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## **Bright Hopes and Bloody Realities: The Diplomatic Prelude to the Winter War**

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BRIGHT HOPES AND BLOODY REALITIES:  
THE DIPLOMATIC PRELUDE TO THE WINTER WAR

Steven Webster and Paul Bushnell\*, Department of History, IWU

While the snows of Karelia were laced with the blood of thousands of innocents, few men stopped to ponder the origins of the war. But now, more than fifty years later, hindsight has uncovered the roots of the Russo-Finnish conflict of 1939-1940. This project deals with the diplomatic initiatives instigated by the Soviet Union in 1938 and continues to cover Russo-Finnish relations until their breakdown in November of 1939. In the midst of the political maelstrom of the late 1930's, naiveté and arrogance prevailed on both sides of the border. A thorough examination of diplomatic records and government documents reveals the extent of the negotiations and the inevitability of the conflict.