

THE THIRD WAY: FINNISH OFFICIAL AND POPULAR MEMORY DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGH THE COLD WAR

By

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The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation/thesis of TODD LIND MOSEBAR find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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This project has lasted longer than I ever expected and it has taken me down paths, which I never expected to explore. Without the help and guidance of Professor Brigit Farley, Professor Steven Kale, and especially my chair Professor Raymond Sun, none of this would have been possible. I owe you all a great debt of gratitude. I would also like to thank my parents for making all of this possible in the first place. Thank you both for instilling in me a deep curiosity and the desire to always continue learning.

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Abstract

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Between 1939 and 1944 Finland lost two wars in defense of their status as a sovereign nation but managed to survive as an autonomous state. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union created a solid sphere of influence that provided them with a buffer zone that stretched from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Adriatic in the south. Finland, despite being a small, defeated nation, managed to remain largely outside of this system of satellite states by plying a very careful course between conciliation and defiance.

The Finnish government openly advocated friendship with the Soviet Union and publicly declared Finland to their continuing partner. Acceptance of a share of the blame for both the Winter and Continuation wars typified the statements of shared respect from the Finnish government. However, on the popular level, a great deal of animosity still existed toward the Soviets along with strong popular sentiment that both wars occurred due to Russian aggression. Despite the co-existence of these two widely separated paths of memory development, neither the official nor the popular memory attempted to supersede or eliminate the other. It is this peaceful co-existence that makes Finland a unique case within the field of memory studies.

This thesis helps define the role and purpose of both sets of memory that developed in Finland during the Cold War. It will show that the official memory espoused by government officials was designed as a utilitarian measure to placate Soviet authorities and allow Finns to remain autonomous and develop a popular memory free from interference by the Soviets. It will also show, through the study of cemeteries and popular media, that popular memory not only existed throughout the Cold War, it remained vibrant and continued to develop despite lacking a national movement for the remembrance of Finland's wars with the Soviet Union. This special interaction between official and popular memory makes Finland a unique case study of an alternative form of memory development.

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### **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother and father who have helped me progress through all of the stages of my education, and to all of my family in Finland who have been such an inspiration to this project.

### **Note on Finnish Place Names**

Since the twelfth century, the Finnish population has been composed of both Finnish speakers (the vast majority) and Swedish speaking Finns. Because of this bilingual society and the nature of Swedish rule, most Finnish provinces, cities, towns, and villages have two names. Both names are correct but one will be in Finnish and the other will be in Swedish. One of the larger cities in Finland is known as both Turku (Finnish) and Åbo (Swedish). To further complicate matters, in regions where Finnish speakers are the majority, the Finnish place names are generally accepted as the primary name; however, in Swedish regions it is opposite. In order to make this thesis as clear as possible on the historical names for battles, treaties, etcetera. I will attempt to use the most widely accepted form of reference for any given location. For locations that are widely known today, I will use the form that appears most commonly on current maps of Finland.

## Introduction

In 1922 my grandfather immigrated to the United States from Finland at the age of 22. He planned to stay in the United States for just one year, but ended up living out the rest of his life here. Though I never met him, the influence I felt from my Finnish heritage has led me to visit that country four times and to become a Finnish citizen. Throughout my experiences with relatives and strangers in Finland, a common thread has revealed itself. The Finnish people are not only proud of their nation in terms of their successes but they also hold a great deal of esteem and reverence for the way they have faced adversity. Between 1939 and 1944, Finland endured two devastating wars with the Soviet Union and ultimately lost one fifth of their territory, many to crippling casualties, and they faced the monumental challenge of relocating nearly ten percent of their population. Through my parents and my personal experiences in Finland, the way that the Finnish people handled that period in their history continues to help define them as a people and as a nation. This pride in being Finnish led me to develop a great deal of interest in Finnish history. I asked myself, what kind of past could have created this kind of identity among such a seemingly marginal people. Upon further investigation, Finland and her history has become a useful and interesting case study for the wider field of memory studies.

This particular period in Finnish history has played a major role in the development of Finnish collective memory since the end of the wars with the Soviet Union. Jay Winter discusses the importance of war memory in the development of popular memory. He argues that war memory dominates this development not only because of the crippling and lasting impacts of war on the physical level, but most importantly, the massive impact war can have on the human psyche. When discussing the development of any kind of collective memory following a period of conflict, warfare will play a central role in the development and evolution of that identity.

The unique aspect of Finland in the field of memory studies is that despite having a government that actively fabricated an official memory of the World War Two period, the Finnish people were able to continue the organic growth of an undercurrent of popular memory throughout the Cold War.

The interaction between these two different sets of memory is the most important and unique aspect of this project. In most other cases of coexisting sets of memory, one attempts to subjugate the other through passive or violent means. Finland presents an anomaly in this regard because rather than conflicting with one another the two sets of memory complement one another by serving a common end. This stands in stark contrast to a case that John Bodnar discusses in *Remaking America* when two sets of competing memory struggled to gain supremacy over the other. He points to the use of memory to elevate the role of elites in the growth of the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. At the same time as the commercial and cultural elites formed their version of United States history, groups like the Knights of Labor created an ideal that glorified working class masses.<sup>1</sup> This formulation of popular versus official memory differs from that of Finland in the motivations behind memory creation. In the case of Finland during the Cold War, the dichotomy grew out of a collective desire to maintain Finnish independence. In the case of late nineteenth century America, the entrepreneurs and the Knights of Labor simply wanted to appropriate credit for laying the foundations of democracy. They wanted to appropriate the identity of the founding fathers. Finnish official memory presented a conciliatory front to the Soviet Union after the World War Two era by openly portraying the two wars as horrific eventualities that could have been avoided with a more stalwart devotion to diplomacy on both sides.

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<sup>1</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 29, 31-32.

This interaction is central to the growing field of collective memory. One way in which it might be understood is to contrast artificial creation to organic growth of memory.

Governments, as George Mosse puts it, can utilize development of war memory, in order to justify lives lost while fighting under the banner of the nation.<sup>2</sup> Memories created in that way would be considered official memories, most often sponsored by the state. Popular memories grow out of experiences and the media put in front of the public. Jay Winter devotes much of his recent book, *Remembering War*, to discussing what he calls “collective remembrance”.<sup>3</sup> In these terms, popular memory is experienced by people through central points, or sites, of memory development. The importance of using remembrance rather than memory lies in its expression of agency on the part of those who develop the memories of a given event or experience. This term provides an apt description of Finnish official memory due to the government’s understanding that maintaining amiable relations with the Soviet Union was necessary for Finland’s continued autonomy. These sites concentrate the modes of collective memory and people will then create their own, group centered, war memories. Studying the relationship between official and popular memory has academic merit, in the case of Finland, because of how memory is created and what it may be used for. Memory, itself, can be used to give political legitimacy to a government’s actions or to provide ammunition to challenge the established memory of a state. It is also important because often times, the two different lines of memory can co-exist. This simultaneous existence can involve conflicted memories between the government and the people or simply two independently formed sets of memory.

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<sup>2</sup> George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 5.

This thesis begins with a broad recounting of Finland's history prior to the events that led up to Finland's first war with the Soviet Union, the Winter War. This approach is important because trying to analyze this period in a vacuum and make conclusions based solely on chronologically isolated evidence simply does not take into account the vast trail of history that underlies the relationship between Finland and Russia that guided their interactions during the late 1930s. In order to understand the many aspects of popular memory that existed at the end of the World War Two period it is vital to understand how Finns felt toward Russians and the relatively new Soviet government. From the earliest years of Sweden's dominion over Finland in the twelfth century until Finland's independence from Russia in 1917, animosity grew between the two nations. The Finns saw a long train of injustices and violations perpetrated against the Finnish people by the Russian Empire and subsequently their Soviet successors. This attitude fed into the World War Two period and combined with the Soviet invasion that started the Winter War and the losses from the Continuation War, Finns built up a very negative view of Russians. Simple pronouncements by the Finnish government could never have countered centuries of animosity or the more recent human and territorial losses sustained during the wars. Though not directly tied to either the official or popular memory of the Winter and Continuation wars, this background helps to contextualize the starting point for post-war memory development and the need for a concerted program of official memory creation. These two conflicts with the Soviet Union helped to create and define both a popular memory of the period as well as an official memory that was presented to the world by the Finnish government.

Chapter Two continues to build a foundation for the main argument for Finland's unique status by compiling a kind of toolbox of memory theory to better understand the importance of various subtle aspects of Finnish remembrance during the Cold War. By discussing various

arguments presented by scholars who study memory development and the role of remembrance in creating a usable past, it provides working definitions for the path of both official and popular memory development in Finland.

The next chapter discusses how the Finnish government crafted their official memory of the war years as a tool to enable Finland to remain a viable, autonomous state. The official memory created by the Finnish government during the Cold War presented the Finnish relationship with the Soviet Union as a friendly and tranquil one in order to placate Soviet officials. Without this kind of amiable relationship between the two governments, Finland would have lost an extremely lucrative trading partner and risked catastrophic interference from the Soviet government and military, similar to events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. These two aspects of official memory diverge both from the historical evidence and from popular memory among Finnish citizens. However, this divergence ceased outside of government circles. On the public level, leaders like J.K. Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen professed notable shortcomings on the part of Finland leading up to the wars with the Soviet Union. Paasikivi, an ambassador and negotiator with the Soviet Union prior to the wars, renounced his pre-war actions saying, "I humbly admit that I played some part in the fateful political mistakes, which evidenced a lack of acumen."<sup>4</sup> Official memory during this period colored the Winter War as unnecessary because of the very reasonable nature of Soviet territorial demands. The public image espoused by Finnish and Soviet officials during the Cold War era, created a picture of two governments in agreement on historical events involving both nations. It showed them assessing equal blame for the outcome of the Winter War and the subsequent Continuation War. The

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<sup>4</sup> Mikhail Semiryaga, *The Winter War: Looking Back After Fifty Years* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1990), 58.

creation of this kind of official memory without the presence of any kind of movement to actively suppress the growth of a popular memory shows the unique nature of the Finnish case.

Despite a conciliatory line toward the Soviet Union, Finnish popular memory persisted and continued to develop during the Cold War years. Evidence for this survival of a strong and healthy popular memory of the wars can be found in a number of different sources. Despite practicing self-censorship, Finnish media provides periodic examples of popular memory through journalism, literature, and films. However, the primary source that illustrates a flourishing popular memory in Finland during the Cold War comes from Finnish cemeteries. By examining the burial practices surrounding both the war dead and veterans, it becomes quite clear that Finns maintained a very positive view of their soldiers. It also alludes to the fact that rather than viewing the wars with the Soviet Union as misadventures the responsibility for which was shared between the two nations, Finns saw them as wars of necessity. They believed they had no choice but to engage in these conflicts in order to protect their rights and to ensure the survival of Finland as an autonomous nation.

The importance of this project is twofold. First, the amount of work done on Finnish war memory in English is paltry, at best. Max Jakobson, a prominent Finnish diplomat and historian, comments that, “only a fraction of the texts needed for a comprehensive understanding of the past and present of the Finnish people exists in other languages.”<sup>5</sup> Anthony Upton, in a book about Finland’s civil war, comments that any non-Finnish scholar who is qualified to write about and analyze Finnish history has an obligation to do so.<sup>6</sup> In the case of Finnish memory of the

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<sup>5</sup> Max Jakobson, *Finland Survived: An Account of the Finnish-Soviet Winter War of 1939-1940* (Helsinki: The Otava Publishing CO., 1984), XIII.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony F. Upton, *The Finnish Revolution: 1917-1918* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), Preface pg. 1.

wars, I too feel that it is important to offer a third party analysis in order to present a relatively neutral perspective and to increase the scholarship available in English. The second point of importance is to the greater study of memory and identity development as a whole. Finland provides a unique case, in that it was a victim of a larger neighbor's quest for more territory and still managed to maintain autonomy in the hegemonic environment of Eastern Europe during the Cold War. The fact that Finland successfully managed to maintain autonomy makes the study of Finnish memory and identity all the more useful to the field.

In this unique instance, by creating an official memory of the wars with the Soviet Union, the Finnish government unintentionally ensured the continued existence of a popular memory of the same period. Evidence will show that the small nation of Finland, existing in the shadow cast by the Cold War Soviet Union, was forced to demonstrate solidarity with Soviet leadership who had, only a few years before, fought an aggressive war with Finland in an effort for territorial expansion. However, the people in Finland held quite a different view than that put forward by their government. Primarily through analysis of Finnish cemeteries, as well as journalism, film, literature, and other print media, the continued existence of a contrary thread of popular memory throughout the Cold War will become evident.

## **Chapter One:**

### **Foundational Elements of Finnish National Identity**

#### **Introduction**

To fully understand the attitudes and themes that underlie any society, it is essential to understand the basis for those attitudes. In the case of Finnish war memory following their conflict with the Soviet Union during the first half of the 1940s, it is necessary to understand their historical attitude toward Russians. The roots for these feelings reach back as far as the twelfth century when Sweden controlled the territory now known as Finland and Russia was nothing more than a loose group of principalities.

Between the twelfth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century, Sweden and Russia fought no less than five wars and countless border skirmishes in the lands populated by the Finns. Unfortunately for the Finnish people, these conflicts almost always occurred on Finnish land and were fought by Finnish soldiers. Regardless of who instigated these conflicts, the Finns have always placed the blame on the Russians for the death and damage dealt to the local populations. Throughout this period of nearly 400 years, the majority of Finland remained under Swedish control. Because of this, the Finnish people developed much closer ties to Sweden, Scandinavia, and Western Europe than they did to eastern influences from Russia. With the ascension of Peter the Great to the Russian throne and Charles the XII to the Swedish throne, tensions exploded into yet another war between Russia and Sweden, which yielded a Swedish defeat and a seven year period that Finns refer to as the Great Wrath. Additionally, it was during the eighteenth century that the Finnish people developed the first traces of a national identity.

The Napoleonic Wars brought great change throughout Europe and these changes did not spare Finland. In 1809 the Russians, carrying out their part of Napoleon's Continental system, sought to bring Sweden into Napoleon's plan to starve England. Tsar Alexander I invaded Finland and occupied the whole of Finnish territory by the end of 1809. Yet again, Finland filled the role of a buffer between two European powers, only this time they served this role for the Russians. It is during this period that relations between Russia and Finland became much better. Alexander I chose to treat Finland very well and the Finns responded in kind. For most of the nineteenth century, Finland remained a problem-free territory within the Russian Empire because of extremely lenient administration by Tsars Alexander I, Nicolas I, and Alexander II. Most likely due to Alexander III's need for increasing Russian prestige in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Finland began to experience some of Russia's traditional reactionary policies toward their possessions.

By the beginning of Nicolas II's reign, Russia began to push their policies of Russification on the Finnish subjects. To the Finns this must have seemed as though the Russians returned to their status as a hereditary enemy. Despite a growing sense of nationalism within the Finnish citizenry, most Finns within the government of the Grand Duchy and the intelligentsia still sought to achieve some kind of compromise with the Tsar, and after Nicolas' abdication in 1917, with the provisional government of Karensky. Only with the rise to power of Lenin and the Bolsheviks did Finland receive any support, and then, only because the Bolsheviks saw Finland as a Red bastion.

Following the conclusion of Finland's separation from Russia, the uneasy relationship between the middle and upper classes (Whites) and the Finnish working class (Reds) finally erupted into open conflict. This marked the beginning of the Finnish Civil War. By the close of

World War I, Finland's civil war had ended but with harsh actions being taken by the middle and upper class victors against the defeated Reds. Russian aid in this conflict only furthered the Finns' negative feelings toward their neighbor to the east. This uneasy, and often openly negative, relationship between Finland and Russia lasted throughout the period between the wars with only periodic spans of luke-warm relations. By 30 November 1939, tensions had again built up to the point of conflict between Finland and the Soviet Union.

