



PALGRAVE STUDIES IN THE HISTORY  
OF EXPERIENCE

# Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000

*Edited by* Ville Kivimäki  
Sami Suodenjoki · Tanja Vahtikari



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Tanja Vahtikari  
Editors

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ISSN 2524-8960

ISSN 2524-8979 (electronic)

Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience

ISBN 978-3-030-69881-2

ISBN 978-3-030-69882-9 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9>

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This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As the editors of the book, we are indebted to a number of people for their work and support. In a workshop in Hämeenlinna in January of 2020, Josephine Hoegaerts, Andrew Newby and Stephanie Olsen offered invaluable comments that were a major help to the book's authors and editors alike. Reetta Eiranen took care of the workshop's practical arrangements. Carl Wieck has done a marvelous job of improving our English language, and Sonja Kalliomäki has been a fantastic copyeditor. At Palgrave, it has been a joy to work with Emily Russell and Joseph Johnson, both of whom have made the publication process smooth and pleasant. Our anonymous peer-reviewers provided us with good advice as well as encouraging comments, while the Finnish archives and memory organizations, whose collections are utilized in the book, have been as helpful and professional as ever. Finally, the Academy of Finland Centre of Excellence in the History of Experiences (HEX) at Tampere University, led by Professor Pertti Haapala, has supported and financed our work—and our colleagues at HEX have also made most useful comments on the book's introduction. Our sincere thanks go to everyone else who has supported our book, in addition to our authors, who have shown great commitment to the joint project.

Ville Kivimäki  
Sami Suodenjoki  
Tanja Vahtikari

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<sup>1</sup> *HEX is an abbreviation for the Academy of Finland Centre of Excellence in the History of Experiences at Tampere University, Finland.*

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Lived Nation: Histories of Experience and Emotion in Understanding Nationalism

*Ville Kivimäki, Sami Suodenjoki, and Tanja Vahtikari*

### TODAY'S NATIONALISMS AND THEIR CHALLENGE TO HISTORIANS

Our book explores the nation as lived-through experiences and emotions: as objects, producers, and contextual frameworks of feelings, experiences, memories, and meanings. Our aim is to analyze the nation as an entanglement of the personal, social, and collective, transcending one-way causalities or top-down hierarchies. As an event or happening between people and social groups, the lived nation<sup>1</sup> is inevitably a more multifaceted and “messier” phenomenon than nationalism treated only as an ideology or discourse. By taking the history of Finland in the nineteenth and twentieth

<sup>1</sup>With “lived nation,” we are drawing inspiration from the concept of lived religion that has a long history of its own in the study of religion; see, e.g., Sari Katajala-Peltomaa & Raisa Maria Toivo, *Lived Religion and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2021), 2–11.

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V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_1)

centuries as our empirical case, we want to develop ideas and methodologies to examine nations through the histories of experiences and emotions, burgeoning fields in current historiography.<sup>2</sup>

Our focus on experiences and emotions in the study of nations is accentuated by present-day politics around the globe. At the time of this writing, nationalism continues to persist and flourish in many different forms. It may appear in a statist form, sponsored by institutions and representatives of the state, but it is also eagerly consumed and produced at the grassroots of people's personal lives. In resurgent nationalist "revolts," discourses that were only recently considered to be on the fringe have gone mainstream. Populist right-wing movements have been sparked from below through horizontal social networks not related to the state but opposing it. Their anti-immigration and anti-establishment rhetoric is more focused on national pride and cultural identities than on any clear political ideology. Although there are certainly important financiers and nodes of power contributing to mobilizing the new populist revolutions, their function can hardly be explained by top-down, state-centered models of nationalism.<sup>3</sup>

Adding to the uncertainties of the time, it is rare for an introduction to a history book to be written in the midst of such historical events. The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has influenced the editing of our anthology very concretely—but, more importantly, it is yet to be seen how the pandemic will influence trends in globalization and nationalism, for example, the future development of nation-states vis-à-vis multinational entities such as the European Union. It is already evident that many responses to

<sup>2</sup>History of emotions is currently institutionalized in the Center for the History of Emotions at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, led by Prof. Ute Frevert, in the Queen Mary Centre for the History of the Emotions in London, and in the Society for the History of Emotions, which continues the work of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions. For the history of experiences, most authors of our book work at the Academy of Finland Centre of Excellence in the History of Experiences (HEX) at Tampere University.

<sup>3</sup>See Marc F. Plattner, "Illiberal Democracy and the Struggle on the Right," *Journal of Democracy* 30:1 (2019), 5–19; Tom Junes, "Polish Youth, Nationalism, and the Far Right," ZOIS Spotlight 6/2020, <https://en.zois-berlin.de/publications/zois-spotlight/polish-youth-nationalism-and-the-far-right/>; Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today* (Cambridge: Polity, 2019).

the transnational pandemic have been “national” or “nationalist” in essence—both in public policies and in informal rhetoric and practices.<sup>4</sup>

In short, it is clear that nationalism today cannot be considered a relic of the past; in its various versions, it is setting the agenda for the future. To borrow sociologist Jon E. Fox’s terms, in the new “hot” populist nationalisms we are seeing “nationalism on steroids” and “fireworks nationalism.”<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the “cooler” and more latent versions of nationalism are doing equally well. Social psychologist Michael Billig famously employed the term “banal nationalism” to describe national feelings and identities routinely reproduced in people’s daily encounters with various national-symbolic artifacts. By living their lives inside the established nation-state structures and the nationally framed cultures, people are consuming nationalism on an everyday basis: for example, in buying food, watching sports, following weather forecasts, driving on a highway, and reading textbooks at school.<sup>6</sup> It is important to remember that Billig’s idea is not to juxtapose banal nationalism with hot, more explicit nationalism—just the reverse. The embeddedness of nationalism in everyday lives can serve as a key to explaining the sudden outbursts of heated nationalism and, in the extreme, to understanding people’s apparent willingness to kill and die for their country. It is thus probable that the powerful emergence of hot nationalism today is linked to the continuities of banal, everyday nationalism in its implicit forms.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Florian Bieber, “Global Nationalism in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *Nationalities Papers* (2020), online publication doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2020.35>, 1–13; J. Paul Goode, David R. Stroup & Elizaveta Gauffman, “Everyday Nationalism in Unsettled Times: In Search of Normality during Pandemic,” *Nationalities Papers* (2020), online publication doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2020.40>; Ruolin Su, “Is Nationalism Rising in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic? Individual Evidence from the United States,” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* (2020), online publication doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11366-020-09696-2>

<sup>5</sup> Jon E. Fox, “The edges of the nation: a research agenda for uncovering the taken-for-granted foundations of everyday nationhood,” *Nations and Nationalism* 23:1 (2017), 26.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), 11–13, 46–9. See also Tim Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (New York: Berg Publishers, 2002); Tim Edensor, “Automobility and national identity: representation, geography and driving practice,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 21:4–5 (2004), 101–20; Rhys Jones & Peter Merriman, “Hot, banal and everyday nationalism: Bilingual road signs in Wales,” *Political Geography* 28:3 (2009), 164–73; Michael Skey, “‘Mindless markers of the nation’: the routine flagging of nationhood across the visual environment,” *Sociology* 51:2 (2017), 274–89.

<sup>7</sup> Billig (1995), 7–8.

For a historian of nationalism, present-day politics together with various social and cultural phenomena connected with national identity provoke a number of questions. First of all, to what extent is nationalism an -ism in any ideologically coherent meaning of the word? Starting with the philosophical works of Hegel and Herder, the study of nationalism as an ideology has represented one of the main veins in intellectual history; but this does not mean that people have had a great national philosophy in mind when feeling strongly about their nation or identifying with it. Therefore, it is worth looking at earlier forms of nationalism and nationhood, like those of today, without an interpretative overemphasis on the role of nationalism as an educated ideology. It also warrants asking how nationalisms may have worked differently in the past compared to today.

If, and when, nationalism as an ideology-based political identity forms too narrow a perspective to explain nationhood, then it is important to search for locations and manifestations for the nation other than political programs and ideological tenets. National feelings, identities, and ways of thinking have also maintained their strength in those countries (e.g., in Scandinavia) where public nationalist rhetoric, for a long time, was relatively temperate until the surge of right-wing populism in the 2000s. Nationalism has been embedded in welfare-state structures, and it has hibernated in informal spheres of culture and society other than the explicitly political one. Following the call for the study of everyday nationalism (see below), it seems useful to situate the lived nation in routine practices, experiences, human relations, and emotions—and to focus, for instance, on children and adolescents in order to understand transmission of and continuities in the forms of national belonging. Young people are targets for the renewal of the nation, but they also identify with the nation on their own terms, re-interpreting and occasionally challenging the designations imposed on them.<sup>8</sup>

The vigorous emergence and form of today's nationalism are not easily aligned with the modernist narrative regarding the birth of nations and their development into nation-states. Instead of representing an evolutionary period in a linear historical timeline—"an Age of Nations"—it

<sup>8</sup> Zsuzsa Millei, "Pedagogy of nation: A concept and method to research nationalism in young children's institutional lives," *Childhood* 26:1 (2019), 83–97; Josephine Hoegaerts, "Learning to love: Embodied practices of patriotism in the Belgian nineteenth-century classroom (and beyond)," in *Emotions and Everyday Nationalism in Modern European History*, ed. by Andreas Stynen, Maarten Van Ginderachter & Xosé M. Núñez Seixas (London: Routledge, 2020), 66–83.



now seems plausible to see nationalism as a more episodic, wave-like phenomenon that may appear in different forms at different times—and then retreat into the background.<sup>9</sup> Although the nation-states and their power structures have certainly provided nationalism with institutional coherence, nationalism seems to be a more complex phenomenon than top-down models would suggest. Political scientist Eric Kaufmann has proposed the use of complexity theory to understand these horizontal dynamics of “crowdsourced,” “viral” nationalism. According to Kaufmann, modernist theories of nationalism are too statist and elite-centered; instead, “national identity is like a forest, emerging from peer-to-peer flows and feedbacks more than via state direction, especially in our post-industrial, democratic age.”<sup>10</sup> It may prove useful to test such perspectives on earlier nationalisms as well as on their distribution.

With the exception of works stemming mainly from Anthony D. Smith’s thinking,<sup>11</sup> all the classical theories in the history of nationalism are linked to the modernist paradigm. With various emphases and explanations, Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Miroslav Hroch have all seen the birth of nationalism occurring within the frameworks of nineteenth-century modernization.<sup>12</sup> As several chapters in our book illustrate, we by no means consider this body of scholarship irrelevant; yet, in line with the remarks above, it is worth asking whether our recent encounters with nationalism require having a fresh look at past nationalisms as well—and whether modernist theories of nationalism need revision. The

<sup>9</sup> John Hutchinson, “Hot and Banal Nationalism: The Nationalization of the ‘Masses,’” in *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, ed. by Gerard Delanty & Krishan Kumar (London: SAGE, 2006), 299–300.

<sup>10</sup> Eric Kaufmann, “Complexity and nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 23:1 (2017), cit. 12.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998); for an overview on debates and discussions, see Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, 3rd ed. (London: Palgrave, 2017 [2000]).

<sup>12</sup> Most importantly, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 [1990]); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985 [1968]). See also John Breuilly, “Modernism and writing the history of nationalism,” in *Writing the History of Nationalism*, ed. by Stefan Berger & Eric Storm (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 61–82.

re-evaluation of this history also feeds into current debates on present-day nationalisms.

## NEW PERSPECTIVES IN NATIONALISM STUDIES

Our suggestion for the historical analysis of nations, nationalisms, and national belonging in the past is to study “lived nations” as entangled histories of experiences and emotions. In order to overcome the dichotomy of top-down and bottom-up perspectives, we want to see “the nation” and “the national” as things that actually happen in people’s individual and social lives.<sup>13</sup> We see experiences and emotions as a mediating sphere where the different impulses (personal, social, cultural, and political) mold into meanings, concepts, actions, and practices. This sphere is also dynamic and contested, marked by conflicting interests and the exercise of power. But before coming to this, we will introduce those initiatives in nationalism studies that have been seminal and thought-provoking for our approach. These initiatives are centered around concepts of everyday nationalism, personal nationalism, and national indifference. Much of this new work has been done in disciplines other than history, although we are, of course, not the first historians to utilize these perspectives.<sup>14</sup>

Noting that research on national identifications has tended to focus on institutions and elites, historian Eric Hobsbawm once regretted that we know little about how ordinary people of the past experienced nationhood in their everyday lives.<sup>15</sup> Three decades later, this regret has not become outdated, even though some historians, such as Maarten Van Ginderachter, have grasped the challenge. In his work on the everyday nationalism of workers in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Belgium, Van Ginderachter sets the aim of tracing how ordinary people engaged with, enacted, ignored, and deflected the nation and nationalism in their everyday relations. He adopts a “sustained focus on sources from, and not merely about, ordinary people” and focuses on, for example, the accidental encounters of rank-and-file workers with national tokens. This approach

<sup>13</sup>Cf. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963), 9.

<sup>14</sup>For historians’ works, see Andreas Stynen, Maarten Van Ginderachter & Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, eds, *Emotions and Everyday Nationalism in Modern European History* (London: Routledge, 2020); Marnix Beyen & Maarten Van Ginderachter, *Nationhood from Below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2012).

<sup>15</sup>Hobsbawm (2012 [1990]), 130.

shares some key characteristics of our idea of studying the lived nation as it seeks to bring together nationalism studies and social history while connecting macro-level explanation to micro-level analysis and discourses to daily practices.<sup>16</sup>

In social sciences and human geography there already exists a solid tradition of exploring everyday nationalism. While Michael Billig's work on banal nationalism remains an important contribution to the scholarship—and can be integrated into the idea of the lived nation—here we draw especially from more recent studies on everyday nationalism. These studies place the making of the nation within social interactions, practices, and mundane everyday encounters between people, spaces, and materialities, and look into the ways in which people, in a more interactive manner than through simply absorbing the nationalist content, take part in reproducing the nation.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, in these recent studies, there is a more focused emphasis on the affective nature of nationalism. As cultural geographers Rhys Jones and Peter Merriman have recently pointed out, national forces and affects are relational and mobile, “for while they may be partially located, grounded or sited – taking hold of particular bodies, in particular places, at particular times – these forces and affects circulate between and are only partially apprehended by bodies inhabiting and moving through particular spaces and sites.”<sup>18</sup> What can be drawn from this scholarship for the concept of a lived nation is that the area of everyday nationalism is dynamic and process-like, and that there are many and varied ways in which to be affected, or not, by national forces. Instead of clear-cut categories and straightforward explanations, this is a juncture of multidirectional encounters.

Studies on everyday nationalism have most often focused on the production and location of national “banalities,” that is on the nationalist framings of the everyday. As sociologist Jon E. Fox has noted, it is important to think about “how banal nationalism gets ‘in here’, in our unspoken, unreflexive understandings of the (national) order of things?”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Maarten Van Ginderachter, *The Everyday Nationalism of Workers: A Social History of Modern Belgium* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 3–4, 6.

<sup>17</sup>See, e.g., Jon E. Fox & Cynthia Miller-Idriss, “Everyday Nationhood,” *Ethnicities* 8:4 (2008); Jones & Merriman (2009); Fox (2017); Peter Merriman & Rhys Jones, “Nations, materialities and affects,” *Progress in Human Geography* 41:5 (2017), 600–17.

<sup>18</sup>Merriman & Jones (2017).

<sup>19</sup>Fox (2017), 30.

Approaching the same question of nationalism in everyday experiences from a different angle, social anthropologist Anthony P. Cohen has coined the term “personal nationalism” to aid in understanding the ways people use nationalism and nationhood to formulate their sense of self. Cohen’s idea has been to see members of a nation as active participants in personalizing nationalism, in attributing their own meanings to it:

*the arguments for nationalism must be cogent within the experience and circumstances of the individuals who interpret it as being appropriate to themselves. Nationalism becomes at once a compelling means of both locating and depicting their selves. Through their ownership of their selves, they “own” the nation, or the manner of its representation, just as they “own” culture.<sup>20</sup>*

Developing Cohen’s concept further, historian Raúl Moreno-Almendral has called for a study of “microhistorical acts of nation-making.” By reading people’s personal accounts, it is possible to see how they experience, memorize, and customize nationhood and how they use the nation as “a meaningful way of framing and making sense of specific life experiences.” Nationalism serves the purpose of codifying personal experiences and memories in collective terms. A personal approach to nationhood does not necessarily mean the same as a biographical one; instead of scrutinizing a particular human life, the idea is to study how the nation shapes people’s mindsets and conceptual frameworks.<sup>21</sup>

Cohen is aware that there are great differences between nations in how much freedom they allow their members in interpreting nationalism for their personal use and to what extent the nation itself can be constructed through such personal narratives.<sup>22</sup> In contrast to totalitarian and strictly hierarchical nation-states, Cohen’s concept was originally developed to help understand the attraction of cultural nationalism in liberal, modern-day Scotland. This is important to keep in mind, although there are arguably also some spaces for personal nationalism in other, more restrictive

<sup>20</sup> Anthony P. Cohen, “Personal Nationalism: A Scottish View of Some Rites, Rights, and Wrongs,” *American Ethnologist* 23:4 (1996), cit. 808.

<sup>21</sup> Raúl Moreno-Almendral, “Reconstructing the history of nationalist cognition and everyday nationhood from personal accounts,” *Nations and Nationalism* 24:3 (2018), 654, 656–7, 664; for the usefulness of Cohen’s concept and for its differences to the studies on banal and everyday nationalism, see Jonathan Hearn, “National identity: banal, personal and embedded,” *Nations and Nationalism* 13:4 (2007), 657–74.

<sup>22</sup> Cohen (1996), 803–4, 812.

nations and nationalisms. Similarly, historians should stress as well that the idea and norms of the self vary in time and in culture. Consequently, there are historical and cultural differences to be considered in exploring people's uses of the nation for expressing and formulating their selfhood. With these caveats, personal nationalism becomes a relevant approach to be developed when studying the experiential and emotional aspects of nationhood. So far, historians have not applied it widely.<sup>23</sup>

Situating the national in grassroots practices, everyday experiences and personal feelings may result in seeing the nation everywhere. Nevertheless, not everything is national, and it is therefore important to consider the stumbles and limits of the nation. A shift of focus from the triumphs of popular nationalism to the moments when the nation loses its salience has given rise to studies that draw on the notion of national indifference. Many of these studies have examined national indifference in the context of the Habsburg Monarchy, but scholars working on other historical contexts have also increasingly adopted the term.<sup>24</sup> According to historian Alexei Miller, national indifference has often been associated with a situation where a nationalist movement struggles to mobilize the masses or where two groups of nationalists are competing, while "ordinary people" are trying to stand apart from this confrontation. However, indifference can be a part of practically any situation involving national mobilization.<sup>25</sup> It can also take many forms, including "national agnosticism," or absence of national loyalties, nationally ambivalent or opportunistic side-switching, or approval of bilingualism and cross-ethnic marriages.<sup>26</sup>

The notion of national indifference has its limits. First of all, if the sources used by a historian do not include explicit nationalist rhetoric, this does not necessarily imply national indifference but can also hint at "a banal nationalism that has retreated into the background."<sup>27</sup> Second, all

<sup>23</sup>For historians' interest in Cohen's concept see Stynen, Van Ginderachter & Núñez Seixas, "Introduction: Emotions and everyday nationalism in modern European history," in Stynen, Van Ginderachter & Núñez Seixas (2020), 3–4, 6.

<sup>24</sup>See Maarten Van Ginderachter & Jon Fox, "Introduction: National indifference and the history of nationalism in modern Europe," in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, ed. by Maarten Van Ginderachter & Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019), 1; Alexei Miller, "'National Indifference' as a Political Strategy?" *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 20:1 (2019), 63–5.

<sup>25</sup>Miller (2019), 63–4.

<sup>26</sup>Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69:1 (2010), 98.

<sup>27</sup>Van Ginderachter & Fox (2019), 5.

divergent grassroots reactions to the nationalist message do not necessarily imply disregard, rejection, or opportunistic appropriation of the nation. Some of these reactions can also be interpreted, for instance, within the framework of what historian Alf Lüdtke calls *Eigensinn*, that is, spontaneous self-will or willfulness. From this perspective, a certain reaction to trickle-down nationalism does not in itself explain national belonging or non-belonging but tells about subversive reappropriation or inversion of imposed values.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, considering the questions of national indifference is fruitful for a study of lived nations. When and why, for instance, is the national framework relevant or irrelevant to people's identities, thinking, and behavior? How do different experiences and emotions relate to national indifference, as in contrast to national belonging?

### THE NATION AND THE HISTORY OF EXPERIENCES AND EMOTIONS

At this point it is necessary to specify what we mean by the concept of a lived nation. We are drawing here mainly from two traditions in historical scholarship—the history of experiences and the history of emotions—and aim to bring these two parallel research fields into a fruitful conversation in order to explain how nations are constructed through experiences and emotions, and vice versa.

As a starting point for the discussion it is useful to look at historian Joan W. Scott's classic article "The Evidence of Experience" (1991), where she offers a poignant critique of the essentialist, unproblematized uses of experience in earlier historiography. According to Scott, historians should not use "authentic" experiences as evidence; instead, they should analyze how discourse and ideology produce knowledge of experience, in the first place, and thus also the subjective identity and reality of the person who experiences. "Experience is, in this approach, not the origin of our explanation, but that which we want to explain," Scott wrote.<sup>29</sup> As one of the pioneers in introducing poststructuralist theory to history, Scott's emphasis was solely on language; there was no space here for bodily and

<sup>28</sup> Van Ginderachter (2019), 105. For *Eigensinn*, see Alf Lüdtke, "Organisational Order or Eigensinn? Workers' Privacy and Workers Politics in Imperial Germany," in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics since the Middle Ages*, ed. by Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 303–33.

<sup>29</sup> Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17:4 (1991), cit. 797.

non-discursive experiences—or the material world—which would nowadays be recognized as important historical phenomena to study.<sup>30</sup> Yet Scott’s main point that experiences are not simply experienced, but that they are socially and culturally constructed, serves as a basic point of departure for our understanding of the history of experiences.

Until recently, the “history of experiences” has not really acquired a stable of its own in English-written historiography.<sup>31</sup> In German scholarship, however, *Erfahrungsgeschichte* boomed at the turn of the millennium, especially in studies on war and society. In this case, the concept of experience has been seen as a possible answer to the challenge of a linguistic or cultural turn. German *Erfahrungsgeschichte* can be called moderately constructivist in its stance toward language and discourse. Using Peter L. Berger’s and Thomas Luckmann’s sociology of knowledge, it has focused on those semantic systems of meaning that formulate people’s perceptions and pre-discursive experiences (*Erlebnisse*) into socially shared experiences (*Erfahrungen*). In longitudinal diachronic processes, experiences pile up to form stocks of knowledge, which are transmitted between individuals, social groups, institutions, and even generations.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, instead of being considered somehow authentic or free from socio-cultural influences, experiences are seen as “predisposed” (*vorgeprägt*) by the person’s language community; religious and ideological standpoints; generation, class, and gender; political community and

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Katie Barclay, “New Materialism and the New History of the Emotions,” *Emotions: History, Culture, Society* 1:1 (2017), 161–83; Derek Hillard, Heikki Lempa & Russell Spinney, eds, *Feelings Materialized: Emotions, Bodies, and Things in Germany, 1500–1950* (New York: Berghahn, 2020); Rob Boddice & Mark Smith, *Emotion, Sense, Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 19–20.

<sup>31</sup> For wider discussions on the concept of experience in historical scholarship, see Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); and David Carr, *Experience and History: Phenomenological Perspectives on the Historical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>32</sup> Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday, 1966). For the impetus, theory and results of the German *Erfahrungsgeschichte* on war and society, see especially Nikolaus Buschmann & Horst Carl, eds, *Die Erfahrung des Krieges: Erfahrungsgeschichtliche Perspektiven von der Französischen Revolution bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001); and Georg Schild & Anton Schindling, eds, *Kriegserfahrungen – Krieg und Gesellschaft in der Neuzeit: Neue Horizonte der Forschung* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2009).

national belonging; as well as by several other background factors.<sup>33</sup> According to historian Reinhart Koselleck's famous postulation, "experience is present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered."<sup>34</sup>

In this German research tradition, experience is not understood simply as a subjective consciousness of objective reality, but as a process in which events and perceptions are shaped into socially shareable meanings. Experiences are not only individual reflections: they form layers of collective and institutionalized knowledge. These layers act as structures that further predispose historical subjects to certain interpretations of their social reality. Still, experiencing is not only an act of reproducing earlier knowledge. Although the experiencing subject is a historically conditioned product of certain kinds of knowing, he or she is also a conscious producer of knowledge, in varying degrees capable of creative reorganization and recombination of cultural meanings in order to express experiences. In this form, a history of experiences should avoid the dangers of essentialism warned about above by Scott; yet it should also avoid reducing historical subjects to mere carriers of discursive meanings, as important as these cultural predispositions may well be for socially meaningful experiencing.<sup>35</sup>

We are not proposing to apply the German history of experiences as such to our own work, but to take from it three crucial notions. First of all, instead of locating experiences within individual minds, we see them as a strongly cultural, social, and *societal* phenomenon, bound to power relations, institutions, and systems of meaning. Second, instead of direct perceptions and fixed entities, experiences are synchronically and diachronically constructed processes which blend into memories—and which are shaped by the person's or social group's earlier experiences and memories. Third,

<sup>33</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, "Der Einfluß der beiden Weltkriege auf das soziale Bewußtsein," in *Der Krieg des kleinen Mannes: Eine Militärgeschichte von unten*, ed. by Wolfram Wette (München: Piper, 1992), esp. 324–32.

<sup>34</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, transl. by Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004 [German original 1979]), cit. 259.

<sup>35</sup> For this theoretical discussion in German, see especially Nikolaus Buschmann & Horst Carl, "Zugänge zur Erfahrungsgeschichte des Krieges: Forschung, Theorie, Fragestellung," as well as Nikolaus Buschmann & Aribert Reimann, "Die Konstruktion historischer Erfahrung: Neue Wege zu einer Erfahrungsgeschichte des Krieges," both in Buschmann & Carl (2001). See also Ville Kivimäki, *Battled Nerves: Finnish Soldiers' War Experience, Trauma, and Military Psychiatry, 1941–44* (PhD thesis: Åbo Akademi University, 2013), 53–9.



the study of experience is a study of a blurred mediating category, where cultural meanings, subjective identities, social relations, and societal structures shape individual perceptions into experiences proper. Analyzing this messy category is thus a matter for social and cultural history.

In international scholarship, the tradition of *Erfahrungsgeschichte* is less known—and in Germany, too, it has given way to new approaches over the past ten years. Nevertheless, many similar questions posed by the German history of experiences can be recognized in the booming field of contemporary history of emotions, albeit approached from a different angle and adding to it. Most works in the field, starting from the concept of “emotionology” developed by Peter and Carol Stearns (1985),<sup>36</sup> have treated emotions as social and cultural phenomena and pointed to historically and culturally specific forms of emotional expression. Many of these studies have focused on the constitutive role of language. Anthropologist William Reddy drew attention to “emotives,” which are emotion words seen as speech acts or performative utterances that produce or change the emotion or feeling they describe. The importance of language was also key to historian Barbara Rosenwein’s influential notion of emotional communities, which she understands as social groups adhering to the same valuations of emotions and emotional expression.<sup>37</sup> Emotional communities, or “communities of experience” for that matter, are useful categories in striving to understand collective experiences, especially if, as is pointed out by historian Margrit Pernau, emotional communities are not grounded in fixed social communities. One should rather pay attention to “the performative power of emotions and their potential ability to contribute to, or even trigger, the creation of communities in the long run, but also for communities which only exist for a short period of time.”<sup>38</sup>

With the communities of experience, we refer to people who have experienced the same things or events, who have communicated and negotiated these experiences with each other, and who have thus given similar (although not necessarily identical) meanings to their experiences. It is

<sup>36</sup>Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, “Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards,” *American Historical Review* 90:4 (1985), 813–36.

<sup>37</sup>Barbara Rosenwein cited in Jan Plamper, “The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns,” *History and Theory* 49:2 (2010), 253; see also Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>38</sup>Margrit Pernau, “Feeling communities: introduction,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 54:1 (2017), 10.

important that the people themselves understand these experiences as formative for their sense of identity and belonging. A nation is not, per se, a community of experience, as not all its members have ever experienced the same things and, even less, given them similar meanings. But nations have the capacity to “nationalize” personal and social experiences that are important to people’s identity, that is, to give these experiences nationally framed interpretations. For example, in times of war or some other major crisis or upheaval, people are inclined to experience through their parent large groups—and in such cases nations can be powerful instances of collective meaning-making. Thus, momentarily at least, nations can act like a community of experience, although not all the citizens share the same experience and its interpretation.<sup>39</sup> Yet, normally, any nation is composed of a multitude of competing and overlapping communities of experience; some of them more closely related to the national community than others. It would be an important empirical question to study which communities of experience are given special status in shaping and defining the nation under different circumstances—for instance, war veterans come to mind—and which communities of experience may be excluded, unrecognized, or pushed to the margins.

In recent years, researchers on the history of emotions have paid more attention to the relationship between emotions and the body, and to emotions, spaces, and matter. Historian Monique Scheer, drawing on practice theory, has highlighted the importance of the bodily practices of “doing emotions.”<sup>40</sup> To a similar end, historian Benno Gammerl uses the concept of “emotional spaces”: different spaces are linked to diverging emotional styles and practices, which depend on historically specific economic, cultural, and political conditions. Where emotions take place, significantly influences how they are generated and expressed.<sup>41</sup> Certain material and spatial realities enhance particular relationships of bodies to each other

<sup>39</sup> It is also possible that some past experiences—true or fictional—are delegated from generation to generation as “our” national experiences, without any direct link between the original event and its present-day “experiencer.” Whether communities of experience can be based on such indirect, transgenerational experiences—or whether such communities would merit a label of their own—is a matter for further investigation.

<sup>40</sup> Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History?): A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion,” *History and Theory* 51:2 (2012).

<sup>41</sup> Benno Gammerl, “Emotional styles – concepts and challenges,” *Rethinking History* 16:2 (2012), 164.

and how they are entangled with particular emotions. In the framework of the study of the history of childhood and emotions, historians Karen Vallgård, Kristine Alexander, and Stephanie Olsen have introduced the concept of an “emotional frontier” in order to address the multi-dimensional, and often competing, sites available to children in negotiating their emotional identity.<sup>42</sup> In which spaces and how “patriotism” and other “national feelings” are produced, encountered, and renewed are important questions within the history of nationalism. Just as people do emotions and experiences, they do the nation in embodied practices. Like emotional communities, emotional spaces should not be considered in overly fixed terms: “a prescriptive space can become a refuge if and when nobody is looking.”<sup>43</sup> Emotions, including those directed toward the nation, always emerge through people’s dynamic uses of space.<sup>44</sup>

The histories of experience and emotion represent two different, although in several aspects parallel, research traditions in history writing. It is noticeable how easily “experience” and “emotion” could be used interchangeably in most of the previous introduction. It is possible to see experience as a wider category than emotions, so that the former incorporates the latter but is not limited to it. Yet it can also be argued that any relevant experience entails an emotional component of some degree. Furthermore, not all emotions are necessarily experiences in the socially shared and discursively processed sense of the German *Erfahrung*. Time will tell whether the differences between these two scholarly branches merit a clearer demarcation; for now, in the chapters of the current book, we see the history of experiences and the history of emotions as fruitfully supplementing and contributing to each other, as well as to the concept of the lived nation.

We return now to defining remarks on the notion of the lived nation. Since the nineteenth century, nations and nation-states have been major contexts for collective and subjective experiences and emotions. We

<sup>42</sup> Karen Vallgård, Kristine Alexander & Stephanie Olsen, “Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood,” in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives*, ed. by Stephanie Olsen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 22–6.

<sup>43</sup> Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 171.

<sup>44</sup> Andreas Reckwitz, “Affective spaces: a praxeological outlook,” *Rethinking History* 16:2 (2012), 252–6; Margrit Pernau, “Space and Emotion: Building to Feel,” *History Compass* 12:7 (2014), 546.

perceive a lived nation as a series of encounters and negotiations between individuals, social groups, institutions, and explicitly nationalist advocates, as well as between bodies, spaces, and objects. This entanglement does not have clear boundaries, and it is not unambiguously a top-down or a bottom-up process. The lived nation is equally about how nations form and renew contexts for experiencing and how they are constructed through experiences. Similarly, nations have been both objects and producers of emotions. In these processes, lived nations have been constructed as political bodies—and one can see nation-states as institutionalized and layered experiences. These political bodies, in turn, create new experiences and emotions. Together with the emerging framework of the nation-states, the messiness of the above-mentioned encounters is shaped by other structures of experience (or emotion): economical frameworks, power structures, and material circumstances. Structures of experience are also cultural and ideological. As the Great Story of the Nation has been constructed as the master narrative of modern national history, people have been invited to integrate their own experiences and emotions into this collective script. In other words, nations have become important systems of meaning when consigning significance to one's experiences and feelings.

What has so far been insufficiently integrated into the historiography of nationalism is the role that experiences and emotions play in people's reproduction of the nation in their daily lives. People do not simply encounter and digest national representations; they have experiential and emotional agency in these encounters, which can be highly varied and is always situational. Clearly, not everyone had experienced and felt a sense of belonging to the nation in similar ways, or not everyone experienced and felt a sense of belonging to the nation at all. In addition, different groups within society had different experiences and emotions in similar national (material or imagined) spaces.<sup>45</sup> People brought to their encounters with the nation their gender, social class, age, and their situated life histories. While we are interested in people's varying positions in relation to the production and consumption of the nation, it is obvious that one should not lose sight of the question of power, and the resulting limits of people's own agency. The collective scripts of the nation have also been narratives of exclusion and marginalization in relation to people's experiences.

<sup>45</sup> Pernau (2014), 542.

What is crucial for both the history of experiences and the history of emotions is to underline that experiences and emotions always happen in a historically specific time, place, space, and materiality. Even though they are formulated through culture and society at large, experiences and emotions are situated and contextual—and they are thus hardly ever quite the same from one person or social group to another. Consequently, it is important to highlight how there exist several influential and affective national/nationalist discourses and practices within particular places at specific times.<sup>46</sup> We will now proceed to frame our specific case of a lived nation: the study of Finland as the history of experiences and emotions.

### THE CASE OF FINLAND: CONTEXT AND TIMELINE

Finland, in its wider transnational relations, serves as an excellent laboratory for scrutinizing the concept of the lived nation. As a case, Finland is as “exceptional” as any nation, but it is also a fruitful example within the European timeline of political mobilizations and crises due to its multifaceted complexity as revealed through “eastern,” “western,” and “northern” versions of nationalism and nation-state histories. And as the present anthology demonstrates, Finnish history can offer useful cases via which to study the connections between gender and class in relation to the nation: how was the nation felt and experienced differently and how did the issues of gender and class shape the experience of the nation? Finland is also useful for the analysis of, e.g., the development of a civic society hand-in-hand with a national “awakening,” war experiences and the nation, and the emergence of “welfare state nationalism.” From a practical standpoint, Finnish archives contain many exceptional and even unique materials for the study of experiences and emotions, for instance, in the fields of the history of childhood and youth, history from below, the history of everyday life, or memory studies. All of these approaches are utilized in our book.

To help to contextualize Finland as a case, it is necessary to give a brief chronological overview of the “national” history of Finland from roughly 1800 to 2000. After being part of Sweden for centuries, Finland was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1809 as a result of the Napoleonic Wars and was afforded wide autonomy. In this new imperial framework, the national movement that strove for a national entity, united in language

<sup>46</sup>Jones & Merriman (2009), 172.

and culture, gained ground in Finland in the mid-nineteenth century. As elsewhere, the development of nationalism into a mass phenomenon was based on civic associations, but crucially also on the rise of modern mass media, the role of which has been somewhat overlooked in Finnish histories of nation-building, despite being underlined in classic works on nationalism.<sup>47</sup> The Finnish national movement known as Fennomania strove for strengthening the status of the Finnish language vis-à-vis Swedish and for elementary education for the masses. At the same time, the rise of the global market economy increasingly affected Finland, especially its industries, forestry, and agriculture. These processes led to restructuring in the economy, population, and social divisions, including strengthening the position of landowning farmers as the backbone of the nation in the nationalistic societal imagination.<sup>48</sup>

The preservation and production of cultural heritage became a key part of the nation-building process occurring around Europe during the nineteenth century.<sup>49</sup> In Finland, the ideas of romantic nationalism inspired the work of the Finnish Literature Society, which, ever since its establishment in 1831, had specialized in the collection of folklore and oral history. Based on similar premises, the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland became active at the end of the century in preserving the Finland-Swedish and Scandinavian heritage, thus carrying on a nationalistic tradition of its own.<sup>50</sup> The activity of these two institutions has continued until the present day as part of the changing objectives of national heritage work. The archives of the Finnish Literature Society contain vast multitudes of reminiscences, diaries, and other materials. These documents, while addressing various aspects of people's daily life, may also be understood as "national work" that people themselves do: that is writing, in very concrete terms, one's own story into the national narrative. Therefore, the archives of the

<sup>47</sup> See Heikki Kokko, *Kuviteltu minuus: Ihmiskäsityksen murros suomenkielisen kansanosan kulttuurissa 1800-luvun puolivälissä* (Tampere: Tampere University, 2016), 438; Hannu Nieminen, *Kansa seisoi loitompana: Kansallisen julkisuuden rakentuminen Suomessa 1809–1917* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> See Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 85–8.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Astrid Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage: Preserving the Past in France, Germany and England, 1789–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>50</sup> Kati Mikkola, Pia Olsson & Eija Stark, "Minority Cultures and the Making of Cultural Heritage Archives in Finland," *Ethnologia Europaea* 49:1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.16995/ee.818>

Society provide an extraordinary repository of the “lived nation,” that has been utilized in several chapters of this book.

The Finnish nationalist movement developed in an imperial context like the nationalist movements in many other European regions.<sup>51</sup> For a long time, Finnish nationalists avoided confrontation with the imperial power and it was not until the end of the nineteenth century when the Russian government’s integration policies caused a radicalization of Finnish nationalism. Around the same time, the socialist labor movement emerged as a mass phenomenon, developing after the Russian Revolution of 1905 into a formidable political force in Finland. The changing balance between the two civic religions, nationalism and socialism, or a redefinition of their mutual relation, characterized the Finnish case in the twentieth century. The success of socialists owed a great deal to their ability to introduce a new idea of the nation that underlined the extension of civil rights.<sup>52</sup>

Finland seceded from Russia to become an independent state in December 1917, as a consequence of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution. However, the struggle as to who was to govern the emerging state led to a bloody Finnish Civil War between the bourgeois Whites and the socialist Reds in 1918. The war left the country deeply divided, as the White winners and the defeated Reds held on to their own public spheres and cultural institutions.<sup>53</sup> The early years of independence also witnessed a tense relationship between Finland and Soviet Russia, and Russophobia featured as a key element of nationalist discourses. In short, Finland is a good example of the challenges faced by the new nation-states that were formed as multiethnic empires collapsed during and after World War I.

The interwar period witnessed a high tide of “hot nationalism” and far-right movements in Finland. Recent scholarship has shed new light on the threat posed by these movements to democratic government.<sup>54</sup> However, Finnish historiography has also long underlined so-called national

<sup>51</sup> See Stefan Berger & Alexei Miller, eds, *Nationalizing Empires* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014).

<sup>52</sup> Pertti Haapala, “The Expected and Non-expected Roots of Chaos: Preconditions of the Finnish Civil War,” in *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy*, ed. by Tuomas Tepora & Aapo Roselius (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 29–31. See also Alapuro (1988).

<sup>53</sup> For an overview, see Tuomas Tepora & Aapo Roselius, eds, *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

<sup>54</sup> Oula Silvennoinen, Marko Tikka & Aapo Roselius, *Suomalaiset fasistit: Mustan sarastuksen airuet* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2016).

unification as a characteristic of this period.<sup>55</sup> This notion of unification has tended to neglect the exclusion of some segments of the population, such as communists, from the nation by the dominant political groups. In the grand story of a homogenous nation there has also been little space for the Sámi and Roma people of Finland. While these ethnic minorities were of some interest to folklore collectors, their histories in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were often marked by stigmatization and maltreatment, including the assimilation of Sámi children by means of separating them from their parents and preventing them from using their native tongue at school.<sup>56</sup>

As in other European regions, the nation-building process and national identity in Finland were shaped by transnational flows and movements of people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Russia, and especially St Petersburg, drew tens of thousands of people from the Grand Duchy of Finland to work as factory workers, craftsmen, and civil servants in the nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> The Finns were also a part of the great European wave of emigration to America, for over 350,000 Finns migrated to North America between 1870 and the early 1920s.<sup>58</sup> After World War II, Sweden featured as a main destination for Finnish emigration. The Finnish emigrant communities formed their own associations, cultural institutions, and media, through which they also maintained connections to the home country and shaped the character of Finnish nationalism. This “long-distance nationalism,” as coined by Benedict Anderson, is one of the spatial aspects that has recently received growing attention in the history of nationalism.<sup>59</sup> Equally important are the experiences of uprootedness or assimilation among immigrants at various moments. Finland was affected,

<sup>55</sup>See Jenni Karimäki, “Tulevaisuuden lähtökohdista kansanvallen kolmiliittoon: Kansallinen Edistyspuolue ja kansallisen cheytymisen politiikka 1919–1939,” (PhD diss., University of Turku, 2016), 25–6.

<sup>56</sup>Mikkola, Olsson & Stark (2019); Veli-Pekka Lehtola, “Sámi Histories, Colonialism, and Finland,” *Arctic Anthropology* 52:2 (2015), 22–36; Miika Tervonen, “The Nation and Its Outsiders: The ‘Gypsy Question’ and Peasant Nationalism in Finland, c. 1863–1900,” in *Nationhood from Below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Maarten Van Ginderachter & Marnix Beyen (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), 139–61.

<sup>57</sup>See Max Engman, “Migration from Finland to Russia during the Nineteenth Century,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 3 (1978), 155–77.

<sup>58</sup>See Auvo Kostiaainen, ed., *Finns in the United States: A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014).

<sup>59</sup>See Eric Storm, “The spatial turn and the history of nationalism: Nationalism between regionalism and transnational approaches,” in Berger & Storm (2019), 228–9.



for example, by a wave of migrants from the former regions of the Russian empire after the Bolshevik Revolution, and a similar wave took place after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. In the interwar years, these migrants encountered hot versions of nationalism, which shaped their experiences of the Finnish society.

The tense relationship between Finland and the Soviet Union escalated into a war in 1939, as a consequence of which Finland lost part of the Finnish Karelian region to the Soviet Union. In hopes of regaining these territories, Finland joined Germany in the onslaught against the Soviet Union of June 1941 and then withdrew from the war under a separate peace agreement in the fall of 1944. Finland eventually remained one of the few nations not occupied during World War II, but the wartime sacrifices, the severe peace terms, and the need to resettle hundreds of thousands of Finnish Karelian refugees after the war had ended became major markers of the national experience.<sup>60</sup> The postwar period also witnessed a political shift, as the communist movement that had been illegal since 1930 re-entered open political life. Moreover, until the 1980s, the influence of the Soviet Union on Finnish politics was significant, even if Finland did not follow the path of central and eastern European people's democracies.

All in all, the years following World War II saw a cooling of the aggressive vigor and pathos of Finland's prewar nationalism. At the same time—and partly also reflecting the “shared” war experience—earlier lines of demarcation and exclusion between the “core” nation and its political non-communities were crossed and even erased. This made space for national integration—and also for the pacified, moderated, relatively inclusive versions of Nordic social-state nationalism. One of the main characteristics of this development has been an emphasis on gender equality, education, and citizenship.<sup>61</sup> After the mid-twentieth century, the development of the welfare state was a defining feature in Finland, and the Nordic welfare model became a master narrative of national history. Yet this story has had its outsiders and victims as well, just as the welfare policies have had their own shortcomings.

<sup>60</sup>For an overview, see Tiina Kinnunen & Ville Kivimäki, eds, *Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>61</sup>For a Nordic historical overview, see Mette Buchardt, Pirjo Markkola & Heli Valtonen, “Introduction. Education and the making of the Nordic welfare states,” in *Education, State and Citizenship*, ed. by Mette Buchardt, Pirjo Markkola & Heli Valtonen (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2013), 7–30.

The welfare-state development in Finland was enabled by postwar economic growth, which, in turn, was boosted by bilateral trade with the Soviet Union. When the Soviet bloc collapsed at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, Finland witnessed a deep economic recession, a new rise of nationalist currents and a “neo-patriotic” re-evaluation of the past wartime history of 1939–45. From the early-2000s onwards, right-wing nationalist populism has also been a growing phenomenon in Finnish politics. At the same time, the national identity and rhetoric have been shaped by Finland’s integration into the European Union and a new phase in economic globalization.<sup>62</sup> Finnish politicians and experts, like their counterparts in many other countries, have typically treated global competitiveness as a national challenge and modified the existing welfare-state institutions to fit the needs of a “competition state.”<sup>63</sup>

With regard to nationalism and nationhood, the case of Finland has been (and continues to be) explained through strong modernist and state-centered paradigms in historiography. There are features that make Finland a compelling case for the classic explanations of nationalism: the close connection between the emerging state institutions and the civic society in the development of Finnish nationalism; the educated elites’ role in the top-down dissemination of national consciousness; and the process of rapid industrialization that went hand in hand with the creation of the public sphere and national mobilization. But Finland is an equally compelling case for the study of the lived nation. What our approach adds to the research discussion is the production and reproduction of the nation in experiences and emotions, which in turn are culturally, socially, spatially, and thus also *nationally* constructed. Consequently, instead of a clearly top-down or bottom-up perspective, we aim to focus on that reciprocal, two-directional dynamic of production between the nation and experiences. Finland is our case study in this enterprise, yet our approach and results are in no way limited to one Nordic country.

<sup>62</sup> Jari Ojala, Jari Eloranta & Jukka Jalava, eds, *The Road to Prosperity: An Economic History of Finland* (Helsinki: SKS, 2006).

<sup>63</sup> Pauli Kettunen, “The transnational construction of national challenges: the ambiguous Nordic model of welfare and competitiveness,” in *Beyond Welfare State Models: Transnational Historical Perspectives on Social Policy*, ed. by Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011), 16–9.

## CURRENT VOLUME

Our book starts with a historical self-reflection. Historians have played an important role in different nation-building processes, from the early nationalism that constructed a shared past for the new nation to the recent forms of national identity work. *Pertti Haapala* examines Finnish historiography from the latter part of the nineteenth century till the turn of the millennium. Haapala focuses on history as a script that is used to give meaning to individual and collective experiences, to frame them with regard to the nation and to integrate present experiences into a national-historical timeline. It is also evident that in the vein of new social and cultural histories from the 1960s onwards, Finnish historians have worked to incorporate new experiences and social groups into the national narrative, thus redefining the nation. From this perspective, history-writing is not simply an academic matter but a crucial medium between experiences and the nation. Haapala's chapter can also be read as an introduction to the key issues and turning points in the Finnish national narrative of the past 200 years—and it thus helps to contextualize other chapters in the book.

Part I of the book, “Feeling and Conceptualizing the Nation,” focuses on the formative period of Finnish nationalism in the nineteenth century. The section starts with *Jani Marjanen's* chapter, which explores the use of the concept “national sentiment” in Finnish- and Swedish-language newspapers during the course of the nineteenth century. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis of digitized newspapers, Marjanen shows that the term “national sentiment” was at the intersection of two nineteenth-century developments: the breakthrough of a national perspective in understanding society and a change in the language relating to emotions and feelings. By shedding light on what kind of emotions were really in question when authors talked about national sentiment in the press, the chapter taps into larger questions of how talking about emotions and emotions themselves relate to each other.

The emotional language of nationalism is also under examination in *Reetta Eiranen's* chapter, which delves into the romantic correspondence of a Finnish nationalist couple in the mid-nineteenth century. By drawing on the notion of personal nationalism, Eiranen analyzes how nationalism was incorporated into the self-narrations of the letters and identifies emotions and gender as central elements in the construction of the national experience. In the correspondence under examination, nationally

interpreted male and female ideals formed a basis for the emotional relationship. Interestingly, these ideals were partly contradictory to the stereotypes: the man cast himself as a selfless but emotional national hero, whereas the woman, used to mediating her personal nationalism through men, had to exercise stronger emotional control in order to adapt to the man's feelings.

*Heikki Kokko's* chapter addresses the construction of the national experience on a personal level by shifting the focus from the protagonists of the national movement to a target of their exhortation. Kokko combines Benedict Anderson's idea of imagined communities and Reinhart Koselleck's notion of modern temporality in order to explore the case of the self-educated peasant Johan Hänninen in mid-nineteenth century Finland. Hänninen was one of the hundreds of ordinary people who engaged in the public sphere as writers of readers' letters to the emergent Finnish-language press and whose writings can be traced with the aid of new digital tools. Analyzing Hänninen's writings, Kokko demonstrates the appearance of the term "nation" in Hänninen's vocabulary and its links with a new conception of time, one that was associated with modernization that affected Hänninen's life in multiple ways. While Kokko does not use the concept of personal nationalism, his notion of the first-hand experience of the nation addresses the same questions about how and why ordinary people adopt and personalize the idea of the nation. Thus, while the chapter shows that the spread of nationalism was partly a trickle-down process, it also indicates the limits of top-down interpretations in elucidating grassroots nationhood.

Part II of the book, "Nation of Encounters and Conflicts," is marked by the events of 1917–18, when the Russian revolutions and Finnish independence were followed by a traumatic civil war. The optimism and integrative elements of the early Finnish nationalism were crushed when the imagined nation was split by political and class-based divisions. *Marko Tikka* and *Sami Suodenjoki* take a novel perspective on this history by studying the Finnish music culture at the end of the 1920s and the practices of producing and distributing music records for a politically divided audience. Finnish "gramophone fever" was a transnational phenomenon, which was linked to the American music business and to the Finnish-American immigrant community. Taking Barbara Rosenwein's concept of emotional communities as their inspiration, Tikka and Suodenjoki recognize two communities of experience, a bourgeois and a socialist one, which consumed different kinds of music and occasionally came into conflict

over musical pieces. Interestingly, though, the American record industry also helped to construct a shared idea of what “Finnish music” sounded like.

The interwar era in Finland was a period of hot nationalism, which was directed against the Soviet Union and the perceived outsiders among the Finnish people. At the same time, the newly independent state started to implement policies which aimed at reinstating national unity. Probably the most important of these policies was the introduction of universal compulsory education in 1921. *Mervi Kaarninen* looks at the post-Civil War Finnish society through the eyes of those “Red” children who had witnessed the bloody Battle of Tampere in the spring of 1918 and whose fathers and sometimes mothers had served in the defeated Red Guards. The children’s experiences were characterized by the presence of violence, loss, scarcity, and humiliation. In contrast to these experiences, the school curriculum emphasized the “White” interpretation of the Civil War and the nationalist-religious values of the new nation-state. Kaarninen uses Karen Vallgård’s, Kristine Alexander’s, and Stephanie Olsen’s idea of “emotional frontiers” to study how children (and their teachers) navigated between dissonant experiences and expectations in these conflicting circumstances.

In a relatively poor agrarian country, the main “social policy” until the 1950s was to distribute land to the landless. In the post-1918 situation, turning former tenant farmers into smallholders was meant to help de-radicalize the rural poor—but the Social Democrats also decided to support smallholding as their policy of choice. *Pirjo Markkola* and *Ann-Catrin Östman* analyze the ideology and norms of Finnish “agrarianism” in the 1920s and 1930s, and how they constructed smallholder citizenship. Instead of focusing solely on normative materials, Markkola and Östman discuss the actual encounters between the farmers and the different promoters of small-scale agriculture. Owning one’s land was a matter of progressive self-development and the practicing of proper Finnishness; it was linked to national family and gender ideals. The nation of smallholders also contained a language issue as the Swedish-speaking minority on the western and southern coasts of Finland developed the idea of “Swedish soil” to support their existence and identity.

It is often easier to recognize the outlines and relevance of nationalism if one looks at it from the borders. In Part III, “Experiential Edges of the Nation,” the Finnish nation-state and national belonging are observed from three perspectives that are outside the mainstream. *Hanna Lindberg* explores the role of nationalism and language among a double minority,

the Finland-Swedish deaf in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. By examining their published letters, Lindberg shows how deaf persons belonging to the Swedish minority created their own “imagined community” in Finland. Although the deaf community in many cases defined itself as standing on the sidelines of national conflicts, nationalism was incorporated in the community’s everyday practices and spaces. Lindberg also indicates the role of sign language in uniting the deaf who belonged to different linguistic groups in Finland.

In the first half of the twentieth century, tuberculosis was the most lethal illness among the Finnish population, a “national disease.” Consequently, the fight against tuberculosis was considered a mission of the highest national importance. The building of a nationwide network of sanatoria was a huge societal effort. *Heini Hakosalo* studies the reminiscences of those Finns who were treated in these public institutions. Many experiences were ambiguous: patients felt grateful for being taken care of and receiving modern medication, yet there were also shortcomings and failures in treatment. The patients connected their individual experiences to the collective narrative through three nationally framed discourses: the stories of progress, stories of war, and stories of belonging. In so doing, they wove their personal hardship and recovery into the history of the nation, thus gaining a sense of purpose from their difficult experiences.

*Seija Jalagin* makes an important contribution to our discussion concerning the lived nation from a refugee perspective. The focus of her chapter is on East Karelian refugees, who first, following an unsuccessful uprising in Russian Karelia against the Bolsheviks in 1921–22, escaped to Finland, and then, after World War II, fled to Sweden, fearing that they would be taken back to the Soviet Union. These East Karelians were refugees twice, in that they were “a minority of a minority,” and their experiencing of the nation involved living in three countries. Jalagin points out that the refugees’ sense of Finnishness can be seen as evidence of flexible nationalism: while over the years the nation-state transformed itself from a controlling to a more ambivalent element in refugees’ lives, it nevertheless maintained its importance. Based on written and oral history narratives, as well as on archival material, the chapter makes a compelling case for the transgenerational nature of experiences.

Part IV of the book, “Nation Embodied and Materialized,” focuses on spatial, material, bodily, and sensory aspects of emotions and experiences when analyzing historical manifestations of everyday nationalism. In addition, the chapters in Part IV show the interconnectedness of individual

and collective experiences. By exploring Finnish war-related dreams during and after World War II, *Ville Kivimäki's* chapter focuses on one of the most intimate spaces and spheres of the lived nation: people's bedrooms. Kivimäki illustrates the rich methodological potential of narrated dreams as source material for historical research beyond Freudian theory, providing a way to analyze nations as embodied lived-through experiences, in this case the intertwined experiences of the nation and violence. Kivimäki's chapter draws inspiration from Anthony P. Cohen's concept of personal nationalism but ends up arguing the reverse. The Finnish war dreams, and how they were later reminisced about, provides an example of how the nation entered people's lives as a collective context of war and postwar periods. Rather than being invited and "personalized" by people into their lives, the nation invaded the dreaming subjects' nightlife by violent force.

Children and childhood have a special place in adults' national(ist) imagination. Key to national pedagogy has been the education of children—intellectually and emotionally—to become future citizens. But children, even though they still rarely appear as subjects in historical studies focusing on nation-building, also were participants in the negotiation of different ideas, practices, and emotions with respect to the national community. Building on early childhood educationalist Zsuzsa Millei's concept of a "pedagogy of nation," which highlights the complexity of the reproduction of the nation in children's everyday life, *Antti Malinen's* and *Tanja Vahtikari's* chapter focuses on emotional co-creation, by adults and children, of the nation in everyday (school) practices in the immediate postwar period. This co-creation, explored by Malinen and Vahtikari via both adult- and children-authored sources, is shown to have been an inherently embodied and spatial experience: the nation became felt in postwar children's lives, among other things, through taking excursions and drawing. Both these practices were understood as means of expanding children's emotional competences in and for the postwar world, as it aspired to peace and democratic values.

Spaces of national memory and heritage figure prominently within the scholarship dealing with the history of nationalism. Spaces of memory are also central to the debates around uses of urban space in capital cities. *Tuomas Tepora* contributes to these discussions with the concept of the "emotional figure," which he defines as "a symbol and a container of contradictory public emotions." Tepora's chapter addresses the changing images of C. G. E. Mannerheim (1867–1951), the Marshal of Finland, and, in particular, the debate concerning the construction of the Museum

of Contemporary Art next to the statue of Mannerheim in Helsinki. Tepora shows how both sides in the debate used Mannerheim images as emotional figures: for those opposing the building of a new museum—and defending the conservative Mannerheim image—the emotional figure remained static, whereas those in favor of the museum construction recoded the emotional figure to reflect their liberal and cosmopolitan perspectives. The changing Mannerheim images were reflective of the wider social and political changes and experiences in Finnish society being undergone in the early-1990s, related to economic recession, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and joining the European Union.

Our book concludes with *Josephine Hoegaerts's* and *Stephanie Olsen's* afterword on future prospects for histories of experience and emotions in studying nations. These perspectives are not limited to any single country or context but can be applied widely in analyzing those aspects of nationalism and national belonging that have usually remained invisible in research. Taking the histories of disability and children as their examples, Hoegaerts and Olsen point out new ways to consider experiences and emotions in relation to the nation—and the relevance of finding new kinds of sources and methods to write these histories. As the editors of this volume, we hope that *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000* serves to expand our understanding of how nations are experienced and felt—and how these experiences and emotions are a crucial part of making the nation, in history as well as today.

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## CHAPTER 2

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# Lived Historiography: National History as a Script to the Past

*Pertti Haapala*

### LIVING TEXT

*Stories are not lived but told. Life has no beginnings, middles, or ends; there are meetings, but the start of an affair belongs to the story we tell ourselves later, and there are partings, but final partings only in the story. There are hopes, plans, battles and ideas, but only in retrospective stories are hopes unfulfilled, plans miscarried, battles decisive, and ideas seminal [...] We do not dream or remember in narrative, I think, but tell stories which weave together the separate images of recollection.*

The citation above from Louis Mink is known as one of the founding ideas of historical narratology.<sup>1</sup> It fits well with the basic idea of this chapter, which studies how the past is experienced as a narrative and how

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<sup>1</sup>Louis O. Mink, “History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension,” *New Literary History* 1:3 (1970), 557–8.

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© The Author(s) 2021  
V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_2)

historical narratives determine experiences. In basic terms, historical narrative is one's personal understanding of the past derived from one's own life experiences and especially from their intertwinement with *historical moments*. These, in turn, are usually shared experiences, which are lived and defined both individually and collectively.<sup>2</sup> The combination of the personal and the collective is how stories of the past spring to life and become history in people's minds. Without discussing the question of historical truth here, the stories represent the "real" past to people who learn to see themselves in a given historical context—whatever its "objective" factuality. Consequently, history becomes one dimension in people's present lives, and it may have a strong impact on how they position themselves, how they value and judge past events, how they interpret the present, and what they expect from the future.<sup>3</sup>

Historical imagination is materialized in written summaries of the past, typically in the form of historiography. The stories tell about the past, but they also work as culturally determined *collective scripts* for reading the present—by giving the contemporary experience a historically reasoned meaning. In other words, the (imagined) past defines the (actual) present—and vice versa.<sup>4</sup> If that is indeed the case, it is relevant to ask where these scripts come from. This chapter focuses on one of their origins, history writing, academic and non-academic. The question is not only about how people adopted some key conceptions such as the nation from historiography, but how they "lived their past" conceptually and how the narratives of the past extended to their personal lives both collectively and diachronically. "Narrative qualities are transferred from art to life," Louis Mink wrote, and concluded: "it is from history and fiction that we learn how to tell and understand complex stories."<sup>5</sup> The formation of modern

<sup>2</sup> Frank Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), offers a distinction between different categories of historical experience, "objective," "individualist," and "collectivist" and poses the question: which comes first, language or experience? (Chapters 9 and 10 and p. 176).

<sup>3</sup> On this aspect of "historical thinking" see Reinhard Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), and Jörn Rüsen, *Evidence and Meaning: A Theory of Historical Studies* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> About the concept and idea of script, see David Herman, "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories: Elements of a Postclassical Narratology," *Modern Language Association* 112:5 (1997), 1046–59.

<sup>5</sup> Mink (1970), 558. A more disciplined analysis of conceptions and experiences can be found in Margrit Pernau & Imke Rajamani, "Emotional Translations: Conceptual History Beyond Language," *History and Theory* 55:1 (2016), 46–65.

societies and nation states represent the kind of complex stories which require historical narratives for their explanation.

It has been widely analyzed as to how a specific model of historiography, *national history*, became a new paradigm and master narrative in the academic and public discourses of the nineteenth century and how it played a major role in politics up until the twenty-first century.<sup>6</sup> What makes the role of national history interesting is that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were an era of modernization, globalization, and a new kind of “scientific” historiography, one which aimed at eliminating all metaphysical and ideological explanations from history writing. One could therefore expect that national(istic) historiography was born into a wrong world. But, as is also well-known, the nation-states were formed at the same time in the wake of modernization—and national history served as a political justification of that process. National identity contained a deep historical dimension, because it was constructed to justify nationality through “shared” history and tradition. The nation’s past, present, and future were logically contingent and tied to each other as narrative structures. In the big picture, the story worked in all modern societies: historical consciousness grew among people of all social strata, national identities emerged, and people bound their personal lives and involvement to the nation.<sup>7</sup>

It is impossible, of course, to know exactly how people have lived their past, and it is irrelevant to try to capture all their “authentic” experiences in the sense of direct, immediate impressions. But there are ways to make the research into historical experiences possible and relevant. First of all, people have expressed and presented their thoughts and feelings, and these experiences can be used to trace collective patterns of thinking. It is also credible to expect that those views which are widely repeated and referred represent socially shared and widely meaningful collective experiences. In addition, we know that history as a set of ideas is basically what has been taught and believed to be “true” history, that is, the *past becomes*

<sup>6</sup>For the European and Nordic contexts see *Writing the Nation Series* (Palgrave, 2008–2015), especially Stefan Berger & Chris Lorenz, eds, *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). On the concept of master narrative, see Krijn Thijs, “The Metaphor of the Master: ‘Narrative Hierarchy’ in National History Cultures of Europe,” in Berger & Lorenz (2008), 60–74.

<sup>7</sup>Carsten Humlebæk, “National Identities: Temporality and Narration,” *Genealogy* 2:36 (2018), 1–18; Maarten van Genderachter, Andreas Stynen & Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, eds, *Emotions and Everyday Nationalism in Modern European History* (London: Routledge, 2020).

*history* via a learning process within educational institutions (academia and schools) and in the public discourse (media and politics).

It is hypothesized here that academic historiography produced much of the collective historical experience of the nation, in this case that of Finland. Academic writers invented the idea of national history, and their representations of the national past were then actively distributed. In traditional historiography, written by academics themselves, it has been taken for granted that their ideas of history penetrated the whole of society and even determined the fate of the nation. That is questionable, of course, but it is worth asking how academic historiography contributed to patterns of thinking among the wider circles of Finns who were experiencing *their* history, either lived or told.

I demonstrate here below—through selected examples—the role of (Finnish) historiography in “organizing” the experience of a nation, its key moments, and collective memory. The outcome, the more or less shared understanding of the past and its meanings, may be called the *autobiography of a nation*. It is a narrative, but it is more than that: it is an autobiography of a society which produces its own social order and history.<sup>8</sup> In that sense, history writing has a social history, written by someone, and to be shared as the common experience of a particular community. There are, undoubtedly, many simultaneous conceptions of the past, but for some reason one narrative often becomes dominant and more paradigmatic for the given nation than others. At least a partial explanation for that is that the narrative serves readily as a script, a kind of mindmap, to follow or as a code that gives collective meanings to individual experiences.<sup>9</sup> How that process works in a living society is not a question of scientific argumentation; rather, its relevance depends on how it justifies the present societal relations and political practices and connects them to history. That dynamics may be called *lived historiography*. It is a story of the past, but it is also a story of those who wrote it and those who lived it, a story which was *told and lived*—in that order.

<sup>8</sup> About the idea of society’s self-production, see Alain Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>9</sup> This model is typical in cultural anthropology but usually absent in historiographical studies. See William H. Sewell Jr., *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004); Katie Barclay, “New Materialism and the New History of Emotions,” *Emotions: History, Culture, Society* 1:1 (2017), 161–83.

## INVENTING THE NATION AND ITS STORY

The history of Finland was invented by a group of nationally minded intellectuals during the first half of the nineteenth century following the ideas of contemporary European philosophers and historians, especially those of the German romantic tradition.<sup>10</sup> For the Finnish case, the process and its timing were closely linked to the consequences of the Napoleonic Wars, when Finland was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1809 after being an integral part of the Kingdom of Sweden since the twelfth century. Separation from Sweden and distance from Russian traditions (in language, religion, and legislation) compelled the Finnish elites to rethink their position, well expressed in the famous phrase: “We are no longer Swedes, we will not become Russians, let us be Finns.” Actually, the statement was not made in Finnish, and it was not at the time an expression of nationalism but a statement of the fact that a new political unit was (in the process of being) born in between Sweden and Russia.<sup>11</sup> The Russian Emperor himself declared that Finland “was placed in the rank of nations”—a phrase which was later given different meanings.<sup>12</sup> In any case, the new Grand Duchy of Finland was now ruled by the local elite who compromised with the Russians to safeguard their own leading position—but not at the expense of the peasants as the German elite did in the Baltic provinces.<sup>13</sup> The ruling Finns adopted a double identity: they were Swedish-speaking Finns but loyal to the Russian Empire. Even a moderate

<sup>10</sup>Stefan Berger & Chris Lorenz, eds, *Nationalizing the Past: Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Miroslav Hroch, *European Nations: Explaining Their Formation* (London: Verso, 2015); Robert Schweitzer, ed., *Zweihundert Jahre deutsche Finnlandbegeisterung: Zur Entwicklung des deutschen Finnlandbildes seit August Thiemes “Finnland”-Poem von 1808* (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2010). On the eighteenth-century proto-nationalism in Finland, see Juha Manninen, *Valistus ja kansallinen identiteetti: Aatehistoriallinen tutkimus 1700-luvun Pohjolasta* (Helsinki: SKS, 2000).

<sup>11</sup>Later the phrase was employed by—anti-Swedish and anti-Russian—nationalism. About this see Jani Marjanen, “Svensk äro vi icke mera’: Om ett uttryckts historia,” in *Köpa salt I Cádiz och andra berättelser*, ed. by Henrika Tandefelt, Julia Dahlberg, Aapo Roselius & Oula Silvennoinen (Helsinki: Siltala, 2020), 163–84.

<sup>12</sup>The original text was “*la Finlande est placée au rang des nations*” and was meant to say that Russia liberated the Finns. Later the text was translated into Finnish a bit differently: Finland was *elevated to being a nation* among other nations, that is Finland was made equal to the states of Sweden and Russia.

<sup>13</sup>Edward Thaden, *Russia’s Western Borderlands, 1710–1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

vision of the possibility for a small sovereign Finnish state did not appear realistic to anyone at the time. Despite its growing economic and political connections to Russia, Finland remained culturally linked to Sweden and Germany.<sup>14</sup>

The first history of Finland was published in 1809 by German historian Friedrich Rühls, who compiled parts of his earlier history of Sweden under the title *Finnland und seine Bewohner*.<sup>15</sup> The book was translated into Swedish in Stockholm and used by students in Finland but gained no wider popularity. In 1832, author and politician A. I. Arwidsson published a supplemented version of Rühls' book in Swedish emphasizing the cultural autonomy of Finland. Arwidsson himself had been expelled from Finland to Sweden for his anti-Russian opinions ten years earlier.<sup>16</sup> When the *Kalevala*, the famous collection of epic folk poetry, was first published in 1835, it was presented and read as the true history of the Finnish people and as evidence of the original Finnish culture, a model familiar from several "nations without a state."<sup>17</sup> Despite some enthusiasm among intellectuals, the *Kalevala*'s first edition sold only a few hundred copies because educated people did not read Finnish and the Finnish-speaking peasants could not read or were not interested. Still, in 1843, a young man named Zacharias Topelius posed to his fellow students the critical question "Do the Finnish people have a history?"—to which he gave a negative answer, because the Finns had no national feeling or identity and the necessary elements of a nation had not been developed during foreign rule.<sup>18</sup> The discussion's conclusion, however, was that the history of Finland

<sup>14</sup> Max Engman, *Pirkät jäähyväiset: Suomi Ruotsin ja Venäjän välissä vuoden 1809 jälkeen* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2010); Jan Hecker-Stampel & al, eds, *1809 und die Folgen: Finnland zwischen Schweden, Russland und Deutschland* (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2011). New Russian connections—among European—are emphasized in Matti Klinge, *A History both Finnish and European: History and the Culture of Historical Writing in Finland during the Imperial Period* (Helsinki: The Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Rühls, *Finnland und seine Bewohner* (Leipzig: Georg Göschen, 1809).

<sup>16</sup> Adolf Ivar Arwidsson, *Lärobok i Finlands historia och geografi för gymnasier och skolor* (Turku: S. S. Arwidsson, 1832). Arwidsson never returned to Finland but was celebrated as a national hero after his death in 1858.

<sup>17</sup> Similar cases were their Norway under Sweden, Iceland under Denmark, the Baltic provinces under Russian and German influence and the many nations under the Habsburg Empire.

<sup>18</sup> Topelius' speech ("Äger det finska folket en historia") was published in 1845 in *Joukahainen* 2 (1845), 189–217. In Sweden it was dismissed with the claim that "Finland had a history, that of Sweden." Paul Nyberg, *Z. Topelius: Elämäkerrallinen kuvaus* (Porvoo: WSOY 1950), 168–9.

needed to be written and that this should be the task of the nationally enlightened youth who called themselves Fennomans. Their ideological leader was J. V. Snellman, then a radical student of Hegel, and later known as the “national philosopher” and founding father of Finnish statehood.<sup>19</sup>

At this point, the history of Finland was a mere idea current among intellectuals inspired by Herder, Hegel, and Finnish mythology. The Fennomans’ connection to the “real people” has later been described as a romance in which young (male) intellectuals “found the simple beauty of the people, their melodious language and saw the rustic Finnish people as a Cinderella, a dear Princess in her rags.”<sup>20</sup> The metaphor is fairly correct in emphasizing the idealistic and emotional dimension of the Fennomans’ historical imagination. The peasant folk they “admired from afar” were real, but their history, experiences, and sufferings were idealized and nationalized, most famously through the national romantic poetry of Johan Ludvig Runeberg after the 1830s. As Runeberg was originally read only by the small Swedish-speaking, educated classes, we may continue the romance metaphor: the bride and the groom had seen each other but they were not acquaintances.<sup>21</sup> There was as yet no joint story of the nation: common folk’s conceptions of the earlier times were based on the Bible and the Lutheran hymn-book’s appendix of historical dates.<sup>22</sup>

It was as late as 1869 when the first *History of Finland* was published in Finnish by professor Yrjö Koskinen.<sup>23</sup> His story started by describing how Finns as a single population had moved to Finland from the east. The remote eastern origins of the Finns separated them from the Swedes and the Slavs.<sup>24</sup> During the Swedish period, Finns became Christians, fought

<sup>19</sup> Marja Jalava, *J.V. Snellman: Mies ja suurmies* (Helsinki: Tammi, 2006) is a concise history of the “great man” whose collected works can be found at <http://snellman.kootuteokset.fi/en>, accessed 24 August 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Gunnar Suolahti, *Nuori Yrjö Koskinen* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1933), 16.

<sup>21</sup> A detailed study on Runeberg’s political thinking is Matti Klinge, *Poliittinen Runeberg* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> *Ajan-Tieto* [Chronicle] covered the time from the Creation until the present. An 1859 version is available at <http://koraali.fi/1701/ajantieto/ajantieto15.html>, accessed 24 August 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Yrjö Koskinen, *Oppikirja Suomen kansan historiassa* (Helsinki: SKS, 1869). Several enlarged editions were published in the coming decades. The author, Georg Forsman, used a political pseudonym. Yrjö Koskinen was his name translated in Finnish.

<sup>24</sup> The migration theory was supported by linguistics and archeologists well into the twentieth century, see Derek Fewster, *Visions of Past Glory: Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History* (Helsinki: Studia Fennica Historica 11, 2006). Today’s knowledge is

for the Reformation and defended Sweden against Russia. But the toll was so heavy that it was only God's wisdom to separate Finland from Sweden and to offer better conditions for a national awakening under the Russian rule. That was the purpose of history for Koskinen. From today's perspective the professor's argument is not very strong but for him and his fellow-patriots, things were self-evident: "The people of Finland *want* to have a history, *ergo*: they have a history [...] The *will* itself proves that the specific nation exists."<sup>25</sup>

Koskinen's way of writing history was exactly what was needed for locating Finns within the grand narratives of Christianity and the empires. The story explained the current situation and justified the emerging political claims for national statehood (see below). Most importantly, Koskinen proved that Finnish people *had* a history through *belonging to a nation*. It is difficult to know how deeply the Finns adopted this idea, but there is ample evidence of its growing popularity from the 1860s on. The key concepts, the nation and its history, were repeated in academia, in political discourse, in newspapers, in schoolbooks, in fiction, and in the performing arts. Historical fiction was the most powerful and best-known form of representing "national heritage" of the time.<sup>26</sup> Runeberg was declared to be the "national poet," especially due to his lyrical history of the "War of Finland" in 1808–09, when Russia conquered Finnish territory from Sweden. He valued the Swedish tradition, but he also made Finns the idealized heroes of the lost war and wrote about *our nation*, a nation which deserved its existence. His poem "Our Land" from 1846, at the time a manifestation of loyal patriotism, became later the national anthem of Finland.<sup>27</sup>

Zacharias Topelius became the first professor of Finnish history in 1854. Displaying the importance of narrative skills in writing history, he

that the population of Finland has a variety of origins and there has never been any "original" Finnish people.

<sup>25</sup> Yrjö Koskinen, "Onko Suomen kansalla historiaa?" *Historiallinen Arkisto* V (1876), 9. Italics by Koskinen.

<sup>26</sup> Linda Kaljundi, Eneken Laanes & Ilona Pikkanen, eds, *Novels, Histories, Novel Nations: Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia* (Helsinki: SKS, 2015); Marja Jalava, Tiina Kinnunen & Irma Sulkunen, eds, *Kirjoitettu kansakunta: Sukupuoli, uskonto ja kansallinen historia 1900-luvun alkupuolen suomalaisessa tietokirjallisuudessa* (Helsinki: SKS, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Johan Wrede, *Se kansa meidän kansa on: Runeberg, vänrikki ja kansakunta* (Helsinki: Gummerus, 1988); Klinge (2004).



made his career mainly as a novelist and playwright.<sup>28</sup> In his novel series *Surgeon's Stories* (1853–67), Topelius presented the joint history of Sweden and Finland as the parallel stories of two families, a noble one and a peasant one.<sup>29</sup> These families represented *two peoples* whose fate was intertwined—and when it came time to separate, the Finns were prepared to follow their own path. In the first Finnish opera (1852), written by Topelius, the Finnish country people bid a grateful farewell to their Swedish king.<sup>30</sup> An increasingly independent role between Sweden and Russia was an appealing identity, and it was easy to adopt emotionally; the sufferings of earlier wars were forgotten in giving them a positive meaning as the cradle of the Finnish nation. The Swedish cultural tradition emphasizing Lutheranism and the rule of law was transformed into a Finnish tradition, distinct from the Russian one.

The most compelling description of Finnish history was Topelius' reader for young people, *The Book of Our Land*, written in Swedish but published immediately in Finnish, too, in 1875. The book's opening lines are: "This book tells about Finland. It tells about the fatherland. What is Finland? It is a country among other countries. What is the fatherland? It is our great home." There follow chapters on Finland's nature and its people, and on their long history. The book ends in the words of a child: "Now I know it [my fatherland]."<sup>31</sup> The work followed the European model of adopting a child's perspective, an intentional metaphor for the awakening of the people as a nation both individually and collectively.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Matti Klinge, *Idylli ja ubka: Topeliuksen aatteita ja politiikkaa* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1998) is a detailed account on Topelius' ideas and societal thinking concerning especially his idea of Finland.

<sup>29</sup>Zacharias Topelius, *The Surgeon's Stories: A Series of Swedish Historical Romances, in six cycles* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Co, 1882–1884). The original texts were published in Swedish and in Finnish 1878–82, and since then in several new editions and translations.

<sup>30</sup>Mari Hatavara, "Composing Finnish National History: Zacharias Topelius' *The Surgeon's Stories*," in Kaljundi, Laanes & Pikkanen (2015), 79–97; Petra Lehtoruusu, "Adapting history: Topelius' *The Surgeon's Stories* and cultural memory in Finland and Sweden," *Ennen ja nyt* 4/2019, <https://www.ennenjanyt.net/2019/12/adapting-history-topelius-the-surgeons-stories-and-cultural-memory-in-finland-and-sweden>, accessed 24 August 2020.

<sup>31</sup>Z. Topelius, *Maamme kirja* (Helsinki: WSOY 1985 [1875]), 15, 562.

<sup>32</sup>Patrick Cabanel, *Le tour de la nation par des enfants: Romans scolaires et espaces nationaux, XIX<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Belin, 2007). A similar work in Sweden was Selma Lagerlöf's *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* (1906–1907). She published an admiring biography of Topelius in 1920 and witnessed for Topelius' importance for Swedish children, too.

And history promised a bright future, too. Topelius explained how Finns could become a model for less fortunate peoples and for the whole of humankind.<sup>33</sup> Despite his national teleology, Topelius' vision of Finland was tolerant: he included among Finns all who lived there, including ethnic and religious minorities. He was convinced of the blessing of Russian rule but he also relativized the status of the Autocrat by writing: "In the [worldly] government are represented all classes from the Emperor to the humble rural worker [...] And all these are ruled, nearest to God, by the law of Finland."<sup>34</sup> The book was compulsory reading for all school children up until the 1950s, and it was the familiar master narrative of the nation, and thus to be learned by heart. It emphasized social harmony, which was based on a hierarchical order but which also acknowledged the dignity of the common people—something that was crucial for the reception of the message. A scientific parallel for Topelius' work, a six-volume book series *Our Own Land*, was published in 1907–11. It bore the subtitle *Encyclopedia for Finnish Homes*.<sup>35</sup>

### HISTORY AS LIVING POLITICS

By the end of the nineteenth century, the history of Finland had been (re)written and the Finns widely believed that they now had a history of their own as a nation. Consequently, current events were seen in that historical framework: people and their actions were judged according to what degree they were beneficial to the cause of the nation.<sup>36</sup> Many Swedish speakers, who saw Finnish nationalism as a cultural threat to them, claimed that the idea of separate "Finnish interests" in the past was not history but political fiction. But for the majority, Fennomania was an appealing ideology which offered membership in the "Finnish nation," an ideal community that challenged the rule of the privileged—who were not the Russians but the Swedish-speaking "better people" (*bättre folk*)—occupying high positions in administration, academia, and business. The history of Finland became

<sup>33</sup> Topelius (1985), 564.

<sup>34</sup> Topelius (1985), 539. The citation has been shortened.

<sup>35</sup> Petri Karonen & Antti Räihä, eds, *Kansallisten instituutioiden muutoutuminen: Suomalainen historiakuva Oma Maa -kirjasarjassa 1900–1960* (Helsinki: SKS, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> Ilona Pikkanen, "The Emergence of a Story Space: The Image of the Club War (1596–1597) in Swedish and Finnish Historiography, 1620–1860," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 43:4 (2018), 515–38.

a political tool in the making of a civil society marked by language and class divisions.<sup>37</sup>

An additional and complicated political dimension existed in the fact that the Russian autocracy supported the Fennomans in order to diminish the influence of Sweden in Finland, and accordingly advertised what was claimed to be the “traditional” loyalty between the Emperor and the Finnish people. The policy worked well, and the loyal Fennomans—including Snellman and Koskinen—became the leading political force in Finland in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In that political project, the history of Finland was the unremovable *bedrock* of national identity—a symbol favored by Topelius. In practice that meant “awakening” the nation by writing history books, academic and popular, scientific and fictional, and founding schools and civic organizations. The project was crowned with success. By the end of the nineteenth century, a strong civil society existed in Finland, along with a rather uniform history culture that was actively nourished in education, in politics, and in the arts.<sup>38</sup> The “national sentiments” that were manifested in music, visual arts, poetry, architecture, and so on are an example of rich imagination in inventing traditions.<sup>39</sup> Now the object of the Fennomans’ romance with the people was pictured as the Finnish Maid. A blond-haired girl in a colorful “national dress” became the most popular symbol and model of the nation by representing youth and purity. When the imperial family visited Finland, as they often did, they were welcomed by young women dressed up as the Finnish Maids.<sup>40</sup>

Besides the overall Lutheran worldview and rhetoric, nationalism was the most often applied argument in three political battles of the early twentieth century, those for national autonomy (political rights), cultural

<sup>37</sup> Katja-Maria Miettunen, “Yrjö Koskisen ja Magnus Gottfried Schybergsonin historia-teokset ja kielikiistan pitkä varjo,” in *Usko, tiede ja historiankirjoitus: Suomalaisia maailmankuvia keskiajalta 1900-luvulle*, ed. by Irma Sulkunen, Marjaana Niemi & Sari Katajalla-Peltomaa (Helsinki: SKS, 2016), 361–96. About the language dispute and its political dimensions, see Max Engman, *Språkfrågan: Finlandssvenskhetens uppkomst 1812–1922* (Helsinki: SKS and Atlantis, 2016).

<sup>38</sup> Henrik Stenius, “Paradoxes of the Finnish Political Culture,” in *Nordic Paths to Modernity*, ed. by Jóhan Páll Árnason & Björn Wittrock (New York: Berghahn, 2012).

<sup>39</sup> Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). About the visual idea of Finland, see Riitta Kontinen, *Sammon takojat: Nuoren Suomen taiteilijat ja suomalaisuuden kuvat* (Helsinki: Otava, 2001).

<sup>40</sup> Johanna Valenius, *Undressing the Maid: Gender, Sexuality and the Body in the Construction of the Finnish Nation* (Helsinki: SKS, 2004).

autonomy (language rights), and individual autonomy (civil rights). All three culminated and were intertwined in the constitutional crises that occurred between Finland and the Russian empire. At the core was the question of the limits of Finland's self-rule. Using historical argumentation, Finns had developed a judicial interpretation that Finland had actually already been made a state with its own constitution in 1809.<sup>41</sup> Hence all attempts to limit its autonomy, even by the Russian autocrat himself, were illegal and unconstitutional. Historical documents were used to support the Finnish cause.<sup>42</sup> In fact, historians had retrospectively created a public memory in which Finland was a *nation* and a *state*—and Finns were convinced that history and law were on their side. Part of that perception was linked to the Finnish Maid who now came to be depicted as a virgin in danger, thus symbolizing the threatened nation.<sup>43</sup> The common understanding of legality predetermined and intensified the reactions to what then happened in the years of “Russification,” a period of Russian policies experienced as an assault on Finnish autonomy. The term “Russification” was widely used in Finland, although it is not quite accurate: no ethnic nor cultural oppression was introduced, and political rights were actually expanded in that period. The experiences from 1899 to 1919, from the constitutional crises to Finnish independence in 1917 and to the consequent Civil War in 1918, were to become the hard core of the national memory and of the nation's autobiography for the whole of the twentieth century.

In 1899 half a million Finns signed the Great Petition in which they asked the Emperor to withdraw the plan to implement all-imperial legislation because it violated the Finnish constitution. As Nicholas II did not understand the Petition's point and refused even to meet the delegation, which represented all Finnish localities, he was nick-named “Oathbreaker” and lost his authority as “Our Emperor.”<sup>44</sup> The historic connection of trust that had existed between the Finnish people and their ruler was

<sup>41</sup> Leo Mechelin, *Précis du droit public du Grand Duché de Finlande* (Helsinki: J. C. Frenckell & Fils, 1886) was the internationally best known argument for Finland's unique position.

<sup>42</sup> On the long-time debate and its judicial and political arguments see Osmo Jussila, *Suomen suuriruhtinaskunta 1809–1917* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2004).

<sup>43</sup> Valenius (2004) reads it that Finnish male intellectuals saw the Finnish nation as their female beloved, a potential bride, who remained an eternal virgin menaced by the Russians. That was not the original connotation but a position that was developed in the beginning of the twentieth century.

<sup>44</sup> Päiviö Tommila, *Suuri adressi* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1999).

broken in a week. The conflict intensified Russia's plans to keep Finland under control. But political tensions exploded in 1904 when the Russian Governor-General was shot to death in Helsinki. The assassin, who had committed suicide, was openly celebrated as a national hero—and for the first time aggressive nationalism, the so-called Activist Movement, gained ground in Finland.<sup>45</sup> But further violent conflicts were avoided thanks to the leading Fennomans' prudence and the First Russian Revolution of 1905, which in Finland was followed by a week-long "National Strike" in early November. That week was experienced as a historic turning point which united the whole nation in its destiny. The demonstrations' major demand was to "restore" Finnish autonomy. That was accepted easily because the Russian government lost control of Finland for a moment. But the mass movement soon turned its attention to demanding *equal rights for all members of the nation*. In a "high national mood" the demand for universal suffrage was accepted by all parties under pressure from the labor movement.<sup>46</sup>

The National Strike—or the Great Strike as it was also called—was the first big political mobilization in Finland comparable to those "revolutions" abroad that Finns had been reading about. In fact, there are a lot of reports and personal impressions of the huge emotional impact of the strike week.<sup>47</sup> It was understood and lived through as a revolution, imitating the original French example of 1789; the National Guard and the Committee of Public Safety were founded, people marched with flags and torches singing *La Marseillaise* and Luther's *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*. The speakers imitated the rhetoric of historical orators and the Bible, of course. One example of living a history is a description of a mass meeting in the city of Tampere when the crowds accepted the Red Manifesto, which actually was a declaration of revolution and made people feel that they were witnessing a turning point in world history:

<sup>45</sup> Tuomo Polvinen, *Valtakunta ja rajamaa: N. I. Bobrikov Suomen kenraalikuvernöörinä 1898–1904* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1984) is a study of Russia's interests in Finland.

<sup>46</sup> An overview is Antti Kujala, "Finland in 1905: The Political and Social History of the Revolution," in *The Russian Revolution of 1905: Centenary Perspectives*, ed. by Jonathan D. Smele & Anthony Heywood (London: Routledge, 2005), 79–93. A detailed study on the political process is Antti Kujala, *Vastakkainasettelun synty: Syksyn 1905 suurlakko Helsingissä ja muualla Suomessa* (Helsinki: THPTS, 2016).

<sup>47</sup> A broad collection of various and conflicting experiences of the strike is Pertti Haapala, Olli Löytty, Kukku Melkas & Marko Tikka, eds, *Kansa kaikkivaltias: Suurlakko Suomessa 1905* (Helsinki: Teos, 1905).

*At noon, the last rumbling machines went silent. A holy strike descended over the city. Oh, wonderful days! [...] It was as if the old reality had petrified and a miraculous new one had blossomed in its place. Tens of thousands of hands had retreated from their own small chores to carry out major tasks of the government and society [...] The people played the king, enjoying the charm of the revolution while forgetting the danger of the revolution. Now the oppressive powers had fallen, just as had the Walls of Jericho. The hymns of the poor echoed up to the heavens and the poets praised the Almighty People. And so, it was heard [...] the Declaration for the Finnish people [...].*<sup>48</sup>

The manifesto spoke in the name of the people (the nation) and stated that “herein is said all that is – consciously or unconsciously – in the heart of every citizen who loves real freedom and human rights.” It became usual to say that since that historic week there were no more subjects in Finland, only equal citizens. That was no doubt that the immediate experience, and the events of 1905, resulted in a huge increase in all kinds of political mobilization and civic activities. The importance of that historical moment was further crystallized when the following year Finland acquired the most democratic parliament in the world and the lower classes—and women—entered politics. The National Strike was commemorated as a milestone in achieving national sovereignty and democracy, “people’s power” as it was then called. The strike was a concrete, lived-through moment in the birth of the nation, something which could now be dated, remembered, told, and relived more truly than the abstract idea of a nation.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup>Väinö Voionmaa, *Tampereen historia III: Itämaisesta sodasta suurlakon aikoihin* (Tampere: Tampereen kaupunki, 1932 [1907]), 397–402, 412, cited 399 & 402. The chapter was written by historian Väinö Wallin (Voionmaa) who participated in the strike and compiled the story by using his own experiences and texts and speeches from those days. The declaration became known as the Red Manifesto because some of the copies were printed on red paper after the printing house ran out of white paper. Later the color was connected to the radical message of the declaration.

<sup>49</sup>In the centennial celebrations of the strike in 2005 organized by the government and the labor movement it was not seen as correct to present critical comments which could reduce the glory of 1905 as a national achievement.

## NATION DIVIDED

The promised national unity collapsed soon, although its story survived. Already in late-1905, one of the main organizers of the National Strike, social democrat Yrjö Mäkelin, declared: “They [workers] are now ready for class struggle because you, dear gentlemen, have isolated them to a class.”<sup>50</sup> The reason for that conclusion was, as Mäkelin claimed, that the bourgeoisie wanted to protect their class interests rather than build a true national community. Another “class division” was created by the fact that there was no longer a shared national history to believe in. Instead, there were more and more claims that “the cause of the people” (equaling the nation) had been betrayed. Workers began to distance themselves from “master class nationalism” while bourgeois intellectuals were disappointed with the people. One textile worker criticized how school children “were made to believe that some kind of Providence commands the fate of nations – instead of the peoples themselves.”<sup>51</sup> The strong social democratic party educated its members in debating and challenging bourgeois views of history and society.<sup>52</sup> On the other side, a number of new books no longer saw the lower classes as idealized members of an ideal nation but as “mob” and as degenerate and morally weak individuals who endangered the nation’s vitality. This rapid change among the leading intellectuals has been called “disillusionment with the people” which resulted from workers’ defiant behavior in 1905 and from the (expected) demoralizing impact of materialism, capitalism, and urban life on the lower classes.<sup>53</sup> The translation of social psychologist Gustave Le Bon’s famous book on the irrationality of the masses signals how Finland followed the

<sup>50</sup> Yrjö Mäkelin, “Punainen julistus, työväki ja perustuslailliset,” *Kansan Lehti* 11 November 1905.

<sup>51</sup> *Tehtaalainen* 23 April 1910 (a hand-written workers’ paper at Finlayson Cotton Mill, Tampere). The citation has been modified.

<sup>52</sup> Jari Ehrnrooth, *Sanan vallassa, vihan voimalla: Sosialistiset vallankumousopit ja niiden vaikutus Suomen työväenliikkeessä 1905–1914* (Helsinki: SHS, 1992). His main thesis is that labor movement employed lower classes’ “archaic hatred” for developing emotional class struggle against the privileged (571–80).

<sup>53</sup> Risto Alapuro, *Suomen älymystö Venäjän varjossa* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1997), 142–50; Kukku Melkas, Heidi Grönstrand, Kati Launis, Maarit Leskelä-Kärki, Jussi Ojajarvi & Lea Rojola, *Läpikulkuihmisiä: Muotoiluja kansallisuudesta ja sivistyksestä 1900-luvun alun Suomessa* (Helsinki: SKS, 2009).

all-European pattern of social and political segregation—including in historiography.<sup>54</sup>

Hence, the next revolution, that of 1917, was not encountered as a joint effort. The fall of the Emperor in March 1917 went rather smoothly in Finland and a coalition government was formed to prepare for Finland's independence. But what happened then could not have been predicted by anyone. The political distrust in 1917 led to a power struggle as to who would rule and determine the future of the coming nation state.<sup>55</sup> Historical imagination was no longer employed to protect national unity but to guarantee its opposite, to reveal the treacherous “true” nature of one's political adversaries. The Left was repeatedly accused of betraying the nation when demanding power and cooperating with the Russian revolutionaries. For many socialists the wish of belonging to the nation was replaced by the international idea of socialism as a new kind of democratic state. The social democratic party intellectuals were convinced that revolution also represented the inevitable course of history—and was immediately at hand. For a moment, in March and November of 1917, there was some enthusiasm about the coming World Revolution—devoid of any idea of what that might entail in practice.<sup>56</sup> The socialists who declared the “Finnish Workers' Revolution” in late January 1918 designed a nation state “ruled by the people.” The planned ultra-democratic constitution was never introduced. Instead, the coup resulted in the Civil War of three months and over 37,000 deaths—most of them members of the defeated Red Guards.<sup>57</sup>

What happened surprised and shocked everyone and required an explanation. The victorious White side introduced the whole nationalistic historical repertoire to convince the public that their victory was that of the rule of law, the will of God, and the purpose of history. The Imperial

<sup>54</sup> Gustave Le Bon, *Joukkosielu* (Helsinki: Otava, 1912), original in French in 1895, in English *The Crowd* in 1896.

