To Morison, that was a damning indictment against Finland, though it says nothing about delivering the country to Germany.

Lansing still hoped that food could win sympathy for the Allies, and went ahead with plans for shipments even after the treaty of March 7th. He steered this course against the counsel of Ambassador Morris and the other Allied ministers in Stockholm, and against Hoover's advice as well, according to Juhani Paasivirta.²³ The British attitude fluctuated. Early in March, the British were for stopping shipments of grain from America to White Finland. Waldo wrote that the English consul in Helsinki advised his government against any kind of assistance to Finland long before the Germans came. He added,

"It may throw light upon the situation if I say, that after our government had practically agreed to the shipment of food for Finland, we received a telegram from the State Department, saying that our information concerning the need in Finland did not agree with the English consul's. Sometime after this the English consul stated that he had gotten his information from Russian newspapers among other sources."²⁴

In other words, the opinion of the English consul was not trustworthy, in the opinion of the American vice-consul, and the former does seem to have been personally unpopular in

Finland.

Despite their consul, Britain did agree to an "initial shipment" of 2,000 tons of foodstuffs for White Finland at the end of March. Almost immediately there occurred the incident with the American and English lieutenants, reported by Ambassador Morris, and termed an "insult".²⁵ Morris again advised strongly against any aid for White Finland, and the operation came to an end.

Red Finland in Search of Foodstuffs

Red Finland had to eat, too. Captain Walter S. Crosley, former American Naval Attaché in Russia, reported on April 1 that southern Finland would soon face starvation. He felt it might be avoided through the introduction of foodstuffs as the Whites advanced, northern Finland having an estimated two months' supply of food. The Whites also expected food from Germany, he added.²⁶

Rather than wait for defeat in order to eat, the Reds and Tokoi as Food Minister turned to Russia. Tokoi discovered that the Provisional Government had actually earmarked some grain for Finland, to be given out when relations between the two countries became satisfactory, no doubt. It was perhaps to this grain, in part, that the New York Times had referred in connection with Bolshevik promises at the end of 1917 (see Chapter VII). This grain was still in Petrograd. Bolshevik leaders were willing enough to send it to Finland, but as Petrograd itself was short of food, there was difficulty with local authorities. Only in late March was the grain available

in Finland.

The food stocks left behind by evacuated Russian garrisons were helpful, but could not suffice. Tokoi tells of a visit to U.S. Ambassador David R. Francis in Petrograd, assuring him of a fair distribution of any food received regardless of party or class. Then Tokoi "casually" remarked upon a White shipment of scrap metal intended for Germany, which was stopped by the Red Guard. He says,

"The Ambassador promised to cable Washington immediately, recommending grain be sent to Finland."²⁷

The Whites got wind of this proposal, and it caused a commotion when their government demanded to know if the U.S. was supporting the Reds. The U.S. was not; the proposal died.

Finally, the Finnish Reds sent their own trains and crews to Siberia, to procure grain at the source. The first train got through with a large accretion of foodstuffs at the end of March. A second and third train were stopped in Russia, where lack of transportation also produced food shortages. The American military attaché, who had moved to Vologda in April, reported a strike among Russian railroad workers over the shipments of food for Finland. At that time, there was an American railroad mission in eastern Russia, and the attaché's final remark showed America's general attitude toward Red Finland. After noting that the trains were allowed to pass through Vologda despite the strike, he wrote,

"Had American railroad men been on duty this would have been prevented."²⁸

Red and White Representatives in America

Both Red and White Finland named persons to represent them in the United States, with the intention of gaining foodstuffs if possible, and also diplomatic recognition. The State Department never seriously entertained the notion of dealing with Red Finland. By the same token, the U.S. government dealt with domestic Socialists and radicals only on a basis of suspicion and surveillance, ending in the post-war Palmer Raids. This outlook was certainly carried into international affairs, and Red Finland was a prime target. The red-dyed reputation of Finnish-Americans, whether deserved or not in individual cases, has earlier been detailed. It happened that Red Finland chose for their representative in America a man already resident there, a man who had a redder reputation than perhaps any of his countrymen. His name was Santeri Nuorteva.

Santeri Nuorteva was working as an editor of the Socialist newspaper Raivaaaja when called upon to act as envoy for the People's Republic of Finland, as he called it. He was a former member of the Finnish Diet, forced to flee the country in 1911 because he criticized the imperial government, or because he absconded with party funds, depending upon who tells his story.²⁹ Nuorteva edited several Finnish-American Socialist newspapers, was a prominent speaker for the party, and also found time to practice law. He attracted the attention of American Military Intelligence officers after the U.S. entered the World War. His fellow Finnish-Americans of the Lincoln Loyalty League, who tried to combat the Red Finnish

reputation in America, also informed the government about certain "dangerous Finns", like Nuorteva.³⁰ When he wrote to request an interview with Secretary of State Lansing, an aide replied in the most general of terms, and of course no interview was granted. Nuorteva had already applied to the Food Administration and met with no objection to the purchase and shipment of food supplies, "but that such an arrangement required the sanction of the State Department." No sanction was given.

