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## The Russian revolutions and the question of supreme authority in Finland in 1917

### Introduction

In March 1917, the provisional Russian government declared null and void all the oppressive measures that the Tsarist regime had directed against Finland during the period of Russification since 1890. By this, Russia restored Finland to her constitutional, autonomous status. Nevertheless, there were a number of unanswered questions. Since there had existed a personal union between Finland and Russia, had the bonds been wholly cut after the overthrow of the Tsar? If the provisional Russian government was entitled to resume the full authority of the sovereign in Finland, did that mean that the same authority must automatically pass on to any organ whatsoever that exercised the ruling power in Russia? At any rate, should a greater share than before of the "supreme authority" be delegated to Finnish organs of government? If so, how much should go to the Senate (or Finnish government, in modern terms) and how much to the Parliament?

This review article focuses on the political debate that took place regarding the above-mentioned issues in Finland during 1917. This includes the examination of the policies of all major parties in Finland. The problems took on internal, Russian-Finnish bilateral and wider international aspects. Opinions were split both between and within different parties, and the second Russian revolution in November 1917 resulted in further overturns. Although several previous studies exist the given problematic has not yet been thoroughly explored and explained. The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview as to why the question of supreme authority was interpreted by different parties in the way it was. Historical source criticism, comparative method and qualitative analysis comprise the methodological basis of the study. Due to the relatively wide scope and approach of this study, printed sources form the core of the material utilized. The most central documents have been published or cited in these publications.



## Finnish *de facto* recognition to the provisional Russian government

The Russian monarchy collapsed under the weight of social unrest and military defeat including huge casualties and territorial losses, and Emperor Nicholas II abdicated on 15 March. Already the next day, Prince Michael, his brother and successor, shifted the highest power to the provisional Russian government under Prince Lvov. Many members of the liberal provisional government expressed support for Finland's autonomy in principle. Nevertheless, the idea was that the provisional government would hold the power until a constitutional assembly created Russia's new form of government. Among other major topical issues, the constitutional assembly would also resolve the question of Finland's relationship with Russia.<sup>1</sup> Under these circumstances, the provisional government was seemingly reluctant to support any extension to Finnish self-rule or readjustment of the powers of the Finnish senate. Rather, it aimed to keep Finland as well all other areas inhabited by minority nationalities in the empire.<sup>2</sup>

The provisional government proclaimed the restoration of Finland's constitutional rights on 20 March. In this March Manifesto, the provisional government voided several previous manifestos, ordinances and decrees that had established an unconstitutional situation since the early 1890s. Political prisoners and deportees were released and freedom of press was declared. Among them was Pehr Evind Svinhufvud, the Speaker of the Finnish parliament (1907–1912), who, after a three-year-long exile in Siberia now returned in triumph to Helsinki.<sup>3</sup> Instead, the provisional government now arrested the most influential persecutor, Governor-General Seyn and sent him to jail in Russia.<sup>4</sup> At the end of March Alexander Kerenski, who, after all, can be considered as the most influential non-Bolshevik political leader of revolutionary Russia, took a trip to Finland to exhort the Finns to be loyal towards Russia but he did not succeed very well. Soon after the collapse of the Tsarist regime, already in March in practice, it had become evident that the restoration of Finnish autonomy was no longer adequate, or sufficient for a growing number of Finns. Even independence, which earlier had only been discussed in trusted company, was pondered rather openly.<sup>5</sup> To all the aforementioned questions, however, different answers were given, which eventually crystallized into political programs.

Many Finns assumed that anarchy would inevitably follow the downfall of the Tsarist government, but contrary to the expectation, it did not materialize to the extent of chaos. The course of the Russian revolution in the spring of 1917 was relatively peaceful. Paradoxically, it meant that opposition to Finnish independence aspirations could be more likely, as a Russian government that was not paralyzed by domestic anarchy would have a better opportunity to give attention to Finnish issues and resist any

<sup>1</sup> Jason Lavery (2006). *The History of Finland*. Westport: Greenwood Press, p. 82; Anthony F. Upton (1980). *The Finnish Revolution 1917–1918*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 27–28; Tuomo Polvinen (1987). *Venäjän vallankumous ja Suomi 1917–1920*. Helsinki: WSOY, pp. 8–9.