<sup>55</sup> On the logic of the power struggles, see Pertti Haapala, “For People's Power: Revolutions in Finland (1899–1932),” in *Global Revolutions*, ed. by Stefan Berger & al (Palgrave, forthcoming 2021).

<sup>56</sup> Ehrnrooth (1992); Risto Turunen & Sami Suodenjoki, eds, *Työväki kumouksessa* (Helsinki: THPTS, 2017); Juha Siltala, “Being absorbed into an Unintended War,” in *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy*, ed. by Tuomas Tepora & Aapo Roselius (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 51–89.

<sup>57</sup> On the course of the Civil War, see Tepora & Roselius (2014) and its interpretation as a revolution, see Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) and Haapala (2021).



German army and Martin Luther were especially credited with helping the nation.<sup>58</sup> Russophobia, which had not been that aggressive before, reached a new level. The evil that had caused the conflict and lured Finnish workers to take up arms was the “Old Archenemy” in the east, now embodied by the Bolsheviks and their Finnish accomplices. “Freedom” or “the Liberation War” (against Russia) became the official name of the Civil War used by the government, the media, and by historians. The long narrative regarding the birth and emergence of the Finnish nation—starting in pre-historic times—was reconstructed from a new perspective, one in which independence was the goal of history, a goal now reached.<sup>59</sup> That view was an immediate response to recent experiences and also helped to accept things that should not have happened: fraternal bloodshed and violent reprisals.

In the coming years, the new “sovereign nation” was written into a history that was even more nationalistic than the idealistic version of the nineteenth century. In the White narrative, the earlier integrative elements of nationalism were replaced by an exclusive approach: the idealized Finnish population was now divided into those who had sacrificed themselves for the cause of the nation in 1918, and into those who betrayed the nation and were thus excluded from it. The history of the previous centuries was streamlined as well. The long-term Swedish impact was further neglected, while the whole Russian period of 1809–1917 was seen solely in the light of the legal and language struggles; the actual administrative and economic progress during the Russian period played no role. Typically, a new monumental popular history of Finland, *A Chronicle of the Finnish People*, picked out those events and persons which highlighted “Finnishness” during the course of history. Even the Kingdom of Sweden was replaced by the new concept of *Sweden-Finland*, which was anachronistically used to designate the time when Finland was an integral part of the Swedish kingdom.<sup>60</sup> Finland was presented as a state-like actor between Sweden and Russia, something she never had been. The history of Finland, if not all historiography, was “Finnished” and it became the “memory of

<sup>58</sup> Government declaration on 25 May 1918 (*Suomen asetuskokoelma 1918*).

<sup>59</sup> Tuomas Tepora, “The Mystified War: Regeneration and Sacrifice,” in Tepora & Roselius (2014), 159–200; Aapo Roselius, “The War of Liberation, the Civil Guards, and the Veterans’ Union: Public Memory in the Interwar Period,” in Tepora & Roselius (2014), 297–330.

<sup>60</sup> Einar Juva’s *Suomen kansan aikakirjat 1–10*, was published in 1927–38 and was selectively based on Carl Grimberg’s famous and popular work on Sweden.

the state.”<sup>61</sup> This narrative was created by academic historians, many of whom were also visible political figures. New politically refashioned chapters were also added to Topelius’ *Book of Our Land*.

As the history of Finland was “whitewashed,” it did not work as a shared story anymore. Most people were certainly indifferent as to how the old times were described, but the new definition of *our nation* was found disturbing to the other half of the population, the ones who had lost the war in 1918. The Red families, and their children at school, felt it was unjust and discriminating the way in which the idea of Fatherland was monopolized by the Whites.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, the Left never apologized for 1918 but held on to the belief that the “revolt” had been justified. During the 1930s, the White “patriotism” was even ironized for finding its proper mental home in fascist Italy and national-socialist Germany.<sup>63</sup> The Red experience of 1918 was encapsulated in the traditions of the labor movement, and was commemorated privately in families and publicly in labor organizations and the party press.<sup>64</sup> Hence, the 1920s and 1930s were marked by strongly divided historical experience and memory. One year, that of 1918, overshadowed all that had happened before that and negated the earlier experience of national unity, real and imagined.

Nevertheless, despite the cruelty of the Civil War, the two history cultures could live side by side, because in 1919 the White winners were compelled to come to a political compromise, one which made Finland a parliamentary democracy and allowed the defeated social democrats to return to the public arena. Gustav Schmoller’s history of class struggles was now translated into Finnish as a warning as to the results of social cleavages and the failure of state authority.<sup>65</sup> Outside politics, much of the new popular culture, especially music and films, lowered class boundaries.

<sup>61</sup>The phrase is from Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Europe after Napoleon: The Politics of Conservatism in a Revolutionary Age* (1964), 331–2.

<sup>62</sup>See Kaarninen’s chapter in this book.

<sup>63</sup>Oula Silvennoinen, Marko Tikka & Aapo Roselius, *Suomalaiset fasistit: Mustan sarastuksen airuet* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2016); Oula Silvennoinen, “‘Home, Religion, Fatherland’: Movements of the Radical Right in Finland,” *Fascism* 4 (2015), 134–54.

<sup>64</sup>Tauno Saarela, “To Commemorate or Not: The Finnish Labor Movement and the Memory of the Civil War in the Interwar Period,” in Tepora & Roselius (2014), 331–63.

<sup>65</sup>Gustav Schmoller, *Luokkataistelut ennen ja nyt* (Helsinki: Edistyspuolue, 1920). Original title *Die soziale Frage – Klassenbildung, Arbeiterfrage, Klassenkampf*, published in German in 1918.

In contrast to the nationalistic White historiography, some fiction authors were brave enough to write critically about the recent past, too, like F. E. Sillanpää, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1939, and Hella Wuolijoki, a popular playwright and a known socialist, who brought strong female characters to the Finnish historical scene.<sup>66</sup> Despite political tensions and hostilities, the social democrats were much more integrated into society by the end of the 1930s than they had been two decades earlier. For example, the rapid advancement in girls' education within all social classes, and the increasing social mobility, signified the crossing of earlier class boundaries: the Finnish society had become democratic in a "deeper sense", that is, "providing equal opportunities to people from all social strata."<sup>67</sup>

When the Soviet Union attacked Finland in late-1939—with Hitler's permission—it naturally came as a shock to the Finnish society. Yet, to the astonishment of the White bourgeoisie, the vast majority of Finnish workers and socialists were willing to defend their homeland. This regained experience of unity, resembling the early forms of idealistic nationalism, came to be called the "Miracle of the Winter War," a historic moment in overcoming the trauma of the Civil War. For past decades, nationalistic propaganda had focused on the existential threat from the east, and now the ongoing war was easily positioned within the historical framework of Finland's "eternal" fight for freedom. A new chapter on the Winter War ("One Hundred Days of Honor") was further added to Topelius' *Book of Our Land*.

Another historically interpreted moment took place when Finland joined the German offensive against the Soviet Union in June 1941.<sup>68</sup> For a short time, as the Germans approached Moscow and Leningrad and the Finns themselves occupied large parts of so-called East Karelia, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the coming of Greater Finland were considered realistic, even probable scenarios. Finland was described as a participant in these "world historic" events, and Finnish historians were invited to provide historical justification for the nation's expansion to the

<sup>66</sup> Panu Rajala, *F.E. Sillanpää: Nobel-kirjailijan elämä 1888–1964* (Helsinki: SKS, 2015), 90–120; Anu Koivunen, *Performative Histories, Foundational Fictions: Gender and Sexuality in Niskavuori Films* (Helsinki: SKS, 2003).

<sup>67</sup> Heikki Waris, *Suomalaisen yhteiskunnan rakenne* (Helsinki: Otava, 1948), 331. His work on social divisions was a strong apotheosis of the unification of the nation.

<sup>68</sup> An overview of the impact of WWII in Finland is Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki, eds, *Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

east.<sup>69</sup> As was also the case elsewhere, wartime Finland was full of patriotic and nationalistic rhetoric and symbols of sacrifice. But as it became apparent in 1942–44 that Germany would not win the war, the public rhetoric became more cautious, focusing on survival instead of on any final victory. The idea of Greater Finland experienced bankruptcy while Finns rehabilitated their Nordic identity and approached Scandinavia and the Anglo-American world.

## NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

When Finland lost the war, and large areas of the country were ceded to the Soviet Union, the defeat was largely experienced as historical injustice. But because the country remained unoccupied, it was also seen as a war of heroic survival, thanks to the sacrifices of the *whole nation*, including especially the soldiers and women who had served at the front and came from all social classes and political backgrounds. There is no doubt that the war period was experienced as a joint national effort of historical significance, which leveled the divisions created in 1918.<sup>70</sup>

Yet the defeat also challenged Finns to revise the national narrative in order to align it with the new political realities, and especially with the turn towards a friendly relationship with the Soviet Union. But academic historians, who had all kept their prewar positions, were reluctant to make any considerable revisions, although some compulsory “corrections” were made under political pressure. For example, the ultra-nationalistic and Russophobic accounts of history were forgotten.<sup>71</sup> It has been claimed that the Soviet pressure urged Finns to “falsify” their history and to adopt a fake Soviet-friendly identity later labeled “Finlandization.” If some politicians wanted to please the Soviets for political gains, academic historians in the 1950s and 1960s certainly did not. History books were not rewritten, and the overall image of Finland’s history remained nationally

<sup>69</sup> Best known accounts were Väinö Auer & Eino Jutikkala, *Finnlands Lebensraum: Das geographische und geschichtliche Finnland* (Berlin: Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1941); Jalmari Jaakkola, *Die Ostfrage Finnlands* (Berlin: Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1942). Both works were written in Finland but published and edited in Germany and added with some citations from Hitler.

<sup>70</sup> Tiina Kinnunen & Markku Jokisipilä, “Shifting Images of ‘Our Wars’: Finnish Memory Culture of World War II,” in Kinnunen & Kivimäki (2012), 435–82.

<sup>71</sup> Pekka Ahtiainen, Jukka Tervonen & Ilkka Herlin, *Menneisyyden tutkijat ja metodien vartijat* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1996), 84–130.

orientated, if not outright nationalistic. The emphasis was now on the historically framed national achievements like the Finnish people's "immemorial" aspiration for democracy and freedom.<sup>72</sup> Transnational dimensions, especially the impact of Sweden and Russia on Finnish history, were further disregarded, though Finland was now often presented as a "Nordic society" distinct from Eastern Europe, which had fallen under communist rule.<sup>73</sup> The image of the nation's history altered only gradually and mostly invisibly. The old narrative of the nation's uniqueness was preserved but linked connotations changed when Finnishness began to mean "western" and "modern" instead of remote and archaic.

If historians reacted slowly, social scientists, politicians, and novelists responded more readily to the new situation. Their idea was that the post-war reconstruction of the nation required a new identity based on social and political integration, modernization of the economy, and political neutrality. The new concepts applied in defining Finnish society were modernity and the Nordic Model, which gradually came to define the country's national identity and history: Finland was presented as a small and homogeneous Nordic nation with deep roots in Lutheran Christianity, democracy, and equality, and which materialized in the tradition of a free peasantry and the early introduction of women's rights. Finnish culture was unique in that it had rapidly developed from peripheral and poor conditions into one of the most advanced in the civilized world. In public discourses Finns were now told to believe that their history, which was traditionally filled with wars, poverty, and foreign rule, was actually a "story of survival" and finally of "success," as witnessed by economic historians.<sup>74</sup> From the 1960s onwards the national identity was linked to material prosperity, technological development and, above all, to education. The "vitality of the nation" was no longer seen only in population growth but in the nation's "innovation capacity." The self-portrait of

<sup>72</sup> Arvi Korhonen, "Suomalaisen kansanvallan juuret," in *Suomalaisen kansanvallan kehitys*, ed. by Pentti Renvall (Porvoo: WSOY, 1856), 8–14. The book includes ten chapters of the "roots of people's power" in Finland, that is, the true idea and content of the nation.

<sup>73</sup> Petteri Norring, "The Rhythm and Implicit Canon of Nordic History by Eli F. Heckscher and Eino Jutikkala," in *Making Nordic Historiography: Connections, Tensions and Methodology 1850–1970*, ed. by Pertti Haapala, Marja Jalava & Simon Larsson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 207–34.

<sup>74</sup> Jari Ojala, Jari Eloranta & Jukka Jalava, eds, *The Road to Prosperity: An Economic History of Finland* (Helsinki: SKS, 2006).

modern Finnish society was reflected via the highly appreciated modern architecture and design.<sup>75</sup>

Even though the reconstruction of the economy, the resettlement of evacuees, and the building of new homes for a growing population kept people busy in the postwar period, the war experience could not be glossed over that easily. In the immediate postwar decades, professional historians did not touch the troublesome topics of 1939–45, just as they did not delve into the tragedy of 1918 but remained silent or held on to their “objectivity.”<sup>76</sup> Hence, the task of treating the traumatic experiences of war was left to novelists and film makers. Among the hundreds of book titles of war fiction, one novel became an unparalleled bestseller and was read and approved of by the majority of Finns—with the exception of the conservative elites.

Väinö Linna’s *Unknown Soldiers* (1954) was a realistic, lively, and ironic story of the war in 1941–44 as experienced by the author himself and his fellow soldiers who were not supposed to be war heroes. The novel was inspired by Erich Maria Remarque’s classic *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) and shared many of its qualities. In addition to micro-historical realism, the story challenged the patriotic and nationalistic rhetoric. And yet, in the end, Linna’s stubborn and misbehaving frontline soldiers saved the country. The novel’s true heroes were the common people, often the sons of the despised Reds of 1918. Thus, Linna stole the glory from those conservative circles that had upheld the heritage of White Finland and appropriated the patriotic values to themselves. Even more importantly, his novel and its wide publicity helped ordinary people, and especially the rank-and-file soldiers, to relocate themselves within a historically plausible war narrative *of their own*. The novel was filmed immediately in 1955 and is still shown on national television on every Independence Day. Several later novels, films, plays, and studies have not essentially changed the image Linna created but, rather, confirmed the narrative.<sup>77</sup> That is how

<sup>75</sup>About the twentieth-century societal optimism, see Pertti Haapala, “2017: Finlands framtidens historia,” in *Öppet fall: Finlands historia som möjligheter och alternativ*, ed. by Petri Karonen & Nils-Erik Villstrand (Helsinki: SLS, 2017); Juhani Koponen & Sakari Saaritsa, eds, *Nälkämaasta hyvinvointivaltioksi: Suomi kehityksen kiinniottajana* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus 2019).

<sup>76</sup>Ahtiainen & Tervonen (1996). The first balanced study on 1918 was published in 1957—and was rejected by history professors.

<sup>77</sup>Väinö Linna, *Tuntematton sotilas* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2000 [1954]). The latest translation in English: *Unknown Soldiers*, trans. by Liesl Yamaguchi (London: Penguin Books, 2015).

fiction became publicly accepted history and people relived their past through it—even mixing fiction and their own experiences. In the final lines of his novel, Linna reformulated the politically ambivalent outcome of the war as a joke: “The USSR won, but small and brave Finland came in a good second.”<sup>78</sup>

Linna’s next book was a trilogy, *Under the North Star* (1959–61), which expanded his historical revision to the high period of nation-making which extended from the 1870s to the 1950s.<sup>79</sup> It is a saga of a crofter family and a fictitious history of the background and consequences of the Civil War in a rural locality. The novel has been read as the “true history” of the Red experience, and, as a reflection of many Finnish family histories, the story has preserved its appeal and relevance till today.<sup>80</sup> But when the book was first published, it was a radically new way of presenting this history: there was not yet at the time any balanced research on 1918, so the White narrative dominated the public discourse, and the traumatic experiences of illegal executions and starvation in prison camps were practically silenced. As with *The Unknown Soldiers*, the novel was welcomed with enthusiasm, but it was also criticized: Linna was accused of falsifying history, insulting the nation and, furthermore, of being a poor and old-fashioned writer. Linna was especially surprised and hurt by the critique from professional historians who were clearly annoyed when an amateur entered their territory. In the public debate that followed, Linna was triumphant. To the claims about his historical ignorance he responded: if you sell nearly million copies you can’t be that wrong.<sup>81</sup>

The self-educated author, a factory worker from Tampere, did not aim to be a history writer but Linna acquired this role in public and he defended his views like any historian. He accused the academics of “hiding the truth from the people” and challenged national historiography by calling it “national ideology.” As an author, he called his own method

On Linna’s impact, see Jyrki Nummi, Maria Laakso, Toni Lahtinen & Pertti Haapala, eds, *Väinö Linna: Tunnettu ja tuntematon* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2020).

<sup>78</sup> Linna (2000 [1954]), 477.

<sup>79</sup> Väinö Linna, *Täällä Pohjantähden alla 1–3* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2000 [1959–1962]). Translation in English: *Under the North Star 1–3*, trans. by Richard Impola (Beaverton: Aspasia Books, 2001–03).

<sup>80</sup> Nummi & al (2020).

<sup>81</sup> Väinö Linna, *Esseitä* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2000), 176–83.

“sociology.”<sup>82</sup> According to him, the national narrative did not see people as actors with their own motives but as passive statistes of history who were used to glorify the national elite’s patriotic intentions. He accused the Finnish intelligentsia of self-delusion and, referring to the Civil War, noted sarcastically: “The holy image of the Finnish people was now broken and that caused such hatred that they tried to fix the picture by killing the model.”<sup>83</sup> That was a barb at the followers of Runeberg and Topelius and their idealistic nineteenth-century imagination of the Finnish nation. Linna wanted to unseat the old-fashioned idea of national history with its child-like subjects and replace it with true people’s history, that of rational, adult individuals. His impact was huge on the ways people began to read and relive history as their own story. Unlike in the nineteenth-century genre, Linna’s novels brought history close to people’s everyday lives and experiences—many of his readers “witnessed in their own case” and hence lived their past twice.

## DECONSTRUCTION AND RECOMPOSITION

Although Linna became a celebrated oracle in explaining the fate of the nation, he was not the only one representing the new mainstream. The generation gap in the Finland of the 1960s was as clear as in all Western societies. Cultural critique of conservative nationalism was wide and successful; old key slogans like “Home, Religion, Fatherland” now seemed outdated.<sup>84</sup> Yet history did not lose its importance as a key component of national identity. Thinking of the past in national terms did not disappear, but the content of the nation, its meaning, changed. In the public vocabulary *nation* was often replaced by *society*, which included the state, population, trades, classes, and so on. Society could still mean what Topelius had called the “shared community of all,” but the logic was different: it was no longer a hierarchy with given positions but a complex, mobile organization of various social groups, individuals, and their actions.

<sup>82</sup> Linna (2000), *passim*; Pertti Haapala, “Writing Our History: The history of the ‘Finnish people’ (as written) by Zacharias Topelius and Väinö Linna,” in Haapala, Jalava & Larsson (2017), 25–54.

<sup>83</sup> Linna (2000), 247–8.

<sup>84</sup> Marja Tuominen, *Me kaikki ollaan sotilaitten lapsia: Sukupolvihegemonian kriisi 1960-luvun suomalaisessa kulttuurissa* (Helsinki: Otava 1991).



In the wake of social sciences, which created a new language to describe the society, historiography went through a conceptual change as well. This began with a critique of nationalistic teleology through focusing on the blind spots in the national history and introducing those people and social groups previously “forgotten” in the collective narrative. In the 1960s, a new generation of historians started to revise the critical moments in national history: those of 1809, 1905, 1917, 1918, and 1939–45. Large government-funded research projects on the Civil War made it one of the best and most openly investigated internal conflicts in the world.<sup>85</sup> The new image of the war was much more multifaceted, fragmented, and problematic, and this made political identification with the Reds or the Whites much more complicated. The same was true for World War II: in closer scrutiny, Finns were not seen only as innocent victims in 1939–45 but had their own dark histories to study and explain. At the same time, and as a small country in a global conflict, Finland was a piece of a bigger puzzle. This metaphor carried on to the Cold War era, in which Finland was a tiny and neutral actor between the Great Powers. Consequently, Finns developed a *small nation identity*, which acknowledged the harsh experiences of the war years but also retained a considerable degree of national self-esteem.<sup>86</sup>

When the traditional historicist narration with descriptive stories of active individuals was replaced by more holistic and social scientific approaches with structures and numbers, historical experience lost some of its appeal for identification. Yet historical experience as a basis for identities remained (or returned) in two ways: through the popularity of personal stories, that is, biographies and memoirs, and through the new social history with its promise to “revive the narrative.” That international trend arrived in Finland in the 1980s and boomed in topics like labor history, family history, women’s history, oral history, and the histories of many minorities.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Bill Kissane, “On the shock of civil war: cultural trauma and national identity in Finland and Ireland,” *Nations and Nationalism* 26:1 (2019), 22–43.

<sup>86</sup> Kinnunen & Jokisipilä (2012); Seppo Hentilä, “Historiantutkijat sotien jälkeisessä yhteiskunnassa,” in *Tiede ja yhteiskunta: Suomen Historiallinen Seura ja historiantutkimus*, ed. by Petri Karonen (Helsinki: SKS, 2019), 523–76.

<sup>87</sup> Pertti Haapala & Pirjo Markkola, “Se toinen (ja toisten) historia,” *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 115:4 (2017), 403–16.

As Finland was a rather homogenous society, the new social history did not see its task as much in eliminating national history as in rebuilding it. Forgotten and ignored individuals and social groups were added to the national narrative and their role as “nation-builders” was underlined. The relevance of women’s history, for example, was justified by studying the making of the nation and civil society in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and by showing women’s essential role in this process.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, the working class and the peasants were integrated into national history as active participants in nation-making. Furthermore, histories of education, media, and popular culture added to the story of how the nation was made in people’s minds and in their everyday life. That is how researchers found a new kind of history and offered it to their readers as a participatory perspective on one’s own past: “Dig where you stand.” In a way, national history was democratized and “given back to the people,” and it was now experienced more often through novels, films, TV-series, documentaries, and exhibitions than through academic historiography. Compared to other Western countries, Finland was no exception in this, but it is worth noting that in the Finnish case the new ways of representing “living history” did not actually challenge the national framework used in seeing the past, but just expanded it.

Postmodernist conceptualizations entered Finnish historiography at the turn of the new century. Younger historians began to problematize the premises of national history and see it as a politically motivated narrative construction, one among other grand narratives.<sup>89</sup> Instead of being an axiomatic paradigm, national history—as well as nationalism—became a subject of study and was seen through people’s experiences, that is, how they had lived their lives as members of a nation. When transnational and global history began to boom from the 1990s onwards, historians started to emphasize the cross-border connections and intertwinements. The whole idea of Finland as a historical entity was challenged and the *History of Finland* was seen more and more as an identity project.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> As an example, see Merja Manninen & Päivi Setälä, eds, *The Lady With the Bow: The Story of Finnish Women* (Helsinki: Otava, 1991).

<sup>89</sup> Kenneth Partti, *Taking the Language of the Past Seriously: The Linguistic Turns in Finnish and Swedish History Dissertations, 1970–2010* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2020).

<sup>90</sup> See the theme issue on national history, *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 115:4 (2017); Karonen & Villstrand (2017).

The revision of national history in the latter half of the twentieth century had its political dimensions, too. First, it supported the integrative public policies that aimed at national consensus in foreign and domestic politics and at the modernization of the country, socially and economically. The making of the Finnish welfare state from the 1960s onwards became a new national effort and an identity marker which was also reflected in historiography. For a small country, history has been used to emphasize national survival and economic success. This publicly cherished storyline has been nurtured by the various international listings in which Finland has been named the best educated, the most equal, the healthiest, the wealthiest, or the happiest nation on earth. Since globalization has been experienced as a positive change for most Finns, it has also been included in the national success story of a small but clever society navigating the international markets and exploiting new opportunities. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, the government declared that globalization (and global problems) should be faced as “one nation,” which can be seen as a return to old rhetoric and the identity of a “joint Finnish nation.”<sup>91</sup> However, as a crucial difference, there was no longer any explicitly ideological commitment to the idea of nationalism, but rather a practical interest in creating social cohesion and international “competitiveness” in a diverse society that includes minorities and immigrants. In terms of historical identity this means that the nation, a true social and political community, has reshaped its premises but has also partly retained (or revived) some old thinking patterns regarding the national narrative, albeit in a new form.

## CONCLUSION

As elsewhere in Europe, national historiography in Finland was originally a project of the political and academic elites, who wanted to develop a narrative of the common past to be adopted by all. The story turned out to be a success and became a model for the common people’s historical experience, despite the fact that the narrative’s reception has always been divided, indifferent, and complex. The response was not an issue of historical or scientific “truth” but of how convincing the story could be for

<sup>91</sup>Pauli Kettunen, *Globalisaatio ja kansallinen me: Kansallinen katseen historiallinen kritiikki* (Tampere: Vastapaino 2008).

people to make sense of their lives and of the nation as a greater context for their personal experiences. The story's attraction was largely based on easily identifiable narrative elements, like family metaphors and Biblical content, and, above all, on the political hopes of promoting collective identity and participating in the state-making. This is how a narrative of the past became social reality, the autobiography of a nation and a society, as well as a crucial element for social cohesion, political order, and cultural identity.

While the nineteenth century saw the rise of national history, the twentieth century witnessed its final success in the state formation and the consequent Finnish identities, which were bound to key turning points in the nation's history. As the twenty-first century began with high hopes of globalization, it seemed like national history among other grand narratives would lose its relevance. Yet in fact, globalization was turned into a "national challenge." It is surprising how widely globalization has been seen through national lenses and truly transnational global history remains a challenge for scholars everywhere.<sup>92</sup>

The Finnish historiography of the past 200 years can thus be seen as a "success story" of methodological nationalism, that is, how the nation was made the object, the subject, and the scope of history, even when the limitations and excesses of national history were simultaneously criticized.<sup>93</sup> To understand that development it is good to remind that national history has been, above all, a social practice and ideology in creating national community and its respective identities. The experience of Finland as a living nation demonstrates that historiography really matters. Historians and philosophers invented the whole thing, the idea of national history, and believed that they could see the nations' future, too. In that sense they were not writing in any academic ivory towers but playing a visible role in society and its development. It is difficult to determine exactly how deep and sustained their impact has been—but it is even more difficult to see how things would have gone *without* their ideas and contribution.

<sup>92</sup>Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York: Norton, 2014).

<sup>93</sup>Daniel Chernilo, "The critique of methodological nationalism: Theory and history," *Thesis Eleven* 106:1 (2011), 98–117.

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PART I

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Feeling and Conceptualizing the  
Nation



# National Sentiment: Nation Building and Emotional Language in Nineteenth- Century Finland

*Jani Marjanen*

## INTRODUCTION

During the course of the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, the term national sentiment was coined and established in several European languages. Translations vary and carry slightly different connotations, but there are clear similarities in how national sentiment in English, *Nationalgefühl* in German, *sentiment national* in French, *nationalkänsla* in Swedish, and *kansallistunne* in Finnish were used and developed.

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This work has been supported by the European Union Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant 770299 (NewsEye) and the Academy of Finland under grant 324778.

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© The Author(s) 2021  
V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences  
and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the  
History of Experience,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_3)

The emergence of the term in several different languages at roughly the same time is indicative of changes both in the language of nationhood and emotion. At this time, more and more things were conceived of as being national. Terms like national economy, national literature, national history, or national anthem were coined and lexicalized, indicating the breakthrough of a national perspective on understanding society. State institutions were gradually understood as national institutions.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, language relating to feelings, passions, sentiments, and emotions underwent a change. In the eighteenth century, passions and feelings were largely regarded as things that were evoked by outer impulses and needed to be controlled. Toward the end of the nineteenth century the understanding of them became more narrowly understood and psychological. In this process the words emotion in English and *Gefühl* in German started dominating the emotional vocabulary. In this new, more scientific approach, outer impulses were still important, but, deep down, emotions were internal, related primarily to the self, and could be understood through psychological scrutiny.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of national sentiment was located in the intersection of these two developments, as it is part of the expanding national perspective and the narrower descriptions of emotional experience. But, the term's gradual decline in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century also relates to the changes in the two vocabularies, making national sentiment, if not an ephemeral concept, one that had to adapt to a world in which emotions were more likely to be understood as psychological and in which national belonging was seen as less voluntarist. This chapter charts this development as it took place in the context of Finland by exploring the language of national sentiment in nineteenth-century newspapers. In the Finnish case, nineteenth-century nation building is characterized as a particularly quick and conscious process as Finland belongs to the so-called young nations, that is, it was one of the imperial substructures in

<sup>1</sup>Simon Hengchen et al., "A Data-Driven Approach to Studying Changing Vocabularies in Historical Newspaper Collections," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, n.d., <https://doi.org/10.1093/llc/fqab032>; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]); Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History*, 1st ed. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ute Frevert et al., *Gefühlswissen: Eine lexikalische Spurensuche in der Moderne*, 1st ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2011); Thomas Dixon, "'Emotion': The History of a Keyword in Crisis," *Emotion Review* 4:4 (2012), 338–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073912445814>



which the post-Napoleonic period quite abruptly presented local elites the possibility of developing a nationhood and statehood. Once that development caught on with non-elite communities, nation building soon cemented a new societal order.

Although most modern scholars of Finnish nation building acknowledge the role of emotional attachment as being part of a so-called national awakening, this perspective has seldom led to a focus on past language,<sup>3</sup> and even then the focus has not been on the concrete emotional vocabulary but rather on creating a typology of very broadly defined discourses. The starting point of this chapter is the notion of past language serving as a source to understanding past experiences of people as well as their expectations and desires for the future.<sup>4</sup> Texts that talk about national sentiment are instances in which some of the past experiences recorded in language are revealed to us if we interrogate the changing meanings of the term. Talking or writing about it was a way of setting the frame for how people could think about feelings for and in the nation. But texts including the term could also portray innovative speech acts that challenged prevalent meanings of national sentiment in a given time. They were also ways to probe new methods of experiencing, so to speak testing, to what degree it could make sense to talk about things national and feelings in the same expression. In particular, early uses of the term should be seen as partly programmatic and partly experimental.

National sentiment has not been at the heart of the history of emotions because it is perhaps hard to conceive of what kind of emotion, if any, we are talking about. However, there are good reasons to argue that precisely therefore it serves as a good case for criticizing a universalizing approach to the emotions that assumes emotions to be unchanging units that can be separated from the words, gestures, or other expressions describing them.<sup>5</sup> Rather, the language relating to emotions ought to be seen as part of the expressional repertoires, which reflect and shape emotional experiences. Talking about emotions or coupling other things with the language of emotions (like in the term national sentiment), is here seen as an emotional

<sup>3</sup> Päivi Rantanen, *Suolatut säkeet: Suomen ja suomalaisten diskursiivinen muotoutuminen 1600-luvulta Topeliukseen* (Helsinki: SKS, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 349–75; Reinhart Koselleck, “Einleitung,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. by Reinhart Koselleck, Otto Brunner & Werner Conze (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1972), XIII–XXV.

<sup>5</sup> For such a critical approach, see Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

practice that is historically situated.<sup>6</sup> Taking stock of discourse as emotional practice thus questions the notion of real emotions versus the language of emotion, even with regard to emotions that are often seen as fundamental to being human, like fear.<sup>7</sup> According to this perspective, fear is lived out through emotional practices in different culturally constructed settings and those practices form the scripts for how to live out fear and how to challenge earlier performances of it.<sup>8</sup> This does not mean that the experience of fear and the performance of that emotion is not real to people, it is just making the claim that there is no single experience of fear that people feel universally, but only culturally mediated scripts that make experiences of fear mutually intelligible. Linguistic expressions are one of the most common ways of communicating those experiences, even if they are not the only ones and remain imprecise.

Studying national sentiment differs from looking into historical experiences and performances of fear, because the discourse of national sentiment generally takes a step away from emotional experience. A feeling toward the nation can be about actual feelings in the sense that individuals would express this devotion through the language of national sentiment. However, statements about national sentiment are usually not about actual feelings but work on a meta level as reflections about the role of emotions in politics, society, and culture. This level of abstraction makes the discourse concerning national sentiment a sign of an evolving emotional vocabulary. Hence, this chapter studies linguistic expressions as a way of seeing to which degree, by whom, and why it made sense to talk about national sentiment, despite the fact that historical actors did mean different things by it. My survey shows that authors could talk about national sentiment by referring to at least four different meanings—national sentiment as devotion toward the nation, as a characteristic of the people, as a description of the atmosphere in the country, and as the collective self-esteem of the country. By tracing these uses, this chapter advances the argument that the discourse moved from highlighting a romantic and personalized relationship to nation building as a necessary

<sup>6</sup> Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion,” *History and Theory* 51:2 (2012), 193–220, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2012.00621.x>

<sup>7</sup> For an overview and discussion on how fear has been approached, see Margrit Pernau, “What Object Is Fear?” *History and Theory* 54:1 (2015), 86–95, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hith.10742>

<sup>8</sup> For an overview of “emotional scripts,” see Jonathan H. Turner & Jan E. Stets, “Sociological Theories of Human Emotions,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 32:1 (2006), 26–8, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.32.061604.123130>

step in self-fulfillment in the early nineteenth century to a description of collective emotional experiences in the latter half of the century. It further suggests that the frame of experiencing national belonging changed. The voluntarist (perhaps even constructivist) notion of nationhood was surpassed by a collective and naturalized notion of feeling about the nation. As a part of this development, national sentiment became more often characterized as a sort of collective emotion.<sup>9</sup> It seems, however, that it did not fit well in the context of the intensified nationalism of the last decades of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, and was at least partly replaced by the less flexible category of national character.<sup>10</sup>

Through the example of national sentiment, this chapter also tries to underline the need to find new ways to study nation building as a process in which emotions are present. Although there are quite a few texts that explore what the word “love” in “love of country” means or how emotions have been key elements in the rise of patriotism, nationalism, and populism,<sup>11</sup> the means of concretely studying the expressions that relate to emotions, are not fully explored. Because it is unclear what kind of feelings were really at stake when nineteenth-century authors talked about national sentiment, this chapter highlights the need to take stock of concrete historical instances in which historical actors talked about emotions in conjunction with the nation. While there are plenty of studies highlighting the role of emotions as a part of nation building,<sup>12</sup> there are fewer studies that trace how historical actors themselves made this connection.

### NATIONAL SENTIMENT AND NEWSPAPERS

The focus on language relating to emotions presents a challenge in choosing the right sources. Printed material has not been seen as the best source for the history of emotions, which has rather deployed ego documents for

<sup>9</sup>Christian von Scheve & Sven Ismer, “Towards a Theory of Collective Emotions,” *Emotion Review* 5:4 (2013), 406–13, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073913484170>

<sup>10</sup>See Balázs Trencsényi, *The Politics of “National Character”: A Study in Interwar East European Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 12.

<sup>11</sup>Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Martha Craven Nussbaum & Joshua Cohen, *For Love of Country?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

<sup>12</sup>For an overview, see Jonathan Heaney, “Emotions and Nationalism: A Reappraisal,” in *Emotions in Politics*, ed. by Nicolas Demertzis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 243–63, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137025661\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137025661_13)

the analysis of more private expressions of emotion. However, for the purpose of studying changing notions of national sentiment, printed sources provide a better entry point as they capture publicly negotiated meanings of terms.<sup>13</sup> I use nineteenth-century newspapers from Finland as they provide a very large data set covering a variety of historical linguistic expressions and hence also include a wide range of emotional vocabulary. Perhaps more importantly, nineteenth-century newspapers were crucial outlets for different visions of nation building, so discourses of national sentiment were part of the series of disagreements about which things were important for experiencing the nation.<sup>14</sup> Obviously, newspapers did not cover everything and censorship and limits to what was socially appropriate clearly limit what can be found in the material, but precisely for this reason they are a good source for studying what was regarded as appropriate discourse when it comes to emotions and nationhood.<sup>15</sup> In general, talking about national sentiment does not seem to have involved using terminology that would have challenged the limits of decency or political appropriateness.

The collection of Finnish digitized newspapers provides a searchable data set for both quantitative analyses of word use as well as for retrieving text passages with key terms. The collection contains all newspapers printed in Finland prior to 1918, but does exclude handwritten papers and some newspaper-like journals.<sup>16</sup> The material is available as downloadable data packages, but is also accessible through two graphical search interfaces.<sup>17</sup> Newspaper publishing was rather modest in the early decades of the

<sup>13</sup>For an example of using newspapers, see Nicole Eustace, *Passion Is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 3–15; For the role of discourse and emotions, see Lila Abu-Lughod & Catherine Lutz, “Introduction: Emotion, Discourse, and the Politics of Everyday Life,” in *Language and the Politics of Emotions*, ed. by Lila Abu-Lughod & Catherine Lutz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>14</sup>The most famous explication of this argument is in Anderson (2006 [1983]).

<sup>15</sup>Lars Björne, *Frihetens gränser: Yttrandefriheten i Norden 1815–1914* (Oslo: Akademisk publiserings, 2018); Jani Marjanen, “Gränserna för det offentliga samtalet i Finland 1809–1863,” in *Offentlighet og yttringsfrihet i Norden*, ed. by Ruth Hemstad & Dag Michalsen (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2019); Pirkko Leino-Kaukiainen, *Sensuuri ja sanomalehdistö Suomessa vuosina 1891–1905* (Helsinki: Suomen historiallinen seura, 1984).

<sup>16</sup>Tuula Pääkkönen et al., “Exporting Finnish Digitized Historical Newspaper Contents for Offline Use,” *D-Lib Magazine* 22:7–8 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1045/july2016-paakkonen>

<sup>17</sup>The interfaces can be found here: <https://korp.csc.fi> and <https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/> with better coverage for the twentieth century in the latter. Any newspaper articles cited

nineteenth century and grew almost exponentially up to the end of the century. In the Finnish case, papers were published in Swedish and Finnish as the main languages, with Swedish-language publications dominating in the early century and Finnish-language output catching up and by the 1890s finally surpassing Swedish-language publications in the amount of words published per year. Smaller amounts of newspapers were also published in German and in Russian.<sup>18</sup>

The asymmetrical relationship between the languages thus changed during the course of the century. Swedish as the language of administration, educated life, and high culture, was gradually challenged by Finnish as the first language of the majority of the population. In addition, Russian, as the main language of the empire, became more important, but knowledge of Russian remained rather limited in Finland, and the influence of Russian when it comes to emotional language remains low, although there are indications that it affected the socialist language of peoplehood in the period around World War I.<sup>19</sup> The interplay between these three languages was a crucial part of the main political tensions in the country, especially in the latter half of the century.

Focusing on Finnish and Swedish, it is crucial to note that the different language spheres ought not to be seen as separate since most authors and many of the readers had to cope with both languages. Whatever happened in Swedish was recorded in Finnish, and once Finnish became gradually more elevated as a literary language, this also occurred the other way around. Early in the nineteenth century, Swedish and Finnish were separated according to domains of life. Anyone with Finnish as their first language would learn Swedish if pursuing an academic career or aiming for a higher position in society. Finnish did not yet possess the vocabulary for politics and science, but this changed very rapidly.<sup>20</sup> The expansion of

can be found through both or one if these interfaces and references are given to the title and date of the newspaper. Any statistics are based on the former interface. If I know the author of a text, that is mentioned in the text.

<sup>18</sup> Jani Marjanen et al., “A National Public Sphere? Analyzing the Language, Location, and Form of Newspapers in Finland, 1771–1917,” *Journal of European Periodical Studies* 4:1 (2019), 54–77, <https://doi.org/10.21825/jeps.v4i1.10483>

<sup>19</sup> Max Engman, *Språkfrågan: Finlandssvenskhetens uppkomst 1812–1922* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2016); Pasi Ihalainen, *The Springs of Democracy: National and Transnational Debates on Constitutional Reform in the British, German, Swedish and Finnish Parliaments, 1917–1919* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2017), 197–205, <https://doi.org/10.21435/sfh.24>

<sup>20</sup> Katja Huomo, Lea Laitinen & Outi Paloposki, eds, *Yhteistä kieltä tekemässä: Näkökulmia suomen kirjakielen kehitykseen 1800-luvulla* (Helsinki: SKS, 2004).

Finnish as a language of written culture created space for including quite a few more people in the public discourse, many of whom operated only in Finnish.<sup>21</sup> In this process, Finnish was elevated and made into a language that could be chosen to emphasize one's Finnishness. In the first half of the century, Finnish authors identified as Finns regardless of language, but toward the end of the century language became an issue of identification. Once Finnish started dominating, the minority label Finland-Swede (*finlandssvensk*) entered the vocabulary to mark Swedish speakers as threatened by the majority—a constellation that would have been impossible in the first decades of the century.<sup>22</sup> In the final decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the Finnish public sphere developed a sort of parallelization of newspapers, cultural institutions, associational life, and political mobilization in which institutions had separate organizations using either Finnish or Swedish.<sup>23</sup>

Because of the shared public sphere and constant translation, the Swedish-language and Finnish-language terms, *nationalkänsla* and *kansallistunne* were to a certain degree in sync in Finland. But the languages provided different possibilities for innovation, of course. In Finnish, especially the nearby word *kansallistunto* (national sentiment or national esteem) was often used in situations where *nationalkänsla* would have been used in Swedish. None of these words are particularly frequent in the data set. *Nationalkänsla* occurs in different inflections 1.2 times per one million words in the period before 1920 (with 3912 total hits). For *kansallistunne* and *kansallistunto* the same figures are 1.5 (5540) and 2.3 (8642). The figures rely on the optical character recognition used in establishing the machine-readable versions of the newspapers, which is not flawless, so the figures are in reality a bit higher, but can be used as indicators for first uses and when the terms became more common (Fig. 3.1).

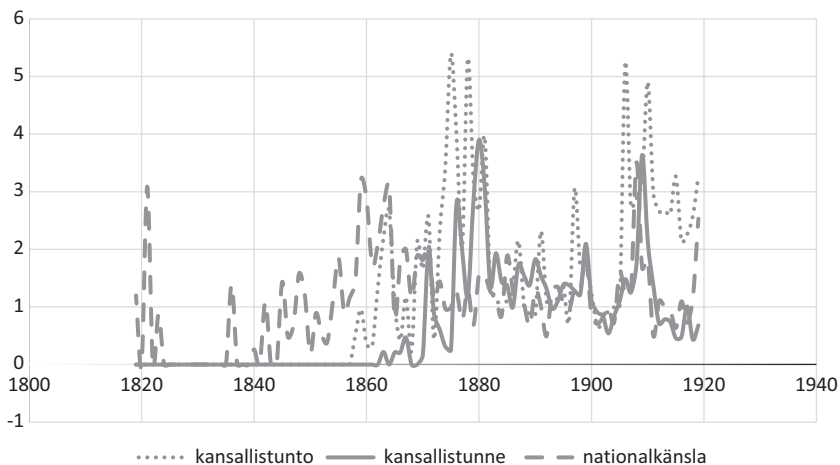
A relative frequency graph over time also suggests that once the terms were introduced, they remained in relatively stable use and at quite modest levels.<sup>24</sup> In Swedish, the word was introduced in the early 1820s as a

<sup>21</sup> Heikki Kokko, "Suomenkielisen julkisuuden nousu 1850-luvulla ja sen yhteiskunnallinen merkitys," *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 117:1 (2019), 5–21.

<sup>22</sup> Marjanen et al. (2019); Engman (2016).

<sup>23</sup> Päiviö Tommila, Lars-Folke Landgrén & Pirkko Leino-Kaukiainen, *Suomen lehdistön historia 1: Sanomalehdistön vaiheet vuoteen 1905* (Kuopio: Kustannuskiila, 1988); Marjanen et al. (2019); Engman (2016).

<sup>24</sup> The graph is produced using the Korp interface made available by the Language Bank of Finland. Lars Borin, Markus Forsberg & Johan Roxendal, "Korp – the Corpus Infrastructure

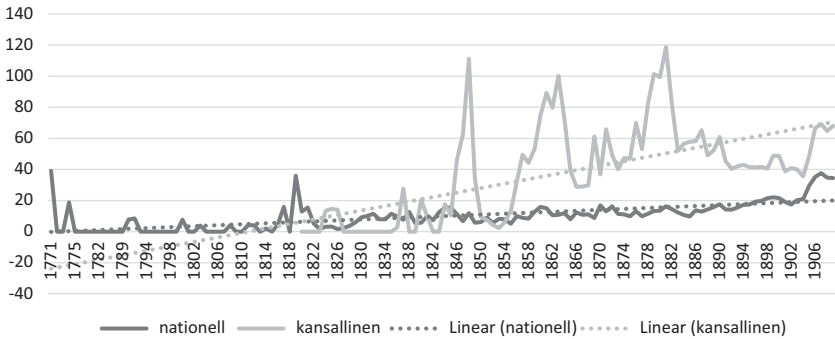


**Fig. 3.1** Relative frequency (occurrences per one million words in the data) of *nationalkänsla*, *kansallistunne*, and *kansallistunto*, 1819–1919

part of the so-called Turku romanticism and papers associated with it, but seems to have been adopted more generally only in the 1830s–1840s. For Finnish, the introduction relates to the expansion of the Finnish-language press both in issues and in topics that were dealt with from the 1860s onwards. The increase in frequency in the 1870s suggests that the intensified mobilization for the Finnish language also boosted the use of *kansallistunto* and *kansallistunne*, but all in all, the relative frequencies do not point to the terms being heavily politicized or going through a semantic shift, but, rather, a steady use once the terms had entered the lexicon. The same goes for the related but less frequent Swedish term *nationalanda* (national spirit) that was important to some early nineteenth-century authors and is close in meaning to “national sentiment.” Graphs produced for English, German, and French in the Google Books data sets provide similar results for the terms national sentiment, *Nationalgefühl*, and *sentiment national* and show that the term was already used toward the end of the eighteenth century, but became more commonly employed only in the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> The Google Books data suggest that national

of Språkbanken,” in *Proceedings of LREC 2012*. vol. Accepted (Istanbul: ELRA, 2012), 474–8.

<sup>25</sup> Jean-Baptiste Michel et al., “Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books,” *Science* 331:6014 (2011), 176–82, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1199644>



**Fig. 3.2** Relative frequency (occurrences per one million words per year) of the lemmas *nationell* in Swedish and *kansallinen* in Finnish. Because of very different grammar, the figures are hard to compare across languages, but their rising trend is similar

sentiment was born through a conflation of the language of nationhood and the language of emotions, and perhaps also that this coupling lost some of its appeal in the period after World War I (Fig. 3.2).

Other similar compounds, like national pride or national character, were more frequently used than national sentiment in English, but they also share an increase in frequency in the nineteenth century and a gradual decline in the twentieth. All of these also seem to peak in times of war, which might have to do with their applicability to military rhetoric.<sup>26</sup> However, in the big picture, these particular terms are not the most important for the language of nationhood. Rather, topics relating to national defense, economy, government, and culture dominate. What matters more than individual things being designated as national is the fact that the term national was overall very productive as a modifier in English, Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish in the nineteenth century. This means that it was used to modify more nouns during the course of the century and gradually the national perspective was used to cover an increasing share of political, social, and cultural life.<sup>27</sup>

The growing use of the term national as a modifier is also seen in Fig. 3.2, which shows a gradually rising trend for the lemmas *kansallinen* and *nationell* in Finnish and Swedish respectively. As in the case of “national

<sup>26</sup> My interpretation differs slightly from Trencsényi (2011).

<sup>27</sup> Hengchen et al.



sentiment,” the Swedish terminology picks up earlier, peaks first in the early-1820s, and then stabilizes from the 1830s onwards. In Finnish, the breakthrough is around the revolution of 1848, but censorship trumped that discourse until it returns to stay in the mid-1850s. This is also the period when *kansallistunto* and soon after *kansallistunne* entered the vocabulary in Finnish. At this time, the Swedish-language data is still considerably larger, so there is also less fluctuation in the Swedish, but it is noteworthy that the relative frequency overall is a bit higher for Finnish than for Swedish in the latter half of the century. This partly relates to differences in grammar but based on a reading of the material seems to boil down to the fact that talking about things national became politically more mobilizing in Finnish than in Swedish at this time. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Finnish society gained many parallel structures in terms of, for example, learned societies, theatres, organizations for civic education for Finnish and Swedish respectively, and at the same time, the language question became gradually ossified, with some people supporting that development and others hoping to bridge relations between the language groups.<sup>28</sup>

While national sentiment was part of the productivity and gradual growth of the vocabulary of nationhood, the discourse around it remained rather modest, but at the same time it is the term that most explicitly links the nation with emotions. To understand how talking about national sentiment fared in the overall development of national imaginaries in the nineteenth century, I have read through a large part of the occurrences of *nationalkänsla*, *kansallistunne*, and *kansallistunto* in newspapers published in Finland. Following the peaks in frequency, I have concentrated on the breakthrough of national sentiment as a figure of thought in the 1820s, the years around 1860 with a clear politicization of the language question and the entry of national sentiment as a feature in both Swedish-language and Finnish-language discourse, and finally on the 1890s as a period in which the language groups were already seen as self-evidently different although most often belonging to the same nation. The examples show that while uses of national sentiment obviously vary also in synchronous sources, we can see a general change toward a collectivistic and less voluntarist conceptualization. Old, conflicting meanings did not disappear completely, as is seldom the case, but in general the language of national sentiment changed to better match a situation in which the Finnish nation was seen as a self-evident historical subject.

<sup>28</sup> See Engman (2016), 176–235.

## AN INDIVIDUALIST NOTION OF NATIONAL SENTIMENT

After the Russo-Swedish War of 1808–1809, and the consequent establishment of a Finnish Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire, a new need to define Finland and Finnishness emerged gradually. Whether Finland could be regarded as a state or a nation provided central topics for assessing the maturity and future development of the country. But these issues were also overshadowed by much uncertainty regarding Finland's position as a part of Russia and the increasingly distant possibility of rejoining Sweden. During the 1810s and 1820s very few voices were vocal regarding Finland's nationhood or statehood, but, toward mid-century, defining those Finnish categories became goals that guided much of domestic politics.<sup>29</sup>

One of the first voices to both theoretically and polemically put forward new ideas about Finnish nationality belonged to Adolf Ivar Arwidsson (1791–1858), a historian and publicist active at the Academy in Turku, but exiled to Stockholm in 1823 due to his politically radical writings. He belonged to a group of young intellectuals, in hindsight dubbed the Turku romantics, who quite broadly engaged in introducing new tenets of the literary romantic style, including individualistic expressions of the self, political activism for freedom of print, and Herderian notions of nationality into Finnish academic discourse.<sup>30</sup> Despite the broad interests of Arwidsson, his later reputation focuses on the role he played as an early leader of a Finnish national movement and he is often described as a “national awakener” (“kansallinen herättäjä”).<sup>31</sup> However, the later descriptions of

<sup>29</sup> Jussi Kurunmäki & Jani Marjanen, “Catching up through Comparison: The Making of Finland as a Political Unit, 1809–1863,” *Time and Society* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X21990349>; Tuija Pulkkinen, “Valtio,” in *Käsitteet liikkeessä: Suomen poliittisen kulttuurin käsitehistoria*, ed. by Matti Hyvärinen et al. (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2003), 213–55; Osmo Jussila, *Maakunnasta valtioksi: Suomen valtion synty* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1987); Aira Kemiläinen, “‘Nation’-sana ja Porvoon valtiopäivien merkitys,” *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 63:3 (1964), 289–304; Matti Klinge, *Finlands historia*. 3 (Esbo: Schildt, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> Werner Söderhjelm, *Åboromantikens och dess samband med utländska idéströmningar*, ed. by Åbo akademi-kommitté 2 (Helsingfors: Schildt, 1915); Lukasz Sommer, “A Step Away from Herder: Turku Romantics and the Question of National Language,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 90:1 (2012), 1–32, <https://doi.org/10.5699/slaveasteurorev2.90.1.0001>

<sup>31</sup> Johanna Wassholm, “Att skapa och reproducera minnet av en nationell storman: A.I. Arwidsson (1791–1858) i storfurstendömet Finlands historiekultur på 1800-talet,” *Scandia* 83:1 (2017), 43–67.

Arwidsson were formulated in an era during which the thinking about Finnish nationality was much more self-evident than in Arwidsson's own time. When Arwidsson wrote about nationality and language, he couched his ideas in an individualistic notion of self-realization, which foregrounded active choices made by Finns to promote the shaping of a national culture. In this, he was heavily influenced by Herder, who, like Arwidsson, wrote about *Nationalgefühl* as a telos to be reached in the future.<sup>32</sup>

In an essay on Finnish as a national language that was published as a serial over many issues of *Åbo Morgonblad*, Arwidsson lamented how it "cannot be expected that a national sentiment towards the mother tongue should be awakened anytime soon" and, further, that it is not likely that "parents and educators would be convinced regarding this topic, which they may not even have reflected upon."<sup>33</sup> Overall, Arwidsson argued for the elevation of the Finnish language, and as he did that he can be placed in what could be called a constructivist notion of nationhood, in which individuals need to find within them a national sentiment that allows them to promote Finnishness.<sup>34</sup> He himself wrote in Swedish and assumed that his audience could read Swedish, but expected that Finnish would be transformed into a language of learning, politics, and culture. National sentiment was a quality that related to the individual and indicated a kind of promise for the future. In the terms of Reinhart Koselleck, it was temporalized and had a clear future orientation.<sup>35</sup>

Arwidsson was well aware that national sentiment or the promoting of Finnish as a national language was not something that would come about naturally but needed active measures and performative deeds. In discussing the role of spoken Finnish, he lamented how people with Finnish as their first language had to switch to Swedish in order to be taken seriously among the educated part of the population. They had to lose their accent and if they were to speak Finnish, "their real mother tongue," they needed to deploy a Swedish accent.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Kritische Wälder* (Bd. 2. Riga, 1769), 166. On Herder in Finland, see Pertti Karkama, *Kadonnutta ihmisyyttä etsimässä. Johdatusta Johann Gottfried Herderin ajatteluun ja herderiläisyyteen Suomessa* (Helsinki: SKS, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> *Åbo Morgonblad* 2 June 1821, 2. An earlier example of the word *nationalkänsla* can be found in *Mnemosyne* 3 November 1819, 2.

<sup>34</sup> For a closer analysis, see Marja Jalava, *Minä ja maailmanhenki: Moderni subjekti kristillis-idealisisessa kansallisajattelussa ja Rolf Lagerborgin kulttuuriradikalismissa n. 1800–1914* (Helsinki: SKS, 2005).

<sup>35</sup> Koselleck (1972).

<sup>36</sup> *Åbo Morgonblad* 24 March 1821, 4.

Arwidsson cannot be regarded as representing any kind of general attitude in Finland at this time. His political radicalism and Herderian language philosophy were singular. Still, the notion of national sentiment as something that needed to be awoken among each and every one individually, was not unique. For instance, in 1836, *Helsingfors Morgonblad* advertised a book comprised of printed plates and titled “*Swedish memories*” (*Svenska minnen*) with the aim of animating the readers’ memories and “speaking to each and everyone’s national sentiment.”<sup>37</sup> The book was obviously primarily meant for Swedes, but it seems that there was also a market for it in Finland as the advertisement was published several times, and it seems that the remark about national sentiment either did not bother anyone or the notion itself was flexible.

Overall, newspapers published in Sweden also circulated to a high degree in Finland, and it is clear that they were influential in introducing new political vocabulary to the eastern side of the Gulf of Bothnia. One of the very few comprehensive descriptions of how national sentiment might have been felt and performed, can be found in the Stockholm newspaper *Aftonbladet*. It published an article titled “On national sentiment” (“Om Nationalkänslan”) which recapitulates a meeting at the house of nobility in Stockholm, during which count David Fredrik Frölich had argued that Sweden could no longer stand up to Russia’s might.<sup>38</sup> It is impossible to assess its influence in Finland, but the article must have found a readership in Finland as Russo-Swedish relations were at the heart of Finnish affairs. Frölich stood for a liberal position within the Noble Estate and during his political career advocated a kind of utilitarianism in international politics.<sup>39</sup>

Frölich’s statement must be understood against the background of tensions in international politics. Uprisings in Poland had recently been crushed by Russian imperial interference, and many Swedes saw this as a model for how Russia would also react in Finland, that is, in former Swedish territory. Reconquering Finland was not at all on the agenda of King Charles John, but for many Swedes letting go of the idea of reconquering old Swedish domains would have meant admitting that Sweden’s period of greatness was in the past. In the Swedish press, revanchist echoes

<sup>37</sup> *Helsingfors Morgonblad* 19 August 1836, 3.

<sup>38</sup> *Aftonbladet* 15 April 1831.

<sup>39</sup> Sven Eriksson, “David F Frölich,” in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* 16 (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1964), 636, <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/14567>

were common.<sup>40</sup> At this time, the alliance between Russia and Sweden from 1812 had ended, which opened up public interest in Finnish affairs in Sweden (partly fueled by Finnish authors who crossed the border).<sup>41</sup>

According to *Aftonbladet*, Frölich was not even allowed to finish his statement before the audience started objecting by stamping their feet, protesting, and even citing Esaias Tegnér's poem "Svea" from 1811. For the author, this was an example of a national sentiment so strong among the participants that they had to react to the pejorative remarks concerning Sweden's might.<sup>42</sup> Here, national sentiment comes across as feelings of being hurt, as pride that requires defending. "Svea," which refers to Sweden, had been authored right after the Russo-Swedish war of 1808–1809 and had become a symbol for Swedish patriotism after the loss of large parts of its land area. A reworked version of the poem from 1812 (after the alliance between Karl Johan Bernadotte and Alexander I) included a section that talked about "reconquering Finland within Sweden's borders" as a call to develop the economy and culture of Sweden within its decimated area.<sup>43</sup> The report does not tell us which parts of "Svea" were recited, but it is apparent that the poem was a sort of antidote to hurt national pride.

Later in the same article, national sentiment is described as something that is inherent to the Swedes. It is the Swedish people who have a national sentiment and that feeling is based on historical experiences:

"The national sentiment of the Swedish people and its state of mind in relation to Russia's politics and government is also something that deserves to be the subject of everyone's 'considerations,'" the article wrote. It also argued that "Russia cannot complain about a national sentiment among a free people."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Henrik Edgren, *Publicitet för medborgsmannavett: Det nationellt svenska i Stockholmsstidningar 1810–1831* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2005), <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-5773>

<sup>41</sup> Lolo Krusius-Ahrenberg, "Finland och den svensk-ryska allianspolitiken intill 1830/31 års polska revolution," *Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier* 21–22 (1946), 153–346.

<sup>42</sup> *Aftonbladet* 15 April 1831.

<sup>43</sup> Esaias Tegnér, "Svea," in *Essaias Tegnér's Samlade Dikter II, 1809–1816*, ed. by Fredrik Böök & Åke K. G. Lundquist (Lund: Tegnér'samfundet, 1968), 66; Jani Marjanen, *Den ekonomiska patriotismens uppgång och fall: Finska husbällningssällskapet i europeisk, svensk och finsk kontext 1720–1840* (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2013), 143.

<sup>44</sup> *Aftonbladet* 15 April 1831, 2–3.

What is interesting in *Aftonbladet's* article, is the tension between collectively shared sentiment, and individually felt indignation in an almost visceral reaction to a speech. In the latter quote it seems that national sentiment is something that all Swedes share, whereas in the reaction to Frölich's speech, it is individuals in the crowd that experience indignation, stamp their feet, and recite patriotic poetry. It seems that this type of vagueness in the meaning of the term national sentiment often escaped contemporaries and that it was used in a rather liberal way. However, going through examples of its use in Finnish newspapers suggests that instances in which national sentiment was understood as belonging to the individual were much fewer than those emphasizing the collective. The examples which meant a sentiment *for* the nation, not the sentiment *of* the nation, appeared in the examples from Arwidsson and in *Helsingfors Morgonblad*, but became proportionately fewer later in the century.

#### FROM AN ASPIRATIONAL NATIONAL SENTIMENT TO NATIONAL AWAKENING

The elevation of the Finnish language was very rapid, with a considerable expansion of new abstract vocabulary, new venues for publication, and a conscious, but still conflicted, campaign to promote Finnish as a language that could be used for educated discourse and governing a state.<sup>45</sup> This obviously also changed how the language question was framed and how national sentiment related to it. From the 1860s onwards, the language question was not only about promoting Finnish, but was often also understood as an actual struggle between Finnish and Swedish as state-bearing languages. One of the first culmination points of this struggle was a debate between the philosopher, journalist, and leader of the Finnish-language movement, Johan Vilhelm Snellman, and the journalist, August Schauman, about language and nationhood in 1859–1860. Again, the debate was conducted solely in Swedish, but at this time Finnish had a much more established position in public life, and the starting point for the debate was the fear that Swedish would lose its position as a state-bearing language in Finland.<sup>46</sup>

More specifically, the debate revolved around the question of whether a nation could be based on two languages or was confined to only one.

<sup>45</sup> See Huumo, Laitinen & Paloposki (2004).

<sup>46</sup> Jussi Kurunmäki, "Kan en nation byggas på politisk vilja? Debatten mellan J. V. Snellman och August Schauman 1859–1860," *Historisk tidskrift för Finland* 92:1 (2007), 63–89.

Schauman represented a constitutional and liberal position that sought to defend Finnish bilingualism by referring to examples from Switzerland and the United States of America but was also committed to the process of cultivating the Finnish nation. Snellman, representing the Finnish-language movement (the Fennomans), attacked Schauman and argued for a future monolingual nation.<sup>47</sup> In this debate, both authors touched upon the issue of national sentiment. Snellman, who famously talked of one nation, one language, did this directly by stating that “nowhere in the world [...] can you encounter a sense of unity before the different languages have converged into a common language. This is evidenced by the national sentiment becoming one.”<sup>48</sup> Schauman replied that “humans of different tribes and languages can come together and feel that they form one people, one nation, without one or the other tribe having to discard or suppress the other.”<sup>49</sup> In a later discussion in 1863, Schauman returned to the issue of national sentiment in writing against a Finnish pledge of allegiance to Russia and Alexander II. He stressed that the pledges (*addresser*) were “a sign of *Russian* national sentiment. We Finns also have a national sentiment, but it is *Finnish* [...] We know our own nation; we do not count as belonging to the Russian nation, we will never do that. What fires Russian national sentiment, leaves ours cold; what violates our national sentiment, does not hurt the Russian one.”<sup>50</sup>

Compared with Arwidsson’s notion of national sentiment, Snellman had adopted a much more collectivistic meaning for the term, although he in general had an individualistic notion of citizens’ role in the state.<sup>51</sup> For him, national sentiment was not about sentiment for the nation, but of the nation. There are similarities too, as Snellman’s national sentiment was also aspirational, something that materialized only after the nation was united under one language. In Snellman’s reasoning, nationhood was tied to language and sentiments and literature were results of that common

<sup>47</sup> Kurunmäki (2007); Thiodolf Rein, *Juhana Vilhelm Snellmanin elämä 1–2*, vol. 2., rev. ed. (Helsinki: Otava, 1904), 276–80.

<sup>48</sup> Johan Vilhelm Snellman, *Samlade arbeten. 9, 1859–1860* (Helsingfors: Statsrådets kansli, 1997), 16; See also Kurunmäki (2007), 75.

<sup>49</sup> [Schauman], *Papperslyktan* 4 April 1859, 106. See Kurunmäki (2007), 75.

<sup>50</sup> *Helsingfors Tidningar* 17 June 1863, 2. See also Jens Grandell, *Från ett årtionde i Finland: August Schauman, republikanism och liberalism 1855–1865* (Helsingfors: Finska Vetenskaps-Societeten, 2020), 210.

<sup>51</sup> For Snellman’s individualism, see Tuija Pulkkinen, *Valtio ja vapaus* (Helsinki: Tutkijaliitto, 1989).

language. Accordingly, Norway did not have a proper national literature or sentiment nor did the United States of America, as their literary canons were, according to Snellman, in effect written in foreign languages, Danish and English respectively.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Finland did not yet possess nationality, but needed to develop one through linguistic unity. Schauman, on the other hand, only wrote about the feeling of belonging to the same people, which leaves the degree of collectivity more open in the first quote, but in the second passage from 1863 his notion of national sentiment is definitely tied to the Finnish nation as a collective. Schauman's notion is more flexible and diverse than that of Snellman, but also for him it was paramount that there was one nation and that the people felt that they belonged to it. In this sense Schauman's notion of national sentiment did not carry that forward-looking aspirational aspect that was present in Arwidsson's individualistic notion and Snellman's collectivist notion. Rather, national sentiment was inherent in the nation.

Snellman can be argued to be the most influential political and philosophical leader of his generation. He was widely read in his time and during that time he was already the object of a conscious process of staging him as a national leader.<sup>53</sup> Still, in many ways his sophisticated Hegel-inspired thoughts about Finland as a state and nation did not trickle down without mutating. The project of promoting Finnish-language culture advanced, but Snellman's conscious construction of Finnishness became less relevant as the Fennoman position grew more confident and was after the 1870s more often than not expressed in Finnish rather than Swedish.

The so-called awakening of Finnish national sentiment was often associated with Snellman,<sup>54</sup> but in later in the century it was not so important to emphasize the aspirational aspect of feeling the nation. Rather, it was evident that things had already changed as "language obstacles are becoming void, and national sentiment has by and large developed to a higher level."<sup>55</sup> At this point it also became logical to search for national sentiment in an earlier time. For instance, *Uusi Suometar* reported in 1876 on a speech by Rietrik Polén, a journalist and the first person to defend a Finnish-language doctoral thesis (in 1858), in which he argued that

<sup>52</sup> Rein (1904), 280.

<sup>53</sup> For the staging of Snellman as a leader, see Marja Jalava, *J. V. Snellman: Mies ja suurmielis* (Helsinki: Tammi, 2006); See also Mikko Lahtinen, *Snellmanin Suomi* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2006).

<sup>54</sup> See for instance, *Uusi Suometar* 9 May 1877, 1.

<sup>55</sup> *Ilmarinen* 24 March 1871, 2.



Henrik Gabriel Porthan (1739–1804) ought to be seen as the “father of Finnish history and national sentiment.”<sup>56</sup> While Snellman had some twenty-six years previously projected the rise of national sentiment into the future, Rietrik Polén now postulated it for the late eighteenth century. A longer history made for a more prestigious existence, but also lost sight of the impressively fast mobilization of the advancement of Finnish-language culture.

Even more influential than Polén was Georg Forsman who used the pen name Yrjö Koskinen, by which he is generally known. Koskinen was seminal for envisioning a history of the Finnish people already before 1809. Unlike Arwidsson, Snellman, or his fellow historian, Zacharias Topelius, Koskinen postulated the Finnish people and nation much further back in time.<sup>57</sup> In his seminal book on the history of the Finnish people, he even claimed that the Finns’ “national self esteem” (*kansallistunto*) was still strong in the seventeenth century, but later weakened.<sup>58</sup> In Koskinen’s historiography, the Finns had a glorious national past to which the people had recently awoken again. National sentiment or self-esteem (the two were often conflated) had a perennial quality, but could vary in strength. Once this view got more dominant, it also meant that national sentiment was no longer an issue to discuss from a theoretical point of view.

### NATIONAL SENTIMENT AND ETHNIC TENSIONS IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

Toward the end of the century, it was more common to see national sentiment used in conjunction with ethnic tensions in imperial contexts. At this time most of the newspapers that mention national sentiment relate it either to the language question in Finland, other ethnic tensions in the Russian empire, or to the issue of Schleswig and Holstein.<sup>59</sup> As we saw from Fig. 3.1, Finnish-language newspapers had started writing about national sentiment using the words *kansallistunne* and *kansallistunto*, with the former as a clearer link to the Swedish word *nationalkänsla*, and

<sup>56</sup> *Uusi Suometar* 4 October 1876, 2.

<sup>57</sup> For Koskinen and Topelius, see Pertti Haapala’s chapter in this volume.

<sup>58</sup> Yrjö Koskinen, *Oppikirja Suomen kansan historiassa* (Helsinki: SKS, 1869), 243.

<sup>59</sup> For Schleswig and Holstein, see, e.g., *Helsingfors Dagblad* 5 November 1864, 1; *Norra Posten* 20 February 1897, 4.

overall it seems that the Finnish-language discourse on national sentiment became more important. By the 1880s the terms had clearly become lexicalized and can be seen as commonly held.

Many examples talk about national sentiment in conjunction with hurt feelings, and in that sense they link to August Schauman's use of the term in the 1860s. In the newspaper *Nya Pressen*, we find an article discussing the so-called postal question as an example of indignation. The paper wrote how Russian travelers in Finland were not allowed to use Russian stamps for their correspondence and that it was "offensive to Russian national sentiment" that Russian stamps were not valid in all parts of the Russian empire. While the paper understands this practical problem as "we Finns ourselves have a rather fragile national sentiment," it still argues that the foundations of Finnish autonomy cannot be sacrificed due to the "nationalism of a few Russian travelers and their convenience."<sup>60</sup>

The idea of a hurt Russian national sentiment is expressed quite a few times in the 1890s, often in conjunction with the postal question, which was at the time one of the symbolically laden political issues with regard to Finland's position in the Russian empire.<sup>61</sup> In this particular example, the interesting thing is that a link was made between national sentiment and nationalism in Russia as if they were merged. It seems, however, that it was more common to juxtapose the two, so that national sentiment was something positive, whereas nationalism was used as a negative label for others. The paper *Wiipurin*, for instance, noted the negative use of nationalism in Finnish discourse: "When Swedishness [the party] brags pompously, that is not 'nationalism,' but when Finnishness [the party] demands natural rights for proper labor, that is fanatic national thinking." On the same page, but in a different article, the paper reported on "the importance of a Finnish national sentiment" putting the program of the Finnish party into practice.<sup>62</sup>

Debates involved with national sentiment also crossed the language divide. Some years earlier, when the Swedish-minded socialist author, Arwid Mörne, lamented that the Swedish-speaking population was decreasing at the cost of Finnish speakers, he argued that "Whenever we [Swedish speakers] note that national sentiment in a particular region or a particular segment of our Swedish population is faltering, we must make

<sup>60</sup> *Nya Pressen* 11 January 1891, 1.

<sup>61</sup> For instance, *Valvoja* 1 February 1899, 77.

<sup>62</sup> *Wiipurin* 14 November 1906, 3rd circulation, 3.

clear to ourselves where the reason for the weakness of the national sentiment lies.”<sup>63</sup> Several Finnish-language papers commented on the text,<sup>64</sup> the paper *Uusimaa* being the boldest one in its interpretation. In a remarkable rhetorical move, it stated that Mörne had admitted to a lower degree of national sentiment among Swedish speakers than among Finnish speakers, and further claimed that the rescue of Swedish national sentiment in Finland did not lie in old Swedish customs or history, but rather in adopting a Finnish past. Swedish speakers could keep their language, as long as they strengthened their national sentiment as a part of proper Finnish nationhood.<sup>65</sup> Like Snellman, the paper demanded unity, but, like Schauman, it also allowed for national sentiment to be bilingual.

The language question remained at the heart of discussions about national sentiment, but it seems, based on a selection of examples from different types of newspapers, that Fennomans, Svekomans, liberals, and socialists all agreed on a core meaning of it in the 1890s and early-1900s. National sentiment had become collectivized and it had lost its aspirational character, but it could be hurt and its degree could be measured. Political and emotional mobilization could perhaps not rely on the idea of awakening a future national sentiment, but the idea of having to defend injured feelings of national belonging did play a role in political discourse.

## CONCLUSION

The historical transformation of national sentiment includes a shift from an individualistic and even voluntarist notion to a collectivist and less flexible understanding of it. There are some continuities embedded in this transformation, as earlier meanings could resurface in later debates, but in general the pattern is clear: once the nation had become something that most Finns regarded as a reality and the language struggle had gained parties that were more or less set, a voluntarist notion of national sentiment became nearly obsolete. While concrete descriptions of national sentiment as bodily reactions and cultural performances are very uncommon in newspaper material of the time in the first place, it seems that the

<sup>63</sup> Arvid Mörne, “Förfinskningen av. vår svenska landsbygd och folkbildningsarbetet därstädes,” *Finsk tidskrift* 49:4 (October 1900), 244.

<sup>64</sup> See Arvid Mörne, “Svenskhet och patriotism,” *Finsk tidskrift* 49:6 (December 1900), 451. The mentioned papers are *Päivälehti* 25 October 1900; *Uusi Suometar* 27 October 1900; *Uusimaa* 31 October 1900; *Valvoja* November 1900.

<sup>65</sup> *Uusimaa* 31 October 1900, 1.

collectivization of the idea of national sentiment made these types of descriptions even less likely. Rather, national sentiment was related to concrete emotions only through the claims of strong or lacking national sentiment in one or the other language group. This is clear in the examples of Arwid Mörne and *Uusimaa* from the year 1900. Feelings did not lie in the national sentiment itself, but in how it was used rhetorically in the texts.

Bearing in mind this transformation of national sentiment, we have to reconsider the long history of nationalism and nation building in Finland that emphasizes a continuity from late eighteenth-century interest in the Finnish language and folklore by Henrik Gabriel Porthan and his colleagues at the Academy in Turku, to the great national leaders, A. I. Arwidsson and J. V. Snellman and their associates, and then finally to mass mobilization of the Finnish party in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> While it would be wrong to deny a continuity of sorts, it is important to note that the future-oriented national sentiment of Arwidsson and Snellman was significantly transformed in later use. The kind of openness to the issue of nationality that they represented was not possible later on.<sup>67</sup> Further, and more importantly, the continuity from Porthan, Arwidsson, and Snellman to late nineteenth-century authors was made considerably stronger in the late nineteenth century when the issue of nationality was already seen as self-evident. At this point creating a history for the national movement served the purpose of making Finnish nationhood more stable.

<sup>66</sup> An influential example of this continuity is in Miroslav Hroch, *Die Vorkämpfer der nationalen Bewegung bei den kleinen Völkern Europas: Eine vergleichende Analyse zur gesellschaftlichen Schichtung der patriotischen Gruppen* (Prague: Univ. Karlova, 1968).

<sup>67</sup> See also Reetta Eiranen's chapter in this book.

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## CHAPTER 4

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# Personal Nationalism in a Marital Relationship: Emotive and Gendering Construction of National Experience in Romantic Correspondence

*Reetta Eiranen*

### INTRODUCTION

Recent study of nationalism has increasingly paid attention to personal meanings and people's active agency in the interpretation and production of the nation; for instance, through concepts like banal nationalism and everyday nationalism.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these approaches, which often concentrate on “from below” viewpoint and on everyday practices, the concept of personal nationalism or a “personal approach” can offer a

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Skey & Marco Antonsich, eds, *Everyday Nationhood: Theorising Culture, Identity and Belonging After Banal Nationalism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Andreas Stynen, Maarten Van Ginderachter & Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, eds, *Emotions and Everyday Nationalism in Modern European History* (London: Routledge, 2020).

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fruitful and complementary starting point for the analysis of national thought and commitment.<sup>2</sup>

The connection between the personal and public spheres has been vital to the emotional power of nationalism. The ideology has gained strength from a link to other elements of individual and group identities, especially those conceived of as “natural,” such as gender and family. Family formed a mediating structure between the public and the private, and the ideals concerning it were central to nationalist thought in Europe in the nineteenth century. Personal and private matters, activities and attachments gained wider significance by being linked with the nation.<sup>3</sup> The viewpoint of personal nationalism offers the possibility of looking at how often abstract national ideals were interpreted and constructed in concrete lived and experienced relationships, and what they meant to the experiencing subjects.

This chapter focuses on a couple, Natalia and M. A. Castrén, who belonged to the central networks of emerging Finnish nationalist thought and were deeply committed to the cause. The object of analysis is their romantic correspondence, written in 1850 during their engagement.<sup>4</sup> M. A. Castrén was a prominent academic, and, in a broader context, the couple was part of the European educated classes and protagonists of national movements in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> It is of special interest to look at the personal experiences that fueled these key agents’

<sup>2</sup>Anthony P. Cohen, “Personal Nationalism: A Scottish View of Some Rites, Rights, and Wrongs,” *American Ethnologist* 23:4 (1996), 802–15; Raúl Moreno-Almendral, “Reconstructing the history of nationalist cognition and everyday nationhood from personal accounts,” *Nations and Nationalism* 24:3 (2018), 648–68.

<sup>3</sup>Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe & America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities since 1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 14, 102–15. See also George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988 [1985]).

<sup>4</sup>The chapter is based on a subchapter of my PhD dissertation, Reetta Eiranen, *Lähisuhteet ja nationalismi: Aate, tunteet ja sukupuoli Tengströmin perheessä 1800-luvun puolivälissä* (Tampere: Tampere University, 2019a). (The title in English: *Close Relationships and Nationalism: The Cause, Emotions and Gender in the Tengström Family in Mid-Nineteenth Century Finland*). The correspondences were originally written in Swedish. All the translations into English are the author’s.

<sup>5</sup>The term “protagonist” (*Vorkämpfer*) derives from Miroslav Hroch’s comparative work on national movements. There have recently been initiatives aimed at studying this central but diverse group more closely. See Joep Leerssen, Xosé-Manoel Seixas & Kasper Swerts, “Relaunching Studies on National Movements,” *Studies on National Movements* 4 (2019), 2–3.

commitment to the nationalist cause. Actually, it is quite phenomenal that in the nineteenth century so many people took up nationalism as their idealistic life goal. In a way, a simple question remains: Why did they do it? Personal nationalism can offer answers by pointing toward the ways in which the ideology affected and was entangled with people's selves, lives, and closest relationships. Personal nationalism shows how the interpretations of the ideology are linked to personal backgrounds, traits, and experiences. It opens up the opportunity to analyze how the personal meanings connected with the cause were transformed into building blocks of the self and one's own life, and, vice versa, how these subjective meanings motivated commitment to the cause. In the Castréns' case, this chapter asks how nationalism intertwined with the construction of their selves and their marital relationship. In this, the emotive and gendered construction of national experience occupied a central position.

An in-depth analysis of personal lived experiences requires looking at them in actual, individual lives. The focus on individuals as well as on their marital relationship also makes it possible to overcome persistent and often gendered dichotomies such as the emotional–rational and the public–private. It opens up deconstructing viewpoints on the national canons as well.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the “personal” and the “biographical” are not to be seen as alternative but as complementary approaches. The biographical knowledge of the research subject forms the prerequisite as well as the context for experiential analysis of personal narratives. The national can frame the ways experiences are constructed, but “biographical” experiences also shape the way in which the national is interpreted.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the concepts of experience and narration need to be scrutinized and not taken for granted within the personal / biographical framework. In this chapter, the letters dealt with are approached as experiential self-narrations. Drawing on the existential-hermeneutical tradition, the structures of experience and interpretation are seen as analogous—understanding *something-as-something* (*Etwas als Etwas*). Narration is defined as interpretation that pertains to experiences that are

<sup>6</sup> Annika Berg & al, “Couples in Science and Politics: Intellectual Partnerships in Sweden, c. 1900–c. 1950,” in *Par i vetenskap och politik. Intellektuella äktenskap i moderniteten*, ed. by Annika Berg, Christina Florin & Per Wisselgren (Umeå: Boréa, 2011), 365–70; Irma Sulkunen, “Biography, Gender and the Deconstruction of a National Canon,” *Gendering Historiography: Beyond National Canons*, ed. by Angelika Epple & Angelika Schaser (Frankfurt: Campus), 65–77.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Moreno-Almendral (2018), 656–7.



already interpretations in themselves (“a double hermeneutics”). In self-narration, the present I gives sense and meaning to past experiences and future expectations. The narrating I chooses the elements of her or his narrative and puts these elements in relation to each other; in this manner endowing them with meaning. A vital premise is that interpretations construct the reality instead of merely reflecting it.<sup>8</sup> Here, the writing of letters is seen as part of this interpretative, experiential construction of the self and the world. Combining self-narration and personal nationalism means analyzing how the narrating I incorporates nationalism in her or his self-narration, that is, to the construction of oneself and one’s experiences.

In this chapter, emotions and gender are seen as central ways of giving meaning to one’s national experience. The analysis draws on cultural anthropologist William Reddy’s concept of *emotive*, by which he refers to emotional expressions that evoke and construct emotions, and thus shape the emotional experience.<sup>9</sup> Gender can be understood in an analogous way. Gender is performatively produced by linguistic and bodily repetitions of gestures and ways of expression where the performative process has ontological consequences.<sup>10</sup> To summarize, emotive and gendered experiences, as with any experiences, are constructed in the ongoing process of interpretation, linguistically as well as bodily. I argue that emotive and gendering narrations, which consist of larger narrative wholes instead of individual words or concepts, construct and produce emotional and gendered experiences.

This chapter will tackle personal nationalism and its emotive and gendered construction in the experiential narrations of letter-writing. The first section discusses the construction of the Castréns’ emotional relationship in relation to the gender ideals of the time and to the particular ways the couple connected those ideals to the nationalistic cause. The second section focuses on the couple’s gendered emotional dynamics, the premise of which

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Hanna Meretoja, “On the Use and Abuse of Narrative for Life: Towards an Ethics of Storytelling,” in *Life and Narrative: The Risks and Responsibilities of Storying Experience*, ed. by Brian Schiff, A. Elizabeth McKim & Sylvie Patron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 81–3; Andreea Deciu Ritivoi, “Identity and Narrative,” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. by David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan (New York: Routledge, 2005), 231–5; Paul Ricœur, “Life in Quest of Narrative,” in *On Paul Ricœur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. by David Wood (London: Routledge, 1992), 21–3.

<sup>9</sup> William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 103–5.

<sup>10</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (London: Routledge, 1993).

was the “genius” man who had suffered for his country. Contradictory to general stereotypes, the case brings together masculine passion and inner feeling as a driving force in national achievements as well as the strong emotional control required of the woman. Lastly, the chapter will concentrate on national science as a joint project field of the spouses, something that concretized the need to express readiness for self-sacrifice, an element central to nationalist ideologies. The man’s scholarly work was central to both spouses’ personal nationalism but in different gendered and emotional ways.

### THE “NATIONAL COUPLE” COMPLEMENTING EACH OTHER

M. A. Castrén (1813–52) and Natalia Tengström (1830–81, Castrén after their marriage) had backgrounds that made them a “perfect” national match.

M. A. Castrén came from a clerical family from Northern Finland’s mostly Finnish-speaking area, but he was Swedish-speaking. He started his studies at the Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki in 1830 and was inspired by the rising wave of Finnish cultural nationalism. The publication of the Finnish national epic *Kalevala* in 1835 was instrumental in directing his interest toward his research fields, the Fenno-Ugric languages and folklore. Castrén belonged to the social network of the most prominent advocates of the Finnish cause at the time. He socialized, for instance, with “the national poet” J. L. Runeberg, “the national philosopher” J. V. Snellman, and the compiler of *Kalevala*, Elias Lönnrot.<sup>11</sup> From his first field expeditions, he acquired “an urge to wander.” Later on, he was driven by a sense of duty—“a deep need to fill my measure,” as he wrote in his diary.<sup>12</sup> In the 1840s, he travelled extensively, more than 50,000 kilometers, in Siberia studying the Fenno-Ugric languages and peoples. The conditions in the expeditions were harsh. He travelled in the cold climate over long distances and rough terrains among few and remote people. After a couple of years, he started suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis, and by the time he returned to Finland for good in 1849 he was also suffering from dysentery

<sup>11</sup>Tapani Salminen, “Castrén, Matthias Alexander (1813–1852),” in *Kansallisbiografia* (National Biography of Finland), <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/3164>, accessed 17 August 2020. Kaisa Häkkinen, “Matthias Alexander Castrén suomen kielen tutkijana,” in *Per Urales ad Orientem: Iter polyphonicum multilingue* (Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Seuran Toimituksia 264), 103–14.

<sup>12</sup>Kaisa Häkkinen, “Suomen kielitieteen nousu 1700- ja 1800-lukujen vaihteessa,” in *Herder, Suomi ja Eurooppa*, ed. by Sakari Ollitervo & Kari Immonen (Helsinki: SKS, 2006), 309–10, 486.

and scurvy. The expeditions made him an early international pioneer in linguistic fieldwork and ethnolinguistics.<sup>13</sup> M. A. Castrén's aim was to show that the Finnish people were not detached from the world and world history but were related to at least a sixth of mankind.<sup>14</sup>

The prestigious and academic Swedish-speaking Tengström family was also central to the nationalistic networks of the time. The tradition of supporting and sympathizing with Finnishness dated back to Natalia Tengström's grandfather, the important political figure Bishop Jacob Tengström, who emphasized the need to develop and strengthen Finnishness—separate from Swedishness—after Sweden ceded the area to Russia in 1809. Natalia Tengström's father, Professor of Philosophy J. J. Tengström, was an important background figure in the rise of the Finnish national movement through his writing and teaching. In this family surrounding, Natalia Tengström and her siblings also developed national interest. Her brother was an enthusiastic advocate of the Finnish cause in student circles, whereas Natalia Tengström and her two sisters founded their own study group dedicated to the Finnish language. She also read rather widely, both by herself and with her sisters in their book club. Siblinghood enabled and promoted the national activities, since these could be taken up and planned together.<sup>15</sup> After M. A. Castrén returned from his last expedition to Siberia as a famous linguist and explorer, he and Natalia Tengström, who had grown into a young woman by then, found each other in the common social circle. They got engaged in January 1850 and married in October of the same year (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2).

The emerging nationalist ideology was closely connected with the construction of gender and emotional ideals. In the nineteenth century, the gender difference and complementarity of sexes, and hence gendered separate spheres, were emphasized. The stark division of the complementarity model was based on rising biological and philosophical ideas. Instead of considering the woman as a weaker version of the man, the sexes were seen as different in their essence. The polarized ideals saw

<sup>13</sup>Salminen (2002); Fred Karlsson, "Castrén, Matthias Alexander (1813–1852)," in *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, 2nd ed., ed. by Keith Brown (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2006), 234.

<sup>14</sup>M. A. Castrén to J. V. Snellman 18 October 1844, in J. V. Snellman, *Samlade arbeten IV* (Helsingfors: Stadrådets kansli, 1994), 621.

<sup>15</sup>Reetta Eiranen, "Emotional and Social Ties in the Construction of Nationalism: A Group Biographical Approach to the Tengström Family in Nineteenth-Century Finland," *Studies on National Movements* 4 (2019b), 6–7, 16–21.

**Fig. 4.1** M. A. Castrén.  
(Photo: Charles Riis, The  
Society of Swedish  
Literature in Finland,  
SLSA 1185)



their fulfillment in the heterosexual love relationship where a complete whole was formed. Also, the ideal of the nuclear family was on the rise. In nationalist thought, the nation was equated with the family, which evoked “timeless” emotional meanings. These bourgeois ideals were reflected in the gender order of the nation, since the educated middle class aspired to make their values those of the nation and strove toward achieving a leading position in society.<sup>16</sup> The man and the woman were

<sup>16</sup>See, e.g., Kai Häggman, “The Century of Family: The Ideal Family and Bourgeois Lifestyle in Nineteenth-Century Finland,” in Kai Häggman, *Perheen vuosisata* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1994), 247–52; Stephanie A. Shields, “Passionate Men, Emotional Women: Psychology Constructs Gender Difference in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *History of Psychology* 10:2 (2007), 94, 96–7; Kramer (2011), 103–10.

**Fig. 4.2** Natalia Castrén. (Photo: C.A. Hårdh, The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland, SLSA 1185)



considered apparently equal but nevertheless different, which also led to their different roles within the context of the nation.

The complementarity model has usually been interpreted as representing the woman as emotional and the man as rational. However, scholar of gender and psychology Stephanie A. Shields has argued that the idea was rather that rationality and emotionality manifested themselves differently in the different genders. The man's rationality was abstract whereas the woman's was practical. The man's emotionality could be seen as a positive force whereas the woman's was considered unstable sentimentality. In general, the man's emotionality was valued, but irrational and uncontrolled outbursts could put masculinity into question. In the end, the man

was to control his emotions with his reason.<sup>17</sup> Emotionality also contained a class aspect: emotional sensibility and reflection on one's emotions were seen as traits of the educated classes whereas the lower classes' ability to feel was not seen to be equally refined.<sup>18</sup>

In M. A. Castrén's epistolary narration, the ideal selves—or “essences”—were strongly interdependent. He declared that in Natalia Tengström, he loved “the glad temperament, the warm heart, the high feeling for truth, for knowledge, for the fatherland, for everything noble and good.” For his part, he assumed that she loved in him “the spirit that has shown itself to be ready, according to its measure, to be roused for everything true and noble.”<sup>19</sup> With regard to other Finnish nineteenth-century male nationalists, it has been shown that feelings for the fatherland and for the spouse intertwined.<sup>20</sup> In the Castréns' case, it was not so much about identifying the loved one with the nation but about loving the nation together. In M. A. Castrén's interpretation, both spouses fulfilled the gendered ideals, but an important addition was their deep commitment to the national cause, something that elevated them and their relationship even further and made their feelings even deeper. The national cause was deeply interwoven with their past, and with the interpretation of themselves as the reason for their mutual feelings. It had profound personal meanings. In this relationality, by narrating the woman in an idealistic manner, the man was actually proving that by being her choice and partner, he too fulfilled the ideal.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Shields (2007), 92, 97–8; Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History: Lost and Found* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2011), 116–17; Eva-Helen Ulvros, *Kvinnors Röster: Livsöden från det moderna Sveriges framväxt* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2016), 95–7.

<sup>18</sup> Juha Siltala, *Valkoisen äidin pojat: Siveellisyys ja sen varjot kansallisessa projektissa* (Helsinki: Otava, 1999), 15, 32–3; Marc Brodie & Barbara Caine, “Class, Sex, and Friendship: the Long Nineteenth Century,” in *Friendship: A History*, ed. by Barbara Caine (London: Routledge, 2014), 238–40; Ulvros (2016), 95–7.

<sup>19</sup> The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (SLS), Gunnar Castréns släktarkiv (GCSA), Folder 7, M. A. Castrén (MAC) to Natalia Castrén (NC), 2 July 1850. Before October 1850 Natalia's last name was still Tengström, but the letters are archived under her married name of Castrén.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., Siltala (1999), 67–71; Marja Jalava, *Minä ja maailmanhenki: Moderni subjekti kristillis-ideologisessa kansallisaattelussa ja Rolf Lagerborgin kulttuuriradikalismissa n. 1800–1914* (Helsinki: SKS, 2005), 177–8.

<sup>21</sup> See also Reetta Eiranen, “The Narrative Self: Letters and Experience in Historical Research,” in *Private and Public Voices: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Letters and Letter Writing*, ed. by Karin Koehler & Kathryn McDonald-Miranda (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2015), 88–9.

