The Battle Over Identity: Finnish-Americans and the Finnish Civil War

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Introduction

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, a national awakening began in the Grand Duchy of Finland that would eventually lead to Finnish independence in 1917. The process of nation-state building in Finland was led by a group of Swedish-speaking Finnish aristocrats and members of the educated elite and gentry. The national identity they sought to create was a romanticized ideal of Finnish peasant culture, with which none of the nationalists were intimately familiar. It was a cultural revolution from above and, although it has been studied extensively in Finland, rarely have historians asked if this new national identity was accepted and internalized from below.[1] The Finnish Civil War that broke out following independence clearly indicates that it was not. This conflict was a bloody class war in which the losing side—workers and leftists working towards an international working-class socialist movement—was written out of history, while the victorious White Guard and its nationalist symbols became the dominant, and only acceptable, representations of Finnishness. Simultaneously, at the beginning of the twentieth century thousands of Finnish migrants left Finland, with many going to the United States. The migration of Finns to North America has also been studied extensively in both Finland and North America, but the question of how Finnish migrants felt about and reacted to the events of the

[1]For example, the most recent comprehensive book on the subject is Tuomas Tepora and Aapo Roselius, *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, and Legacy* (Boston: Brill, 2014). Tepora and Roselius bring together the past fifty years of scholarship on the topic of the Finnish Civil War and show how the events and memories of them have had a lasting impact on Finnish society. While they discuss the international element of the civil war, they do not discuss in great detail Finnish immigrants' response to it, instead focusing on the civil war's entanglement with the Russian Revolution and World War I. See also Einar Juva, *Suomen vapautumisen historia* (Helsinki: Otava, 1938); Tuure Lehen, *Punaisten ja valkoisten sota* (Helsinki: Kansankulttuuri, 1978); Erkki Salomaa, *Työväenliike ja Suomen itsenäisyys* (Helsinki: Kansankulttuuri, 1967); Erkki Kivijärvi, *Suomen vapaussota 1918* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Ahjo, 1919); Jaakko Paavolainen, *Valkoinen terrori* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1967); Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Jaakko Paavolainen *Red och vit terror: Finlands nationella tragedy* (Stockholm: Askelin and Hägglund, 1986).

Finnish Civil War has not been sufficiently answered.[2] Studies instead have focused on the ways in which Finns in America expressed their Finnishness, and how they kept their national identity while becoming a part of the larger American society. What has not been asked is how these migrants became part of the Finnish national community while living in America. These are the answers this dissertation examines, while arguing that Finns in America had to learn how to be Finnish in the same way that their counterparts in Finland had to, which was a wish of both conservative Finns in America and the new government in Finland. This illustrates the transnational nature of nationalism, i.e. that a nation-state cannot exist if others do not perceive it as such. With this in mind, emigrants prove to be an excellent tool in the building of the nation-state.

Benedict Anderson famously declared that nations are imaginary in nature. These imagined communities are composed of individuals who do not know each other and will probably never

[2]Early works on Finnish migration to North America were written either by migrants themselves or their descendants, who were interested in their connections with Finland. For this reason, they have mainly concentrated on conservative Finns and the Finnish-American communities that continue to perceive themselves as part of the larger Finnish community. For example: Noreen Sippola Fairburn, *My Father Spoke Finglish at Work: Finnish Americans in Northeast Ohio* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2007); Jacob Keikkinen, *The Story of the Suomi Synod: The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (New York Mills: Jacob Keikkinen); John Kolehmainen and George Hill, *Haven in the Woods*: *The Story of Finns in Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1951); Armas Holmio, *History of the Finns in Michigan* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001; Vilho Niitemaa, *Old Friends-Strong Ties* (Vaasa: Institute for Migration, 1976); Patricia Johnson Eilola, *A Finntown of the Heart* (St. Cloud: North Star Press, 1998); Reino Hannula, *Blueberry God: The Education of a Finnish-American* (San Luis Obispo: Quality Hill Books, 1979). These works are not as valuable as secondary source material, but they help uncover what Finnish immigrants and their descendants think about their past and connection with Finland. Apart from local histories, early scholarly works on Finnish migration discussed the Americanization of Finns as well as their contributions to the United States. For example: Reino Kero, *Migration from Finland to North America* (Turku: Turku University Press, 1974); John Wargelin, *The Americanization of the Finns* (Hancock: The Finnish Lutheran Book Concern, 1924); William Hoglund, *Finnish Immigrants in America 1880-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960); David Hinshaw, *Heroic Finland* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1952); Liisa Liedes, *The Finnish Imprint* (Fitchburg: New England Finnish American Bicentennial Committee, 1982). In more recent decades more scholarly attention has been placed on Finnish migration from scholars in Finland. Most recently is Auvo Kostiainen's edited collection, which is the culmination of thirty years of research, *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration*, ed. Auvo Kostiainen (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014). While it examines Finnish migration from numerous perspectives, including a strong transnational approach, it is more of a general overview and does not effectively answer how Finnish communities reacted to national events in Finland.

meet, yet there is a sense of community between them.[3] It is because of this that a community separated by borders and oceans can nevertheless exist. Anderson believes the press plays an important role in the creation and maintenance of these communities, as news coverage allows people to see themselves within the same community even if they never have contact with each other. This study, therefore, places newspapers and their content at its center. The Finnish-American press was extensive and mirrored the political nature of the press in Finland. The development of the Finnish-American press has been studied by several scholars, though the actual content of the newspapers has often been overlooked. An in-depth study of the content reveals that the Finnish-American community was deeply divided between those involved in the international workers' movement and conservative Finnish-Americans who were interested in maintaining their Finnishness and contact with the mother country. While radical Finns have been the subject of previous studies, their reaction to, and involvement with, the Finnish Civil War has not been fully researched. Instead, the focus has been on their work within the wider labor movement in America. A thorough examination of the Finnish-American working-class press reveals a deep connection with the events in Finland, as it leveraged the freedom of the press in America as a weapon to fight and then get revenge upon the individuals it perceived as responsible for the failure of the workers' revolution in Finland. This is the second major argument of this project. Examining the Finnish-American conservative press and the Finnish-American labor press together reveals how the Finnish-American community was deeply divided, and explains why some Finnish-American communities continued to be strongly connected to the mother country, while others did not develop a strong Finnish identity. Immigrants abroad, therefore, are revealed to be a central component in the creation and maintenance of the nation-state. Matthew Frye Jacobson's study of

[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 39-40.

Irish, Polish, and Jewish migrants found that they continued to be engaged with the events of their homelands, and all saw themselves as part of national diasporas.[4] The same can be said of conservative Finnish migrants; however, examining only these migrants who continued to express themselves as part of the imagined Finnish community leaves out those who rejected the entire nation-building project and instead viewed themselves within a larger international workers' society.

On December 6, 2017, Finland celebrated a century of independence. Celebrations began on January 1 of that year, with commemorations and memorials happening periodically throughout the year. President Sauli Niinistö declared in his annual Independence Day speech:

> Dear Finnish expatriates and people of Finnish heritage around the world. There are so many of you! Before our independence there were hundreds of thousands and now there are almost two million people of Finnish heritage living around the world. If even one in ten of you light a candle on your window sill on Independence Day, there will be a sea of light that represents to those around you your deep sense of pride in Finland. I remember…most recently the strong spirit of unity at the Finnish-American FinnFest celebration in Minnesota…I have had the opportunity to meet with you; people of Finnish heritage and Finns all around the world. Some have moved from Finland recently while some of you have a bond with Finland only through their grandparents. One of the speakers at the FinnFest opening told of her first visit to Finland. "I felt as if I had come home," she said. This made me think about Finnish identity as a feeling and how strong that feeling is…the history of migration is also a part of Finland's story and the process of building Finland. Finnish expatriates have created the Finnish brand. You will be the first and perhaps the only connection to Finland many people will ever have. I am pleased with what you reflect. You represent courage, curiosity and openness. You have the *sisu*, the guts to persevere in a foreign culture and the heart to keep Finland close. I have spoken about participatory patriotism…We Finns feel that this is a country and society that everyone participates in. Everyone, both near and far, must protect this feeling of cohesion together.[5]

In President Niinistö's speech to Finns abroad, he stressed that Finnish migrants have, since independence, been an important part of the building of the Finnish nation-state as representatives

[4]Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[5]Sauli Niinistö, Tasavallan presidentin tervehdys ulkosuomalaisille, December 6, 2017. Tasavallan presidentin kanslia, Helsinki, Finland.

of the Finnish "brand." This brand consists of courage, curiosity, and openness (*sisu*), as well as a strong sense of pride and national identity rooted in Finland. Following the centennial celebration, 2018 marked the 100-year anniversary of the Finnish Civil War. There were no celebrations, memorials, or events marking this. There were no speeches praising the bravery of the Red Guard or remembrance of soldiers who fell in battle. The event was equally unmarked, if not entirely forgotten, in Finnish communities abroad. The National Museum of Finland in celebration of the 100-year anniversary ran a year-long exhibit titled "The Story of Finland." The exhibit tracked the development of the Finnish national awakening, celebrating the symbols and culture of the victorious Whites. While a large part of the exhibit focused on the "war for independence," the civil war was not represented in the timeline of events. Heroes of the White Guard, such as General Mannerheim, were celebrated with enthusiasm and speeches were given in his honor. The exhibit continued with the development of modern Finland. The civil war was not included in the "Story of Finland."

This dissertation germinated after a casual walk around the city of Aberdeen, Washington in 2013. Knowing that Aberdeen contained a large Finnish population, not unlike other Finnish settlement areas in Minnesota and Michigan, I went to do research in the local historical society's archive and public library. While walking through the formerly impressive downtown area, I passed businesses graced with Finnish surnames, as well as the old rotting signs of the Finnish hall and sauna. The Aberdeen city phonebook likewise contained numerous Finnish surnames. Near the end of my walk I came across a large mural that had been painted in 2010 and celebrated the immigrant groups that had made Aberdeen. Flags representing numerous countries graced the mural, yet one was oddly absent. While Finns represented the only ethnic group in Aberdeen that had their own section of the cemetery, the flag of Finland was missing from the painting. After a

conversation with the librarian at the city library, on which the mural is painted, I was informed that the inclusion of countries' flags had been determined by which local groups asked to be included in the project. When asked why the Finnish flag was not included, she replied that no Finnish group came forward to request its inclusion. I asked if there were any local Finnish groups or organizations active in Aberdeen, and she said no. From a simple walk came the not so simple question: why did a strong Finnish identity not exist in an area that had previously had so many Finnish migrants, and that still contained numerous descendants of Finns? It was in stark contrast to the numerous villages and towns throughout Minnesota and Michigan that have Finnish flags dotting their landscapes, and are home to Michigan's Finlandia University and the annual FinnFest event that celebrates all things Finland. In President Niinistö's message to Finns abroad, he spoke of the cohesion and pride that Finns around the world have maintained, but in Aberdeen this was entirely absent. Why? The answer is complicated and is found in the turmoil that resulted from the Finnish Civil War and its aftermath.

Finland Before 1918

To fully understand what occurred amongst Finnish immigrants in North America, an understanding of the socio-political climate they migrated from must come first. The story of Finland before 1918 is the story of empire. For much of its history, Finland had been part of the Swedish empire, which implanted in it a Swedish-speaking aristocracy that had been allowed to control the Duchy of Finland with almost total independence from the Swedish crown. In contrast to the Swedish landed aristocracy were the Finnish-speaking people, the majority whom had their own language, culture, and traditions, and lived separately from their Swedish counterparts.

Finland had long been a buffer zone between the Swedish and Russian empires and in 1809, after a year-long war, the Diet of Finland recognized Alexander I as grand duke of Finland, thus beginning the period of Russian control. Alexander I is today celebrated in Finland as one of the fathers of Finnish nationalism, as in his takeover of the duchy he confirmed the freedom Finland had previously enjoyed and promised that it would retain its own laws and customs. This included keeping the Lutheran religion, its own central government, and Swedish as its official language. For the next several decades things continued in Finland much as they had before. The landed Swedish aristocracy remained in control of Finnish affairs, and the lives of the Finnish-speaking population remained unchanged. Subsequent tsars continued to treat the Grand Duchy as a semi-autonomous region within the Russian Empire—until Nicholas II.

In 1899, Nicholas II issued his February Manifesto, which began a period of intense Russification. Believing that Finland was no different than other parts of the empire, Nicholas II decided that matters outside of local issues would be decided by Russian officials. He also placed the Russian Orthodox Church on equal footing with the Lutheran Church of Finland, abolished freedom of the press, began an intense censorship campaign, made Russian the official administrative language, and passed a conscription law requiring Finns to serve in the Russian army while subsuming the Finnish army into the imperial military. Perhaps most damaging to the ruling elite, Nicholas II also replaced Finnish government offices and officials with Russian ones. A second period of Russification began after the Russo-Japanese War, and although the conscription laws were repealed, this Russification campaign continued until the February Revolution in 1917.

Simultaneously, within Finland the burgeoning Fennoman movement emerged, working to create a Finnish nation-state with a population that would consciously view itself as part of an

independent Finland.[6] This movement was the main driving force of a larger nation-building project that sought to establish a sense of homogeneity among all the people in Finland, thus bringing together the ruling Swedish-speaking elite and the Finnish-speaking peasant majority. Founding the Suomalainen Puolue (Finnish Party) in the 1860s, leaders of the Fennoman movement sought to reshape the Finnish language into the national language of Finland, as well as to create a national Finnish culture that would replace the culture of the Swedish aristocracy. The leaders of this movement were Swedish-speaking Finns, many of whom learned Finnish and changed their surnames to Finnish ones. According to Risto Alapuro's study of Finland and revolution, the unique status of Finland within the Russian Empire, combined with Finland's inherited political system from Sweden, made both the political and cultural revolution possible in Finland.[7] An earlier study further concluded that the Fennoman movement and nationalization of Finnish culture came from "younger men of solid gentry background, with Swedish as their initial language, who laid the basis for conscious political organization."[8] Russia also supported the Finnish Party and the development of Finnish as an official language, as it was in Russia's interest to divide Finns from Sweden. Finnish was officially recognized as an equal official language in

[6]The period of Finnish national awakening has been written about extensively. Most recent and most comprehensive is Derek Fewster, *Visions of Past Glory: Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2006). Fewster's shows how history was used and manipulated to create a homogenous Finnish culture and identity that had ancient roots. See also: John Wuorinen, *Nationalism in Modern Finland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931); Glenda Goss, *Sebelius: A Composer's Life and the Awakening of Finland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Osmo Jussila, *Nationalismi ja vallankumous venäläis-suomalaisissa suhteissa 1899-1914* (Helsinki: Suomen historiallinen seura, 1979); Pekka Hamalainen, *Luokka ja kieli vallankumouksen Suomessa* (Helsinki: Suomen historiallinen seura, 1978); Kimmo Katajala, *Suomalainen kapina: talonpoikaislevottomuudet ja poliittisen kulttuurin muutos Ruotsin ajalla* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura, 2002); Rafael Koskimies, *Runebergin Suomi: esseitä kansallisherätyksen vaiheilta* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura, 1977); Sirkka Paikkala, *Se tavallinen Virtanen: suomalaisen sukunimikäytännön modernisoituminen 1850-luvulta vuoteen 1921* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura, 2004); Juha Siltala, *Valkoisen äidin pojat: siveellisyys ja sen varjot kansallisessa projektissa* (Helsinki: Otava, 1999); Tuomas Tepora, *Sinun puolestas elää ja kuolla: Suomen liput, nmationalismi ja veriuhri 1917-1945* (Helsinki: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 2011); Sirkka Ahonen and Jukka Rantala, *Nordic Lights: Education for Nation and Civic Society in the Nordic Countries, 1850-2000* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2001).

[7]Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 29.

[8]Roberta Selleck, "The Language Issue in Finnish Political Discussion: 1809-1863" (Ph.D. dissertation, Radcliffe College, 1961), 168.

1892. Ironically, Russia's plan to separate Finns from Sweden helped the burgeoning nationalist atmosphere that came into conflict with the Russification process.

The national culture created within the Fennoman movement reflected the gentry's ideas of Finnish peasant culture, and was extremely romanticized. One of the key goals of the Fennoman movement was to connect Finland with an ancient past. To this end, Elias Lönnrot compiled oral folk tales from Karelia into the Finnish national epic, *The Kalevala: Old Karelian Poems about Ancient Times of the Finnish People*. The Kalevala has since been perhaps the most studied piece of Finnish culture both within and outside of Finland, and has lent its name and themes to countless dramas, operas, pieces of music, books, works art, organizations, and companies. The Kalevala provided Finland with her own ancient myths and legends connected to the Finnish-speaking peasantry. To fund his research, as well as produce more national literature, Lönnrot and others founded the Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura (Finnish Literature Society), whose first publication was the Kalevala. The collection and publication of the Kalevala has been cited by many as the beginning of the nationalist movement in Finland.[9]

Beginning in the 1840s the Swedish elite in Finland opened schools to teach Finnish lessons that would instill patriotism and nationalism within the Finnish peasantry. According to Alapuro, these schools and other nationalist activities only reached the landowning, wealthier Finns, who composed around twenty-five percent of the population.[10] In the same study, he notes that around five percent of the population was composed of the aristocracy and elite, meaning seventy percent was not actively part of the nationalist awakening. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Fennoman movement was at its peak; however, as Jussila Osmo in his study

[9]Urpo Vento, "The Role of the Kalevala in Finnish Culture and Politics," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 1, no. 2 (1992): 91.

[10]Alapuro, 38.

of nationalism in Finland has noted, the Swedish elite's goal of aligning the Finnish peasantry with the Finnish nationalist ideal instead of international socialism was not entirely successful. By the early 1900s the working classes was already been split between those favoring an anti-Russian, nationalist agenda, and those coming from the perspective of class struggle aligned with the international workers' movement.[11] It is because of this divide that the Finnish Civil War was, in part, a war over the creation of a Finnish nation-state.

Finnish Independence and the Finnish Civil War

The period surrounding Finnish independence and the subsequent civil war coincided with the Russian Revolution, and the two events were intimately linked, causing a period of great confusion. The actions of Finnish Diet member Oskari Tokoi during this period shed light on the confusing nature of Finland in 1918, and the divide that followed. Tokoi's life straddled the Atlantic world and therefore also illuminates how the Finnish Civil War affected Finns on both sides of the ocean. Born in 1873 to a Finnish-speaking landowning family, he had the benefit of a basic education. His father and uncle had both emigrated to the United States and returned to Finland with the money they had made abroad. After his father's death, Tokoi's uncle took over the family farm and, after a few years working for his uncle, Tokoi decided to follow in his father's footsteps and emigrate to America.

In the United States he started by working in the mines of Wyoming's Black Hills, while getting involved in the temperance movement as well as the Finnish-American labor movement as a member of the Western Federation of Miners. His autobiography continually refers to the

[11]Jussila Osmo, "Nationalism and Revolution," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 2, no. 3 (1977): 295.

importance of the temperance movement and the union in enabling him to survive in the United States. For example, he noted that, as a union member, he received fourteen dollars while unemployed, which enabled him to move further west to find mines that had work, whereas many of his "fellow countrymen spent their bonus on the plague that is alcohol," finding themselves stuck in an area with no work after "sobering up when their money was spent."[12] Tokoi's time in America led him to have an aversion to the more radical labor movement, and not only because of its distance from the temperance movement. In the summer of 1896 he was part of a union strike that dragged on with no end in sight. He noted with disgust that the union was unsympathetic to some of the strikebreakers who had families and therefore had to cross the picket line for their survival. The union leaders placed an order for rifles and ammunition in order to stop the "scabs" and convince the owners to meet their demands. He likens this moment to the "kind of desperation with the inclination to use force that was a factor leading to the formation of the IWW," the radical Industrial Workers of the World, which he claims "recognized sabotage and violence as a part of organized union activity."[13] Following the events of the Leadville Strike he disavowed any labor activity that encouraged sabotage and violence and left the area. This same division in the labor movement in Finland would lead to complications for Tokoi later in his life.

In 1900 Tokoi returned to Finland. During his time in America he had become more aligned with the temperance movement and the more conservative labor movement associated with the American Federation of Labor. His observations of Finland upon his return describe a country where the laboring masses had no inclination of the burgeoning nationalist movement. He notes that "the people were still leading lonely and isolated lives, not interested in or aware of anything that took place outside their own province…their own country of Finland as a whole was

[12]Oskari Tokoi, *Maanpakolaisen muistelmia* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1947), 49-50.
[13]Ibid, 66-67.

foreign…and that a distant Czar was the head of the state and existed by the will of God."[14] To the lived experience of the villagers, there was no such entity as a "Finland" with a government; it was only a distant concept in the same way that they knew a distant czar existed. In other words, outside of the small elite class, the majority of Finns had not been nationalized by the Fennoman movement. Tokoi makes this point more explicitly when he talks about a petition to the Czar opposing Russification that elites circulated. Commenting on attempts to get villagers and peasants to sign the petition, Tokoi says, "They did not have an easy time of it," because the peasants believed "the whole affair had started because the upper classes were in distress as the Czar merely wanted to strip them of excess power and use it himself." He notes that the "upper classes had been robbing the people and now when they were afraid of losing their power they were turning to the very people they had robbed, begging them to sign this petition…they would not sign that paper as 'when you go berry-picking with the masters, you lose your berries and the berry-pail too.'"[15] The world that Tokoi returned to was not the united, hegemonic Finnish society that elites believed they had created, but a society deeply divided by class.

Slowly, according to Tokoi's telling, he became increasingly involved in political affairs more by chance than ambition. By the time of the Great Strike in 1905, Tokoi notes that the Russification campaign had begun to bring the people in villages to action. This resistance, however, was split between those who favored passive resistance to Russification, and the "Old Finns" who supported appeasement and believed that more radical resistance would lead to harsher punishment. Once a call for a strike came, Tokoi says that the villagers, not understanding what a

[14]Ibid, 90.
[15]Ibid, 94-95

strike meant, "surrounded me. I, who had been to America, must know what this meant."[16] This was the moment in Tokoi's life when he really became involved in politics.

When the strike ended in victory for Finland, the Czar promised that a new parliament would be elected by universal suffrage. In Tokoi's own village of Kannus, a meeting was held with all the villagers in attendance to explain what the victory meant for them. At the gathering a group representing the conservative "pro-Finnish" side of the argument presented its case and urged the establishment of a Finnish nationalist organization in Kannus. Tokoi, on the side of the workers, argued for the formation of a workers' association. The workers won the vote, and Tokoi was elected as chairman of the Kannus workers' society. Simultaneously, workers' societies sprang up all across Finland in opposition to the landed gentry and elites, who saw them as a "constant reminder that times had changed."[17] The problem that elites faced as 1918 drew near was that the Finnish nation they had tried to create had begun organizing itself into labor societies, instead of the desired patriotic, folk education Finnish societies. By 1906 the country was divided between the Social Democratic Party formed out of the workers' societies and the conservative nationalist Old Finns and Young Finnish party.

In the events leading up to the first election by universal suffrage, it was widely believed that the Social Democrats would not gain any significant seats in the new parliament. As Tokoi points out, most areas of Finland had no significant concentrations of industrial workers or tenant farmers who would be likely to favor the Social Democrats.[18] Tokoi was chosen as the Social Democratic candidate for Ostrobothnia, and he began a speaking tour concentrating on how the current system favored the Swedish aristocracy and landed gentry while taking the money from

[16]Ibid, 106
[17]Ibid, 107
[18]Ibid, 110

the poor. In the end, the Social Democrats in Ostrobothnia got one seat and Tokoi was elected to Parliament. In total, the Social Democrats, to everyone's surprise, received eighty seats out of two hundred, making them the largest single party in the government. This would normally have allowed them to elect one of their own as Speaker. It is in this moment that early signs of a split within the labor movement, which would have a large impact after the civil war, can be seen. Some believed they should exercise their right and elect one of their own party as speaker, while the other faction claimed that participating in a bourgeois system of government through ministerial positions supported the very system socialism was attempting to overthrow.

The Social Democrats came to a compromise and agreed not to put forward one of their own candidates, but to support a bourgeois candidate from the Young Finnish Party which, although a Finnish nationalist party, did not advocate illegal means against Russia but wanted to work within constitutional powers to achieve its goals. Per Svinhufvud was therefore elected Speaker. Tokoi notes that the atmosphere after the first election was one of hope for the future, which was crushed by reactionary governors-general sent from Russia who dissolved the Finnish Parliament in 1908 immediately after convening, because Svinhufvud made negative comments about Russia and the Czar.[19] Much to Russia's annoyance, in subsequent elections the same individuals were elected to Parliament, with the exception that with "each election the number of Social Democrats always grew slightly higher."[20] Also growing in each election was the Agrarian Party, in opposition to the Social Democrats. The older parties that existed more flexibly between the Far Left and the Far Right meanwhile gradually began to disappear.

By the opening of the Finnish Parliament in 1913, the Social Democrats had grown tired of not being able to put through any legislation, as Svinhufvud opened every session with a critique

[19]Ibid, 115
[20]Ibid

of Russia and the Czar, resulting in parliament's dissolution again in 1909 (twice), 1910, and 1913. It was decided that, for the first time, the Social Democrats would put forward one of their own candidates for the position of Speaker. Tokoi was chosen and was elected as Speaker of the Parliament. Over the next few years, as the chairman of the Finnish Federation of Labor, Tokoi travelled around Europe participating in international labor conferences. At one point he met Lenin who, according to Tokoi, told him that after the revolution in Russia, "all nations under Russian subjection would be given complete and unconditional independence, with the freedom to decide for themselves if and how they wanted to be in league with the new Russia."[21] While some on the Left in Finnish politics had slowly begun discussing the idea of independence, it had as of yet not been a part of the Social Democrats' program. Once World War I began, the Finnish Parliament did not meet, which favored the bourgeoisie as it stopped all discussion of reform and legislation favoring the laboring class.

Throughout the war, the Social Democrats demanded that Parliament be called into session, but in 1916 its term expired and the law stipulated that a new election be held. According to Tokoi, the workers were pleased to hold an election, whereas the bourgeoisie believed it was pointless as the parliament would not be called into session anyway, and with the German victory that was soon to come, the entire situation of Finland would be changed to their benefit. The majority of the bourgeoisie, therefore, did not vote in the election, while the laborers "ran to the polling stations," resulting in the Social Democrats taking 103 seats.[22]

In March of 1917, the Czar was overthrown and power lay in the hands of the new Russian Provisional Government. When news of the revolution was heard in Finland, Tokoi immediately left for St. Petersburg as the representative of the Social Democrats and the Finnish Parliament.

[21]Ibid, 128.
[22]Ibid, 132.