During the Russo-Finnish Wars between 1939 and 1944, the Russians' actions only served to cement the hereditary hatreds that had, for so long, characterized interactions between these two peoples. Russia's unwarranted attack on Finland in 1939 and the subsequent peace and the Continuation War between 1941 and 1944 cost Finland dearly in resources and in casualties. With a population of only about four and a half million people, Finnish casualties, as a percentage, made up a more significant portion of her population than almost any other country during this period.

It takes this period of more than 600 years and the final two wars between 1939 and 1944 to develop the animosity that the Finnish people felt towards Russians at the beginning of the years following World War II. The popular memory that the Finnish people developed during and after the Russo-Finnish Wars was composed of aspects of all of that 600-year history. To attempt to relate that development without first understanding the foundations of Finnish popular memory would be folly.

### **Finland Under Sweden**

The relationship between Finland and Sweden began in 1155 with a crusade to spread Christianity to Finland by King Erik of Sweden, Bishop Henry of Uppsala, and Nicholas

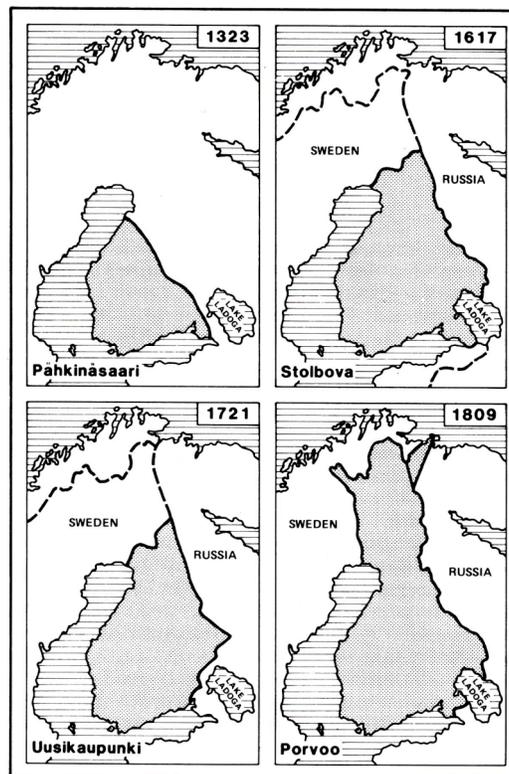
Breakspear.<sup>7</sup> This connection developed into Sweden's control over most of, what is today, Finland. By 1400, the population of Finland viewed themselves as subjects of a province within the Swedish empire. Not only did they see themselves as being a part of Sweden, they considered Finland to be on the same footing as provinces in Sweden proper.<sup>8</sup> It is during this early period in Finnish history that attitudes toward Russia began to develop. Beginning in 1311 and continuing through 1650, Sweden fought five wars with Russia or Russian principalities like Novgorod and Muscovy. There were also nearly constant skirmishes along a relatively nebulous border with Russian territory to the east.<sup>9</sup> The majority of these engagements occurred on land occupied by Finnish people. They, not the Russians or the Swedes, experienced the depredations of warfare between two great powers. However, because of Finland's traditional links to Sweden and the rest of Scandinavia, blame for damaged property and loss of life fell to the Russian invaders.

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<sup>7</sup> Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Finland* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 21, 30, 36-43



Map 1 Finland: historical boundaries

**Figure 1**<sup>10</sup>

During their time under Swedish rule, Finland underwent a number of major catastrophes. The majority of their misfortunes were solely due to the depredations visited upon them by Russia and her soldiers in Finland. However, some of these, and the worst single period, occurred because of gross mismanagement by the Swedish Crown. What the Finns refer to as the Great Wrath, typifies this. Due to sheer incompetence and poor planning by the Swedish king Charles XII, Finland was subjected to Russian occupation from 1713 to 1721.<sup>11</sup> Rather than place blame at the feet of their traditional Swedish rulers, the Finnish people seem to have placed full responsibility on the shoulders of Russia and the Tsars. It was much easier for

<sup>10</sup> Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, 50.

<sup>11</sup> Byron J. Nordstrom, *Scandinavia Since 1500* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 142.

Finnish peasants to identify their troubles with those who were destroying their property and killing their friends and family, than with the high politics that caused the war. For this to make sense, it must be understood how such close ties developed between Sweden and Finland.

Finnish relations with the Swedes to their west became increasingly close during the initial years of Swedish control over Finland. A number of specific instances served to solidify these good feelings. The foremost link between Sweden and Finland was formed in 1155 when Christianity was brought from Sweden to the loose groups of Finnish tribes scattered throughout the region. By 1172, the three groups of Finns, the Suomalaiset, the Hämäläiset, and the Karjalaiset all fell under the jurisdiction of the Pope.<sup>12</sup> This early contact built strong bonds between Sweden and Finland and served to bring the Finnish people into the Sphere of the Swedish throne in Stockholm. A telling indicator of Finnish attitudes comes from John H. Wuorinen when he describes the comment of a Finnish observer in 1793.

As recently as the beginning of the present century, the clergy, most of the gentry out in the country, and a great number of the merchants and burghers of the cities spoke Finnish among themselves. How great has been the change since then, and the change has come without any coercion or compulsion. All who have received the education and training of civil servants or attend public schools learn to understand and speak Swedish, and nobody considers this a cause for complaint, any more than those who intend to enter the field of scholarship object to learning Latin.<sup>13</sup>

This clearly illustrates the close connection that developed between Finland and Sweden during the twelfth through the eighteenth centuries. Due to cultural and linguistic ties between the two neighbors, Finland's population identified much more with the attitudes and traditions of

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<sup>12</sup> Nordstrom, *Scandinavia Since 1500*, 18, 19.

<sup>13</sup> John H. Wuorinen, *A History of Finland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 103.

Sweden, Scandinavia, and Western Europe, rather than the Russian alternative. That attitude still persists in the modern era.

The last century of Swedish rule can also be considered the most influential for fostering Finnish views of the Russians. The eighteenth century began with yet another war between Sweden and Russia called the Great Northern War. It began as an attempt by Charles XII of Sweden to play high politics and enlarge his empire while achieving revenge on those he saw as committing transgressions against his family. Charles had very little success in the war and subsequently, Finland fell under Russian occupation by 1714. Immediately following occupation, Russian forces decimated any objectives that might entice Sweden to attempt to retake Finland in the near future. This included areas like the city of Viipuri, parts of the Ostrobothnia region and the Åland archipelago. All of these areas were traditionally populated by a large percentage of Swedish speakers.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the early part of the occupation, Finnish peasants continued to carry out partisan activities against Russian forces. Unfortunately for the partisans, their actions brought down swift and harsh reprisals from Russian authorities. Adding to the already tense situation were unwarranted acts of violence committed against civilians, as well as deportation of thousands of families to Russia as laborers. In fact, in one incident, the Russians deported 5,000 families back into Russia.<sup>15</sup> Of the thousands who were shipped to Russia only a very small number ever returned alive. However harsh the Russians' administration became, nature took its toll as well. During the years of Russian occupation, bad harvests, early frosts, and the destruction of farms by the Russians brought famine to Finland.

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<sup>14</sup> Eino Jutikkala and Kauko Pirinen, *A History of Finland* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 136.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

“Nearly one fourth of the farm holdings were abandoned by their owners or tenants during the war.”<sup>16</sup>

Estimates vary on the total loss of life among the Finnish population during this period. Finland’s population at the outset of the Great Wrath sat at around 500,000 or more<sup>17</sup>, but by the end of this seven-year occupation, the population had declined to between 300,000-350,000, a loss of up to 200,000 people.<sup>18</sup> This left Finland, not an overly wealthy area to begin with, in a very poor position for recovering from the Great Wrath. Here, again, is an example of how Russians became hereditary enemies of the Finnish people. Despite Sweden’s role in starting the Great Northern War with Tsar Peter the Great, Finnish peasants identified losing property and family members with the Russian occupation.

The period following the Great Wrath, 1721-1772, was a relatively calm and prosperous time in Finnish history, so much so that it became known as the “Age of Freedom”. Historians coined the term because of reforms enacted by the Swedish monarchy and Riksdag following the return of Finland to Swedish control in 1721.<sup>19</sup> Changes to the Swedish constitution became so liberal, that government in Swedish-Finland could be described as a constitutional monarchy rather than an absolutist state like France. Only between 1742 and 1743 was there a break in Finnish prosperity and it is referred to as the Lesser Wrath. Historian Fred Singleton describes the Lesser Wrath as “less traumatic than had been ‘The Great Wrath’ of the previous generation,

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<sup>16</sup> Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 93.

<sup>17</sup> Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, 47.

<sup>18</sup> Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 94.

<sup>19</sup> Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, 53.

but it was nonetheless a bitter blow.<sup>20</sup> Swedish aggression directly caused the war that led to Russian occupation in 1742 and 1743. Territory lost to Russia in the Great Northern War served as the catalyst for Swedish militarism during this period. In their zeal to recapture areas of southeastern Finland that had been under Russian control for nearly thirty years, Swedish forces lacked solid organization and good leadership.<sup>21</sup> This occupation by the Russians lasted only a year but many of the same things were done to the Finnish people as were experienced in the Great Wrath. With the last war still fresh in the minds of Russian occupiers, it was easy for them to take their frustrations out on the Finnish population.<sup>22</sup> As with past occupations, this reinforced the existing negative view of the Russians despite being initiated by Swedish designs on re-establishing Sweden's borders along pre-1721 lines.

The transition to Russian rule occurred haphazardly. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the whole of Europe was experiencing an upheaval due to Napoleon's military campaigns throughout the continent. By June of 1807, Napoleon's military successes forced Tsar Alexander I to provide support for French military and economic policies. The two military powers came to a meeting at Tilsit to discuss the future of Europe. In order to isolate England, Napoleon developed his Continental system and he was attempting to get all European nations to adhere to the blockade of British ships. The agreement that came to be known as the Tilsit Pact essentially set up spheres of influence. France dealt with the nations of Western Europe, while Russia held sway in Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. Russia's role in this agreement was to acquire Swedish cooperation in the continental blockade. When Gustavus IV Adolphus refused

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<sup>20</sup> Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, 51.

<sup>21</sup> Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 94.

<sup>22</sup> Jutikkala and Pirinen, *A History of Finland*, 147-148.

to abandon trade with Britain, Russia upheld their half of the Tilsit Pact and invaded Swedish Finland in February of 1808.<sup>23</sup> In this invasion, as in those preceding it, the Finnish peasants continued to fight well after Sweden and Finland's regular forces were routed and the Finnish upper classes had bowed to Russian authority. However, due to the poor performance of Swedish forces and their lack of preparedness, Russian troops quickly defeated them and occupied the whole of Finnish Territory.



The Grand Duchy of Finland

**Figure 2**<sup>24</sup>

Alexander I never intended to do anything more than simply occupy Finland until Sweden capitulated and adopted Napoleon's Continental system. However, once Russian forces

<sup>23</sup> Jutikkala and Pirinen, *A History of Finland, 178-179*.

<sup>24</sup> Osmo Jussila, Seppo Hentilä, and Jukka Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy to a Modern State: A Political History of Finland Since 1809* (London: Hurst & Company, 1999), 2.

had occupied the whole of Finland in 1808, they gave notice to the European community that Russia would annex Finland permanently. Russia's decision to take control of Finland in 1808 and 1809 grew directly out of the attitude of the Napoleonic period. Alexander had just lost his war with Napoleon and in the Tilsit Agreement of July 1807, Napoleon and Alexander established spheres of influence in Europe. According to the agreement, it would be Russia's responsibility to force Sweden to comply with the Continental System.<sup>25</sup> Once Finland fell under Russian occupation, the Russians seized the opportunity to incorporate the territory into their empire and reunite it with Finnish lands already ceded to Russian after the Great Northern War and the Swedish war of 1742. Additionally, Russia was suffering from her recent war with Napoleon and was hoping to utilize Finnish resources to help rebuild Russian infrastructure and prestige within Europe.<sup>26</sup> The only way for the Russians to achieve a peaceful annexation was for the Tsar's temporary government to issue a statement to the Finnish people that "former laws and privileges would be maintained."<sup>27</sup> This became a permanent fixture in Finland when the Tsar personally promised to uphold traditional Finnish government at the Diet of Porvoo in March of 1809.

We Alexander the First, by God's grace Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias... Let it be known: Having by the will of the Almighty entered into possession of the Grand Duchy of Finland, We have hereby seen fit once more to confirm and ratify the religion, basic laws, rights and privileges which each estate of the said Duchy in particular and all subjects therein resident, both law and high, have hitherto enjoyed according to its constitutions, promising to maintain them inviolably in full force and effect: in confirmation of which We have graciously signed this Charter with Our own Hand. Given this day, the fifteenth of March 1809, in Porvoo.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 110.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-113.

<sup>27</sup> Jussila, Hentilä, and Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy...*, 7-8.

By the time of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the Tsar's officials had finalized negotiations with Sweden regarding the territory to be annexed. The borders for Finland throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century were set in Vienna in 1815. This initiated nearly a century of relatively good relations between Russia and Finland that began to seriously deteriorate by the last decades of the nineteenth century.

### **Finland Under Russia 1809-1917**

The majority of time spent as a Grand Duchy of the Russian empire was a period of relative calm in relations between Russians and Finns. It began with Alexander I giving nearly unprecedented autonomy to a newly acquired territory. It continued under Alexander II when Finland was given increasing autonomy within the empire through the addition of a number of very liberal reforms. By the reign of Alexander III in the late nineteenth century, Finland was nearly independent with a military organization of its own, a thriving intellectual nationalist movement, and a virtual constitutional monarchy with the Tsar as the head of state. This began to degrade when advisors to Alexander III and Nicolas II suggested that Russification should be applied to all of Russia's territorial possessions. Until the administration of Governor-General N.I. Bobrikov and his rabid Russification policies, Finnish reformers strictly used pacifist and intellectual means to protest undesirable policies of the Russian bureaucracy. The assassination of Governor-General Bobrikov was the first major incident of open violence carried out to effect change in Russian policies in Finland. The assassination provides an indication of the severity of Russification in the eyes of the Finnish people.

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<sup>28</sup> D.G. Kirby, *Finland and Russia 1808-1920: From Autonomy to Independence* (London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1975), 14-15.

Finnish government under the Tsars underwent a kind of evolution from 1809 to 1917. Between 1809 and 1863 the initial agreements between the Tsar and the Finnish diet remained in place, because the diet met only once during this period and that was in 1809 when the Tsar needed to legitimately establish his dominance over Finland. During this period, the organization remained nearly identical to the one that existed under Swedish rule with the executive power passing from the Swedish monarch into the hand of the Russian Tsar. The only change made to Finland's governmental structure came with the creation of an Imperial Senate, which was a collection of councilors that answered to the Governor-General of Finland as a kind of cabinet body. Finland also had a representative in St. Petersburg called a Secretary of State. The Secretary of State reported directly to the Tsar. This was unusual because all other Russian possessions had to go through bureaucratic ministers to petition the Tsar.<sup>29</sup>

With the violent history of Russian occupations of Finland Alexander I wanted to ensure that the peasants, who had always carried out partisan activities against Russian occupiers, would remain passive despite Russia's annexation of Finland. Additionally, the Tsar also wanted to avoid any more altercations with Sweden since Napoleonic France was still an obvious threat to Russia's security in Europe. Therefore, he ordered the Governor-General in Finland, Steinheil, to both create the most beneficial situation for Russia possible in Finland and to ensure that the internal structure throughout Finland be "arranged in such as way that the people of that country, united to Russia, have incomparably more privileges than they enjoyed during the period of Swedish rule..."<sup>30</sup> The infrastructure set up in 1809 remained constant for the next fifty-four years.