The representatives of White Finland got a better reception at the State Department. The men chosen were Julio N. Reuter, previously in America as a publicist for Finland in 1915, and Kaarlo Ignatius, who was already in America trying to obtain food. Lansing received them in late February of 1918, though careful to explain that he spoke unofficially and personally. He led Reuter to believe that the U.S. gave de facto recognition to the White government, though official action was not to be expected until the "disorder and confusion" in Finland was brought to an end.³¹ Lansing then tried very hard to get food for White Finland, even after the Finno-German treaty of March 7.

The treaty and subsequent German intervention in April made Reuter in particular look like a liar or a fool. He had gone to the New York Times before meeting with Lansing, in order to publicize the cause of White Finland. Among other things he said,

"There is no pro-German party and no pro-Swedish party in Finland..." "Finland would not welcome the intrusion of

any foreign army to help her..." "We cannot help the coming of volunteers, but certainly a German army landed in Finland would not be welcomed."³²

All of those assertions, except possibly the one about a pro-Swedish party, were contrary to what Svinhufvud and his closest associates had in mind for Finland. On March 9, the Times carried this headline:

"GERMAN PRINCE AS FINLAND'S KING"³³

That was indeed what Svinhufvud had in mind, though the headline was not yet an accomplished fact. But everyone was not made privy to Svinhufvud's thoughts. Reuter was pro-Ally. He probably had voiced his own sentiments quite sincerely, and furthermore, he had voiced Mannerheim's sentiments, too. Mannerheim asked only arms and munitions from outsiders, German aid being presented to him as a fait accompli on the part of the Svinhufvud government.³⁴ Again, Mannerheim was a pro-Ally, and so also was Rudolph Holsti, White Finland's representative in England. When a crisis developed between Finland and Britain during the summer of 1918, Holsti received word of the affair through the British Foreign Office! The Svinhufvud government kept him deliberately uninformed whenever his pro-Ally or Republican sentiments might get in the way.³⁵ One may conclude that the Reuters and the Holstis were used in a charade designed to keep up the illusion of Finnish neutrality, especially useful in the pursuit of foodstuffs and recognition, while Svinhufvud and his government pursued what was really a pro-German policy. (One must add that Holsti and Reuter were very capable individuals.)

Red Finland did not derive any real benefit in America

from the White connection with the Germans, other than more favorable press notices. The New York Times was full of atrocity stories about the Reds early in the Civil War. When the Germans arrived, there was a change in the Times' reports. Now the atrocities were committed by German-led White Guards. The Reds took on a more human aspect. Tokoi was asked, "Would Finland join the Russian Federation of Soviets?"

"Certainly not," he replied. "We belong to a different civilization. They are Communists, we are Socialists."³⁶

His questioner concluded that Tokoi and his companions were definitely pro-Ally. Furthermore, their plan was to form a republic something like Switzerland, he said. In this assumption, the questioner came close to the truth.

But the truth that a victorious Red Finland would not go Bolshevik (at least not immediately) did not stir the U.S. government. Nuorteva's writing in the newspapers against the "pro-German" Whites was very effective. Another food commissioner from the White government, a Mr. Valkeapaa, attributed his failure to get the money Finland had sent to the U.S. in 1917 to Nuorteva's influence. But Nuorteva could not get the use of the money himself, for Red Finland. The United States washed its hands of both parties to the Civil War.

As the food shortage was at the root of the November general strike, so it continued to be a problem that contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War. America and its Allies could probably have prevented both of these eruptions with the timely delivery of foodstuffs, but they were not

responsible for causing the disturbances, since Finland did have some food reserves that were not known to the public and therefore were not tapped before the Civil War. The Allies, following America's lead, did try to use food to combat German influence in Finland. Their plans matured too late to prevent the fighting, however, which allowed the ties between Germany and the Svinhufvud government to become too strong to be broken by a promise of food. This because White Finland had greater need for munitions and men than for food, and those were needs that Germany was willing and able to supply. The U.S. government was not at all willing to support Red Finland, and neither were any of the other Allies willing to do so during the Civil War. Therefore, with the defeat of the Reds, America and the Allies had very little influence in Finland, and Finland still had very little food.

