

Journalism and the publication of books and pamphlets was a signature activity of political activists, as is exemplified by the founding of the *Vapaus* (Freedom) Publishing Company in Sudbury and of the *Työkansa* (Working People) newspaper and publishing company in Port Arthur, Ontario. Tomes on economics and socialism by self-educated thinkers like Port Arthur's Moses Hahl circulated in Finnish communities throughout North America. The poems and stories of writers like Aku Päiviö inspired thousands of Finnish readers of these publications. Before the First World War the *Työkansa* was published as a daily newspaper, something which has not been seen since in the Finnish diaspora although the local Finnish immigrant population has increased tenfold.

There was also a boom in hall-building, particularly by the Finnish Organization of Canada (FOC) to provide a venue for social education through theatre, lectures, study groups, and political organizing. The dances, films, and entertainments always drew the masses in greater numbers, and the political activists tolerated these because they wanted to hold members. Theatre was a key vehicle of popular education in Finn halls all over the country; writer-director Felix Hyske was particularly sought after by audiences as well as Finnish-speaking amateur actors.

There were also Lutheran churches in the main Finnish centres such as Sudbury, Toronto, and Port Arthur, but they could not attract the numbers of the socialist halls. This was not so much because of hostility between the church and the labour movement but because the church in Finland was viewed as a quasi-state body into which one was born rather than actively joined and supported. It was not until well after the Second World War that Finnish Lutheranism found the social interpretations of the gos-

pel that were already engaging workers and the unemployed in other denominations before the World War 1.

For many, the exile was viewed as only a temporary period before alleviated conditions in Finland would permit returning to resume the nationalist struggle. Some succeeded: for example, Eero Erkkö returned from New York, where he had helped launch the newspaper *Amerikan Kaiku* (American Echo), to Helsinki to found the *Helsingin Sanomat*, which later became the country's main daily. Among the returnees was also labour activist Santeri Nuorteva, who later joined thousands of other immigrants to found a socialist community in Karelia.

The entire Karelian Exodus of the interwar period in fact revealed the strong sense of socialist nationalism many Finns harboured in returning to the nearest alternative Finnish territory after being excluded from Finnish society as socialists after the 1918 Civil War. The socialist commitment of many immigrant Finns was also clearly expressed by their significant representation in the North American contingents in the Spanish Civil War, the Lincoln and Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion.

The 1918 Civil War, Finland's tragic episode in the Great War, was a watershed for many who had viewed themselves as exiles in wait of a changed political climate. Finland remained a hostile environment for socialist politics also into the 1930s. It was a time of the ascendancy of the



*Vapaus* newspaper delivery. Sudbury, circa 1930s. Photo: Finnish Canadian Historical Society.