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The winter war: A study of Russo-Finnish diplomacy 1938-1940

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THE WINTER WAR:
A STUDY OF RUSSO-FINNISH DIPLOMACY 1938-1940

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PREFACE

It is the purpose of this study to shed some light on the diplomacy which took place between Finland and the Soviet Union from 1938 to 1940. That the Finns successfully met and blocked Russian efforts to make Finland a part of the U.S.S.R. is a fact. Now it is for the historian to seek out and evaluate how and why this was possible. Because of the propinquity of Finland to Russia and her century of existence as a Grand Duchy of Czarist Russia, the Finns have come to know and understand the Russian mind and thought. Herein lies the validity of a study of this nature for in the present world situation there is a need on the part of the West to understand and evaluate Russian Foreign policy. Through the study of the manner in which the Finnish government conducted and still conducts its relations with the Soviet Union the Western Powers may well find a clue to a means of meeting an aggressive and dynamic Russian policy.

The author wishes to thank the staff of the Gene Eppley Library for their valuable assistance rendered during the months required to complete this project. Appreciation is also expressed to Mrs. Ruth Konttinen of Suomi College and the Finnish-American Library, Hancock, Michigan, for the invaluable aid rendered in securing many of the sources used in this study. Especial thanks are due Dr. A. Stanley Trickett, Chairman of the Department of History of the University of Omaha, for the continual interest, patience, and innumerable constructive criticisms extended during the preparation of this study. Without the assistance of above-mentioned persons, the completion of this work would have been infinitely more difficult.

R.W.C.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION[1]

Somewhere about the beginning of the Christian era there appeared in a land of lakes and forests, bordered by the Baltic Sea on the south and southwest, Sweden and Norway on the west and northwest, and Russia on the east, a people whom Tacitus called the Fenni. These were the ancestors of the present-day Finns, the inhabitants of Finland or in Finnish, Suomi. Many conjectures have been made concerning the origin of these people, but it is generally conceded by contemporary scholars that they originally made their home in the vicinity of the Ural mountains and along the Volga River. This does not mean, however, that they are related to the Teutons, Slavs, or Mongols. They are ethnologically related to the Votjaks, Chermis, and Ostjaks in Central Russia while linguistically, Finnish belongs to the Finno-Uric language group and is related to Estonian and, more distantly, to Hungarian. "This lingistic affinity, however, has had no influence on the development of Finnish institutions. More recent and prolonged contacts with Indo-European peoples, notably Scandanavians, are today dominant in Finnish culture."[2]

For the first millenium or so of their occupation of the present

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[1]The following chapter is based mainly on Mantere and Sarva, Keskikoulun Suomen Historia, (Porvoq, Finland: Werner Soderstrom Osakeyhtiö, 1951), pp. 1-344, and Anatole Mazour, Finland between East and West, (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1956), pp. 1-93, unless otherwise noted.

[2]Heikki Waris, Social Institutions in Finland, (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1938), p. 196.

area called Finland, the Finns lived a primitive life. The Roman historian Tacitus described them as ". . . squalidly poor; neither arms nor homes have they; their food is herbs, their clothing skins, their bed the earth. . . ."[3] But in one sense they could not be blamed for this, for the land they came to settle was far from salubrious; with a harsh climate, poor soil, and a summer season too short for much serious farming.[4] The rigorous climate and their precarious existence served to harden the nature of the Finns and did much to mold their character to what it is today. This character was well summarized by the nineteenth century Finnish historian and novelist, Zachris Topelius, in the following manner:

> The general traits of their character are: hardened, patient strength; resignation; perserverence allied to a certain obstinacy; a slow, contemplative way of thinking; an unwillingness to become angry, but a tendency when anger has been aroused, to indulge in unmeasured wrath; coolness in deadly peril, but caution afterwards; inclination for waiting, deferring, living for the day, interrupted sometimes by unseasonable haste; adherence to the old and well-known, an aversion to anything new; attention to duty; law-abiding habit of mind; love of liberty; hospitality; honesty; a predeliction for religious meditation revealing itself in true piety, which, however, is apt to have too much respect for the mere letter. . . ."[5]

The Finns had need of such characteristics in the course of their history. As a nation situated at the crossroads of two civilizations, it was the meeting ground of conflicting ideas and ideology. In a word, Finland has been the cockpit in which Russia and Sweden have met to settle

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[3]The Complete Works of Tacitus, Germany 46, tran. A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1942).

[4]Finland is situated between 59° 39' 10" and 70° 05' 30" north latitude with approximately one-third of her total area lying above the Arctic Circle. She has 60,000 lakes occupying nine per cent of her total

their differences.

THE GRAND DUCHY OF FINLAND: SWEDISH RULE

One of the most decisive events in the history of Finland occurred in 1157 when King Erik (St. Erik, the patron saint of Sweden) with Henry, an Englishman appointed Bishop of Uppsala, set forth on a crusade to subdue the heathen Finns. His aim was to convert them to Christianity, and incidentally, to expand his own domains and forestall further Russian inroads into the area. In 1172 the first Finnish historical document appeared in the form of a Bull addressed by Pope Alexander III to the Bishop of Uppsala complaining of the difficulty in containing the Finns and their refusal to remain true to the Christian faith.[6] This points up at this early date that resistance to innovation which Topelius was to remark on many centuries later.

In 1219 the first Bishop of Finland was appointed with the diocesan seat at Turku (Aabo). Strained relations between Sweden and the Russian state of Novgorod resulted and reached such a state that in 1240 the Bishop dispatched an army composed of Swedes and

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area, while 71 per cent of the land area is forested, thirteen per cent is arable and ten per cent is waste land. (Based on Jukka Miesman, ed., Facts about Finland, Paul Sjoblom, tran. (Helsinki: Otava Publishing Co., 1955), pp. 3-4.

[5]Quoted in J. Hampden Jackson, Finland (New York: Macmillan Co., 1940), p. 20.

[6]David Hinshaw, Heroic Finland (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons 1952), p. 5.

German Knights of the Sword against Novgorod. The effort proved fruitless and left the Russians in control of Karelia where they remained until 1293 when Torgils Knutson, a Swede, led a crusade to convert the Karelians to Roman Christianity. His efforts were crowned with success, western Karelia was occupied and Viipuri (Viborg) Castle was built as the easternmost outpost of the Swedish domains. Success did not mean peace, however, for the two states continued to clash sporadically until 1293 when the Peace of Pähkinäsaari (Nöteborg or Schlüsselburg) was concluded by King Magnus Eriksson with Novgorod.

The peace treaty for the first time delineated the Finnish borders by establishing an eastern demarcation line between Swedish and Russian claims in Finland. The first period of Swedish conquest in Finland ended with the western part of Viipuri province as part of the Swedish kingdom known as Finnish Karelia while the eastern portion was called Russian or Outer Karelia. From this time on, most of modern Finland was to remain under Swedish rule and to develop as a nation sharing as part of its inheritances the massive tradition that belongs to the West. Under the auspices of a benevolent Swedish administration, while at times neglectful, the Finns were to be inculcated with the concepts of the inherent dignity of men, individual freedom, and political independence. Though she was an integral part of the Swedish kingdom, Finland always stood apart as a special land or province, free to live by her own customs and laws as passed by her own local assemblies.

Despite the favorable conditions under which she was incorporated into Sweden, all was not well in Finland. A small group of dominating,

arbitrary, and privileged Swedish nobility came into being, who took little or no interest in the country, other than to mulct it of whatever they could. The situation was aggravated by the distance between Finland and Sweden and the difficulty of traversing that distance, as well as by the decentralized nature of the Swedish government during the late Middle Ages. It had always been the practice of the Swedes to elect their kings, and such leaders wielded real power only during the time of war. Central, royal, authority was a negligible factor during peace-time and each land or province had its own assemblies and was governed by its own laws and customs with little interference on the part of the elected monarch. In addition, while a privileged nobility existed, the nobles were never able to make serfs of the common people. These segments of society remained essentially free people throughout the whole history of Sweden and Finland where the peasant always enjoyed the right of holding land in his own name.

Many clashes occurred on Finnish soil during the period from 1323 to 1523 when Gustaf I Vasa ascended the throne of Sweden to end the Kalmar Union and initiate the meteoric rise of Sweden to a predominant position in Europe. An eminently capable statesman, able soldier, and incomparable ruler, Gustaf Vasa consolidated his domains into a nation in the truest sense of the word, brought the Lutheran religion from Germany to his people, and stabilized the government by making the crown hereditary. In regard to Finland, he began a program of colonization in her eastern parts, established Helsinki in 1550 as part of the same program, and declared Finland a Grand

Duchy under his son John in 1556.

During the next two centuries Finland gave her young men, her money, and her heart to the Swedish kings as they strove to complete Swedish ascendency in the Baltic. Finnish soldiers made the backbone of the Swedish armies as they marched back and forth across Europe until that fatal day in 1718 when the brilliant but erratic Charles XII met his death after having seen Sweden humbled by defeat. By the Peace of Uusikaupunki (Nystadt) all the territory that had been gained in Karelia by the earlier Peace of Stolbova (1617), i.e. Kakisalmi (Kexholm) and Inkerimaa (Ingria), plus Viipuri, were lost to the Russians. The cession of Viipuri was considered especially necessary by the Romanov Czar, Peter the Great, for the defense of his newly founded capital city, St. Petersburg, on the Neva.

Though Finland remained a part of Sweden for another century, the die had been cast and it was only a matter of time until Russia should decide that the anomalous situation of Finland threatened her position on the Baltic. Sweden, however, had not forgotten her former glory and twice during the ensuing century attempted to wrest the lost territories back from the Russians. These were but the death convulsions, however, of a once powerful nation and both were destined to fail. The first occurred in 1741 and lasted until 1743 when the Peace of Turku was signed and with the signing went the rest of Viipuri province. Again in 1788 Gustaf III threw his nation into war in an effort to regain what had been lost. His attempt ended in failure, but proved that a considerable part of the Finnish nobility desired to separate Finland from Sweden, even if

this were only possible under the sponsorship of Russia. The desire for Finnish independence found expression in the efforts of some of the Finnish nobility to exploit the Anjala League episode.[7] The plotters' motivating factor was the retention of their privileged status in Finland which had become threatened by the increased authority of the king after 1772. They also hoped that an independent Finland might prove valuable enough as a buffer between Sweden and Russia to prevent further conquest and desolation at the hands of the stronger northern powers. Among the leaders of this group were J. A. Jägerhorn, Klick, and General Sprengtporten. These men journeyed to the court of Catherine II to seek her aid in the establishment of a Finnish republic. Catherine evaded the issue, stating that such a project could be undertaken only by duly appointed authorities of the Finnish people. Disappointed, the men returned to Finland, where the plotting was soon exposed. They fled back to Russia to seek protection and remained there until 1809, when Czar Alexander I assumed the role of Grand Duke of Finland. Peace was restored in 1790, with neither side having gained or lost any territory as a result of the episode.

During the twilight of Swedish rule, there was only one other development of any importance, the confirmation by Gustaf III of the

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[7]The so-called Anjala League was headed by K. H. Klick and others who claimed that Gustaf III had acted unconstitutionally by going to war without the *Riksdag's* consent. They planned to kidnap the king and bring about an independent settlement with Russia themselves.

fundamental laws of the kingdom consisting of two acts: the "Form of Government of 1772" and the "Act of Union and Safety of 1789". Both of these acts were of especial importance for Finland in that they served as the basis of Finnish law down to 1917. The "Form of Government" kept the power of the purse in the hands of the Riksdag but the king retained the power to summon and dismiss the parliamentary body. It also provided that the three non-noble Estates could outvote the Estate of Nobles. The "Act of Union and Safety of 1789" was designed to place the power over foreign affairs entirely in the hands of the monarch while still delegating the Riksdag power to control finance.

THE GRAND DUCHY OF FINLAND: RUSSIAN RULE

During the Napoleonic wars the French desire to complete the Continental Blockade by excluding the British from the Baltic led to an alliance with Denmark and to open negotiations with Sweden. Sweden for her part adamantly refused to take orders from the Emperor or to join him in his grandiose schemes to conquer her northern neighbors. Napoleon then turned to Alexander I of Russia and concluded the Treaty of Tilsit (1807) to which was appended several secret clauses, one concerned with Finland. By it, Russia was granted the right to annex Finland as compensation for the war which the Czar agreed to wage against Sweden to punish her for her perversity.

In February of 1808 the Czar's armies invaded Finland in conjunction with those of Denmark which attacked Sweden from the south.[8]

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[8]Jackson, op. cit., p. 46.

Sweden's military forces moved into action like a rusty machine and, led by old and incompetent generals, failed to halt the invaders. In a short time the Swedish armies felt the onus of defeat as Suomenlinna, the "Gibraltar of the North" fell without a short being fired. For all practical purposes the fall of this vital fortress sealed the fate of Finland, although the rank and file of the Finnish populace, long innoculated with a hatred for anything Russian, continued the uneven struggle. Fighting for home and field, the small force of 12,000 peasants under the leadership of Adlercreutz, Döblen and Sandels fought on against some 55,000 Russian troops for five months longer.[9] Finally, on September 17, 1809, the Swedes and Finns capitulated and the Peace of Hamina (Fredrikshamn) was drawn up, whereby, Sweden surrendered all of Finland to the Czar.

Alexander had anticipated the final peace by about six months when he summoned a Finnish rump Parliament to meet at Porvoo (Borgaa) and declared his intention to incorporate the nation into his empire as an autonomous Grand Duchy. Finland was to become "a self-governing part--the only self-governing part--of the empire. Its constitution, laws, courts, church, and religion (Lutheran), educational system and economic life were left almost wholly unchanged. Thus, autonomous Finland was able to carry on, after 1809, on the basis which the preceding centuries had given to the nation".[10] Only control of

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[9]Ibid., p. 49.

[10]John Wuorinen, ed., Finland and the Second World War--1939--1944 (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 5.

foreign policy was to rest in the hands of the Imperial government of Russia.

The Finland that was annexed to Russia in 1809 was economically poor with a predominantly agrarian population that had not as yet modernized its methods of cultivation. At the time the population stood at about 863,000. In 1811 the figure reached 1,053,000 when Käkisalmi and Inkerinmaa in Karelia were restored to Finland. Of the total population only 40,800 were urban dwellers with the largest city being Turku which included just over 10,000 people.[11]

Throughout the century that preceded World War I, Finland made great strides in the direction of modernization; farming began to be conducted scientifically after the opening of several schools of agriculture; industrialization began after 1870 when textile mills were established at Tampere and when the increased use of the circular saw expanded the lumber industry. In 1866 laws were enacted establishing a primary school system and by 1875 public secondary schools were operating. Steamships made their appearance about the middle of the century and by 1870 railroads began to ease transportation problems. After 1880 the telephone came into common use, having been preceded by the telegraph about mid-century. By the end of the century, the population had increased to 3,250,000 with more than 500,000 urban

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[11] John Wuorinen, Nationalism in Modern Finland (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 29.

dwellers available to meet the demands for industrial labor.[12]

For all that they enjoyed a special status in the Empire, and though their own customs, laws, and culture still obtained, there was a good deal of unrest among the intellectuals in the Grand Duchy. This was in part due to the retention by the old Swede-Finn nobility of the control of government and their insistence of retaining Swedish as the only legal language in courts, schools, Diet, Senate, and for all official documents. The intellectuals who centered around the University of Turku[13] were the first to realize the anomaly of the situation and longed to change it. They believed with Adolf Ivar Arvidsson that: "Swedes we are no longer; Russians we cannot be; therefore, we must become Finns." In order to achieve this end the Lauantaina Seura (Saturday Society) came into being to promulgate the use of the Finnish language as a literary medium. Its leaders were men like Johan Ludvig Runeberg, writer of the Finnish national anthem, "Maamme Laulu" ("Our Land"), and Elias Lönnrot, the collector of the songs and rhymes which he edited to form the Kalevala, the national epic of Finland. "Differing widely in outlook, training and temperament, they [the members of the Lauantaina Seura] were united in the faith that the future of the country lay with the peasants."[14]

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[12] Wourinen, Finland and the Second World War, p. 6.

[13] The University of Turku was founded in 1640 and remained there until the disastrous fire that destroyed most of the city in 1827. The University was moved to Helsinki in that year and has since been called the University of Helsinki.

[14] Jackson, op. cit., p. 54.

Too late to belong to the Lauantaina Seura but still an influential figure in the efforts to make Finnish more than the language of the peasantry was Alexis Kivi, dramatist, and novelist. Johan Wilhelm Snellman, professor, senator, reformer, and one of the foremost of nineteenth century nationalists, also looms large as one of those who recognized the importance of a national language as a distinct necessity for the propagation of national unity. It was due to his unstinting efforts that Finnish was raised to equality with Swedish in all areas of national life. By causing it to become a part of all school curricula and making it incumbent upon all officials to be able to use Finnish as well as Swedish, he ensured the Finnish language its deserved position in the life of the nation.

During the liberal reign of Alexander II (1855-1881) Finland fared well, her economy was boosted and for the first time in fifty years a meeting of the Diet was summoned in 1863. It was during his reign that most of the nineteenth century improvements in life were effected and that Finland was allowed considerable autonomy in national affairs. With his assassination in 1881, however, his son, Alexander III (1881-1894), took a less benevolent view of Finnish nationalist aspirations. In 1891 the first overt violations of the Finnish constitution occurred with direct Russian interference in the Finnish postal system, customs regulations, and financial policy. Alexander III, however, was sensitive to Finnish feeling and when vehement protests were voiced, he allowed the matter to drop. Not so his successor, Nicholas II (1894-1917), who under the guidance and advice of his mentor, K. P. Pobedonostsev, began a policy of harsh measures to obviate any

nationalistic aspirations on the part of the minority groups in the empire. With Pobedonostsev as a motivating factor, there was initiated a vigorous campaign to crush out all forms of nationalism, except, of course, Great Russian.

The Russification program soon gained impetus; Russian was made the official language in many areas of Finnish government; and appointment of Russian officials in the Finnish civil service became common. Oil was poured on the fire in 1898, when in February an Imperial Manifesto declared that henceforth all Finnish Parliamentary acts must be approved by the Governor-General, then forwarded to the Russian Duma for final approval. As if this were not bad enough, the Duma was delegated authority to pass bills that concerned the internal affairs of the Grand Duchy, something which had been expressly denied the Imperial Government by Alexander I. To make matters worse, in August of the same year, N. I. Bobrikov was appointed Governor-General. The historian Anatole Mazour says of him:

> Bobrikov's stamina was as admirable as his political acumen was deplorable. Flexible as a concrete block, imaginative as the proverbial Tsarist bureaucrat, blindly loyal to the imperial idea, and totally void of any insight into the true nature of the issues at stake, the new governor general set out with a hard-fisted policy immediately to administer the Grand Duchy of Finland in a manner of a colonial satrap.[15]

Further interference in Finnish affairs followed. The Finnish army was incorporated into the imperial army in 1901. A declaration in 1899 stated that all matters of imperial concern would be decided by

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[15] Mazour, op. cit., p. 17.

the Duma and that its pronouncements would be effective throughout the empire, including Finland. In the future only matters clearly and exclusively concerned with Finland could be acted on by the Finnish Diet and the power of deciding what those matters might be was vested in a specially appointed committee that would meet in St. Petersburg. Thus, almost in an instant Finnish autonomy was swept away.

The initial reaction in Finland was one of passive resistance and non-cooperation as urged by most political leaders, clergymen, and scholars. However, when repeated attempts to have the situation rectified by petitions to the Czar proved useless and showed that Bobrikov's policies had the imperial government's full approval, resistance began to stiffen. Bobrikov on his part had not been idle; he placed a stringent censorship on all papers that advocated passive resistance or that attacked his policies, jailed those who dared to oppose him, and sought in every way possible to stem the tide of popular opinion. A Russian language newspaper was established in Helsinki, Russian-born subjects were given the right to hold property in Finland, the use of Russian was made mandatory in the Senate, and the teaching of Russian in the schools was intensified. Freedom of assembly was abolished in 1901, and in 1902, Bobrikov was granted virtual dictatorial powers, including the right to dismiss judges, civil servants, and police officers, all of whom were, of course, replaced by Russians. Such measures only served to infuriate the populace until finally the earlier attitude of passive resistance and sullen submission gave way to violence.

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In June, 1904, Bobrikov was assassinated, and in 1905, concurrent with the general strike in Russia and Russo-Japanese War, the Finns also struck. The result was the repeal of the Manifesto of 1899, the Russian language no longer required in the schools or in the Senate, disclaiment of Russians from entry into the Finnish civil service, and the reduction of the powers of the Governor-General. In keeping with the general improvement of her position in the empire, the Finnish Constitution was revamped in 1906. The Diet was made unicameral, with the Senate serving as a court, the Estates were abolished, and universal sufferage was initiated for all men and women twenty-four years of age or older.[16] At the same time freedom of speech, press, and assembly, were constitutionally assured.

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For a time all went well for Finland as the Czarist regime recuperated from the blows it had received. But another period of Russification was to follow with the advent of Peter A. Stolypin, a reactionary who hated all liberal and socialist movements. In 1908, F. A. Seyn was appointed Governor-General of Finland and the question of the ultimate position of Finland in the empire was again raised. Under Seyn, Russian-born subjects were once more made equal to the Finns in Finland, Russian was to be taught in all schools, and all laws passed by the Finnish Diet had to be approved by the Duma and the Russian State Council. These measures met with spirited resistance from Finnish legislators and judges. The Russian answer was to deport to Siberia those who opposed the changes. But neither repeated dissolution

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[16]Finland was the first nation in Europe to enfranchise women, and the second in the world after New Zealand.

of the Diet nor the deportation of legislators, newspaper editors, and others, served to curb the mounting resentment of the Finnish people.

Several years were to elapse before the breaking point was reached. This was occasioned by the First World War which brought unprecedented economic prosperity to Finland as she fed the insatiable appetite of the Russian war machine. On the surface the situation appeared calm and serene, but beneath the surface there was a deep-seated unrest and feeling of disaffection that only awaited the proper moment to manifest itself. That moment arrived in March, 1917, when Alexander Kerensky and his followers toppled the Czarist regime and established a new social and political order. Although concerned with the multitude of questions connected with the conduct of the war, settlement of the age-old problem of land reforms, and the immediate problems of establishing the new government, one of the first things the provisional government did was to restore to Finland her constitution and to repeal the oppressive laws of the preceding decade. Acts of political amnesty brought back many of the Finnish exiles, who aided the cause of Finland during the trying months ahead.

The provisional government regardless of its good intentions and the friendly attitude of Kerenski, vascilated on the issue as to where the vanished power of the crown should reside. Finnish statesmen pressed for an answer to this question and, when none was forthcoming, they sized the initiative in July, 1917, and declared that henceforth the power of the crown in Finland resided in the Finnish Diet. They further declared that all matters pertaining to Finland would be decided by the Diet in keeping with the concept of national

self-determination, although military matters and foreign policy were left in the hands of the Russian provisional government. This amounted to a virtual declaration of Finnish independence and has since come to be known as the Independence Bill.[17]

Independence and Civil War

The decision of the Diet to declare Finland independent except for control of the army and foreign affairs was flatly rejected by the provisional government. Kerensky ordered the dissolution of the Diet and called for new elections to be held in October to determine the attitude of the nation. At the time the Social Democrat Party had a clear majority in the Diet, holding 103 of the 200 seats, and controlled the government. It was their desire to maintain a link with Russian that had led to the clause leaving control of the army and foreign affairs to the Russian government. When the election results became known, the Social Democrats had lost eleven seats, reducing their number to 92, which portended ill for the future relationship between Finland and Russia.[18]

The election results reflected the uneasiness of the more conservative elements in the nation over the alarming number of strikes which had been called by the radicals and the tendency toward violence throughout the summer and autumn. As they had campaigned on a platform of autonomy within the Russian state, the Social Democrats were compro-

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[17]Wuorinen, Nationalism in Modern Finland, p. 219.

[18]Jackson, op. cit., pp. 85-87.

mised by the November Revolution in Russia and the advent of the Bolsheviks. Nationalist aspirations in Finland were advanced by this event and bourgeois parties wasted no time in setting the wheels of the Diet in motion. On November 15, the Diet proclaimed that by virtue of the Constitution of 1772, supreme power resided with it. Then in keeping with the Finnish characteristic of waiting and watching, a couple of weeks elapsed as "the Diet members and the people of Finland waited with fear and anxiety for the heavens to fall. When the skies continued to remain in their immemorial place and no threat of retribution came from St. Petersburg, the Diet took the momentous step on December 6, 1917, and drafted a declaration of independence which formally proclaimed Finland to be a sovereign state."[19] Recognition by the Soviet government was accorded on January 4, 1918, and most of the outside world followed suit in short order.

That Russia accorded recognition was due to political necessity. She was too weak to oppose the Finns and internal problems preoccupied the Soviet leaders. The Bolsheviks had hoped that a revolution in Finland led by the Social Democrates, might ultimately have created a regime in the former Grand Duchy friendly to the Soviets and recognition did not mean that Lenin and Trotsky had given up hope for a proletarian revolt in Finland. As Mazour so succinctly states:

> Soviet recognition was granted in principle; that is, it stated that Finland's declaration of independence was in conformity with the principle of the right of self-determination declared by the Bolsheviks; it did not imply approval of the "bourgeois government"

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[19]Hinshaw, op. cit., p. 37.

> nor could it be interpreted as a pledge to honor such a government as "bourgeois international law" prescribes. At an opportune moment revolution might come and the Bolsheviks would feel free to extend a helping hand to the rightful claimant to power.[20]

In keeping with their hopes of a revolution in Finland, the Russians made little or no effort to withdraw their troops from Finnish territory as they had agreed to do earlier. This left a contingent of about 40,000 undisciplined and revolutionary inflamed troops in the country who were to be a source of trouble in the months to follow.

Meanwhile, the tensions already existent between the socialist and middle-class elements in Finland were heightened by the presence of armed groups known as the Red Guard and White Guard. The White Guard had been organized as a Civil Defense corps during the summer of 1917 to maintain order in Helsinki and to restrain the Russian troops. Elsewhere in the nation the White Guards were organized under the guise of fire brigades and sports clubs. Suspicious of the motives behind these groups and suspecting their political affiliations because of their middle-class and peasant composition, the Social Democrats organized a counter-organization among the laboring-class, with the first units formed in the industrial city of Tampere. Similar groups were soon formed throughout the nation with the avowed aim of protecting the interests of the working-class and defending them against attacks from their social foes. By December the Red Guard had expanded its activities and came to be headed by a small revolutionary committee on much the same order as that in control in Petrograd.

With the passage of time it became clear that the Red Guard

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[20] Mazour, op. cit., p. 46.

was bent on revolution of the Soviet type with the aid of the Soviet government. For their part, the middle-class parties hoped to maintain the status quo with the aid of the White Guard, and, if necessary, with the help of Germany. To put an end to the impasse, Svinhufvud, the President of the Senate, decided to open negotiations with Germany and to enact a conscript law for the country. As a first step, he initiated negotiations to have the 27th Jäger Battalion, a group of about 2,000 Helsinki University students who had been clandestinely sent to Germany for military training between 1914 and 1916, returned to Finland to serve as the core of the new conscript army.

The stage was now set for a decisive struggle. On 28 January, 1918, the Reds struck, seizing the government buildings in Helsinki and ordering the local Red Guard units in other cities to take similar action. The coup d'etat accomplished, Finland was proclaimed a Socialist Workers' Republic differing in only one respect from that of Russia: in Finland the parliamentary form of government was retained.