Footnotes to Chapter VIII

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- 2 - Oskari Tokoi, SISU - "Even Through A Stone Wall", (New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1957), p. 155.
- 3 - Mortimer A. Waldo Papers (Michigan State University Archives, East Lansing, Mi., Collection No. 42, Box No. 2), letter written by Ernst Krogius on 23 October 1918, p. 4.
- 4 - Ibid., consular report written to Ira Nelson Morris by Mortimer A. Waldo, p. 4.
- 5 - Foreign Relations of the United States - 1918 ("Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States", Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), Russia, Vol. II, p.p. 786-787.
- 6 - Ibid., p. 801.
- 7 - Ira Nelson Morris, From An American Legation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923), p. 180.
- 8 - Samuel Eliot Morison, Inquiry Document No. 421, "Memorandum on Finland" (National Archives, Washington, D.C.), written in 1918, p. 123.
- 9 - Ibid., p. 122.
- 10 - Tokoi, op. cit., p.p. 161-163.
- 11 - Morison, op. cit., p. 116.
- 12 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932), Russia, Vol. II, p. 750.
- 13 - New York Times, 18 February 1918.
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- 18 - Lt. Com. John Gade, Inquiry Document No. 169 "Corrections in Memoranda on Finland" (National Archives, Washington, D.C.), written in 1919, p. 1.

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22 - Morison, op. cit., p. 107a.

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24 - Mortimer A. Waldo, op. cit., consular report written to Ira Nelson Morris, p. 2.

25 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1933), Supplement 2, p. 581.

26 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932), Russia, Vol. II, p. 779.

27 - Tokoi, op. cit., p. 158.

28 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932), Russia, Vol. III, p.p. 231-232.

29 - Auvo Kostiainen, "Turbulent Times: The Last Years of Santeri Nuorteva in America, 1918-1920", Finnish Americana, Vol. III (New Brighton, Minn., 1980), p. 42.

30 - Kostiainen, op. cit., p. 46.

31 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932), Russia, Vol. II, p.p. 755-756.

32 - New York Times, 22 February 1918.

33 - New York Times, 9 March 1918.

34 - C.G. Mannerheim, Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1954), p. 155.

35 - Paasivirta, op. cit., p. 47.

36 - New York Times, 20 April 1918.

CHAPTER IX

The end of the Civil War found Finland in the German sphere of influence, though officially neutral in regard to the World War. What appeared to be German-Finnish threats against the Murmansk Railroad, together with the search for a German prince to take a new Finnish crown, gave America and the Allies cause to believe that Finland did not wish to maintain real neutrality. The uncertain state of Russian affairs gave yet another reason for Allied reluctance to deal with Finland as an independent state, or to address Finnish needs for foodstuffs. Nevertheless, the idea of using American food to sway Finnish policy remained current. The U.S. government did not actually send food until after the Armistice was declared, and the German troops had left Finland. Then it was Hoover, in charge of the Allied food relief program, who moved America and the Allies to recognize Finnish nationhood, too.

From the End of the Civil War to the Armistice

Two days before the White army's victory parade on May 16, Consul Haynes advised the Secretary of State to offer food and conditional recognition to Finland. President Wilson was then considering an address from the White Finnish envoys to the United States, delivered in February when they visited Lansing, but only handed to the President a few days earlier.

The President's reply was short:

"My dear Mr. Secretary: Do you not think that the proper reply to this is that we shall be willing to recognize the republic of Finland only when she shows that she is not controlled by Germany, as she now seems to be?"¹

An Assistant Secretary noted further,

"I gave the President's reply orally to Dr. Ignatius when he called upon me recently. The Secretary did not seem to think that it was necessary to make a formal reply to the memorial signed by the representatives of Finland."²

There, in a nutshell, is the history of American relations with Finland from the end of the Civil War to the proclamation of the Armistice. The Americans on the spot, Consul Haynes and Vice-Consul Waldo, tried hard to convince their government that Finland could be influenced through recognition and food, being desperately in need of the latter. Germany was giving some foodstuffs, they said, but was getting more in return in the form of butter, metals, and horses. Lansing was no longer to be convinced.

And notwithstanding the talk of German control, the most important reason for nonrecognition of Finland was the desire to avoid, as yet, countenancing the disintegration of Russia. That was the word to Morison from Basil Miles, the State Department's Russian affairs expert. His words confirmed the President's concern for Russia, as expressed in a war aims speech given by Wilson on January 8.

Finland discounted the idea of German control anyway, still professing neutral status. In reality, Mannerheim resigned as Commander-in-Chief and went abroad when he learned that the German forces were to stay in Finland and take over

the organization and training of the Finnish army. The Svinhufvud government was glad to have the Germans, as further proof against any resurgence of revolutionary activity.

That government convened a rump Diet minus 82 Socialists and tried to push through a new, monarchical constitution. This was not a fresh idea, as the government still operated on the basis of the Constitution of 1772 which supported a monarchy, but there had been a republican constitution on the table ever since the declaration of independence. A dispute arose as to whether or not independent Finland had been recognized as a republic by those nations which had opened relations. The monarchists declared that "adherence to last December's decision is especially unwise, since the obstacles which then prevented a free choice no longer exist."³ That is, there was no longer a large Socialist opposition, and no difficulty was expected from Russia. As the Socialists had naively expected to control a Finnish constituent assembly, so now the Svinhufvud government expected that non-Socialist Finlanders would welcome a monarchy.