<sup>2</sup> Osmo Jussila & Seppo Hentilä & Jukka Nevakivi (1999). *From Grand Duchy to a Modern State. A Political History of Finland since 1809*. London: Hurst & Company, pp. 92–93; David Kirby (2007). *A Concise History of Finland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 158; Polvinen. *Venäjän vallankumous*, pp. 26–30.

<sup>3</sup> Fred Singleton (1999). *A Short History of Finland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 104; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, pp. 28, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Eino Jutikkala & Kauko Pirinen (2003). *A History of Finland*. Helsinki: WSOY, p. 385.

<sup>5</sup> Kirby. *A Concise History*, p. 158; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, pp. 42–46; Polvinen. *Venäjän vallankumous*, pp. 33–37.

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separatist movements. That is why many Finns were in doubt, whether it would be better to accept the concessions the provisional government made and be satisfied with a return to full autonomy.<sup>6</sup> This would mean, at least for the time being, abandoning the idea of complete independence. On the other hand, how realistic such an unprecedented aim would be at any rate?

Finland gave *de facto* recognition to the provisional Russian government as the power that exercised "supreme authority" by carrying out its rulings. Thus, the Russian-dominated Senate resigned and the provisional government appointed a new Senate for Finland. The previous general parliamentary elections had taken place as scheduled in July 1916 but the Tsar had announced in advance that the parliament would not convene until the war was over. Probably for this reason, the turnout at the polls was relatively weak and the Socialists won an absolute majority, albeit not of the votes but of the parliamentary seats. As a result, the Social Democratic Party held 103 seats out of the 200, the largest majority ever received by any party in Finnish parliamentary history. This exceptional distribution of power in domestic politics later had a most significant impact on Finland's future development, owing to the disappointment felt by the Social Democrats on losing their majority position at the following election in late 1917.<sup>7</sup>

The Social Democratic Party Until was ideologically opposed to what they called "ministerial socialism". They wanted the power centered in the parliament and not an independent executive organ (senate/government). However, after lengthy negotiations a compromise solution was reached by 24 March. In the end, the parliamentary strength of the Socialists encouraged them to change their established tactics, and they agreed to accept seats in the government of a capitalist country. All the most nominate political figures of Finnish political life were represented in the new Senate. There were an equal number of ministers, six Socialists and six from non-Socialist parties (the Old Finns, the Young Finns, the Agrarian Union, and the Swedish People's Party), but the deputy chairman, Oskari Tokoi, belonged to the former. Tokoi's Senate was the first government in the world to have a Socialist prime minister.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the first Socialist parliamentary majority also backed it at the same time. Nonetheless, there was a deep political division within Senate, and therefore, one could call Tokoi's Senate both a government of national discord as well as a government of national unity.<sup>9</sup>

### The fate of the "Power Act"

The leftists' dominant position tempted them to transfer to the parliament as great a share of the Tsar's authority as possible. Here they also wanted to assure of the Russian socialistic parties' consent. The All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies convened in June and called for full *internal* independence for Finland. However, the Congress also insisted that the final resolution of this question laid within the competence of the constitutional assembly that was to convene later.<sup>10</sup> It was generally expected that the assembly would create a "Democratic Russian Republic" and secure Finland's freedom in a way or another. At any rate, the Socialists in Finland

<sup>6</sup> John A. Wuorinen (1965). *A History of Finland*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 211–212.

<sup>7</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 388; Singleton, *A Short history*, p. 104.

<sup>8</sup> Jussila & Hentilä & Nevakivi. *From Grand Duchy*, pp. 94–95; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, pp. 21, 29–36.

<sup>9</sup> Lavery. *The History of Finland*, pp. 82–83.

<sup>10</sup> Singleton. *A Short history*, p. 105; Kirby. *A Concise history*, p. 158; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, p. 80.



deliberately hid this restrictive aspect as they presented their own program in the Finnish parliament a few weeks later.<sup>11</sup>

On 18 July, the Finnish Social Democrats pushed through the so-called Power Act, by which the parliament declared itself to be vested with the "supreme authority" in Finland. This included the right to appoint the Senate and confirmed that the Tokoi's government was the executive power for the time being. Otherwise, the Act stated that "the powers of the monarch having ceased to exist, the Legislature of Finland hereby resolves that the following is in force: The Legislature of Finland alone has the power to enact, confirm, and promulgate all Finnish laws, including laws regarding public economy, taxation, and custom duties. The Legislature also has the final power of decision in all other matters that the Tsar – Grand Duke according to rules and regulations formerly in force had been competent to decide. The provisions of this law do not apply to foreign affairs, military legislation, or military administration."<sup>12</sup> Thus, the Power Act left foreign policy and military affairs in the hands of the Russian government.