Instead of creating a workers' republic, however, the Social Democrats had plunged the nation into a civil war which later became known as the War of Liberation. Marshal Karl G. Mannerheim in his Memoirs defends the use of the term War of Liberation when he states:

> The action which I started was directed against the Russian troops that had remained in Finland despite the recognition of the Soviet Government. The open warfare now begun was, therefore, a war of liberation. The fact that subsequent operations were directed against Russians as well as against our own rebels [sic] did not alter this fact, for which neither the legitimate government nor its army was responsible. The guilt rested solely on the leaders of the rebels.[21]

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[21] Karl Gustaf Mannerheim, Memoirs, tran. Eric Lewenhaupt, (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1953), P. 141.

Events moved quickly as the government headed by Svinhufvud fled to Vaasa to prepare for the coming struggle. Luckily, they had the services of General Mannerheim around which the Civil Guard could rally and to give their army the leadership requisite to carry it to victory. The first thing that needed to be undertaken was the expulsion of the Russian troops from Southern Ostrobothnia (February, 1917), who the White government feared would join up with the insurgents and supply them with the arms and equipment they needed. Mannerheim decided to strike quickly, although he was seriously handicapped by the lack of arms and trained officers. Moving swiftly, the Whites disarmed the Russians in the Southern Ostrobothnia in four days and then proceeded to secure the gains they had made.[22]

Armed with the captured weapons of the Russians and reinforced by the end of February with the returned Jäger Battalion plus the timely arrival of a contingent of Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian volunteers as well as 84 officers of the Swedish army, Mannerheim prepared to attack Tampere, the center of the Red resistance.[23] On April 3, the attack was begun and after three days of furious fighting, during which the Red forces put up a valiant effort, Tampere fell and the way was opened for the conquest of the rest of Finland.[24]

In the meantime, much to Mannerheim's displeasure,[25] the Finnish government had enlisted the aid of the Germans, who agreed to

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[22] Ibid., pp. 141-143

[23] Ibid., pp. 147-152.

[24] Ibid., pp. 162-170.

[25] Ibid., p. 155.

send an expeditionary force to help in the liberation. The first German forces landed at Hanko under the leadership of Major General Rüdiger von der Goltz and proceeded to march on Helsinki from the southwest while the Finnish forces moved in from the north. At the report of the approaching forces the Red government fled the capital which fell with hardly any resistance. A few days after the arrival of von der Goltz, a second German force landed at Lovisa and advanced inland and aided in cutting off the Red army in the east. Within a short time all of Finland was in the hands of the White forces, the Red government having fled to Russia.[26]

The war over, the government now faced problems of organization and a basic decision regarding the form of government to be established. It was Svinhufvud's desire to establish a monarchy in Finland on the Swedish model. To facilitate these plans, the Finnish government named Svinhufvud regent, at the same time requesting Kaiser William to name one of his sons King of Finland. The Kaiser declined the offer for his sons but graciously suggested his brother-in-law, Prince Friedrich Karl of Hesse, for the honor. The Diet elected him and the Prince accepted, but when the German cause was lost in the fall of 1918, he very diplomatically asked to be relieved of the honor. These events led to the fall of Svinhufvud as regent and the summoning of Mannerheim to fill the position.

From the beginning Mannerheim realized the necessity of connecting the Finnish cause with the victorious Allied powers and proceeded

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[26] Ibid., pp. 171-176.

to steer Finland towards republicanism and on 17 June, 191, the Diet proclaimed the state the Republic of Finland. During the succeeding months the government was faced by a congeries of problems, domestic and foreign that appeared almost insurmountable. The economy was prostrate, the problem of the prisoners taken during the war remained to be tried, food was in great shortage, while there was the problem of Karelia and the settlement of border problems with Russia. The first problem the government had to grapple with was of the food supply. This was met by the shipment of grain from the United States. An amnesty bill released some 43,000 interned prisoners from the internment camps in December, 1919, but it was several years before all of them finally were released. Before the final groups were set free some 125 were put to death for their part in the Civil War.[27]

Foreign problems, especially the future of Karelia, plagued the new government. It had been the hope of Mannerheim and other Finnish nationalists that the land of the Kalevala would ultimately be restored to Finland. A half-hearted war-time effort on the part of the British to utilize this desire as a means of stopping German penetration into Finland, as well as to keep Russia in the war through the quashing of the Bolshevik government,had yielded no final result. After several further desultory attempts, all was given up and in 1920 the Finns and Russians sat down to negotiate a treaty to delimit the boundaries between the two countries. The negotiators met at Tartu (Dorpat) in the fall of 1920 and there it was determined that Eastern Karelia should belong to the Soviet government, although its autonomy was to be respected.

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[27] Jackson, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

For her part, Finland received Western Karelia, except for the frontier provinces of Repola and Porajärvi which were given to the Soviet Union in order to assure the military defense of Leningrad. In the north, the Finns received the ice-free Arctic Ocean port of Petsamo (Petchenga) "Forever to be owned by Finland with full rights of sovereignty, and Russia renounces in favor of Finland all her rights and title over the territory thus ceded."[28] It was further agreed that the islands belonging to Finland in the Gulf of Finland should be neutralized: Someri, Narvi, Peninsaari, Lavansaari, Suur Tytärsaari, Piene Tytärsaari, and Rodakär.[29]

The Treaty of Tartu was to prove of great legal value to Finland when the Kremlin presented its demands for concessions in the Gulf of Finland and the Karelian Isthmus in 1939. It provided the basis for many of the Finnish rejections of the Soviet demands for concessions and later served as a basis for the Finnish negotiators during the armistice talks in March, 1940. (See Appendix A, p. 159).

Apart from these boundary problems with her eastern neighbor, the Finnish government was involved with Sweden in dispute over the Aaland Islands. It has been Sweden's desire to incorporate the archipelago into Sweden on the grounds that the population was almost entirely Swedish speaking and desired union with Sweden rather than to remain a part of Finland. However, since 1809 the islands had been an administrative unit within Finland and after declaring her independence,

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[28] Treaty of Tartu reprinted in full, Appendix I, Mazour, op. cit., p. 214.

[29] Ibid., p. 215.

she included the Aaland Islands as part of Finland. This was of rather great concern for Sweden, as the islands in unfriendly hands posed a threat to her security. After the Crimean War the islands had been demilitarized but, during the First World War, Russia had gained the assent of the Allies to fortify them. A Swedish military expedition was dispatched to the islands in February, 1918, for the ostensible purpose of preserving order and saving lives. Finnish chagrin could not change the situation, but the later arrival of German troops in May did, and the Swedes were forced to evacuate.

When the war ended the question was still unsettled. The islanders sent a deputation to the Paris Peace Conference to request that they be allowed to decide their own political future by plebescite. Too many matters of greater importance faced the delegates at the Peace Conference to allow them to take up the question. It was promised that the matter would be given careful consideration, but nothing was done.

Finland siezed the initiative in May, 1919, by enacting a decree granting the islanders a degree of autonomy. This was not enough for the local population and a deputation was sent to Stockholm to urge that Sweden annex the Archipelago. The Finnish government replied by sending an armed occupation force into the islands and arrested the delegation when it returned from Stockholm. For a time it appeared as though the matter would lead to war between Sweden and Finland, but the timely intervention of the British Government resulted in the matter being referred to the Council of the League of Nations in late summer, 1919.

A committee was appointed to investigate the situation and it was decided that it was within the competence of the League to adjudicate

the matter. Finnish sovereignty was recognized but the proviso was inserted that the islands be assured an autonomous status in the Finnish Republic. Sweden was further pacified in the fall of 1921, when the demilitarization of the archipelago was considered. Great Britain, Sweden, Italy, France, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, and Finland all signed a Convention to guarantee such status, although Russia, a vitally interested party in the Aaland question, was neither invited to the Conference, asked for an opinion, or invited to become a signatory to the Convention. Thus, a potential threat to Sweden was obviated, autonomy and cultural freedom was assured the islanders and a possible Northern war averted.

On the domestic scene during the twenties many of the problems that vexed the nation before independence still remained. One of the most important of these was the condition of the peasant population largely consisting of tenant farmers with small holdings whose existence was at the mercy of the landholders. To make land holdings more equitable, the government passed the Lex Kallio, in 1922, to expand the basis of land ownership. It provided for government purchase of land from the larger landholders and its resale to the peasants under long-term sales contracts.

Another immediate problem for the government was the rapid revival of the Finnish Communist party after its defeat in 1918. In 1920 the government had granted legal recognition to the party by allowing it to hold a constituent meeting under the name of Finland's Socialist Worker's Party. In the election of 1922, the Communists returned twenty-seven representatives to the Diet, most of whom were elected at the expense

of the Social Democrats.[30] Throughout the first post-war decade the Communists kept up their political agitation, propaganda, and terrorist tactics, infiltrating the labor unions and in general attempting to upset the established social order.[31] With the difficulties encountered in the latter part of the period because of the world wide economic depression, a reaction set in and the usually level-headed Finns became increasingly violent in their opposition to the Communists.

> Increasing discontent and indignation at the paralyzing party quarrels, but most of all at the barefaced treachery of Communist agitation, with its terrorism and hooliganism among the workers had prepared the ground for a reaction which grew little by little until it became an overwhelming popular movement, known under the name of the Lapua Movement. A Communist-engineered disturbance in Lapua at the end of November 1929 provided the signal for a local manifestation of popular anger, which was followed by numerous local meetings and expressions of opinion all over the country. The fears and wishes expressed at these were laid before the government and Riksdag, which still, however, could not bring themselves to alter the course on which they were set.[32]

Led by clergymen and peasants, and taking on a Facist tone, the movement slowly gained momentum and became more violent and terroristic. Communist newspaper plants were invaded, the presses wrecked and the editors and staffs roughly handled. Prominent Communist leaders were often kidnapped and driven to the Russian borders and thrown across the boundary into the Soviet Union. In July, 1930 conservative peasants marched on the capital and forced the government to succumb to their anti-communist demands.[33] As a consequence, the government pro-

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[30]Hugh Shearman, Finland--The Adventures of a Small Power (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1950), p. 80.

[31]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 242-243. [32]Ibid., p. 243.

[33]Mazour, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

hibited the publication of Communist newspapers and Svinhufvud formed a new government which was amenable to the Lapuan demands.

Svinhufvud began by placing the twenty-three Communist members of the Diet under arrest. He then turned to the business of legislative reform. Included in his program was the suppression of the Communist party, the gagging of its press, and the passage of enabling acts to allow rule by special emergency ordinances. Since these were in the nature of constitutional amendments, a two-thirds majority of the Diet would be necessary for passage, plus new elections and passage in the new Diet by a similar two-thirds majority. Knowing that he could not get the necessary support for such action, Svinhufvud utilized another form of parliamentary strategy, i.e. he requested the Diet to adopt the legislation as an emergency act, rather than a constitutional amendment. This required a five-sixths majority, but did not necessitate the holding of an election. However, when this attempt failed, there was nothing left to do but dissolve the Diet and call for an election.[34]

In a state of high excitement and hysteria, punctuated by acts of violence, abductions, and illegal administrative proceedings, the election campaign of October 1930, took place. Following the elections the Social Democrats lacked by one vote the necessary strength to block Svinhufvud's legislation. In November the program was pushed through the new Diet and the Communist Party was outlawed, leftist

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[34] Ibid., p. 86.

labor unions were suspended, and the freedom of the Communist press denied.

Unappeased by these triumphs, the Lapua movement prepared to carry their program to ultimate goals. Led by General Wallenius, the movement undertook a program to restrain representative institutions and replace them by a Fascistic government.[35] Plans were laid for a coup de etat in the early spring of 1932, in support of which, the Lapua leaders sought to enlist the aid of the Civil Guard. When Wallenius ordered a march on Helsinki in March, Svinhufvud decided that the developments made necessary a refusal to bow to the demands of the movement and refused to take additional steps to erradicate communism by further limiting the constitutional rights of the nation.

Negotiations followed the stronger stand of the government and, after some persuasion, the Lapuans were induced to lay down their arms and resume their normal life. Wallenius surrendered a week later and the attempted revolution ended. Some of the participants were tried and sentenced, but prison terms were light and most participants escaped any punishment whatsoever. The following March, however, legislation was passed which banned all Lapua organizations.

A successor to the Lapua movement, known as the Isänmaallinen Kansan Liiks or IKL (National Patriotic League), was organized and took part in the general elections of 1933 but had only small success.

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[35] Shearman, op. cit., p. 82.

In the elections of 1936 the IKL won only fourteen seats, indicating that Finland had regained her political equilibrium and that the trial by terror of the Lapuans was over.

In summing up this movement Hugh Shearman has said:

> The most significant thing about that extremist movement, with its facist characteristics, is not that it arose but that the Finns rejected it, a response which was unhappily all too rare among European nations at that period of history faced with similar temptations to unbalance. The extremist tendencies took their rise and reached their greatest strength during the period in which Finland was suffering most from the effects of the world-wide economic depression.[36]

Thus, after leaning both towards the left and the right, and almost falling into a Facist dictatorship, the Finnish government was stabilized about the middle of the thirties along moderate lines. Thereafter, political orientation was towards neutrality and association with the Scandanavian countries. In the years immediately prior to 1939, the government pursued a policy neither overtly pro-German nor anti-Russian, but one which it hoped would preserve Finnish independence.

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[36] Ibid., p. 84

CHAPTER II

RACING T E STORM

When Svinhufvud was elected president in 1931 with the aid of the Lapua agitators, it had appeared as though Finland were heading down the road leading to a fascist dictatorship. This was not to be, however, for though Svinjufvud agreed with many of the tenets of the movement, he was too temperate to allow such a course to be pursued to its ultimate end. This became clear in his actions to suppress the uprising projected by Wallenius and the fact that upon his election he asked Mannerheim to become Commander-in-chief of the Finnish armed forces. Mannerheim declined this post but agreed to become Chairman of the Defense Council and to assume the role of Commander-in-chief in the event of war.[1]

At the time of the worst agitation on the part of the Lapuans when the Communist Party was outlawed and its activities curtailed, there was great dissatisfaction expressed in Soviet circles. So much had this action disturbed Russia that at the time of the big Lapua demonstration in Helsinki in 1930, the Soviet Union had prepared for war.[2]

Fortunately, nothing resulted from this and once the Lapuan threat was removed in 1935 by the Supreme Court, Finland was approached

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[1] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 265.

[2] Wuorinne, ed., Finland and World War II, 1939-1944, p. 38.

by Russia on the matter of a non-aggression pact. The Russian proposal was in essence the proposal with which Finland had broached Russia in 1927, only to have it refused because the Finns had desired to include a clause requiring arbitration in case of disputes.[3] On January 21, 1932, the treaty was concluded and was ratified on August 9, 1932.

The treaty guaranteed the then existent boundaries between Finland and the Soviet Union as determined by the Peace of Tartu in 1920, which was to ". . . . remain the firm foundation of their relations . . . ."[4] It was further agreed that neither party would in any way undertake aggressive action directed towards the other or enter into agreements or treaties with a third party which would be openly hostile to the other contracting party.[5] It was the fifth article, especially, upon which the Finns based their faith that Russia would not attack after negotiations broke down in November 1939, and it is of interest to quote it here in order that an understanding of Finnish attitude might be reached.

> The High Contracting Parties declare that they will always endeavor to settle in a spirit of justice any disputes of whatever nature or origin which may arise between them, and will resort exclusively to pacific means of such disputes. For this purpose, the High Contracting Parties undertake to submit any disputes which may arise between them . . . . to a procedure of conciliation before a joint conciliation committee . . . ."[6]

Besides the non-aggression pact in April, the Finns agreed to

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[3]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 275; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 39.

[4]"Treaty of Non-Aggression and Pacific Settlement of Disputes between the U.S.S.R.", reprinted in full in Mazour, op. cit., p. 227 ff.

[5]Ibid., p. 228. [6]Ibid.

a convention of conciliation as part of the same treaty. Under this convention the two contracting parties agreed to "submit to a Conciliation Commission for amicable settlement . . . . all disputes of whatsoever nature which may arise between them on account of circumstances occurring after the signature of the Treaty of Non-Aggression and Pacific Settlement of Disputes . . . ."[7] In 1934 the non-aggression pact was renewed until 1945, although the pact of 1932 was not due to expire for almost another year.

Yet signing an agreement such as this with the Soviet Union was to have little or no value in the ensuing years. Russia was by 1933 sufficiently strong to begin to look about her to see whom she might consume as the imperialistic urge began to grow. The Commissar for Foreign Affairs, early in that year, proclaimed that the independence and neutrality of the Baltic nations and Finland was to the advantage of the Soviet Union and stated that the U.S.S.R. was also concerned lest the internal policies of those governments should obviate their independence. In November 1936, a further pronouncement in this same connection was made by the Commissar of Leningrad, A. A. Zhdanov:

> We people of Leningrad sit at our windows looking out at the world. Right around us lie small countries who dream of great adventures or permit great adventurers to scheme within their borders. We are not afraid of these small nations. But if they are not satisfied to mind only their own business, we may feel forced to open our windows a bit wider, and they will find it disagreeable if we have to call upon our Red Army to defend our country.[8]

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[7] "Convention of Conciliation between Finland and the U.S.S.R." reprinted in full in Mazour, op. cit., p. 230.

[8] Quoted in Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 39.

Statements like these were not conducive to the effacement of Finnish doubts concerning the designs of Soviet foreign policy. To meet the contingency of implementation of these statements, Finland undertook to look to her defenses under the guidance of Mannerheim. During the first decade of independence little had been done to bolster the defensive position of the nations, the last full scale maneuvers having taken place in 1927. Most of the equipemtn was of World War I vintage and hence obsolete and virtually worn out.[9]

The first task in Mannerheim's view was to get the necessary appropiations to purchase the requisite arms and equipment to modernize the military machine. For this purpose the Diet approved allocation of 700 million marks to be used over a six year period; of this 75 million marks were earmarked for 1931-32 when it was estimated that the naval fleet should be completed. After that 125 million marks per year were to be spent for indispensible replacements in the army and air force.[10] In the following year (1932) when the budget was again debated and passed, the result was a ten per cent reduction in defense expenditures, mainly for capital appropriations for material replacements. This reduced the share of defense in the total national budget from nineteen to seventeen per cent, ostensibly

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[9] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 267.

[10] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 269 ff; and Julh Kuikkanen, Talvisodan Puolustusministeri Kertoo (Porvoo, Finland: Werner Soderstrom Osakeyhtio, 1951), p. 29.

because of the non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union and the idea of collective security provided by the League of Nations.[11]

For such corner-cutting tactics by the Parliament Mannerheim had very little sympathy. Looking back as he wrote his Memoirs he said that, "We could do without many things in the program of other Ministries, but we could not afford to compromise our security."[12] As a result of the economy-minded Parliament's failure to appropriate sufficient funds to the armed forces only limited maneuvers were conducted in 1932. This was regarded in military circles as a great loss, as ". . . . only an expert could estimate its full implications. Nothing except extensive maneuvers can prepare the troops for the many demands of war . . . . large maneuvers are of extreme importance money used for that purpose is never wasted."[13]

But with what resources were available Finnish military leaders began to prepare for what they recognized as inevitable. Modest preparations were begun on the Karelian Isthmus to block any aggression from that approach. The so-called Mannerheim Line consisting of concrete-fortified machine gun nests and trenches were constructed as well as anti-tank traps composed of stones and concrete. In order to accomplish this work as cheaply as possible, the government utilized some 100,000 unemployed.[14] It is interesting to note here that Mannerheim

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[11] Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 271, 275-276.

[12] Ibid., p. 271. [13] Ibid.

[14] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 272; and Niukkanen, op. cit., p. 26.

was dissatisfied with the fact that only a part of the appropriations for combating unemployment were allocated for this purpose while Niukkanen seemed to feel that they were almost sufficient. To support his stand he gives a table of figures to show how the money was allotted for the three categories the Defense Council had established according to urgency.

Total for fortifications	360,000:
Total for work on 11 roads	6,640,000:
For repairing 7 piers	1,540,000:
For reconditioning of 5 drill grounds	572,000:
Total	9,112,000:[15]

With these modest beginnings, Finnish defenses to the east were gradually made more secure, although even when war broke out their adequacy was questionable.

The next problem which necessitated attention was the matter of army organization. Since the War of Independence the army had been organized on a cadre system and neither mobilization nor deployment could be carried out with the safety and speed requisite for effective defense. Mobilization was reliant on a few garrisons which, because of the overflow of men, equipment, horses, carts, and other material, made good targets for air raids. Perhaps the most disquieting fact about the whole matter was that only a small portion of the peace time army was ready for mobilization and deployment. To counter this precarious situation the Defense Council decided to reorganize the whole military on a territorial basis which would permit creation

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[15] Niukkanen, op. cit., p. 27. The figures quoted are in Finnish marks.

of a larger field army than could the cadre system. Instead of incorporating called-up reserves, under the new plan, divisions could march as units on a war footing from their own territories. It was felt that in this way a fuller utilization of the nation's resources could be made in a more suitable and quicker way.[16]

During the following years a more realistic attitude on the part of the government towards defense expenditures was evident, especially, after the elections of 1936. At the end of 1937 a review of the armed forces of the nation was made, upon which all future recommendations for appropriations were based. For practical reasons the suggested program was divided into two parts: (1) concerning armaments and equipment, and (2) industrial products, machines, raw materials, semi-manufactures, buildings, fortifications, stocks of war requirements, and fuel. The total amount asked for to implement this program was set at 2,910 million marks but, when the Diet had finished with it in February 1938, 200 million marks were pared off, reducing the sum to 2,710 million marks. It was also determined that the program should be carried out over a period of seven years, i.e. through 1945. Defense appropriations in 1938 were twenty-three per cent of the total national budget as against only sixteen per cent in 1937 and in 1939 the proportion for defense rose to thirty per cent of the total.[17] The important thing to be noted from these figures is that there was a definite change in attitude on the part of the Diet

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[16]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 273-4; Niukkanen, op. cit., p. 16 ff.

[17]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 289-291.

members, especially those of the Left, who had always been averse to defense appropriations. They gradually came to realize with Mannerheim and the Defense Council that the needs of defense could no longer be ignored.

This change of atmosphere in government circles can be traced back to the early part of the decade preceding the outbreak of war. At the beginning of the Thirties the world-wide economic depression hit Finland hard and her economy was hard put to maintain itself. When independence from Russia was declared, the nation had almost a century of experience in conducting her domestic affairs as an autonomous Grand Duchy, whereas no such experience had been gained in the areas pertaining to external affairs. Matters had been further complicated by the troubles with Sweden surrounding the Aaland Islands question which had only served to widen the gulf between the two nations. Moreover, the ideal of collective security had been dealt another serious blow in the Twenties by the German-Russian agreements of 1926.

Following the War of Liberation, the young nation based her hopes for remaining outside any future conflict upon the collective system of the League of Nations. When the League abdicated its responsibility for protecting small nations against aggression by failing to halt the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and did nothing about Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, Finnish faith in the League began to falter. Finland began to seek around her for other means of security and to this end she turned to Sweden, when the latter began

to draw up a new scheme of defense in the face of the League's failure. Sweden's preparations were regarded in Finland as a sign of a tougher defensive policy which might open the way for defensive alliance between Finland and Sweden.[18] In keeping with this hope Prime Minister Kivimäki on December 5, 1935, made the following declaration of foreign policy to the Finnish Diet:

> According to Finnish opinion, of all her neighbors, the Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden, run the least risk of being drawn into war or into war-like and dangerous political developments. They, in consequence, enjoy the best possibilities of preserving their neutrality. As it is also in Finland's interest above all to preserve her neutrality, it is natural that Finnish orientation must be towards Scandanavia, to which our country is bound closely by geographical, historical, economic, and cultural bonds. Finland feels bound to maintain a defensive system as far as her economic means permit in order to protect her neutrality, her territorial integrity, and her sovereignty from any danger from wherever it may threaten, thus contributing to the common defense of neutrality for all Nordic countries.[19]

The declaration was unanimously accepted by the Diet, once again showing the world that Finland desired to remain outside of all conflicts between the Great Powers.

As had been stated in the declaration, it was the hope of Finland that Sweden would accept the proffered hand and set about strengthening the defenses of the North in collaboration with Finland. These hopes found barren ground in Sweden, however, for in 1936 Sweden's representatives to the League of Nations declared that the Swedish government was disinclined to enter into any commitments outside those

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[18] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 285.

[19] Quoted in Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 285.

stipulated by the League, even if the commitments were regional in nature.[20] On her part Russia did not regard Finland's Scandinavian orientation as posing a threat to Soviet interests in peace time but she expressed the opinion that war conditions might change this. In the event of war, there was a danger that another Great Power might attack Russia through Finland without her consent or that of Scandanavia.[21]

Finland sought to secure her neutrality through closer collaboration with the Northern Countries by coordinating her defense with theirs, especially with Sweden. To this end the Finnish government undertook with the other Scandanavian states, to free itself from the obligation of sanctions declared by the League of Nations. On July 1, 1936, it was declared on behalf of the Finnish government that as a result of the manner in which the sanctions had been applied to Italy, Finland would reserve her position. Then on May 29, 1938, Finland, concurrently with Sweden and Norway, declared that henceforth every case where sanctions were advocated by the League would be decided on its own merits with Finland reserving judgment as to whether she would abide by the sanctions ordered. The reason given for this action by the Finnish representative to the League was the anxiety and desire of Finland to increase her collaboration with the Northern Countries for the strengthening of common neutrality.[22]

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[20] Ibid., p. 256; and Herbert Tingsten, The Debate on the Foreign Policy of Sweden-1918-1939, tran. Joan Bulman (London: Oxford University Press, 1949) p. 224 ff.

[21] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 286.

[22] Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 291-292; Tingsten, op. cit., pp. 195, 210-211; and Wuorinen, Finland in World War II, p. 41.

That Finno-German relations during the early part of the Thirties when the Lapua Movement was at its peak were very cordial was in part due to the aid rendered by the Germans in the War of Independence and the cultural affinity existent between the two nations. German was commonly used among the educated classes, both in speaking and writing, while many students studied in German schools and universities. The fact that a considerable number of the commissioned officers in the Finnish army were trained in the German forces and that many of the Finnish military concepts were copied from those of Germany also helped cement good relations between the two nations because of the President's strong pro-German sentiments.

