

# 'Finlandization' as a method of living next door to Russia

by Paul Malone

"Finlandization" is a word used in a pejorative sense by critics of Finnish foreign policy who claim the independence of Finland has been compromised by its determination to maintain constructive relationships with the Soviet Union. In a broader sense, the term is employed by opponents of detente in the West who fear other European democracies may follow in Finland's footsteps and bow to the threat of Soviet military pressure in the conduct of their foreign policies.

It is significant that this term "Finlandization" is used glibly by writers and commentators who have little, if any, first-hand knowledge of Finland — its history, its people, its problems and its achievements; its success as a free market democracy in maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

The state visit of Canada's Governor-General Edward Schreyer to Finland in May 1981 provided him, Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan and accompanying officials with on-the-spot insights into Finnish foreign and domestic policies. Exchanges of views in Helsinki are reported to have underlined similarity of Canadian-Fenno outlooks on multilateral issues and mutual enthusiasm for bilateral cooperation in economic and scientific relationships.

With a population of less than five million dispersed over a rocky and unfertile area lying almost entirely above the 60th parallel of northern latitude, Finland plays a role in international affairs more influential and more constructive than its modest physical resources warrant. As a determined neutral state, Finland has succeeded in establishing friendly relationships with both Eastern and Western blocs, as well as Third World neutral and non-aligned countries. The history of Finland and its exposed geopolitical position as a western-style democracy sharing an 800-mile border with the U.S.S.R are responsible for its adherence to a foreign policy based on "active neutrality". Finland's strategic vulnerability in the event of

war involving the superpowers explains Finnish support and enthusiasm for detente.

Finland's struggle for independence from neighbouring states continued for more than 800 years before achieving success in 1917. In 1155 A.D. Sweden invaded Finland, which had been occupied earlier by tribal migrants from Central Asia. Swedish objectives were twofold — to secure military bases for use against Russia and to establish Christianity. Finland remained under Swedish control until 1809 when a Russian victory over Sweden in the Baltic resulted in a transfer of Finnish territory to control of the Czar personally. Finland became a semi-autonomous grand duchy of Russia with the Grand Duke.

During the 19th century the Czars exercised their authority over Finland in a relatively liberal and constructive manner. But stirrings of revolution within Russia earlier this century resulted in increasingly oppressive measures within Finland in concert with the entire Russian domain. Leaders of Finnish resistance took advantage of the Russian revolution of 1917 to issue a Declaration of Independence. Pre-occupied by domestic problems and convinced forces of the left would quickly take over control of the infant state, the revolutionary regime in the Soviet Union promptly recognized the Declaration of Independence. When civil war broke out almost immediately in Finland, Moscow actively supported the rebellious forces of the left. A bitter struggle between "White" (non-Bolshevik) and "Red" forces in which both German and Soviet reinforcements participated on opposing sides ended in victory for the Government battalions under the great Finnish patriot Marshal Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim who had been a prominent military officer in Czarist Russia in the days of the grand duchy.

## Winter war

Relations between Finland and the U.S.S.R. remained frosty until the eve of World War II. The Soviet Union, which anticipated an eventual attack from Nazi Germany, demanded territorial concessions from Finland to strengthen the defence of Leningrad. Despite the formidable odds they faced, the Finnish leaders refused to yield Finnish territory. The Soviet Union

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