

THE *Saga*
OF THE
Karelo-Finnish
Republic

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WRECKING ACTIVITIES UPROOTED

Much has already been achieved here, but these achievements would have been still greater if forces hostile to the people had not striven to hamstring and disrupt them.

After the whirlwind of the great October Socialist Revolution swept out those who had been accustomed all their lives to sit on the backs of the people and be fed by their labor, many of them fled abroad and found harbor in England, France, the U.S.A., China and Japan. But no few remained near the Soviet border, hoping that they would soon be able to return.

Not all who wanted to hide from the just wrath of the people managed to get away. Here and there some remained, and carried out the bidding of secret service departments of foreign countries whom they had long served. They were told to make their peace with the new power and to win confidence for themselves at all costs.

Immediately they assumed a red veneer. Some of them even managed to make their way into the Bolshevik Party, to occupy

high government and political posts, secretly working to build up their own numbers.

They took to themselves the outcasts and dregs of society — thieves, murderers, gangsters, agents provocateurs, ex-kulaks — and secretly placed them in all sorts of posts.

No few such "workers" operated in Soviet Karelia too.

Big forest fires, in the best timber sections, would flare up for no known reason. It could be thought that these fires were caused by the hot, dry summer, lightning or peat fires. But quite frequently behind these "natural causes," incendiaries were discovered.

There were occasions when big catches of fish decayed because of the lack of salt to preserve them. Either the salt had not been delivered because someone had "forgotten" to order it, or it had been delivered to the wrong place. And here too the "forgetful" person was found and made to answer for it.

Sometimes a "mistake" was made in delivering seeds, and those not suitable for cultivation in Karelia were delivered, or else instead of grain, weed seeds were received. By "mistake" kerosene got into the sugar, motors went dead, sand was found in tractor bearings and the bearings burned out. But it was only rarely that the guilty person was not found.

In collective farms prize bulls and thoroughbred milch cows would suddenly sicken and die. Nails and iron filings would be found in the stomachs of the cattle when they were cut open. Magnets were used to clean the fodder and the deaths stopped. But after some time they began again. This time glass slivers were found in the hay. The hay came from the South, a long way off, where hostile people of the same mind were uncovered. These and the others were ruthlessly weeded out and made short work of.

More than once enemies were caught red-handed in the act of attempting to fire a charge that would blow up a sawmill, a power station or a factory. Often the workers or collective farmers would have to battle flames in the factory or granary, cattle sheds, club

houses, reading rooms, hospitals and schools. The enemy resorted to the knife and poison, to fire and bullet, furtively and behind the backs of their victims, and no villainy was too loathsome for them.

But the main efforts of the enemy were directed towards sowing enmity between the Karelian people and the Russian people, and between the Karelians and the Finns.

At the same time the enemies tried in every way to ignore the teaching of the Russian language and Russian literature. An attitude of mistrust and hostility was engendered towards Russian culture and the Russian people, who had gone through centuries of trials and tribulations side by side with the Karelians and Finns.

In this way, the enemies hoped that the Karelians and Finns would be imbued with a feeling of hatred for the Russians. In their dreams the Finnish bourgeois nationalists already saw Karelia as a colony of ignorant and illiterate slaves of the Finnish landlords and capitalists.

This wrecking policy of the Finnish White Guard agents brought the Karelian Republic many losses, hindered the development of national forces and the general development of culture. However, the Soviet people and their government succeeded in exposing the enemies and rendering them harmless.

THE IMPERIALISTS PLOT AN ANTI-SOVIET WAR

Close to the Finnish border, within gunshot as a matter of fact, lay one of the largest cities of the U.S.S.R.—Leningrad. As far back as 1919, the London *Times* wrote:

"If we look at the map we shall find that the best approach to Petrograd is from the Baltic, and that the shortest and easiest route is through Finland, whose borders are only some thirty miles from the capital of Russia. Finland is the key to Petrograd, and Petrograd is the key to Moscow."

It is for this reason that hundreds of reinforced concrete and granite and earth-work fortifications with heavy guns and machine guns were built on the Karelian Isthmus. These fortifica-

tions were connected by subterranean passages, surrounded by special anti-tank trenches and numerous mine fields.

Every village, every hamlet on the Isthmus of Karelia was transformed into a fortified center with supplies of munitions and gasoline as well as radio aerials. Railway lines and highroads which were of no economic importance whatever for Finland ran right up to the Soviet border.