The young Natalia Tengström comes forth in her letters as lively and witty, even somewhat ironic, qualities which crystallized in her nickname Little Nattu, which referred to her young age and was a somewhat child-like shorthand for Natalia.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, according to the future Ms. Castrén, the upcoming marriage had a sobering effect on her. For her, the fact that the perfect man had chosen her was not a guarantee of her own worth. The man's idealistic expectations worried her, and she did not want him to have too good a picture of her. She claimed that he did not know how inept she was and worried about how she could be as good as she should and wanted to be. She appealed to God to aid her in living up to expectations. Paradoxically, by narrating herself in this modest and gendered way, she actually confirmed the fact that she fulfilled the ideal.<sup>23</sup>

Hermeneutically, the self is constantly reinterpreted in relation to the narratives the culture proposes to us and to the ways in which people use these narratives in shaping their experiences. Reciprocally, these cultural narratives are reinterpreted in actual, lived situations.<sup>24</sup> In the relationality of selves, the writers had the possibility of narrating themselves but also of becoming narrated by the other.<sup>25</sup> In letter writing, the writers can “propose” stories of and to each other and, in this way, define or try to define the other as well as their mutual relation. The complementarity model can be read as a cultural narrative that M. A. Castrén and Natalia Tengström appropriated to their own lived situation. However, it is important to note that it was not (as it never is) just about repeating a readymade script. Instead, the couple, and especially the man, made strong interpretations of the cultural narratives available to them, and in these interpretations, nationalism represented an important element. Also, M. A. Castrén strongly proposed a specific story to his fiancée concerning himself, her, and their relationship. The woman was left with the role of complying, and, as said, in this way she actually played along with the script.

In the self-narrations drawing from their past, national ideals were woven into their selves and into the emergence of their relationship, but

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., The National Library of Finland (NLF), Kellgreniana, Coll. 99.3, NC to Sofi Kellgren, 3 March [1850], 5 September 1850; SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, Josephine Pipping to Natalia Castrén, tredje dag jul [1850].

<sup>23</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 24 February 1850, 1 March 1850, 17 September 1850. See also Eiranen (2015), 88–9.

<sup>24</sup> Ricœur (1992), 21, 32–3; Meretoja (2017), 82–3.

<sup>25</sup> Adriana Cavarero, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, trans. by Paul A. Kottman (London: Routledge, 2006 [1997]).

these ideals also had a bearing on their future expectations. The Castréns' letters constructed the idea of a predestined union, where the ideal inner essences of each spouse drove them to each other. In line with the contemporary ideal of love marriage, M. A. Castrén thought that their pure feelings, but also the knowledge of each other's noble principles, which in this case were connected to the national cause, would secure their mutual love and happiness. A perception of divine guidance was intertwined with this: he was sure that God, not chance, had made them for each other and sealed their union.<sup>26</sup> In her answer, Natalia Tengström stated that she had praised the Lord who had created such a beautiful life and given her "you to love and live for."<sup>27</sup> In the man's letters, providence had brought the ideal complementary essences together. The woman did not bring up her own superiority but, again, thanked God more passively for the man and the happiness she had been granted.

The pair's social circle reinforced the idea of a complementary and nearly perfect national couple. The older esteemed friends J. L. Runeberg (who also was Natalia Tengström's uncle) and J. V. Snellman praised Natalia Tengström, which convinced M. A. Castrén even more about their compatibility. Natalia Tengström, for her part, felt even more pressure to live up to the ideals.<sup>28</sup> Also Fredrika Runeberg, Natalia Tengström's aunt and J. L. Runeberg's wife, had a very positive attitude toward the match, to which she attached ideological meanings. She was glad that Natalia Tengström's "happy eyes and kind warm heart" would bring comfort and warmth to the life of the man who had "sacrificed so many years of coldness and discomfort for his *Own Country*."<sup>29</sup> In the relatives' assessments, the viewpoint of social prestige was also present, though vaguely downplayed. J. L. Runeberg had joked that his wife would get another portrait of a famous relative for her drawing room. For Fredrika Runeberg, M. A. Castrén was "an honorary son-in-law" but she expressed the conviction that Natalia Tengström was in love with the man and that it was not

<sup>26</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 2 July 1850, s.a. [16 September 1850?], s.a. [23 September 1850].

<sup>27</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 26 September 1850.

<sup>28</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 17–19 February 1850, 2 July 1850; SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 24 February 1850. See also Eiranan (2015), 88–9.

<sup>29</sup>SLS, Handskrifter av J.L. Runeberg och Fredrika Runeberg, SLS-Samlingen, SLSA 1106, Fredrika Runeberg to Carolina Tengström, Fredag [January 1850]. Italics originally in Finnish, "Oma Maa."



a question of calculation.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, even mentioning this reveals that it was a possibility.

The key marriage ideal of the time was freely chosen, romantic love.<sup>31</sup> In their correspondence, the couple reassured each other of their feelings, which was, of course, typical of romantic letter-writing.<sup>32</sup> In fact, as with many contemporary brides, Natalia Tengström had mixed feelings as the wedding day approached. However, she emphasized with similar wording to both her fiancé and sister that the union was her “own free choice” and that she was as fond of her fiancé as much as she could be of anyone.<sup>33</sup> In addition, it was now her turn to appeal to Uncle Runeberg’s authority. She shared her feelings through citing the following lines from the poet: “More than life, I found, is to love.”<sup>34</sup> The *emotive repetition* in the letters, in some cases even via similar phrases, constructed and strengthened the emotional experience and the mutual relationship. Even though the national commitment formed an integral part of their match, the couple needed to assure themselves, but also their social circle, of their sincere emotional motives.

### EMOTIONALLY DEPENDENT GENIUS

In the ethos of the nineteenth-century educated middle class, the crucial task of the woman was to support her husband, and to prepare the home to be a safe haven for the husband who was bearing the strain of struggles in the outside world. In the nationalistic context, this meant that the man sacrificed himself for the nation in the public arena while the woman could do her part for the nation by sacrificing herself for him in the private sphere of the home.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup>SLS, Handskrifter av J.L. Runeberg och Fredrika Runeberg, SLS-Samlingen, SLISA 1106, Fredrika Runeberg to Carolina Tengström, Fredag [January 1850].

<sup>31</sup>See, e.g., Ulvros (2016), 21–2.

<sup>32</sup>E.g., SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 28 June 1850, 2 July 1850; SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 30 June 1850, 2 July 1850.

<sup>33</sup>NLF, Kellgreniana, Coll. 99.3, NC to Sofi Kellgren, 5 September 1850; SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 17 September 1850.

<sup>34</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 26 September 1850.

<sup>35</sup>Mosse (1988), 18–19; Jalava (2005), 184, 190–2; John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007 [1999]), 6, 54–6.

M. A. Castrén was emotionally and even existentially dependent on his beloved. From the viewpoint of personal nationalism, it is striking that his scientific and national task intertwined tightly with the feelings toward and the relationship with his fiancée.

In his narration, M. A. Castrén tied his science, fatherland, and beloved together into an integrated trinity and an existential necessity. He expressed the belief that nothing else really mattered as long as he stayed true to “my science, my fatherland and You, good Natalia.”<sup>36</sup> On another occasion he named the same trinity as the only conditions necessary for his bliss, but in reverse order “Natalia, fatherland, science.” Interestingly, he had started to write “science” as the second word on the list but crossed it out so as to put “fatherland” between the beloved and science, which indicates that it was important for him that it was in the middle.<sup>37</sup> In a variation on the theme, Natalia Tengström’s love was “as necessary as the air I breathe, it is a condition of my existence as a human being, as a scholar and as a citizen.”<sup>38</sup>

It appears that for M. A. Castrén, nationalism acted as a mediator between the abstract common good and personal happiness. This can be understood through the Hegelian ideas underlying the national movements of the time and their Finnish interpretation: the world spirit advanced through particular national spirits.<sup>39</sup> In the Castréns’ case, science represented the general world spirit and its advancement; hence, the advancement of the whole of human kind. But importantly, this was done through *national* science. In this continuum, the beloved represented the private and the family, which, for their part, formed the basis for the national. They supported the man as a human being and enabled him to work for the nation and science and through them for the common good.

The hardships he had endured during his nationally motivated expeditions to Siberia formed the background for M. A. Castrén’s self-narration and the justification for his future expectations. This was an integral part of his personal nationalism within the romantic relationship. In general, his fiancée provided him with peace and recreation of mind and, through them, energy for his work. Crucially, M. A. Castrén felt that he needed the

<sup>36</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 3 March 1850.

<sup>37</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, s.a. [26 September 1850?].

<sup>38</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, s.a. [16 September 1850?].

<sup>39</sup> On Finnish interpretations of Hegelianism, see Marja Jalava, *J. V. Snellman: Mies ja suurmies* (Helsinki: Tammi, 2006), 40–5, 247.

love and kindness of his beloved even more due to the difficult experiences he had undergone. He worried that those trials had made him reticent and had hardened his shell. During his travels, he had forsaken any hope of personal happiness. Finding love with Natalia Tengström was in strong contrast to the long lonely years.<sup>40</sup> At the time, young men would often warn their fiancées of their unspecified weaknesses or flaws for which they needed the woman's understanding and support.<sup>41</sup> In M. A. Castrén's narration, the reasons for his shortcomings were ennobled by the national motivations that had caused them.

As a matter of fact, M. A. Castrén considered Natalia Tengström's "warm heart" a reward, and compensation for his many troubles—from "a just providence." Curiously enough, he emphasized that he did not "flatter" his fiancée by saying so.<sup>42</sup> This line of thought has the flavor of gendered demeaning, even though a benign interpretation could be that he felt that only through his endeavors had he become a man worthy of Natalia Tengström's love. Nevertheless, the aspect of the man "earning" the woman's love and understanding through great national deeds formed an important undertone in the "relational nationalism" of their relationship, and hence, of their personal nationalisms.

In his letters, M. A. Castrén elevated his intense inner emotional life. Despite his outward appearance, he had "by nature a restlessly stormy mind." He pondered that he might be too much of a slave of his emotion and wondered that it had not led to his ruination. But in actuality, he idealized his inner feeling as God's will and work: "[...] it is this feeling I have to thank for all the little I will accomplish in this life."<sup>43</sup> He stated that he had always "just followed the impulses of my heart and let God look after the rest."<sup>44</sup> In his view, it was thus inner feeling that had actually enabled his scientific and nationalistic achievements.

Masculine passion was actually an important part of nineteenth-century politics, and it was recognized that great and exceptional deeds were fueled by inner passion. This inner feeling enabled a man to commit deeply

<sup>40</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 17.–19 February 1850, 28 June 1850, s.a. [23 September 1850?]; NLF, Kellgreniana, Coll. 99.4, MAC to Robert Tengström 6/18 March 1846.

<sup>41</sup>Tosh (2007), 56.

<sup>42</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 17.–19 February 1850. See also Eiranen (2015), 88–9.

<sup>43</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 2 July 1850.

<sup>44</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 8 March 1850.

to a cause or an idea. Nevertheless, attitudes toward conduct which broke the rules of emotional control were somewhat ambivalent. It was best if masculine passion was well-controlled (through reason) and in this manner was channeled in the right way.<sup>45</sup> In his narration, M. A. Castrén was not too worried about emotional control but trusted to the guidance of providence as his ultimate guarantee. Hence, he implies that his inner feeling, as the workings of God, could not go wrong, but would lead him irreversibly aright as some kind of national “chosen one”—a vehicle of the world spirit.

M. A. Castrén’s self-narration combined religious connotations and the romantic-genius cult, both of which intertwined with nationalist thought. The nation could acquire transcendent and religion-like meanings by connecting the individual to higher virtues and immortality. The nation and its cause thus became, in a way, sacred. Also, in the spirit of romantic ideals of authenticity and sincerity, the search for the nation’s “golden age” and its heroes and geniuses gained importance. The golden age would reveal the nation’s true nature and “essence”—the Finnish *Kalevala* being a representative case. The national heroes embodied the highest national ideals and represented the meaning of those ideals in the same way as religious prophets. Ingenuity was linked to creativity, spontaneity, and originality. The top level of intellectuals transcended mere mortals.<sup>46</sup> M. A. Castrén saw emotion and impulse as positive resources of his being, which testified to his special nature and its pureness. It should be noted that he used the word for feeling or emotion (*känsä*) in the singular. It represented an almost mystic inner force or even his essence. The strong inner feeling—the passion—was seen as essential to creating the romantic and national genius-hero.

The emotional genius was, however, weakened and sensitive. He desperately needed the emotional safe haven the woman could offer but, at the same time, this dependence gave her the power to ruffle him. For example, a somewhat minor quarrel between the couple could push M. A. Castrén into dark thoughts. He begged his fiancée not to disturb his peace, because, when it happened, he felt “a cold, like that of death,

<sup>45</sup> Shields (2007), 97–8; Frevert (2011), 116–17.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London: Routledge, 2009), 76–9, 95–7; Kramer (2011), 4, 81–5, 92, 100; T. V. F. Brogan & R. Falco, “Genius,” in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th ed., ed. by Roland Greene & al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 549–51.

cutting into my blood.”<sup>47</sup> It appears that it was not necessarily a rare thing for the young Natalia Tengström to lose her temper. In explaining her side of things, she would excuse her emotional outburst with an appeal to the thoughtlessness and childishness of Little Nattu. She, too, appealed to emotionality that she could not help: it was impossible to subdue the feeling.<sup>48</sup>

A gendered double standard prevailed in the emotional dynamics of the relationship. Even though both parties emphasized, in accordance with the ideals of romantic love, that they wanted to hear and share what was in their innermost hearts, the solution to discord was taken to be that Natalia Tengström would mature to the point where she could moderate her feelings. The man wished for more tolerance and patience toward his shortcomings.<sup>49</sup> Then, she declared:

*You know I have made a major, serious decision that I will never be inconsiderate again [...] I want, with God's help, always to be your own kind good Natalia. Ooh, it is so tedious to be inconsiderate!*<sup>50</sup>

The double standard found here partly challenged the basic divisions of the complementarity ideal, since, in general, the man should have filled the role of the strong and protective party. However, it was in line with the idea that the home the woman prepared was a place where the man could relax and allow himself to be vulnerable.<sup>51</sup> The trajectory of Natalia Tengström's self-narration led from the thoughtless Little Nattu to the patient wife who could control her feelings—the stereotype of the respectable national wife. Nevertheless, Little Nattu was still very much present in the somewhat naive expressions and interjections. The process of incorporating the right kind of personal nationalism into her self-narration was ongoing.

For M. A. Castrén, the legitimization of his own flaws drew from the hardships he had endured on behalf of the national cause, and the bottom line was that he required more strength and sacrifice from his fiancée. Despite emphasizing the ideal of sincerity and openness in the relationship, he wanted his fiancée to restrict her expression of negative feelings.

<sup>47</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 28 June 1850.

<sup>48</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 30 June 1850.

<sup>49</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 7 February 1850, 8 March 1850, 2 July 1850; SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 8 March 1850, 13 March 1850.

<sup>50</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 2 July 1850.

<sup>51</sup> Siltala (1999), 72, 78–9; Jalava (2005), 190–2, 196; Tosh (2007), 54.

The woman was to exercise more emotional control than the man. By accomplishing this, Natalia Tengström would fulfill the ideal of the woman who sacrificed herself—her emotions in this case—for the man and, through him, for the nation.

### NATIONAL SCIENCE AND SHARED SACRIFICE

The Castréns' nationalistic goals concretized in the husband's scholarly work. Both spouses were ready to make sacrifices for its sake, but they had their own gendered roles.

In general, the idea of self-sacrifice was important to nationalist thought and is often associated with the ultimate sacrifice, that of giving one's life for one's country. The ideal of a national destiny motivated the requirement to sacrifice and strive in the service of the national community. This had religious connotations. Many nationalists considered their own nation to be that of "the chosen people" with a special mission. Religious history provided nationalists with a way of explaining the necessity for their community's sufferings: all chosen people had to go through ordeals which would then lead to happiness and prosperity—a redemption. Sacrifice and suffering ennobled the nationalistic cause and provided evidence of the agents' altruism. They could, indeed, offer a sense of a divine purpose. This ethos was also strong in the Finnish national ideals.<sup>52</sup>

In M. A. Castrén's letters, suffering, sorrow, and sacrifice were even conditions for experiencing genuine and deep positive emotions.<sup>53</sup> He anticipated that he and his fiancée would have to go through many dire afflictions, but that that was only natural, since "every serious endeavor requires some kind of sacrifice and abstinence."<sup>54</sup> He claimed that the most beautiful and inspirational moments of his life were those when he had sat by his lamp in the night, poor and reviled, working "for the true and the right."<sup>55</sup> The scholar constructed himself as a selfless hero of a cause, where suffering and poverty elevated and ennobled his intellectual work for the nation. A hero worked because of his calling and was not corrupted by economic or other egoistic aspirations. However, his outlook

<sup>52</sup>Siltala (1999), 16, 31–2, 36, 40, 51–2; Jalava (2005), 177–8; Smith (2009), 77–9, 97–8; Kramer (2011), 81, 86–7, 95–9.

<sup>53</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 8 March 1850.

<sup>54</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 17–19 February 1850.

<sup>55</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 5 March 1850.

regarding a destitute future does not appear very credible given the fact that it came on the threshold of the marriage of a celebrated scholar to the daughter of a well-off professor.

Nevertheless, the couple wanted to create a mutual perception that they were people who were ready for sacrifice if need be. This was a crucial part of their personal nationalisms and their self-image as a couple. M. A. Castrén declared that he would not betray his life goal even for his fiancée and her happiness. For her part, Natalia Tengström had assured him that she would rather suffer the worst with him than make him “betray the cause of science and the fatherland.”<sup>56</sup>

Despite the idealizing picture of Natalia Tengström in her fiancé’s letters, her interest and understanding toward his national scholarly work was negotiated in the correspondence. When he had to travel for his research, he hoped his fiancée would sacrifice her “private joy for a greater purpose, for the demands of science.”<sup>57</sup> He also pondered that his long reflections on his scholarly work and prospects in his letters represented “an uninteresting chapter” for her.<sup>58</sup> Natalia Tengström assured him of her readiness for sacrifice and her interest and understanding regarding the man’s work. In both cases, she was a bit hurt by his doubts. She claimed that she could never be so childish and egoistic that she would demand the man to neglect something that even she had to comprehend to be “the best and the right.”<sup>59</sup> Also, she claimed that if one really liked someone, one was interested in everything that concerned them, “and even more so in a matter that has great weight and significance for You, and what You wrote to me was completely comprehensible, and not Samoyed language at all,” she wrote, making a little joke referring to her fiancé’s research subject.<sup>60</sup> In Natalia Tengström’s assurances one can read between the lines the mildly irritated addition “even if I am a woman.” However, in a gendered way, she tied her personal nationalism tightly to her fiancé and to their emotional connection. In the detour of her narration, the national scholarly work was considered important for her because it was important to him.

<sup>56</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 17–19 February 1850. See also Eiranen (2015), 88.

<sup>57</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 17–19 February 1850.

<sup>58</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 27 February 1850.

<sup>59</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 24 February 1850.

<sup>60</sup>SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 1 March 1850.

A greater sacrifice had to do with M. A. Castrén's academic position and the couple's economic situation. At one point he was offered a position as an adjunct professor in the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, at the imperial capital, an offer he rejected. The fundamental problem was that even though the position would have been advantageous for his career, settling down in St. Petersburg was in contradiction to his national commitment to Finland. "I consider it one of my highest duties not to betray my science and my fatherland for any external profit," he claimed. Otherwise he felt he could not respect himself. The decision might lead to trouble and even poverty, but he could console himself with the consciousness that it was done on behalf of the fatherland.<sup>61</sup> The decision was very closely linked to his self-image and, hence, to his personal nationalism.

In addition, the general opinion of the national circles was at stake. There were examples of harsh criticism toward men of letters who had moved or planned to move to Sweden or Russia.<sup>62</sup> And the scholar also felt responsible for the younger national generation. He assumed that his "falling away" would be "morally disheartening" for them. As for his enemies, they would rejoice to see him sell himself to foreign service.<sup>63</sup> Interestingly enough, receiving funding from the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg was not a problem: they had already partly funded his expeditions.<sup>64</sup> The essential issue was the place of residence and activity. It was important to Castrén and to his contemporaries to remain within the borders of the Grand Duchy of Finland rather than move to the capital of the Empire, a place that was perceived by Finns to be foreign. In this sense, the personal nationalism involved was strikingly spatial, as it was linked to a specific geographical whole.

In his letters to Natalia Tengström, M. A. Castrén wrote about the issue at length and in detail.<sup>65</sup> The extent of the reflections implies that the decision was not easy, and that the temptation was stronger than he was ready

<sup>61</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 5 March 1850.

<sup>62</sup> On the cases of J. J. Nordström, A. J. Sjögren and J. V. Snellman see Eiranen (2019a), 114, 328.

<sup>63</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 3 March 1850.

<sup>64</sup> Salminen (2002).

<sup>65</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 22 February 1850, 27 February 1850, 3 March 1850, 5 March 1850.



to admit. The narrative repetition of the same themes implies that he wanted to convince not only his fiancée but also himself. In addition, the lengthy accounts can be interpreted as M. A. Castrén's attempt to make his academic future a common cause of the spouses and to commit Natalia Tengström to the decisions being made. He wanted to make it part of the personal nationalism for *both* of them.

Despite his noble and self-sacrificing tenets, M. A. Castrén could not deny that economic security promoted happiness. In addition, it was a matter of respect. With regard to the insecurity of his livelihood, he was irritated because he felt that he was not sufficiently valued and that his efforts on behalf of the national cause were not acknowledged—especially within his home country. His “feeling”—again in the singular—was hurt by the fact that he had to submit to promoting his own interests in trying to secure some sort of support for his work.<sup>66</sup> The inner feeling and self-sacrifice he had sketched as the cornerstones of his personal nationalism would have, in the end, and in his mind, deserved a material reward in addition to the love of the woman.

Natalia Tengström had a firm opinion about her future husband's career prospects: she opposed accepting the position and moving to St. Petersburg. However, according to the gendered standards of the time, she could not express her opinion directly, let alone bluntly. Firstly, her strategy was to *thank* the man “cordially” for his decision not to accept the adjunct position. The other strategy was to appeal to other men's opinions (her father, J. V. Snellman, the students), and to refer to the criticism that those who had left the country earlier had received. If M. A. Castrén would do the same, she believed that people would say of him, too, that it was “unforgivable, for one's own benefit, to abandon one's own country.” By keeping to the examples she set, she could express her own stance. If the man accepted the position, it would be very hard for her, she stated. Interestingly, Natalia Tengström wrote about the possibility of moving to St. Petersburg consistently in the singular “you”—about *you* having to give up Finland and *you* not feeling at home there.<sup>67</sup> Usually at the time, the woman would self-evidently follow her husband and change her place of residence along with

<sup>66</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 7, MAC to NC, 27 February 1850, 3 March 1850, 8 March 1850.

<sup>67</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 8 March 1850. See also Eiranen (2019b), 9, 22.

him.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, Natalia Tengström, who was at this point still a fiancée and not a wife, appears to have implied by this subtle linguistic means that *she* would not leave Finland no matter what. Her words can even be interpreted to show that the decision to “abandon” Finland would have offended the essence of the national man she had fallen in love with. At the same time, the ideological motivation for declining to move to St. Petersburg was neatly in line with her being able to hold on to her family and life in Helsinki.

In the end, the outcome of the narration of both spouses was that honorable work for the right and noble goals would be rewarded. The last resort and guarantor was divine providence.<sup>69</sup> Soon enough, M. A. Castrén received his “reward.” He was appointed to be the first Professor of Finnish language and literature at the Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki.<sup>70</sup> The achievement and the acknowledgement were, in a way, common to both spouses. “Castrén was, in a way, the hero of the day, and I [was] so inexpressibly happy!!” Natalia Castrén reminisced the day he was appointed.<sup>71</sup> The professorship, and being the wife of a nationally significant man, was part of the personal nationalism of Natalia Castrén.

M. A. Castrén died in May 1852, after only one-and-a-half years of marriage. The cause was the renewal of the tuberculosis he had been inflicted with during his scholarly expeditions in Siberia. The 21-year-old widow was devastated. In the years that followed, she held tightly to her husband’s memory and to the national cause he had advanced. It was a means of emotional survival.

*I can still as before be happy for the happiness of others, everything big and beautiful that takes place in the world and above all in our own beloved fatherland. And I would not be worthy of being called Castrén’s wife if I could not [do this].<sup>72</sup>*

<sup>68</sup> See e.g. Kai Häggman, *Perheen vuosisata* (Helsinki: SKS, 1994), 101.

<sup>69</sup> SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 3 March 1850, 5 March 1850; SLS, GCSA, Folder 1, NC to MAC, 8 March 1850.

<sup>70</sup> Salminen (2002).

<sup>71</sup> NLF, Kellgreniana, Coll. 99.3, NC to Sofi Kellgren, 13 March [1854].

<sup>72</sup> NLF, Kellgreniana, Coll. 99.3, NC to Sofi Kellgren, 1 January 1854. See also Eiranen (2015), 89–90.

The national upbringing of their son was linked to this, too. She intended to raise him to love Finland and think of its best. She felt that, in this way, her life would not have been fruitless.<sup>73</sup> In the personal nationalism that took shape in Natalia Castrén's sorrowful self-narration, her husband's death and her own suffering would not be in vain if the cause for which he had sacrificed his health would advance, also through their son.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of personal nationalism takes seriously the question of what the national project actually meant to the people who were committed to it in their daily lives. The narrative approach is one method by which to tackle the issue of personal nationalism, that is, the experiences of the nation and the national. Within this framework, personal nationalism refers to how the narrating subjects incorporate nationalism in their self-narration. In the context of a marital relationship, the emotional and gendered aspects are crucial for the construction of the national experience.

The key thread throughout the Castréns' self-narrations is the central meaning given to the nation and the national in their self-construction and in their mutual relationship. In the emotional connection constructed in the correspondence, the nationalized complementary male and female ideals created a basis and prerequisite for the idealized romantic relationship.

The man was proactive in applying the national framework to their gendered selves and to the relationship. This also provided a way of expressing his expectations for the future marriage and its gendered roles. This, indeed, created pressure on the young bride. She was dedicated to the national cause in her own right, too, but in this gendered dynamic she could not express it explicitly. Her gendered strategy was to mediate her personal nationalism through men: the fiancé and her feelings for him, her father and other men in the same social circle, and their authority.

The trajectory of their personal nationalisms in the self-narrations was that self-sacrifice for the nation would (and should) be rewarded. This mirrored religious redemptive ideas. M. A. Castrén's personal

<sup>73</sup>NLF, Kellgreniana, Coll. 99.3, NC to Sofi Kellgren, 1 January 1854.

nationalism was, in this sense, self-contradictory. He wanted to conceive of and represent himself as self-sacrificing, but, at the same time, he narrated himself as a passionate national genius or hero. The paradox is that in order to be a national hero, you had to sacrifice, but in order to be altruistic with respect to your sacrifice, you could not toot your own horn. This is not to say that the sacrifice was made *because* of the reward but was rather done with trust that it would be rewarded. Importantly, it must be remembered that the suffering at stake was not abstract but lived. The Siberian expeditions proved to have deeply affected M. A. Castrén's physical and mental state.

A key tenet in Natalia Tengström's developing personal nationalism was emotional self-sacrifice on behalf of her spouse, which was especially legitimized by his weakened physical and mental condition caused by the national sacrifice. The transition from bubbly and witty Little Nattu into a patient "national wife" took time. As a young widow, she had profoundly adopted the national ideals. In her sorrow, she found consolation and meaning for her loss and her sacrifice in the belief that it had happened on behalf of the national cause.

The Castréns lived out the gendered ideals of the time and gave them a strong national but also emotional interpretation. The emotional dynamics reversed the stereotypical assumptions about the man as the stronger and non-emotional party in a heterosexual relationship. Actually, in the Castréns' case, the woman was to exercise stronger emotional control in order to accommodate the man's feelings, and, even more so, when the man was a passionate but weakened genius. Nevertheless, this was in line with the idea of the woman preparing the home to be a safe haven for the man.

In a way, the Castréns set an example of how to realize the right kind of national selves, emotions, and relationship in their lives. Their social circle conceived of them as a perfect national match, but this entailed certain expectations. They had to fulfill the ideal of romantic love and show readiness for self-sacrifice for their country instead of favoring egoistic benefits. At this point, in the mid-nineteenth century, the example was set mostly for their peers. They showed their own social circle of the educated upper and middle class how to be national.

When analyzing people's experiences and motivations, the question of sincerity versus opportunism often arises. However, the personal and deepest motivations are often opaque even to the people themselves. As

the Castréns' case indicates, it is not either or. Experienced and sincerely felt inner drives can very well intertwine with looking out for one's own interest. It is not wise to take research subjects' statements of their sincerity at face value, but it is also inadequate to explain the motivations of individuals, or even larger groups, based solely on consideration of opportunistic goals.

To summarize and generalize, the power and appeal of nationalism was grounded on its tight connection with profound personal meanings and motivations. These meanings and motivations affected people's sense of self and their closest, most important relationships—the very core of their being and lives.

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## CHAPTER 5

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# Temporalization of Experiencing: First-Hand Experience of the Nation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Finland

*Heikki Kokko*

### INTRODUCTION

How and when did the nation become a relevant identity category for ordinary people? Giving a clear answer to this question is usually difficult because of the lack of historical source material. There is a shortage of autobiographic material such as diaries that could have documented this kind of change at the time when it happened. This concerns people from all social strata, but especially those from lower layers of society whose experience could be an indicator of a wider societal change. Due to the lacking empirical evidence, first-hand experience of the nation has been difficult to obtain. Therefore, the emergence of the experience of the

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V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_5)

nation, whether it was a matter of modernization or not, has remained a controversial issue in nationalism studies.<sup>1</sup>

A case that could shed light on this phenomenon is that of mid-1800s Finland. The industrialization and formation of modern society began in Finland at a late stage, but once it started it transformed Finland from one of the most agrarian countries in Europe to a Nordic welfare state within a century.<sup>2</sup> The comparatively late and exceptionally rapid societal changes that influenced the whole population after hundreds of years of relatively slow development, as well as the compactness of Finland as a society with a population of 1.6 million in 1850, make mid-1800s Finland a representative and controllable case for this analysis. Within two decades, 1850s–60s Finland witnessed large-scale social and economic reforms, a major population disaster in the form of a famine, and the rise of a nationwide public sphere. Significantly, a nationwide culture of readers' letters to newspapers developed during this first phase of modernization. Thousands of people wrote about their everyday experiences to the pages of the newspapers from the 1850s onwards. A characteristic of this culture was that the letters were often written in the name of local communities. In their local letters to the newspapers, hundreds of ordinary people documented their experiences of the societal transformation occurring in the mid-1800s.<sup>3</sup>

One of the writers of these letters was Johan Hänninen. He was born in 1842, the son of a crofter and the first in his family to disentangle himself from the agrarian self-sufficient community of the rural parish. During this process, he absorbed a modern form of nationalism, and was the first person of his family to do so. Because of Hänninen's writing activity, the changes in his experience of belonging are documented in his readers' letters. Later in his life, Hänninen became a wide-ranging grass-roots pioneer of the civic society, participating in social movements such as agricul-

<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hannover: UPNE, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Pertti Haapala, "Modernisation of Finland 1800–2000," in *Perspectives to Global Social Development*, ed. by Mikko Perkiö (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2009), 48–66; Pauli Kettunen, "The Conceptual History of the Welfare State in Finland," in *The Changing Meanings of the Welfare State: Histories of a Key Concept in the Nordic Countries*, ed. by Nils Edling (New York: Berghahn, 2019), 226–8.

<sup>3</sup> Heikki Kokko, "Suomenkielisen lehdistön paikalliskirjekulttuuria tallentava digitaalinen Translocalis-tietokanta," *Ennen ja nyt: Historian tietosanomat* 19:2 (2019a).

tural meetings (1870s), the temperance movement (1880s), a co-operative organization (1890s), and a political party in the first parliamentary elections (1907).<sup>4</sup>

As an active participant in the nationwide culture of writing letters to the press in Finland, Hänninen could be seen as a representative case for Benedict Anderson's thesis regarding the emergence of the experience of the nation mainly as a product of the press. Anderson's thesis of "imagined community" is perhaps the most influential modernist theory concerning the origins and spread of nationalism. It is a constructionist approach that has been widely accepted beyond the borderlines of different disciplines, such as history, sociology, and anthropology since the beginning of the 1980s.<sup>5</sup> Anderson's argument in his classic book is that the experience of the nation is the experience of belonging to an imagined community and goes beyond one's face-to-face interaction. For Anderson, the imagined community is a product of modernity, especially in regard to the development of modern printing technology. According to him, the newspaper in particular transformed the experience of time and space. This opened the way to imagining the nation as a community of people who spoke the same language.<sup>6</sup> Anderson's approach is general; he concentrates on the wider structures that were preconditions to the experiential change that enables the experience of the nation. Johan Hänninen's case could add more to this picture by widening the approach to the individual level.

In this chapter, I approach nationalism as a form of the experience of belonging.<sup>7</sup> I will test and develop further Anderson's thesis regarding "imagined communities" by analyzing the experiential change that an emerging experience of the nation required at the individual level. Using Hänninen as a case study, I will argue that the emergence of one's experience of the nation was based on a transformation in the structures of experiencing, in which modern linearly progressing temporality began to

<sup>4</sup> Heikki Kokko, *Kuviteltu minuu: Ihmiskäsityksen murros suomenkielisen kansanosan kulttuurissa 1800-luvun puolivälissä* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2016), 315–16.

<sup>5</sup> See John Breuilly, "Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities: A Symposium," *Nations and Nationalism* 22:4 (2016), 625–59.

<sup>6</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 22–36.

<sup>7</sup> By belonging I refer to an experience that includes the interaction between one's personal identity and a sense of membership of the community. See, for example, Eleanor Knott, "Nationalism and Belonging: Introduction," *Nations and Nationalism* 23:2 (2017).



define the way people experienced. In order to discover the structural basis, I will analyze the form of Hänninen's experience of the nation and his form of belonging that preceded it. I will examine the content and personal significance of these two modes of belonging and contextualize them within the life history of Hänninen in mid-1800s Finland. Broadly, this will shed light on the character of nationalism at the time it emerged as a societal phenomenon.

## RESEARCH MATERIAL

The significance of Hänninen's experience of the nation as a case is founded on the societal representativeness of the nationwide culture of local letters to newspapers. The Finnish Academy Centre of Excellence in the History of Experiences (HEX) has collected all the readers' letters written in the name of local communities and published in the Finnish-language press during the period 1850–1875,<sup>8</sup> from the fully digitalized newspaper collection of the National Library of Finland.<sup>9</sup> The digital *Translocalis* database includes about 27,000 letters to newspapers which contain grass-roots experiences from the interface of modernity.<sup>10</sup> This chapter contributes to the research field of the history of vernacular writing<sup>11</sup> by using the systematically collected readers' letters as source material. The large-scale usage of the local letters to the newspapers as source material has not been possible prior to this.

The significant feature of the culture of writing letters to the press in mid-1800s Finland was the anonymity of the writers. The writers usually signed their letters only with initials or pseudonyms. This usually leads to difficulties in recognizing people like ordinary peasants and crofters.<sup>12</sup> Johan Hänninen is a rare and special case among the writers from the lower stratum of society, because his identity and the features of his life history were possible to trace. This was possible because I managed to identify him through comparing his local letters that were written in the

<sup>8</sup> Kokko (2019a).

<sup>9</sup> Digital Collections of the National Library of Finland, <http://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/>, accessed 27 August 2020.

<sup>10</sup> See *Translocalis Database*, <https://research.tuni.fi/hex/translocalis/>, accessed 18 May 2021; Kokko (2019a).

<sup>11</sup> See Anna Kuusmin & M.J. Driscoll, eds, *White Field, Black Seeds: Nordic Literacy Practices in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Helsinki: SKS, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Kokko (2019a).

name of parishes to the church records of the parishes in which he had lived.<sup>13</sup> With over 50 published letters found in the *Translocalis* database in 1868–1875, Hänninen is one of the most productive writers of this era.<sup>14</sup> I have contextualized the experiences of Hänninen’s letters by using biographical source material about his life.<sup>15</sup>

As a part of the culture of the letters to the press, the experiences Hänninen wrote about had societal representativeness compared to, for example, private diary entries. The conventions of the nationwide culture of local letters were socially constructed by the writers who sent their texts to the press. Furthermore, hundreds of writers and thousands of readers across the country cautiously controlled what the other authors wrote. The debates and comments on other authors’ letters were a characteristic feature of this culture of letters to the press. As the debates were public and nationwide, the control by the peer group was societal in character.<sup>16</sup>

### THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

My theoretical framework as a researcher of historical experiences is an application of the sociology of knowledge promoted by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, which I combine with Reinhart Koselleck’s historical theory of experience and experiencing.<sup>17</sup> Based on Berger and Luckmann, I see human experiencing as the construction of social reality. Experiencing is not an inner process individual in its essence. Rather, it is based on constant interaction between subjects. Both experiences and experiencing—like all elements of human reality—develop in a dialectic process between nature and the socially constructed world. In this dialectic process, the human organism itself is changing.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Kokko (2016), 457, 299–315.

<sup>14</sup> *Translocalis Database*.

<sup>15</sup> See Kokko (2016), 457, 299–315.

<sup>16</sup> Kokko (2019a); Heikki Kokko, “Kosminen kokemus: Hengellisen ja maallisen dualismi 1800-luvun puolivälin suomenkielisessä kansanomaisessa ajattelussa,” in *Eletty historia: Kokemus näkökulmana menneisyyteen*, ed. by Johanna Annola, Ville Kivimäki & Antti Malinen (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2019b), 12–16; see also Päiviö Tommila, “Yhdestä lehdestä sanomalehdistöksi 1809–1859,” in *Suomen lehdistön historia 1: Sanomalehdistön vaiheet vuoteen 1905*, ed. by Päiviö Tommila et al. (Kuopio: Kustannuskiila, 1988), 77–266, here 200–4.

<sup>17</sup> I am developing this theoretical framework for the history of experiences along with Dr. Minna Harjula.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1991 [1966]), 33–42, 201–4, 233. The recent

I apply Koselleck's concept layer or sediment of experience approach along with Berger and Luckmann's thesis on the sedimentation of experiences as analytical tools for examining societal experiential change. According to Koselleck, experience is something that has already occurred but takes place today. It is the presence of the past within the present. For an individual, it is at the same time something that one can remember from the past and something that the individual had not been in touch with. This is because experiences usually convey elements of earlier generations that influence the individual's observation and thoughts unconsciously. As Koselleck has stated, experience based in the past is something where "many layers of earlier times are simultaneously present." This means that unlike the modern concept of history suggests, in the temporality of experience, time is not linear, progressing from a single time era to another. Rather, via layers of experience, past historical times are simultaneously present in the present.<sup>19</sup>

The emergence of layers of experiences could be explained by Berger and Luckmann's thesis on sedimentation. Experiences that have enough significance could become sedimented in one's mind. Other individuals in the same historical context may have the same kind of experiences. When these individuals interact with each other, their experiences become common experience. This common stock of knowledge may be objectivated in a sign system, such as language or institutional practices. The sign system detaches the experience from its original context and makes it anonymous. The sign system transmits experiences to people who have no connection to the original experience. As these people absorb the experience, they start to think or act in the same way as the original experiencers. The objectivated and anonymized experience can thus be transmitted to the next generations. At some point, however, the connection to the original experience will be lost. Hence, new generations can invent new meanings for the sediments of experience. Therefore, the layers or sediments of

research on neurosciences supports this premise of Berger's and Luckmann's social constructionism by emphasizing the plasticity of the human brain. The historical, cultural, and social factors formulate the human being also as a biological organism. Tuomas Tepora, "What, if Anything, Can the History of Emotions Learn from the Neurosciences?" *Cultural History* 9:1 (2020), 95–8; Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 142–54.

<sup>19</sup>Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, translated by Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 259–63.

experience not only outline how we confront individual observations, but also how we structure and thus construct the entire reality.<sup>20</sup>

Besides experience, the sense of belonging to the nation could be seen as an emotion. In my analysis, I see emotion as the sub-category of the experience. The emotion toward the nation is an experience of the nation. Following Sara Ahmed, I don't see the emotions, feelings or experiences as private matter flowing from the inward sphere of the human being. Rather, they are situated in the interaction between human beings and the objects of the world. Within this interaction, human beings categorize the world with classifications such as inside and outside of the human being. This is how, to put it in Ahmed's words, "feelings make 'the collective' appear *as if it were a body in the first place*." Experience of the nation is a characteristic example of this kind of feeling.<sup>21</sup>

Methodologically, I relate to the conceptual history, which I understand in the Koselleckian sense primarily as the analysis of human experiencing. New concepts emerge or the meaning of the concepts is transformed when the experiences behind them change. Written past experiences can be reconstructed by analyzing how concepts are used in historical sources and by contextualizing them using the methods of social-science history.

### EXPERIENCE OF THE PEOPLE

Johan Hänninen wrote his first published readers' letters to the newspaper *Kansan Lehti* in the winter of 1868. The name of the newspaper could be translated into English as "People's Paper." It was a Finnish-language newspaper that publicly asked its readers to write letters that it could print in the newspaper. According to the editor of the *Kansan Lehti*, the paper wanted to provide an organ for the people of Finland.<sup>22</sup> In his first letter, Hänninen used the concept of "kansa" (people) in expressing his belonging. In the first sentence of the letter, he wrote: "Because I too belong to the people, whose Newspaper You, the young *Kansan Lehti*, have devoted yourself to be, please let me salute you with the news from my parish."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See Berger & Luckmann (1991), 85–9, 33–61.

<sup>21</sup> Sara Ahmed, "Collective Feelings. Or, the Impressions Left by Others," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21:2 (2004). See also Boddice (2018), 82–3.

<sup>22</sup> Wolmar Schildt, "Kunniotetulle yleisölle," *Kansan Lehti* 4 January 1868.

<sup>23</sup> J. H-n. [Johan Hänninen], "Rautalammita," *Kansan Lehti* 21 March 1868.

The concept of “*kansa*” that Hänninen used dates to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It frequently occurred in the old Finnish-language Bible and in old law books.<sup>24</sup> It has its origins in the Finnish preposition “*kanssa*,” which means “with.” Therefore, to belong to the people in Finnish literally refers to “being with the fellow people.”<sup>25</sup> The meanings of the Finnish concepts of people and nation are close to each other. “*Kansakunta*” (nation) that also becomes common in mid-1800s is a compound word formulated from the word “*kansa*” (people) and from the word “*kunta*,” which refers to the unity or community of an entity. Besides “*kansakunta*,” the word “*kunta*” is used in compound words such as “*yhteiskunta*” (society) and “*kuningaskunta*” (kingdom). In the 1860s the word “*kunta*” came to signify rural administrative districts that were earlier called parishes (*pitäjä*).<sup>26</sup>

The word “Kansa” (people) was a central concept in the publicity of mid-1800s Finland. According to Ilkka Liikanen, it became politicized by the Finnish-speaking nationalistic elite during the 1860s and 1870s. At that time, the Finnish-speaking nationalistic elite used this word as a means of presenting the people as a separate entity that did not include the ruler. The nationalistic elite legitimized its own role by claiming to represent the will of the people (*kansa*). This was a way of challenging the distributing of power in the society.<sup>27</sup>

However, the “*kansa*” to which Hänninen expressed his belonging in 1868 did not include the kind of people that the nationalistic elite promoted. Hänninen did not use the concept of “*kansa*” to separate from the distinct entity. Instead, he emphasized that the “*kansa*,” as well as all beings, are under the power of almighty God. According to Hänninen the Finnish people relied too much on themselves. This produced a disbelief in God, which caused people to fail to observe the Sabbath and spend it in acquiring worldly knowledge and enjoying different amusements.<sup>28</sup> This could be seen as a critique of the national project of the elite that made efforts to put Finnish-speaking people on a pedestal.

<sup>24</sup> Ilkka Liikanen, “Kansa: Fennomanian kansa-käsité ja modernin politiikan kieli,” in *Käsitteet liikkeessä: Suomen poliittisen kulttuurin käsittehistoria*, ed. by Matti Hyvärinen et al. (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2003), 263–7.

<sup>25</sup> Henrik Stenius, “Kansalainen,” in Hyvärinen et al. (2003), 312–14.

<sup>26</sup> See Pauli Kettunen, “Yhteiskunta,” in Hyvärinen et al. (2003), 176–181.

<sup>27</sup> Liikanen (2003), 280–2.

<sup>28</sup> J. H–n. [Johan Hänninen], “Rautalammilta,” *Kansan Lehti* 21 March 1868, 28 March 1868, and 11 May 1868.

The actual topic of the letter was the famine, later called “The Great Hunger Years of 1866–8,” the last year of which was being lived at the same time Hänninen wrote his text. For Hänninen the experienced hunger was unambiguously the revenge of God directed toward the people of Finland.<sup>29</sup> According to Hänninen, all the common efforts of contemporary people to ease the famine’s distress were completely useless. The only thing that could help the people of Finland were the Christian texts that the authorities had ordered to be read on the day of prayer.<sup>30</sup> Hänninen emphasized that the relief of the disaster could happen via the grace of God alone and the only thing the members of the Finnish population could do about it was to strive for personal repentance and righteousness.<sup>31</sup>

Hänninen justified his thought by referring to the Old Testament of the Bible. He encouraged his audience to read the first chapter of the Book of Haggai to understand the real reasons behind the famine. According to the Book of Haggai, instead of rebuilding the temple of God, the people of Judah concentrated on building their own homes. This led to crop failure and famine as the punishment of God.<sup>32</sup> Hänninen emphasized that the revenge of God was not caused by inefficiency or bad economic skills of the people of Judah. Instead, it was caused by their disbelief and self-reliance.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, according to Hänninen, the main reason for the Finnish famine was not the laziness, ignorance, or dissipation of the people, although this was the usual explanation in the press. For Hänninen, the essential reason for the famine disaster was the sin of self-reliance. Referring to the efforts of the nationalistic elite to develop national progress and public enlightenment Hänninen wrote: “Surely, there is no longer any reason to encourage the [Finnish] people to rely on themselves, but on God; And this indeed is the intention of God with this punishment.”<sup>34</sup>

The main strains of Hänninen’s idea of comparing the Finnish people to biblical peoples could be traced to the interpretation of Lutheran

<sup>29</sup> J. H-n. [Johan Hänninen], “Rautalammilta,” *Kansan Lehti* 28 March 1868.

<sup>30</sup> J. H-n. [Johan Hänninen], “Rautalammilta,” *Kansan Lehti* 11 May 1868.

<sup>31</sup> J. H-n. [Johan Hänninen], “Rautalammilta,” *Kansan Lehti* 21 March 1868, 28 March 1868, and 11 May 1868.

<sup>32</sup> J. H-n. [Johan Hänninen], “Rautalammilta,” *Kansan Lehti* 28 March 1868.

<sup>33</sup> J. H-n. [Johan Hänninen], “Rautalammilta,” *Kansan Lehti* 28 March 1868.

<sup>34</sup> J. H-n. [Johan Hänninen], “Rautalammilta,” *Kansan Lehti* 21 March 1868, 28 March 1868, and 11 May 1868.

doctrine in nineteenth-century Finland. The Lutheran church was a state church in Finland and its doctrine was taught to the entire population, except for the 2.3 percent minority of Orthodox Christians.<sup>35</sup> The master narrative of Lutheranism was that, at the Creation, God created human beings like God, but, because of the Fall, those beings became mortal. Based on this master narrative, the interpretation of Lutheranism had two main principles in nineteenth-century Finland. Firstly, that human being had become inherently and thoroughly sinful due to the Fall. Secondly, that the human being could not reach salvation by his or her own actions but only through the grace of God. This caused a dualistic division between the spiritual and the earthly, the former being primary and the latter secondary.<sup>36</sup> In his letter of 1868, Hänninen followed the strict interpretation that all earthly activity, such as human ambition for national development, did not have the Lord's blessing, because He ordained all. Therefore, Hänninen believed that the Christian texts that were read in the parishes for the day of prayer could provide the only possible relief, because, according to Lutheran doctrine, the power of the authorities stemmed from God.<sup>37</sup>

This kind of thought allowed no room for agency of the people as a community to tackle contemporary problems. Therefore, the people of Finland to which Hänninen believed he belonged, did not decide their own fate in the grip of the famine: they had no agency. The agency of the human being was limited to gaining salvation in order to go to heaven. Thus, the domain of individual efforts was limited to the sphere of spirituality, since the common efforts of human beings were considered earthly activity that originated from the Fall.<sup>38</sup> The only thing that a human being could do on this earthly side was to have faith in God. In his letter of 1868, Hänninen expressed this dualistic division between the spiritual and the earthly tangibly by stating that even starvation to death was a victory for the truly Christian human being, if it was the will of God.<sup>39</sup> This kind of thought was in contradiction to the then-current nationalistic ideology

<sup>35</sup> See Esko M. Laine & Tuija Laine, "Kirkollinen kansanopetus," in *Huoneentaulun maailma: Kasvatus ja koulutus Suomessa keskiajalta* 1860-luvulle, ed. by Jussi Hanska & Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen (Helsinki: SKS, 2010), 258–312.

<sup>36</sup> Kokko (2019b), 120–32.

<sup>37</sup> J. H-n. [Johan Hänninen], "Rautalammilta," *Kansan Lehti* 11 May 1868.

<sup>38</sup> Kokko (2019b), 120–9.

<sup>39</sup> J. H-n. [Johan Hänninen], "Rautalammilta," *Kansan Lehti* 11 May 1868.

of the elite, whose ambition was for national development produced by a common effort of the people.

If Hänninen's belonging to the people is examined in light of Anderson's theory of imagined community, it can be seen that in many ways it did not resemble the nation as an imagined community. Hänninen's "kanssa" seems not to have its peculiar past, present, and future based on the activity of its members. It did not resemble Anderson's nation as "the idea of sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous, empty time," or more precisely as a "solid community moving steadily down (or up) history."<sup>40</sup> Rather, the "kanssa" of Hänninen comes close to embodying the features that according to Anderson were typical of imagined communities prior to modern nationalism. Indeed, the straightforward paralleling of nineteenth-century Finnish people and the ancient biblical people of Judah seems to resemble a conception in which, according to Anderson, history was not seen "as an endless chain of cause and effect" and there were no "radical separations between past and present."<sup>41</sup>

However, the "kanssa" of Hänninen seems to have a feature that Anderson recognizes as essential to modern nationalism. Anderson's thesis is that nationalism was based on a new kind of temporal simultaneity. According to Anderson, the nation as an imagined community was based on the experience of the horizontal temporal simultaneity of the present, which could be described with the concept of "meanwhile."<sup>42</sup> This created confidence in the anonymous activity of one's contemporaries as a core of nationalism.<sup>43</sup> Hänninen's letter shows that he experienced this kind of temporal simultaneity. He wrote his letter to his contemporaries whom he saw as forming the people of Finland, who were simultaneously suffering from famine in different parts of the country. This could be seen as confidence in the anonymous activity of his contemporaries. However, Hänninen had no confidence that the activity of the "kanssa" would be supportive of the nation that had its human-made past, present, and future. His confidence was based on Lutheran doctrine that emphasized every individual's personal salvation, something that Hänninen believed could relieve the famine distress. The connection between his

<sup>40</sup> Anderson (2006), 26.

<sup>41</sup> Anderson (2006), 22–4, 36.

<sup>42</sup> Anderson (2006), 24–36.

<sup>43</sup> Anderson (2006), 26.



contemporaries in the present was based on a belief in every individual's personal relationship to God.

As seen through Anderson's theory, Hänninen's experience of the people seems to be a kind of hybrid form of the experience of the nation and an earlier form of belonging to it. It was founded on temporal simultaneity at the present moment, but not on the linear temporality that goes from the past to the present and the future. It could be that Hänninen, who was under the influence of the press, had experienced horizontal temporal simultaneity as a sense of "meanwhile." However, in his mind it intermingled with the thesis of the Lutheran doctrine, in which the linear progressing temporality that structured human activity throughout history had no significant role. Therefore, the community of people had no independent agency throughout the course of history. It seems to be that Hänninen's experience of belonging to this "people," which had a biblical model, had a different structural emphasis than that of modern nationalism.

#### EXPERIENCE OF THE NATION

After the first readers' letters in the spring of 1868, Hänninen took a one-and-a-half-year break in writing. At the beginning of 1870 he started again. In the letters Hänninen wrote at that time, he no longer wrote about the Finnish inhabitants as a "people" (*kansa*) comparable to biblical peoples. Instead, the concepts of "nation" (*kansakunta*) and "fatherland" (*isänmaa*) appeared for the first time in his vocabulary.<sup>44</sup>

The nation of Hänninen more and more resembled Anderson's imagined community. Significantly, unlike his earlier conception of the people, the nation of Hänninen was structured by the linear temporality that was absent from his earlier conception of the people. The first sentence of the first letter in which Hänninen expressed his experience of the nation in 1870 was: "I see the common progress of my fatherland (*isänmaa*) as holy, dear and beloved."<sup>45</sup> This sentence is especially interesting, because it had a clear temporal structure of linear progressing time. The "common progress" could be seen to refer to the future of the nation, the "fatherland" referred to the past of the nation as the land of the ancestors, and the "holy, dear and beloved" to the emotions that the nation evoked in his mind in the present. This linear temporal structure linked to the nation

<sup>44</sup> J. H-n: [Johan Hänninen], "Kirje A. Jle Rilla," *Kansan Lehti* 26 February 1870.

<sup>45</sup> J. H-n: [Johan Hänninen], "Kirje A. Jle Rilla," *Kansan Lehti* 26 February 1870.

also appeared in other Hänninen letters of the 1870s. Interestingly, in many of these texts he tried to catch the abstractness of this structure, especially in metaphors related to family. In addition to using “father” to refer to the past of the nation, Hänninen frequently used “children” for the symbol of the future of the nation.<sup>46</sup> In his letters of the 1870s, he occasionally signed them with the expression “your brother,” and frequently addressed his fellow readers and writers as “brothers” and “sisters” (veikot and siskot).<sup>47</sup> They were the representatives of the present in Hänninen’s experience of the nation.

Besides Hänninen’s experience of linear temporality, his experience of horizontal temporal simultaneity, the sense of “meanwhile” that, according to Anderson, is a distinctive feature of modern nationalism, was now different. In Hänninen’s earlier experience of “people,” the connection between contemporaries was established via God. As Anderson argues, in the experience of the nation the connection was founded on confidence in the anonymous activity of one’s contemporaries.<sup>48</sup> This was crystallized in one of Hänninen’s letters, in which he explained what he meant by calling his fellow readers and writers brothers and sisters. Hänninen wrote that a brother was someone whom he did not recognize from his coat or face, but whom he recognized from the message that came from inside his or her heart.<sup>49</sup> This could be seen as an example of confidence in the activity of distant contemporaries that were beyond the face-to-face interaction that Anderson sees as at the heart of the emerging experience of the nation.<sup>50</sup> Hänninen began to trust in his imagination that there were numerous communities of people like himself, who worked for a nation that had its past, present, and future. Unlike with the earlier experience of the “people,” the agency that defined the direction of the development of the community was in the grip of human beings.

It seems to be that this gave new significance to the present in Hänninen’s thought. A characteristic feature of Hänninen’s nation in the

<sup>46</sup>For example J. H–n: [Johan Hänninen], “Kirje Veikoille!” *Kansan Lehti* 19 March 1870; J. H–n: [Johan Hänninen], “Kirje A. Jle Rilla,” *Kansan Lehti* 16 May 1870.

<sup>47</sup>This was a common habit especially among the writers of *Kansan Lehti*. See Laura Stark, *The Limits of Patriarchy: How female networks of pilfering and gossip sparked the first debates on rural gender rights in the nineteenth-century Finnish-language press* (Helsinki: SKS, 2011).

<sup>48</sup>Anderson (2006), 24–36.

<sup>49</sup>J. H–n: [Johan Hänninen], “Kirje Helsingin Veikolle!” *Kansan Lehti* 2 May 1870. J. H–n: [Johan Hänninen], “Kirje Veikoille!” *Kansan Lehti* 14 May 1870.

<sup>50</sup>Anderson (2006), 24–36.

1870s was the strong emotional tone that was directed toward the social issues of the current era. In his texts, Hänninen often associated social reforms and the nation with the human heart. In one of his letters, he hoped that civil servants for his nation would acquire “a pulsating national Finnish heart.”<sup>51</sup> He called the city of Jyväskylä, where the training of elementary school teachers had started and where school activists had recently convened, “the pedagogical sweetheart of Finland,” where people from across the country “rushed with heart pounding with joy” to meet fellow people.<sup>52</sup> The first Finnish-language school in Helsinki was, for Hänninen, a “national institute” and “the Finnish people’s institute of love.”<sup>53</sup>

In fact, when Hänninen wrote about the nation, his focus was almost always on the current social conditions of Finland. The burning societal issue for him was the status of the Finnish language in comparison to Swedish. Therefore, Hänninen greeted with joy every piece of news which indicated any improvement in the status of Finnish. For example, Hänninen expressed his gratitude for the fact that the language used at the founding celebration of the first elementary school in Pieksämäki in 1872 was solely Finnish.<sup>54</sup> The foundations of Finnish-language schools were close to his heart, in particular because he hoped for Finnish-language civil servants to serve the Finnish nation.<sup>55</sup> Hänninen’s nation went beyond current social barriers. In 1872, he thanked the founding celebration of the first elementary school in his home district for forgoing distinctions of rank at the event. According to Hänninen, the gentlemen treated the peasants as members of the people of the fatherland to which they themselves also belonged.<sup>56</sup>

The future of the nation played a significant role in Hänninen’s thought because it intertwined with the present. Hänninen’s approach to the future was connected with children and the youth. The social reforms that were conducted in the present, such as the establishment of

<sup>51</sup> J. H-n: [Johan Hänninen], “Pieksämäeltä,” *Suomenlehti* 2 September 1873.

<sup>52</sup> J. H-n: [Johan Hänninen], “Kirje A. -kk-lle Jämsässä,” *Kansan Lehti* 21 May 1870.

<sup>53</sup> J. H-n: [Johan Hänninen], “Pieksämäeltä,” *Suomenlehti* 2 September 1873.

<sup>54</sup> J. H.: [Johan Hänninen], “Pieksämäeltä,” *Suomenlehti* 19 November 1872.

<sup>55</sup> J. H-n: [Johan Hänninen], “Pieksämäeltä,” *Suomenlehti* 2 September 1873.

<sup>56</sup> J. H.: [Johan Hänninen], “Pieksämäeltä,” *Suomenlehti* 19 November 1872.

Finnish-language schools, were done for the next generations.<sup>57</sup> Hänninen also supposed that confidence in the future was something he had in common with other readers and writers of the newspapers. Hänninen expressed this in one of his letters by assuming that he and his fellow writers shared high respect for the “nation and its flight of progress.”<sup>58</sup> It seems that, for Hänninen, children were the representatives of the future in the present. The activities in the present were carried out for them.

The past had less significance for Hänninen than the present and the future. Although Hänninen acknowledged the significance of the past for the nation, history seems to have been unimportant for his experience of the nation. In fact, Hänninen did not write at all about the history of the Finnish nation at the beginning of the 1870s but only referred to the fact that there had been earlier generations living in Finland in the past.<sup>59</sup> One obvious reason for this was that there was no existing historiography in the Finnish language that had put the Finnish nation on a pedestal. The first historical interpretation that provided ethnic roots for the Finnish-speaking population, and excluded the Swedish-speaking population from Finland, was completed by historian Georg Zacharias Forsman (later Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen) in 1873.<sup>60</sup> However, this was not a full picture. It seems to be that the distinctive feature of Hänninen’s experience of nation was its emphasis on the present societal problems and the possibilities for the future in the present.

The structure of Hänninen’s first-hand experience of the nation at the beginning of the 1870s seems to adapt Anderson’s thesis about the experience of the “imagined community.” As Anderson suggests, its core was in linear temporality and in the sense of temporal simultaneity. The case of Hänninen shows that the emerging of the nation as the imagined nation demanded a temporalization of the experience of belonging, which strengthened the role of human agency as the force that could change the world. This made Hänninen’s early nationalism societal in its character.

<sup>57</sup> J. H–n: [Johan Hänninen], “Kirje Veikoille!” *Kansan Lehti* 19 March 1870; J. H–n: [Johan Hänninen], “Kirje A. Jle Rilla,” *Kansan Lehti* 16 May 1870; J. H–n: [Johan Hänninen], “Kirje A. -kk-lle Jämsässä,” *Kansan Lehti* 21 April 1870.

<sup>58</sup> J. H–n: [Johan Hänninen], “Kirje Veikoille!” *Kansan Lehti* 19 March 1870.

<sup>59</sup> *Translocalis Database*, The letters of Hänninen 1868–75.

<sup>60</sup> Miikka Tervonen, “Historiankirjoitus ja myytti yhden kulttuurin Suomesta,” in *Kotiseutu ja kansakunta: miten suomalaista historiaa on rakennettu*, ed. by Pirjo Markkola, Hanna Snellman & Ann-Catrin Östman (Helsinki: SKS, 2014), 145–6.

Nostalgia that is present in many later forms of nationalism was not characteristic of Hänninen's experience.

### THE PROCESS OF THE FORMULATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE NATION

There is no question as to where Hänninen absorbed the ideological content of his experience of the nation and its temporal structure. As an active newspaper reader, he acquired that content from the Finnish-language press of the mid-1800s that was edited by the Finnish-language educated elite, who used the newspapers to promote their ideological agenda of a nationalism based on the idea of national progress.<sup>61</sup> This was also an explanation that Hänninen offered himself in his memoirs, written in 1912. According to Hänninen, his national awakening began when he managed to get hold of and read a bound volume of the newspaper *Aamurusko* in his youth in the late-1850s.<sup>62</sup> *Aamurusko* was edited by well-known representative of the Finnish nationalistic elite, Pietari Hannikainen.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, Hänninen could also find peer support for his experience of the nation from the culture of letters to newspapers that began to blossom in his youth and in which he participated, first as reader and later as a writer.

The question remains, what kind of process was the assimilation of the experience of the nation at the individual level? To understand this, we must take a closer look at Hänninen's life history. It is obvious that we cannot get inside his head. However, the information about his life course sheds light on the experiential change that first-hand experience of the nation demanded.

Hänninen was born into a Finnish-speaking family in the rural parish of Rautalampi in 1842. His father was a crofter who also worked as a cobbler.<sup>64</sup> In mid-1800s Finland, this meant a self-sufficient life in the local community in which people produced and consumed almost all the goods needed within their household. In these circumstances, crop failures, hunger, and infectious diseases were constant hazards. Death, especially of children, was always present. As chances for social mobility were limited,

<sup>61</sup> See for example Tommila (1988), 143–95.

<sup>62</sup> Harkki [Johan Hänninen], "Seitsemänkymmentä vuotta," *Maakansa* 14 May 1912.

<sup>63</sup> Tommila (1988), 187.

<sup>64</sup> Kokko (2016), 311.

human beings usually lived their lives in the social position into which they had been born.<sup>65</sup> This was due to the socio-economic situation of the period. Although the growing season in the north was short, 93 percent of the entire population lived in the countryside and 79 percent got their livelihood from agriculture.<sup>66</sup> While 85 percent of the population of Finland was Finnish-speaking, Finnish was primarily the language of the common people, such as Hänninen, who lived in the numerous local rural communities. There were no state schools for Finnish-speakers and the Finnish-language literary culture was still in its infancy.<sup>67</sup> Swedish-speakers formed 14 percent of the population.<sup>68</sup> Swedish was the language of the central administration, the educated, and the Swedish-speaking common people. The Swedish language was difficult to learn for native Finnish-speakers, because it was linguistically distant and unrelated to Finnish. Lutheranism was the only socialization system provided by the authorities for Finnish-speaking people like Hänninen. He, just like everyone else, was required to go through confirmation classes at the age of about 15 to prove that he could read the Lutheran texts and understand the Lutheran doctrine.<sup>69</sup>

In his youth, Hänninen succeeded in achieving the ability to write. Because of the Lutheran emphasis on the personal reading of religious texts, some sort of ability to read was quite common in the countryside of Finland, but the ability to write was rare. The first official statistics (1880) show that under 13 percent of the whole population over ten years of age could write.<sup>70</sup> This means that only a few percent of the Finnish-speaking adult population could write in the mid-1800s. Hänninen himself learned the ability to write in his youth through spontaneous efforts. According to his autobiographical article, this happened after he began to persistently commit to paper the songs that his father sang.<sup>71</sup>

The achieved literacy enabled Hänninen to get into the Finnish-language public sphere, which underwent the first upswing in his youth at the end of the 1850s.<sup>72</sup> His literacy also made it possible in 1860 for

<sup>65</sup> Kokko (2016), 67–75.

<sup>66</sup> Official Statistics of Finland (SVT) VI:1, Population of Finland 21.12.1865.

<sup>67</sup> Kokko (2016), 67–75.

<sup>68</sup> SVT VI:1.

<sup>69</sup> See Laine & Laine (2010), 258–312.

<sup>70</sup> SVT VI:11, Population of Finland 21.12.1880.

<sup>71</sup> Harkki [Johan Hänninen], “Suomettaren lukioille,” *Maakansa* 14 May 1912.

<sup>72</sup> Kokko (2019b), 5–9.

Hänninen to get into a two-year farming school at the age of 18. The farming schools, established at the end of the 1850s, were the first educational institutions that operated in the Finnish language. They educated land stewards and milkmaids to develop Finnish agriculture.<sup>73</sup> For Hänninen, the farming school made it possible to develop as a reader and writer, because besides agricultural education, there was teaching in theoretical subjects as well.<sup>74</sup> Hänninen undoubtedly familiarized himself with the ideas about the nation that he had read in the press available at the farming school. The school was led by Antti Manninen who was a self-educated representative of the nationalism promoted by the educated elite. Furthermore, Manninen was one of the most productive contributors to the Finnish-language press in the 1850s and 1860s.<sup>75</sup>

After completing the farming school, Hänninen returned to his home district of Rautalampi and ended up working as an ordinary farmhand for years. However, the accelerating societal change in 1860s Finland increased the value of his literacy skills. Municipal reform in 1865 transferred local power from the Lutheran church to local landowners. As the reform had to be put into practice at the local level, this increased the social status of the people who had gained full literacy. This helped crofter's son and farm worker Hänninen to get a position of trust in the local government even though he did not have the right to vote. In 1867 Hänninen was chosen to be a deputy member of the local board for his home municipality even though he was not a landowner. At the same time, his status also improved in another way. In 1866, Hänninen got married to maid Karoliina Manninen and in 1867 they had their first child.<sup>76</sup> As a married man with a family, Hänninen became a full member of the agrarian community.

As previously mentioned, in 1866–8 the population of Finland suffered “The Great Hunger Years,” the last major famine in Europe along with the subsequent Swedish famine of 1867–9. During those years, about ten percent of the entire population of Finland died. The disaster touched almost everyone in Finland. Even though not all localities suffered from hunger, contagious diseases spread as crowds of beggars moved across the

<sup>73</sup> Arvo M. Soininen, *Vanha maataloutemme: Maatalous ja maatalousväestö Suomessa perinnällisen maatalouden loppukaudella 1720-luvulta 1870-luvulle* (Helsinki: SHS, 1975), 345–7.

<sup>74</sup> “Kertomus Leväsen Maaviljelyskoulusta,” *Tapio* 27 July 1861.

<sup>75</sup> See Kokko (2016), 140–56.

<sup>76</sup> Kokko (2016), 312–14.

country.<sup>77</sup> In 1868, during the third year of the disaster, at the age of 25, Hänninen started his almost lifelong career as a newspaper letter writer, reflecting on his everyday experiences. His letters show that Hänninen experienced the famine's distress personally. In one of his letters from 1868 Hänninen described how he had eaten eight different substitutes for flour during the famine.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, his father died of a contagious disease during the first year of the famine in 1866.<sup>79</sup>

The famine was undoubtedly a turning point in Hänninen's life. It seems that during it his spirituality increased in significance. Both his letters and the church records of his home parish indicate that during the famine his Lutheran faith deepened as he began to receive Communion regularly following a hiatus of several years.<sup>80</sup> After the famine abated, Hänninen's religious thinking showed a change. In the 1870s he began to publicly promote the doctrine of the evangelical revival movement, and especially the branch that drew inspiration from the teachings of the Swedish preacher Carl Olof Rosenius. The teachings of Rosenius were popular, especially among the early newspaper writers of mid-1800s Finland, because the doctrine of Rosenius created a space within Lutheranism for the idea of earthly progress.<sup>81</sup>

Besides the experience of distress and a deepened Christianity, the "Great hunger years" opened a new opportunity for Hänninen. When crowds of beggars wandered across the country, some parishes began to establish temporary workhouses for them. In the parish of Mikkeli, this developed into a more permanent solution. In the spring of 1868, the parish established one of the first poor houses in Finland and Hänninen was hired as its first supervisor.<sup>82</sup> This meant social climbing for the son of a crofter like Hänninen. It also meant disentanglement from his agrarian childhood region, where he had spent the first 26 years of his life. In 1870, poor house supervisor Hänninen wrote letters in which he expressed his experience of the nation for the first time. In the 1870s, Hänninen

<sup>77</sup> Miikka Voutilainen, *Poverty, Inequality and the Finnish 1860s Famine* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2016), 15–18.

<sup>78</sup> "Rautalammilta," *Tapio* 25 May 1868.

<sup>79</sup> National Archives of Finland (NAF), Rautalampi rippikirja 1862–1871, p. 1201–2.

<sup>80</sup> NAF, Rautalampi rippikirja 1862–1871, p. 1201–2.

<sup>81</sup> Kokko (2016), 381–6.

<sup>82</sup> Kaarlo Wirilander, "Kun ensimmäinen maalaiskunta sai vaivaistalon vuonna 1868," *Huoltaja* 56:24 (1968), 838–43.



became one of the most productive activists contributing to the culture of local letters.<sup>83</sup>

Hänninen's course in life suggests that the construction of one's experience of the nation and its temporal structure was not a sudden conversion but a long-term process. He received his first connection to nationalism via the press at the end of the 1850s but expressed an experience of the nation that could be identified as an imagined community for the first time in the 1870s. The culmination of this process seems to have been the disentanglement of Hänninen from his childhood world. Hänninen expressed an experience of the nation for the first time after he broke away from the social world of his home district and its interpretation of Lutheran doctrine. The experience of the nation began to blossom after he, as a married man, became a full member of the adult community, and after his social rise that disengaged him from the old agrarian self-sufficient mode of life. The broader societal context of the resurfacing of his experience of the nation was the economic boom that followed the famine in 1870s Finland. It seems that the progressive spirit of the time helped Hänninen trust in the new kind of experience of belonging that was based on the idea of linear earthly progress.

Hänninen's case indicates that the nation was not only an idea that was spread by the elites and learned by the ordinary people. It demanded profound experiential change for an individual like Hänninen, who lived the nation as a first-hand experience. The core of this transformation lay in absorbing the idea of linear temporality that led to conceiving of human agency as the master of all development.

## TWO SOCIETAL SEDIMENTS OF EXPERIENCE

Why were the experiences of Hänninen so different in 1868, when he expressed his belonging to the Finnish people (*kansa*), and later in the 1870s when his experience of the nation (*kansakunta*) emerged? To answer this question, Hänninen's experiential change needs to be analyzed from a societal perspective. Following Koselleck's and Berger and Luckmann's thought, Hänninen's conceptions of the nation and "people" and their temporal structures could be seen as the two different layers of experience that had sedimented in his mind during the course of his life. Instead of seeing these layers as the stages of development in Hänninen's

<sup>83</sup> *Translocalis Database*.

thinking or in his personal identity, they could be seen as two different societally shared experiences of belonging that were both simultaneously present in the society and in Hänninen's conscious and unconscious thought.<sup>84</sup>

Firstly, the earlier experience of the "people" was the societal layer of the experience of belonging that resurfaced in Hänninen's mind during the nationwide famine in 1866–8. It was based on his childhood primary socialization that was conducted by his significant others, mainly the members of his family.<sup>85</sup> The theoretical basis of this socialization system was the Lutheran doctrine that was controlled by the state and its authorities via confirmation classes. This sediment, based on illiterate and self-sufficient agrarian life, resurfaced in the mind of Hänninen in the spring of 1868 when the famine was at its worst due to the grain crops failing for two to three years in a row.<sup>86</sup> In these desperate circumstances, 25-year-old Hänninen put his faith in the Lutheran doctrine that he had absorbed in his childhood. Ultimately, it promised a better life in heaven.

Secondly, the experience of the nation that Hänninen expressed later in the 1870s was based on the societal layer of experience, which began to be constructed when Hänninen succeeded in achieving literacy. This helped him to get included in the rising sphere of the Finnish-language press and enabled his social rise and disentanglement from his local environment. Breaking into the sphere of publicity made it possible for Hänninen to absorb the idea of the nation. As Anderson has suggested, the newspaper as a means drew his attention to linear progressive temporality and to the new kind of horizontal temporal simultaneity.<sup>87</sup> Indeed, a hint of this "meanwhileness" had already become visible in Hänninen's earlier experience of the "people," when he addressed his fellow contemporaries as a God-ordained people living in the present.

The religious change in Hänninen created space for his new experience of the nation. At first glance, some could say that he simply began to think differently and in a more secular way. However, Hänninen's religious change indicates that absorbing the experience of the nation was not a matter of secularization. Preferably, it was about the reformulation of the Lutheran doctrine in a sense that enabled the experience of the nation.

<sup>84</sup> See Berger & Luckmann (1991), 85–9.

<sup>85</sup> See Berger & Luckmann (1991), 149–57.

<sup>86</sup> Voutilainen (2016), 15–18.

<sup>87</sup> Anderson (2006), 24–36.

The doctrine of Carl Olof Rosenius that Hänninen supported emphasized the certainty of salvation if a human being experienced rebirth during his or her earthly life. Such rebirth meant that original sin could be expunged during one's earthly life. This reorganized the Lutheran dualism of the earthly and the spiritual and opened the domain of the earthly to a fresh idea of human progress, such as the nation.<sup>88</sup> The change in Hänninen's religious thought made his experience of the nation based on a linear time theoretically possible.

The course of Hänninen's life points to the conclusion that at the end of the 1860s two societal layers of experience of belonging, the layer of the "people" and the layer of the nation, coexisted and interacted in his consciousness. This can be seen from a letter Hänninen wrote during the famine. In this text, he emphasized that under the circumstances of the famine there was no reason to encourage the Finnish people to rely on themselves.<sup>89</sup> This was exactly opposite to what the nationalistic elite had promoted in the newspapers before and during the famine. Thus, this could be seen as resistance to the national discourse of the elite, while the vision of national progress had proved to be empty in the circumstances of famine distress. In the extreme conditions imposed by the famine, the layer of the nation stood aside, while the layer of the "people," to which he had been socialized in his childhood, resurfaced. Furthermore, the interaction between these two layers also continued later in Hänninen's life. The analysis of the relationship between the earthly and the spiritual remained a frequent theme in his writings during the following decades.<sup>90</sup>

Hänninen was a person who stood at the interface of the experience of the nation and the earlier form of belonging to it. By following Koselleck, it could be stated that the layer of the "people" was something in which past "experiences" of the past generations were present.<sup>91</sup> In contrast, the layer of the experience of the nation was a first-hand experience that had no existing models in Hänninen's agrarian life. This could be seen as one reason why Hänninen's experience of the nation was based on the present and the future. From Hänninen's point of view, the nation as a first-hand experience had no past in his life history. Its emphasis was on improvement of current social conditions carried out on behalf of the next generations of the nation.

<sup>88</sup> Kokko (2016), 381–6.

<sup>89</sup> J. H–n. [Johan Hänninen], "Rautalammilta," *Kansan Lehti* 28 March 1868.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, J. H–n. [Johan Hänninen], "Eräs epäkohta nuorison sivistyksessä," *Savonlinna* 22 April 1886.

<sup>91</sup> Koselleck (2004), 259–63.

Indeed, Hänninen's experience of the nation follows the large-scale experiential transition that Koselleck has pointed to. Hänninen's emphasis on the present and future could be seen as the emerging of a modern horizon of expectations. According to Koselleck's thought, in the self-sufficient agrarian world, the experiences of the past and the expectations for the future interwove in such a way that temporality itself was not an essential category for experiencing reality. However, the large-scale changes seen in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century modernization process caused the horizon of expectations to move from the hereafter to earthly life. The Christian doctrine of completeness attained only in the hereafter was applied to a new idea of improvement on earth. This made it possible to convert the uncertainty stemming from the coming of the apocalypse to facing the hazards of an open future. This transformation was structured temporally together with the idea of progress.<sup>92</sup> The broad context of the Hänninen case lies within this large-scale experiential transformation of experiencing itself.

Against this background, the emergence of Hänninen's experience of the nation can be seen as societal process, in which the categorizations of linear progressing time began to define Hänninen's experiencing process itself. The broader context of Hänninen's change to the form of belonging was the modernization process that reached the distant district of Rautalampi on the edge of Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. It captivated Hänninen and disentangled him from roots based on the self-sufficient agrarian life of past generations. For Hänninen himself this caused the experiential change that was a slowly progressing process with flashbacks to the old self-sufficient agrarian life. Hänninen was a man who lived at the interface between the premodern and the modern.

## CONCLUSION

As Benedict Anderson has suggested in his thesis of "imagined communities," the case of Johan Hänninen indicates that first-hand experience of the nation was based on the conception of linear progressing time and on the new kind of experience of the significance of the present moment as something that went beyond face-to-face communication. This made confidence in the activity of fellow contemporaries the core of the experience of the nation.

<sup>92</sup> Koselleck (2004), 263–5.

The case of Johan Hänninen opens a more nuanced perspective on Anderson's interpretation of the meaning of temporality in the emergence of the experience of the nation. Firstly, instead of characterizing the process as a transformation from simultaneity-along-time to the temporal horizontal simultaneity, this case study indicates that first-hand experience of the nation emerged when the temporality began to define the experiencing process itself. The case of Johan Hänninen indicates that first-hand experience of the nation was based on absorbing linear progressive temporality as the foundation of one's experiencing process itself. It led to a new conception of human agency and abilities. The human being now appeared as the master of earthly development, the manifestation of which was the nation.

Secondly, the Hänninen case points out that first-hand experience of the nation was based on the significance of the present moment and was legitimized by the expected future. Neither history nor nostalgia legitimized Hänninen's nation as occurs in many forms of later nationalism. Therefore, the Hänninen case highlights the societal character of early grass roots nationalism. In Hänninen's case, nationalism as an ideology was directed toward the current societal circumstances and legitimized by the expectations of a better future.

Thirdly, Hänninen's experiential change indicates that absorbing the experience of the nation was not a straightforward development or a sudden conversion. Instead, it was a slowly constructing process, in which the old societal layer of experience of belonging overlapped with a new kind of temporalized experience of the nation. These sediments of experience resurfaced in Hänninen's mind in different societal situations. Thus, the experience of the nation was the product of a changing society. This can be seen from Hänninen's life history that changed its course along with societal transformation, and from his experience of the nation which emphasized the significance of the present and the future, not of the past. Furthermore, Hänninen's case shows that absorbing of the experience of the nation was not an act of secularization in the sense that nationalism replaced religion. Instead, it was about the reformulation of religion in a manner that enabled the experience of the nation as an imagined community.

The case of Hänninen indicates that the press played a significant role in the emergence of the experience of the nation among ordinary people, as Anderson has previously pointed out.<sup>93</sup> The press had a crucial role in

<sup>93</sup>Anderson (2006), 24–36.

the circulation of information regarding the nation and a new kind of linear temporal structure of experiencing. However, the case of Hänninen also indicates that this mediatization must be seen as part of the multidimensional process of modernization that included simultaneously, for example, the spreading of literacy, the emerging of the division of labor, and the emerging of the modern state and citizenship therein.

Hänninen's case suggests that seeing nationalism as a straightforward top-down phenomenon, where the educated elite constructed the nation, is a delusion. The idea of the nation was the creation of the national elite, but the transformation that the breakthrough of it required was the result of changes in social reality that were driven by a modernization process that went beyond national borders. The temporalization of experiencing was too complex a process to be uniquely administered by any single group of the society.

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PART II

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Nation of Encounters and Conflicts



# Divided Nation on Records: The Transnational Formation of Finnish Popular Music During the Gramophone Fever

*Marko Tikka and Sami Suodenjoki*

## INTRODUCTION

*The accordion is just the thing. I know. Your nationality doesn't appreciate anything else!*<sup>1</sup>

With these words, an American sales director for a multinational record company described the musical preferences of Finns to an interviewer in 1927. He knew what he was talking about. The accordion was the most popular instrument for many European emigrant groups in contemporary North America: not only for the Finns but also for the Italians, Irish,

<sup>1</sup>Yrjö Sjöblom, "You have to educate them yourself!" *Kalevainen* 16 (1928), 46.

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Germans, Scandinavians, and Slavs.<sup>2</sup> Yet the director's words not only mirrored but also shaped the state of affairs, because his company had enormous influence on the direction of popular music in Finnish America and soon thereafter also in Finland. At the time of the interview, the recording industry had not yet started in Finland, but the market for popular music records in the Finnish language was already mushrooming. During the following two years of "gramophone fever," over a million gramophone records were imported to Finland, and around a quarter of them contained Finnish-American popular music. These records played a crucial role in molding consumer tastes.

In this chapter, we explore how imported gramophone records tapped into the lived experiences of the nation among Finnish audiences and shaped their experience of popular music in the late 1920s. We focus on records, which were recorded for Finnish audiences in America and Europe and examine how these records outlined the transnational and local elements of what was to be known as Finnish popular music. By doing so, we engage with a spatial turn in the history of nationalism that involves attentiveness to the impact of transborder flows and movements on nation formation and national identities.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, we explore how the spread of the imported records reflected the deep political divides of the newly independent nation-state, which had seceded from Russia in 1917 and witnessed a bloody Civil War the following year. We argue that popular music was an important medium through which people lived out the nation in their everyday practices and that gramophone records, by changing these practices and the idea of popular music, could also influence how people experienced the nation.

As a theoretical tool, we employ the concept of *communities of experience*, which can refer to almost any social or imagined communities formed around shared experiences. Studying these communities is possible without explicit focus on emotions, but the concept is nevertheless close to

<sup>2</sup>James Leary, "Crossover accordionists," in *Squeeze this! A Cultural History of the Accordion in America*, ed. by Marion Jacobson (Illinois: Illinois University Press, 2012), 118–21; Helena Simonett, "Introduction," in *The Accordion in the Americas. Klezmer, Polka, Tango, Zydeco and more*, ed. by Helena Simonett (Illinois: Illinois University Press, 2012), 12–13.

<sup>3</sup>Eric Storm, "The spatial turn and the history of nationalism: Nationalism between regionalism and transnational approaches," in *Writing the History of Nationalism*, ed. by Stefan Berger & Eric Storm (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 215–37.

Barbara Rosenwein's idea of "emotional communities."<sup>4</sup> Communities of experience are formed by individuals who share personal or collective experiences and interpret them together in a specific context. They are dynamic, overlapping and synchronous, which means that an individual can belong to many experience communities at the same time and move between them. An individual could become part of an experience community, for example, through social status, family, neighborhood, profession or civic activity.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, we examine how popular music records could reinforce and shape existing experience communities related to political and class status, but we also consider whether people who were listening to the same records at the same time across the nation could be referred to as a community of experience.

The chapter spans the period from the rise of record importing to Finland, around the mid-1920s, to 1930, when the importation of records plummeted due to the global economic depression. The records under examination are from the catalogs of the British-American record company Columbia and the British Gramophone Company.<sup>6</sup> The catalog of Columbia consists of 117 music records, which were originally produced for Finnish-American consumers in the United States and only later reissued for Finland, in 1928–30. These records contained instrumental and vocal dance music as well as comic songs, not forgetting political working-class songs. By comparison, Gramophone's catalog for Finland included 165 records, comprising dance music but also patriotic art music, which were recorded in 1925–29, mostly in Europe. The chapter outlines key differences between these catalogues, suggesting that they were aimed at partly different audiences.

Besides analyzing the genres and content of these records, we explore their circulation and reception in Finland through digitized newspapers and periodicals.<sup>7</sup> By using song titles as keywords, we trace where and when particular records were played and sold and how Finnish audiences responded to them. Popular songs were covered frequently in contemporary

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107:3 (2002), 842.

<sup>5</sup> In a Finnish context, see Ella Viitaniemi, "Muurarimestari Kustaa Stenman ja katumaton maailma," in *Eletty historia: Kokemus näkökulmana menneisyyteen*, ed. by Johanna Annola, Ville Kivimäki & Antti Malinen (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2019), 76–7.

<sup>6</sup> The records are listed in *Rainer Strömmer's Catalogue of Finnish 78 rpm Records* (Helsinki: Suomen Äänitearkisto, 2012), 23–8, 148–57.

<sup>7</sup> Digital collections of the National Library of Finland, [digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](http://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi)

news reports and columns, whereas the advertisement sections of newspapers and journals provide ample evidence of the sales channels of recordings. As an additional source, we employ reminiscences regarding gramophone use in the 1920–40s, which are included in a survey about consumer habits preserved in the Finnish Literature Society’s Archive.<sup>8</sup>

The first section of the chapter outlines the material conditions surrounding the “gramophone fever” and the main features of the popular music records sold in Finland in the late 1920s. We argue that the breakthrough of the global music industry, marked by cheap gramophones, “hit records” and their efficient marketing, changed the whole idea of popular music during this period.<sup>9</sup> As part of this development, Finland witnessed a flux of Columbia’s Finnish-American music records, which were targeted at working-class audiences and thereby had some distinctive features compared with other records on the market. Nevertheless, the second section shows that the best-selling dance-music recordings in the catalogs of Columbia and Gramophone also had certain similarities, in terms of musical style and orchestration, which helped to frame these recordings as “Finnish”.

In the third section, we explore how a popular song came “sticky” with emotions as it spread across borders and confronted new audiences of different political persuasions.<sup>10</sup> To do this, we focus on the march “Vapaa Venäjä” (Free Russia), which became a hit record in Finnish America in 1924. At the end of the decade, the imported records also boosted the popularity of Free Russia in Finland and stirred public criticism against the song for allegedly glorifying Soviet Russia. Free Russia came to embody the political divisions of the nation, as it served to reinforce the experience community of leftist workers on the one hand and stir “hot” nationalist hostility on the other. Yet the record industry also detached the Free

<sup>8</sup>Finnish Literature Society Archives (FLSA), Folklore Archive (KRA), Survey on Consumer Habits (Kulutus) 2006–7. For more extensive use of this material, see Tiina Männistö-Funk, “‘They Played it on Saturday Nights in a Barn’: Gramophone Practices and Self-Made Modernity in Finland from the 1920s to the 1940s,” *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity* 1:2 (2013), 101–27.

<sup>9</sup>For this development in the United States and Britain, see W. H. Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); James J. Nott, *Music for the People: Popular Music and Dance in Interwar Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>10</sup>For “sticky affects,” see Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

Russia march from a strictly political framework by making it a commodity and one “Finnish” popular music piece among others.

### IMPORTED GRAMOPHONE RECORDS AS TONE SETTERS FOR POPULAR MUSIC

Ordinary people encountered music in various spheres of everyday life in the 1920s. In Finnish schools, the singing of patriotic and regional songs and hymns formed an important part of the curriculum. The singing of hymns was also an essential element of church services, which a considerable part of the population still attended; and it influenced the ways in which people used their singing voice in other contexts. In the events of various civic associations, collective singing was used as a means of strengthening unity and solidarity among participants. Many associations also organized dances to pull crowds to their events, even if dancing was labeled as sinful by many religious and conservative people.<sup>11</sup> At these events, dance music was typically performed by an accordionist or a live orchestra, but the gramophone also appeared as a substitute for live music at the end of the 1920s.<sup>12</sup> Popular music was also sometimes heard in movie theaters, where a pianist, accordionist or gramophone accompanied a silent film or entertained the audience during the reel change. Even more so than the radio, another trendy consumable of this period, the gramophone revolutionized the way people listened to music and spent their leisure time.<sup>13</sup>

The international record industry had gained ground in Finland at the beginning of the twentieth century when the Gramophone Company started to produce records specifically for the Finnish market.<sup>14</sup> After a decade-long break caused by World War I, the Gramophone Company revived recordings for Finland in 1925. Around the same time, Finnish

<sup>11</sup> Marko Tikka & Seija-Leena Nevala, *Kielletyt leikit: tanssin kieltämisen historia Suomessa 1888–1948* (Jyväskylä: Atena, 2020), 36–41, 53–6, 68–73.

<sup>12</sup> Männistö-Funk (2013), 116.

<sup>13</sup> Radio broadcasting started in Finland in 1926 but did not become more common until the 1930s. The non-commercial, state-owned Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yleisradio) had a quite conservative music policy for a long time.

<sup>14</sup> Pekka Gronow & Björn Englund, “Inventing Recorded Music: The Recorded Repertoire in Scandinavia,” *Popular Music* 26:2 (2007). See also Karleric Liliedahl, *The Gramophone Co.: Acoustic recordings in Scandinavia and for the Scandinavian market* (Helsinki: Suomen äänitearkisto, 1977).

consumers were familiarized with imported German, Swedish and Anglo-American music records, which included modern dance-rhythm pieces with simple choruses. Together with innovations in recording technology and the spread of portable gramophones (Fig. 6.1), the appeal of modern dance music brought about a global “gramophone fever” at the end of the decade. This boom of the record industry reached Finland in 1929, when annual record sales exploded to around 1.2 million.<sup>15</sup> According to an estimate, these records included 250,000 Finnish-American recordings manufactured in the United States and Britain specifically for Finland.<sup>16</sup>

Finland had no domestic record production before the end of the 1920s, which meant that all the records sold were imports. Both gramophone records and gramophones were considered luxury items with high customs duties. This made these products too expensive for most Finnish consumers, whose living standard was still far below that of Western Europeans despite rapid economic growth in interwar Finland.<sup>17</sup> However, the situation changed when the government quartered the duties on gramophones and records from the beginning of 1929.<sup>18</sup> This decision paved the way for the explosion of record sales in Finland.<sup>19</sup>

The period of gramophone fever showed that consumers yearned for danceable “schlager” tunes with Finnish vocals. The Gramophone Company pressed the first modern dance-music recordings for Finland in 1928 and 1929, but those were not enough to satisfy the growing demand. To fix this, two businessmen began to import Finnish-American records. One of them was English-born Charles Henry Chester, who had set up a radio and gramophone shop in Helsinki in 1925. At first, Chester sold Swedish, German and American records, but later he started to search for music better suited to Finns. As a native English speaker, he had no

<sup>15</sup> Gronow & Englund (2007), 300; Pekka Gronow, *78 kierrosta minuutissa: Äänilevyn historia 1877–1960* (Helsinki: Suomen Jazz & Pop Arkisto, 2013), 93, 120–6.

<sup>16</sup> Einari Kukkonen, *Oi muistatkos Emma* (Helsinki: Kustannuskolmio, 1998), 111–2.

<sup>17</sup> For economic development, see Riitta Hjerppe, *The Finnish Economy 1860–1965: Growth and Structural Change* (Helsinki: Bank of Finland, 1989), 48–53.

<sup>18</sup> See *Kansan Lehti* 31 December 1928, 6. The duties on gramophones and records were again raised at the end of 1929 as a response to the rapid growth in sales. *Helsingin Sanomat* 5 October 1929, 3; *Aamulehti* 21 November 1929, 3.

<sup>19</sup> On the gramophone fever in Finland, see Peter von Bagh & Ilpo Hakasalo, *Iskelmän kultainen kirja* (Helsinki: Otava, 1985); Pekka Jalkanen & Vesa Kurkela, *Suomen musiikin historia: Populaarimusiikki* (Porvoo: WSOY, 2003); internationally Pekka Gronow & Ilpo Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry* (London: Cassell, 1998), 39–41.



**Fig. 6.1** Cheap portable gramophones enabled listening to popular music records in new settings, such as in rowboats, in the late 1920s. (Photo: Matti Luhtala, Vapriikki photo archive, Tampere)

trouble contacting the Columbia headquarters in London.<sup>20</sup> Columbia was among the pioneers of so-called ethnic recordings in the United States, and the company had produced a considerable catalog of Finnish-American music during the 1920s.<sup>21</sup> Chester negotiated a contract to distribute these records in Finland and sold them in the tens of thousands in 1928–30. Even if his motive was primarily to make money, he had a considerable indirect influence on what consumers came to understand as Finnish popular music.