Non-socialist representatives criticized the Power Act on grounds of domestic politics, as it threatened to lead to the dictatorship of a single party; in this case that of the Social Democratic Party. In a longer perspective, it would have created a state completely lacking a chief executive body. Under the prevailing circumstances, the government would only have amounted to a parliamentary committee. As such, the Act was more an attempt to transform Finland into an ultra-parliamentary democracy than an attempt to declare Finland wholly independent.<sup>13</sup> Anyhow, the non-socialist parties did not block the passage of the Act in the Senate, even though they were in a position to do so, because the alternative would have been to leave the "supreme authority" in the hands of the Russian government. Besides, the law, in spite of its weaknesses, was likely to take the country closer to its goal of a full national independence. The non-socialist parties were also under a heavy extra-parliamentary pressure from their political opponents, as the extreme Left organized violent strikes and mass demonstrations throughout Finland.

The Social Democrats believed that the Bolsheviks would succeed in their *coup d'état* in July and take power in Russia. Contrary to this expectation, the provisional government did not surrender but remained in power, from now on under Kerenski. The Social Democrats refused to send the Act to the provisional government for ratification, which led to an open conflict between the holders of power in Finland and Russia. The Act thus became a test of the Finnish parliament's and its Socialist majority's real ability to use the power they had defined. Against the recommendations of the All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the provisional government did not ratify the Power Act but ordered the dissolution of the Finnish Parliament on 31 July; simultaneously, it also called new elections.<sup>14</sup>

The Finnish political parties now had to decide whether to accept the orders of the provisional government or those of the parliament. In the Senate, there were six votes for and six votes against the publishing the manifesto of the Kerenski government. The dead-end was resolved by the vote

<sup>11</sup> Jussila & Hentilä & Nevakivi. *From Grand Duchy*, p. 97; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, pp. 78–81; Polvinen. *Venäjän vallankumous*, pp. 78–83.

<sup>12</sup> Wuorinen. *A History of Finland*, pp. 213–214; Risto Alapuro (1988). *State and Revolution in Finland*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 158–160.

<sup>13</sup> Kirby. *A Concise History*, p. 159; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, p. 88.

<sup>14</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 387; Jussila & Hentilä & Nevakivi. *From Grand Duchy*, p. 97.

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of Governor-General Stakhovich, which was quite exceptional. Normally the Governor-General did not attend Senate meetings even if he had the right to do so and take part in the decision-making. Accordingly, the holders of power in Finland decided to obey the order, although with an extraordinary narrow margin. In this context, it is also important to mention that numerous Finnish non-socialist politicians secretly rejoiced Kerenski's call for new elections, as this opened an opportunity to put an end to the Socialist majority in the Finnish parliament.<sup>15</sup>

The decision had the effect of bringing the Finnish Socialists closer to the Russian extreme Left who were outside the Kerenski government, the Bolsheviks. Parliament dissolved, although the Social Democrats still found that the dissolution was illegal. As Russian troops barred the entrance to the parliamentary meeting hall, the Social Democrats under the leadership of their spokesperson, Kullervo Manner, even tried to continue the parliamentary session in another building. The police barred their entry into this house as well.<sup>16</sup> Non-socialist members of parliament, for their part, voluntarily stayed away from the parliament, as they believed in the legality of the order for new elections. Because of these decisions, the Social Democratic senators gradually resigned from the government, while non-socialist senators kept on working as usual.<sup>17</sup>

## The road towards full independence

The new elections were held on 1–2 October. No political landslide took place, but the most significant result was that the Socialists lost their absolute majority position. The Social Democratic Party remained the largest single party with 92 seats and polled 45 per cent of the total poll, but the Socialists were surprised, disappointed and bitter toward the non-socialists, who had cooperated with the Kerenski's government in enforcing the dissolution order. The centrist Agrarian Union was the biggest winner: In the new parliament, they had 26 seats instead of the former 19. Other non-socialist parties combined gained 4 seats more than before.<sup>18</sup> The campaign had been partly on the Power Act and partly on other issues. It seems probable that the non-socialists won a majority by convincing voters that the Left bore the heaviest responsibility for the growing unrest in Finland.<sup>19</sup>