There was talk of German promises and pressures concerning a monarchy in Finland. Supposedly, if Finland accepted a German prince, Germany would aid and support the conquest of Russian Karelia, a fond dream of Finnish nationalists. This "promise" was more wishful thinking than reality. On the other hand, there was the rumored threat that Germany would leave Finland to a possible new revolution if a monarchy was not established. Fear of another outbreak was very real, and though German troops would become burdensome as any foreigners

might become, a German withdrawal would be cause for apprehension (especially among the pro-Germans in the government!).

True or not, the talk did not convince everyone. The Swedish Party and the Old Finns mostly favored a monarchy, but the Agrarians were against it, the Young Finns split, the Socialists not heard from. Pending resolution of the form of government, Svinhufvud was named regent and given all of the Czar's former prerogatives. Even so, it proved impossible to bring the new constitution through the Diet, so the bill was withdrawn and the session of the Diet suspended. The monarchists fell back upon the old reliable version of 1772, one article of which declared that the Diet could elect a king by simple majority. By a margin of 14, with 82 Socialist seats vacant (although bourgeois vacancies had been filled), the Diet accepted a monarchy. That was too close for Kaiser Wilhelm, who removed his son Oscar from consideration for the position, though of course a German was preferred. A German newspaper also made the comment that a German prince enthroned by a Finnish minority would only become a new source of difficulty for German policy. The vote was taken in August, so one would assume that difficulties were indeed mounting everywhere for Germany. The Finnish monarchists seemed oblivious to what was going on in the outside world, as they went on about their search for a suitable German candidate.

Meanwhile, the Allies feared a German-Finnish thrust toward the Murmansk Railroad and the Arctic Ocean. The Finnish White Guards obliged with occasional sorties into Karelia to 'protect the citizens from Bolshevik brigands'. The White

Finns also engaged British marines at Petsamo on the Arctic, a possible site for a submarine base. This was the incident revealed to Holsti by the British Foreign Office. The ensuing crisis almost brought Finland openly into the war. Finno-British relations were further strained by the organization of the Finnish Legion, a band of Red Finn refugees under British officers, used to protect the Murmansk Railroad. Tokoi was with them, and rumors flew of a British offer to support a Red Finnish government-in-exile.

That did not prevent the British from testing the waters with an offer of food and recognition of the Svinhufvud government, if Finland would enforce real neutrality. Mention was made in June of 11,000 tons of American grain to be delivered after the Germans withdrew. Lansing appeared to know nothing whatever about the deal, and advised the chargé in London to inform the British "that this Government has not changed its views that no shipments of foodstuffs should be made available for distribution in Finland for the present."⁴

Lansing then delivered what was essentially his last word on the subject until the Armistice arrived. Because Finland seemed committed to co-operation with Germany and intent upon expansion into Russian territory, there would be no foodstuffs for Finland. Lansing took the moral high ground - compared to the British - and declared that sending food on conditions "would seem to imply that this Government is interested in Finland only insofar as it will serve as a pawn in the game of war against the Central Powers."⁵ Behind the moral stance was the desire to keep Finland from getting an exaggerated

sense of its own importance as a factor in world affairs.

Nothing was said about sending food without conditions in order to combat hunger, as the Scandinavian nations asked, upon a Finnish suggestion. Neither was anything said about a German allegation that Finland was as neutral as Norway, which was sometimes referred to as an "anti-German neutral".⁶ Norway received whatever food "can be spared" from America in exchange for an agreement on trade and shipping that turned it into a virtual non-neutral.⁷

Efforts to Obtain U.S. Support for Finland

Vice-Consul Waldo reported talking with a Finnish-American in the White army who said that the soldiers favored a republic for Finland. Waldo observed that many of the more educated people thought a monarchy was the best way to avoid renewed revolutionary activity, though a young politician told him that "there was still a possibility for the republican form and that it needed only some little impetus from outside to strengthen this movement."⁸ Hence the continuing efforts of Haynes and Waldo to get some sign of support for Finland from America and the Allies.

Consul Haynes sent a lengthy report to the State Department in which he claimed that Finland could not be other than neutral in its weak and hungry condition, that 60% to 65% of the people were pro-Entente but unable to speak out because of the government's pro-German orientation. Haynes believed, too, that America misunderstood Finland. He noted that Ambassadors Morris and Francis were major sources of information

for America, and theorized that they were overtaxed with other responsibilities, making their knowledge of Finland suspect. But at the top of his list of six reasons for America's misunderstanding of Finland were the Finnish immigrants. Haynes may have had a point.