But with the Nazi system and its excesses Finland slowly began to withdraw from close German relations in keeping with the Finnish policy of neutrality and collaboration with the Northern States. By 1937 Finnish relations with Germany were becoming definitely cool, if one is to believe the German ambassador, Blücher's dispatch to Berlin on October 15 of that year. In that dispatch Blücher suggests a number of things which might be spoken of on Finnish Foreign Minister Holtsi's visit to Berlin. Among these were Holtsi's trips to Moscow, Stockholm, Copenhagen, London, Paris, Geneva, and Reval, and the attendant efforts to normalize relations with Russia, to place relations with Sweden, Denmark, and Norway on a basis of constant cooperation, to cultivate good relations with Britain and France, to form the closest ties to the League of Nations, and to deepen relations with Estonia. At the same time Finno-German relations were neglected, which was surprising to Blücher since Finland was a Baltic power and had to

consider both the Great Powers in the area, i.e. Germany and the U.S.S.R.[23]

Further reading of this same dispatch indicates that Germany was concerned about economic relations with Finland for mention was made of the concession granted for English nickel mining in the Petsamo region when the Germans were refused consent to build a fish-meal factory in the same area. The Germans were in the main satisfied with other economic matters but disliked the purchase of Air Force materials from Britain and were hopeful that better treatment might be expected in the future.[24]

Upon the arrival of Holtsi in Berlin and this subsequent conversations with the German Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath, the former was assured of Germany's best wishes for Finland. Neurath stated that Germany had only one interest in Finland: "that Finland's independence be preserved, as well as her ability to maintain neutrality under any circumstances that might arise."[25] He went on to say that Finnish foreign policy was determined by her geopolitical position, i.e. Russia as a neighbor in the east and the Baltic on the other side where Germany occupied a dominant position. Therefore, Finland must reckon with two factors and Russia posed the greater threat to her security and independence than did Germany. "So it would be to Finland's own best interest to cultivate good relations with the country that not only was well disposed toward her but that also had

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[23] Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. V (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 533. (Hereafter referred to as DGFP)

[24] Ibid., p. 534. [25] Ibid., p. 537.

a certain interest in the maintenance of her independence, namely Germany."[26]

Germany's concern over Finnish coolness was well founded for the Nazi system came in for acute criticism in Finland. Partly in consequence of that criticism, the position of the German language in Finnish culture came to be considered too prominent. So much so that just before the outbreak of war in 1939, Prime Minister Cajander, who had assumed that office after the 1936 elections, delivered several speeches in which he stated that too much time was devoted to the study of the language and that it occupied a disproportionate position in Finnish cultural life.[27]

For all her alledgedly good intentions and expressions of consideration for Finland's political well-being, Nazi Germany was not the example which Finland chose to follow. When in the spring of 1939, Germany proposed a mutual non-aggressionpact to the Scandanavian countries including Finland, the Finns in conjunction with Sweden and Norway rejected the proposal. At first the Finns stated that they agreed in principle to the non-aggression treaty, but after further study the Finnish envoy to Berlin, A. Wuorimaa, was instructed to issue a written communique to the Berlin government stating that the Finnish government declined to enter into such an agreement with anyone. Cited as the reason behind this was that Finland didn't wish to become a pawn in the politics of Great Power combinations and therefore she did not desire to change the then

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[26] Ibid. [27] Wuorinen, Finland in World War II, p. 12.

existent treaty system.[28]

It was the innate fear of Russia that caused the Finnish government to seek a middle course during the last years before the war and to avoid too close a relationship with Germany. The Finnish desire to be accepted in the Scandanavian bloc also influenced her attitude toward Russia and Germany. In a summary report to Secretary of State, Hull, on September 1, 1937, the U. S. envoy to Russia, Joseph Davies, stated that:

> In all these states Scandanavia and Finland the great concern of foreign policy is to maintain a balance as between Russia and Germany. It is significant that Finland was not accepted in the Scandanavian bloc until Sweden was assured that the relations between Russia and Finland were pacific and friendly. It is their constant effort to maintain strictly correct and formal relations with both countries.[29]

With this in mind Foreign Minister Holtsi had travelled to Moscow in February, 1937, in an effort to counter-balance the criticisms to the effect that the Finnish government was pro-German.[30] While there it became evident that there was a peculiarly deep-seated distrust of Finland in the Kremlin.

> Above all they suspected that Finland was in cooperation with Germany, and that Germany's objective was to attack Russia through Finland. It was claimed, for instance, that the Germans had established poison gas factories in Finland and were building airports in Finland for military purposes. It was naturally impossible to ascertain whether these claims were due to the stupidity of Russian spies, or whether they were arguments invented for the occasion.[31]

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[28] DGFP, Series D., Vol. VI, p. 408, 513; and Väinö Tanner, The Winter War (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 16.

[29] Joseph E. Davies, Mission to Moscow (Garden City, N. Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1943), pp. 133-134.

[30] Ibid. p. 54. [31] Woorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 40.

On her part, Finland gave every indication and assurance that she was not pro-German but was rather determined upon neutrality along with the other nations of the Scandinavian bloc. It was declared that Finland would view any encroachment on her territory as an unfriendly act, especially if it should cause Finland to become the battleground between Great Powers. On the whole, Holtsi's visit produced little of value as no major issues were discussed, and it is doubtful if the Soviet leaders understood that Finland indeed determined to follow a course of neutrality. One positive result was that the Scandanavian bloc became convinced of Finland's desire to remain neutral and maintain amicable relations with her Great Neighbor.[32]

While trying to stabilize relations with her neighbors, the increasing tenseness of the world situation called Finnish attention to the vulnerability of the demilitarized Aaland Islands in the Gulf of Bothnia. Should the islands fall into the hands of a Great Power Finland's neutral position would be jeopardized and would probably become untenable. Mannerheim realized the peril to Finland and Sweden by the defenseless situation on the islands when he stated:

> Unfortified and defenseless, the archipelago obviously offered a temptation to the Great Powers on the Baltic. And Aaland in the hands of a Great Power carried with it the risk, both for Finland and Sweden, that their strategic position would be rolled up from inside.[33]

Recognizing their mutual danger, negotiations were begun in the spring of 1938 between Finland and Sweden concerning the fortification of the islands. From the beginning the negotiators realized that they

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[32] Ibid. [33] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 289.

would have to obtain permission from the signatories of the Aaland Convention; and that Russian must also be consulted as an interested party, although she was not a signatory. They decided, however, to come to an agreement first and then broach the question to the other nations concerned afterwards. By the time the Munich crisis came in September the Finno-Swedish discussions had advanced to the point where co-ordination of military defense of Aaland was decided on. The plan in the main was concerned with the dispatch of troops to the islands in the event of overt action on the part of any Great Power. At the time the Russian Baltic fleet had been sighted off the coast of Finland from Hanko, probably as a warning to Germany. Development of this situation could have required the manning of the islands in keeping with the Aaland Convention, i.e. in the event of surprise attack, Finland could undertake to defend the archipelago.[34]

Sweden agreed to an even broader plan of defense for the islands inOctober, namely that Finland be permitted to make military preparations on a number of islands in the Aaland group. These islands lay south of a line corresponding approximately to 60 degrees north latitude upon which the inhabitants in the future would be liable for military service on the islands. Finland also reserved the right to request Swedish aid in event of an emergency.[35] About the same time, it became known in diplomatic circles that Sweden's reason for consenting to the fortification of the Aalands was the

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[34] DGFP, Series D, Vol. V, pp. 594, 596; and Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 295-296.

[35] DGFP, Series D, Vol. V, pp. 600; and Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 298-299.

fear that Germany might attack her, rather than fear of such an act on part of Russia.[36]

Early in 1939 the Finns and Swedes submitted their proposed amendments to the Aaland Convention to be known as the Stockholm Plan, to the other signatory powers and Russia with a request for their concurrence. When the signatories and Russia had assented, the matter was then to be referred to the League of Nations for final approval. The main points of the final proposal was that neutrality of the islands was to be maintained but demilitarization was to be considerably curtailed. On the southern islands Finland was to have a free hand to institute defensive measures while on the northern zone she was to have the right to take defensive measures for a period of ten years. The latter proposal called for military training for island population, stationing troops from other areas of the country, artillery installations on the southern islands, and anti-aircraft positions on the mainland.[37]

Concurrence was rendered by all the signatories to the Finnish-Swedish *démarche* without any objections. It was the Soviet Union, however, that voiced objections and ultimately defeated the Stockholm Plan. Russia's negative response resulted from her declared fear that some third power might sieze the islands and thus gain the advantage in the Baltic. The Russian government also hinted that though she had no objections to the fortification of the islands she had a greater

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[36] DGFP, Series D, Vol. V., p. 601.

[37] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 180-3; and Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 298.

interest in them than did Sweden. So Russia felt that she should be kept as fully informed on the work of fortifications as Sweden. In July, 1939, Molotov at last clarified the Soviet's wishes regarding the Aaland Island question. The Soviet government at that time formally claimed equal rights with Sweden; i.e. the right to give active assistance in their defense should Finland request it.[38]

As the Soviet objections being of paramount consideration for the Swedish government, Sweden backed out of the Stockholm Plan. The Finns for their part refused Molotov's demands and began preparing the defenses of the islands without the aid of Sweden. Thus with Russian opposition the first concrete move for action of the Scandanavian neutrality policy fell through.

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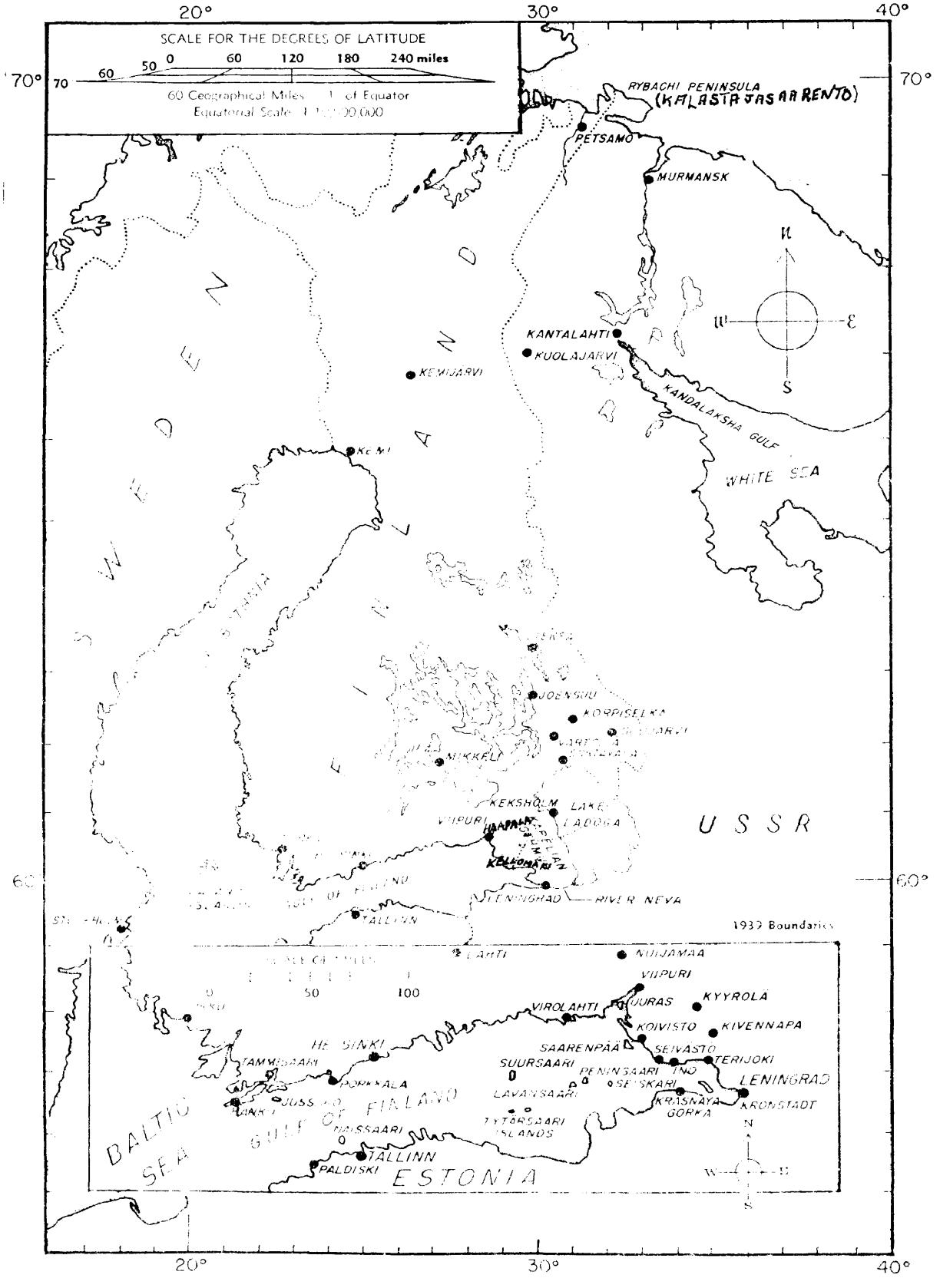
[38] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 727, 841; Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 299, and Wuorinen, Finland in World War II, pp. 41-42.

Reproduced from Tanner, op. cit.



CHAPTER III

WAR CLOUDS GATHER

During the period of conversations concerning the Stockholm Plan for the fortification and defense of the Aaland Archipelago the inner circle of the Finnish government was engaged in a secret negotiations with the Soviet Union. Those discussions which began with a strange phone call to Foreign Minister Holtsi from a second secretary of the Sovier Legation, Boris Yartsev, urgently requesting an opportunity to speak to him. Unusual and as clearly a violation of accepted protocol as the request was, Holtsi agreed to an appointment for April 14, 1938.[1]

Yartsev was quite well-known in Helsinki and acquired many friends among extreme leftists in the Finnish capital. A story was commonly circulated that he represented the G.P.U. (Soviet State Police) in the Legation.[2] Whatever his function, Yartsev called at the Foreign Ministry and asked for the privilege of discussing some highly confidential matters with Holtsi. He stated that, some weeks before when he had been in Moscow, the Soviet government had delegated to him exceptionally broad powers to discuss the means of improving relations between Finland and the U.S.S.R., and requested that all such discussions be kept entirely secret, even from the Soviet envoy, Vladimir Derevyanski.[3]

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[1] Tanner, op. cit., p. 3.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., p. 4.

Upon Holtsi's bidding him speak, Yartsev launched upon a review of the European scene in general and the future position of Finland in particular. He then proceeded to assure Holtsi that the Russian government wished to respect the independence of Finland and her territorial integrity but that Moscow firmly believed that Germany had extensive schemes for aggrandizement at the expense of Russia. To facilitate these plans would involve the landing of the extreme north wing of a German attacking force in Finland, prior to an allout invasion of Russia. What would the Finnish attitude be if such a contingency should arise? If the Finns were to remain passive and allow the German armies a free hand, Russia would not remain on the border awaiting the attack but would enter Finland from Rajajoki to do battle. But if Finland were to offer resistance, Russia would gladly render all the economic and military assistance possible, binding herself to withdraw her forces when the war ended.[4] Yartsev then went on to observe that the U.S.S.R. was prepared to offer Finland economic concessions of almost any magnitude since Russia had virtually insatiable capacity to purchase Finnish industrial products, especially cellulose and agricultural products. Yartsev further stated that Moscow was aware of German plans to assist Finnish facists in a coup d'état if the present Finnish government refused to cooperate.[5]

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[4]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 293; Tanner, op. cit., pp. 4-5; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, pp. 44-5.

[5]Tanner, op. cit., p. 5.

In concluding his talk, Yartsev asked Holtsi if he would be amenable to discussing these matters with him alone, as Derevyanski, Soviet Minister to Finland, and Austrin, the other Legation secretary, by no means must know what was transpiring. On this point a Finnish constitutional problem arose; as Holtsi pointed out, it was incumbent on him to receive and consider any information or proposal that might come to his attention but in the final analysis, the President of the Republic determined the nation's foreign policy in its entirety. So without the President's authorization, irregular discussions such as those suggested could not be entered into. Holtsi also emphasized Finland's policy of Scandanavian cooperation, the sole purpose of which was to preserve peace as far as Finland was concerned. He further stressed the firm political position of the government of which he was a part by referring to the fact of its support by three-fourths of the representatives in the Diet and stating that the populace would follow the regime's pacific policy.[6]

Holtsi next queried Yartsev regarding the nature of Soviet aid, i.e. would it include sale of arms to Finland? To this Yartsev gave an affirmative reply with condition attached, namely that the aid would include this, along with other forms of economic support, if Finland guaranteed to the Russians that Germany would not be assisted in war against the U.S.S.R. To Holtsi's natural question of what was meant by guarantees, Yartsev very cagily replied that that could wait until there should be assurances that Finland sincerely desired to stay out

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[6]Tanner, op. cit., p. 5.

of Great Power conflicts and would resist a German invasion. On this note the first of many interesting meetings between Holtsi, and other government officials, and Yartsev ended.[7]

From this rather unorthodox approach to negotiations and the secrecy that surrounded them, it is apparent that the Soviet Union anticipated war and was seeking to secure her frontiers in collaboration with Finland. It also appears that the Russians had little faith in Finland's repeated declarations of neutrality or in their own non-aggression pact with Finland. Apparently they felt that Finland was incapable of resisting an attack without outside aid and they wanted to be sure that help came from the right direction, namely from Russia.

No more discussions took place until after Yartsev returned from a visit to Moscow, from where he proceeded to Stockholm before returning to his duties in Helsinki. In the interim, however, he spoke to a number of private individuals. To such persons as the Prime Minister's secretary, Arvo Inkila, General Aarne Sihvo, and Mrs. Hella Wuolijoki, he spoke more frankly than he had to Holtsi. It was especially with Inkila that the Russian was most open. Through him Yartsev managed to get an interview with Prime Minister Cajander in June while Holtsi was absent in Geneva. Of that first meeting between the Prime Minister and Soviet representative nothing is recorded as the conversation was of a general nature.[8]

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[7]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 293; and Tanner, op. cit., p. 5.

[8]Tanner, op. cit., p. 6.

A second meeting between Cajander and Yartsev took place on July 11, when the discussion again centered on possible German aggression against the U.S.S.R. When Yartsev suggested that Finland might be occupied as a base of German military operations, Cajander said that that would be impossible as it would violate Finnish neutrality and jeopardize Finnish territorial integrity, neither of which Finland would permit. How Finland was to defend her neutrality effectively against such a superior force as the German army Cajander could not say as the exigencies of war are such that it is impossible to guarantee the outcome. But in the event, Finland would do her best. Cajander added that he hoped that even as Finland made every possible effort to avoid becoming a pawn of a Great Power, so too would the Soviet Union respect the inviolability of Finnish territory. Yartsev's reply to this was much the same as he had given to Holtsi, i.e. if Finland would furnish guarantees that Germany would get no bases in Finland, Russia would undertake to insure Finnish inviolability.[9]

Later in the conversation Cajander introduced the subject of trade as an important facet of Finno-Russian relations and mentioned the repeated failures of numerous earlier negotiations of this kind. Apparently Russian diplomacy had more than one way of enticing Finland into her camp, for Yartsev said that first a political basis of agreement would have to be reached before trade agreements could be considered. Yartsev seemed to be angling for a treaty between the

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[9] Ibid., p. 6.

two nations, the content of which he was not then prepared to disclose. On this note the conversation came to an end, but not before Yartsev once more impressed on Cajander the need for utmost secrecy.[10]

It was at this juncture that Finance Minister Väinö Tanner was for the first time informed of what was taking place. Cajander was mystified as to the exact demands that the Soviet government was making and therefore, requested that Tanner seek to draw Yartsev out on the political matter. The first meeting between Tanner and Yartsev occurred on July 30, but nothing of any great value came of it. As no progress seemed to be made, Tanner suggested that Yartsev draw up a memorandum stating Moscow's proposals and the guarantees desired. Yartsev promised to draft the proposals but when the two met again on August 5, the promised memorandum was not presented.[11]

For lack of proposals about which to orient the discussion Tanner brought up the matter of Russian border violations, the closing of the Neva River to Finnish shipping contrary to the Treaty of Tartu, and the detention of the steamship Airisto a short time previous.[12] In view of the anonomous author of the Wuorinen book, in retrospect the above Soviet actions and the tenor of the Yartsev conversations indicated a clear preparation for war on the part of Russia.[13] Yartsev promised to report the matter to Moscow and try to effect an amelioration of these actions.

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[10] Ibid. [11] Ibid., p. 7.

[12] Tanner, op. cit., p. 7; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 44.

[13] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 44.

As always, the Finns wished to improve their commercial and trade relations with the Soviet. Tanner expressed the hope that the Russians would take a more understanding attitude in the matter. Once more, as he had to Holtsi, the Russian declared that improved trade relations would have to be preceded by a political agreement as politics were also involved. To speed up the negotiations and bring about an amicable settlement he suggested that it would perhaps be better if the discussions were to take place in Moscow. Tanner objected to this, on the grounds that if the negotiations were held in Moscow, the secret would be out, and with the distance involved, the Finns would be handicapped by not being in close enough contact with their government. Yartsev promised to see what could be done about the matter of the border violations and closing of the Neva and also to sound out Moscow on the feasibility of holding the negotiations in Helsinki.[14]

Nothing more took place for five days, and when at their meeting on August 10, Yartsev proposed nothing new, Tanner reported the fact to Cajander. The latter jotted down the following proposal for a treaty draft to be read to Yartsev the next day:

> While always adhering to the neutral policy of the northern countries, the government of Finland will at the same time permit no violation of Finnish territorial integrity nor consequently the acquisition by any great power of a foothold in Finland for an attack against the Soviet Union.
>
> The government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, while undertaking to respect the territorial integrity of Finland at every point, will on the other hand not oppose Finland's proceeding even in time of peace to undertake in the Aaland Islands such military measures as the most perfect possible safeguarding of the

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[14] Tanner, op. cit., p. 7.

integrity of Finnish territory and the neutrality of the Aaland Islands may require.[15]

Upon hearing the above proposal Yartsev merely repeated the suggestion that the negotiators work in Moscow.

From the tenor of the Finnish proposal it is obvious that the government was desirous of securing Soviet consent to the fortification of the Aaland Archipelago. Discussions with Sweden concerning its fortification had been in progress since early in the year which reinforces the statement made above (see page 45) that Sweden applied pressure on Finland to secure the consent of the U.S.S.R. to the alteration of the status of the islands, and made continued negotiations contingent on Soviet consent.

Not until their fifth meeting (August 18) did Yartsev present definite proposals and a statement of the guarantees that he had so long been vague about. The Russian proposal began by holding out the bait of a trade agreement in return for certain political concessions. In essence the demands stated that if Finland felt herself unable to enter into a secret military agreement, Russia would be satisfied with a written understanding on Finland's part whereby she agreed to resist any German attack and to call on Russia for aid if she were unable to do so successfully. Russian aid meant not so much the stationing of Soviet forces in Finland but rather Finnish procurement of Soviet arms and protection of the sea frontiers.[16] Regarding the fortification of the Aaland Islands, the Russians indicated they would welcome

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[15] Ibid., p. 3; cf. Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 293.

[16] Tanner, op. cit., p. 8.

being permitted to assist in arming them by supplying arms, stationing a secret observer to survey and help supervise the work, and by having a part in the control of the installations. All that was desired in return for this favor was Finnish assent to the construction by the Soviet Union of a fortified air and naval base on Suursaari Island (Hogland) in order to protect the approaches to Kronstadt and Leningrad. The U.S.S.R. was prepared in that event to sign a treaty guaranteeing Finnish territorial integrity and sovereignty and to conclude a trade agreement most advantageous and favorable to Finland.[17]

These proposals were then brought before the Finnish government in a secret session. The gravity of the situation could not help but impress itself on the Finnish statesmen as the rapid change in the international scene brought the imminence of war. Finnish fears of war had not been alleviated by the Austro-German Anschluss of the previous March and the expansionist policies of the Great Powers (especially Germany) had even induced the Leftists in the Diet to support a more extensive program for military preparedness as mentioned above (page 37). Yet with the characteristic ambivalence shown by most pre-war governments, many Finns in responsible positions continued to regard Germany as the only possible ally in the event of a Russian attack, although the official government policy under Holtsi was one of coolness toward Germany. It was not easily forgotten in Finnish

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[17] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 294; and Vhorinen, Finland and World War II, pp. 44 ff.

circles that an earlier Russian envoy, Assmus, had once declared to Prime Minister Kivimaki that, '"In case of war, Russia could not avoid occupying Finnish territory."'[18] Though divided in opinion as to whether Germany or Russia presented the greater threat the Finns were still determined on a neutral policy oriented towards peaceful Scandanavia.

The upshot of the governmental session was a negative attitude toward the Russian proposals. Prime Minister Cajander stated it as follows: "The proposal tends to violate Finland's sovereignty and is in conflict with the policy of neutrality which Finland follows in common with the nations of Scandanavia."[19] This reply, which was a long way from being what Yartsev was instructed to obtain, was tendered to the Russians on August 29.

Shortly after the Finnish reply was received, the Soviet press began a campaign of anti-Finnish propaganda which was commonly assumed to be a result of the attitude of the Finns. Yartsev himself did not let matters rest either; he entered into further conversations with Tanner in September demanding a clarified and more detailed answer than that received in August. Tanner explained that the Finnish statement entailed a refusal to permit Russian bases on Suursaari and that no help was needed in preparing defenses on the Aalands. As for the arms needed, Finland was ready and willing to purchase them from Russia if

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[18]Quoted in Alvin T. Anderson, "Origins of the Winter War; A Study of Russo-Finnish Diplomacy," World Politics, Vol. VI, No. 2. (January 1954), p. 171.

[19]Tanner, op. cit., p. 10.

the price and quality were right. With this flat refusal, and no counter-proposal, which Yartsev had asked for, being made, Tanner's part in the negotiations ended for the moment.[20]

During October Yartsev had further conversations with Holtsi, in a further attempt to bring the matter to a head. Numerous meetings were held, with the talks following a well-established cycle. Both sides reiterating earlier proposals and neither was willing to give ground. Toward mid-October Holtsi handed Yartsev a lengthy written statement containing an analytical report of his government's attitude in the matter. While in Geneva he and Swedish Foreign Minister, Rickard Sandler had together seen Russian Foreign Commissar Litvinov and related to him how plans were progressing for the joint defense of the Aaland Archipelago. With this in mind Holtsi suggested that it would perhaps be better if decisions on the Russian proposal waited until after the diplomatic demarches with regard to the Aalands, which were to be presented in a few months to the signatories of the Aaland Convention and the U.S.S.R.[21]

At a later meeting, Yartsev disavowed his abilities as a diplomat and requested the privilege of speaking in ordinary language. He then proceeded to clarify what Russia desired, i.e. a military alliance and the turning over of Suursaari to Russia to defend in event of war. If Finland could undertake to do so in collaboration

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[20] Ibid., p. 11.

[21] Ibid.

with Russia and if, in case of war, Finland could not defend them, the responsibility for their defense would be assumed by Russia. Once more the Finns declined on the same grounds as before.[22]

This latest Russian proposal was probably due in great part to the Czechoslovakian crisis which had just preceded it. With the Germans taking over the Sudetenland, and with the resultant weakening of Czechoslovakia, the U.S.S.R. had lost an ally. With the cooler attitude of England and France toward her and their seeming reluctance to oppose Germany, the Soviet Union felt isolated and suspicious of the West. Finland too was suspect because of her activities in the Aalands and, in the Russian view, her pro-German attitude. The Russian belief that Finland was pro-German went back to the early 1920's. The Russian view had persisted despite all Finnish assurances and actions to the contrary, e.g. the non-aggression pact, trade negotiations, Holtsi's visit to Moscow, and Finnish declarations of neutrality.

Negotiations took a new twist when Holtsi resigned in November, 1938 and Väinö Voionmaa became interim Foreign Minister. The tenor of the discussions remained much the same as they were to do throughout the year, but now they deliberated on means of best carrying the discussions to fructification. From the Yartsev-Voionmaa conversations on November 21, it was determined that a trade delegation should be sent to Moscow and that two political negotiators should accompany it. It was ultimately decided that the negotiators should go ostensibly to

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[22]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 294-295; and Tanner, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

attend the dedication of the new Finnish Legation Building on December 7, 1938.[23]

Discussions in Moscow were headed by the Finnish envoy in Moscow, Yrjo-Koskinen, and the acting bureau chiefs Urho Toivola and Aaro Pakaslahti. When the delegates appeared for their audience, they found that Commissar for Foreign Trade, Anastas Mikoyan, was to receive them. At this Yrjo-Koskinen decided that his position as diplomat did not permit him to take part as the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs was not aware of the political discussions. Hence, only Toivola and Pakaslahti were present for the first session, which they began by broaching the subject of trade improvement between Finland and Russia, as was a pertinent subject for discussions between a trade delegation and Commissar for Foreign Trade. This, however, was not quite what Mikoyan desired, and said it was nice to talk to Finnish trade representatives but there were certain prerequisites to arriving at a satisfactory commercial treaty. Military problems were involved, and the question of leasing Suursaari and providing for the defense of Leningrad must be considered.[24] Mikoyan noted with some satisfaction the Scandanavian orientation of Finland's foreign trade policy but stated that frankly that this was not an adequate guarantee that the nation would be able to ward off a violation of her neutrality.