After a meeting with the new premier, Prince Lvov, and other ministers of the new government, Tokoi claimed they told him that with the end of the Czar in Russia, his representatives were also finished in Finland and that Finland should call together its Parliament and create its own government.[23] It was at this point that the seeds of civil war were planted. Many in Finland felt that with the revolution in Russia, Finland had automatically become an independent nation and had the sole authority to summon the Finish Parliament. Others, including the Social Democrats, believed that relations with Russia should not be severed until the new Russian government could take part in negotiations with Finland in regards to their future relationship.

Tokoi and representatives of all the parties in Finland returned to St. Petersburg but found everything in chaos. At this point, according to Tokoi, Lvov took back his previous statement and declared that while Finland should look to its own affairs for the time being, he believed that the powers of the Czar had been transferred to the Provisional Government, which would appoint a new governor-general for Finland who would open the Finnish Parliament. As to the internal affairs of Finland, Lvov told the group that Finns should take matters into their own hands.[24] After returning to Helsinki, Tokoi and the Social Democrats, who held the majority from the 1916 election, decided to form a cabinet, a step they had previously skipped as many members, again, believed that socialists should not participate in a bourgeois form of government. On March 27, 1917, Tokoi and his cabinet began to operate.

One of the first orders of business was to maintain law and order in the revolutionary atmosphere created by the collapse of Russian imperial authority. Tokoi notes that during the revolution, policing fell into the hands of militias formed by workers and the labor societies. The bourgeois wanted the former police system to be restored and, without the permission of

[23]Ibid, 135
[24]Ibid, 137.

parliament, issued an order for its restoration. This meant that within Finland each area had a militia formed by the workers and a militia formed by the bourgeoisie. As the workers' militias refused to give up the power they had gained, the bourgeoisie began to train and arm groups with weapons procured from Germany. In response, the workers formed themselves into the Red Guard and opposed the newly formed bourgeois civil guard, or White Guard. Tokoi condemned both groups and claimed that neither had the support, or were under the control, of his government.[25]

In his discussion of what he believed to be the radicalization of the Social Democrats in Finland, Tokoi claims that the labor movement radically departed from its goals after thousands of workers who had been employed by Russia on building projects became unemployed and "poured into the labor societies and the Social Democratic Party."[26] These workers insisted that the Social Democrats not participate in a bourgeois government and began attacking the government and cabinet, itself composed of Social Democrats. This led to the beginning of the disintegration of the Finnish labor movement, while the bourgeoisie became more united in their cause. At the same time, the Russian government now under Kerensky, as well as the Allied powers, said that Russia would remain intact as under the Czar and the Russian government had the final authority over Finland.

In June, Tokoi made a speech in the Finnish Parliament that argued for independence, but also for maintaining a relationship with Russia, as it was the work of Russians and the workers' revolution that made it possible for Finnish independence to even be considered. The cabinet, therefore, proposed that Finland regulate itself entirely, while maintaining that Russia still had final authority through the appointed governor-general. This was rejected by the larger Parliament, which endowed parliament with full authority in everything except for foreign affairs through

[25]Ibid, 142.
[26]Ibid, 144.

passage of the Enabling Act. Kerensky dissolved the Finnish Parliament in retaliation and ordered new elections. According to the Enabling Act, however, the Finnish cabinet had to sign any manifestos from Russia in order to make them valid, whereas Kerensky believed his manifesto trumped any parliamentary action. The cabinet, led by Tokoi and maintained through a coalition, opposed the manifesto and its call for new elections. The governor-general appointed by Russia vetoed their decision. The bourgeoisie, meanwhile, welcomed new elections and the dissolving of the Social Democratic majority. This meant that the elites believed that new legal elections would be held, while the Social Democrats believed the dissolution of parliament was illegal and therefore they still held the majority.

New elections were held and a new Parliament formed, with the Social Democrats losing a number of seats. At the same time, the October Revolution took place in Russia, wherein the Bolsheviks overthrew Kerensky and placed Lenin in power. In Finland the same question came up again: who had supreme authority in Finland? Tokoi notes that the Finnish bourgeoisie had accepted Kerensky's Provisional Government and its power to dissolve the parliament and call for new elections; however, they were not going to accept a Bolshevik government as the supreme authority.[27] The Finnish Federation of Labor and the Social Democratic Party demanded that the Enabling Act be put into force and the former Social Democratic cabinet be put back into place, arguing that the dissolution of parliament had been illegal. This was rejected by the majority in the new parliament, and the Finnish Federation of Labor called for a general strike in response.

The strike ended with a promise that the Social Democrats would be allowed to put forward names to be part of a coalition government. What resulted was a conservative cabinet with Svinhufvud as its Premier. Svinhufvud's cabinet then declared independence from Russia on

[27]Ibid, 151

December 6, and immediately put its hopes in the hands of the Germans for recognition of an independent Finland. To the bourgeoisie, any recognition by the Bolsheviks meant recognizing the power of the Russian government under Lenin. This did not deter Tokoi and the Social Democrats, who went to St. Petersburg (now Petrograd) to ask Lenin for formal recognition. Lenin said he would recognize Finnish independence if Svinhufvud came officially to ask. Both governments, Lenin's and Svinhufvud's, wanted the other to officially recognize their autonomy and power in order to secure their new regimes. Svindhufvud conceded and went to Petrograd, and on January 3, 1917 Russia recognized Finland's independence. While this should have brought the workers and the bourgeoisie in Finland together, the former strike committee reformed as a Revolutionary Committee in opposition to Svindhufvud's bourgeois government and began preparation for war.

On January 28, 1918, Tokoi received a memo claiming the workers' revolution had begun and the workers had arrested the members of Svindhufvud's cabinet and taken control of Finland. According to Tokoi, the memo, due to confusion, had been released before the arrest of the cabinet could take place and its members had now escaped to the north in Vassa. Tokoi, though claiming to have nothing to do with these events, was made Minister of Food in the new revolutionary government headed by Kullervo Manner.[28] What followed was five months of a bloody civil war which ended, with the help of German troops, in a White victory. At the end of May the revolutionary government, including Tokoi, abandoned Finland and fled to Russia. Once in Moscow, they sought aid from foreign powers to retake Finland. But some of those who fled, including Tokoi, believed that retaking Finland was a lost cause and redirected their efforts to helping the Finnish refugees in Russia, while finding and creating a new place to live within the Soviet Union.

[28]Ibid, 159.

In what Tokoi represents as an unavoidable series of events, he and other Finns in the Soviet Union were forced to join the British-controlled Murmansk Legion and Britain's attempt to help anti-Bolshevik forces retake control of Russia. By the end of 1920, Tokoi was seen as an enemy to the Finnish revolutionary government in exile for his participation in the Murmansk Legion. The Finnish revolutionary government in Moscow declared him a traitor and called for his execution, while the White government in Finland declared him a traitor for being a leader of the Social Democrats whom they blamed for the "rebellion," as well as for participating in the Murmansk Legion that had fought Finnish nationalist forces that were attempting to seize British-controlled areas of Russia along the Finnish-Soviet border. He was unable to return to Finland, as he would be executed, and he could not stay in the Soviet Union, where he was now seen as a traitor.

Under the protection of the British, he and others in the Murmansk Legion went to England and from there were allowed to go to Canada on British passports. Eventually he returned to America where he became editor of *Raivaaja,* a moderate Finnish-American workers' paper. His experience with the Finnish revolution and his time in Soviet Russia resulted in a hatred for Communists and the radical labor movement. In the 1940s the Finnish Parliament pardoned him of all previous charges and he was allowed to visit Finland once again.

The life of Oskari Tokoi touches each part of this dissertation. As a migrant to North America before the Finnish Civil War, he had been introduced to the labor movement. Upon returning to Finland he participated in the workers' movement and the ensuing Finnish Civil War. His participation and beliefs about the revolution mirrored the confusion surrounding these events, as well as the disintegration of the workers' movement in Finland that followed. When he returned to America he came into contact with the radical Finnish-American labor movement, which

viewed him as an enemy. In his later years, he became an ardent Finnish patriot abroad, and as editor of *Raivaaja* he contributed to the break in Finnish-American communities.

Organization

In this dissertation I examine the relationship between Finnish migrants in the United States and the Finnish Civil War, as well as the broader theme of how national identities are formed and maintained among emigrants. Using the case of Finnish migrants, I argue that previous studies of Finnish migration have wrongly started with the assumption that migrants from Finland left their homeland with a strong Finnish national identity. Instead I argue that an examination of Finnish-American newspapers illustrates that, similar to Finns within Finland, the migrants in the United States were divided between the international workers' movement and loyalty to the Finnish-nation state. I argue that many migrants left Finland with no concept of a "Finnishness" and, after coming into contact with America, joined the international workers' movement with fervor. Simultaneously, conservative Finns worked towards the nationalization of their fellow countrymen and expressed loyalty and patriotism for the burgeoning Finnish nation-state. Following the Finnish Civil War in 1918, the divide was unbridgeable and Finnish-American workers used their freedom in the United States to actively take revenge on the Finnish bourgeoisie whom they believed had murdered their fellow workers in a class war. As the Finnish-American left continued to align itself with the international workers' movement, the Finnish-American right, in a transatlantic partnership with Finland, actively sought to advance the nationalization project using the symbols of victorious White Finland. Finland, in return, sought to include Finns abroad within

the larger transnational Finnish community where loyalty was expressed through maintaining "Finnishness" abroad.

At the heart of this dissertation is the use of Finnish-American newspapers, which illuminate the divide between these divergent communities. While these newspapers have been the subject of previous studies, their content has very rarely been examined in depth. Putting the newspapers' content at the center illustrates how the deep divide between Finnish-Americans occurred and reflected the situation in Finland. The Finnish Civil War, while seemingly a national event, had a strong effect on Finnish-American radicals, who used the freedom of their press as their weapon of choice in fighting alongside their Finnish comrades.

Conservative Finnish-Americans likewise utilized the press in order to teach Finns in America how to be Finnish. They accomplished this by running articles on the key symbols of "Finnishness," as well as articles that highlighted their membership in a transnational Finnish community. This was supported and maintained by the government in Finland, which viewed its migrants abroad as tools to help strengthen the new Finnish nation-state. This highlights the transnational nature of nationalism.

Chapter 1 is an overview of the Finnish-American labor press and how it developed in the United States. It begins with the ways in which ideas of freedom in America were ingrained in Finns before they left Finland, and how that notion of freedom changed when they came into contact with America. The chapter continues to highlight the split that occurred in the Finnish-American labor movement and how freedom of the press became the weapon of choice for the battling ideologies amongst the Finnish-American working class. The divide in the press reflected the ways in which newspapers maintained their readership by tailoring the news to fit their audience's expectations and worldview. The larger implication of these developments in the

Finnish-American press, as well as the press in Finland (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3), was that as the sole source of news for many readers, the papers helped shape readers' perspective of events. An individual that read the radical *Industrialisti*, for example, never would have read the conservative *Amerikan Suometar*, thus making discussion and compromise between different ideologies impossible.

Chapter 2 examines how Finnish-Americans from both sides reacted to the events of Finnish independence and the Finnish Civil War. Focusing on the more conservative Finnish-American news outlets, what emerges is a battle between Finnish communities for recognition of their respective sides in the Finnish Civil War. Conservatives attempted to convince the American public of the White government's right to rule Finland, while defending its relationship with Germany. Left-wing Finnish-Americans, on the other hand, sought to defend the Finnish revolutionary government and its socialist character, as well as its alignment with the Soviet Union. By the end of the Finnish Civil War, the Finnish-American community was completely and forever divided.

Chapter 3 examines how Finnish-American workers reacted to the events following the Finnish Civil War. While the revolutionary government was exiled and split in the Soviet Union, Finnish-American workers sought to get revenge on Finns they perceived as guilty of "butchery" of the Finnish working class. The Finnish-American labor press spurred distrust and anger within the Finnish-American left, and became the tool the workers used to enact their revenge. From this perspective the Finnish Civil War, ideologically, was fought in the United States as well, highlighting the ways in which seemingly national events occur transnationally.

Chapter 4 covers the work and actions of the Finnish press and government following the civil war, and their connections with Finnish-American communities. What emerges from

Finland's press is that on both sides of the Atlantic, conservative Finns actively worked to create an image of "Greater Finland," membership in which entailed actively pursuing and maintaining a Finnish identity or ideal Finnishness. At the heart of this transatlantic relationship was the use of White Finland's nationalist symbols and heroes of the war for independence, and a rejection of the workers movement and those involved. Benedict Anderson stressed that nation-states, apart from being imaginary communities, are inherently limited, meaning that they cannot encompass everyone.[29] Red Finland and the international workers' movement became the "anti-Finland," while White Finland and its own narrative of events became the accepted reality.

[29]Anderson, 40-41.

Chapter 1

Finnish-Americans and the Press

1.1 Ideas of Freedom and America in the Finnish Press

In the eyes of Finns in the 1850s, the United States was a country with social conditions that seemed to be exemplary compared to those of their own country. The American education system was considered to be more favorable toward the working class, and the economy, comparatively, seemed to be in order. When pondering why the United States seemed to be so much more attractive to Finns than other destinations, Finnish newspapers concluded that the country "enjoyed all the blessings of freedom."[30] Already in the 1850s, Finnish media routinely referred to the United States as a "promised land of freedom."[31] Interestingly, the existence of slavery did not diminish the United States as the land of freedom in the minds of Finnish immigrants, and newspapers in Finland could refer to America simultaneously as the "land of greatest freedom" and "the land of slavery" in the same issue.[32]

The American Civil War also did not diminish the United States' status as the home of the free. Throughout the 1860s Finnish journalists continued to describe the United States by referencing to how free individuals were in it. The *Suometar*, for example, commented on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln by stating, "Above all Lincoln was the most prolific supporter of freedom of ideas and defended his country as the land of freedom and equality."[33] The United States had its most vocal supporter in the 1860s in J.W. Lillja, a journalist from the *Åbo Underrättelser* who wrote:

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[30]*Wiborg*, October 31, 1856, November 4, 1856, September 9, 1857.
[31]*Wiborg*, July 31, 1857.
[32]*Mehiläinen*, October 1860.
[33]*Suometar*, April 28, 1865.

> Why does our heart beat faster when we hear the name of the United States mentioned? How has this federation been able to evolve from a subordinate colony to the first nation in less than two generations? What has caused hundreds of thousands of people from Europe and Asia to go there? The answer to all these questions is one thing: Because one can exist and sacrifice without hindrance to the true altar of freedom. This miracle of freedom has been denied in Europe and never known in Asia. Freedom in America has even given it the power to banish its blackest mark, the slavery of the negro.[34]

In praising the freedom of American society, newspapers never precisely defined what American freedom was. The contexts in which the term "American freedom" was used show only that it was something positive that was lacking in Finnish society. While not everyone in Finland subscribed to newspapers in the mid-nineteenth century, it would be unreasonable to assume that the connection between the United States and the idea of freedom only existed in newspaper editorials. It is more likely that this connection was already widespread. The identification of the United States with an unidentified "freedom" was supported by letters arriving from Finnish immigrants in the United States. Many of these letters were reprinted in newspapers across Finland; for example a letter in the *Österbotten* in 1867 from a Finnish migrant in Michigan recounted:

> At home we often talk about the free American country, and here is truly a free country. Here no man has to pay a lifetime of work in order to be happy they were born into this world nor are they dependent on priests or travel papers allowing people to freely travel here more than they can at home. There is no difference in value between people here as everyone is equally free. You can walk into any office or place of business and greet any Yank without deference or lifting your cap or hat. You can simply walk in, sit down and use the short Yank greeting: How are you?[35]

Letters in the late 1860s and 1870s talked about American freedom as if it were a notion obvious to the reader, meaning that this connection between the United States and freedom was already widespread. A paper from Oulu published a letter from a Finnish immigrant living in Minnesota that connected the freedom of American society with democracy: "This new world is the noblest place in the world and has given birth to what the nobility hate. This child of happiness is the

[34] *Åbo Underrättelser*, August 2, 1866.
[35] *Österbotten*, November 16, 1867.

United States of America, born of common folk, and born a nation that is controlled by its people. Words cannot describe the fruits gained from such happy freedom…you must live in the arms of freedom for yourself."[36]

In the 1870s the *Oulun Wikko-Sanomat* and the *Keski-Suomessa* featured semi-regular articles written by an immigrant from Finland named Alexander Leinonen. In the early 1870s he was living in Texas, and he had a very positive image of American society. In one article he sent to the *Oulun Wikko-Sanomat*, he declared that from "America freedom and equality will spread across the entire globe."[37] To honor the centenary of American independence, Leinonen wrote a poem published in the *Oulun Wiikko-Sanomat* that was filled with his admiration of America and its freedom and democracy:

> A hundred years ago a strange sound was heard,
> Across the seas to the far west a legend arose,
> Believed to be the roar from refugee settlers.
> It brought hope to the slaves,
> Proclaimed dignity and freedom to all,
> Rolling like thunder over the land
> Causing princes of countries to tremble.[38]

When looking at the writing of Finnish journalists and the letters by Finns living in "free America," one can see that the vague concept was defined in reference to what was missing from Finnish society. Leinonen, for example, wrote of the American school system:

> Equality, which is widespread in this country, also exists within the schoolrooms. A typical schoolroom as a teacher humbly advising their students, but outside of this there is no distinction made. How teachers in Finland would be horrified to see a student sitting with their hat on, their feet on the table and not standing to attention as they entered the room whereas here in America the teacher sees nothing reprehensible in this…here in America, it has occurred to me, all men are equal brothers and the people themselves are their only rulers.[39]

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[36]*Oulun Wiikko Sanomat*, February 24, 1870.
[37]*Oulun Wikko-Sanomat*, August 31, 1872.
[38]*Oulun Wikko-Sanomat*, July 15, 1876.
[39]*Oulun Wiikko-Sanomat*, August 24, 1872.

The number of Finnish immigrants in the 1870s was not yet large. Overall, only around 3,000 people left Finland for America during that decade. Despite the low level of migration, the Finnish government and some newspapers viewed migration to America as a great danger to Finnish society. Finland was a sparsely populated area and the government realized that if people began moving to America the wilderness of Finland would never be inhabited. With this in mind the government and some newspapers began to engage in anti-emigration propaganda. The United States was described as an anti-immigrant country, and Finnish propaganda sought to show that becoming rich in the United States was not as easy as the letters from America said. Using the same terminology of freedom and equality, some in Finland began to use these terms in a way that would make immigrants no longer want to go to a "country of freedom." An editorial in the *Oulun Vikko-Sanomat* questioned the dreams that immigrants had of America:

> Where is the poor stranger who is a traitor to his country, who has abandoned his father's country and nationality? He is in America deep in toil in the mines. Where is the family of that miserable traitor? They are in a little shack…Where the hell is the immigrant that benefited so much from the great and free American capitalism? It is only the rich that live out their days in glorious abundance while that miserable poor immigrant spends his miserable days in a cheap and wanting shack…So I ask how is this miserable man equal in the land of equality with his rich neighbor? Believe me, he is equal and free to be as miserable as the dog sitting alongside his fat owner.[40]

In the late nineteenth century the term "Free America" was used every time newspapers mentioned the United States. Most of the time the news even bore the title "Free America."[41] As time went on, these news pieces often contained something negative or satirical; however, it is evident that those emigrating in the late nineteenth century did not only rely on newspapers to inform their views. Letters sent by relatives and acquaintances from America were considered much more reliable than newspaper reports and government propaganda. In general, emigrants'

[40]*Oulun Wiikko-Sanomat*, October 25, 1879.
[41]For example, *Vestra Nyland*, September 19, 1890, *Wasa Tidning*, December 6, 1892.

letters primarily contained information about the health of the sender, the weather, and workplaces. When the sender included information about American society, it was usually limited to commenting on the belief that America really was a free country; however, what the sender meant by free was always vague.

Among the Finnish immigrants looking for a promised land, there were certainly those who were disappointed in the United States and its social conditions even in the 1860s; however, harsh criticism of the United States and its conditions for workers did not begin to appear on a regular basis until the early twentieth century, when the socialist movement began to gain a foothold among American Finns. With some Finnish labor leaders leaving Finland because of Russian oppression of the social democrats, their choice of the United States shows that American society was expected to be at least more tolerable than Russian-controlled Finland. American society, however, did not live up to expectations of these first moderate socialists, who began voicing criticism. Even then, however, the numerous labor newspapers established by Finns in America commented that they were only able to voice objections because of the freedom of the press and circulation of ideas allowed by American freedom. In this regard America was still the "land of the free" which allowed Finnish migrants to freely criticize American society.

When America did not fulfill immigrants' get-rich-quick dreams, Finnish-American leftists began to use the term "free America" to attack the social conditions in their new homeland. A good example of the new use of this term can be found in the Finnish-American author Tolle Kaivola's short story about migrants arriving in New York City while being questioned by immigration officers:

> -"And you?" The man was asked. "Why have you come to this country?"
> -"I have come to enjoy the freedom of a free country," he replied.
> -The officers winked at each other as they cast pathetic glances at this yearning for freedom. He was ordered to move on. The next man was asked, "Why did you leave Finland?"

-He answered, “I had to get away from my country. I am persecuted in my country for my opinions.”
-“Oh, Anarchist!” the officer shouted.
-The man replied, “I am not an anarchist but…”
-“Back, back, America is a free country! Your opinion is not needed here” replied the officer as he ordered the captain of the ship to take the man back to his homeland.[42]

The Finnish-American socialist movement can be said to have originated not only in Finland, but also in disillusionment with the belief that America held everything positive that was lacking in Finland. However, the concept of America as a “free country” was too enthralling to be discarded, and so it was used instead as a weapon to further the workers’ movement in America through the development of labor newspapers and periodicals that were freely established while simultaneously outlawed in Finland. The idea of America as a bountiful land of freedom continued in the minds of hopeful emigrants in Finland, so throughout the early twentieth century waves of Finnish migrants continued to arrive with ideas of social democracy from Finland, which they combined with their hopes and dreams in the promised land. Upon arriving and finding the land of freedom not all that it was said to be, they used the relative freedom in America to form associations and labor newspapers to criticize the social conditions of their new homeland.

1.2 Establishment of the Finnish-American Labor Press

The rise and the development of the Finnish-language press in North America has been extensively studied on both sides of the Atlantic. Conservative and non-labor papers were the topic of earlier scholarship, but beginning with the pioneering work of Auvo Kostiainen and his contribution to Dirk Hoerder’s edited collection *The Immigrant Labor Press in North America*, the

[42] *Vappu*, January 1908.

Finnish labor press began receiving extensive attention.[43] Early studies on the Finnish-language press centered around the idea of the acculturation of Finns in the United States, and used the newspapers to track this development over time. Hoerder points to the fact that many scholars have viewed the immigrant press only through the lens of acculturation, focusing on whether or not it furthered the speed of "assimilation/acculturation or retarded it."[44] Hoerder argues against this framework and claims that the role of the press was "manifold and varied over the years, partly in response to the changing needs of the ethnic/migrant community."[45] In the case of the Finns, these needs changed drastically over time. Kostiainen argues that the Finnish press in America was so vast due to the fact that an estimated 98% of Finns were literate by the mid-nineteenth century and from the "old country" Finns brought with them the tradition of organizing their lives through associations. These associations in the United States immediately established their own presses in Finnish strongholds so that information could be shared in the ever-increasing area that Finns were inhabiting. The initial organizations and periodicals came from the church and the temperance movement. Kostiainen points out that the Finnish church in America was largely responsible for creating and maintain a nationalist sentiment towards the home country.[46]

After the Russification process in 1899 created a mass exodus of political refugees from Finland, the Finnish-language press in North America began to give voice to socialists who viewed the freedom of the press in America as a tool to be used to further the workers' movement. Working concurrently with Kostiainen, George Hummasti has tracked the development of Finnish-

[43]Auvo Kostianen, "Finns," in *The Immigrant Labor Press in north America, 1840s-1970s: An Annotated Bibliography, Vol. 1 Migrants from Northern Europe*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Christiane Harzig (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987), 199-259.

[44]Dirk Hoerder, "An International Mobile Working Class and Its Press in North America: A Survey," in *The Immigrant Labor Press in north America, 1840s-1970s: An Annotated Bibliography, Vol. 1 Migrants from Northern Europe*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Christiane Harzig (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1987), 31.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Auvo Kostianen, 201-203.

American labor newspapers.[47] His work illustrates Hoerder's argument that the ethnic presses in North America changed in response to the needs of the immigrant group as he tracks the initial papers that marketed themselves as supporters of the labor movement to more radical papers as labor radicalism spread through Finnish communities.

The first paper established by a leader within the labor movement was the *Amerikan Työmies*, created by Antonia Tanner, who had fled Finland in 1899 when Russian authorities began to arrest "free thinkers" and those who supported an independent Finland. The first issue came out in January 1900, but the paper ultimately failed to gain enough support to make it past twenty-four issues; however, it laid the groundwork for future efforts.[48] The first major Finnish-language labor newspaper was the *Amerikan Suomalainen Työmies*, known more generally simply as *Työmies*. Hummasti tracks its development to a failed attempt to work with an established conservative Finnish printing house in Massachusetts called Pohjan Tähti.[49] In 1903 a recent Finnish arrival, Urho Mäkinen, began printing a pro-socialist and satirical journal called the *Uusi Meikäläinen* at the press. According to Hummasti, Mäkinen was kicked out by the publisher after he printed an unflattering cartoon of Pohjan Tähti's owner.[50] Nevertheless, Finnish socialist organizations had already become more widespread by 1903, and with local support Mäkinen bought and established his own press, the American Finnish Workers Publishing Company, in the nearby town of Worcester. It was here that he began publishing *Työmies* with other prominent labor leaders who had also left Finland.

[47]George Hummasti, "The Working Man's Daily Bread: Finnish-American Working Class Newspapers 1900-1921," in *For the Common Good: Finnish Immigrants and the Radical Response to Industrial America*, ed. Michael Passi (Superior: Työmies Society, 1977), 167-195.