Santeri Nuorteva and other Finnish-American radicals continued to attract Military Intelligence spies and citizen informers. Nuorteva's Finnish Information Bureau was backed by the Finnish Socialist Federation (of the American Socialist Party) during the Civil War, and Russian funds gradually gained more importance after the Finnish war. The obvious inference was that a connection existed between Finnish-American leftists and the Bolsheviks, which would not endear those Finnish immigrants to the U.S. government. At one point, Ambassador Francis had been talking with exiled Finnish Reds in Russia, and became enthused about the idea of a Finnish-American Legion to be sent over against the Germans. He wished to make an appeal to the immigrants in American newspapers. The plan was improbable anyway, but Lansing's answer showed what he thought of Nuorteva and the Bolsheviks:

"Department questions advisability of co-operating with or encouraging in any way members or advocates of former Finnish Red labor government. Santeri Nuorteva, who has informed the Department that he represents the Finnish Red labor party officially in this country, has announced that aims of his party are the same as the Soviet government of Russia..."⁹

Nuorteva's announcement did not speak for all Finnish or Finnish-American leftists, because they were badly fragmented. He was the most visible of them in America, though, so the State Department chose to take him as a representative figure.

This did not help Haynes, who hoped to avoid a conclusion on the part of the U.S. government that aid to Finland would be wasted because the anti-German faction must be thoroughly Bolshevik, as leftist Finnish-Americans appeared to be.

Finnish-American conservatives did not give the consul much help in his campaign for Finland, either, though not for lack of trying on their part. They organized the Finland Constitutional League as a sort of lobby for the homeland with the American government. The League's goals for U.S. action were (1) send food to Finland; (2) recognize "the Finnish Republic"; (3) request permission of Finland to send Allied troops to Murmansk and environs; (4) assist Finland economically; (5) express sympathy for Russia with the intent to aid all factions opposed to Germany, and declare "the availability of a friendly and independent Finland to this end."¹⁰

Obviously, the League was ill-informed about Finland, not to mention Russia and the State Department. Leaguers wanted not only to get aid and support for Finland, but also to prove that Finnish-American patriots did exist, despite the pervasive radical reputation and the German presence in Finland. The League thus tried to present both Finland and Finnish-Americans in the best possible light. The result was utter disbelief that anyone in Finland could be pro-German, unless due to "mistakes made by the Allies, and particularly by the United States".¹¹ They brought up once again the requisitioned food, and they criticized subordination of Finland's needs to a hesitating and unclear Russian policy. They did help to win recognition of Finnish-American loyalists,

but they were not likely to make themselves popular. There was some truth to what the League said, but it was said with the same ignorance of the current situation that brought forth the following declaration:

"As for a German princeling, we here shall believe in such a monstrosity when we see it, not before. What we know is that there have been all sorts of ridiculous stories of the kind published at intervals for months past, emanating nearly all of them from Swedish Socialist misinformation sources and as often contradicted by subsequent statements or the cold facts."¹²

Food and the Recognition of Finnish Nationhood

The cold fact was that on 9 October 1918, Prince Frederick Carl of Hesse was elected by the rump Diet to the throne of Finland. The Prince felt it prudent to hold off a response to the invitation, however, considering that in some Finnish quarters expressions of opinion were not very encouraging, and that the war was not going well for Germany.

During the month of October, Vice-Consul Waldo was journeying through Finland in order to publicize the Allied cause, after which he wrote up a report. He seems to have spoken mostly with people who would have supported the White government. Generally, they were friendly to him, and remembered past instances of American generosity while wondering why it did not still obtain. He found that popular opinion blamed British interference for America's failure to send food. This was due to British actions of the previous summer, supporting the Reds and yet dangling American food in front of the Whites. The Finns could understand that people might have political differences, but did not see why such differences should

prevent them from getting food. Waldo added,

"This blame having been placed on Great Britain, the standing of America in the mind of the Finn remains unsettled. The strong feeling of friendliness that has existed so long has been shaken a little. The general tone places nothing to our credit and nothing to our discredit."¹³

Waldo did not receive uniformly favorable comments throughout his trip, but the general idea was that food would revive the former sympathy for America. The relationship with Germany was treated as one of expedience in a time of extremity, and Waldo felt that most Finns were pro-Finland rather than pro or anti anyone else (except maybe Russia).

The U.S. government was not yet ready to extend its sympathy in October, what with the election of a German prince to a Finnish throne. A little earlier, in response to another of Haynes' designs to get food for Finland, the Allies reassured themselves that revictualling could only be undertaken if Finland broke with Germany. They thought Finland needed to "change its state of mind", and develop a conviction of Germany's inevitable defeat. "Firmness on the part of the Allies may go far toward establishing that needed conviction."¹⁴ Lansing did not contradict those words, which belied his stance on the "high ground", above the use of food in diplomacy.