When the Finns emphasized that there was no spot as weak in Finnish defenses as the Aaland Islands and that it was hoped, therefore, that Russia would agree to the Finns building fortifications

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[23]Tanner, op. cit., p. 12; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 44.

[24]Tanner, op. cit., p. 12.

> on the islands, Mikoyan changed the subject and asked if Finland could not cede Suursaari to Russia. The Finns declared that Suursaari remained unfortified in accordance with the provisions of the Dorpat Treaty of 1920, but if the conditions of the treaty were to be changed, Finland could erect the fortifications herself.[25]

After about two hours of conversation in this vein, Mikoyan returned to what the audience was ostensibly concerned with, trade. It was agreed that a number of representatives of Finnish commerce and industry should meet with him that evening to discuss what the Finns hoped for in improved commercial relations. He emphasized the fact that politics would not enter into the conversations, since in his view, the time to bring up political questions would come when the necessary foundations for encouraging trade had been laid, discussions of border questions had been initiated, and other items of immediate practical concern had been taken care of.[26]

The evening discussions were attended, also, by Minister Yrjö-Koskinen and the Finnish Minister of Communications, Väinö Salovaara. Mikoyan in these talks merely reiterated what he had said earlier, emphasizing the importance of political relationships as a precondition to commercial discussion. Upon these matters no decisions were reached.[27]

This meeting can be considered as the end-point in the first phase of Finno-Russian negotiations. It is noticeable that throughout the conversations covering most of 1938, the Russians would not consider

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[25] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 46.

[26] Tanner, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

[27] Ibid.

any aspect of Finno-Russian trade relations without first arriving at definite political and military arrangements. Using trade as a lever, the Russians policy seemed designed to force the Finns into agreements that would, in the Finnish view, have violated their neutrality, territorial integrity and independence. It may be argued that had the Finnish government, at this stage of the negotiations seen fit to compromise while the Russian demands were still at a minimum, war might have been avoided. But in view of what afterwards happened to the other Baltic states, it is difficult to argue that the Finnish policy was incorrect.

For the next few months Finno-Russian diplomatic exchanges were rather routine, while Finland continued negotiations with Sweden for the joint defense of the Aalands. However, on March 5, 1939, Litvinov handed Yrjö-Koskinen a memorandum concerning trade relations and the fortification of the Aalands. In order to create a favorable atmosphere for the reaching of an agreement, the U.S.S.R. now proposed that Finland lease her Suursaari, Lavansaari Island (Lovskar), the two Tytärsaari Islands (Tyter Skerries), and Seiskari Island (Seitskar) in the Gulf of Finland for a period of thirty years (see map facing page 49). It was not Russia's purpose to fortify the islands, the memorandum stated, but to use them as observation posts to influence the security of the Leningrad Passage. If these demands were met, the Soviet Union would guarantee better relations between the two countries, a most favorable, for Finland, trade agreement, and the solution of the Aalands problem in a satisfactory

manner.[28]

The Soviet Union received the Finnish reply on March 8. It was written by Eljas Erkko, the Finnish Foreign Minister since December 8, 1938. Erkko made it plain that the Russian demands exceeded what Finland considered it safe for her to grant in position as a neutral. Therefore, Finland could not consider leasing to a foreign power the islands referred to because they were an integral part of Finland, a sovereign territory which the Soviet Union had confirmed and acknowledged in the Treaty of Tartu. He pointed out that the islands had been neutralized at that time on Soviet insistence, and stated that no defense preparation had been initiated on any of them.[29]

Litvinov was dissatisfied and disappointed with the Finnish reply since in the Russian view, leasing the islands would not be a violation of Finnish neutrality, more especially since the Soviet Union did not propose to fortify them. But Litvinov had been prepared for just such a reply and he proposed that rather than lease the islands, they might be exchanged outright for compensation in Eastern Karelia north of Lake Ladoga. Once again the Finnish reply of March 13, was in the negative. Litvinov, however, refused to consider this as a final decision and in Russian eyes the matter was not closed.[30]

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[28]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 299; Tanner, op. cit., pp. 13-14 and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 46.

[29]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 299; Tanner, op. cit., p. 14; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 46.

[30]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 299-300; Tanner, op. cit., p. 14; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 46.

When the Finnish reply of March 13 was given to Litvinov, he remarked that the former Soviet envoy to Finland, Boris Stein, then accredited to Rome, would be sent to Helsinki to press the Russian case. As early as March 11, Stein had contacted Erkko and presented essentially the same plan as Litvinov. He amplified it to include a lease agreement, for a stated period of time, by which Finland would have received extensive exploitation rights to forest areas in Russia Karelia.[31]

Stein argued that Finland's neutrality would best be secured by the cession of the islands to Russia and that the area Russia was prepared to cede in Eastern Karelia (133 square kilometers) was greater than the combined areas of the islands in question. Even a written statement, he said, by Finland that she would resist any attempt at violation of her neutrality was worthless in Russian eyes unless backed up by practical measures.[32] Erkko's reply was that, under the constitution, Finnish territory was inalienable and such an exchange was not discussable. He emphasized that Finland feared that if a precedent for ceding territory was established, Germany too might make similar demands. To such Finland would never assent.[33]

Stein expressed dissatisfaction with the Finnish response and requested that the Finnish government study the proposals further.

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[31]Tanner, op. cit., p. 14.

[32]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 300.

[33]Tanner, op. cit., p. 14; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 47.

After consideration, the Government's answer was delivered to Litvinov's, in a memorandum transmitted by Yrjö-Koskinen on March 20. It read as follows:

> The Finnish government cannot negotiate regarding a matter which in one manner or another involves the cession of parts of the territory of the state to another power. This negative reply is not to be understood in the sense that the Foreign Minister would be unwilling to continue an exchange of views with the purpose of reaching a solution to the questions raised by the Soviet Union regarding guarantees to its security.[34]

The Soviet Union's repeated demands of Finland are indicative of the failure of the Russian leaders to understand the workings of a constitutional democracy. Or, if they understood such matters, their insistence shows that they were so accustomed to operating with a minimum of popular opposition that they failed to realize that in a free nation to wantonly disregard public opinion was to court political suicide. Finnish government, especially as it enjoyed a clear majority in the Diet, was not willing to undertake action that would have such dire consequences and preferred to pursue the Scandanavian orientation, neutrality, and pacific policies in foreign relations.

Litvinov's reaction was one of regret. He declared that it was not up to Finland to propose concrete suggestions. Russia had made hers when she had requested the islands in the Gulf of Finland. Erkko was told that now Finland must speak, but he still remained steadfast in his defense of the Finnish position. He showed the envoy a draft of a note that was to be delivered to the Soviet government in which Finland once

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[34]Quoted in Tanner, op. cit., pp. 14-15

more reiterated her determination to defend her neutrality under any and all circumstances and against any and every aggressor.[35]

Before leaving Helsinki on April 6, Stein frankly insisted that the discussion should not be considered at an end. The Soviet Union was not prepared for a final reply to its demands as the islands requested were of strategic significance to Soviet security.[36] This, however, ended the last phase of the preliminary negotiations, which had extended over a year, concerning Finnish guarantees of Russia's security.

Much criticism was subsequently directed at the Finnish statesmen for their inflexibility in meeting the Russian demands to lease the islands in the Gulf of Finland. Marshal Mannerheim, for example, felt that no damage to Finnish independence or sovereignty would have been involved had the Finns met the demands. In his Memoirs, the Marshal states:

> I was of the definite opinion that we were bound to meet the Russians in some way if this was likely to lead to improved relations with our mighty neighbor . . . . I said that the islands were of no use to the country and that we had no means of defending them, as they were neutralized. On the other hand, the islands were of real importance to the Russians, as they commanded the entrance to their naval base at the Bay of Luga, and by leasing them we should draw advantage from one of the few trumps we held.
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> But I met with no understanding. It was pointed out to me that a government which dared to propose anything of the sort would immediately fall, and that no politician would agree to challenge public opinion in this manner. To this I replied that if there were really no one who was willing to risk his popularity in a

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[35] Tanner, op. cit., p. 15; and Wuorinen, Finland and World II, p. 47.

[36] Tanner, op. cit., p. 15; and Wuorinen, Finland and World II, p. 47.

> matter so vital to the country, I was prepared to place myself at the disposal of the government, convinced as I was that my honest opinion would be understood. But I went still further and expressed the opinion that it would be to Finland's advantage to offer to move the frontier nearest to Leningrad westward by five or six miles, against a reasonable compensation.[37]

On the other hand Tanner defends the policy of the government on the grounds that if the Russian demands were met then, later on more demands might arise. In his book he states that:

> These negotiations showed that the Soviet Union tenaciously sought to have Finland assent to certain limitations on its right to make use of its territory and that Finland with equal tenacity opposed the suggestions put forward. Subsequently--when Finland was obliged, on the basis of peace treaties made after the wars in which it was engaged, to cede much larger areas--criticism was directed against Finland's negative position at the time. Yet under the circumstances of that period a different approach to the case would hardly have been possible. There still existed trust in international law and in the binding character of signed and sealed treaties. It was not considered possible that a great power would seek by force to assume possession of territories which it had itself ceded to Finland through an express treaty. Under no circumstances would the Diet have been disposed to approve proposals of this sort if the government had presented them for consideration. Moreover, it is uncertain whether concessions made at that stage would have prevented the presentation of fresh demands. Indeed, it is conspicuous that while the negotiations were under way the Soviet demands tended to increase and did not by any means come closer to the Finnish position as might properly have been expected.[38]

Whatever criticisms are leveled at the Finnish government, the fact remains that at the time, it was felt that no such concessions could be made. It might have been a far better thing, had the Diet been informed of the negotiations. Throughout, the Finnish government

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[37]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 300-301.

[38]Tanner, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

respected the Soviet desire that they be kept secret. In any case, if the Diet had been informed of the conversations, the nation might have been better prepared to meet the crisis that was to come. It is useless, however, to speculate on such matters.

The breakdown in the conversations resulted in a discontinuance of trade negotiations and the refusal of Russia to assent to the revision of the Aaland Convention proposed by Finland and Sweden. Thereafter, the Swedes became increasingly hesitant concerning the Stockholm Plan and when on May 31 Molotov announced that Russia had as much to say, or more, on the Aaland question as any other country, Sweden withdrew the question from before the Riksdag. That the proposal was to be debated at an extraordinary session of that body was the reason given. But by June, the matter was dropped altogether.[39]

In the meantime, Finland had been approached by Germany on the matter of a non-agression pact. Finland declined to accept the offer as impinging on her neutrality and Scandinavian orientation. Russia was dissatisfied with Finnish declarations of neutrality. To Mannerheim, neutrality only made Finland's position more untenable as it only served to limit Finland's freedom of action that much more and Finland was not in a position to antagonize the two great Baltic powers.[40]

The Soviet Union had not even been consulted on the matter of the Munich agreements in the preceding September which had aroused

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[39]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 301.

[40]Ibid., pp. 302-303.

a feeling of ill-will in Russia towards the West. When Germany seized the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Russian apprehensions and suspicions deepened. However, as the threat of war increased, Russia was increasingly recognized by the Great Powers as a military factor to be reckoned with. Hence both Germany and the Allies began to woo seriously the U.S.S.R. and to seek Russian aid in the event of an armed conflict. In March the British and French initiated joint negotiations aimed at Soviet-Western collaboration against Germany. Russia demanded, as a prerequisite to any such accord, that the resultant treaty would guarantee the Baltic States (Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania) and Finland aid in the contingency of their being attacked. To be included in the agreement was "indirect aggression", i.e., the assumption of a pro-German attitude on the part of the governments to be guaranteed. Thus Russia, under the guise of benevolent guardianship of their independence, would have obtained the right to interfere in the internal affairs of these nations, even to the point of providing military aid, without their first requesting it.[41]

At first the British and French seemed inclined to accept the Russian conditions, which sent a chill of apprehension through the members of the Finnish government. In consequence, strong Finnish demarches supported by the Swedish government were made in London and Moscow. The result was that the British and French governments

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[41] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 58; Tanner, op. cit., p. 18; and Wuorinen, Finland in World War II, p. 48.

declared that they would not accept any Russian proposals which included Finland.[42]

As astute diplomats, the Russians also allowed Germany to court them. Discussion began in May 1939, but it was not until August that serious conversations were initiated. On the Russian side the move was engineered to counterbalance the Anglo-French negotiations and to get the most advantageous offer from both sides, then to accept that which would best serve Russian interests.[43] After the breakdown of Anglo-French-Russian conversations, discussions between Germany and Russia rapidly reached a conclusion in the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact on August 23. Both parties to the pact vociferously denied that the Baltic states had been divided into spheres of influence,[44] but the evacuation of Baltic Germans in September and October of 1939 seemed to indicate otherwise.[45] In 1941, Ribbentrop admitted that it was agreed in the August pact that Finland should be relegated to the Soviet sphere of influence.[46] After the war the secret protocol pertaining to the spheres of influence was published. It stated that:

> On the occasion of the signature of the Nonaggression Pact between the German Reich and the U.S.S.R., the undersigned

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[42] DGFP, Series D., Vol. VI, pp. 58, 727, 841, and Tanner, op. cit., p. 18.

[43] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 305.

[44] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII, pp. 338, 491.

[45] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 51. [46] Ibid.

> pleni-potentiaries. . . discussed in strictly confidential conversations the question of the boundary of their respective spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. These conversations led to the following conclusions:
>
> 1. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R. . .[46]

Within a week it became clear what the full import of the pact was—it opened the way for the German invasion of Poland on September 1 and the Russian declaration of war against the defeated nation on September 17.

At first the pact was received with some amazement in Finno-Scandia—the two sworn enemies embracing one another as allies![47] Yet in Finland there was little real concern at first over the German Soviet treaty; in fact, it was thought to be a skillful counter-move to the policy of the Western Powers.[48] Foreign Minister Erkko told the German envoy to Finland, Wipert von Blücher, that for the moment it appeared to give advantage to Finland in that the Baltic Sea area would be excluded from hostilities since the two Great Powers were now allied. Thus, he said, the danger of Finland becoming involved in war was lessened but, nevertheless, he did express doubts about the future. What struck Erkko was that the terms of the Russo-German Pact differed from those that Germany had proposed to Finland a short time

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[46]Documents on International Affairs, 1939-1946, Vol. I, Royal Institute of International Affairs (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 409.

[47]Tanner, op. cit., p. 18.

[48]DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII, p. 203.

before. They also differed from any that Russia had concluded with other nations. For Erkko this portended something unusual, but at the moment he was not exactly sure what.[49]

Former Finnish Foreign Minister Antti Hackzell expressed the thought that Russia in the Fall of 1939 did not present any danger to Finland but conceded that this situation could change if Russia were to be built up by Germany. He thought that Russia might stand aside from the war and await the exhaustion of the warring powers and enter at the moment most advantageous to her. The consequences from such an event would be grave for Finland for she would be the first to feel the effects of an expanding Russia.[50]

The Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement was the starting signal for World War II. Within a week of the signing of the pact, the Reich declared war on Poland. Immediately on receiving the report of the German action the Finnish government, singly and in conjunction with the Scandanavian countries, declared her intention to remain entirely neutral and impartial in the conflict.[51] In this manner the Finns expressed their aim of abstaining from any involvement in the international conflict.

Germany, on the day of her attack on Poland, declared that, in accordance with the existing friendly relations between herself and

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[49] Ibid., p. 343.

[50] Ibid., p. 344.

[51] Tanner, op. cit., p. 19; DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, p. 12; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 52.

Norway, Sweden and Finland, she would in no wise injure the inviolability of the three and would at all times observe a respectful attitude for their territorial integrity. By the same token Germany expected a policy of strict neutrality towards her, and would take an especially adverse view of breaches of their neutrality by third parties.[52]

Russia gave at least lip service to the idea of neutrality throughout the first half of September. As late as mid-September, the press chief of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs declared that the Red Army would not be led by any excuse, e. g. a revolt in Poland, into crossing the Russo-Polish border.[53] Yet on September 17, the Red Army did invade an already badly defeated Poland and took part in the division of spoils. Upon entering the German-Polish fray, the Soviet Union issued a declaration of neutrality to all nations, including Finland and her neighbors in Scandanavia.[54] The Russian proclamation served to strengthen the confidence of government circles in Helsinki that the Finnish nation would be able to maintain its position of neutrality.

For a time yet Finland was to maintain her position of neutrality, but not for long. Soviet aims, guaranteed by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, were soon to become apparent. At this point, however, it would

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[52]DGFP, Series D, Vol. VII, p. 502. It was probably meant by third party intervention any action by Britain and France in Finno-Scandia.

[53]Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 52.

[54]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 307; and Wuorinen, Finland and World II, p. 52.

seem wise to review events to see if Finland could have done more than she did to assure her well-being as a small independent state caught between ambitious Great Powers. The anonymous author of Wuorinen's volume argues that:

> It is possible today to argue, with the aid of hindsight, that a more far-sighted policy on Finland's part would have prevented Finland from becoming the subject of the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreements. This seems, however, very unlikely. If either Power had considered it to be in her own interests to protect Finland in these negotiations, Finland would already have had to be--by August, 1939----the vassal of the Power "protecting" her. That is to say, she would already have had to be in the position to which the negotiators sought to assign her. The Soviet Union obviously had a clear-cut program which it was carrying out without bothering about the small obstacles in its path. The Germans later argued that if Finland had not rejected the non-aggression pact proposed by Germany in May, 1939, she would not have fallen into the Russian sphere of influence. At the time, however, nothing was said of what Finland's position would then have become, or of how the non-aggression pact would have strengthened Finland's position. Later, when it was seen how little a non-aggression pact safeguarded Denmark against the attack by Germany, such arguments were no longer presented, even to the Finns.[55]

To say that Finland might have avoided the disaster by reaching an agreement with Russia during the preceding April has been dealt with above. It is, however, well to reflect that had Finland surrendered her neutrality at that point, perhaps she would not have been able to maintain herself, as she did, on the periphery of the Great Powers' struggle. Had she been allied with Russia, as proposed, there is great likelihood that she would have been drawn into the full maelstrom of the struggle between East and West. In the end, the nation would undoubtedly have been occupied by Russia,

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[55]Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, pp. 51-52.

without a chance of protect, and suffered ultimately the same consequences as other nations bordering on Russia, i.e. the loss of her independence. Just as debatable is the argument that the islands demanded should have been ceded. Regardless of the situation, the Diet undoubtedly would have balked, and nothing would have been accomplished. Furthermore, as the author of the Wuorinen book states in this connection, "It must be kept in mind that at the time a total war had not yet lowered international political morals to the present level where Great Powers but not the small ones have the right to defend themselves."[56]

Thus, did Finland stand at the threshold of an entirely new experience in foreign affairs, adamantly maintaining a policy of neutrality and assuming that there was still extent in the world a concept of justice for all. When in the ensuing months, Moscow's demands became evermore pressing, Finland was to stand in need of all the sisu[57] her people possessed.

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[56] Ibid., pp. 47-48.

[57] Sisu is a term connoting integrity, intestinal fortitude, determination, vigor, vitality, courage, an unwillingness to give up despite all odds; in the vernacular sense, it might be defined as "guts" combined with sheer determination.

CHAPTER IV

THE MOSCOW NEGOTIATIONS

Upon the successful partition of Poland, Russia turned her attention to the lesser Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Foreign Ministers of these countries were summoned to Moscow to discuss the conclusion of treaties of friendship and reciprocal aid with the Soviet Union. Under pressure of Russian military actions on her borders, Estonia granted naval and air bases to Russia on September 28; on October 5 Latvia concluded a treaty of the same genre; and on October 11 Lithuania completed negotiations that resulted in her regaining Vilna, which Russia had just wrested from Poland, in return for military bases given the Soviet Union.[1]

Helsinki was seriously distressed by the Soviet demands on the Baltic States and realized that similar concessions would probably be demanded of her. The Finnish government, however, was determined to resist such pressures, come what might.[2] The Finnish expectations were confirmed on October 5, when Soviet leaders were reaching a successful conclusion in negotiations with the Baltic States. Molotov requested the Finnish Minister to Moscow to visit the Kremlin. There he was informed that, in view

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[1]Winston S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), p. 485; Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 307-308; and Tanner, op. cit., p. 21.

[2]DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, p. 148

of the war situation, the Soviet Union now wished to exchange views with Finland regarding "certain concrete questions of a political nature".[3] Molotov further suggested that the Finnish Foreign Minister journey to Moscow for the conversations, or that another plenipotentiary be appointed. When pressed for elucidation on the nature of the proposed conversations, Molotov refused to go into details. He did, however, express the hope that discussions might be initiated as soon as possible and requested an answer within a few days.[4]

In Helsinki, Molotov's indefinite reply and invitation caused anxiety. It was clear, though, that no alternative to acceptance was given. Scant attention, however, was paid to the urgent request for speed. On October 8 Derevyanski called on Erkko to inform him that Moscow was irritated because the Finnish reply was delayed, that Finland was not treating the matter as the other Baltic States had, and that this might be detrimental to course of affairs.[5] Erkko retorted, "I have no knowledge as to how the Baltic States were invited to Moscow; Finland has dealt with the matter as a normal affair and in the normal course."[6]

Erkko was loath to go to Moscow as he felt that his place was with the government. It was, therefore, decided that J. K. Paasikivi, Finnish Minister to Stockholm, should be sent as

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[3] The Finnish Blue Book: The Development of Finnish-Soviet Relations during the Autumn of 1939 (hereafter cited as FBB) (New York: J. B. Lippencott Co., 1940), p. 42.

[4] Tanner, op. cit., p. 21. [5] FBB, pp. 43-44.

[6] Ibid., p. 44.

Finland's chief representative at the Moscow discussions. General instructions were drafted directing the Finnish representatives to point out that Finland's relations with the Soviet Union were regulated by the Tartu Peace Treaty and the Treaty of Non-agression and to reiterate Finland's decision, in conjunction with the other Northern Powers to remain neutral and at peace. Any proposals that might infringe on the neutral policy and free political status of Finland were to be rejected. Finland's size was to be emphasized as a factor preventing her from aggressive action toward any nation.[7] In witness of her will to remain at peace and neutral Finland notified the world of her decision to defend her position even to the point of taking up arms. Moreover, Finland wished it known that she would not allow anyone to use her against anybody. In addition, if proposals affecting Finnish territorial inviolability or sovereignty were advanced by the Kremlin, the delegates were to declare that none of them were authorized to promise anything that violated the Finnish Constitution. Any such cessions would necessitate approval by the government and Diet.[8]

More specific instructions forbade the negotiators to discuss the establishment of Soviet military bases on the Finnish mainland or in the Aaland Islands; the same stipulations applied to boundary adjustments on the Karelian Isthmus and to the opening of Finnish ports to Soviet forces. Only on certain islands in the Gulf of Finland--Seiskari, Lavansaari, Tytärsaari--except Suursaari

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[7]Ibid., pp. 46-47.

[8]Ibid., p. 47.

(see map facing page 49) were they empowered to make concessions and then only under extreme pressure. Discussion of these concessions was permitted on condition that any cessions be reciprocal and that the compensation given Finland appear reasonable in the eyes of the world.[9]

If the Russians suggested the conclusion of a mutual assistance treaty, the negotiators were instructed to point out that this would be incompatible with Finland's neutrality policy as the Helsinki government feared such arrangements would involve her in war. In this regard, it was pointed out that the Soviet government had already expressed satisfaction with the policy of neutrality pursued by Finland and, therefore, it should be suggested that a mutual aid treaty was unnecessary.[10]

Evidence of Finland's sincere desire to remain neutral and on good terms with the rest of the world is to be found in the measures that were undertaken during July and August. The budget for the ensuing year was drawn up in August in the usual fashion[11] and despite the imminence of war the foreign debt was reduced.[12] Another indication of the Finnish belief that continued peace was possible is to be found carrying on of plans for the Olympic games scheduled for Helsinki in 1940.[13] But when Polish war broke out and the Western Powers declared war on Germany in September, Finland also assumed a realistic attitude toward the

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[9] Ibid., p. 47. [10] Ibid., p. 48.

[11] Tanner, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

[12] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 42.

[13] Ibid.

altered circumstances by recalling some reservists to the colors. At the end of September officers and non-commissioned officers on leave-of-absence since 1938 were called up for refresher courses and on October 6 the advance troops were mobilized and dispatched to the Karelian Isthmus to give military support to the negotiations in Moscow. At the same time civilians were evacuated from the frontier areas of the Isthmus.[14] These actions amounted to virtual mobilization and on October 19 the German Minister to Helsinki reported to his government that Finnish mobilization was complete.[15]

On October 9 Paasikivi, accompanied by Johan Nykopp, a department head in the Foreign Ministry and Colonel Aladar Paasonen, departed for Moscow. The party arrived there on the eleventh and began the first round of talks on the twelfth. Representing the Kremlin were Stalin, Molotov, V. P. Potemkin, and Derevyanski. An oral statement of the Soviet demands was made referring to the general situation in Europe and stressing the necessity for closing the Gulf of Finland to any enemy who proposed to attack Leningrad and the Soviet Union. On the south shore the U.S.S.R. was said to be secure by the bases in the Baltic States but no such security existed on the north shore controlled by Finland. It was therefore suggested that Finland conclude a treaty of mutual aid relating to the security of the Gulf of Finland. Mention was also made of the

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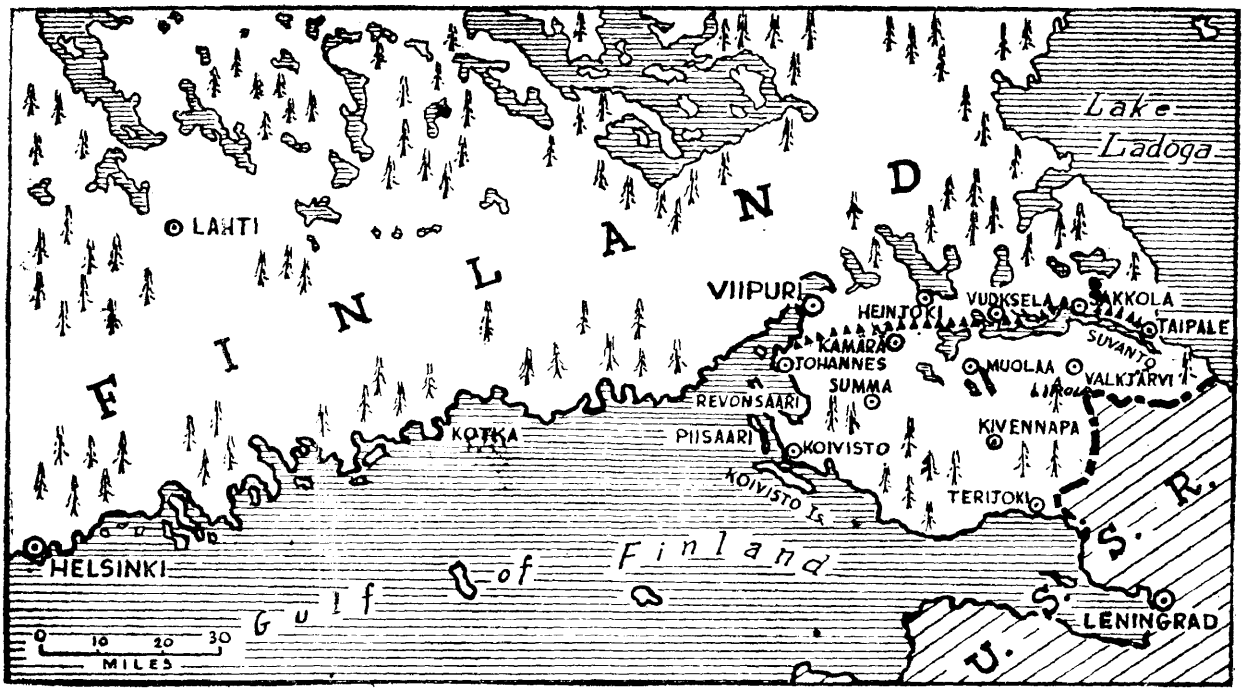
[14]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 309; and Niukkanen, op. cit., pp. 98-101.