The overall situation was seriously deteriorating indeed. Finland was close to famine, and ill-disciplined Russian troops committed acts of violence in all parts of the country. The paralysis of the export trade during the World War had caused heavy unemployment, which was no longer alleviated, as in earlier war years, by fortification works paid by the Russian army. The act passed by the preceding parliament to democratize communal administration had not been ratified by the "supreme authority". In addition, the situation of tenant farmers was weak, and many of them feared what would happen when the temporary ban on evictions was going to be expired in the near future. There were gangs of unemployed workers in towns and of landless workers in the countryside. In general, social reform remained at a standstill.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Singleton. *A Short history*, pp. 105–106; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, pp. 93–96.

<sup>16</sup> Jussila & Hentilä & Nevakivi. *From Grand Duchy*, p. 97; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, pp. 105–106.

<sup>17</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, pp. 387–388; Lavery. *The History of Finland*, p. 83.

<sup>18</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 388; Singleton. *A Short history*, p. 106.

<sup>19</sup> Lavery. *The History of Finland*, p. 83.

<sup>20</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 389; Singleton. *A Short history*, pp. 106–107.



After the Social Democrats had lost its majority position in parliament, it became increasingly difficult for the parliamentary wing of the party to restrain the revolutionary wing. The majority of the party members may have been in between; in other words, they did not directly demand violent revolution but they did not oppose the use of force, either. A similar development was evident in the ranks of their opponents as well. The non-socialist parties had drawn closer together throughout the second Russification period from 1909 onwards, and the division between the Compliers (The Old Finns Party) and Constitutionalists (The Young Finns Party) in relation to Russification was rapidly losing significance. Thus, after the October elections, the Social Democrats faced a more resolute and hostile non-socialist bloc who made the restoration of law and order in Finland a clear priority.<sup>21</sup>

Because the Russian gendarmerie had been disbanded after the March revolution, Finland lacked an official military organization and a sufficient and effective police force in autumn 1917. Partly in order to fill the gap, two private armies were forming in the country. These were the socialistic Red Guards and the non-socialist Civil Guards, or White Guards. The Finnish national activists had organized the Civil Guards to drive the Russian troops out of the country and to keep public order. The Red Guards initially served for the latter purpose but they also worked as a Leftist pressure vehicle. The weak parliamentary wing of the Socialists actually disliked the formation of the Red Guards, but it was either too ignorant or incapable of preventing their organization. Until November, both private armies were more defensive than offensive.<sup>22</sup>

The revolutionary elements among the Finnish Socialists gained strength by the radical trends in Russia. The influence spread either directly from St. Petersburg or through Russian troops stationed on Finnish soil. Naturally, broader international influences affected the situation in the same manner as in every other country with Socialist movements. The division between reformist evolutionary and "orthodox" revolutionary wings became evident in Finland during 1917 at the latest. The core question was whether Socialist goals could be better achieved through participating in elections and power sharing with other "progressive" political parties, or if only a violent revolution was sufficiently effective to bring societal changes the "orthodox" wing considered necessary. On 7 November, the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, and after this new revolution, the pace of events in Finland was higher, too.<sup>23</sup>

The Bolshevik takeover transformed attitudes towards national independence and the means that could be used to achieve it. The cautious non-socialist parties that up to then had repudiated the activists' ideal of national independence immediately wanted to separate from a Russia where radical Socialists hold the highest power. The non-socialists were ready to explain that Russia was in chaos and therefore the exercise of "supreme power" there had ceased. The Social Democrats, for their share, were now willing to wait and negotiate with the new leadership in Russia.<sup>24</sup>

In the opinion of non-socialist parties in Finland, the question of the supreme power in the country had to be finally resolved without any delay. A proposal to transfer the power to an elected regency council (three regents, according to the provisions of the 1772 act of government) was accepted in the parliament on 8 November, i.e. as soon as one day after the Bolshevik coup. It

<sup>21</sup> Kirby. *A Concise History*, p. 159; Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, pp. 388–389.