<sup>20</sup> Marko Tikka, “Kuinka populaarimusiikista tuli yhteistä,” *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 119:1 (2021). Another businessman Niilo E. Saarikko, later a well-known music producer, also imported Finnish-American Columbia records to Finland in the late 1920s, but much is not known about his business. On Saarikko see Pekka Gronow, “Saarikko, Niilo (1898–1979),” *Kansallisbiografia*, <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kansallisbiografia/henkilo/1035>, accessed 9 January 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Pekka Gronow, “Ethnic Recordings: An Introduction,” in *Ethnic Recordings in America: A Neglected Heritage* (Washington: American Folklife Center, 1982), 3.

The Finnish-American records that Chester imported had their own catalog numbers, owing to which these records are easily identifiable today. Based on the number of preserved records, Chester's imports circulated widely in Finland in the late 1920s, and their impressive sales were also noted in contemporary papers.<sup>22</sup> Overall, Chester's catalog for the years 1928–30 included 117 releases, which he had picked from Columbia's recordings that had succeeded in Finnish America and had the potential to do the same in Finland.

Table 6.1 indicates the categories of the Columbia music records imported by Chester and the releases for Finland by the other major company Gramophone between 1925 and 1929. These records fall into five categories: (1) instrumental dance music, (2) modern dance music with vocals, (3) comic songs, (4) ideological songs and (5) other music pieces. The first category, instrumental dance music, typically included traditional folk music pieces played by an accordionist or a small folk music band. Most of these pieces were familiar to Finnish listeners, as they were the kind of music that was played in dance soirées and other public dance events in Finland.

The second category of records comprised "modern dance music." This music emanated from the United States, where new dances like the

**Table 6.1** Finnish-American recordings of Columbia released in Finland and the recordings for Finland by the Gramophone Company, 1925–29

	<i>Sides (No)</i>		<i>Sides (%)</i>	
	<i>Columbia</i>	<i>Gramophone</i>	<i>Columbia</i>	<i>Gramophone</i>
Dance music without vocals	63	36	26.9	10.9
Dance music with vocals	24	32	10.3	9.7
Comic songs	50	84	21.4	25.5
Ideological music	19	30	8.1	9.1
Other: Concert music, operetta songs, and so on	78	148	33.3	44.8
Total	234	330	100	100

The data include 117 records (234 sides) from the Columbia series 7000, 13000 and 16000, and 165 records (330 sides) from His Master's Voice series AL and X, produced by Gramophone. Information on the records is based on Strömmer (2012), 23–28, 148–57

<sup>22</sup> *Tuisku* 30 June 1929, 7; Sulho Ranta, "Gram-, gram-, gramofoneja," *Tulenkantajat* 18 September 1929, 287.

foxtrot, the turkey-trot and the one-step, had become popular in the 1910s. Supported by cheap gramophones and dance-music records, this music spread over the Western world and became the standard of modern dancing after World War I.<sup>23</sup> As a consequence, local orchestras everywhere were trying to play foxtrots, waltzes and tangos like the Anglo-American or European dance orchestras of Paul Whiteman, Jack Hylton or Dajos Bela.<sup>24</sup>

Finnish audiences familiarized themselves with modern dance music through popular pieces of the day like “Underneath the Russian Moon,” “Alaska,” “Katinka” and “Jeannine, I Dream of Lilac Time.” The record company had “nationalized” these pieces simply by recording them with Finnish lyrics.<sup>25</sup> However, the most successful modern dance-music recording in Chester’s catalog was a waltz of Finnish origin, “Meren aalot” (Waves of the Sea). It sold as many as 17,000 copies in Finland.<sup>26</sup> Waves of the Sea was performed by the trio of the American-born Finnish musician Antti Kosola and the emigrant singer Leo Kauppi (1900–38), who became famous in Finland owing to Chester’s imports.<sup>27</sup>

The third category, comic songs, represented popular recording material in the early twentieth century and was featured in both catalogs under examination. The mainstream comic songs were non-political, but some Finnish-American comic songs nevertheless *did* include political elements such as inconspicuous references to class relations.<sup>28</sup>

The fourth category of songs, small but important, was ideological music. Nearly all the Finnish-American records in this category were performative music connected with the labor movement, including the

<sup>23</sup> Don Rayno, *Paul Whiteman: Pioneer in American Music, 1890–1930, Volume I* (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2003); Kenney (1999), 63–4. On recordings and dance music, see Nott (2002); Catherine Parsonage, *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain, 1880–1935* (London: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> Gronow (2013), 133–5. For Sweden, see Dan Malmström, *Härligt, härligt men farligt, farligt: Populärmusik i Sverige under 1900-talet* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1996), 71–2; for Finland, see Pekka Jalkanen, *Alaska, Bombay ja Billy Boy: Jazzkulttuurin murros Helsingissä 1920-luvulla* (Helsinki: Suomen etnomusikologinen seura, 1989); Marko Tikka & Toivo Tamminen, *Tanssiorkesteri Dallapé: Suomijazzin legenda 1925–2010* (Helsinki: SKS, 2011), 14–15.

<sup>25</sup> Columbia 13439, 16068, 16220. See Strömmer (2012), 24, 28.

<sup>26</sup> Kukkonen (1998), 127–8.

<sup>27</sup> Columbia 7790. See Strömmer (2012), 23.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Leo Kauppi’s lyrics to “Maailman Matti”, a song about a carefree globe-trotter, read that the globe-trotter’s mother “mourned because I didn’t become a bourgeois.” Columbia 13351.



marches “Kansainvälinen” (The Internationale), “Proletaarit nouskaa” (Workers of the World Awaken) and “Vapaa Venäjä” (Free Russia). The category also included politically loaded ballads such as Punavangin laulu (The Red prisoner’s song), written in the aftermath of the Finnish Civil War of 1918.<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, Chester did not seem to screen his imports politically, which accounts for the radical leftist undertones of some of the songs. There was clearly a niche in the market for this type of records in Finland, since they were lacking in the catalogs of Gramophone and other companies. The ideological music in these other catalogs mainly consisted of patriotic marches and other similar pieces, which only appealed to a limited audience. For example, when the German label Odeon recorded a series of military marches by a well-known Finnish military band in 1929, these records found few buyers.<sup>30</sup> The modest appeal of ideological music was reflected in contemporary advertisements, which focused on new danceable hits and comic songs.

All in all, Chester’s catalog differed interestingly from Gramophone’s imports, which were distributed in Finland by the music retailer Fazer. Whereas one-third of Chester’s catalog contained dance music, only one-fifth of the Gramophone records represented this category (Table 6.1). Compared with Chester, Fazer apparently relied more on the kind of songs that had already been popular before World War I. Thus, the Finnish catalog of Gramophone looked as if it represented a period when gramophones and records were expensive luxury items, designed for the prosperous upper- and middle-class consumers. It mainly included classical or salon music, religious hymns and patriotic marches or songs. Gramophone’s records were also different from Chester’s imports in that they included Swedish-language songs, since Fazer also served the needs of Swedish-speaking consumers.

The differences between the two catalogs corresponded to the contemporary political divisions of Finland. These divisions had been exacerbated by the Finnish Civil War, fought between the socialist Reds and the non-socialist Whites in early 1918. The war had caused 38,000 deaths and left the country deeply divided into two experience communities, *White Finland* and *Red Finland*. White Finland maintained the memory of the winners of the Civil War and bolstered the paramilitary Civil Guards, the

<sup>29</sup> For the history of these songs in Finnish America, see Sajaleena Rantanen, “Suomalaisten ‘tuplajulaisten’ laulut,” *Ennen ja nyt: Historian tietosanomat* 17:4 (2017).

<sup>30</sup> Kukkonen (1998), 202–3.

agrarian-bourgeois state and the Lutheran Church. Red Finland was the community of those defeated in the Civil War, ex-revolutionaries and their relatives, many of whom continued to be affiliated with the labor movement and shared experiences of imprisonment, terror and loss of civil rights.<sup>31</sup> This political and experiential demarcation was reflected also in popular-music records. To put it roughly, the Gramophone Company's Finnish wholesaler Fazer offered music to White, bourgeois Finland, whereas Chester's imports were targeted at the rural folk and urban workers. This segmentation is significant considering that these two distributors accounted for almost a half of the records sold in Finland at the end of the 1920s.<sup>32</sup>

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF FINNISHNESS IN DANCE-MUSIC RECORDS

The titles of the dance-music recordings included in the Finnish catalogs of Columbia and Gramophone are revealing of the distributors' assumptions about Finnish consumer tastes. Interestingly, the words "Finland" and "Finnish" appear in only five song titles in the Chester's catalog, as compared to 12 titles in the Gramophone catalog. The titles in Chester's catalog included "Muistoja Suomenmaasta" (Memories of Finland), "Kevät Suomen metsissä" (Spring in the woods of Finland) and "Jos kaikki Suomen järvet" (If all the lakes of Finland).<sup>33</sup> All of these tapped into nostalgia for their home country among Finnish emigrants in America. The latter two titles were also illustrative of contemporaneous Finnish music that constructed the image of the nation by relating to its seasons and nature.

Besides referring explicitly to Finland, the recorded songs named particular places or landscapes. Illustrative examples from Chester's catalog include the song titles "Inarinjärvi," and "Kallaves," which refer to well-known lakes, or "Punkaharju valssi," which refers to a municipality famous for its ridges.<sup>34</sup> Songs like these continued the same kind of admiration of

<sup>31</sup> On the political division, see Miika Siironen, *Valkoiset: Vapaussodan perintö* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2012) and Mervi Kaarninen's chapter in this book.

<sup>32</sup> Einari Marvia, *Fazerin Musiikkikauppa 1897–1949* (Helsinki: Fazerin Musiikkikauppa, 1949); Pekka Gronow, *Studies in Scandinavian-American Discography, vol. 1* (Helsinki: Suomen Äänitearkisto, 1977), 18–19; Kukkonen (1998), 111.

<sup>33</sup> Columbia 7801, 13353, 13354. See Strömmer (2012), 23–4.

<sup>34</sup> Columbia 16119, 16157, 16194. See Strömmer (2012), 25–7.

natural landscape that had been common to nationally inspired music and, more generally, to nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the song titles basically referred to the same elements of landscape, such as the lakes and forests of Southern Finland or Karelia, which had long been reproduced in published landscape images as reflecting the “Finnish” national landscape. As art historian Maunu Häyrynen has argued, this imagery “provided a mnemonic framework for patriotic sentiments,” activating pride, aesthetic appreciation or melancholy, depending on the context.<sup>36</sup>

Overall, Finnish place names were far from being dominant points of reference in the record titles. In fact, they were mentioned, for example, less frequently than sailors, vagabonds and gypsies. The record producers clearly recognized that consumers not only longed for harmonious, idealized images of the nation-state but also for topics relating to the concerns of their everyday life. Moreover, these other topics imply that record distributors calculated that a mobile lifestyle and the exoticism of foreign lands would be just as appealing to Finnish consumers as to any others.

Quite interestingly, several titles in the catalogs under examination refer to Russia and Russianness, even though the relationship between the newly independent Finland and the former motherland, Russia, was tense during the interwar period. When Russia became a Soviet regime in 1917, Russophobia had been cemented as a key element of Finnish nationalism and also manifested itself in a number of Finnish comic songs published in printed form.<sup>37</sup> Yet the imported music *records* of the late 1920s show few signs of anti-Russian sentiment.<sup>38</sup> Instead, the record producers seem to have viewed Russianness as Eastern exoticism that suited popular music. For example, Chester’s catalog includes titles such as “Russian Lullaby” and “Underneath the Russian moon” as well as titles that refer to the city

<sup>35</sup> See Philip V. Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2004), 83–4; Daniel M. Grimley, *Grieg: Music, Landscape and Norwegian Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006).

<sup>36</sup> Maunu Häyrynen, “The Kaleidoscopic View: The Finnish National Landscape Imagery,” *National Identities* 2:1 (2000), 16.

<sup>37</sup> Mikko-Olavi Seppälä, “Venäläissotilas suomalaisissa kupleteissa,” *Idäntutkimus* 23:3 (2016); Sami Suodenjoki, “Popular Songs as Vehicles for Political Imagination: The Russian Revolutions and the Finnish Civil War in Finnish Song Pamphlets, 1917–1918,” *Ab Imperio* 20:4 (2019), 241–2.

<sup>38</sup> Exceptions include Tatu Pekkarinen’s comic song about Russian emigrants (“Venäläinen pakolainen,” 1929). His Master’s Voice A.L. 947.

of Moscow and the Volga River. Some of these songs were based on Russian folk melodies. Nor was Russianness a problem for the Gramophone Company. The company's Finnish catalog contains songs like "Russian fantasy" and "A Russian medley," played by the Balalaika orchestra of Helsinki.<sup>39</sup> Exceptional in these two pieces was the use of the balalaika, an instrument strongly associated with Russianness.<sup>40</sup> Due to this association, the balalaika was later to disappear from among the instruments of Finnish popular music when the rise of far-right nationalism further fomented anti-Russianness in the 1930s.

Popular music records acquired a national character not only through the lyrics but more importantly through their rhythm and melody: that way they *sounded* familiar and "Finnish." The three best-selling Finnish popular music recordings of 1929 are illustrative of this: "Emma," "Asfalttikukka" (Asphalt Flower) and "Meren aallot" (Waves of the Sea) were all slow waltzes in a minor key. Of these three recordings, Waves of the Sea was the greatest success among Chester's imports, whereas Emma and Asphalt Flower were in Gramophone's catalog, and their sales climbed to nearly 30,000 copies.<sup>41</sup>

The waltz Emma was essentially a love song about a treacherous girlfriend and it drew on agrarian romanticism. By contrast, Asphalt Flower, Gramophone's other hit, had an urban setting. The lyrics of Asphalt Flower told about an immoral and sexually attractive woman—in fact, the term "asphalt flower" was a euphemism for a prostitute. Compared with these songs, Waves of the Sea covered love and desire less explicitly. Having been originally produced for the Finnish-American community, Waves of the Sea related to the experiences of Finnish emigrants, who had gone through their journey to the new land. The lyrics described the similarities between the unpredictability of the sea and love life. This romantic theme was easy to identify with, explaining the song's popularity among Finns on both sides of the Atlantic.

An additional factor behind the success of Waves of the Sea was its singer Leo Kauppi, whose distinctive baritone divided the opinions of critics and was easy to imitate.<sup>42</sup> A press commentator highlighted this imitability, and

<sup>39</sup> His Master's Voice X 3124. See Strömmer (2012), 155.

<sup>40</sup> See *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* 3 October 1929, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Kukkonen (1998), 119–22, 127–8.

<sup>42</sup> Sulho Ranta, "Gram-, gram-, gramofoneja," *Tulenkantajat* 18 September 1929, 287; T. Pikkanen, "Gramofooni ynnä musiikki," *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* 9 August 1929, 5.

the bad influence of the imported gramophone records on people, by noting that one could encounter mendicant children singing Kauppi's songs in trains.<sup>43</sup> Waves of the Sea and Kauppi's voice were also reminisced about by some respondents to a questionnaire on gramophone use.<sup>44</sup> One informant recalled that Kauppi's songs had been among the few records owned by his neighbors, whose old gramophone had been a source of great joy to him and other children. According to the informant, he had even crafted a mock gramophone to be used in playhouse "soirées," where children "sang with creaking voices, trying to imitate Leo Kauppi."<sup>45</sup>

All in all, the three best-selling songs of 1929 have many similarities that account for their popularity. Their lyrics are short and concise, making the songs easy to memorize, even on a first hearing. All of them are made in the folk-song style, and they have short introductions followed by a refrain and an interlude. The songs are in three-quarter waltz time, and the tempo is slow. The melodies are similar as well: all the songs are in a minor key and their melody is played in legato. And since the same features were characteristic of church hymns, this made the melodies easy to learn.

The mode of presentation in these three songs was familiar to record buyers: both Waves of the Sea and Asphalt flower were played by an amateur dance band that sounded like any band in a Finnish dance hall. The group playing Waves of the Sea included an accordion, a violin, an alto saxophone and drums. The accordion naturally had a key role in these records as it was the most significant dance-music instrument of 1920s' Finland. Emma was distinctive from the other two songs as it was played by a salon orchestra, but it still sounded familiar to ordinary consumers. In the 1920s, the salon orchestras were frequent performers in cafés and restaurants in urban Finland, and they played dance-music pieces like Emma for both listeners and dancers. Combined with the content, form, arrangement and language of the musical pieces, the familiar orchestration helped listeners experience the recordings as Finnish popular music despite their transnational production chain.

<sup>43</sup> Väinö Siikaniemi, "Gramofooni ja kulttuuri," *Suomen musiikkilehti* 7:15 (1929), 7.

<sup>44</sup> FLSA, KRA, Kulutus 2006-7, 310, 798.

<sup>45</sup> FLSA, KRA, Kulutus 2006-7, 276-7.

## FREE RUSSIA AS A COUNTERIMAGE OF AN OPPRESSIVE NATION

The Finns were divided in their attitudes toward Soviet Russia throughout the 1920s. While White Finland drew on Russophobia and saw the Bolsheviks as the great external enemy, many defeated Reds viewed the eastern neighbor differently. For them, as with many supporters of the communist movement internationally, the Soviet Union represented the fatherland of workers.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, thousands of Finnish Reds had fled to Russia in 1918 and stayed there, playing a prominent role in the creation of the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in the 1920s.<sup>47</sup>

Against this backdrop, it is striking that one of the Finnish popular-music hits of the late 1920s was entitled “Vapaa Venäjä,” in English, Free Russia. This song was based on the Russian patriotic march “Farewell of Slavianka,” which had been composed by Vasily Agapkin during the First Balkan War in 1912.<sup>48</sup> Farewell of Slavianka had been performed mainly among Russian students during World War I, and it became a White Army anthem during the Russian Civil War. However, given that the composer Agapkin served in the Red Army, the march was also likely sung on the Bolshevik side after 1918.<sup>49</sup> At some point, an unknown writer supplied the march with Finnish lyrics, which addressed the end of the imperial regime and the emancipation of workers in Russia. This Finnish version, titled “Vapaa Venäjä,” apparently originated among Finnish Red refugees in Soviet Russia. However, by the mid-1920s, the song had also spread to workers’ communities in Finland and Finnish America.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Tauno Saarela, *Suomalainen kommunismi ja vallankumous 1923–1930* (Helsinki: SKS, 2008), 650–1.

<sup>47</sup>Markku Kangaspuro, “Finnish Project: Karelian Workers’ Commune,” *Journal of Finnish Studies* 15:1–2 (2011), 40–51.

<sup>48</sup>The American recordings of Free Russia erroneously credit Wolff Kostakowsky and not Agapkin for composing the melody. See Valentin Antonov, “‘Toska po Rodine’. Vokrug da okolo,” *Solnechnyy Veter*, <https://www.vilavi.ru/pes/toska/vokrug.shtml>, accessed 28 May 2020.

<sup>49</sup>We thank Rustam Fakhretdinov for information on the history of “Farewell of Slavianka.” See also M. D. Chertok, *Russkiy voyennyi marsh: k 100-letiyu marcha “Proshanie slavianki”* (Moscow: Kanon+, 2012).

<sup>50</sup>The Labour Archives of Finland (TA), The Commission of Finnish Labour Tradition (TMT) 179:2953, 14; Pekka Gronow, *Laulukirja: Työväen lauluja kahdeksalta vuosikymmeneltä* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1971), 57.

In 1924, the record company Columbia recognized the commercial potential of Free Russia and commissioned a Finnish immigrant tenor Otto Pyykkönen to record it in New York.<sup>51</sup> The lyrics of Pyykkönen's recording were written by Emil Rautiainen, a Finnish-American poet who later moved to the Soviet Union. Rautiainen's lyrics praise the liberation of the people from their chains and greet "the free Russia of labor, where the slaves create a new life."<sup>52</sup> However, one verse from Rautiainen's lyrics, depicting how the workers broke "the foundations of lies" and "the power of the oppressive night," was apparently purged from the record in accordance with commercial interests.<sup>53</sup> The song's subversiveness was also moderated by its lack of direct references to Bolshevism or the Soviet regime.

Otto Pyykkönen's Free Russia became an instant hit among Finnish Americans. A sales manager for Columbia specifically acknowledged the "very satisfactory" sales of the record in 1927,<sup>54</sup> and the frequent advertisements for the Free-Russia record in the Finnish-American press further attest to its wide circulation.<sup>55</sup> To build on that success, Columbia also released two instrumental versions of Free Russia in America, one by an accordionist duet in 1925 and one by the Brooklyn Finnish-Socialist Club's orchestra in 1928.<sup>56</sup>

Following these developments, Charles Henry Chester decided to include Pyykkönen's record and the instrumental versions of Free Russia in his catalog for Finland (see Fig. 6.2).<sup>57</sup> This decision was eased by the fact that at this point, the march "Vapaa Venäjä" was already gaining popularity in Finland at workers' events. Beginning in 1926, a growing number of workers' choirs and orchestras included it in their repertoires.<sup>58</sup> To explain why workers found the march so appealing, one reporter made the claim that its "lyrics and melody exceeded in majesty even those of the

<sup>51</sup> Columbia 3003-F. See Strömmer (2012), 11.

<sup>52</sup> Juha Niemelä, *Finnish American Songs* (Turku: Migration Institute of Finland, 2003), 14; Dmitri Frolov, "Canadian and American Finns in the GULAG," *Journal of Finnish Studies* 15 (2011), 166.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Rautiainen's lyrics for "Vapaa Venäjä," in *Työväen lauluja* (Superior, WI: Työmies, 1925). We thank Juha Niemelä and Saijaleena Rantanen for observing the discrepancy between the lyrics of the record and the printed song.

<sup>54</sup> Yrjö Sjöblom, "You have to educate them yourself!" *Kalevainen* 16 (1928), 44.

<sup>55</sup> E.g. *Nyky aika* 15 January 1927, 2; *Punikki* 15 April 1927, 10.

<sup>56</sup> Columbia 3084-F and 3174-F. See Strömmer (2012), 14, 18.

<sup>57</sup> Columbia 16058. See Strömmer (2012), 19.

<sup>58</sup> E.g. *Iltalehti* 9 June 1926, 2; *Ilkka* 6 August 1926, 1.



Fig. 6.2 An accordion version of Free Russia from Chester's catalog. The label title "Vaapa Vaanaja" was a comic contortion of "Vapaa Venäjä" and served to differentiate the record from the version with ideological vocals. (Photo: Marko Tikka)



‘Marseillaise.’”<sup>59</sup> This comparison was sharp-sighted, for Free Russia indeed developed into a Finnish counterpart of the “Marseillaise” in the following years. The main difference between the spread of these two marching songs was that Free Russia benefitted from records right from the beginning, whereas the trajectory of the “Marseillaise” into a transnational working-class anthem had started before the rise of the record industry. What was common to both marches was that they spread in different versions.<sup>60</sup> As for Free Russia, this meant that the version performed at workers’ events in Finland had different lyrics from Otto Pyykkönen’s record.<sup>61</sup> While these “original” lyrics likely remained the standard at workers’ events even after 1928, the record, with Pyykkönen’s vocals, made the march familiar to new audiences far beyond the organized workers’ communities.

In both Finland and Finnish America, Free Russia especially appealed to working-class people affiliated with the labor movement. However, the contexts for distributing ideological music were essentially different in these countries. In the United States, the capitalist record industry seems to have been quite liberal toward ideological content when it looked for material that would attract Finnish-American buyers. In Finland, the distributors had to conform to a stricter ideological control. The newly independent country was still torn by the bloody Civil War, and the White winners sought to quell the leftist counterculture that survived among workers. In their anxiety over a new revolution, the bourgeois Whites eagerly banned workers’ political songs as subversive propaganda. If a song appeared to praise Soviet Russia, it was especially suspicious.

When the performance of Free Russia became increasingly common in workers’ events in 1926, the bourgeois commentators in the press quickly became alarmed in Finland.<sup>62</sup> They did not even need to hear the song, as its mere name was enough to provoke suspicions about Bolshevik propaganda.<sup>63</sup> Most importantly, bourgeois critics argued that the title and lyrics of Free Russia blatantly contradicted present conditions in the Soviet

<sup>59</sup> *Pohjan Voima* 6 June 1926, 3.

<sup>60</sup> For the “Marseillaise” as a workers’ anthem, see Sabine Hake, *The Proletarian Dream: Socialism, Culture, and Emotion in Germany, 1863–1933* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 88, 93, 126; Deborah Pearl, *Creating a Culture of Revolution: Workers and the Revolutionary Movement in Late Imperial Russia* (Indiana: Bloomington, 2005), 145–205.

<sup>61</sup> See *Pohjan Voima* 6 June 1926, 3.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. *Iltalehti* 9 June 1926, 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Ilkka* 6 August 1926, 1.

Union.<sup>64</sup> As the leading liberal newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* put it, the march should not be performed in Finland but in Russia, where people truly need the freedom that the march proclaimed.<sup>65</sup>

Interestingly, Free Russia also found critics among the Social Democrats. For example, a columnist for *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* associated the performance of the march with people's ignorance about the arbitrariness and terror of the Soviet government. The columnist also linked the march more generally with Russianness, as it was based on a Russian melody. Instead of Free Russia, he recommended the old Finnish workers' anthem "Työväen marssi" (The Workers' March), composed by Oskar Merikanto in 1894, as it "is stirring and more suitable on a Finnish basis."<sup>66</sup> The columnist's view mirrors the tendency of Finnish Social Democrats to view Soviet Russia as a threat to both Finnishness and Finnish Social Democracy.<sup>67</sup>

Despite the critique of Social Democratic commentators, Free Russia continued to enjoy popularity at workers' events.<sup>68</sup> This had to do with the ongoing division of the labor movement into Social Democratic and Communist camps. Indeed, Free Russia seems to have become an anthem of Finnish Communists at the end of the 1920s. By playing and singing the song, communist workers could solidify their identity, strengthen their internal cohesion and protest current conditions in their country of residence. Free Russia offered an appealing counterimage to that of White Finland, the community from whose bosom they had been pushed. Hence, the case of Free Russia is revealing of how people lived out the nation and its political divides in their everyday lives. While some people used the song as a way of criticizing the oppressive Finnish nation-state, others viewed it, in contrast, to be a threat to the nation.

The leftist workers' use of Free Russia to support protest is illustrated by particular incidents in northern Finland. During these incidents, workers or working-class youth gathered on railway platforms to sing Free Russia in support of communist activists, who were either being

<sup>64</sup> E.g. *Etelä-Saimaa* 30 June 1927, 3.

<sup>65</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 23 June 1927, 19.

<sup>66</sup> Sasu Punanen, "Mitä Sasulle kuuluu," *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* 18 June 1927, 9.

<sup>67</sup> Niko Kannisto, *Vaaleanpunainen tasavalta? SDP, itsenäisyys ja kansallisen yhtenäisyyden kysymys vuosina 1918–1924* (Helsinki: Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura, 2016), 565.

<sup>68</sup> *Eteenpäin* 25 January 1928, 3; *Sosialisti* 30 March 1928, 5.

transported to prison by the police or being released.<sup>69</sup> In situations like these, the song operated as building material for an experience community as it provided leftist workers with a means to interpret and express their collective experiences of political oppression and nation-state violence.

The singing incidents on railway platforms draw our attention to the role of place and occasion in shaping experiences. Historian Peter Burke has introduced the idea of an “occasionalist” approach, which encourages historians to look closer at occasions and situations and the ways in which interaction, roles and audiences shape them.<sup>70</sup> During the incidents, the singing workers engaged in a dynamic interaction with other actors such as the police, railway workers, reporters and bystanders. These diverse participants responded to the singing of Free Russia very differently as the song induced among them very different experiences of the nation.

Spatiality and occasionality are likewise important factors in tracing the experiences of listening to Free Russia on a record. The spread of the imported records and gramophones multiplied the number of situations where Free Russia was played. While earlier the march was heard mainly in organized workers’ events, people could now hear it on a gramophone in cafés, dance halls, trains, boats (see Fig. 6.1) and homes.<sup>71</sup> The growing exposure to the recorded version also encouraged people to learn to sing the song or play it on an instrument. All this expanded the familiarity of the march and associated it with other popular music records, which hit the market at the same time.

The new performance contexts may have also obscured the political character of Free Russia in people’s minds. This would explain why Free Russia was even played on a gramophone in a patriotic soirée of the White Civil Guard and its supporting women’s organization, as a leftist newspaper ironically reported.<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, some press commentators felt that the spread of the march into new contexts made it all the more dangerous. One columnist depicted how the playing of the tune on a gramophone in a café had made him ponder the emotional influence of Free Russia. The columnist compared the march to the Marseillaise, which

<sup>69</sup>National Archives of Finland, The Archives of the Political Police (Valpo) I, person file 147: Akseli Timonen, Overview of the Tornio delegation, 30 July–30 August 1928; *Pohjan Voima* 15 December 1926, 1; *Pervä-Pohja* 9 March 1927, 5.

<sup>70</sup>Peter Burke, “Performing History: The Importance of Occasions,” *Rethinking History* 9:11 (2005), 36, 44–9.

<sup>71</sup>E.g. *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* 26 May 1929, 8; *Iltalehti* 15 July 1929, 4.

<sup>72</sup>*Sosialisti* 21 December 1929, 6.

had “immensely influenced masses of men” during the French Revolution. Likewise, when Free Russia was played, some listeners were “inebriated by its tunes, having flaring eyes and emotions oriented to do battle.” Hence, the columnist concluded that the march appeared a subtle form of Bolshevik agitation.<sup>73</sup>

The variations in the interpretation of Free Russia in political terms are illustrated by a response to the survey mentioned above on gramophone use. According to the respondent, his parents had acquired a gramophone in his childhood, and their record collection had included Free Russia and some other Finnish-American records. On one occasion, they had left a pile of records on a table, Free Russia lying on top, when a Civil Guard officer had visited their home. The respondent recalled that “the officer happened to lean on the Free Russia record too hard and it got broken, but it was surely an accident.” While suggesting the incident to be an accident, the informant showed his awareness of the record’s political character by adding that his parents “never talked politics at home.”<sup>74</sup>

In the alarm over the Free Russia records, politics amalgamated with the perceived pervasiveness of second-rate music coming from America. Press commentators repeatedly attacked Finnish-American records for their low musical quality and trifling themes.<sup>75</sup> Underlying this criticism was the notion that many Finnish-American records were addressed to working-class audiences and some of them concerned class politics. Free Russia appeared as a showpiece of “trash music,” as it was not only recorded in America by an unremarkable singer but also appeared subversive.<sup>76</sup>

On the other hand, the leftist press eagerly mocked bourgeois newspapers for their anxiety over Free Russia and other American-made records. In 1929, a columnist for *Pohjan Voima* noted ironically that the culprit for the viral spread of “trash music” was actually the bourgeois government, which had lowered the duties on gramophone records. The columnist stated that this decision had profoundly influenced the aural experience of the bourgeoisie:

<sup>73</sup> *Kymenlaakson Sanomat* 3 August 1929, 4.

<sup>74</sup> FLSA, KRA, Kulutus 2006–7, 267.

<sup>75</sup> *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* 9 August 1929, 5; *Tulenkantajat* 18 September 1929, 13; *Suomen musiikkilehti* 15 (1929), 238–9.

<sup>76</sup> E.g. *Tuulispää* 3 August 1929, 6–7.

*The bourgeois now suffer tremendously upon hearing the bacillary tones of "Free Russia" in their ears everywhere. The whole atmosphere of the white country [...] is filled by Bolshevik tones. The bourgeois no longer hear but very seldom the ultra-yearning tones of "Jager's bride."*<sup>77</sup>

By the term "white country," the author referred to the winners of the Civil War and their political hegemony in Finland. Interestingly, the columnist also contrasted the success of Free Russia with the singspiel "Jääkäarin morsian" (Jager's Bride), which had premiered in 1921. The singspiel depicted Finnish Jagers, who had gone to Germany for military training during World War I for the purpose of liberating Finland from Russia. Excerpts from Jager's Bride were recorded by several companies during the gramophone fever of 1929, and they represented the genre of nationalistic popular music on the Finnish market.<sup>78</sup> For the leftist columnist, the comparison between Free Russia and Jager's Bride served as an analogy for the struggle between socialism and capitalism in Finland.

As the 1920s were coming to a close, Finnish authorities and right-wing activists sought to quell the spread of Free Russia by banning its performance and destroying its sheet music.<sup>79</sup> The police and customs officials also reportedly seized shipments of Free Russia records, thus hurting the wallets of distributors like Chester.<sup>80</sup> These measures stemmed from the rise of the radical nationalist Lapua movement, which resorted to rough justice in suppressing leftist activity and pushed the authorities to pass anti-communist legislation.<sup>81</sup> However, among the left, the bans and seizures served to associate Free Russia even more strongly with protest against the oppressive nation-state. For one leftist commentator, the seizures illustrated what bizarre means the bourgeoisie was willing to adopt in its zeal to protect the fatherland.<sup>82</sup>

The reported incidents concerning the distribution and performance of Free Russia support the ideas of cultural studies scholar Sara Ahmed concerning the stickiness of emotions. Ahmed emphasizes that emotions do not reside in subjects or objects but take shape as the objects of emotions

<sup>77</sup> *Pohjan Voima* 28 July 1929, 2.

<sup>78</sup> E.g. His Master's Voice X 3127. See Strömmer (2012), 155, 176–7, 254.

<sup>79</sup> E.g. *Työväenjärjestöjen Tiedonantaja* 30 May 1929, 5, and 26 October 1929, 3; *Työ* 8 August 1929, 3.

<sup>80</sup> *Työn Ääni* 26 July 1929, 4; *Pohjan Voima* 27 July 1929, 1.

<sup>81</sup> See Saarela (2008), 761–81.

<sup>82</sup> *Työväenjärjestöjen Tiedonantaja* 30 May 1929, 5.

move and circulate between bodies.<sup>83</sup> The more widely Free Russia was spread by records and sheet music, and the more it confronted different audiences and provoked public discussion, the more emotional value was attached to it. The political charge surrounding Free Russia was hard to miss even if one viewed the record primarily in the framework of popular music, not to mention if one had political affiliations.

For many communist workers, the playing and singing of Free Russia became a means of expressing courage and unity in the face of oppression and thereby binding together their community of experience. Indeed, the song was clearly part of the phenomenon in the late 1920s where the communist movement was strongly visible in Finnish society through strikes and demonstrations. This, in turn, boosted a counterreaction and served to radicalize right-wing Whites. Considering the outraged opinion pieces about bold communists singing and playing Free Russia,<sup>84</sup> it is not far-fetched to claim that the song also consolidated the opposite community of experience, the supporters of the far-right Lapua movement, which mobilized at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s.

Just how provoked right-wing commentators were about popular music records that had anything to do with Russia is aptly illustrated by a writer to *Länsi-Suomi*, who wondered in 1930 why patriotic Finns wanted to listen to songs about the Volga, the Urals and the Russian moon:

*The whole Russian society before and after the revolution is swarming in our modern ditties, which we listen to on our gramophones. [...] for those gramophone records, which taste like gruel, I suggest that we provide really good transportation by car to the wilderness of death.*<sup>85</sup>

By urging that unwanted records should be transported to the wilderness, the writer referred to a method of abduction and intimidation adopted by far-right nationalists in their struggle against communism. In the summer of 1930, the activists of the far-right Lapua movement began to attack suspected communists by abducting and driving them to the border of the Soviet Union. By suggesting a similar treatment for records, the writer made his political stance clear and revealed the warped logic of Finnish right-wing nationalists in lumping together Russianness, communism and a bunch of gramophone records as objects of fear and hate.

<sup>83</sup> Ahmed (2004), 4–11.

<sup>84</sup> *Rovaniemi* 3 August 1929, 2; *Fascisti* 15 September 1931, 7.

<sup>85</sup> *Länsi-Suomi* 5 August 1930, 4.

## CONCLUSION

When the global gramophone fever reached Finland in the late 1920s, hundreds of thousands of consumers got to know what modern Finnish dance music was like. Nevertheless, the suppliers of this music were multinational companies such as Gramophone and Columbia, which served the needs of different ethnicities by offering them popular music in their own language. The distribution of popular-music records also required the contribution of transnational mercantile agents such as Charles Chester in Finland. Chester was involved in constructing the musical experience of the nation by selecting the imported Finnish-American records and marketing them to consumers as Finnish music. By also including in his catalog political working-class songs, he widened the idea of popular music and reached for new consumer segments.

The catalogs for Finland of Columbia and Gramophone offerings were partly designed for different audiences, but their best-selling records were very much alike: danceable waltzes with a familiar rhythm, style and orchestration. These features helped buyers to conceive of these songs as Finnish, as “our own” popular music. The idea of a Finnish popular music was also reinforced by the sheer volume of new record titles that hit the market during the lowered customs duties in 1929. As never before, consumers across the country were buying and listening to the same new releases at the same time. This generated a new collective experience of popular music, one that was intrinsically commercial and included both national and transnational dimensions. While the mere labels on the records pointed to their foreign origins and contributed to their charm, consumers could also conceive of the records as Finnish, owing to their topics, lyrics and their familiar music styles.

The rapidly growing imports of popular music records raised alarm among nationalist intellectuals regarding the corrupt musical tastes of the masses. This alarm echoed the nineteenth-century educated elite’s aspirations to mold the cultural values and consumer habits of the rank and file.<sup>86</sup> The alarm over records was also connected with politics. It was especially the Finnish-American records, which were aimed at working-class audiences and included ideological songs, that fueled criticism about

<sup>86</sup> See Pertti Haapala, “‘Rihkamakansa’ – työväestö sivistyneistön silmin,” in *Suomen kulttuurihistoria* 3, ed. by Anja Kervanto-Nevalinna & Laura Kolbe (Helsinki: Tammi, 2003), 156–77; Hake (2017), 33–48.

the flux of dubious low-quality music into Finland. The march Free Russia was a case in point, as its popularity among Finnish workers conjured up the threat of Soviet Russia in the minds of bourgeois and even Social Democratic commentators. However, among ordinary workers, Free Russia could evoke very different experiences and provide a counterimage to the prevailing oppressive conditions in Finland. Overall, the case of Free Russia aptly illustrates how divided was Finland still politically in the late 1920s. Even if the popular music records may have given rise to a new “Finnish” community of experience based on shared aural experiences, some records could also nourish existing political communities of experience and thereby exacerbate societal demarcations.

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# Red Orphans' Fatherland: Children in the Civil War of 1918 and Its Aftermath

*Mervi Kaarninen*

## INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1918, the Civil War in Finland divided the nation into winners and losers—Whites and Reds. These divisions affected almost all citizens, including children. The war tore the society apart, and the consequences of the war were the most severe in families where one or both of the parents had lost their lives. There were families in which both parents were waiting to be sentenced to prison camps, that in the summer and fall of 1918 held about 70,000 people.<sup>1</sup> After World War I in Europe, and in all the belligerent countries, the war orphans' generation was growing up.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Aapo Roselius & Tuomas Tepora, eds, *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

<sup>2</sup>Pignot, Manon, "Children," in *The Cambridge history of the First World War Vol III: Civil Society*, ed. by Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 29–45; Manon Pignot, *Allons enfants de la patriae: Génération Grande Guerre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2012); Andrew Donson, *Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority In Germany, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Bart

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In Finland, the situation had specific features. The Civil War left about 20,000–25,000 orphaned children, but the division into Reds and Whites also applied to the war orphans. The overwhelming majority of orphans were the children of the Red rebels, about 90 percent of 5000–5500 families. The families of the Reds were, as a rule, poor, and for a widowed mother, it was an impossible task to simultaneously try to survive with her children and earn a living without receiving any outside economic support. State officials knew to expect that children in the homes of the Reds would suffer from distress.<sup>3</sup> If the husband and father had managed to survive the battles and the prison camp, his involvement in the war on the Red side would stigmatize him and his family for years to come.

The state authorities, charity workers and teachers understood that it was not possible to allow the children of the Reds to starve to death. These children needed food, constant care and careful upbringing in order to become good citizens in the new independent Finland. The organization of relief work had already begun at the end of April 1918 when the war had not yet ended. The National Board of Social Welfare, together with the National Board of Education and charitable and Christian associations, was responsible for the organization of the targeted relief work. In this salvation process, the aim was to build a thriving new Finland and a unified generation from the ruins of the Civil War.<sup>4</sup> These actors understood that in the new independent state, the children and young people would form the future of the nation.

The children of the Reds had to be integrated into the shared fatherland, but how was this process to actually be made possible? Many of these children had lost everything: their father, their siblings and, in many cases, the security of their home. In this chapter, I examine how the children of the Reds understood and experienced the fatherland. They had witnessed

Ziino, “They seem to understand all about the war: Australian children and the First World War,” *Journal of History of Childhood and Youth*, 11:2 (2018), 227–41; Aldis Purs, “Orphaned Testimonies: The Place of Displaced Children in Independent Latvia, 1918–26,” in *Placing the Child in Twentieth-Century History: Context and Framework*, ed. by Nick Baron (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 40–69; Nazan Maksudyan, *Ottoman Children & Youth during World War I* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1919), 11–15.

<sup>3</sup> *Suomen sotaorvot, tilastollinen selonteko*. (A statistical account of war orphans in Finland). *Les enfants abandonnés par suite de la guerre. Statistique pour la Finlande. Résultats de l'enquête sur les habitations en 1919. Quelques données préliminaires. Revue sociale. L'administration générale des affaires sociale en Finlande* 5 & 6, 375–95.

<sup>4</sup> A. R. Rosenqvist, “Aikamme kulttuuri sekä individuaalinen ja sosiaalinen pedagogiikka,” *Kasvatus ja koulu* 7:9 (1921), 253.

the devastation of war and were growing up amidst contradictions in the new nation state on its way to peace and harmonization. I seek here to interpret children's emotions and experiences in White Finland. What kind of emotions were children taught and what kind of emotions did they have to eliminate?<sup>5</sup> How did pedagogues and teachers understand the children's emotions, such as grief, anger and bitterness? The children mourned their losses, while the winners' side organized victory celebrations and parades in honor of their war heroes. The children and orphans of the Reds found connections via the different emotional communities such as home, foster home, school and the children's own communities in the streets and on the playgrounds where they tried to respond to different expectations and demands.<sup>6</sup> I use the concept of the emotional frontier, which historians of childhood Karen Vallgård, Kristine Alexander and Stephanie Olsen define as a "boundary between different emotional formations." These emotional frontiers are difficult to traverse. For instance, in the case of the Red children, the state authorities and teachers, in their salvation process, had very different aims regarding emotional education and upbringing than did the parents; and the children, caught in the middle, needed to cross boundaries between different emotional communities.<sup>7</sup> At school, children were taught emotions, values and habits which were in contrast to the values according to which they were being raised at home, for example, in the case of education concerning love of the fatherland.

In this chapter, I focus on the city of Tampere where the Civil War and its consequences were felt deeply. Tampere was a key industrial center in Finland and the third largest town. The Battle of Tampere in early April 1918 was massive and particularly brutal.<sup>8</sup> And the fall of "Red Tampere"

<sup>5</sup> About emotional education, see Karen Vallgård, Kristine Alexander & Stephanie Olsen, "Emotions in the Global Politics of Childhood," in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspective*, ed. by Stephanie Olsen (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 21.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying About Emotions in History," *Journal of American Historical Review* 107:3 (2002), 842–3.

<sup>7</sup> Vallgård, Alexander & Olsen (2015), 21–5; Josephine Hoegaerts, "Learning to Love: Embodied Practices of Patriotism in the Belgian Nineteenth Century Classroom (and Beyond)," in *Emotions and Everyday Nationalism in Modern European History*, ed. by Andreas Tynen, Maarten Van Ginderachter & Xosé M Núñez Seixas (London: Routledge, 2020), 66–7.

<sup>8</sup> Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Tuomas Hoppu, "The Battle of Tampere," in *Tampere 1918: A Town in the Civil*

marked the beginning of the end of Red rule in southern Finland. As research data, I use a large oral history collection entitled Tampere Political Heritage. The thematically structured interviews were conducted in 1972–76.<sup>9</sup> They can be interpreted as life-story interviews including themes from early childhood until the 1970s. The Civil War and its aftermath were among the themes discussed and open a view on the war from a child's eyes.<sup>10</sup> Each interview forms a life story where the narrator gives an account of his/her life via the reminiscence process and memory. The construction of the childhood experiences began in childhood. Life stories include people's own perceptions of their lives. They are influenced both by the time of the event, the Civil War, and the time of the narration, the 1970s. The life history includes the dimensions of the life story and the narrated life. It combines reconstruction of and reflection on one's past. Emotions like sorrow, bitterness and fear have been structured during the life span in different social and political contexts in light of the experiences undergone.<sup>11</sup> And those experiences have had an impact on the narrator's world view.<sup>12</sup> I have complemented the oral history material with documents from public authorities. The upbringing of the children of the Reds, how the fatherland was taught, and how the state understood its

*War*, ed. by Tuomas Hoppu & Pertti Haapala (Tampere: Vapriikki, 2010), 44–139.

<sup>9</sup>In 1972, the History Committee of Tampere commissioned the Folkliives Archive of the University of Tampere in the project "Tampere Political Heritage." The collection includes 222 interviews. Beginning in the early 1960s, archives and museums began to organize campaigns to collect written narratives from ordinary Finns about their personal experiences related to the Civil War and its aftermath. The narratives of the people who identified with the defeated side contained a lot of new information concerning the war. In Tampere, the Civil War had been "a lived experience," as people had commemorated the war in their various communities. Tiina Kinnunen, "The post-Cold War Memory Culture of the Civil War: Old-New Patterns and New Approaches," in Tepora & Roselius (2014).

<sup>10</sup>For childrens' experience of war, see Ellen Schruppf, "Childrens' Stories of WWII: A Study of Essays by Norwegian School Children from 1946," in *Nordic Childhoods 1700–1960: from Folk Beliefs to Pippi Longstocking*, ed. by Reidas Asgaard, Marcia J. & Merethe Roos Bunge (New York: Routledge, 2018), 205–20.

<sup>11</sup>Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2005), 225–7; Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), 34–43; Alistair Thomson, "Life stories and Historical Analysis," in *Research Methods for History*, ed. by Simon Gunn & Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 101–17.

<sup>12</sup>Saara Tuomaala, "Sukupuolen kokemuksista muistitietohistoriaan," in *Muistitietotutkimus: Metodologisia kysymyksiä*, ed. by Outi Fingerroos et al. (Helsinki: SKS, 2006), 272–3.

obligations to the orphans<sup>13</sup> can be found in the documents of the poor-relief, child welfare and school administration authorities. Additionally, education ideology and pedagogy were discussed in the pedagogical journals of the time.<sup>14</sup>

### THE STREET AND THE FEAR

Locals lived in Tampere under Red Rule in the besieged town for two months. Children saw the Red Guards daily in marches, parades and funeral processions. They followed how the Reds practiced shooting and built barricades on the streets. During the Red Rule, unannounced and repeated house searches were conducted day and night in order to find hidden men, guns and foodstuffs. This continued after the Battle of Tampere when the Whites began to search for hidden Red Guards.<sup>15</sup>

The boys in Tampere could not stay away from the streets even when the battles were going on. The young lads were excited and tense about what they were experiencing. “When our gang heard that there was shooting and the din of battle somewhere, we just went to see; we did not understand to be afraid.”<sup>16</sup> The boys drifted in groups around Tampere, and during these tours they saw the brutality of war. For the boys between the ages of 7 and 14, the streets and quarters had become familiar during the time before when they had worked as errand boys, newspaper vendors and shoeblacks. These dead-end jobs offered the possibility for working-class boys and girls to earn money. This was a typical phenomenon in all cities.

During the war, boys wanted to continue their way of life. Paavo Johannes was 11 years old in 1918, and about 50 years later, he reminisced about a walk he had taken around the town during a battle. He had seen two young, about 15- or 16-year-old Red Guards losing their lives. Paavo Johannes recounted that all that had happened and every thing he had

<sup>13</sup>I define the Red orphans' generation as including those children whose fathers had fought on the Red side. This refers to the experience of belonging to a population group that had lost the war.

<sup>14</sup>*Opettajain lehti* (Teachers Magazine), *Kasvatus ja koulu* (Upbringing and School), *Alakansakoulu* (Lower Primary School), *Suomen Kasvatusopillinen aikakauskirja* (Finnish Pedagogical Journal).

<sup>15</sup>Marianne Junila, “War through children’s eyes,” in Tepora & Roselius (2014), 230–53.

<sup>16</sup>Tampere University, Folklife Archives (hereafter FA), Tampere Political Heritage (hereafter TPH), Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358; Järvinen, Toivo Vihtori (1908) 6400.

seen during the Civil War returned to his mind much later. “As a child, all things did not come to mind. The events were out of my mind for a long time and now these memories begin to come back again. There is now more time to think.”<sup>17</sup> He contemplated years later that when he had processed his experiences with a child’s brain, he had not had nightmares. “I thought it belongs to the rhythm.”<sup>18</sup> Urpo said the same. “It no longer feels like anything, when you see people dying. The Guard bayoneted a person to death. You got used to it.”<sup>19</sup>

When the Battle of Tampere began, people had to escape from their homes and try to find shelter in churches, schools and the basements of public buildings. Toini, born in 1908, remembered when shelling got closer and her family was woken up in the middle of the night and told to leave to find shelter. When Toini ran with her family, they heard shooting quite close by. Toini describes her experiences in the following words: “Strange that I was not afraid. I did not feel any fear. The adults were afraid. It was exciting.”<sup>20</sup> Toini and her family stayed in a shelter in a cellar near her home for two weeks.<sup>21</sup> The noise of the artillery, street fights and the whistling of shells could be heard inside the shelters and cellars.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, young people could not resist leaving the shelters. They would leave at dusk for the town center in order to see what was going on.<sup>23</sup> The huge fires, the blackened and deserted houses and the lines of prisoners remained in their minds after the battles.<sup>24</sup> “The night when the town was finally captured, we children, were in a cellar and saw the great fire of Kyttälä. It felt gloomy.”<sup>25</sup>

After the battles ended, the massive damage to the town was revealed. More than a hundred buildings had been destroyed.<sup>26</sup> One mother commented that children are so used to seeing dead bodies that it no longer feels like anything.<sup>27</sup> First, families wanted to see if their own homes had

<sup>17</sup>FA, TPH, Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167.

<sup>18</sup>FA, TPH, Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167

<sup>19</sup>FA, TPH, Salminen, Urpo (1913) 6252.

<sup>20</sup>FA, TPH, Alanko, Toini (1907) 6224; see also Salminen, Urpo (1913) 6252.

<sup>21</sup>FA, TPH, Alanko, Toini (1907) 6224.

<sup>22</sup>FA, TPH, Ruokonen, Paavo Alvart (1907) 6368.

<sup>23</sup>FA, TPH, Salminen, Urpo (1913) 6252.

<sup>24</sup>FA, TPH, Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358; Saario, Urho (1912) 6374.

<sup>25</sup>FA, TPH, Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358.

<sup>26</sup>Sami Suodenjoki, “From Ruins to Reconstruction,” in Hoppu & Haapala (2010), 160–72.

<sup>27</sup>Tampere University. Department of History. Diary of Kaarlo Tiililä, 19 April 1918.

been damaged or burnt down. Parents walked with their children through the town. The children were thus exposed to the destruction, to homes where everything had been turned upside down, to windows, ramparts and stoves destroyed and furniture broken. On the way home, there were dead bodies, shattered carriages, horses lying on the ground and the smell of smoke. The prisoners gathered at the Market Square stuck particularly in the children's minds.<sup>28</sup> Several decades later, Otso described thoughts he had had at the time: "I did not feel any fear of these dead people and dead horses."<sup>29</sup>

The battle was over but it would be a long way back to peace and a normal life. Paavo Alvirt describes his experiences during the final stages of the war:

*Two fallen Red Guards were lying Under our window. At the Central Square, prisoners were left standing for the whole day. We heard that the aim was to shoot them at the Central Square with machine gun fire. Some of the prisoners were taken to the old Russian barrack area. Waking up in the middle of the night was terrible. My mother had blankets and pillows around her head to mute the sounds of execution shots. My father tore his hair out. It was terrible even from a child's eyes to think about what was happening when the shots resounded. In the morning at 2 o'clock the execution shots were heard. They were indelibly stamped into my mind at that time. That lasted the whole summer.<sup>30</sup>*

When people spoke of their experiences, the common and repetitive theme was their view of fear. Why they, as children, were not afraid, why they did not understand to be afraid? Trauma psychologist Kirsi Peltonen has analyzed in her research children's and adolescents' unique way of meaning making and handling violent situations. As she writes, each developmental stage offers both protective self-healing processes and vulnerabilities. Hence, the lack of full understanding of frightening events might, in this case, have protected the children in traumatic situations.<sup>31</sup> The chain of events was remembered in very detailed ways, and it proves how

<sup>28</sup> FA, TPH, Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358; Saario, Urho (1912) 6374; Järvinen, Toivo (1908) 6400; Lindholm, Eino (1912) 6436.

<sup>29</sup> FA, TPH, Ruokonen, Paavo Alvirt (1907) 6368; Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358, Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167.

<sup>30</sup> FA, TPH, Ruokonen, Paavo Alvirt 6368; also Kolinen, Elsa (1903) 6898.

<sup>31</sup> Kirsi Peltonen, "Children and Violence: Nature, consequences and interventions focuses on mental health and social relations of children exposed to violence" (PhD dissertation: University of Tampere, 2011), 14.

strong these childhood experiences during the war had been. The war changed normal daily routines completely. The sounds of fighting, the walking routes, the people on the streets and the passers-by were decades later described in detail. The memories are sharp and they concern, for example, the houses and streets where shooting was witnessed, where the dressing station was situated, where guns and ammunition were placed and where dead bodies were lying. The descriptions are present in memories as detailed visions.<sup>32</sup>

During the days, weeks and months after the battle, boys and girls were closely involved in the life of the town around them. The boys' activities in the town and their curiosity concerning exceptional circumstances proved that the war was also an adventure. The young people watched what was happening around them, and they followed the model they got from adults. When dead bodies were picked up, boys checked the pockets of the victims and collected what they thought might be profitable. Adults would chase the children away at once when they saw them, but there were always opportunities in such chaotic circumstances.<sup>33</sup>

The children had been involved in dangerous and traumatic situations, and they were entrusted with more responsibility than in ordinary circumstances. Paavo Johannes had followed his father to see the damage to their neighborhood only to be met with White troops carrying out inspections. In this situation, Paavo Johannes' father was aimed at with a rifle, after which he was arrested and taken away. Paavo Johannes ran to his mother who told Paavo Johannes to run after his father and find out where he had been taken.<sup>34</sup> The children wandered with their mothers and relatives near the cemetery area looking for their loved ones among the heaps of dead bodies. Mothers sent children to prison camps to carry food to their fathers, relatives or neighbors. This job was easier for children because the guards at the camp were not so aggressive towards them.<sup>35</sup> The fallen or executed father is often mentioned in the memories of the respondents, and after the father's death came anxiety about the mother. Vieno, born 1914, explained that she and her siblings would not allow their mother to

<sup>32</sup> For example: FA, TPH, Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167.

<sup>33</sup> FA, TPH, Salminen, Urpo (1913) 6252.

<sup>34</sup> FA, TPH, Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167; Ruokonen, Paavo Alvar (1907) 6368.

<sup>35</sup> FA, TPH, Salminen, Urpo 6252; Ruokonen, Paavo Alvar (1907) 6368.



disappear from their sight. Children shouted after their mother: "Don't go, they will also kill you."<sup>36</sup>

Although the war had made death a daily affair, the children realized that the way the bodies of the Red troops were treated was not right or acceptable. Sorrow, remembrance and respect for the dead also belonged to the losing side. About a year after the end of the Civil War, in May 1919, a group of girls and boys wanted to remember the Reds who had died in the war. The children knew the location of a mass grave and put a red cloth they had purchased there as a flag. It was the children's own idea, for they felt the need to commemorate the grave. They also waited to see if anyone would take their flag away. Nobody came.<sup>37</sup>

### AT HOME: HUNGER, COLD AND BITTERNESS

For the children of the Reds, the Civil War and its aftermath left them with the sense that no one cared what happened to their families and that no one would help them. Otso was seven years old in 1918 and he retrospectively analyzed his feelings: "There was no pity towards the Reds. The society did not think about them. It was trying to fall silent. Keep quiet. The beaten were left alone to lick their wounds. Those who had stayed alive tried to lick wounds."<sup>38</sup>

Bitterness towards White winners and the whole of Finnish society can be found in Otso's speech. The bitterness, however, was an emotion from which the children of the Reds should have been saved and helped to overcome. The state authorities understood as early as the spring 1918 that children and young people had an important role to play in building a new independent Finland. It was the duty of the Finnish nation to care for the Red children and educate them to be "good citizens." The most important task would be to teach them to love their fatherland.<sup>39</sup> The children's experience after the war that led them to feel that no one cared about them meant that it was difficult to learn to love their fatherland and to grow up to be patriotic citizens.

<sup>36</sup> Finnish Labour Archives (hereafter FLA), The Commission of Finnish Labour Tradition (hereafter CFLT) 252/1100; also FA, TPH, Kolinen, Elsa (1903) 6898.

<sup>37</sup> FA, TPH, Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167; see also Alanko, Toini 6224.

<sup>38</sup> FA, TPH, Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358.

<sup>39</sup> Mervi Kaarninen, *Punaorvot 1918* (Helsinki: Minerva, 2017), 12–42.

In post-1918 Finland, there were two categories of orphans. White orphans were treated as the children of national heroes who had saved Finland (the fatherland) from bolshevism. The National Board of Social Welfare organized the support of White families through a statutory pension. But while Whites had the right to pensions, the Reds had to apply for municipal poor-relief funds in order to stay alive. The pensions for White war widows and orphans were understood to be a hard-earned winners' right. After the Great War in Europe in countries like Britain, France and Germany, pension schemes were created for the war widows and orphans.<sup>40</sup> In Finland, this kind of war-widow pension scheme was out of the question for the red widows and orphans during the years that followed the war. The Red widows ultimately received a pension granted by the Finnish government, and the status of war widow, only in 1943, 25 years after the end of the Civil War.<sup>41</sup>

Based on statistics, most Red families were poor and would have needed societal aid. It was understood that without societal intervention, these families would starve to death, so the state began to organize relief work to help Red families suffering from hunger and cold. The average age of children, in the whole country, who had lost a father, was seven years, and there were, on average, three children under the age of 15 in such families. For the Red widows, it was difficult to find jobs because of the prejudices many employers held towards them. If a mother did find a job, the daycare for small children caused problems.<sup>42</sup> Additionally many families were homeless because of the damages incurred in the war. Many families had been housed in company flats, and they often had to move due to the death of the father. In addition, many house owners were unwilling to rent flats to Red families.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup>Michael Lanthier, *Women Alone: War Widows in Third Republic France, 1870–1940* (Burnaby: Simon Fraser University, 2004); see also Angela Smith, *Discourses Surrounding British Widows of the First World War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 71, 77–88; Caoimhe Nic Dháibhéid, “Schooling the National Orphans: The Education of the Children of the Easter Rising Leaders,” *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 9:2 (2016), 261–73.

<sup>41</sup>Juho Partanen, “Punaleskien eläkkeet 1943,” in *Wars, Internees and the Transition to the Postwar Era*, ed. by Lars Westerlund (Helsinki: Kansallisarkisto, 2010), [https://arkisto.fi/uploads/Julkaisut/monografiat/Internoidut\\_Naytto.pdf](https://arkisto.fi/uploads/Julkaisut/monografiat/Internoidut_Naytto.pdf), accessed 24 August 2020.

<sup>42</sup>*Suomen sotaorvot, tilastollinen selonteko*. (A statistical account of war orphans in Finland). *Les enfants abandonnés par suite de la guerre 1919. Statistique pour la Finlande*, 375–95.

<sup>43</sup>Suodenjoki (2010), 160–72.

The Finnish National Board of Social Welfare reacted quickly after the war by planning an operation to transfer children of the Reds to White homes in agrarian areas where foodstuffs were more available than in urbanized areas. The foster parents were supposed to raise children to appreciate the independent fatherland and its values. The transfers were seen as a means to save children from warfare, hunger and cold, as well as a socialist upbringing. The Red mothers were stigmatized as a social threat that could not be trusted with such an important task as bringing up the new generation.<sup>44</sup> This plan proved how suspicious the state authorities and social workers were towards the Red mothers' ability as parents.<sup>45</sup> However, this operation had connections to the wider question of child transfers and relocation in Europe after the Great War. During and after the war, tens of thousands of children were moved from Central Europe to areas that had suffered less during the war, such as Denmark and Sweden. Carried out until 1924, the transfers of children incorporated humanitarian and political motivations.<sup>46</sup>

Charitable organizations took on an important role in trying to influence people's opinions and getting help for the orphaned children and widows who found themselves in the middle of a catastrophe. The organizations published appeals filled with emotional rhetoric, and in which charity and concrete aid were combined with Christian love and love of the fatherland. It was felt that it would be in the fatherland's interest to help the Red children, children who should not be punished or rejected for their father's wrongdoings, and who should be forgiven their parents' sins.<sup>47</sup> In some appeals it was recommended that Finland should give up foreign missions so that the resources could be used for "local pagans."<sup>48</sup> Using the concept of "pagan" in this context meant that the Red widows and orphaned children were seen as objects needing missionary and educational aid.

To get the poor relief, the Red widows were obliged to accurately explain the economic circumstances of the family. The local poor-relief

<sup>44</sup>Tiina Lintunen, "Women at War," in Tepora & Roselius (2014), 201–29.

<sup>45</sup>Kaarninen (2017); Komiteanmietintö 1919:11. V. 1918 kapinan aiheuttamain turvaton lasten huoltokomitea (Helsinki, 1919).

<sup>46</sup>Monika Janfelt, "Stormakter i människokärlek: Svensk och dansk krigs-barnshjälp," (PhD dissertation: Åbo Akademi, 1998); Donson (2010), 170–2.

<sup>47</sup>Paulus, "Rientäkää auttamaan kovaosaisia lähimmäisiämme," *Huoltaja* 7:14 (1919), 208–10.

<sup>48</sup>Lida Yrjö-Koskinen, "Olisiko mahdollista?" *Suomen Nainen* 25 January 1919, 33–4.

authorities had the right to decide what kind of assistance they gave: whether it be financial assistance, food aid or firewood. The authorities could encourage or even force the mother to place her children in foster homes or children's homes so that she could go to work more easily.<sup>49</sup> If the poor relief was granted, the families would be under state control and the authorities could make inspections of homes to check on how the poor relief was being used. The state, via the National Board of Social Welfare, nevertheless understood the difficult situation these families found themselves in and granted supportive regular governmental subsidies to municipalities and organizations engaged in helping Red families. This system was the first step towards promoting harmonization and represented a significant investment by a heavily indebted country.<sup>50</sup> According to earlier legislation, local poor-relief authorities were obliged to help only children and young people under 15 years of age. Those 15-years-old and older were supposed to support themselves and were also expected to contribute to the living costs of their family. The upbringing and education of Red orphans to become good and patriotic citizens were seen as such important goals in postwar Finland that the ministry of social welfare decided to allocate state aid for the vocational education of Red orphans up until their 17th birthday, or their 21st, if they could show that they were in a vocational school or were training for a job.<sup>51</sup>

In the reports and memories of the Red widows and orphans, these kinds of relief and the state's role in granting subsidies to municipalities have not been mentioned. One reason for this could be the humiliating character of the poor relief. On the other hand, this exemplifies the effects the experience and the circumstances produced on people's minds. The subsidies which families received were very small, and this contributed to the feeling that no one actually helped or really cared.

Life for the Red families was hardest in the summer and autumn of 1918, as well as in the winter of 1919. Since the summer of 1917, town dwellers had suffered from food shortages and even hunger.<sup>52</sup> The hunger forced inhabitants to take action, and children were particularly active and self-motivated in this difficult situation. Urpo recounted that when he

<sup>49</sup> FA, TPH, Kolinen, Elsa (1903) 6898; Kaarninen (2017).

<sup>50</sup> Komiteanmietintö 1919:11. V. 1918 kapinan aiheuttamain turvatonten lasten huoltamisesta (Helsinki, 1919).

<sup>51</sup> Mervi Kaarninen, "The long War of the Orphans," in Hoppu & Haapala (2010), 174–85.

<sup>52</sup> For the food shortage see Pertti Haapala, "Expected and Non-expected Roots of Chaos: Preconditions of the Finnish Civil War," in Tepora & Roselius (2014), 21–50.

witnessed a horse fall in battle, young boys were asked to cut the horse's flesh into small pieces. The flesh was to be used at home to help with the food shortage.<sup>53</sup> During those difficult times, children were forced at an early age to help their mother.<sup>54</sup> First, the mothers sent young boys and girls after midnight to queue at local shops, hoping to get milk and flour. Then children began to develop their own strategies to relieve their hunger through begging. The same groups of boys that had gone around town during the battles made begging trips to the countryside in the areas surrounding Tampere.<sup>55</sup> Children from ages 10 to 12 took part in even two-week-long begging trips on foot. They did not ask permission or even tell their parents about their plans. The rumors that there were foodstuffs such as bread, flour and milk available in the farmhouses in the countryside inspired the begging. The societal disorder and food shortage lay at the root of the begging and made it acceptable.

The begging was not limited only to boys since girls also went begging. Children would not only go from door to door but would also beg in trains, marketplaces and restaurants. During the begging trips, the children learnt how to survive in difficult circumstances. In the life stories, the begging trips that were made have been described as adventures, reflecting both the experiences of the time and the later narration of the events. The young boys slept in hay barns, fished in order to get food and stole, if it was the only way to stay alive.<sup>56</sup> With regard to children's war experience, Nazan Maksudyan has proven how children were partakers, actors and witnesses to the political actions of the Ottomans. They were active agents as soldiers, wage earners and farmers.<sup>57</sup> The begging of the children of Red families can equally be understood as one form of resistance and as proof of children's own agency. This resistance and agency drew from the contemporary circumstances and the White winners' behavior and can also be interpreted as supportive of the mother, the family and the defeated side.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> FA, TPH, Salminen, Urpo Olavi (1913) 6252.

<sup>54</sup> FLA, CFLT 252/1100.

<sup>55</sup> FA, TPH, Kuusinen, Urpo (1907) 8357; Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167; Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358; FLA, CFLT 252/1100.

<sup>56</sup> FA, TPH, Kuusinen, Urpo (1907) 8357; Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167; Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358; FLA, CFLT 252/1100.

<sup>57</sup> Maksudyan (2019), 11–15.

<sup>58</sup> Susan A. Miller, "Assent as Agency in the Early Years of the Children of the American Revolution," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 9:1 (2016), 48–9; see also Ville

In the autumn of 1918, newspapers wrote that thousands of child beggars were traveling around Finland in search of sustenance. Children's begging had become systematic and professional and the authorities tried to put a stop to it. In Finland after the Civil War, as elsewhere in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe, the begging became associated with wandering children and juvenile delinquents.<sup>59</sup> Begging went against all the principles of a civilized state. In the autumn of 1918, various associations, with government support, established shelters for wandering child beggars. Newspapers wrote about their living conditions and urged citizens to do their best to discourage begging.<sup>60</sup>

During their begging trips, children learnt how to behave to get the best possible result. Sometimes boys and girls had some bric-a-brac such as buttons, ribbons, needles, pins and shoelace to sell. It was easier to arrive at a farmhouse and ask if buttons or needles were needed. Paavo Johannes described his begging tours as follows: "We wandered to farmhouses. The instinct of the young boy. First we gave the farmer and his wife a chance to express their opinion (on the war and on the Reds). We understood that we would receive more food if we agreed with the house's owners. We became plotters. It provided food."<sup>61</sup> This case exemplifies the emotional frontier where the children lived and how they had to learn to act on the different frontiers.<sup>62</sup> Paavo continued his story: "Sometimes we even received from the croft or cottage owner an invitation to sit down at the table."<sup>63</sup>

## THE CLASSROOM AS AN EMOTIONAL COMMUNITY

After the war, the children of the Reds had to return to school. Educators and state authorities had the strong conviction that primary school could save the children for the nation. All the tragic consequences of the war

Vuolanto, "Experience, Agency, and the Children in the Past: The Case of Roman Childhood," in *Children and Everyday Life in the Roman and Late Antique World*, ed. by Christian Laes & Ville Vuolanto (New York: Routledge, 2018), 11–21.

<sup>59</sup> Miranda Sachs, "'A Sad and Odious Industry': The Problem of Child Begging in Late Nineteenth Century Paris," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 10:2 (2017), 188–205.

<sup>60</sup> Kaarninen (2017).

<sup>61</sup> FA, TPH, Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167; FLA, CFLT 252/1100.

<sup>62</sup> Stephanie Olsen, "Introduction," in Olsen (2015), 1–10.

<sup>63</sup> FA, TPH, Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167; FLA, CFLT 252/1100.

were encountered in the classroom, which became the scene of contradictory emotions. The fatherland of the primary school teachers was unconditionally the Finland of the White winners.<sup>64</sup> The pupils knew that the teachers were on the winners' side.<sup>65</sup> The re-education of the Red children to become patriotic citizens of the new independent Finland was nevertheless felt to be possible through the help of primary school and civic education. In the spring of 1918, even before the official end of the Civil War, the Teacher's Magazine asked: "What must be done so that our nation can be saved from doom. The compulsory education act must be carried out, whatever the cost. Every child has the right to a good upbringing."<sup>66</sup>

The schools had been closed during the war, but after the two-month break, they were re-opened in mid-April.<sup>67</sup> Some teachers began the school year by enquiring about the pupils' circumstances at home and asking about their father's participation in the war. Some pupils happily gave answers, and many were proud that their father had belonged to the Red Guard.<sup>68</sup> Then again, Toini said that those children whose fathers had died or were in prison were shy and thought it better to be silent.<sup>69</sup> Some of the pupils' answers confused teachers. Vieno, for instance, answered: "My father was shot as a rebel. I don't have a father." Children also repeated words and phrases that they had heard in the adults' conversations.<sup>70</sup>

Good judgment was called for from teachers when welcoming to school those children who had lost their father or mother, and those

<sup>64</sup> *Kansakoulun lehti* 36:13–18 (1918), 158–63.

<sup>65</sup> FA, TPH, Alanko, Toini (1907) 6624. Tampere employed about 130 primary school teachers, and it is obvious that their Whiteness as well as Redness could have different shades. After the war, in Finland 92 primary school teachers were accused of supporting the Reds, which meant 1.6 percent of total primary school teaching staff. Mervi Kaarninen, "Kansakoulu, kansakunta ja tottijärväläiset," in *Työväestö ja kansakunta*, ed. by Raimo Parikka (Helsinki: Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura, 1997), 179–80; Jukka Rantala, *Kansakoulunopettajat ja kapina: vuoden 1918 pumaisuussytykset ja asema paikallisyhteisössä* (Helsinki: SKS, 2002).

<sup>66</sup> O. K., "Mitä on tehtävä?" *Opettajain lehti* 13:6 (1918), 67. The discussion continues in: K. K. M., "Näkökulmia," *Opettajain lehti* 13:9 (1918), 98–9; E. Kangas, "Mitä on tehtävä?" *Opettajain lehti* 13:10 (1918), 108–9.

<sup>67</sup> About school work during the Civil War in Tampere see Junila (2014), 230–53.

<sup>68</sup> FA, TPH, Salminen, Urpo (1913) 6252; Syrjä, Unto (1910) 6389–90.

<sup>69</sup> FA, TPH, Alanko, Toini (1907) 6624.

<sup>70</sup> FLA, CFLT 336/31/1771.

children whose fathers were waiting for their sentences at the prison camps. When the hostilities were over, for example, one of the Tampere primary school teachers wanted to get pupils back to school as soon as possible, so she went around pupils' homes to pick them up. Her aim was to prevent children from seeing all the ruins and destruction in the city, as well as to keep them from hearing the voices of drunken Whites celebrating victory.<sup>71</sup> In the reminiscences of the children, school teachers are often remembered positively, and many teachers were appreciated for their warm attitude towards fatherless children.<sup>72</sup> Leo's father died in the prison camp and, in addition, his two older brothers had fought in the Red Guard. Leo remembered his school time: "The school was easy for me. I was the best pupil in my class [...] I was encouraged to go to the secondary school but I had to work and give my earnings to my mother. At the school I sat at the first desk. I was given a nickname by the other pupils as the teacher's 'blue-eyed-boy.' If I did not know my homework it shamed me."<sup>73</sup>

According to the harmonization politics of the state and the National Board of Education, teachers were required to have societal awareness and knowledge of human nature. Their duty was to equalize class distinctions, so they had to try to bring the children from different social classes together. Despite their own world views, the teachers were expected to behave sympathetically and without bias towards the Red children. Teachers were allowed political opinions but not agitation.<sup>74</sup> The situation in Tampere was special due to the fact that in the local elections at the end of 1918 the social democrats had won a majority in the city council. Thanks to municipal democracy, the social democrats got their delegates onto the municipal school board to make decisions on school affairs. These town councilors brought some

<sup>71</sup> Lyyli Friman, "Esimerkillinen opettaja: Muistelmia opettaja Maria Laurilasta," *Tammerkoski* 15:7 (1953), 209–10.

<sup>72</sup> FA, TPH, Alanko, Toini (1907) 6624; Kuusinen, Urpo (1909) 6155; Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167; Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358; Haavisto, Elma (1907) 6250.

<sup>73</sup> FA, Laakso, Leo (1914) Y 4315.

<sup>74</sup> Kouluhallituksen arkisto (KA, Arcives of School Administration). Tampereen piirin kansakoulun opettajiston piirikokouksessa 22.–23.9.1919; Hämeenlinnan tarkastuspiirin ptk:t 1.–2. Kesäkuuta. P. Korppoo: Opettajain suhtautumisesta lasten vanhempiin; Vuosikatsaus Savonlinnan piirin kansakouluihin 1918–1919. J. F. Cantell, Mihin pitää kansakoulun kasvatuksen ja opetuksen yleensä pyrkiä; *Kansakoulun lehti* 36 (July/September 1918), 158–63.



understanding of the circumstances of Red children, and especially of Red orphans, to the decision-making.

Poverty was present in the classrooms and caused feelings of indignity. Children were divided into Reds and Whites and into the wealthy and the poor. These divisions expressed the existence of contradictions. The party divisions were sharp within children's communities just like in the classrooms and yards, as Toini narrates: "Children began to build barriers themselves during the war and after it. There were Reds' kids and butchers'<sup>75</sup> kids. I was a butcher's kid and my friend was a house owner's daughter. We were Whites and the washer's daughter called us butcher's kids while we called her a servant's brat."<sup>76</sup>

The children from poor families, and especially Red orphans, received shoes and clothes via the primary school as poor relief. These clothes were seen as signs that identified children and were experienced as labels stamped by the Whites.<sup>77</sup> In order to get these shoes, coats and trousers for the children, the teacher had to write a certificate of indigence. This was one way in which the local poor-relief and school authorities tried to organize help for the poor and needy families. For the children, this well-meant procedure caused feelings of humiliation and shame.<sup>78</sup> It irritated them that the clumsy black shoes and the color and quality of the textiles revealed the clothes' origin. The clack of clogs served to signal that Red children were walking nearby. The boys were picked on when they had to come to school in their sisters' shoes with white socks. Older boys had to use men's old shoes that were too big for them.<sup>79</sup> Most of the primary school pupils came from working-class families but the disparities in wealth caused segregation. It made a great difference if both parents were alive and the father had a permanent job.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup>The Whites were named collectively as "butchers," which was an insulting name for white soldiers denoting cruelty and inhumanity. The name "butcher" was also used to mean an executioner.

<sup>76</sup>FA, TPH, Alanko, Toini (1907) 6624.

<sup>77</sup>FA, TPH, Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358.

<sup>78</sup>About humiliation and shame in the classroom, see Ute Frevert, *The Politics of Humiliation: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 79–82.

<sup>79</sup>FA, TPH, Ojala, Otso (1911) 6358.

<sup>80</sup>FLA, CELT 336/31/1771.

The primary school wanted to intrude into pupils' homes and to bring parents into the sphere of instruction as well.<sup>81</sup> Pedagogues thought that the parents had failed as educators of their children. The National Board of Education wanted to reduce the contradictions between teachers and parents through home and school interaction. When the parents were unable to teach the idea of the fatherland, it became Society's duty to organize what the parents neglected. Teachers experienced special difficulties in meeting socialist parents and co-operating with them. They thought that the homes tried to destroy all that the school aimed to construct. All the official expectations were therefore difficult to fulfill in practice.<sup>82</sup>

The primary school inspectors gave practical advice on how to organize the interaction between the home and the school. The primary school teachers were encouraged to invite parents to school and to participate in school celebrations. These events were given an important role as a tool for the emotional education of pupils during the 1920s. The Independence Day and the Kalevala Day ceremonies strengthened the national identity and the idea of the fatherland. Teachers were advised to organize Christmas pageants as unforgettable and emotional events. The Christmas tree at a school was seen as being especially important for those children who could not have one at home where Christmas was not given such a great importance. The school was supposed to offer Christmas spirit to the children of poor homes. Additionally, with these events, it was possible to advise mothers on how to organize Christmas at home.<sup>83</sup> A primary school teacher described the idea of the Christmas tree and how it could create a feeling of warmth and sensitivity in children: "The Christmas tree in our common classroom, which is the temple of our work, pushes like a loving mother's gaze directly into the depths of the heart."<sup>84</sup> The Mother's Day festivities in the early 1920s became another area of responsibility for primary school teachers. Motherhood was seen as a

<sup>81</sup> Elhti [Eemeli Etelälähti], "Koti ja koulu. Kotikasvatusta kohentamaan II," *Kansakoulu* 1:27 (1929), 482–3.

<sup>82</sup> Aukusti Salo, "Koulun tehtävä isänmaallisen hengen kasvattamisessa," *Kasvatus ja koulu* 8:6–7 (1922), 146–53; Paavo Virkkunen, "Maailmansodankokemukset ja tulevaisuuden kasvatus," *Kasvatus ja koulu* 4:9 (1918), 279–84.

<sup>83</sup> J. L., "Kuusijuhlat kouluharrastuksen herättäjinä," *Opettajain lehti* 14:48 (1919), 615.

<sup>84</sup> Maalaisopettaja, "Kuusijuhlat," *Opettajain lehti* 19:51–2 (1924), 950–1.

woman's real nature and the most important task in bringing up the next generation of the Finnish nation. A special meaning was attributed to Mother's Day as a national day dedicated to Finnish mothers as the hearts of homes and heroes.<sup>85</sup>

An important milestone on the path towards harmonization was the universal compulsory education act, which came into force in 1921. The new legislation brought children between the ages of 7 and 14 within the sphere of compulsory studies. The law entitled everyone to receive education free of charge, regardless of gender, language or social class. This meant that children of all social classes met in the classroom.<sup>86</sup> This was a big investment for a poor country. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Finnish primary school emphasized the patriotic values of the nation state. The new national curriculum highlighted history, religion, the agrarian way of life and patriotism. Cleanliness and obedience were also important areas of instruction. Primary school teachers intruded into pupils' homes through hygiene and health inspections, thus bringing households into the sphere of health education as well.<sup>87</sup>

The lines of division that separated school pupils, as well as the societal contradictions and the experience of bitterness that persisted, surfaced as resistance. The attitudes became apparent in the classroom community and outside the school during free time. As Paavo Johannes concluded: "Class divisions prevailed among the children who were divided into Reds and Whites. It was seen as natural. The war continued among the children and reflected the previous attitudes within the families. It shaped relationships among the children."<sup>88</sup>

Eino described classroom feelings that emerged when the teacher began to speak about patriotism. The boys gave the teacher the bird. Four fingers

<sup>85</sup> On motherhood, see Johanna Valenius, *Undressing the Maid: Gender, Sexuality and the Body in the Construction of the Finnish Nation* (Helsinki: SKS, 2004), 111; "Äitiänpäivää viettämään," *Opettajain lehti* 16:16 (1921), 211; "Äitiänpäivää viettämään," *Opettajain lehti* 17:17 (1922), 196; "Äitiänpäivää viettämään," *Opettajain lehti* 18:19 (1923), 298–9.

<sup>86</sup> Jukka Rantala, "The Political Ethos of a Model Citizen: Ensuring the Correct Political Attitude of Elementary School Teachers during the First Decades of Finland's Independence," in *Nordic Lights: Education for Nation and Civic Society in the Nordic Countries, 1850–2000*, ed. by Sirkka Ahonen & Jukka Rantala (Helsinki: SKS, 2001), 153–72.

<sup>87</sup> Pauli Arola, "Tavoitteena kunnan kansalainen: Koulun kansalaiskasvatuksen päämäärät eduskunnan keskusteluissa 1917–1924," (PhD dissertation: University of Helsinki, 2003); Saara Tuomaala, *Työvätekeivistä käsistä puhtaiksi ja kirjoittaviksi: Suomalaisen oppivelvollisuus­koulun ja maalaislasten kohtaaminen 1921–1939* (Helsinki: Otava, 2004), 63–6, 262–83.

<sup>88</sup> FA, TPH, Niiniviita, Paavo Johannes (1907) 6167.

were put in the mouth and then booing begun. Eino stated that this kind of a speech was a waste of time. The patriotic celebrations at the school did not therefore evoke only warm emotions towards the fatherland, which was their aim.<sup>89</sup> In the Independence Day celebration, the boys refused to sing Paavo Cajander's patriotic song "Raise a toast to the fatherland" which contains the words: "One power is hidden in the heart. That power is pure and holy."<sup>90</sup> The lyrics describe love for the sacred fatherland, thus setting powerful emotions alight. The song emphasizes the feeling in such a way that one is prepared to die, overcome dangers and starve for the fatherland. The refusal of the boys to sing caused the teacher to lose his temper, put his foot down and roar, "you are like your fathers, Red refugees in Russia." Instead, the school children sang mocking songs of the war hero and commander in chief of the White army, General Mannerheim.<sup>91</sup> Eino also said that they had had a singing exam where the pupils were allowed to decide for themselves which song they would sing. Eino decided to sing an old Finnish labor movement song (Workers' March). He sang the whole song after which the teacher expressed his opinion through giving him a low grade for his performance.<sup>92</sup>

Just as with patriotic songs, history teaching also produced resistance among the Tampere schoolboys. History was among the most important subjects in the curriculum since it was connected with a patriotic upbringing and the will to defend the nation.<sup>93</sup> In one of the textbooks, there was a picture with the text "the Jäger of the War for Freedom."<sup>94</sup> Every boy crossed out the text and wrote instead, "the Finnish Butcher." This textbook, which caused debate in the newspapers, described the Civil War one-sidedly as a war of liberation and underlined the savagery of the

<sup>89</sup> FA, TPH, Ruokonen, Paavo Alvirt (1907) 6368.

<sup>90</sup> Paavo Cajander, *Maljan esitys isänmaalle*. Composition by Jean Sibelius.

<sup>91</sup> FA, TPH, Haavisto, Elma (1907) 6250.

<sup>92</sup> FA, TPH, Lindholm, Eino (1912) 6436.

<sup>93</sup> See Aimo Halila, *Suomen kansakoululaitoksen historia IV* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1950), 178–82; Tuomaala (2003).

<sup>94</sup> The Jägers were Finnish volunteers in the German army in the World War I; they formed a key element in the White Army in 1918.

Reds.<sup>95</sup> Paavo Alvirt analyzed his feelings: "It produced resentment towards the upper classes; we were keen men of the resistance."<sup>96</sup>

The war continued in the children's games, and the Battle of Tampere was fought again in the home yards and nearby forests.<sup>97</sup> The pupils did not fight in the school yards during the breaks; and there was a gentlemen's agreement that the teachers would not interfere in the fights that occurred on the way to school.<sup>98</sup> Several "minor" Red Guard groups were established around Tampere, and the boys formed their own armies with companies and commanders.<sup>99</sup> The young boys from 5 to 12 paraded with, in their belts, wooden swords with metal points. They wandered through the city seeking the traces of battle; they also prepared gunpowder mixtures, hand grenades and organized fire fights. All this was dangerous and injuries happened.<sup>100</sup> For the children, the war games had replaced the game of cops and robbers. In a similar manner, Andrew Donson describes German children's war games during the Great War, when the boys held battles complete with uniforms, iron crosses, pails for cannons and battery walls.<sup>101</sup> In Tampere, one way to express feelings towards people who were known as Whites was to annoy them by throwing stones on their roof and then running away.<sup>102</sup> The resistance of schoolboys became concrete when the memorial ceremony for the Battle of Tampere and the unveiling of the Statue of Freedom to the honor of the White winners was organized in Tampere in April 1921. The boys named this festivity the "butchers' market." A group of schoolboys who worked as shoeblacks were viewing this ceremony angrily with tears in their eyes. They stood crying by themselves with their fists in their pockets, but after the ceremony, the boys began an attack on the statue by throwing shoe polish cans at it.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>95</sup> *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* 12 January 1920 & 28 October 1920; *Opettajain lehti* 15:42 (1920), 569–70; see also Oona Ilmolahti, *Ebeys ja ennakkoluulo: Työväenyhteisön ja kansakoulunopettajiston suhde Helsingissä sisällissodasta 1930-luvulle* (Helsinki: Työväen historian ja perinteen tutkimuksen seura, 2017), 179–83.

<sup>96</sup> FA, TPH, Ruokonen, Paavo Alvirt (1907) 6368.

<sup>97</sup> FA, TPH, Lehtinen, Kalle Johannes (1910) 6242.

<sup>98</sup> FA, TPH, Lindholm, Eino (1912) 6436.

<sup>99</sup> FA, TPH, Ruokonen, Paavo Alvirt 6368.

<sup>100</sup> FA, TPH, Saario, Urho (1912) 6374.

<sup>101</sup> Donson (2010), 170–72; Ziino (2018), 231.

<sup>102</sup> FA, TPH, Salminen, Urpo (1913) 6252.

<sup>103</sup> FA, TPH, Lindholm, Eino (1912) 6436.

## CONCLUSION

After the war, the children of the Reds experienced the feeling, in a multitude of ways, that they belonged to the losers of the war. They were marginalized in the nation. Their encounters with the nation represented a contradictory process during the 1920s. As Josephine Hoegaerts points out, patriotic love can be compared to a family-based model of affection, and the “love of the fatherland was a generational practice, passed on from one generation to the next and therefore as open to change as it was rooted in history and tradition.”<sup>104</sup> The children of the Reds could not learn to love the fatherland which they connected with the White winners’ experiences during and after the Civil War. The children were divided into Reds and Whites, and as Eino characterized it, the class war was ongoing among children. The children’s war games expressed children’s emotions and were one form of resistance. This kind of action encouraged one to express emotions. In the life-story interviews, words like “sorrow,” “grief,” “tears” and “cry” are usually not used. Only Eino used these words when telling how angry he was at the unveiling ceremony of the Statue of Freedom. He cried silently and said that he then decided to be a working-class man until his death.<sup>105</sup>

The children and young people lived at emotional frontiers, and they had to try to respond to the different demands and expectations at home, at school and on the playgrounds. This situation was especially difficult for those children who were transferred back and forth from home to foster homes and children’s homes. The children were active in their agency through showing initiative during those dangerous and difficult days. In children’s games, the war was fought over and over again.

The children followed the life around them and wanted to participate in helping their mothers to support the family. The emotions of excitement, bitterness and humiliation during the war and in its aftermath belonged to the life of children and young people. Hunger and poverty left them with the feeling that no one cared about them when they tried, together with a widowed mother, to stay alive.

The life-story interviews convey intensive emotions connected with war time in 1918. Those emotions have been shaped into experiences and

<sup>104</sup> Hoegaerts (2020), 68.

<sup>105</sup> FA, TPH, Lindholm, Eino (1912) 6436.

have had different influences on the life courses of the people involved. Elsa Kolinen was a 15-year-old girl when her father was shot: “We kids observed when those to be shot were transported. [...] I will never forget the emotions that I experienced then.” Elsa soon went to work in a cotton mill, enrolled in evening classes and became a member of the Social Democratic Party. All that she saw after the war made her feel solidarity with the working class. During the following decades, she occupied several posts of trust within the municipal organization of Tampere.

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# Guardians of the Land? Smallholders Living Their Nation in Interwar Finland

*Pirjo Markkola and Ann-Catrin Östman*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter relates small-scale landowning to lived nation by exploring what it meant to become a landowner in early twentieth-century Finland. At the beginning of the century, Finland was an agrarian country, but not all people living on agriculture owned the land they cultivated. In 1910, circa 40 percent of the agricultural population owned their farms, 20 percent were tenant farmers and 40 percent agricultural laborers, the so-called landless population, in very unstable labor relations.<sup>1</sup> The fact that they were commonly called “landless” (in official statistics “farmless”) reveals

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<sup>1</sup>Arvo M. Soinen, “Maataloustilasto v. 1910 – tilasto ja todellisuus,” *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 74 (1976), 211–25.

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V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_8)



an ideological standpoint according to which landowning was a shared ideal, both by the educated classes and the agrarian working classes. Being landless was a problem that could be solved by becoming landowners. Various attempts to improve the living conditions of tenant farmers, cottagers and landless laborers were initiated to provide these people with their “own land,” their own small-scale farms to make possible earning a living for rural working men and their families.<sup>2</sup>

Concern for agricultural interests and for a more equal division of landed property characterized the Finnish state in the interwar period, and society, composed of independent landowning farmers and smallholders, was understood to guarantee political stability. The Civil War in 1918 politicized class relations and revealed the revolutionary potential of landless laborers. The “land question” was already a key political issue before the Civil War; after the war the non-socialist governments took the issue of landowning even more seriously. Consequently, land reforms in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s increased the predominance of smallholdings and family farms.<sup>3</sup> The emancipation of tenant farms in 1918, in particular, strengthened the idea of landowning as a cornerstone of nation-building and national emotions. In 1919, the emancipation law was amended, and tenant farmers were quick to buy their farms from landowners. By the mid-1920s, two thirds of tenant farms were emancipated; and by the early 1930s, approximately 90 percent of tenant farms had

<sup>2</sup>Matti Peltonen, *Talolliset ja torpparit: Vuosisadan vaihteen maatalouskysymys Suomessa* (Helsinki: SHS, 1992); Matti Peltonen, “Torpparikysymys,” in *Suomen maatalouden historia II*, ed. by Matti Peltonen (Helsinki: SKS, 2004); Ann-Catrin Östman, “Mekanisoinnin ensimmäinen aalto,” in Peltonen (2004); Teppo Vihola, “Pärjääkö pienviljelys?” in Peltonen (2004); Ann-Catrin Östman, *Mjolk och jord* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 2000); Ann-Catrin Östman, “Gendered understandings of agrarian population in early Finnish social studies,” in *In Experts We Trust: Knowledge, Politics and Bureaucracy in Nordic Welfare States*, ed. by Åsa Lundqvist & Klaus Petersen (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2010), 249–60; Pirjo Markkola & Ann-Catrin Östman, “Ei vain ahkeruudesta: naiset, työ ja tasa-arvo,” in *Nälkämaasta hyvinvointivaltioksi: Suomi kehityksen kiinniottajana*, ed. by Juhani Koponen & Sakari Saaritsa (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2019), 167–82.

<sup>3</sup>Major reforms included the 1918 emancipation of tenant farms, the 1919 law that extended emancipation rights, land acquisition laws in 1924 and 1925, and 1936 settlement legislation. During World War II, land acquisition and settlement laws were passed. Vihola (2004), 356–65; Heikki Roiko-Jokela, “Asutustoiminnalla sodasta arkeen,” in *Suomen maatalouden historia III*, ed. by Pirjo Markkola (Helsinki: SKS, 2004), 29–30, 37–40.

turned into smallholdings owned by former tenant farmers or agricultural laborers.<sup>4</sup>

As in the neighboring countries, the idea of smallholding was generally emphasized. In Sweden, Denmark and Norway, gradual land reforms were introduced in the late nineteenth century, and legislation on land acquisition loans was passed at the turn of the century. After World War I, several Eastern European countries, including the newly independent Baltic States of Estonia and Latvia, carried out massive land reforms, and, accordingly, the concept of an “Agrarian reform zone” was applied by the League of Nations to the new border-states of the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup> Politicians and other activists in Finland were not alone in their attempts to develop agricultural policies that were expected to solve rural social problems.