[15]DGFP, Series D., Vol. VIII, p. 319.



Reproduced from Walter Citrine, My Finnish Diary. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1940).

need for a military base on the mainland of Finland, with Hanko Cape mentioned as a desirable location. In Petsamo the Finns were asked to cede the western part of Kalastajasaarento (Fisherman's Peninsula). For the security of Leningrad the Kremlin suggested that the border between the two nations should be moved to the Kuolemanjärvi-Kyyrölä-Muolaa-Lipola line (see map facing page 82). In the Gulf of Finland the Finns were called upon to cede some small islands including Koivisto and Suursaari. At the same time the Soviet government declared itself prepared to compensate Finland be ceding territory in the Eastern Karelia many times the size of the areas requested from the Finns. In conclusion the Russians stated that they did not want to discuss the Aaland problem in this connection in order to avoid difficulties.[16]

Dismayed by the Russian demands, Paasikivi replied that a mutual aid treaty was impossible because of the Finnish policy of neutrality and stated that Finland could not renounce her territorial inviolabilty by agreeing to the geographical demands. Upon this note the first meeting adjourned with Paasikivi promising to secure further instructions from his government.[17]

New directives were immediately issued from Helsinki. The Finnish delegates were instructed neither to assent to any mutual aid treaty nor to agree to the granting of territory for military purposes. Kalastajasaarento was important to Finland and it was

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[16]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 310-312; and Tanner, op. cit., p. 25.

[17]Tanner, loc. cit.; cf. Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, pp. 55-56.

Finland's aim to ask for Russia's half of the peninsula as compensation for concessions elsewhere. Regarding Suursaari, the delegates were to consider it as a separate question to be discussed after the outcome of conversations on the outer islands. As for the town of Sa[illegible]renpää on Koivisto Island, it was not to be discussed, as were the islands of Somero and Narvi, both of which had been included in the Russian demands. The proposed boundary rectification on the Isthmus was impossible in the Finnish view as Finland then would be placed in jeopardy by such a cession of territory.[18]

On the fourteenth the next round of sessions commenced with Paasikivi reading a memorandum drafted by Colonel Paasonen which endeavored to prove that no danger threatened the security of Leningrad. According to the memorandum, the Finns deemed it possible to cede the island of Lavansaari, Seiskari, and Penin saari, which could be integrated into the Soviet defense system in return for adequate compensation.[19] The Kremlin declared these concessions too trifling to be worthy of consideration. Concessions were desired on the Isthmus, especially as the frontier there was located too near Leningrad (32 km.) and the Soviet armies already possessed cannons capable of firing 50-60 km. It was argued that Finland might secure similar ones and then Leningrad would be directly threatened. The Russian demands ultimately aimed at the restoration of the boundaries of Peter the Great, to secure the U.S.S.R. against attack.[20]

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[18] Tanner, op. cit., pp. 25-26. [19] Ibid., p. 26.

[20] Ibid.

Paasikivi asserted that on economic grounds alone the Russian demands were excessive, but Stalin retorted that the military does not think in terms of economics. Stalin then pointed out that the possibility of an attack from either the Allies or Germany caused her to make these demands, especially for mainland bases. If Finland was afraid to grant Hanko as a base because it was on the mainland, Stalin was prepared to dig a canal across Hanko Neck to sever the Cape from Finland! The Finnish delegates argued on juridical grounds and in accordance with their instructions, but to no avail.[21]

At one point in the discussion Stalin noted the partial mobilisation of Finnish forces and pointed out that Russia too had dispatched troops to the Isthmus. Such a strained situation, in his view, could not long obtain without risk of war. In recounting this part of the conversations, Tanner points out that the full significance of this statement was not realised in Finland until it was too late.[22]

Upon conclusion of the session, Paasikivi announced his decision to return to Helsinki for further instructions and requested a written memorandum from the Russians for reference while there. That evening, the requested aide memoire was

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[21]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 312; and Tanner, op. cit., pp. 27-28

[22]Tanner, op. cit., p. 28

delivered.[23] It read in part:

> In the negotiations with Finland the Soviet Union is mainly concerned with the settlement of two questions:
> (a) Securing the safety of Leningrad;
> (b) Becoming satisfied that Finland will maintain firm, friendly relations with the Soviet Union.
>
> Both points are essential for the purpose of preserving against external hostile agression the integrity of the Soviet Union coast of the Gulf of Finland and also of the coast of Estonia, whose independence the Soviet Union had undertaken to defend.

In order to carry out this undertaking, the memorandum stressed the importance of Russian bases on the north side of the Gulf of Finland, which, in conjunction with those in Estonia, would close the Gulf. To achieve this, Hanko Cape and surrounding territory were to be leased to the Soviet Union for a thirty year period for the establishment of a naval base provided with artillery supplementing the coastal artillery at Baltischport (Paldiski), to defend the base the Russians proposed to garrison it with one infantry regiment, two anti-aircraft battery groups, two air force regiments, and one battalion of armored cars, with a total of not more than 5,000 men. Finland was also to grant Lappohja Bay (Lapvik) as an anchorage for the Soviet fleet. The islands of Suursaari, Seiskari, Lavansaari, Tytärsaari, and Koivisto, were demanded together with part of the Karelian Isthmus from Lipola to the southern border of the town of Koivisto (see map facing page 82). In exchange for this territory, the Russians agreed to cede

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[23] Ibid. [24] FBB, p. 49.

the communes of Repola and Porajärvi (see map facing page 49). In Petsamo, the western part of Kalastajasaarento was to be also ceded.[25]

All Finnish cessions would have amounted to 2,761 sq. km. for which they would have received 5,529 sq. km. of undeveloped territory in exchange. The demand for a reciprocal aid treaty was dropped in favor of strengthening the existent non-agression pact by including a paragraph whereby neither party would join any alliance hostile to the other. Finally, fortifications on both sides of the Karelian frontier were to be destroyed. In return Russia would not have any objections if Finland alone fortified the Aaland Islands.[26]

When the Finnish delegation read the Russian memorandum, Paasikivi said the cessions would have to be approved by the Finnish Diet and since the demands were of constitutional importance, they would require a 5/6's majority for approval. Stalin expressed firm belief that the proposals would get 99 per cent support.[27] His statement is a good indication of the lack of understanding by dictators of how republican forms of government operate. Paasikivi also asked how the Russian demands reconciled with Stalin's famous slogan: "We do not want a crumb of foreign territory, but neither do we want to cede an inch of our own territory to anyone."[28] Stalin's rejoinder was to the effect that in Finland's case it would be a matter of exchange.[29]

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[25] Ibid., p. 50. [26] Ibid., pp. 50-51.

[27] Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 312-313, and Tanner, op. cit., p. 30.

[28] Quoted in Tanner, loc. cit. [29] Ibid.

The Finnish delegation then returned to Helsinki to confer with the government and receive further instructions. In Helsinki (October 16) Paasikivi reported to the Council of State which discussed the Russian demands in some detail. Diversity of opinion was manifest on most points, but all were agreed that Hanko could not be ceded.[30] Especially regarding cessions on the Karelian Isthmus there was a wide range of opinions. Marshall Mannerheim urged the government to compromise by ceding the city of Ino, which he recognized as having as great a strategic value to the Russians as Hanko. He thought that perhaps in this way the latter might be saved.[31] Among the political leaders there was an uncompromising attitude towards cessions on the Isthmus which was to decisively influence the tenor of later instructions issued to the negotiators.[32]

On October 20, President Kyösti Kallio and Foreign Minister Erkko went to Stockholm to attend a meeting of the heads of the four Northern States. The Finnish delegates went with the intention of sounding out these states on their attitude towards the Russo-Finnish negotiations. Much had been expected by Finland from this meeting but such was not to be the case. From the outset it was plain that these states could not be counted on to aid Finland militarily in the event of war because of their fear of German intervention.[33]

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[30] Ibid., p. 31.

[31] Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 314-315; cf. Niukkanen, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

[32] Tanner, loc. cit. [33] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, pp. 56-57.

Finland felt that her position was strengthened by a letter from the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt to President Mikhail I. Kalinin of the U.S.S.R., expressing the hope that friendly relations might prevail between Finland and the U.S.S.R. The Scandanavian Ministers to Moscow had also endeavored to aid Finland diplomatically by seeking an audience with Molotov to express the same sentiment as the American President. They were unsuccessful as Molotov refused to see them.[34] The importance the Kremlin attached to Roosevelt's message may be gauged by Molotov's speech before the Supreme Soviet on October 31 when he advised the American President to concern himself with the Philippines and Cuba rather than with Finland.[35]

On October 21 Erkko drafted new instructions for the Finnish delegation calling for a refusal to cede Hanko and Lappohja Bay. Only the southern part of Suursaari could be ceded, although if necessary the whole of the island might be surrendered to keep Hanko out of jeopardy. There was to be no yielding on Kalastajasaarento and no reciprocal aid treaty was to be entered into. According to the instructions three alternatives were cited for a rectification of the Isthmus frontier: (1) the Kuokkala bend might be straightened to place the frontier about 45 km. from Leningrad instead of 32 km., thus eliminating the threat of long range artillery; (2) Ino could

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[34]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 313.

[35]James W. Ganterbein, ed., Documentary Background of World War II, 1931-1941 (hereafter cited as DBWW) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), pp. 570-581.

be granted as an isolated fortress to ward off seaward danger; (3) if the Soviet Union demanded that Ino be attached directly to her territory, this might be accomplished by a connecting strip lying between the line Ino-Vammeljoki-Lintulanmäki-Jäppinen and the Gulf of Finland.[36]

At the Cabinet meeting held that day the new instructions were presented for discussion but only on the three Isthmus alternatives was there contention. Because of opposition by some Cabinet members to the last two alternatives, the instructions were redrafted to empower the delegates to eliminate only the Kuokkala bend. Before the Cabinet adjourned Paasikivi requested that someone in the Cabinet accompany him to Moscow, or he would not go. He then demanded that Finance Minister Väinö Tanner be the one.[37]

That same day the Finnish delegation set out for Moscow and arrived there on October 23. The first round of discussions convened that same evening with Paasikivi reading the Finnish memorandum in which Finland declared herself desirous of remaining on friendly terms with the U.S.S.R. To this end the Finnish government was prepared to cede the islands of Seiskari, Peninsaari, Lavansaari, and the two Tytärsaari islands, if given adequate compensation, and willing to discuss amicable arrangements regarding Suursaari in

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[36]Tanner, op. cit., p. 34; cf. Niukkanen, op. cit., p. 90.

[37]Tanner, op. cit., p. 34.

keeping with the interests of both nations. On the Karelian Isthmus, the Finns declared themselves prepared to straighten the Kuokkala bend by moving the frontier to a line running from Rajajoki, east of Haapala, straight to the Gulf of Finland at a point east of Kellomäki church (see map facing page 49). The other Russian proposals were rejected as prejudicial to Finnish neutrality, except that the Finns were ready to redraft part of the non-agression pact of 1932 so that neither party would aid another state that attacked one of the contracting powers.[38]

Stalin's response was that the Finns were not conceding enough. He emphasized that his former demands were minimal and, hence, could not be reduced by bargaining. A long harangue followed, during which he spoke of the war and the possibility of an attack on Leningrad. For this reason, he claimed possession of Hanko Cape which was absolutely necessary to the U.S.S.R., as were the islands in the Gulf of Finland. He scornfully rejected the offer to efface the Kuokkala bend as totally insufficient and too confined should the Red armies have to deploy in the area to meet an enemy. In an effort to enhance his offer, Stalin drew a line on a staff map which would terminate at the village of Koivisto. Since no authority had been delegated to the Finnish representatives on this matter they declined to discuss it.[39]

Suddenly in the middle of the discussion Stalin pointed to Porajärvi and Repola and inquired what the Finns thought of the territory offered in exchange by the U.S.S.R. The Finnish reply

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[38] FBB, pp. 51-54.

[39] Niukkanen, op. cit., p. 91; and Tanner op. cit., pp. 40-41.

was that this was something to be taken up after it was seen if agreement could be reached regarding the reas demanded by Russia. When the Finns asked why the demands were made anyway, since the frontier had been established as recently as 1920, it became clear that the Soviet government was thinking of the possibility of war in the vicinity of the Gulf of Finland and along the shores of the Arctic Ocean. In this connection Stalin frequently mentioned England and France, but he also alluded to Germany. From this the Finns concluded that it was really Germany that he feared.[40]

After several hours of fruitless discussion, during which the Finns incessantly repeated their position on the basis of the Peace of Tartu and the non-agression pact of 1932 and 1934, the session was broken off. Before departing the Finns expressed their regrets because of the failure to accomplish anything specific and then made their adieus. No mention was made of further meetings and Molotov seemed astonished at the Finnish departure. According to Tanner, Molotov asked, "Is it your intention to provoke a conflict?" Paasikivi retorted, "We want no such thing, but you seem to."[41]

Back at the Finnish Legation, the delegates decided that, as no further discussions seemed possible, to return to the Helsinki the next day. That evening, however, Molotov's secretary arrived at the Legation to request the Finns appearance for another parley that same night. Upon arriving at the Kremlin they were once more closeted with Molotov and Stalin, who resumed the conference as

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[40]Tanner, op. cit., p. 41; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, pp. 57-58.

[41]Tanner, op. cit., p. 42.

though there had been no interruption.[42] In a written statement, Molotov stated that the Soviet Union would be willing to reduce the force she proposed to station on Hanko Cape (from 5,000 to 4,000) and to reduce the territorial demands on the Karelian Isthmus. He still, however, was adamant in demanding that the Russo-Finnish boundary should terminate at Koivisto. At the same time he accepted the Finnish proposal for expansion of the Non-agression Pact.[43]

At the conclusion of the conference the Finns informed their hosts that they would have to return to Helsinki to consult their government and Diet. Before departing from Moscow, Tanner and Paasikivi decided that a letter should be dispatched to Stockholm to ascertain the Swedish attitude toward Finland in the event of war. Tanner undertook to write the letter to the Swedish Prime Minister, Per Albin Hansson, in which he inquired of Hansson how much material assistance and military aid Sweden was prepared to render Finland if negotiations broke down in Moscow. Hansson replied on October 27 that Finland should not count on any direct Swedish intervention in case of war, although Sweden would be willing to continue supplying arms, munitions, and equipment as well as food to Finland. Beyond this Sweden was unwilling to make promises other than to give the Finns as fully diplomatic support as possible in Moscow. Hansson indicated that the Swedish attitude derived from the fear of German reprisals if Sweden violated her neutrality by

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[42] Ibid.

[43] FBB, pp. 54-56.

giving Finland military aid.[44]

A Finnish Cabinet member, Karl-August Fagerholm, actually delivered Tanner's letter to Hansson and at the same time discussed the Finno-Russian negotiations with the Swedish Cabinet. He felt that a difference of opinion existed in Sweden on the matter, with the left-wind parties supporting the policy of non-intervention and the right-wing parties supporting more favorable aid for Finland. Opponents of an intervention policy were more determined and articulated their views more lucidly than did the proponents of intervention. Part of the problem for the supporters of an intervention policy was their lack of information concerning the Russian demands, which had been kept secret by the Finnish government, and the fear of German invasion of Skåne if Sweden leaped into a conflict on Finland's behalf.[45]

Swedish fears of German reaction were well founded; Germany coveted Swedish iron ore and would have been severely affected by any interruption in ore shipments occasioned by Swedish action in Finland. Germany also feared that in aiding Finland, the Swedes might make concessions to France and Great Britain for bases in Sweden from which they could control the Baltic.[46] German views regarding Allied bases in the Baltic were possibly justified as Hansson expressed to Fagerholm the view that, if Norway could manage to permit transit of Allied troops across her territory to Finland, so could Sweden.[47] Such action, in the German view, would

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[44]Tanner, op. cit., pp. 45-48. [45]Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[46]DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, p. 252. [47]Tanner, loc. cit.

permit the British and French a foothold in Scandanavia that could be used against Germany.

In Finland, for the first time the Diet was informed of the negotiations (October 28) when the Speaker Väinö Hakkala, and the chairmen of the various Diet party groups were invited to meet in a joint session with the Council of State. After being briefed on the negotiations in progress, the party chairmen were requested to consult with the policy committees of their parties and to reconvene later. On October 29 another session of the Council of State convened at which the Diet party group chairmen approved the conduct of the negotiations to date and expressed satisfaction with the counter-proposals of the government. All groups were adamantly opposed to the cession of Hanko Cape and to giving way on the Karelian Isthmus, but they did express readiness to support some compromise action to preserve peace.[48]

In consequence of the assured support in the Diet, a reply was drafted for presentation to the Kremlin. Finland's desire to preserve her national integrity and neutrality was once more reiterated and it was said that the cession of Hanko Cape was impossible. On the other hand, Finland agreed to cede the islands of Seiskari, Peninsaari, Lavansaari and both Tytärsaari Islands, in the Gulf of Finland. Regarding Suursaari, Finland thought that an amicable arrangement could be arrived at that would take into account the security of both Finland and the city of Leningrad. As for the

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[48] Ibid., pp. 52-54.

Koivisto-Lipola line on the Karelian Isthmus, that was called impossible as it placed the Soviet frontier too close to Viipuri, Finland's main export harbor. As an indication of her goodwill, Finland now offered to cede, in return for commensurate compensation elsewhere, the territory south of the Vammeljoki-Lintulanjoki-Kaukjärvi line, considerably more than had been previously offered. In the Petsamo region Finland expressed her willingness to cede the western part of Kalastajasaarento up to Pummanki Fjord in return for reasonable compensation, although the only reason cited for the Russian demand had been that the line was inconveniently and artifically drawn.[49] In the instructions it was stressed that the areas to be ceded were of primary military significance, as had been repeatedly emphasized by the Soviet Union, whereas the territory offered in exchange was of little strategic importance. Moreover, the territory Finland was to cede was densely populated and would necessitate extensive financial compensation for the losses suffered by Finnish citizens.[50] Finland could not agree to the demolition of the frontier fortifications on the Karelian Isthmus "as the measures which the Finnish Government has adopted on the frontier are solely due to considerations of defense and security . . . . But she is also obliged to provide for the safety of her frontiers by the strict neutrality on which the policy of her Government is based."[51]

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[49] FBB, pp. 61-63. [50] Ibid., p. 64.

[51] Ibid., p. 65.

October 31, the day that the Finnish representatives departed on their return journey to Moscow, Molotov, in a gross breach of the secrecy which until that time had been observed by both sides, delivered a speech to the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union exposing all the details of the negotiations. In the course of his speech Molotov emphasized the necessity of obtaining military security for the Soviet Union and especially for the city of Leningrad. He declared that the Soviet Union had a right to make the demands of the Finns for her own security and that the Soviet Government "was especially interested in the Gulf of Finland, that approach to Leningrad from the sea, as well as in the frontier, which was at a distance of only 32 km. from Leningrad."[52] In this connection he also mentioned that the population of Leningrad almost equalled that of Finland, i.e. about 3,500,000 to Finland's 3,650,000. In his opinion the proposals by the Soviet Union were modest and confined to the minimum for Russia's security. After describing the Soviet demands in detail, Molotov declared that an attempt to prevent the conclusion of the proposed treaty would be harmful to Finland. He therefore expressed the hope that no third parties, e.g. Britain, France or the United States, would pressure Finland to refuse the Soviet proposals.[53] He criticized President Roosevelt for his statement in Finland's behalf and, in an endeavor to prove how munificent was the Russian attitude to Finland, said:

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[52] DBWW, p. 578. [53] Ibid., pp. 578-579.

> Of its own free will the Soviet Union insured the separated and independent existence of Finland. There can be no doubt that only the Soviet Government, which recognizes the principle of the free development of nationalities could make such a step. It must be said that none but the Soviet Government could tolerate the existence of an independent Finland at the very gates of Leningrad.[54]

Consternation prevailed in Helsinki at this breach of secrecy, especially since the Finnish representatives had just set out for Moscow. In a telegram delivered to the negotiators at Viipuri, Erkko urged them to return to the capital for new instructions. By the time the wire was delivered, however, it was obsolete and new instructions were issued by telephone. Over the phone Erkko explained that the Cabinet had decided to leave up to Tanner and Paasikivi the decision as to whether the trip should be continued or not. At Rajajoki another phone call was made in which Tanner and Paasikivi informed the government of their intention to go on.[55]

They decided to continue because they felt that "the purpose of the speech was . . . to make of the demands a fait accompli which we could no longer avoid."[56] Another consideration was Finnish public opinion and world opinion; not to have done so might have been taken as vascillation at best and retreat at worst.[57]

That same day the Finnish Foreign Ministry issued a communique referring to the speech. It stated that the publication of the views of the Soviet Union at that moment had created a new situation and jeopardized the continuation of the conversations. Finland, on her part, had "in an independent and unbiased manner, not being subject

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[54] Ibid., p. 578.

[55] Tanner, op. cit., pp. 58-60.

[56] Ibid., p. 59.

[57] Ibid.

to the influence of any foreign power, endeavored to find a solution to the questions submitted to her, however difficult they might be, for the sake of the neutral policy she had adopted."[58] In this manner Finland sought to assuage Soviet fears of attack from the west through Finland and to prove her willingness to arrive at a reasonable arrangement that took into consideration the security of both nations.

When the Finnish party arrived in Moscow (November 2) it was met by the Swedish Minister, Otto W. Winther, who told the delegates that he was trying to see Molotov to present Sweden's démarche in Finland's case. Ultimately the démarche was never presented as Winther was not received at the Foreign Commissariat. He also informed the Finns that American Minister Laurence Steinhardt had expressed the opinion that the Finnish business would end in an acceptable agreement.[59]

At the Finnish Legation a wire from Erkko awaited the delegates. It stated:

> Molotov's speech is regarded here as a tactical maneurver to frighten us. The same tactics were used successfully against Estonia. We are calm. The Russians must be shown a firm front. They are shaken to a degree by the impression made by the speech.[60]

That evening the Estonian Minister to Moscow, A. Rei, called on Tanner. Their talk was of a general nature at first but finally Rei stated bluntly that Soviet-Estonian treaties were disadvantageous to his state. Even the trade agreements were not operating properly--Soviet goods were priced too high and prices paid to Estonia were too low. Moreover, the Soviets had not refrained from trying to influence

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[58] FBB, pp. 60-61. [59] Tanner, op. cit., p. 62.

[60] Quoted in Tanner loc. cit.

Estonian domestic affairs.[61] It is possible to infer from this that the Finns were led to believe that if they ultimately submitted to the Russian demands, they would suffer the same interference that Estonia did.

The first round of the new conversations began the next evening (November 3) with Stalin absent and Molotov and Potemkin present. Paasikivi read the Finnish memorandum but it made little impression on the Russians. From the views exchanged, it was obvious that the Russians were thinking along the same general lines as in the earlier sessions. Tanner states, "It was plainly evident that the intelligence with power to decide was absent from the group and that it was for this reason we were bogged down."[62]

Molotov finally flatly described the Finnish proposals as unsatisfactory and repeated that the Soviet demands were minimal. For their part, the Finnish representatives declared that they had gone to the maximum limit that Finland's security would permit. As the session was breaking up Molotov said, "We civilians can see no further in the matter; now it is the turn of the military to have their say."[63] It is possible that he meant the military was about to present its case but it is more likely that he meant the events that were to come in December.

Negotiations resumed the next day with Stalin present, who stated that it was now time to discuss details. Though Russia tolerated an independent Finland, still certain guarantees were required for Soviet security. Therefore, Hanko and Lappohja were required and

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[61] Ibid., p. 65. [62] Ibid., p. 66. [63] Ibid.

Finland could put their cession in any juridical terms she chose--lease, sale, or exchange. Finnish rejection of this proposal was countered by a proposal that the islands of Hermansö, Koö, and Hästö-Busö just west of Hanko Cape be ceded instead of the Cape itself. As no instructions had been issued on this point, the Finns declined to discuss it.[64]

On the other demands the discussion followed the same cycle, without definite result. It should be noted, however, that the tone of the conversations was reported as friendly enough. A speech made by Foreign Minister Erkko (November) was brought up by the Russians who desired to attack its content. In his speech Erkko had said that the Finnish Government was backed by a united nation and that Molotov's speech gave a one sided view of the negotiations. He added that Finland would continue to take her stand on the principle of neutrality and the right of self-defense. Finland would also carry on negotiations on the basis of treaties still in effect between the two states.[65] In their discussion of the speech, Stalin and Molotov stated that the text as published in Finland was purged of its worst parts. They claimed that they had both the unexpurgated and purged texts when the Finns expressed displeasure with the distortions that appeared in the Soviet press.[66]

It was at this juncture that the second session ended with the Finnish representatives promising to contact Helsinki on the

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[64]Tanner, op. cit., pp. 67; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 59.

[65]FBB, p. 17. [66]Tanner, op. cit., p. 68.

Hanko islands proposal. The next day Tanner telephoned Erkko, who informed him that the Governor of Viipuri province was in Helsinki to furnish information necessary to calculate the value of the property in that part of the Karelian Isthmus which the Russians wished Finland to cede. The Soviet Union had promised to pay, above and beyond the territorial compensation, such sums.[67] That the Finnish government was already preparing for cession of Isthmusian territory indicates that Finland believed that a peaceful settlement of the matter was still possible.

New instructions arrived from Helsinki on November 8 forbidding any discussion of exchange, lease, or purchase of Hanko Cape. The same directives applied to the islands west of the Cape, and even the mention of Jussarö was unconditionally forbidden. On the Karelian Isthmus, the cession of Ino was not to be discussed as it was believed an extensive hinterland would be required also. This was tempered, however, by the possibility of discussion if the Russians abandoned their demands for Koivisto and Hanko Cape. In the Petsamo region the Finnish government would agree to only the northern part of Kalastajasaarento being ceded.[68]

Both Paasikkvi and Tanner were deeply disappointed with the new directives as they left no ground for discussion. Tanner wired Helsinki for permission to break off negotiations if the Kremlin refused to accept the latest concessions. Erkko wired back that they were free to do so since Finland had agreed to cede the maximum that her security and independence would allow. Paasikivi was especially

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[67] Ibid., pp. 68-69.

[68] Tanner, op. cit., p. 73

averse to the new instructions and said, "Now if ever would be the time to fight. But since you of the army (turning to Paasonen) can do nothing, it is necessary to avoid war and back up. None of the army people but Mannerheim understand anything."[69] Paasikivi had reference to Mannerheim's advice at an earlier stage to make the concessions required in order to avoid war since the military was not prepared to wage a full scale war.