[48]Hummasti, 169.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

While there was a growing need for Finnish-language labor newspapers, the burgeoning *Työmies* faced some immediate threats to its survival. Earlier in 1903 a number of Finnish-American socialist groups had organized themselves into two large federations: the Imatra League, with most of its members in the Northeast, and the Finnish Workers League in the Midwest. Hummasti points out that in this early stage, Finnish-American workers were not unified under a single ideological direction; the workers within the Imatra League adhered to a "national theosophy and a kind of utopian socialism" that was in direct conflict with *Työmies* and the Finnish Workers League, which favored a Marxist approach.[51] This put *Työmies* in conflict with the organizations that were part of the Imatra League, thus limiting its base of support. Not being able to gain many subscriptions, *Työmies* decided to move to a more friendly area in Michigan, where the bulk of Finnish Workers League members lived, and by March 1911 it was financially secure enough to begin publishing as a daily instead of a weekly.[52]

Workers in the East who favored *Työmies* were not pleased with its move to Michigan. A former employee of *Työmies*, Taavi Tainio, did not believe that the paper would survive the move to Michigan so he decided to work for the *Pohjan Tähti*, hoping to slowly turn it into a more radical socialist paper. His attempts failed when, like his predecessor, he ran a story that was not favorable to the owner of the press and was immediately removed from his position.[53] Believing that the Northeast needed its own newspaper for the workers movement, Tainio and other working-class leaders established *Raivaaja* in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. While it faced the same financial difficulties as its predecessors, Tainio was able to take over 1,000 subscriptions with him from the

[51]Ibid, 171.
[52]Ibid.
[53]Ibid, 172.

Pohjan Tähti and by May of 1910 *Raivaaja* was operating as a daily in competition with both *Pohjan Tähti* and *Työmies*.[54]

Tainio was a staunch social democrat and advocated for social democratic principles in *Raivaaja*. This was challenged in 1907 by radicals who had fled Finland after the failed Sveaborg Rebellion in 1906, led by Johan Kock and Russian soldiers garrisoned on the island. According to Hummasti, Kock had a limited knowledge of socialist ideology but was able to gain supporters in the United States due to his goal of forming military training groups throughout the United States that would then return to Finland to fight for the workers' revolution.[55] Kock was, for a brief period, able to take over the leadership of *Raivaaja*, but his ideas of violence and anarchism did not sit well with the stockholders who soon replaced him with a social democrat, Frans Josef Syrjälä.[56] From this period on in *Raivaaja*'s history it would remain staunchly aligned with social democratic principles.

In 1906 a national federation of Finnish working-class organizations that had joined the Socialist Party of America formed the Suomalainen Sosialistijärjestö (Finnish Socialist Federation, or SSJ). With both *Raivaaja* and *Työmies* in circulation and possessing established readerships, the SSJ chose both papers to act as its official organs, with *Raivaaja* representing the East and *Työmies* in charge of the Midwest and West. Workers on the West Coast believed that *Työmies* was too far away to effectively serve as their socialist organ and "basic educational tool," and began advocating for their own newspaper.[57] In response, Finnish workers gathered in Astoria, Oregon and created their own publishing company and on December 7, 1907 the first issue of *Toveri* came off the presses, with Aku Rissanen, another failed rebel from the Sveaborg Rebellion,

[54]Ibid, 173.
[55]Ibid.
[56]Ibid.
[57]Ibid, 175.

hired as editor-in-chief. It then became the third official organ of the SSJ and advocated moderate Marxist socialism.[58] Hummasti argues that the role of these three papers was integral to the spread of socialist principles to Finns scattered around America, and therefore was responsible for the formation of the SSJ, as evidenced by one *Toveri* correspondent who called the newspaper his "daily bread."[59]

Hummasti defines three major crises that led to the development and divides within the Finnish labor press in the early twentieth century, the largest being the Finnish workers' response to the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The IWW was established in 1905 and adopted a radical syndicalist philosophy, with its adherence to direct action and the general strike as the most viable way of bringing the working class into control of society. The SSJ had always advocated a political approach to the labor movement, believing that through peaceful electoral action the workers would eventually win. For almost a decade the SSJ and its organs were able to exist alongside Finnish-American workers who had joined the IWW. But in 1911 a member of the IWW, Leo Lauki, was elected editor of *Työmies*, causing a "war of words" between *Työmies* and *Raivaaja* that led to the election of Severi Alanne as the editor of *Työmies* in 1913.[60]

Alanne took a hardline approach against the IWW, causing some SSJ members to leave with threats of creating their own paper. In June of 1914 they began publishing a newspaper in Duluth, Minnesota that supported the doctrine of the international workers' movement and the Socialist Party of America, while at the same time explaining the tenets of the IWW's syndicalist "industrial unionism." The SSJ believed this split would financially harm its own activities and banned party members from subscribing to the new paper or joining the IWW. This caused the

[58]Ibid.
[59]Ibid, 180
[60]Ibid, 182.

"great rift" in the Finnish-American workers' movement, as over 3,000 members left the SSJ and joined the IWW, subscribing to the union's new newspaper, momentarily named *Sosialisti*.[61] By 1916 the staff of *Sosialisti* realized that a reunion with the SSJ was never going to be possible and fully embraced industrial unionism, renouncing all political activity as a means to revolution. They then renamed their paper *Industrialisti* and by 1919 it was the largest Finnish working-class paper in America.[62]

The final major Finnish-American working-class paper, *Eteenpäin*, formed in response to the Bolshevik revolution and changing ideas about socialism among Finnish-Americans. The American Communist movement began gaining momentum in Finnish-American communities in 1919. Many began to believe that the SSJ was not radical enough and no longer represented the majority of working-class Finns. This was not only felt by many of the leaders of the SSJ, but also by the editors of *Työmies*. This led in 1920 to the SSJ breaking from the Socialist Party of America, a decision that did not go over well with Finnish-American socialists in the east and *Raivaaja*. Refusing to leave the Socialist Party, *Raivaaja* broke with the SSJ and remained a moderate socialist organ. In response the SSJ created a new organ for the East, *Eteenpäin*, with Elis Sulkanen, a former editor of *Työmies* and *Toveri*, as its editor.[63]

In less than twenty years, Finnish-Americans went from having no working-class papers to having four major dailies with a readership spread across North America. These papers were established by socialists who had fled Finland beginning in 1899, and were used as a tool for spreading the labor movement among Finnish-Americans. Beginning in the 1850s Finns had been fed the myth that America was the land of freedom where one could amass wealth and live in

[61]Ibid, 183.
[62]Ibid, 184.
[63]Ibid, 191.

luxury. The term “freedom” was never defined, but instead came to mean everything that was positive and lacking in Finland. When Finnish migrants arrived in America and found it to not be the paradise they had been promised, and they began to use the term “freedom” to now mean the ability to freely express and disseminate ideas, even ideas that criticized their new homeland. By the time of the Finnish Civil War of 1918 and its aftermath, Finnish-Americans already had a ready-made and well-developed political press that would continue the fight in the United States.

Chapter 2

The Finnish-American Press and the Finnish Civil War

Finland declared independence from Russia on December 6, 1917. On January 27, 1918 it erupted into civil war which would last through May 1918 and claim approximately 36,000 lives. This in a country with a population of around three million. At its most basic level the war was fought between the Finnish Red Guard, representing the Finnish workers movement who were at war to create a socialist utopia, and the White Guard who represented the ruling elite and middle-class who were conservative-minded and wanted to maintain the status quo in Finland. The Finnish Civil War was a crucial turning point in the history of the Finnish people. In Finnish Studies is has been researched extensively and produced countless publications. The fact that the events of 1918 affected Finnish immigrants who had chosen the United States as their new homeland, however, has received little scholarly attention. The issue is very lightly touched upon in a few previous studies, but more detailed scholarship has yet to be published.[64]

2.1 The Finnish-American Right and Finland in 1918

Long before the events of 1918, Finnish-Americans were divided roughly into two camps. The so-called bourgeois or right-wing circles were grouped mainly around the church, temperance societies, and the Knights of the Kalevala organization. When the war broke out in 1918 they recognized the White Government which they viewed as the legitimate regime of their former

[64]For example, see William Hoglund, *Finnish Immigrants in America 1880-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), 136-137 and Juhani Paasivirta, *Suomen kuva Yhdysvalloissa 1800—luvulle* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1962), 56-57.

homeland. Their activities focused mainly on obtaining economic aid to Finland in the form of food. In pursuing this first goal they centered their activities around asking the United States government to send aid to Finland, which never came to fruition. This fed into their second but equally important goal, which was to gain recognition of Finland's independence and newly formed government from the United States.[65] Before independence they had tried in vain to get the United States Census to create a different category for Finns so that they would not be marked as "Russian." This was part of the Fennoman movement that Finnish-American conservatives were a part of, and whose slogan was "Swedes we are not, Russians we cannot become, therefore Finns we must be." In the minds of conservative Finnish-Americans, it was a point of pride and their national identity that they not be considered Russians in both official and unofficial documents. Left-wing Finnish-Americans do not appear to have believed this to be an issue until the civil war, when they also began petitioning the United States to recognize the Red Government. Those on the Right had been attempting to gain some special recognition of Finland as a separate entity from Russia beginning in 1900. The conservative Swedish-speaking Finnish newspaper, *Ledstjärnan* had referred to the Swedish-speaking Finnish population as stateless people since the first Finnish parliament of 1905 and urged its readers to petition the US government for official status.

The question of recognition by the United States was directly tied to the ongoing war in Europe and the fear of disrupting a postwar balance of power. The records regarding Finland's independence created by the United States State Department survive and provide insight into officials' thought processes, as well as the confusion that the Civil War in Finland caused within international diplomacy. France was the first to recognize Finland's declaration on January 4, 1918, though it was not made public until January 10. This recognition seemed to blindside

[65] Juhani Paasivirta, *Ensimmäisen maailmansodan voittajat ja Suomi* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1961), 60-61.

American diplomats in Europe. David Francis, the Charge d'Affaires ad interim in Russia, wrote the Secretary of State on January 11 asking if France had consulted the United States before making its decision and, if so, why was he not informed. He also wanted to know how he should proceed with the matter.[66] The response to Francis was vague and claimed that while the president expressed "sympathy for democracy and self-government," the United States would not recognize Finland's independence until "the will of the Russian people has been more definitely expressed."[67] The British echoed President Wilson's sympathies, claiming that they would like to act in unison with the United States on the "Finnish question" but would prefer to wait until a government in Russia would recognize Finland's independence.[68] Lord Balfour, the Foreign Secretary, told the Finnish delegation in London that he and England approved of Finnish independence "in principle" but could not yet give formal recognition.[69] The Bolshevik government under Lenin had already recognized Finnish independence within hours of France doing so on January 4 making the "will of the people" known; however, the United States and Britain were still hoping for a White victory in Russia which would then be the voice of the Russian people..

Thornwell Haynes, the acting US Consul in Helsinki, believed that the United States should immediately recognize the new Finnish government, claiming that doing so would create much needed pro-American sympathy in Scandinavia, and that Finland would soon become a member of the Norwegian-Swedish-Danish alliance Haynes believed giving Finland recognition immediately would assure the United States a "back door" for trade with Russia after the war. He

[66] David Francis to Robert Lansing, January 11, 1918. Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[67] Robert Lansing to David Francis, January 14, 1918. Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[68] Walter Haines Page to Robert Lansing, January 23, 1918. Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[69] Ibid.

further told Lansing that no other small nation "clamoring for recognition" offered such a geographical trade advantage and that it was time to stop "clinging to a Russian corpse…in the fruitless expectation of gaining a few feet of French trenches."[70] This seemed to have sparked the interest of Lansing and the United States. The same day that he received Haynes's telegram, Lansing dispatched one to Sweden to inquire about its views on the stability of the current Finnish government as well as the future of Finland within the Norway-Sweden-Denmark League. He further requested that Sweden send a thorough report on the "historical, political, and economic considerations which would prompt a desire for recognition on the part of Finland."[71] Grant Smith, the US Ambassador in Copenhagen, wrote Lansing that Sweden could be convinced to help Finland in its current situation as it was looking to acquire the Åland Islands as well as to gain suzerainty over Finland.[72] The outbreak of civil war sent the White Guard government to seek aid in the form of weapons and foods, and although the United States replied that it could send neither, the Swedish government replied that it could not supply weapons directly but would not stop private Swedish companies from doing so.[73] The British Foreign Secretary encouraged Sweden to provide weapons, believing that if it did not do so then Finland would continue to rely on German support.[74]

The need for food and weapons in Finland was known to Finnish immigrants in the United States and most Finnish-American organizations were working to procure such aid. Once it reached American papers that war had broken out in Finland and details began to emerge, right-

[70]Thornwell Haynes to Robert Lansing, January 24, 1918. Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[71] Robert Lansing to Stockholm, February 4 1918. Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[72] Grant Smith to Robert Lansing, February 6 1918. Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[73]Ira Morris to Robert Lansing, January 31 1918. Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[74]Ibid.

wing papers began promoting efforts to raise money for the White government so it could purchase the necessary weapons. Right-wing periodicals such as the *Amerikan Suometar* and *Ledstjaren* initially framed the rising conflict in Finland as a continuation of the fight against Russia for independence, rather than as a conflict between rival Finnish governments. The confusion around this matter was reflected by diplomats at the time as well: Lord Balfour wrote that the Finnish government would likely not ask the Bolshevik government for recognition as Russian soldiers in Finland continued to commit "depredations which is inconsistent with Bolshevik recognition of Finnish independence."[75] This was almost a month after the Bolsheviks had already recognized Finland as independent.

While the left-wing Finnish-American papers focused on the actual military engagements and the success of the Red Guard, the right-wing papers focused on loyalty to the burgeoning Finnish nation-state while attempting to portray those involved in the insurrection as traitors. Dr. E.J. Carstein, writing for *Ledstjärnan*, wrote a lengthy piece titled "Runebergs' memory and the Finnish National Ideal in the United States,"[76] which was republished in other conservative Finnish-American papers across the country.[77] His piece was a poetic celebration of Johan Ludvig Runeberg, one of the main Finnish-Swedes who was part of the national awakening in the nineteenth century. Runeberg's birthday, February 5, had already become a national celebration day for the Finnish-Swedish population in Finland and had recently become one for the Finnish-Swedes in the United States as well. Carstein began with a call to the national ideal created by the national awakening at the end of the nineteenth century:

[75]David Francis to Robert Lansing February 3, 1918. Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[76]Dr. E.J. Carstein, "Runebergs-minnet och det finska nationalitestsidealet i Förenta Staterna," *Ledstjärnan,* February 1918.

[77]For example Dr. E.J. Carstein, "Runebergs-minnet och det finska nationalitestsidealet i Förenta Staterna," *Vetkusten,* February 14, 1918.

> Now, when the majority of Finnish and Swedish-Finnish associations in this country are preparing to commemorate Finland's greatest son, a time that unfortunately coincides with civil war in our dear homeland, it would not be out of place to talk about the significance of Runeberg's memory and his relation to the nationalist ideal – the pursuit of national independence and recognitions as well as national cohesion – and his ideals and aspirations for Finnish traditions in our Finnish homeland.[78]

He then wrote at length about Runeberg's youth and how from a young age he believed "there was no people like his own Finnish people" and for Runeberg "the sun shone nowhere as brightly and as gloriously as over the blue Finnish lake, the flowering Finish meadow, and the whistling Finnish forest." Carstein argued that "all he encountered in his young awakening life, talked about a Finland, which for him was the promised fairyland of dreams, the top and foremost country in the world."[79] Throughout his retelling of Runeberg's life, he imbued Runeberg with the national ideal of a Finnish patriot. This ideal combined the love of Finnish nature with the awakening of a Finnish national spirit. Carstein then began his attack on the Red Guard as an attack on the ideals of Runeberg and thus the ideals of Finland. He quoted Runeberg's poem *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* throughout his editorial. Part of the saga relates the surrender of Sveaborg Fortress during the Finnish War of 1803 wherein Finland was no longer part of the Kingdom of Sweden but was now part of the Russian Empire. To Finnish-Swedes the surrender was the biggest treason in Finnish history. Runeberg referred to this moment when he wrote the words:

> Let not his kindred share the blame,
> None else his guilt should own,
> Or blush with sympathetic shame;
> Its weight be his alone.
> The traitor, nevermore has he
> Son, father, kin, or family.

[78]Ibid.
[79]Ibid.

Carstein reprinted these words against the "night-black deeds of Finnish men, who today wear shields against their own fatherland and its legitimate government,"[80] thus equating the surrender of Sveaborg with the Red insurrection now taking place.Carstein and others in right-wing circles knew that the existence of a Finnish nation-state was dependent on the world viewing Finns and Finland as such. The victors of the Finnish Civil War would be, in part, decided on the battle fields in Finland, but would also be decided in the minds of Americans. Carstein asked what Finns should do to honor the memory of Runeberg, to which he responded:

> We should join more than before…we should, once and for all, completely cut out all the thoughts of compromise and cooperation with a government that has given us nothing but betrayal and betrayal, lies on lies, blows, violations and oppression. We should first of all send to the legal Finnish government a mass letter, emphasizing the undeniable necessity for the appointment of Finnish representation in the United States, in order that Finnish women and men may receive legal protection in this country – something that we have not always been able to do as stateless people.[81]

Here was the irony of the nation-state at the beginning of the twentieth century: without a nation-state to migrate from, it was difficult to become part of an adopted one. This was the biggest complaint of the right-wing Finnish-Americans who, due to their prosperity in the new country, wanted to have legal permanent status in the United States. They had no intention of returning to Finland, despite their Finnish nationalism. Carstein wrote for the *Ledstjärnan:*

> The memory of our great countryman, should stir and inspire us into patriotism – whole heart and soul – pro-Finlandia. By no means do I go against our new country's legitimate demands and expectations of us, but our duty, as Finnish women and Finnish men, is to make sure that our beloved Finland, which will always be our hearts first love, *through us in this country* gain and experience the promise of Czar Alexander I: to be raised to the level of nations. Only then, only with this in mind and this goal, can we be worthy of the memory of the man for whom Finland was everything.[82]

[80]Ibid.
[81]Ibid.
[82] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

Here Carstein was referring to the expectations of men joining the United States military to fight against Germany, when at that moment Finland was counting on Germany winning the war. The Germans were helping the White government fight the Red Guard, and the majority of Finnish-Swedish men had been trained in Germany. The right-wing Finnish-Americans had to fight an uphill battle throughout the Finnish Civil War to convince Americans that Finland's relationship with Germany was one only of necessity, while also claiming loyalty to their new homeland. For some this meant joining the United States military, but Carstein and other leaders in Finnish-American circles boycotted fighting in the war and he was later arrested by the United States for sentiments he expressed in this article as well as from the pulpit.

These sentiments later got Carstein into trouble with the United States. In February and March he had been traveling throughout Oregon and Washington to speak before different Finnish-American groups. In Finland he had been an attorney but in the United States he used the pulpit to teach Finnish-Americans about their homeland. On March 26 the mayor of Hoquiam, Washington banned all speeches in foreign languages. Hoquiam was next to the neighboring city of Aberdeen. Both towns had large numbers of Finnish immigrants and, at the time, were split between Red and White supporters, with the White Finns based mainly in Hoquiam and the Red Finns based in Aberdeen. The mayor's decision was the result of a speech Carstein had made the week before in Hoquiam wherein he made "seditious utterances [that] violated the espionage act by plotting to interfere with the selective draft."[83] Carstein had been arrested and was being held under the Espionage Act in Tacoma awaiting trial. It was claimed that he urged draft evasion among Finnish-Americans. Part of the evidence used against him were sermons he made throughout Oregon and Washington, and the editorial he had written for the *Ledstjärnan*. In April he was freed, the

[83]*Morning Oregonian* March 26, 1918.

Oregonian reporting that the federal grand jury could not find sufficient evidence for a case against him.[84]

For the right, the most difficult problem was getting the American public to understand and accept the relationship between Germany and Finland. Towards this end the right-wing Finnish-Americans created the Finland Constitutional League of America with its own periodical, the *Finland Sentinel*.[85] The Lincoln Loyalty League also served the same purpose, with the added task of showing loyalty to the new Fatherland, the United States. In practice, both organizations urged their members to voluntarily go to war within the ranks of the US Army.[86] In this they were also trying to eliminate the American impression that all Finnish-Americans were communists and enemies of American society.[87] After the Russian Revolution, the fear of "reds" in America turned the attention of Americans to Finnish migrants, among whom socialist ideals already had considerable support before the First World War. Many Finns also participated in the trade union movement, including radical unions like the Industrial Workers of the World.[88]

Conflict between Finnish-American conservatives and Finnish-American leftists preceded the war of 1918. Workers' organizations criticized the activities of the Finland Constitutional League and attempted to exert pressure on those who worked in America on behalf of the Finnish Whites and the White government. For example, Pastor John Wargelin mentions in his memoirs that he was threatened in the summer of 1918 because of his writings on behalf of the White government to such an extent that the police had to protect him until the threats ended.[89]

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[84] *Oregonian*, April 13, 1918.

[85] Constitution of the Finland Constitutional League of America. *The Finland Sentinel* 1, 1918, *Amerikan Suometar*, July 11, 1918, *Raivaaja*, July 19, 1918.

[86] *Amerikan Suometar*, January 9, 1919.

[87] *Päivälehti*, April 11, 1918.

[88] William Hoglund 73-75, 126-127 and Juhani Paasivirta 1962, 58.

[89] John Wargelin, *A Highway in America* (Hancock: Finnish Lutheran Book Concern, 1967), 59.

Among themselves the right-wing Finnish-American media utilized the image of Runeberg and the other leaders of the National Awakening throughout the Finnish Civil War as foils to the deeds of the Red Guard. To them, the White Guard were guardians of these ideals, while the Red Guard were traitors. They never questioned whether or not the working classes ever accepted the ideals of the National Awakening or bought into the image of the Finnish nation-state. It is of no coincidence that those on the left never used the symbols created in the nineteenth century to foster national sentiment, but instead used new heroes of the workers revolution and glorified the international working man and woman who labored for a future outside of the bourgeois' nation-state.

2.2 The Finnish-American Working Class and the Civil War in Finland

When the 1918 war broke out in Finland, the Finnish-American labor movement was split in two. At the beginning of the century, the Suomalainen Sosialistijärestö (Finnish Socialist Organization) was founded as a link between labor unions initially formed along national lines and the Socialist Party of America.[90] It was in 1914 that the first schism occurred in Finnish socialist circles. Around 3,000 Finnish-Americans resigned from the Sosialistijärjestö and joined the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World.[91] The next break in the Finnish-American labor movement came in 1920, but its causes can be found in the events of the Russian Revolution and the Finnish Revolution of 1917-1918.[92] The zealous supporters of the revolution differed from the

[90] Leo Mattson, *Suomalainen sosialistijärjestö: Työmies 20 voutta* (Superior: Työmies Society, 1923), 29-30.

[91] William Hoglund, 75-76.

[92] Leo Mattson, 182; Vilho Boman, *Suomalaiset lännen kultalassa* (Superior: Työmies Society, 1923), 15-16.

Sosialistijärjestö and established their own society whose main voice among the Finnish-Americans became the newspaper *Työmies* while the *Raivaaja* remained moderate.[93]

When information about the situation in Finland in 1918 arrived in America, the leaders of the Finnish-American labor movement became more or less united in the effort to defend the Finnish Red Guard. According to historian Armas Holmio, however, this did not lead to the unification of these organizations, but instead to the loss of members whose relatives had fought on the side of the White Guard in Finland.[94] Holmio does not provide any numbers for the loss of members, however, no accurate information on such losses are available.

The Finnish War of 1918 in the minds of the Finnish-American left was a class war. It was "the struggle of oppressed workers against capitalism and the bourgeoisie". When initially it seemed that the revolution was successful, it was the subject of enormous enthusiasm and joy for the Finnish-American working class. The labor newspaper *Raivaaja* reported the Red Guards' early success in Finland with enthusiasm and highlighted how workers in neighboring countries were uniting to help the Reds in Finland. Most notable was a report that Swedish workers were striking in order to prevent the shipment of arms from Sweden to the Finnish White Guard.[95] The following day the headline of *Raivaaja* read, "Finnish Workers Get Help: Russian Government Sends Special Forces to Help Finnish Workers," and the paper continued to report that the Red Guard in Finland had successfully taken over the city of Uusikaupunki and now effectively controlled the entirety of southern Finland.[96] After the Russian Revolution, new revolutions were expected, and the Finnish-American working class saw it as a source of pride that their former

[93] Leo Mattson, 36, John Kolehmainen, *Sow the Golden Seed* (Fitchburg: Arno Press, 1955), 66-67.
[94] Armas K. E. Holmio, *Michiganin suomalaisten historia* (Hancock:Michiganin suomalaisten historia-seura, 1967), 410.
[95] *Raivaaja*, February 18, 1918
[96] *Raivaaja*, February 19, 1918.

homeland was in the process of being next, and looked like the revolution there could not fail due to the international cooperation among workers. The enthusiasm was not for a national revolution in Finland, but for what was thought to be the beginning of a successful international revolution for the entire working class.[97]

On February 20 the Finnish labor government chose Santeri Nuorteva as its representative to the United States with the goal of "putting forth the correct information about the revolution in Finland and other issues."[98] This brought the Finnish question closer to Finnish-American workers as Nuorteva was someone with whom they were familiar. In Finland he had been elected as a Socialist representative in the first Finnish Parliament of 1905; however, after the failure of the first parliament he emigrated to the United States and soon became a well-known leader within the American labor movement, especially amongst his native Finns.[99] His acceptance for the position was published in numerous Finnish labor papers across North America. In it he wrote:

> I accept the appointment, however, a few days ago Professor Reuter, representing the bourgeoisie of Finland, arrived in America and is currently in Washington presenting himself as the official representative of the Finnish government. Instantly give me the authority to go to Washington to challenge his representation. We only have a general knowledge here of your position in Finland so more information would be welcomed. Please indicate how far the power of the bourgeoisie extends there. It has been reported here that they are holding most of Northern Finland. The vast majority of Finnish-Americans are not entirely compassionate about the movement in Finland due to misinformation.[100]

His primary task now became to obtain American recognition of the Red Finnish government. In addition to this task, Nuorteva was tasked with disseminating the "right information about the reds in Finland" and to help obtain financial assistance for Finland.[101] Nuorteva's task was an uphill

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[97]Ibid.

[98]Letter from Yrjö Sirola to Santeri Nuorteva, Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[99] Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 78.

[100]*Raivaaja,* February 20, 1918.

[101] *Raivaaja,* March 27, 1918.

battle as Professor Reuter and Dr. Ignatius, the representatives of White Finland, were competing for the same goal. This led to Finnish newspapers from both the Left and Right urging their readers to write the United States government asking that they only accept the audience of their respective representative. In a letter to the head of government for the Whites, Pehr Svinhufvud, Dr. Ignatius wrote that the socialists' efforts in the United States were making his job difficult, mentioning the activities of Nuorteva in particular.[102] Also, Reuter was concerned that Nuorteva, as the representative from the Red government, had put Finland's situation in a "vague light" and, as a result, all Finnish representatives were only invited to wait for the time being and would not be seen.[103] The confusion of the situation partially caused the United States not to recognize Finland's independence until May 1919. In the months between January 1918 and May 1919 a media battle ensued in the United States between representatives from both sides of the aisle attempting to win over the American public's sympathies. Most notable was the three-month back-and-forth between Santeri Nuorteva and Herman Montagu Donner in the *New York Times*. Montagu Donner was the president of the Finland Constitutional League of America which was founded, in part, to counteract the work of Nuorteva.