Given the central importance of smallholding, the promotion of modern and rational small-scale agriculture was embedded in a network of different local associations and semi-official regional agricultural societies. Various groups of politicians and economists—socialist as well as liberal and conservative—emphasized the viability of smallholdings and worked to strengthen small-scale farming. Generally, independent farming was seen as an important tool for economic development and social cohesion, and it was often openly related to nation-building.<sup>6</sup> As suggested in previous research, this can be conceptualized as economic nationalism, meaning “a strategy of national elites to mobilize their laboring classes politically and advance them economically” and “nation building carried out in the economic sphere.”<sup>7</sup> In addition to economic nationalism, small-scale agriculture was given political meaning, thus emphasizing both economic and political citizenship of smallholders.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Arvo Santonen, *Pienviljelijään järjestäytymiskysymys ja pienviljelijäjärjestöjen vakiintuminen Suomessa: Tutkimus maatalouden pienviljelypoliittisesta murrosvaiheesta 1930-luvun alkuaan mennessä* (Helsinki: SHS, 1971), 113–14.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. Nils Edling, “Småjordbrukets tid – en inledning,” *Bebyggelsehistorisk Tidskrift* 38 (1998), 1–5; Hans Jörgensen, “The Inter-War Land Reforms in Estonia, Finland and Bulgaria: A Comparative Study,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 54:1 (2006), 64–97; Anu Mai Köll, “Cooperatives as Part of the National Movement in the Baltic Countries,” in *Cooperatives in Ethnic Conflicts: Eastern Europe in the 19th and Early 20th Century*, ed. by Torsten Lorenz (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2011), 52.

<sup>6</sup>Santonen (1971); Vihola (2004).

<sup>7</sup>The first definition by Rudolf Jaworski and the second by Ágnes Pogány in Torsten Lorenz, “Introduction: Cooperatives in Ethnic Conflicts,” in Lorenz (2011), 10.

<sup>8</sup>For examples, see Clare V.J. Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside, The Politics of Rural Britain 1918–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Piotr Wawrzeniuk, ed., *Societal*

Also, politicians and agriculturalists involved in the Swedish movement in Finland eagerly embraced smallholding, often depicting it as a means of protecting the minority and “Swedish soil.” This was a time when the idea of “Swedish-Finland,” a Swedish-speaking grouping in Finland, was strengthened. In 1920, the Swedish-speaking minority amounted to 11 percent of the population (about 340,000 people). In the language act of 1922, Finnish and Swedish were declared to be national languages; however, Swedish was the national language in a minority position. Under the new language act, the Finnish municipalities were classified as unilingual (Swedish or Finnish) or as bilingual.<sup>9</sup> The territories inhabited by Swedish speakers were intensely discussed, and some politicians used the concept of “Swedish soil” to strengthen their arguments. Consequently, agriculture and landowning were pivotal aspects of the debate. As was the case elsewhere in Finland, the explicit aim was to increase the number of smallholdings.<sup>10</sup> The smallholding concept was propelled by economic, national and theoretical reasons, but it was openly presented in a nationalist way in the Swedish-speaking regions of Finland.<sup>11</sup>

In this chapter, we focus on encounters between smallholders and the nation by reading national agricultural policies of the 1920s “from below” in Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finland. Encounters between smallholders and the nation took place in a variety of arenas. Civil-society organizations, aiming at improvements in family farming, formed a particularly

*Change and Ideological Formation among the Rural Population of the Baltic Area 1880–1939* (Huddinge: Södertörn University College, 2008); Elizabeth B. Jones, *Gender and Rural Modernity: Farm Women and the Politics of Labor in Germany, 1871–1933* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Dietmar Müller & Angela Harris, eds, *Transforming Rural Societies: Agrarian Property and Agrarianism in East Central Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2010).

<sup>9</sup>Kenneth D. McRae, “Toward language equality: four democracies compared,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 187/188 (2007), 13–34; Ann-Catrin Östman, “Finnish Citizens on Swedish Soil,” in *Zwischen Kriegen: Nationen, Nationalismen und Geschlechterverhältnisse in Mittel- und Osteuropa 1918–1939*, ed. by Johanna Gehmacher, Elizabeth Harvey & Sophia Kemlein (Osnabrück: Deutschen Historischen Instituts Warschau, 2004), 289–303.

<sup>10</sup>Johannes Weegar, *Våra fädrens jord: A.B. Svenska småbruk i Österbotten 1917–1980* (Vasa: A.B. Svenska småbruk, 1991); Olle Sirén, “En bondeledare och Den svenska jorden,” *Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier* 78 (2003), 249–318.

<sup>11</sup>Östman (2004) shows how different forms of nationalism were combined in depictions of Swedish-speaking Western Finland. Farmers were connected to citizenship in the Finnish state through their public roles, but also to Finland-Swedish ethnic nation-building through concepts like “the soil” and “the land.”

influential bridge between nationalist ideals and smallholders. Historian Henrik Stenius points out that popular movements in Finland and Sweden were more prepared “to accept standardised, statutory norms” in comparison to many other countries.<sup>12</sup> Popular movements not only provided an arena of agency for smallholders but also taught smallholders how to verbalize emotions regarding national belonging and the virtues of citizenship. Moreover, oral histories, life stories, smallholders’ letters to smallholder associations and later interviews provide us with a small corpus of ego-documents. Despite the limited size of the corpus, reading the documents in the context of economic development programs represented by civil-society organizations enhances our understanding of the smallholders living the nation in the 1920s.

Focusing mainly on encounters between smallholders and organizations providing means of modernization, we explore classed and gendered everyday practices. We ask how the smallholders utilized opportunities to keep and maintain their farms and what kind of emotions, ambitions and calculations were attached to landowning—or to losing land. In this chapter, the lived nation is studied in terms of practiced citizenship and a Koselleckian understanding of historical time as constructed in tensions between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation.<sup>13</sup> By looking at everyday social practices, we make the roles played by women and men visible and thereby study the intertwined making of gender, class and citizenship. Citizenship can be understood as a “set of practices,” not just political and juridical but also economic and cultural.<sup>14</sup> Through these practices, smallholders define themselves as competent members of society. Influenced by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, scholars have used the concept of “national habitus” to highlight the importance of everyday practices to the emotions of belonging. This approach also leaves room for local actors

<sup>12</sup>Henrik Stenius, “Nordic Associational Life in a European and an Inter-Nordic Perspective,” in *Nordic Associations in a European Perspective*, ed. by Risto Alapuro & Henrik Stenius (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2010), 54–5.

<sup>13</sup>Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1985), 267–76.

<sup>14</sup>Bryan S. Turner, “Contemporary problems in the theory of citizenship,” in *Citizenship and Social Theory*, ed. by Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 1993); Anders Ahlbäck & Ann-Catrin Östman, “Inledning: Manligt medborgarskap och samhällsreformer i Finland, 1918–1960,” *Historiskt tidskrift för Finland* 97:1 (2012), 2–16; cf. Maria Ågren, ed., *Making a Living, Making a Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 10–11, 127–9.

and organizations in studies of how nations are experienced.<sup>15</sup> Thus, situated and classed practices are in many ways fundamental to smallholders' identities, to their experiences and to feelings of belonging. The smallholders' set of practices was constructed in their daily life where their experiences and expectations shaped each other. Citizenship was practiced in a gendered way, and we study these encounters and sets of practices through exploring the importance of the family, landowning, professionalism and enacted modernity.

### SCENES OF ENCOUNTERS

One of the organizations that aimed at supporting modern smallholdings was the Ruth Foundation. Founded in 1917, the Ruth Foundation was a non-socialist organization, largely characterized by ideas of social reform. Resources for the foundation were donated by a wealthy couple, commercial councilor William Ruth and his wife Fanny Ruth (née Standertskjöld), who envisioned the future of the Finnish nation being based on industrious smallholders. They were dissatisfied with the government's efforts to promote smallholding in rural Finland; moreover, they were worried about the increasing economic influence of forest-industry companies that were buying up farms from landowners.<sup>16</sup> For the foundation, the land question was part of a social question, labeled "social policy."

The Ruth Foundation chose to work in Finnish-speaking Central Finland where large and well-developed farms were rare. It arranged training courses for smallholders and their families on a variety of topics, such as farming, cattle raising, gardening and domestic economy. It also created a prize system for model farms to promote exemplary smallholdings. In 1932, Dr. Östen Elfving, one of the major experts in modern agriculture, published the Ruth Foundation's detailed history in which he presented 20 model smallholdings, supported by the

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Andreas Stynen, Maarten Van Genderachter & Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, "Introduction: Emotions and everyday nationalism in modern Europe," in *Emotions and everyday nationalism in modern European history*, ed. by Andreas Stynen, Maarten Van Genderachter & Xosé M. Núñez Seixas (London: Routledge, 2020), 3–7.

<sup>16</sup> Östen Elfving, *Uusia teitä pienviljelyksen kohottamiseksi: Ruthin säädöksen toiminta 1917–1932* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1932).

foundation. Each farm description consists of a brief history, an account of family relations, key statistics on the development of agriculture and milk production as well as illustrations.<sup>17</sup> The farm descriptions and related archival sources provide an idea of how smallholders adjusted to modernity and economic rationality in meeting the requirements of the Ruth Foundation and, thus, the requirement of the modern nation. These documents were not produced primarily by smallholders, but from a history-of-experiences angle the farm descriptions suggest how the smallholders' space of experience was crafted.

Organized voices of smallholders can also be heard from other encounters with the nation. Smallholder associations, in particular, argued that the future of the Finnish nation depended on the prosperity and wellbeing of smallholders.<sup>18</sup> Until the mid-1920s, the Smallholders' League (*Pienviljelijäin liitto*) was a leading organization among the Finnish-speaking smallholders. It was a central body for social democratic smallholder associations that had been initiated by representatives of smallholders who criticized agricultural societies for acting in favor of wealthy farmers. The League was originally founded in 1910 as a central union for tenant farmers, but after the emancipation of tenant farms, it changed into the smallholders' organization in 1919.<sup>19</sup> It provided consultation, training courses and publications as well as personal advice in correspondence with smallholders.

Another dimension of the situation of smallholders can be seen in the Swedish-speaking smallholder organizations. As elsewhere in Europe, ethnic consciousness was raised in the aftermath of World War I, and earlier bilingual organizations—among them agrarian producer co-operatives—were divided according to language. Similarly, regional agricultural societies became unilingual; one of these semi-official organizations—*Österbottens*

<sup>17</sup> Elfving (1932), 89–184. Manuscripts of farm descriptions are stored in the foundation's collection. There are no major differences between the typewritten manuscript and the publication. National Archives of Finland (NAF), Ruth Foundation's Collection (RFC), Folder 20, typewritten family descriptions; Model smallholdings were revisited in the 1960s and new farm descriptions were published in Veli Perttuli, *Fanny ja William Ruthin säätiö pienviljelyksen edistämiseksi 1916–1966* (Helsinki: Ruth Foundation, 1966), 110–92.

<sup>18</sup> Santonen (1971), 150–6.

<sup>19</sup> It was challenged and later outnumbered by the Smallholders' Central Union, founded in 1922 by agriculturalists in the political center and right. Vihola (2004), 378–81; Santonen (1971), 79, 119, 194; Tampere City Archives (TCA), Smallholders' League (SL). Minutes and correspondence.

*Svenska Lantbrukssällskap*—was active in Ostrobothnia in Western Finland. For smallholders, it arranged ambulatory schools in villages considered underdeveloped and provided consultation and advice.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, several organizations were responsible for running the corporation *AB Svenska småbruk* (Swedish smallholding). The aim of this corporation was to protect monolingual Swedish communities in areas where a great majority spoke Swedish. Attracting support from other organizations, *AB Svenska småbruk* emphasized the threat of Finnification and offered loans to Swedish speakers to buy smallholdings. This was depicted as a way to keep Swedish soil in the right hands.<sup>21</sup>

### MODEL FARMS FOR RURAL FAMILIES

In 1919, the secretary of the Ruth Foundation and former minister of agriculture, Mr. Uuno Brander, initiated a rewards program for model farms in Central Finland. The aim of this program was to provide local smallholders with encouraging examples of ways to improve their living conditions. In terms of economy and technology, model farms were to become modern small-scale farms run by capable and “developed” smallholders.<sup>22</sup> Mr. Brander suggested that recently emancipated tenant farms should be nominated to the program because he reasoned that those farms possessed the required qualifications to develop into exemplary farming units. Location and good road communications were also used as selection criteria. Nominated smallholders were supposed to become active participants in co-operatives and other agricultural organizations, and their model farms were to receive visitors and trainees who could learn from their experiences. The co-operative movement was rather strong in Finland, and it is no wonder that the Ruth Foundation counted on co-operatives in their program. As in many other parts of Europe, co-operation had a double function: it promoted economic self-help and market integration, but it also aimed at integrating the lower strata of the population into the nation. In addition, the inclusive effects of self-help were stressed. Through edification and education, the smallholders were

<sup>20</sup> Weegar (1981); Östman (2000), 270–81.

<sup>21</sup> Sirén (2003), 249–318.

<sup>22</sup> Elfving (1932), 85; Perttuli (1966), 67–8.

ascribed agency, responsibility and the political ability to act in modernized local communities.<sup>23</sup>

The Ruth Foundation did not select prosperous and well-established farms, because its aim was to promote development and progress among the lower strata of the agrarian population. Therefore, farms with barren fields and old buildings in poor condition were prioritized over modern agricultural production units. Moreover, model farms were to be mainly run by family members without hired hands.<sup>24</sup> Family farming as a leading principle informed the selection process.

The first set of model farms was nominated in 1921 when ten former tenant farmers signed a contract with the foundation. Their farms were investigated, and a case-specific development plan was drafted. These rewards contracts, negotiated with a consultant, bound the farmers to improvements in crop rotation, the use of manure and rational forestry. Rationalized dairy farming was initiated, including the measuring and book-keeping connected with milk production. The next step was to agree on a cultivation plan with consultants. Several of the farmers were prepared to arrange cultivation experiments to improve their grain production. Moreover, repairs to cowsheds, barns, outbuildings and farmhouses were charted and planned. The construction plans for farm buildings were to be laid out by professionals and approved by the foundation's consultant.<sup>25</sup> The consultants gave advice to the farming couple and a regular follow-up program was organized. All consultation was provided free of charge, and financial compensation was paid to model farms implementing the development plan.

Why did the smallholders join these programs and what made them willing to accept all these recommendations? It is obvious that indebted farmers of limited means were motivated by the financial benefits, but they must have also perceived other benefits in adjusting to the comprehensive development plans and progress goals suggested by the representatives of the foundation. The newly independent nation, nation-state Finland, may

<sup>23</sup>Lorenz (2011), 36–7; Mary Hilson, Pirjo Markkola & Ann-Catrin Östman, "Introduction: co-operatives and the social question," in *Co-operatives and the Social Question: The co-operative movement in northern and eastern Europe (1880–1950)*, ed. by Mary Hilson, Pirjo Markkola & Ann-Catrin Östman (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2012), 8–13.

<sup>24</sup>Elfvig (1932), 86; NAF, RFC, Folder 20, Manuscript of model farms.

<sup>25</sup>Elfvig (1932), 87–9, Appendix II: Model contract, 209; NAF, RFC, Folder 18, Contracts.



well have provided former tenant farmers and their families with future horizons that coincided with their own prospects as well.

The ways in which smallholders encountered the nation can to some extent be seen in those model farms joining the rewards program. In the first set of selected farms, all smallholders were former tenants who had acquired the ownership of their farms between 1909 and 1924. Almost all smallholders had a lengthy history of tenancy; only one smallholder had bought his farm from the landowner while taking over the tenant farm from his father. The men in the program were in their late 40s or early 50s (age scale 47–56), and their wives were of approximately the same age.<sup>26</sup> Family size ranged from one foster child to 12 children (mean 5). The age of children varied from newborns to young adults, and some children had left their parental home to earn their own living. Two families had one old grandparent in their household; other families consisted of two generations. These families seem to represent a typical sample of tenant farmers and smallholders.<sup>27</sup> One striking feature is the lack of young couples who might have been interested in developing into professional farmers and progressive citizens. Clearly, a lengthy experience of tenancy and future horizons of promised independence drew middle-aged smallholders to the rewards program; moreover, the foundation attempted to select experienced smallholders.

Smallholders shared a modest educational background. None of them were mentioned to have obtained a primary school education or other education. However, most couples were counted as literate or displayed other indications of being literate. The only couple that was considered weak in their written skills was mentioned to represent “a true old-school settler type.”<sup>28</sup> In comparison to the other families, it was important for the foundation to state that this family possessed other valuable characteristics. Moreover, it was clearly mentioned that all of their eight surviving children had gotten a primary school education. Regardless of their modest background, the children’s education showed the parents’ commitment to progress and modernization.

The second set of model-smallholding farmers was recruited in 1922–23, and their rewards program continued until the late 1920s. This

<sup>26</sup> Elfving (1932); A woman’s date of birth is usually mentioned only in handwritten notes. NAF, RFC, Folder 18.

<sup>27</sup> On agricultural population, see e.g. Östman (2004), 55–73.

<sup>28</sup> Elfving (1932), 110.

time the families were slightly smaller, and the parents somewhat younger. The mean age of the fathers was 45 and their ages ranged from 35 to 56; half of recruited farmers belonged to the age group of 40–44. During the rewards program, these younger families were still growing: the average increased from 3.8 children to 4.3 by the end of the program period. All model farms were small. The first set of farms was larger (mean 35.2 hectares) than the second (mean 30.8 hectares), but at the beginning of the rewards periods, the second set had slightly bigger fields than the first one.<sup>29</sup> This suggests that the foundation turned more intensively towards cultivation than towards forestry.

### FAMILIES OF THE NATION?

The common definition of the concept of “smallholding” referred to farms which were run by family members without hired hands. Thus, family was embedded in the definition of a smallholding. The Ruth Foundation selected only families headed by a couple. In some families, married children took over the smallholding when one parent passed away or became too infirm to work. One smallholding continued to be run by a widow and her adult sons when the husband died. The size of the family as well as the balance between sons and daughters determined whether an external labor force was needed. For example, one family hired a male servant until their sons were old enough to help the parents. They had many daughters and thus no need for a female servant.<sup>30</sup> This was in line with the principles of the foundation. For example, in 1919 the Ruth Foundation had arranged a summer course for smallholders in which one topic was the significance of a housewife and/or a daughter to a smallholder home.<sup>31</sup> All family members were supposed to work for the smallholding, and obviously this was a daily practice.

Smallholders themselves underlined the importance of the family. In 1922, a tenant farmer turned to the Smallholders' League to seek support in gaining ownership to the fields he had previously cultivated. To prove his farming capacity and availability of labor power, he mentioned the size of his family: four sons and four daughters who were “semi-adults.” Eight children needed to be fed but, more importantly, they formed the labor

<sup>29</sup> Derived from figures in Elfving (1932), 95–184.

<sup>30</sup> Elfving (1932), 110–11.

<sup>31</sup> Elfving (1932), 47.

force necessary for successful farming.<sup>32</sup> Many families participating in the Ruth Foundation's rewards program reported that they needed hired hands if their children were too young to work. As soon as the children were capable of working, the need for an external labor force could cease. In that circumstance, they indicated that they could meet the national requirements of a smallholder economy.

Life stories written by women also stress the importance of the family, and female authors point to the work done by family members. In her life story, Marta, born in 1906, describes the work done by her parents, who had bought a small farm in Ostrobothnia in the 1910s. In 1925, she and her husband bought the farm, and she explains how they managed to work together and separately. Moreover, she describes the work done by her mother, her younger siblings and her sister-in-law.<sup>33</sup> In the 1990s, rural women in Swedish-speaking Finland and in Sweden were encouraged to write about their own lives. When depicting the interwar period farming, women repeatedly indicated what possibilities smallholding offered to the family as a unit. By using passive forms or words like "we," they referred to the family unit. In addition, they stressed the significance of working together and the work done by the family. To a high degree, Marta and the other female writers also described their work in the fields.<sup>34</sup>

The idea of family farming was strengthened by permanent and ambulatory farmers' schools and schools in domestic economy. Some of the schools, especially the ambulatory ones, were targeted at smallholders.<sup>35</sup> In 1929, the acquisition of land was discussed in a farmers' school for smallholders in a Swedish-speaking area of Finland. It was explicitly stated that a man needs to be married in order to buy land; if a man was unmarried, he was advised to rent land. One male student boldly addressed his

<sup>32</sup> TCA, SL, Correspondence –1922. Ea:1.

<sup>33</sup> Marta's story was written after interviews made by scholars engaged in local history writing. It is a short and handwritten individual life story, encompassing five pages. Marta Nyman, letter to Ann-Catrin Östman 28 October 1994. Copy held by Östman, also The Archive of Cultural Research at Åbo Akademi University (Cultura); Ann-Catrin Östman, "Jag minns att jag var en arbetsmyra": Arbete i agrara kvinnors livshistorier," in *I dialog med kvinnoliv*, ed. by Harriet Silius et al. (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1998), 143–64.

<sup>34</sup> Östman (1998), 149–51.

<sup>35</sup> Kirsi Klemelä, *Ammattikunnista ammatillisiin oppilaitoksiin: ammatillisen koulutuksen muotoutuminen Suomessa 1800-luvun alusta 1990-luvulle* (Turku: Turun yliopisto, 1999); Cf. Östman (2000), 276–8.

comrades as follows: “I would recommend that a man with experience of farming, who has some money and a family, buy land.”<sup>36</sup> The young student might have echoed his instructors, but the message certainly made sense to him and his colleagues as well.

In the interwar period, the family was the basic unit of the nation, and, in the same manner, it was the cornerstone of smallholder economy. In 1939, women’s role in agriculture was described and summarized by the Board of Agriculture: “The daughters of Finland must be brought up to be housewives on these farms. The Finnish housewife must be able to take care of children, the household, the cattle and the garden, to cook, to weave, to make clothes and even to help her husband in the fields in busy times.”<sup>37</sup> This citation, of course, reflects the standpoint of official state administration, but the mediating links between the state and smallholders, as well as life stories of smallholder women, tell a similar story with much less glory accruing to women’s work in the smallholder economy.

### CAPABLE PRODUCERS OF THE WEALTHY NATION

The aim of the Ruth Foundation was to promote smallholdings and provide smallholders with the necessary skills to cope with all aspects of the smallholder economy, from forestry to gardening and from dairy farming to rational cultivation. The smallholder economy was also of great national significance. Because the agricultural sector was important, changes in its growth had an impact on the national economy. After the hunger crisis that occurred during World War I, it was seen as necessary for the agricultural sector to meet domestic demand.<sup>38</sup>

The promotion of smallholdings carried links to agrarianism. As an ideology, agrarianism is broad—it is considered to be a theory of development in which family farms, co-operatives and municipal self-government constitute the central elements. At its core is an emphasis on the idea of

<sup>36</sup> NAF, Österbottens svenska lantbrukssällskap (ÖSL) UA 1, 8 January 1929.

<sup>37</sup> Department of Domestic Science in the Board of Agriculture, ed., *Maataloudellinen kotitalousopetus: Oppilaitokset, harjoittelu, neuvonta* [Teaching of Rural Domestic Science. Schools, Training, Travelling instructors] (Porvoo: WSOY, 1939).

<sup>38</sup> Teppo Vihola, “Maatalouden rakennemuutokset itsenäisessä Suomessa,” in Peltonen (2004), 330–51; Jari Ojala, “Feeding economic growth: agriculture,” in *The Road to Prosperity: An Economic History of Finland*, ed. by Jari Ojala et al. (Helsinki: SKS, 2006), 78–84.

the “middle way,” a form of social reform and economic development positioned between liberalism and socialism. In the interwar period, many agrarian movements in the Eastern European countries were leftist, with an emphasis on economic, social and democratic reform.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, there was competition for the minds of smallholders in Finland. Not only Social Democrats and the Agrarian Party but also communists and other political small groups tried to recruit smallholders to their rank and file.<sup>40</sup>

The Ruth Foundation and the smallholder associations stressed the connection between economy and politics. Societal progress, economic development and the rationalization of agriculture were key goals. Smallholding was not just characterized as a tool for improving the economy of individuals and families; it also gave nations—especially the Swedish minority—tools for self-defense and self-protection, as the foundation of *AB Svenska småbruk* indicates.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, a stronger smallholder economy with independent and progressive smallholders served the national economy and provided Finnish consumers with locally produced milk products, eggs, vegetables and grain. Co-operative dairies and other forms of agricultural co-operation facilitated smallholders’ contributions to the national economy. Thus, smallholders’ willingness to increase their production showed their commitment to national efforts as well.<sup>42</sup>

This endeavor was shared by politicians, civil-society activists and smallholders themselves. The same tenant farmer who referred to his large family when turning to the Smallholders’ League also made a reference to his schooling. He had gone to a farmers’ school; moreover, he was a trained forest warden (ranger), and he considered his 15 years of experience in farming as extensive. Another man reported that he had had several decades of experience on his tenant farm, and, for a third farmer, it was crucial to underline his 25-year contract signed eight years before. The fact that one tenant farmer stated in his letter that he was a member of the Smallholders’ League can also be read as evidence

<sup>39</sup> Johan Eellend, “Agrarianism and modernization in inter-war Eastern Europe,” in Wawrzeniuk (2008), 35–6; Cf. Jörgensen (2006), 64–97.

<sup>40</sup> Matti Lackman, *Taistelu talonpojasta: Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen subde talonpoikaiskysymykseen ja talonpoikaisliikkeisiin 1918–1939* (Oulu: Pohjoinen, 1985), 86–89; Santonen (1971), 123–7.

<sup>41</sup> For Nordic examples, see Edling (1998). Cf. Eellend (2008).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Lorenz (2011), 27–9.

of a serious attitude towards professional farming.<sup>43</sup> Experience, knowledge and stability were characteristics often invoked when tenant farmers tried to prove that they were economically worthy citizens and reliable smallholders.

The smallholders' interpretation of professional farming was based on their space of experience which sometimes clashed with the guidelines of the supervising organizations. One smallholder considered the Ruth Foundation's construction plans for a stone cowshed too expensive and unsuitable for a smallholding. Instead, he built a wooden cowshed on a concrete foundation.<sup>44</sup> Differing views on smallholder economy also became evident when the foundation was not satisfied with one smallholder's input. The smallholder, who had worked as a foreman in a large farm, applied his know-how and experience to his own small-scale agriculture. The Ruth Foundation considered the progress of this smallholding too modest and claimed that the smallholder's working methods were unsuitable for a smallholding. For example, the cattle were too numerous compared to the size of the fields and the old-fashioned cowshed was not replaced until 1952.<sup>45</sup> It is more than possible that, due to his experience as a farm foreman, this smallholder was not as receptive to all aspects of consultation as were some others.

Some smallholders explicitly stated their commitment to professional development. In his letter to the Ruth Foundation, Aapo Hietamäki tried to speed up his first cultivation plan and inquired if the promised consultant was already coming to Hietamäki's farm. It would soon be time for spring sowing and the smallholder indicated his immediate need of consultation. A similar wish was expressed by another smallholder. For these farmers, the foundation represented useful professional support. Some smallholders reported their purchase of professional literature, and one group of smallholders and their wives even sent a telegram to the Ruth Foundation to express their gratitude for an agricultural excursion that had been arranged for them.<sup>46</sup> Becoming better and more knowledgeable smallholders was one way to live the nation in a smallholder economy.

<sup>43</sup>TCA, SL Ea:1, Correspondence -1922.

<sup>44</sup>The cowshed was later approved by the foundation. Perttuli (1966), 170.

<sup>45</sup>Elfving (1932), 155-6. In the 1960s, this smallholder was posthumously depicted as an eager participant in excursions, exhibitions and training courses. Perttuli (1966), 186-8.

<sup>46</sup>NAF, RFC, Folder 8, letter from Aapo Hietamäki to consultant Vääntinen, 29 April 1921; Folder 18, letter from Asarias Joenniemi to consultant Vääntinen, 9 May 1924.

The Ruth Foundation met the needs of the smallholder economy by hiring a household consultant to give advice on gardening, and their professional milkmaid recommended better winter forage. Gender-specific tasks for men included improvements in forestry, drafted and planned in the rewards program. To serve their members, many local smallholder associations eagerly invited household and dairy farming consultants provided by their central organization.<sup>47</sup> Here, again, smallholders' space of experience was negotiated with educators. This guidance can be regarded as an attempt to strengthen the position of rural women and modernize the gendered division of labor. Women needed education in dairy farming, but at the same time they were supposed to have time for domestic duties, such as gardening.<sup>48</sup> The gendered forms of consultation both relied on the experiences of smallholders and tried to transform modern smallholder experiences.

All smallholder organizations focused on the need to improve living conditions. When schools for smallholders were planned, a lack of modern know-how as well as harmful conservatism were pointed at. It was especially in remote areas where farming did not meet the standards of developing societies. Learning by observation and socialization no longer sufficed; in other words, the smallholders' space of experience and horizons of expectation needed to change. Ambulatory schools for youth living in peripheral villages would provide the necessary practical and theoretical education in farming methods and in questions of economy. Moreover, it was commonly feared that young people, in particular, found urban and industrial centers more attractive than rural areas and farm labor.<sup>49</sup>

In early twentieth-century Finland, dairying was considered extremely important in economic terms; simultaneously it was characterized as a female industry. Some discussions by students in ambulatory schools stated that old-fashioned men did not understand the importance of dairying. Clearly, men were seen as needing to change, something that could be achieved through education and supervision. Discussions on this topic

<sup>47</sup> Elfving (1932), 89–91; The smallholders' League employed visiting consultants. Member associations were entitled to invite them. TCA, SL Ea:1, Correspondence –1922.

<sup>48</sup> Ann-Catrin Östman, "Civilizing and mobilizing the peasantry," in Hilson, Markkola & Östman (2012), 126–35.

<sup>49</sup> NAF, ÖSL, He 3, Amb. Lantmanna- och småbrukarskola; Anna Halme, *Eteen eestii ihanteen: Kansanopistoelämää Lahdessa 1893–1939* (Helsinki: Kansanvalistusseura, 2003).

were popular and sometimes intense. The same tone can be found in interviews with former participants of the Ruth Foundation's rewards program. One farmer criticized his father for neglecting the improvements in dairy farming recommended by the foundation. Another farmer admitted in the 1960s that his wife and the foundation had been right when they suggested investing in a proper cowshed; and one smallholder's wife explained how her husband did not always understand recommendations for cattle keeping.<sup>50</sup> These later interpretations bring out generational and gendered tensions otherwise quite hidden in the farm descriptions published in 1932.

The popularity of ambulatory farmers' schools and domestic economy classes is one indication that instruction and consultation in the smallholder economy was a crucial way for smallholders to become professional farmers. This seems to have been a source of pride. In everyday work practices, the smallholders proved themselves modern and rational and thus able to practice their nation. These prescribed practices signaled and enforced understanding of modernity and progress.<sup>51</sup> Women attended courses in dairy farming, cattle keeping, poultry keeping and food preservation, and men received training in field work, farming technology and forestry. Quite typically, these ambulatory classes organized patriotic celebrations at the end of the classes. Their program consisted of songs, poems and presentations with an explicit nationalist message. For example, at the end of the first awards program, the Ruth Foundation invited smallholders to a festive celebration in the nearby city of Jyväskylä. Both spouses attended the closing ceremony in which leading agricultural specialists gave talks on the national importance of smallholding.<sup>52</sup>

### PERFORMING PROGRESSIVE AND MODERN CITIZENSHIP

Progress and development were made an explicit goal of the Ruth Foundation, and the civic duties of smallholders are reported in its documents. The previously mentioned smallholder Aapo Heinämäki was an

<sup>50</sup> NAF, RFC, Folder 18; Perttuli (1966), 122, 128, 188.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Turner (1993). E.g. Östman (2004); Deborah Fitzgerald, "Accounting for Change: Farmers and the Modernizing State," in *The Countryside in the Age of the Modern State, Political Histories of Rural America*, ed. by Catherine McNicol Stock & Robert D. Johnston (London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 189–212.

<sup>52</sup> NAF, RFC, Folder 18. Smallholder celebration in Jyväskylä 1926.



exemplary citizen in his local community: he was repeatedly elected to the municipal council; he belonged to several municipal boards and the board of cooperative store; moreover, he ran a local cooperative bank for six years.<sup>53</sup> Another smallholder chaired the local board for poor relief, belonged to many other municipal boards, was an elected member of the municipal council and chaired the board of a cooperative bank.<sup>54</sup> Several other smallholders from the model farms reported their local positions of trust.

In the same way, many local associations indicated smallholders' commitment to progressive citizenship. Smallholder associations supported smallholders' participation in local elections and organized training courses in civic duties.<sup>55</sup> The Smallholders' League published a journal called *Pienviljelijä* (Smallholder). Local chapters of the league distributed the journal, and some chapters even reflected upon the significance of educational publications. Many local associations organized their own libraries in which they collected useful literature not only on various aspects of smallholder economy, such as field cultivation, cattle keeping, poultry keeping, gardening and forestry, but also on the national role of citizens.<sup>56</sup> Here smallholders were building on a lengthy civil-society tradition since the late nineteenth century. Village libraries and local study circles had been organized by the temperance movement, the labor movement and agrarian civic organizations.<sup>57</sup>

The Ruth Foundation's aim of promoting progress and modernization met with some response in the families of the model farms. For them, children's primary school education was common. At least six children were sent to vocational schools: three boys were supported by the foundation to go to the farmers' school, two girls went to a school in dairy farming, and one girl studied in a folk high school. Figures may be even higher since many families in the second set of model farms still had small children. Nevertheless, professional consultation received by parents and the education given to children showed that the educational aims of the foundation met the needs of smallholder families. In the 1960s, one of the boys who went to the farmers' school reminisced about his education and

<sup>53</sup> NAF, RFC, Folder 18. Note on Heinämäki farm.

<sup>54</sup> NAF, RFC, Folder 18. Note on Kuivakangas farm.

<sup>55</sup> Santonen (1971), 150–6.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. TCA, SL Cd:2, Minutes of Vihdin Herrakunnan torppariosasto 4 July 1920.

<sup>57</sup> Risto Alapuro & Henrik Stenius, "Kansanliikkeet loivat kansakunnan," in *Kansa liik-keessä*, ed. by. Risto Alapuro et al. (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1987); Hilson, Markkola & Östman (2012), 8–14.

stated its significance not only to farming but also to civic duties in local society.<sup>58</sup> Professionalization of farming was a crucial part of nation-building both from above and from below.

Reading was a civic virtue. By reading books, rural people were to learn how to become proper citizens.<sup>59</sup> In the written contracts, smallholder families were to acquire vocational literature on agriculture. The smallholder's guide and a calendar on agriculture were often mentioned in the contract, and the co-operative movement's journal was highly recommended. Documents from farm inspections reveal that many families actually bought recommended advisory material, whereas some other families were not willing to invest in such literature. Usually families with a basic library received more positive comments on the state of farming than families without books and journals.<sup>60</sup> Owning and reading books was a crucial part of a smallholder's citizenship.

The watchword being "progress," societal progress, economic development and rationalization of agriculture were key aspects that framed the discussions and arguments in courses for smallholders. The smallholders needed education in rational methods. The concept of "rational" could mean anything from working according to the latest scientifically proven methods in the various fields of agriculture to applying those results in the running of the household and in nutrition. It was also emphasized that the schools should discuss a range of themes, such as health care, municipal activities and temperance. All these aspects were touched upon when students were discussing the need of societies for control of cows and their milk. The educators and teachers encouraged smallholders to form voluntary "control-organizations," which would hire a trained woman to visit and control cattle feeding and the quality of the milk.<sup>61</sup> Thus, there were no lines drawn between public activities and work practices.

<sup>58</sup> Elfving (1932); Paavo Saarinen, b. 1909, son of Sakari and Tiina Saarinen from the first awards program was interviewed by Veli Perttuli (1966), 145.

<sup>59</sup> Saara Tuomaala, "Pulpeteista piholle, metsiin ja kaduille," in *Valistus ja koulunpenkki: Kasvatus ja koulutus Suomessa 1860-luvulta 1960-luvulle*, ed. by Anja Heikkinen & Pirkko Leino-Kaukiainen (Helsinki: SKS, 2011), 355–65; Saara Tuomaala, *Työtätekevistä käsistä puhtaiksi ja kirjoittaviksi: suomalaisen oppivelvollisuuskoulun ja maalaislasten kohtaaminen 1921–1939* (Helsinki: SKS, 2004).

<sup>60</sup> NAF, RFC, Folder 18. Inspections.

<sup>61</sup> Jakobstad-Pietarsaari Museum, Archives: Mellersta Österbottens vandrante folkhögskola, 10 April 1935, 17 August 1935; Cf. Östman (2000), 265–7.

The Ruth Foundation also encouraged families to join control-organizations. Altogether 55 percent of the model farms joined a control-organization, and the figure could have been higher if there had been more local organizations to promote dairy farming.<sup>62</sup> Given the remote location of selected farms, this was a high figure. Discussions at farmers' schools also reveal an understanding of the necessity for participation in civic life—it was emphasized that the farmers should establish organizations for the wellbeing of the community. Daily practices, such as bringing milk to the co-operative dairy and keeping the cows as well as the cowshed clean, were also central to the construction of identity and national belonging.<sup>63</sup> It was through everyday practices and the routines of daily work that identity was formed and performed. This connects to wider debates about the construction of the nation in practices and daily life as well as to understandings of performativity.<sup>64</sup>

This is closely linked to the idea that modern practices serve to construct a healthy community where women and men are ascribed modernized and partly similar roles. Thus, rational and modern practices bridged the understandings of private and local as well as of municipal and national. Tending the farm and participating in agricultural organizations and local administration served as the practice of commitment to the nation and the community. Also, in this way, the nation was practiced.

## HUNGER FOR LAND

The Ruth Foundation supported smallholders who had emancipated or were about to emancipate their tenant farm. Landowning was an obvious goal for many tenant farmers and cottagers. However, not all of them emphasized ownership. For example, while one rural workers' association was transformed into a smallholders' association in 1920, their new statutes defined a permanent right of residence and a permanent right to cultivate the farm as their goal.<sup>65</sup> This was in keeping with the previous social democratic smallholder movement which struggled between the ideals of collectivization and private ownership. The position of the

<sup>62</sup> Elfving (1932).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Östman (2012).

<sup>64</sup> Cf. The introduction of the book.

<sup>65</sup> TCA, SL Ce:2, Minutes of Majaalahden työväenyhdistys 1 September 1920. This decision followed the central organization's policy.

landless population, including tenant farmers, was one of the most burning domestic political concerns in Finland. For the labor movement, applying international socialist theories to the agrarian realities of Finland was a difficult equation to solve. After the parliamentary reform in 1906, landless people voted for Social Democrats; at the same time, they wanted to become landowners. In the 1910s, the Social Democratic Party adopted a pragmatic stance on promoting emancipation of tenant farms and gained massive electoral support in the countryside. Later, their party program in 1922 took a positive stance on private (small-scale) landowning and independent smallholdings.<sup>66</sup>

Families participating in the Ruth Foundation's rewards programs showed an explicit hunger for land. Some of those families had started from scratch: for example, from a cultivated area of 0.02 or 0.1 hectares, a dilapidated cottage and no forestland.<sup>67</sup> In general, during the rewards period, the first set of model farms increased their average arable land from 5.8 to 6.2 hectares, and the second set increased theirs from 6.2 to 7.1 hectares. However, this growth tells only a partial truth about smallholders' industriousness. Those smallholders who had started almost without fields had cleared their 4–5 hectares before the program, and the rewards period represented just a cross-section of their agricultural expansion.<sup>68</sup> Some smallholders could also afford to buy meadows, marshes and forestland to be cleared and cultivated.

Families with a migration background provide another example of the smallholders' hunger for land. One couple (born in 1872 and 1881) had lived for a long time in the United States where the husband worked as a tailor. After their return to Finland in 1910, they settled into a tenant farm of 42 hectares and bought it in 1919. By the mid-1920s they had more than doubled the farm's arable land from 7 to 17 hectares. In another family, the husband had worked in Canada and the United States as a lumber jack and a sawmill worker. After his return to Finland, he was gradually able to acquire landed property. In 1906, he and his wife first bought a right of tenancy, and in 1916 their tenant farm was emancipated. Some years later, they more than doubled the total area to 42 hectares.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Petri Jussila, *Tilastomies torpparien asialla: Edvard Gyllingin maatalouspoliittinen ajattelu ja toiminta suurlakon ja sisällissodan välissä* (Helsinki: THPTS, 2015), 250–2; Santonen (1971), 128–9; Lackman (1985), 46.

<sup>67</sup> Elfving (1932), 105, 190.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. Sahinaho, Lahdenmäki and Peltola smallholdings. Elfving (1932), 165–81.

<sup>69</sup> Elfving (1932), 127, 136.

It is probably not surprising that families with experiences of migration had acquired the resources to become landowners; moreover, they were willing to raise their status by joining a farming development program.

Owning land was not enough. The farm needed to be self-sufficient and either free of debt or with the debt under control. Emigration was actually often a conscious attempt to stick to the land. Marta's husband emigrated to Canada in order to earn money to pay their debts. In the short life story written by Marta, landowning is ascribed a pivotal role. She depicts the tenant farm where she was born and relates how her parents bought land. Moreover, she also emphasizes how she and her husband worked hard when they acquired this piece of land. In her life story, the focus is clearly on the tenant farm.<sup>70</sup> Collective conventions form life writing and writing a life story is a way of organizing and making sense of experiences.<sup>71</sup> Marta's other texts, her answers to questionnaires, also emphasize the work on the farm and, eventually, the love for the land.<sup>72</sup> The short life story reveals that the key topics are related to the small farm, for which Marta carried responsibility. Like other forms of life writing, this text bears value.

The reputation of the Ruth Foundation gave hope to landless people who were hungry for their own piece of land. In 1918, for instance, the foundation received a letter from Lapland with a polite question as to whether the foundation's funds were available, either as loans or as donations, to agricultural workers interested in buying a smallholding. The foundation, however, recommended that this man turn to the National Board for Rural Settlement.<sup>73</sup>

Among the smallholders selected by the Ruth Foundation, we can find some unfortunate families. For example, one farm had been run by a tenant widow and her daughters until one daughter's husband took over the tenant farm. Buildings were dilapidated and the badly kept arable land was barren. In the 1920s, a proper farmhouse was built following the construction plans provided by the foundation. A cowshed and other animal shelters were rebuilt as well. Attempts to develop farming

<sup>70</sup> *Cultura*. Marta Nyman 8 October 1994, 1, 3–4.

<sup>71</sup> Lena Marander-Eklund & Ann-Catrin Östman, "Biografiska betydelser," in *Biografiska betydelser – norm och erfarenheter i levnadsberättelser*, ed. by Lena Marander-Eklund & Ann-Catrin Östman (Hedemora: Gidlunds förlag, 2011), 10–14.

<sup>72</sup> The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland Archives (SLS) 1210: Utvandrarerna, 566–79.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. NAF, RFC, Folder 8. Letter from Aatu Hulkko to the foundation 7 September 1918, letter from the foundation to Aatu Hulkko in November 1918.

and make it profitable through the awards program are obvious; the importance of the rewards program is further confirmed by the fact that the farm again got into financial difficulties soon after the program period. In 1932, this indebted smallholder passed away and his estate had to sell the farm to pay his debts.<sup>74</sup> Attempts to stick to farming with the help of a development program indicate that losing the land was a threat to be taken seriously.

Marta's husband emigrated so that the couple could pay for their farm. Throughout the years, Marta took care of the farm and the children. Life as smallholder was difficult. When a collection of rural life stories was organized, the writers stressed the experiences of smallholding. "We in Ostrobothnia were smallholders. Had 5–7 cows on the farms, 1–2 horses, sheep and hens and some 8–10 goats," summarized a woman of her community.<sup>75</sup> Several authors from the group underline that smallholding was the normal state of affairs in Ostrobothnia. Scholars of rural autobiographies stress that one needed a motive to write. Certain features in the narratives tend to surface more often than others, among them stories of hardship or poverty, and these accounts are often directed to an audience of younger generations.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the women who answered the call for life writing referred to the experiences of emigration, and, like Marta, they depicted the hard lives of their mothers and other women, who took on responsibility for farming, while their men—husbands and brothers—worked abroad. These writers chose to make the shared and collective experiences visible when writing about their own lives. While official texts spoke the language of progress, economic stability and civic development, these texts tell stories of hardships. Hunger for land led to hard work, sometimes too hard, and these stories reveal the other side of the coin.

<sup>74</sup> According to a later interview, the kind-hearted smallholder had secured other farmers' loans and was therefore indebted. Perttuli (1966), 129.

<sup>75</sup> Östman (2000), 34.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Eija Stark, "Narrative Weapons of the Underprivileged," *Ethnologica Scandinavica* 44 (2014), 23–38.

## CONCLUSION

*You who go to Finland to look for things worth seeing, do not forget the best of them all, the brave housewife and the great work which is being done everywhere in order to improve the Finnish home, to strengthen domestic happiness and to create an unfaltering love for their native country.*<sup>77</sup>

In 1939, the Department of Domestic Science in the Board of Agriculture published a richly illustrated book telling of the achievements of domestic science in Finland. The book was targeted at international visitors in the 1940 Summer Olympics in Helsinki. Due to the war, the Olympics were canceled, but the book on domestic science remains and explicates the bond between women's work, home and emotions of national belonging that were developed during the interwar period. Women in the above-mentioned smallholder families who received consultation in cattle keeping, gardening and domestic duties were now depicted as the foremost tourist attraction in Finland.

Our case study investigates smallholding not only as an ideology but also as practiced, lived and promoted. It enables us to uncover interaction and encounters between smallholders and social reformers as well as agriculturalists. More importantly, it provides insights into how seemingly trivial everyday practices, such as feeding the animals, clearing land for cultivation and tending the garden, were given added value and interpreted in terms of professionalism and progress.

In many parts of Europe, nationalist movements idealized the peasantry. In Finland, too, smallholders were considered the pillar of Finnishness as well as of the "Finland-Swedish" ethnicity. Nonetheless, ambivalent and classed understandings of the peasantry prevailed. In this context, economists, politicians and civil-society organizations together with the agrarian population engaged in developing and improving the status of smallholders. Both the Ruth Foundation, the Swedish-speaking consultants and the social democratic smallholder associations operated in geographical areas considered peripheral and underdeveloped. Documents from these organizations make visible understandings and definitions of rural problems as well as encounters with smallholders.

These encounters reveal smallholders' responses to agricultural policies. Smallholders were hungry for land, and in that hunger, they needed both

<sup>77</sup> *Maataloudellinen kotitalousopetus* (1939), 1.

material and immaterial resources. The ideas of proper farming patterns and family relations, represented by organizations and smallholders, clashed, challenged and reinforced each other. The ideals of national progress were negotiated in these encounters. People living on small-scale agriculture accepted and adapted to the ideals of nation-building through rationalization of agriculture and dairy farming, but to some extent they also resisted middle-class values coming from above. Koselleck's conceptualization of historical time<sup>78</sup> suggests that the space of experience and the horizon of expectation informed the ways in which individual smallholders selected elements of consultation. For example, if they felt that a cultivation plan made sense to them or met at least some of their expectations, it was accepted; if a suggested cowshed seemed too expensive, it was rejected. However, the selective nature was gendered, and tensions between generations were also present in smallholder economy.

Economic activities and everyday practices were both gendered and classed. Smallholders and civic activists understood that smallholding was a family issue; it was often stated that the work of the whole family—husband, wife and children—was needed to secure the progress and viability of small farms. Women were not only practitioners of home economics but were also engaged in agriculture in an informed way. Many smallholders turned into active citizens who pursued both economic and political citizenship as producers and participants in municipal administration, co-operatives and associations. The citizenship formed, formulated and practiced was often male. However, women were also ascribed civic duties, and these responsibilities are noticed in life writings. The organizations formed by the farmers themselves were especially pivotal, and the dairy organizations in particular operated in both private and public spaces.

By tracing the voices of the smallholders, we can point at understandings of smallholding as modern and progressive as well as an appreciation of landowning. Aspects related to progress and professionalism are explicitly and implicitly stressed in ego-documents. The smallholders performed the practices, and understood the rationality, of modernization. However, ego-documents also enable a more complex picture and render the harshness of smallholding livelihoods visible.

In this chapter, we have focused on practices. However, our reading suggests that the concept of land is emotionally and symbolically charged when alluding to the nation. Both in Finnish and in Swedish “land” can

<sup>78</sup> Koselleck (1985), 272.



be related to soil, ground and country. Thus, the theoretical concept of *emotive*, referring to certain kinds of emotional statements that show how words, tropes, and figures both form, change, and use emotions, would be a fruitful way to further conceptualize the ways in which smallholders lived their nation.<sup>79</sup> To a high degree, terms like land (*maa, land/jord*) and agriculture (*maanviljely, jordbruk*) could be understood as emotives. In particular the first pair of words (*maa/jord*) could be used in a symbolic way but also in connection to concrete farming and to everyday work practices. This conceptualization, however, would need a different reading of this material, complemented by a wider set of publications by smallholder organizations.

After all, women and men who encountered these organizations believed in the possibilities of smallholding. Besides depicted love of their farmland, an emphasis on hardship and misery is visible in some life stories, maybe as an effect of a dialogue with later generations or as an implicit critique of the promises and belief promoted by other groups. Read in this way, these texts bear witness to and comment on ideals formed by “cruel optimism,” a concept presented by Lauren Berlant to depict societal promises which were never fulfilled.<sup>80</sup> After World War II, the prospects of Finnish smallholders were first to be fueled by new land reforms and then crushed by a society in which smallholdings were no longer viable. The tension between the horizon of expectations encouraged in the interwar period and the space of experience of post-World War II smallholders was dramatically altered.

<sup>79</sup>William M. Reddy, “Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions,” *Current Anthropology* 38:3 (1997), 331.

<sup>80</sup>Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 23–4.

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PART III

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Experiential Edges of the Nation



# National Belonging Through Signed and Spoken Languages: The Case of Finland-Swedish Deaf People in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

*Hanna Lindberg*

## INTRODUCTION

*A language question does not exist among the deaf[...] For them, their common fate is of more importance.*<sup>1</sup>

In 1957, the Finland-Swedish newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet* published letters to the editor, debating whether the Finland-Swedes had been ostracized from the deaf community in Finland. An anonymous writer claimed that deaf people belonging to the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland had been marginalized within the Finnish Association of the Deaf, as

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<sup>1</sup> *Hufvudstadsbladet* 12 May 1957.

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information was seldom given in Swedish and Finland-Swedish members were often steamrolled by their Finnish counterparts. In their answer, the association strongly denied these claims and accused the writer of trying to agitate in the name of language. According to the association, deaf people were unperturbed by the language disputes that had characterized much of Finnish politics during the previous decades. Deaf people simply had no time for the follies of the hearing, and they were united by a common struggle that defied possible language barriers.<sup>2</sup>

In their answer, the association referred to one of the main features of the rise of nationalism in Finland during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that is, the positions of the Finnish and Swedish languages in public life. In Finland, Swedish was, until the late nineteenth century, the main administrative and educational language and, to a large extent, the language of the social elite. Furthermore, in areas along the Western and Southern coasts of Finland as well as the Åland islands, Swedish was the mother tongue of people of all social strata. The rise of national sentiment from the mid-nineteenth century onwards saw a recognition of the Finnish language and culture and a Finnification of several areas of society, leading in turn to consolidation and mobilization of the geographically scattered Swedish-speaking Finns. At the turn of the twentieth century, language became, with some notable exceptions,<sup>3</sup> a marker of geographical and institutional segregation, and a process of ethnification of the Finland-Swedes commenced. Through the concept of “Finland-Swede” (*finlandssvensk*),<sup>4</sup> first introduced in the 1910s, the Swedish

<sup>2</sup> *Hufvudstadsbladet* 6, 12 May 1957.

<sup>3</sup> Heikki Waris has shown how the expansion of the workers' communities in Helsinki in the late nineteenth century lead to widespread bilingualism, where especially second-generation workers were fully functional in both languages. Heikki Waris, *Työläisyhteiskunnan syntyminen Helsingin Pitkäsillan pohjoispuolelle*, 2nd ed. (Helsinki: Weilin+Göös, 1973 [1932/1934]), 96–105.

<sup>4</sup> *Finlandssvensk* is translated into English both as *Finland-Swede* and *Swedish-speaking Finn*. The latter term is more accurate when referring to periods before the early 1900s, but it is both linguistically impossible, and ontologically problematic, when referring to deaf people. *Swedish-speaking deaf*, which is the term most commonly used in the sources when referring to deaf people from Swedish-speaking homes, is also problematic as it reflects an oralist notion. For most deaf persons, sign language is their mother tongue, and they do not necessarily *speak* any language. Their educational and/or family background is, however, Swedish, and they are therefore incorporated into the Swedish cultural and social sphere in Finland. Thus, Finland-Swedish deaf (people) is the best linguistic construction in reference to the group.

speakers of Finland were seen as a cultural unit where, although numerically in a minority, the Swedish language was legally equal to the Finnish.<sup>5</sup>

If the language struggles can be seen as one of the grand narratives of Finnish modern history, and as an integral part of the rise of nationalism in the country, could it be claimed that deaf people,<sup>6</sup> who had formed national and local communities since the mid-nineteenth century, were really immune to language conflicts, as was stated by the association in 1957? According to historian Douglas C. Baynton, the field of Deaf History reveals new perspectives of general history, and disability as an analytical tool can reorganize our understanding of historical developments and our view of mainstream history.<sup>7</sup> The same can be said of other minorities living side by side but in different respects opposed to majority cultures. As historians of nationalism such as Tara Zahra and recently Maarten Van Ginderachter et al. have shown, minorities in multiethnic countries and borderline regions often reacted indifferently to nationalism. Indifference to issues of nationalism could either be a direct political response to national upheaval or apathy toward the nationalism of political elites, a discarding of nationalism in favor of other categories of belonging (for more on national indifference, see the introductory chapter).<sup>8</sup> Did a

<sup>5</sup> Max Engman, *Språkfrågan: Finlandssvenskhetens uppkomst 1812–1922* (Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2016), 16, 158–63; Max Engman, “Finns and Swedes in Finland,” in *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World*, ed. by Sven Tägil (London: Hurst, 1995), 179–216; Jennica Thylin-Klaus, “‘Den finländska svenskan’ 1860–1920. Tidig svensk språkplanering i Finland ur ett idéhistoriskt perspektiv,” (PhD diss., Åbo Akademi University, 2012), 37–8.

<sup>6</sup> I write “deaf” with a lowercase. The convention of writing “Deaf” in reference to deaf people as a linguistic and cultural minority was introduced in the 1970s in the wake of increased deaf awareness and the recognition of sign languages, but it is problematic when studying earlier periods. As Baynton states, it is difficult to know the self-identification of deaf people of the late nineteenth century, and whether they adhered to the idea of deaf people as a cultural and linguistic unit. Douglas C. Baynton, *Forbidden Signs: American Culture and the Campaign against Sign Language* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), 11–12.

<sup>7</sup> Baynton (1996), 1; Douglas C. Baynton, “Disability: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 17:2 (1997), 81–8. See also Catherine J. Kudlick, “Disability History: Why We Need Another ‘Other’,” *The American Historical Review* 108:3 (2003), 763–93.

<sup>8</sup> On national indifference, see, e.g. Maarten Van Ginderachter & Jon Fox, eds, *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe* (London: Abingdon 2019); Jeremy King, *Budweisers in to Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls:*

distancing from language conflicts also imply a distancing from other expressions of nationalism?

In this chapter, I study questions of language and national belonging by focusing on Finland-Swedish deaf people, that is, on a small minority existing in the intersection of ethnicity, disability and language. I argue that by studying the burgeoning Finland-Swedish deaf community as a case in point, one can expose a simultaneous process of adherence to national sentiment and a distancing from certain aspects of nationalism. Furthermore, I argue that questions of language and nationalism were primarily evident in experiences and practices, and that it is specifically through the mediation of often mundane experiences that the role of nationalism and language becomes visible.

In order to expose the lived experience of nationalism and language by Finland-Swedish deaf people, I use as my main source the journal *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* (Journal for Deaf-Mutes, from 1908 spelled *Tidskrift för Dövrstumma*), which was first published in 1897. I focus on two time periods: the 1890s and 1900s and the 1920s and 1930s, which are the main periods of Finland-Swedish national mobilization. The journal was intentionally established as a journal *for* and *by*—not *about*—deaf citizens. Its content was seen as ranging from normative texts, educating and informing deaf people with respect to different issues, to lived experiences of everyday lives.<sup>9</sup> The presence of deaf contributors to the journal is therefore large, and many pages are dedicated to readers' letters, conveying various information about the lives of Finland-Swedish deaf people. I read these letters and the experiences that they convey not as direct reflections of the concrete experiences but as socially and culturally embedded and transformed over time.<sup>10</sup>

*National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 17 (1899), 264. Furthermore, the editors stressed that the journal was primarily for the uneducated, who lived isolated from other deaf individuals. Therefore, the content was supposed to be as easily accessible as possible. *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 55 (1902).

<sup>10</sup> Ville Kivimäki, "Reittejä kokemushistoriaan – Menneisyyden kokemus yksilön ja yhteisön vuorovaikutuksessa," in *Eletty historia: Kokemus näkökulmana menneisyyteen*, ed. by Johanna Annola, Ville Kivimäki & Antti Malinen (Tampere: Vastapaino 2019), 30.

## NATION AND LANGUAGE IN THE BIRTH OF DEAF COMMUNITIES

In their study on the cultural construction of deaf people, sociologists Jan Branson and Don Miller argue that deaf communities developed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the West in connection to a strong national discourse, exemplified particularly by the establishment of *national* associations and the definition of *national* sign languages. Although there have been different forms of international cooperation and transnational exchanges, this transnationalism has served to further emphasize the national character of deaf communities.<sup>11</sup>

According to Branson and Miller, nationalism has served as a structure for deaf communities.<sup>12</sup> This is evident when looking at the “birth” and politicization of deaf communities in the late nineteenth century. The cradles of national deaf cultures and communities have in most cases been schools for deaf people, where deaf children were brought together and spent a large part of their childhood. Schools for deaf people were founded throughout Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth century, with the purpose to instill their pupils with religious education.<sup>13</sup> The first school in Finland was founded in 1846 by Carl Oscar Malm in the town of Borgå (Porvoo in Finnish) in Southern Finland. Malm, who had been deaf since infancy, received his education at the Manilla Deaf School in Stockholm, and he brought to Finland not only deaf education but also Swedish sign language, which he used in his teaching.<sup>14</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century, this language had developed from its Swedish roots and could be considered as its own

<sup>11</sup> Jan Branson & Don Miller, *Damned for Their Difference: The Cultural Construction of Deaf People as Disabled* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2002), 234, 236–40. Branson and Miller argue that the national discourse risks undermining the heterogeneity of deaf communities, especially in multiethnic and multilingual countries.

<sup>12</sup> Branson & Miller (2002), 234–5. For more on how nationalism served as a structure in promoting political aims, see, e.g. John Breuilly, “What Does It Mean to Say that Nationalism is ‘Popular?’” in *Nationhood from Below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Maarten Van Ginderachter & Marnix Beyen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 23–43.

<sup>13</sup> Minna Harjula, *Väillinaisuudella vaivatut: Vammaisuuden tulkinnat suomalaisessa huoltokeskustelussa 1800-luvun lopulta 1930-luvun lopulle* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1996), 82; Esme Cleall, “Jane Groom and the Deaf Colonists: Empire, Emigration and the Agency of Disabled People in the late Nineteenth-Century British Empire,” *History Workshop Journal* 81:1 (2016), 39–61.

<sup>14</sup> Rafael Helling, *Dövstumskolan i Borgå 1846–1946* (Åbo, 1946), 9.



distinct language.<sup>15</sup> This sign language would develop throughout the twentieth century into two national sign languages, the Finnish and the Finland-Swedish sign languages.<sup>16</sup>

Other schools for deaf people were founded in the late nineteenth century, and, according to Eeva Salmi, who has studied the pedagogical development of deaf education in Finland, the schools were a social melting-pot in matters of class, age and language. Deaf children were born into all social classes, and the classrooms were a reflection of the class structure of the country. Moreover, not only children were taught in the schools, but also teenagers and adults who had not received previous education.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the schools brought together children from Finnish- and Swedish-speaking homes, and schools in the western and southern parts of Finland were essentially trilingual: sign language was used in direct communication and, when writing, both Finnish and Swedish, depending on the home language of the pupil. Sometimes all three languages would be used at the same time; for example, Achilles Sirén, director of the Borgå school in 1869–90, prided himself on being able to fingerspell simultaneously with one hand in Swedish and the other in Finnish.<sup>18</sup>

The rise of nationalism and the institutional segregation of the Swedish and Finnish languages would affect deaf people in a number of different ways. Like Malm, also other early educators of deaf children used sign language to communicate with their pupils, but the late nineteenth century saw a greater emphasis on oralism. According to the oralist ideology of deaf education, also known as the German method, deaf children

<sup>15</sup> Tommi Jantunen, *Suomalaisen viittomakielen synnystä, vakiintumisesta ja kuvaamisen periaatteista* (Helsinki: Kuurojen liitto, 2001), 30–1. However, as there was no official recognition of sign languages as “real” languages at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, no clear distinction was therefore made between sign languages used in different countries. Baynton (1996), 13; Joseph J. Murray, *One Touch of Nature Makes the Whole World Kin: The Transnational Lives of Deaf Americans* (PhD diss.: University of Iowa, 2007), 2.

<sup>16</sup> Karin Hoyer, “The sociolinguistic situation of Finland-Swedish deaf people and their language, Finland-Swedish Sign Language,” *To the lexicon and beyond: Sociolinguistics in European Deaf communities*, ed. by Mieke Van Herreweghe & Myriam Vermeerbergen (Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 2004), 3–23.

<sup>17</sup> Eeva Salmi, “Kielelliset käänneet kuurojen opetuksessa,” in *Muuttuvat marginaalit: näkökulmia vammaistutkimukseen*, ed. by Joel Kivirauma (Helsinki: Kehitysvammaliitto, 2008), 18.

<sup>18</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 6 (1897).

should be taught how to speak, and how to understand speech through lip-reading. Furthermore, all communication with deaf individuals, also in school, should be conducted in spoken languages and not in sign, as sign language was seen as a primitive way of communicating that prevented intellectual development and social integration. The decree of the Milan Congress on deaf education in 1880, which stated that deaf education should rely on the oral method, has been viewed as the final legitimization of oralism globally. According to Salmi there was, however, no direct influence of the Milan decree on Finnish educators, most of whom favored the oral method already in the 1870s. In 1892, the oral method was set in law, and deaf teachers were no longer employed in schools for deaf people in Finland.<sup>19</sup>

The suppression of sign language was part of a nation-building process and followed a similar pattern to that of the suppression of other minority languages in the wake of nationalism, as well as to the definition and institutionalization of national languages. Sign language was, like many other languages, seen as a threat to the lingual cohesion of the nation, and although deaf people were not commonly viewed as a minority in the nineteenth century, the risk of social exclusion through sign language was generally frowned upon. Furthermore, as historians Douglas C. Baynton and Joseph J. Murray have shown, the suppression of sign language in America was often motivated by its foreign character, since American sign language was developed from the French through adaptation of French educational models in American schools for deaf people.<sup>20</sup>

Sign languages did, however, not disappear with the introduction of oralism. Socially, deaf pupils continued to communicate with each other in sign language, and, in the deaf clubs that were founded as deaf children grew up and wanted to continue to socialize with each other, sign language was the given communication form. The clubs can be seen as a second step in the community-making and politicization of deaf citizens.<sup>21</sup> In most Western countries, the last decades of the nineteenth century saw an upsurge of deaf clubs in the cities, and in Finland the first deaf club was founded in the city of Turku in 1886. The idea of deaf clubs followed the

<sup>19</sup> Eeva Salmi, *Linguistic Turns in Teaching of the Deaf in Finland* (Helsinki: Humanistinen ammattikorkeakoulu, 2010), 32.

<sup>20</sup> Baynton (1996); Murray (2007).

<sup>21</sup> Joseph J. Murray, "Transnational Interconnections in Nineteenth-Century Western Deaf Communities," in *The Oxford Handbook of Disability History*, ed. by Michael Rembis, Catherine Kudlick & Kim E. Nielsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 428.

Swedish example, and Swedish influence over the Finnish deaf community thus continued to be strong.<sup>22</sup> Finland was at the time a grand duchy under Russian rule, but also Russian deaf education followed the general European trends, and therefore Finland turned toward the West.<sup>23</sup>

The members of the clubs were joined together through their common language and shared experiences, and as both Finnish and Finland-Swedish deaf children were educated in the same schools up until 1892, they used the same sign language. The founding members of the clubs were often from Swedish-speaking bourgeois families, which had also been the case for Carl Oscar Malm, who passed away in 1863. His first pupil David Fredrik Hirn, who later also worked as a teacher, founded the Turku club, while the Stadius family were among the founding members of the club in Helsinki. The Swedish families formed an elite within the burgeoning deaf communities, which was a reflection of the language structure in the cities during the late nineteenth century.

The Swedish dominance continued during the third phase of politicization of the deaf community in Finland, with the foundation of the national association in 1905, the Finnish Association of the Deaf-Mute. The same people who had founded the local deaf clubs were also the driving forces behind the national association. The purpose of the association was to safeguard the interests of deaf people in Finland and to secure their educational and intellectual growth.<sup>24</sup> The Swedish background of the founding members, both hearing and deaf, did not mean that the Swedish language was prioritized in any particular way. Instead, the association was trilingual with sign language, Finnish and Swedish used in different activities. However, as the twentieth century progressed, the Swedish dominance quickly waned and the Finland-Swedes would not be on the concrete agenda until the early 1980s, when the Swedish group within the association was formed, as a reaction to what Finland-Swedish deaf people experienced as neglect of their issues within the association.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Eeva Salmi & Mikko Laakso, *Maahan lämpimään: Suomen viittomakielisten historia* (Helsinki: Kuurojen liitto, 2005), 58–62.

<sup>23</sup> For deaf education and community formation in tsarist Russia, see Claire L. Shaw, *Deaf in the USSR: Marginality, Community, and Soviet Identity, 1917–1991* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), 23–30.

<sup>24</sup> Salmi & Laakso (2005), 78–80.

<sup>25</sup> Hanna Lindberg, “Att värna om en minoritet inom en minoritet. Finlandssvenska dövas gränsposition och arbete för rättigheter i 1980-talets Finland,” *Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier* 95 (2020), 191–217.

The associational unity of deaf people from Finland's two main linguistic groups which has lasted until the present day can be contrasted to the development in other bi- and multilingual European countries. During times of national upheaval, deaf people of different linguistic groups have often followed the separation which exists among the hearing population. In Belgium, deaf people from Flanders and Wallonia were joined in the national federation, Navekados (the National Federation of Catholic Deaf-Mutes), between 1936 and 1977, after which separate associations were formed. As a consequence, contacts between the two groups diminished and their sign languages diverged.<sup>26</sup> As I will discuss in the next section, although there was political unity of deaf people in Finland, there was also an increasing institutional separation of deaf people from the different language groups, which would affect the position of the Finland-Swedes.

#### CREATING A FINLAND-SWEDISH DEAF COMMUNITY IN THE 1890S AND 1900S

As previously stated, there was no division between Finnish and Finland-Swedish deaf people until 1892 when the schools were divided linguistically, as were all elementary schools in Finland one year later.<sup>27</sup> The division of the schools on linguistic grounds was particularly important in schools for deaf people when education was based on the oral method; this meant that Finnish and Swedish deaf pupils could no longer be taught simultaneously, while almost all educational focus was directed toward teaching deaf children how to speak.<sup>28</sup>

Two schools provided education in the Swedish language, the school in Borgå and the one in Jakobstad.<sup>29</sup> The schools created centers for deaf

<sup>26</sup> Mieke Van Herreweghe, Maartje De Meulder & Myriam Vermeerbergen, "From Erasure to Recognition (and Back Again?): The Case of Flemish Sign Language," in the *Oxford Handbook of Deaf Studies in Language*, ed. by Marc Marschark & Patricia Elizabeth Spencer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 46. For the Catalan case, see e.g. Maria Josep Jarque, Marta Bosch-Baliarda & Menchu González, "Legal Recognition and Regulation of Catalan Sign Language," in *The Legal Recognition of Sign Languages. Advocacy and Outcomes Around the World*, ed. by Maartje De Meulder, Joseph J. Murray & Rachel L. McKee (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2019), 268–83.

<sup>27</sup> Engman (2016), 194.

<sup>28</sup> Salmi & Laakso (2005), 170–71. Swedish and Finnish deaf pupils were taught in both joint and separate classes before the division of the schools in 1892. Helling (1946), 59.

<sup>29</sup> The two schools had different tasks, with the Borgå school being a speech school and the Jakobstad school a writing school. All children were sent to Borgå for their first years of

people from Swedish-speaking families and gave rise to deaf cultures, that would, as the twentieth century progressed, be defined as a particular Finland-Swedish deaf community. Although schools for deaf people had only recently been divided on the basis of language, and the deaf clubs were bilingual, a connection and a perceived unity was formed around the Swedish language through the monthly journal *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* founded in 1897 by Ossian Wichmann, principal of the deaf schools in Mikkeli (1895–96) and Borgå (1896–1918). Wichmann had the previous year also founded the Finnish *Kuuromykkäin Lehti*. In 1906 both *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* and *Kuuromykkäin Lehti* were taken over by the Finnish Association of the Deaf-Mute and were thereafter edited by John Sundman (deaf), assisted by a Finnish and a Swedish secretary (both hearing).

The purpose of the journal was to provide Finland's "Swedish deaf-mutes with educational and purposeful reading." In many ways the journal served initially as an educational continuation after formal schooling had ended and as a way for teachers to keep watch over their former students as they grew older. However, *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* was also intended to be a "uniting link between the Swedish deaf-mutes," thereby keeping the community created by the schools intact.<sup>30</sup> Communications-scholar Carol Padden has argued that deaf communities are formed through the day-to-day contact between deaf individuals as well as their hearing allies. Deaf communities are therefore local in character and consist of people with common goals and interests.<sup>31</sup> I argue here that communities of deaf people in the late nineteenth century could also be formed through an abstract sense of belonging, where specific common features, such as deafness, sign language, the Swedish language and the experience of deaf education at a specific locality, created a structure within which a community could be born.

education. The children who were thought to be suited for oral education continued in Borgå, while the children who were deemed unfit to be trained in the oral method were sent to Jakobstad, 500 kilometers to the north, and taught through writing, lip-reading and finger spelling. In Jakobstad, overaged pupils, who were exempted from the ban on sign language, were also educated. Birgitta Wallvik, *Från Döfstumsbacken till Solsand – teckenspråkig kultur i Jakobstadsnejden* (Jakobstad: Jakobstads Nejdens Döva 2016), 21.

<sup>30</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 1 (1897).

<sup>31</sup> Carol Padden, "The Deaf Community and the Culture of Deaf People," in *Sign Language and the Deaf Community: Essays in Honor of William C. Stokoe*, ed. by Charlotte Baker & Robbin Battison (Silver Spring: National Association of the Deaf, 1980), 89–104.

In many ways the burgeoning Finland-Swedish deaf community of the late nineteenth century was an imagined one, in the words of Benedict Anderson, as many of its presumed members had never met each other.<sup>32</sup> They had attended different schools or the same school at different times. Furthermore, some had no contact with other deaf individuals after leaving school and returning home to their families. As mentioned previously, the Swedish-speakers were spread over a vast geographical area, and, as Max Engman among others has stated, there was no perceived unity between Finland-Swedes of different regions and social classes until the late nineteenth century. The mobilization and the process of constructing “the Finland-Swede” was in many respects a counterreaction to the “Finnification” of Finland and the growing national sentiments among the Finnish-speaking population.<sup>33</sup>

The creation process of a Finland-Swedish deaf community took a very concrete form in *Tidskrift för Döfstumma*. The first issues of *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* in 1897 present what one could almost call a catalogue of Finland-Swedish deaf people. Under the title “Information about deaf-mutes,” the paper listed the current whereabouts, professions and the marital status of previous pupils of the Borgå, Jakobstad and Turku schools. Similar lists can also be found in *Kuuromykkäin Lehti*, but they are much shorter even though there were more Finnish deaf individuals, and as a result they are less comprehensive.

The lists might seem to hold only basic information but are important in the community-making process. Through listing specific individuals, the realm of the Finland-Swedes within the deaf community was mapped out and defined. The publication of the lists coincided with the geographical construction of what would in the 1900s be known as *Svenskfinland* (Swedish-Finland). In 1897 the idea that the Finland-Swedes were inhabiting certain areas of Finland, separated through a “language barrier” from the Finnish parts of Finland, was for the first time illustrated in a calendar by *Svenska folkskolans vänner*.<sup>34</sup>

Whether or not the people mentioned on the lists actually were from Swedish-speaking families is in some cases uncertain; some of the names

<sup>32</sup> For imagined communities, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>33</sup> Engman (2016).

<sup>34</sup> Anna-Maria Åström, Bo Lönnqvist & Yrsa Lindqvist, *Gränsfolkets barn: Finlandssvensk marginalitet och självhävvelse i kulturanalytiskt perspektiv* (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2001), 29.

are Finnish and they are listed as living in overwhelmingly Finnish-speaking regions. The fact that they were included on the Swedish and not on the Finnish lists shows the greater importance of educational than family background.

This is also evident in the readers' letters. The letters are unique sources in the history of deaf people; they often have no specific purpose other than to recount all sorts of anecdotal and everyday observations. As the twentieth century progressed, the letters became fewer and more structured, taking the form of more traditional letters to the editor, addressing certain issues or conveying specific views. The letters from the early days of *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* are, of course, written by a small segment of the community; with sign language as the primary language, the ability to write in Swedish or Finnish, at least if it was meant for publication, was in many cases limited. According to Eeva Salmi, written accounts were most often by deaf people who held a leading position in the community.<sup>35</sup> However, *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* was specifically meant for "ordinary" deaf people, not those representing the higher social strata, and therefore people of varied backgrounds wrote to the journal.<sup>36</sup> With the knowledge that the letters would be published in a journal edited by former teachers, the experiences and opinions conveyed are of course to some extent curated. However, this is not always the case, as there are also examples of letters being critical of, for example, oral education, thereby agitating the editors.<sup>37</sup>

Like the segment "Information about deaf-mutes," the letters also map out the Finland-Swedish realm of the deaf community, but while the lists were a top-down construction listing specific individuals, the letters are more informative. The letters were meant to re-establish contact with previous friends and teachers from the schools and to inform them of the writer's whereabouts and current situation. The information was not, however, limited to the writer her- or himself, since many wrote with the specific purpose of reporting on deaf people who lived in their town or parish, or with whom they had stayed in contact after leaving school. The letter by Sofia Andersson from 1897 serves as an example of how the letters were formulated:

<sup>35</sup> Salmi (2010), 12.

<sup>36</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 55 (1902).

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g. *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 16 (1898), 17 (1899), 19 (1899).

*Many thanks for the journal. It was very fun to read it and I would like more. I live at home with my old father and I take care of the household. It is 7 years since my mother died. I sew, crochet and knit. In the summer I work in the fields and meadows and sometimes for other people.*

*I know 3 deaf-mute girls: Edla Renström lives in Pojo, Kärräng, Adolfina Enberg in Lohja, Kyrkstad, and Alexandra Westerholm in Svartå, Mjölнарby. All three have attended the Turku school for the deaf-mute.<sup>38</sup>*

The letters were a part of community-making process, establishing a bond and a shared domain among people living far apart, sometimes without ever having met. The bond was firstly created in connection to a common educational background, and the place of education is as important, if not more so, than the place of residence.

Secondly, the bond was made through the use of sign language, as proficiency in and dialect of sign language was often mentioned by the letter writers, which created distinctions and hierarchies between deaf people. As different conventions of signing existed in different schools, letter writers mentioned difficulties in understanding signers from other schools, and although no division was at this point made between the Finnish and Finland-Swedish sign languages, deaf individuals who “sign in Finnish” were also commented upon.<sup>39</sup> Most attention, and pity, was however bestowed on deaf people who had forgotten or never learned to sign.<sup>40</sup> The importance of sign language also affected how the hearing were described. When a division between deaf and non-deaf individuals was made, the latter were referred to as “the speaking” (as opposed to “the signing”), not “the hearing.” Thus, the focus was not on auditory ability but, instead, on the oral.<sup>41</sup> According to the oralist ideology, deaf people would, through speech and lip-reading, be equal to the hearing, and their deafness would be made insignificant. Therefore, in the letters attention was given more to mouths and hands than to ears.

The focus on sign language also meant that deaf people from Finnish families were included in different ways. The writers to *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* included deaf individuals whose educational and family background was Finnish, and who either practiced their Swedish skills by writing to the journal or who wrote with the hope that their letter would be

<sup>38</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 3 (1897).

<sup>39</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 6 (1897), 3 (1897), 72 (1904).

<sup>40</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 2 (1897), 19 (1899), 24 (1899), 80 (1904).

<sup>41</sup> See, e.g., *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 11 (1898), 73–4 (1904).



translated into Swedish. As Vilho Kujala stated in his letter, he hesitated to write as he had no knowledge of the Swedish language, but his will to make contact with his Swedish friends was greater than his hesitation.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, while the Swedish and the Finnish languages became an external structure from the 1890s onwards with separate schools and journals, deaf people breached these boundaries.

### NATIONALISM AS DAILY PRACTICE

How are issues of nationalism and patriotism (*fosterländskhet*) dealt with in the readers' letters and in the journal at large? As stated previously, the history of deaf communities is intertwined with the rise of the nation state, affecting both educational ideology and organizational structures. In *Tidskrift för Döfstumma*, national sentiment is expressed in a number of different ways, ranging from explicit national rhetoric in the educational material to more subtle references in the readers' letters to daily practices and material encounters with nationalism.

The journal reacted to the major political developments in the country, as the first lines of the second issue of 1900 show:

*The previous, for Finland, such a fateful year has also been for the Helsinki club of deaf-mutes a year of trial, in more ways than one. The surge of the storms that have stirred minds and hearts has also reached the silent world of deaf-mutes, and even though, because of their impairment, they cannot actively participate in patriotic endeavors, which are the order of the day, but so to speak stand outside of these, they are fully aware of what is at stake.*<sup>43</sup>

This paragraph is taken from the annual report of the Helsinki deaf club for the previous year. The report started with a recognition of the turbulent year of 1899, when Emperor Nicholas II issued the February manifesto, according to which the Finnish representative assembly was deprived of its influence over the application of imperial legislation in Finland, a move that gave rise to grave anger. The report, written by Julia Stadius, stressed the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of deaf people in these events and in Finnish society at large. Because of their impairment, deaf people were not able to be active figures in patriotic endeavors

<sup>42</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 8 (1897).

<sup>43</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 26 (1900).

(*fosterländska strävanden*) but were nevertheless aware of what was happening and sympathized with the reaction in Finland. Should the report's account of the national upsurge and deaf people's part in it be understood as a conscious distancing, in line with the notion of national indifference? Deafness is seen by Stadius as an obstacle to certain actions and concrete participation, but not due to blunt indifference. Therefore, one can read Stadius's words as a standpoint for the importance of nationalism within the deaf community, but in a more subtle form than it had been for many of the majority population.

The subtle approach to nationalism is also evident in the readers' letters from the turn of the century. The letters were mostly devoid of an explicit national rhetoric, but, instead, gave information about the everyday life of the writers: the work they did, the health of their family members and friends, their travels and how they otherwise spent their days.<sup>44</sup> If past experiences were conveyed, they most often related to the childhood of the author spent at the schools for the deaf.<sup>45</sup> However, some letters touched upon nationalism; for example, teachers were credited with teaching their pupils to love their fatherland.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, memories and experiences that were not situated in the writer's educational background often dealt with nationally important events. When Maria Hirn, photographer and wife of David Fredrik Hirn and one of the most prominent members of the deaf communities in Turku and Helsinki, wrote to the journal in 1897, it was to tell of her teenage experiences of the bombardments outside of Helsinki during the Crimean War, how she met both Russian and English soldiers and witnessed the atrocities of war.<sup>47</sup>

More interesting, however, are letters that in passing tell of how nationalism is incorporated into everyday practices and material encounters. In 1898, the letter writer A. L. provides an account of his visit to the Vasa deaf club, where national symbols were embedded in the décor of the rooms and in the practices of its members. Paintings of national figures such as Johan Ludvig Runeberg and Zacharias Topelius, as well as of the fathers of deaf education Carl Oscar Malm and Carl Henrik Alopeaus,

<sup>44</sup>This can in part be explained by the difficulties many deaf people had with writing, and therefore issues of a more abstract nature are rarely formulated in writing.

<sup>45</sup>*Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 28 (1900). School experiences were in all certainty filtered by the knowledge that former teachers edited the journal; the writers often related how kind and thoughtful the teachers had been, and how much they had learnt from them.

<sup>46</sup>*Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 10 (1911).

<sup>47</sup>*Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 6 (1897).

covered the walls. The meetings began with the members gathering around the latest issues of *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* and *Kuuromykkäin Lehti*, examining the pictures and reading the text together, with people explaining to others the more difficult words. Afterwards they sang together, and were currently practicing *Vårt Land*, the national anthem of Finland written by the national bard Runeberg. Here singing meant signing the lyrics of the anthem, accompanied by rhythmic movements.<sup>48</sup> The deaf clubs were, as stated previously, primarily social-gathering spots, where deaf people could stay in touch with each other after leaving school. The clubs, however, also had an educational function and provided their members with necessary social, political and religious information. The Helsinki club arranged presentations with different themes, for example, in 1899 Julius Hirn, son of Maria and David Fredrik, gave a talk about Runeberg and his role in raising national sentiments.<sup>49</sup>

Both Runeberg and *Vårt Land* (in Finnish *Maamme*) would quickly become fixtures in deaf communities. A.L.'s description of the members of the Vasa deaf club practicing *Vårt Land* was one of the first accounts of a tradition that quickly spread to other clubs. Initiated by the deaf artist Albert Tallroth, performing *Vårt Land* in sign language was a recurring feature at gatherings for deaf people at the turn of the twentieth century, especially those meetings of a more formal character.<sup>50</sup> Initially, deaf persons themselves were astounded by the sight of sign language choirs performing the anthem.<sup>51</sup> Runeberg was further celebrated at deaf clubs and schools by the performance of passages from his epic poem *The Tales of Ensign Stål* and the arrangement of so-called Runeberg-feasts commemorating his birthday on February 5.<sup>52</sup> For deaf people, Runeberg was not only the foremost national father but also a patron of deaf education. He had been a personal friend of Carl Oscar Malm and a member of the school board in Borgå. Therefore, other deaf individuals in Malm's circle had also been in personal contact with Runeberg.<sup>53</sup> In 1904, when 100 years had passed since the birth of Runeberg, deaf schools and deaf clubs celebrated the occasion widely. The Swedish Borgå school partook

<sup>48</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 15 (1898).

<sup>49</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 18 (1899).

<sup>50</sup> Raija Nieminen, "Kuurojen kulttuuri," in *Kuurojen Liitto 80 vuotta* (Espoo: Kuurojen Liitto, 1985), 35.

<sup>51</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 19 (1899), 33 (1901), 35 (1901), 57 (1903).

<sup>52</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 20 (1899), 30 (1900), 70 (1904), 2 (1910).

<sup>53</sup> Salmi & Laakso (2005), 46–7.

of a daylong celebration since Runeberg had resided in Borgå during his adult life.<sup>54</sup>

Zacharias Topelius, author and historian of great national significance, was also a fixture on the pages of *Tidskrift för Döfstumma*, with numbers of his short stories published in the journal. Topelius's stories were considered to be of the highest educational value, and he wrote, among other things, children's stories, such as "Gossen, som hörde det tysta tala" (The boy who heard silence speak) about the young deaf boy Paavo. The fact that portraits of Runeberg and Topelius covered the walls of the Vasa deaf club, and that they stood out as national symbols within the deaf world, is also interesting from the language perspective. They were Finnophiles who both wrote in Swedish but had great respect for the Finnish language and the Finnish-speaking lay population, and their stories portrayed the struggles and heroic endeavors of the ordinary Finn. They did not, however, as did some of their counterparts, turn their backs on the Swedish language but saw that the two languages had different roles and could coexist.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, their message of unification resonated within communities that in certain aspects defied language barriers.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, nationalism and national sentiment were most visible in letters about everyday practices. It was, for example, through jointly signing the national anthem *Vårt Land* and participating in the celebration of Runeberg that the importance of nationalism was emphasized. However, a "nationalization" of language is strengthened in *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* as the twentieth century progressed. This is not surprising, as the dramatic events of Finnish independence in December 1917, and the civil war the following spring, affected all realms of Finnish society. In succeeding years, General Gustaf Mannerheim took the place of the national savior, with several articles and poems by editor John Sundberg and secretary Julia Stadius praising Mannerheim.<sup>56</sup> As the next section will highlight, a nationalization and politicization of content also affected the ways issues of language were dealt with.

<sup>54</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 70 (1904).

<sup>55</sup> Engman (2016), 74, 138.

<sup>56</sup> *Tidskrift för Döfstumma* 2–5 (1918), 1 (1919), 8–9 (1919).

## CONFLICT AND CONCILIATION IN THE 1920S AND 1930S

The interwar period saw a polarization of ideologies and political views, with the language question as one of the main issues of concern. In the 1910s, the ethnification of the Finland-Swedes had been formulated by leading academics, writers and politicians, who held the position that the Swedish speakers of Finland were one united people of an Eastern-Swedish race, rooted in the Swedish soil of Finland. Between 1919 and 1922 the Finnish parliament passed a series of language laws, according to which Finland had two national languages and both Finnish and Swedish were to be used in government activities, by civil service departments, and in communication between authorities and citizens. In the following years, fractions within the two language groups were radicalized, which led to both heated debates in the parliament and fights in the streets of Helsinki.<sup>57</sup>

Did the conflicts also affect the deaf community? And how were issues of language discussed in the more polarized climate of the 1920s and 1930s? In answering those questions it can be noted that the discussions in the journals for deaf people during those decades reveal conflicts and attempts to create opposition between the Swedish and the Finnish language, but also, and maybe more importantly, an attempt to avert conflicts and bridge gaps by stressing the importance of sign language.

Finland-Swedish mobilization and identity-construction in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was primarily a counter-reaction to the rise of Finnification, and the same process can be seen in the deaf community. In 1928, Väinö Sihvola, the editor of the newly founded journal *Kuurojen Ystävää*, wrote about the uselessness of the Swedish language for deaf people and proposed that the Borgå school should be turned into a Finnish school. Sihvola stressed that he had nothing against the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, as they generally were also proficient in the Finnish language. This was, however, not the case for deaf people within the minority, and the Swedish language condemned them to a life of isolation and unemployment. According to Sihvola, while Finnish deaf people knew and generally were willing to use their limited knowledge of the Swedish language, the Finland-Swedes were, paradoxically, completely ignorant of Finnish. Furthermore, Sihvola saw no need for the state to accommodate such a small minority through

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g. Åström, Lönnqvist & Lindqvist (2001), 16–25, 149–60; Henrik Meinander, *Nationalstaten: Finlands svenskhet 1922–2015* (Helsingfors: SLS, 2016), 19–58.

deaf education in the Swedish language.<sup>58</sup> Others wrote in support of Sihvola's suggestion, as it was seen as both the most humane measure for improving the small group's vulnerable position and in line with broader national ambitions.<sup>59</sup>

The readers of *Tidskrift för Dövstumma* did not, however, appreciate Sihvola's concern for their future. In an answer to Sihvola, Walter Lindberg expressed his astonishment at Sihvola's agitation against the Swedish language, something he saw as a slap in the face of the Swedish deaf in Finland. Moreover, Sihvola's article was, according to Lindberg, full of lies; the group was not at all as small as Sihvola claimed, and there was no proof of Sihvola's allegation that Finnish deaf children had been sent to Swedish schools, while there were numerous examples of Finland-Swedes in Finnish schools. According to Lindberg, Sihvola's article was a cheap blow leveled in order to strengthen the position of the Finnish language, thereby mimicking the hearing in their agitation against the Swedish language. The move was detrimental to the community of deaf people in Finland, who were united through a common sign language, as well as to relations with the Scandinavian countries.<sup>60</sup>

A decade later, a new conflict arose, once again concerning deaf education in Swedish. In an issue of *Tidskrift för Dövstumma* from 1936, Anton Hellöre from Jakobstad wrote to protest plans to enroll Finnish students in the Borgå school. The school at the time was the only remaining Swedish language deaf school in Finland, and, according to Hellöre, it fostered Swedish culture and spirit among deaf people, and most importantly taught them their Swedish mother tongue. Hellöre saw the plans as a "true-Finnish" (*äktfinsk*) attack on Swedish deaf education and argued that these plans could greatly harm the prevailing unity that existed between deaf people of different language and educational backgrounds.<sup>61</sup> Also, others joined the discussion in support of keeping the Borgå school Swedish. For example, Irene Karlsson stressed her hatred and distaste of politics and language conflicts but could not keep quiet on this matter.<sup>62</sup>

When the Swedish language and the ethnic belonging of the Finland-Swedes were discussed during the 1920s and 1930s, the discussants also

<sup>58</sup> *Kuurojen Ystävä* 10 (1928).

<sup>59</sup> *Kuurojen Ystävä* 12 (1928).

<sup>60</sup> *Tidskrift för Dövstumma* 6–7 (1928).

<sup>61</sup> *Tidskrift för Dövstumma* 5 (1936).

<sup>62</sup> *Tidskrift för Dövstumma* 6 (1936).

included non-Finnish citizens. For example, the Swede Martin Larsson wrote to the journal in 1927 to express his support for Finland and the positive relations existing between the two countries. According to Larsson, the Finland-Swedes formed a historical link between the countries, and Larsson was troubled by rumors of Finland-Swedish soldiers no longer being allowed to use their language in the army. In his view, the Swedish language should prosper in Finland, not disappear.<sup>63</sup>

If the focus in the 1890s was on determining who among the deaf were Finland-Swedish, the articles from the 1920s and 1930s explicitly discuss issues of language and stir debate regarding the position of the Swedish language in Finland and the conditions of Finland-Swedish deaf people. Therefore, contrary to what the Finnish Association of the Deaf stated in 1957, the deaf community was not unaffected by the language conflicts of the hearing. The readers' letters of the 1920s and 1930s also discussed language in a more explicit way, but they took a conciliatory tone, emphasizing the importance of knowing different languages as well as the bond between deaf people of the different language groups in Finland. The conciliatory tone is especially evident when addressing the experiences of first encounters with people of the opposite language group. In 1927, the paper published translations of letters by Finnish deaf people dealing with the benefits of language studies. In one letter the signature U. K-n.<sup>64</sup> told of his travels in the depths of Swedish Ostrobothnia and how he was able to communicate with people who had no knowledge of Finnish. His own simple knowledge of Swedish, in addition to pantomime, helped him to find shelter and company, and he praised the kindness of the people he had met.<sup>65</sup>

Other writers express similar experiences, but from a Swedish point of view. When the letter writer E. H.<sup>66</sup> visited a meeting for deaf people in Seinäjoki, in the Finnish part of Ostrobothnia, she was astounded by the unity she experienced between Swedish and Finnish deaf people and the kindness of the Finns.

*The one writing these lines has not previously been to such a large meeting for the deaf-mute, and what made the greatest impression is the prevailing unity to*

<sup>63</sup> *Tidskrift för Dövstumma* 4 (1927).