Numerous air fields, considerably surpassing the requirements of the Finnish air fleet, lay directly behind the frontier and far back of it. All this had been built with one aim, that of attacking the Soviet Union, and in the first place Leningrad.

In the conditions of the second imperialist war, the British and French plutocrats decided that the time had come to use their Finnish White Guard hirelings to instigate a war against the U.S.S.R.

The perspectives for an anti-Soviet war were all the more alluring by reason of the fact that the British and French imperialists counted on kindling the flames of war in a new hearth—Scandinavia—under the guise of "assistance to Finland." They hoped to blockade Germany from the North by utilizing the Scandinavian people for this purpose.

On orders from London and Paris, the Finnish White Guards began to perpetrate a series of provocative acts on the Soviet-Finnish border. It was clear to the Soviet Union that the people of Finland did not want the war into which it was being impelled by the Finnish militarists and bourgeoisie. The Soviet Union patiently urged its neighbor to come to its senses. There is no doubt but that these two states would have settled the matter peaceably if a third party had not disrupted the negotiations. Incited by their masters, the Finnish White Guards began to commit the most monstrous acts of provocation, opening artillery fire on Soviet border guards. The blood of Soviet people had been spilled, but nevertheless the Soviet Government for the last time tried to settle this provocative incident through diplomatic channels. It proved

impossible to accomplish this, however, since the peace proposals of the U.S.S.R. were rejected and the provocative attacks on Red Army border guards continued.

On November 30, 1939, the Red Army crossed the border.

For one hundred and three days, the guns thundered from the Baltic to the Sea of Barents.

It was not only the Finnish troops that came out against the Soviet Union, but the combined forces of a number of imperialist countries. The imperialists assisted the Finnish White Guards by supplying arms and men, and by a rabid campaign throughout the world calling for war against the U.S.S.R.

In the course of the war, the Finnish White Guards received hundreds of airplanes, thousands of field and machine guns, hundreds of thousands of rifles and hand grenades, millions of shells and billions of bullets, all of the latest model and highest grade.

For one hundred and three days, the lying bourgeois press wrote about the invincible fortifications of the Karelian Isthmus and the panic retreat of the Red Army.

Chamberlain and Daladier spoke in Parliament and the Chamber of Deputies respectively with cynical frankness about the aid that was being rendered Finland.

At the end of the one hundred and third day the "hail the conquering hero" talk stopped short.

On a much lower key and grudgingly the bourgeois papers announced the cessation of hostilities between Finland and the U.S.S.R.

It was only considerably later that the readers of the bourgeois press learned the truth to the effect that Finnish officers and men were on Soviet soil solely in the capacity of prisoners of war, and that in the somewhat over three months of fighting the Red Army had been advancing constantly, despite the terrific difficulties of their unexampled march.

The winter of 1939-40 was an exceptionally severe one. The thermometer dropped as low as 58 degrees below. The retreat-

ing Finnish army burned villages, razed the houses, forcibly evacuated the civilian population, requisitioned their cattle, blew up bridges and mined the roads as they fled. Petsamo, Finland's only port in the North, was captured in the very first days of the war. The front line was pushed far beyond the Soviet borderline.

THE RED ARMY SMASHES THE MANNERHEIM LINE

The fighting on the Karelian Isthmus was particularly fierce. The line of fortifications from the shores of the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ladoga extended for from fifty to sixty kilometers. The British and French military experts assured the world that no force on earth could break through these fortifications which, by the way, were erected with the assistance of the British General Kirk.

The bourgeois strategists could not understand the simple truth that for an army of emancipated people no fortresses are impregnable.

In March, 1940, when the Mannerheim line had already been smashed, the Dutch newspaper *Rotterdam Courant* wrote that in certain respects the Mannerheim Line was even stronger than the Maginot and Seigfried lines.

The bourgeois press was obliged to admit the superiority of Soviet military technique and primarily of the artillery and air force, with whose help the "impregnable" Mannerheim Line had been destroyed.

Swedish officers who had observed the operations of the Soviet planes in Finland wrote in a press interview published in the *Svenska Dageblatt* that the conduct of daily air operations in which hundreds of planes participated was a remarkable achievement in view of the prevailing low temperatures, and indicated that the Arctic exploits of the Russian pilots during the past few years were not mere chance records but were based on purposeful and well organized training in winter conditions.