Santeri Nuorteva had founded his own office, the Finnish Information Bureau, by March of 1918.[104] The Finnish-American right-wing press soon began referring to it as the "misinformation bureau" and reported that all information coming from the office and Nuorteva must be regarded as lies.[105] Throughout May and June of 1918, Nuorteva and Montagu Donner used the *New York Times* to battle for the American public's sympathies for their respective sides.

[102] Dr. Kaarlo Ignatius to Svinhufvudille, March 4, 1918, Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

[103] Juhani Paasivirta, *Finland år 1918* (Helsinki: Centraltryckeriet 1962), 93.

[104] *Raivaaja,* February 25, 1918.

[105] *Amerikan Suometar,* March 14, 1918.

Nuorteva and the Finnish-American Left used the bourgeois government's relationship with Germany as their main weapon of choice, while Montagu Donner attempted to use Americans' fear of Bolshevism. In many cases the work was already done for them. Edwin Björkman, a Swedish immigrant and journalist, wrote an editorial for the *New York Times* titled, "Finland's Stand: Statements to Show That at Present She is Aligned with Our Enemies." Björkman argued that the Scandinavian countries could not cooperate on any terms with the White government in Finland as it "belongs to the States allied to Germany and thereby has come to stand outside the group of northern States."[106] On May 11, the *New York Times* reported on a meeting held by Nuorteva at Carnegie Hall and quoted him at length. It is this report that triggered the exchange between Nourteva and Montagu Donner. The piece, in part, read:

> Santeri Nuorteva, representative in the United States of the Provisional Government of the People's Republic of Finland…declared that "Germany has raised in the east a barrier of bitter hatred that will eventually spell the doom of Kaiserdom…[and] that between the real Finnish people and the Prussian Junker there is no peace." He added "There is peace and affectionate love between the Finnish aristocracy and the German Junkers, for they know that if they don't hang together they will hang separately…" In Finland the Germans and the White Guard junkers have been killing the leaders of the labor movement. They believe they thereby will crush the movement forever. The fools! They do not understand that in our times every working man and woman is a leader, ready to step in where his comrades have fallen… Now, when the Finnish junkers have invited the Germans to Finland and the Germans are acting as their agents, at a time when they are slaughtering the laboring men and women of Finland by the thousands and trying to exterminate the whole labor movement with German machine guns, they have the nerve to tell the American people and the rest of the world that they had to invite the Germans to preserve the civilization of Finland against the anarchistic and murderous Socialists. They say that the alliance with Germany is merely a recent incident, but as far back as 1914 the present White Guard leaders were sending thousands of Finnish young men to be trained in the German Army…Only with German help can it maintain its power. A heavy penalty will be paid by the Allies if this is not understood.[107]

In the same issue another story also cast gloom over the bourgeois government. According to the reporter a group of Americans, including a Finnish immigrant named "Miss Ranta," had escaped

[106]*New York Times*, June 6, 1918.
[107]*New York Times*, May 11, 1918.

the oncoming Germans in Petrograd through Finland to safety in Sweden. In their escape they were said to have "mounted the ramparts of the Reds" waving the stars and stripes in order call a truce between the Red Guard and the White Guard. Once on the side of the whites, after a brief arrest, they "proceeded overland in sleighs…where they met with many insults from German officers and Finnish soldiers under their influence."[108] Nuorteva continued to push this narrative of Finnish soldiers being influenced, and controlled, by the Germans. This was an easy sell to the American public, especially following the announcement in newspapers across the United States that the White Government, including General Mannerheim, favored a German Prince as King of Finland.[109]

In response to the allegations put forth by Nuorteva at Carnegie Hall, Montagu Donner wrote a lengthy editorial for the *New York Times* titled "The Germans in Finland: An Answer to the Bolshevist Presentation of the Complicated Situation There."[110] In the letter Montagu Donner insisted that referring to Nuorteva's conference as a "Finnish mass meeting" was entirely false as "for the most casual observer who had ever come into personal contact with the natives of Finland…the Finns were conspicuous by their almost complete absence, that nation being represented almost solely by the women ushers on the floor and the Finnish mixed choir and musical trio." Montagu Donner, by contrast, claimed to be writing on behalf of the "thousands of outraged Finlanders in the United States" who were angry over Nuorteva claiming to speak for the Finnish people and his "grotesque" lies. Using strong language, Montagu Donner claimed that Finland was the most democratic state in the world and was not run by an aristocracy held up by German junkers.[111] He did not at this time, however, discuss the plans of the White government to

[108]Ibid.
[109]*New York Times*, May 3, 1918.
[110]*New York Times*, May 14, 1918.
[111]Ibid.

elect a German as King of Finland. The back-and-forth between Nourteva and Montagu Donner continued through June.

On May 15, Nuorteva claimed that all of Montagu Donner's statements could be proven false by the dispatches of the Associated Press and that if the White Guard had truly been for the Finnish people they would not have had to hide out in northern Finland until the Kaiser's army came to its aid. He admitted that the Red Guard may have committed atrocities in Finland, but continued by arguing, "If America had inherited a ruling alien aristocracy which betrayed the country to the Germans, it is quite believable that here and there a few traitorous rascals would be severely treated by the people."[112] Here Nuorteva alluded to the Swedish-speaking minority that owned the majority of land in Finland and held most governmental positions. These same Finnish-Swedes had been responsible for the National Awakening and call for independence from Russia. Nuorteva used the war America was fighting with Germany and American's disdain for aristocracy and monarchy to win the public over.

While right-wing Finnish-Americans had to convince the American public that Finland's relationship with Germany was merely one of necessity and that democracy ruled Finland, left-wing Finnish-Americans had to explain why the democratic movement in Finland took on a socialist form. In his response to Montagu Donner, Nuorteva claimed: "It is because feudal institutions have been preserved there [Finland] up to today. No mere political reconstruction could avail to change the rigid feudal structure of society."[113] He then claimed that the Swedish aristocracy and White Guard were continuing to execute men and women in their attempt to extinguish the will of the Finnish people. In the same issue of the newspaper, another article claimed the White Guard in Finland had executed without trial 500 Russian soldiers and that

[112]*New York Times*, May 15, 1918.
[113]Ibid.

25,000 Finnish Red Guard prisoners were going to be sent by the White Guard to work in Germany as laborers.[114] To the American public, the White Guard and Finnish government under General Mannerheim were coming across in a negative light and Nuorteva was winning the media battle. It did not help Montagu Donner's case that on May 17 another article appeared in the *New York Times* claiming that the bourgeois parties in Finland not only wanted a monarchy, but also were advocating for Finland to join the Central Powers.[115]

On May 18, Montagu Donner responded to Nuorteva and began presenting the actions of the White Guard in Finland as a war against Bolshevism.[116] He began with the usual statement that everything coming from Nuorteva was a lie and Nuorteva was not and had never been a legal representative of the Finnish government. He insisted that the Red government was never in itself a legal entity but existed "simply as the creation of brute force temporarily triumphant through the assistance of hired foreign arms." Here he was referring to the Russian soldiers who were procured to help the Red Guard. He used Nuorteva's own statement to "prove" his point, quoting him as saying, "I am not interested in the Finnish question from the national point of view; not at all. I would like to see Finland as part of the federated Republic of Russia!"[117] What Nuorteva actually said, at least as it was published in *Raivaaja*, was that he would like to see Finland join the international movement of workers as started in Russia.[118]It is clear that Nuorteva and the Finnish-American Left were not orienting themselves along national lines, but were looking towards a different system outside of the nation-state. This was something Montagu Donner and the Finnish-American Right could not grasp. Montagu Donner admitted that Nuorteva's statement was met

[114]Ibid.
[115]*New York Times*, May 17, 1918.
[116]*New York Times*, May 18, 1918.
[117]Ibid.
[118]*Raivaaja,* May 12, 1918.

with "enthusiastic applause," but claimed this was proof that the audience was overwhelmingly non-Finnish as truly patriotic Finns would never applaud such a statement. He further claimed that Nuorteva neither represented the Finnish people nor the Russian Bolshevik movement and pointed to Nuorteva's statement from four days previous wherein he said at a meeting at the People's House, "Exactly as the autonomy of the various states in this country has lapsed, so will the boundaries now separating nation from nation be swept away through the action of the united labor movement of the world."[119] Montagu Donner claimed later in the piece that "Nuorteva is a Bolshevik first and a Finn afterword."[120] In reality Nuorteva and the other Finnish-Americans on the Left were neither of these things but instead, in the United States, aligned themselves along class lines rather than national ones. For them this was an obvious path, as Finland as a nation-state had not existed when they left Europe and they had not consumed the conservative media that helped Finnish identity evolve in North America as part of the National Awakening.

Montagu Donner still had to convince the American people of Finland's "special" relationship with Germany. Initially he argued that the relationship is one purely of necessity. He then argued that Finland and Germany had always shared close cultural relations. Public opinion was not on the side of anyone who advocated a close relationship with the enemy, so in his next editorial he wrote:

> No one can exceed me in the loathing I feel for the Kaiser…my own war poems have placed that fact beyond all cavil. But I am bound to acknowledge that, if there stands one single item to the Teutons credit in the black ledger of their endless crimes during the last four years, it is to be found in the fact that they supplied arms to the Finnish Constitutionalists, after the latter had applied fruitlessly to France and Sweden for assistance, and were consequently faced with imminent destruction at the hands of the anarchist Red Guard and their allies, the Russian soldiery, with the inevitable threatened annihilation of the great structure of constitutional liberty and western culture which

[119]*New York Tribune*, May 14, 1918.
[120]*New York Times*, May 18, 1918.

> Finland had been engaged in painfully erecting throughout the centuries, on the very edge of a huge semi-Oriental despotism![121]

He also now had to respond to the announcement of the plan to have a German-controlled monarchy in Finland. To this end he argued that this was the obvious reaction to people seeing the "primeval brute drunk with a new lease of power," referring to the democracy of the Red Guard and its actions in Finland during the Civil War. General Mannerheim and others in the White Government claimed that it was the White Army that demanded a monarchy. This makes sense as the bulk of officers within the White Guard were members of the Finnish-Swedish aristocracy and had been trained in Germany. In this same issue of the *New York Times* another article announced that the High Court of Justice in Finland had ordered the arrest of all Socialist members of the Finnish Diet, whether they had taken part in the recent insurrection or not. It went on to say that no new election would take place before the decision on the monarchy was made.[122]

On May 22, the headline of the *New York Times* read: "Dictator Urges Monarchy: Only Form of Government for Finland, Judge Svinhufvud Says."[123] The piece reported that Svinhufvud, the "temporary dictator," was quoted as saying that the only way forward for Finland was a constitutional monarchy and that he, as well as most of the members of the Finnish Diet, would resign if Finland became a republic.[124] On May 31 another headline read "Massacres by White Guards and Germans in Finland Continue."[125] On May 31 a Swedish national, who signed his editorial as P.K., wrote a lengthy letter to the editor wherein he argued that the correspondents defending the Finnish White government overlooked a major point: "That is the undeniable fact

[121]Ibid.
[122]Ibid.
[123]*New York Times*, May 22, 1918.
[124]Ibid.
[125]*New York Times*, May 31, 1918.

that at present the Finnish White Government is in active alliance with the Germans."[126] He continued that it did not matter if the claims about Red Guard atrocities were correct as they did not alter the fact of the alliance with the enemy Germans. He then wrote at length that, while Montagu Donner and others argued that the relationship was one of necessity, the White government had already made a deal with the Germans long before ever approaching Sweden or France for help, and that it was because of this that Sweden would not get involved.

Montagu-Donner's uphill battle to win over the American public now had to answer a number of accusations. In his next editorial in the *New York Times* he was joined by politician and author Aino Malmberg, who was also the mother of Lauri Malmberg, the Commander-in-Chief of the White Guard forces after Mannerheim's retirement. In this editorial they claimed that Nuorteva and others were "pandering to popular prejudice" against Germany to "gain a following he could not otherwise win."[127] They continued that it is the fault of the Red Guard that Finland's independence still was uncertain and lacked international support, by arguing that "at the precise moment Finland needed the services of every man and woman, of whatever station in life, to uphold her newly won independence," the masses of the "lower elements" were tricked into supporting the "blood-thirsty Bolsheviki."[128] In reference to Finland's relationship with Germany they repeated that it was one built of necessity and that Americans should understand, claiming that it was exactly what "America did in 1776."[129] What followed was a very long argument that Nuorteva and others continued to lie to the American public and that in truth it was the Socialists in Finland that had betrayed the country and the international public. They then presented five points countering the announcement of a German monarchy in Finland and ended with:

[126]*New York Times*, May 31, 1918.
[127]*New York Times*, June 4, 1918.
[128]Ibid.
[129]Ibid.

> When all is said and done, who are the real pro-Germans? The Finns who have fought on the side of law and order, striving to develop their country first, without any foreign interference, or those who, by rising in arms to force their own selfish class aims upon the community, and calling in Russian armed help against their own legally elected Government, brought about the eventual intervention of Germany? In conclusion, the earnest wish of every American, as well as every Finn, is that we here in America might obtain authentic, direct news from Finland; then no one would have a chance to spread falsehood broadcast, with or without the medium of a so-called 'Information Bureau,' the proper title for which should be 'Finnish Misinformation Office.[130]

Nuorteva responded to the editorial with one of his own on June 7. In this article he repeated that the apologists for the White Guard were lying and bending the facts to fit their narrative. He then quoted the numerous *New York Times* article headings that claimed a German takeover in Finland was supported by the White government, as well as the articles that discussed the brutality of the White Guard.[131] Over the next few months the *New York Times* continued to report of the atrocities committed by the White Guard against supposed socialists in Finland, as well as stories on German control of Finland.

Apart from the American Press, both Nuorteva and Montagu Donner published in the Finnish-American press, though instead of trying to convince readers which government they should support, they instead reported on the atrocities the other side committed. It is likely they had no need to convince readers of which government to support as the subscribers were already aligned with their respective sides. The Finland Constitutional League of America printed briefly the *Finland Sentinel* to report on the events of the civil war. Information coming from Finland was sparse and often contradictory. Both Nuorteva and Montagu Donner claimed to be reporting what actually was happening. To the Finnish-American readers of the *Finland Sentinel* Montagu Donner printed a series of letters that he received from Finland. He introduces one letter by writing:

> The following letter from a leading citizen in the Finnish capital to his brother in America was written after the terrible four months' internecine struggle had finally resulted in the

[130]Ibid.
[131]*New York Times*, June 7, 1918

> crushing of the Red Guards who had traitorously raised the standard of rebellion against their own constitutionally elected government. It is of the highest importance as containing the first clear connected account of recent events in Finland, of which such conflicting reports have trickled into the American press for months.[132]

The letters published by Montagu Donner are extremely suspect in regards to their actual origin. None of them are written in a way one would expect from a letter between brothers or intimate friends. Many letters written in this period from Finns in Finland to their relatives and friends in America did mention the events going on as well as their opinion of them. They also, however, usually included the normal things one would assume to be in a letter between family separated by an ocean such as questions about health, weather, news from other family and friends etc. The "letters" published by Montague Donner read like political manifestos and propaganda. The names of the sender and receiver are never included and never once are questions asked about general life events. The sender of the "letters" even included footnotes to further explain things to their "dear brother." It is likely Montagu Donner forged the letters and published them as such in order to give them credibility to his readers. In other words, it would make the reader believe that they were getting first-hand knowledge of the events in Finland.

While Nourteva was reporting that the war in Finland was a class war between the bourgeoisie and the workers of Finland, Montague Donner aimed to convince Finnish-Americans that this was a lie. In one "letter" published he argues that the Reds were simply puppets of the Russians and were using the peasantry for their own goals. Of the victory of the White Guard he wrote, "But then the marvelous thing happened! The peasants in northern Finland rose…and the peasant corps were appointed the regular army of the Government."[133] He does not tell the reader that Finns in Northern Finland where the White government was in hiding were forcibly

[132]*Finland Sentinel*, September 1, 1918.
[133]Ibid.

conscripted into the White army. What continues in the letter is a blow-by-blow report on all the battles and the atrocities the Red Guard committed during their "reign of terror." For example, he claims that:

> A minister was nailed to the altar in his church, his body slashed open with a bayonet, salt rubbed into the wounds, and below was written in the victim's blood: May Thy God Help Thee!…holy communion was distributed to the cows in a stable. These actions are the outcome of that hatred for all things sacred and religious, which has been so consistently preached by the Socialistic press.[134]

Both sides in the civil war certainly committed atrocities; however, the ones reported by the conservative Finnish-American press must be regarded as largely fabricated.

In the Finnish-American press both sides attempted to claim to be the party of the worker or "peasant" class, but in effect they were largely speaking into the wind. Those reading papers such as the *Finland Sentinel* and *Amerikan Suometar* were already aligned with the conservative Right and thus were reading publications that would reinforce their own worldview. Knowing this, both Montagu Donner and Nuorteva focused most of their energy on winning over Americans. The reports by the Finnish-American left and the atrocities of the White Guard will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Nuorteva continued his activities even after the war had ended with the Reds, and even later, as a representative of Russia in America, he considered it his duty to defend the Finns.[135] In a letter to Oscar Toiko in the summer of 1918, Nuorteva claimed he had remained out of Finnish-American politics since he was no longer the "red Finnish envoy" to America.[136] Nevertheless, his influence on the opinion of the Finnish-American workforce was considerable. He did not, however, have the support of the entire Finnish-American working class. For example, the

[134]Ibid.

[135] *Nation*, July 7, 1919.

[136] Santeri Nuorteva to Oskari Toko October 14, 1918, Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Records of the US Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Finland 1910-1944.

members of the IWW and their periodical, *Industrialisti*, responded negatively to his activities.[137] According to the *Industrialisti*, Nuortevas' appointment as a representative of Finland was rejected because they believed Nuorteva was opposed to the left-wing radicals. This was a typical expression of the newspaper's anti-political syndicalist ideology.[138] Finnish-American right-wing areas organized rallies, for instance in Worcester, Massachusetts at the beginning of March to oppose the work of Nuorteva. They claimed 12,000 people attended the meeting and sent a delegation to protest the US government in Washington.[139] In July, Nuorteva received a threatening letter demanding that he cease all activities.[140]

2.3 Initial Aftermath of the Finnish Civil War

The war in Finland had aroused enthusiasm among Finnish-American workers. Then, when rumors of Red defeat began to emerge in the United States, the labor press considered these to be propaganda spread by the Whites and continued to be suspicious of them until the end of the war. When the Red defeat was confirmed, the loss was felt very bitterly and painfully by the Finnish-American working class. The blame for the failure of the Finnish Reds was placed on bourgeois intrigue and assistance from Germany. To the far-left Finnish-Americans the loss, however, was not felt to be final, as it was believed that the new revolution would soon come. The IWW started to look for the educational aspect of the Finnish Civil War.[141] It seems that *Industrialisti* recovered from the loss of the Finnish Reds faster than most Finnish-American working people. Perhaps this

[137] See for example *Industrialisti*, February 25, March 14, April 10, 1918.
[138] *Industrialisti*, March 1, 1918.
[139] *Raivaaja*, March 6, 1918.
[140] *Raivaaja*, July 22, 1918.
[141] *Industrialisti*, February 19, 1918.

was because of the persecution of syndicalist in the United States, making the fight at home more important than helping Finnish workers, as well as the IWW's increasing estrangement from Bolshevism.[142]

The bitterness brought about by the Red defeat in Finland was further enhanced by the knowledge of the executions carried out by the Whites. As Finnish-Americans began to receive letters from their relatives from Finland, they were published in newspapers.[143] The intention was that all the workers would get the correct picture of the power of the "butchers" in Finland, because the letters not only described the events during the war, but also the horrors that took place after during the so-called "white terror." The Finnish-American labor movement, for its part, sought to financially help the Finnish Reds. In 1918, there were a total of three fundraising campaigns initiated by the Finnish Socialist Organization. The collections were for the famine in Finland, to support the Finnish Red government exiled in Moscow, and to rebuild Finnish labor organizations. The Finnish Socialist Organization campaign became known as "One Million Marks," as its initial goal was to collect one million marks for the effort. What arose next was a dispute over who the funds should be sent to. The confusion was further increased by the fact that Santeri Nuorteva had received a loan for one million marks in order to maintain his office, the Finnish Information Bureau. Nuorteva's enemies, mainly the IWW, raised a large fuss about the fact that the money had been gathered to be sent to Finland, not to be loaned to Nuorteva.[144] IWW members began their own collection for the Finnish Red Guard and to assist those they viewed as political prisoners in Finland.

[142] *Industrialisti*, May 9, 1918.
[143] *Raivaaja*, January 13, 1919; *Työmies*, January 6, 1919.
[144] *Industrialisti*, June 7, June 14, 1918.

Even though war in Finland had technically ended in 1918, the Finnish-American labor press was worried that the atrocities committed by the White Guard would be forgotten or ignored.[145] The importance of the Finnish Civil War for the Finnish-American workforce is shown by the fact that the subject continued to be dealt with in the newspapers as well as in works of fiction and flyers long into the 1920s.[146] A significant number of the descriptions came from those who had fled from Finland to the Soviet Union, but there were also dramas written and performed across America in Finnish-American halls.[147]

The political divide between Finnish-Americans in 1918 would also manifest in the way new immigrants were received on American soil. Those on the Right were eager to receive representatives of the now independent Finland. Parties were held in their honor and opportunities to report on Finland's situation were readily granted to them.[148]

The working class reacted to the representatives of "White Finland" with suspicion and, more often than not, downright hostility. The Finnish-American proletarian newspapers – *Raivaaja*, *Työmies*, and *Industrialisti* – for their part tried to make sure that the cruelties committed by the White Guard would not be forgotten, and demanded that vengeance was to be exacted on them according to their misdeeds.[149] The butchers of "White Finland" were considered "bloodthirsty beasts" who were even willing to cross the ocean in order to reach their "prey."[150] Those who fought with the Reds in the civil war were welcomed as heroes into labor organizations. At the same time the Finnish-American Left hoped that the experiences from the class war gained

[145] *Raivaaja,* January 2, 1919, *Työmies,* January 16, 1919, *Industrialisti,* May 10, 1919.
[146] Lauri Luoto, *Valkosen leijonan metsästäjät* (Superior: Amerikan suomalaisten sosialististen kustannusliikkeiden liiton, 1927); Kaarlo Valli, *Liekeissä. yhteiskunnallinen romaani suomen v. 1918 luokkasodast* (Astoria: Amerikan suomalaisten sosialististen kustannusliikkeiden liiton kustantama, 1923).
[147] Ibid.
[148] *Amerikan Suometar*, July 16, 1918.
[149] *Raivaaja,* January 2, 1919, *Tyomies,* January 16, 1919, *Industrialisti,* May 10, 1920.
[150] *Punikki,* August 1, 1920.

by the immigrants would benefit others as well.[151] Also, according to Holmio, the Finnish-American labor movement's numbers were swelled with veterans of the Finnish Red Guard, who started to migrate in America after the civil war.[152] However, the right-wing press, such as *Amerikan Suometar* and *Päivälehti*, did not pay any attention to their arrival.

In the summer of 1919, concerns among the working class started to rise, as people who had fought on the side of the Whites in the civil war began to arrive on American soil. The labor press started publishing articles in which readers were discouraged from granting unknown persons permission to speak in public events held at the people's house.[153] The labor organizations feared that these strangers might be able to drive a "white agenda" and persuade Finnish-Americans to sympathize with the Finnish government. This mistrust was aimed at every Finn migrating from Finland after the war – not only unknown persons. Even members of one's own labor organization weren't always trusted. For example, Juho Niemi, who was part of the Minneapolis division of the Socialist Party, visited Finland during the war. After having returned to America he sought to rejoin his division. The subject of his return was placed under debate at the division meeting, since there had been rumors of Niemi having been part of the White Guard during his visit to Finland. The division concluded that he could be allowed membership only after these rumors could be irrefutably disproven.[154] The readers of *Työmies* were not informed, however, of how the rumors were disproven, only that his own statement given at the division meeting was taken with skepticism.

The Finnish-American workforce was pushed to take serious action when members of the White Guard started to show up at the same worksites as the organized workers. This problem first

[151] *Tyomies,* May 2, 1921.
[152] Holmio, 410
[153] *Tyomies,* June 16, 1919.
[154] *Tyomies,* December 15, 1919.

arose among the Finnish in Canada. Among other factors, this may have been because the remnants of the Murmansk Legion, including Oskari Tokoi, migrated to Canada from England in 1920.[155] Canadian officials were well aware of the tensions between the Finns in Canada. The legionnaires' travelling clearances had been delayed, as the Canadian officials were afraid that unease among the Finnish population might be caused by Bolsheviks within the legion.[156] In Canada they were placed at a remote lumber camp at the northern border between Ontario and Quebec.[157] It was here that the unrest among the Finns started.[158] What part the legionnaires played in these breakouts is difficult to determine based on the available source material. However, in September 1918 Oskari Tokoi had already been declared a traitor to the proletariat and sentenced to death by the central committee of the Finnish Communist Party. According to the declaration, the carrying out of the sentence was the duty of every revolutionary worker.[159]

In general, organized workers refused to share worksites with the White "butchers."[160] This, in turn, led to difficulties with the employers. Occasionally foremen would agree to workers' demands and the laborer was forced to find work elsewhere, as for example was the case in Pass Lake, Ontario, in January 1921.[161] Sometimes the situation would lead the workers to strike. This form of protest was questionable, however, even in the eyes of one's fellow union members. After all, the strikers could be replaced by scabs who could be sympathetic to the butchers. In an article published in *Industrialisti* under the pseudonym H. J., workers were encouraged to use the "butchers" methods against them and exact revenge on each one: "Deep is our blow, our wrath

[155]The Murmansk legion was a British military unit composed of Finnish Red Guard members who had fled Northern Finland when the White guard took over.

[156] Jukka Nevakivi, *Muurmannin legioona. suomalaiset ja liittoutuneiden interventio Pohjois-Venajalle 1918-1919* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1970), 323.

[157]Ibid, 324.

[158]*Indusrialisti,* February 2, February 3, February 18, 1921.

[159]Nevakivi, 354-355.

[160]*Industrialisti,* February 2, 1921.

[161]*Industrialisti,* February 4, 1921.

invincible, the whole of our joy at the tip of our sword."[162]

Threats and calls to use violence against the immigrant Whites began showing up more and more often in Finnish labor papers, as did calls to boycott worksites and any events where one might come in contact with Whites.[163] In May 1921, Finnish-Americans held gatherings all over the United States in order to collectively send protests to the president of Finland and the parliament. These protests demanded that the Finnish government release labor prisoners being held in Finland and threatened that if their demands were not met that workers in America would treat arriving Whites in the same fashion that laborers were being treated in Finland.[164] Judging by articles published in the newspapers and tabloids of the time, in addition to letters Finnish workers were receiving from Finland, the Finnish-American population was certain the Leftists were being brutalized in prison camps, and therefore the "same fashion" assumedly connoted violence as well.