<sup>64</sup> Most likely Urho Keränen.

<sup>65</sup> *Tidskrift för Dövstumma* 11 (1927). First printed in *Kuuromykkäin Lehti* 8 (1927).

<sup>66</sup> Most likely Elma Häggman.

*be found between the Finns and the Swedes. Sign language – the common language of the deaf-mute – showed that it was possible here to join together two peoples into one. I had previously had the impression that the Finns lack culture, but this meeting in a Finnish region made me think otherwise. I want to mention one example: in the crowd an unknown Finnish girl from the countryside stepped on my foot and she politely apologized. It was a small gesture. But it was beautiful.*<sup>67</sup>

Letters such as this all have a similar narrative; the writer was at first skeptical because previous ignorance and misconceptions had created perceptions with regard to an opposite language group. These perceptions were, however, changed by an actual encounter. In E. H.'s account, sign language was the key to unity and a bridge between the Finns and the Finland-Swedes. Compared to the readers' letters from the turn of the century, these letters were more structured and curated, with a specific message to the reader. The letters and the experiences they conveyed became more politicized in the 1920s and 1930s, and they can be seen as a part of the counterreaction to a more inflamed language debate occurring in the society at large, constructing deaf communities as a harmonious conflict-free sphere. This was also a strategic necessity on the part of Finland-Swedish deaf people. By the mid-1930s the Finland-Swedes no longer dominated the Finnish Association of the Deaf-Mute, and they were numerically too small a group to act as a counterweight to Finnish deaf members. Therefore, consolidation under the sign-language umbrella, instead of agitation and confrontation, offered the only optional path.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have analyzed the role played by nationalism in the construction of deaf communities through focusing on how issues of language—specifically Swedish, Finnish, and sign language—were discussed and served as a structure in the creation of a Finland-Swedish deaf community during the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century. During that period, deaf communities were formed and politicized, and an educational separation was created between deaf people from Swedish- and Finnish-speaking families. This was a result of the consolidation of the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland and the creation of

<sup>67</sup> *Tidskrift för Dövstumma* 8 (1928).



the Finland-Swedes as an ethnically separate group from the Finns. I have approached the subject by studying the journal *Tidskrift för Döfstumma*, since the journal was instrumental in keeping the geographically scattered Finland-Swedes connected. The readers' letters that were sent to the journal and which depict the readers' everyday lives stand out as particularly interesting in the study of language and nationalism; they show the process of community-making and the meaning of nationalism in practice rather than as discourse.

Although deaf people would not be recognized as a cultural and linguistic minority until the late twentieth century, it was long before this that they created communities and cultures through sign language, schools for deaf people, deaf clubs, their own journals and a national association. In times of rising national feeling, minorities have often been nationally indifferent, either through ambivalence or by being directly opposed to national endeavors. In the readers' letters of *Tidskrift för Döfstumma*, nationalism is not per se a recurring topic of discussion, and Julia Stadius stated in 1900 that deaf people did not take an active part in "patriotic endeavours." The importance of national belonging is, however, revealed through the lived experiences conveyed in the letters. Here, practices, such as sign-language choirs performing the national anthem, stand out as poignant examples of the merging of nationalism and deafness.

Thus, deaf people were by no means isolated from the political and ideological developments in their country of residence, and the political formation of the deaf community and the educational separation of deaf children from Swedish- and Finnish-speaking families were the results of a general national formation. As I have shown in this chapter, the late nineteenth century saw the construction of a Finland-Swedish deaf sphere as separate from the Finnish sphere, and by the 1920s and 1930s, a period in Finnish history when language disputes were intensified, members of the deaf community also argued about the position of the Swedish language in the country. However, by focusing on a minority in the intersection of ethnicity, disability and language, the ambivalence toward issues of language and national belonging can be exposed. More important than the languages of Swedish and Finnish was sign language, which in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries united deaf people from Swedish- and Finnish-speaking homes. Therefore, although arguments about language also arose within the deaf community, the idea of deafness and sign language as uniting forces was strongly emphasized,

especially in letters recounting experiences of meeting deaf and hearing individuals from opposite language groups.

Therefore, through a study of the history of deaf communities, I argue that it is imperative to focus on lived experiences when analyzing questions of language and national belonging. Depictions of practices, rather than normative discourse, expose the importance of national symbols and social relations in a developing nation state. Mundane accounts of everyday lives have the potential to be key sources in studying the nationalism of small minorities.

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## CHAPTER 10

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# The Ill(s) of the Nation: The Experience of Tuberculosis in Finland from the 1920s to the 1970s

*Heini Hakosalo*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on narrated experiences of tuberculosis. The investigation is based on and made possible by a major collection of written tuberculosis-related recollections called the *Collection Competition for Sanatorium Tradition (ST)*. The collection was organized in 1971 by the Finnish Literature Society and the Chest Patients' Union on the occasion of the latter's 30th anniversary. Circa 350 people answered the writing call, mailing in over 9000 pages of written reminiscences and over 1000 photographs.<sup>1</sup> The bulk of *ST* contributions can be characterized as illness

<sup>1</sup>The collection is held by the Finnish Literature Society Archives (FLSA, Archive Materials on Literature and Cultural History) in Helsinki. The material is organized alphabetically, by the surname of the author. I will refer to individual contributions by the author's surname. An exception to this rule is a bulk of written recollections and transcribed inter-

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© The Author(s) 2021  
V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_10)

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narratives. They unfold over time, have a beginning and an end, and one or more recognizable protagonists.<sup>2</sup> Although they focus on tuberculosis, they often deal more broadly with the protagonists' lives and other illnesses, growing into veritable pathographies. As I see it, an essential feature and a key function of an illness narrative is to assign meaning to suffering. I argue that one way for *ST* narrators to make sense of their dire, often traumatic, illness histories was to place them into the context of national history. In this chapter, I will discuss three narrative strands that figure prominently in the material and that allowed the authors to assimilate their personal illnesses with the collective ills of the nation: (1) stories of progress, (2) stories of war, and (3) stories of belonging.

As discussed in the Introduction, thematic writing calls have been and still are popular in Finland. They have been carried out by folklore studies departments and by major national memory institutions, like the National Board of Antiquities, the Finnish Literature Society and its Swedish-speaking counterpart, the Society for Swedish Literature in Finland. The original purpose of these "heritage" or "folklore" collections was to document deep-rooted collective traditions, especially peasant traditions that were thought to be threatened by modernization. The preferred informants were rural common people. A shift of emphasis took place in the 1960s: while the calls remained popular, they were increasingly likely to target urban and educated sections of the population, focus on themes with no direct connection to the traditional rural way of life, and to encourage people to reflect upon their own views and feelings rather than just document collective beliefs and practices.<sup>3</sup> Heritage collections have been carried out in the other Nordic and in the Baltic countries as well.<sup>4</sup> However, from the point of view of the international historiography of

views that were amassed by active members of the Chest Patients' Union and filed collectively under the name "Chest Patients' Union Material" (henceforth CPUM). Three authors have requested that their real names not be used. I will refer to them by a pseudonym, put in inverted commas.

<sup>2</sup> Illness narratives have interested medical anthropologists and literary scholars more than they have historians. A seminal anthropological study on illness narratives is Arthur W. Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness & Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013 [1995]), 77–80, 83.

<sup>3</sup> On the history of heritage collections, see *Kirjoittamalla kerrotut: Kansatieteelliset kyselytiedon lähteinä*, ed. by Pirjo Korkiakangas et al. (Helsinki: Ethnos, 2016) and *Kansanrunousarkisto, lukijat ja tulkinnat*, ed. Tuulikki Kurki (Helsinki: SKS, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Anne Heimo, "Nordic-Baltic Oral History of the Move," *Oral History* 44:2 (2016), 37–46.

tuberculosis, *Sanatorium Tradition* constitutes a rare, if not a unique resource.

Although the materials accumulated in the various Finnish heritage collections have primarily been employed by folklore scholars, they also have considerable historiographical value. The practice itself is interesting from the point of view of the overarching theme of this volume. Given that heritage collections were carried out by eminent national organizations, addressed to “the people,” and open to anyone who felt she had anything to contribute, it is possible to see heritage collections as a form of citizen science—or rather citizen scholarship—and as an opportunity afforded by state institutions for ordinary people to contribute to national history. *Sanatorium Tradition* represents “history from below” in two respects. First, the majority of the contributions can be regarded as *histories*, as they assume a chronological, narrative form and seek to identify significant changes. Second, they offer a view *from below*, as the authors mainly belonged to “the common folk.” Members of the elite did not contribute, and upper middle-class, academically educated people, as well as the Swedish-speaking minority, are clearly underrepresented, even when we take into account the socially selective nature of the disease. Gender-wise, the collection is relatively well balanced: although female participants are more numerous, men wrote, on average, more.<sup>5</sup>

*ST* contributions are highly varied. They differ in length, style, perspective, and tone, reflecting differences in the authors’ ages, genders, education, social backgrounds, and disease histories.<sup>6</sup> Most are autobiographical

<sup>5</sup>The background materials related to the collection—the organizers’ correspondence, summaries, and newspaper clippings—can be found in a separate case at FLSA (no signum). *ST*, or parts of it, has previously been used as source material by the folklore scholar Aili Nenola, by myself, and also in at least three unpublished masters’ theses. Aili Nenola, *Parantolaelämää – tuberkuloosipitolaat muistelevat* (Helsinki: Keuhkovammaliitto, 1986); Heini Hakosalo, “The Woodland Cure: Tuberculosis Sanatoria and Patients’ Perceptions of the Healing Power of Nature,” in *In Pursuit of Healthy Environments: Lessons from Historical Cases on the Environment-Health Nexus*, ed. by Esa Ruuskanen and Heini Hakosalo (London: Routledge, 2021); Heini Hakosalo, “Tubipommi ja rautlasi: Emotionaalisia esineitä 1900-luvun alkupuolen suomalaisissa tuberkuloosiparantoloissa,” *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 114:2 (2016), 165–76.

<sup>6</sup>The variability of experiences of tuberculosis has also been emphasized, e.g., by Stacie Burke, *Building Resistance: Children, Tuberculosis and the Toronto Sanatorium* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2018), 262; Anne Shaw & Carole Reeves, *The Children of Craig-y-nos: Life in a Welsh Tuberculosis Sanatorium, 1922–1959* (Milton Keynes: Wellcome Trust Centre, 2009).

accounts written specifically as an answer to the call in 1971, but the collection also includes second-hand texts recounting other peoples' experiences, printed materials such as newspaper clippings, and contemporary textual remnants such as excerpts from diaries, letters, and sanatorium magazines. Some authors focused on recording outward circumstances and events, others on their personal experiences. The participants were free to assume whatever authorial position they wanted, and while some clearly saw themselves as folklore informants, others wrote more like historians, autobiographers, diarists, or authors. The authorial position could also shift within one and the same contribution.<sup>7</sup> To quote the oral historian Alessandro Portelli, the participants were free to move between "subject-oriented life-story and theme-oriented testimony."<sup>8</sup>

The concept of experience that informs this chapter is summed up in Fig. 10.1. As I see it, historical study of experience is concerned with the ways in which people have made sense of their emotions by means of culturally available conceptual tools. Experiences are thought emotions. They are conceptualized and intentional, that is, they are *about* something. They are also perspectival: they are *someone's* thought emotions, and to speak about "my experience" or "their experiences" is to recognize them as restricted reconstructions of the world from a specific point of view. The definition brings together, first, the emotional and the cognitive and, second, the individual and the collective. Although we often study experiences through the utterances of individuals, it is clear that what people think and feel is dependent on the ways that the communities to which they belong think and feel. It is also obvious that experience thus defined is a historical and cultural phenomenon, that is, that it varies over time and from one culture to another.<sup>9</sup> Experiences do not necessarily have to be

<sup>7</sup>Such shifts in the authorial position make it difficult to decide what to call the authors. I do not want, at least not consistently, to call them patients. "Patient" is a relational term, and most of the narrators would not have identified themselves as patients at the time of writing, nor did they always do so even when they were ill. I call them patients when they are writing from a patient position, i.e., as sanatorium patients or in relation to a healthcare professional, but otherwise use other denominations such as authors, narrators, or participants.

<sup>8</sup>Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 6.

<sup>9</sup>The notion of experience comes with a huge theoretical and methodological package, having been theorized and debated in philosophy, psychology, and other fields of science and scholarship for decades, perhaps for centuries. It is clearly not possible to provide anything like a comprehensive discussion within the constraints of this chapter. I assume that the most controversial part of my short instrumental definition of experiences as "thought emotions"

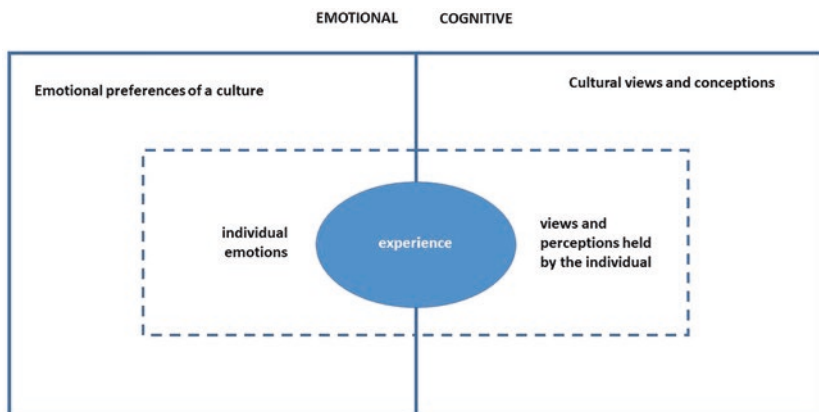


Fig. 10.1 The dimensions of historical study of experience

narrative in form,<sup>10</sup> although historical studies of experience do show a strong preference for the use of narrative material.

Historical research on tuberculosis is plentiful, particularly for the period between 1880 and 1960. While the historiographical emphasis has been on tuberculosis as a public health issue and a medical problem, the patient's view has not been neglected.<sup>11</sup> However, I believe that this

is the way it prioritizes emotions. This order of priorities is based on the simple observation that while it is possible to conduct a historical study on a concept without including the emotions of the people who have devised or employed the concept, it is impossible to conduct a historical study on non-conceptualized emotions (that some would call affects or arousal-stage emotions). Broadly speaking, the definition is inspired by the social constructionist view on emotions. See, e.g., Barbara H. Rosenwein & Riccardo Christiani, *What is the History of Emotions?* (Oxford: Polity, 2018), 19–25; Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2017), 128–51.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Paul Ricoeur, who thinks that “experience makes sense through narrative,” quoted in Leonard V. Smith, *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers' Testimony of the Great War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 17.

<sup>11</sup>For a review of Anglophone historiography of tuberculosis, see Linda Bryder, Flurin Condrau & Michael Worboys, “Tuberculosis and Its Histories: Then and Now,” in *Tuberculosis Then and Now: Perspectives on the History of an Infectious Disease*, ed. by Flurin Condrau & Michael Worboys (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2010), 3–23. Book-length histories of tuberculosis that give room to patient experience include, e.g., Linda Bryder, *Below the Magic Mountain: A Social History of Tuberculosis in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); F.B. Smith, *The Retreat of Tuberculosis, 1850–1950* (London: Croom Helm, 1988); Katherine Ott, *Fevered Lives: Tuberculosis in*

chapter has a contribution to make to the historiography of tuberculosis, thanks above all to the rare source material and the definition of experience outlined above. Medical historians dealing with patient experience have tended to favor its emotional side. While doctors get interrogated primarily with respect to their scientific beliefs and science-based actions, historical studies on patients have tended to focus on their emotional responses, overlooking the fact that patients, too, have beliefs pertaining to the nature and causation of a disease. These beliefs need be neither irrational nor watered-down versions of mainstream medical beliefs. Lay conceptions of disease often have deep cultural roots and can grow into veritable systems of belief. They should be of interest to medical professionals as well, because they clearly matter for patients' treatment choices and compliance.

### STORIES OF PROGRESS

The *ST* material revolves around tuberculosis and sanatoria but is not exclusively focused on these. Being long-term beneficiaries of the health care system, the narrators were in a position to witness changes in the social “contract of health,” that is, in the development of health-related rights and obligations of citizens and the state, respectively. The collection was carried out at a time when the Finnish welfare state was about to take form. The 1960s had seen waxing criticism of prevailing social, health care, and educational services, and a growing consensus about an urgent need for reform. During the first part of the 1970s, health care and educational services would undergo major reforms, reforms that would bring Finland more closely into line with the other Nordic welfare states.<sup>12</sup> The

*American Culture since 1870* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Sheila M. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death: Tuberculosis and the Social Experience of Illness in American History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Helen Bynum, *Spitting Blood: The History of Tuberculosis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Shaw & Reeves (2009) and Burke (2018) focus on children's sanatorium experiences. In addition, Timothy Boon discusses lay narratives of tuberculosis in the context of health education in “Lay disease narratives, tuberculosis, and health education films,” in *Tuberculosis Then and Now* (2010), 24–48; and Flurin Condrau has used a “hall diary” to investigate patients' self-organization in “Who is the captain of all these men of death? The social structure of tuberculosis sanatorium patients in postwar Germany,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32:2 (2001), 243–62.

<sup>12</sup>For a concise English analysis of the development of health care services and individual rights in Finland, see Minna Harjula, “Health Citizenship and Access to Health Services: Finland 1900–2000,” *Social History of Medicine* 29:3 (2016), 573–89.



views and values of the people who contributed to *ST* represent an interesting combination of old and new ways of thinking about the respective rights and obligations of public authorities and the citizen in the area of health.

Notwithstanding touches of nostalgia, especially when it comes to describing the traditional sanatorium,<sup>13</sup> the overall image arising from *Sanatorium Tradition* is that of progress. The participants generally think that things have changed for the better both for themselves and for the nation, and that both are now better equipped to withstand a health threat like tuberculosis. One author exclaimed, “Do not talk to me about the good old days,” and went on to discuss people who had succumbed to the disease for lack of proper care.<sup>14</sup> For another participant, the main justification for organizing the collection in the first place was its capacity to shed light on progress: “It is good to collect such reminiscences for they show the huge steps forward that tuberculosis work has taken and that patients can now cope with their grave plight much better.”<sup>15</sup>

Part of the progressivist, even celebratory, tone can no doubt be explained by the nature of the collection and the positions of the participants. The latter were well aware that they were taking part in an anniversary collection and garnished their stories with polite expressions of gratitude and triumphal stock phrases like “life will win!”<sup>16</sup> Many of them had lived with tuberculosis for years, even decades, and been left with permanent physical, mental, or social impairments. Still, they were alive and mostly symptom-free, and able to reflect upon their illness histories from the relative safety provided by effective medication and a serviceable social security network. Most *ST* narratives veer toward what the medical anthropologist Arthur W. Frank has called “the restitution plot,” describing the protagonists’ path from health to sickness and back to health again.<sup>17</sup> A picture based solely on ego-documents (e.g., diaries and letters)

<sup>13</sup> By the term “traditional sanatorium,” I refer here to tuberculosis sanatoria between 1900 and 1960. Sanatoria did not disappear after 1960, but they shed most of their idiosyncratic features, becoming indistinguishable from other institutions of care.

<sup>14</sup> FLSA, Archive Materials on Traditional and Contemporary Culture, Collection Competition for Sanatorium Tradition (henceforth *ST*), Ylösmäki 7.

<sup>15</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Haapiainen 25. On progress, see also Harju 84, Mäki-Petäjä 58.

<sup>16</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 1017, Bogdanoff 39, Juoperi 14, Honkiniemi 19, Huhtanen 4, Kivimäki 17, Koponen 15, Kuusisto 26, Lahti 26, Leskinen 35, Rautavala 14, CPUM 248.

<sup>17</sup> Frank (2013), 14, 77–80, 83.

written when the illness was still active would no doubt look different: darker and, above all, marked by painful insecurity about the future.

The plot usually starts unfolding when the protagonist realizes that she is ill with tuberculosis. The diagnosis constituted a major “biographical disruption.”<sup>18</sup> It shattered the protagonists’ plans and prospects, and changed their relationship to their bodies, families, and communities, as well as their position in society at large. It is more difficult to identify a singular point of closure. While some authors ended their stories when the sanatorium door closed behind them, others went on to write at length about their post-institutional treatments, relapses, comorbidities, and impairments. They described their efforts to regain a place in the family, the local community, and the nation. The reincorporation of a discharged sanatorium patient was clearly a process rather than an event, and often a long and arduous process marked by setbacks and frustrations. Work was the central element in this process: patients regained their self-esteem and place in society primarily by becoming productive citizens again and, secondarily, by raising a family with healthy, properly educated children. Many narrators, both men and women, recounted their post-institutional work histories in detail, ending the narrative only when they were able to provide for themselves and their families.<sup>19</sup>

On a more general level, the participants regarded effective medication and functioning systems of social support as the most important signs of progress. Thanks to these, tuberculosis diagnosis was no longer a death sentence, nor did it automatically turn a person into a social outcast.<sup>20</sup> For the *ST* narrators, social and medical welfare were two sides of the same coin. Financial problems, loss of social status, and stigmatization were an integral part of the overall burden of the disease and were detrimental to

<sup>18</sup>On the concept of biographical disruption, see Michael Bury, “Chronic Illness as Biographical Disruption,” *Sociology of Health and Illness* 4:2 (1982), 167–82. Patients often likened being diagnosed with tuberculosis to having received a death sentence. FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 67, Harju 101, Honkiniemi 4, Jaskari 2, Kanervisto 3, Kuusisto 4. See also Nenola (1986), 15.

<sup>19</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 43–8, 234–5, Aarnio 20–4, Haapiainen 23–5, Hannula 30–1, Heino 5–7, Jäppinen 3–7, Kanervisto 22–4, Kasurinen 6, Kivilahti 19–21, Koponen 14–15, Korhonen 5–6, Kotilainen 15–18, Kuusisto 25–6, Lahti 19–20, 24, Meilo 12–13, Mäki-Petäjä 50–8.

<sup>20</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Salmu 2, Ijäs 3, Ahokas 1, Harju 53.

health, whereas social welfare “promotes recovery, because the money worries were terrible.”<sup>21</sup>

The authors fully recognized the pivotal importance of the introduction of effective chemotherapeutic medication. However, “the view from below” that *ST* provides on this turning point is less straightforward and unproblematic than the view conveyed by standard medical histories. The latter tell us that three effective antituberculosis drugs (streptomycin, para-aminosalicylic acid, isoniazid) came to the market between 1947 and 1951, turning tuberculosis into a curable disease. *ST* describes a halting process with many problems and insecurities. From the patients’ point of view, the whole of the 1950s must be regarded as a transitory period. News of the discovery of streptomycin reached Finnish sanatoria fast and gave rise to high hopes, but these hopes were often disappointed. At first, the problem was availability: the supply of imported pharmaceuticals met only a fraction of the demand. Some patients managed to obtain small amounts on the black market, or from their relatives in the USA, Canada, or Sweden.<sup>22</sup> But even though availability soon improved, affordability long remained a problem. The drugs, being “frightfully expensive,”<sup>23</sup> often remained out of reach for poorer patients. A former patient summed up her feelings: “The medicine cost money, a lot of it, and so I had to look aside when my fellow patients were medicated. Who would have given a loan to a tuberculosic? I was not envious, but I was very bitter.”<sup>24</sup>

While medication was welcome, the science behind it remained opaque to the average patient. Patients often misspelled the names of the drugs and mixed up their indications and side effects. It was the social side of things on which they were the real experts by experience. Some felt that the social and financial plight of the tuberculosic had been overlooked in public discussion, perhaps on purpose.<sup>25</sup> They discussed financial problems at great length and with much passion. The vast majority of *ST* authors stemmed from the working or lower middle classes. They were smallholders, farm workers, forest workers, skilled or unskilled urban workers, nurses, primary school teachers, cleaners, salespeople, and clerks. Many victims of tuberculosis did not yet have an occupation when they fell ill,

<sup>21</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Haapiainen 18–19.

<sup>22</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Stadius 3–4, Saarinen 5, T. Leskinen 21, “Savimäki” 8, CPUM 78.

<sup>23</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Närhi 2.

<sup>24</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Kapiainen 6. On the difficulties involved in buying the medicines, FLSA, *ST*, Eröla 4, Haapiainen 18, Honkiniemi 9–11, Huvinen 29–30, 32, Kanervisto 4.

<sup>25</sup> FLSA, *ST*, T. Leskinen 1.

and the disease deprived them of an education. Few had any financial buffer against prolonged illness. For people like this, the financial burden of a chronic disease like tuberculosis could be devastating.<sup>26</sup> The overall financial burden consisted of three things: the cost of hospitalization, indirect costs of treatment (e.g., travel costs), and loss of income due to incapacity to work.

Prior to World War II, there were two main forms of public assistance to which a tuberculous with little or no means could resort: she could apply for a free state-subsidized bed in a sanatorium or turn to municipal poor-relief authorities, who might commit to covering one or sometimes several two–three-month periods in a sanatorium. Both forms of assistance were means-tested, and the latter in particular was heavily stigmatized. Recipients of municipal poor relief, known as people “living off the municipality,” formed a special social category within the local community. Being relegated to this group was considered shameful, and it could also curtail one’s political rights: up until the 1940s, the recipients of municipal poor relief could lose their right to vote in both local and national elections.<sup>27</sup> Municipal poor relief was an inadequate, unequal, and stigmatizing form of assistance, and it is no wonder that a great many *ST* participants talk about it with resentment and a lingering sense of injustice. Some narrators took great pains to stress that, however crushing their difficulties, they had never resorted to municipal poor relief.<sup>28</sup>

In discussing improvements in social welfare (summed up in Table 10.1), *ST* narrators particularly highlighted steps that separated medical welfare from poor relief. The first of these was the National Pension Act (1937), which secured a small basic income for (some) people unable to work. Although the payments were small and not automatically granted, the pension was discussed without the shame and anger that tended to color references to municipal poor relief, and the first payments were sometimes

<sup>26</sup> Finnish historian Maria Lähteenmäki has illustrated, by means of a historical case study focused on a single family, how swiftly and thoroughly tuberculosis could destroy the economic and social position of even a relatively well-to-do peasant family. Maria Lähteenmäki, “Taudin merkitsemä pohjoinen perhe. Tuberkuloosin ehkäisy rikkaan elämäntapojen muokkaajana,” in *Keulakuvia ja peränpitäjiä. Vanhan ja uuden yhteiskunnan rajalla*, ed. by Riitta Oittinen & Marjatta Rahikainen (Helsinki: SHS, 2000), 147–62.

<sup>27</sup> Harjula (2016), 8, 11.

<sup>28</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Aarnio 8, Aitamäki 17, 27, Arvola 4, God 2, Haapiainen 18, Huvinen 29, 31–2, Ijäs 5, Järvinen 1, Keränen 4, Kotilainen 5, T. Leskinen 6, Reiman 3–6, Remes 5, Tikkanen 14, CPUM 215.

**Table 10.1** The most important legislative steps taken from the point of view of the medical and social welfare of people with tuberculosis

<i>Year</i>	<i>Law or decree</i>	<i>Main consequences for the tuberculositic</i>
1922	Poor Law	Obliges municipalities to assist sick people without means.
1927	Tuberculosis Decree (298/1927)	Introduces mandatory registration of tuberculositics (with restrictions).
1929	Law on State Subsidies for Tuberculosis Sanatoria, Mental Hospitals, and Tuberculosis Control (269/1929)	Provides generous state subsidies to municipalities that join together to found tuberculosis sanatoria; rapidly leads to the formation of a network of major public sanatoria known as “folk sanatoria” ( <i>kansanparantolat</i> ).
1937	National Pension Act	Provides a small allowance for people too old or infirm to work.
1944	“Public health acts” (220/1944, 223/1944, 224/1944)	Establish a national network of municipal maternal and child-care clinics with free services. The clinics contribute to tuberculosis control through case-detection, vaccination, and referral to infant preventoria.
1948	Tuberculosis Act (649/1948)	Puts in place a nation-wide public tuberculosis service with tuberculosis districts, outpatient clinics (dispensaries), and central sanatoria, and makes the services of the outpatient clinics free to end user.
1956	Public Welfare Act (116/1956)	Replaces the 1922 Poor Law; turns the municipal support for the hospitalization of the tuberculositic from a loan into an allowance.
1956	National Pension Act (347/1956)	Changes the pension from savings-account-based to flat-rate pensions; extends the range of recipients and raises the payments.
1960	Tuberculosis Act (355/1960)	Makes sanatorium treatment free to the patient from the start of 1961.
1963	Law on Universal Health Insurance (364/1963)	Compensates part of the indirect costs caused by the treatment of tuberculosis (e.g., travel costs) and loss of income, takes force at the beginning of 1964.
1972	Primary Health Care Act (66/1972)	Creates a nation-wide network of primary health-care centers that offer low-cost medical services.
1986	Tuberculosis Act revoked	Dissolves the separate tuberculosis services (districts, offices, sanatoria), discontinues the tuberculosis register and integrates the regulations concerning tuberculosis control into the Contagious Disease Act (786/1986).

*(continued)*

**Table 10.1** (continued)

*Silmu* 1 (1971), 25; Harjula (2016), 10–12; Minna Harjula, *Hoitoonpääsyn hierarkiat. Terveyskansalaisuus ja terveyspalvelut Suomessa 1900-luvulla* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2015), 212–13, 228–9; R. Ahtokari, *Elämä voittaa: Puoli vuosisataa työtä keuhkovammaisten hyväksi* (Helsinki: Otava, 1991), 45, 190; Sakari Härö, *Vuosisata tuberkuloosityötä Suomessa: Suomen tuberkuloosin vastustamisyhdistyksen historia* (Helsinki: Suomen tuberkuloosin vastustamisyhdistys, 1992), 207–8; Sakari Härö, *Tuberculosis in Finland: Dark Past, Promising Future* (Helsinki: Finnish Lung Health Association, 1998), 14; Sirkka Törrönen, *Tuberkuloosipiirien liitto 1933–1983* (Tuberkuloosipiirien liitto, 1984), 69; Niilo Pesonen, *Terveyden puolesta, sairautta vastaan: Terveyden- ja sairaanhoito Suomessa 1800- ja 1900-luvuilla* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1980), 492–3

recalled with a downright sense of wonder.<sup>29</sup> References to disability allowances are more ambiguous. A series of such allowances were introduced during and after the war, but they seldom benefited people whose infirmities had been caused by pulmonary tuberculosis. Patients recounted failed attempts to obtain a disability allowance and complained that the conditions were so strict that you had to be practically dead in order to be eligible.<sup>30</sup>

The 1956 Public Welfare Act constituted a major improvement, as it turned the municipal support for hospitalization from a loan into an allowance. In other words, the municipality was no longer allowed to reclaim what it had paid toward the costs of hospitalization, a move which considerably reduced the overall financial and psychological burden of the less well-off patient. The statute also reduced disparities between municipalities, as some of them had been more aggressive in reclaiming the hospital fees than others. The 1961 Tuberculosis Act was an even more marked improvement, as it made tuberculosis medication free. Summing up the change, a narrator wrote: “times have changed a lot: things are different from back then, for nowadays even poor people can get treatment when they need it.”<sup>31</sup> Universal health insurance, introduced in 1964, compensated for indirect sickness costs and for lost income. It also signaled a major change in attitude toward medical and social welfare. In the words of the historian Minna Harjula, “health insurance was seen as a social right and it created a new, more equal health citizenship in Finland.”<sup>32</sup> *ST*

<sup>29</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Ahokas 12, Aitamäki 233, Harju 86–7, Holopainen 14–15, Honkiniemi 9, Ijäs 15, Kuusisto 25, Leskelä 46, Närhi 2, Tikkanen 29–30, CPUM 162.

<sup>30</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 101, 140, 233, 1010–13, Heikkilä 1.

<sup>31</sup> FLSA, *ST*, God 1.

<sup>32</sup> Harjula (2015), 212–13.

narrators, many of whom had struggled for years, if not for decades, with an overwhelming financial burden, could hardly believe how much things had changed: “Free sanatorium treatment and a daily allowance. What a comfort and relief!”<sup>33</sup>

### STORIES OF WAR

Another prominent narrative strand relates the patients' illness histories in terms of warfare and represents the patient as an unsung hero in combat with a murderous enemy. Several scholars have discussed the use of military metaphors in conceptualizing disease, and some have also pointed out similarities between war and illness stories.<sup>34</sup> For instance, Arthur W. Frank has noted that illness narratives overlap with survivor stories, of which war stories are an example.<sup>35</sup> Alessandro Portelli has detected a “functional analogy” between men's war stories and women's hospital stories. In both cases, Portelli observes, narrators “leave their homes to deal with death,” “face the state in its bureaucratic and technological aspects,” “deal with hierarchies, machinery, and science,” “stand up to the big man,” and struggle with the technical language of the military and medicine, respectively.<sup>36</sup> There are also interesting similarities between sanatorium stories and the stories concerning Finnish frontline soldiers of World War II, as analyzed by the historian Ville Kivimäki. Both evoke a journey to a liminal space between life and death and an environment that is at once organized, disciplined, and (on the experiential level) chaotic. Death and suffering are strongly present; personal courage, endurance, and camaraderie are highlighted; gallows humor is a common coping method; and

<sup>33</sup> FLSA, ST, Tuominen 3. See also Huvinen 32 & God 1.

<sup>34</sup> A well-known discussion on the use of military metaphors can be found in Susan Sontag, *Illness and Metaphor* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1978). Medical anthropologist Emily Martin has shown that war, policing, and the nation-state have provided conceptual models and metaphors for discussing the workings of the immune system. Emily Martin, “Toward an Anthropology of Immunology: The Body as Nation-State,” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 4:4 (1990), 410–26; Emily Martin, *Flexible Bodies: The Role of Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994). See also Deborah Lupton, *Medicine as Culture: Illness, Disease and the Body in Western Culture*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2003 [1996]), 61–3.

<sup>35</sup> Frank (2013), 69.

<sup>36</sup> Portelli (1997), 8.

members of one's own affective community are clearly demarcated from nonmembers.<sup>37</sup>

It is not surprising that *ST* narrators resorted to martial metaphors. The generations that they belonged to had been profoundly affected by World War II (1939–45) and also by the Finnish Civil War (1918). For them, the war narrative was a familiar, readily available means of framing personal experiences, enhancing their worth as citizens, and tapping into a national master narrative. Their manner of thinking and talking about tuberculosis was no doubt also influenced by the vigorous antituberculosis campaign, the idiom of which was stridently nationalistic and militaristic, especially in the 1930s–50s, when it was headed by the powerful, semiofficial Finnish Anti-Tuberculosis Association (FATA).<sup>38</sup> To give but a few examples, FATA “tuberculosis propaganda” urged the entire population to join the “common front” in “the war against tuberculosis,” termed “the national disease.” Sanatoria were referred to as “citadels” and “fortresses,” the family home as “the first line of fire,” ambulatory tuberculosis nurses as “frontline soldiers,” and the FATA chairman as “the commander.” In the postwar years, mass X-ray examinations and the BCG vaccination were hailed as “our new weapons” in the war against tuberculosis. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, tuberculosis experts kept reminding people that defenses should not be abandoned or weapons laid down prematurely.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ville Kivimäki, *Battled Nerves: Finnish Soldiers' War Experience, Trauma, and Military Psychiatry, 1941–44* (Turku: Åbo Akademi University, 2013), 197–269.

<sup>38</sup> The nationalistic and military language of the Finnish antituberculosis campaign has been discussed in Tiina Hautamäki, *Tuberkuloosin ja aidsin kulttuuriset merkitykset* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2002), 12–13, 114, 119–20, 125, 132–3, 136–7, 146, 220; and Hanna Kuusi, “Keuhkotauti kansallisvaarana: Tuberkuloosin vastaiset strategiat Suomessa vuoteen 1939 asti,” unpublished MA thesis (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 1995), 95–6. I have written about the ways in which the two national antituberculosis organizations participated in nation-formation prior to 1917 in Heini Hakosalo, “A twin grip on ‘the national disease’: The Finnish anti-tuberculosis associations and their contribution to nation-formation (1907–17),” in *The Making of Finland: The Era of the Grand Duchy*. Special issue of *Journal of Finnish Studies* 21:1–2 (2018), 208–36.

<sup>39</sup> The examples come from Severi Savonen, “Tuberkuloosipäivänä,” *Tuberkuloosilehti* 2:1 (1926), 1–2, here 2; Severi Savonen, “Tuberkuloositaistelun nykyinen nousukausi Suomessa,” *Tuberkuloosilehti* 3:3 (1927), 161–4, here 164; Gust. Rud. Idman, “Richard Sievers 75-vuotias,” *Tuberkuloosilehti* 3:2 (1927), 51–4, here 54; Severi Savonen, “Tärkeä aloite keuhkotautityön tehostamiseksi,” *Tuberkuloosilehti* 8:1 (1932), 29–38, here 31; *Tuberkuloosilehti* 8:3 (1932), 124–6, here 124; *Tuberkuloosilehti* 10:1 (1934), 26–31; Severi Savonen, “Mitä keuhkotautitaistelumme rintamalta nykyhetkellä kuuluu (Radioesitelmä 16.XII.1934),” *Tuberkuloosilehti* 11:1 (1935), 9–14; Severi Savonen, *Uudet aseemme keuh-*



Sanatorium slang was replete with military terms. For instance, long-term patients were called “veterans” and nontuberculous outsiders “civilians,” the implication being that “lungers” and “civilians” were two different groups with such drastically different experiences that it was hard for them to understand each other.<sup>40</sup> Critical authors could refer to sanatoria as “barracks” and criticize doctors and nurses for behaving like non-commissioned officers toward patients.<sup>41</sup> Military vocabulary and military manners became even more prominent during World War II, when sanatoria became part of the war effort. The bulk of sanatorium beds were reserved for the army and occupied by injured and ill servicemen.<sup>42</sup> Male sanatorium physicians wore officers’ uniforms under their white coats, army manners and forms of address were adopted, and young frontline soldiers became the new elite stratum of the patient population.<sup>43</sup>

On a personal level, too, patients often discussed their disease histories in terms of war, struggle, and combat. They recounted how they had “fought” and “waged war” against the disease, “gained victories,” “suffered defeats,” and been part of the “tuberculosis front.”<sup>44</sup> A female author mused about the pseudonymous Toivonharju sanatorium where “more than three hundred people – mainly young people – wage their own war against death. For most of them, the war will be long, while those waging a blitzkrieg will usually be defeated.”<sup>45</sup> The young age of the average sanatorium patient added weight to military metaphors. The authors sometimes explicitly related their personal struggle to national military history: “It was the beginning of 1945. The war had just ended, and we had

*kotaudin hävittämiseksi* (Helsinki: Otava, 1947), 20; Severi Savonen, *Tuberkuloosisuojarokotus keuhkotaudin hävittäjänä* (Helsinki: STVY, 1949), 7; Martti Savilahti, “Calmetterokotuksella on armeijassa saatu kiintoisia tuloksia,” *Terveydenhoitolehti* 58 (1946), 276–7; Ahtokari (1991), 53; Härö (1998), 7; Allan Tiitta, *Collegium medicum. Lääkintöhallitus 1878–1991* (Helsinki: Lääkintöhallitus, 2009), 399.

<sup>40</sup> FLSA, ST, Ahokas 19, Arola 17, Kivimäki 15–16, Pehkonen 20, Kautto 80, Kuusisto 23, Salmu 39, “Savimäki” 8, CPUM 99, 461.

<sup>41</sup> FLSA, ST, Aitamäki 127, Harju 51–2, Puttonen 9, “Savimäki” 2, CPUM 180.

<sup>42</sup> According to an estimate, circa 15,000 Finnish servicemen fell ill with tuberculosis during WWII. Härö (1992), 166–7. The number of men whose tuberculosis became manifest during peace-time military service was also considerable, although difficult to define with any precision.

<sup>43</sup> FLSA, ST, Alava 16, Hannula 14, CPUM 201, 228.

<sup>44</sup> FLSA, ST, Siemala 23–5, Virtanen 12, CPUM 461.

<sup>45</sup> FLSA, ST, Alava 16.

embarked upon our peace-time life, but then my own war against a grim disease began.”<sup>46</sup>

Several authors claimed or implied that the combatants in the war against tuberculosis had not been given their due in the collective memory and in national narratives. Indeed, the need to commemorate them was cited as a motive for answering the writing call. A woman thus wrote that she had decided to mail in a contribution because she wished to report her fellow patients’ “courageous struggle against their overwhelming enemy,”<sup>47</sup> and another described her father’s 50-year struggle with tuberculosis in much the same terms as war heroes were commemorated.<sup>48</sup> A male patient quoted a letter he had received from a sanatorium doctor:

*Perhaps you might write a book some day on ‘the forgotten heroes.’ The hundreds, even thousands of men and women who have endured suffering and died as heroically as frontline soldiers, who have fought within the walls of the sanatorium. Military and civilian courage have often been combined [in the same person]. Apart from those who succumbed, there are plenty of survivors who have gone through a prolonged baptism by fire [...].*<sup>49</sup>

Construed as a battle, a disease history could become a test of courage and persistence, sometimes also as a vehicle of moral refinement.

## STORIES OF BELONGING

Sanatoria, particularly the large public sanatoria erected in the 1930s, can be regarded as “national” institutions from the outset.<sup>50</sup> They were major public institutions, owned and administered by municipalities and monitored, and mainly funded, by the state. The staff were public officials, which enhanced their status and authority. Sanatoria represented the state of the art in pulmonary medicine and medical technology, and the buildings in which they were housed were often designed by leading architects. Modern sanatoria were associated with health, development, and modernity. Kirsi Saarikangas, a Finnish historian of art and architecture, has

<sup>46</sup> FLSA, ST, Närhi 1.

<sup>47</sup> FLSA, ST, Lehtonen 6.

<sup>48</sup> FLSA, ST, Aimo-Koivisto 45.

<sup>49</sup> FLSA, ST, Onni Nikula to Kaarlo Aitamäki 23 July 1971, quoted in Aitamäki 930.

<sup>50</sup> These sanatoria were first known as “folk sanatoria” (*kansanparantola*) and, from the beginning of the 1950s, as “central sanatoria” (*keskusparantola*).

remarked that “Sanatoria, together with sports and new sports buildings, played a central role in the creation of the image of a clean healthy Finland.” According to Saarikangas, the sanatorium was “the model institution of the first half of the twentieth century.”<sup>51</sup> There is indeed no doubt that sanatoria were an object of national and civic pride.<sup>52</sup> Such pride was not unique to Finland,<sup>53</sup> but, in the Finnish case, sanatoria stood out in a particularly clear and impressive outline against the backdrop of the otherwise relatively poorly developed health infrastructure of the newly independent country (Fig. 10.2).

Mundane nationalism was a feature of sanatorium life. National symbols, for instance the Finnish flag, were often on display, and national and religious celebrations were carefully observed. Patients would not have expected anything else, as the nation-state was a self-evident frame of reference at the time. Moreover, patient subculture, known in Finland as “hall culture,” involved a playful recreation of national institutions. The term covers the collective and semi-voluntary forms of patient self-organization and self-discipline that revolved around the “hall” (from the German *Liegehalle*), the communal balcony used for fresh-air treatment of tuberculosis sufferers. Patients sharing a hall formed a “hall state” with an often humorous and gendered name. The most common form of government being a republic, the “state” had a president and a set of ministers, a constitution, a flag, and a national anthem (Fig. 10.3). A newcomer became “a citizen” in a “hall baptism,” and received a “hall name” that was entered into the hall diary or ledger.<sup>54</sup> In their reminiscences, patients characterize the hall state as “a whole society in miniature”<sup>55</sup> and “a wholesome ordered society.”<sup>56</sup> Hall practices alleviated boredom, eased social tensions, and bolstered communality. It is difficult to say when exactly they became part of sanatorium life or how widespread they were. What

<sup>51</sup> Kirsi Saarikangas, *Asunnon muodonmuutoksia: Puhtauden estetiikka ja sukupuoli modernissa arkkitehtuurissa* (Helsinki: SKS, 2002), 92.

<sup>52</sup> E.g., Savonen (1935), 9.

<sup>53</sup> Michael E. Teller, *The Tuberculosis Movement: A Public Health Campaign in the Progressive Era* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 82; Michael Worboys, “The sanatorium treatment for consumption in Britain, 1890–1914,” *Medical Innovations in Historical Perspective*, ed. by John V. Pickstone (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 47–71, here 53.

<sup>54</sup> FLSA, ST, Aitamäki 331–2, 334, Hannula 17–18, Ijäs 35, Luhtala 15–21, Naskali 7, “Savimäki” 2, 5, Tikkanen 5.

<sup>55</sup> FLSA, ST, Ijäs 22.

<sup>56</sup> FLSA, ST, Jaskari 9, 10.



Mjölbollstad Sanatorium.

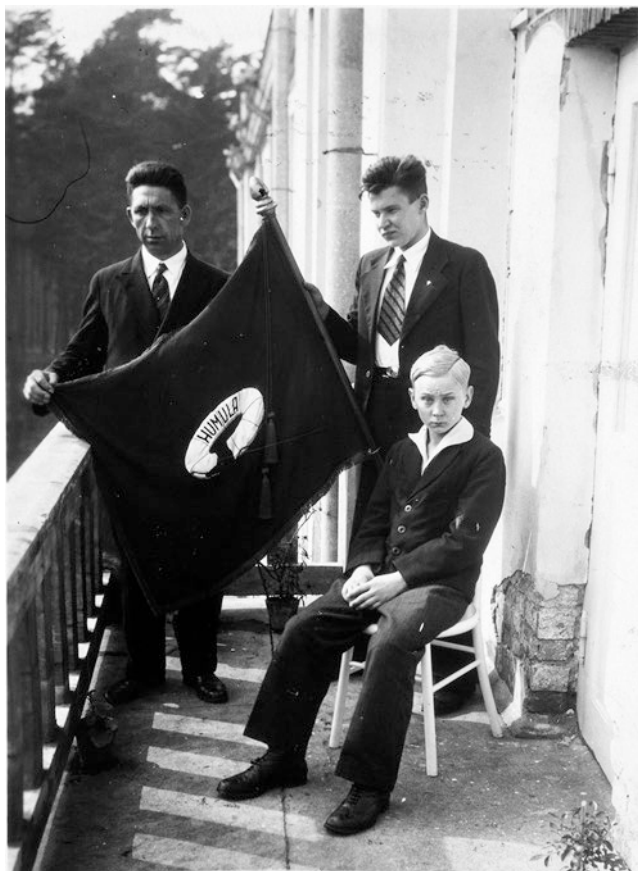
**Fig. 10.2** Mjölbollstad (Meltola) Sanatorium, opened in 1931, was one of the 17 folk sanatoria built between 1925 and 1952. Images like this were displayed in international exhibitions to celebrate Finland's achievements in the field of tuberculosis control and health care. (Photographer unknown. The archive of the Finnish Lung Health Association, Helsinki)

seems clear is that they peaked in the 1930s, waned during and because of World War II, and were replaced by the emergence of formal patient organizations in the 1950s.<sup>57</sup>

*ST* narrators subjected features of the sanatorium order to harsh criticism. At the same time, they presented it, in some respects, as an ideal institution. They routinely spoke about the sanatorium (community) as a family, household, or home.<sup>58</sup> A former patient wrote, characteristically,

<sup>57</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 935. Nenola (1986) is particularly interested in the sanatorium subculture. Again, such sanatorium traditions and rituals were not unique to Finland. See, e.g., Condrau (2001); Rothman (1994), 234.

<sup>58</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Arola 17, Finnilä 82, Haapiainen 22, Hannula 17, 21, Honkiniemi 17–18, Jännesniemi 15, Jurva 5, Kanervisto 16, Korhonen 11, Kotilainen 10, Natri 2–3, Nevalainen 33, Torvela 5, Wessman 14, Yli-Jyrä 2.



**Fig. 10.3** The flag of the Humula hall at Halila Sanatorium. (Photographer unknown. The image archive of the Finnish Literature Society)

that “the sanatorium was like one big family. Someone who hasn’t been there, in that society of people who have ended up on the dark side of life, cannot understand this.”<sup>59</sup> An elderly lady with several sanatorium stays behind her wrote that “the sanatorium has been a second home to which I have been able to return whenever the struggle to make a living has

<sup>59</sup> FLSA, ST, Haapianen 21–2.

surpassed my strength.”<sup>60</sup> This institutional home comes across as patriarchal, hierarchical, and disciplined, but also as caring, harmonious, communal, and, perhaps most surprisingly, equal.

The traditional sanatorium was a rigidly hierarchical institution, with the physician-in-chief at the apex. Patients referred to the latter in their reminiscences as “God,” “the supreme God,” and “pharaoh.”<sup>61</sup> In sanatorium language, the physician-in-chief was commonly called “superdaddy” and the matron “supermommy.”<sup>62</sup> Indeed, some scholars have been struck by the inferior, even infantile position of the patient within the sanatorium microcosm.<sup>63</sup> The place of each member of the medical, nursing, and economic staff in the hierarchy was clearly defined. The staff tended to be rank-conscious and adhered to a strict code of address and accessibility. For instance, a former patient recalled that while patients might be on first-name terms with cleaners they never were that with doctors or nurses.<sup>64</sup> A myriad of written and unwritten rules regulated the patient’s life, and some matrons and physicians-in-chief were known as notorious authoritarians. Patients might occasionally rebel against the discipline, but, at least in hindsight, they were prone to judge the discipline as having been necessary and the hierarchy as something that was natural at the time.<sup>65</sup>

The narrators also stressed the harmonious nature of the sanatorium community. Traditional sanatoria took conscious measures to avoid strife, for instance by forbidding religious and political discussions. Some narrators asserted that the latter rule was followed, while others denied this.<sup>66</sup> Naturally, politics could not be completely excised from the sanatorium. The oldest *ST* participant, a woman born in 1893, still treasured the memory of the march that had been organized on the sanatorium grounds to celebrate women’s suffrage in 1906.<sup>67</sup> The collection also contains

<sup>60</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Finnilä 87.

<sup>61</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 168, CPUM 189, 200.

<sup>62</sup> The original Finnish “ylipappa” and “ylimamma” are difficult to render in English. Literally, they mean something like “the superior (grand)daddy” and “the superior (grand)mommy.” The tone is slightly humorous but not downright irreverent.

<sup>63</sup> Nenola (1986), 35, 120; Bryder (1988), 205.

<sup>64</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Saarinen 8, CPUM 164.

<sup>65</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 127, CPUM 180.

<sup>66</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Aarnio 13, Aitamäki 333, Bogdanoff 33–4, Finnilä 42, Heino 14, Jääskeläinen 32, Jaskari 3–4, Johansson 5, Keränen 3, Kurkinen 2, Mäki-Petäjä 24, Tuominen 111, CPUM 224.

<sup>67</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Huhtanen 10–11.

references to other political and social events and developments: the divisive heritage of the Civil War, the Great Depression, the right-wing extremism of the 1930s, the hardships of World War II, the political turmoil of the postwar years, and the 1952 Olympic Games.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, the institution emerged in the *ST* narratives as a tranquil island sheltered from the worst tempests of national politics. One narrator contrasted the silent, heroic battle being waged in the sanatorium with the mayhem prevailing on the national scene in the 1930s: “Newspapers carried headlines about the [extreme right-wing] Lapua movement, blackshirts and communism. The fatherland was ravaged by the devil. At the same time, real patriots were spitting blood; tuberculosis was really a disease of the people.”<sup>69</sup>

Patients’ testimonies as to the equality of the sanatorium community seem inconsistent, even contradictory. Equality among patients receives a lot of praise in *ST*. “There were no ranks,” one author asserted. Others agreed that “Patients were all of equal worth regardless of title and wealth,” that “No patient had any special position or privilege,” that “age or rank mattered little,” and that “We were all just patients whether you yourself paid or [whether your fee was covered by] a municipality or the state.”<sup>70</sup> However, others insisted that the staff treated patients differently, depending on the latter’s education, social class, and wealth,<sup>71</sup> and saw to it that everyone knew who was “living off the municipality” or lagging behind in their monthly payments, something which was “awfully demeaning.”<sup>72</sup>

External evidence is not altogether conclusive either. It is true that there was relatively little social segregation in Finnish sanatoria. No sanatorium could survive completely without public support, and a sanatorium that received state subsidies had to provide a fixed number of free beds for patients with few means. There were therefore poor patients in private sanatoria, too. Wealthy patients, in turn, sought treatment in folk

<sup>68</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Aarnio 13, Aitamäki 343, U. Heikkilä 4–5, Honkiniemi 2–3, Ijäs 25, Tuominen 2, CPUM 196, 232.

<sup>69</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Meilo 1–2.

<sup>70</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Hautamäki 10, Järvinen 5, Yli-Jyrä 2, Aarnio 13. See also Huvinen 20, Ijäs 35, Kotilainen 15–16, “Savimäki” 5.

<sup>71</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Hurskainen 1, Kaario 36, Kairisvuo 2, Walta 3, CPUM 99, 143, 192, 194, 240.

<sup>72</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Haapiainen 18–19. For similar statements, see Lindqvist 10, Keränen 3–4, Vesterinen 7.

sanatoria, because private sanatoria were few and because folk sanatoria represented the state of the art in tuberculosis medicine. There was a degree of spatial segregation in some of the older private sanatoria—rich and poor tended to be housed in different sections of the sanatorium—but the segregation was not particularly strict.<sup>73</sup> Patients from all classes mingled in the joint dining and day rooms, and private patient rooms and balconies were rare. But education, and especially wealth, mattered. For instance, “work therapy” (cleaning, washing, waiting tables, repairing, or farming) was restricted to public patients.<sup>74</sup> Specific remedies from cough medicine to phototherapy all cost extra and would therefore be out of poor patients’ reach. As long as there were only symptomatic or experimental remedies on offer, this form of inequality was not particularly harmful. However, it became injurious, sometimes even fatal, in the 1950s, when patients were denied effective curative treatment on financial grounds. This did not stop a patient who had been in a sanatorium in the mid-1950s from stating that treatment had been exactly the same for all and that a farmhand “was treated so well that a member of the royal family could not have been better treated.”<sup>75</sup>

What accounts for such apparent contradictions? First, there were probably genuine differences between different sanatoria in this respect. In some, the staff worked harder than in others to downplay social and financial differences among the patients.<sup>76</sup> Second, there were changes over time. On the whole, social class and education mattered more in the 1920s than in the 1950s. On the other hand, money, or the lack of it, became more of an issue in the 1950s, when the proliferation of canteens, shows, and films meant that there was more use for cash within sanatoria.<sup>77</sup> Third, even patients who recognized the existence of differential treatment could still be impressed by the *relative* equality prevailing in sanatoria. Mid-twentieth century Finns would not have expected to be treated exactly the same regardless of social class, wealth, and education, but the fact that all patients ate together, were subjected to the same rules, and received the same basic treatment was enough to make poor people regard the

<sup>73</sup>FLSA, ST, Korhonen-Jolma 2, Lindqvist 9–10, Piikamäki 10–11.

<sup>74</sup>FLSA, ST, Saarinen 14.

<sup>75</sup>FLSA, ST, Aitamäki 117, also 103.

<sup>76</sup>FLSA, ST, Jaskari 15, 18.

<sup>77</sup>FLSA, ST, Huhdanmäki 7, Huvinen 31, Jaskari 18, Kairisvuo 1–2, T. Leskinen 17, Luhtala 7, Mäki-Petäjä 19–20, Nyström 1, Reiman 12, Soini 14–15, CPUM 81, 189, 238; “Nytt från förbundet/Sanatorieminnen,” *Silmu* 1 (1971), 28–30, here 30.



sanatorium as an island of equality. This sentiment was expressed by a woman recounting the story of her stepsister Maria. In the sanatorium, Maria could, for the first time in her life, rest from hard physical work and get enough to eat. “There she felt similar to other people.”<sup>78</sup>

“Felt” is the key word here. Many *ST* narrators regarded the sanatorium as an ideally equal community, despite material evidence to the contrary, because the experience of sharing the same fate was strong enough to override social differences. People suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis shared similar hopes and fears, pains, and limitations. The experience of being feared and rejected by “civilians” was all but universal among patients. Comparisons with leprosy and the plague were common.<sup>79</sup> In writing about their first admission to a sanatorium, the narrators often evoked their deep sense of relief about being among their own kind and no longer being shunned because of their disease. Even a fellow patient who was not relatable in other respects was a *kobtalotoveri*, literally, “a comrade in fate.”<sup>80</sup> It is this sense of shared fate that makes one narrator assert that “Never have I experienced such comradeship and sense of community in ‘civilian life’ as I did there. Only one who has been there knows that.”<sup>81</sup> This sentiment gets repeated in the *ST* material time and again.<sup>82</sup>

A sense of community and belonging was not just a matter of comfort but also a therapeutic and restorative factor. The narrators’ conception of disease was inherently psychosomatic: they believed that emotional states impacted the course of the disease, and that basically anything that helped them maintain a calm and hopeful frame of mind could have therapeutic value.<sup>83</sup> We can also appreciate the restorative value of the sense of community when we remember the severe damage that the diagnosis often did to social relationships. Many of the victims had been blocked from their workplaces or schools, avoided by neighbors, left by their girl- or boy-friends, and forced to isolate themselves from their family members. They commonly discussed feelings of worthlessness and social isolation. “The

<sup>78</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Jaatinen 1–2.

<sup>79</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 21, “Einonen” 121, Kivilahti 16, Mannermaa 2, Mäki-Petäjä 15–16, Poijärvi 20, Saarikoski 1.

<sup>80</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Jaskari 8, Huhdanmäki 7, Karapuu 2, Keskinen 3, Lindqvist 10, H. Oksanen 4.

<sup>81</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Arola 17.

<sup>82</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Aromaa 17, Kuusisto 23, Kotilainen 15–16, “Mattinen” 130, Saarinen 7, CPUM 193.

<sup>83</sup> FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 37, 59, 62, 65, 72, 103, 104, 171, 928, Avola 34–5, Harju 70, 117, Jaskari 21, Jänesniemi 12.

tuberculous felt as though cast out of society, as if their lives were over, [that] they were good for nothing, like worn-out pieces of clothing, rags.”<sup>84</sup> The intense communality of the sanatorium allowed a patient to remain a social being and thereby limited psychological damage.

In the 1960s, sanatoria became more hospital-like. Patients who had been treated in both the traditional sanatorium and in the 1960s hospital-sanatorium often compared the two. The latter offered more by the way of medical and social services (e.g., the services of an arts and crafts instructor, a physiotherapist, and a social worker), not to mention therapeutic efficiency. It was less isolated and more accessible. The attitude of the staff toward the patients was less authoritarian and formal (even too informal to the taste of some older patients). The outlook of the patient population had also changed drastically. In-patients’ average age had risen significantly and they were now more likely to be bed-ridden and wearing hospital pajamas rather than their own clothes. Meals were taken in patient rooms or wards rather than in the communal dining room; joint pastimes had been replaced by television. By the end of the 1960s, the characteristic communality of the sanatorium was gone. As welcome as the new effective services were, patients could also regret the loss of communality and regard the new hospital-sanatorium as a bleak house.<sup>85</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The view of tuberculosis and sanatoria emerging from patient reminiscences is not quite identical with textbook histories, which are predominantly based on medical publications, administrative documents, and doctors’ memoirs. The very conception of illness that informs *ST* illness narratives is different from the standard biomedical conception. *ST* narrators made no sharp distinction between somatic, psychological, and social aspects of illness. Rather, they regarded these aspects as entangled and posited multiple causal links between them. Illness, as narrated in *ST*, was the sum total of many things: physical suffering and reduced function,

<sup>84</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 172. Similarly, a poem called “We,” and published in a patient magazine, characterized consumptives as refuse and as mere expenditures for society. Cited in Kasurinen 7–9. See also Finnälä 9, Jaskari 8, Kautto 10.

<sup>85</sup>FLSA, *ST*, Aitamäki 84, 241–2, 253, 263, 340, 1015, Harju 60–1, 65, 84, Heino 36, Keränen 5, Kotilainen 17, Meilo 7–8, M. Oksanen 25, Salmu 44, Suominen 4, 5–6, Tuominen 3.

mental anxiety and stress, financial burden, disrupted and frayed social bonds, reduced social status, and social stigma.

Things that alleviated this overall burden of illness counted as progress. Progress could thus encompass medical innovations, but also manifest itself as an investment in public welfare. Stories of personal progression toward better health and wealth became integrated into a national master narrative, that of the emergence of the welfare state. The narrative of war provided another opportunity for the *ST* narrators to make use of the repository of culturally shared values and concepts and fuse the individual and the national. The third narrative strand singled out in this chapter presented the sanatorium as an ideal nation in miniature, as it were. The authors drew a stark contrast between the harsh prewar society and the traditional sanatorium, which, notwithstanding its many shortcomings, emerged as a place where everyone could count on being cared for, where no one was isolated or disparaged because of tuberculosis, where political and religious strife was kept at bay, and where a sense of community was so strong that it overrode social, linguistic, and religious differences.

Given the average age and the predominantly rural background of the *ST* participants, the markedly traditional outlook of the ideal sanatorium society does not come as a complete surprise. It is a euphemized reflection of the premodern patriarchal society, with its clear, “natural” (unquestioned) hierarchy, strong leadership, and distinct gender divisions, while also being possessed of close and supportive horizontal relations, consensus, and care. Patients both welcomed the inclusive but impersonal welfare services that accompanied the development of modern *Gesellschaft* and were nostalgic about the traditional sanatorium *Gemeinschaft*. This seeming contradiction serves as a reminder that illness narratives are not logical propositions, and do not need to respect either the law of contradiction or the law of the excluded middle. As Arthur W. Frank writes when he speaks about his hospitalization for cancer, “I both hated the hospital and found it was the only place where I felt had a place.”<sup>86</sup>

Looking at *Sanatorium Tradition*, one cannot but admire (and, as a researcher, be thankful for) the trouble that the authors went to in putting their reminiscences into words—and also to ponder about their motives for doing so. By way of conclusion, I suggest a twofold motive, a “historical” and a “therapeutic” one. The narrators wanted to witness about their personal ordeal, but also about the historical developments that they had

<sup>86</sup> Frank (2013), 107.

observed and been part of. In many cases (and some of the narrators say as much), the memory work also served a therapeutic purpose, as it allowed them to take distance from their experiences and create new emotional scenarios. In the last instance, we do not need to see the two motives as separate. The intense sense of vulnerability that accompanied a potentially fatal disease like tuberculosis was easier to own if it could be assigned broader significance and value. By linking their personal illness histories to national history, the narrators could give a sense of purpose and meaning to their losses and suffering. At the same time, their personal testimonies concerning the illness stood as a contribution, however modest, to the national knowledge-community.

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# Nimble Nationalism: Transgenerational Experiences of East Karelian Refugees in Finland and Sweden

*Seija Jalagin*

## INTRODUCTION

*I was homesick for the next 40 years. It would have been so nice to meet and interact with one's family but there was this iron curtain between us that just would not open. Even the letters stopped coming! For years we did not know whether they were alive there in Karelia or if they had passed away. The family was completely split into two "camps."<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>“Koti-ikävää pojin seuraavat 40 vuotta [...] Olisihan sitä niin mielellään halunnut tavata ja olla kanssakäymisissä perheensä kanssa, mutta väliin oli tullut rautaesirippu, joka ei vähääkään raottunut. Kirjeetkin loppuivat tulemasta! Niin emme vuosiin tienneet elivätkö hyö siellä Karjalassa vai joko oli Tuoni heijät vienyet. Perhe oli jakaantunut täydellisesti kahteen 'leiriin'.” Finnish Literature Society Archives (FLSA), Archive materials on traditional and contemporary cultures (KRA), Viena-Aunus 397–485, 1993–94. The narrator was born in 1904 in East Karelia.

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© The Author(s) 2021  
V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_11)

After 70 years in Finland, a refugee woman wrote about how she missed her childhood home and family members left behind in Russia in 1922. In the autobiographical account that she submitted to a writing competition of the Finnish Literature Society she also recorded how the nightly dreams regularly took her to the lakeshores of her former home in East Karelia. The dreams only stopped after she met her cousin from the Soviet Union in 1968 and heard what had happened to the home village. In her everyday life this woman, like thousands of other East Karelian refugees in Finland or in Sweden, strove to build a new life.

East Karelia, later called Soviet Karelia, today the Karelian Republic of Russia, is an area in Northwest Russia adjacent to the eastern border of Finland; hence the name East Karelia, used mainly in Finland. The Karelians living in Russian Karelia were Orthodox by religion and spoke the Karelian language, one closely related to Finnish. At the end of the nineteenth century the Karelians constituted 43 percent of the population (79,000 people in 1897), the rest being mostly Russians.<sup>2</sup> “Finnish Karelia” lies in the southeastern part of contemporary Finland. The people are mostly Lutheran and speak the Karelian dialect of Finnish. During World War II, in 1941–44, the Finnish army occupied parts of Eastern Karelia, whereas after the war part of Finnish Karelia was ceded to the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

Over the course of history, the two Karelias have witnessed several violent conflicts, border transfers, and refugee flows in both directions that invite us to research the relationship between refugees and nation-states. The above-cited recollections of the aged refugee woman call for a closer investigation of minority groups at the margins of national histories. In contrast to internally displaced people, foreign refugees typically form a minority in their new home societies and may be scattered over one or more countries. They may be considered a minority according to one or more criteria, such as ethnicity, religion, language, and nationality.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Iivo Härkönen, *Itäinen vartio: Lukuja vanhasta Karjalasta* (Helsinki: Ahjo, 1920), 102–9. Today the population of East Karelia is ca. 640,000; most inhabitants are Russians. In 2014, the Karelians constituted 7.4 percent of the population. “The Republic of Karelia (brief information),” *The Official Karelia: The Official Web Portal of the Republic of Karelia*, [http://old.gov.karelia.ru/Different/karelia3\\_e.html](http://old.gov.karelia.ru/Different/karelia3_e.html)

<sup>3</sup>Otti Fingerroos, “‘Karelia Issue’: The Politics and Memory of Karelia in Finland,” in *Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations*, ed. by Tiina Kinnunen & Ville Kivimäki (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 483–4.

<sup>4</sup>As Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller have pointed out, in the nation-states ethnic groups are often defined by their ‘origin’ and thus distinguished from the indigenous or

This chapter focuses on refugee experiences of the nation, or rather nations, as the East Karelian refugees under investigation here have lived in at least three countries. Following an unsuccessful uprising in Russian Karelia against the Bolsheviks in 1921–22, more than 11,000 people escaped to Finland, the closest neighboring country to the west. Several thousand of them returned home in 1922–23. After World War II, hundreds of those East Karelians who had settled in Finland fled again westward, this time to Sweden, fearing that they would be taken back to the Soviet Union. According to the peace treaty, Finland (and other states on the losing side) were ordered to repatriate Allied citizens. Following these orders, 87 percent of the 63,000 Ingrian Finns who were evacuated to Finland from German-occupied Soviet regions during the war were forced to return to the Soviet Union. Some 5000 succeeded in obtaining asylum in Sweden. Compared to them, as well as to the 30,000 Balts who also sought asylum in Sweden, the East Karelians under scrutiny here are a marginal group in numbers, but an exemplary case of refugee agency because they undertook to maximize their eligibility as candidates of the host society.

What did nation mean to people who were forced “into the gaps between nation states?”<sup>5</sup> What constitutes nation in the margins of the margins for someone who has started over from scratch twice, in two different countries? How do these experiences surface in family narratives and what does this tell us about the transgenerational impact of forced displacement? In seeking to answer these questions this chapter also contributes to the emerging field of refugee history that focuses, among other things, on the experience of refugees in different temporal and spatial contexts.<sup>6</sup>

majority population instead of seeing that this differentiation is the outcome of ethnic politicization that takes place in the process of nation-state building. Anreas Wimmer & Nina Glick Schiller, “Methodological nationalism and beyond: nation-state building, migration and the social sciences,” *Global Networks* 2:4 (2002), 301–34, here 305–6.

<sup>5</sup> Reinisch and Frank cite Emma Haddad. Jessica Reinisch & Matthew Frank, “‘The Story Stays the Same’? Refugees in Europe from the ‘Forty Years’ Crisis’ to the Present,” in *Refugees in Europe, 1919–1959: A Forty Years’ Crisis?* ed. by Matthew Frank & Jessica Reinisch (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 12.

<sup>6</sup> Dan Stone, “Refugees then and now: memory, history and politics in the long twentieth century: an introduction,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 52:2–3 (2018), 101.

## TRACING REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

Refugees and nation-states intertwine in many ways. For example, displaced people tie states together as they cross borders and seek asylum. Their presence requires policy formation as well as institutional and administrative expertise and practices in handling the immigration processes and migrating people.<sup>7</sup> When large groups of displaced people are on the move, they also demand, for instance, international cooperation between states and between transnational aid organizations. From the mid-twentieth century onward, refugees have also challenged nation-states to reflect on who may be entitled to their evolving social security systems. Yet, historians tend to treat refugee crises as temporary problems where, after being resolved, things go back to normal; or they alternatively believe that many refugees did not want to be (or could not be) open about their status and thus left behind very few records that could enable the tracing of their experiences. Acknowledging them as agents, we might “think of refugees as people in motion rather than as subjects constructed in relation to the states that alternately refuse or receive them,”<sup>8</sup> as historian Peter Gatrell has suggested. Gatrell’s words urge us to contest nation-states as embedded sites of identity and home and encourage research into how refugees experience nations as the basis of modern states.

When considering refugee history in Finland and Sweden from the late-1910s to the 1950s, the wider framework is what historians Jessica Reinisch and Matthew Frank call “a forty years’ crisis,” a period that started in the aftermath of World War I in 1919 and ended in 1959—the World Refugee Year—when “Europe’s home-grown refugee problems were supposedly ‘solved’.” It was a crisis of a “European-dominated international order of nation-states.”<sup>9</sup> During this period, successive refugee crises gave rise to national and international solutions under the aegis of the League of Nations and the United Nations, including the Refugee Convention of 1951, which has since served as the key legal document guiding international refugee policy.<sup>10</sup> Regarding the post-1959 period, the focus has

<sup>7</sup> Peter Gatrell, “Refugees – What’s Wrong with History?” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 30:2 (2016), 175.

<sup>8</sup> Gatrell (2016), 178.

<sup>9</sup> Reinisch & Frank (2017), 12–13.

<sup>10</sup> The 1967 addition enlarged the 1951 convention to include all refugees, not just those affected by World War II. Stone (2018), 105.



been more on the global refugee problem, although the international refugee regime and related practices remained of European origin.<sup>11</sup>

This chapter looks at the significance of the nation from the bottom-up perspective of the refugees by analyzing oral history narratives and written reminiscences of their experiences. It suggests that being a refugee means that one's life centers around the nation-state in at least two ways. First, as Albert Cohen from the International Refugee Organization (IRO) expressed it in 1949 at a meeting of IRO and voluntary organizations in Geneva, the refugee is an alien, but not a "normal alien." He does not "have that last resort [...] – return to his native country." The refugee is also an "unprotected alien... He has no Government behind him."<sup>12</sup> Second, the vulnerable position of the refugee makes him dependent upon the government in the receiving country and its immigration system until she/he is granted asylum, and eventually, following the limbo of renewing work and residence permits, citizenship. Only citizenship provides the legal rights (and obligations) that accompany government protection, and only citizenship transforms the refugee into a "normal alien."

The primary sources used in this chapter consist of three types of reminiscence material created by East Karelian refugees and their family members, mainly from the 1990s up to the present. The first type is made up of the written narratives from the archive of the Finnish Literature Society that regularly organizes competitions to collect oral histories. In this study, three such collections have been utilized: "My Karelian Roots" (*Minun karjalaiset juureni*) was collected in 1993–94, "East Karelian Refugees" (*Itä-Karjalan pakolaisuus*) in 1995–96, and "Karelianness in the 2000s" (*Karjalaisuus 2000-luvulla*<sup>13</sup>), collected in 2019. The competitions typically contain a set of questions that the respondents can use in composing their narratives, but they are not required to do so. Therefore, the narratives are of various lengths and differ thematically, from book-length autobiographies to detailed descriptions about certain topics or short answers to individual questions. What is noteworthy, however, is that writing about one's own or one's family's life (history) for the competition and sending the writing to the Finnish Literature Society, an esteemed

<sup>11</sup> Reinisch & Frank (2017), 12–13.

<sup>12</sup> Stone cites Cohen. Stone (2018), 104–5.

<sup>13</sup> The circa 80 texts submitted to this call include some from individuals with East Karelian family history.

institution for collecting and preserving Finnish cultural heritage, is an act of recording oneself into the *national bottom-up narrative*.

The second type of material consists of my interviews with East Karelians (n=7) in Sweden in 2016. The interviewees were born in Finland between 1929 and 1940 to refugee families, and were at the time of the interview in their late eighties.<sup>14</sup> The third type of oral history material utilized here consists of some published articles in which the refugees depict their life courses and routes in Finland and in Sweden. Some collected writings and articles also include stories from Soviet Karelia from the 1920s to the 1950s, as well as from the post-Soviet era when people could again travel more freely to the Karelian Republic in Russia.

In order to examine the role of the nation-state in refugee lives, the archival material of government immigration and refugee aid authorities in Finland and Sweden has also been utilized.<sup>15</sup> With the archival material it is possible to investigate the refugees' fluctuating position between the 1920s and the 1950s and to examine how the immigrant policies and practices in Finland and Sweden are reflected in memories of refugeedom and resettlement. By crosslighting the various sources I will argue that the *nation-state* represents a central element in refugee experience.

The chapter consists of three sections. The first is a discussion of the relationship of experience and memory as an object of study in this chapter. The second section investigates the experiences of the East Karelians' relationship to the nation-state, and the third examines their experiences in local communities and their encounters with the majority population in Finland and in Sweden as well as with other minority groups. The chapter ends with a discussion of the findings in relation to the refugee experience of the *lived nation*.

<sup>14</sup>All interviews were carried out in Finnish. Four of them took place in the informants' homes as semi-structured interviews and were recorded digitally. Three were conducted by phone (not recorded) and did not lead to face-to-face interviews, although the informants gave their consent to use the information in research. The interviewees are anonymized here. I found them mainly from among the ca. 300 names that I collected in the Finnish census records from 1948–49.

<sup>15</sup>These include the personal files on refugees created by the National Alien Commission of Sweden (*Statens Utlänningskommission*) from 1944 to the 1960s; the State Refugee Aid Center of Finland (*Valtion Pakolaisavustuskeskus*) board meeting protocols and annual reports from 1922 to 1939, and the Finnish State Police (*Etsivä Keskuspoliisi Valpo*) records on foreigners in Finland, 1922–49.

## MEMORIZING EXPERIENCE

Experience is embedded in our everyday lives in several ways: it is at the same time both unique and subjective as well as overarching and recognizable. Research on experience recognizes the value of an individual viewpoint but it also enables individual attitudes to be regarded as knowledge.<sup>16</sup> Historians typically study experiences of the past by detour. In the historical material, descriptions of experience provide an opportunity to analyze the significance of human experiences. Narratives of experiences and the process of narration as such are experiences for their actors and the two cannot be separated. Drawing on feminist historian Joan Scott's discussion on whether research really addresses an individual's experience, literary scholar Ernst van Alphen points to the inseparability of the discourse and experience: "subjects are the effect of the discursive processing of their experiences."<sup>17</sup>

Even if the acts of narration are individual, experience also has a collective character. The act of experience is "not about registering objective data but instead it is dynamic interaction of preconceived ideas and reality that takes place in shared contexts," as philosopher Jussi Backman articulates the potential of sharing experiences with others who live in the same reality with us.<sup>18</sup> The *feel* of (shared) reality motivates us to ask how narrated memories of experience are formed. Do we, for example, interpret descriptions of the asylum-seeking processes and resettlement of refugees in the host society as a narrative that is told over and over again because it has left strong embodied memories and because it was a shared experience for the refugees? Or is it simply so that because "reality is rather a discontinuous chaos" we actually "experience events from the perspective of narrative frameworks in terms of which these events can be understood as meaningful," as Van Alphen phrases it?<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Jarkko Toikkanen & Ira A. Virtanen, "Kokemuksen käsitteen ja käytön jäljillä," in *Kokemuksen tutkimus VI: Kokemuksen käsite ja käyttö*, ed. by Jarkko Toikkanen & Ira A. Virtanen (Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press, 2018), 9.

<sup>17</sup>Ernst van Alphen, "Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory and Trauma," in *Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Volume III: Political Narratology*, ed. by Mieke Bal (London: Routledge, 2004), 107–22, here 108.

<sup>18</sup>Jussi Backman, "Äärellisyyden kohtaaminen: kokemuksen filosofista käsittehistoriaa," in Toikkanen & Virtanen (2018), 27.

<sup>19</sup>Van Alphen (2004), 116.

If we define experience as an interpretation in the present of an individual or a group with regard to the past, we draw attention to the temporal and mediated nature of experience, which in itself escapes our reach. When an experience is described, it is already in the past and only the act of describing it happens in the present. The expression, the narration, is of a contextual nature: the narrator uses the cultural and social conventions and premises that he/she is socialized in and has at his/her disposal, or, to put it in other words, experiences are “grounded in cultural discourses.”<sup>20</sup>

The individual and transgenerationally shared experiences that are under scrutiny in this chapter and that are narrated in interviews or in writings can be regarded as autobiographical narratives. They often escape coherent form. Instead, they are answers to questions in a research interview or presented as part of a narrator’s written life story. The narrators conceive that they depict their life “as it happened” and as they experienced it. Following the narration, the researcher or reader accepts the life story and the experiences interwoven in the story in a special way: as if they are true.<sup>21</sup> Sometimes the interviews and autobiographical texts wind in directions that seem haphazard. These directions are important because the associative mind may uncover the meanings that are given to the experiences. Much like the writers of autobiographical texts, interviewees use speech to recreate fragments or episodes of their lives through memories and by exploring their life as a longitudinal process. They do this in order to respond to the interviewer’s questions, but they may also create a narrative structure, a meaningful plot for their life story, or simply display the relevance of the events and experiences that their memory tunes them in to remembering.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Van Alphen (2004), 120.

<sup>21</sup>Philippe Lejeune, “The Genetic Study of Autobiographical Texts,” *Biography* 14:1 (1991), 1–11, here 2–3.

<sup>22</sup>Folklorist Kirsti Salmi-Niklander has noted that written narratives and also interviews may bring to the surface incidents that seem minor but which in the act of telling become memorized again and are also given meanings in a new manner. Kirsti Salmi-Niklander, “Tapahtuma, kokemus ja kerronta,” in *Muistitietotutkimus: Metodologisia kysymyksiä* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2006), 207.

## FROM REFUGEES TO CONTENT CITIZENS OF THE WELFARE STATE

Summing up their life the aged refugees talked in the interviews about how well everything had turned out. The ones who agreed to my interview call seemed to be at peace with their refugee and migrant past. Most had been born in Finland from refugee parents and had come to Sweden in the late-1940s as teenagers or in their early twenties and spent their entire adult life there. They had secured permanent status as citizens of Sweden and witnessed their offspring integrate more easily than themselves. Unpleasant experiences were overshadowed by general satisfaction in the life they had led.<sup>23</sup>

A dominant element in both the interviews and in the written memories of East Karelian refugees is the ethos of hard work. A typical case is that of a man, who had begun work at age 13 in a sawmill in Finland and was 16 years old when the family fled Finland. Like his father and siblings, he then labored in the textile industry and in forestry work, while eventually finding a position in a pen factory where he subsequently worked for 35 years. He described in detail the product development and production process involved in the creation of ballpoint pens, as well as the highlights of his working years. Once the King of Sweden, Carl XVI Gustav, visited the factory and started asking the interviewee questions about the pen-making process. Afterwards, the man's boss complained about the man talking to the king. The man replied to the boss that "You will have time to talk to him, alright,"<sup>24</sup> thus pointing out that also an ordinary conveyor belt worker and immigrant deserved the opportunity to demonstrate his workmanship to the high-ranking guest.

To my question about the Swedes and their attitudes toward newcomers he replied: "as far as I understood and realized, they were pleased to have a good labor force. And we did not make demands similar to those of the refugees of today. We had no demands. We were just happy to get a job."<sup>25</sup> Another interviewee, a woman who had been a factory worker for decades, likewise compared the postwar refugees to the 2015 asylum

<sup>23</sup> See also Anneli Sarvimäki, Gunilla Kulla, Liisa Palo-Bengtsson, Kristiina Heikkilä & Sirkka-Liisa Ekman, "Sellainen elämästä tuli: Mietteitä siirtolaisuudesta," in *Kahden puolen pohjanlahtea II: Enemmistöjen ja vähemmistöjen kesken*, ed. by Marianne Junila & Charles Westin (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2007a), 539.

<sup>24</sup> Interview of a man, M1 (born 1932) in 2016. Interviewer Seija Jalagin.

<sup>25</sup> Interview M1.

seekers who “demanded everything right away. [...] We were refugees, too, but we were not given anything. We just went to work.”<sup>26</sup> She summarized the reality one had to adapt to: “I am not saying that my life has been bad. It has just been work, I have always been working. Never been unoccupied, often had two jobs at the same time.”<sup>27</sup>

For migrants forced to leave home because of postwar conditions, hard work was their license to social citizenship in Sweden. That is, in general, the dominant discourse of the Finnish immigrants to Sweden of the 1960s and 1970s who ethnologist Hanna Snellman interviewed for her research. A majority of them came from rural villages and small farms where they had learned to work hard, something that their Swedish employers later esteemed.<sup>28</sup> Their reputation as hard-working people earned the Finns acknowledgement and recognition and legitimized their existence in their new home country.<sup>29</sup> Public health researcher Anneli Sarvimäki, and others who also interviewed elderly Finns in Sweden, concluded that their life-course narratives portray “paths from crisis to victory and overcoming hardships.”<sup>30</sup> In a similar manner, the East Karelians in my research appreciate today receiving good healthcare, a steady pension, and a permanent home. They express pride in their workmanship and industriousness in a way that signifies that they owe their good old age to themselves—once the Swedish government gave them the chance to demonstrate their worth.

The interviewed refugees were grateful to the Swedish state for giving them asylum and a fresh start. Several had been in Sweden already during World War II as war children<sup>31</sup> and had seen how much easier life was compared to that in Finland “where many children could not even get milk,” as one woman described the severe wartime conditions.<sup>32</sup> In addition, some families were evacuated to Sweden during the Lapland war

<sup>26</sup> Interview of a woman, W1 (born 1929) in 2016. Interviewer Seija Jalagin.

<sup>27</sup> Interview W1.

<sup>28</sup> Hanna Snellman, “Lappilaiset Göteborgissa,” in Junila & Westin (2007), 115.

<sup>29</sup> Snellman (2007), 116–17.

<sup>30</sup> Anneli Sarvimäki, Gunilla Kulla, Liisa Palo-Bengtsson, Kristiina Heikkilä & Sirkka-Liisa Ekman, “Iäkkäät suomalaissiirtolaiset kertovat,” in Junila & Westin (2007b), 74.

<sup>31</sup> More than 80,000 children were taken to Sweden, Norway, and Denmark during 1939–1945 as war children. Some 15,000 never returned. Marianne Junila, “Wars on the Home Front: Mobilization, economy and everyday experiences,” in Kinnunen & Kivimäki (2012), 216–17.

<sup>32</sup> Interview of a woman, W5 (born 1930). Interviewer Seija Jalagin.

(1944–45) when the Finnish army fought against the German troops, former brothers-in-arms, to drive them out of the country on the basis of the armistice treaty of 1944 between Finland and the Soviet Union. Many refugees were disappointed and dispirited by the hardships in postwar Finland. Citizenship was difficult to obtain, and in some cases not even citizenship seemed to guarantee the right to stay in Finland when the Allied Control Commission demanded repatriation of Soviet citizens. World War II had given refugees an opportunity to show loyalty to Finland. Hundreds of young men from East Karelian families had enlisted in the Finnish army and duly received citizenship.<sup>33</sup> As one woman recalled: “Like many other refugees both my brothers took part in the Winter War and the Continuation War. [...] They wished to defend the freedom and independence of our country. Of the fatherland that we love.”<sup>34</sup> War against the Soviet Union had signified a chance to demonstrate patriotic loyalty to Finland, where most of them had been born and raised, and at the same time to respect their parents’ opposition to the Bolsheviks in 1918–22 and the Soviet rule.

To my question as to why the family had fled Finland, the interviewees’ replies were strikingly similar. “Dad said he will not go to Russia. He knows how things are there,” or “Dad said he will not go to Siberia,” were typical answers. They illustrate the coherence of the transgenerational, intrafamilial narrative that originated in the border-crossing and asylum-seeking process. After they had crossed the border the adults were subjected to police interrogations, but the minors in the family also had to be careful to stick to the refugee narrative so as not to jeopardize refuge in Sweden. To the Swedish State Police the East Karelians typically gave one reason for seeking asylum in Sweden: They were afraid that they could be forced to return to the Soviet Union, which they no longer felt to be their home and also had a political system that they did not approve of.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Antero Leitzinger, *Ulkomaalaispolitiikka Suomessa 1812–1917* (Helsinki: East-West Books, 2008), 316–17; Pekka Nevalainen, *Viskoi kuin luoja kerjäläistä: Venäjän pakolaiset Suomessa 1917–1939* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1999), 90.

<sup>34</sup> FLSA, KRA, Pakolaisuus 418–420, 1995–96.

<sup>35</sup> Swedish National Archives (SNA), National Alien Commission of Sweden (NAC) Collection, Central Files, Personal Files of the (East Karelian) Refugees from Finland to Sweden. This reference concerns the files of 76 refugees from Finland to Sweden in the late-1940s. In addition to the immigration documents, the files also include the naturalization records.

When asked about political orientation they typically claimed to be “non-active” and added as confirmation: “yet, no Communist.”<sup>36</sup> These confirmations illustrate the refugees’ consciousness of the politically sensitive situation in the early Cold War years. The Swedish government monitored immigrants in case any Soviet agents tried to slip through,<sup>37</sup> and the East Karelian, Baltic, and Soviet refugees striving to find refuge in the west were painfully aware of such distrust.

When we talked about the journey and the beginnings in Sweden most interviewees said that word had spread that Sweden would welcome immigrants because there was a labor shortage. The immigrants just needed the right reason to enter: to seek asylum as political refugees. Historian Mikael Byström has pointed out that Sweden changed from a country of anti-immigrant policy in the interwar years to an immigrant-friendly state, partly because the government realized that refugees provided a much-needed labor force in the immediate postwar years. The process is tightly linked to the beginnings of the welfare society that also promoted “ethnic nationalism,” meaning that Sweden preferred to take in people from other Nordic countries.<sup>38</sup>

The records of government immigration authorities reveal that the refugees were subjected to regular and meticulous control. Their first experiences in the new nation-state were brought about by the government immigration apparatus. The refugees had to apply for an alien passport that was typically valid for one year. At the same time, the newcomer was given a work and residence permit for five months, which entitled him/her to settle in a restricted area. For the first couple of years, the permit periods were from five to seven months, and only when the person had demonstrated orderliness (the Swedish word is *skötsambet*) did he/she get a one-year (later a two-year) permit.<sup>39</sup> Extension of permits required statements from both the employer and the landlord, and sometimes also from a social worker who visited the applicant’s home to observe its

<sup>36</sup>SNA, NAC Collection, Personal files of the (East Karelian) refugees from Finland to Sweden.

<sup>37</sup>Cecilia Notini Burch, *A Cold War Pursuit: Soviet Refugees in Sweden, 1945–54* (Stockholm: Santérus Academic Press, 2014), 322–4.

<sup>38</sup>Mikael Byström, *Utmaningen: Den svenska välfärdstatens mote med flyktingar i andra världskrigets tid* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012), 12–13.

<sup>39</sup>If the immigrant committed a crime or became mentally ill, he/she could be immediately deported. The same applied if the person was unable to support himself and his family and would thus become a government burden. See also Notini Burch (2014), 109–10.



tidiness, the relationship between the spouses, and so on. Eventually, the immigrant applied for citizenship, which most East Karelian refugees were only granted on average after more than ten years in the country.<sup>40</sup> This kind of immigrant policy no doubt added to the refugee families' attempts to secure their position in the Swedish society through hard work and self-maintenance.

Swedish employment services worked together with immigration authorities to steer the refugees to specific regions and jobs, such as forestry (males) and domestic service (females), which were both poorly paid and unappealing to the Swedes. Word travelled quickly and most refugees sought employment in the industrial sector, particularly textile factories and heavy industry. Similar to the forest industry in Finland, the industrial centers in Sweden soon hosted refugee communities. In Sweden, they consisted of Ingrians, East Karelians, and Balts, among others. A labor shortage worked to the benefit of the workers who could move from one company to another in search of better wages.<sup>41</sup> Beginning one's new life in the industrial sector was often a welcome option because companies provided housing, and, in any case, most refugees were fairly uneducated and accustomed to manual labor. Some, however, preferred forestry work and life in a small village because it reminded them of their home in rural East Karelia. "Already in the quarantine camp [after crossing the border] Dad said that we would like to go to a place with forests. [...] And I like the forests, like my Dad,"<sup>42</sup> one woman recollected of her family's beginnings in Sweden. She was still living in the same town and said that everything was so nice in the new place.

What the oral and written narratives do not recount are the regular monitoring practices by the government authorities. There may be different reasons for this. The informants are permanently settled in Sweden, they have long since passed the test of becoming a beneficial and orderly immigrant, and they are *de jure* citizens. Their active years also coincided with the building of the welfare society in Sweden, a process they participated in and therefore feel entitled to the rewards of. Or, perhaps they no longer reflect on the techniques of monitoring because they took it for granted after similar experiences in interwar Finland where

<sup>40</sup>SNA, NAC Collection, Personal files of the (East Karelian) refugees from Finland to Sweden.

<sup>41</sup>Interview of a woman, W3 (born in 1932); Interview M1.

<sup>42</sup>Interview of a woman, W4 (born in 1930) in 2016. Interviewer Seija Jalagin.

foreigners also had to regularly apply for residence permits. The immigrant policies and practices exposed the refugees to what historian Nick Baron calls the “technique of ‘subjectification’” in his study on the repatriation system of Soviet citizens after World War II. The state transforms “the individual into a subject of power,” through filtration, border control, internment camps, and interrogations, in order to not only exclude unwanted subjects but also to construct itself after transformative times such as war. Simultaneously, the practical operations, the government’s aims, mentalities, and rationalities, are conveyed discursively.<sup>43</sup> The personal files in the National Alien Commission of Sweden on the East Karelian refugees testify to how individuals learned to read these mentalities and rationalities and act accordingly, beginning with their very first encounter with government authorities. When applying for the work and residence permits, they knew how to answer the questions of the state police in ways that did not endanger them as potential subjects of power in the society of which they wished to become members. The refugees’ skillful following of the rationalities also indicate that they invested everything they had in the new beginning. Their main resource was an able and healthy body for manual labor.

For the government in interwar Finland and postwar Sweden industriousness was a sufficient guarantee of the immigrant’s capability to support him/herself, particularly if the state regarded the refugee as politically suitable. Post-World War I Finland, eager to demonstrate that it was a civilized nation despite having achieved sovereignty only in 1917, considered everyone fleeing revolutionary Russia a refugee.<sup>44</sup> Anti-Bolshevik East Karelians and Ingrians were, in particular, labeled “kinsfolk,” as they spoke Finnic languages. In postwar Sweden, political refugees, particularly from the neighboring countries, were a welcome supplement to the labor force. Asylum did not mean gratuitous aid, however. The Nordic and other western European countries followed the principle that everyone should provide for him/herself. Whether for citizens or aliens, government-funded aid was given only to those unable to work, such as orphaned children, the sick, and the old. Refugees in interwar Finland had to find

<sup>43</sup>Nick Baron, “Remaking Soviet Society: the Filtration of Returnees from Nazi Germany, 1944–49,” in *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet–East European Borderlands, 1945–50*, ed. by Peter Gatrell & Nick Baron (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 100–1.