The Italian official government organ, *Popolo d'Italia*, published a dispatch from Finland dated March, 1940, which stated that the Finnish press was informing the people retrospectively about details of battles that had previously been withheld from public knowledge. The news of the desperate plight of the Finnish Army after the fighting on the Summa, where the Mannerheim Line was broken through, came as a complete surprise.

As early as March 5—the correspondent continues—the Finnish General Staff acknowledged that their strategical position was untenable and on March 7, at a stormy session of the Military Council, Mannerheim demanded that peace negotiations be opened before the enemy learned the true state of affairs. The Finnish Army was faced with the choice: either to surrender or to stake all on desperate guerrilla warfare that would end in the complete defeat of Finland.

The pressure of the Red Army was so strong that despite the promises of liberal assistance by way of arms and men from London and Paris and their insistent demand that resistance be maintained, the Finnish bourgeoisie was obliged to conclude peace.

According to the terms of the peace treaty concluded on March 12, 1940, a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland, the entire Isthmus of Karelia with the cities of Vyborg and Koivisto; the Western and Northern shores of Lake Ladoga with the towns of Antrea, Kexholm and Sortavala, territory including the city of Suojärvi; the territory west of Kandalaksha, with the town of Kuolajärvi; and part of the Peninsula of Sryedny and Rybachi were ceded to the Soviet Union. Moreover, Finland agreed to lease the Peninsula of Hango at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland to the U.S.S.R. for thirty years. On this peninsula the U.S.S.R. has built a powerful naval base which will be able to deal with any new attempt at aggression against the U.S.S.R. on the part of the imperialist powers.

The generous peace terms of the U.S.S.R. exposed the slander of the imperialists about Soviet aggression in Finland. Besides

securing the safety of its Northwestern borders and primarily of Leningrad the Soviet Government not only made no further demands on its defeated adversary which would in any way encroach on her national independence, but it even returned to Finland considerable territory that had been captured by the Red Army, and Petsamo, the only Northern ice-free port on the Arctic Ocean.

After the conclusion of peace, the Soviet Union had to decide on the best ways of building up and developing the economy of the new territories that had been ceded to the U.S.S.R. by the terms of the peace treaty.

With the minor exception of the small strip of land directly bordering on Leningrad and the sections of the Sryedny and Rybachi peninsulas within the limits of the Murmansk Region, all this territory gravitates towards the Karelian Republic. It is united not only naturally and historically, but also by the common features of their economy.

THE KARELO-FINNISH S.S.R. IS FORMED

The new districts are in some cases purely Finnish districts. In Karelia itself the Finns constitute a national minority. Taking this into account, the people of the Karelian Republic appealed to the government of the Soviet Union to create a united Karelo-Finnish Republic, granting it the same rights as are enjoyed by the other Union Republics of the U.S.S.R.

This legitimate request of the Karelians, Finns, Russians and other peoples living in the Karelian Republic was granted by the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

Thus it was that in the Northwest of the great Land of Socialism the new, twelfth Union Republic—the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic—was born.

The Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. is eighth in size among the republics of the Soviet Union. All of Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium could fit comfortably within its borders.

Its Western border constitutes a state border of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Safely within this border, which protects them like steel armor, the kindred peoples—Karelians and Finns—bound by ties of blood and a history that is centuries old, live and work in freedom. They are now able to build up and develop their state and national culture in peace, thereby also strengthening the Land of the Soviets, which in times so fraught with danger for small nations was able to secure to the peoples of the Karelo-Finnish Republic complete freedom and independence.

The rapid economic development of the new territories of the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. is facilitated by the fact that they possess a dense network of railway lines and highways. Most of these roads quite recently were of no economic importance for Finland, since they were built solely for military purposes. Today these roads of war are already serving the cause of peace.

Northern Finland had no railways whatever. Even the only ice-free port of Petsamo and the extremely rich ore deposits in the North had no rail connections with the rest of the country. This merely goes to show once again that the rulers of Finland were not actuated by the economic requirements or the interests of the national economy.

The territory around the town of Kuolajärvi also lay far from any railway line. Today construction has been completed on a railway from Kandalaksha west, through Kuolajärvi to the Finnish border. By the terms of the Peace Treaty, Finland has undertaken to build a new line running east from Kemijärvi to the border. This railway line will connect the North of the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. with the shores of the Gulf of Bothnia and will facilitate the most rapid economic development of the Northern regions of Finland herself.