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<sup>29</sup> Arvid Enckell, *Democratic Finland* (London: Herbert Joseph Limited, 1948), 13-15.

Between 1809 and 1863, Finland remained a peaceful and mostly loyal possession of the Russian Empire. During the reign of Alexander I, the Finnish diet met only once in 1809. In Nicolas I's reign, the Finnish diet was never convened because of his strong sense of his autocratic rule over all of the Russian empire. Finns became very unhappy with Russian government because they believed that it did not follow the Finnish constitution. Two major criticisms leveled against Russian policies by the intelligentsia in Finland were first, and foremost, to repeal the edict of 1850, which prohibited the use of the Finnish language and second, to end censorship of public expression. These, along with other criticisms, were made at an increasing rate throughout the years between Alexander II's coronation in 1855 and Alexander's three decrees while in Helsinki in 1863.<sup>31</sup> The debate among educated Finns was allowed to continue without interruption by Russian censors during this period.

Alexander's decrees of August 1863 dealt with the primary complaint from Finns; that the Finnish language should be legalized. Alexander's decrees placed the Finnish language on an equal footing with Swedish as a national language and fully sanctioned its use in state business throughout the Grand Duchy. Along with these decrees, Alexander proclaimed that Finland's diet meet every five years. This in turn led to reforms issued by the diet and approved by the Tsar that further liberalized Finland's government.<sup>32</sup> One hallmark reform issued by the Finnish diet stated that no decision concerning Finland could take effect without first being

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<sup>30</sup> Alexander I, St. Petersburg, Russia, to [Governor-General Steinheil, Helsinki Finland], 26 September 1810, *Finland and Russia 1808-1920: From Autonomy to Independence*, London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1975.

<sup>31</sup> L.A. Puntala, *The Political History of Finland, 1809-1966* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1975), 37-38.

<sup>32</sup> S.S. Oldenburg, *Last Tsar: The Autocracy, 1894-1900* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1975), 1:221

ratified by the diet. This reform allowed Finland's autonomy within the Russian empire to reach its peak in the years between 1863 and Alexander III's coronation in 1881.

The Russians, always suspect in Finnish eyes, began to revert back to their conservative policies regarding their possessions at the end of Alexander II's reign and especially during the reign of Alexander III. As nationalist movements spread throughout Europe during the late nineteenth century, Russian aristocrats also began to push the Tsar harder to reduce or eliminate Finland's special status within the empire. They argued that there was no legal precedent for Finland to be allowed to keep such a liberal system in place that conflicted so much with the system of the greater Russian empire.<sup>33</sup> Between 1881 and 1905, Russia progressively reduced Finnish autonomy with reform after reform. From 1905-1907 Russia experienced a wave of strikes and civil discontent unrivaled in their history. Tuomo Polvinen, in his book about Governor-General N.I. Bobrikov, explains that Russification had made Finns ready to exploit this period of disarray within Russia to extract favorable reforms from the highly reactionary Nicolas II.<sup>34</sup> However, increased freedom witnessed in Russia due to reform translated to the essential loss of Finnish autonomy in the Russian empire.<sup>35</sup> By 1909, all unique positions within the Finnish government had been subordinated to Russian officials in St. Petersburg. They had become no more than local representatives of the greater Russian empire, which ended Finland's special status for good.

Finnish scholars, poets, journalists, students, government officials, and the upper classes mounted increasingly strident calls for their rights under the accepted constitution of Finland but

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<sup>33</sup> Puntila, *Political History of Finland*, 58-61

<sup>34</sup> Tuomo Polvinen, *Imperial Borderland: Bobrikov and the Attempted Russification of Finland, 1898-1904* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 278-279.

<sup>35</sup> Jussila, Hentilä, and Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy...*, 86.

these were ineffectual.<sup>36</sup> Upon the declaration of war between the great powers in 1914, Finland sent 2,000 volunteers to train with the German military in anticipation of the possibility of a complete break from Russia at war's end.<sup>37</sup> By 1917, Finland was ready for actions rather than words. They took the opportunity afforded to them by the Russian Revolution and declared independence from Russia on 6 December 1917.

### **Nationalism and the Growth of a Finnish National Identity**

A recurrent theme among Finnish scholars, poets, and the intelligentsia, increasing in prominence from the eighteenth century onward, is the development of a Finnish national identity. The earliest appearance of a national identity came to Finnish scholars during the early eighteenth century. Daniel Juslenius published a study in 1700 at the University of Turku that attempted to establish Finland's national history. Even more important than his work on the history of Finland, Juslenius wrote another piece entitled *Vindiciae Fennorum* in 1703 that extolled "the virtues of country and nation" and spoke out in "militant defense of Finland and its people."<sup>38</sup> However, Juslenius' most important contribution to developing a Finnish national identity came with his compilation of the first dictionary of the Finnish language.<sup>39</sup> Subsequently, the Finnish language itself became an important foundational element for much of the Finnish nationalist movement. At this point in history, works like these had no chance of reaching peasants or any of the lower classes, but Finnish scholars and the upper classes quickly embraced them and developed an intense demand for more. Fulfilling this demand for Finnish

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<sup>36</sup> Jussila, Hentilä, and Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy...*, 35, 37, 46, 49, 51, 60.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>38</sup> Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 96.

<sup>39</sup> Jutikkala and Pirinen, *A History of Finland*, 123.

history, Henrik Gabriel Porthan produced his *Dissertatio de poesi Fennica* between 1766 and 1778. It was a five-volume work that analyzed the Finnish oral folk tradition. This work, so important to development of a national identity, earned Porthan the title of ‘The Father of Finnish History.’<sup>40</sup>

As Finland transitioned to Russian government, nationalism continued to gain strength and Finnish national identity became increasingly well defined. Alexander I inadvertently provided fuel to the Finnish nationalist movement during his speech to the Porvoo diet in 1809 when he said, “Finland had been granted a place ‘among nations.’”<sup>41</sup> Nationalism during the Russian period was characterized by literary movements, which were led by scholar J.V. Snellman and the poet J.L. Runeberg. Snellman wrote both as a scholar and a journalist, and through these mediums he pushed for the growth of a national spirit. It was this national spirit that would then be the basis for a true nationalist movement. Runeberg approached Finland’s national identity from a different angle; poetry. His poetry referred to historical events and spoke of the greatness of Finnish culture. One of his most nationalistic poems dealt with the defeat of Finnish forces in Russia’s 1808 invasion. Runeberg decried the failures of Vice-Admiral Cronstedt and General Klingspor in keeping the Russians from occupying Finland. His poems have contributed to Cronstedt and Klingspor’s reputations as traitors to the Finnish people. In one piece, Runeberg refers to Klingspor as a man with “two chins, one eye and only half a heart.”<sup>42</sup> This idea of betrayal of the Finnish people indicates the development of a relatively strong national identity.

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<sup>40</sup> Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, 52.

<sup>41</sup> Jussila, Hentilä, and Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy...*, 11.

<sup>42</sup> Singleton, *A Short History of Finland*, 61.

In contrast to many other subject peoples in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, the Finns exercised dissent through passive means rather than through terrorism or other violence. According to Orlando Figes' work on the Russian Revolution, Russification policies drove nearly all of the Finnish population to join nationalistic and anti-tsarist parties to protest the loss of their special status. The Young Finns, the Social Democrats, and the Party of Active Resistance all sought to halt direct Russian rule and military conscription because they violated Finland's rights of self-rule.<sup>43</sup> Russian imperial responses to this growing movement illustrate its strength and the threat that it represented to the Tsarist government of Russia. By the reign of Nicolas II, the perceived threat became so great that his government issued a manifesto in 1899 that nearly wiped out any legislative powers still held by the Finnish Diet. Due to the Tsar's reactionary policies, Finnish nationalist parties continued to grow and in 1905 Nicolas again reflected their menace to the imperial government when he restored rights held prior to 1899 and added still more.<sup>44</sup> Following Nicolas II's abdication protests were made against continued Russian rule on legal grounds. Finns claimed that the new provisional government had no legal right to maintain Finland as a Russian possession because "the Tsar had ruled over the Grand Duchy purely on the basis of his personal authority, as the Grand Duke of Finland", therefore, sovereignty should be returned to the Finnish parliamentary body upon his abdication. In response to a unilateral declaration of independence from Finland's parliament, Russian troops stationed in Finland dissolved the parliament on 21 July 1917.<sup>45</sup> This proved to be the last of a

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<sup>43</sup> Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 82.

<sup>44</sup> Oliver Warner, *The Sea and The Sword: The Baltic, 1630-1945* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1965), 154-155.

<sup>45</sup> Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, 375, 376.

string of reactionary reforms that persuaded even those who wanted compromise to move toward Finnish independence.

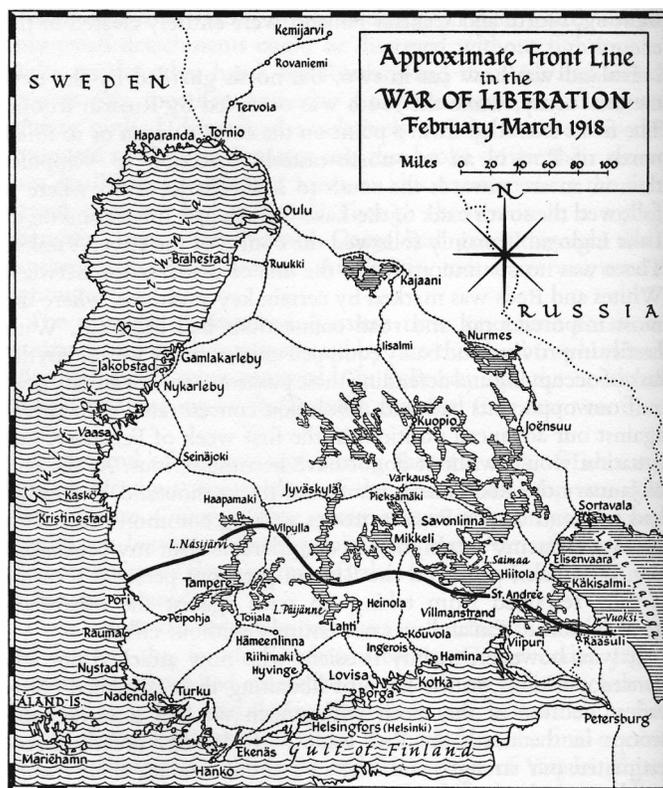


Figure 3<sup>46</sup>

### Finnish Independence and Civil War 1917-1918

Finnish independence was declared on 6 December 1917 and was signaled to the world through notes sent to the governments of Britain, France, the United States, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden on 5 December.<sup>47</sup> The appeals made to western nations were intended by the leader of the Finnish parliament, Pehr Evind Svinhufvud, in an effort to counter a strong socialist movement already in existence throughout industrial areas of Finland. His ultimate fear was that Bolsheviks from Russia would aid Red Finns in wresting control of the provisional Finnish

<sup>46</sup> C.G.E. Mannerheim, *The Memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, INC., 1954), 146.

<sup>47</sup> Upton, *The Finnish Revolution*, 189.

government from traditional hands.<sup>48</sup> These fears were realized when control of the provisional government was contested by the Finnish working class in January of 1918. The relevance of the Finnish revolution in this context is the role of Red Army troops in the Finnish Civil War. White forces, based in predominantly rural west-central Finland, were under the command of a Finnish upper-class general named Carl Gustav Emile Mannerheim. Animosity toward Russia underwent a smooth transition from the Russian Empire to the new Bolshevik government because Russian troops in Finland during the civil war had mutinied against their Tsarist officers and were receiving instructions from Lenin's Communist government.

Mannerheim's memoirs provide great detail in describing the numbers and role of Russian forces in Finland during the civil war. Russian troops were garrisoned all over the coast, especially in southeastern Finland in the fortress city of Viipuri where the Forty-Second Corps of the Russian army was based. According to intelligence estimates related by Mannerheim in his memoirs, Russian troops in Finland numbered approximately 40,000. These soldiers, not the Finnish Red Guard, were the primary concern of Mannerheim during the civil war.<sup>49</sup> Of further concern to White forces was the arming of the Red Guard from Russian arms depots in the cities. In two specific cases, Russian troops actively took part in battles between Red and White Finns; in the industrial cities of Turku in the south and Tornio in the north.<sup>50</sup> Anthony Upton argues that the Russian forces in Finland were weak, disorganized, and mostly passive during the civil war, which refutes the beliefs of Mannerheim and the civilian government of the White Finns.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Upton, *The Finnish Revolution*, 187-189.

<sup>49</sup> Mannerheim, *Memoirs*, 132.

<sup>50</sup> Upton, *The Finnish Revolution*, 152-153.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 187-188.

However, in this case, perception equates to reality because after the end of the civil war the victorious Whites genuinely held a great deal of animosity in regard to the Russian role in a domestic conflict. This perception was reinforced during the civil war when Russian troops were reinforced in southern Finland with two trainloads of Russian marines.<sup>52</sup>

Following the victory of White forces in the civil war relations between Finland and the new Soviet Union cooled and they maintained a state of peace through the interwar years. Ideological differences played a vital role in the break with Russia. The initial separation that resulted in Finnish independence in 1917 and 1918 stemmed from nationalistic and opportunistic sentiments that came out of the leadership of the Finnish Grand Duchy. However, following Finland's civil war, in which White forces defeated Red forces in armed conflict, the dominant sentiment of governing elites weighed heavily against the Soviet Union. Members of the Finnish governing elite took up stout opposition to the Bolshevik ideology of Soviet Russia. This, in addition to traditional animosities and Finnish perceptions of the unique nature of their culture, helped create a significant split between Finland and the Soviet Union during the interwar years.

### **The Interwar Years, 1919-1939**

The problems created between the Soviet Union and Finland during the Finnish Civil War were finally solved with the Peace of Tartu in 1920. In the peace treaty, the undeclared state of war between Russia and Finland finally came to an end and the Soviet government officially recognized Finnish independence.<sup>53</sup> Due to the intense distrust on both sides following the peace treaty, the period between Finland's civil war and the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish Winter War were tense. Part of the reason for this uneasiness was the inherent divide that

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<sup>52</sup> Mannerheim, *Memoirs*, 139.

<sup>53</sup> Wuorinen, *A History of Finland*, 225.

persisted between the Finnish and Russian governments. The Bolsheviks had lost any credibility with the Finns through their aid of the Red Finns and the Soviets felt a need to affect change in a Finnish government that stood opposite of Soviet communism.

Finnish fears of Soviet interference in their internal affairs flourished during the interwar period. These fears were reflected in an official capacity through nearly constant trials of Communists on charges of espionage and the banning of the Finnish Socialist Labour party from elections after 1922. Popular fears were expressed through the Lapua Movement, which took violent action against communists throughout Finland beginning in 1928.<sup>54</sup> From the earliest days of the Peace of Tartu, Russians viewed Finnish actions against domestic communists as a heritage of open hostility toward the foundational tenets of the Soviet Union. These tensions finally began to come to a head in 1938 when the Soviet Union started making demands for Finnish territory.

The first of Soviet territorial demands involved creating closer ties to Russian and building Russian fortifications on Suursaari Island. The reasoning behind these demands, according to Max Jakobson, were nothing new and had been a part of Russian general staff planning since the years prior to the First World War.<sup>55</sup> The demands increased in March 1939 when the demands increased from one island in the Gulf of Finland to four islands.<sup>56</sup> Additional fortifications were demanded on the Åland Archipelago due to Soviet fears of an invasion from a western European power through the Gulf of Finland.<sup>57</sup> In response to these demands, the Finns

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<sup>54</sup> Puntila, *The Political History of Finland*, 142, 143.