<sup>44</sup>In addition to former Russian citizens this also included Finnish citizens and third-country citizens who used Finland as a transit country. Leitzinger (2008), 171–3.

employment,<sup>45</sup> and the same policy was applied in postwar Sweden.<sup>46</sup> In practice, the refugees who in Russian Karelia had been independent farmers became immigrant laborers in forestry, agriculture, and industry in Finland and Sweden.<sup>47</sup>

### LOCALIZED ENCOUNTERS, FLEXIBLE IDENTIFICATIONS

While the government recognized refugees as “kinsfolk” (Finland) or as a much needed labor force (Sweden) it was in encounters with the local population, particularly with working-class people, where problems like prejudice and exploitation surfaced. In Finland, trade unions regarded the refugees as unwelcome competitors and demanded that employers privilege Finnish workers.<sup>48</sup> Several interviews and written family narratives tell of Finns calling the East Karelians “Russky,” in Finnish *ryssä*, an insulting form of the word “Russian.” It reflects the historical antipathy toward Russian dominance and violence in Finland going back at least to the early eighteenth century.<sup>49</sup>

Being called names created such a vivid memory that it followed the refugees to Sweden. In one interview a woman recounted how she had first come to Sweden as a 13-year-old war child. A few years after returning home to Kemi (in northern Finland) her whole family escaped to Sweden again, where her wartime foster family helped them to acquire jobs and housing and start a new life. Her father later said that they should have come to Sweden back in the 1920s instead of staying in Finland. The woman phrased her father’s and her own experiences as follows: “One never heard the word ‘Russky’ here, or the slandering. The other children [in Kemi] when they started a fight, they would call us names, they said that we were ‘Russky brats’.”<sup>50</sup>

In a detailed, unpublished autobiography from the 1990s, a man who fled to Sweden in 1948 with his family writes about “how there’s this general idea that when we came here the Swedes helped us, and it is somewhat true, but they knew how to make us pay for their ‘help’.” He

<sup>45</sup> Nevalainen (1999), 110–15.

<sup>46</sup> Byström (2012), 31–4.

<sup>47</sup> Nevalainen (1999), 140.

<sup>48</sup> Nevalainen (1999), 137, 281.

<sup>49</sup> Sinikka Wunsch, “Lupa vihata: propaganda ja viholliskuvat mielipiteen muokkaajina konfliktitilanteissa,” *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 101:2 (2003), 263–77.

<sup>50</sup> Interview of a woman, W2 (born 1931) in 2016. Interviewer Seija Jalagin.

underlines the fact that he does not intend to blame all Swedes but rather to draw attention to the fact that there were some who conned the immigrants and made them pay extra for furniture and other equipment. He then continues to explain how the difficulties in the early years helped to develop self-esteem and a critical eye regarding injustice:

*But when we learned the language, they could no longer exploit us like that; instead, we started to demand our place in society. And, in time, at least we who came here back in 1945–49 earned that place and for many years now we have been Swedish citizens and know our rights, like the Swedes, and even better than them sometimes, because when I talk with them and tell them about a letter I've written to a newspaper about contemporary society and its injustices, my friends ask how I dare to write. We who came here half-naked, we dare.<sup>51</sup>*

In another refugee family in Sweden the father told his children to say that they were Finns, not Russians, should someone ask where they came from. He himself was proud of his Karelian origins in Russia and spoke Russian with his East Karelian friends but wished to spare his family any unwanted attention. When I interviewed his daughter, she told me that she had only much later realized that the family had come from Russian Karelia. The Finnishness her father emphasized stood firm in her as she reminisced with regard to singing at school about “a blue dress and a white ribbon,” symbolizing the colors of the Finnish flag. Later, someone in Sweden had asked her how she could possess a Finnish passport even if she was Russian.<sup>52</sup>

As the archival records have demonstrated, for the government's immigration policy and practices national categorizations were the basic criterion for the right to asylum. In everyday life, as the oral histories also indicate, national categorizations differentiated immigrants from the local population and marked them as non-Finnish in Finland and non-Swedish in Sweden. At the same time the nation-states forced national categories on the immigrants who tried to integrate into the host society while preserving what was left of their own cultural origins. Often this involved

<sup>51</sup> Archives of The Karelian Culture Society (*Karjalan Sivistyseura*), Helsinki, Autobiographical manuscript by Veikko Jyrinoja, Muistelmaa polun varrelta Suomessa – Vienassa – Ruotsissa [1992–93].

<sup>52</sup> Interview W4.

the spoken language, original family names,<sup>53</sup> the Orthodox religion, traditional food, songs, and other cultural forms that were nurtured at home or in gatherings with fellow East Karelians.<sup>54</sup>

One might assume that an ability to speak the local language could ease the immigrant's integration into the host society. In that case the East Karelian refugees who spoke Karelian as their first language should have found it easy to adapt to the Finland of the 1920s–1940s. This was not the case, however, as their painful memories of discrimination imply. In trying to earn a living, the refugee men with families were especially inclined to grab any opportunity. A son of a refugee family later recalled how they had moved around for work in the 1920s. After two years in a refugee center in Kymnlinna, in Southeastern Finland, the family went to Central Finland, but when the sawmill burnt down, they were forced to “return to Kymnlinna as there was no work. And in [19]28 we left for Haapakoski [...] because our lot had to go where we were told, and if we didn't it could mean deportation. There was a strike but we had to become strikebreakers; the Karelian refugees were in no position to protest.”<sup>55</sup> In the industrial centers in Finland and Sweden the refugees gradually formed close communities, which helped sustain their cultural traditions and provided safety nets during times of trouble.

In Finland, the refugee communities could be as large as 1000 in the industrial centers such as Kemi in northern Finland, whereas in Sweden the refugees, maybe no more than 1000 altogether, were scattered around the country, which made networking rather challenging.<sup>56</sup> The East

<sup>53</sup> In Finland, in particular, a majority of the East Karelian refugees changed their family names to Finnish names, as the original names often contained a Russian ending with -eff or -off. The patronyms that were used in Russia were completely dropped off in official documents. Nevalainen (1999), 297–300.

<sup>54</sup> Nevalainen (1999), 222–3, 259–66; *Ruotsin suomalainen ortodoksinen seurakunta 1958–1968 [Finnish Orthodox Congregation in Sweden 1958–1968]*, ed. by Martin Juhkam (Ruotsin Suomalainen Ortodoksinen Seurakunta, 1968), see particularly the photographs that illustrate many of the cultural events of the East Karelians in Sweden. Also, *Kalevan Kansa Kerho*, (the association of East Karelians in Sweden [1948–98]) archives record the gatherings of the refugee community, National Archives of Finland (NAF), Karjalan Sivistysseura (KSS) Collection, Kalevan Kansa Kerho (KKK), Folder 147, Protocols 1948–98 and annual reports, 1948–95.

<sup>55</sup> FLSA, KRA, Viena-Aunus 525–533, 1993–94. This refugee family finally settled in the Martinniemi sawmill community in northern Finland in 1929.

<sup>56</sup> NAF, KSS Collection, KKK, Folder 147. Also Martin Juhkam, “Seurakunnan toiminta 1958–1968,” in *Ruotsin suomalainen ortodoksinen seurakunta 1958–1968 [Finnish Orthodox*

Karelians in Sweden could be called a non-community, which nonetheless tried to create its own contact points. The language issue was one catalyst essential to organizing the community. With some experience of exploitation and the need to interact with the authorities (though interpreters were provided for police interrogations and on other occasions) the refugees soon understood the significance of language skills. The Swedish state provided no language courses at this period, as it later did for the large immigrant masses from the 1960s onwards.<sup>57</sup> In the industrial city of Borås, in southern Sweden, the East Karelians established an association in 1948 called “Kalevan Kansa -kerho,” with the organization of language classes as its first task. A male refugee who knew some Swedish acted as the teacher. Later, the association organized get-togethers and contributed to the founding of the Finnish Orthodox Congregation in Sweden in 1958—the Orthodox religion being one of the few cultural traditions from East Karelia that the refugees could carry with them and sustain in their new host societies.<sup>58</sup> After the association was disbanded in 1998, some of the older members still felt the need to keep up the community spirit. Some women who had given up their Karelian maiden names upon marriage began to use these names again, along with, or instead of, their married name. They considered that it was easier to recognize each other and “remain in contact among the Karelians and the Finns,”<sup>59</sup> as one woman explained in her interview.

Language skills could nevertheless still remain modest, as they were not really essential in factories and forestry. Besides, the refugees socialized mostly with other refugees. Most of them also married East Karelians, Finns, or other foreigners.<sup>60</sup> As one man put it: “Wherever we lived, every apartment housed Finnish-speaking people. There were not so many Swedes in the barracks, particularly in the early years. They were all

*Congregation in Sweden 1958–1968*], ed. by Martin Juhkam (Ruotsin Suomalainen Ortodoksinen Seurakunta, 1968), 59–94.

<sup>57</sup> Jouni Korkiasaari, “Suomalaiset Ruotsissa 1940-luvulta 2000-luvulle,” in *Suomalaiset Ruotsissa*, Jouni Korkiasaari & Kari Tarkiainen (Turku: Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, 2000), 190.

<sup>58</sup> *Ruotsin suomalainen ortodoksinen seurakunta 1958–1968 [Finnish Orthodox Congregation in Sweden 1958–1968]*, ed. by Martin Juhkam (Ruotsin Suomalainen Ortodoksinen Seurakunta, 1968). In Finland, the refugee priests from East Karelia took care of the refugees’ spiritual needs and ecclesiastical practices as part of the Karelian Refugee Parish under the Orthodox Church of Finland. Nevalainen (1999), 181–8.

<sup>59</sup> Interview W4.

<sup>60</sup> SNA, NAC Collection, Personal files of the (East Karelian) refugees from Finland to Sweden.

Estonians, Ingrians or Karelians.”<sup>61</sup> As a 16-year-old teen at the time of immigrating to Sweden, he had refused to learn Swedish at the beginning. It was his way of protesting against the strange environment and the foreign society. He only began to feel more at home after he joined a football team of Ingrian Finns. Later, he learned to speak Swedish fluently but regretted never having learned to write it properly.<sup>62</sup> Housewives in particular had few opportunities to learn Swedish, as their everyday surroundings were limited to the home. Most families spoke Karelian at home, but sometimes the parents spoke Russian if they did not want the children to know what they were talking about.<sup>63</sup>

The interviews and autobiographical writings analyzed in this chapter contain several narratives regarding unfair treatment or other painful experiences that act as *points of memory*, a term coined by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer and employed by folklorist Ulla Savolainen in her research on Finnish Karelian narratives of forced migration. Testimonial objects or materials that revive the past in the present act as points of memory because they change into symbolic anchors between the present and the past in the process of remembering.<sup>64</sup> Drawing on Pierre Nora’s conceptualization, Savolainen refers to the embodied memories, material evidence, sources, places, and historical details as *sites of memory*.<sup>65</sup> Anthropologist Kristiina Korjonen-Kuusipuro and social scientist Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto, who also studied post-World War II displacement among Finnish Karelians, say that oral histories include a strong physical, bodied, and place-oriented dimension.<sup>66</sup> The rather canonized nostalgia about the lost home places in former Finnish Karelia, and numerous journeys there by former inhabitants since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, center heavily on places and embodied memories.<sup>67</sup> Most Finnish Karelians who were forced to leave their homes at the end of the war in 1944 still today

<sup>61</sup> Interview M1.

<sup>62</sup> Interview M1.

<sup>63</sup> Interview W2.

<sup>64</sup> Ulla Savolainen, “Points and poetics of memory: (Retrospective) justice in oral history interviews of former internees,” *Memory Studies* (2018), 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698018806946>, accessed 3 September 2020.

<sup>65</sup> Ulla Savolainen, *Muisteltu ja kirjoitettu evakkomatka: Tutkimus evakkolapsuuden muistelukerronnan poetiikasta* (Joensuu: Suomen Kansantietouden Tutkijain Seura, 2015), 72–3.

<sup>66</sup> Kristiina Korjonen-Kuusipuro & Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen, “Muistelun monet muodot – kertomus, kehollisuus ja hiljaisuus paikan tietämisen tapoina,” *Elore* 24:1 (2017), 5.

<sup>67</sup> Outi Fingerroos & Ulla Savolainen, “Luovutetun Karjalan yllirajainen muisti,” in *Karjalani, Karjalani, maani ja maailmani: Kirjoituksia Karjalan menetyksestä ja muista-*

maintain that they were evacuees, not refugees—the Finnish word *evakko* actually means both a person and the circumstances of being evacuated—which underlines the judicial difference between the internally displaced person and a refugee. While the evacuee is ordered by his/her own government to leave home, the refugee makes the decision for him/herself. Nonetheless, both concepts draw attention to the importance of nationality and citizenship—and to the role of the nation-state in the lives of the displaced people.

Contrary to the Finnish Karelians' narratives of displacement, the East Karelians' memories under scrutiny here are rather sporadic and only loosely attached to specific places. There is no one place they consider their own. Memories of the original home villages in East Karelia were buried along with the passing of the first generation of refugees, and there were not very many opportunities to visit Soviet Karelia or keep contact with relatives there. Few of the displaced Karelians had any items or photographs as points of memory. The only family item from East Karelia prior to 1922 that I came across during the interviews was a piece of cloth that one woman had hanging on her kitchen wall. Such decorated cloths were used in homes as hand towels (Fig. 11.1).

Most interviewees had sensed that their parents missed their home and relatives in Karelia but that they had resigned themselves to their fate or considered it too painful to talk about those memories. One informant recounted how his father used to write letters “with his beautiful handwriting” and send photos and packages to his first wife who had remained with their son in Soviet Karelia. Eventually the relatives asked him to stop writing as the letters had regularly been opened and any contact with family members in the west might cause problems for them. The same man kept up hope of returning to East Karelia or at least being buried there. He only applied for Swedish citizenship late in life. Sweden was his second choice for a burial place.<sup>68</sup> In another family the father had fled to Finland in 1922 with his second wife, leaving his two young daughters behind with their grandparents. In 1948 the man and his family escaped from Finland to Sweden. His younger daughter, from the second marriage, told me that her father never saw his two eldest daughters again but she herself had had a chance to meet them, her half-sisters, and other

*misesta, evakoiden asuttamisesta ja selviytymisestä*, ed. by Pirkko Kanervo, Terhi Kivistö & Olli Kleemola (Turku: Siirtolaisuusinstituutti, 2012), 149–66.

<sup>68</sup> Interview W4.





**Fig. 11.1** The decorated cloth hanging on the wall is a rare keepsake of home in East Karelia. The interviewee's mother brought it with her when she fled to Finland in 1922. (Photo: Seija Jalagin, 2016)

relatives in Soviet Karelia in the 1960s.<sup>69</sup> Hers was a rare case though. The second-generation East Karelian refugees in Sweden were too detached from the family history in Russian Karelia to get interested, particularly when they themselves had had no firsthand experience of it.

<sup>69</sup> Interview W2.

While Russian Karelia, Finland, and Sweden, as the three home countries, come up in the refugee narratives as a part of family history within a succession of political turbulences, and in relation and comparison to each other, they are given different meanings. The original family home in East Karelia is recalled as a place and mode of life. The home village which the family members left behind and the Karelian culture where independent farmers led a modest life before the Russian revolution are today only objects of longing for a life lost or a trace of family history. Since East Karelia was transformed into a completely different kind of society during Soviet rule, it became a place of no return. Throughout Soviet Karelia in the 1960s, the government deemed small villages to be “lacking perspective” and forced people to move away from them. Nostalgia also eroded because news and letters from relatives still living in East Karelia revealed how profound had been the change. In some narratives the writers express how happy they are to live in Finland or in Sweden in comparison to the hardships of their relatives in Soviet and post-Soviet Karelia.<sup>70</sup>

The life stories and memories of East Karelian refugees are characterized by multisitedness and national ambiguity. One interviewee put it this way: “Sweden is my home country, but I am not really a Swede.”<sup>71</sup> Home and home country could refer to emotional attachment,<sup>72</sup> but in the case of the East Karelian refugees this does not seem to be the case. They consider Sweden their home country—and value it for its stability and safety—but it seems that they mainly consider it a home for practical reasons. Home country and nation also seem to have no link to each other in their narratives. To consider Sweden (or Finland) as a nation of one’s own would embody a sense of national belonging, something that hard work and orderly conduct in the eyes of the government do not necessarily bring about, even if they legitimate one’s existence in the nation-state.

National belonging seems to involve a feeling that one is part of a community, even if it is an imagined community, following Benedict Anderson’s

<sup>70</sup> “Kun olen tavannut Neuvostoliittoon jääneiden sukulaisten jälkeläisiä ja kuullut heidän kertomuksiaan siellä tapahtuneista elämänvaiheista niin sanon vain, että olen onnellinen, kun olen saanut elää täällä Suomessa.” FLSA, KRA, Pakolaisuus 451–459, 1995–96. “Usein ovat mielessä lapsuuden kulta-ajat, varsinkin nyt, kun on aikaa ajatella ja hyvähän minun elämä on ollut, kun vertaan sukulaisteni elämään siellä rajan takana, tuumii nyt 93-vuotias pirteä vanha emäntä [Pudasjärven Livolla].” See also FLSA, KRA, Uusikarjalaisuus, 2019.

<sup>71</sup> Interview W4.

<sup>72</sup> See, e.g., Snellman (2007), 124–5.

famous idea of nation.<sup>73</sup> A female interviewee expressed her national identification in emotional language: “I am a Finn to the bottom of my heart – I will never become Swedish.”<sup>74</sup> As is characteristic of the oral histories analyzed here, she thus set Finnishness and Swedishness in comparison, in this case in opposition, to each other in a way that makes one ask why forced migrants with multiple national homes would need to nourish national feelings at all. A male interviewee talked about how he supports the Finnish national team in international sports events, which is also one of the ritualistic acts of banal nationalism. He continued humorously and a bit puzzled that even his grandsons, who do not even speak Finnish, support the Finnish national team. He himself recalled telling some Swedes that he is always on the winning side: “When Russia wins, I win. When Sweden wins, I win. When Finland wins, I win. Who do you win with?”<sup>75</sup> These three countries in his family history are layers of identification for him, but his triple victory simultaneously illustrates the ambivalence and flexibility of the immigrant experience in relation to nationalism.

The vast immigration of more than 400,000 Finns to Sweden in the 1960s and the 1970s made this group, the Finnish-Swedes, the biggest foreign minority in Sweden. This immigration amalgamated all Finnish-speaking groups together, regardless of their different ethnic categories in Finland. For the East Karelian and Ingrian asylum seekers of the 1940s, the hundreds of thousands of Finns in Sweden provided a large community to associate with, which strengthened their Finnish identity and ethnicity. Because they came from Finland or via Finland and spoke Finnish or Karelian, in Sweden they were regarded simply as Finns. At that point, it no longer made any difference as to whether one was of Russian Karelian or Finnish Karelian origin (or Ingrian). All those who spoke Finnish and lived in Sweden as immigrants could identify with each other. The Swedes no doubt regarded them simply as Finns, as “normal aliens” who had the right to move to Sweden as migrant workers on the basis of the 1954 convention, according to which citizens of the Nordic countries became

<sup>73</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

<sup>74</sup> Interview W1. Two thirds of the ca. 1000 Finns in Sweden who participated in a study by Sarvimäki et al. said that they felt completely Finnish and considered Finnishness as a special resource. Sarvimäki et al. (2007b), 524.

<sup>75</sup> Interview M1.

free to immigrate to other Nordic countries with no passport or residence and work permits required.<sup>76</sup>

While the elderly East Karelians in Sweden expressed national belonging to Finnishness, it is in reality the identification as a Finn among hundreds of thousands of people of Finnish origin in Sweden that opened to them a specific national space to identify with. This national space is of an emotional nature, with expressions of banal nationalism, as in sports, but which also contains the emotional capacity of the Finnish language as their first language, even though their parents may have spoken Karelian at home.

We should also consider whether the refugees studied here are nationally flexible or even indifferent. Historian Tara Zahra suggests that we conceptualize migrants and the displaced by using the term “national indifference rather than such terms as *assimilation*, *acculturation*, or *hybridity* that assume preexisting national loyalties and coherent group identities.”<sup>77</sup> National indifference has been specifically used to describe the reaction of ordinary East Europeans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the states imposing national categories on them. Fundamentally then, as Zahra says, national indifference is a negative category. When studied in localized contexts it proves useful for analyzing refugee experiences. Zahra herself has called on historians to “examine how experiences of migration and displacement served to accentuate or eradicate national indifference.”<sup>78</sup>

The East Karelian refugees (or other refugees from Finland to Sweden) were not forced by governments to choose between national or ethnic categories. Yet, the nation-state control systems or the local people in both Finland and Sweden made them conscious of these categories and, depending on place and moment, either accentuated or eradicated national indifference and paved the way to national flexibility. In Finland, the refugees resisted being labeled as Russians by the local people. In Sweden, they claimed political asylum by identifying—for practical reasons—as refugees of Russian origin, albeit not of Soviet Russian origin. In time, they identified again as Finns in Sweden, a rather loose category based on

<sup>76</sup> Mikael Byström & Pär Frohnert, “Introduction I,” in *Reaching a State of Hope: Refugees, Immigrants and the Swedish Welfare State, 1930–2000*, ed. by Mikael Byström & Pär Frohnert (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2013), 20; Leitzinger (2008), 434.

<sup>77</sup> Tara Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69:1 (2010), 116.

<sup>78</sup> Zahra (2010), 115–16.

this immigrant group's spoken language. These situational and flexible identifications are similar to the instrumental nationalism that Brendan Karch employs to depict the actions of the Upper Silesians who under constrain by German and Polish national politics in the 1930s and 1940s strove to balance between value-driven nationalism and other values and social commitments.<sup>79</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has analyzed the narrated memories of East Karelian refugees in Finland and in Sweden by paying special attention to their experience of national belonging. There are some transgenerational strands in the narratives, although the material centers on the second generation of refugee family members who were born in Finland to one or two parents of Russian Karelian origin. If we had the chance to interview the first generation,<sup>80</sup> the configurations of national belonging might be somewhat different. Safe to say, however, is that becoming a refugee (twice with the East Karelians in this study) prescribes certain frames that guide the individual's possibilities and agency, which then shape their shared experiences of displacement. These frames are mainly produced by the host governments' institutional control and maneuvers and become visible mainly when studied from the archival sources of these institutions.

From the very beginning, the refugees were engaged in dealing with government authorities. They received aid such as shelter, clothes, food, healthcare, educational support, and employment services in different ways. They had to regularly apply for extensions to their work and residence permits. In return, the state expected the aliens to show obedience, gratitude, and orderliness, and, most important of all, the will

<sup>79</sup> Brendan Karch, "Instrumental nationalism in Upper Silesia," in *National indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, ed. by Maarten van Genderachter & Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019), 180–203.

<sup>80</sup> There are practically no firsthand recollections from those who fled from East Karelia to Finland after the revolution. The Finnish ethnologists and other researchers who interviewed them during the 1920s–1950s were interested in their cultural traditions and lifestyle in Russian Karelia. See, e.g., Pertti Virtaranta, *Vienan kansa muistelee: 128 valokuvaa ja piirrosta* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1958). Virtaranta is the leading name among researchers on the East Karelians in the Soviet Union, Finland, and Sweden but his work also focuses on peasant life in East Karelia.

to provide for oneself. The lack of juridical citizenship, in other words political rights and the right to expect protection from the government, reinforced the role of the nation-state in refugee life. The refugees demonstrated agency in *enacting citizenship* that includes “legal rights, such as residency and citizenship [...] as well as everyday experiences of belonging.”<sup>81</sup>

That these institutional frames are reflected upon quite superficially in personal narratives raises a question about the relationship between experience and memory. It seems that institutional control has not caused emotionally laden memories once its outcome has become positive. The former refugees have proven their worth, earned citizenship, and become entitled to the benefits of the welfare state through their own earnings. On the other hand, their memories contain examples of painful or negative encounters at the local level. These involved prejudice and othering as well as exploitation, which inhibited the development of a sense of national belonging. Hence, while in principle the nation-state appears as the cherished home country, in practice national belonging becomes a rather complex issue for the minority of a minority. The East Karelian refugees’ relationship to the nation-state resembles *everyday ethnicity*, a term used by Gábor Egry to describe ordinary people’s reactions to nationalist politics in interwar Romania. According to Egry, everyday ethnicity helps to avoid the negative connotations of national indifference<sup>82</sup> and leaves room for ordinary people’s agency. As everyday ethnicity is profoundly relational it becomes visible in interactions, in people’s reactions to ethnicity, and in how they define their relation to it.<sup>83</sup>

For the refugees studied here, national belonging—toward Finland—was developed only over time, and in Sweden because the refugees

<sup>81</sup> Kati Turtiainen, Johanna Hiitola, Sabine Gruber & Marja Tiilikainen, “Introduction,” in *Family Life in Transition: Borders, Transnational Mobility, and Welfare Society in Nordic Countries*, ed. by Johanna Hiitola, Kati Turtiainen, Sabine Gruber & Marja Tiilikainen (London: Routledge, 2020), 4.

<sup>82</sup> For a discussion of this critique, see Maarten Van Ginderachter & Jon Fox, “Introduction: National indifference and the history of nationalism in modern Europe,” in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, ed. by Maarten van Ginderachter & Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019), 4–7.

<sup>83</sup> Gábor Egry, “Beyond politics: National indifference as everyday ethnicity,” in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, ed. by Maarten van Ginderachter & Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019), 146–8, 157.

identified with other Finnish-speaking minorities there. National belonging then manifests itself as a minority identity, being Finnish in Sweden, in contrast to having been labeled “Russky,” *Russian*, in interwar Finland. These findings suggest that immigrants, like the East Karelian refugees who were displaced twice, are apt to keep national options open, and that they may feel about the nation one way but act in another way for pragmatic reasons.

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PART IV

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Nation Embodied and Materialized





## CHAPTER 12

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# Nocturnal Nation: Violence and the Nation in Dreams during and after World War II

*Ville Kivimäki*

### INTRODUCTION

*My knowledge of everyday life has the quality of an instrument that cuts a path through a forest and, as it does so, projects a narrow cone of light on what lies just ahead and immediately around; on all sides of the path there continues to be darkness. This image pertains even more, of course, to the multiple realities in which everyday life is continually transcended. This latter statement can be paraphrased, poetically if not exhaustively, by saying that the reality of everyday life is overcast by the penumbras of our dreams.<sup>1</sup>*

With this elegant phrasing, sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) defined their idea of our everyday life and the socially constructed knowledge of how this life is made sensible. In studying past

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<sup>1</sup>Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 45.

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V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_12)

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experiences, historians have usually been interested in that “narrow cone of light,” which represents the various ways of observing and making sense of the world. It is in the nature of historical scholarship—and the sources we use as our instruments of knowledge—to focus on the historically changing meanings and the processes of understanding when in a wide-awake state of everyday life; it has been less inviting to stumble into the darkness of the surrounding forest. The most serious attempt to study that darkness has been made in the area of psychohistory, which has used a Freudian theory framework to interpret the unconscious through concepts like wish-fulfillment, projection, fantasy, and transference.<sup>2</sup> The results have sometimes been original and innovative, but also highly controversial. Sigmund Freud seems to have had such a strong and continuous influence on the analysis of dreams that this may have warned historians—wary of the pitfalls of psychohistory—away from entering the field.

Consequently, in relation to the historical study of dreams, this chapter has two aims. First, I will show that “the penumbra of our dreams” is a worthy subject to consider, in its own right, but also in order to understand many aspects of the wide-awake experiences and behavior of people who have experienced massive violence. Instead of clearly separating day from night, the chapter tries to move in the territory of dawns and dusks, where dreams and awake states blur into each other. Second, in so doing, I think it is useful to point out that dreams can also be studied without the burden of Freudian theory. As I will demonstrate, there are other ways of looking at dreams than as a search for unconscious wishes and latent symbolism, as interesting as those interpretations may be.

Furthermore, the third aim of the chapter is not limited to dreams as such but is linked to the broader theme of the book, the study of nations as lived-through experiences. I am studying the dreams related to the experiences of World War II undergone by the Finnish “war generation,” that is, those Finns who experienced the war in their early adulthood or late adolescence.<sup>3</sup> Although the major part of my research material focuses on soldiers and war veterans, I am also relating these experiences to those

<sup>2</sup> Psychohistory has nowadays become a marginal field, rarely discussed inside the historical scholarship. For an early but still relevant summary on the problems and opportunities of applying psychoanalytical theories in history, see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, “Zum Verhältnis von Geschichtswissenschaft und Psychoanalyse,” in *Geschichte und Psychoanalyse*, ed. by Hans-Ulrich Wehler (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1974), 7–26.

<sup>3</sup> For general overviews on Finland in World War II in English, see Olli Vehviläinen, *Finland in the Second World War: Between Germany and Russia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002);

of civilians. I am interested in the different contents of the dreams and in how the dreams changed. Most importantly, I see dreams as a way of studying the intertwined experiences of the nation and violence within the context of war and its aftermath.<sup>4</sup> How did the nationally framed war experience manifest itself in dreams? What are the “national” meanings in war dreams and what does this tell us about the experience of a nation at war? Is it possible to recognize a specific dream culture shaped and created by war?

Although the questions above concern large issues of war, nation, and culture, I am approaching them from the perspective of individual soldiers and civilians and their war-related dream experiences. In nationalism studies, social anthropologist Anthony P. Cohen has used the concept of personal nationalism to analyze how modern-day Scottish people use the nation to express themselves and to formulate their personal identity.<sup>5</sup> I have studied a similar kind of phenomenon regarding Finnish soldiers’ patriotic frontline poetry during World War II where the soldiers could be considered “artisans of nationalism” when they used the nation to give meaning to their war experiences.<sup>6</sup> In regard to the focus on the personal, one can find parallels in the works above to this chapter; yet the direction of influence is mostly different. Instead of seeing the chapter’s dreaming subjects as active agents of nationalism, I will rather show how the nation invaded their nightlife by violent force and without invitation.

Tiina Kinnunen & Ville Kivimäki, eds, *Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>4</sup>For recent reconceptualizations of war and the nation in terms of violence, see especially Louise Edwards, Nigel Penn & Jay Winter, eds, *The Cambridge World History of Violence*, Vol. IV: *1800 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); also Ville Kivimäki, “Violence and Trauma: Experiencing the Two World Wars,” in *The Routledge Companion to Cultural History in the Western World*, ed. by Alessandro Arcangeli, Jörg Rogge & Hannu Salmi (London: Routledge, 2020a).

<sup>5</sup>Anthony P. Cohen, “Personal Nationalism: A Scottish View of Some Rites, Rights, and Wrongs,” *American Ethnologist* 23:4 (1996), 802–15; for further development of the concept, see Raúl Moreno-Almendral, “Reconstructing the history of nationalist cognition and everyday nationhood from personal accounts,” *Nations and Nationalism* 24:3 (2018), 648–68.

<sup>6</sup>Ville Kivimäki, “Feeling the Fatherland: Finnish Soldiers’ Lyrical Attachments to the Nation during the Second World War,” in *Emotions and Everyday Nationalism in Modern European History*, ed. by Maarten Van Ginderachter, Andreas Stynen & Xosé M. Núñez Seixas (London: Routledge, 2020b).

## HISTORY OF DREAMS AND DREAM SOURCES

My approach to historicizing dreams has been influenced by the work of three scholars. Circumventing the Freudian paradigm, historian Peter Burke has called for a cultural history of dreams, which takes as its starting point that “in a given culture people tend to dream particular kind of dreams.” The culture shapes dreams in at least two ways: the dream symbols have particular cultural meanings and there are typical stresses, fears, and conflicts that a person living in a given culture or society has to face and which then influence the dream world.<sup>7</sup> We can thus speak of historically changing dream cultures, where the recurrent anxieties are processed through culturally specific symbols and meanings at night.

Discussing an extraordinary collection of dreams gathered by journalist Charlotte Beradt in the Third Reich during 1933–1939, historian Reinhart Koselleck has offered the important notion that these dreams are not only testimonies of terror, but a crucial part of that terror themselves. Hitler’s totalitarian regime occupied the private nightlife of its subjects, haunting the dreams with grotesque real-life events as well as phantasms of persecution.<sup>8</sup> From this we can conclude that there are not only specific dream cultures, but that the dreams prominent in a given historical situation may actually have a considerable influence on people’s everyday life and the culture at large. This is especially the case when a large segment or the entire population has gone through a period of war, political terror, or some other collective catastrophe.

Literary scholar Irina Paperno has studied similar kinds of dreams to those collected by Beradt: Soviet dreams during the Stalinist era. According to Paperno, dreams provide a way of looking at a person’s existential situation and emotional concerns: what one knows and feels without being fully aware of it. Dreams commonly focus on fears and expectations toward one’s future, and thus they provide material well-suited for studying the experience of political terror, which forces a person to anticipate persecution and ever-tightening control over private matters. Dreams also emphasize the continuity of stress and fear long after the actual violence has

<sup>7</sup> Peter Burke, “The Cultural History of Dreams,” in idem, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 24–5, 27.

<sup>8</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, “Terror und Traum: Methodologische Anmerkungen zu Zeiterfahrungen im Dritten Reich,” in idem, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 292–3. Cf. Charlotte Beradt, *Das Dritte Reich des Traums* (München: Nymphenburger, 1966).

ended: nightmares related to the Great Terror did not end with Stalin's death in 1953, but went on for the decades thereafter.<sup>9</sup> Even though war experiences as such do not equate to living under repressive totalitarianism, the immediate threat of violence, the lack of personal freedom, and uncertainty about the future *do* characterize both experiences. It seems fruitful to study war experiences from the same angle as Paperno has adopted with respect to the dreams of Stalinism: how people dealt with the most stressful and existentially threatening circumstances and how the nocturnal memory of this experience has kept a hold on people.

Taken together, Burke, Koselleck, and Paperno's remarks encourage a historical study of dreams in a dynamic relationship between the individual experience, the surrounding culture, and the varying dream contents. I will explore this triangle through two corpuses of sources. The first of them are the collections of the Finnish Literature Society Archives (FLSA), which is the most important folklore, reminiscence, and oral history archive in Finland. One specific collection stands out here: the Dream Inquiry (Unikysely) organized by folklorist Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj in 1989. As is common with the FLSA's materials, the collection is based on a public appeal or call distributed through newspapers and FLSA's respondent networks. The collection contains written firsthand dream accounts from 104 respondents: altogether 342 pages of information. The call was not issued specifically for war-related dreams. In the first sentence of the call, Kaivola-Bregenhøj asked people to tell "how they interpret" their dreams, and this primary interest was then followed up with questions regarding the personal meaning of dreams, whether the respondent shares his or her dreams with others, and further itemizations of these questions.<sup>10</sup> But as the call was made at the end of the 1980s, it received numerous war-related responses—at that time, the Finnish war generation was still actively present in public life, and the late-1980s and the 1990s were generally the era of a memory boom regarding World War II.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Irina Paperno, "Dreams of Terror: Dreams from Stalinist Russia as a Historical Source," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 7:4 (2006), 794–7, 823–4.

<sup>10</sup> Finnish Literature Society Archives (FLSA), Unikysely/Dream Inquiry 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj, *Kerrotut ja tulkitut unet: Kulttuurinen näkökulma uniin* (Helsinki: SKS, 2010), 178–9; in English, see Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj, "Dreams of the Second World War," in *Dreams, Phantasms and Memories*, ed. by Wojciech Owczarski & Zofia Ziemann (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2015), 179–89. For the memory boom, see, e.g., Ville Kivimäki, "Between Defeat and Victory: Finnish Memory Culture of the Second World War," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 37:4 (2012), 482–504.

Furthermore, I have gathered war-related dream reminiscences from other collections of the FLSA. They do not form a systematic corpus, but they are useful in supplementing and bringing variation to other sources.<sup>12</sup>

My second corpus of sources is different in nature and contains only directly war-related dreams. In 1999–2000, the advisory committee on war veteran matters in Northern Finland organized a survey “From War to Peace” (“Sodasta rauhaan”), which aimed at collecting information and reminiscences concerning the war veterans’ experiences, challenges, and problems in their transition from military service to civilian life in and after 1944. The survey was distributed to those men and women who had served at the frontlines or in the war zone during World War II. The long form of 17 pages contains 123 questions. One of them (9.3.) had to do with dreams: “Did the war follow you in your dreams? What kind of war dreams did you see and for how long?” The space for answering the question was limited to a little over three lines on the form—and as part of such a long survey, the respondents were not inclined to use too much time on any one question. Yet the briefness of answers is compensated for by the size and range of the data: the survey gained 1058 responses in total, of which 882 were from men and 176 from women. Some of the women were answering on behalf of their veteran spouses, if the latter were in too frail a condition to do this on their own. Almost all the answers came from the Lapland and the Oulu Provinces in Northern Finland.<sup>13</sup>

### SLEEPING IN WARTIME AND AFTERWARD

Before turning our attention to the substance of war-related dreams, it is good to say something about the sleeping conditions as a background for dream contents. Wartime and its aftermath affected also the ways people slept and how sleep was perceived and controlled.

I am grateful to Professor Emerita Kaivola-Bregenhøj for her kind and helpful comments on this chapter.

<sup>12</sup>Originally, FLSA started purely as a folklore archive, collecting and preserving the national heritage of Finnish folk poetry. From early on, dreams have had an important place in such mythological materials and their study. Consequently, the FLSA’s classification system has its own index code for dreams, which (if the materials are properly indexed) allows for spotting dream contents throughout the different collections.

<sup>13</sup>National Archives of Finland in Oulu (NAF Oulu), “From War to Peace” Survey 1999–2000. I am grateful to Soja Ukkola for first pointing this material to me more than ten years ago.

In an insightful article on this topic, historian Alan Derickson has studied the changing attitudes toward sleep in the US Army and on the American home front during World War II. From 1941 onward, as the United States entered the conflict, continuous sleep loss, prolonged wakefulness, and a chemical struggle against sleep became dominant features of military service. Unlike in earlier wars, where combat was usually paused for the dark hours, much more of the fighting now took place at night—on the ground, in the air, and on the sea. Consequently, falling asleep meant danger and sacrificing the initiative to the enemy; soldiers' fear of being caught unguarded became the main incentive to stay awake. The Army used conventional methods to fight sleep (coffee and caffeine tablets) and new methods were also applied (amphetamines). In the war industry at home, the coffee break was introduced during the war, and the first coffee machines appeared in 1946. On a cultural level, the ability to cope with sleep deprivation became a new feature of “tough-guy” masculinity, which has turned out to have had a lasting imprint on American manliness. War promoted sleeplessness; “sleep was something to be postponed, minimized, or otherwise avoided at all costs.”<sup>14</sup>

While there is no similar study available as to the influence of World War II on Finnish sleeping habits and attitudes, Derickson's findings correlate very closely with the information we do have. During the short but very intensive Winter War of 1939–1940, Finnish troops specialized in night fighting in order to raid their Soviet enemy and to compensate for their lack of manpower. On the other hand, Red Army artillery and patrols tried to harass the Finns during the night in order to deprive the defenders of any proper rest. In the last stages of the conflict, in February–March 1940, many of the Finnish frontline troops had not had a chance to sleep for weeks in a row, which resulted in utter exhaustion and nearly catatonic states. Soldiers might fall asleep in the middle of combat and in freezing temperatures.<sup>15</sup>

During the Continuation War of 1941–1944, sleep deprivation took more chronic forms. The conditions of the trench warfare lasting from the end of 1941 till the summer of 1944 were relatively stable, yet the

<sup>14</sup> Alan Derickson, “‘No Such Thing as a Night’s Sleep’: The Embattled Sleep of American Fighting Men from World War II to the Present,” *Journal of Social History* 47:1 (2013), 1–26 (cit. p. 14).

<sup>15</sup> Lasse Laaksonen, *Todellisuus ja harhat: Kannaksen taistelut ja suomalaisten joukkojen tila talvisodan lopussa 1940* (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 1999).

frontline soldiers had to become accustomed to poor sleeping conditions. Nightlife in crowded shelters was disturbed by lice, noise, sentry duties, alarms, and sporadic fighting. A good night's sleep was usually possible only during rest periods behind the lines and on home leaves. Furthermore, prolonged stress and potentially traumatic war experiences often had a deteriorating influence on the quality of sleep. In my doctoral dissertation, I studied a large sample of Finnish soldiers who ended up in military psychiatric care in between 1941 and 1944. Different kinds of sleep disorders were the most common symptom among the patients, so that over 60 percent of the soldiers had them recorded in their patient files. Subsequent to violent experiences, constant nightmares and a lack of sleep wore the men down to the point of complete mental breakdown (Fig. 12.1).<sup>16</sup>

At least some Finnish troops were supplied with Pervitin, a German brand of methamphetamine designed for military use.<sup>17</sup> A more common source of physiological dependency was coffee, which was in short supply, so there were various attempts to find different surrogates in order to produce the same stimulating effect. The coffee shortage was such a key wartime experience that the coming of the first postwar coffee shipment from Brazil to Finland in February 1946 has been considered one of the milestones in returning the country to a normal peacetime mode. It is difficult to say whether the lack of sleep became such a culturally idealized feature of Finnish masculinity during the war as Derickson has argued for the American case; yet it is clear that bad sleep and sleeplessness were hallmarks of war experience also in Finland. This was not limited to frontline soldiers: at home, the workload of women, especially those with children, minimized the time for proper rest, even if conditions would have otherwise allowed this.<sup>18</sup>

The problems in nightlife acquired new features in the immediate post-war years. The Army's demobilization, the resettlement of over 400,000 Karelian evacuees, and the destruction of Lapland in 1944–1945 created

<sup>16</sup>The actual figure is probably even considerably higher, as the patient files were often filled in haste and with little attention. Ville Kivimäki, *Battled Nerves: Finnish Soldiers' War Experience, Trauma, and Military Psychiatry, 1941–44* (PhD thesis: Åbo Akademi University, 2013), 278.

<sup>17</sup>Mikko Ylikangas, *Univettä, kuolonleipää, spiidiä: Huumeet Suomessa 1800–1950* (Jyväskylä: Atena, 2009).

<sup>18</sup>Kirsi-Maria Hytönen, *Ei elämäni lomaa mahtunut: Naisten muistelukerrontaa palkkatyöstä talvi- ja jatkosotien ja jälleenrakennuksen aikana* (Joensuu: Suomen kansantietouden tutkijain seura, 2014).





**Fig. 12.1** An exhausted Finnish soldier during the summer battles of 1944. (Photo: T. Nousiainen, SA Photo 153773)

a dire housing shortage. In cities, the lack of apartments forced people to live in cramped, loud, and inferior quarters. For the parents of small children, war invalids suffering from pains, or night-shift workers, the sleeping conditions could be nerve-wracking.<sup>19</sup> In the countryside, the physical

<sup>19</sup> Antti Malinen, *Perheet abtaalla: Asuntopula ja siihen sopeutuminen toisen maailmansodan jälkeisessä Helsingissä 1944–1948* (Helsinki: Väestöliitto, 2014), 79, 116, 206, 215, 227–8. For similar findings, see also Laura McEnaney, “Nightmares on Elm Street: Demobilizing in Chicago, 1945–1953,” *Journal of American History* 92:4 (2006), 1265–91.

circumstances of sleeping were usually somewhat better, but hardly ideal: typical farmhouses were small, families big, and for the evacuees and other resettlers it could take years to acquire permanent lodging. One more thing added to the nightly disturbances: the yelling and rolling of those restless sleepers, who were constantly thrown back into the war in nightmares. A husband, father, or brother screaming at night became one of the most common nocturnal memories for their relatives in the postwar era. For the veterans themselves, the expectation of recurring nightmares could lead to a vicious cycle of sleeplessness, anxiety, and depression.<sup>20</sup>

### NATION ENTERS THE DREAMS

On the night before 30 November 1939, Helmi P., a woman in her mid-thirties, had a dream where she was walking on a road together with other women from neighboring houses. They were picking beautiful flowers as they went, and when Helmi P. turned back she saw that there were still several flowers left behind, but that they were all black roses. The next morning the Winter War started and soon there were fallen soldiers, also from Helmi P.'s home village. Women began to be anxious about the survival of their close ones, and so Helmi P. comforted her neighbors with her dream: because none of the women had picked up the black roses, it was felt that their relatives would not die in the war. This turned out to be true, in the end.<sup>21</sup>

In similar reminiscences, the anticipation and then the outbreak of war became visible in dreams. Typically, the growing fear of a Soviet invasion in the autumn of 1939 manifested itself at night in the form of dark, ominous clouds gathering on the eastern horizon or as airplanes and other flying objects storming in from the east.<sup>22</sup> In dreams, the threat toward the Finnish nation and state was experienced in deeply personal terms: the foreign aggression was aimed at one's home and relatives. In October 1939, when the Finnish Army had started its mobilization but the war had not yet started, 28-year-old Kerttu H. had a dream of airplanes swarming in from the east. One of them crashed in the yard of her home and killed

<sup>20</sup> Irmeli Hännikäinen, *Sota ihmisessä – totta, tarua ja unta: Posttraumaattisen stressihäiriön taustaa ja kuvaa sodan veteraanin mielenmaisemassa* (Helsinki: Sotainvalidien Veljesliitto, 2015), 234–5, 238–50; Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2010), 44, 78, 107–8, 125.

<sup>21</sup> FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 245; see also Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2015), 184.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 45; 119; cf. also Signum 216 (on the summer of 1944).

her husband. Trusting her dream, Kerttu H. was certain that her spouse would not return alive from the war—and on the last day of the Winter War she learned that he had died together with 14 fellow soldiers when their shelter was destroyed.<sup>23</sup>

The war seems to have nationalized people's dreamworld to a great degree: besides the everyday fears and expectations that occupied one's nights, the fate of the whole country in its struggle became a serious concern in dreams. Moreover, one's personal existence was now tightly bound to the collective survival of the Finnish nation. For the soldiers at the front, this was a direct physical threat, and many of their dreams focused on this question, providing answers to it from different angles. Two months before the Winter War, soldier-to-be Matti N. had been asleep and was suddenly woken by a stranger who said that there "will be fighting on Independence Day" (6 December)—and then disappeared. Matti found himself at the front in early December, and as he was not quite sure whether the stranger had said "fighting" (*tapellaan*) or "killing" (*tapetaan*), he welcomed Independence Day with anxiety.<sup>24</sup> Another soldier saw a dream of his dead mother making the bed for two. The person asked if he could lay beside his mother who declined and said that the place was reserved for the younger brother. The next day the brother got seriously wounded and died within a couple of weeks.<sup>25</sup>

Such ominous dreams connected with one's personal survival or wounding are very common in the soldiers' reminiscences. The front represented a borderline between life and death, marked by the arbitrariness of violence; and under these conditions it was natural that the soldiers searched for any signs that could bring some order into the chaos. In interpreting such signs, a person became an active individual agent and not merely a passive victim of war. Frontline fatalism helped soldiers cope psychologically by easing the anxiety of being responsible for one's own survival.<sup>26</sup>

Finland remained unoccupied during World War II, and almost all the fighting was restricted to the frontlines. Thus, as the Finnish home front

<sup>23</sup> FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 40.

<sup>24</sup> FLSA, Korsuperinne Collection 1973, Vol. 6, Matti N., p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 309.

<sup>26</sup> Alex Watson, "Self-deception and Survival: Mental Coping Strategies on the Western Front, 1914–18," *Journal of Contemporary History* 41:2 (2006), 251–3, 257–61; for similar observations in Finnish soldiers' letters, Sonja Hagelstam, "I stridens hetta: Krigets fasor i brev från fronten," *Budkavlen* 90 (2011), 37–8.

was mostly safe from direct violence, the dreams here centered on the fate of loved ones and of relatives at the front, as well as on the possible duration or cessation of the conflict. These dreams could have strong symbolic content that borrowed motifs from folklore, religion, and mythology. Helmi P., who had had the earlier dream of black roses, had another nightly vision of several boats departing from the lakeshore by the church. Resembling coffins, one of the boats came ashore near the house from which Helmi P.'s cousins had been sent to the front—and soon one of the cousins died.<sup>27</sup> A similar kind of boat theme was also present in other dreams—as a mythical symbol of death, travel, and crossing, the boat was well-suited to address the uncertainties and fluidities of the time.<sup>28</sup> On the home front, women seem to have been more inclined to see ominous dreams than men—or at least it has seemed to be more acceptable for women to express such beliefs.<sup>29</sup>

In the above-mentioned dreams of both soldiers and civilians, the war entered sleeping minds. As Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj has written, war sensitized people to interpret their dreams as omens.<sup>30</sup> As testified by the dreams, the national war effort was closely linked to very subjective matters, such as the death or survival of oneself or one's relatives and the fate of one's homestead. The personal and the national became tightly interwoven. There were also dreams with explicitly national symbols. On the final days of the Winter War, a young female Karelian evacuee, Martta K., had a dream about soldiers from her home village, some of them already fallen, who raised a torn Finnish flag in a heavy storm. This could be seen as an omen predicting the coming peace: the country would be mutilated and territories lost but, thanks to the soldiers' sacrifices, independence would be preserved.<sup>31</sup> In another version of the same theme, but this time during the Continuation War of 1941–1944, Mirjam L. witnessed how a red flag was first raised on a pole, followed by a Finnish flag at half-mast: peace had come but Finland had lost.<sup>32</sup> Both in 1940 and in 1944, the

<sup>27</sup> FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 246.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 79; 169; 215.

<sup>29</sup> Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2010), 132–6. For a rare dream by a soldier's father, see FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 119.

<sup>30</sup> Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2015), 180–1.

<sup>31</sup> FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 136.

<sup>32</sup> FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 168; see also Tuomas Tepora, *Sinun puolesta elää ja kuolla: Suomen liput, nationalismi ja veriuhri 1917–1945* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2011), 319.

forthcoming end of hostilities and the new national borders were matters of ominous dreaming.<sup>33</sup>

One more aspect points in the same direction as nationalized war dreams: the common appearance of political figures. In the threatening totalitarian dreams that were dreamt in Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union, dictators and their henchmen terrorized people at night.<sup>34</sup> In the Finnish version, the same persons were making foreign political decisions regarding Finland. Sometimes the sleeper had a say in the situation. A Finnish soldier dreamt of trying to negotiate with Stalin, who turned out to be quite a crook.<sup>35</sup> In the autumn of 1941, when Finland and Germany were co-belligerents, a young woman working in a tailor shop had a dream about having to iron pants for Hitler. Not knowing what might be Hitler's right fit, she decided to prepare three pairs of trousers in different sizes. Hitler came to fetch the trousers together with Eva Braun and a big German shepherd—and chose the third pair. The woman told her dream to a coworker, who swiftly interpreted its meaning: the war would last for three full years still, Hitler would lose and die in the end.<sup>36</sup> The same person Matti N., who had had the Independence Day dream in 1939, also dreamt of Roosevelt, Mussolini, Hitler, Churchill, Stalin, and the leader of the Finnish Army, Marshal Mannerheim, gathering around a map and contemplating future Finnish borders. Matti stepped in and pointed the right borderline to the other gentlemen, who then left the room in the same order as they would later die.<sup>37</sup> Another soldier saw Mannerheim entering a room some time before the outbreak of the Continuation War in 1941. “We’ll go again, boys,” Mannerheim said in a downcast mood. The sleeper helped Mannerheim to don his coat and leave the building. Soon a new war started.<sup>38</sup>

World leaders toying with Finland's destiny is probably quite an accurate depiction of the manner in which many Finns experienced their country's foreign political situation.<sup>39</sup> Being a small state in a global conflict, most of the important military and diplomatic decisions were made

<sup>33</sup> E.g. FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 29; 216; 302.

<sup>34</sup> Beradt (1966), passim; Paperno (2006), passim.

<sup>35</sup> NAF Oulu, From War to Peace, B:42 N:o 02038.

<sup>36</sup> FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 117.

<sup>37</sup> FLSA, Korsuperinne Collection 1973, Vol. 6, Matti N., p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> FLSA, Dream 1989, Signum 153.

<sup>39</sup> For the public opinion reports on the Finnish home front, see Martti Favorin & Jouko Heinonen, eds, *Kotirintama 1941–1944* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1972).

outside of Finland. Yet the occasional interference of a “little Finn” in the political dream theater can also be interpreted as symptomatic of a Finnish war experience: unlike many other nations in Europe that fell under foreign occupation, Finland retained some control over its own fate. This limited but still existing agency can be recognized in the dreams above.

### NIGHTMARE YEARS: RELIVING THE VIOLENCE

In his posthumous work *Conflict and Dream* (1923), British psychiatrist W. H. R. Rivers set out to oppose the dominant Freudian dream theory of the time. Having treated shell-shocked soldiers at the Craiglockhart Hospital during World War I, Rivers could not accept the idea that the best way to interpret dreams was to search for their hidden meanings in unconscious wishes. At least this was not the case with war dreams, which were, in contrast, characterized by their brutal and relentless repetition of the horrors the soldiers had directly witnessed. It felt absurd to see these dreams as symbolizing some repressed emotional conflicts in childhood; the only wish here was that the nightmares would finally come to an end.<sup>40</sup>

As we now turn to the question of war-related nightmares in the “From War to Peace” survey, it is easy to come to the same conclusion as Rivers did 100 years earlier. Whereas the ominous and political dreams discussed above still allow for various degrees of symbolical interpretation, the vast majority of dreams recorded in the survey form of 1999–2000 were laconically straightforward. “For over ten years, almost every night,” a man responded to the survey question of whether he had had war-related dreams and for how long. “A group of thousand men is running towards me with their eyes and mouths wide open, but there’s no sound of shouting. This corresponds with the situation of my wounding.” In June 1944, the man had served at the site where the Red Army started its massive offensive against Finnish troops.<sup>41</sup> Just as with this example, it is also noteworthy that soldiers’ war-related nightmares are often linked to a precise point in time: they are not vague semblances of earlier war experiences but direct encounters with a specific violent moment.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *Conflict and Dream* (London: Kegan Paul et al., 1923), esp. 65–8, 144, 160–4; see also Joanna Bourke, *Fear: A Cultural History* (London: Virago, 2005), 125–8.

<sup>41</sup> NAF Oulu, From War to Peace, A:14 N:o 02565.

<sup>42</sup> Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2015), 182–3.

Most of the respondents to the survey in 1999–2000 naturally belonged to the youngest Finnish age cohorts that had been called to arms during World War II, having been born in the first half of the 1920s. For them, the devastating events in the summer of 1944 were the key war experience they carried with them into postwar civilian life. The dreams that reflect this experience are abundant in the collection and form its main stream. Central characteristics of the recorded dreams are physical and mental vulnerability, the experience of helplessness before violent powers outside of one's own control, and the graphic detail of this violence. Night after night in the immediate postwar years, the young veterans were about to be stabbed, assaulted, torn, mutilated, crushed, pierced, or taken captive. The same enemy tanks, artillery barrages, and dive bombers returned every night, as if following a timetable. "Yes, many years after the war I had dreams that the Russkies attacked our positions with their bayonets fixed and then I either ran out of ammunition or the weapon didn't work. I woke up just as the Russkie was about to stab me."<sup>43</sup> Usually the only personal action seemingly available in the dreams is trying to escape, which is then somehow hindered.<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, a recurrent theme in the Finnish soldiers' nightmares is the sleepers' inability to act, or the malfunction of their weapons. "About ten years after the war I quite often had horror-dreams about war. Often, I woke up in a situation where I was fighting against an attack. When I shot at the attacking enemy, I could barely hear the gunshot and the bullet flew so slowly that I could have reached it by running. I woke up to that."<sup>45</sup> "Yes. The same dream has been repeated for 30 years. [...] The Russkie always attacks with a powerful Uraah-cry, my machine pistol never works, and an enormous panic strikes me. My wife wakes me up peacefully."<sup>46</sup> In dire combat situations, a soldier's life was dependent on the proper function of his weapon, and the fear of malfunction was thus a very concrete concern at the front. At the same time, this kind of dream connotes an experience of male vulnerability and impotence that has been recorded among war veterans in other countries as well, especially following a war-time defeat.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> NAF Oulu, From War to Peace, B:41 N:o 00520.

<sup>44</sup> For example, NAF Oulu, From War to Peace, B:40 N:o 01273 and B:23 N:o 00748.

<sup>45</sup> NAF Oulu, From War to Peace, A:16 N:o 03335.

<sup>46</sup> NAF Oulu, From War to Peace, B:41 N:o 00522.

<sup>47</sup> For Germany and Austria, see Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006);

In a study of Dutch war victims and their war-related nightmares over 40 years after the end of World War II, psychiatrist Bas Schreuder et alii showed that the combat veterans' dreams were often direct repetitions of their traumatic war experiences: "The reality content [of the dreams] seems to be so high that it is possible to speak of a re-enactment." Ex-soldiers' nightmares resembled nightly panic attacks and were closely linked with intrusive posttraumatic symptoms. In civilian war victims, however, such "replicative" dreams were less frequent, and the nightmares were more commonly about losing one's family members. Furthermore, civilians' war-related dreams were often better characterized as "posttraumatic anxiety dreams" rather than outright posttraumatic nightmares; they had a symbolic connection to traumatic experiences compared to the accurate replications experienced by the combat veterans.<sup>48</sup>

Neither my sources nor my approach allow for such epidemiological results; yet even without any quantifiable data the reading of dream reminiscences both in the collections of the Finnish Literature Society and in the "From War to Peace" survey are well-compatible with the findings of Schreuder et alii. Some civilian dreams were also concerned with the threat of direct violence: usually in connection with an air raid or airplanes. It was more common, though, that the civilians' war dreams were concerned with the survival of loved ones at the front; as a result, they contained more symbolic, interpretative themes than the front soldiers' nightmares, which depicted violence in its naked form. As W. H. R. Rivers noted after World War I, the ability to symbolize and fantasize may be seen as a sign of healing in war dreams, as a way to distance oneself from disturbing memories and to transform them. The poverty of imagination in violent repetitive nightmares, in contrast, kept the sleepers captured by war.<sup>49</sup>

Svenja Goltermann, *Die Gesellschaft der Überlebenden: Deutsche Kriegsheimkehrer und ihre Gewalterfahrungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (München: DVA, 2009); Ernst Hanisch, "Der Untergang des Kriegers: Männlichkeit und politische Kultur nach 1945 in Österreich," in *Männerkrieg und Frauenfrieden: Geschlechterdimensionen in kriegerischen Konflikten*, ed. by Elisabeth Anker, Silvia Arzt, Kirstin Eckstein & Julia Neissl (Wien: Promedia, 2003), 107–17.

<sup>48</sup> Bas J. N. Schreuder, Wim C. Kleijn & Harry G. M. Rooijmans, "Nocturnal Re-Experiencing More Than Forty Years After War Trauma," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 13:3 (2000), 453–63; Bas J. N. Schreuder, Marjan van Egmond, Wim C. Kleijn & Anouschka T. Visser, "Daily Reports of Posttraumatic Nightmares and Anxiety Dreams in Dutch War Victims," *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 12:6 (1998), 511–24 (cit. on the reality content p. 512); also Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2010), 91–3.

<sup>49</sup> Rivers (1923), 66–70.



### TRANSITION DREAMS AND REGAINING AGENCY

Psychological studies on the prevalence of nightmares among the Finnish population from 1972 till 2007 have confirmed that the war generation was, indeed, a nightmare generation. The first comparative data available is from 1972. It shows that of those adult Finnish men at the time who had not served at the front during World War II, 2.9 percent experienced frequent nightmares. The same figure for men with frontline service was 7.0 percent and for war invalids, 10.9 percent. The women of the war generation also had more nightmares than other women. In a follow-up study covering the data from 1972 to 2007, the prevalence of frequent nightmares clearly decreased in Finland, as the proportion of war generation survivors among the general population became much smaller.<sup>50</sup> In a study concerning war-related themes in German dreams from 1956 till 2000, the frequency dropped, with the same obvious explanation regarding the decreasing number of people with war experiences in the population.<sup>51</sup>

Another reason for the diminishing frequencies of war-related dreams and nightmares is that the war generation itself had fewer of these dreams as time passed. In the "From War to Peace" survey, veterans were asked to recount for how long they had had war-related dreams. Some of the respondents said that the dreams had never stopped and for some they had started again in old age. Yet many, if not most, of the answers mention some approximate stretch of time after which the war-related dreams either disappeared or became much less frequent. These estimates vary from a couple of months after the war to several decades, but the most common answer sets the period at roughly ten years. Thus, in the mid-1950s the nightly agony was easing for many veterans.

Are there any traces in the dream content that might help to explain this change? As I showed earlier, veterans' war-related nightmares were a continuous repetition of violent experiences, with very little symbolic substance. Yet there is one common vein throughout the dreams that can be interpreted as a sign of transition: the war events started to take place in civilian surroundings, usually in and around the veteran's home. The sleepers had to dig trenches and defend them in their own yard; the enemy was approaching their home village; one's family was about to be caught

<sup>50</sup>Nils Sandman et al., "Nightmares: Prevalence among the Finnish General Adult Population and War Veterans during 1972–2007," *SLEEP* 36:7 (2013), 1041–50.

<sup>51</sup>Michael Schredl & Edgar Piel, "War-Related Dream Themes in Germany from 1956 to 2000," *Political Psychology* 27:2 (2006), 299–307.

by the enemy; or the Soviet patrols were sneaking around the house.<sup>52</sup> Some dreams depicted the outbreak of a new war that threatened the sleeper's family and homestead—and one dreamer living in Western Lapland had to fight against the Swedes, too.<sup>53</sup> “Strangely enough, usually the war events, the enemy are here right around my home. The sound of shells and explosions may be extremely realistic, just like the fear. But shooting does not succeed. When one should shoot, the bullets fall from the barrel of the gun uselessly onto the ground. There is no damage to myself or to the Russkies. This is the rule in war-related dreams,” a veteran reminisced in the FLSA Dream Inquiry.<sup>54</sup> For years, another person was continuously dragging an antitank gun at night in his civilian surroundings, to the frustration of his wife.<sup>55</sup>

Civilians, too, had war dreams taking place around their homes, most importantly air raids triggered by the sound of an airplane or some other cause. Children could start to see war-related nightmares if they had eavesdropped and heard some war stories while awake or heard their father's cries at night. In their sleep, people feared a new war, having to leave their home once again, or being occupied by the Soviet Union and sent to Siberia in the near future.<sup>56</sup> In these ways, the past as well as the anticipated wars occupied the nights in Finnish homes for a long time after the hostilities had ended in 1944–1945.

On the other hand, the increasing civilian content in dreams tells us about the beginning of a postwar era. The theme of having to defend one's family home with insufficient or malfunctioning weapons is related to the earlier topic of male vulnerability: being caught unguarded in their civilian clothes and environment, ex-soldiers were thrown back into battle unprepared. After the long war years, which had required being on constant alert, leaving behind one's military identity was difficult and potentially dangerous, at least in nightmares. But as the dreams tell, this transition was nevertheless happening. Another way of saying the same thing is to note that the nightmares ended when one's life came to be full of new, civilian things: work, marriage, children, building a house, and so on.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> For example, NAF Oulu, *From War to Peace*, B:20 N:o 00049, B:17 N:o 01077, B:20 N:o 00047, B:6 N:o 01168.

<sup>53</sup> For example, NAF Oulu, *From War to Peace*, B:62 N:o 03631 and A:9 N:o 03057.

<sup>54</sup> FLSA, *Dream Inquiry 1989*, Signum 190–1.

<sup>55</sup> FLSA, *Dream Inquiry 1989*, Signum 14.

<sup>56</sup> FLSA, *Dream Inquiry 1989*, Signum 46.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Hännikäinen (2015), 249–50.

In a rare couple of reports at the Finnish Literature Society Archives, the dream itself becomes the site of relief from recurrent nightmares. On one occasion, this happened in the most aggressive way. War veteran Taito K. was having a dream where a man entered his home through a window. Taito first hit him with the blunt side of an axe, but the man kept coming. So, Taito decided to hit him with the blade and smashed in his head, which ended the dream. Taito had other dreams as well, where he was using different powerful weapons against the enemy. When doing so he could yell loudly and badly scare his wife.<sup>58</sup>

These were a sort of empowering action dreams. A different kind of example comes from Paavo T., who had had continuous nightmares for ten years after the war, in which he was torn and killed by a bullet or a piece of shrapnel. “By the way it was remarkable that I was feeling horrible pains in my body and often I was sweating, and I had screamed while asleep.” Then Paavo had a dream which ended the nightmares for good. He was walking at night at his homestead and recognized that the men of his village were gathering in their old Civil Guard uniforms, carrying shot-guns. Paavo understood that the Civil Guards, which had been abolished after 1944, had taken up arms. The men tried to offer a weapon to Paavo, too, but he declined and said angrily: “You boys! It’s not the time for the Lapua laws anymore,” which referred to the radical right-wing Lapua movement of the early 1930s. As the men kept offering him the weapon, Paavo finally took it but decided that he would not be siding with these men but would join the Finnish Communist Party that had been legalized in the autumn of 1944. In actual fact, he never fulfilled this decision in real life.<sup>59</sup>

Paavo T.’s dream can be interpreted as him being able to react to the burden of the past and resist the call to return to war. The reference to the Communist Party, as well as his rejection of the Civil Guards, also point toward his ability to adapt to the new postwar situation and to orientate toward the future. Not much can be generalized from a single dream, but for Paavo T. at least, the dream signified winning back his subjective agency and ended the nightmares that had terrorized him for years. In her analysis of Stalinist dreams, Irina Paperno noted that the dreams were both an indicator and an instrument, when the Soviet citizens were forced to adapt to the totalitarian realities by changing their own identity,

<sup>58</sup> FLSA, Dream Inquiry 1989, Signum 103.

<sup>59</sup> FLSA, Dream Inquiry 1989, Signum 312.

thoughts, and behavior.<sup>60</sup> We can see a reverse phenomenon in the Finnish transition and relief dreams above: as the distance from the war years grew, more freedom for the civilian identity and agency could emerge.

### THE NATION AND THE CULTURE OF WAR DREAMS: CONCLUSIONS

The dreams that I have used as my source were all retrospectively remembered and recorded in writing. It is probable that their literary, diachronically constructed nature distinguished them to some degree from those immediate war dreams that were never written down and of which we have no evidence.<sup>61</sup> Yet the dream contents' uniformity and abundance also speak for a common, war-related dream culture that affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of Finns who had witnessed the stress and violence of war, either at the front or on the home front. It seems reasonable to assume that the written dream reminiscences in the archives correspond, by and large, with the wider wartime and postwar dream culture; it is therefore also possible to use the dreams as a window into that verbally unprocessed and socially unshared dreamworld, which occupied people's minds at night. As historian Klaus Latzel has written, such visceral experiences may "vagabond" as raw material in individual and societal memory, without being properly integrated into our everyday reality.<sup>62</sup>

If we think of the dreams in these broader terms, war-related nightmares can be seen as a mental canvas for the dawning Cold War period. The individual dreams' helplessness, vulnerability, and anxiety are depictive of the "little Finland" left at the mercy of the Soviet great power. Although there are considerable national differences in war and postwar experiences, this was hardly a uniquely Finnish phenomenon; if we could obtain the material to study European dreams in the 1940s and after, I am sure we would find a shared culture of nightmares. But unlike in Finland, in many other countries the nocturnal violence would not be limited to the frontlines and to wartime.<sup>63</sup> The history of war-related dreams also

<sup>60</sup> Paperno (2006), 823–4.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2015), 187–8.

<sup>62</sup> Klaus Latzel, *Deutsche Soldaten – nationalsozialistischer Krieg? Kriegserlebnis – Kriegserfahrung 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1998), 370.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. e.g. Petri Karonen & Ville Kivimäki, "Suffering, Surviving and Coping: Experiences of Violence and Defeat in Post-war Europe," in *Continued Violence and Troublesome Pasts:*

points toward a history of war-related stress, which imprinted traces of violence, fear, and loss in people's bodies and minds, although we do not necessarily have any verbal accounts of these experiences. Epidemiological studies in medicine and psychology have shown that the Finnish war generation (and the more vulnerable subgroups within that generation) has suffered from various somatic ailments and mental health problems that have most likely been caused or accentuated by the experiences of major wartime stress.<sup>64</sup>

Returning to Anthony P. Cohen's concept of personal nationalism introduced briefly at the beginning of this chapter, the study of Finnish war dreams underlines a reverse phenomenon. Instead of personalizing nationhood, I have shown how the war nationalized the most private and personal spheres of life. Here, the nation did not enter people's lives so much through the explicit ideology of nationalism, but as a collective context of war and postwar it created and shaped individual experiences in a very concrete way. For the men and women of the war generation, this happened at the formative age of early adulthood.

In the immediate postwar years, the war experiences as they manifested themselves in dreams were characterized by utter helplessness. This was especially true for those young frontline veterans who had experienced the chaotic circumstances of the summer of 1944. As I have shown, the worst nightmares started to ease roughly ten years after the war had ended. It is notable that around the same time in the mid-1950s, the first positive representations of Finnish soldiers and war experience began to appear in public. Frontline soldiers' war stories started to be published in the monthly magazine *Kansa taisteli* ("The People Fought")—a Finnish version of the German *Landserhefte*—and in the popular war-novel genre, pioneered by author Väinö Linna and his profoundly influential war novel *The Unknown Soldier* in 1954. In these publications we see the opposite of the dreams above: Finnish soldiers are skilled, active, and brave—and their weapons work with devastating effect. This contrast is interesting: maybe

*Post-war Europe between the Victors after the Second World War*, ed. by Ville Kivimäki & Petri Karonen (Helsinki: FLS, 2017), 7–26.

<sup>64</sup>Tarja Kunnas et al., "Late-life coronary heart disease mortality of Finnish war veterans in the TAMRISK study, a 28-year follow-up," *BMC Public Health* 11:71 (2011); Craig A. Molgaard et al., "Depression Late After Combat: A Follow-Up of Finnish World War Two Veterans from the Seven Countries East-West Cohort," *Military Medicine* 156:5 (1991); Hanna Alastalo et al., "Cardiovascular health of Finnish war evacuees 60 years later," *Annals of Medicine* 41:1 (2009).

the action-style war stories were in such demand in order to get over the nocturnal memories of defeat and stagnating passivity? Maybe the forms of nationalism visible in the war's emerging memory culture were one way to give shared cultural and ideological meaning to those subjective experiences that had haunted people as raw and uncommunicated nightmares?<sup>65</sup> Borrowing Peter L. Berger's and Thomas Luckmann's metaphor at the beginning of this chapter, the Finnish memories of war, both private and public, would thus indeed be "overcast by the penumbras of our dreams."

<sup>65</sup>For the Finnish memory culture of war and its nationalism, see Tiina Kinnunen & Markku Jokispilä, "Shifting Images of 'Our Wars': Finnish Memory Culture of World War II," in Kinnunen & Kivimäki (2012), 436–82; Kivimäki (2012).

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# Feeling the Nation through Exploring the City: Urban Pedagogy and Children's Lived Experiences in Postwar Helsinki

*Antti Malinen and Tanja Vahtikari*

## INTRODUCTION

In addition to adults, children, even very young children, negotiate different ideas, practices and emotions with respect to the national community.<sup>1</sup> In their daily lives, children encounter various patterns of emotional formation: they learn from different and sometimes conflicting agents what and how they should be feeling, and, in contrast, what they should not express in a given situation.<sup>2</sup> School, especially through its curricula work,

<sup>1</sup>Zsuzsa Millei, "Pedagogy of nation: A concept and method to research nationalism in young children's institutional lives," *Childhood* 26:1 (2019), 83–97.

<sup>2</sup>Karen Vallgård, Kristine Alexander & Stephanie Olsen, "Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood," in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives*, ed. by Stephanie Olsen (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2015), 12–34, here 21.

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V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_13)

is one of the key institutional settings for the state to advance its national(ist) agendas and to place emotional expectations on children. It is also a site for “unseen, unheard, unnoticed” everyday nationalism: the mundane (re)production of national frameworks through situated activities.<sup>3</sup> At schools, everyday nationalism is present, for instance, in language use, embodied practices, priorities given to certain values, daily schedules, and in children’s encounters with spatial and material realities.<sup>4</sup>

In Finland, the emotional education of children remained entangled with the category of nation in the post-World War II period, even though the nationalist sentiments in society had cooled down from the hot period of the interwar years. As in many other European societies, children were seen to bring hope for future reconstruction after the long and devastating war.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, it needs to be kept in mind that most children in the immediate postwar era had a first-hand experience of wartime. As historians of postwar childhood have asserted, the period saw highlighted interest in children’s emotions and in emotional reconstruction (that complemented material reconstruction) as part of social policy.<sup>6</sup>

The setting for our chapter is postwar Helsinki, and our point of departure is the classroom. We explore the emotional-national education of children by adults through the means of pedagogy, particularly the manner in which children were taught various (emotional) competences and skills, which were understood as a means to advance their becoming attached to the local and national community. This said, our aim is not to pursue only a top-down view but to bring into the analysis the complexity of children’s experiencing of the nation. In this vein, early childhood educationalist Zsuzsa Millei has introduced the “pedagogy of nation”

<sup>3</sup>Jon E. Fox, “The edges of the nation: a research agenda for uncovering the taken-for-granted foundations of everyday nationhood,” *Nations and Nationalism* 23:1 (2017), 26–47, here 27. See also Rhys Jones & Peter Merriman, “Hot, banal and everyday nationalism: Bilingual road signs in Wales,” *Political Geography* 28:3 (2009), 164–73.

<sup>4</sup>For institutional care of young children, see Millei (2019), 84.

<sup>5</sup>Machteld Venken & Maren Röger, “Growing up in the shadow of the Second World War: European perspectives,” *European Review of History—Revue européenne d’histoire* 22:2 (2015), 199–220, here 199.

<sup>6</sup>Roy Kozlovsky, “Architecture, Emotions and the History of the Childhood,” in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives*, ed. by Stephanie Olsen (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2015), 100–1; see also Harry Hendrick, “Children’s Emotional Well-being and Mental Health in Early Post-Second World War Britain: The Case of Unrestricted Hospital Visiting,” *Cultures of Child Health in Britain and the Netherlands in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra & Hilary Marland (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 213–42, here 214.



concept, which, by complementing the more often used concept of “national pedagogy” that focuses on intentional pedagogy, calls attention to the “complex process through which the nation is (re)produced in [children’s] everyday life.”<sup>7</sup> In this chapter we argue that children in the postwar era negotiated their emotions and their emotional belonging to the nation in manifold and often subtle responses to the national stocks of experience that were offered to them through educative processes and in various material and spatial everyday bodily encounters. Our chapter thus sets out to examine how educators, children, and urban space coproduced the nation in relational everyday (school) practices.

Children’s emotional experiences, as with wider emotional styles in society at a given time, are inherently spatial and material. Emotions interact with the spaces construing them and those emotions are in turn shaped by the kinds of spaces in which they are performed. Different spaces thus become linked to different emotions.<sup>8</sup> As pointed out by historians Karen Vallgård, Kristine Alexander and Stephanie Olsen, children have “had to learn to navigate diverse emotional spaces and collectives,” ranging from home and school to playground, and, in our case, to the wider urban environment where very different emotional norms were set by parents, teachers and peers.<sup>9</sup> It is also possible to view children’s encounters with their environment and the material world as a form of “non-human teacher”<sup>10</sup> in the processes of everyday nationalism and emotional formation. Following cultural geographers Rhys Jones and Peter Merriman, we see national forces and affects as something that circulated between bodies inhabiting and moving through particular spaces.<sup>11</sup>

During the first half of the twentieth century, *kotiseutuoppi*, “knowledge of the home” (in German *Heimatkunde*, in Swedish *hembygdslära*) was high on the agenda of Finnish elementary education. *Kotiseutuoppi* was a pedagogy that contended that knowledge of the local community and the child’s own experience should occupy an important place in all

<sup>7</sup> Millei (2019), 84–5.

<sup>8</sup> Benno Gammerl, “Emotional styles – concepts and challenges,” *Rethinking History*, 16:2 (2012), 161–75; Margrit Pernau, “Space and Emotion: Building to Feel,” *History Compass* 12:7 (2014), 541–9, here 542.

<sup>9</sup> Vallgård, Alexander & Olsen (2015), 22.

<sup>10</sup> Millei (2019), 85.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Merriman & Rhys Jones, “Nations, materialities and affects,” *Progress in Human Geography*, 41:5 (2017), 600–17, here 602.

education.<sup>12</sup> *Kotiseutuoppi* was believed to offer a way to develop children's attachments to their local everyday environments, urban and rural, and, more broadly, to the nation. A significant feature of *kotiseutuoppi* pedagogy, or environmental education (both terms were used), was the idea that children should reflect their experiences of locality, at-homeness, by writing, drawing and exploring their environment. In this chapter, we will focus on the latter-two-mentioned intertwined practices, drawing and exploring the environment, both of which we understand as emotional practices. As Monique Scheer asserts, "practices not only generate emotions but [...] emotions themselves can be viewed as a practical engagement with the world."<sup>13</sup>

In this chapter, we use two sets of contemporary sources from the immediate postwar period: educators' writings published in professional publications as part of the national curriculum work, and young children's drawings from one Helsinki school, the Käpylä primary school. The drawings are archived in the Aalto University's History of Art Education Archives (HAE). The collection contains around 30,000 works,<sup>14</sup> which makes it a rare resource even internationally.<sup>15</sup> A large part of the material consists of works entered in competitions that were organized yearly by the National Board of General Education. In addition, individual schools such as Käpylä elementary school sometimes decided to donate their archives to the HAE archive. Typically, school archives were created by an individual teacher who had collected students' works over the years and wanted to preserve the works as historical examples of contemporary art

<sup>12</sup>Heidi Hilli-Tammilehto & Sirpa Tani, "Kotiseutuopetuksesta ympäristö- ja luonnontietoon: lähiympäristön huomioon ottaminen suomalaisessa kouluopetuksessa," *Terra* 111:2 (1999), 69–76.

<sup>13</sup>Monique Scheer, "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuvian Approach to Understanding Emotion," *History and Theory* 51:2 (2012), 193–220, here 193.

<sup>14</sup>Pirkko Pohjakallio, "A Hundred Years of Art Education in Finland – An Exhibition," in *Power of Images*, ed. by Liisa Piironen (Helsinki: InSEA Finland & The Association of Art Teachers in Finland, 1992), 18, 86–93.

<sup>15</sup>For an international reflection, see, for example, Carolyn Kay "Children's Drawings as Historical Sources for the Study of Education in World War One," in *Transformationen von Schule, Unterricht und Profession: Erträge praxistheoretischer Forschung*, ed. by Kathrin Berdelmann, Bettina Fritzsche, Kerstin Rabenstein & Joachim Scholz (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2019), 185–212.

education.<sup>16</sup> The Käpylä school archive was collected by the elementary school teacher Dagmar Kemilä (1891–1961). Focusing on one school and one teacher allows for the contextualization of our case into a specific urban place, and permits an in-depth look into the practice of drawing (preceded by urban excursions), from the co-creative perspective that existed between the teacher and the children.

Out of a total of 206 Käpylä school pieces of work, we have collected all drawings and paintings that depict spaces (public/private, outside/inside) and environment, focusing on urban topics but also including images depicting more rural/forest-like environments (which still very widely existed in Finnish cities in the immediate postwar years). Our sample includes around 150 drawings and paintings made by small children, girls and boys, aged from six to eight.<sup>17</sup> When analyzing children's art, age-based variations are important to keep in mind: whereas older children tend to focus on realism, younger children take more freedom in their representations.<sup>18</sup> Images in which realism was not necessarily a primary concern also form a prominent group in our sample data. Another category to think about is gender, something that shaped notions of national belonging, even when girls and boys took part in joint excursions and drawing classes, and thus shared common experiences. While taking due notice of this, we will, nevertheless, not explore gender as a main analytical category, because, as earlier research has convincingly shown, gender differences are a less significant variable with regard to young children's drawings.<sup>19</sup>

The meanings of any images, including drawings, are made at three main sites: the site of the production of the image, the site of the image itself and the site of the audience.<sup>20</sup> The main focus of this chapter is on

<sup>16</sup>Juuso Tervo, "Mistä kuva todistaa? Arkistoidut oppilastyöt, historiankirjoitus ja kuva- taidekasvatuksen historian toisinkirjoittaminen," in *Jälkikuvia, kuvan jälkiä: Lasten ja nuorten taiteen tallentaminen ja tutkiminen*, ed. by Päivi Venäläinen, Jemina Lindholm, Seija Kairavuori, Tiina Pusa & Susanne Ylönen (Helsinki: Nuorisotutkimusseura, 2019), 169–90.

<sup>17</sup>In the archive, works are divided into eight series. Aalto University Learning Centre (Helsinki), History of Art Education Archive, Aa.120:01–Aa.12:08.

<sup>18</sup>Manon Pignot, "Drawing the Great War: Children's Representations of War and Violence in France, Russia and Germany," in *War and Childhood in the Era of the Two World Wars*, ed. by Mischa Honek & James Marten (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2019), 170–88, here 173.

<sup>19</sup>Pignot (2019), 173.

<sup>20</sup>Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2012).

the site of the production, which we understand to be a highly complex site, extending beyond any physical site, including the classroom, the school, the urban excursions preceding the drawing, the pedagogical framework, the teacher's engagement and, most importantly, the drawing child herself/himself and the practice of drawing. In our analysis, it is also important to take into consideration the regional differences in Finland. In the capital city of Helsinki, new ideas and curriculum objectives were adopted more quickly compared to smaller cities and rural areas. Some teachers in Helsinki, such as Dagmar Kemilä, innovated and pioneered new techniques, and influenced teacher education nationwide.

Despite our focus on drawing as a practice, we do not intend to overlook in our analysis the other two sites mentioned above: the site of the image and that of the audience. Drawings and paintings constitute a history of experience source similar to other firsthand, personal accounts by historical actors; they do not offer any direct route to an "authentic" self.<sup>21</sup> A form of self-expression that lies behind the drawings "is hybrid, complex and polychromatic."<sup>22</sup> Cultural historian Mary Tomsic has suggested that it might be valuable to think about children's drawings as both "aesthetic and social objects," as meanings are created in the particular context where the drawings are used. Similarly, it is important to disentangle the histories and frames of children's drawings, the purposes that the drawings might have served and their real or imagined audiences. Social context affects how experiences can be organized and represented.<sup>23</sup>

## POSTWAR HELSINKI SCHOOLS IN CONTEXT

In Helsinki, as in many other European cities, war was followed by rapid urban growth. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Helsinki had already become regarded as a city of "newcomers," due to a high level of migration from rural areas and smaller cities. In the aftermath of World War II, the population growth was fueled by a high birthrate, work-related

<sup>21</sup> Mary Tomsic, "Children's Art: Histories and Cultural Meanings of Creative Expression by Displaced Children," in *Children's Voices from the Past: New Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. by Kristine Moruzi, Nell Musgrove & Carla Pascoe Leahy (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2019), 138.

<sup>22</sup> Manon Pignot, "The crayon war: how children drew the Great War," in *War and Art: A Visual History of Modern Conflict*, ed. by Joanna Bourke (London: Reaktion Books, 2017), 311–12.

<sup>23</sup> Tomsic (2019), 138–41; Pignot (2017); Margaret Higonnet, "Child Witnesses: The Cases of World War I and Darfur," *PMLA* 121:4 (2006), 1565–76.

migration and resettlement of evacuees from areas that Finland had ceded to the Soviet Union under the terms of the armistice agreement—most importantly Finnish Karelia, located on the border of Finland and Russia.<sup>24</sup> By early 1945, some 30,000 displaced people, mainly from Finnish Karelia, were living in Helsinki.<sup>25</sup>

For the newcomers, arrival and settlement in Helsinki brought challenges, as most places were unfamiliar and orientation in the city was in itself difficult. On an emotional level, migration to Helsinki was especially difficult for Karelian evacuees, as well as for the so-called war children who, during and immediately after World War II, had been evacuated abroad from Finland, mainly to Sweden and Denmark (around 11,000 were sent from the Helsinki area in 1941–1946).<sup>26</sup> It can be argued that children belonging to these two groups experienced a sense of liminality after their return. They not only experienced a loss of home “there” (in Karelia or in Sweden), but also struggled to find their place and a sense of belonging in the present-day Helsinki. Many of the displaced families were forced to continue living in conditions similar to those caused by wartime evacuations, such as those to be found in emergency shelters and cheap hostels. Overall, due to a severe housing shortage, apartments in Helsinki were overcrowded, and people were sometimes desperately seeking adequate permanent dwellings.

The modernist urban renewal in Helsinki was actualized on a broader scale only from the mid-1950s onward. However, immediately after the war new buildings already started to appear in the city. The urban space was in transition both socially and materially. One such area was Käpylä, originally built in the 1920s, and one of the fastest growing neighborhoods in Helsinki in the postwar period. Between 1939 and 1954 the area’s population tripled to 12,300. As a result, Käpylä was one of the districts in Helsinki that had the most children, a fact that had a significant influence on the functioning of the Käpylä elementary school. In the

<sup>24</sup>Tanja Vahtikari, “‘Washing Away the Dirt of the War Years’: History, Politics and the Reconstruction of Urban Communities in Post-World War II Helsinki,” in *(Re)Constructing Communities in Europe, 1918–1968: Senses of Belonging Below, Beyond and Within the Nation-State*, ed. by Stefan Couperus & Harm Kaal (New York: Routledge, 2017), 65–84.

<sup>25</sup>The overall number of evacuees from ceded areas was 430,000. Antti Malinen, *Perheet abtaalla: Asuntopula ja siihen sopetuminen toisen maailmansodan jälkeisessä Helsingissä 1944–1948* (Helsinki: Väestöliitto, 2014), 153–4.

<sup>26</sup>Heikki Salminen, *Lappu kaulassa yli Pohjanlahden. Suomalaisten sotilaiden historia* (Turku: Siirtolaisinstituutti, 2007), 200.

immediate postwar years, over 1200 children received instruction there, often in as many as three daily shifts.<sup>27</sup>

Wartime experiences fostered the notion of society as a functional whole that could be steered and rationalized by means of scientific knowledge. The postwar Finnish society faced a major challenge in demobilizing and reintegrating over half a million former soldiers, resettling around 430,000 evacuees from the ceded areas, and stabilizing the society. Overcoming social conflicts and supporting integration and social cohesion became major policy issues, issues that were also reflected in the objectives of the school curriculum.<sup>28</sup>

In the interwar years, the primary school curriculum had mainly been based on religious, moral and patriotic values.<sup>29</sup> During wartime, primary schools had taken part in the promotion of values, such as self-sacrifice, honor and heroism, which served the purposes of a belligerent nation and its war propaganda. In the postwar period, moral and patriotic questions of love for the nation remained important, along with an emphasis on social cohesion, but these features were reframed in reference to new models of state and citizenship. In the post-1945 world, Finland adopted a policy of neutrality, according to which the priority was to develop working and peaceful relations with the Soviet Union, and to maintain a balanced relationship between East and West. The conditions of the September 1944 Moscow Armistice required Finland to ban organizations conceived to be fascist and paramilitary and to rehabilitate the Communist Party. A Soviet-led Allied Control Commission was established in Helsinki to make sure that Finland would comply with the obligations of the Armistice. According to the new foreign policy, previous right-wing rhetoric and chauvinism were (self-)censored from the public sphere, and there were also some (mostly unsuccessful) attempts by the Finnish Far

<sup>27</sup> Helsingin kaupungin tilasto (HKT) VI, Opetuslaitokset 1945/1946–1946/1947, 40; HKT, Opetuslaitokset 1947/1948–1948/1949, 43.

<sup>28</sup> Pauli Kettunen, “Wars, Nation, and the Welfare State in Finland,” in *Warfare and Welfare: Military Conflict and Welfare State Development in Western Countries*, ed. by Herbert Obinger, Klaus Petersen & Peter Starke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 260–89, here 284.

<sup>29</sup> Hannu Simola, “From exclusion to self-selection: examination of behaviour in Finnish primary and comprehensive schooling from the 1860s to the 1990s,” *History of Education* 31:3 (2002), 207–10; Saara Tuomaala, “Kinoksia ja kivikkokankaita: Koulutie suomalaisen modernisaation kokemuksena ja metaforana,” in *Modernisaatio ja kansan kokemus Suomessa 1860–1960*, ed. by Hilikka Helsti, Laura Stark & Saara Tuomaala (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2005), 241–76.

Left to purge civil servants and teachers considered to be incompetent and politically biased.<sup>30</sup> The postwar period also brought less politically motivated changes to the educational debate, drawing from viewpoints and concepts that reflected individual experiences of war and its horrors. Earlier ideals of obedience and loyalty, and even of patriotism, began to be questioned and were superseded by the ambition to foster democratic values and more peace-loving citizens. Similar ideas were also promoted in postwar Sweden.<sup>31</sup>

Now the main task of a school was to train competent and supportive future citizens suited for democratic life,<sup>32</sup> as pointed out by the Elementary School Committee of 1946:

*The demands of a democratic society require that future citizens be taught to become independent, free personalities, and that their individual traits are valued. Democratic life is possible only when these individuals are educated in mutual collaboration. Future citizens must be righteous, unselfish, tolerant and self-restrained, since these qualities advance social organization based on mutual solidarity.*<sup>33</sup>

According to Matti Koskenniemi, who worked as a secretary of the Committee for the Elementary School Curriculum, the “new school” should take advantage of pupils’ activity, as this would promote their social maturation.<sup>34</sup> This view was echoed in the new 1952 Curriculum, in which school was described as a “miniature society” and an arena for interaction

<sup>30</sup> Ville Kivimäki, “Between Defeat and Victory: Finnish Memory Culture of the Second World War,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 37:4 (2012), 482–504, here 487; Jukka Rantala, *Sopimaton lasten kasvattajaksi! Opettajiin kohdistuneet poliittiset puhdistusyrkimykset Suomessa 1944–1948* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 1997).

<sup>31</sup> For Sweden, see Johan Östling, *Sweden after Nazism: Politics and Culture in the Wake of the Second World War* (New York: Berghahn, 2016), 182.

<sup>32</sup> Simola (2002), 109; Leevi Launonen, *Eettinen kasvatusajattelu suomalaisen koulun pedagogisissa teksteissä 1860-luvulta 1990-luvulle* (Jyväskylä, Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2000), 205; Antti Saari, “Technique of Freedom: Representing the School Class as a Social Order,” in *A Political Sociology of Educational Knowledge: Studies of Exclusions and Difference*, ed. by Thomas A. Popkewitz, Jennifer Diaz & Christopher Kirchgasser (New York: Routledge, 2017), 211–28, here 217. For the love of the nation in the context of the postwar kotiseutuoppi-education, see Aukusti Salo, *Kolmiluokkaisen alakansakoulun työn järjestäminen ja opetussuunnitelmat* (Helsinki: Otava, 1948), 26.

<sup>33</sup> Committee for the Elementary School Curriculum Report 1946:2, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Matti Koskenniemi, *Sosiaalinen kasvatus koulussa* (Helsinki: Otava, 1952), 12–13.

between students and teachers.<sup>35</sup> Life in school was to be shaped into an educative training ground emphasizing civic rights and duties. For these purposes, *kotisentuoppi* pedagogy set out to develop children's physical and psychological capacities, as well as their social skills. The idea was to train children to express themselves in a variety of ways: to begin with by exercising the whole body, especially the hand, and gradually moving on to training children's abstract thinking. Different school aspects, such as crafts, drawing, reading and writing were seen as ways to accomplish this, since they were believed to satisfy children's basic need for activity.<sup>36</sup> When considered from the point of view of producing national belonging, the focus of attention was first placed on tangible features of the nation.<sup>37</sup> In the following two sections, we will focus on two activities, exploring the local environment and drawing, which, in the pedagogy of the time, were considered mutually supportive. In addition, we have chosen a few drawings, representative of our material, for a closer analysis. By examining the two practices and the drawings together, and in relation to postwar educational objectives aiming to teach children emotional competences, we will discuss the nation as educated, learned and lived space for/of children.