<sup>22</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 389; Alapuro. *State and Revolution*, pp. 162–163.

<sup>23</sup> Lavery. *The History of Finland*, pp. 83–84.

<sup>24</sup> Lavery. *The History of Finland*, p. 84; Jussila & Hentilä & Nevakivi. *From Grand Duchy*, p. 101.

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turned out, however, that this was not a long-lasting solution.<sup>25</sup> The desire for independence of the revolutionary wing of the Finnish Socialists dwindled. The party as a whole primarily wanted to hold tight to the Power Act, for reasons connected with domestic politics. It drew up a program under the title of "We demand", which contained the Power Act and a collection of resolutions of principle in the sphere of social legislation. For instance, an eight-hour workday, universal suffrage in communal elections, and the end to tenant farming were in the list. In addition, the given reforms were to be put into effect without any delay or unnecessary formalities.<sup>26</sup>

During the autumn, the Finnish Central trade union organization had fallen under the control of extremists. The Union called a political general strike on 13 November, and the weak police force was helpless to prevent violence; the Red Guards and other Leftist gangs murdered approximately 30 citizens. Perhaps due to the shock the violence aroused among the public, the parliamentary elements of the Socialists temporarily gained the upper hand over the revolutionaries. Having consulted the moderate wing of the Socialists, a few non-socialist deputies submitted a compromise solution. On November 15, Parliament resolved, by 127 votes to 68, to take over the "supreme authority... for the time being... inasmuch as it has not yet been possible to elect the regents". A significant step forward towards a full national sovereignty was that no reservation was made on this occasion in respect to foreign policy and military affairs. In practice, this meant that Finland had declared herself *de facto* independent.<sup>27</sup>

To meet the demands for social reforms and to stabilize political situation, the parliament also ratified certain laws the next day, on 16 November. These included the establishment of an eight-hour workday and a large-scale reform of local government, which satisfied the majority of strikers. The strike was called off, but the revolutionary ferment continued among the "orthodox" wing of Socialists. The Central Revolutionary Council set up by the extremists issued a proclamation that contained threats ("the fight continues"), although the Council was not yet in the position to continue with revolutionary activities immediately. During the strike, the Red Guards had occupied public buildings, railway stations and telephone exchanges. In all, it seemed that the Finnish extreme Left was prepared to follow the Russian Bolsheviks.<sup>28</sup>

The change of government was necessary in the new situation, but forming a wide coalition was difficult. The bloodshed perpetrated by the strikers during the strike had severely damaged possibilities of collaboration between the "Whites" and the "Reds". It may also be assumed that the entire Social Democratic Party had to a certain extent become compromised in the eyes of the non-socialists, although there was relatively wide inner dissension within the Party. The Socialists formally proposed a purely socialist government, but the idea had no possibility to win majority support in the parliament. On 26 November the parliament appointed a new government that consisted of non-socialist representatives alone. Pehr Evind Svinhufvud (later the third president of Finland), a veteran of passive resistance against Russification and who enjoyed a reputation of unyielding firmness took the chair. The powers assumed by Parliament were concentrated in the hands of the government, and Svinhufvud promised firm measures to restore law and order.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Kirby. *A Concise History*, p. 160; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, pp. 141–142.

<sup>26</sup> Lavery. *The History of Finland*, p. 85; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, pp. 134–150.

<sup>27</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 390–391.

<sup>28</sup> Kirby. *A Concise History*, p. 160; Jussila & Hentilä & Nevakivi. *From Grand Duchy*, p. 102.

<sup>29</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 391; Kirby. *A Concise History*, p. 160.



## Independence declared and recognized

The resolution of November 15 was, in fact, a declaration of independence, but neither Finnish politicians nor foreign audience considered it such an act. In forming the cabinet, Svinhufvud insisted that all its members agree that Finland be declared independent in due form. The formal decision was made on the day following the formation of the cabinet, and the declaration was submitted to the parliament on 4 December. Kaarlo Ståhlberg, a representative of the liberals (and later the first president of Finland, 1919–1925), drafted the proposal. Parliament accepted the declaration two days later, and its commemoration on December 6 is annually celebrated as Finland's Independence Day. The wording was as follows: "In view of the fact that the Government has submitted a proposal for a new Constitution which incorporates the principle that Finland is an independent Republic, the Legislature, as the repository of supreme power, for its part accepts the principle and also agrees that the Government shall proceed to the measures which in its judgment are essential for obtaining recognition by foreign Powers of the political independence of Finland".<sup>30</sup>

