

JOINT CRISIS COMMITTEE

MetroWest Model United Nations 2020

Reds' Side of the Finnish Civil War



1/27/1918, Red forces storm the city of Tampere, marking one of the early victories of the War



I. Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Hi! I'm Brinda, and I'm a senior at AMSA. I started MUN as a Freshman because I wanted to be more aware of current and historical events, and I have grown to love the engaging and competitive environment that it fosters. I have been to a few different conferences, including PEAMUN, EagleMUN, ClarkMUN, and ConcordMUN, in which I earned an Honorable Mention in a crisis about the constitutional convention.

I am excited to be chairing this JCC. As reds, our room should be actively working to stop the whites (the conservatives) from advancing both their forces and ideas. We must ensure that Finland has a place in the rapidly-changing modern world through industrialization and adaptation.

I can't wait to chair the red's room in the Finnish civil war JCC, and to see all of the new ideas and plot lines the committee can come up with! Our committee will be taking place in 1918, and will continue until the end of the war. This background guide will cover the basic information on the Civil War and the Red's ideas. In addition to this background guide, please do as much specific research as possible, as we will be looking for delegates who portray their character accurately and take full advantage of the crisis room and their portfolio powers in order to keep the committee moving.

Papers should be emailed to me at brinda77.p@gmail.com by 11:59pm on February 7th, 2020 in order to receive consideration for any awards.

Please email me with any questions that you may have; I'm here to help!

See you soon!

Brinda Purimetla

Chair of the Finnish Civil War Joint Committee Crisis (Reds)

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II. Buildup and Pressing Issues

During the period of Pax Russica (1809-98), The Grand Duchy of Finland's power began increasing. After Russia lost the Crimean War, efforts were made to modernize the country. Finland was swept up in this wave of industrialization, and for half a century it went through both economic and social growth. This increased Finnish nationalism, and many people felt that the country was becoming more distinct from the Russian empire.

In response to this, Russia initiated a campaign to russify Finland, in order to create a strong union to compete with increasingly powerful countries, such as Germany. This time was called "The First Period of Oppression", and many Finns wanted to resist integration with Russia. Tensions began running so high that some working class people committed terrorist attacks, a precursor to the violence to come.

The rising political tensions between Russia and Finland was mainly caused by the autocratic rule of the Russian empire and the undemocratic social hierarchy and class divisions. Along with its industrialization, Finland's class rifts deepened, especially the one between the working class and upper class. The working class became increasingly aware of this change, and this allowed the Finnish labor movement to take hold. The movement culminated with the Finnish Social Democratic Party. The working class demanded better rights, while the more elite classes thought that they were better fit to lead. This change only further raised tensions between the working class and the bourgeoisie. After Russia's failed war against Japan in 1905, there was a General Strike in Finland that culminated in the abolition of the previous system of estates. Finland created a governing body to lead the country independently, and this significantly increased the support of Social Democrats. However, after the Tsar regained control, he overpowered Parliament and controlled the Finnish Senate in "The Second Period of Oppression". This time was ended by the February Revolution in Russia.

During the World War, Finland was not affected directly. However, Germany saw it as an important location for resources and industrial products, as they were fighting a two-front war and were depleted in resources. They also recognized that it was a passage to Petrograd, a major city in Russia, and the Kola Peninsula, which was filled with raw materials that would be useful in rising industries. The



German empire funded radical groups such as the Finnish National Activist Movement to try to divide the country and make it easier for them to invade and control it.

After Russia collapsed, Finland was presented the opportunity to become more independent from Russia. Finland's autonomous status was reinstated; however, its government collapsed quickly because of power struggles, mainly between the social democrats and conservatives. The social democrats wanted to keep and continue the reform that was helping the working class, and they wanted to continue spreading their influence. On the other hand, the conservatives wanted to maintain their long-held dominance. In lieu of the events happening in Russia, both sides gave help to the groups that aligned with their ideas in an effort to gain dominance over each other, causing a large rift to form between the two sides. When the social democrats won full control of the Parliament in 1916, they created a new senate composed of six social democrats and six conservatives. However, no one was willing to compromise, creating political standstill. This caused political change to be resolved by separate organizations, all working to weaken the authority of the state.

The February Revolution stopped industrialization in Finland and stopped imports from Russia, leading to inflation and food shortages. This only strengthened support of the social democrats, who had a majority in Parliament. The strikes against the government led to another general strike that protested the lack of food.

The October Revolution continued to show the conservatives that the social democrats were becoming more of a threat. This created more tensions, and marked the start of the political violence. Parliament took control of the country, and began implementing policies that helped the working class. However, after the Finnish labor movement lost authority in Parliament, it announced the need to begin assembling a paramilitary group called the Worker's Order Guards. A minority of this group became the Red Guard.



