

Diploma thesis „Nationality policy in Soviet Karelia, 1920-1935 “ deals with the bolshevik experiment of governing a multinational empire on the example of eastern Karelia in the inter-war period. The paper examines the specific aspects of Karelia’s development in contrast with the central nationality policies. Unique region with Finnish communist emigrants as leaders serves as an essence of understanding the nationality policies of the USSR. In search of a large-scale support of all the Russia’s peoples the bolsheviks opted for a pragmatic policy of national concessions. The creation of autonomous Karelia was only possible because of a number of factors. Thanks to the policy of building national cadres, the Soviets were temporarily inclined towards regional administration. The success of Tartu peace negotiations was determined by solving the Karelian question and autonomous Karelia seemed to have been just the answer to Finnish demands. The region was supposed to become a showcase of socialism and friendship of the peoples. The Finnish bolsheviks were up to this challenge. Apart from the actual nationality policy in Karelia, the thesis also deals with the factors determining the level of independence such as economic policies and the dependence on center, language and education questions and challenges to Karelian autonomy, such as the GULAG Archipelago under the OGPU. As a specific illustration of how determined to rebuild the titular population the Karelian leadership was serves the phenomenon of “Karelian Fever” where thousands of Finns from North America travelled to Karelia to help building socialism only to become victims of the national operations and terror together with the whole Finnish Karelian leadership.