Tanner also expressed severe chagrin at the tenor of the new instructions which had been approved by the Cabinet and Diet party groups. Especially was he unhappy over a statement by Mauno Pekkala, Chairman of the Social Democratic group (Tanner's party), who had declared that the party approved the instructions but desired that the negotiators be directed to manage the conversations in such a way as to avoid war. In Tanner's words, "This was truly a comfortable fashion of conducting business: issue strict instructions from which there was to be no divergence, but still tell your men to avoid a conflict."[70]

In light of Helsinki's instructions, the delegates decided immediately that they should refuse any demands for bases at the western end of the Gulf of Finland. If that caused a break-down of negotiations, then they would return to Helsinki; if not then they could go on talking about territory on the Karelian Isthmus and Suursaari. On the basis of compensation figures received from the government in Helsinki, they drafted a memorandum concerning property to be ceded on the Isthmus and calculated the sum required in compensation for property losses

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[69] Ibid. [70] Ibid., p. 74.

in the areas. The sum required totalled about 800 million Finnmarks.[71]

Armed with the latest directives, the Finns returned to the Kremlin on November 9 for another parley. When the Finnish refusal to cede the islands near Hanko Cape was read, the Russians showed great surprise. They apparently had expected the Finns to accept this proposal. When nothing more was said about Hanko, the Finns pointed to Suursaari on a map and proposed ceding the southern portion of the island. Stalin said that two masters on the island would never do.[72] It is difficult to understand Stalin's position on Suursaari, for even had Finland retained possession of the northern half, the Soviet Union, with its military establishments there, would have been able to defend itself from attack.

Stalin then pointed to the narrows opposite Seivastö and declared that the aperture necessitated a fortress on both shores (Finland and Estonia) or it would remain unclosed. The islands Finland proposed to cede, he said, were so tiny as to be impractical for the purpose. He next siezed on the Ino question and observed that for defense purposes 20 km. of hinterland would be required, thus bearing out Erkko's prediction. Pointing to the map, Tanner again stressed the southern half of Suursaari as the reasonable limit of Finnish concessions on that island. If, however, the Soviet government would abandon its claims on Hanko Cape and other western bases, the Finnish government would undertake to satisfy the Soviet demands in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland and on the Karelian Isthmus.[73]

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[71] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[72] Tanner, op. cit., p. 75; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 60.

[73] Tanner, loc. cit.

Refusing compromise, the Russians stoutly maintained their original demands, thus creating an impasse. The Finnish delegation was not, in any case, empowered to meet the Soviet demands. After an hour of fruitless discussion, Tanner secured Stalin's agreement to adjourn. The termination of the conversation recorded no satisfactory agreement.[74]

A dispatch cabled to Helsinki from the Finnish Legation surmised the complete break-down of negotiations. It advised, however, that all public announcements be withheld pending further developments. Stalin, it was reported, seemed to be earnestly seeking an agreement.[75] This possibility was dispelled at about 12:30 a.m. of the following day (November 10) with the appearance at the Legation of Molotov's secretary bearing a letter referring to the Finnish aidé-memoire of November 9. As the memoire had contained the sentence, "Finland cannot grant to a foreign Power military bases on her own territory and within the confines of her frontiers," the Finns were accused of misrepresenting the Soviet position. Molotov asserted that

> "if . . . a piece of territory situated in the vicinity of the port of Hanko [or nearby islands] should be sold to the U.S.S.R., . . . [it] would mean that the objection that such a piece of land formed part of the territory of Finland would cease to apply, since, after being sold to the U.S.S.R., it would, ipso facto. become Soviet territory."[76]

In view of this claimed "misrepresentation" the aidé-memoire was returned.

That same day a letter in reply to Molotov's was drafted which

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[74] Ibid., p. 76. [75] Ibid., p. 77. [76] FBB, p. 67.

reviewed the last phase of the negotiations and asserted that the Finnish negotiators had not misrepresented the Soviet proposals. It was also made clear that, even if the territories demanded were ceded *in toto*, they would still remain within Finnish boundaries. Finnish reasons for not assenting to the Soviet demands were reiterated as was their declared willingness to satisfy the Soviet Union elsewhere. In conclusion the sincere desire of the Finnish government to conclude an agreement on the basis of the concessions proposed by Finland and the demands of the U.S.S.R. were emphasized.[77]

No reply was received to the Finnish letter but the Soviet press launched an attack of invective on Finland, accusing her of being the ploy of warmongers. The concluding paragraph of an editorial in *Krasnyi Flot*, a Moscow mid-day paper, is a good example of the type of propaganda employed:

> Provocateurs, warmongers, and their henchmen are trying to represent the Soviet proposals as a threat not only to the independence of Finland but also to the security of Scandanavia, particularly Sweden. The Soviet people repudiates with loathing these filthy insults of the international political sharpers. We know that our government's sole motive is and has ever been a concern to restrict the war zone and to underwrite the life and peaceful work of the states which are neighbors of the Soviet peoples. Unshakably faithful to the principles of its pacific policy, the Soviet government will find ways and means to guarantee the security of the extreme north western land and sea frontiers of our fatherland.[78]

Taking this as a cue, the Finnish delegates sent a letter to Molotov (November 13) thanking him for the friendliness shown them during

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[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

[78] Quoted in Tanner, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

their stay and expressing regret that the negotiations had proven unfruitful. They continued by expressing the hope that at some later date, and under more auspicious circumstances, the negotiations might be resumed. With that the Finnish delegation departed for home.[79]

It is obvious from the instructions that were first issued to Paasikivi on October 9 that Finland assumed a negative attitude toward Russian demand before they were even clarified. Such an attitude did not derive from stubbornness or lack of realism but rather from a deep and sincere desire on the part of Finland to remain apart from any conflict and to maintain her national integrity and territorial inviolability.

It is deceptively simple in the light of subsequent events to say that the Finnish government should have made concessions at the time and, thus avoided the war and the territorial amputations consequent on it. However, the general context of European power politics left the Finns little reason to hope that prompt concessions would not be met with further demands. To the exploitation of the Baltic States might be added the unencouraging spectacle of the dismembered Czechoslovakian Republic, the victim of Russia's Molotov-Ribbentrop partner. Weighing these facts, detachment might yet favor a policy of settlement. In the final decision of the Finns, however, experience might be said to have cast the deciding vote. It hardly strains the facts to note the similarity of Stalin in 1939 to Alexander I in 1808. Finland's dilemma is the perennial one of small states. Confronted by a Great Power that takes opportunity rather than responsibility for its rationale, it must look to history

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[79] Ibid., p. 80.

for justice. The plight of Melos in the path of an expanding Athenian Empire, finds its just expression in the timeless account of Thucydides:

> If we yield now, all is over; but if we fight, there is yet hope that we may stand upright. . . It may be your interest to be our master, but how can it be ours to be your slaves?[80]

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[80] Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, tran. Benjamin Jowett, in C. A. Robinson, Jr., ed., Selections from Greek and Roman Historians (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1959), pp. 101, 103.

CHAPTER V

LAST DAYS OF PEACE AND UNDECLARED WAR

During the last weeks of November matters on Finland's part remained stable and quiet. The populace of the capital was happy to think that a bad phase had passed and that the situation would tend to be easier. N ot so in the Soviet Union, however, for throughout the remainder of November, the Russian press continued to rain invective on Finland and Soviet planes repeatedly violated Finnish air space.[1]

Events rapidly reached a climax on November 26 with the fateful "Mainila Incident," i.e. the Soviet allegation that Red troops in the vicinity of the village of Mainila on the Karelian Isthmus were fired upon by Finnish artillery. Allegedly a non-commissioned officer and three soldiers were killed and nine others wounded.[2] Thereafter, events followed one another in rapid succession. The Soviets demanded that Finnish border troops be moved back a distance of 20-25 km. from the frontier. The Finnish government refused to do this and denied that Finnish artillery had fired the shots on Mainila. It was suggested that perhaps the Soviet troops while practice firing, had accidently fired on the village since three Finnish border guards had reported that the shots came from south of Mainila.[3]

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[1]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 318-319; and Niukkanen, op. cit., p. 112. According to Mannerheim, Soviet planes had violated Finnish air space frequently since October 9.

[2]FBB, pp. 70-71. For the military's view on the matter, cf. Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 319 and Niukkanen, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

[3]Ibid., p. 72.

Actually the Finns could not have done the firing, as the Russian claimed, as Mannerheim in mid-October had ordered all artillery moved back from the frontier by a distance greater than their range. In the same order the Marshal had directed that great care be exercised in the operation of aircraft and naval vessels, lest just such an incident be provoked.[4] That the Mainila shots were a crude machination on the part of the Soviet was revealed in 1941, when captured Russian soldiers explained that the incident had been arranged by the Reds.[5]

The Finnish government made every endeavor to remain at peace. Their efforts included an appeal on November 27 to the U.S.S.R. for the appointment of a joint committee to investigate the matter in accordance "with the Convention concerning Frontier Commissioners, concluded on September 21, 1926."[6] Helsinki further declared itself "prepared . . . to open conversations with a view to the mutual withdrawal of troops to a certain distance from the frontier."[7] Moscow's reply to the Finnish memorandum was a flat rejection of all Finnish offers to adjust the situation. In reply Molotov stated that:

> The Finnish Government's reply to the note from the Government of the U.S.S.R. . . . is a document which reflects the deep hostility of the Finnish Government towards the U.S.S.R. and is the cause of the extreme tensions in the relations between the two countries. . . . Nothing but a lack of responsibility and disdain for public opinion can account for the attempt to explain away this reprehensible incident by alleging firing practice by Soviet artillery on the actual frontier-line within sight of Finnish troops.[8]

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[4]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 351.

[5]Paasonen, Finland and World War II, pp. 62-63.

[6]FWB, p. 73. [7]Ibid., p. 72. [8]Ibid., p. 73.

In addition, Molotov scornfully rejected the idea of mutual withdrawal of troops from the border because it would put the Red troops in the suburbs of Leningrad. Thus Leningrad's safety would be in even greater jeopardy, and therefore, the Russians were again requesting a unilateral withdrawal. If Finland failed to meet these demands, Moscow could only construe it to mean that the Finns intentionally desired to threaten Leningrad and in view of Finland's

> concentration of a large number of regular troops in the immediate vicinity of Leningrad and subjecting it . . . to a direct threat, the Finnish Government have committed a hostile act against the U.S.S.R. which is incompatible with the Treaty of Non-Aggression . . .[9]

Therefore, the Soviet Union unilaterally renounced the treaty.

Before the Finnish Minister to Moscow could deliver his government's reply to the latest Soviet note, the Soviet Union on November 29 severed diplomatic relations with Finland. In its note explaining this action the Kremlin stated that Finnish troops continued to attack the Soviet forces and therefore the Soviet government could no longer endure such a situation. Finland was held responsible for all the border violations and was said to have promoted the situation. For this reason Soviet economic and diplomatic representatives to Finland were recalled.[10] Nevertheless, the Finnish Minister delivered the Finnish note to the Kremlin that day. In it the Finnish government expressed a desire to establish a conciliation committee to investigate border incidents and, should that course fail, suggested submitting the dispute to a neutral party for arbitration.[11]

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[9]Ibid. [10]Ibid., p. 75. [11]Ibid., p. 76.

All attempts to maintain peace failed and on November 30, the Soviet Union without warning or the issuance of a formal declaration of war commenced regular military operations on land, sea, and in the air along the whole Finno-Soviet border.[12] The Red air attack was directed at industrial centers and cities, especially Helsinki. On Soviet news reports it was claimed that Finnish accounts of bombs being dropped on civilian centers were fabrications. The Red Air Force had merely dropped bread on the starving masses of Helsinki! Hence the term "Molotov's bread-baskets."[13] At this point the full import of Molotov's statement that it was up to the military to have its say was brought forcefully home.

Thus began Finland's ordeal by combat as the David of the North met the Goliath of the East in battle. The Finns could not turn to Germany for succor and support as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between the Reich and the U.S.S.R. prevented such aid on the part of Germany. Hence, other aid was sought from the West, i.e. Scandanavia, France and Britain. In the meantime the Helsinki government turned to the task of conducting the war and endeavored to find a means of restoring peace.

Immediately on the outbreak of hostilities it was decided that the Helsinki government should be reconstituted for successful conduct the war and, if possible to continue negotiations with the Kremlin. The decision was based in part on the feeling in Helsinki that the

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[12] Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 320-321; and Pekka Tiilikainen, Radioselostajana Tulilinjoilla (Provoo, Finland: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1940), pp. 30-31.

[13] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 63.

Kremlin would not be likely to pursue negotiations with the government that had spurned its demands. From the outset of the war the continual policy of the Finnish government was to restore the peace by one means or another. Thus in keeping with its decision to resign, the existent government headed by Cajander tendered its resignation to President Kallio on November 30. The next day Risto Ryti agreed to head the new government as Prime Minister with Väinö Tanner assuming the office of Foreign Minister and Juho K. Paasikivi as minister without portfolio.[14]

As soon as word of the Russian attack was reported to the outside world, Sweden and the U.S. offered to act as mediators.[15] Both these offers were gratefully accepted by Finland but the Soviet Union refused to accept them.[16] When these efforts proved of no avail, the new Finnish government turned to the League of Nations for aid (December 3) in settling the conflict. Russia refused to attend the sessions dealing with the matter. Molotov, in his reply to the invitation from the committee appointed by the League of Nations to investigate the Russo-Finnish conflict, informed the committee that:

> The U.S.S.R. is not at war with Finland and does not threaten the Finnish nation with war . . . The Soviet Union maintains peaceful relations with the Democratic Republic of Finland, whose Government signed with the U.S.S.R. on December 2 Pact [sic] of Mutual Assistance and friendship. This Pact settles all questions which the Soviet Government had fruitlessly discussed with delegates former [sic] Finnish Government now divested of its power.[17]

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[14]Tanner, op. cit., pp. 97-98. [15]Ibid., pp. 100-101.

[16]FBB, p. 21. [17]Ibid., p. 95.

This announcement informed the world for the first time of the puppet government set up by the Kremlin in the frontier hamlet of Terijoki. This pseudo-Finnish government was headed by Otto Kuusinen, a Finnish Communist exile resident in Russia since the defeat of the Reds in the Finnish War of Liberation. The Russians would only negotiate with this government since they apparently expected a swift victory over Finland and the establishment of a Soviet-type government in Helsinki.[18]

Moving with unprecedented alacrity the League of Nations Council submitted the matter to the Assembly on December 9. On December 11 the belligerents were urged to cease hostilities and seek mediation. Again the Soviet government refused on the same grounds as before, and on December 14 the Assembly passed a resolution condemning the Russian action and urging all League members and states that were not members to render Finland every humanitarian and material assistance possible. The Assembly further resolved that same day to expel the Soviet Union from the League of Nations.[19]

Although the world had been urged to aid Finland, little more than strong <u>demarches</u> were delivered to Russia and expressions of sympathy extended to Finland. For her part Sweden rejected the Finnish appeal for substantial military aid and contented herself with not making a formal declaration of neutrality.[20] From the United States came expressions of sympathy and, more important, orders

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[18]<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 103-105. [19]<u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 81-88 and 89-111.

[20]Mannerheim, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 378.

curtailing export of essential raw materials and industrial products to the Soviet Union. This seriously hampered the U.S.S.R.'s ability to wage effective war.[21] Of more immediate importance to Finland, however, was an American loan of thirty million dollars to be used for civilian purchases.[22]

On the other hand, Germany, once a good friend of Finland's, assumed a coldly cynical attitude towards her, and stated in effect that the Finns had brought on the war by not concluding a treaty of non-aggression with Germany when it was offered. In response to a Finnish appeal for German support in Moscow to end the conflict, the Wilhelmstrasse replied that it could do nothing in Moscow.[23] Further indications of Germany's attitude was manifested later in December when the Reich refused to permit transit of arms and troops to Finland across Germany territory and prohibited German firms from selling arms to Finland.[24] In fact a shipment of Italian airplanes, which had crossed the whole of Germany and were ready for shipment to Finland from a north German port were ordered shipped back to Italy. During the period German press and radio reports expressed no sympathy for Finland, and the Nazi government warned Sweden on at least three occasions to remain neutral in the Finnish conflict or risk war with Germany.[25]

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[21] Ibid. [22] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 68.

[23] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, p. 479.

[24] Tanner, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

[25] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 69.

Thus, for all practical purposes, Finland stood alone against her giant adversary and could entertain little hope of ultimate victory. The Finnish government realized that the only realistic course open to them was to make peace at the earliest possible moment. This was an important reason for the change in government in order that objections from Russia about the composition of the government, would be lessened when, and if, peace negotiations should begin.

CHAPTER VI

THE TORTUOUS ROAD TO PEACE

Every effort was made by the Finns to defend their independence during the Winter War, although in the opinion of Mannerheim, the nation's military preparedness was seriously deficient. In his Memoirs he quotes the following statistics to show the inadequacy of Finnish war materials:

Cartridges for rifles, quick fire guns and machine guns	2 months
81-MM. grenade projectiles	22 days
77-mm. shells for field guns	21 "
122-mm. shells for field howitzers	24 "
Shells for heavy artillers	19 "
Fuel and lubricating oil	2 months
Aviation fuels	1 month[1]

The Marshal further points out that the ratio of Russian to Finnish divisions was nine to seven and that the Russian advantage in artillery was a "lopsided" two regiments to one. In addition, the Red divisions each contained an anti-tank section and armored battalion with from 40 to 50 tanks, and an anti-aircraft company, while the Finnish units had no such corresponding complements. Regarding automatic weapons and grenade throwers, Mannerheim states that, on the average, the Soviet divisions were twice as strong as those of the Finns. Furthermore, the Red artillery strength, per division, was three times as great as that of the Finnish divisions. Despite these differences, the U.S.S.R. was able to place 26-28 divisions in the field against nine for the Finns.[2]

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[1]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 324.

[2]Ibid., pp. 324-325, 330.

Not all was to Finland's disadvantage, however, for from childhood every Finn was trained to co-operate with nature. This now stood them in good stead, and as the Finnish armies were accoutered in white to blend with the snow and placed on skis, they had the advantage of superior mobility and better concealment in winter warfare. To these advantages was added the training the troops had received in the frontier areas during October and November. During those weeks the troops had been thoroughly familiarized with the terrain and countryside over which they were to fight. Field fortifications had continued to be erected and mine fields laid. Moreover, the short winter days handicapped the adversary's superior air power.[3] These preparations proved their worth in meeting the initial onslaught of the Soviet armies.

During December and January the Finnish armies performed the impossible -- they managed to halt the Red advance and destroy large numbers of troops. Thus the front was stabilized and the Finnish government was enabled to seek peace on reasonable terms. As early as December a multitude of offers to mediate the conflict were received in Helsinki. From Denmark came an offer to request Germany to approach the Soviet Union on the matter. At the same time Sweden again offered its good offices for the same purpose. Foreign Minister Halvdan Koht of Norway, in a personal note to Tanner, suggested that the Finns surrender Hanko Cape in return for neutralization of the Gulf of Finland. In the event

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[3] Ibid., p. 323, 326.

that this proposal met Helsinki's approval, he was prepared to make a demarche in Moscow.[4]

Vague reports were also received from Estonia that the Soviet Union realised it had undertaken a misadventure. It was rumored that that the Soviet government expressed the hope that negotiations might be resumed if Finland agreed to comply with certain conditions.[5] Later clarification of this proposal stated that Ants Piip, the Estonian Foreign Minister, had heard from the Kremlin that Finland could purchase peace by ceding Hanko and forcing Tanner to resign.[6] "It was decided to answer this announcement by saying that Hanko could not be ceded under any circumstances and that it did not behoove the Soviet Union to dictate how the Finnish government was to be composed."[7]

After much debate in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, it was finally decided that Germany provided the best hope for successful mediation. Therefore, Germany was to be approached first on the matter and, if this failed, a number of other states might be asked to intervene on Finland's behalf. Regarding the latter decision, it was considered best to approach the United States as a disinterested mediator. Prime Minister Ryti and Foreign Minister Tanner brought the matter up in a casual discussion with H. F. Arthur Schoenfeld, the American Minister to Finland, in December. The latter elicited interest in the project but

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[4]Tanner, op. cit., pp. 115-116.

[5]Ibid., p. 116.

[6]Ibid. [7]Ibid.

expressed doubt if the moment was propitious. On January 9 the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet decided to request the United States, in conjunction with Italy, to approach the Soviet Union with a view of offering to mediate and bring an end to the hostilities. It was further suggested that the United States ask Italy to simultaneously urge both Germany and Sweden to approach Finland and the Soviet Union with the same purpose. Thus by a joint representation on the behalf of Finland, it was felt that a just settlement might be reached. Despite the interest aroused, nothing ever came of the idea and it ultimately was dropped.[8]

In keeping with their intention of first addressing an appeal to Germany, the Finns on December 15 sent Professor T. M. Kivimaki to Berlin to learn if Germany would be agreeable to undertake such a role. His findings added little to what was already known in Helsinki for it was obviously too early for any agreement to be reached in Moscow through the offices of the Wilhelmstrasse.[9] With the coming of the new year, however, Finnish successes on the front created an air of optimism in goverment circles in Helsinki. The moment appeared auspicious to press for German mediation and to this end Tanner invited Wipert von Blücher, the German Minister to Finland, to the Foreign Ministry for a discussion on January 4, 1940. Tanner approached the matter in an oblique manner by asking Blücher what advice Germany might

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[8]Ibid., pp. 116-117.

[9]Ibid., pp. 117.

offer Finland to assist her in withdrawing from the war. Blücher countered by asking what Finland would suggest in case the possibility to discuss peace should arise. He went on to say the moment was unfavorable for peace discussions since the Reds had yet to win a victory, but promised to inquire as to the attitude of his government on the matter.[10]

Although these conversations were supposedly confidential, word of them leaked out. The Finnish Minister to Copenhagen, Paavo Pajula, reported to his government that the German Minister to Moscow, Count C. F. von der Schulenburg, had told the Danish Minister there that Germany hoped peace could be restored between the two belligerents. News reports began to appear in the world press to the effect that Germany had already transmitted a peace proposal to Moscow. Regarding the news reports, Harri Holma, the Finnish Minister to France, reported that he was of the opinion that Moscow had instigated the rumors as a counter move to Western plans to aid Finland.[11]

These rumors were probably well founded, for at Blücher's instance Germany had already begun to explore the possibility of peace in Moscow. In a dispatch to his government dated January 11, 1940, Blücher urged an alteration in German policy vis-a-vis the U.S.S.R., and urged since Soviet weakness had been revealed, stronger measures to restore peace.[12] Despite his efforts, matters progressed slowly. On January 17, Tapio

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[10] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, pp. 613-614; and Tanner op. cit., pp. 117-119.

[11] Tanner, op. cit., p. 119.

[12] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, pp. 650-652.

Voionmaa, Permanent Undersecretary to the Finnish Foreign Minister, was told by German Legation Counselor Reiner Kreuzwald that no reply to Blücher's inquiry had yet been received from Berlin.[13] It is reasonable, therefore, to suspect that Germany and the Soviet Union were seriously studying the matter of peace.

On January 19 Blücher appeared at the Foreign Ministry to report that "the German Government is of the opinion that at the moment there are no prospects of putting an end to the war."[14] As though endeavoring to mitigate the reply, Blücher wondered out loud if, after all their victories, the Finns would really be disposed to make peace. When Tanner quickly assured him that Finland sincerely desired peace, the German asked if Finland had really expected Berlin to mediate peace in Moscow. Blücher seemingly desired to give Tanner the impression that Germany had not made any representations to the Kremlin and that, after meditating on the proposal to do so, had reached a negative decision regarding the matter.[15] The German reply and Blücher's attitude would seem to indicate that Germany did not wish to appear incapable of making her influence felt in Moscow.

Another attempt to end the war through German mediation was made after January 24 when Blücher again called on Tanner. Blücher started lamenting that the German negotiation plans had leaked out and sought

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[13] Tanner, op. cit., p. 120.

[14] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, p. 677.

[15] Tanner, op. cit., p. 120.

to blame the Finns for the breach of secrecy. Tanner sharply refuted this by reading a memorandum recounting Pajula's report of Schulenburg's talk in Moscow about hopes for peace. Thereupon the German brushed by this point and asked Tanner if he had any new proposals to make to Berlin. To this Tanner replied that, in view of Germany's negative answer before, "It is unpleasant to knock on the same door twice."[16] On this note the attempt to use Germany as a mediator at Moscow ended until February 17.

In the meantime other roads to peace were being explored by Helsinki. On New Year's day, Mrs. Hella Wuolijoki wrote to Tanner suggesting that she might be assigned the task of ascertaining through her friend Mme. Aleksandra Kollontai, the Soviet Minister to Stockholm, if peace were possible. Tanner agreed to try this approach and on January 8 Mrs. Wuolijoki came to Helsinki for instructions. On January 10 she departed for Stockholm, where the next day she reported having made contact with Mme. Kollontai, who thought the moment propitious for peace efforts. A few days later Mrs. Wuolijoki informed Helsinki that a pair of military men were on their way from Moscow to discuss the matter of peace. On January 21 the initial contact was made with the two men, who merely inquired about conditions in Finland and were otherwise reserved and uncommunicative. On the twenty-sixth a phone call to Erkko, the former Foreign Minister of Finland, in Stockholm disclosed that no details were yet available. Apparently the Russians wished to assure themselves that the Finns earnestly desired peace and were not just stalling for time. At this point the whole matter came to a momentary standstill.[17]

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[16]The foregoing section and quote are from Tanner, op. cit., pp. 121-123.

[17]Ibid., pp. 123-124.

That Russia was not yet ready to make peace, and therefore did not wish to push the Stockholm conversations too rapidly, is proved by a memorandum concerning a statement by Molotov dispatched on January 25 from the German Embassy in Moscow to the German Foreign Ministry. The memorandum pointed out that the Soviet territorial aims were stated in the plan agreed upon by the Kuusinen government. In this same regard, the memorandum continued:

> . . . the Soviet Government could never tolerate a hostile Finnish Government close to Leningrad and the Murmansk railroad. An understanding with the Tanner-Ryti Government and with Mannerheim was entirely out of the question.[18]

It was further stated that even if Svinhufvud were to head a new government, there was no likelihood of agreement since he was too much like Tanner and Ryti. There was room left, however, for expansion and supplementation of Kuusinen's government when it took over the government in Helsinki.[19] Apparently this meant that some members of the Helsinki government would be allowed to enter Kuusinen's puppet cabinet.

Despite this pessimistic note, which was evidently unknown in Finland, a significant break-through in the Stockholm discussions occurred on January 29. Sometime before, when the Swedish Foreign Minister, Günther, had asked Mme. Kollontai if Sweden might mediate between Finland and the U.S.S.R., the offer was turned down. He

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[18] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, pp. 708-709.