III. The Reds

The Reds (social democrats) rose in popularity quickly due to the frustration that the working class had towards the growing rifts in social classes caused by the Industrial Revolution. They stood for continuing industrialization in order to establish Finland as a world power, and wanted more equal rights between classes. They were able to take over popular support following the Parliamentary Reform of 1906, which abolished the traditional system of estates. Many people felt that the social democrats were actively championing for the poorer classes, and support rose quickly. Soon after, The Finns created the Parliament of Finland, which established universal suffrage. The number of voters increased from 126,000 to 1,273,000, including female citizens. The reform led to the social democrats receiving over half of the popular vote. After the February Revolution, the social democrats had the opportunity to govern Finland, given their majority in Parliament. They passed the “Law of Supreme Power”, which allowed Parliament to overshadow the more conservative Senate’s authority. The social democrats felt threatened by the conservatives, who were spreading the idea of governing Finland using older systems. The conservatives were intimidated by the social democrats’ quick rise in popularity over a short period of time. Tensions between the conservatives and the social democrats grew so high that it led to paramilitary groups being formed.

IV. Bloc Positions

Finns

These people will mainly be of the working class, and will want to express their want for fairer rights for the lower classes. They are also untrained and extremely inexperienced, and rely heavily on Russian tactical support.



Russians

As members of the Bolshevik party in Russia, these people are supposed to be in Finland to help the Reds' cause. However, some characters might secretly be working to reintroduce a Russian influence into Finland. Research to find out!

V. Characters

Aleksi Ali Aaltonen

A Finnish journalist and former lieutenant of the Russian Imperial Army, Aaltonen served as the first commander-in-chief of the Finnish Red Guards from November 1917 to the end of January 1918.

Eero Haapalainen

A Finnish politician, trade unionist and journalist who was one of the most prominent figures of the Finnish socialist movement in the first two decades of the 1900s. He served as the commander-in-chief of the Red Guards after Aaltonen.

Eino Rahja

A Finnish-Russian revolutionary who joined the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1903, becoming aligned with the party's Bolshevik faction. During the Finnish Civil War, Rahja was one of the most capable military leaders of the Reds. He, Taimi and Eloranta replaced Haapalainen as co-commander-in-chiefs of the Red Guards for two weeks.

**Adolf Taimi**

Taimi was the delegate for internal affairs of the Finnish People's Delegation. Taimi had a mission to be in contact with Bolshevik soldiers and Finnish Social Democrats. He worked in close cooperation with the Bolshevik-led Helsinki Council. He, Eloranta and Rahja replaced Haapalainen as co-commander-in-chiefs of the Red Guards for two weeks.

Evert Eloranta

A member of parliament from 1908 to 1917, Eloranta was a member of the Social Democratic party. He was elected into the Finnish People's Delegation as the Delegate for Agriculture. He, Rahja and Taimi replaced Haapalainen as co-commander-in-chiefs of the Red Guards for two weeks.

Kullervo Manner

A Finnish journalist and politician, Manner was a member of the Finnish parliament, serving as its speaker in 1917. He was also chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Finland in the time leading up to the war. During the Finnish Civil War, he led the Finnish People's Delegation.

August Wesley

Wesley was a Finnish journalist, trade unionist and revolutionary who was the chief of the Red Guards' general staff in the War, the second highest role in the Red Guards.

Hugo Salmela

Salmela was a sawmill worker from Eastern Finland, and became one of the Red Guard military leaders. He replaced Svechnikov as the commander-in-Chief of the Northern Front under the advisory of Bulatsel.



Verner Lehtimäki

Lehtimäki was a Finnish Socialist, soldier, pilot and aerospace engineer. In 1917, Lehtimäki lost his job as a car salesman in Russia and started smuggling guns for Finnish revolutionaries. Lehtimäki fought in the Battle of Vilppula as a commander of a cavalry unit.

Mikhail Svechnikov

Svechnikov was a Russian military officer in the Imperial Russian Army and the Red Army. He worked as a military advisor for the Red Guards. In February 1918, Svechnikov was shortly the commander-in-chief of the Northern Front, replaced by Salmela.

Georgij Bulatsel

Bulatsel was a Russian military officer in the Imperial Russian Army and the Red Army. In February of 1918, Svechnikov was replaced by Salmela as the commander-in-chief of the Northern Front, and Bulatsel became his advisor.

Konstantin Yeremeyev

Yeremeyev was the chief of the Vyborg military district and led the battles of Rautu, which was a strong Reds center on the Eastern Front. He preemptively strengthened Russian troops in Rautu in March expecting an attack from the Whites. When the Whites attacked in April to protect their front out of fear of the growing numbers of troops in Rautu, nearly 800 Russian troops and Finnish revolutionaries died.

Heikki Kaljunen

Kaljunen was the leader of the Red Guard on the Karelian Front during the Finnish Civil War. He was one of the founders of the Terijoki Red Guard. He served as commander-in-chief of the Red Eastern Front.



Fredrik Edvard Johansson

Johansson was an industrial worker who became a leader of the inexperienced Helsinki Red Guard after the Red Guard general staff and Red Government left Helsinki and re-established themselves in the city of Vyborg in Eastern Finland. He led the Red forces during the Battle of Helsinki.

Matti Autio

Autio was a newspaperman who originally came to Varkaus as an agitator during the 1917 General Strike. He became the commander of the Varkaus Red Guard. During the Battle of Varkaus, Autio led the mostly unarmed Red forces against the White forces for two days before surrendering.



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