Finnish public opinion did more openly question the direction of their government's foreign policy in the fall of 1918, but that government remained blindly pro-German until the Armistice and the probable refusal of Prince Frederick Carl necessitated a change in Finnish politics. Svinhufvud prepared to leave the regency, and the Senate and the Diet

decided on November 15 to name Mannerheim in his stead, though the actual change would not occur for a little while yet. Mannerheim was even then travelling in Britain and France, seeking to open up better relations with the Allies. Haynes reported,

"They say the new government will demand immediately withdrawal of German forces from Finland, order general elections, and request American food and recognition upon the basis of self-determination..."¹⁵

In this manner, Finland would fulfill the basic conditions for recognition which Britain had set down some months previously, and which the United States had supported.

Haynes went on to express fear of a Bolshevik movement into Finland, and advised that Allied military forces be held at the ready in case of need. But he added,

"It will be impossible for the new or any other government to succeed without food..."¹⁶

For that very reason, the Allies were then engaged in creating a relief organization; or rather, in turning the job over to Herbert Hoover. He said later,

"Our major purpose was to save hundreds of millions of lives..."¹⁷

He said at the time,

"It is not necessary for me to mention how fundamental it appears to me that this (relief) is, if we are to preserve these countries from Bolshevism and rank anarchy..."¹⁸

Hoover said that "dreadful reports" of Finland's difficulties had come to him even before he left for Europe in November, though on November 22 he had written in his Memorandum on Reconstruction only that "Finland requires some assistance..."¹⁹ Once in Europe, Hoover received Rudolph Holsti and

a Finnish delegation, who gave out the too-familiar description of a people reduced to mixing the bark of trees with what little flour they had. The U.S. had already begun preparations to send 5,000 tons of foodstuffs if shipping could be found. Hoover agreed to replace for the Scandinavian countries 10,000 tons of provisions which they had offered to Finland on the condition of later reprovisioning from America. He could have related also what his government had proclaimed on November 16:

"...however small any initial shipment of food supplies to Finland may be, we should be prepared to follow it with a steady flow of materials, which will demonstrate that what we do to feed the Finnish population is not a mere matter of temporary expediency."²⁰

And,

"Our view is that the withdrawal of the German troops removes the last obstacle to organizing definite measures to feed the Finnish population regardless of party..."²¹

All the obstacles were not yet removed. The Finlanders surprised Hoover by telling him that they would pay for the food they received. But they could not use the money long held in the United States, because the banks could not release it to a country whose government had not received American recognition. Hoover cited other difficulties, as well, that could be overcome through recognition. Food did get to Finland, as to other countries; the "Hoover men" arrived to help establish relief organizations, and people began to be "Hooverized" - to benefit from food aid.²² But the unresolved credit problem briefly endangered the flow of food in March of 1919, only a month after the relief program started

to yield regular results. The problem was not insurmountable, considering the credit status of some other countries then receiving relief, but it was a problem that was curable through recognition. Besides, there were other factors that made recognition from the Allies imperative for Finland.

Britain, France, Italy, and the United States were the arbiters of European affairs at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Three of those nations had never recognized Finland, and France had broken relations after the election of Prince Frederick Carl. The Allied representatives often received the notes or visits of White Russians who wished to make certain that their interests were not forgotten, including their interest in Finland. This consideration slowed action on the recognition of Finland, which is precisely what the Finlanders feared. They did not want the question left for the end of the Peace Conference, when Russian influence might be strong enough to thwart their bid for independence. After all, no one could tell yet how the Russian situation might resolve itself, or what the Allies might do about it.

Finland had a Diet election in March of 1919, with the Socialists again eligible, and the new government took a turn toward republicanism. A presidential election would follow in the summer, when the office of the regency would be dropped. Thus Finland "self-determined" in a direction that could hardly be objectionable to the Allies. But Finland was a small country on the periphery of Europe, and the Allies had many important questions to deal with. It was Holsti who visited Hoover once again to ask for help in this new

extremity.

Hoover was as frustrated as anyone over the difficulties caused for Finnish relief by the lack of recognition. He wrote,

"My urgent representations as to the necessity of the recognition of their independence to the Council of Foreign Ministers over months got nowhere."²³

To Hoover, the status of the Finnish question before the Council of Foreign Ministers at Paris was "such nonsense" that he urged President Wilson to raise it before the "Big Four", "and let me do the talking," he added. Wilson asked for "the usual memorandum".

In his memorandum, Hoover observed that Finland had fulfilled the requirement of a general election and had created a liberal ministry. He appealed to sentiment for Finland's "struggle over a century to gain independence", as he put it, and cited the problems arising through lack of recognition. Hoover's final remarks came from the heart:

"If ever there was a case for helping a people who are making a sturdy fight to get on a basis of liberal democracy, and are asking no charity of the world whatever, this is the case. I am convinced from our reports (from the food relief organization) that unless Finland is recognized within a very short time that the present government cannot survive the difficulties with which it is faced..."²⁴

Hoover loved a country that tried to be self-supporting, and he hated the threat of Bolshevism, which he inferred in his note.

