

In a democracy like Canada, this was not a bad thing, but many Finns had been exposed to socialist and other radical or "progressive" ideas at home, which made them suspect in the eyes of Canadian authorities of the time. The Finnish Canadian community was internally divided between left-oriented Finns and the more conservative nationalist Finns, but to the Canadian officials, the largest identifiable group of Finns were the socialists active in labour unions, strikes, protests, and other types of radical politics.<sup>8</sup> Immigration was curtailed during the First World War, and Canadian official enthusiasm for Finnish immigrants cooled somewhat due to the negative perception of the "radical" element. During the war Finnish organizations were subjected to police scrutiny and Finnish-language newspapers and publications subject to censorship.<sup>9</sup> Later F.C. Blair, the secretary for the Department of Immigration and Colonization wrote in 1919 to several employers to explain that immigration from Finland was discouraged because some "Finnish people seem to be very busy spreading IWW [International Workers of the World] propaganda and occasionally one is found doing something worse."<sup>10</sup> Despite this, roughly 500 Finns had demonstrated their loyalty to Canada and served in military units at home or overseas in the Canadian Expeditionary Force.<sup>11</sup> By the 1920s Finland was once again a preferred source of immigrants for farmers, farm labourers, and female domestic servants. However, in 1930 immigration restrictions, brought about by the Great Depression, dramatically reduced the number of new arrivals from Finland until after the Second World War.<sup>12</sup>

The war would also lead to diplomatic recognition of Finland. On December 6, 1917, the Finnish Diet took the opportunity to declare the Grand Duchy of Finland was an independent country. Political conflict between more conservative Finns and socialist Finns soon erupted

into civil war. With the military aid of Germany the conservative White Finns were victorious over the socialist Red Finns by the spring of 1918. The presence of German troops caused the Canadian government to consider Finland to be under the control of the enemy. This along with fear of socialist revolutionary activity in Canada caused organizations which used the Finnish language and publications in Finnish to be prohibited in September 1918.<sup>13</sup>

Another aspect of the chaos surrounding the Russian civil war was the military intervention by the Allies in Northern Russia around Murmansk and Archangel. Among the troops were several hundred Canadian soldiers and roughly 1,200 Red Finn refugees who had been recruited by the British into the Murmansk Legion to oppose the Germans and their White Finnish allies. Canada provided some of the officer cadre for this unit.<sup>14</sup> For the Allies a precondition to the recognition of Finnish independence was lenient treatment and repatriation of the legionaries. The Finnish government agreed, but reserved the right to bring to justice those who were accused of crimes during the civil war. Consequently the Council of Foreign Ministers, during the Paris Peace Conference, granted recognition of Finland's independence on May 3, 1919.<sup>15</sup> However, there remained approximately 50 Legionaries who were blacklisted and prevented from entry into Finland. Under pressure from Britain, the Canadian government eventually agreed to accept them and by the spring of 1920 they were en route to Canada.<sup>16</sup> After being sequestered for several months at a lumber camp they eventually joined the general population.

Canada, which was still part of the British Empire in 1919, also gave de facto recognition of Finnish independence. That December Finland appointed a Consul General in London responsible for all parts of the British Empire including Canada. Soon after in early 1920 Erick J. Korte, a

8 Varpu Lindström-Best, *The Finns in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1985), 10-11, 14.

9 Arja Pili, *The Finnish-Language Press in Canada, 1901-1939: A Study in the History of Ethnic Journalism* (Turku: Institute of Migration, 1982), 92-93.

10 F.C. Blair to McFadden and MacMillan Lumber Company, Fort William, 27 August 1919. Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG76 1A1, Vol. 25, File 651 Part 3, Reel C-4693.

11 David Ratz, "Finnish Canadian Soldiers in the First World War," in *Hard Work Conquers All: Finnish Canadian Experiences*, eds. Michel S. Beaulieu, Ronald Harpelle, and David K. Ratz (Vancouver: UBC Press, forthcoming, 2017).

12 Varpu Lindström-Best, "The Impact of Canadian Immigration Policy on Finnish Immigration, 1890-1978," *Siirtolaisuus-Migration* 2 (1981): 7-10.

13 John Herd Thompson, *Ethnic Minorities during Two World Wars* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 9.

14 Jukka Nevakivi, *Muurmannin legioona: Suomalaiset ja liittoutuneiden interventio Pohjois-Venäjälle, 1918-1919* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1970).

15 Juhani Paasivirta, *The Victors in World War I and Finland: Finland's Relations with the British, French and United States Governments in 1918-1919* (Helsinki: SHS, 1956), 117-118.

16 "Canada is Choice of Finnish Reds," *Montreal Gazette*, November 4, 1919.