<sup>55</sup> Jakobson, *Finland Survived*, 14.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

sent one of their most trusted negotiators to Moscow to discuss the increasing territorial demands, which had increased from building fortifications to allowing an outright lease for thirty years. October 1939 brought a summons delivered to the Finnish government demanding a delegation be sent to Moscow to discuss “concrete political questions.” When the Finnish delegation, led by J.K. Paasikivi, arrived at the meeting in Moscow they were presented with an even larger list of demands.

The Soviet Union... demanded: the the frontier between Russia and Finland in the Karelian Isthmus region be moved westward to a point only 20 miles east of Viipuri, and that all existing fortifications on the Karelian Isthmus be destroyed; that the Finns cede to Russia the islands of Suursaari, Lavansaari, Tytarsaari, and Koivisto in the Gulf of Finland, along with most of the Rybachi Peninsula on the Arctic coast. In compensation for this, Stalin was willing to exchange 5,500 square kilometers of East Karelia, above Lake Ladoga; that the Finns lease to the USSR the peninsula of Hanko, and permit the Russians to establish a base there, manned by 5,000 troops and some support units.<sup>58</sup>

Having only recently declared independence, any loss of Finnish soil was viewed as out of the question to the Finnish government. In addition to the national pride issue, the Finnish military establishment advised against the demands regarding the Karelian Isthmus because of its value for defending Finland’s borders. A parallel can be drawn between the Karelian Isthmus and the Czech Sudetenland. Once through these regions, no natural barriers or significant defensive fortifications remained between an invader and the hearts of these two nations. Finnish military leaders, and especially General Mannerheim, had these concerns in mind when recommending against accepting Soviet demands.

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<sup>57</sup> Eloise Engle and Lauri Paananen, *The Winter War: The Soviet Attack on Finland, 1939-1940* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1973), 9.

<sup>58</sup> William R. Trotter, *A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 1991), 15-16.

## Conclusion

Despite continuing demands for territorial concessions, Finnish leaders remained firm in their decision to decline. This led, on 30 November 1939, to a massive Russian invasion of Finland along their entire border with the Soviet Union. After a desperate 105-day defense, the weight of sheer numbers eventually forced the Finnish government to sue for peace in March of 1940. The brutal territorial cessions forced upon the Finns in this peace treaty severely reduced the nation's industrial capacity and humiliated a still young country.



Figure 4<sup>59</sup>

Tensions caused by the unwarranted invasion of Finland during the Winter War and the loss of so much vital Finnish territory led Finland and Russia into, what is known as, the Continuation War between 1941 and 1944. This conflict was initiated by the Finns with help from Nazi Germany and was surprisingly successful until Russia turned a significant portion of its military strength in Europe to retaking territory ceded after the Winter War. After taking terrible losses

<sup>59</sup> Anthony F. Upton, *Finland in Crisis, 1940-1941: A Study in Small-Power Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1964), 23.

in two wars with Russia in five years, Finland had to pay a war debt to the Soviet Union because of their status as a co-belligerent with Nazi Germany.

The historical divisions between Finland and Russia have deep roots that extend back over 600 years. The way the Finnish people viewed yet another period of war that devastated their country again is built on those divisions. These feelings of animosity are not unique in and of themselves. The importance of their open distrust of Finland's eastern neighbor is that it survived openly during a period of constant threats to the very existence of Finland as a free and independent state. This chapter not only shows the roots of popular memory, it also illustrates experiences in Finland's past that allowed for pragmatic government that could navigate a difficult environment for a small, autonomous state. The following chapters will take Finnish popular memory as it existed in the years following the end of Russo-Finnish conflict and place it within the context of the Cold War. They will also show how popular memory co-existed with pragmatic government to allow for Finland's continued autonomy in the no-man's-land between east and west. No relationship between two groups of people with such different cultures and heritages can be viewed in a vacuum; context is essential.

## Chapter Two:

### Memory and Identity, a Theoretical Toolbox

#### Introduction

Toughness and perseverance typify Finnish identity, which springs from their long history of hardships and warfare with their neighbor to the east, Russia. In fact, the Finns have a word, *sisu*, that essentially means guts or toughness and they commonly will use this word to help define themselves. This identity has been constructed through the popular memory of Finland's rough past and Finns hold their performance in their twentieth century wars as a central signifier of this tradition. Among the common people in Finland, war memory continues to be an important part of their heritage. Through the importance of war memory in determining Finnish identity, its place within the larger context of collective memory becomes apparent. Jay Winter offers an explanation for the paramount role of war memory within collective memory by pointing out that war not only dominates developing collective memories, but also the growing study of collective memory. In addition to physical damage done by warfare, its impact on a society's psyche affords war memory its influential role in guiding the development of collective memory.<sup>60</sup>

When people experience an event that has an impact on a wide section of the population, a common memory of that event will develop. That shared memory is known as collective memory. Collective memory is primarily a social construction. The very foundation of memory theory comes from Maurice Halbwachs' work called *On Collective Memory*. According to Halbwachs, memory itself exhibits a highly social aspect that allows people to "acquire... recall,

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<sup>60</sup> Winter, *Remembering War*, 6.

recognize and localize their memories.”<sup>61</sup> This collective memory develops and matures according to the society or community that fosters it. John R. Gillis refers to collective memory as a kind of support structure that helps to maintain a people’s memory of a given event or experience.<sup>62</sup> Collective memory also helps to define social groups and provide them with an identity. Further, collective memory illustrates how a given population or group of people will develop a common memory of a shared event or experience. Robert Moeller uses a number of structures for collective memory development to show how citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany arrived at a usable past or identity. Making a past usable simply refers to the process through which people reconcile past events with their cultural identity and present and future goals both politically and culturally. Sources like popular films, media, higher education, rituals, and political debates all contribute significantly to development of collective memory, as well as the construction of memorials and other sites of memory.<sup>63</sup> These sources for collective memory development have the potential to be used to artificially create collective memories. Because many of the sources of collective memory are controlled by elites, they can be used to create politically motivated and artificial versions of historical events. Within the study of collective memory, there are many sub-fields that aid in clarifying the varied aspects of the wider field.

War memory makes up an important facet of memory theory because the events involved in warfare create significant mental markers in the memories of individual soldiers and civilians.

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<sup>61</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.

<sup>62</sup> John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 15.

<sup>63</sup> Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 13.

For example, Jay Winter, in his book *Remembering War*, shows how when an otherwise normal person goes into a combat situation, they experience “unassimilable” events, severing them from their former identity. Very few experiences approach this level of impact on the human psyche, which makes war an indispensable instrument for the study and tracking of memory construction.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, war memory serves a central role in collective memory development because of the social nature of memory construction. This has become more prominent during the modern era of citizen soldiers because once the soldiers return from war; they help to determine the track of memory development among the population. The modern United States typifies this type of development because of the nature of the image of the soldier in American culture. Especially since World War Two, Americans have idolized soldiers as protectors of freedom and democracy, so they have become central to developing collective memories of American conflicts.

In much the same way that one must understand the historical context of a discussion of memory, it is also essential to have a pallet of theory to work with. This chapter will introduce the ideas of official and popular memory, the creation of a usable past by a society, the growth of a society’s identity, the process of developing soldiers’ memories, and the importance of memorials and cemeteries to memory development. Each of these ideas functions within the larger theory of collective memory development. Within these areas, there are other necessary components like language and symbols. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche introduce their book on German social and cultural history and memory by explaining the state of the field. They bring up the point that current historical studies, especially in social or cultural fields, have overlooked the traditional source material of economic and national relations in favor of cultural

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<sup>64</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 52-53.

material that can be found in museums, monuments, or memorials. These two historians argue that traditional sources should not be discarded, that they should be analyzed from a cultural perspective. “The result of overlooking such topics is a distorted and limited view of what memory is and how it operates in society.”<sup>65</sup> Their argument holds significant importance for any discussion of the interaction and relationship between official and popular memory. Analyzing government fiscal and foreign policy helps to shed light on the motives of a government and clues to explain reactions of the populace. Finally, this chapter will discuss various mediums for expressing memory and its development. In order to more effectively analyze these manifestations and representations, a primer, of sorts, is required.

### **Official and Popular Memory**

The distinction between popular and official memory is central to the growing field of collective memory. One way in which it might be understood is to contrast the artificial creation of a collective past with an organic growth of memory within a social group. To put it simply, official memory refers to the manner in which an event is portrayed by an overarching, governing body or a group of elites within a society. In other words, creating official memory requires conscious action on the part a group in power. Governments, as George Mosse puts it, can utilize development of war memory to justify lives lost while fighting under the banner of the nation. To maintain the air of legitimacy held by a government, they will often selectively champion a set of soldiers’ memories or recollections to bolster support for the regime or by using those symbols to completely fabricate a favorable set of collective memories. Memories of soldiers who believed they were fighting for the good of the nation and that they were offering sacrifices to a worthy cause were taken up by their governments. However, soldiers who became

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<sup>65</sup> Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 4.

disillusioned with war were conveniently omitted from government-supported media.<sup>66</sup> In this way, memories of war are often of the glory that is won by brave soldiers in defense of the homeland. They very rarely portray war as a horrible experience that scars soldiers both mentally and physically for their entire lives. Additionally, war deaths are never a waste of a nation's youth and resources; they are always necessary for the preservation of a society's way of life. To those ends, governments selectively enshrine soldiers' memories in a country's national history. The words of a poet and German volunteer provide a fitting example of memories chosen by governments to further their version of war, "happiness lies only in sacrificial death."<sup>67</sup> This type of interaction is a common manifestation of official memory.

John Bodnar also argues that a government can create memory that diverges from the collective memory of the people who experience it. He illustrates his argument by pointing to the process of funding and building the United States Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. Of the numerous groups involved in carrying the memorial to fruition, each had their own objective; each had their own historical perspective that they wished to express through the design of the memorial. Members of the government during the 1980s sought to ascribe recollections of willing sacrifice for the good of the nation to the war memorial, while families and friends of the war dead and the living veterans sought to simply remember their comrades and their hardships during the war.<sup>68</sup> Further, Bodnar provides an instance of elites exerting influence over the development of a revolutionary heritage. By the last two decades of the nineteenth century, wealthy elites in both the northeast and the southern states made a concerted effort to

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<sup>66</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>68</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 5.

memorialize contributions by elites to the revolutionary cause. In one particular case, wealthy New Yorkers memorialized the one-hundred-year anniversary of George Washington's inauguration with an opulent gala. Their intention was to celebrate not only Washington's contribution to the United States, but also to instill the importance of his roots as a part of "colonial nobility".<sup>69</sup> This type of celebration elevated the role of the prominent members of the American Revolution and tended to exclude the vital contributions of the common soldiers. They chose not to stress the importance of the popular support for separating from Great Britain. Rather, elites sought to solidify their positions in late nineteenth century society by showing their heritage as essential to the eventual success of the American independence movement.

In Jay Winter's *Remembering War*, he shows how the nationalist wave that swept Europe and fed the war hysteria prior to the First World War was based, largely, on fabricated memories. For example, citizens of France and Germany saw themselves as hereditary enemies in the years prior to World War One, so when a state of war broke out between the two nations, French and German civilians turned out in droves to protect their respective nations. In his book *The Inverted Mirror*, Michael Nolan explains that in France and Germany, the period between the Franco-Prussian War and World War One was a time of suspicion between the two powers. When war broke out in 1914, they saw it as a sequel to the war in 1870-'71.<sup>70</sup> These feelings and attitudes did not simply appear in the populations of Germany and France, leaders who pushed ideas like nationalism and racialism planted them there. French and German leaders and academics like Paul Dérouléde and Ludwig Woltmann constructed an intellectual framework that allowed people in both countries to paint one another in stark contrast. Dérouléde placed the

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<sup>69</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 29.

<sup>70</sup> Michael E. Nolan, *The Inverted Mirror: Mythologizing the Enemy in France and German, 1898-1914* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 24.

fear of domination by Germans at the forefront of the French psyche in public speeches. His German counterpart, Woltmann, built a sense of superiority in the minds of Germans by explaining the natural dominance of German culture and showing how even the good aspects of French culture had roots in Germanic antiquity.<sup>71</sup> These ideas bore little resemblance to reality, but they managed to construct a memory among the people of France and Germany that they had always been enemies and that it was the natural state of things.

Ceremonies, rituals, and sites of mourning reinforce official memories because they create fanfare that surrounds a historical event. The Vietnam Wall in Washington DC serves as an example of the role of the government in steering the design, funding, and construction of memorials and other sites of mourning. Monuments that commemorate important events in a nation's history at the national level have to be designed to address all aspects of the national experience, so they need to be quite broad. In the case of the Vietnam Wall, groups across the United States presented numerous concepts for a national Vietnam memorial and many of them presented conflicting conceptions of the war. Advocates from the United States government wanted to present a memorial that honored sacrifice and national glory, while groups that represented the veterans of the war wanted to show the massive cost of the conflict. These differing ideas came into conflict because government backing was important for the funding of the national monument and they saw the concepts proposed by veterans' organizations as too negative. Disagreements of this kind show how influential the state can be in the process of guiding the development of collective memory through rituals and sites of mourning.

Another example of a government creating an environment that was conducive to obedience and war hysteria occurred in Britain between 1870 and 1914. Britain bolstered and

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<sup>71</sup> Nolan, *Inverted Mirror*, 25.

expanded many traditions to reinforce the aging institution of the British monarchy. The Cult of the British Monarchy was built on invented practices and symbols that were made to look as though they originated in a “time out of mind”.<sup>72</sup> This perceived legacy made the monarchy into an even more sacrosanct institution. That status made it into a symbol to which Britons and their colonial cousins could rally during trying times. In *Nations and Nationalism*, E.J. Hobsbawm discusses the need for European monarchies to adapt themselves following the period of revolution during the Napoleonic era, even in countries like Russia and Great Britain where no serious threat existed. Because the monarchies sprang from a single pool of royal families, they needed to create links to their respective nations to help legitimize their rule.<sup>73</sup> In his article in *Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm goes into much greater detail regarding the lengths to which monarchies went to instill nationalist feelings among their subjects in the years prior to World War One. By issuing stamps that commemorated historical events associated with their country and holding jubilees to celebrate anniversaries, European monarchies were able to fabricate traditions that would continue to support nationalist feelings.<sup>74</sup>

A major motive behind the creation of traditions to reinforce national ties to the various monarchies came from governmental needs for troops to defend their respective empires. Convincing troops to fight in a war between a number of close relatives would have been quite difficult. However, putting that same conflict in terms of national pride and the protection of important national belief structures provides a great deal of motivation for the common people to

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<sup>72</sup> Winter, *Remembering War*, 23.

<sup>73</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 84-85.

<sup>74</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Tradition: Europe 1870-1914.” In *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 281.

participate. Memories created in that way can be considered official memories, most often sponsored by the state. Additionally, with the increasing importance of elected officials throughout the western world during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, monarchs also needed to cement their symbolic roles in states relied on parliamentary government. Hobsbawm uses the Russian Romanovs and Austrian Habsburgs to illustrate this point.<sup>75</sup> One particular aspect of that invented tradition came directly out of the eighteenth century and was pioneered by the British. Having a national anthem provided something for the people of Britain to hold as a collective representation of the many disparate parts of the British Empire.<sup>76</sup> In the decades that followed institution of a national anthem, a national flag and a national emblem that combined representational aspects of compositional elements of the empire produced yet another force to inculcate a national sense of unity. Britain provides a good example of invented tradition because the core of the British Empire was composed of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. For centuries, these four regions fought one another for the right to maintain their autonomy. However, by the eighteenth century the four had become the United Kingdom. In order to smooth over numerous animosities, the need developed to portray them as a united nation with a long tradition of cooperation and co-existence. By the end of the nineteenth century, with the exception of Ireland, that goal had been largely accomplished.