He sent his memorandum to the President on April 26. Hoover did not need to appear before the Big Four, as Wilson proposed recognition. The proposal caused some discussion, but the memorandum was soon sent to the Council of Foreign

Ministers "with directions to act at once". The Council met on May 3, and agreed to act favorably. Formal recognitions were soon extended, that of the United States on May 9.

By this time, the most important result for Finland was less in the sphere of material aid than in the political sphere. Moderate republicans had their position strengthened against both conservative monarchists and radical Socialists or Communists. The nation was encouraged to take more of a middle road in dealing with the problems of reconstruction. The government of the new republic had sought for respect both internally and externally. With that respect, they hoped for greater stability inside Finland, and for leverage against any Russians who might try to extend their rule over Finland.

In a letter of May 19 from Holsti, then Minister of Foreign Affairs for Finland, Herbert Hoover was assured "of the great gratitude of the Finnish people for your invaluable assistance" both in terms of food relief and in terms of guaranteeing to Finland "her place among the sovereign states of the world..."²⁵

In another letter to Hoover, gratitude was expressed and extended more generally. The last line said,

"Benedictions were asked for the great and noble American people living beyond the sea."²⁶

This time it was not a Russian Count who spoke for the people of his Empire, but a committee of Finnish citizens who were speaking for themselves.

Footnotes to Chapter IX

- 1 - Foreign Relations of the United States - 1918
("Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States", Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), Russia, Vol. II, p. 788.
- 2 - Ibid., p. 788.
- 3 - Ibid., p. 797.
- 4 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1933), Supplement 2, p.p. 581-582.
- 5 - Ibid., p. 582.
- 6 - The American-Scandinavian Review, May-June (New York: American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1918), p. 161.
- 7 - Ibid., p. 291.
- 8 - Mortimer A. Waldo Papers (Michigan State University Archives, East Lansing, Mi., Collection No. 42, Box No. 2), consular report written to Ira Nelson Morris by Mortimer A. Waldo, p. 8.
- 9 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932), Russia, Vol. II, p. 810.
- 10 - Herman Montagu Donner, "A Defense of the League", The Finland Sentinel, Volume I, number 3, September (New York: The Finland Constitutional League of America, 1918), p.p. 79-80.
- 11 - Ibid., p. 80.
- 12 - Ibid., p. 81.
- 13 - Mortimer A. Waldo, op. cit., report of Waldo's trip through Finland in October, 1918, p. 20.
- 14 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1933), Supplement 2, p. 586.
- 15 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1932), Russia, Vol. II, p. 812.
- 16 - Ibid., p. 812.
- 17 - Suda Lorena Bane and Ralph Haswell Lutz, Organization of American Relief in Europe 1918-1919 (Stanford University, California: Stanford University Press, 1943), p. 14.
- 18 - Ibid., p. 36.

Footnotes to Chapter IX, cont.

19 - Ibid., p. 52.

20 - Foreign Relations - 1918, op. cit., (1933),
Supplement 2, p. 588.

21 - Ibid., p. 588.

22 - Akseli Rautenheimo, Finland Review, Volume I,
number 4, December (New York: Consulate General of Finland,
1919), p. 33.

23 - Herbert Hoover, Memoirs of Herbert Hoover - Years
of Adventure 1874-1920 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951),
p. 365.

24 - Ibid., p. 365.

25 - Bane and Lutz, op. cit., p. 717.

26 - Hoover, op. cit., p. 367.

CONCLUSION

The story of relations between Finland and the United States shows food to be a basis or foundation upon which other relationships were built. A historically precarious food supply, which became a definite food deficit in the 19th century, forced Finland to seek outside sources for provisions. The United States proved able to supply Finland and many other countries through occasional food relief as well as in normal trade. These activities strengthened the general image of America as a land of plenty, and in Finland, Americans were thought to be sympathetic and generous. These images encouraged Finnish immigration, though the experiences of the immigrants did not always confirm the images. Even so, natives of Finland would continue to seek support in the United States for various causes, because they expected to gain a hearing. The U.S. continued to be a haven for exiles, too, even if their beliefs were not always held in esteem by Americans. The U.S. was still viewed in Finland as 'the friend in time of need' which had always been 'the friend indeed'.

The circumstances of the World War, and of internal and external affairs in both Finland and the United States at that time, brought difficulties in Finnish-American relations. The U.S. employed or was party to the employ of 'grain

diplomacy' in its dealings with Finland on more than one occasion during the years 1917-1919. It seems not to have been a consistent policy, but rather an expedient.