The Kandalaksha-Kuolajärvi trunk line connects Karelia with the new territory ceded to the U.S.S.R. and thus brings new life to this hitherto backward and undeveloped region.

The war left profound traces, particularly on the Karelian Isthmus, where railway lines were destroyed, roads mined and bridges blown up. The tremendous work of restoration is going on here full swing.

It is not only the roads and bridges that had to be restored, but the industries that had suffered the effects of the war as well. Factories, mills, shipyards, power stations and flour mills are being put into operation in rapid order. Smoke is already rising from the smokestacks of many factories whose normal course of operation had been disrupted for a time. Soon all the machines and machine tools will be working full blast, life will hum in all the factories and mills, and a mighty torrent of paper, timber, cardboard, cellulose, fish, metal and stone will flow south, east and west.

Day and night, trains are speeding north from the South. Grain, sugar, meat, butter, canned goods, confectionery, footwear, clothing, textiles and machinery are being sent by the Soviet Union to the newly emancipated territory.

In the very near future, the Karelo-Finnish Republic will have finished its work of restoring and perfecting the industry in the newly-acquired regions, and it will make greater economic headway than ever. The peoples of the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R., free from the threat of economic crisis, unemployment, and dismal uncertainty for the morrow, will become still more prosperous, will make still greater cultural progress.

Its picturesque landscapes, its many forests and lakes, its wholesome climate make the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. one of the most beautiful republics of the Soviet Union.

It is difficult to imagine a more enchanting or lovelier country than this in the summer time.

The July sun at midday does not scorch but caresses, the mild air breathes the marvelous fragrance of pine woods, the eye rests on the dull green of endless forests, the emerald freshness of ever-green dales, silvery rivers and crystal lakes, and everywhere one hears the ceaseless rush of waters.

The low hills which intersect the land in all directions lend particular charm and variety to the natural scene. A rounded ridge rises before one, wearing a green cap of forests, and beside it, lost in a misty haze, towers a forbidding gray cliff up whose sides the pines and firs do not dare to clamber. The deep green of a ravine suddenly changes to the bare rock of a sheer precipice. A lake with a fantastically winding shoreline lies like a mirror in its dark frame of forests, reflecting scores of islands, from tiny islets covered with tender green to large bare islands humping up like the shells of giant turtles.

Mineral waters spring at the feet of hills and cliffs by the shores of the lakes. For years many of these have been catering to the well being of man. The Kexholm Spa and the famous Koncha waters near Petrozavodsk are particularly well known.

The Eastern part of the Karelo-Finnish Republic already can boast of numerous sanatoriums and rest homes, and many more will be built in the near future on the Isthmus of Karelia and along the shores of Lake Ladoga.

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED

The peoples of the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic have every possibility of soon making their country with its wealth of natural resources one of the most outstanding and developed republics of the U.S.S.R. The guarantee of this is the high level of political activity and understanding so strikingly expressed by the working people of this Republic at the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. and the Supreme Soviet of the Republic on June 16, 1940. These elections proved a brilliant victory for the Stalin bloc of Communists and non-Party people, 99.67 per cent of the registered voters having taken part in the election of deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. and 99.66 per cent in the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. The Stalin bloc of Communists and non-

Party people received the votes of 489,459 people, or 96.48 per cent of the total number of votes cast. Universal and equal suffrage by direct vote and secret ballot was an expression of genuine democracy such as is inconceivable in any other country in the world but the Soviet Union. The elections were transformed into a popular holiday, rousing the greatest enthusiasm among the working people.

Heading the list of the elected representatives of the people of the Karelo-Finnish Republic is the great name of Stalin, the name with which the entire victorious path of the numerous peoples of the Soviet Union, the liberty and independence of the people of the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R., who are building up a flourishing socialist republic, is indissolubly linked.

Among those elected by the people of the Karelo-Finnish Republic is the national hero Toivo Antikainen, who is called by the people "the Dimitroff of the North," because of his unflinching stand and heroic courage before the court of the class enemy. No brutality on the part of the bourgeoisie was able to break the dauntless will and valorous spirit of this true son of the working class, the class to whom belongs the future.

The words uttered by Toivo Antikainen, freed from the prison walls behind which he had been incarcerated by the bourgeoisie, ring out in solemn promise:

"We shall bend our every effort and give all our knowledge towards the transformation of our Republic into an indestructible bulwark of the city of Lenin and the Northwestern borders of the Soviet Union."