The use of symbols by governments and in the media to help bolster a desired memory yields an ideal illustration of official memory creation. According to Bodnar, “dogmatic formalism” and the use of unambiguous language are necessary for maintaining an event in idyllic circumstances. Furthermore, keeping a recollection of an event in the abstract aids

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<sup>75</sup> Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Tradition: Europe 1870-1914.” In *The Invention of Tradition*, 282.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

official memory because it allows a government to avoid specific experiences that may not sustain the accepted past.<sup>77</sup> Symbols provide a method of conveying an official memory without ambiguity or abstract language because they are made to have a specific meaning within a society. In *Remaking America*, Bodnar shows how the United States government appropriated pioneers and war dead and made them into symbols that typified nationalism, self-sacrifice, and freedom. Though these symbols are extremely effective in supporting official positions, they also have an aspect of popular memory. What Bodnar refers to as a “vernacular” component of symbols like these is the reason for their success in propagating an official point of view. The tight hold that people maintain on symbols from their past makes them “susceptible to reformulation by officials.”<sup>78</sup> By using already important symbols of America, the United States government inculcated ideals that supported their ends into the popular American lexicon. John Gillis, in *Commemorations*, provides useful examples of the power of symbols in the form of monuments. In his discussion of remembrance of the Civil War, he introduces two ways that memorialized the ideas, rather than the actions, that defined the upheaval of the American Civil War. Through law and statuary, Americans attempted to remember the reasons behind a war that divided that nation.<sup>79</sup> The impetus behind both of these avenues of remembrance resides, primarily, in the hands of the state. With this degree of power over how an event like the Civil War is represented, the state has the opportunity to manipulate how people remember.

The term “popular memory” represents a much broader arena than official memory, but it provides its own specific parameters. Popular memories tend to grow out of experiences and the

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<sup>77</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 13-14.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

<sup>79</sup> Gillis, *Commemorations*, 127.

various forms of media put in front of the public. Jay Winter devotes much of his book to discussing what he calls “collective remembrance”.<sup>80</sup> In these terms, popular memory is experienced and created by people through central points, or sites, of memory development. The importance of using remembrance, according to Winter, lies with the contrast between collective memory and collective remembrance. By using remembrance, Winter provides agency to the development of traditions, memories, or ideals. These sites concentrate the modes of collective memory, allowing people to create their own, group centered, memories of traumatic events like wars or other trying times. Winter outlines some examples of sites of memory in his introductory chapter of *Remembering War*. Assassinations, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, wars, or genocides all act as markers for the initial stages of popular memory development, or collective remembrance.<sup>81</sup> Popular memory, in contrast to official memory does not, necessarily, develop for a particular aim or goal. It organically grows out of historical markers, or sites of memory based on the shared experiences of a social group. Though popular memory tends to grow on its own, it has the ability to contest official memory. In some instances, popular memory can parallel official memory and in other cases it can contest official memories and offer an alternative version of historical events.

The broad range of pathways in the growth of popular memory makes classification difficult at best. In some cases, popular memory develops through anecdotal evidence distributed by people who experienced events first-hand, while in other cases, collective memories develop through contact with varying sources of media like films or photographs. Jay Winter discusses many of the modes of popular memory development that were experienced in

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<sup>80</sup> Winter, *Remembering War*, 5.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

the First World War. He addresses everything from photographs depicting scenes of war and destruction experienced on the Eastern Front to memorials that typified attempts by both the common people and their governments to construct a palatable memory of an appalling chapter in human history. One specific mode of popular memory development that carries significant importance to individual families is the correspondence from family members who experienced World War One first-hand. These letters demonstrate the wide variation in soldiers' experiences during war. Even accounts of the same battle, on the same stretch of trench, from the same unit differ from one another, which illustrates how individual vernacular culture and perspective can color recollections. When beginning with such diverse evidence it is no wonder that popular memory illustrates such varied experiences. This variance offers a unique opportunity to access motives and thought processes at the most basic levels.

In his book *The Soldiers' Tale*, Samuel Hynes uses soldiers' experiences to illustrate how memories of war develop into the streamlined narratives that abound during and after a conflict. He attempts to define what exactly composes a simplified narrative by explaining that wars are classified as good, bad, or necessary in order to ascribe meaning to a seemingly pointless waste of life.<sup>82</sup> This distinction develops on different levels, among social groups like families or communities, or at the level of nations through various means, including soldiers' narratives. The importance of soldiers' stories lies in the growth of popular memory. Each social group, family, or community retains traditions that color the experiences that are relayed to them by those who came into contact with shocking events like trench warfare.

In both Bodnar and Winter's books, symbols perform an important role in representing important themes for a given set of popular memory. Bodnar writes about pioneers and war dead

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<sup>82</sup> Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), xiii.

as symbols that have memories attached to them by families or communities. Despite efforts by elites or governments to sanitize these symbols, popular versions persist. An exemplar of this phenomenon is the redefinition of national commemorations to suit the needs of common people. Bodnar explains that despite attempts to assign specific attributes to national commemorations, people will appropriate symbols from the events and “redefine that symbol or ignore it for the sake of leisure or economic ends.”<sup>83</sup> The fourth of July typifies these redefinitions. Common Americans now use a holiday that celebrates sacrifice and democracy to sell memorabilia and fireworks rather than actually memorializing the founders of the United States. This case illustrates the broad capacity of popular memory to develop along highly localized lines.

Studying the relationship between official and popular memory has scholarly merit because of how memory is created and what it may be used for. Memory, itself, can be used to give political legitimacy to a government’s actions or to provide ammunition to challenge the established memory, identity, and policies of a state. It is also important because often, the two different lines of memory can co-exist. This simultaneous existence can involve conflicted memories between the government and the people, between two groups with conflicting political agendas, between elites and lower classes, or simply two independently formed sets of competing memory. More often than not, given two sets of memory co-existing within the same social group, one will attempt to take precedence over the other. Guy Beiner explores this phenomenon through the Irish uprising of 1798. The long-standing movement for Irish independence from Great Britain provided the opportunity to utilize events from 1798 a century later to give further impetus for Irish separation. These events hold great importance in the study of official versus popular memory because of the broad spectrum of Irish nationalistic

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<sup>83</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 16.

organizations that attempted to take control of the centennial celebrations in 1898. Each group intended to build their version of the 1798 uprising to better aid their agenda. In western Ireland, committees organized celebrations and commemorations that were designed to further agrarian concerns. These issues held a great deal of importance to the Irish in the Mayo and Connacht regions because of land rights agitation.<sup>84</sup> Throughout 1898, any number of local clubs organized and carried out their own versions of 1798 commemorations. However, even at the local level political rifts became apparent. Each local committee had members that hailed from Irish political parties of the late nineteenth century that varied from home rulers to Gaelic sports enthusiasts, and each worked toward vastly different goals.<sup>85</sup> These local and regional organizations' attempts to create the official memory of the Irish nationalist movement are unique because they were trying to establish the official version of a popular event. In traditional terms, the British colonial government would create the official memory of the events of 1798. In this case, however, Irish clubs and political parties tried to become the leading elites of the Irish nationalist movement.

The traditional interaction between these two types of memory has been, for the most part, rocky and it has become violent in a number of cases. Problems arise because the official version of historical events is often created to serve some specific purpose. Popular memory that contradicts the official portrayal can threaten international relationships or it can undermine internal government policies. In some instances, popular memory can even shed light on very unpopular periods in a nation's history, which can damage a regime's legitimacy or undermine a government's rationalization for historic actions. Bodnar discusses this idea of conflicting

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<sup>84</sup> Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 246.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

memories through United States history. He explains that official memory takes on a plastic quality when used to accomplish specific goals set out by the government. Rather than attempting to produce the most accurate accounting of events, governments will choose to champion the memories that best fit the official conception of the government.

Sometimes, however, people adhere to the official memory of an event because it helps to further a positive characteristic that has been internalized as desirable at the national level. Germany and France, prior to World War One, illustrate this phenomenon through their respective nationalist movements. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Germans believed that they typified what it meant to be a thoroughly organized and civilized society. They took a great deal of pride in their industrial development and their martial abilities. Germany, under Bismarck, made a concerted effort to develop these identities within Germany's population with the aim of producing a sense of national pride at being German. France, on the other hand, chose to propagate an identity that espoused French high culture and their republican tradition of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Aspects of each of these official memories holds elements of truth, but their governments took them to greater lengths to inculcate national pride among their respective populations.<sup>86</sup>

### **Concrete Representations of Memory**

In this study, concrete manifestations of memory development will serve vital interpretive roles. Concrete manifestations of memory development are sites of memory that serve as central points for a society to focus memorials and remembrance. Places like the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington DC or the Cenotaph in London typify sites of memory because they help to mold American and British memories of historic conflicts. In addition to

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<sup>86</sup> Nolan, *Inverted Mirror*, 6.

monuments, cemeteries can provide a more malleable focal point for the development of memory. Cemeteries elucidate paths of memory development through the manner of their construction, symbolism, and their importance to those that lose family members in time of war and the society in general. The central element of popular memory analysis will in fact, center on cemeteries. Cemeteries and monuments have become an integral component of memory studies because they can be extremely powerful in determining how cultures address collective memories of death in war and their attitudes toward the war itself. Cemeteries have evolved significantly from the years before the French Revolution through the modern era. The focus of remembrance in cemeteries has shifted from elites to recognition of sacrifices made by all war dead. Within this interpretive grouping, any kind of public representation yields clues to the development of traditions, attitudes, and memories within a society. A public representation can include cemeteries, monuments, museums, ceremonies, or any kind of public commemoration.

Prior to the French Revolution and throughout the nineteenth century, cemeteries for war dead in Europe memorialized great leaders and generals. They only recognized officers with names and grave markers, leaving the graves of simple soldiers without any concrete recognition. The common infantryman simply received a mass burial at a nearby location with little fanfare immediately following a battle. That all changed with the French Revolution because the revolutionaries saw the contributions of commoners as vital to the success and survival of the French Republic. With the liberal nature of the French Revolution, focus started to shift from solely focusing on the great figures of history to increasingly revere contributions made by common soldiers.<sup>87</sup> French recognition of their war dead came, initially, in the form of national monuments rather than national cemeteries. By the beginning of the nineteenth century,

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<sup>87</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 37.

death transformed into a peaceful rest rather than a chance to repent sins committed during a person's lifetime.<sup>88</sup> The United States pioneered this aspect of transition in 1862 during the American Civil War. Through an act issued by the United States Congress, a unit was created whose role was to identify, register, and bury the bodies of fallen soldiers in military cemeteries. By the 1860s, soldiers who died in the service of the United States were seen as deserving special recognition for giving the ultimate sacrifice for their country.<sup>89</sup> Institution of Memorial Day after the Civil War helped to systematize memory of war dead in the United States.<sup>90</sup> European nations did not initiate similar reforms within their respective militaries until the end of the nineteenth century. In fact, it took the shock of the First World War to make all war dead equal in memorials and cemeteries in Europe.

Changes in the conceptualization of cemetery design progressed through the nineteenth century and into the interwar years between World War One and World War Two. Some of the most significant changes occurred in the way Europeans viewed death. Another aspect of changes made to cemetery design was reflected in the landscaping and layout used during the mid to late nineteenth century. During this period, cemeteries shifted from closely packed, urban, churchyard cemeteries to designs that more closely resembled parks. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, death became a solemn experience when the living entered a state of eternal rest. The entire vision of death as being taken by the Grim Reaper underwent a metamorphosis toward a more secular interpretation. Relocation of cemeteries outside of large urban areas illustrated the incomplete secularization process. For nineteenth century Europe, a

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<sup>88</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 39.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.

<sup>90</sup> Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 28.

proximity to nature allowed their loved ones to be a more integral part of God's creation. The movement toward a more natural focus for cemeteries spread to remembrance of war dead. German Heroes' Groves provide a fitting example of nineteenth century Europeans embracing a more nature-centered process of remembrance. Design of the Heroes' Groves sought to place war dead in communion with God's creation, the symbolism of nature represented renewal and it kept some religious symbolism in an increasingly secular era. It also symbolized a state of eternal youth for those it memorialized. The remnants of a Christian liturgy served European leaders well when war came again in 1914 because they were able to connect religion to sacrifice in the name of national defense. Soldiers could be viewed as pious because they sacrificed their lives for the good of the nation and the continued existence of their homeland. Heroes' groves simply took the connection between nature and Christian piety and appropriated it in support of government attempts to encourage nationalist sentiments. This illustrates a significant aspect of cemetery design because this became the primary design philosophy used in the creation of military cemeteries at the end of the nineteenth century and following the First World War.<sup>91</sup>

After World War One, cemeteries continued to change from their traditional role to become sites of national mourning and collective memory development. They also began to take on the role of national monuments. In World War One cemeteries, governments began to use stone altars, crosses made of both stone and iron, and other items to represent heroism and national sacrifice. Though the French Revolution began the transition of war dead from a side effect of war to focal points for national pride, the First World War provided an impetus for a complete restructuring of remembrance. By utilizing uniformity of head stones, placing monuments within military cemeteries, and creating a clear distinction between local cemeteries

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<sup>91</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 38, 43-44.

and those for war dead, governments made burial sites into symbols of sacrifice for the nation. For cemeteries to reach this point, a great deal of change occurred in all facets of design, symbolism, and cultural outlook.

After the war, monuments became increasingly important in the process of memorializing and remembering war dead. Monuments appeared a number of different formats during the 1920s and 1930s. The British built what was known as the Cenotaph after World War One to offer a severely wounded populace a collective point for national mourning. Though it was only an empty tomb, it allowed all British people to have one collective site of remembrance, one point they could all use to reconcile the pain and hardship caused by the war. Another type of monument that became popularized at the same time was tomb of the Unknown Soldier. According to George Mosse, the idea for a monument to commemorate all soldiers was discussed by the French throughout World War One. The focus on an Unknown Soldier allowed all war dead to be memorialized without specificity toward deed or rank, providing equal recognition to all. During the 1920s, Tombs of the Unknown Soldier appeared all over Europe; they helped nations come to terms with some of the losses experienced in the wars.<sup>92</sup> The Germans took a different approach to a monument similar to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the form of *Totenburgen*, or fortresses of the dead. Rather than distinguish fallen soldiers as individuals, these monuments made a clear statement that the soldiers had been part of the nation. The fortresses would have a mass grave where the bodies of German soldiers would be buried and there would be a separate tablet or wall with their names.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 94-96.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

## **Conclusion**

The memory boom, as Jay Winter refers to it, serves as a vehicle for better understanding the way in which societies deal with traumatic events in their pasts. Warfare and the destruction it causes provide concrete points in people's memories that can be approached and studied using various analytical tools developed by historians like Jay Winter, Eric Hobsbawm, and George Mosse. With these tools, historians can approach complicated issues within a society's psyche and deconstruct it into its component parts and explain how certain views developed, and in some cases, why. The following chapters will use this approach in an attempt to explain an anomalous occurrence in the history of official and popular memory development. The methods discussed in this chapter have provided tools necessary to understand the following analysis.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **Official Memory and the Politics of Necessity**

#### **Introduction**

Official memory development in Finland presents a unique opportunity to study a different path of memory creation. Finland's place within the political landscape of twentieth century European history typifies the unique nature of official memory development, which has changed at various times due to tectonic shifts in the diplomatic and political landscape in Europe and around the world. In contrast to the rest of Europe, the World War Two period in Finland consisted of three separate conflicts under three separate sets of circumstances. Due to these periodic shifts, the path of official memory development has been altered along with the diplomatic and political environments. Consequently, the majority of any discussion of official memory in Finland deals with diplomatic and political history in contrast to the largely cultural quality of popular memory development. With this in mind, the development of Finnish official memory relies directly on Fenno-Soviet relations after World War Two and during the Cold War. A primary aim was to present an acceptable view of the wars with the Soviet Union, thereby aiding Finland's image in the eyes of the Russians. Maintaining a workable middle ground between the Soviet Union and the nations of Europe and the United States typified Finnish diplomatic goals in the latter half of the twentieth century. This might help explain why Finnish leaders also seemed to advocate a policy of not mentioning that period in the national history. Some of the more notable memoirs written during the Cold War lack any outright comment on war responsibility or the conflicts in general. Most notorious among these omissions, Urho Kekkonen provides very little discussion of war responsibility and no comment regarding the years during and prior to the World War Two period. Utilizing more traditional

history, though well represented in scholarly works, allows the veil to be lifted from Finland's misunderstood position during the Cold War and illuminates Finnish national identity. It also delves into an important discussion that helps to expand the study of collective memory, national identity, and the unique relationship between official and popular memory in Finland.