### EXPLORING THE CITY

In *kotisentuoppi* pedagogy, shaping the child emotionally became closely linked to national-patriotic education, which aimed to evoke love for the local community and the local environment, and, via these encounters, for the nation. The objective was not only to teach children how to make observations concerning the surrounding world and to gather information based on these observations, but to “awaken the child's intellectual, volitional and emotional abilities in their entirety.”<sup>38</sup> Key to these “lived, emotional and recreational stimuli” was seen to be the child's “own experience.”<sup>39</sup>

The *kotisentuoppi* education has been associated with promoting mainly rural and traditional values. Nevertheless, it was also considered important in the faster-changing postwar urban contexts. While the rural version

<sup>35</sup> Committee for the Elementary School Curriculum Report 1952:3, 28.

<sup>36</sup> Matti Koskenniemi, *Kansakoulun opetusoppi* (Helsinki: Otava, 1944), 298–9.

<sup>37</sup> See also Josephine Hoegaerts, “Learning to love: Embodied practices of patriotism in the Belgian nineteenth century classroom (and beyond),” in *Emotions and everyday nationalism in modern European History*, ed. by Andreas Tynen, Maarten van Genderachter & Xosé M Núñez Seixas (London: Routledge, 2020), 79.

<sup>38</sup> Aukusti Salo, *Alakansakoulun opetusoppi II: Kotisentuopetus* (Helsinki: Otava, 1934), 18.

<sup>39</sup> Salo (1934), 15.



found purpose through referring to threats of urbanization, in postwar Helsinki, the reasoning was quite the opposite: *kotiseutuoppi* education was seen as a way to integrate newcomers into the urban community. There were concerns as to whether a genuine love for home could exist within the context of the expanding metropolis of Helsinki.<sup>40</sup> For these purposes, as early as the late 1930s, the Helsinki Society had published a series of schoolbooks especially designed to teach history and geography in Helsinki schools. In addition to their use as practical guides to the local environment, these books played a role as emotional guidebooks.<sup>41</sup> The books were still frequently used during the postwar era, and they were modified to fill the special needs of the postwar situation. The *kotiseutuoppi* education within an urban context was expected to teach local traditions and to educate children to adjust to new things.<sup>42</sup> According to this mindset, teaching history had a place—not so much as a means of exploring a distant past, but, rather, as a means of introducing the kind of knowledge and competence required by contemporary demands.<sup>43</sup>

An important idea behind all *kotiseutuoppi* pedagogy was that children should leave the classroom to explore their local environment. On school-organized excursions, the teacher was supposed to lead the children to observe the environment in new and unconventional ways. Because the key idea motivating *kotiseutuoppi* education was to use real-life topics, it was understood that in different settings, rural and urban, the excursions should also take a different shape.<sup>44</sup> On excursions, the pupils were taught to make observations, to describe their visual encounters with the environment and to discover local signs of Finnishness. When returning to the classroom, the observations were to be captured on paper, often by drawing. Especially during the early years of education, fieldwork and local surveys formed an important part of the teaching, as they provided not only a means to teach features of the local environment but also fostered children's awareness of how society worked on a local level.<sup>45</sup> The Käpylä

<sup>40</sup> Heikki Waris, "Suurkaupungin kotiseutuharrastus," in *Kauppiaiden ja merenkulkijain Helsinki* (Helsinki: Helsinki-Seura, 1954), 7–10.

<sup>41</sup> In the context of nineteenth-century Belgium, see Hoegaerts (2020), 66.

<sup>42</sup> Salo (1934), 29.

<sup>43</sup> Vahtikari (2017), 73–76.

<sup>44</sup> Lempi Vermasvuori, "Miten järjestän ympäristöopin retkeilyt," in *Kansakoulun työtapoja. 1 osa*, ed. by Kaarlo Saarialho, Matti Koskenniemi, Arvo Jääskinen, Aili Konttinen & Vilho Myrsky (Helsinki: WSOY, 1948), 384–6, here 384.

<sup>45</sup> See also Teresa Ploszajska, "Down to earth? Geography fieldwork in English schools 1870–1944," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 16:6 (1998), 757–74, here 762.

collection of children's drawings reveals the different locations that students visited: the local church, nearby parks, construction sites and tram lines. The drawing assignments that teachers gave, such as "What did you do in the summer?" "The house where I live," "Our school," "The Church," "The view from my window," "Our day out in Helsinki," encouraged children to express their feelings, including love and appreciation for the home and the nation as subjective lived spatial experiences. Children also portrayed their everyday life in the school yard and at home.

Already in prewar *kotisentuoppi* education, supporting children's own initiative had been seen as important<sup>46</sup>; this objective became pronouncedly present in the postwar situation. The book issued by the Helsinki Society, designed to be used in elementary schools, also urged children to explore the city independently. The emphasis was on urban space as a learning environment, and the city itself was used as an "object lesson" linking the past to the present<sup>47</sup>:

*Outdoor trips are a really fun and useful way to learn. We like it a lot, said all three in unison. What has our wandering about in Helsinki been, other than studying outdoors. I doubt that we would ever have learned to know the city so well otherwise; just reading books would not have been sufficient. Books are useful to some degree, maps especially, but seeing and hearing first-hand is the most important thing.*<sup>48</sup>

In the Helsinki Society book, siblings Anneli and Timo, after moving to Helsinki from the countryside, get to know their new place of residence bit-by-bit thanks to the help of their Helsinki-native cousin Kari. Their narrative evokes the idea of a gradual and circle-like widening of their realm of knowledge about their home environment: first by getting to know the home in a modern apartment building and the asphalt-covered yard, then by moving to the nearby blocks, and learning about the logic of urban traffic, and, finally, through exploring the city center and its key places of memory—churches, statues and major public buildings, and even the memorial graveyard for the fallen soldiers of World War II, the so-called Heroes' Cemetery.<sup>49</sup> A similar kind of circle-like forming of knowledge of the urban

<sup>46</sup> Tuomaala (2005), 258.

<sup>47</sup> See also Håkan Forsell, "The City as Instructor. Pedagogical avant-garde and urban literacy in Germany around World War I," in *Education, Childhood and Anarchism: Talking Colin Ward*, ed. by Catherine Burke & Ken Jones (London: Routledge, 2014), 3–18.

<sup>48</sup> Eero Salola, *Helsinkiä oppimassa* (Helsinki: Otava, 1957), 83.

<sup>49</sup> Salola (1957).

environment can be found in the children's drawings. The home, the school building, the road to school, the local church, and the neighborhood are commonly used themes. There are also several images depicting gates as motifs—home gates, school gates, church gates—which can be interpreted as liminal spaces of stepping into or out of a wider sphere (Fig. 13.1). The drawings, just like the book by the Helsinki Society, were essentially about negotiating the boundaries of the growing metropolis. But they also embodied the idea that this circle of knowledge regarding the home would and should extend beyond city limits to the whole nation.



**Fig. 13.1** “At the school gate” by eight-year-old Anje Tötterman, 1945–1950. Stepping from one sphere of experience into another. The image also testifies to the role of friendship in children’s lives. (Photo: Aalto University’s History of Art Education Archives, Helsinki)

The visual materials used in teaching, such as educational images, reproductions of well-known landscape paintings, and schoolbook illustrations offered children ways of interpreting the relationship between the home environment and the nation. As the capital of the country, and representing power and national institutions, Helsinki had an obvious place within the Finnish national landscape imagery, while the overall emphasis was nevertheless on rural and natural environments.<sup>50</sup> To some extent, Helsinki schoolchildren reproduced these visual themes in their drawings. At the same time, there exist almost no drawings using classical motifs of monumental Helsinki or the Finnish national landscape imagery in our material, such as panoramic views or images using a bird's-eye perspective. Children's drawings, instead, show a very multifaceted, locally bound Helsinki imagery. The drawing by an eight-year-old boy named Jouko, depicting a lively urban street view with stores and trams (Fig. 13.2), is a



**Fig. 13.2** Dogs rule the streets in the drawing by eight-year-old Jouko Iivonen, 1945–50. (Photo: Aalto University's History of Art Education Archives, Helsinki)

<sup>50</sup> Maunu Häyrynen, *Kuvitettu maa: Suomen kansallisen maisemakuvaston rakentuminen* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2005), 72, 185.

case in point. It also shows the multiple levels of meaning-making that can be present in a single drawing. The pair of skis he drew in a shop window are hardly there by accident. That would seem, rather, to be a statement of a child's desire in economically difficult times. Moreover, Jouko's drawing makes visible his freedom in handling the subject matter and the lack of any need to pursue realism in this small child's art: instead of human beings, the urban streets he draws are ruled by dogs. The children's drawings were thus hybrids created between established visual imageries and conventions, the teacher's instructions and the children's own worlds.

The books published by the Helsinki Society introduced children to urban vocabulary, and to practical competences needed for living in the city, whether related to safety in urban traffic or to thinking about and treating policemen "in a sympathetic and kind way." That teaching, as well as some of the drawing assignments given by teachers, drew from models of participatory, productive and responsible citizenship.<sup>51</sup> The drawing by the eight-year-old girl Annikki depicts a mother and two children in an economically important and productive task, that of collecting scrap metal (see Fig. 13.3). The viewer's attention is drawn to the many sacks that the three are transporting, and especially to the mother's pulling and pushing of a heavy burden. This may be interpreted to reflect the major role that women and mothers played in the postwar society. Many other drawings and paintings in our material emphasize the role of the mother in a similar way—mothers appear more often than fathers in these images, and they are given prominent roles in them, be it holding hands or otherwise taking care of things. This indirectly suggests the absence of the father from the postwar family life for various, often war-related, reasons.

This and other drawings and paintings may also be associated with the reproduction of a wider reconstruction mentality and imagery in postwar Finnish society: they show industrious and active children who are working side-by-side with their parents.<sup>52</sup> Here, the active part that the children are playing is underlined by their central positioning in the image. Even though it is highly likely that the assignment had been proposed by the teacher, Dagmar Kemilä, the autonomy and involvement of the child, both in the subject matter and the manner in which it is illustrated, again comes to the fore. The harmonious, "Finnish" winter landscape, with the rising or setting

<sup>51</sup> In the British context, see Kozlovsky (2015), 105.

<sup>52</sup> See also Anniina Koivuova, "Paljain jaloin. Rauhaan paluun arki koululaisten piirustuksissa ja maalauksissa," in *Lappi palaa sodasta: Mielen hiljainen jälleenrakennus*, ed. by Marja Tuominen & Mervi Löfgren (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2018), 58–77.



Fig. 13.3 “Collecting scrap metal” by eight-year-old Annikki Santanen, 1945–1950. Still, more than images of work, our collection of drawings and paintings contains many that show children playing. (Photo: Aalto University’s History of Art Education Archives, Helsinki)

sun, suggests that while the family had to work long hours for the nation the task itself was not unpleasant for the children and that it involved pride.

The urban self-adventure, supported by the educators, resembled, to a certain extent at least, the concept of adventure playgrounds promoted in postwar Britain. At an adventure playground, children were expected to design and construct the playground themselves, often from wartime rubble. In addition to the idea of appealing to children's own initiative and to models of participatory citizenship, freedom, within limits, was a feature of both.<sup>53</sup> In the Helsinki Society guidebooks, even though children were told to venture into the city on their own, the spontaneity of their urban exploration, in the experts' minds, was limited to the routes introduced and the destinations given. How children experienced the urban spaces introduced to them obviously varied, as the same spaces can trigger vastly divergent emotions in different people. The children thus experienced spaces in relation to their embodied history. According to historian Margrit Pernau, different groups within society had different experiences and emotions in similar spaces, "because their minds and bodies [had] learned to be affected differently."<sup>54</sup> The spatial experience is also relational in another sense. The children felt and experienced spaces in relation to other spaces. For example, the freedom outside of home became even more meaningful for children living in overcrowded apartments.

The children's will and ability to explore the city reached well beyond the ideal routes proposed by experts, since, in the postwar period, they were allowed to move around very freely. They also expanded their territories bit-by-bit from their home yards to areas that were normally out of bounds to them.<sup>55</sup> Käpylä and its surroundings, for example, had plenty of intriguing but dangerous places: rocks, forests, dumps, wastelands, railways, industrial areas and construction sites. Lacking day-care facilities and adult supervision, having short school hours, and learning in shifts, which meant that some children started their school day as late as 2 pm, all resulted in plenty of free time for the children.

Being able to freely move around meant there was an increasing risk of accidents, especially in traffic and at construction and railway sites. Not surprisingly, child experts and parents were worried that urban space

<sup>53</sup> Kozlovsky (2015), 102.

<sup>54</sup> Pernau (2014), 542.

<sup>55</sup> Simo Laakkonen, "Asphalt kids and the matrix city: reminiscences of children's urban environmental history," *Urban History*, 38:2 (2011), 301–23.

would educate the children in an unproductive way. “Educators from the sideline” included environments out of bounds to children, but also, and perhaps more importantly, street life and its side effects.<sup>56</sup> Clearly, there was a discrepancy between the visual imagery of *kotiseutuoppi*-related education, which led to the favoring of certain topics, and the children’s everyday experiences and encounters with other dimensions of urban life and space in Helsinki. These encounters were, nevertheless, still related to the nation and its past, although even more to its violent history. For example, while walking in the streets, parks, and forests, children often encountered homeless veterans and war invalids (Fig. 13.4).

Historian Frank Biess has pointed out how postwar societies needed, at least partially, to redefine the parameters of acceptable and unacceptable emotions.<sup>57</sup> For instance, in Finland state actors promoted a culture of resilience and self-restraint, and citizens, children included, were encouraged to put aside their personal past and present burdens. Often children had only limited capabilities of sharing and communicating their experiences of distress with adults: reactions to the children’s plights could vary from empathy to anxiety and from suspicion to punitive reactions.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, postwar societies offered places of emotional refuge from the established emotional norms.<sup>59</sup> One such emotional refuge for children trying to have some freedom from their distressing home environment was offered by the self-exploration, especially the withdrawal to a natural (or an urban green) environment. For children living in difficult home conditions, the green space offered opportunities for social withdrawal where their privacy and freedom could be realized. These places are visibly present in the children’s drawings.

Woods, meadows, rivers and other natural surroundings provided spaces in which children could process their feelings freely, without adult supervision or rules governing children’s appropriate behavior. As a part of their

<sup>56</sup> Paavo Päivänsalo, “Kodin ja koulun ulkopuolella oleva ympäristö lapsen luonteen muovaajana,” *Lapsi ja Nuoriso* 11:7 (1947), 163–4.

<sup>57</sup> Frank Biess, “Feelings in the Aftermath: Toward a History of Postwar Emotions,” in *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe*, ed. by Frank Biess & Robert Moeller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 30–48.

<sup>58</sup> Antti Malinen & Tuomo Tamminen, *Jälleenrakentajien lapset: Sodanjälkeinen Suomi lapsen silmin* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2017); Kirsi-Maria Hytönen & Antti Malinen, “‘Cos I’m a Survivor’. Narratives of Coping and Resilience in Recollections of Difficult Childhood in Post-war Finland,” *Ethnologia Fennica* 45 (2018), 55–78.

<sup>59</sup> For emotional refuges, see William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).





**Fig. 13.4** Drunken men in Helsinki at the corner of Albertinkatu and Pursimiehenkatu streets. (Photograph taken in the 1950s. Photo: Helsinki City Museum)

education, Finnish elementary school students were educated to move about in natural surroundings: they learned not only to value and make use of natural resources, such as wild berries and mushrooms, but also to use nature as a place of relaxation. From 1943 onward, pupils in Helsinki were also expected to contribute to the food supply, under the supervision of primary school teachers, by growing vegetables and picking forest berries and bringing them to the school kitchen. Some of the assignments given by Dagmar Kemilä, and the related drawings, one, for example, by eight-year-old Aila, entitled “Mushroom woodland,” seem to reflect these demands and objectives related to postwar shortages (Fig. 13.5). The drawing depicts two children picking mushrooms by themselves and placing them in their baskets without adult supervision. The children are portrayed as making use of natural resources, of living their national obligations.

At the same time, there was still room for play and wonder, at least in Aila’s representation. The child on the left seems to be observing an ant climbing up a spruce tree. The students were also taught to live their nation through appreciating the aesthetic and restorative qualities of nature. Study books used in primary schools depicted gardens and nature as comfortable and relaxing spaces, which encouraged a healthy and sober lifestyle and “cultivated the soul and heart for the benefit of human life and society.”<sup>60</sup> As part of the above-mentioned assignment, Dagmar Kemilä arranged a field trip where she asked her pupils to observe the forest, as well as the intricate details of an individual tree, its foliage and needles.

The embodied practice of drawing offered another emotional refuge in the children’s lives. We will discuss in the next section these “alternative spaces and places”<sup>61</sup> of emotion that drawing created, and how they, often in very subtle ways, were linked to the nation.

<sup>60</sup>Kalle Kalervo, *Koulupuutarha-aatteen kehitys meillä ja muualla* (Helsinki: Kirja, 1913); Oiva Saari, Lyly Miettinen & Matti Koskenniemi, *Luonto ja me: luonnontiedon oppikirja kaupunkien ja muiden asutuskeskusten kansakouluille* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1952), 153.

<sup>61</sup>See also Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen, “The Politics of Identity and Visuality: The Case of Finnish War Children,” in *Images in Use: Towards the Critical Analysis of Visual Communication*, ed. by Matteo Stocchetti & Karin Kukkonen (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011), 181–98, here 186. For drawing as an emotional refuge for children, see also Koivurova (2018).



**Fig. 13.5** “Mushroom woodland” by eight-year-old Aila Teerikangas, 1945–1950. (Photo: Aalto University’s History of Art Education Archives, Helsinki)

### LEARNING NATIONAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCES THROUGH ART

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, pedagogues in Europe showed increasing interest in children’s free and intuitive expression in drawing: as children saw the world differently compared to adults, it was felt that their drawings should not be measured according to adult criteria.<sup>62</sup> Influences of the international art education movement are also clearly visible in two Finnish committee reports published in 1907

<sup>62</sup>Kay (2019), 189; Pignot (2019), 170–88; Mary Ann Stankiewicz, “Capitalizing Art Education: Mapping International Histories,” in *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education*, ed. by Liora Bresler (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 7–38; Merja Mannila, “The early development of art education in Finland,” in *Images in time: essays on art education in*

and 1909. Both criticized the prevailing methods of art education, according to which students were asked to copy teachers' models in a mechanized way. The committees suggested instead that the emphasis should be more on stimulation and development of pupils' sense of beauty and perception.<sup>63</sup> The need for revision of art education was also justified with respect to societal demands to educate healthy future citizens: "A trained eye is able to enjoy more than an untrained one, and a mind which is open to aesthetic values provides ways for a child to resist unhealthy influences."<sup>64</sup>

According to architectural historian Roy Kozlovsky, the post-World War II generation in England redefined the politics of aesthetic education as "a technique for engineering a more peaceful society by transforming the emotional structure of the individual."<sup>65</sup> Art historian Herbert Read, in particular, believed that by educating children in aesthetic techniques they could expand their capacity to communicate and express themselves. These were also activities that Read considered necessary for the development of balanced personalities with critical intellectual capacity.<sup>66</sup>

Educators in Nordic countries held similar beliefs, and reforms were often motivated by pointing to the experiences of the education programs of the totalitarian states. For example, the Finnish National Curriculum for 1952 stated explicitly that instead of forcing pupils to follow a single political ideology, they should be guided toward free and independent thinking, and intellectual curiosity. In the 1952 Curriculum, art education was considered to play a major role in the formation of future citizens, as it provided tools to foster children's creativity, imagination and abilities of self-expression—all features that gained new significance in post-World War II societies.<sup>67</sup> In Finnish art education, and in educational thinking overall, the reformist ideas were in the air, but undoubtedly many teachers still continued to teach using old methods in their day-to-day work.

*Finland*, ed. by Maria Laukka et al. (Helsinki: Helsinki University of Industrial Arts, 1992), 31–7.

<sup>63</sup> Piirustuskomiteamietintö [Committee for the Art Education Report] 1907: 13a, p. 15; Piirustuskomiteamietintö 1909: 8a.

<sup>64</sup> Piirustuskomiteamietintö 1909: 8a, 8–9.

<sup>65</sup> Kozlovsky (2016), 125.

<sup>66</sup> Kozlovsky (2016), 125.

<sup>67</sup> Committee for the Elementary School Curriculum Report 1952:3, 13, 19, 28.

Dagmar Kemilä became one of the most well-known representatives of the new style of art education in Finland. From the 1920s until the 1950s, Kemilä made several study trips to Central Europe. She also took an active part in educating elementary school teachers around the country. She gave lectures, wrote articles related to the teaching of *kotiseutuoppi* and art education, and lectured regularly on the national School Radio.<sup>68</sup> In 1947, the National Board of Education, together with Kemilä, organized an exhibition at the design company Artek's showroom in Helsinki, aiming to introduce Kemilä's successful teaching methods to a wider audience in Finland. Both art critics and the public praised Kemilä's students' works, which were put on display for their "joyful play of color."<sup>69</sup> The Ministry of Education was so impressed that it decided to send the drawings to an international exhibition organized by the Union des Arts Plastiques at the Louvre in Paris.<sup>70</sup> Kemilä's students won several prizes at the Louvre exhibition, and their drawings were also later displayed in New York and Japan.<sup>71</sup> While the young artists had not done their drawings for any particular audience, Dagmar Kemilä probably gave the assignments with audiences sometimes in mind. In the international context, the children's drawings represented not just Kemilä's teaching methods but also Finland and the Finnish way of life.

Kemilä saw art education as a way of facilitating the development of the children's imagination and emotional life. In one of her articles, she described in detail her method of awakening students' inner vision:

*When the subject is explained and demonstrated in words and with gestures, the students gather their thoughts, concentrate, calm down at their desks, close their eyes for moment and start to grow their inner visions. These minutes of inner awakening are the most positive and adorable moments of the class. It's like life itself lays its invisible hand on them. One can only hear their steady breathing, and now that the teacher's part of the task has been transferred to the pupils, he/she can stand back and wait for the pupils to bring their vision to life.<sup>72</sup>*

<sup>68</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 4 June 1936; *Opettajain Lehti* 33:51 (1938), 1483; Dagmar Kemilä, "Huomiointia alakansakoulun piirustuksen opetuksesta," *Stylus* 26 (1941), 45–52.

<sup>69</sup> *Suomen Kuvalehti* 19 April 1947 II, 3.

<sup>70</sup> *Uusi Suomi* 21 March 1947.

<sup>71</sup> *Uusi Suomi* 1 March 1947.

<sup>72</sup> Kemilä (1941).

After the awakening of their inner vision, the children could start to draw. We argue that during art classes the children became engaged in multilayered narrative worlds: while drawing and painting they transformed field-trip experiences into new visual narratives, and again reinterpreted them when explaining—to the teacher and to other students—what was happening in their drawings. Kemilä understood visualization through drawing and the relating of the children’s stories as two interwoven processes.<sup>73</sup> It can be argued that in these narrative worlds, the children were able to experience a “simulated reality” and feel in response to the stories and images they heard, saw or created themselves. As historians Pascal Eitler, Stephanie Olsen and Uffa Jensen point out, “reading can be an active experience through which readers can explore their imagination, participate in the production of the text’s meaning, and exercise varying degrees of autonomy.”<sup>74</sup> We propose to expand this notion to drawing.

This kind of engagement with narrative fiction and mental simulation of social experiences may improve social skills, such as the ability to feel empathy.<sup>75</sup> Education concerning empathy became in itself one of the objects of the postwar curriculum, as school authorities acknowledged that many students, such as war orphans and evacuees, had experienced war-related losses, and were in need of support.<sup>76</sup> The National Board of Education emphasized in its circulars that teachers should do all that they could to help, for example, evacuated children to feel comfortable and welcome in their new environments. According to this view, stories in school books or in children’s books could impart and share “situated and practical knowledge, telling children not necessarily what to feel but how this or that emotion occurs, what it looks like and the physical experience of it, in some level of detail.”<sup>77</sup> Also, art teaching was used to similar effect. Dagmar Kemilä gave students motifs such as “My church” and “Easter” when teaching religion, but at the same time they were introduced to

<sup>73</sup> Kemilä (1941).

<sup>74</sup> Pascal Eitler, Stephanie Olsen & Uffa Jensen, “Introduction,” in *Learning How to Feel. Children’s Literature and Emotional Socialization, 1870–1970*, ed. by Ute Frevert et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–20.

<sup>75</sup> Raymond A. Mar, Keith Oatley & Jordan B. Peterson, “Exploring the link between reading fiction and empathy: Ruling out individual differences and examining outcomes,” *Communications* 34:4 (2009), 407–28.

<sup>76</sup> See Kouluhallituksen kansaopetusosaston II arkisto, Dc:4, kiertokirjeet 1944–45, Circular 7 September 1944.

<sup>77</sup> Eitler, Olsen & Jensen (2014).

emotions such as grief and feelings of loss as they drew church services, funerals, grieving relatives, or other religious themes related to Easter and the suffering of Jesus.<sup>78</sup>

Our analysis points to the fact that teachers played a major role in the formation of emotional skills such as empathy. Dagmar Kemilä's pedagogy was well-suited to the new postwar situation. For example, she believed that classrooms could become sites where children learned to express their feelings courageously, without fear, and that this learning started by imitating teachers.<sup>79</sup> The teacher's duty was to invite students into a mimetic learning experience, by behaving and speaking in a warm manner that facilitated open discussion, and even by wearing colorful and nice clothes that made them more approachable to children. Kemilä also believed that teachers should present examples of drawing techniques that encouraged students to use their imagination and to express emotions. Kemilä herself taught the children to hold several crayons in their hand simultaneously, and even to draw with both hands at once, in order to develop speed and spontaneity. The drawing paper was also as large as practically possible in order to provide room for the children's expression.<sup>80</sup> Kemilä also expected students to be able to explain in detail what they had drawn, in order to develop their ability to communicate and express their feelings and ideas. Just as with the school excursions, the practice of drawing engaged a wide spectrum of the children's senses. Borrowing from Josephine Hoegaerts, who has examined school excursions in nineteenth-century Belgium, we argue that these multisensory experiences allowed pupils a concrete, physical and very direct interaction with the nation, and "a heightened awareness of that close interaction."<sup>81</sup> The nation was learned and felt in situated activities.

One of the prize-winning works in Paris was a drawing by the eight-year-old schoolgirl Leena, entitled "The Lovely Sun" (Fig. 13.6). This was a theme that Kemilä seems to have been particularly interested in. She used it as an example in her writings on several occasions.<sup>82</sup> With its bright

<sup>78</sup> Dagmar Kemilä, "Minun kirkkoni," *Schoolradio* 1942, 22–3, 36. See drawings 6294, boy, eight years old, 1945–1950; 6296, boy (no information on age), 1945–1950; 6297, girl, eight years old, 1946.

<sup>79</sup> *Uusi Suomi* 1 May 1947.

<sup>80</sup> *Suomen Kuvalehti* 19 April 1947 II, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Hoegaerts (2020), 73–4.

<sup>82</sup> Dagmar Kemilä, "Aurinko armas [Dear Sun]," *Kouluradio* (1942), 44.



**Fig. 13.6** “The Lovely Sun” by 8-year-old Leena Paasi, 1945–1950. (Photo: Aalto University’s History of Art Education Archives, Helsinki)

colors, an expressive technique and a feeling of spontaneity, Leena’s work is illustrative of drawing as an engagement with multilayered narrative worlds and the kind of national-emotional work we have described above. As already mentioned, one of the major objects in Kemilä’s teaching was to foster children’s ability to feel empathy toward other human beings, animals and nature as a whole. In Leena’s drawing, a young child seems to be facing the sun, and connecting with it, by feeling the warmth and brightness of its rays. This experience of connection, and of being able to feel connected, to home, locality, nation and to the wider world was something that teachers hoped to foster in children, as a way of socializing them to become competent and adaptive future citizens.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Committee for the Elementary School Curriculum Report 1952: 3, 24.



Written on the back of the drawing one can find Kemilä's remarks on her approach to the motif "lovely sun," and how she instructed her students:

*When observing the sun in nature, we realize its brightness. We will not draw a face for the sun. If we did so, we would no longer be considering the sun to be great, wonderful and lovely. Only from storybooks will children learn to draw a face for the sun. The sunbeams we shall draw as straight lines, which are not like the withered petals of a day flower.*

These instructions show how Kemilä guided her young students, and how she expressed her own ideals with regard to a desirable outcome. The children were not given total freedom to express their inner vision. In the process, the teacher's and the children's emotions became entangled.

## CONCLUSIONS

The nation in the postwar period was reproduced for and by children in multifaceted ways. This was done not simply by educators offering ideological concepts and ideas, and/or through the representations of the nation, but equally in material and spatial everyday encounters, and in everyday school practices, such as exploring the urban environment, withdrawing to green space and drawing. At play were a whole range of "explicit and non-intentional—but still educative—encounters," such as emotions, stimulation of the will to learn in children, and nonhuman teachers (such as the space and environment).<sup>84</sup> The nation for postwar children was a lived experience: not as openly nationalist as had been the case in the interwar period, but nevertheless present. In the postwar period, this experience was becoming increasingly urban.

The case study of postwar Helsinki illustrates the importance of fully acknowledging the spatiality and materiality of emotions when discussing children's emotional formation and historical manifestations of everyday nationalism. In the field of the history of childhood, children's own experiences, in respect to what adults thought children should be experiencing, are a key area of interest. As Stephanie Olsen points out, "it is in the dynamic relation between stakeholders of

<sup>84</sup> Millei (2019), 85.

childhood (including, most importantly, children) and childhood itself that the new narrative of children's emotions emerges."<sup>85</sup> Educators hoped to encourage certain ways of experiencing the city in relation to the national space and frames of experiencing. Postwar National Curriculum in Finland (1946 and 1952) emphasized the role of art education, as it offered a means to teach children emotional competences and to foster their development into balanced and peace-loving personalities. In our analysis, we took a closer look at Dagmar Kemilä and her exceptionally progressive art-teaching techniques. Kemilä believed that aesthetic techniques such as drawing and connected excursions and discussions would expand children's capacities for emotional expression and communication. In the process, new forms of national belonging, suited to the postwar society, were negotiated in embodied and sensory ways.

The children's spatial encounters and drawings were influenced by the objectives of the *kotisentuoppi* education; the assignments given by the teacher; the teacher's personality and her own feelings and ways of being in the world; the broad visual culture surrounding the children, and the social and material realities of the city. Still, as historian Manon Pignot asserts, children "were not mere copyists, we must also imagine these drawings as alternative forms of personal expression."<sup>86</sup> By exploring and drawing, postwar children living in Helsinki gave meaning to the urban environment as part of the wider national space.

<sup>85</sup> Stephanie Olsen, "Introduction," in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives*, ed. by Stephanie Olsen (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2015), 2.

<sup>86</sup> Pignot (2017), 312.

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# The Image of Marshal Mannerheim, Moral Panic, and the Refashioning of the Nation in the 1990s

*Tuomas Tepora*

## INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War resulted in radical changes in Finland's international position and economy. It sparked an identity struggle, seen within society as soul-searching. One of the major national symbolic figures, Marshal Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim (1867–1951), the Civil War (1918) and World War II military leader and the President of Finland (1944–1946), became a mirror in this collective introspection. This chapter addresses the personality cult surrounding Marshal Mannerheim, as well as the alternating images of him, as keys to understanding the emotional and social upheavals within Finnish society in the early 1990s.

The chapter focuses on the debate in the early 1990s concerning the construction of the Museum of Contemporary Art next to the Mannerheim

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V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_14)

equestrian statue at the heart of Helsinki. The debate offers invaluable insight into the emotional memory politics, the layers of memories, and future expectations in the post-Cold War nation. In the early 1990s, the Mannerheim statue and contemporary art formed an oxymoron that seemed to threaten the moral base of the nation. The juxtaposition symbolized a moral panic that concerned the lived experience of Finland's changing international position. Through the concept of "lived experience," I intend to show how individual citizens sought emotional advice from the perceived national collective. By "moral panic," I refer to a media-driven and emotionally charged debate that concerned the moral foundations as well as the future of society.

Trained and having served in the Imperial Russian Army until 1917, Mannerheim's dominant public image is as the Marshal of Finland, the celebrated Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish Army during World War II. Yet, since 1918, and up until World War II, his dominant image had been that of the White General of the victorious White Army in the Finnish Civil War.<sup>1</sup> For many defeated socialists, however, he symbolized a demonic butcher-in-chief. Out of more than 36,000 people who perished as a consequence of the bloody civil war, more than three-fourths were socialists, known as the Reds. This bitter emotional legacy has significantly contributed to the Mannerheim cult, which derives its power from controversy. Mannerheim the butcher is a "conservative" figure. That figure resists change as strongly as its revered counterpart, Mannerheim the marshal. Thus, the most creative and productive building blocks for the Mannerheim personality cult are found between conservative poles. This is the territory of the playful and eroticized Mannerheim, the cosmopolitan and art-loving aristocrat. This is also the territory of a plethora of commercial brands, which also utilize the conservative imagery. The Mannerheim image, as with any public image in open societies, has also been susceptible to decoding and recoding over time. The dominant Mannerheim figures may be seen as keyholes into significant cultural and social changes.<sup>2</sup> One major turning point occurred at the end of the Cold War, as will be discussed in this chapter.

<sup>1</sup>J. E. O. Screen, *Mannerheim: The Finnish Years* (London: Hurst, 2000).

<sup>2</sup>*Päivän Sanomat* 31 January 1959; Yrjö Niiniluoto, *Suuri rooli: Suomen marsalkan, vapaaherra Carl Gustaf Mannerheimin kirjallisen muotokuvan yrittelmä* (Helsinki: Otava, 1962); Tuomas Tepora, "Ratsastajapatsas, moraalinen paniikki ja nykytaide: Mannerheimielikuvien muuttuvat merkitykset ja niiden rakentajat 1900-luvulla," in *Yhteisöstä yksilöön: Juba Siltalan jublakirja*, ed. by Marja Jalava, Ilkka Levä, Tuomas Tepora & Ville Yliaska (Helsinki: Into, 2017).

## EMOTIONS, REMEMBRANCE, AND A NONTOTALITARIAN PERSONALITY CULT

During Mannerheim's lifetime, and especially after his death, the Mannerheim image had developed into an emotional figure that could be understood as a symbol and a container of contradictory public emotions.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, "emotional figures" reflect, circulate, and amplify a wide range of social emotions expressed and commemorated in society. From the perspective of the history of emotions, the Mannerheim images can be seen as having been used in the expression and production of public and collectively shared or contested feelings. The Mannerheim personality cult may not have drawn huge crowds rallying around his few statues. Instead, the conservative Mannerheim cult and its strong counterimages marked off urban and rural spaces with memorials and with emotional memories that both supported and challenged the intended meanings. These emotional figures created certain emotional spaces and demarcation lines, such as the statue sites, certain buildings such as his former Headquarters in Mikkeli or symbolically highly charged defensive structures, namely, the Mannerheim defensive line in Karelia. It thus warrants asking how the Mannerheim image worked (or works, for that matter) as an emotional figure?

Imagined, internalized emotional figures can, of course, be powerful. When one spotted a Mannerheim image, or read or heard mention of the name of the Marshal, it became difficult to remain ignorant. One was forced to have an opinion. Obviously, there was no single Mannerheim image but, rather, competing images that represented, reflected, and recoded new waves of Mannerheim "emotionology" and emotive, transformative manifestations.<sup>4</sup> One wondered what and how to feel in connection with the values Mannerheim represented, and, most importantly, why one should be wary of not publicly trespassing the sacred boundary around his image. Smearing or defacing a Mannerheim statue was a political statement, but it was also a distinctly emotional statement unlike with any other statue of historical or political significance.

<sup>3</sup>For a corresponding concept in memory studies, "figures of memory," see Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995), 125–33.

<sup>4</sup>Peter N. Stearns & Carol Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *American Historical Review* 90:4 (1985), 813–36; William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 96–111; Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 59–70.

I understand the function of personality cults in democratic societies as the depositories of socially constructive emotions. Thus, they are points of negotiation, unity, and discord between social groups within the collective. I draw from the cross-fertilization of the history of emotions and memory studies. My key sources include the archival material of the Marshal Mannerheim Heritage Foundation (*Suomen Marsalkka Mannerheimin perinnesäätiö*, MHF) and the elite veteran's organization for the Knights of the Mannerheim Cross. These offer invaluable insight into conservative Mannerheim imagery and the methods of its guardians. Scholars have identified contemporary recreations and decoding of the Marshal as increasingly mediatized phenomena. The media along with social media form the sites for Mannerheim controversies, discussions, and "sacralization"<sup>5</sup> and offer insights into alternate Mannerheim images and emotional representations. The discussion here is complemented by an interview with history professor Matti Klinge, a member of the MHF board in the 1980s and early 1990s, prior to the statue and museum polemic.

Modern, political personality cults have traditionally been implemented in totalitarian societies. Historians and political scientists share a rather straightforward consensus that the construction and maintenance of personality cults serve instrumental goals. They mobilize and indoctrinate people and build political hierarchies around the leader. These structural layers of hierarchies within closed autocracy form the basis of a totalitarian society.<sup>6</sup> Nontotalitarian personality cults, in turn, may have instrumental purposes, but the reception of the cultic figures is difficult, if not

<sup>5</sup> Tarja Väyrynen, "Keeping the Trauma of War Open in the Male Body: Resisting the Hegemonic Forms of Masculinity and National Identity in Visual Arts," *Journal of Gender Studies* 22:2 (2013), 137–51; Jere Kyyrö, "Sacredness as a Resource, Sacralization as a Strategy: Field Marshal Mannerheim and Finnish Fields of Media and Cultural Production," *Implicit Religion* 20:1 (2017), 43–64; Jere Kyyrö, *Mannerheim ja muuttuvat tulkinnot: Mediatisoitunut kansalaisuskonto 2000–2010-lukujen kulttuurikistöissä* (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Robert C. Tucker, "The Rise of Stalin's Personality Cult," *American Historical Review* 84:2 (1979), 347–66; Ian Kershaw & Moshe Lewin, *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Balázs Apor, Jan C. Behrends, Polly Jones & E. A. Rees, eds, *Leader Cults in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc* (London: Macmillan, 2004); Jan Plamper & Klaus Heller, eds, *Personality Cults in Stalinism/ Personenkulte im Stalinismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

impossible, to control. As famously noted by Max Weber, modern, bureaucratic leadership relies on legal authority and rationality. This form of rule should be the most immune to personality cults, yet charismatic leaders have not been uncommon in modern Western societies. Weber, propounding his theory of authority before the era of twentieth-century totalitarianisms, was conceiving of a party leader.<sup>7</sup>

The twentieth century can be described as the era of the personality cult. In that period, different forms of totalitarian and authoritarian leadership evolved around the globe. They produced various types of cult images that reflected corresponding emotional regimes of fear, awe, and ecstasy. Importantly, the calls for charismatic leadership and cult images were not confined to totalitarian societies. The wars and crises of the first half of the twentieth century produced political and military leaders in authoritarian, democratic, and hybrid societies within Western and Eastern Europe. These leaders, such as Miklos Horthy of Hungary, Józef Piłsudski of Poland, or Gustaf Mannerheim, already became mythicized, revered, and hated figures during their lifetime. The political elites and the leaders themselves utilized their positions to construct and maintain myths that served their political purposes and legacies.<sup>8</sup>

Nontotalitarian personality cults have been the object of tentative research, but the field is still in a formative phase of development. Works on the myths and images of political figures such as Abraham Lincoln and Charles de Gaulle have indicated that scholars of nontotalitarian personality cults may benefit from concentrating particularly on the afterlife of the leader figures. It seems that nontotalitarian personality cults reach their peak and procreative qualities in the commemoration of their leaders. The continuity of the totalitarian regimes is threatened by or at least faces a major challenge at the death or removal of the leader. Democracies, in turn, begin to evaluate, celebrate, defame, and commemorate the past leader. The surviving political establishment may or may not safeguard the legacies of the leaders, but in an open society safeguarding will eventually prove impossible. The leaders are transformed into images that in time may become focal points of the popular culture, as in the cases of

<sup>7</sup>Max Weber, "Die drei reine Typen der legitimen Herrschaft," *Preussische Jahrbücher* 187:1 (1922), 1–12.

<sup>8</sup>Catherine Horel, *L'amiral Horthy: Régent de Hongrie* (Paris: Perrin 2014); Monika Świda, "The Historical Figures of the Republic in the Process of Reconstruction of the National Imagery: Sidónio Pais and Józef Piłsudski," *Studia Litteraria Universitatis Jagellonicae Cracovensia* 7:4 (2012), 153–67.



Mannerheim, de Gaulle, and President Urho Kekkonen of Finland.<sup>9</sup> The key difference between totalitarian and nontotalitarian personality cults lies in their capacity to regenerate and decode meanings. One can and does satirize Hitler and Stalin and their brethren. One cannot, however, adopt a hybrid attitude toward the cultic qualities of these characters. In Mannerheim's case, one can scorn the military attributes of his image while endorsing his cosmopolitanism.

### THE NEO-PATRIOTIC DECADE

It is clearly historically unsound to label entire decades as representative of certain historical eras. In Finland, the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union acted as catalysts for renewed explicit conservative patriotism—seen from within this framework, the 1990s have been called the neo-patriotic decade.<sup>10</sup> The term refers to the recreated celebration of nationalistic and often populist values, especially in connection with the remembrance of World War II. To be precise, it is perhaps more accurate to describe the early 1990s as the neo-patriotic era proper and to connect the bulk of the latter part of the 1990s with the European-Union-friendly economic boom of the turn of the millennium.

In the early 1990s, the Eastern superpower had lost the Cold War and suddenly many Finns experienced the feeling that they not only had sided openly with the Western victors of the Cold War but were the moral victors of World War II. That is, defeated Finland reversed the consequences of the war. This change in ideas becomes understandable in light of the conservative version of Finnish war experience that had endured since the end of World War II, even if in a minor key. According to that view, the Finnish participation in the war had actually been an isolated and separate conflict from the war waged between the Allied and Axis powers.

Fluidly moving and self-contained, patriotic sentiments created unexpected combinations and results when they came into contact with other new and emotionally heavy currents within society, such as the question of

<sup>9</sup>Sudhir Hazareesingh, *In the Shadow of the General: Modern France and the Myth of de Gaulle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 144–69; Tuuli Lähdesmäki, “From Personality Cult Figure to Camp Image – the Case of President Urho Kekkonen,” *Participations* 6:1 (2009).

<sup>10</sup>Tiina Kinnunen & Markku Jokisipilä, “The Shifting Images of ‘Our Wars’: Finnish Memory Culture of World War II,” in *Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations*, ed. by Tiina Kinnunen & Ville Kivimäki (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

joining the European Union or the consequences of the collapse of the bipolar globe. The neo-patriotic experience and public discourses became closely linked with a morally supportive atmosphere that found fuel and guidance from remembering the heroism shown 50 years before. The popularity of and the demand for realistic and patriotic rather than allegoric war films became one of the manifestations of the changed atmosphere of the 1990s.<sup>11</sup>

The war generation had by now reached the age of retirement and the conservative leaders of the veterans' movement took their positions as the guardians of the prescribed legacy of the war generation. In the guise of Director of the Board of the MHF, General Adolf Ehrnrooth, Mannerheim rose from the dead in order to finish the remaining worldly battle of the veterans. The General, in his late eighties, thus became a highly visible symbol of the veterans' generation and of renewed patriotism. Clearly the veterans included people from all walks of life, but in the media the "veterans" became synonymous with conservative neo-patriotism. It is also important to understand that the youth of the 1990s, in particular, adopted a nationalistic attitude. The social changes of the decade formed their key experience while the Finnish experience of World War II formed a unifying and predominantly positive historical point of reference. It provided a representation of a nationally uplifting and defensive battle. The veterans' generation found its closest ally from among teenagers and young adults in their early twenties.<sup>12</sup>

However, the young and the patriotic did not necessarily see joining the EU as problematic. This illustrates how the identities found themselves in the middle of the process of reorganization. In the United States, Francis Fukuyama famously anticipated the end of history, meaning the global victory of liberal democracy. Nationalism was considered to be an idea of the past, and national feeling, that is nationalism as an emotional phenomenon, seemed to be on its way to becoming a "lost emotion." The experience in the former socialist republics of Eastern Europe would soon prove otherwise. In Finland, many writers published works that defined

<sup>11</sup> Ville Yliaska, "Kansakunnan uudelleensynty," in *Yhteisöstä yksilöön: Juha Siltalan juhla-kirja*, ed. by Marja Jalava, Ilkka Levä, Tuomas Tepora & Ville Yliaska (Helsinki: Into, 2017), 326–36.

<sup>12</sup> Sirkka Ahonen, *Historiaton sukupolvi? Historian vastaanotto ja historiallisen identiteetin rakentuminen 1990-luvun nuorison keskuudessa* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1998), 74–89, 120–3, 171–2; Pilvi Torsti, *Suomalaiset ja historia* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2012), 135–55.

“Finland” and sought new ways to prosper as a nation. The parochial celebrations of Finnishness, together with its peculiar national characteristics, became linked with a constant media struggle aimed at proving one’s European-ness. The Finnish way of self-Europeanization was called, and perhaps then also experienced, as a form of “self-racism.”<sup>13</sup>

The Western recession of the early-1990s hit the Finnish economy exceptionally hard. Carefree private spending in the late 1980s resulted in a debt crisis furthered by the abrupt loss of the lucrative bilateral Soviet trade. The unemployment rate rose to a high of nearly 20 percent in 1994.<sup>14</sup> The neo-patriotic turn cannot be understood without considering the concurrent relative economic misery, with many a lost job, business, piece of property, or dream. The widespread unemployment and the conservative celebration of Finnish moral superiority may seem contradictory to each other, but, as this chapter suggests, recession and essentially populist neo-patriotism became closely linked. This link was enhanced by the concurrent public debates and campaigns for and against joining the EU. Campaigners against joining the Union reflected the sentiment of not wishing to concede the country’s newly acquired and reinvigorated independence to Brussels. In the October 1994 referendum, 43 percent of voters opposed joining. By 1994, the economy had started to recover, despite the fact that unemployment hit record levels. Everyday life was still filled with short-sightedness.

This experience coincided with perhaps the fiercest postwar battle connected with the significance of the remembrance of Marshal Mannerheim. The media spectacle of the year 1994 was the controversy surrounding the construction of the Museum of Contemporary Art at the heart of Helsinki, a spot occupied by the Mannerheim equestrian statue. Whereas in the late 1980s Mannerheim enthusiasts had lamented the media’s lack of interest in the commemoration of the military leader,<sup>15</sup> in the new geopolitical situation the entire emotional regime of the society seemed to lean toward embracing conservative symbolism.

<sup>13</sup> Satu Apo, “Suomalaisuuden stigmatisoinnin traditio,” in *Elävänä Euroopassa: Muuttuva suomalainen identiteetti*, ed. by Pertti Alasuutari & Petri Ruuska (Tampere: Vastapaino, 1998), 86.

<sup>14</sup> *Findicator*, Unemployment rate 1989 M01–2020 M02, <https://findikaattori.fi/en/table/34>, accessed 15 April 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Mannerheim Heritage Foundation Archives (MHF), Folder Hb 1: Minutes of the Board (1980–2000), Minutes of the Board Meeting 28 January 1987.

## THE STATUE AND CONTEMPORARY ART

The Mannerheim statue in central Helsinki was unveiled on Mannerheim's birthday in 1960, after a decades-long process that had initially begun in the interwar period. After World War II, a popular movement instigated by the student body of the University of Helsinki and led by a board of professors, high-ranking military personnel, conservative politicians, and financial elites, finished the project in an impressive manner, mainly with donations from citizens. More than 600,000 people donated funds for the statue project in the 1950s. It is notable that the equestrian form of the statue connected it with symbolism of *ancien régime* sovereigns. Other than the equestrian Mannerheim statue in Lahti, unveiled in 1959, the Helsinki statue was the first of its kind in Finland. The Helsinki statue was designed by Aimo Tukiainen, who had previously finished commissioned works on military graves and, interestingly, Red civil war memorials.<sup>16</sup> The Mannerheim Heritage Foundation was established in 1973 to continue the work of the statue committee. Its prime mover from the start was General Ehrnrooth, a relative of Mannerheim.<sup>17</sup>

The statue and its location have since formed a key site of memory in Finnish society. After a lengthy debate and extensive public planning, the site selected for the statue was at a major central crossroads on the main thoroughfare that in 1942 had been named *Mannerheimintie* (Mannerheim Road), in the busiest and most visible spot of the city. The Parliament and the National Museum were situated nearby. The location was also the point at which Mannerheim had entered the city in May 1918 during the victory parade that symbolically ended the Civil War with a White victory. Although the statue otherwise depicted Mannerheim as a World War II Marshal, the controversial and divisive symbolism arising from the bitter legacy of Finland's brutal domestic war thus became interwoven with the symbolism of the statue's location.<sup>18</sup> In spite of that prominent location, the proximity of the railway station meant that facing north-east from the

<sup>16</sup>Riitta Konttinen, *Suomen Marsalkan ratsastajapatsas* (Helsinki: Suomen Marsalkka Mannerheimin perinnesäätiö, 1989), 191–2, 194–5.

<sup>17</sup>Vera von Fersen, *Ratsastajapatsasvaltuuskunnasta perinnesäätiöksi: Suomen Marsalkka Mannerheimin perinnesäätiön synty ja toiminta* (Helsinki: Suomen Marsalkka Mannerheimin perinnesäätiö, 2005), 27.

<sup>18</sup>Tuomas Tepora, "Changing Perceptions of 1918: World War II and the Post-War Rise of the Left," in *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy*, ed. by Tuomas Tepora & Aapo Roselius (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 387–9.

statue stood old railway storage buildings, unused tracks, and open space around Töölönlahti Bay. This part of the city has only experienced heavy development from the 1990s on. The construction of Kiasma, the Museum of Contemporary Art, began that development.

The original 1950s' public discussion of where to erect the statue would almost merit another chapter. Suffice it to say, however, that in line with the cultic characteristics connected with Mannerheim, there was a clear hierarchy in opinions regarding the best locations. The hierarchy was based on the social proximity of the debater to Mannerheim. Who, it might be asked, had the right and the power to express, or even have access to, an opinion that would echo the authentic feelings and opinions of the Marshal? And vice versa, who possessed enough status and credibility to satirize the location debate?<sup>19</sup> This is important, because similar emotions and status fights for representation were also expressed in the early 1990s, when the Museum of Contemporary Art seemed to threaten the position of the statue. During the Cold War, the sides in the debates and satires were comprised of the far Left and the others. But in the early-1990s, it was difficult to pinpoint the sides politically. In general terms, the two sides to the controversy were the statue-defending “neo-patriots” and the museum-defending “cosmopolitans.” Unlike during the Cold War, neither side visibly tried to besmirch Mannerheim's legacy or make his imagery appear foolish. Both sides constructed Mannerheim images so as to argue for their positions in the debate.

The building project to house the contemporary collection of the National Gallery of Art began in the late 1980s. The state acquired a valuable site for the building from the city of Helsinki. The vast unbuilt land in the center of the capital city adjacent to the Mannerheim statue needed urban revitalization, but the site for the museum building was tight and closely bordered the site of the statue. Thus, relocation of the statue by 20 m was already on the agenda during the city planning discussions in 1991. In 1992, the city approached the Mannerheim Heritage Foundation about relocating the equestrian statue. The Foundation rejected even a modest move. By that time the veteran's movement had acquired great visibility and had earned public respect. The relocation of the statue without the consent of the Mannerheim Heritage Foundation would have left city officials in a dire, even a shameful, position. The legacy of the veterans found itself in the line of fire.

<sup>19</sup>Tepora (2017), 297–8.

However, the same year a call for an architectural competition was announced and the city decided to grant the competitors the right to move the statue. The Foundation reacted, and in 1993 city manager Kari Rahkamo assured the board of the Foundation that the statue would remain untouched.<sup>20</sup> Up until then, the controversy had received very little public attention, but the structure of its future narrative had already been scripted. The relocation of the Mannerheim statue would violate the memory and the legacy of the veterans. Thus, it would undermine the collective experience of not only the “veterans’ generation” but of the public patriotic sentiments that had recently gained prominence.

The American architect Steven Holl received first prize in the competition. His design, titled Chiasma (Kiasma), meaning an X-shaped configuration, annoyed lay people as well as many Finnish architects. For the laypeople the design seemed ugly, and for the professionals the building’s location was misplaced. The first round of public outcry in 1993 concerned the design of the building and was mainly carried out by architects. In this debate, the location of the statue received next to no attention. According to the debaters, the major problem with the decision of the competition was to award the first prize to a foreigner. Society was suffering from a recession but the state and the capital city were about to carry out a major design and building project. Why not support local architecture and national design? As usual, local citizens also voiced their concern over the prospective building. Without voicing any particular interest in the fate of the Mannerheim statue, a society called Pro Töölönlahti Bay drew attention to its aim to save the undeveloped Töölönlahti Bay area from construction. Moreover, the postmodern design of the building felt alien to many people.<sup>21</sup>

The final and the most visible round of the Kiasma controversy began in the spring of 1994, when the city council prepared to make the final planning decision on the new museum building. This debate became the media spectacle of the year and made the juxtaposition of the Mannerheim statue and contemporary art a public question of loyalties. Either one sided with the veteran’s movement, represented by the Mannerheim Heritage Foundation and the Mannerheim statue, or one chose contemporary art with its fluid, unrooted values and postmodern buildings (Fig. 14.1).

<sup>20</sup>MHF, Folder F 1: Letters (1980–1993), letter from Kari Rahkamo to the MHF, 3 August 1993.

<sup>21</sup>*Helsingin Sanomat* 14 March 1994.



**Fig. 14.1** The construction site of Kiasma, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, 1996. (Photo: Jan Alanco, Helsinki City Museum)

### A POPULIST MOMENTUM

It can be said that in the early 1990s Finland experienced the formation of a third republic, following the first republic of the interwar period and the second republic of the Cold War era. Many people had to decide whether patriotism and the EU were compatible with each other. Many citizens seemed to experience the nation by being forced to scrutinize their collective attachments, identities, and hopes for the future. The answers were diverse, but some form of patriotism seemed to permeate many of the responses. Populist nationalism was one of the answers put forward. The Mannerheim statue in Helsinki thus became an emotional figure that defined the expectations and fears of social transformation of the society from an introverted and homogenous nation to a Europe-bound country.

First, the problem concerned whether the Mannerheim statue should be moved slightly. This embodied realistic concern and a question.<sup>22</sup> However, even in the beginning it seemed probable that the statue would remain on its present site. Surprisingly, the debate did not cool down. The next round of the debate concerned whether the statue was going to be relocated to an entirely new site. Finally, as spring progressed, the yellow press and op-eds in the *Helsingin Sanomat*, the nation's largest newspaper, discussed whether contemporary art and Mannerheim were compatible at all. Should the museum be built elsewhere? This media debate did not reflect realistic concerns of the city planners and politicians. It reflected a skillfully crafted campaign against the perceived contemporary rootlessness symbolized by contemporary art and the forgetting of the nation's wartime history. The yellow press in particular sensed the populist advantage to making headlines out of incomprehensible contemporary art contained within an ugly building abutting the Mannerheim statue.

Backed by the veterans' and reservists' organizations, the Mannerheim Heritage Foundation approached the members of the city council in late March with a letter requesting that the Marshal's statue be protected. Immediately afterward, the foundation held a press conference. Every major news medium was present. It could be said that Mannerheim rode again and lifted General Ehrnrooth onto fame. In mid-April, the foundation handed city manager Rahkamo and the members of the city government a petition signed by fourteen defense and other civil organizations, including the associations for war invalids and career officers. The signatories petitioned the city not to build the museum too close to the statue. Visibly led by Ehrnrooth, the foundation also decided to approach the government. The Museum of Contemporary Art was a state museum, and it petitioned Culture Minister Tytti Isohookana-Asunmaa and the Chief Secretary of the Ministry of Education, who had presided over the architectural competition. All of the petitions made headlines in the national media.

The sculptor of the Mannerheim statue, Aimo Tukiainen, supported the Mannerheim enthusiasts. He saw the area surrounding the statue as belonging to the concept. The Marshal's statue required open space. Tukiainen's legal petition to preserve the environs of his artwork did not succeed although Tukiainen did not oppose the museum but only its location.<sup>23</sup> This aspect resonated with the public. In an opinion poll conducted

<sup>22</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 1 September 1993.

<sup>23</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 30 June 1994.



among the visitors to the National Gallery in October 1994, the most often-cited reason for opposing the building of the museum on its designated site was felt to be the badly chosen location. Mannerheim and contemporary architecture caused some people symptoms of cognitive dissonance. However, this opinion poll among the art lovers showed that a clear majority did not see a problem with the location of the museum.<sup>24</sup>

The MHF understood to appeal to the negative feelings contemporary architecture and art induced in some segments of the public. In media discourse, Mannerheim became a symbol of popular taste and the will of the people. Why, some wondered, cannot the citizens decide if the museum is compatible with the Mannerheim statue? And was this question not like the upcoming EU referendum? The general public was the best expert, wrote one Helsinki-dweller in an op-ed. The elites and experts despised public opinion.<sup>25</sup> The provinces rose up, and contemporary art received even less understanding outside the capital. Some local people published satirical op-eds that suggested the relocation of the statue outside of Helsinki.<sup>26</sup> “*Marski* is the affair of all of Finland,” wrote a man from Jyväskylä in Central Finland, using the diminutive of “Marshal.” Helsinki’s choice for the location of the museum sprang from the bad taste characteristic of the people in the capital. They did not have the moral right to destroy the nationally precious environment. The junk of contemporary art threatened to “drown” the statue, which was supposed to remind future generations that Finland is “worth defending.”<sup>27</sup> General Ehrnrooth made the last line famous and omnipresent.

In the early 1990s, as nationalism gained support and the public duly showed respect for the work of the war generation, the supporters of the neo-patriotic causes experienced constant threats and potential profanation of sacred values. The battle was by no means waged between the capital and the rest of Finland. Many citizens of Helsinki reacted angrily against the new museum building. Opponents belonged to various social classes and language groups. For instance, a Swedish-speaking veteran with an aristocratic background published an op-ed in which he lamented how the Marshal was on his way to becoming a gatekeeper for a museum, a porter in the street: “Shame,” he wrote, “on you who have the power.”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 13 October 1994.

<sup>25</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 3 June 1994.

<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, *Helsingin Sanomat* 26 May 1994.

<sup>27</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 24 May 1994.

<sup>28</sup> *Hufvudstadsbladet* 25 May 1994.

Another Swedish-speaker could not understand the need for a museum to be built in the midst of a dire economic situation. It was “sad” that the Marshal had been drawn into “this inconceivable case.”<sup>29</sup> Many of the residents of metropolitan Helsinki were as disappointed with the city planning officials and the “elites” as their fellow citizens in other parts of the country.<sup>30</sup>

As the decisive meeting of the city council approached, the stakes climbed higher. Ehrnrooth had already become a “monument” himself, as a prominent Finnish author characterized the 89-year-old general.<sup>31</sup> It was his moment to step up and publish an open letter in a number of newspapers. In undertaking this task, Ehrnrooth decided to write as a private citizen. He presented himself as the authority on Mannerheim’s legacy and the intermediary of his will, as a kind of incarnation. He refused to take for granted that city manager Rahkamo had promised to leave the statue intact. He enlightened him: “Do you know history, city manager Rahkamo?” If not, Ehrnrooth was ready to lecture: “Independent Finland would not exist without Mannerheim.” Old and already feeble Ehrnrooth possessed charisma that appealed to large segments of the citizens, not only the war generation but also the young. He used his old age to teach the “young” city officials. He reminded them that the statue had been funded by public fund-raising. The bureaucrats did not have the right to destroy the will of the people and their possession. “One who does not know the history of one’s country, does not control the present and thus cannot plan the future.”<sup>32</sup> The Museum of Contemporary Art adjacent to the statue of the most important personality in the history of the nation represented plain ahistoricity, a crime against sacred Finnish values. Citizens encouraged by Ehrnrooth, aided by the scandal-hungry yellow press, pointed their fingers at Helsinki-based elites, the perceived rootless and unpatriotic people.<sup>33</sup> At this time, it became clear that the MHF and the public who stood up for the popular Mannerheim image opposed the construction of the museum altogether. The battle was not about the new museum but between two worldviews that represented distinct moralities.

In many ways the campaign to protect the Mannerheim statue was also the personal project of Adolf Ehrnrooth (1905–2004), who silenced

<sup>29</sup> *Hufvudstadsbladet* 25 May 1994.

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, *Helsingin Sanomat* 21 May 1994 and 9 June 1994.

<sup>31</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 27 March 1994. Jukka Kemppinen on Ehrnrooth’s memoir.

<sup>32</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 14 May 1994. The letter was sent to 110 media.

<sup>33</sup> See, for instance, Hotline poll results in *Iltä-Sanomat* 7 May 1994.

differing opinions even within the MHF.<sup>34</sup> Before the 1990s, he had been known for his work for the veterans' organizations and as a decorated frontline commander in World War II. He had become a vocal and distinguished mouthpiece for the veterans' organizations in the 1980s but was not generally known to the public. The year 1994 therefore became *his* year. His memoir published early the same year, entitled *Kenraalin testamentti* (The Will of the General),<sup>35</sup> topped the non-fiction charts and established him as a "Vice-Marshal." The book assured readers that Finland was, 50 years earlier just as today, worth defending. The aristocrat with the Danish spouse claimed, among other obscure one-liners, that multinational states were doomed to fail and that Finland was the best country for the Finns.

Next, Ehrnrooth and the MHF petitioned newly elected President Martti Ahtisaari and the government not to build the museum too close to the statue. President Ahtisaari responded that he was not in a position to get involved in the ongoing civic debate.<sup>36</sup> He responded, however, by giving the veterans' organizations a visible and celebratory place in the Independence Day celebrations scheduled for later in the year.

The MHF did not give in. Only a few days before the first city council meeting regarding the urban planning of the museum site, a young attorney approached the MHF and proposed that the foundation suggest that the city hold a referendum on the matter. According to municipal law, if two percent of the citizens with the right to vote signed a petition to act on a perceived defect, the municipal council was compelled to formally consider the complaint. Hurriedly, the board of the MHF set up an organization to gather signatures from the public. The organization consisted of active members of the union for reserve and noncommissioned officers, with members of voluntary defense organizations added. Within four days, these enthusiasts were able to more than double the needed number of signatures. In the end, more than 23,000 Helsinki citizens signed the petition.<sup>37</sup>

Ehrnrooth handed the petition to the deputy city manager on 3rd June. The following day marked the 127th birthday of Mannerheim, while

<sup>34</sup>E-mail interview with Matti Klinge 27 November 2017.

<sup>35</sup>Adolf Ehrnrooth and Marja-Liisa Lehtonen, *Kenraalin testamentti* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1994).

<sup>36</sup>Tepora (2017), 309.

<sup>37</sup>MHF, Folder Hb 1: Minutes of the Board (1980–2000), memorandum 1994: publicity campaign for the protection of the Mannerheim equestrian statue.

4th June had also been the date of the Flag Day of the Defense Forces since 1942. The MHF board and about 300, mainly older, enthusiasts gathered at the statue to pay their annual respects. At that moment, the participants staged the last melodramatic event undertaken to save the memory of “the greatest of the sons of our time.” In the press, Ehrnrooth even appealed to God to protect the statue.<sup>38</sup> “National pride is not the same as chauvinism,” he told the audience. He also evoked historical parallels from the interwar period when the “chauvinist” segments of society had threatened to remove, and had desecrated, statues and memorials in the capital dedicated to Russian sovereigns. The public, according to the General, had risen to protect them. Today it seemed as if these Russian figures that evoked mixed emotional memories were more important than the Marshal of Finland.<sup>39</sup>

The city government did not agree with the public on the need for a referendum, and eventually the city council decided against it by an overwhelming majority. It was felt that urban planning should not be decided by a general vote. The Green League Council member Kalle Könkkölä crystallized the fear many politicians had of the populist will of the perceived silent masses: “Contemporary art would lose in a referendum.”<sup>40</sup>

The Council member was right. Because of the massive effort of the MHF to stop the construction of the museum, we are today able to follow the nationwide opinion-poll statistics surrounding the statue saga. In the early June of 1994, the MHF commissioned from a major opinion poll company a poll of the attitudes toward the museum and statue debate. One of the rather prescriptive questions read: “Should Parliament/Government have an effect on the protection of the [Mannerheim] equestrian statue that has been created by funds collected from the public?” Fifty-nine percent of all the respondents answered yes, twenty six percent voted no, and fourteen percent remained undecided. There was no marked difference in opinions between genders. Occupation-wise the protection of the statue interested primarily the working classes and the pensioners. No indication of socialist ideology surfaced here. When classified by place of residence, the protection of the statue received more support in the countryside and in small towns than in larger urban areas. The difference in support between generations is perhaps the most interesting result. The

<sup>38</sup> *Hufvudstadsbladet* 7 June 1994.

<sup>39</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 5 June 1994.

<sup>40</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 16 June 1994.

older generations supported the statue, but so did the youngest. In the age group of 15–29, 61 percent favored “protection” of the statue and only 29 percent were against it. According to later research, neo-patriotism affected the generation that came of age in the 1990s by molding their attitudes toward a more conservative stance than that of their parents, the baby-boomers.<sup>41</sup> As a matter of fact, in the age group of 30–49, the cause of the statue protectors received the least support, yet formed the majority.<sup>42</sup> The representatives of the older segments of this age group had come of age during the heat of the Cold War and had a more restrained attitude toward open celebration of conservative nationalism than the younger generation, whose formative transnational experiences had included the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union.

### “THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF MODERNISM”

The museum and statue debate would not have been a proper debate unless the supporters of the new museum building and contemporary art had not participated in it. Columnist Tuomas Nevanlinna observed in June 1994 how the sides of the debate did not genuinely try to overcome their differences of opinion. The protectors of the statue believed that the sacred values of independence and of the veterans were being offended. Equally, the supporters of the museum were strong in their own belief. They treated the project as if they were erecting the “equestrian statue of modernism.”<sup>43</sup> Nevanlinna’s phrase implied that *Kiasma* represented a new monument for a new era.

The wall between the debaters was not impenetrable, at least not from the museum side. For the recoding of Mannerheim, the rhetoric of the museum directors turned out to be most fruitful. The Mannerheim image did not conform to a single populist and conservative mold. Tuula Arkio, the director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, employed the

<sup>41</sup>Ahonen (1998), 74–89; Tuomas Tepora, “Toisen maailmansodan muistokulttuuri: Kommunikatiivisesta muistamisesta kulttuuriseen muistiin,” in *Puolustuslinjalla: Yhteiskuntatieteellistä ja historiallista tutkimusta maanpuolustuksesta ja asevelvollisuudesta*, ed. by Teemu Tallberg, Anni Ojajärvi & Tiia Laukkanen (Helsinki: Nuorisotutkimusverkosto, 2017), 127–8; *Aamulehti* 8 June 1994.

<sup>42</sup>MHF, Folder F 2: letters (1994–2000), poll commission for Taloustutkimus, 1 June 1994; Foundation for the Mannerheim Cross Knights archives (MCK), letters 1991–1995, Taloustutkimus poll results: The protection of the Mannerheim equestrian statue, 1994.

<sup>43</sup>*Rakentaja* 8 June 1994.

great-man image of Mannerheim in support of contemporary art. In an op-ed response to Ehrnrooth, Arkio illustrated how the petition against the museum had proved that the MHF and the supporters of its cause did not aim at the protection of a work of art, the statue. Instead, they were attacking contemporary art, which they did not consider worthy of Mannerheim. Contemporary culture and independence seemed incompatible. Had Mannerheim led in battle only in order for Finnish culture to lose its vitality? “Mannerheim was a cosmopolitan who was genuinely interested in other cultures,” she wrote, adding that he had been a “scientist” of other cultures. “If [the MHF] does not have the courage to face contemporary culture and values, it testifies cowardice in hiding behind the back of Mannerheim. It basically feels that Mannerheim is being desecrated while not being able to defend himself.” As a climax, Arkio asked whether Mannerheim had left Finland for good, as he did after his presidency, because of the intellectual climate in the country.<sup>44</sup>

Arkio was backed by other higher state officials active in art and culture administration. For instance, the director of the state visual art committee contributed to the self-flagellation of “immature national consciousness” led by “random emotions.”<sup>45</sup> Architect Steven Holl had initially been unaware of Mannerheim’s significance in Finland. By now, however, he had done his homework. He expressed publicly that Mannerheim had been a “true person of culture,” who would have wanted to have the museum next to his statue.<sup>46</sup> What linked the debaters across the divides was the importance they invested in deciphering the “true” attitudes and feelings of Mannerheim.

Ehrnrooth’s campaign to woo the general public also overshadowed differing voices close to the MHF. University of Helsinki history professor Matti Klinge had served on the board of the foundation just prior to the escalation of the statue imbroglio. According to Klinge, General Ehrnrooth had fired him from the board after the professor had expressed a conciliatory opinion regarding the proposed relocation of the statue by a few meters.<sup>47</sup> Later Klinge participated in the debate by voicing concern over how the media and the public opinion had suddenly transformed the meanings of Mannerheim and “culture” into the opposites of one

<sup>44</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 30 May 1994.

<sup>45</sup> *Ilta-Sanomat* 2 June 1994.

<sup>46</sup> *Ilta-Sanomat* 1 June 1994.

<sup>47</sup> Matti Klinge e-mail interview (2017).

another.<sup>48</sup> For the professor, Mannerheim did not represent a folk character but, rather, an *ancien régime* role model for the people to look up to.<sup>49</sup>

Unavoidably, the debate generated satirical commentary and criticism of “great-man” narratives and idolatry that nevertheless contributed to the publicity and modern myth surrounding the Marshal. Journalist and author Jari Tervo suggested that it would be best to remove all the buildings within a radius of 10 km of the “center of our universe, the Mannerheim statue.” The Museum of Contemporary Art would be best located on “some outlying islet” off the coast of the city. Art critic Markku Valkonen captured in his satire the significance of Mannerheim perhaps the most incisively. As he saw it, the spirit of Mannerheim resided in the statue. Both sides in the debate sought guidance and permission from this spirit. What would have Mannerheim himself wanted? The statue itself as a work of art was not important, nor was the museum. The real concern was whether the powerful spirit of the leader had been offended. What if the great warrior-chief’s rest had been interrupted? That would constitute an offense against the tribal immanence of Finland. Did the debaters possess enough *mana* to ward off the revenge of the great forefather?<sup>50</sup>

The cultural elite refashioned Mannerheim into a cultural hero who was a cosmopolitan in a narrow-minded nation. They usually criticized any personality cult stemming from a popular, if not vulgar, desire. In other words, their Mannerheim image resembled their own mirror-image, that of being above the common people.

### MORAL PANIC

It is now clear that the 1994 statue and museum debate did not concern first and foremost either the Mannerheim statue or the Museum of Contemporary Art. It represented a moral panic caused by social changes and uncertain expectations about the future. By that I mean a mediated and viral belief that addressed the moral foundations of the society. The “eternal change” symbolized by contemporary art threatened the moral basis of the nation. The everyday means of emotional navigation had

<sup>48</sup> *Hufvudstadsbladet* 1 June 1994.

<sup>49</sup> Matti Klinge, “Myytti,” in *Mannerheim: Sotilas ja ihminen*, ed. by Kari J. Sillanpää & Harri Westermarck (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 1992).

<sup>50</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 29 May 1994.

failed. Some segments in the society observed disturbances, not perhaps so much from their own moral compass but from the compass of others. The work of the war generation seemed redundant in the face of conceding independence to the EU and having postmodern architecture cast a shadow over the national-conservative image of the Marshal.

General Ehrnrooth captured the statue discourse in one perception: contemporary art and the Mannerheim statue did not fit together. They represented two distinct worldviews.<sup>51</sup> This crystallized what moral panic meant. “The eternal values of the fatherland” were in danger of being sacrificed to the “ever-changing values of the present,” he asserted.

Modern, media-driven moral panics need not capture the entire society. Nor did the Mannerheim statue debate. It was a symbol, or a symptom, of the anxieties that accompanied social change. Another concurrent and more visible moral panic concerned fear of satanic-ritual abuse. This media-driven panic began in North America in the late 1980s. The satanic panic began with reported cases of ritual child abuse, and by the early 1990s it had become a cultural phenomenon in Western Europe and the Nordic countries. Little or no evidence for cult-based abuse was ever produced, but Satanism as an infamous subculture captured public attention. In the Finnish context, scholars have connected the satanic panic with the social changes of the 1990s, although the epidemic was actually a transnational scare.<sup>52</sup> The collapse of the Soviet Union affected religious sentiments and values. The eastern superpower had represented an institutionalized evil. Its disappearance and the relative weakness of the new Russia contributed to the spiritual search for an alternative evil, something that was especially true among the religious section of society.

What did Mannerheim have to do with the fear of an adolescent plagued by the devil? Seemingly not much, but contemporary art on the other hand did, and so did the overall atmosphere that contributed to uncertainty about the future. In the early 1990s’ atmosphere, art historian Jaakko Puokka published a yellow-press op-ed, in which he asked if the new Museum of Contemporary Art was a “temple for Satan.” This piece may not have been entirely serious in its spiritual connotations, but it was not meant as satire either. It made clear how deeply “satanic” architecture

<sup>51</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat* 26 May 1994.

<sup>52</sup> Titus Hjelm, *Saatananpalvonta, media ja suomalainen yhteiskunta* (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 2005), 189–211.



violated urban space and harmony. Citing Biblical sources, the author compared the form and details of “Chiasma” to Old-Testament Leviathan, the king of all beasts and a lethal serpent, the creature of chaos that brings the end of the world.<sup>53</sup>

### CONCLUSION: MANNERHEIM RECODED

In this chapter, I have described the Mannerheim images of the early 1990s as emotional figures. Public opinion, the media and interest groups, notably the Mannerheim Heritage Foundation, refashioned preexisting emotional Mannerheim figures to contain the new challenges created by an altered foreign policy, a deep recession, the joining of the EU and cultural struggles connected with neo-patriotism.

For the participants, the Mannerheim statue debate of 1994 held moral consequences. The implications were portrayed as defining the destiny of the nation, a nation that had metaphorically recently escaped from the restraints of the Soviet Union, was experiencing a dire recession and was about to join the European Union. The debate pitted the heritage of the war generation and the “eternal values of the nation” against the values of “the ever-changing and elusive, rootless present.” The Mannerheim Heritage Foundation, led by General Adolf Ehrnrooth, initiated the battle aimed first at blocking the Mannerheim statue from being removed from the path of the new museum building for contemporary art. Subsequently, the battle inflated to preventing the construction of the museum altogether. The battle waged by the MHF ended in defeat, but emblematically the supporters of the heritage foundation saw their fight as a “defensive battle” echoing the neo-patriotic overtones of the decade.<sup>54</sup> Mannerheim, however, did not lose the battle. The supporters of the museum evoked an image of an art-loving cosmopolitan who would have loved to see a world-class museum housed in a modern building located beside his statue.

Emblematic, transnational phenomena of the turn of the 1980s and 1990s were moral panics, meaning widely shared and media-driven experiences of threat to societal security and the future. While reasons behind the panics were manifold, especially in Finland and in the context of the end of the Cold War, the political, social, and economic changes of the early 1990s became associated with the feelings of insecurity. These

<sup>53</sup> *Iltalehti* 20 June 1994.

<sup>54</sup> For example: MHF, folder F 2: letters (1994–2000), private letter to Adolf Ehrnrooth, Helsinki 1 May 1994.

feelings were expressed in the panics that varied from satanic-ritual abuse to the fear of immigration and that gender roles were in jeopardy.<sup>55</sup>

In this context, the supporters of conservative Mannerheim images refashioned their idol into a protector of the nation from the perceived rootlessness and ahistoricity of the post-Cold War society. Interestingly, however, the proponents of liberal and cosmopolitan values also harnessed Mannerheim in their fight against the perceived restraining forces that seemed to prevent Finnish society from renewing itself. It is thus not surprising that the decade that has since been named the “neo-patriotic” decade experienced an extensive search for guidance from the image of its dead leader.

It is important to understand that the perceived legacy of the veterans was a historical variable. The strong populist support for the leaders of the veterans’ organizations could not have occurred during the Cold War or even in the late-1980s. It is also difficult to imagine such strong popular and populist indignation caused by perceived formless and rootless contemporary art ten years later in early millennial Finland.

The MHF continued its battle till the end. It filed a complaint on the urban area development plan first with the Ministry of the Environment and then with the Supreme Administrative Court, together with, among others, sculptor Aimo Tukiainen and the Pro Töölönlahti Bay society. The Court dismissed the complaint in 1995.<sup>56</sup> However, the polemic regarding the suitability of the museum to its construction site continued until the inauguration of the new museum in 1998. Final public indignation arose concerning the color of the fence circling both the construction site and the Mannerheim statue. An art student won the competition to paint the fence and chose to do it in magenta. Since the press reported that as the color pink, the outcry was immediate. Mannerheim with his horse in a pink stall! The side of the fence that ran sideways to the statue, and facing Mannerheim Road, was quickly repainted gray.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> For a contemporaneous analysis, see Juha Siltala, *Miehen kunnia: Modernin miehen taistelu häpeää vastaan* (Helsinki: Otava, 1994), 10–14.

<sup>56</sup> MHF, Folder Hb 1: Minutes of the Board (1980–2000), judgment of the Supreme Administrative Court, 11 November 1995.

<sup>57</sup> *Hufvudstadsbladet* 16 April & 10 May 1996; *Helsingin Sanomat* 25 April, 3 May & 11 May 1996; *Iltalehti* 16 April 1996; *Iltä-Sanomat* 8 May & 11 May 1996.

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PART V

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## Epilogue



## The History of Experience: Afterword

*Josephine Hoegaerts and Stephanie Olsen*

### NEW TRADITIONS AND NEW VOICES

The history of experience, in the novel ways that the authors of *Lived Nation* and the associated HEX research center are conceiving of it, is a new field, but one that builds upon strong historiographical traditions, especially the history of emotions. We point below to some of the spaces in which the history of experience can make a substantial contribution to existing fields including, of course, the history of the nation, but also the history of childhood and youth and the history of disability, among many others. The history of experience is concerned with embodied engagement with social, cultural, political and material contexts, in order to understand lived experiences through these engagements. It centers the (inter)subjectivity of discourses and practices of the past.

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© The Author(s) 2021  
V. Kivimäki et al. (eds.), *Lived Nation as the History of Experiences and Emotions in Finland, 1800–2000*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69882-9_15)

We have been asked to write this afterword to point to new directions for and applications of the history of experience. We do so, of course, from our own combined perspectives as historians of experience, of childhood and youth, of education, of gender, of the emotions and the senses as well as of sound and embodied practice. Giving space to historical sounds, voices and other nontextual sources has taught us to value the embodied character of communication and expression. Drawing upon deeper understandings of the (sensorial as well as emotional) experiences of historical actors as they forged ways to understand each other and live together is therefore essential to historical writing. The methodological frameworks explored in this book present important suggestions and challenges in this vein.

While most of the focus in this volume is on modern Finnish history, the conceptual and methodological tools developed, and the relevance to larger themes related to the “nation”—war, citizenship, patriotism, inclusion/exclusion, children and disability—point to a much broader applicability in future historiography. Authors in the volume demonstrate, in their respective chapters, the many intersections between themes, methodological approaches and subfields to which the history of experience can bring new insights. The pedigree of this new approach is also inherently international.

As showcased in many chapters of this book, the history of experience is often informed by the tools and concepts developed over the past 30 years in the history of emotions and senses. Emotions, senses and experiences are clearly linked and perhaps are mutually defined.<sup>1</sup> Emotions and senses—the way they are shaped, felt and displayed—are part of what defines experience for both individuals and collectives. Experiences cannot be understood without them and are in a constant process of being reshaped because of them. In other words, the history of experience frees up historians of emotions to look less narrowly at what made humans what they were in the past (and relatedly, what makes them what they are in the present).<sup>2</sup> It strives to incorporate human feelings and senses as part of a wider understanding of human experience—of what it meant, and means, to be human. It also underlines how being and feeling human is always

<sup>1</sup>Rob Boddice & Mark Smith, *Emotions, Sense, Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), chapters 3, 4 & 5.

<sup>2</sup>See Joanna Bourke, *What It Means to Be Human* (London: Virago, 2011); Rob Boddice, *A History of Feelings* (London: Reaktion, 2019), 188–91.

contextual, dependent on the changing material, cultural and structural features of our world.

The history of experience, therefore, offers new ways to include otherwise absent historical actors. Historians of experience decenter narrative and discourse, putting them in the context of worlds represented in, and constructed by, material, visual and audible sources. Through the history of the lived body, they seek to listen to otherwise hidden “voices” and to see otherwise hidden bodies. Or rather, they suggest ways to bypass the metaphor of the historical actor’s voice and its ability to be “heard” completely. Frequently building on the methodologies of histories of emotions and the senses, analyses of experience not only point toward nontextual sources in new ways, but also displace language and speech as primary roads toward knowledge about the past. After all, if meaning-making *in* the past consisted of so much more than the articulation and the creation of text and imagery, histories, too, should move beyond logocentrism, and include a wider range of meaning-making practices. Not only seeing, understanding, knowing and writing, but also feeling, hearing, teaching, sensing and other modes of perceiving, including the vicissitudes of historical cognition, should figure in historical analysis.

In some ways, these moves toward the inclusion of practices (and the people carrying them out), that cannot easily be understood as “discourse,” also open up new ways of reimagining the connections between cultural and social history and, above all, the role of “materialism” in both. Used as shorthand for both tangible and economic issues, “material” history often seems to move away from the particularity of human life; but as many scholars have shown, the physical, economic world and that of human senses and sensibilities have been, and are, deeply entangled.<sup>3</sup> Histories of experience promise to insist on those entanglements rather than analytically to pick them apart, thus giving the single human a new place in societies of the past. Insisting on such material, experiential entanglements offer ways to break away from links and tension between individual and collective “identities” and to focus instead on how experiences can be shared (or not shared), can be “inner” or openly expressed, can be acceptable or unthinkable for a community.

<sup>3</sup>For example, Jennifer Tucker, “Visual and Material Cultures,” in *New Directions in Social and Cultural History*, ed. by Sasha Handley, Rohan McWilliam & Lucy Noakes (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Donna Loftus, “Markets and Cultures,” in Handley, McWilliam & Noakes (2018).

Seeking historical accounts of experience can, in very broad strokes, be juxtaposed with sources dealing with prescription or official attempts to shape lives. But this is an unhelpful dichotomy. In fact, the history of experience promises to afford us new ways to engage with source material we know very well—that of political, medical, educational and juridical institutions—and to find new ways of mobilizing this material to include historical actors whose “voice” may have been lost, but whose “experiences” we can at least partly come to know, thus enriching our understanding of the diversity of lived realities within or opposed to such institutions. The political structure of “the nation” has produced many such institutions, and their attendant bureaucracies and archives, and therefore offers a number of possibilities to enable such a shift of perspective and narrative.

What a history of experience might represent, therefore, is a way of disrupting grand narratives of what the past means. It not only taps into historiography’s rich tradition of eclecticism, creating a space to adopt and adapt insights from other disciplines like cognitive science, anthropology, psychology and others, but it also has the potential to lend to those disciplines, challenging essentialism at every step.

### EXPERIENCING THE NATION

Focus on the lived nation provides an excellent context in which histories of experience play out: a laboratory of human experience that has traditionally been approached as one of ideologies and collectives. This volume is a powerful, implicit critique of histories of “great men” and their archives and seeks to return to a focus on individuals from a radically different perspective. This methodological project goes beyond a micro-historical or biographical approach to history. Complex and abstract categories of a social or political nature also owe their “real” existence to their experiential presence in historical actors’ lives. While “the nation” as an imagined community or collective is an ideological construct and a political agreement (and has been studied as such), it has come into being as a felt reality for citizens through experiences of belonging, and for noncitizens through experiences of exclusion. Writing histories of national awakening, consolidation, independence or isolation as histories of “lived nation” is therefore not just a matter of giving voice to different inhabitants of that nation, but also foregrounds the constant interplay between ideology and practice, or between subjective and intersubjective performances in the making of national realities. Attending to experience as a historical category, as this



volume demonstrates, cuts across multiple approaches and subdisciplines, including those concerned with ideas and ideology, politics and institutions, memory and memorialization as well as those that bring historical bodies, sensations and feelings into focus.

As the reconfiguration of national history into one of a “lived nation” shows, the category of experience brings the historically contingent boundedness of ideologies, ideas and (political) discourses into view. Nations, like other modes of belonging, are not just “constructions” but also the result of a repeated range of concrete experiences through which nations are conjured up for those who “live” them.<sup>4</sup> Nations are moored to particular spaces inhabited by the memories, feelings and bodies that create them. They are anchored in languages that allow for their expression and that tie them to speaking, thinking and feeling humans, and they are rehearsed through daily practices of public and domestic interaction.

## INTERSECTIONS

In approaching the nation from a range of different perspectives, *Lived Nation* also gives us a glimpse into how the history of experience can contribute to the further development of a number of methodological questions and categories of analysis. Such developments can take us far beyond the realms of histories of nations and belonging. Imagining the potential extension of the history of emotions to some of the categories of analysis we engage with in our own research, we reflect below on the exciting (and perhaps daunting) possibilities for histories of disability and childhood, respectively.

### *Disability*

In providing an interface for discursive and “material” reality, between collective and individual perspectives, histories of experience can especially be expected to contribute substantially to those subfields in which it has traditionally been difficult to make scarce sources speak beyond normative, institutionally sanctioned narratives. Several chapters in this volume show how the history of experience can help us delve into the lives and histories of traditionally disempowered inhabitants of institutions designed

<sup>4</sup>Josephine Hoegaerts, “Singing the Nation, Singing the Self,” in *Masculinity and Nationhood 1830–1910* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

to educate, cure or otherwise change them. The study of the history of disability has been grappling with such issues for almost four decades.<sup>5</sup> Moving from a “medical model” of disability to, first, a “social” and, more recently, a “cultural” one, scholars and activists alike have shifted their attention from normative and disciplinary narratives of impediments in need of a cure toward a perspective that centers on a sociocultural world in need of more inclusive thinking.<sup>6</sup> This change has been profound. It has allowed scholars to question existing modes of authority (who decides, for instance, what disability means if models of medically defined normality no longer apply?). It has led to a critical reframing of practices of “observation” as part of a wider culture of “staring”<sup>7</sup> and, above all, has laid bare the ways in which “disability” is constructed through the creation of and insistence upon culturally particular norms. This medical model of disability is not an innocent project of charting diversity in “nature” but a historically specific framework that supports an ultimately eugenic project of “progress.” Refusing the medical gaze that underpins it and replacing it with a culturally critical perspective has been a successful scholarly endeavor, but one that risks erasing individual, material bodies as well as the experiences lived through them. Reading institutional discourses “against the grain,” as articulations of a normative framework that produces disability, avoids “staring,” at the cost of making the objects of the gaze invisible altogether. Focusing on the experiences contained in the bodies under the medical gaze or normative stare, and the experiences co-constructed in the intersubjective spaces between (differently abled) bodies offers a promising avenue toward their inclusion in a cultural history of disability.

### *Children and Childhood*

Several of the chapters in *Lived Nation* deal with histories of children and childhood. They discuss how children internalized ideas about the nation, with children themselves as integral parts of it. The dynamic relation of

<sup>5</sup> Henri-Jacques Stiker, *Corps infirmes et société* (Paris: Aubier, 1982).

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Devlieger, Beatriz Miranda-Galarza, Steven E. Brown & Megan Strickfaden, eds, *Rethinking Disability: World Perspective in Culture and Society* (Ghent: Garant, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Rosemary Garland-Thompson, *Staring: How We Look* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

individually and collectively lived experience is the target here. Modes of practicing collective emotions, of children living together through emotive prescriptions of childhood afford an avenue of inquiry, with a particular focus on how children experienced war and its aftermath. This pertains not merely to the presence or awareness of military conflict, but to their experience in navigating prescriptive attempts to educate them in ways specific to wartime. Education and enculturation are never neutral for children—they are always directed by the views and ideals of contemporary culture and society—and contexts of war provide stark settings in which these processes are particularly acute. Experts, parents and teachers might have conceived of the problem of wartime education as the shaping of emotions, mobilized by particular visions of the child as future citizen or embodiment of a national ideal, but rarely did children blindly follow prescription. The history of experience affords a more robust way to understand this complexity.

Historians of childhood and youth have been frustrated with the limited tools available to uncover historical actors' lived realities.<sup>8</sup> How do we as historians access individual and collective humanity—the experiences, motivations, thoughts and feelings—of children and youth, who often leave few traces in the historical record? Those they do leave are often mediated adult recollections.

There is currently a historiographical imperative to downplay what adults thought and did about childhood and instead focus on children's "voices" and what they experienced themselves. This issue is even manifest in the division of the field itself into the history of childhood and the history of children. Broadly, the former focuses on top-down concepts of and prescriptions for childhood, and the latter focuses on children themselves.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Karen Vallgård, Kristine Alexander & Stephanie Olsen, "Emotions and the Global Politics of Childhood," in *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: Global, Imperial and National Perspectives*, ed. by Stephanie Olsen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 12–34; Karen Vallgård, Kristine Alexander & Stephanie Olsen, *Against Agency* (Society for the History of Children and Youth, Internet publication, 2018), <https://www.shcy.org/features/commentaries/against-agency/>, accessed 8 September 2020.

<sup>9</sup>For introductions, see Colin Heywood, *Childhood in Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 6–9; Mary Jo Maynes, "Age as a Category of Historical Analysis: History, Agency, and Narratives of Childhood," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1:1 (2008), 114–24.

Yet this dichotomy is false when viewed through the lens of the history of experience. Even institutional and political sources, when read against the grain, can provide us with a new understanding of what it meant and felt like to be a child in a particular time and place, or at the very least how those feelings were framed. The inculcation in children of experiences of national belonging, resistance to national belonging, or even a sense of a nation in a process of change or conflict, all take place within prescriptive frameworks that either delimit experience or define when limits have been exceeded. While the question of the authenticity and reliability of historical narratives of past individuals and groups is perhaps especially relevant and particularly acute for historians of childhood and youth, it is, nonetheless, one that should be common for all historians. No experience occurs outside of a context.

#### BOUNDARIES OF THE NEW HISTORY OF EXPERIENCE

While the history of experience promises to open new doors to understanding the past, it is decidedly not a history of everything. In its inherent multiplicity and fluidity, experience might look like a boundless, and therefore unwieldy, category. There are, however, clear limits to “experience.” Or rather, it is clear what a history of experience is not. Histories of experience are not histories of ideas, events, actions or discourses as they might traditionally be understood, although they may of course intersect with and reimagine all of these concepts. Focused on the “lived reality” of historical actors, histories of experience push for a thick layering of accounts and meanings of the past, more than for an analysis predicated on “disentangling” particular constituent parts of historical structures or events. In that sense, a push toward experience also pushes us to imagine source criticism in new ways, and particularly invites us toward a rethinking of the authorial voice in many of our historical documents. The classical string of contextualizing questions—who, what, when, how—gains new meaning when we not only ask them of the practices of writing, or the events and ideas examined, but also involve the experiential world of both the writers and those about whom they write.

*Lived Nation*, through its focus on topics in modern histories of nation, has provided a template for other historians to “do” the new history of experience. Its diverse approach, embracing a wide range of analytical

categories in conjunction with “experience,” encourages us toward a historical approach that is inherently messy, entangled and complicated. Its agenda pushes us to look at primary sources in fresh ways and to ask fundamentally different questions of our source material. It is a new historiography in challenging times, a practice that reflects frustrations and inadequacies with previous approaches, while at the same time mobilizing new contemporary concerns.

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<sup>1</sup>Note: Page numbers followed by ‘n’ refer to notes.

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