In some cases a warning would be sent directly from Finland about an incoming immigrant. For example, Finnish-Americans were forewarned of Väinö Sola's arrival for a singing tour, and it was ordered that "the honest workers should in no way stoop so low as to go hear his butcher songs."[165] Even though warning letters like this were published in the proletarian press, the identities of their senders were often left out. This may be because the workers saw the contents of the letters as more important than the sources and readily believed the media that reinforced their own beliefs.

Little by little Finnish working people started to suspect all immigrants arriving from Finland after the civil war to be "butchers," and these suspicions were often poignantly brought up in public. This in turn inspired bitterness in the falsely accused. For example, in the fall of 1920

[162]*Industrialisti,* February 25, 1921.
[163]*Työmies,* January 2, September 7, 1920, April 1, 1921.
[164]*Industrialisti,* May 9, May 30, 1921.
[165]*Työmies,* April 15, 1920.

there was a debate in the pages of *Industrialisti* between one group of Finns and a writer using the pseudonym Paavo over each party's affiliation during the civil war. Eventually the quarrel led both parties to acquire certificates proving they had been part of worker organizations and had not taken part in "the affairs of the bourgeoisie."[166]

Soon some Finnish workers provided newcomers with a certain span of time in which they had to come up with the required certificates from Finland. The documents had to prove the person had been part of the Red Guard in Finland.[167] If the applicant managed to assert his loyalty to the working class, he was granted membership.[168] A common characteristic to these first attempts at acquiring certification was that the Finnish-American working class still trusted any given applicant enough to allow them to acquire the proper documentation from Finland by themselves. Beginning in 1920 and 1921, labor organizations started demanding the certifications to be issued by labor unions, and not by individual persons in Finland. Even then, only unions functioning within the region the person under scrutiny had resided in during the civil war were considered reliable.[169]

Before the formation of special committees for this purpose, the investigation of the newcomers' affiliations during the civil war were primarily undertaken by local labor organizations. Beginning in 1921, official committees were created in the United States in order to perform the investigation of all newcomers from Finland, which is the topic of the following chapter.[170]

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[166]*Industrialisti,* August 17, September 9, September 16, November 9, 1920.
[167]*Industrialisti,* February 3, 1921.
[168]Ibid.
[169]*Industrialisti,* January 24, 1921.
[170]*Eteenpäin,* February 10, 1922.

Chapter 3

The Finnish-American Left and the Aftermath of the Finnish Civil War

Following the Finnish Civil War and the reopening of communication between Finns on both sides of the Atlantic, stories from Finland began pouring into America regarding the atrocities committed by the White Guard. Many of these stories were printed in Finnish workers' newspapers, and daily reminders of the violence decorated their front pages. For instance, in May of 1921 *Industrialisti* ran the headline "Do you want butchers in Duluth?" and *Työmies* warned in bold letters, "Butchers hiding amongst honest workers!"[1] In this period of fear, anger, and suspicion, Finnish-American workers became suspicious of anyone coming from Finland, a fear that was only enhanced by the stories and headings in the daily papers. In October of 1921 *Industrialisti* announced that an investigative committee had been formed in Duluth, Minnesota due to "pressure from public opinion."[2] The initial aim of this committee was to ascertain the extent to which individuals had participated in the Finnish Civil War and whether their actions warranted being branded an enemy of the workers and a "butcher."[3] Those coming from Finland, in many cases, were not pleased with the treatment they received from such committees, but they found that ignoring a summons made it impossible to find work, stay in lodging houses, join labor organizations, and socialize.

[1]*Industrialisti*, May 9, 1921 and *Työmies*, May 12, 1921.
[2]*Industrialisti*, October 8, 1921.
[3]Ibid.

3.1 Creation of the Committees of Inquiry

What eventually became the Committees of Inquiry thus seem to have formed due to public pressure from Finns already living in America, as well as Finns who had recently arrived and found it necessary to have their names publicly cleared in order to participate in daily life. Finnish-American workers wanted to make sure that they were not accepting enemies of the working class into their workplaces, unions, and social clubs. This need was further enhanced as Communists and syndicalists continued to be persecuted in the United States; therefore, it became necessary to know that new members of the community could be trusted.[4]

While the announcement of the local committee in Duluth claimed it was formed on the insistence of workers, Oskari Tokoi believed that the Communist International had ordered the Committees of Inquiry to be established. In his memoir, Tokoi wrote that "Finns in the United States and Canada had been ordered to carefully study the past of every Finnish immigrant that arrived and was ordered to ban any suspicious person and subject them to general persecution and boycott."[5] Tokoi argued that the Finnish-American Communists were subordinate to Russian leadership and took direct orders from the Comintern.[6] Tokoi is an excellent source for this period in Finnish and Finnish-American history as he was intimately involved with almost every major political and social development from 1900 to 1920 on both sides of the Atlantic; however, his disgust for radical syndicalists and Communists perhaps distorts his narrative of the activities of the Committees of Inquiry. Twice he had been asked to come before such committees, and both

[4]Niilo Wälläri, *Antoisia Vuosia: Muistelmia toiminnasta ammattiyhdistyslookkeessä* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1967), 43 and Thomas Bailey, *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations from Early Times to Our Day* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), 247.

[5]Oskari Tokoi, *Maanpakolaisen muistelmia* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1959), 330.

[6]Oskari Tokoi, *Amerikan suomalaisia* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1949), 160.

times he left the area rather than and questioned their right to operate or judge him.[7] He was also aware that he had already been branded both a butcher and an enemy of the workers for his involvement with the Murmansk Legion, and a death sentence had been called against him by the Finnish Communists in exile in Moscow.[8] This order for his "execution on sight" had been republished in *Työmies*.[9] Nevertheless, Tokoi's claim about an order from the Comintern, despite no such order having been found by historians, is not outside the realm of possibility.

It appears that the committees were first formed within Finnish-American Communists' associations, but very quickly became a joint venture between different Finnish-American communists, socialists, and IWW groups. In August of 1921, socialist groups in Detroit created a local committee that reported its activities in *Työmies*, the newspaper of the Finnish Socialist Federation.[10] Their stated goal was to interview anyone who had arrived from Finland since the Finnish Civil War, and they claimed the organization had been formed, again, "from public pressure…and in response to the creation of other such investigative bodies."[11] The Finnish-American Communists had already created committees that would evolve into the Committees of Inquiry, so it is safe to assume that it is these committees the socialists were referring to. By 1922, in Detroit, all of the committees were operating jointly, bringing together the Finnish-American Communists, IWW, and socialists. As previously discussed, these groups had a contentious past but all, except the IWW, now belonged to the Workers Party of America. The Workers Party of America had applied for membership with the Communist International in 1922 and had been

[7]Tokoi, *Maanpakolaisen muistelmia*, 317-320.
[8]Ibid, 235.
[9]*Työmies*, February 15, 1921.
[10]*Työmies*, January 12, 1921.
[11]Ibid.

accepted as a "sympathizing party."[12] This application, however, was really a farce, as the Workers Party of America was acting as the legal front of the Community Party, which already belonged to the Comintern.[13] It is therefore possible that the Comintern had been involved in ordering the creation of the Committees of Inquiry; however, it is more likely that similar committees had already been established and that, believing the issue to be important enough, Finnish-American workers decided to come together while momentarily setting aside their ideological differences. What these joint operations therefore accomplished was the unification of all the Finnish workers' organizations, which now viewed the Finnish bourgeois nationalists as their common enemy. Perhaps it is for this reason that Tokoi noted, with abhorrence, that in the "political war among the Finnish-Americans that was still raging" the communists had almost entirely absorbed the local social democratic associations and turned the Finnish-American communities into "Communist strongholds."[14]

From outside of Fitchburg, with *Raivaaja* leading the resistance against the communists, Tokoi noted that "the Social Democrats, my own people, were opposed by fanatic and overpowering Communists—and from the other extreme just as fiercely by equally fanatic Finnish Whites who, glorying in the victories of the Finnish civil war, wanted to rake revenge on all 'Reds' wherever they found them."[15] In reality, outside of the conservative Finnish strongholds, Finnish-American workers were able to exact revenge for their dead relatives through the use of the Committees of Inquiry and the newspapers. While in Finland the White Guard continued to commit extrajudicial atrocities against real and suspected "Reds," the Finnish workers in the

[12]Letter from the Comintern to the Workers Party of America, January 11, 1923 reprinted in *The Communist International, 1919-1943: Documents. Vol. II, 1923-1923* ed. Jane Degras (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 3.

[13]Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia: The Formative Period* (New York: Viking Press, 1960), 21-23.

[14] Tokoi, *Maanpakolaisen Muistelmia*, 340-341.

[15]Ibid, 246.

United States attempted to create a semblance of "legality" by creating committees to act, in the words of one such organization, as a kind of "national court."[16] The conservative Finns, for their part, all but ignored the actions and work of these committees, and instead focused on their victory in Finland and continued their program of nationalizing immigrants from Finland into Finnish immigrants.

It must be understood that most of the Finnish workers in America believed the victorious Finnish government to be an illegal regime that seized power through German military backing. To many, the real government was now in exile in Moscow. In February of 1918 the exiled Red government under Kullervo Manner issued the *Vallankumousoikeudet* (The Rights of the Revolution). This provisional law stated that in order to protect the achievements of the revolution, legal revolutionary courts would be created throughout the country. Section 1 of the provisional law created the legal basis for the court. Section 2 stated that "Revolutionary courts are set by the municipalities. The appointment of members and the appointment of a public prosecutor are carried out by the organized labor of the municipality, either directly at a joint meeting or through the local representative body where one exists."[17] This provisional law was known to the Finnish immigrants in the United States, and had been reprinted in both *Työmies* and *Industrialisti*.[18] It is therefore likely that some in the United States felt that they had the legal right and backing to investigate those coming from Finland, especially those committees that referred to themselves using the term "national court."

These seemingly official Committees of Inquiry did not begin operating across the United States and Canada until 1921. The available source material does not provide clarity as to why

[16]*Työmies*, September 7, 1922.
[17]Suomen Kansanvaltuuskunta, Vallankumousoikeudet 1918, February 1, 1918.
[18]J. Letonmäki, "Vallankumousoikeudet suomessa v. 1918," in *Suomen luokkasota. Historiaa ja muistelmia*, ed. Alex Halonen (Superior: Työmies, 1928), 62-70.

their operation did not begin until that time. The problem of newly arrived immigrants from Finland and their possible connections to the Civil War had been known for some time, and raised numerous times in the press beginning in 1919.[19] It is most likely that it was a combination of increased migration coming from Finland, and the postbellum ability to verify individuals' backgrounds that caused their rapid creation in Finnish regions across North America in 1921. The fear felt among Finnish-Americans was also continually being fueled by the newspapers that had daily stories titled "News from White Finland," which reported on the atrocities that had been committed and continued to be committed by the White Guard. These stories were long and detailed, and therefore effectively stoked the anger and resentment Finnish-American workers were feeling. The story quoted here illustrates the general tenor of such stories:

> More white blood! The gruesome story of a grave digger. The mind wants to silence the thoughts about the brutality and savagery that the Finnish bourgeoisie practiced in Finland in the aftermath of the most recent class war. In addition to the thousands of murders we have previously reported, we also cite the following story, which a grave digger has told with teary eyes to the detective police. It makes it clearer how many innocent and unknown victims have been murdered by bloodthirsty bourgeoisie in Finland, and how things have been kept a secret so far….In our last issue we reported that the head of the Finnish government [Mannerheimn] was guilty of numerous murders, so since the members of the government are guilty of murder, you can get an idea of what is happening in Finland to satisfy the bloodthirst of the rest of the bourgeoisie. The reader should remember that the bourgeoisie newspapers do not say a word about these murders, as many of their editors are also guilty of robbery and murder in one way or another.[20]

General Mannerheim was and continues to be the most celebrated hero in Finnish history for his role in the war for independence and later for his role in the Winter and Continuation Wars. To the workers movement he was enemy number one and was held responsible for the atrocities committed by the White Guard. No story reported in the press at the time directly connected Mannerheimn and other leading government officials to specific atrocities, but all of them began

[19]For example *Työmies*, June 16, 1919 and December 12, 1919.
[20]*Industrialisti*, August 8, 1921.

by reminding readers that since the leaders of the new bourgeois government in Finland were all murderers, then those below them would go equally unpunished and unchecked for their crimes. There is also always a connection in these articles between the bourgeoisie and revenge following the civil war, thus giving fuel to the rumors that the White Guard were continuing acts of violence after the war to "satisfy the bloodthirst," which, they believed, were being supported by Mannerheimn. The story continues:

> The grave digger Aleksander Mäkinen said he was the grave digger of Jämsä parish. Shortly after the Battle of Länkipohjan [March 16, 1918]…the prison guard Saari told the witness to dig more graves, which he did. In the evening, the prison guard Saari called on the telephone and ordered Mäkinen to come to Saaris house to retrieve some bodies, which the witness did. The bodies were around the corner from Saaris house and were moved by horse by Jalmari Saari and Mäkinen to the cemetery where they were buried in the graves dug by Mäkinen. Mäkinen said he did not know the identity of the bodies as Saari had not told him. The day after, Jalmari Saari told the witness that because the executions by his house had disturbed his neighbors, all executions would henceforth take place in front of the church bell tower. The behavior of Jalmari Saari, who had been accompanied by men unknown to several witnesses, had been threatening so the witness could do nothing but follow his orders.[21]

The articles also tend to include an innocent bystander who is forced to take part in the events. In this case it is the grave digger Aleksander Mäkinen. It is these bystanders who usually are the narrators of the events said to have transpired. While they are very detailed in their narration of the brutality of the events, they tend to be vague in the details of those specifically responsible for the massacres:

> Almost every night after that, Saari and his men captured and brought up to the bell tower, sometimes two, sometimes three, sometimes five, and even on time twelve people to be executed. In the morning, Saari ordered how many graves had to be dug, but many times more people were shot than graves had been ordered, and so they were buried on top of each other. On Saaris orders, the witness was forced to be present at the executions, even though he was disgusted by what was going on. Mäkinen could not say who killed the prisoners at the time, nor did the witness know all the shooters as many were from a different parish; however, he did say that Jalmari Saari, Juho Frommin, the parish clerk,

[21]Ibid.

> and Veikko Sippola were all present at the executions. The prisoners were brought in all handcuffed together, and thus often had to wait until their comrade connected to them was first shot. When the prisoners were shot, they were not wearing any outerwear, and the shooters would take the prisoners shoes, if they had better ones, off of the corpses.[22]

Here Mäkinen was unsure of who the killers were besides Saari, Frommin, and Sippola. The inclusion of Veikko Sippola is another trope in these articles. When the narrator claims to not know who the executioners were, they usually include Sippola as being present. This has led some scholars to attempt to clear Sippola of past crimes by showing that he could not have possibly been present in all the executions that he is claimed to have partaken in. While it is true that it is unlikely he participated in all of the executions he is said to have, he most certainly was involved in some extrajudicial murders. Regardless of his actual involvement in events, to the Finnish-American workers he became a sort of "boogieman" and the embodiment of White Finland's "butchery." The stories published about atrocities committed during and after the war highlight the brutality and inhumane nature of the crimes, which only added to the anger and fear felt by the readers of the stories. As this same article continues:

> Who the executed were, the witness did not usually know because the shootings took place in the dark of night, but the witness had known among them was the shop worker Fritjof Peltonen, the two shoemakers named Vahlroos, father and son, a farm laborer Verner Laakso from Koskenpää, and the Jämsä mill worker Hugo Harten and his wife Linda Harten. Also, Heikki Rajala, the machinist. Some of those executed would begin praying when they were brought to the place of execution, and would beg for mercy claiming they had nothing to do with the Reds or the rebellion, but no one was ever given mercy. The witness was most disturbed by the murder of Linda Harten. Her husband who had been shot before her had prayed and begged on his knees to spare her life for their five children, but no mercy was given to her either.

While the narrator of the events rarely knows or remembers the name of individuals executed, the individuals they do remember add to the horror of the event. For example, the inclusion of women, mothers, and whole families in the executions is another trope. In this execution it was a husband

[22]Ibid.

and wife with five children. The reader is given the image of the husband begging on his knees to spare his wife for the benefit of their children who will now be parentless. Mercy is never a theme in these stories. Another article in the *Työmies* reported on the extrajudicial killing of eighteen people, including an entire household and its children, who were returning from working in the fields. The reason for their murder, according to the article, was that the White Guardsmen, returning home from the war, saw them walking and assumed, since they were laborers, that they had been part of the recent rebellion.[23] The same article claims that when family members tried to get justice, government officials laughed at them. However, the grandson of one of the individuals reported killed in this incident, Elias Niemi, is now a politician in Finland, whose blog reports that he was told that his grandfather died from the Spanish flu which then also claimed the life of his grandmother.[24] The article in *Työmies*, by contrast, claims that Niemi's wife "upon learning of her husband's fate fell ill and died." This points to a problem in the source material and the possible unreliability of both stories that were published and family legends. In many newspaper stories the authors and witnesses to the events being described are anonymous, and it is rare for the victims' names to be shared. Was Elias Niemi murdered by White Guardsmen on their way home from the front in an extrajudicial killing, or did he die from the Spanish flu? The answer to this question may not be possible to find; however, what is relevant here is that Finnish-American workers believed that White Guardsmen had committed what they viewed as murder and atrocities against their fellow comrades in Finland, and they were consuming media that reinforced this belief. The illegality of the events is another theme in each of the stories printed. The first article quoted above continues:

[23]*Työmies*, August 11, 1921.
[24]http://kaiarilundell.blogspot.com/2018/05/1918.html

> Jalmari Saari and the other shooters had forbidden the witness from talking about the executions so that word would not spread in the village, which the witness had so far obeyed and had assured the dozens of people who had asked him that there was nothing to know. But now the witness would not conceal the facts of the crime which he detested and hated being a part of the entire time. The witness had subsequently received payment for digging the graves and assisting in the transportation of the bodies from the bank manager Bruno Tahvanainen, who was at the time a member of the Jämsä Civil Guard and who had written the payments without recording what the payments were for. The witness never asked by what right the prisoners were killed, but assumed it was on the basis of a court decision, even though the witness could not think of a court that could make such a decision in that location at the time. On closer inspection of the shooters, the witness said that for certain Jalmari Saari and Juho Frommin had at one point or another been a shooter, and also a farm owner from the village of Tervola in Jämsä. The witness had heard in the village a lot of talk about those who had been shot and had heard that many of them had been completely innocent of the entire rebellion and were only killed because of being working people. The witness cried out in tears that he had been forcibly involved in the execution and that he had not robbed any of the deceased.[25]

Here the witness to the event, the grave digger, claims the executions might have been ordered by a court, but is quick to point out that no such court existed in the area that would have that power. He is also sworn to secrecy, which would lead readers to understand the events as illegal (i.e. if they were court ordered executions, secrecy would not be necessary). This story follows the same pattern of others that were reported on a near daily basis in the workers' papers in North America. The witness that describes the events is always someone who was forced against their will to take part and, in most cases, the names of the perpetrators and victims are unknown. This uncertainty about the identities of the culprits is a theme in every article, putting the readers into a state of anger and suspicion because the killers of their comrades in Finland could be any of the people arriving since the end of the civil war. These vague and possibly embellished articles fed an atmosphere of suspicion and directed workers' anger against the bourgeois Finnish state, which culminated in the creation of the Committees of Inquiry throughout North America.

[25]*Industrialisti,* August 8, 1921.

By the end of 1921, at least thirty-eight committees were operating in the United States, to which an additional twenty-seven were added in 1922 and fifteen in 1923. After 1923 the number of committees still in operation began to fall and by 1926, only two committees are known to have remained operational. These numbers, however, are likely too low, because not all committees published notices and reports in newspapers. For example, in the Finnish press in Munising, Michigan, there is no mention of a local committee; however, some of the minute books of their meetings have been preserved. In September of 1921 the editors of *Työmies* stated that the minutes of the Committees of Inquiry had become too large and numerous to publish in its pages.[26] It therefore seems that in the committees' early stages *Työmies* considered it best to restrict the publication of their activity reports, and in response the editors of *Industrialisti* claimed that the work of the committees would be completely useless unless the results of their research were made public.[27] *Industrialisti* subsequently began publishing the results of the committees, as did *Työmies*, citing public pressure. The moderate socialist paper *Raivaaja*, by contrast, ceased cooperating with the committees at a very early stage and refused to print their minutes. By 1922 *Raivaaja* and its editors were more aligned with the social democrats, such as Tokoi, and the social democrats in Finland who were now focused on reintegration following the civil war, not revenge.

Minnesota and Michigan had the largest number of committees, but seeing as these areas held the highest number of Finnish immigrants, this is not surprising. In general, it appears that the number of Committees of Inquiry correlated with the proportion of the population of Finnish-Americans; however, in some areas there are a few strange features. A closer inspection of Michigan shows that not a single committee existed in or around the area of Hancock, the city with the largest Finnish population in North America. This is explained by the fact that the majority, if

[26]*Työmies*, September 3, 1921.
[27]*Industrialisti*, September 9, 1921.

not all, of the Finns in Hancock were part of the Finnish-American Right.[28] In Hancock, therefore, joining labor organizations was neither necessary nor was there any authority to compel anyone to answer questions. Montana had committees in Red Lodge and San Coulee, but there is no mention of a similar committee in Butte, even though Butte had a reputation as being a hotbed of Finnish radicals.[29] For example, the famous singer Wäino Sola made three trips to America in the 1920s and appeared in Communist and socialist halls across the country; however, it was not until his third trip in 1928 that he went to Butte, as he had previously been banned and labeled a butcher by the Communists there.[30] Sola had fought at the front on the side of the Whites and was very much a part of the bourgeois White culture in Finland. While other socialist groups were able to look past this to see him perform, the Communists in Butte would not. While Butte appears to have never had a Committee of Inquiry, much smaller Finnish communities created their own committees in towns such as Frankfort, Illinois and Temple, Maine. From these examples, it appears that the establishment of a committee was influenced in part by the number of Finns in the area, but even more by the level of activity of local labor organizations. At a glance it also appears that there were relatively fewer Committees of Inquiry in the West, even though a significant Finnish population lived along the Pacific Coast. This is explained by the fact that the majority of newly arriving Finns reached America from the East and the Great Lakes region, which is therefore where they would have come before a Committee of Inquiry before moving on to the West Coast. Reports from Aberdeen, Washington and Astoria, Oregon support this conclusion. Most of the

[28]Salomon Ilmonen, *Amerikan suomalaisten sivistyhistoria III* (Hancock: Suomalais-luteerilaisen kustannusliikkeen kirjapainossa, 1928), 187 and Armas Holmio, *Michiganin suomalaisten historia* (Hancock: Michiganin suomalaisten histroia-seura, 1967), 403.

[29]Elis Sulkanen, *Amerikan suomalaisen työväenliikkeen historia* (Fitchuburg: Amerikan suomalainen kansanvallan liitto, 1951), 458.

[30]Wäino Sola, *Wäino Sola kertoo* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1951), 243.

activity reported by the committees in these locals was verification that an individual had already been examined in a previous town.

3.2 Election of Committee Members and General Policies

The first Committees of Inquiry were chosen by joint workers' meetings and were not subordinate to any particular party or labor organization, but were rather expressions of the "collective spirit" of all organized workers.[31] While these initial committees worked under a general consensus, members of some labor organizations and political groups were angered that they were not represented. In a letter to *Industrialisti*, one writer complained that his local committee was composed of moderates who were willing to allow Whites to be granted full comradeship if they claimed they had only fought due to forced conscription. He argued that most soldiers who "butchered his brethren" might invoke this same excuse, and that no leniency should be given, "as in other localities."[32] In another letter, a disgruntled worker argued along similar lines, and went on to give the names of individuals who had been cleared but whom he insisted were in fact "butchers."[33] This "naming of names" caused a problem for the editors of the different publications, as well as the committees. In Detroit a man named Paul Alanne came before the local committee because people had accused him of war crimes ever since his arrival in America. The Detroit committee, however, announced that "Comrade Paul Allene worked during the revolution at a Russian machinery workshop and came here with a stamped work certificate from the revolutionary committee…nobody has the right to call Paul Alanne a butcher."[34] Similarly, in

[31]For example, *Työmies*, February 21, 1921.
[32]*Industrialisti*, October 28, 1921.
[33]*Työmies*, November 12, 1921.
[34]*Industrialisti*, July 25, 1921

Superior, Wisconsin a Finnish-speaking Finn with a Swedish name fell under constant attack and was declared a murderer by the workers in the area on account of his name. Swedish Finns had been completely aligned with the Whites during the Civil War, with the bulk of the officers being Swedish-speaking Finns. The committee there wrote, "The committee has recently interviewed Oscar Lindroos and as a result of our investigation we would like to state that there is no reason to suppose he was involved in the slaughtering or torturing of our Finnish comrades or otherwise involved in assisting the whites in their attempts to destroy the working class…based on our investigations we would like to remind everyone that no one has the right to call anyone a butcher unless otherwise stated."[35] The committees faced an epidemic of people being accused of war crimes simply because they arrived after the civil war. Newspapers did not help solve this problem, as they continued to publish rumors of suspected butchers hiding among honest workers.

