

# JOINT CRISIS COMMITTEE

MetroWest Model United Nations 2020

## Whites' Side of Finnish Civil War





## **I. Letter from Chair**

Hello delegates!

My name is Izam Karukappadath, your chair for the Joint Crisis Committee about the Whites Side of the Finnish Civil War. I started doing Model UN in 9th grade, stemming from a deep interest in international relations and politics, which is something I'm sure most of you can relate to. Since joining the Model UN team, I've been to conferences including EagleMUN, ClarkMUN, ConcordMUN2019, and PEAMUN.

I've achieved many awards at conferences, which most notably from this year include Outstanding Delegate at PEAMUN 2019 and Honorable Mention at ClarkMUN 2019. Joining AMSA's Model UN team has been an absolutely pivotal moment of my educational career, convincing me to leave behind past career choices and decide to pursue one in law and foreign relations.

I am extremely thrilled to be chairing this committee in particular, as the many attempts and failures of Russia in history are quite exciting to hear about. In this committee, though, we will not only be hearing about it; Yet, we will be actively working to fight the communists and to keep Finland independent. Throughout the committee, I am looking forward to seeing great cooperation between delegates as well as healthy debate.

Position papers must be submitted by 11:59 PM by 2/2/2020 in order to receive consideration for awards. These should be emailed to [izam.karuka@gmail.com](mailto:izam.karuka@gmail.com). See you soon!

Izam Karukappadath

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

[izam.karuka@gmail.com](mailto:izam.karuka@gmail.com)



## **II. Buildup to the Finnish Civil War**

During the late 1800s, the Industrial Revolution touched parts of eastern Europe, influencing Finland's economy and growth, introducing a class of agrarian and industrial workers which became an interest point for trading countries. Isolated by the Baltic Sea, enabling the Duchy to catch the eye of Germany as a place to purchase raw materials, industrial products, food and labour needed to provide for the growth of the country and its army. Included in the rise, the Russian Empire pushed for the "Russification of Finland", only angering the Finnish people more. Represented by the Finnish Social Democratic Party, workers fought against Russification and pushed for documents that supported the democratic needs of Finnish people. There was a heightened power struggle by the totalitarian philosophies of Russian autocrats and the democratic views of the Fins, only growing by the failed wars against Japan and the Russian Revolution of 1905. They called this movement an increase of military power and started the push for the sovereignty of Finland. German use of Finland in addition to the Russian manipulation only sparked more nationlistic feelings over the Duchy, threatening the strength of the Russian Empire.

Just years prior to the civil war, World War 1 ravaged the European countries, causing international chaos and deterioration of what people had known as common life. Politics became a way for people to act out and demand what was needed for their country to function during the war. This idea came into fruition for those living in Russia, pursuing independence from the monarchical rule. With the infamous February and October Revolutions, the disintegration of Russia offered the Finns an opportunity to gain independence from their "mother" state. After the Czar's power had been terminated, the Russians introduced a dual power to the country, giving more freedom of government to the people. This directly affected the Finns as in March of 1917, their autonomous status was returned and allowed the Finns to gain a sort of independence they were striving for. This, however, was only the start. The disintegration of Russia, from its military to the economy, only pushed for more reform to take hold, opening up a chance for the Finns to get a place in the Russia government and make a move toward their independence.



Angered by the halting of Finnish economy due to the power struggle in Russia (during the February Revolution), commoners called for large scale reform, including an eight-hour work day and better working conditions. Eventually, the Finnish people were able to gain a majority in the Parliament, resulting in Russia's loss of control over the country and creation of tension between the Reds and the Finns.

### **III. Rise of the Whites**

After the rise of Bolshevik power in Russia, a swing of nationalistic emotions hit Finland. Workers were inspired by the quick takeover demonstrated by the Russians, over their autocratic leaders. The Finnish use of militant tactics mixed with slow and steady methods made the Whites particularly popular, with the growth of over 100,000 workers joining the party by 1907. By July 1916, the SDP was able to win majority in Russia's parliament, displaying their power. This "takeover" of Russia only pushed for the nationalistic needs of Finnish people, creating a general strike on November 14, 1917 and controlling a portion of the country. The radical members of the SDP (Finnish Social Democratic Party, Suomen Työväenpuolue) wanted to push the strike even further to completely take over Russia, but the moderates argued otherwise. Despite the strike being "general" and more or less peaceful, the strike grew tensions between the Red (communist) Guards and the White (Democratic) Guards. Many middle and upper class people felt no reason to fight due to the set trade pacts between Finnish people and Russians, but also they felt threatened by the rise of German Jagers as a credible fighting force for the White Guard. Under the control of Pehr Evind Svinhufvud, president of Finland, the Finnish people started to revolt against Russian authority and demonstrated against the socialist philosophies. The final, and biggest, act of the White Guard was on January 9th, 1918 when the Finnish government authorized the White Guard to act as a state security force and to maintain law within Finland. This act competed against Russian rule of the Duchy, fueling the means for war.



#### **IV. Main Problems Leading Up**

Like any country wishing to gain independence, there are many topics of interest between the opposing sides. 1917 was a monumental year for the Finns, winning majority in Russian Parliament among other things. In July of that year, the Finnish parliament proposed the *valtalaki* (or the Power Bill) which allowed for the country to become almost independent. This bill was approved, however the Russian Provisional Government rejected the bill's legitimacy and threatened to occupy Finland if it abided by the Power Bill. In August of 1917, the Russians continued to neglect the lack of food and supply arriving in Finland, leaving many to starve. Angering the Finns, many riots broke out, arguing against the Russian rule saying that they were refusing to take measures to solve the food crisis. In all, the biggest problem was the neglect and downfall of the Russian Empire that spurred the want for Finnish independence. The increased nationalism throughout the state called for immediate action of freedom from Russia, which it further denied. This only sparked tensions, leading to the start of the Finnish Civil War.



## **V. Bloc Positions**

### **1. Nationalists**

Nationalism had become a sort of “civil religion” for many Finnish people. Views normally held by the conservative groups of the country, the Nationalists are extremely anti-communist. These people will be pushing for an absolute crushing of the communists, and full independence for Finland.

### **2. Germans**

The Germans wanted to replace the Finnish White Forces with a new Finnish conscript army, which would basically be fully run by German officers and all soldiers would be trained through German army standards.

### **3. Russians**

Extremely similarly to the Germans, the Russians wanted to replace the Finnish White Forces with a more Russian run army.



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