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Swedish activism during the Finnish civil war and the imagined community of Sweden and Finland as represented by the Palme family

Bakgrund/Frågeställning

The Swedish activists in the First World War period were eager for Sweden to regain Finland or at least parts of it. The Finnish civil war intensified these endeavours. While the activism in Sweden as an intellectual tendency is well documented, the actual networking going on between Swedish activists and the Finnish white nationalists during the last years of the First World war and how this was perceived among the more practically involved activists is less thoroughly analyzed. The proposed paper (and paper presentation) focuses on the Swedish Palme family as a case study of the variations of opinion on the character of the imagined community between Sweden and Finland in this period. The Palme family was closely connected to the Finnish movement for independence from tsarist Russia. The right wing liberal politician and entrepreneur Sven Palme worked for the Finnish independence from Russia on it's own terms. His son, the academic Olof Palme – that is, Olof Palme the elder, who died in the battle of Tampere in 1918 - developed a more defined grand Swedish and expansionist perspective in his view on the Swedish Finnish relationship, inspired by Sweden's period as a great military power in the seventeenth century. His brothers were more moderate in their views; Gunnar who was involved in the gathering of funds for the financing of the Swedish Brigade in Finland in 1918, and Nils, then a Swedish junior officer and a volunteer in the regular White army in Finland. The paper focuses on the various interpretations of the imagined community with Finland among the Swedish activists, and also how these notions influenced the Swedish outlook. The source material is collected from the Palme family archive. The subject could, if accepted, be included in the research stream number four “Imagining Norden – branding and Nordic reputation”.

Metod och Resultat

Konklusion