**Finnish Civil War**

- Historical Context
- Political Struggle
- Civil War
- Trauma of the Civil War
- How was the war remembered?

**Political Struggle**

- 1905 General Strike
- Parliament without constitution
  - Universal suffrage 1906
  - Growing support of Social Democratic party
- "Reds" & "Whites"
  - Armed militias
  - Training camps
- Political support
  - German
  - Bolshevik
- SDP Parliamentary majority 1916
  to Bourgeois majority 1917
- 1917 Revolution
- Finnish Independence Dec. 6, 1917
- 1st Finnish President, P.E. Svinhufvud
- Aspirations to Constitutional Monarchy

**Beginning of Civil War**

- Independence declared Dec. 6, 1917
- Problem of maintaining order
  - Russian troops in Finland
  - Conflict between right and left in parliament
  - Insufficient police institution
  - Uncertainty over control of police
- Vicious cycle of increasing "threat"
- War begins January 27, 1917 with "stripping of arms"

**Reds and Whites, 1918**

- 30,000 "Red Guards"
- O.W. Kuusinen
- Drawing from previous political organization
- Some supplies from Bolsheviks
- Concentrated in Helsinki and Tampere
- Poorly trained

- Parliament flees to Vaasa
- Republican guards appointed
  as national army by Svinhufvud
- 38,000 Soldiers concentrated
  in Vaasa
  - C.G. Mannerheim
- Military support from Germany
  & Sweden
Course of Civil War

- Whites evacuate to Vaasa, in the north
- Red and white “terror” during February and March, 1918
- Red attack on Whites Feb., 1918
- Whites push south in March, 1918
- German reinforcements to take Helsinki
- Battle of Tampere in April 1918

Toll of the War

- 3,100 Whites killed in fighting
- 3,600 Reds killed in fighting
- Field executions
  - 1,700 Whites killed
  - 9,200 Reds killed
- White internment camps
  - 80,000 Reds imprisoned
  - 12,500 Reds die in camps
- 30,000 total deaths in civil war
- Political order restored in May 1918
- Parliament reinstalled in Helsinki
- “Reds die, whites tell the story”

How Was the War Remembered?

- Trauma
  - Trials
  - Camps
  - Communities divided
- Linna writing in 1960s
- What could explain the conflict?
  - Independence struggle
  - Betrayal of nation?
    - Who?
    - Why?
  - Socialist revolution, in an agrarian society?
    - How Finland
    - Why Finland?
  - Consequence of breakdown and chaos
    - Orthodoxy theory
    - Skilful kayaker theory
- Terms for 1918 conflict
  - War of Independence
  - Class war
  - Events of 1918
- Linna puts everyday voices in foreground

Conclusion

- War brings to a head previous class divisions
- Traumatic event, which impacts heavily subsequent history
- Literature offers a means of response
  - Affirmation
  - Critique
  - Struggle

Ubiquitous “Heroes Graveyard” (Lappeenranta, eastern Finland), where whites killed in the civil war were buried with full honors

Mannerheim memorial statue, Helsinki