Illustrative of the already deep confrontation between the "Whites" and the "Reds", it was not possible to arrive at a wording that would have been satisfactory to both camps. The non-socialist majority of the parliament rejected the leftists' proposal that stressed the necessity of reaching an agreement with the Bolshevik government on Finnish independence. This would have meant the creation of a Russo-Finnish joint committee that produced proposals for establishing relations between Finland and Soviet Russia. The winning non-socialist declaration of independence was accepted by a vote of 100 to 88. The Social Democrats were not categorically opposed to independence but rather to the way Svinhufvud's government was pursuing it.<sup>31</sup>

As the parliament accepted the declaration of independence on 6 December, the wording contained three essential points in relation to the question of supreme power in Finland. First, the supreme power in the country belonged to the Finnish parliament without any reservations. Second, Finland wanted to secede from Russia and establish full national independence. Third, merely giving a declaration was not sufficient but the realization depended on other actors as well. At any rate, independence could become a reality only after the foreign powers had granted recognition to it and the Russian troops had withdrawn from the country. The withdrawal depended on Russia alone, and in regard to foreign recognition, Russia also held the key position.<sup>32</sup>

Svinhufvud's government tried first to gain recognition of Finland's independence from her democratic neighbors and the most important Western powers – the Scandinavian countries, Germany, France, Great Britain and the United States. Finnish government did not succeed in this, however, as no other country ready to give a recognition before a favorable decision had come from Russia. Svinhufvud was unwilling to turn to the Soviet government, because it feared that the Bolsheviks would not remain in power long. It also feared that by entering into relations with the Bolsheviks might make it difficult to gain recognition from a non-socialist successor regime in Russia. An important push factor in the situation was that Germany was engaged in peace

<sup>30</sup> Wuorinen. *A History of Finland*, pp. 215–216; Upton. *The Finnish Revolution*, p. 182.

<sup>31</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 392; Lavery. *The History of Finland*, p. 84.

<sup>32</sup> Kirby. *A Concise History*, p. 161; Polvinen. *Venäjäns vallankumous*, pp. 160–161.

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negotiations with the Soviet government, and Germany put pressure on Svinhufvud to ask Lenin to recognize Finnish independence.<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, the Soviet government wanted to show the world that it alone possessed full power in Russia. Moreover, the Bolsheviks had stated that all nations had the right for self-determination. The emergence of independent nation-states was not a true aim of Bolshevik nationalistic policies, but the principal freedom to secede was rather designed to lay a foundation for other nations to rejoin the Russian Socialistic Federation. The Bolsheviks believed that after a socialistic revolution in Finland that would take place soon the Finns would be among the first to freely join Russia again. Due to this kind of calculation, the Soviet government was ready to recognize Finnish non-socialist senate and Finnish national independence.<sup>34</sup>

A Finnish diplomatic delegation under the guidance of Svinhufvud traveled to St. Petersburg in late December. After a week-long negotiations the Council of People's Commissars recognize the sovereignty of Finland, and several other recognitions by most of other countries followed during the next days and weeks. Among them were neutral Sweden, France of the Entente powers, and Germany of the Central powers. Finnish Parliament announced that the country would pursue a policy of neutrality in the world conflict that was still raging. The United States and Great Britain, for their part, continued to wait for the collapse of the Bolshevik regime. The anti-Bolshevik successor government would then continue the war against Central powers and, after the end of the war, decide whether it wanted to recognize the independence of Finland and other small nation-states.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

As a conclusion it can be said that with the collapse of the Russian monarchy in spring 1917, all of Finland's political parties wanted greater autonomy if not total independence for Finland. A division arose over the means of this end. The majority of non-leftist parties wanted to negotiate any new autonomy or independence with Russia's new rulers. This desire for a negotiated settlement rested on the understanding that the Russian provisional government was the legal successor to the monarchy. For their part, the Social Democrats and a part of national activists argued that the end of the monarch ended the bond between Finland and Russia. In addition, the parties fought over whether the Senate or Parliament should exercise supreme authority. As the Social Democrats had an absolute majority in Parliament, they strongly proposed an Act making Parliament the supreme body of state. Respectively, the non-leftist parties wanted the Senate to be the supreme authority as it represented a compromise coalition with six socialist and six non-socialist ministers. Finally, the Bolshevik takeover transformed attitudes toward full national independence. Finland's non-Socialist parties immediately wanted to get out of a Russia run by radical Socialists, but the Social Democrats were now willing to wait and negotiate.