The dissenters aside, in most localities the committees were formed as joint efforts. In places where several workers' organizations were active, they usually each elected representatives to the Joint Committee of Inquiry. For example, in Detroit the committee had three members from the Socialist Party, three members from the IWW, and two members from the Marxist Club.[36] In smaller communities and areas with only one labor organization, there were usually only three members on a committee, while in larger Finnish communities it was normal to have between five and eight committee members.[37] In Brooklyn, a committee started with two members elected by the Brooklyn Construction Workers' Union, who then presented the matter to the Brooklyn Finnish Socialist Division which told them to continue to act as a committee while adding three more

[35]*Industrialisti,* July, 29, 1921.
[36]*Työmies*, September 10, 1921.
[37]*Industrialisti,* April 3, 1921 and *Työmies*, September 10, 1921.

members. The announcement made by the Brooklyn Committee of Inquiry illustrates well the nature of the committees:

> Finally, the long-awaited Committee of Inquiry came to fruition. This committee has been desperately needed here from the start, since there have been many suspicious personalities, even downright butchers, working among us…It was decided that all persons who have come from Finland after the Civil War, whether they be members of the IWW or not, should come to the Committee of Inquiry to clarify their relationship with the Civil War and, if possible bring certificates from their respective Finnish labor organizations. All workers on the payroll are asked to cooperate with the committee by informing them of any suspected butchers who are trying to hide among honest workers so that the necessary steps can be taken against them. So I urge all those who know they have done wrong to come and confess their sins. If you do not then what happened recently to one of our brothers' killers, Mr. Itkonen, will happen to you. Henceforth, any person who deliberately neglects to attend a committee meeting after receiving an invitation will be considered and treated as a butcher. His name and domicile will be published in all labor magazines so that workers around the country will know to give him the treatment he deserves. Workers everywhere follow the example and put into practice the good phrase: We will never forget. By doing so we may get some of the butchers to bitterly regret their bloody wrongs they committed while acting as the knights of the bourgeoisie against their own class.[38]

Cooperation between the different labor organizations in these committees did not run smoothly for very long. Already in May of 1921, some labor organizations began to scold the moderate socialist organizations for having taken in Finnish-born migrants without investigating their role in the Civil War. The syndicalists and Communists favored only allowing migrants into their ranks who had actively fought for or helped the revolutionaries in Finland, while moderate socialists accepted those who had stayed out of the conflict altogether and even allowed Whites who claimed they had only fought due to conscription. In an oral history interview in 1962, Armas Aho recalled that during this period the Finns in Astoria were divided between the "Reds, whites, and pinks who had sat on the fence waiting to see who the victor would be." Aho claimed that most anger was directed at those that had never picked a side. As an avid union supporter and

[38]*Industrialisti*, July 22, 1921.

former member of the IWW, he believed that such "pinks" could never really be trusted, as they went always in the direction that favored their own personal interests and not the interests of all workers.[39] It seems that Aho's view of these "fence sitters" was the general view of the more radical Finnish workers, while the moderates, composed in part of these inbetweeners, were willing to extend comradeship to those Finns that made a public apology for their actions during the civil war. This practice of forgiving and moving forward seems to have been the prevalent attitude among moderate socialists organizations, and mentions of the Committees of Inquiry and similar activities are extremely rare in moderate socialists publications such as *Raivaaja*, which was based in Fitchburg. The fact that Oskari Tokoi was fully welcomed by the Fitchburg Socialists at the same time he was being denounced by the Communists as a labor traitor also demonstrates the attitude of the Socialist moderates in the aftermath of the Finnish Civil War.[40] This had not always been the case in Fitchburg; in 1920 singer Wäinö Sola's tour stop in Fitchburg had been cancelled due to the efforts of local radicals, but by 1928 the attitude of *Raivaaja* had changed so drastically that Tokoi became its editor.[41] Elis Sulkanen was a Finnish-American journalist who, throughout his career, had worked for *Työmies*, *Sosialisti*, and *Toveri*. Later in life he disavowed communism and joined his former enemy, *Raivaaja*. In his own memoir and history of this period, Sulkanen claims that the communist movement had a strong following in Fitchburg among the Finns up until 1920, but gradually lost all its support due to internal crises and disorganization.[42] Fitchburg subsequently became the stronghold of Finnish moderate socialism.

The spread of communist organizations within Finnish communities is what led to the fragmentation of the Joint Committees of Inquiry, as the Communists rarely agreed with the

[39]Armas Aho, Interview, March 15, 1962, Aberdeen City Museum Archive.
[40]Tokoi, *Maanpakolaisen Muistelmia*, 343-344.
[41]Sola, 229.
[42]Sulkanen, 380-381.

organizations' decisions and would routinely reexamine those who had previously been granted comradeship.[43] By 1922 the Communists began to withdraw their members from the joint committees and to elect their own commissions.[44] By the Autumn of 1923 the disintegration process of the joint committees had come to a head, and in November the Executive Committee of the Finnish Socialists Organizations issued a recommendation to the Committees of Inquiry calling for their investigations to be restricted to persons who wished to join labor unions and organizations.[45] This advice was ignored by the more radical groups, which continued to demand that anyone who came from Finland, regardless of their wish to join a union, would have to appear before a committee.

Despite Tokoi's belief that these committees had been ordered by the Comintern and responsible to it, available sources suggest that local labor organization were almost always responsible for their activities In International Falls, Minnesota, for example, the minutes and reports of the Committee of Inquiry had to be reviewed by a general meeting. The same body criticized the committee and urged it operate better and more quickly in the future.[46] In Cromwell, Minnesota, the Committee of Inquiry came under fire for not holding any interviews, and was called on to defend itself at an extraordinary section meeting where it was decided that the committee would be allowed to continue it work, but better results were expected in the future.[47] Similarly, in Cloquet, Minnesota a writer who signed as "wanting clarity" wrote to *Industrialisti*:

> Beginning in the spring…a committee was elected, whose task it was to find out from Finland how the men and women coming from Finland had participated in the class war that had raged there. It has been so long since this meeting that we believe the committee would have been able to get this information twice over, but nothing has happened. Has the committee neglected its mission or where is the fault? There are rumors that the

[43]*Työmies,* April 4, 1922.
[44]*Työmies*, May 10, 1922.
[45]*Työmies,* November 28, 1923.
[46]*Työmies*, February 2, 1922
[47]*Työmies,* January 11, 1923.

> committee has received information on these individuals. If so, I think that this committee was chosen with the hope that we would all know whether there are butchers among us or not. I would therefore like to demand that the committee let the public know what it has found out. For everyone, I suppose, still remembers the events, the extrajudicial slaughtering the butchers did after the end of the Finnish Civil War. Even now, our brothers' shed blood is crying out for revenge.[48]

This complaint is identical in form to others that were published. It illustrates the anger the Finnish working class was feeling in America, as well as how it perceived these committees as their tools for revenge. The committee in Cloquet responded to the author by reminding everyone that its members were elected by a People's Assembly and therefore had no personal motives in the matter. Regarding the slowness of their work, they argued that the invitations to appear before the committee have gone unanswered and "in our locality most of the people do not belong to a labor organization thus they have little power to enforce any rulings."[49] This supports the argument that these committees were really only able to function in localities where organized workers outnumbered conservative Finns, which in Cloquet was not the case. In response to the committee's reply, the author of the original complaint sent another letter naming those rumored to be "butchers," and urged everyone to treat them as such until proven otherwise.[50] Similar problems continued to plague committees across North America, which would typically end their announcements with reminders that no one should be regarded and treated as guilty until the committee has ruled them to be such. As time went on, this problem escalated and committees were careful to report any information they received in order to avoid attempts at vigilante justice.

Initially, the Committees of Inquiry met regularly and were formal in structure. Their subjects came before a committee, either after being invited or voluntarily, and reported on their involvement in the Finnish Civil War, and a record was kept of each interrogation. This record

[48]*Industrialisti,* August 2, 1921.
[49]*Industrialisti,* August 6, 1921.
[50]*Industrialisti,* August 12, 1921.

was then published verbatim. After 1924, the meetings changed character. The committees no longer met on a regular basis, and announced dates of meetings were often missed. This was due to the fact that the number of Finns coming to the United States was significantly reduced by 1924, and it was no longer necessary to hold meetings as often as before. For example, in 1925 in Superior, Wisconsin an individual had to request for the committee to convene, although it had previously met every Sunday from 1921 to 1923.[51]

The usual practice was to give an individual "temporary comradeship" until reliable evidence of their activities in the civil war was obtained, unless anything suspicious was already known.[52] In particular, it was noted repeatedly that no one was to be labelled a "butcher" until the Committee of Inquiry had confirmed the charge.[53] The fact that such statements had to be issued, multiple times, shows that those arriving from Finland were mistrusted, even when their actual activities during the war were not yet known. When the required certificates arrived from Finland, committees would proceed as required. For example, if the person in question had fought in the ranks of the Reds or had otherwise assisted the Red Guard, the committee granted them full comradeship. They then were entitled to all the benefits of whichever labor organization they joined. This caused some tension within the Finnish Socialist Executive Committee, which required a person to have a fully paid-up membership as a condition for full comradeship, and argued that the local Committees of Inquiry were neither able nor authorized to check on the payment of dues. The Executive Committee reiterated that the Committees of Inquiry were only to ascertain an individual's background in regards to the Finnish Civil War. In practice, however,

[51]Finnish Socialist Organization of Superior meeting minutes, September 9, 1925, Turun Yliopisto: Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos, Teutorin kirjasto.

[52]*Työmies*, September 3, 1921.

[53]*Industrialisti*, October 15, 1921.

this request was ignored, as declarations of full comradeship continued to be published in the press by the investigative committees.[54]

The publication of exonerations and confirmations of comradeship was important to both the Finnish workers already in the United States and those who came after the Civil War. These were public notices of how to treat individuals, either as a friend or an enemy. The importance of this is illustrated by the fact that many individuals returned to Committees of Inquiry if their testimony and background had not been published. For example the committee in International Falls, Minnesota announced:

> Emil Virtanen also came to the meeting to make things clear from a previous meeting. He also had his own testimony which had previously not been disclosed and he would like to make it known. The certificate of the above-mentioned person was re-approved by the meeting. The certificate reads as follows: This certifies that Emil Virtanen has not been in any (at least not friendly) relationship with the White Guard in Finland and that he is in all respects a trusted worker. To all workers, Emil Virtanen should not be regarded as a butcher but as a friend of the workers and granted full comradeship.[55]

Virtanen had previously been mentioned in an announcement, but only regarding his attendance of the meeting. As his case shows, the granting of comradeship was not taken seriously or considered legitimate unless it was published in full in the newspapers. It is for this reason that the initial ban on the publication of the minutes of the Committees of Inquiry by *Työmies* in 1921 was greeted with hostility. Similarly, the *Ettenpäin* came under attack for arbitrarily shortening the announcements of the Committee of Inquiry to the point that the editors of *Industrialisti* called the paper an enemy of the worker.[56]

Committee investigators denied comradeship credit if a certificate from Finland stated that the person concerned had fought or otherwise assisted the Whites in the civil war. Such individuals

[54]*Työmies,* November 11, 1923 and *Vapaus,* October 10, 1923.
[55]*Industrialisti,* August 4, 1921.
[56]*Industrialisti,* November 8, 1921.

were literally proclaimed to be "full-blooded butchers" (*täysiverisiksi lahtareiksi*).[57] If an individual did not comply with the Committee of Inquiry they would also be declared butchers, even without first getting information from Finland.[58] The exact practices of the committees seem to have varied slightly, but most commonly an individual who had arrived from Finland would be invited twice before being declared an enemy. The Committee of Inquiry would send each invitation in writing or authorize a member, in the company of two witnesses, to deliver it.[59] By using this measure, *Työmies* explained, the committee eliminated the possibility that the subject could claim they had never received the invitation to attend. If, after both attempts, the person concerned did not attend the meeting, the committee declared him or her a "butcher" and published their name, address, and any other personal data they had in the newspaper. If the person moved to another local, word would be sent that they should continue to be treated as a butcher by all workers.[60] As the committee in Superior noted, "There is no reason for anyone to avoid questioning, because sooner or later, you will have to submit."[61] In such cases where an individual moved to another location after being invited but without appearing before a committee, they were regarded as publicly admitting guilt by the working population. Once one was declared a butcher, it was common for newspapers to publish announcements regarding their whereabouts as they moved around the continent, making it difficult for them to live in any locality except those dominated by conservative Finns. This had the unintended effect of populating the conservative Finnish regions across North America with individuals that had not only strong nationalist sentiments, but also a hatred for the workers' movement.

[57]For example, *Industrialisti*, November 8, 1921.
[58]*Työmies*, September 3, 1921.
[59]For example, *Industrialisti*, June 22, 1921 and July 30, 1921.
[60]*Työmies*, September 8, 1921.
[61]*Industrialisti*, August 4, 1921.

3.3 The Committees of Inquiry and their Relationship with Finland

In the early stages of the Committees of Inquiry, most individuals were able to satisfy the investigators with the evidence they had brought from Finland. Initially, any certificate brought from Finland was acceptable; however, already in 1921 the Finnish-American working population began to pay close attention to the certifiers. It was feared that the certificates could be written by anyone – "Mannerheim himself" could be writing the certificates, at least one newspaper article emphasized, and therefore their reliability could not be assumed.[62] It was believed that it would be better to require a certificate from a labor union in Finland, at which point it would at least be certain that the certifier was on the side of the workers. One problem with this was that the many of the unions in Finland were willing to grant full comradeship to individuals who had been forced to the front on the side of the Whites. However, as noted above, it was widely believed in North America that no one could be forced to the front and forced to kill their fellow workers.[63] This was especially the belief of the more radical Finnish-American groups. For this reason, the investigating committees did not always rely on the certificates issued by labor unions, but decided to also question the Socialist Workers Party of Finland (*Suomen sosialistisen työväenpuolueen*, or SSTP) about the reliability of the certifiers. The controversy between the moderate Finnish-American socialists, on one hand, and Communists and the IWW, on the other, had already grown to such an extent that the Communists and IWW no longer believed they could trust the moderate Finnish socialist organizations and the certificates they gave.[64] The SSTP was a better option for the Communists and the IWW. The party had been founded after the civil war and was composed

[62]*Industrialisti*, October 13.1921.
[63]*Industrialisti*, December 12, 1921 and *Työmies*, January 16, 1922
[64]*Industrialisti*, September 20, 1921.

of individuals who broke from the Social Democratic Party (*Suomen sosialidemokraattinen puolue*) as well as former members of the now illegal Communist Party of Finland. The SSTP's connection with the Communist Party made its situation difficult and at times dangerous, which was reflected in some of its responses to the Committees of Inquiry. In one response its members confirmed a committee's suspicion that it had found a former White soldier with a fake membership card and certificate. Their reply contained the added message: "You are aware through the newspapers about the party issues here in Finland, so we ask that the information we have provided and our identities not come to [the accused man] Perttula's knowledge, because through him we might end up in a prison cell here."[65] They were correct to be fearful of their position in Finland. In 1923, due to their connection with the Communist International, all leading members of the party, as well as numerous members of parliament, were rounded up by the police and jailed.

The inquiries sent to Finland also became more formal in 1921. First in Chicago, and then throughout the country, committees began to require all questionnaires sent to Finland to be stamped and accompanied by the officers' signatures. Similarly, they required all certificates from Finland to contain a stamp and signatures.[66] This practice emphasized the official nature of the matter, and also provided greater accuracy. For example, certificates that were not stamped with a workers' association stamp were sent back to Finland with a verification request and stamp.[67] The rapid increase in the number of people needing to be investigated also led to the formalization of the questionnaire sent to Finland, so that committees only needed to fill in the name and date as well as attach their stamp and signatures. The form particularly noted that "No private testimonials

[65]*Industrialisti,* July 28. 1921.
[66]*Työmies*, September. 4, 1921.
[67]*Työmies*, February 26, 1922.

will be accepted, only certificates from the labor unions and the party are taken into consideration."[68]

The need for certified certificates in America became known in Finland, so most new immigrants knew to obtain them before leaving.[69] As a result, individuals who had fought on the side of the Whites began to obtain fake certificates, either through acquaintances or by stealing a union stamp and writing the necessary certificates themselves. For example, one letter to the workers in the United States warned,

> From Karijoki to the Industrial Workers. I write you comrades to inform you that once again butchers have left to America bearing certificates of our protection, but that are filled with butchers' names that you should be wary of. Their names are: John Ketomäki who is going to Red Lodge, Montana and who has worked at the headquarters of the butchers and forced honest workers to comply with Mannerheim's order and go to the front to slaughter Finnish workers. The name of the other is Iivari Korhonen, who is accompanied by his wife, though their arrival point and destination is unknown to me. He is a passionate butcher and was even awarded a butcher medal of bravery that he always wears proudly. This same "awardee of valor" got caught up in the liquor trade so he thinks his profession will be more successful in America. Matti Mäkitorkoita, who has gone to Minnesota to hunt these butchers, will tell you more of their deeds. The butchers must be held accountable when they flee to America. I have heard they have excellent recommendations, but do not know how they have acquired them. The Workers Association has made no recommendations for them.[70]

Other letters like this one continued to arrive in America, warning workers of Whites arriving with fake documents.[71] The letter quoted above also highlights what Finnish workers in both Finland and America viewed as their right to take revenge on Whites in the United States when justice was not served in Finland. What is more, it appears workers in Finland were sending "hunters" after these individuals, knowing that revenge would be possible outside of Finland. The problem of forged certificates led to closer control and scrutiny by Finnish-American workers, and

[68]Bruno Joannes Helgreniä Papers. Työväenliikkeen kirjasto, Helsinki.
[69]*Industrialisti,* March 10, 1921.
[70]*Industrialisti,* April 18, 1921.
[71]For example *Industrialisti,* May 16, 1921 and June 2, 1921.

created an atmosphere of distrust that the newspapers helped feed. The committees began to question the Socialist Workers Party of Finland about the validity of certain certificates and the organizations that had issued them.[72] The SSTP then had to obtain information from the local organizations, leading to the committee directly and indirectly contacting the same association multiple times, which provoked indignation and frustration in Finland as multiple requests were being made for certificates that had already been issued but had not been trusted. The replies to these requests could be bitter in tone, for example one terse response that noted, "We have received your request. This being the second certificate sent, not to count the one that accompanied him, you should now be assured that he has not participated in the slaughter mentioned above."[73]

The initiative for corresponding with the workers' associations in Finland came from Finnish-Americans. Often the investigating committees had to send repeated inquiries before a reply would arrive. This may be due to the fact that after the war, the activities of the labor unions in Finland were in decline and under scrutiny; however, the fact that Finnish workers warned Finnish-Americans of the arrival of "butchers" shows some activity on their part. In most cases this was carried out through private correspondence. Workers' newspapers in the United States indicated that Whites were coming to America and urged workers to keep their guard up, but in most cases they did not say where this information was coming from. This is likely due to the fact that they worried about retaliation and punishment in Finland. It is certain, however, that warnings were sent on a regular basis from Turku, Ikaalinen, Kuotane, Karijoke, and Helsinki.[74] The majority of responses from Finland came from the areas of Etelä-Pohjanmaa and Pohjois-Satakunta. This is understandable, as the brutality of the civil war and its aftermath was felt most

[72]*Työmies*, December 19, 1922.
[73]*Työmies*, October 26, 1923.
[74]For example see *Industrialisti* April 18, 1921, *Työmies*, January 4, May 3, December 12, 1922, *Eteenpäin*, January 4, 1922.

severely in these areas. No responses ever arrived from the Swedish-speaking regions of Finland, due to the fact that the Swedish-speaking Finnish populations in both Finland and America stayed clear of workers' organizations and were generally ardent supports of the White Guard. In America, the Swedo-Finnish papers treated the civil war and the Red Guard in the same way that the conservative Finnish papers did, in that they regarded the entire workers' movement and those involved as traitors to Finland.[75]

In 1968, the University of Turku sent questionnaires to Finnish immigrants in the United States. The final question on the form was a general request for information about their lives in America. Respondent John Ketomäki wrote six pages in which he spent a great deal of time venting about the Finnish Communists in America and their treatment of him. He had been accosted by a group of Finns upon arrival at the train station in Duluth on his way to Montana, and was pulled from the train and severely beaten before being taken to a building where he was held until the Committee of Inquiry could meet. While waiting for the investigation he was able to escape and, knowing he would not be welcomed in Red Lodge, he went to Hancock in Michigan. There he found work and resided up to the time of the questionnaire. This again highlights two important facts: that the workers in America felt it was their duty and right to take revenge on Finns who had fought on the side of the Whites; and that their ability to take revenge only extended to the areas where leftist Finnish workers were in the majority. Ketomäki, upon his escape, went immediately to Hancock because he knew that area was inhabited by conservative Finns who would treat him as a hero and not as a criminal. He did lament that he was not able to make it to Montana, as his

[75]For example see *Finska Amerikanaren* Deccember 21, April 18, May 9, 1918.

brother and two uncles were already there, and he blamed the "traitors of Finland" for his misfortune.[76]

3.4 The Committees of Inquiry and "Butchers"

The attitude of the Finnish-American working population towards those who fought on the White side of the Finnish Civil War varied slightly according to the circumstances. Already in 1921 committees were urging workers not to treat anyone as a butcher until it was learned if the person concerned had volunteered to fight for the Whites or had been forced.[77] As previously mentioned this advice went unheeded, as evidenced by the need for committees to issue continual reminders. In some cases, individuals came from Finland and openly admitted they had fought for the Whites, arguing that their circumstances had made other options impossible or blaming the stupidity of youth and ignorance. In these rare cases committees did grant full comradeship if the subject made a full and public confession and apologized. This was extremely rare and has only been found in six cases.[78] An example of one such apology reads:

Comrades. In an effort to become a member of the working organization, I must first ask for forgiveness for what I have done during the class war in Finland in 1918 having taken part in it voluntarily on the side of the whites who oppressed the interests of the workers. Now I have come to realize that I have done a great wrong. I have fought against my own interest. I did this out of ignorance, being under the influence of the atmosphere that prevailed in the area where I lived. I

[76]Survey of Finnish Immigrants, University of Turku, 1968, Turun Yliopisto: Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos, Teutorin kirjasto.

[77]*Industrialisti*, October 15, 1921.

[78]*Industrialisti*, February 12, 1921, *Ettenpäin* September 9, 1922, *Työmies*, June 3, 1923, April 11, August 1, November 27, 1924.

had never thought, that is, I never studied politics to see that my interest belongs with the workers. Now, after coming to this continent I have come to realize exactly where I need to contribute and the group I should belong to. This is why I ask you to forgive what I have done in Finland in 1918. I will now join you in your fight and fight against the capitalist class.[79] This contains features that are common to all the public apologies, such as the fact that the activities on the Whites' side were due to "ignorance." Another common feature of the apologies is the claim that the labor movement was completely unknown to the confessor until after they arrived in the United States.

The arrival, or suspected arrival, of White "butchers" in the Americas is what led to the establishment of the Committees of Inquiry. Workers feared that the Whites might invade labor organizations, and at the same time individuals coming from Finland wanted to start in America with a clean reputation. Once declared a butcher, newcomers were promised the treatment they "deserved as slaughterers of their own class."[80] If their arrival in a community was known beforehand, in many cases workers waited at the train station in order to force them to acknowledge their deeds. In some cases, Whites were able to circumvent this treatment by giving the committee an address in Finland from which to request a certificate and then slipping away before a response arrived. This was the case, for example, of Heikki Niemi. He first arrived in Canada, where he was given time by the Committee of Inquiry while it obtained his certificates in Finland, but he allegedly left for Ironwood, Michigan the following day. The workers in Ironwood were put on alert, but he never arrived.[81] As in the case of John Ketoämaki, the Finnish labor movement sent warnings about the arrival of Whites in America, especially when it was believed they would be carrying false documents. The "butcher" who was the target of the largest chase was Veikko

[79]*Työmies*, November 27, 1924.
[80]*Työmies*, January 2, 1921.
[81]*Industrialisti*, May 9, 1920.

Sippola, who was one of the most well-known symbols of White terror after the war.[82] Finnish workers accused Sippola of killing around seventy people; however, the number of alleged murders rose as high as 136, according to the Finnish-American *Työmies*.[83] Regardless of the exact number, the Finnish-American working population believed Sippola to be a "major butcher." His picture and personal details were published in the summer of 1921 by both *Industrialist* and *Työmies*. The accompanying announcement is quite telling regarding what workers were expected to do upon confronting a butcher:

> Here is a picture of Veikko Sippola, the great murderer of Finnish workers. According to his own speeches, he has killed 76 Red Guard and brave working-class fighters since the Civil War. He is a murderer so lying is also a characteristic he has. It is believed he really has 130 workers deaths on his conscience…He should be very recognizable from this picture. As mentioned, the original name of this great butcher is Veikko Sippola. Today, however, he uses the name Veikko Heino. He speaks several languages…it is not necessary to mention what kind of treatment this murderer of 130 working class people deserves from the workers in this country. Let you own conscience guide you. Above all we ask workers to take their revenge. (We have made a picture plate of his image, which we will send freely upon request.)[84]

While the paper did not directly advocate for violence against individuals, it is clear what the editors of the *Industrialisti* were telling workers to do. The final part of the message, however, caused some confusion. Within a week the editors were receiving dozens of letters requesting his picture—so many that they had to print another announcement clarifying that they meant they would send the plate to other publishers, but would not send individual photos to people.[85] Apparently, readers were eager to check that Sippola was not lurking around their vicinity. In Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario there was a suspicious-looking person who was believed to be Sippola. He was brought before a "General Citizens Meeting" where it was confirmed he was not the "great

[82]Jaako Paavolainen, *Poliitiset väkivaltaisuudet Suomessa 1918, II: Valkoinen terrori* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1966), 251.
[83]*Työmies*, February 24, 1922.
[84]*Industrialisti*, July 6, 1921.
[85]*Industrialisti*, July 13, 1921.

murderer." In the event of further such errors, this person was given a certificate at the meeting with a department stamp that declared him not to be Sippola even though his appearance suggested otherwise.[86] The actual Sippola spent the next few years under a fake name in San Francisco, but he was discovered to have entered the United States under a false name and false papers, and as such he was arrested but was released on bail. He fled to Canada, where he continued to elude capture until he returned to Finland in 1930, where he lived out the rest of his life.

Another notorious White who caught the attention of workers across the continent was Eli Anttila, who was traveling through Detroit and Marquette in 1922.[87] He evaded capture in Marquette but in Detroit was requested to attend a meeting of the Committee of Inquiry. Knowing his fate, he attempted to leave but, according to a *Työmies* correspondent, was captured by a group of men and held until another meeting could be arranged. After being beaten severely he escaped and a month later appeared again in Marquette.[88] There Anttila attempted to attend a dance but again was taken away by force by a group of Finnish men and was not heard from again. The *Työmies* correspondent who witnessed the event claimed "maybe he moved to a more friendly area, or had been a victim of an accident, or had been retaliated by Finnish-American workers taking their rightful revenge for his slaughter of workers," and it "was considered best to remain silent thereafter."[89]

There is no concrete evidence of the killing of Whites by Communists or IWW members in the United States. There were reports, similar to those regarding Anttila, that individuals had possibly gone missing. The surveys conducted by the University of Turku in 1968, however, shed some interesting light on the matter. Twelve respondents claimed they knew for a fact that those

[86]*Työmies*, September 8, 1921.
[87]*Työmies*, July 19, August 24, September 7, 1922.
[88]*Työmies*, July 27, 1922.
[89]*Työmies*, September 7, 1922.

who were discovered to be White Guards in the United States were killed.[90] Aukusti Vertanen, in his response, claimed that at a meeting in Canada they actually voted in front of him whether or not he should be killed.[91] However, aside from these twelve, the other thousands of respondents did not mention such knowledge. All that can be said for certain is that Finnish-American workers felt that justice had not been served in Finland, and that on this side of the Atlantic it was possible to exact some form of revenge. The newspapers and the Committees of Inquiry routinely reminded workers to treat "butchers" as they had treated the working population of Finland, but they never directly advocated murder.