The study of official memory development is not a new branch in the historical community and a number of scholars have already detailed cases that typify established paths of official memory development. Up to this point, official and popular memory have existed in two kinds of relationships: they either mutually reinforce one another, or they exist in opposition. The Finnish case, however, offers an opportunity to study the development of official memory in a third direction, with different methods that yielded different products. In most works on memory, there tend to be only two major paths that memory development can follow. One path, typified by the United States or Great Britain's roles in the two World Wars, yields a popular memory of brave soldiers fighting to defend their respective nations from the depredations of the enemies of freedom and democracy. This popular memory, in both countries, is fully supported by their governments through memorials and holidays. The other path, typified by the East German government and their Cold War views of Jewish communists, illustrates two distinct sets of memory in conflict with one another. This adversarial relationship resulted in the suppression of the popular memory at the hands of the East German government. Finland's unique third way allowed for the creation of an official memory at the government level without suppression of the popular memory at the local level.

Understanding official memory in the Finnish context requires analysis of different components that made up the Finnish relationship with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Influences from the role of communism to war responsibility weighed on the path of memory

development. Following the first conflict between Finland and Russia during the winter of 1939-1940, popular and official memory mirrored one another, with a common thread being that war responsibility fell solely at the feet of the Russian invaders. After the second round of fighting from 1941 to 1944, official attitudes began to change, in large part, to mollify members of the Soviet Control Commission who oversaw implementation of the peace treaty. This divergence of popular and official memory began with an alteration of the government's public attitudes toward responsibility for the Fenno-Soviet wars. As part of the peace settlement negotiated between Finnish and Russian leaders, those responsible for the outbreak of the Continuation War needed to be tried for war crimes. These trials began to define the official memory of the Fenno-Soviet wars of the 1940s for the duration of the Cold War.

The policies of J.K. Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen, as presidents of Finland, defined how Finland, as an entity, viewed their wars with the Soviet Union during the 1940s. By deconstructing the approaches of Paasikivi and Kekkonen toward both foreign and domestic policies, it becomes easier to understand their approaches to relations with the Soviet Union. Their public representations of Finland's role in the wars of the 1940s grew out of their belief that the best way to maintain a neutral position between east and west was to make certain concessions to their neighbor to the east. Some of the most important concessions appear in their representation of the way Finns remembered their wars with Russia. Through both speeches and policies these two men charted Finland's path through the Cold War in the only way that would ensure their continued survival as an independent and autonomous nation. Many of these policies, when viewed from the perspective of a defeated nation, twice attacked by a more powerful neighbor in less than five years, seem counterintuitive.

## Components

Official memory of the Winter and Continuation Wars has more than one component. In addition to memories of the wars themselves and Finland's involvement in starting them, Finnish opinion of Russians also comprises a significant portion of their memories of the World War Two period. As part of their opinion of Russians, their views toward communism also play an important role. From the sixteenth century through to the modern era, Finns have had a rather negative view of Russians due to periodic conflicts and occupations. The two wars during the 1940s simply reinforced this view, cementing it within the Finnish national identity. After concluding peace with the Soviets in 1944, the government needed to reevaluate the way they referred to not just the wars themselves, but also how they referred to the Soviet Union in general. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Finnish government carried out highly repressive policies toward domestic communists, which eventually culminated in an official ban on the communist party in Finland.<sup>94</sup> After the wars, Finnish policy had to change in order to conform to Soviet sentiments, so the Communist Party became a legal association in Finland once again. Significant anti-communist sentiment remained among the Finnish population, but the official memory of communism became much less negative.<sup>95</sup> Parliamentary elections of 1948 reinforced this attitude when communists lost seats in parliament and remained outside of any coalition. The government no longer referred to historical incidents when the communist elements in Finland actively undermined the authority of the legal government.

When referring to the Soviet Union in Finland, it is nearly impossible to avoid consideration of either the Winter War or the Continuation War. Because of this link,

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<sup>94</sup> Jussila, Hentilä, and Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy...*, 155, 158-159.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

development of an official memory acceptable to the Soviet Union during the Cold War necessarily meant fabricating an official memory of communism in general. During wartime, the Finnish government made a tacit agreement to avoid openly partisan politics in order to facilitate unification of war efforts against the Soviet Union. Especially during the period between the Winter and Continuation Wars, Finnish communists under the guise of the Finnish-Soviet Society (SNS) created a great deal of opposition to government policies because they were not pro-Soviet enough. Any liberal, centrist, or rightist groups in the Finnish parliament received vociferous denouncements from the SNS, which ran counter to the agreement to avoid partisanship. They also helped to organize and participate in labor rallies that they intentionally steered toward violence in order to increase unrest among the populace. Their intent in carrying out these actions was to destabilize Finnish society in order to create a fertile environment for a Bolshevik style revolution.<sup>96</sup> Immediately following the armistice that ended the Continuation War, the Finnish Communist party became lawful for the first time since the 1930s and their criticisms of the central government were once again placed into the public view.<sup>97</sup> In Finnish history, domestic communist forces have been a source of significant opposition to more mainstream political movements.

Added to the stigma carried by domestic communists during the post-war years was the participation of the Kuusinen government in the initial invasion of Finland during the Winter War. During the first hours of the Soviet invasion in November 1939, the Soviets set up a rival Finnish government in Terijoki, on the 1939 border with Russia to create an air of legitimacy for

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<sup>96</sup> Upton, *Finland in Crisis*, 115, 119.

<sup>97</sup> Anthony Upton, *Communism in Scandinavia and Finland: Politics of Opportunity* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973), 240, 242.

the invasion.<sup>98</sup> Soviet leaders immediately claimed that the invasion was simply an effort to liberate Finland from an illegitimate capitalist government at the request of the legal government of the Finnish people. The Soviets went so far in this endeavor that they helped equip a Finnish military unit that fought under the banner of the Terijoki government against the units of Finland's defense forces. In the official memory, this incident fell by the wayside because it painted a decidedly unfavorable image of the Soviet Union and Finland's domestic communist party. Domestic communists caused further unrest in Finland through a rumored attempt at a coup at the same time as the parliamentary debate over the treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union during the spring of 1948. Max Jakobson addresses this period in *Finnish Neutrality* and explains that despite Paasikivi's conciliatory policy toward the Soviet Union, he carried out a relatively anti-communist policy toward domestic communists. The local party organizers were rumored to be putting together a coup to overthrow Finland's democratic government. Paasikivi responded to the rumors by increasing the readiness of local military units and placing a gunboat opposite the presidential palace in Helsinki Harbor.<sup>99</sup> This suggests that, although official policy made communists part of the established system, fears and distrust persisted.

### **Official Memory Between the Wars**

Official memory between the wars expressed pride in the defensive victory against the Russians. Finns managed to avoid destruction and assimilation into the group of Soviet Socialist Republics. Unlike public professions of solidarity with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the Finnish government expressed and acted on fears that the Soviet appetite had not been sated by their expansion during the Winter War. Throughout this period, the desire to regain lost

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<sup>98</sup> Trotter, *A Frozen Hell*, 58-59.

<sup>99</sup> Max Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality: A Study of Finnish Foreign Policy Since the Second World War* (London: Hugh Evelyn Limited, 1968), 44.

territory, movements of national unity that saw the disappearance of divisive party politics, suppression of communist organizations, and concerted efforts to expand and rearm the Finnish military were not only prevalent, but had significant support from most parties active in the Finnish government.<sup>100</sup> With those motives in mind, the overtures made toward both Sweden and Germany during this period illustrate Finnish governmental policies that reflected the official memory of the Winter War as a war of survival against a voracious eastern neighbor.

One of the most significant differences between the peace that ended the Winter War and the one that ended the Continuation War deals with the size of the Finnish military. The first peace dictated harsh reductions in territory along the Finnish border that created 400,000 refugees, allowed for a rather sizable Soviet military presence in southwestern Finland, required a railway connection between Sweden and the Soviet Union, and a non-aggression clause prohibiting any alliances with nations hostile to either signatory.<sup>101</sup> However, with all of these requirements, the Soviets chose not to include any limitations on the size of the Finnish military. Official Finnish military policy after the conclusion of the Peace of Moscow was to expand the military to not just a larger standing force, but to increase the military potential of Finland in preparation for dealing with any future threats. Governmental policies show a highly nationalist response to the Winter War that was not allowed following the Continuation War.

The disparity in action taken for defensive preparations before 1939 and after 1939 paint a vivid picture of the way the Winter War was remembered prior to the beginning of the Continuation War. Before 1939, the national committee on defense had a difficult time, at best,

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<sup>100</sup> Upton, *Finland in Crisis*, 80-85.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-25.

appropriating money and resources for improvement of Finland's ability to defend itself.<sup>102</sup>

However, after the Peace of Moscow in March of 1940, the government became highly invested in rebuilding national defenses, in both fortifications and improvements to the military itself.

The resultant change in policy shows that the government saw an active threat from the Soviet Union despite professions of a sincere desire for peace presented in the Peace of Moscow.

Further, according to the Finnish constitution, ultimate control of the military lies in the hands of the president, but during 1940 and '41, Risto Ryti abdicated this responsibility and placed it in the hands of Marshal Mannerheim and his representative to the cabinet, Minister of Defense Rudolf Walden.<sup>103</sup> Again, this alteration in Finnish policy illustrates their open skepticism of Soviet sincerity regarding the continuation of peace.

The memory of the Winter War as a desperate struggle to maintain Finnish independence and culture persisted into the Continuation War. Finns still considered the Soviets aggressors throughout the Continuation War, which was reflected by government policies that advocated closer ties with Sweden, and failing that, Germany. Connections with Germany during the Continuation War allowed Finland to retake all of the territory lost to the Soviets, as well as additional land that better facilitated a successful defense of those areas. Without an official memory that allowed for black and white interpretations of responsibility for the Winter War, public support for continued conflict with the Soviets could not have been maintained. The importance of this official memory is that it existed both among the leadership in the government and the military and among the Finnish people. Finnish memory, at this time, fell into one of the two accepted interpretations of official versus popular memory, that of mutual support for one

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<sup>102</sup> Mannerheim, *Memoirs*, 271, 275, 280.

<sup>103</sup> Upton, *Finland in Crisis*, 79.

another. At the conclusion of the Continuation War in 1944 the government faced the necessity of altering their public position toward both the wars and the Soviets themselves.

### **Official and Popular Memory Split**

Responsibility for actually ending the Continuation War in 1944 fell on the shoulders of Mannerheim, who took over the presidency from Risto Ryti. Due to the fact that Mannerheim managed to appear largely aloof from political decisions that led to the Continuation War, the Soviets saw him as a more acceptable leader. Additionally, Mannerheim had a reputation as a realist, supported by his urging for peace at the end of the Winter War because he recognized that it was the only option that would allow Finland to maintain independence.<sup>104</sup> In this role, he became the first head of Finland to present a differing position from that of the public. In 1944 when he rose to the office of President, Mannerheim had again realized the need to conclude peace with the Soviet Union despite thoroughly undesirable terms. Article Thirteen of the peace treaty presented Finland with the most difficult challenge, requiring trials for those accused of responsibility for initiating the Continuation War. Under Mannerheim's leadership the government launched these trials within the Finnish judicial system.<sup>105</sup> His consistency in following the dictated peace, typified by the war responsibility trials, helped transition the Finnish government from their wartime policies to those of J.K. Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen and provided legitimacy that could only come from a national figure like Mannerheim. This policy of realism rather than idealism opened the door in Finnish politics for the possibility of maintaining neutrality and autonomy within Finland throughout the Cold War era.

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<sup>104</sup> Mannerheim, *Memoirs*, 387.

<sup>105</sup> J.E.O. Screen, *Mannerheim: The Finnish Years* (London: Hurst and Company, 2000), 231-232.

Prosecution of Finnish wartime leaders for war responsibility, though supremely distasteful to Finns, needed to be carried out in order to prove a devotion to permanent peace between the Soviet Union and Finland. Despite the desire of Finnish leaders to show Finnish sincerity in carrying out the agreed peace, Mannerheim managed to avoid being included among those officially accused of war responsibility because of his eminent position in Finnish history. Though Paasikivi and other leaders saw the need to create a memory of the Fenno-Soviet wars that would be amenable to the Soviet Union, that new memory could only extend so far and Mannerheim had attained an essentially sacrosanct place in the minds of common Finns. Charging him with war responsibility would have severely undermined domestic stability and hurt the cause of peace that Paasikivi's government was pushing for. It would have also undermined the people's willingness to compromise. Therefore, Finnish leaders chose to leave Mannerheim out of these proceedings with the tacit agreement of Soviet leaders, who also understood Mannerheim's importance to the Finnish people.<sup>106</sup> Paasikivi and others continued to limited the reach of the newly minted memory of the wars with Russia, which shows that Finns, for the most part, determined the development of their own official memory. The differing nature of and responses toward Communist growth in Finland and Czechoslovakia typify the limited reach of Finnish official memory into the actual governing process. President Paasikivi refused to allow the Finnish Communist party to wield influence in the government while also refusing to acquiesce to their demands for changes in the Finnish government. In Czechoslovakia, where the Communist party garnered forty percent support, President Benes gave in to Communist demands for increased influence and was eventually overthrown by a

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<sup>106</sup> Screen, *The Finnish Years*, 230-231.

Communist coup.<sup>107</sup> Max Jakobson, a prolific Finnish diplomat and historian, suggests that after peace had been achieved with the Soviets, criticism of pre-war and wartime policies within Finland became a part of a concerted effort to appease the Soviet control commission in Helsinki.<sup>108</sup>

Having avoided occupation after both the Winter and Continuation Wars and maintaining the integrity of their democratic institutions allowed this unique amount of control over their affairs in the years after the wars. The two states that grew out of the Allied occupation of Germany offer interesting cases when compared to Finnish reactions toward war crimes trials. In the same way Adenauer appeased the western allies through full cooperation with occupation authorities, Finland acquiesced to Soviet demands for trials of people they deemed criminals. In the case of the Federal Republic of Germany, a lack of any historical memory of the Holocaust or other war crimes characterized both the official and popular memory after West Germany's acceptance as an equal, or near equal, western ally. Following Adenauer's efforts to make West Germany an equal partner among the western allies, memory of the holocaust among West Germans disappeared from their historiography.<sup>109</sup> Just as in the Finnish case, German leaders devised an official memory of the World War Two period with the ultimate goal of enabling citizens to maintain their memory of events from that time. Germans in the Federal Republic sought to wipe away the memory of these distasteful events by simply refusing to acknowledge them in the media and scholarly works. This was the only way that common Germans would be able to construct any kind of a usable identity. Adhering to the decisions of the Nuremburg trials

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<sup>107</sup> Max Jakobson, *Finland in the New Europe* (London: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 62.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>109</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity After the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 116-117.

and carrying out de-Nazification in West Germany allowed the people to do what was necessary and then move past their memories of the Second World War. The Finnish response to Soviet demands for war crimes trials was to accept the need to appease Soviet authorities by setting up an internal court to try Finnish leaders for starting the Continuation War. East Germany, under the control of the Soviet Union, presents an alternate concept of interactions between official and popular memory.