The name of its Deputy, Otto Kuusinen, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Finland, is extremely popular among the masses of the Karelo-Finnish Republic. To his credit is a glorious life spent in struggle for the liberation and happiness of his people. It is people such as he who go down in the history of their country as its finest sons.

The Finnish poet, Armas Eikia, spent many years in the prisons

of Finland before he took his place among those elected to government posts by the people of the Karelo-Finnish Republic. His literary activity is inseparably bound up with the liberation struggle of the Finnish people against their oppressors.

Soon after his release from twelve years of imprisonment by the Finnish bourgeoisie, the Finnish worker, Adolph Taimi, was elected a Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Republic and the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. Despite the long years of bitter prison life, hunger-strikes and torture, he has retained his fervor and his energy, and feels particularly keenly the joy of the days of freedom which the victory of the Red Army has given back to him.

Side by side with these tried champions of the cause of the working class, splendid Soviet people fostered by the socialist revolution, people who have shown by their conscientious and selfless work how boundlessly they are given over to the cause of the people, how ready to devote their whole lives to the struggle for the happiness of the working people, have also been elected to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. and the Supreme Soviet of the Republic. Among these is the White Sea fisherman, Korguyev. Recently the second volume of folk tales, written down as he told them, has appeared in print.

There is also the school teacher, Bonch-Osmolovskaya, who has taught for thirty years and educated many a devoted and enterprising patriot of the socialist fatherland.

By the will of the people, Gotchiev, one of the best loggers in Karelia, and Doctor Isserson, one of the best surgeons, have also been elected Deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the new Republic.

At these elections the people of the Karelo-Finnish Republic expressed their firm and unshakable desire to forge ahead together in the commonwealth of peoples of the great Soviet Union, under the guidance of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, to strengthen the power and might of the Soviet land, and its gallant Red Army, which has secured peace for the working people, and affords them

the opportunity of steadily continuing the creative work of building up a communist society.

The First Session of the Supreme Soviet of the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic opened on July 8, 1940.

Carrying out the mandate of their constituents, the people's elected representatives established the procedure for elections to local government bodies, and elected the Republic's supreme organs of government.

The best of the best sons of the people of the Karelo-Finnish Republic were elected to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of that Republic, at the head of which the tried proletarian revolutionary, Otto Kuusinen, was unanimously elected.

A NEW SOCIALIST CONSTITUTION

The people's representatives adopted the Constitution of the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R., sister to the great Stalin Constitution.

Like its great prototype, the Karelo-Finnish Constitution is a constitution of consistently developed and thoroughly socialist democracy.

It not only proclaims equal rights for all citizens but guarantees this equality to them in actual life through the legally established fact that all exploitation of man by man is abolished.

It not only proclaims the right of all citizens of the Republic to work, but ensures them of this right in actual life through the legally established fact that unemployment has been wiped out.

It thereby constitutes an indictment of the regime of exploitation beyond the borders of the Karelo-Finnish Republic, and, primarily, of the regime of White Guard terror in bourgeois Finland. Finnish reactionary papers slander the new Republic, asservating that the Finns and the Finnish language are being suppressed there. The Constitution of the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. exposes this base slander, showing that the Finnish language is, on a par with Russian, an official language of the Republic, although the Finnish population of the Republic is only a minority.

In order to retain their hold on the people, the Finnish bourgeois nationalists roused feelings of chauvinism and strove to sow hate and enmity between the working people of the different nationalities, particularly between the Finns and the Russians. With these ends in view, they played on the prejudices that had taken root in the Finnish people over the scores of years during which they had lived under the yoke of Russian tsarism.

The new Constitution of the young Republic of the Karelians and Finns, imbues these people, just it does the Russian people, with a spirit of internationalism, a spirit of friendship and brotherhood among the working people of all nationalities.

Articles 96 of the Constitution declares:

"Equality of rights of citizens of the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life, is an infeasible law.

"Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, any establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law."

The Lenin-Stalin national policy that is being pursued in the Karelo-Finnish S.S.R. on the basis of the Constitution exerts its influence on the working people of Finland as well. It facilitates and hastens their complete emancipation from the road of Finnish anti-Soviet nationalism and increases the number of friends of the Soviet Union who are fighting for a free and happy Finnish nation.

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