The primary purpose of announcing the identities of White Guards and their whereabouts was instead to allow organized workers everywhere to be wary of them, and to make it impossible for them to find peace anywhere in America. They were not allowed to obtain employment, enter bars, or find housing.[92] For example, Saimi Nurmio had been declared a "butcher" by a committee in Duluth, at which point he was "dismissed from his job, his living quarters, and the workers' house, after which he went to work at a canteen. The workers at the canteen held a meeting and forced him to leave. He was then forced to vacate an apartment he had begun renting. *Industrialisti* announced, "All organized workers are to treat the butcher Salmi Nurmio with the treatment of the butchers."[93] Many who, like Nurmio, had fought on the side of the Whites returned to Finland

[90]Survey of Finnish Immigrants, University of Turku, 1968, Turun Yliopisto: Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos, Teutorin kirjasto.

[91]Survey of Finnish Immigrants, University of Turku, 1968, 5539, Turun Yliopisto: Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos, Teutorin kirjasto.

[92]For example, *Työmies*, June 22, 1921, August 8, August 17, 1923, April 16, 1924.

[93]*Industrialisti,* July 9, 1923.

because of the "persecution of the communists."[94] Others moved to areas where there were no Finns or where there were only conservative Finns.[95]

3.5 Conclusion

The activities of the Committees of Inquiry were directly connected to the Finnish Civil War as well as to the Finnish-American communist movement and the IWW. The moderate socialists, on the other hand, kept themselves at a distance. On the basis of the material available, the formation of the Committees of Inquiry appears to have been due to two factors. First, the Finnish-American labor unions wanted to keep their ranks free from traitors, and, if possible, to punish those who fought on the side of the Whites in the 1918 Finnish Civil War. Second, immigrants from Finland after the civil war sought a way to clear themselves of unpleasant accusations. Even if a higher body, such as the Comintern, did order their creation, a desire already existed for something like the Committees of Inquiry within Finnish-American communities.

The most fundamental factor behind the establishment of the investigative committees was the escalation of the ideological divide among Finnish-Americans. Workers' movements had already received tremendous support even before the First World War, and the loss suffered by Finnish workers during the civil war deepened the divide between the Finnish-American bourgeoisie, or conservatives, and the working population. The Right continued to support "White" Finland while the labor movement had put all of its efforts and energy on the side of the Reds and the international workers' movement that was desperately hoped for. This bitterness was

[94] Survey of Finnish Immigrants, University of Turku, 1968, 5522, Turun Yliopisto: Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos, Teutorin kirjasto.

[95] Survey of Finnish Immigrants, University of Turku, 1968, 565, Turun Yliopisto: Historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitos, Teutorin kirjasto.

increased by the "white terror" that followed the civil war, and the fact that the workers' new revolution, an idea that many believed in, never came to fruition. This divide between the nationalist White Finns and those who viewed themselves as part of an international workers' movement would never be healed in the United States and Canada, and would not begin to heal in Finland until the Winter War twenty-five years later. The fallout within Finnish-American communities illustrates, most importantly, the ways in which seemingly national events, like civil wars, manifests themselves within migrant communities abroad. In many respects, the Committees of Inquiry and the actions of the Finnish-American labor movement in America can be seen as extensions of the Finnish Civil War.

In the United States, the Committees of Inquiry experienced a booming period from 1921 to 1924, when their network of activities covered almost the entire Finnish-American settlement area. After that, activity declined sharply and by 1925 was almost non-existent. The reason for this was the shift of Finnish immigration to Canada instead of the United States. In this period the committees played an important role in the Finnish-American labor movement, a role that has previously gone unnoticed. They were able to do so because they proved to be an effective way of ensuring working-class traitors did not join workers' organizations, as well as a method for Finnish workers to take revenge on those they believed to have participated in the full-scale butchering of their working-class comrades in Finland. It is certain that this revenge included some violent elements, but there is no definitive proof of the assassination of Whites by Finnish-American radicals.

Historical research has completely ignored the work of these committees not because the phenomenon was insignificant, but because of the difficulties in obtaining source materials. There are no surviving complete minute books from the committees. Their minutes were also reported in

Finnish-language labor newspapers; however, these papers do not exist in complete collections anywhere, but instead reside in several libraries across two continents in fragmentary form. However, collecting and bringing together these fragments allowed a great deal of the work of the investigative committees to be uncovered. These newspapers, like the conservative Finnish newspapers discussed in the previous chapter, worked to reinforce the ideology and aspirations of their readers while providing them with ammunition against "the other."

Chapter 4

Finnish-Americans and the Finnish Right in the Aftermath of the "War for Independence"

As discussed in the previous chapter, following the Finnish Civil War, the Finnish-American radical Left turned its energies towards furthering the international workers' movement. Part of its activities focused on rooting out Finnish migrants deemed enemies of the workers' movement, while the rest of its undertakings fell in line with the broader socialist, syndicalist, and communist movements in the United States. Connections with Finland, beyond exchanging information on migrants arriving in North America, were sparse. Simultaneously, the Finnish-American Right focused its attention on forging deeper bonds with the homeland in an attempt to nationalize the Finnish population of North America, while excluding those on the Left. This was also the goal of the victorious White Government in Finland, which actively pursued spreading the idea of a "Greater Finland" wherein Finns abroad would see themselves politically and socially as part of the newly independent Finland. This was to be achieved, in part, through organized trips of Finnish migrants to the homeland, which were widely reported on in conservative papers both in Finland and the United States. The first of these official visits occurred in June of 1921, when over 500 Finnish immigrants arrived in Helsinki to attend celebrations, as well as a conference organized in their honor. The goal of the conference was to discuss ways to better develop future communications between Finland and her citizens abroad.

These efforts were especially important to the leading party in Finland, the monarchist far-right Kansallinen Kokoomus (National Coalition Party, or KOK) and its news organ, *Uusi Suomi* (New Finland). Acting as a foil was the re-established Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue (Social Democratic Party, or SDP) and its newspaper, the *Suomen Sosialidemokraatissa* (Finnish

Social Democrat). These two papers reported on organized expeditions of Finnish migrants back to Finland in stark contrast to each other. In order to better understand conservative Finnish-Americans in the post-war period, it is necessary to understand these efforts and the situation in Finland.

4.1 Finland After the Civil War

Finland was deeply divided after the Finnish Civil War between the winners and losers. Each side was, in turn, internally divided as well. The labor movement had split between the moderate social democrats and the more radical elements, in the same way it is was divided in the United States; however, the atmosphere in Finland favored the moderates, who virtually destroyed their rivals. Finland's victorious bourgeoisie also split over the future of Finland and its government. In the past two decades, much research has been carried out on these initial years following the civil war. In his book on Finnish political parties, Rauli Mickelsson notes that in the years following the war Finnish society was divided into numerous cultural, ideological, and organizational camps.[1] In his study on the culture of the victors of the war, Miika Siironen argues that, "After the White victory, patriotism began to manifest itself as an acceptance of the interpretation of the war as one of independence and the celebration of 'White' culture and the heroes of the White Guard."[2] Society became dominated by bourgeois nationalist cultural hegemony, in which the values and ideas of the victors of the war became the norm against which all other ideas were seen as oppositional.

[1]Rauli Mickelsson, *Suomen puolueet: Vapauden ajasta maailmantuskaan* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2015), 70-71.

[2]Miika Siironen, *Valkoiset: Vapaissodan perintö* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2012), 208.

Views that differed from those of White Finland were strictly monitored and, in many cases, kept out of the media. To achieve this aim, the government of Finland had passed the Freedom of the Press Act of 1919 as a tool to curb such views. Riku Neuvonen, who has studied the development of freedom of speech in Finland, has describes the interwar era as a period of intensely restricted freedom of expression, especially for left-wing newspapers that were the subjects of numerous complaints.[3] However, the SDP, which had condemned the revolution and joined with other centrist parties, had a surprisingly free range to operate in Finland. Niko Kanniston has shown that the SDP was allowed, for example, to voice surprisingly harsh criticisms of the government and individuals in power. The short-lived Finnish Socialist Workers Party, formed in 1919 by dissident members of the SDP,[4] by contrast, would never have gotten away with such statements due to government censorship.[5] Neuvonen has similarly concluded that the SDP was able to get away with more due to its genuinely more moderate views, as well as a certain amount of self-censorship in its newspaper.[6] Like the Left, the bourgeois Right also had its own, less severe, internal conflicts. The bourgeoisie was completely united in its interpretation of the Civil War as a war of independence; however, it was divided over how to heal the wounds of the war, as well as between the monarchist Far Right and the centrist republicans.[7] Those on the Far Right advocated a strong central power rather than what they believed would be a "disorderly democracy."[8] Their opinion was that the recent failed rebellion was in part caused by an excess of democracy. The centrist republicans, by contrast, wanted to pursue the interests of the people as a

[3]Riku Neuvonen, *Sananvapauden historia suomessa* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2018), 172-177.

[4]Tauno Saarela, "American Impact on Finnish Communism in the 1920s," in *Labouring Finns* ed. Michael Bealieu (Turku: Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, 2011), 51.

[5]Niko Kannisto, *Vaaleanpunainen tasavalta: SDP, itsenäisys ja kansallisen yhtenäisyyden kysymys vuosina 1918-1924* (Helsinki: Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura, 2016), 330.

[6]Neuvonen, 180.

[7]Pauli Kettunen, *Poliittinen like ja sosiaalinen kollektivisuus* (Helsinki: Suomen historiallinen seura, 1986), 234-235.

[8]Ibid.

whole, regardless of individuals' activities in the war, while uniting the country's various factions and organizations. From the republican point of view, the monarchist faction was attempting to place total control of the government into the hands of a single party.[9] This atmosphere of division was mirrored in Finnish communities in the United States. The difference between the two contexts was that the divide within the conservative faction did not exist in America, and the radical Left had significantly more freedom to operate there.

4.2 Development of the Press in Finland

The development of a politically oriented press in Finland began with the publications of the Nuorsuomalainen Puolue (Young Finnish Party), composed of young and wealthy Finnish nationalists who were largely responsible for the nationalist awakening in Finland in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In the early years of their activity, their press focused on spreading folk beliefs and traditions that would instill a sense of an ancient "Finnishness" in support of their claim to join the ranks of nation-states. This was mirrored in the right-wing Finnish-American press, which routinely reprinted articles from the Finnish conservative press in the early twentieth century. Lars Landgren's study of the politicization of the Finnish press argues that the breakthrough of the Young Finnish Party at the turn of the century began the process of the press being overtaken with political intent.[10] During the first period of Russificaiton in Finland this trend was intensified, and by the time of the Great Strike of 1905 newspapers had a clear role as political organs.[11]

[9]Ibid.

[10]Lars Landgren, "Kieli ja aate: Politisoituva sanomalehdistö 1860-1889," in *Sanomalehdistön vaiheet vuoteen 1905*, ed. Päiviö Tommila (Kupio: Kustannuskiila Oy, 1988), 341.

[11]Ibid, 345.

The Great Strike of 1905, and the parliamentary reform in Finland that followed, created a new and more class-based party division which in turn increased the need for more newspapers. It was believed that the best way to reach voters was through the press and that, in order to ensure that readership was maintained, information had to be presented in the "right color."[12] In the party press that developed after the Great Strike of 1905, rhetoric was intense and fierce confrontation was the norm, and although this rhetoric eased slightly over the next decade, partisan newspaper coverage remained a central feature of Finnish newspapers.[13] What this meant for the divided society of post-civil war Finland was that the worldviews conveyed to readers of different publications could be radically different, as was the case with the portrayal of Finnish emigrants and their future relationship with the homeland.

4.3 The Finnish Press and Transatlantic Connections

Following the civil war, the press in Finland reported on Finnish migration abroad in starkly contrasting ways, and in this reporting overseas Finns became an issue that reinforced the group identities of different newspapers' readers. The Finnish press and its portrayal of Finnish migrants changed throughout the early twentieth century. As discussed in Chapter 1, early articles on the United States focused on the idea of freedom, which inscribed itself on the imagination of Finnish emigrants. Finnish migration began to be painted in a negative light near the end of the nineteenth century, as it was viewed as an exodus of able-bodied men and their families that would hinder Finnish expansionist goals in the sparsely populated areas of Finland. In effect, emigrants

[12]Raimo Salokangas and Päiviö Tommila, *Sanomia kaikille: Suomen lehdistön historia* (Helsinki: Edita, 1998), 111.

[13]Ibid, 130-134.

were seen as a national threat and as traitors to the burgeoning Finnish nation-state. After independence, views of migrants changed. Instead of portraying emigrants as traitors, the conservative press emphasized the importance of establishing and maintaining links between Finland and her nationals abroad. This idea of Finnish immigrants as vital members of the newly formed Finnish nation-state was not only the subject of newspaper articles, but Parliamentary politics as well.[14] Emphasis on the importance of maintaining contact with immigrants abroad is particularly evident in the KOK's paper *Uusi Suomi*. For example, its coverage of the visit of Finnish immigrants to Finland in the summer of 1921 had already begun that January, when the visit was still in its preliminary planning phase.[15] Throughout the spring the arrival of Finnish-American businessmen, who were aiding in organizing the event, was widely reported on, adding to the excitement about the expedition. This enthusiasm is illustrated by the fact that it was not until May of 1921 that the Finnish-American Business Association even confirmed its participation in the event.[16] The actual visit that summer was followed with great detail by *Uusi Suomi*, while the SDP's paper, *Suomen Sosialidemokraatissa*, was entirely silent on the subject.

The conservative press stressed the importance of Finnish-Americans enriching and preserving their Finnish identity. According to Benedict Anderson, newspapers were one of the key factors that enabled the existence of national imagined communities. The newspaper made it possible for individuals to see themselves as members of the same community as people personally unknown to them.[17] Newspapers also played a vital role in forming and maintaining a transnational social network. In writing about everyday matters related to Finnish immigrants, the conservative

[14]Reino Kero, *Suureen lähteen: Siirtolaisuus suomesta Pohjois-Amerikkaan* (Turku: Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, 1996), 112-119

[15]*Uusi Suomi*, January 14, 1921.

[16]*Uusi Suomi*, March 24, March 27, May 15, 1921.

[17]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 72-75.

press in Finland maintained and created transatlantic ties and contacts. For example, *Uusi Suomi* routinely printed the obituaries of Finnish-Americans.[18] Many of these obituaries focused on how individuals had preserved their Finnishness abroad or how they had worked to spread Finnish culture in America. This was especially true if the deceased had been part of the many Finnish Church organizations, which were reported to be the main institution for preserving Finnish identity in the United States.[19] These obituaries worked to maintain the idea that the immigrants were part of the same community as the readers. Many articles about Finnish-Americans featured themes that emphasized the social and symbolic links between Finnish communities separated by the Atlantic Ocean.

These ties contributed to the creation of a transnational social space between the Finnish and Finnish-Americans.[20] People who traveled alone or in groups between the communities of North America and Finland were the "live links" who, through their movements, expressed and created these bonds. Traveling required that information flow between different parts of the social space, a function that the newspapers provided. The development of travel and information technology was also a key component of the connections between Finnish groups. By the 1920s, steamship travel had increased, thus allowing Finnish emigrants to more easily visit their

[18]See for example, *Uusi Suomi*, April. 17, October 18, December 30, 1921.

[19]*Uusi Suomi*, June 5, 1921.

[20] Transnational social spaces are the result of processes within transnationalism. The basic definition of transnationalism is continuous forms of connection that transcend the borders of sovereign states. Transnationalism thus involves a process known as transnational expansion of social spaces. In this process people's socials spaces expand beyond the borders of nation-states and create a new transnational social space. Thomas Faist argues that this transnational social space consists of individuals and organizations, their networks, and their social and symbolic ties. Social ties are the result of continuous interactions between at least three people. Symbolic ties are continuous interactions that allow people to share different kinds of interactions and memories as well as future prospects. These groups may be, for example, linguistic, religious, or ethnic. Thomas Faist, "The Border-Crossing Expansion of Social Space: Concepts, Questions and Topics," in *Transnational Social Spaces: Agents, Networks, and Institutions*, ed. Thomas Faist and Eyüp Özveren (London: Routledge, 2016), 2-4,

homeland.[21] Already in 1920 a group of over 400 Finnish-Americans visited Finland on an excursion that was subsequently repeated every year of the decade.[22] The travel of migrants to Finland in the 1920s increased awareness of Finnish emigrants, facilitated through the thorough reporting of these excursions.

In addition to visits by larger groups, newspapers also wrote about individuals moving between Finland and the immigrant communities. Many of the early Finnish labor movement's leaders had emigrated to America at the turn of the century, before returning to Finland. In fact, many of the divisions within the labor movement in Finland were caused by the radicalization of its leaders in the United States.[23] However, despite these overt connections, the labor press in Finland hardly reported on Finnish migrants. The only substantial "live link" was in Oskari Tokoi, who in 1921 was in exile in North America. During his exile he maintained ties with the SDP through letters that were published in the *Suomen Sosialidemokraatissa*. In these letters he reported on the state of the Finnish labor movement in North America, as well as economic issues and their impact on Finnish immigrants' lives.[24] His hatred for Communists and radicals made him the perfect person for the moderate *Suomen Sosialidemokraatissa* and its readers; however, this meant that the activity of the more radical elements of the Finnish-American labor movement were, for the most part, unknown to the readers of the *Suomen Sosialidemokraatissa*. This was important, as the paper was the most widely circulated labor newspaper in Finland, meaning that the growth

[21]Keijo Virtanen, "Pohjois-Amerikassa olevien suomalaisten siirtolaisten ja kotimaan yhteydet," in *Suomen siirtolaisuuden historia III: Sopeutuminen, kulttuuritoiminta ja paluumuutto* ed. Keijo Virtanen and Auvo Kostiainen (Turku: Turun Yliopisto, 1986), 238-239.

[22]Ibid, 240.

[23]Mikko Pollari, "Teosofia ja 1900-luvun alun suomalaisen ja amerikansuomalaisen työväenliikkeen väliset transatlanttiset yhteydet," in *Työväki maahanmuuttajana* ed. Sakari Saaritsan and Kirsi Hänninen (Helsinki: Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura, 2012), 55-59.

[24]*Suomen Sosialidemokraatissa* February 19; June 10; August 10, 1921.

of the more radical international workers' movement was hampered by the politicization and "coloring" of the Finnish press.

While Tokoi was the only substantial transatlantic link between left-wing Finnish groups, the right wing had several reporters covering the United States for *Uusi Suomi*. Akseli Rauanheimo was by far the most celebrated individual in the reporting of the *Uusi Suomi*. Rauanheimo, born Axel Gustaf Järnefelt, had been a prominent individual within the Finnish national awakening, on both sides of the Atlantic, through his work as a journalist and author. Throughout his career he worked as an editor for Finnish-American papers as well as for papers in Finland. His books on Finnish immigration were heavily advertised in *Uusi Suomi*, with laudatory reviews. Most of his books concentrated on Finnish immigration to the United States and the ways in which Finns had been integral to the development of America since the colonial period.[25] In 1921 he returned to working full time for the Finnish-American press and his articles, speeches, and presentations were frequently printed in *Uusi Suomi* as evidence of Finland's great connection to, and the Finnishness of, its compatriots abroad.[26]

The Church of Finland played a large role in nationalizing Finns abroad. The travels of Bishop Koskimies pioneered this effort. His 1921 trip to America was widely reported on in *Uusi Suomi* before, during, and after his actual visit.[27] Before he left Finland he told *Uusi Suomi* that the purpose of his trip was to "bring to the Finnish Christians in the United States the greetings and embrace of their homeland church and to strengthen Finnish national awareness…and to

[25]For example, under the name Akseli Järnefelt: Akseli Järnefelt, *Suomalaiset Amerikassa* (Helisnki: Otava, 1899); Under the name Akseli Järnefelt-Rauanheimo, *Meikäläisiä merten takana: Kuvauksia Amerikan suomalaisista* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1921); *Suomi ja Amerikka: Muutamia koketuskohtia* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1922); *Before William Penn: The Story of the First sSettlers in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1929).

[26]*Uusi Suomi*, February 13, April 13, July 14, August, 20.1921.

[27]*Uusi Suomi*, January 16; May 18; March 6; June 1; September 14, 1921.

improve contacts between the immigrants and Finland."[28] While traveling, Koskimies acted as a "living link" between the Finnish communities in America and the Finns in the homeland.

After the church, Finnish-American businessmen provided the strongest transatlantic link. H.J. Mäki worked to increase business between America and Finland, and also organized screenings of Finnish propaganda films in the United States in order to inform Finnish-Americans about the "beauty and culture of their homeland."[29] Business was important for Finns on both sides of the Atlantic. The excursion in 1921 was undertaken not only to establish a greater understanding between Finns, but also to "bring as many dollars from America as possible."[30] In a presentation to the Helsinki Merchants Association, Rauanheimo explained that Finnish immigrants had been very successful in the American economy and argued that "establishing better connections will bring commercial benefits to all."[31] Businessmen such as Mäki were important in leading the efforts to create a formal body to deal with Finnish migration and citizens abroad. To this end the Suomalaisuuden Liiton Ulkosuomalaisosasto (Department of Finnish Immigrants Abroad) within the Association of Finnish Culture and Identity in was formed in 1921 with the sole purpose of continuing communication between Finland and Finnish migrants.[32] Education of Finns abroad about their homeland was one of its main activities, including the production of numerous texts, films, music and art exhibitions, as well as the organization of future excursions.[33]

Compared to the business networks represented by Mäki, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland represented by Bishop Koskimies was a much more organized and established link. In addition to Koskimies, visiting pastors from Finland were a common feature in the Finnish-

[28]*Uusi Suomi*, January 16, 1921.
[29]*Uusi Suomi*, November 12, 1921.
[30]*Uusi Suomi*, June 15, 1921.
[31]*Uusi Suomi*, April 3, 1921.
[32]*Uusi Suomi*, August 24, 1921.
[33]Virtanen, 224.

American landscape. In June of 1921, for example, a pastor from Oulu was granted an additional two-month leave of absence in order to prolong his sermon tour in America.[34] His trip coincided with the first excursion of Finnish-Americans to Finland that summer and was scheduled so that he could spread the "message of unity" to those Finnish-Americans who could not join the trip.[35] The Church of Finland was not the only religious organization actively seeking to preserve Finnishness in American communities. Churches that had been established in America by Finnish migrants were also active participants. For example, the largest synod of Finnish congregations, Suomi Synod, founded in 1890, aimed from the outset to act as a representative and unifying body of the Church of Finland among Finns across the Atlantic. To help with this goal the Suomi Synod founded Finlandia University in 1896 with the sole purpose of "preserving Finnish cultural heritage among immigrants, especially in the form of the Finnish language and Lutheranism."[36]

Networks and organizations such as businesses and the church are virtually absent from the coverage of the left-wing press in Finland, and in the United States were treated with hostility. When Bishop Koskimies was traveling in the United States he went to Astoria, Oregon, leading a Finnish member of the IWW to write, "This [Astoria] is so famously a place of Finns that the bishop of the butchers has dared to come and bless us with his presence. He was worried that we were all here Bolsheviks, though there are some snakes among us that hovered around him. It is miserable to think that the blessing of the murderers of Finnish workers can travel here in peace."[37] Such expressions of outrage were not possible in the left-wing press in post-civil war Finland. Finnish left-wing papers instead focused on the disintegration of the left-wing party in America.[38]

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[34]*Uusi Suomi,* June 22, 1921.

[35]Ibid.

[36] Arja Pilli, "Amerikansuomalaisten kirkollinen toiminta," in *Suomalainen siirtolaisuuden historia II: Aatteellinen toiminta*, ed. Auvo Kostiainen and Arja Pilli (Turku: Turun Yliopisto, 1983), 21-29.

[37]*Industrialisti,* June 9, 1921.

[38]For example, *Suomen Sosialidemokraatissa* February 23; February 24; May 21, 1921.

Transatlantic relations had played a central and significant role in the Finnish labor movement in the early twentieth century; however, this connection did not return to prominence as immigration began to grow again after the war. Tauno Saarela, who studied the American impact on Finnish Communism, has argued that this was partly due to the division of the Finnish left in both Finland and North America, as well as organizational fragmentation and ideological disputes complicating cooperation and networking.[39]

Earlier research on Finnish transnationalism carried out by Peter Kivisto argues that transnationalism has traditionally been divided into three different categories: economic transnationalism, political transnationalism, and sociocultural transnationalism. This third category is the broadest, and describes efforts abroad to strengthen the cultural heritage of the country of origin, including religion.[40] According to Kivisto, religious transnationalism was an important part of Finnish North American immigration for the first two decades of the twentieth. He believes the early 1920s started to see the decline in religious transnationalism due to immigration patterns and the Americanization policies of Finnish-American churches.[41] The decline Kivisto describes, however, does not appear in the newspapers. On the contrary, the Finnish church appeared to be an important player in the development of transatlantic relations throughout the decade.

In regards to economic transnationalism, Kivisto argues that there was no substantial economic relationship between Finnish-Americans and Finland.[42] While this may be true, the appearance of, and belief in, such contact was very much present. It was precisely the transnational

[39]Tauno Saarela, "American Impact on Finnish Communism in the 1920s," in *Labouring Finns* ed. Michael Bealieu (Turku: Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, 2011), 50-51.

[40]Peter Kivisto, "The Transnational Practices of Finnish Immigrants," in *Finns in the United States* ed. Auvo Kostiainen (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), 298.

[41]Ibid, 304-305.

[42]Ibid, 300.

activities of entrepreneurs as reported in the *Uusi Suomi* that received so much attention; however, it must be pointed out that most of this attention was directed at opportunities and aspirations, not concrete action. The expeditions led by the Finnish American Business Association and the reporting of its activities in conservative papers in Finland are a case in point. At least from the view of the conservative press and its readers, economic transnational relations were a key bridge between Finns.

The conservative press in Finland played a major role in the expansion of its readers' "imaginary community" following the civil war. This community was in line with the essential features of "White Finland" and was therefore supported by both business and the Church of Finland. The transnational social space shared by Finnish whites and conservative Finnish-Americans appears to have been much more active than the space shared by the Finnish left and the Finnish-American labor movement. Whereas Finnish-American workers viewed themselves within the international workers' movement, their conservative counterparts actively worked to integrate themselves within the Finnish "imagined community" that had also been the goal of the victors of the Finnish Civil War.