[19] Ibid., p. 709.

again pressed the question on January 25 and this time received a more affirmative answer.[20] Mme. Kollontai agreed to transmit the suggestion to Moscow, and on the twenty-ninth she received an answer from Molotov stating, in part, that, "The U.S.S.R. has no objection in principle to concluding an agreement with the Ryti-Tanner government."[21]

Thus the abortive Kuusinen government was thrust unceremoniously aside by the Soviet Union and the way was opened for definite peace conversations. In its reply the Kremlin made no mention of Hanko Cape, but stated that since war had intervened, contrary to Soviet wishes, even greater guarantees for the securing of the Soviet borders were necessary and required. Finland was also informed that, if a detente were reached, concessions larger than those demanded in October-November 1939, would have to be made.[22]

The Finnish government drafted a reply stating that it was prepared to negotiate with the point of departure being the Moscow negotiations of the previous fall. It was also pointed out, however, that Finland was not responsible for the war and that she had on several different occasions expressed her ardent desire to end it. In order to find an efficacious solution, the Finns stated they were ready to cede such territory as was deemed necessary for the security of Leningrad in return for commensurate compensation elsewhere. Helsinki considered it self-

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[20]Tanner, op. cit., p. 125.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 378-379; and Tanner, op. cit., pp. 125-126.

evident that monetary compensation would be made to Finnish citizens for property losses in any areas ceded. Moreover, neutralization of the Gulf of Finland by international agreement would be considered.[23]

When the reply was received in Stockholm for transmission to Moscow on February 2, Günther felt that it did not offer enough. He agreed, however, to forward it to Moscow through Mme. Kollontai. During the day the Russian Minister called on Günther and informed him that Moscow had apprised her of its unwillingness to drop its demands regarding Hanko Cape. Since no mention had been made concerning Hanko Cape in the telegram of January 29, Günther evinced surprise and told Mme. Kollontai that he doubted if Finland would agree to their consideration. A short while later Günther gave Mme. Kollontai's message to Erkko, who then expressed doubt regarding the wisdom of sending the Finnish reply to Moscow. Because of its positive nature, however, Günther encouraged sending the statement and the Finnish reply was given to Mme. Kollontai for deliverance to Moscow later that day.[24]

On February 3, Mme. Kollontai again visited Günther in an extremely nervous state and told the Foreign Minister she wanted it recorded that her acceptance of the reply did not imply her approval of its contents. She went on to say that she had merely sent it as a matter of information to the Kremlin. Turning to the Hanko Cape question, she asked if there were any way of getting Finland to concede on this item. To this Günther

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[23]Tanner, op. cit., pp. 127-128; and Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, pp. 73-74.

[24]Tanner, op. cit., p. 128.

Gunther expressed doubt. He believed that Finnish internal politics made it impossible for her to alter her foreign policy on this point, especially since this was what the fighting was about.[25]

On the basis of this information it was decided that Foreign Minister Tanner should be asked to visit Stockholm to speak with Mme. Kollontai personally. He arrived in the Swedish capital on February 4 where he was immediately briefed by Mrs. Wuolijoki. The latter told him that Mme. Kollontai was of the opinion that the Finnish reply was not a satisfactory basis for negotiations since it did not include any proposal for a Soviet base at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland. She had, therefore, sent a report on the Finnish reply as a matter of information.[26]

On February 5 Tanner talked with Mme. Kollontai who told him that it would be in Finland's best interest to make peace as the U.S.S.R. was planning a massive military offensive in the Spring. In her opinion, Hanko Cape was the crux of the matter and she pressed for Finland's assent to Russian demands on the question. Tanner finally proposed that, for the moment, the official attitudes of their respective governments be set aside while they engaged in a frank and open discussion of the aims of both nations. It was agreed to do this and Tanner said that, though Finland could not agree to ceding Hanko Cape, he was personally willing to consider cession of some unspecified island at the mouth of the Gulf

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[25] Ibid., pp. 129-130.

[26] Ibid., pp. 142-145.

of Finland to the U.S.S.R. If such a proposal found favor in Moscow, he promised that he would give it active support in Helsinki. There would have to be territorial compensation elsewhere to assuage Finnish public opinion, but Tanner thought that Nepola and Porajärvi would suffice. Mme. Kollontai seized on this suggestion and asked if the island was so located as to correspond to the Soviet Union's original needs. Tanner refused to name the island but assured her that it would serve the U.S.S.R.'s purpose. He further assured her that the Finnish government was ready to begin negotiations immediately. In this regard he suggested that Stockholm seemed to be the most suitable place to hold them. Upon this note the conversation closed with Mme. Kollontai promising to transmit the suggestion to Moscow by cable.[27] As a result, it was decided that Tanner should remain another day in Stockholm to await Moscow's reply to his suggestion.

The next day (February 6) Molotov cabled that Tanner's suggestions were insufficient as a basis for negotiations. Mme. Kollontai asked Tanner to specify the island he proposed in the hope that this might serve as an opening to negotiations. Tanner refused to do so and stressed that the suggestion was his own and he was not sure that it would find support in Helsinki. Immediately after this meeting with Mme. Kollontai, Tanner returned to Helsinki.[28]

In the meantime, Britain and France had become actively interested in the Russo-Finnish War. When the Finns had proven that they were

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[27] Ibid., p. 145-147. [28] Ibid., pp. 147-148.

capable of stopping the Russian war machine, the Allies began to consider sending substantial military aid to Finland via Norway and Sweden. The League of Nations resolution of December 14 urging the nations of the world to aid Finland provided the ideal rationale for Allied plans to bring Norway and Sweden into the Western camp. Since all was quiet on the French front, careful attention could be given to the Northern conflict as a means of opening a second front against Germany at the expense of Scandanavian neutrality.[29]

In accordance with these plans, the Allies on December 27 and 28 had informed Sweden, that, in keeping with the League of Nations decision, they were ready to render indirect aid to Finland, i.e. supply technicians and materials. To implement their efforts, they requested that Sweden agree to expedite the program by allowing transit of the items. The Swedish government on January 3 and 4, 1940, declared itself ready to agree to such transit, but said that it preferred that the supplies be sent in the guise of Finnish purchases from abroad. Shortly thereafter, Britain granted Finland permission to recruit volunteers in the British Isles. Great Britain then requested permission for transit of such volunteers across Swedish territory.[30]

Prior to the British action in December, the question of aid to Finland had come up in the Allied Supreme Council (December 19) where some diversity of opinion was manifest. Prime Minister Daladier of France desired to dispatch an expeditionary force immediately, but the British were hesitant because of the possibility that such action would

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[29]Churchill, op. cit., pp. 513 ff.

[30]Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 70.

lead to a breach with the Soviet Union. Despite the British objections, Daladier, shortly after the opening of the New Year, ordered the formation of such a force to aid Finland.[31] Regardless, the final decision to aid Finland was not reached until February 5, 1940, and only after it was decided to petition Norway and Sweden to grant transit rights for the expedition. The zealous efforts of the Finnish Minister to Paris, Harri Holma and Colonel Aladar Paasonen, the Military Attache there, played a large part in securing this decision.[32]

That the Allies were so suddenly galvanized into action on Finland's behalf undoubtedly followed the launching of a massive Soviet offensive on February 1 which threatened to crush the Finnish armies. It was in consequence, that the overtures of peace to Moscow, via Stockholm, had been undertaken. The Russo-Finnish War was advantageous to the Allies and, if it should end quickly with a Finnish defeat the highly beneficial disturbance of Soviet economy would be terminated, In that case, Russian aid to Germany would be possible. Furthermore, as long as the Northern War continued the Allies had adequate reason for bombing the Caucasian oil fields which supplied Germany with petroleum, and a rationale for stopping Swedish ore shipments to the Reich.[33]

On February 8 Erkko wired that Molotov was interested to know what island Tanner had in mind in his discussions with Mme. Kollontai. Thus a new hope was aroused that peace might yet be attained. After a conference between Ryti, Tanner, and Major General Rudolf Walden, liason officer for Mannerheim's headquarters, it was decided, that in light of the Allied offers, no reply would be given regarding the island in mind

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[31] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 378.

[32] Tanner, op. cit., p. 149.

[33] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II. pp. 70-71,

at that time. Later that day Mrs. Wuolijoki phoned Helsinki and also inquired about the island. She said the Soviet Union required Tanner's advance assurance that the cession would be made once it was proposed. To both Erkko and Mrs. Wuolijoki Tanner promised an answer by February 12.[34]

In light of these developments, the Finnish Cabinet decided that Mannerheim and his staff should be consulted on the matter of what territory might safely be ceded. A delegation of Cabinet Ministers was sent to Marshal Mannerheim's headquarters to communicate the details of the latest developments (February 10). At headquarters, Tanner outlined, in order of preference, three possibilities for future conduct of the war and diplomacy: (1) pursuit of peace; (2) limitation of the war to Scandanavia; (3) if these plans failed to materialize reliance on Western aid. It was clearly stated that this course would undoubtedly draw Finland into the world conflict. From the ensuing dicussion it was clearly apparent that Mannerheim and his advisors preferred peace even at a sacrifice.[35]

In his resume of the deliberations, Mannerheim indicated that the securing of peace was placed first among the alternatives because of the shortage of men and artillery. Swedish aid was suggested as a second alternative and it was urged that such assistance be sought with great energy. In this regard the Marshal thought that Sweden should be asked to send trained units since the recruiting and training of volunteers was too slow a process. The vague and inadequatetly

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[34]Tanner, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

[35]Ibid., pp. 151-152.

prepared aid offered by the West was to be accepted only as a last resort. On the question of what territory might safely be ceded, he stated that the island of Jussarö at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland was least important to Finland since maritime traffic to Hanko Cape and Turku would not be impeded by its possession by another power. On the Karelian Isthmus he suggested that a coastal strip about 10 km. wide, extending from Seivästö to Ino, be ceded. The whole of Suursaari Island might also be ceded. If these augmented cessions were accepted by Moscow, the Marshal felt that the Russian demands for Kalastajasaarento should be relinquished. In return for these cessions, he said that the Repola and Porajärvi communes would be acceptable compensation.[36]

In Helsinki, after the delegation of Cabinet Ministers returned from their meeting with Mannerheim's staff a session of the Foreign Affairs Committee was convened on February 12 to decide upon which course to pursue. Tanner presented the three alternatives he had outlined to the military leaders. In the Committee there was no common consensus of opinion as at military headquarters. Defense Minister Niukkanen felt that no real chance for peace was possible. He, therefore, favored a policy of seeking Swedish aid first and, that failing, suggested that Finland should then turn to the Allies. Paasikivi was of the opinion that a peace policy should be assiduously pursued at all costs. His opinion was based upon Sweden's incessant refusal to send military aid and the fact that the Western offers

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[36] Ibid., pp. 152-153.

were too vaguely formulated. Uuno H annula, Minister of Education, sided with Niukkanen and adamantly argued for a continuation of the war by calling in any and all outside aid offered. He believed that the Diet would never accept the harsh terms set by the Russians. Also in favor of continuing the war was Minister of Justice, J. O. Söderhjelm. His opinion was based on a conviction that the Finnish nation would not understand the cession of a base at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland since this was the very thing they were fighting to prevent. He did, however, feel that territorial cessions on the Karelian Isthmus, plus an agreement to neutralize the Gulf of Finland, would be acceptable. Prime Minister Ryti pressed for peace, if possible. If not, he hoped that Sweden could be brought to make a public announcement that she would send auxiliary forces to Finland. To this end he suggested that Tanner once more go to Stockholm. President Kallio, who was present, although not a member of the Committee, expressed his desire for peace. Earlier the President had opposed ceding a base near Hanko Cape, but he now felt that, if the island of Jussarö were acceptable to the Russians, it should be ceded and believed that Finnish national pride and prestige could be satisfied.[37]

Thus the membership of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Cabinet was divided with some favoring peace and others determined to continue the fight. The only positive decision arrived at was that Tanner should once again visit Stockholm to seek further Swedish aid. At a private conference after the session, however,

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[37] Ibid., pp. 154-157.

Prime Minister Ryti, President Kallio, and Foreign Minister Tanner decided that the peace program should be pursued energetically. For this reason they decided to communicate immediately to Günther their information that Finland stood ready to cede the island of Jussarö to the U.S.S.R.[38]

Immediately following the conference Tanner departed for Stockholm. Enroute he received a wire from Erkko stating that the Soviet Union now demanded not only Hanko Cape but also the whole Karelian Isthmus and the entire western shore of Lake Ladoga. Upon arrival in Stockholm Tanner went to see Günther, who informed him that the Finnish note offering to cede Jussarö had not yet been delivered. He also told Tanner that he had refused to transmit the latest Moscow peace proposals as they were too far reaching in nature.[39]

Tanner next visited Prime Minister Hansson to inquire if more extensive military aid could be expected from Sweden. In this regard, he inquired if Sweden could dispatch units of troops as volunteers as Germany had done in the Spanish Civil War. Tanner pointed out that if no aid were forthcoming from Sweden, Finland would be obliged to turn to Great Britain and France. In that event, serious consequences might follow for all the Northern countries. Hansson said that it was impossible for Sweden to send units of her armed forces to Finland as volunteers since Germany and the U.S.S.R. would understand what these units really were. Serious reprisals on the part of both states could be

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[38] Ibid., p. 157. [39] Ibid., pp. 157-158.

expected from any such action. In fact, the Swedish Premier stated Germany had warned the Swedish government on numerous occasions to remain out of the Finnish war.[40] This was contrary to what Finland had been led to believe as Blücher had inquired of the Wilhelmstrasse in December if they had given any such advice to Sweden. Berlin had replied that no warning had been issued.[41] Tanner pointed this out to Hansson and said he doubted, therefore, that Germany would mount an attack on Sweden even if she were to give substantial aid to Finland. The Finnish Foreign Minister then informed Hansson of the Allied Supreme Council's decision and informed the Swede of the imminent arrival of a Western military commission in Finland. He inquired regarding the attitude that Sweden would assume if Finland appealed for Western aid and requested transit rights for the auxiliary troops. As before, Hansson replied that Sweden would refuse.[42] In view of this negative attitude, Finland was then forced to pursue her own course in accordance with this reply.

During the days immediately after Tanner's return to Helsinki no word was received from Moscow regarding the matter of the cession of Jussarö. However, on February 17 the German Minister, Blücher, called at the Foreign Ministry to inform Tanner that Germany still felt unable to mediate in the conflict as the moment was still unpropitious. He then made a suggestion which Berlin had instructed him to say was his own. The idea was that

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[40] Ibid., p. 158. [41] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, pp. 558-559.

[42] Tanner, op. cit., p. 158.

Ribbentrop might advance in Moscow a proposal that representatives from both sides meet in Berlin to negotiate and clarify their aims. In this regard he suggested that Paasikivi would probably be the negotiator most acceptable to Moscow. Two problems interposed themselves, he pointed out, i.e. would the Wilhelmstrasse agree to conduct the matter and would the Kremlin accept the proposal. For his part Tanner agreed to take up the matter with the Cabinet and inform Blücher if an affirmative decision were reached.[43]

The Finnish Cabinet expressed interest in Blücher's suggestion and, on February 20, the German Minister was asked to call at the Foreign Ministry. Tanner immediately pointed out an apparent contradiction in Blücher's proposal: the Minister had said the moment was not propitious for German mediation, yet the new proposal envisaged action on the part of the German Foreign Ministry, which would ultimately sponsor the meeting if it could be arranged. How was this to be understood? In answer, Blücher said that Germany felt she could not mediate; therefore he had advanced the idea of a Berlin meeting on his own initiative in the hope that a contact would be helpful. In reply to a further question from Tanner, the German said he was unable to guarantee that his plan would succeed. Tanner then said that he assumed that Blücher had talked to his superiors in Berlin about the matter, but Blücher refused indicate by an answer if this were so. When asked

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[43] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, pp. 774, 778; cf, Tanner, op. cit., pp. 165-166.

what conditions Moscow might propose, Blücher replied that he had no idea. At this point Tanner thanked him for the information and terminated the conversation.[44] Thus ended the last attempt at German mediation.

Subsequent to his talk with Blücher, Tanner conferred with Ryti and Walden. Their talk resulted in a decision to ask Sweden, on their own responsibility, to initiate peace negotiations which would include the cession of Hanko Cape, if necessary. It was further decided that Walden should go to military headquarters to seek the advice from the leaders of the army on the peace proposal. While Walden was away the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Diet would be convened to ascertain its views.[45]

The Diet Committee met that day (February 20) and indicated that it favored reaching a peace settlement. With this support, the Cabinet decided on a peace course. To this end Tanner was directed to phone Erkko in Stockholm and instruct him to approach Günther with the suggestion that Sweden undertake to mediate to bring about an end to hostilities. Erkko was to impress upon Günther that it would be in Sweden's interest to mediate, for if Finland turned to the West for aid, the entire North would be inexorably drawn into the war. A short while later Erkko reported that the Swedish Foreign Minister had gladly assented to the suggestion.[46]

At the same time (February 20) Mannerheim received British

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[44] DGFP, Series D, Vol. VIII, pp. 585-586; ct. Tanner, op. cit., p. 166.

[45] Tanner, op. cit. pp. 167-168. [46] Ibid., pp. 168-170.

General Robert Ling and French Colonel Ganeval at his headquarters. Both men spoke of the proposed Allied aid but neither was able to give explicit information concerning the number of troops, the time of their departure, or tell whether Norway and Sweden would agree to their being transported across their territory. They did make it clear to Mannerheim, however, that the first duty of the advance troops would be to counter expected German reprisal actions on the Scandinavian Peninsula.[47]

Walden returned from military headquarters on February 23 with the above information. Because of its vagueness, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet was doubtful of the value of Western aid. Peace negotiations, even more than before, appeared to be the only reasonable course for Finland. Later in the day Erkko reported from Stockholm that Molotov had communicated precise terms for the initiation of such negotiations. These included the cession of Hanko Cape, the Karelian Isthmus including Viipuri, and the northeastern shore of Lake Ladoga including the town of Sortavala. In return the Soviet Union was prepared to evacuate Petsamo and other unspecified areas. Moscow also asked for a defense pact guaranteeing the Gulf of Finland be concluded between the U.S.S.R., Finland and Estonia. If these terms were not accepted now, new and more stringent demands would be made later.[48]

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[47]Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 381-382.

[48]Tanner, op. cit., p. 172.

That the Soviet Union after almost two weeks of silence (since February 6), made such extensive demands may have been a result of the success of the massive offensive of the Karelian Isthmus launched by the Red Army on February 1. Another factor probably influencing the situation was a Swedish press report of February 16, corroborated by Prime Minister Hansson and King Gustav V on February 19, that any form of Swedish military aid to Finland was out of the question.[49] These two developments probably contributed to the Russian belief that Finland was in a position which made rejection of such terms almost impossible.

Because of these new developments, the Foreign Affairs Committee was convened for the second time that day. As on the February 12 opinion was divided, but it was finally decided that all courses of action should be kept open until definite answers could be obtained to several questions. These were:

(1) Could auxiliary military forces be expected from Sweden? If so, how many men and how soon would they arrive?

(2) Would Sweden permit Western forces to cross her territory?

(3) How soon would Western aid reach Finland?[50]

When the session terminated, Tanner telephoned Erkko and instructed him to submit the first two questions to Günther with the request for a prompt reply. The next day (February 24)

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[49] Ibid., p. 147.

[50] Ibid., pp. 172-173.

Günther's reply was reported to Helsinki. It stated that Sweden could only promise to intensify her volunteer program. Under no circumstances would Western forces be permitted transit across Swedish territory.[51]

That day General Ling arrived in Helsinki to confer with the Finnish Cabinet on the matter of Western support. At the first meeting Tanner gained the impression that the project was still only vaguely formulated. But later that evening, at a meeting with Ling and the British Minister to Helsinki, Gordon Vereker, more specific details were revealed, i.e. men, arms, and ships, were even then ready for departure. The two Britons asserted that the expedition could depart on March 15 and reach Finland by April 15.[52] During the course of the conversation it was made clear that the Allies expected Finland to obtain the necessary transit rights from Norway and Sweden. In light of what was already known, Tanner expressed doubt that Sweden would permit such transit. Vereker suggested that the Finnish government first broach the matter to Sweden privately. This would allow time for consideration. Then, when Finland formally requested Western aid, a simultaneous request for transit rights could be made to Norway and Sweden, with a statement that the request was to be made public. In this way Vereker hoped it would be possible to coerce Norway and Sweden into giving an affirmative

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[51] Ibid., pp. 173-174. [52] Ibid., pp. 175-176.

answer. Tanner expressed doubt that this would change the Swedish position. To Vereker's query whether Sweden might assume a more positive attitude if given guarantees of aid by the West, Tanner felt it was unlikely that such promises would change the Swedish position.[53]

Whatever the Norwegian and Swedish attitude, however, it was impressed upon the Finns that a prompt reply to the Allies was essential. The Allies desired an official request for aid from Helsinki by March 5 at the latest. Since a time limit was set, Tanner inquired how extensive the aid would be that the West proposed to send. Vereker listed several units totalling from 20,000-22,000 men armed with automatic weapons. This it was said would make them equal to about twice that number of Finnish troops.[54] In this regard it is interesting to note that the number of troops the Western Allies proposed to dispatch had increased considerably over the number which they had at first suggested. According to the anonomous author of Wuorinen's book, earlier estimates regarding the size of the expeditionary force had been from 6,000 to 12,000 men.[55]

Armed with this new information, Tanner requested an assembly. The Council of State was to report on the entire matter. As in the Foreign Affairs Committee, opinion was divided. The result of the conference was a decision that Tanner should

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[53] Ibid., pp. 176-177. [54] Ibid., p. 177.

[55] Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 71.

once again visit Stockholm, both to ascertain the Swedish attitude to the latest Western proposals and to talk with the Russian Minister to Sweden, Mme. Kollontai. On February 27 Tanner crossed the Gulf of Bothnia to Stockholm. In conversations with his Swedish counter-part, he revealed in general terms the latest Western proposals and inquired if Sweden would permit transit for the expedition. Günther's reply was that no transport of foreign forces across Sweden would be permitted and no military intervention was to be expected from Sweden. He did, however, promise to give Finland all the economic aid possible, if she made peace.[56]

Tanner also had a conference with Prime Minister Hansson who told him that the aid promised rather vaguely by Sweden on February 24 would consist of only volunteers. Hansson could not estimate how many. Sweden still refused to send direct military aid to Finland or to take any overt action in Finland's behalf for fear of war. Upon hearing this, Tanner pointed out that Finland had no other recourse but to address an appeal for aid to Great Britain and France. Without specifying figures or dates, he outlined the Western proposals and asked if Sweden would be inclined to permit transit of the Allied troops.[57] Hansson replied in the following words:

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[56] Tanner, op. cit., pp 172. [57] Ibid., pp. 181-182.

> The Swedish government has clearly expressed its position on this point. Sweden desires to observe neutrality on this matter as well. No transit passage of forces can be permitted. Volunteers and small groups might be permitted to pass through.[58]

Hansson's last remark seemed to leave open the possibility of Swedish assent to passage for Allied forces in the guise of volunteers. However, when Tanner asked how many volunteers might be granted passage, the Prime Minister's rather vague reply was that the number would not be very large. In any case they would not be allowed to carry arms. In conclusion Hansson declared that if the Western Powers attempted to force passage through Norway and Sweden, "Sweden would find itself in the war on the Russian side and against Finland."[59]

Tanner also talked with Mme. Kollontai that day. He inquired if Moscow's demands of February 23 were ones that could be altered through discussion. Mme. Kollontai was distressed and lamented that the Finns should have made peace when the terms were easier, i.e., February 6. The terms now presented were firm and unalterable. Some minor changes might be made during negotiations but she felt this was rather unlikely. Tanner explained to her that a Finnish reply could not be expected on too short notice since democracies needed more time to reach decisions than did dictatorships. With this the conference ended.[60]

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[58] Ibid., p. 183. [59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., p. 185.

On February 28 events began to move rapidly, forcing the Finnish Cabinet to make quick decisions. Moscow informed Helsinki, via Stockholm, that an answer to the Russian demands was expected within forty-eight hours. This was tantamount to an ultimatum.[61] Only a few days before the British Minister, Vereker, had asked that the Finns make an official appeal for Western aid within a week and by March 5 at the latest. Each day the Finnish position became more precarious. On the Karelian Isthmus the Red armies were forging ahead against exhausted Finnish troops and the Russian terms were expected to become even harsher if their armies had continued success. The first Western aid could not be expected before April 15, and what was promised would be insufficient. Confronted by such a situation the Cabinet, on the advice of the Commander-in-Chief and his assistants and supported by the Diet, decided to seek peace.[62]

On February 29 they agreed to a reply to the Moscow proposals readings

> The Finnish government, which for its part also aspires toward the termination of hostilities and the conclusion of peace, considers that it can in this sense regard the conditions as a point of departure for negotiations, and accepts them in principle. The comprehensive scope of the proposal and the obscurity of some of its details make clarification and definition necessary, but these points can be cleared up in oral negotiations. The Finnish government awaits a statement as to when and where the Soviet government proposes that the negotiations begin. The Finnish government considers Moscow a suitable place.[63]

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[61] Ibid., p. 188. [62] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 383.

[63] Quoted in Tanner, op. cit., pp. 194-195.

This note was sent to Erkko in Stockholm with instructions to hold it until he was directed to deliver it to Mme. Kollontai.

News of the Cabinet decision to make peace became known in Helsinki during the day (February 29) and led to swift action on the part of the Western Allies. That evening the French Minister to Finland, Charles Magny, sought an audience with Tanner in order to inform him that Allied plans to send only 12,000 men to Finland had been revised to provide for a force of 20,000 Poles, Britons, and Frenchmen. They were even then being assembled and were ready for departure, despite Swedish refusal to permit transit of any forces. In Magny's opinion the Swedes and Norwegians would change their attitude once they were appraised of the full details. Moreover, if Finnish forces could hold out for a few more weeks, adequate aid would arrive in time and be followed by reinforcements. Magny went on to say that if Finland made peace, she would have to suffer whatever losses of territory the Soviet Union required on her own responsibility.[64]

During the night new information and further offers of aid arrived from London and Paris. The Finnish Minister in Paris, Harri Holma, reported that Premier Daladier had definitely promised that Allied forces would arrive in Finland by the end of March, with their departure date dependent upon London. The probably date was March 12, but not sooner as France could hardly

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[64]Churchill, op. cit., p. 573; and Tanner, op. cit., p. 194.

be ready any earlier. The Allies now proposed to send 50,000 men and have them in Finland before the end of March. Transit problems would be solved by the West according to the report. As a precondition the Finns were to break off negotiations with the Kremlin, or all preparations would be interrupted and the shipment of arms and equipment would cease.[65]

Thus on March 1, the day on which a reply to the Soviet Union was required, the situation was complicated. Because of Western pressure, it was decided that the reply in Erkko's hands should be held and a new one drafted in the hope of gaining time. The new reply read:

> The Finnish government is anxious to bring about a cessation of hostilities and the conclusion of a peace, but since the new frontier contemplated in the proposal is vague, further particulars with regard thereto are requested. Similarly information is desired as to what compensation Finland is to receive.[66]

At the same time the Helsinki government inquired if the Western Allies could immediately dispatch 50,000 troops to Finland, to arrive in March, and if more could be sent later. It was also requested that 100 fully manned and armed bombers be sent.[67] An answer to these requests was received later that day promising the desired 50,000 men by the end of March. According to General Ironside, the British Commander-in-Chief of Home Forces, reinforcements for these would be sent later as needed. He also informed the Finns that the figures Ling and Ganeval had quoted to Mannerheim

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[65] Tanner, op. cit., p. 196. [66] Quoted in Tanner, op. cit., p. 197.

[67] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 384; and Vuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 71.

were incorrect and that full aid to Finland was planned.[68]

In the meantime, the latest Finnish reply to Russia had been reported to the Swedish Foreign Minister, Günther. He expressed to Erkko his doubts of its efficacy as a point of departure. In his opinion an affirmative reply would have been better. He felt that frontier questions could be dealt with more effectively in negotiations. At the same time he reiterated his government's refusal to permit Allied forces to pass through Sweden. He also informed Erkko that Mme. Kollontai had told him that it was up to Finland to initiate peace negotiations by accepting the terms offered by the U.S.S.R.[69] On this basis Günther suggested that a positive phrase be added to the Finnish reply stating that "Finland is accordingly prepared in principle to accept the Russian demands."[70] To this Tanner was not willing to agree before the next day.