<sup>33</sup> Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 393; Lavery. *The History of Finland*, p. 84; Polvinen. *Venäjän vallankumous*, pp. 172–177.

<sup>34</sup> Jussila & Hentilä & Nevakivi. *From Grand Duchy*, pp. 104–105; Polvinen. *Venäjän vallankumous*, pp. 50–57.

<sup>35</sup> Jussila & Hentilä & Nevakivi. *From Grand Duchy*, pp. 105–106; Jutikkala & Pirinen. *A History of Finland*, p. 394; Polvinen. *Venäjän vallankumous*, pp. 193–195.



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## Krievijas revolūcija un Somijas statusa jautājums 1917. gadā

1917. gada martā Krievijas Pagaidu valdība pasludināja par spēkā neesošiem visus represīvos rīkojumus, ko pret Somiju bija pieņēmis Krievijas cara režīms kopš rusifikācijas sākuma 1890. gadā. Tādējādi Krievija atjaunoja Somijas konstitucionālo autonomijas statusu. Tomēr vairāki jautājumi toreizējās savstarpējās attiecībās vēl nebija līdz galam skaidri: vai Krievijas un Somijas personālūnijas pastāvēšanas laikā esošie likumi vairs nedarbojās pēc cara gāšanas no troņa un vai Krievijas Pagaidu valdībai bija tiesības atjaunot Somijas autonomiju pilnā mērā? Kādas un vai vispār varas funkcijas būtu jānodod Somijas iestādēm, kādas funkcijas jādeleģē Senātam (jeb somu valdībai) un kādas – Parlamentam?

Šajā rakstā galvenā uzmanība pievērsta 1917. gadā Somijā notikušajām politiskajām debatēm par šiem jautājumiem. Aplūkotas visu lielāko Somijas politisko spēku izteiktās domas. Galvenā problēma bija saistīta ar Krievijas un Somijas savstarpējām attiecībām – gan divpusējām, gan šo savstarpējo attiecību starptautisko kontekstu. Mūsdienās ir pieejami vairāki pētījumi, kuros ir aplūkotas minētās problēmas, tomēr visi jautājumi vēl līdz galam nav atbildēti un izpētīti. Šī raksta mērķis ir parādīt, kāpēc un kā dažādi Somijas politiskie spēki traktēja jautājumu par augstāko valsts varu. Pētījuma metodoloģiskais pamats ir vēstures avotu kritika, salīdzinošā metode un kvalitatīva avotu analīze. Rakstā izmantoto avotu bāze galvenokārt ir publikācijas periodikā. Svarīgākie dokumenti ir citēti pēc to publicējumiem.

Pēc Krievijas monarhijas sabrukuma 1917. gada pavasarī visas lielākās Somijas politiskās partijas vēlējās Somijas lielāku autonomiju, ja ne pilnīgu valsts neatkarību. Tomēr šīs prasības nebija vienādas, un tas Somijas politiskajās aprindās radīja šķelšanos. Vairākums labējā politiskā spektra partiju vēlējās turpināt sarunas ar Krievijas jauno Pagaidu valdību par Somijas autonomiju vai pilnīgu neatkarību, jo uzskatīja, ka Krievijas Pagaidu valdība ir bijušās cara valdības tiesību mantiniece. Savukārt sociāldemokrāti un daļa nacionālistu politiķu uzskatīja, ka līdz ar cara gāšanu ir beigušās iepriekšējās attiecības starp Somiju un Krieviju. Turklāt starp šiem politiskajiem spēkiem pastāvēja domstarpības par augstākās valsts varas sadalījumu starp Senātu un parlamentu. Sociāldemokrātiem bija lielākais vairākums parlamentā, un šis politiskais spēks uzstāja, ka tieši parlamentam jābūt augstākai valsts varas struktūrai. Savukārt labējie politiskie spēki vēlējās, lai augstāko valsts varu realizē Senāts kā kreiso un labējo kompromisa koalīcija.

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