In contrast, the government of the German Democratic Republic defined memory of the Second World War in opposition to popular memories of the years prior to the war and years of conflict themselves. Interactions between official and popular memory in East Germany typify one of the more traditional conceptions of this relationship. In an environment where popular and official memory existed in opposition to one another, the East German government chose to not only suppress the popular memory of the common Germans' role in World War Two but to do so violently. In this instance, the anti-Semitic policies from the Nazi period persisted in East Germany but with different justifications, which were based on Stalinist orthodoxy.

Construction of a collective memory of wartime activities within Communist East Germany typifies the enforcement of official memory over popular forms. Beginning in the late 1940s, leaders in the German communist party subscribed to an increasingly anti-Semitic view of Jews in the Democratic Republic. They argued that a Jewish influence in East Germany was a cosmopolitan and capitalistic one. With that, the memory of the role of Jews within the communist party before and during World War Two underwent a major alteration, and any members of the party who persisted in advocating for recognition of their Jewish compatriots

were either run out of the party or simply arrested.<sup>110</sup> This example illustrates a case in which any deviation from the official memory of World War Two elicited a strong repressive response from the East German government.

### **The Paasikivi Line and Urho Kekkonen**

After Mannerheim, the two men who charted the path of Finnish official memory were, J.K. Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen. Understanding of that course of memory development requires an analysis of these two men and the situation of Finland during their respective tenures as president. J.K. Paasikivi began his political career decades prior to the outbreak of war between the Soviet Union and Finland. During his pre-war career, he gained a reputation as not just a staunch conservative, but a committed monarchist, favoring Finnish nationalism and opposing anything having to do with communism or Soviet influence within Finnish affairs.<sup>111</sup> In fact, Paasikivi advocated the installation of a German prince as a Finnish monarch in 1918.<sup>112</sup> His views continued to develop throughout the period between independence and World War Two as he shifted from advocating close relations with Germany to strongly supporting Scandinavian unity. Finally, by the time he served as Finnish Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Paasikivi saw cooperation with the Soviets as Finland's only viable option. This past makes his role in mending relations with the Soviet Union after the end of hostilities all the more remarkable. His later reputation as an able negotiator, Soviet expert, and an acceptable personality in the eyes of Soviet leaders mostly grew out of the interwar period between March

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<sup>110</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 108-109.

<sup>111</sup> Jussila, Hentilä, and Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy...*, 123-124.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

1940 and June 1941.<sup>113</sup> During much of this time, Paasikivi served as the Finnish ambassador to the Soviet Union in Moscow. While in this role he built himself up as someone that the Soviet Union could trust, in that he genuinely desired to avoid conflict between the two countries. With this in mind, Paasikivi continually recommended that the government in Helsinki undertake concessions that, in his estimation, would convince Stalin and Molotov that Finland truly wanted to avoid participating in any war between the great powers. At one point, Paasikivi put so much pressure on the Helsinki government to at least consider concessions that they began to lose confidence in his ability to satisfactorily represent the Finnish government. However, Paasikivi's evolution within the Finnish government shows that rather than being a politician with a concrete position, he was a pragmatic diplomat and leader that pushed policies that were dependent on contemporary issues facing his country.

When Paasikivi left his post as ambassador in early 1941 he removed himself from government almost entirely until after the end of the Continuation War in 1944. In the climate that existed following Finland's second defeat at the hands of the Soviet Union in five years, Paasikivi re-emerged as one of the only Finnish leaders with little to no negative stigma attached to him in the eyes of the Soviet Union. A combination of his conciliatory stance when ambassador to Moscow and his lack of involvement in events surrounding the Continuation War made him an ideal personality to take on the duty of implementing the peace terms set by Moscow and dealing with internal matters without offending the Soviet Control Commission in Helsinki. He began this task in the post of prime minister under President Mannerheim. Due to persistent health issues, Paasikivi did much of the actual governing of Finland while peace with the Soviet Union was being implemented. Paasikivi's role in his government under Mannerheim

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<sup>113</sup> Jakobson, *Finland in the New Europe*, 52.

was to serve as a more conciliatory personality to the Left than the President. Though Mannerheim withheld public opposition to many of the most intrusive aspects of the peace treaty, Paasikivi advocated measures that impinged on a number of Finland's rights as an independent nation in both domestic and foreign policy issues. After Mannerheim retired from the Presidency of Finland due to health concerns, Paasikivi rose to fill the empty post and subsequently initiated what would come to be called the Paasikivi Line in Finnish foreign policy. His ability to adjust made him the ideal person to lead Finland during the years of reparation payments, refugee resettlement, and general instability. It also made him effective in introducing and developing an official memory of the wars with Russia that did not necessarily conform to the popular view among common Finns. After a number of failed governments, Urho Kekkonen, another realistically minded Finnish politician, took the post of prime minister under Paasikivi's administration. As prime minister, Kekkonen helped to carry out Paasikivi's conciliatory policy initiatives.

A telling event during Paasikivi's presidency was the death of the former Marshal of Finland, C.G.E. Mannerheim on 27 January 1951.<sup>114</sup> In the midst of the Cold War, Mannerheim died in Switzerland at the age of eighty-three. This event had such an impact in Finland because Mannerheim represented Finnish defiance during the World War Two years and his open opposition to Bolshevism and Communism in general. Upon his death, the entire nation of Finland, with the notable exception of domestic communists, mourned his passing and sought to honor him through celebrations and a large and elaborate funeral in the nation's capital. Finnish leaders feared that such a public show of open patriotism would threaten relations with the Soviet Union. In response, the Finnish parliament voted to forego attendance at Mannerheim's

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<sup>114</sup> Screen, *The Finnish Years*, 253.

funeral services. However, his position in Finnish history held such importance that two ministers from the cabinet chose to attend despite the government's decision, one being Urho Kekkonen.<sup>115</sup> Finnish citizens also responded strongly across the entire nation by attending not just the procession and funeral in Helsinki, but also carrying out individual ceremonies and memorials. The extent of these ceremonies further illustrates the superficiality of Finnish official memory. Sixty thousand people paid their respects to Mannerheim's body while he lay in state in the Finnish National Cathedral in Helsinki and hundreds of thousands participated in the procession and funeral. Despite the government's choice to forgo official participation in these ceremonies, veterans from Finland's wars with the Soviet Union, thirty Finnish generals, tanks, artillery, soldiers, fighting planes, former premier Fagerholm, and president Paasikivi all participated in the Marshal's funeral.<sup>116</sup> Paasikivi seems to have attended the ceremonies out of respect for a former colleague.

This event typifies the ambiguous and pragmatic nature of official memory of the wars with Russia because of the tolerant way in which the government responded to open exercise of pride and patriotism in memory of an individual that represented many things that were distasteful to the Soviet Union. Due to Mannerheim's essentially sacrosanct place within Finnish history and the government's appearance of due diligence in foregoing participation in the ceremonies, the Soviets seem to have looked the other way for this show of patriotism and nationalism. Rather than characterizing her wars with Russia as mistakes and militaristic misadventures, in the response to Mannerheim's death popular memory was allowed to paint them as patriotic attempts to defend Finland and her people from a hereditary enemy. These

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<sup>115</sup> Screen, *The Finnish Years*, 254.

<sup>116</sup>“Rites for Mannerheim: Finland Pays Final Tribute to War Hero and ex-President,” *The New York Times*, 5 February 1951.

events illuminate a populace with deep convictions that ran counter to the established line of official memory espoused by the government. However, despite outward appearances, official memory in Finland developed with the goal of maintaining Finland's autonomy in a regional environment hostile to the continuation of popular memory.

The importance of Paasikivi's approach to creating official memory lies in his personal views regarding the wars with the Soviet Union and Finnish leaders from that time. In Screen's biography of Mannerheim, he refers to some of Paasikivi's personal diary entries that express deeply held convictions that run counter to many of the central memories of the wars and Finnish leaders. He cites the responses of domestic communists to Mannerheim's funeral and the mass admiration shown toward him by both the government and the common people. In Paasikivi's estimation, those on the far left in Finland were "isolated from their own people."<sup>117</sup> Though his official policy involved self-flagellation, he understood that the popular sentiment among the people was significantly more patriotic. He also intoned his personal admiration for Mannerheim through a public broadcast soon after the Marshal's death that was a tribute to his life in service to his country.<sup>118</sup>

In one respect, Finnish official memory created under Paasikivi follows traditional interpretations, that is to say that the government created it to serve a political purpose. However, in many of the contemporary cases that occurred in parallel to events in Finland, official memory that developed under Soviet influence forced populations to adhere to the official version of historic events; effectively suppressing popular memory development due to an inability to express it outside of the home. Though the Finnish government created an official

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<sup>117</sup> Screen, *The Finnish Years*, 254.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

memory that differed from that which developed among the populace, it remained insulated within official government circles. Differences between various secret policing agencies throughout Eastern Europe and similar institutions in Finland typify the differing responses to fabricated sets of memory. In the case of Finland, the years immediately after the end of the Continuation War saw increasing involvement from Finnish communists in government. One of the most significant roles a communist filled was the post of minister of the interior, held by Yrjö Leino.<sup>119</sup> Due to his influence in this position, the secret police became a communist organization, leaning heavily toward the Soviet Union. However, following the rumored coup against Paasikivi's government, Leino was removed from power and the strength of the secret police diminished. This progressed in the opposite direction of other secret police agencies throughout Eastern Europe, like the Stasi in East Germany. In her book *Stasiland*, Anna Funder details a number of cases in which the Stasi actively suppress popular memory among the East German population. One instance that she relates shows the extent of the East German government's fear of the popular memory. She describes how even an affair that went unreported by a Stasi officer prompted a demotion, not for the affair, but for the failure to report it.<sup>120</sup> This kind of monitoring and fear took place throughout the Soviet Satellites in Eastern Europe. The Finnish government, despite having a separate official memory, undertook no action to monitor its citizens or punish them for deviating from the accepted course of events. Despite the appearance of allowing communist politicians into the government apparatus of Finland, Paasikivi made a concerted effort to withhold the most influential ministerial portfolios

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<sup>119</sup> Jussila, Hentilä, Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy...*, 248-249.

<sup>120</sup> Anna Funder, *Stasiland: True Stories From Behind the Berlin Wall* (London: Granta Books, 2003), 151-152.

from the communists.<sup>121</sup> Again, this kind of action shows that the views presented by the government did not always accurately reflect popular opinion. Creation and persistence of this line of official memory continued throughout Urho Kekkonen's lengthy term serving as president of Finland.

The first thing that must be considered when analyzing a political leader is the philosophy they use to govern. In the case of Urho Kekkonen, that philosophy heavily focused on foreign policy rather than domestic policy. In his opinion, "foreign policy comes before domestic policy, and so it also must. Unless we are able to conduct a foreign policy in accordance with our national interests, the question of a good or a bad domestic policy will remain entirely academic."<sup>122</sup> With this in mind, a foreign policy that focused on maintaining amiable relations with the Soviet Union becomes more understandable. Kekkonen chose to make sacrifices within the domestic sphere by, among other things, presenting a different memory of the wars with the Soviets in order to stabilize Finland's position. At one point in his memoirs, Kekkonen points to the danger of following public opinion in foreign policy because a leader needs to make decisions based on information that the public may not have viable opinions about. This kind of leadership philosophy suggests that Kekkonen recognized the presence of a separate popular memory that did not necessarily dictate the best path for Finnish foreign policy.<sup>123</sup> Something that becomes readily apparent when reading Kekkonen's memoirs is that there is very little, if any, mention of the Winter or Continuation Wars with Russia. This absence of information illustrates two aspects of memory, Kekkonen's personal desire to avoid his own past and his

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<sup>121</sup> Jussila, Hentilä, Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy...*, 252.

<sup>122</sup> Urho Kekkonen, *A President's View* (London: Heinemann, 1982), 24.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 174-175.

maintenance of Finland's official memory of that period. His wartime positions heavily favored involvement with Germany, which he expressed through written pieces appearing as late as early 1943.<sup>124</sup> By choosing not to address this past, Kekkonen reinforces his position as a leader who can deal closely with the Soviet leadership. His omission of any discussion of wartime issues helps to avoid approaching this topic with his governmental contacts in the Soviet Union. Due to Kekkonen's importance in Finland, he needed to ply a careful course between placating both the Soviets and his own population.

Former president Risto Ryti's funeral served to indicate the role and purpose of official memory during the Cold War because in the eyes of the Soviet Union he alone held significant responsibility for starting the Continuation War. Ryti's funeral during Kekkonen's presidency acted much in the way Mannerheim's funeral did under Paasikivi's. Though given the longest prison term among Finnish leaders, he was given a state funeral at his death in 1956. Despite the public conviction that Ryti was a war criminal, President Kekkonen not only attended the funeral but also gave a speech stating that Ryti had acted in the best interest of his country.<sup>125</sup> Risto Ryti's funeral demonstrated the difference between Finland's official memory and that of the two common frameworks for memory development. Rather than Ryti dying in obscurity at a work camp, his death brought considerable demonstrations of support that were not suppressed by the Finnish government. Further, Ryti's death reinforces the triviality of Finnish war crimes trials during the late 1940s because the Finnish people and even the Finnish government did very little, if anything, to mask the reverence expressed by Finns for their former wartime president. The war crimes trials, carried out under the presidency of Mannerheim, ran counter to legal

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<sup>124</sup> Jussila, Hentilä, and Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy...*, 205.

<sup>125</sup> Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 30.

precedent in Finland because the Soviet Control Council required that the Finnish parliament pass retroactive laws that would make the decision to enter into a war with the Soviet Union in 1941 illegal. However, devotion to the utilitarian nature of Finnish official memory allowed Mannerheim and his government to convene war crimes trials without damaging development of popular memory.

In stark contrast to the leadership of these two Finnish presidents, leaders in the Soviet satellite states used their positions to further official memories of the World War Two period while suppressing popular versions of the same events. This further illustrates the unique nature of Finnish memory development in the post-war era. Throughout Eastern Europe, control of the various Soviet Satellites lay in the hands of powerful central figures that actively pushed a specific line of policies that conformed to a single viewpoint dictated to them. These strongmen, though heads of their domestic communist parties, answered to the Soviet Union. Leaders of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, and Romania, all fit this description and maintained an official memory within their countries through forceful means.<sup>126</sup> Finland, on the other hand, chose their own leaders through democratic processes, which allowed them to project an official memory to the international community while opting not to suppress development and expression of popular memory within Finnish borders. Finnish official memory presented a broad front to show that Finland no longer represented a militaristic state that sought to recover lost territory. They worked to present the image of a reformed nation, invested in a continued friendship with the Soviet Union. Despite the breadth of this façade of official memory, it lacked any significant depth in Finnish society. Rather than attempting to

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<sup>126</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *Eastern Europe: Politics, Culture, and Society Since 1939* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 40, 75, 102, 131, 193.

enforce the official memory of the World War Two period on the Finnish people, their government did just enough to prevent further conflict and interference from the Soviet Union.