America with its Russian ally may have been withholding grain from Finland in the summer of 1917, though it is not certain if it was a case of withholding or of simply not having grain to give at that time. Finland only knew that it was not receiving foodstuffs when they were desperately needed, and felt that Russia in particular was using food as a weapon, while the U.S. did nothing to help Russo-Finnish relations. In response, Finland failed to support Russian military forces financially, leading to disaffection which further endangered the Provisional Government during the 'July Days'. Finland's Socialist-dominated government sought separation from Russia, bringing disruption of the coalition with the other Finnish political parties. Tokoi, Nuorteva, and the Socialists have seen this as a definite step toward civil war, and at the least it did nothing to bring Socialists and bourgeoisie together. Therefore, the consequences of a lack of imported grain were crucial for Finland, at a time when the food shortage sparked strikes and rioting. Since Finland had been able to contract for American grain in May, one is

tempted to blame Russia and the U.S. both for a short-sighted policy that could have been reversed, but again, we do not know what was behind the non-issuance of American export licenses. The U.S. apparently felt that Russia should be able to meet Finnish demands at least by August or September, in accordance with the Inter-Allied Supply Committee's decision.

The Russian grain was not, however, forthcoming. Tokoi spoke of finding grain that had been earmarked for Finland by the Provisional Government. Though he seems to have found it only after the Civil War had begun, the grain must have been collected before the Provisional Government fell. In addition, Finland did contract again for American wheat in September, 1917, which was quickly gathered - but not released. This is the first clear evidence of withholding American grain, in conjunction with the Provisional Government, in an attempt to influence Finland. The attempt succeeded, but the Provisional Government fell, so it derived no benefit.

Finland was assured of not receiving the Socialist Law on Authority while the Provisional Government lasted, because of Kerensky's threat to prevent food deliveries if it passed. Therefore, the Socialists had no political maneuverability in the Diet elected in October with regard to their most cherished object, the Law on Authority, until after the Bolshevik Revolution. By then, it was fast becoming impossible to consider Socialist projects in the normal political process. Russian grain diplomacy, supported by the U.S., thus helped to limit the operation of the political process in Finland, contributing to the general strike of November, 1917.

The requisitioning of the American grain in two stages - at the end of October and at the end of November - cannot be seen as an attempt to pressure Finland. America's allies had developed a serious shortage of their own, and it was this that Hoover tried to meet. When there was no longer a Provisional Government to support, Finland took a definite back

seat to the many other pressing demands that contributed to a late-season grain crisis among the Allies. The requisitioning caused hard feelings in Finland, and opened an effectual door to German propaganda. Insofar as the food shortage was not alleviated, there is some reason for seeing a contributory cause of the Civil War in America's act, but it was not the result of a conscious policy aimed at Finland, and Finnish farmers were hoarding grain, anyway.

The State Department did decide in December of 1917 to initiate grain diplomacy with Finland. This was a response to allegations of rising German influence. Secretary of State Lansing overcame Hoover's reluctance and Britain's qualms and would have delivered food to Finland had not the Civil War upset his plans. He did not cease his efforts even then, or after the Finno-German Treaty of March 1918, though he did limit his scope to White Finland. In this Lansing demonstrated the U.S. government's extreme aversion to left-wing political movements, influenced in the case of Finland by leftist Finnish immigrants in America. Not until Allied citizens were insulted, and German troops about to land, did Lansing stop trying to supply White Finland. If he seems blind to the intentions of men like Svinhufvud, one must remember that Lansing dealt with pro-Ally Finnish envoys who were not kept informed on Finnish affairs, and with a Consul and a Vice-Consul at Helsinki who consistently maintained that American food would affect Finnish opinion. And perhaps it would have done so, as it had in the past, but we cannot know for certain.

In June of 1918, Lansing claimed that the U.S. would not indulge in grain diplomacy with Finland, out of regard for the Finns. Statements of August and September show that the Allies thought food was being withheld until Finland had a "change of mind", however, and Lansing did not then discourage the idea. Aid was not promised immediately after the Armistice, either, but only when Svinhufvud made ready to leave the regency and the government became less objectionable to the Allies. That this change was accomplished quietly and easily was due in part to a growing conviction in Finnish public opinion that a change was necessary in order to avoid starvation. This was a success for an undeclared policy of grain diplomacy, though certainly the defeat of Germany had the biggest effect.

Thereafter, American food was used not to influence Finnish foreign policy, but to help Finland regulate its internal affairs. If anything, Holsti managed to use the Allied food relief program to influence the policy of the Allies toward Finland, a bit of grain diplomacy in reverse! Owing to Holsti's contacts with Hoover through the relief program, Finland received food and also recognition as an independent state. Food, therefore, besides being the basis of Finnish-American relations and an important factor in Finnish affairs internally and externally, was directly involved in the emergence of the independent state of Finland.

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