4.4 Finnish Migrants as part of the National Community

The creation and preservation of Finnish immigrants' own national culture and identity was a topic of debate in the early twentieth century. The issue was discussed both among conservative Finnish-Americans and in their country of origin. This is similar to other immigrant communities. Among migrants, the formation of ethnic centers with cultural products and services in their own language, which contributed to the creation and preservation of cultural traditions,

was common. For example, Swedish and Norwegian immigrants had their own churches, schools, newspapers and magazines. Similar to Finns, the Norwegian and Swedish Church also created colleges in America to provide training for priests.

Finnish settlers paid close attention to creating and preserving Finnishness as well, though at a later stage. The Suomi Synod, as mentioned, had long considered it important to preserve the Lutheran faith as well as the Finnish language, while also playing host to Finnish travelers who brought nationalist Finnish music and theatre to America.[43] Other groups such as cooperatives, temperance associations, and the nationalist Knights of Kalevala also included cultural preservation in their missions.[44]

In Finland, debate surrounded the question of whether Finnish-Americans had anything in common with their counterparts in Finland. The debate emphasized the role of language and religion in spreading a feeling of national identity among migrants. These same discussions took place in Sweden and Norway. The idea of belonging to a "Greater Norway" was based on a shared ethnicity where membership was determined by one's loyalty to Norway and its cultural traditions.[45] The idea of cross-border nationalism was also important in Sweden. According to one contemporary, the Swedes had two homelands, the Swedish Empire and the Swedish Nation. The latter included North American immigrants as well as Swedish-speaking people living in Finland and Estonia.[46]

The national identity of Finnish migrants was celebrated in Finland, as can be seen in the welcome letter from *Uusi Suomi* upon the arrival of the expedition of 1921:

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[43]Pilli, 23-24.

[44]Auvo Kostiaienen, "Amerikkalainen Kalevan ritarikunta," in *Suomen siirtolaisuuden historia II*, ed. Auvo Kostiainen (Turku: Turun Yliopisto, 1983), 109-112.

[45] Daron Olson, *Vikings Across the Atlantic: Emigration and the Building of a Greater Norway 1860-1945* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 149.

[46]Arnold Barton, *A Folk Divided: Homeland Swedes and Swedish Americans 1840-1940* (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1994), 180-181.

> As we all know, the Finnish-American immigrant is the same as the people living here in Finland, even though they have rooted themselves in American soil. We consider Finns in America as brothers who simply built their own home away from their father's house while the other brothers stayed in their father's home. We joyfully welcome you, the Finns of America, as we know you have retained the Finnish national spirit and love for the land of your fathers; that is to say, you have stayed Finns while also creating a position for yourself in the great melting pot of the world.[47]

The letter goes on to explain that the previous visit by Finns in 1920 had showed Finland that "they were no longer wandering migrants" but had been economically successful on American soil. The paper was pleased to report that this economic success had increased in the course of a year, as was proven by the Finns who arrived in 1921. Heikki Ojalla, one of the Finnish-Americans who went on the 1921 expedition, explained in an oral history interview in 1962 that it was important that they arrived in Finland "wearing the best clothes and women with their best jewelry," as well as bring expensive furs and other gifts for friends and family in Finland. When asked why this was important, he replied that "we wanted to show people in Finland that moving to America had been a good thing and that we had been successful."[48] The migrants were proud of their success abroad but at the same time wanted to emphasize their Finnishness and belonging to the national community. Meanwhile, the left-wing papers made no comment about the arrival of the Finnish migrants. To readers of the conservative media, "all" Finns that had gone to America were achieving economic success while retaining their Finnish sense of self. This left out those involved in the Finnish workers' movement who spent their days laboring in the mines and forests. Tokoi, however, in a letter to *Uusi Suomi*, wrote about Finns dying in poverty in America, having never achieved the American dream. The fault, however, was that of the migrants themselves, and of the alcohol "consuming their wages," he claimed.[49]

[47]*Uusi Suomi*, June 19, 1921.
[48]Heikki Ojalla Interview, 1962, Apello Archvies Center, WA.
[49]*Uusi Suomi*, November 12, 1921.

When assessing the preservation of national identity, the focus of *Uusi Suomi* mainly centered on religion and language. The state of the Finnish language was the subject of reports written by Bishop Koskimies during his trip to America. Koskimies wrote that its survival was a desire of many Finnish-Americans, especially the older population; however, he also pointed out that English-language skills were increasingly becoming important and growing, and claimed that Finnish priests in America could no longer perform all their duties in Finnish alone. He wrote that the language would most likely have to be abandoned in successive generations, but emphasized that "the preservation of Finnishness will survive in deeper forms, such as being proud of belonging to the Finnish tribe."[50] While the weakening of Finnish language's position raised concern, true Finnishness was thought to survive despite of this. Bishop Koskimies' prediction turned out to be true. Beginning in the 1930s, a fund was established to help descendants of Finnish-Americans travel to Finland to see their ancestral homeland. Scholarships were offered on a semi-regular basis up through the 1990s through the Suomi-Seura (The Finland Organization), which had evolved from the Department of Finnish Immigrants Living Abroad. Essay contests were held to determine the winners of the scholarship, with the same theme each time: why are you proud to be Finnish? These essays show that respondents, sometimes three and four generations removed from Finland, still viewed themselves as Finns even after the Finnish language had been completely forgotten.

In addition to language, the conservative press in Finland paid close attention to the ecclesiastical life of immigrants when assessing the state of Finnishness in America.[51] Bishop Koskimies' journey to America was undertaken not only to bring the greetings of the Church of

[50]*Uusi Suomi,* August 2, 1921.
[51]*Uusi Suomi,* January 20, 1921.

Finland to immigrants abroad, but also to strengthen "Finnish national awareness."[52] To Koskimies and the Church of Finland, the Lutheran faith was an integral part of Finnishness. During the migrants' visit to Finland, Pastor Rautanen made a speech praising the level of the immigrants' patriotism, which he saw in their "deep religious faith and ecclesiastical organization."[53] This is not surprising when one remembers that the Church of Finland was very clearly and vocally on the side of the Whites and therefore become an integral part of post-war White hegemony.

The Finnish language and the religious life of immigrants were not topics that appeared in the left-wing press in Finland or in Finnish-American newspapers. Leaders of the Finnish-American workers' movement encouraged all Finns to learn English so as to be better integrated into the wider labor movement in America. Some scholars have argued that the Finnish-American Left was more positive about the process of Americanization than conservative Finns, believing that, as socialism took its own form in America, the people would also merge with their new surrounding society.[54] While this may be the case, Finnish-American papers only stressed the importance of learning English in regards to being able to better participate in the wider workers' movement. The silence on the connection between the church and Finnishness, meanwhile, is hardly surprising in the left-wing press in Finland. Niko Kannisto notes that the Finnish Left stayed silent on the issue, due not only to the position of the church in the civil war, but also to its ideals of religious freedom.[55] While the left-wing press in Finland could not vocally attack the church, the Finnish-America labor press continually painted the church as a weapon of the bourgeoisie and an enemy of the workers' movement.

[52]*Uusi Suomi,* January 16, 1921.
[53]*Uusi Suomi,* August 8, 1921.
[54]Kostiainen, 112-113.
[55]Kannisto, 490-492.

In addition to language and ecclesiastical life, celebrations and traditions played a major role in the creation of a transnational Finnish community. Conservative papers in Finland published articles on the Finnish festivities held in America, such as the celebration of Independence Day and the Kalevala Festival that celebrated "ancient Finnish folk culture."[56] The celebrations that took place during the visit in 1921 were described in detail by the conservative press, and these articles were republished across the Atlantic. The entire program was patriotic and equated Finnish culture with the bourgeois culture of the era. To celebrate midsummer, the Finnish-Americans were taken to Suomenlinna Fortress in the morning while an orchestra played patriotic music on their journey to the island. After arriving at Suomenlinna, they were given a tour of the sights and stopped at the tomb of Count Ehrensvärd. Ehrensvärd was an eighteenth-century Swedish military officer who was largely responsible for building and fortifying Suomenlinna. At the tomb, according to the reports, a prayer was said and a speech was delivered honoring those ancestors who "since ancient times fought and worked for a free Finland."[57] The irony that this speech was held at the tomb of a Swedish military officer who had been sent by the Swedish crown to tighten control over the Finnish territory seemed to have been lost on everyone. From the tomb, the group was taken to the church on Suomenlinna where mass was held and a military band performed. That evening's dinner was accompanied by presentations that focused on the love of the motherland and Finnishness. A key theme in these presentations was the connection between immigrants and their homeland. Pastor Rautanen remarked on the "importance of these joint celebrations in the world of building a bridge between Finns" and praised the patriotism of the Finnish immigrants. The evening ended with the singing of the Finnish national anthem, "Maamme," which had been composed by a German. This irony, again, seems to

[56]*Uusi Suomi*, January 20; February 13, 1921.
[57]*Uusi Suomi*, June 22, 1921.

have been lost on everyone present and to the press that reported widely on the events.[58] The midsummer celebrations thus included the key features of White Finland: patriotism, the church, the armed forces, and remembrance of ancestors and the national past.

Celebrations were a significant part of Finland's interwar culture. Tuomas Tepora, who has studied the experiences of the interwar period, highlights the role of festivals in the creation of post-civil war social cohesion. According to Tepora, "clearly idealistic national symbolism and its associated festivities and myths played an important role in the victorious Finland's struggle against the threat of the disintegration inherent in the memory of the Civil War."[59] The inclusion of Finnish-American guests as part of a nationalist celebration can thus be interpreted as an attempt to integrate them into the national community of White Finland.

In addition to a created shared culture and shared celebrations, joint projects also worked to integrate migrants into the national community. The Kalevala Society had been formed in 1911, and in 1921 a plan to build a Kalevala House was announced during the Finnish-Americans' visit to Finland. It was intended to act as a research institute, art gallery, concert hall, museum, movie theatre, and workshop for artists. In addition, a tomb was planned for the burial of great Finns to come. According to Derek Fewster, who studied the creation of Finnish national identity, the planned large and imposing building was intended as a kind of extreme symbol of Finnishness.[60] Finnish-Americans, and their money, were invited to join the project. A speech by one Professor Setälä, a professor of Finnish language and literature, emphasized the great significance of the planned Kalevala House for Finland and Finnish-Americans, which "would at the same time be a

[58]Ibid.

[59]Tuomas Tepora, *Lippu, uhri ja kansakunta: Ryhmäkokemukset ja -rajat Suomessa 1917-1945* (Helsinki: Helsingin Yliopisto, 2011), 129.

[60]Derek Fewster, *Visions of Past Glory: Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society), 330-333.

flagship of the unity and solidarity of Finns and Finnish-Americans."[61] The nationalist atmosphere that surrounded the project was used to integrate the Finnish-Americans into the national community, through a cooperative project that would symbolize not only Finnishness but also the cohesion of Finnish communities separated by the Atlantic.

The Kalevala and the Kalevala Society's role in the Finnish interwar national project were strongly related to tribal notions. The idea of the Finnish tribe and its proud and ancient past was central to the creation of Finnishness and Finnish national identity.[62] The Finnish migrants were treated in the conservative press as part of the national community, but also part of the wider Finnish tribe. In one letter Bishop Koskimies specifically emphasized that Finnish migrants belong to the "Finnish tribe and their tribal past."[63] The issue was particularly topical during the Finnish-Americans' 1921 visit, because at that same the Kalevala Society also held a joint conference attended by Hungarians and Estonians, who were viewed as part of the larger Finno-Ugric language group and, in the words of *Uusi Suomi*, as "old singers of the Kalevala."[64]

The simultaneous visit of the "tribal peoples" and the Finnish-Americans was likened to a tribal meeting in which "relatives separated recall their beloved tribal memories and share with each other the goals of the future of the tribe." The paper further stated that the participation of the migrants in the "tribal meeting complements the representation of our dispersed tribe."[65] Akseli Rauanheimo had written and published a new book for the event on the Finno-Ugric people, which *Uusi Suomi* advertised as being especially topical "when our brethren from different countries, Hungary, Estonia, Russia, and even America, have gathered in our capital."[66] It is clear from the

[61]*Uusi Suomi*, June 30, 1921.
[62]Aira Kemiläinen, *Suomalaiset, outo pohjolan kansa: Rotuteoriat ja kansallinen identiteetti* (Helsinki: Suomen historiallinen seura, 1993), 358 and Fewster, 396.
[63]*Uusi Suomi*, August 2, 1921.
[64]*Uusi Suomi*, June 19, 1921.
[65]*Uusi Suomi*, June 26, 1921.
[66]Ibid.

writings of the press that the presence of both the Finnish-Americans and the tribal groups provided a popular and easy way to associate these two groups in the same discourse.

The attention paid to the creation and preservation of Finnish identity and culture in the conservative press in Finland was far more abundant than the attention paid to these topics by newspapers on the Left. In the reporting it is clear that the national community to which both Finns abroad and those in Finland belonged to was the culture of the victorious Whites. Miika Siironen has noted that newspapers played an important role in the moral regulation of White Finland, which sought to set the standards for cultural norms in post-civil war Finland. One of these standards was unwavering patriotism and the acceptance of White symbols and Christian morality as defined by the Church of Finland.[67] The inclusion of, and in fact the mission to include, Finnish-Americans in celebrations and projects that met those standards should be interpreted as attempts to integrate them into the White national community. Conservative newspapers in Finland were integral participants in this project.

Shared celebrations, projects, and other ways of connecting Finnish-Americans and Finns in Finland can also be seen as the symbolic ties that maintained the transnational social space between White Finland and immigrant communities. Symbolic ties allow people across transnational spaces to share meanings, memories, and perspectives. The interaction of symbolic bonds does not need to occur face-to-face, but can instead take place within a larger group. As many of the transnational interactions between Finns were saturated with the values of White Finland, the shared meanings, memories, or prospects of the future were also in keeping with the norms of White Finland. These in turn suffused the imagined community encompassing conservative Finnish-Americans and White Finland. According to Benedict Anderson, nation-

[67]Siironen, 208.

states as imagined communities are perceived as inherently limited. The national community of White Finland, which expanded across the Atlantic, was likewise limited. In this national community, working-class Finns and the radical labor movement were excluded. The news coverage of the conservative press in Finland, as well as of the conservative Finnish-American press, shows the limitations of the imagined Finnish national community. The civil war and subsequent nationalist project split Finnish-Americans between those involved in the labor movement and those involved in conservative Finnish-American groups. This shows that seemingly national events, such as Finnish Civil War and formation of Finnish national identity, are formed through transnational processes.

Conclusion

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the Finnish press portrayed America as the land of the free. This freedom, however, remained undefined and as thousands began emigrating to the United States they found American society not to be the free utopia they had envisioned. This led many to get involved in the labor movement, where freedom of the press became key to their activities. Simultaneously, the Finnish government began to view emigration as a threat to the nationalization project and attempted to paint America in a negative light. When this did not create the desired effect, it began to view Finnish migrants abroad as key players in the formation and maintenance of the newly formed Finnish nation-state.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Finnish government officials and nationalists knew that to be a viable nation-state, Finland had to be recognized as one by other countries. The conservative press and agents such as Carstein and, later, Tokoi worked to instill a sense of Finnishness in immigrants abroad in order to help this mission. The radical Finns in the labor movement posed a threat to this goal, as the radicals' actions in the labor movement began to give Finns a negative reputation in the minds of Americans. After the end of the Finnish Civil War, the division of the Finnish community was complete as Finnish-American workers became suspicious of anyone coming from Finland, while conservative Finns celebrated the victory of the White Finns. Due to the atrocities committed by the White Guard in Finland, Finnish-American workers needed a way to weed out Whites or White sympathizers from their ranks, as well as to exact revenge on the Finnish bourgeoisie who were going unpunished in Finland. To this end Finnish-American workers united behind committees that would investigate all Finns coming from Finland after the civil war. These committees published their findings in the workers' press and were seen as vital to Finnish-American workers. Refusing to come before a committee or being declared a

"butcher" meant complete isolation from the working-class community, leading those who were declared as such to either move to more friendly areas or return to Finland. While the committees attempted to maintain a monopoly on declarations of "butchery," individuals and the press went wild with accusations against anyone they believed was escaping justice, leading to divisions among Finnish-American workers as some believed a more lenient approach was better.

Although the committees operated throughout the United States and Canada, conservative Finnish-Americans and their press never acknowledged their activities. Instead they focused solely on the celebration of the White victory and establishing a mutual transatlantic relationship with Finland to increase the bonds between migrants abroad and their Finnish homeland. Through the conservative press, Finns in America and Finns in Finland were able to see themselves as part of the same imagined community and worked towards the establishment and maintenance of the new Finnish nation-state, embedded within the symbols and culture of the victorious Whites. They were operating within what Thomas Faist calls a transnational social space. In the process of creating these social spaces, social and symbolic ties were created through the interactions group members. These interactions could be physical, such as the Finnish migrant expeditions to Finland and the tours of church officials and musicians from Finland to Finnish communities in North America. For most, however, frequent travel across the Atlantic was not possible. The press became the most important link enabling Finns on both sides of the Atlantic to view themselves within the same imagined community, even though most would never meet, see, or speak to each other. These links between conservative Finnish-Americans and the Finnish homeland continue to operate to the present day.

This division can be seen, for example, in the oral history project begun in 1981 by members of the Finnish Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington to document the history of

Finnish migrants to the United States. The questions asked centered around being Finnish, Finnish holidays and traditions, and an overall sense of pride in being Finnish. The interviewers initially spoke with elderly Finnish members of their own congregation, but then began to spread to other Finnish settlement areas in Washington and Oregon. In an interview with Antti Kuivala in Astoria, Oregon the interviewer did not receive the answers she was expecting. She begins by asking Kuivala what church he belonged to. He answers with a laugh and says he had never belonged to any church. Kuivala's English is not particularly fluent, so the interviewer repeats the question, believing he did not understand the first time. He again says that he had no connection with any church. She continues to ask about "typical" Finnish celebrations that he partakes in, and he replies that he cannot think of anything in particular. Instead of accepting the answer, the interviewer begins to describe all the Finnish traditions she partakes in and traditions other interviewees told her about, most especially the midsummer celebrations. Kuivala again chuckles and says he never did those things in Finland and that he sees many things done in America that people say are Finnish that he has never heard of. At this point you can begin to hear the frustration in the recording of the interviewer's voice. She next asks how important it has been to Kuivala to be Finnish. There is a long pause in the recording. She asks again and he answers that he does not understand the question. She tells him she is very proud and happy to be Finnish. His response is that he never really thought or cared about it. The interview continues with a similar back-and-forth in which the interviewer grows more frustrated. In one part of the interview Kuivala begins to talk about participating in the Great Strike of 1905, to which she responds that she has never heard of it and continues to ask another question. Her final question to Kuivala was whether his family fought in any wars in Finland. He responded that his brother fought with the Russians. She then proceeds to "correct" him and tells him that he must be mistaken, that his brother must have

fought against the Russians. He simply responds that he understood her question and that his brother fought with the Russians in the civil war and was killed. After this she wraps up the interview and tells him she has nothing more to ask.

This interview between a descendant of Finnish immigrants who belonged to the Finnish Lutheran Church and a former union activist who came from Finland at the age of twenty illuminates the key arguments made in this project. Throughout the interview the interviewer is frustrated and confused that Kuivala does not fit into her image of what Finnish people are and the identity they possess. From her previous interviews with Church Finns in Seattle, she was given long stories about the celebrations and traditions they brought with them from Finland, as well as a very clear sense of pride in being Finnish. Many of those interviewed talked about their pride in the small country of Finland maintaining its freedom from Russia in two wars, while painting Russia as an old and ancient enemy. When Kuivala responded his brother had fought with the Russians, she therefore believed he must be mistaken. When his conception of Finns and Finland did not fit within her own identity and pride in being Finnish, she ended the interview and left.[1] This illustrates the historical fracture in the Finnish community that resulted from the Finnish Civil War and the success of the nationalization of conservative Finnish immigrants. Kuivala, to the interviewer, was not Finnish, as he did not participate in the symbols and traditions that the interviewer believed to embody Finnishness.

Similarly, Suomi Seura essay contests illuminate what the descendants of Finnish immigrants believe to be true "Finnishness." In one essay response to the question, "Why you are proud to be Finnish," the respondent writes at length about the music of Sibelius, the art of the Kalevala done by artists such as Akseli Gallen-Kallela, and the Kalevala itself. This same

[1]Antti Kuivala Interview, Oral History Collection, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington.

respondent describes how she attended Finnish culture camps sponsored by the Finnish Lutheran Church in America and its partner college, Finlandia University, since she was a young girl. These camps continue to the present day and work to instill a sense of Finnish pride through exposure to the great works of Finnish culture. In this particular essay the respondent writes that her great-grandmother, whom she had never met, came from Finland to Michigan when she was a young girl and that she had "always dreamed of visiting her great-grandmother's home." Her connection with Finland was removed by three generations, she did not speak Finnish, and she had never been to Finland. Yet she still professed a deep connection and pride in being Finnish.[2]

In a similar essay written by the son of a Swedish-speaking Finnish immigrant, the author writes that "A little bit of Finland lives forever in my heart," and recounts the times when his mother's "nationalistic feelings could no longer be silent" and she would tell him stories, sing songs, and read poetry which was how he came to be acquainted with "Runeberg, Topelius, with the Kalevala, and Sibelius."[3] He ends his essay by expressing a wish to visit Finland for the first time, at which point he would be proud to wear the folk costume his mother made him.

Apart from the summer camps and essay contest, the Finnish consulate in New York, in partnership with Suomi Seura, created an afterschool program in 1972 in Minneapolis public schools that contained significant Finnish-American populations in order to instill "ethnic awareness of Finns and Finnish-Americans."[4] The funding and material came largely from the National Board of Education in Helsinki and the Finnish American Society of Minneapolis. Their stated objectives are enlightening:

Students will learn that:

[2]Kilpailutyöt 199, Suomi-Seura, Turun Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, Turku, Finland.
[3]Kilpailutyöt 210, Suomi-Seura, Turun Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, Turku, Finland.
[4]Opetusmateriaali, Yleiskirje, Suomi-Seura, Turun Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, Turku, Finland.

1. Each cultural group teaches its children the customs, beliefs and values of that culture.
2. Ethnicity is a major factor in self-identity.
3. Finnish traditions and customs have helped shape the life styles of Finnish-Americans.
4. Finnish-Americans have made many contributions to the economic, cultural and social life of America.
5. Finnish culture today can make contributions to solving America's contemporary social, political and economic problems.

Values:

1. Students will learn pride in their Finnish-American heritage
2. Students will learn to deal critically with ethnic stereotyping.[5]

The objectives were intended to teach descendants of Finnish-Americans about their ancestral heritage, while also instilling in them pride about the ways in which Finns have contributed to American society. The curriculum included teaching about Finnish folk heroes from the Kalevala, the geography and landmarks in Finland, the different "Finnish Enclaves" in Minnesota and Michigan, Finnish holidays and traditions, cooking Finnish foods, instruction in the Lutheran catechism, and the Finnish language. The classes began in elementary school and continued through high school, culminating in students' final year with an all-expenses paid trip to Finland if they participated in the entire program.

Long after the events of the Finnish Civil War, the cultural education of Finnish-Americans remained an important feature in both Finnish-American communities as well as in Finland. The Suomi Seura contestants who wrote of their Finnish identities stand in stark contrast to Antti Kuivala, who never taught his son Finnish and expressed no interest in Finnish culture and identity, but instead tried to tell his interviewer about his experience within the labor movement, his participation in the Great Strike of 1905, and his brother's alignment with the Reds in the Finnish Civil War.

[5]Ibid.

As the events of 1918 receded further into the past, Finland developed the social welfare programs it is known for today. To many Finnish-Americans, who had been rigidly taught to despise socialism, this became a problem. In an essay written for the Suomi Seura contest in 1970, one respondent wrote that nobody in America knows where and what Finland is because Finland did not spend enough on advertising to attract visitors. She believed that with Finnish citizens paying far more taxes than anyone else, the country should use that money to advertise instead of helping "poor farmers who have lived thousands of years without government support." She further claims that Finns in America were now unlike the Finns in Finland because in America they are still "proud of being their nationality," showing pictures and movies of their "mother country to organizations, clubs, and schools for no charge but because they feel Finland is worth knowing and advertising."[6] She believed Finns in Finland were no longer proud of their heritage and the national symbols that the author of the essay was taught to be the pinnacle of Finnishness. The attitude the respondent held towards Finns in Finland is not unique; in fact Finnish media and pop-culture today make jokes about Finnish-Americans being more Finnish than the Finns. This illustrates that whereas Finland has evolved and the culture has changed, Finnish-American culture has remained static while believing that it embodies true Finnishness.

As belonging to the labor movement, and being a member of either the IWW or Communist Party, became increasingly dangerous in the United States, Finns who had been involved sometimes came to a questionable end. The arrest and judicial records for the city of Aberdeen shed a depressing light on some of their fates. Over a period of less than two weeks in June of 1922, forty-six Finnish men were arrested for reasons of insanity and sent to the Washington State Insane Asylum in Steilacoom. Their arrest records suspiciously lack information surrounding the

[6]Kilpailutyöt 192, Suomi-Seura, Turun Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, Turku, Finland.

events of their arrest. While other records describe what individuals were doing and where they were at the time of arrest, these forty-six files simply state "insane." Even more suspicious was that they were all arrested by the same officer, and their sentences were all signed by the same judge. At least twenty-two of them were for certain IWW members, and very active in the labor movement. Their fates are unknown as the records of the Washington State Hospital, which is still active, are sealed indefinitely. It seems probable and even likely that the arrest of these men for reasons of insanity were related to their activities in the labor movement. Outside of this two-week period, arrests due to insanity are quite rare in the records.[7]

Historical research on Finnish migration and Finnish-Americans has, until recently, been carried out by members of the Finnish-American community and as such has written out the role of Finnish-Americans in the radical labor movement, as well as their reactions to the Finnish Civil War. In some regards it could be argued that the Finnish Civil War was also fought in America, with newspapers used in battles instead of guns. Finnish-American workers' response to the civil war, combined with Finnish-Americans' involved in the nationalization process of Finland, illustrates the transnational nature of seemingly national events. To help create what Benedict Anderson calls the national "imagined community," Finns abroad, through agents from Finland such as church representatives and traveling reporters, learned and accepted what it was to be Finnish. The international workers' movement, meanwhile, led some Finnish-Americans to view themselves within a class framework that put them in opposition to the bourgeois Finnish nation-state. As the workers' movement disintegrated and the industries Finns were heavily involved in, such as timber, began to falter, they passed away without instilling "Finnishness" into the next generation. It appeared, until quite recently, that their history had died with them.

[7]Jail Record 1913-1922, Grays Harbor County Criminal Records, Washington State Archives, Olympia, Washington.

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