

FINLAND'S INDEPENDENCE AND THE INTERWAR ERA, 1917-39 Part 1

More than a century of Russian rule in Finland ended in 1917. The Finns, however, experienced no easy transition to independence, but rather endured a bloody civil war between their own leftist Reds and rightist Whites. Finally, a leftist takeover was averted; Finland's independence was secured; and a parliamentary democracy emerged.

The Finnish Civil War

The Revolution that was underway in Russia by March 8, 1917, spread to Helsinki on March 16, when the Russian fleet in Helsinki mutinied.**



http://www.warchat.org/pictures/civil_war_finland_1918_firing_squad.jpg

**<http://motherearthtravel.com/history/finland/history-5.htm>

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FINLAND'S INDEPENDENCE AND THE INTERWAR ERA, 1917-39 Part 2

The Finnish Civil War

The most traumatic event in Finnish history is the Civil War of 1918 between the Reds and the Whites. Finland had become independent a year earlier. The young nation was not spared the effects of the First World War or the Russian Revolution. Thousands of Finns were executed during and especially after the Civil War. Most of the executions were carried out by the victors.**



http://www.illume.fi/elokuvakuvat/1610080944_ivsmaller.jpg

**http://www.illume.fi/site/?lan=3&page_id=16

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[Finnish partisans were involved in attempts](#) to overthrow the [Bolsheviks](#) in Russian Karelia ([East Karelia](#)) in 1918–20, such as in the failed [Aunus expedition](#). These mainly private expeditions ended after the peace treaty of Tartu. After the end of the [Russian Civil War](#) and the establishment of the [Soviet Union](#) in 1922, the Russian part of Karelia became the Karelian [Autonomous republic of the Soviet Union](#) (ASSR) in 1923.

In 1939, the Soviet Union attacked Finland, thus starting the [Winter War](#). The [Moscow Peace Treaty](#) of 1940 handed most of [Finnish Karelia](#) to the Soviet Union. About 400,000 people, virtually the whole population, had to be relocated within Finland..*

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/dc/Winter_war.jpg

**<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karelia#History>

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The White Guards were accordingly depicted as Finland's freedom fighters. The aftermath of the Civil War was, however, extremely bloody. As the Reds had murdered some 1,100 people in their zone of control (so-called *Red terror*), the Whites retaliated ruthlessly, executing some 7,370 people after the recapture of the Red areas (so-called *White terror*). It is estimated some 9,720 Finns were executed in the Civil War and its aftermath. Some 4,000 Whites and 4,500 Reds were killed in action. The [famine](#) of 1918 claimed another 20,000 Finns. Of those who perished, some 13,000 persons were in the prison camps. Because of their ruthlessness and eagerness to retaliate, the White Guards earned the title *Lahtarikaarti* (Butcher Guard) amongst the Reds.**

http://farm7.staticflickr.com/6178/6241425837_9fe63892bb.jpg

**[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Guard_\(Finland\)#The_White_Guards_in_the_Civil_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Guard_(Finland)#The_White_Guards_in_the_Civil_War)

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