On March 2 no word was received from Moscow, but Helsinki did not assume that negotiations were broken off despite the fact that the time limit set had expired. Sweden worked to secure better terms for Finland, but without favorable result. Meantime, Great Britain and France still sought to keep the Finns in the war by announcing that the bombers they had requested would be sent at once.[71]

On the morning of March 3 Tanner requested that the Council of State be convened. Its deliberations resulted in another postponement of the decision regarding an all out effort to end the

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[68] Tanner, op. cit. p. 199. [69] Ibid., p. 198.

[70] Ibid., p. 199. [71] Ibid., p. 200-201.

war. After the meeting Tanner, Ryti, Walden, and Paasikivi, conferred in private and decided to assure the Kremlin that the Finnish government was prepared to negotiate if Viipuri and Sortavala were omitted. They phoned Günther to inform him of this. He expressed himself as pleased to hear this and urged them to make peace.[72]

During the day further specific information regarding British and French support was submitted by Vereker. He told the Finns that the troops to be sent from Britain would number only 6,000. They would be dispatched on March 11, instead of March 15 as reported the day before, if Finland requested the aid by March 5.[73] In light of this, the Council of State was convened but the only decision arrived at was to await further clarification of Moscow's position.[74]

On March 4 there was still no answer from Moscow. Allied requests for an official appeal for aid from Finland were again made. That evening Colonel Ganeval called on Ryti to inform him that a contingent of 18,000 Britons and 15,000 Frenchmen would leave in a week, if the Finns would continue to fight. In addition, he said that the French Commander-in-Chief, Maurice Gamelin, had ordered fifty British and twelve French bombers to Finland within a week. Any troops needed in Scandinavia as the result of an attack by Germany would not diminish the assistance planned for Finland. The troops could be expected by April 15 but they might arrive as early as April 10. In conclusion, the Frenchman said that he had

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[72] Ibid., pp. 203-204. [73] Mannerheim, op. cit., pp. 384-395.

[74] Tanner, op. cit., p. 205.

learned that Sweden would not oppose transit by force of arms.[75]

The disparity between the more extensive French plans and the more modest British proposals for aid to Finland led the Council of State to decide for peace on March 5. At the same time the Western Allies were to be asked for an extension until March 12 before the Finns had to ask for aid. After the Council meeting Tanner telephoned Günther to authorize him to forward the Finnish reply of March 1 to Moscow. While talking to Günther, Tanner learned that Moscow had replied to the second Finnish note. Molotov indicated that the U.S.S.R. was still adamant in his demands for Viipuri and Sortavala. As for the Finnish decision, Molotov said the Soviet Union would wait a few days for Finland's response. Günther said that Molotov had remarked to Assarsson, the Swedish Minister to Moscow, that perhaps it might be well for the Kremlin to negotiate with Kuusinen. Molotov had also repeated an earlier threat that if peace were not made now, greater demands would be made later. In the same conversation Günther told Tanner that contrary to what had been said in Helsinki, the Swedish Cabinet was unanimously opposed to allowing transit of Western forces to Finland.[76]

The Finnish reply was forwarded to Moscow that day with an added suggestion by Günther that hostilities cease on March 6. Moscow agreed to the initiation of peace conversations the next day (March 6) and suggested Moscow as the place where the discussions should be conducted. The U.S.S.R., however, refused to accept the

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[75] Ibid., pp. 208-209. [76] Ibid., pp. 210-213.

Swedish suggestion for an armistice, evidently because the Red armies had not yet succeeded in capturing Viipuri. Later that morning the Finnish Cabinet and Diet were informed of Moscow's acceptance. Both groups gave assent to the initiation of negotiations. Appointed as representatives to the discussions were Prime Minister Ryti, General Walden, Paasikivi, and Representative Väinö Voionmaa. The delegation left that day for Stockholm and proceeded from there to Moscow on March 7.[77]

Britain and France still persisted in their efforts to keep the Finns fighting by making a final offer of aid on March 7. According to figures transmitted by General Ironside a contingent of 57,500 troops were to be dispatched to Finland, all of which would be placed under Mannerheim's command.[78] Holding fast to their determination to make peace, the Finns did not issue an appeal for such troops, but awaited word from Moscow.

On March 9 the Finnish delegates met the Soviet delegates for the first time to begin the negotiations for a peace settlement. The Soviet demands were now found to exceed those they had presented through Stockholm. In addition to their other terms, the Russians now required that Finland cede certain areas in the Salla and Kuusamo communes as well as agree to construct a railroad from Kemijärvi to the frontier yet to be delimited.[79]

When word of the new Russian conditions reached Helsinki, the government began to reconsider the offer of Western aid. Great Britain

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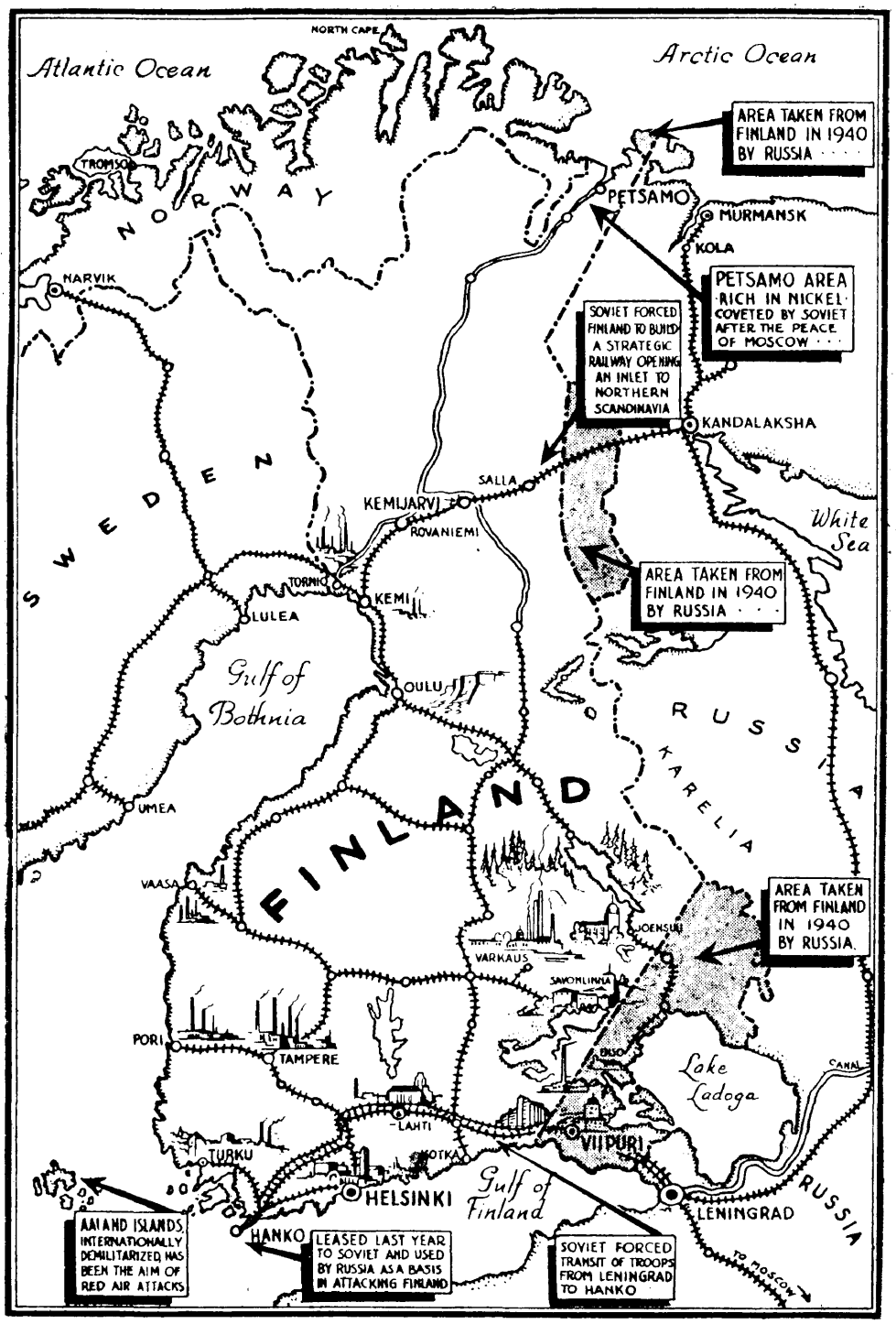
[77] Ibid., pp. 214-218. [78] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 385.

[79] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 386; and Tanner, op. cit., p. 225.



THE TREND OF THE SOVIET POLICY TOWARD THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

Reproduced from Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy, March 1940-June 1941, Official Blue-Book [illegible] of Finland. (New York; Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1941.)

and France were still prepared to give help as the following communique from Premier Daladier on March 8 shows:

> We have waited for several days for Finland to make her appeal, so that we can come to your aid with all the means at our disposal. It is difficult to understand why this request is still postponed. . . . If Finland does not now make her appeal to the western Powers, it is obvious that at the end of the war, the western Powers cannot assume the slightest responsibility for the final settlement regarding Finnish territory.[80]

Daladier had agreed orally to the Finnish appeal to be allowed to delay their request until March 12 but said that he preferred an earlier date. He said he understood Finland's position but that the Finns should also appreciate his situation since he had crusaded so energetically against the Kremlin. Furthermore, it was known that Finland could count on the arrival of British bombers with crews in a short time. Therefore, the Finnish delay only increased their own peril.[81]

On the other hand, many factors tended to force Finland to submit to the Kremlin's terms, as harsh and unreasonable as they appeared to be. Sweden in particular had pressed for a settlement of the conflict to safeguard the Northern States from involvement in the European War. The determining factor, however, was Marshal Mannerheim's advice, given on March 9, to conclude peace. In his Memoirs the Marshal states that:

> In view of the uncertainty which attached to the expeditionary force, and with the conviction that our strength would be insufficient if the struggle extended beyond the spring, . . . I felt compelled to give the government categorical advice to conclude peace.[82]

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[80]Quoted in Wuorinen, Finland and World War II, p. 78.

[81]Ibid. [82]Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 387.

Under the circumstances, and faced with such advice from the man best qualified to assay the military situation, the Finnish Cabinet was forced to conclude that no outside help could turn the tide of war. Therefore, on the morning of March 12 President Kallio signed the credentials granting power to the Finnish delegates to sign peace treaty. The credentials were cabled to Moscow and that evening the peace treaty was signed.[83]

The peace treaty that Finland was forced to sign seemed most unjust to a people that had only asked to be allowed to pursue its own peaceful life and wanted nothing but to be left out of the struggles of the European Great Powers. Despite her valiant efforts in defence of her independence and integrity, Finland was forced to cede to the Soviet Union the whole Karelian Isthmus along with her largest export center, Viipuri, plus Viipuri Bay and its islands. Likewise, on the western and northern shores of Lake Ladoga extensive areas, including the towns of Käkisalmi and Sortavala, and the parish of Suojärvi, were stripped from her. In the Gulf of Finland a number of islands were also turned over to the U.S.S.R. In addition, Finland agreed to lease for a period of thirty years Hanko Cape and its surrounding waters along with the islands included in those waters.[84] Finland was given ten days to withdraw her forces from the Hanko area, while the Reds agreed to evacuate their military forces from the Petsamo region, but deprived Finland of the right to maintain a naval base there. Furthermore, Finland was forced to agree to construct

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[83]Tanner, op. cit., pp. 243, 250.

[84]FPB, pp. 115-117.

a railroad across the center of the country from Kemijärvi to the Soviet-Finnish border for the use of the Russians in their trade with Sweden.[85] Finally, hostilities were to cease at noon on March 13 with Finnish troops to be withdrawn from the ceded areas at a rate of not less than seven kilometers per day. The commanders of both armies were charged with the responsibility for seeing to it that no damage was done to the towns, localities, and territories that were evacuated.[86]

For Finland the treaty meant the loss of an area totaling 25,000 square miles. The population of the lost territories was twelve per cent of the nation's total inhabitants, or about 500,000 people. All of these were given the right to move into the areas retained by Finland and most of them did so at the cost of leaving behind the homes, fields, and forests, that their ancestors had owned and cultivated for generations. Finland's losses amounted to about eleven per cent of her total economic potential and included her natural defenses on the Karelian Isthmus and at Hanko Cape. As a result the nation's future freedom of action in foreign affairs was limited, but as a slight consolation, the Soviets did not force a military pact upon Helsinki.[87]

President Kallio confirmed the decision of the Diet and ratified the peace on March 16. On March 18 Paasikivi and Voionmaa departed for Moscow to exchange the instruments of ratification and on March 20 final ratification was completed in Moscow.[88]

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[85] Ibid., pp. 116-118. [86] Ibid., pp. 119-120.

[87] Mannerheim, op. cit., p. 388.

[88] Tanner, op. cit., p. 260.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Clearly the foregoing discussion gives rise to several questions of grave import in the present system of international relations. It was Bertrand Russell who wrote: "The good life is inspired by love and guided by knowledge." The historian's task is to construct an hypothesis that will make the Finnish experience meaningful for the guidance of contemporary society. If the reality of history is in the present, then our concern must be the significance of historical experience for the ground and condition of our existence in the present.

The common heritage of the citizens of the United States and likewise to a lesser or greater extent, that of all democracies in the Western Tradition is the profound faith in the efficacy of the rule of law "to establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and to our posterity." Within this framework must be made the hard decisions which will uphold or impair the pursuit of these ideals. It was in this framework that President Woodrow Wilson enunciated the doctrine of national self-determination. The considered opinion to which the facts constrain us is that the Finnish experience (1939-1940) implies the necessity for a careful reappraisal of this doctrine.

National self-determination was conceived in the bosom of English common law with its traditions of self-imposed individual

responsibility. Prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish conflict national states enjoyed sovereignty in the presence of an agency (the League of Nations) incapable of constraining them to responsibilty. Ample proof of this inability to enforce international responsibility and law was the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, Italy's occupation of Ethiopia, and Germany's siezure of Czechoslovakia and her attack on Poland for which the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union was the necessary precondition.

Objectively, it must be pointed out that Finland also contributed to the effeteness of the League of Nations by her resolution, in conjunction with Sweden, to determine whether sanctions levied by the international body would be observed. Thus in the traditional polarity of the Great Powers the small states resulting from the Treaty of Versailles and guarenteed by the League of Nations produced a power vacuum in an international situation (even by traditional European standards) of great complexity. If a Great Power finds more advantage in overthrowing a settlement than in maintaining it, then it is not a peace, but an armistice. Numerous examples illustrating this point might be drawn from the nineteenth century; perhaps the best of these is the great concern of Metternich and Castlereagh, at the close of the Napoleonic Wars, to prevent even the suggestion of the dismemberment of France. The same principle induced Bismarck to oppose (unsuccessfully) the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine at the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War (1871); for, as was remarked at the time, the impact of this event upon the French mind was such that, if they must take Alsace-

Lorraine, they might as well take Normandy while they were about it. In 1941 there was not one but several such permanently dissatisfied powers. For these powers the rule of force was a fact and the rule of law no more than Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's astonished "scrap of paper."

In these difficult circumstances, as has been shown, the Finnish government was not impervious to its peril. Great faith was placed in the security of the 1932 non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union; the notions of the Finnish Cabinet, especially Foreign Minister Erkko, of what might be termed the Great Power rationale were noble to a point bordering on the ingenuous. Nor can this be attributed to a flaw in Finnish logic. Clearly, the possibility of Finland attacking the Soviet Union seemed remote indeed. This judgment omitted at least two consideration calculated to bear upon any decision taken in Moscow. The first is a matter of geography. In a comparable situation, the perennial interest of the United Kingdom in the affairs of the Low Countries has frequently occasioned friction but not surprise. Thus it does not seem irresponsible to suggest that no Great Power, given the opportunity to prevent it, could tolerate a frontier within artillery range of its second largest city (Leningrad), and incidentally of its greatest naval base (Kronstadt). The second consideration, though less tangible, is probably the more important. A proverb warns of the dangers of judging others by the measure of one's self. In 1939 the Soviets had only begun in a modest way (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) to demonstrate the extent to which they were the successors of Peter the Great and Catherine II. Apparently the Soviet

Union regarded the small states as pawns in the chess game of power politics; thus the Kremlin's addresses to Finland might be interpreted as the obvious move to forestall similar action on the part of some other power. Thus the Finnish government, though fully alerted to the perils that confronted it, had made two rather serious miscalculations. Since a decision, properly so-called, cannot be made in a vacuum, an error of any consequence, or even of seemingly no consequence, is apt to display an expansive tendency.

So it proved for the Finnish Cabinet. Relying upon the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, Finland painstakingly prepared her entre to the Scandinavian orientation. This policy of scrupulously guraded neutrality pivoted upon the prestige of Sweden's unbroken, one hundred and twenty-four year reign of peace in conjunction with her vital production of steel and the care she took to maintain the country's rigid posture of defense. The aim of the Finnish policy, then, was to secure an agreement with Sweden whereby Swedish prestige might serve to guarantee the neutrality of Finland. Thus the series of diplomatic moves, previously discussed, whereb y it was hoped the cooling of Finnish-German relations would serve to reassure the Swedes that Finnish partnership would in no way compromise Sweden's own neutrality.

The first suggestion from the Soviet government that it desired to alter the status of Finnish-Soviet relations (August 5, 1938) caught the Finnish government in the midst of this delicate maneuver. At this point the failure to correctly evaluate the intentions of the Kremlin lead them to a course which may well have compromised their

positions with the Russians. As the negotiations with Sweden seemed to offer the best hope, the Finnish government's responses to the deliberately vague early approaches of the Soviets was framed in the rigidly correct posture of inflexible neutrality. Thus while stressing its formal position, it may well have been take in Moscow for the prefunctory statement of a government unable to offer more definite reassurance. The merits of the only alternative the situation offered are impossible to calculate. Had the Finnish government attempted the hazardous policy of a diplomatic equestrian performance between Sweden and the Soviet Union, the result must remain an open question. Perhaps such an alternative presents itself only to the calm of hindsight.

The decisive point in the developing crisis must be regarded as the failure of the Aaland Islands negotiations with Sweden.

> The Swedish prime minister [sic] Per Hansson belatedly admitted to Vaino Tanner that if the Swedish-Finnish alliance had come about in time, Russia probably would not have been so persistent in her demands and war might have been avoided.[1]

The splendid courage and daring of the Finns in the face of hopeless odds was to prove but another in the list of small states crushed in a world of national states that failed to observe and respect the very laws they themselves had enunciated. When the struggle became at last a force impossibility, the Finnish government was compelled at last to inquire through the Russian Minister at Stockholm the terms of peace. They proved to be economically crippling

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[1]Mazour, op. cit., p. 100.

cessions of territory. From the settlement the Finnish state emerged in a quasi-autonomous condition which boded ill for the future of an independent Finnish policy.

APPENDIX A[1]

TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND AND THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Translation

The Government of the Republic of Finland, of the one part, and

The Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, of the other part,

Being desirous of bringing to an end the hostilities which have broken out between the two States and of creating permanent peaceful relations between them,

And being convinced that the creation of definite conditions for their mutual security, including guarantees for the security of the cities of Leningrad and Murmansk and the Murmansk railway, is in the interests of both Contracting Parties,

Have decided that for this purpose the conclusion of a Peace Treaty is essential and have therefore appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND:

Risto Ryti, Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland,

Juho Kusti Paasikivi, Minister,

Rudolf Walden, General,

Väinö Voionmaa, Professor.

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[1]FBB, pp. 115-118.

THE PRESIDIUM OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS:

Vjatcheslav Mihailovitch Molotov, President of the Council of Commissars of the U.S.S.R. and Commissar for Foreign Affairs,

Andrei Aleksandrovitch Shdanov, Member of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R.,

Aleksander Mihailovitch Vasilevski, Brigadier;

who, having exchanged their credentials, found in due and proper order, have agreed upon the following provisions:

ARTICLE I.

Hostilities between Finland and the U.S.S.R. shall be immediately concluded according to the procedure defined in the Protocol attached to the present Treaty.

ARTICLE 2.

The frontier between the Republic of Finland and the U.S.S.R. shall follow a new boundary line by which shall be incorporated in the territory of the U.S.S.R. the whole of the Karelian Isthmus, the city of Viipuri and Viipuri Bay with the islands thereof, the western and northern coastal area of Lake Ladoga with the towns of Käkisalmi and Sortavala and the church village of Suojärvi, a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland, the territory east of Märkäjärvi and the church village of Kuolajärvi, and parts of the Rybachi and Sredni Peninsulas--in conformity with the map attached to the present Treaty.

The exact delimitation and establishment of the frontier line shall be effected by a mixed committee of representatives of the Contracting Parties, which shall be appointed within ten days of the signing of the present Treaty.

ARTICLE 3.

Both Contracting Parties undertake to refrain from all acts of aggression directed against each other, and undertake not to conclude any alliance or to become parties to any coalition directed against either of the Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE 4.

The Republic of Finland agrees to lease to the Soviet Union for thirty years in consideration of an annual rent of eight million Finnish marks to be paid by the Soviet Union, the cape of Hangö and the surrounding waters within a radius of five nautical miles to the south and east and three nautical miles to the west and north thereof, and a number of islands situated therein, in conformity with the map attached to the present Treaty--for the establishment of a naval base capable of defending the access to the Gulf of Finland against aggressions; and in addition for the defence of the naval base the Soviet Union is granted the right to maintain there at its own expense armed land and air force units of the necessary strength.

The Government of Finland will withdraw within ten days of the entry into force of the present Treaty the whole of its armed forces from the cape of Hangö, and the cape of Hangö with the islands appertaining thereto will pass into the administration of the U.S.S.R. in conformity with this Article of the present Treaty.

ARTICLE 5.

The U.S.S.R. undertakes to withdraw its military forces from the Petsamo area which the U.S.S.R. voluntarily ceded to Finland under the terms of the Peace Treaty of 1920.

Finland undertakes as provided in the Peace Treaty of 1920, not to maintain warships and other armed vessels in the waters adjoining the Artic coast belonging to it, with the exception of armed vessels of less than one hundred tons, which Finland may maintain there without limit, and a maximum of fifteen war vessels or other armed ships, the tonnage of which may in no case exceed four hundred tons.

Finland undertakes, as provided in the said Treaty, not to maintain submarines and armed aircraft in the waters mentioned.

Finland further undertakes, as provided in the said Treaty, not to construct on this coast any naval harbours, naval bases or naval repair yards, which are larger in size than is necessary for the said vessels and their armament.

ARTICLE 6.

The Soviet Union and its nationals, as provided in the Treaty of 1920, are granted free right of transit via the Petsamo area to and from Norway and the Soviet Union is granted the right to establish a Consulate in the Petsamo area.

Goods transported via the Petsamo area from the Soviet Union to Norway, likewise goods transported via the said area from Norway to the Soviet Union, shall be free of all inspection and control, with the exception of the control necessary for the conduct of transit traffic; nor shall Customs duties or transit or other charges be imposed.

Control of the above mentioned transit goods shall be permitted only according to the established practice in such cases in international traffic.

Nationals of the Soviet Union who travel via the Petsamo area to Norway and from Norway back to the Soviet Union, shall be entitled to unhindered passage with passports issued by the due authorities of the Soviet Union.

With due observance of the general provisions in force, unarmed aircraft of the Soviet Union shall be entitled to maintain air traffic between the Soviet Union and Norway via the Petsamo area.

ARTICLE 7.

The Government of Finland grants to the Soviet Union goods transit rights between the Soviet Union and Sweden, and for the development of this traffic by the shortest railway route the Soviet Union and Finland regard as necessary the construction, each on its own territory, and if possible in the course of the year 1940, of a railway connecting Kandalaksha with Kemijärvi.

ARTICLE 8.

With the entry into force of the present Treaty, trade relations between the Contracting Parties shall be renewed and for this purpose the Contracting Parties shall proceed to negotiate regarding the conclusion of a Trade Agreement.

ARTICLE 9.

This Peace Treaty shall enter into force immediately after its signature and shall later be ratified.

The exchange of instruments of ratification shall take place within ten days at Moscow.

The present Treaty is drawn up in duplicate in the Finnish, Swedish and Russian languages, in the City of Moscow on March 12th, 1940.

Risto Ryti J.K. Paasikivi V. Molotov A. Shdanov
R. Walden Väinö Voionmaa A. Vasilevski.

APPENDIX B[1]

PROTOCOL ATTACHED TO THE TREATY OF PEACE
CONCLUDED BETWEEN FINLAND AND THE UNION OF
SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ON MARCH 12TH, 1940

Translation

The Contracting Parties establish the following procedure for the cessation of hostilities and the transfer of troops to behind the frontier fixed by the Treaty of Peace.

1. Both Contracting Parties shall cease hostilities on the 13th day of March, 1940, at 12 o'clock noon Leningrad time.

2. With the object of ceasing hostilities from the prescribed hour onwards, a neutral zone one kilometre in breadth shall be arranged between the advanced positions of the troops, for which purpose the troops of that Contracting Party, which, with reference to the new frontier, occupies territory belonging to the other Contracting Party, shall be withdrawn a distance of one kilometre on the first day.

3. The transfer of military forces to the other side of the new frontier and the movement of the military forces of the other Contracting Party to that frontier, shall begin at 10 a.m. on March 15th, 1940, along the whole of the frontier between the Gulf of Finland and Lieksa, and at 10 a.m. on March 16th, 1940, northwards of Lieksa. The transfer shall be effected in marches of not less than 7 kilometres per day, the troops of the other Contracting Party moving forward in such order that an intervening distance of not less than 7 kilometres is maintained between the rearguard of the withdrawing troops and the advance guard of the other Contracting Party moving towards the new frontier.

4. In accordance with Clause 3, the following time limits are fixed for the transfer of troops to the various sections of the frontier:--

(a) in the sector comprising the upper reaches of the Tuntsajoki, Kuolajärvi, Takala, the eastern shore of Lake Joukamojärvi, the transfer of the troops of both Contracting Parties shall be completed at 8 p.m. on March 20th, 1940;

(b) in the Latva sector east of Kuhmoniemi, the transfer of troops shall be completed at 8 p.m. on March 22nd, 1940;

(c) in the sector Lonkavaara, Värtsilä, Matkaselkä railway station, the transfer of the troops of both Contracting Parties shall be completed at 8 p.m. on March 26th, 1940;

(d) in the sector Matkaselkä railway station, Koitsanlahti, the transfer of troops shall be completed at 8 p.m. on March 22nd, 1940;

(e) in the sector Koitsanlahti, Enso railway station, the transfer of troops shall be completed at 8 p.m. on March 25th, 1940;

(f) in the sector Enso railway station, Paationsaari, the transfer of troops shall be completed at 8 p.m. on March 19th, 1940;

5. The evacuation of Red Army troops from the Petsamo area shall be completed by April 10th, 1940.

6. The Army Commands of both Contracting Parties undertake, during the transfer of troops to the other side of the frontier, to take the necessary measures, in the towns and localities to be ceded to the other

Contracting Party, to preserve these from damage and to take the necessary measures to preserve towns, localities, defensive and economic establishments (bridges, dams, aerodromes, barracks, depots, railway junctions, industrial establishments, the telegraph system, electric power stations) from damage and destruction.

7. All questions arising out of the cession by one Contracting Party to the other of the areas, localities, towns or other objects mentioned in Clause 6 of the present Protocol, shall be decided on the spot by representatives of both Contracting Parties for which purpose the Army Commands shall appoint special delegates on each of the main routes utilised by both Armies.

8. The exchange of prisoners of war shall be effected with the minimum of delay after the cessation of hostilities in accordance with a special agreement.

March 12th, 1940.

Risto Ryti
J.K. Paasikivi
R. Walden
Vaino Voionmaa

V. Molotov
A. Shdanov
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