### **Conclusion**

Presentation of official memory in Finland appears in a number of different forms and from a number of different sources. The official memory of events that took place during the wars with Russia is expressed through public speeches, the news media, governmental policies, and in some cases, through academic material. Most of the speeches that address war memory openly offer a great deal of self-flagellation that chastise Finnish politicians for failing to take the necessary steps to avoid war with the Soviet Union and for entering into an aggressive war soon thereafter. In describing Paasikivi's approach to relations with the Soviet Union, Max Jakobson explains that it became necessary that "[Paasikivi] thus undertook a double task of persuasion: to make the Kremlin trust and independent Finland, and to make the Finnish people bend themselves to the facts of power and work together to achieve that first objective."<sup>127</sup> In this quote, Jakobson makes it clear that Paasikivi needed to steer a careful course between catering to his people and taking a stance toward the Soviets that would offend the Finnish electorate. It was in this context that Finnish politicians were forced to be openly self-critical. This self-flagellation appears prominently in a short history of the Winter War by Russian historian Mikahail Semiryaga. In his history, Semiryaga refers to public professions of shared guilt for the Winter War by Finnish politicians. He points to admission by both Paasikivi and Kekkonen that they viewed Finland's failure to make concessions as a shortcoming of Finland. This, they suggest, helped to push Finland and the Soviet Union into a conflict that could have been

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<sup>127</sup> Jakobson, *Finland in the New Europe*, 53.

avoided.<sup>128</sup> Mauno Koivisto, Kekkonen's successor as the Finnish president, makes reference to appeals made to the Finnish people to change their attitudes to ensure peace, stability, and unrestricted neutrality in the Soviet shadow. Though not specifically mentioned, Koivisto is referring to attitudes toward both the wars with the Soviets and the Soviets themselves. He even goes on to make a veiled critique of some of the official positions taken by his predecessors during the Cold War saying,

When Paasikivi and Kekkonen began their work, public opinion was considerably different from what it is today. Time and time again both of them made serious appeals to the people and the mass media to admit the facts and to exercise self-control. I have not had to do that, and I hope that I will not have cause to in the future. By that I do not mean that all the officially conveyed standpoints, towards foreign powers which are friendly towards us, have always been within the boundaries of what is appropriate.<sup>129</sup>

The veiled nature of Koivisto's critique illustrates Finland's pragmatic approach to their foreign policy throughout the Cold War and into the 1990s. Further, Koivisto supports his estimation of Soviet regard for Finland by reviewing Fenno-Soviet relations prior to the rise of Stalin. His account relies heavily on quotes from Lenin and his public statements in reference to Finland. Rather than trying to argue that Stalin simply wanted good relations with Finland and some small territorial concessions, Koivisto illustrates their good will from a less contentious time.<sup>130</sup>

Throughout the Cold War, the Finnish media chose to carry out a policy of self-censorship in order to help maintain the integrity of the Finnish nation. Rather than opting for

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<sup>128</sup> Semiryaga, *The Winter War*, 58.

<sup>129</sup> Mauno Koivisto, *Foreign Policy Standpoints: 1982-1992* (Oxon, UK: Aidan Ellis Publishing, 1992), 9.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-84.

openness at any expense, similar to the media in the United States, Finnish news outlets chose to work with the government. Government policies, by far the easiest source for analyzing official views toward the wars, reflect a group of leaders that understood the need for curtailing public expression of popular memories in order to keep Soviet influence in Finland at a minimum. Finally, analysis of scholarly source material written throughout the Cold War often illustrates positions that the government advocated toward their wars with the Soviet Union. Though not addressed openly in a broad range of sources, in many cases studies written by Finnish historians present a telling absence of heroic language when dealing with the war years. The most heroic representations of Finnish exploits in the years between 1939 and 1945 come from foreign historians who have chosen to take up the cause of Finland. The most common Finnish views toward the wars with the Soviet Union unveil an attitude of necessity. Rather than considering the wars as heroic defenses of Finnish society, land, and culture, they simply suggest that fighting was their only option. Additionally, rather than denigrating the exploits of Finnish soldiers, Finnish politicians used the leaders themselves as scapegoats, placing the blame in official memory creation on their shoulders.

## **Chapter Four:**

### **Finnish Popular Memory**

#### **Introduction**

Following the World War Two era in Finland, two avenues of memory development emerged, one that spawned in government circles and one that grew directly out of the popular experience of Finland's wars with the Soviet Union. Finnish leaders fabricated official memory, discussed in the previous chapter, so that Finland would be able to survive as an autonomous nation in an environment that saw Eastern Europe consumed by the Soviet Union. This chapter deals with the organic growth of Finnish memory of their wars with the Soviet Union. Due to the existence of an official memory that ran counter to many of the popular memories of this period, popular memory must be illuminated in relation to the official version of events and responsibility for those events. Consequently, popular memory and official memory serve to help define one another. The primary focus of this chapter will be to explain Finnish popular memory and to use cemeteries as a focal point in the discussion. However, in addition to Finnish cemeteries and their methods for dealing with war dead and veterans from the Fenno-Soviet wars, this chapter will also use various other avenues to help contextualize Finnish popular memory.

Beyond cemeteries and the treatment of those involved in the wars with the Soviet Union, other indicators help to track and define Finnish popular memory. Films and novels written during the Cold War and those produced after the collapse of the Soviet Union show how Finns viewed both the Winter War and the Continuation War. In the case of Finnish films regarding this period in their history, a conspicuous lack of films produced on this subject matter during the Cold War shows how sensitive this subject was in the eyes of the Finnish government. An

article written by Andrew Nestingen at the University of Washington expands on this through his study of the Finnish film boom between 1999 and 2001. Additionally, studying output from the Finnish media during the Cold War further illustrates popular memory through periodic pieces that surfaced with a critical tone of Soviet political moves. These journalistic aberrations lifted a self-imposed censorship from time to time but were then quickly retracted by both journalist and publication or the journalist would be fired soon after. This method allowed the expression of Finnish popular memory without any imposition of consequences on the nation because they could be portrayed as actions taken by rogue journalists, and the impacts could be limited to a small scale. Finally, political cartoons drawn immediately following the Winter War clearly illustrate Finnish feelings toward the Soviet Union and regarding the war itself. They offer both statements of how Finns felt and also great imagery, which helps further explain these attitudes.

### **Components**

A number of different facets comprise Finnish popular memory. They came together in the years following the World War Two period to make up a consistent set of memories that colored how Finns viewed their long-term past, their memory of the two wars with the Soviet Union, their views toward the Soviet Union and Russians, and how they viewed themselves as Finnish citizens. Components like these ran counter to the official memory expounded by the Finnish government. However, the official memory served a dual purpose: to maintain Finnish autonomy, and to allow popular memory to continue development without interference from the Soviet Union. Limited contributions to popular memory also came from Finns who experienced the wars but chose to relocate to the United States or Canada following their conclusion. This group and their children helped further develop the popular memory of the wars through written accounts and fictional literature published in English.

In the introduction to his book *Finland Survived*, Max Jakobson lays out both what became the Finnish national identity and the way it reached maturity in an independent Finland. Through their role as a “privileged trusty in the tsars’ ‘prison of nations’”, Finland managed to develop and inculcate western democratic traditions, so when they attained independence in 1917, they took on the mantle of a western, democratic form of government and a relatively well-formed national identity.<sup>131</sup> I have chosen Max Jakobson as a benchmark for defining Finnish popular memory because of his eminent place in Finland’s national politics and international diplomacy. He has also written voluminously on topics ranging from direct histories of Finland’s wars to their diplomatic place in Europe during and after the Cold War. Thus, Jakobson represents both the source of official memory and an example of popular memory in Finland. Finns, according to Jakobson, have a well-developed sense that they are a small nation and will use that early on in any discussion of their country. They will brag about their status as a small independent state, use it as an excuse, or even justification for holding some kind of moral high ground.<sup>132</sup>

However, more important than any of his outright explanations of Finnish identity, Jakobson’s tone and the way he approaches the topic of war with the Soviet Union, reveals the core elements of a popular memory. When discussing the idea that Stalin actually allowed Finland to remain autonomous, which trivializes Finland’s role in preserving her political independence, Jakobson makes his opinion very clear. He argues that this proposition holds very little validity because on two occasions, 1939 and 1944, Stalin attempted to completely consume

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<sup>131</sup> Jakobson, *Finland Survived*, 6.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, XI.

the whole of Finland.<sup>133</sup> His use of emotionally powerful wording like “Stalin twice made a serious effort to crush Finland” shows how he felt about those two efforts by the Soviet dictator.<sup>134</sup> This kind of attitude from a highly placed official in Finland’s Cold War government illustrates how popular memory persisted throughout the Cold War years.

Another component of Finnish popular memory concerns the way in which Finns view their actions and their soldiers during the wars. An article in *Helsingin Sanomat*, the primary Helsinki daily newspaper, clarifies this line of popular memory through an active debate over a recent piece of revisionist history regarding execution of deserters in 1944. The new book, *Will the Front Collapse*, discusses the possibility that the Finnish defense establishment made a concerted effort to sanitize archives of records that describe the execution of more than two hundred deserters in 1944. The importance of this book lies with the response it elicited from Finland’s historical establishment. In an effort to defend the popular memory of the comportment of Finland’s defense forces, six prominent military historians published an entire book devoted to debunking the arguments of Heikki Ylikangas. This attempt to preserve the traditional view of Finland’s soldiers and military during the Continuation War illustrates how strongly Finns are still attached to their popular memory of that conflict.<sup>135</sup> Finns remember their soldiers from World War Two as being heroes who were defending their country from domination by the Soviet Union. Dr. Jokisipilä, the reviewer, provides a very positive review of

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<sup>133</sup> Jakobson, *Finland Survived*, XVI.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI

<sup>135</sup> Markku Jokisipilä, “New Book Disputes Claims of Secret Executions of Wartime Deserters,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 8 October 2008, <<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/New+book+disputes+claims+of+secret+executions+of+wartime+deserters/1135240241387>>.

the book critiquing Ylikangas' work and shows himself to be in opposition to the differing view of Finnish history.

Stories about heroic Finnish soldiers attacking Russian units single-handedly, and about small units of Finnish troops surviving against all odds, run throughout books written about the Winter War. Regardless of the date of publication, these stories persist throughout the Cold War period. This type of glorification stands in stark opposition to the conciliatory tones expressed by Finnish leaders toward the role of Finnish soldiers as tools of a government that was executing a flawed foreign policy. Many of the stories seem contrived and they most likely are. However, stories are usually based on actual events and so must be given some legitimacy. Additionally, they serve as markers for popular sentiments toward historical events. In two related instances, Finnish officers committed heroic acts that inspired their enlisted troops to follow their examples. In one of the occurrences, two lieutenants left cover to attack two tanks with only five taped-together grenades. One, Lieutenant Virkki, exposed himself to enemy fire to distract the gunners by shooting toward observation ports with his pistol a number of times. While Virkki did this, Lieutenant Huovinen snuck up and tried to attack the tanks from the rear. This incident helped to keep their unit morale high and to inspire their units to do the same in combat. Another incident involved a lieutenant named Remes; he received a wound in his hand and was last seen by his unit heading toward an aid station in the rear. They found Lieutenant Remes' body the following day among the bodies of six Russian soldiers.<sup>136</sup> These accounts illustrate the sense of bravery and devotion that defined the Finnish soldiers' sense of identity. This sense of identity belonged not only to the soldiers who fought against the Soviet Union, but

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<sup>136</sup> Eloise Engle and Paananen, *The Winter War*, 96-97.

also to the Finnish populace. This helped Finns maintain a usable past while their political leaders took necessary measures to ensure Finnish autonomy.

Aside from the memories of soldiers' exploits during the wars, Finns held on to strong nationalist feelings toward their veterans throughout the Cold War. Having the Soviet Union as a neighbor prevented the public expression of reverence for Finnish veterans because they had been fighting against the Soviet military. Additionally, any open expression of positive feelings toward the veterans was construed to mean that the Finnish government was returning to their militaristic tendencies. Consequently, there is a conspicuous lack of reverential celebrations or monuments from the Cold War years. However, in both Finnish cemeteries and remembrances performed at the funerals of Finnish leaders, the popular memory of veterans was able to shine through for fleeting moments.

### **Cemeteries**

Cemeteries offer a valuable source for defining a society's path for popular memory development. Expression of collective memory through cemeteries provides important markers for both the culture and their way of viewing the dead. More specifically, cemeteries can illuminate a society's views toward the way in which deaths occurred. War dead hold a special significance in the study of memory for this reason. By studying the way soldiers are remembered, scholars can get an idea of how the society views the war in which the soldiers died. In the case of Finland, soldiers received reverential treatment by having separate sections in local cemeteries set aside specifically for them. Movements of the nineteenth century, like that of J.C. Loudon, drifted away from traditional churchyard cemeteries, showing a secularization of death. Loudon preferred to promote solemn calm in his designs rather than

Christian guilt or gloom experienced in churchyard cemeteries.<sup>137</sup> They also cemented a tradition of memorializing common soldiers killed in warfare. These traditions can all be seen in cemeteries throughout Finland. By analyzing burial practices, cemetery design, and symbolism utilized on graves and tombs, scholars can determine the direction of memory development.

When studying Finnish popular memory during the Cold War, cemeteries offer a valuable case study of the continual remembrance of Finland's wars with the Soviet Union according to Finnish recollections rather than those deemed more suitable to the Soviet Union. Popular memory was expressed by the Finnish people through a unique middle ground that developed after the wars. The middle ground was composed of two major components, the memorialization of Finnish national heroes and wartime sacrifices, as well as places that traditionally represented private areas to Finns. By continuing to bury the dead in local cemeteries, Finns were able to continue to remember the fallen and the wars in their own way. Nationwide expression of popular memory became possible through the same methods. The local Hietaniemi Cemetery in Helsinki served as both a local cemetery and a place where national figures could be buried that avoided the title of a national place of mourning but effectively served that purpose. Due to its position as the local burial site for Helsinki, the cemetery avoided complications by being the logical locale for burying national leaders, but also being in a central place that helped facilitate pilgrimages from the Finnish population.

The graves of Finland's wartime leaders serve a dual purpose in the Hietaniemi Cemetery in Helsinki. They serve as simple grave markers for the dead, but they also provide Finns with places of national pilgrimage. Mannerheim's grave provides the most obvious case of this kind of cemetery architecture.

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<sup>137</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 44.



**Figure 5**<sup>138</sup>

Figure 5 shows the monumental nature of Mannerheim's grave, complete with a token left by a visitor. In this photograph, it is clear that Mannerheim's grave has received more prominent placement than the graves of common soldiers who died during the World War Two period. Additionally, the area where Mannerheim's grave is located shares a common mall with a monument to Finnish war dead called the Cross of the Heroes (seen in Figure 6). Mannerheim's grave, the Cross of the Heroes, and the graves of some other prominent military leaders sit around a central mall within the section of Hietaniemi Cemetery devoted to Finland's fallen soldiers. This mall can be seen clearly on the right in Figure 7.

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<sup>138</sup> Todd Mosebar, May 2007. Hietaniemi Cemetery (Helsinki Finland): C.G.E. Mannerheim's grave.



**Figure 6**<sup>139</sup>



**Figure 7**<sup>140</sup>

Considering Mannerheim's place within the pantheon of Finnish war heroes, it is no surprise that he would receive such an esteemed place in the Hietaniemi Cemetery. However, the strength of popular memory throughout the Cold War becomes clearer when analyzing the graves of those

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<sup>139</sup> Mosebar, May 2007. Hietaniemi Cemetery: Cross of the Heroes.

<sup>140</sup> JPK, May 2005. Hietaniemi Cemetery: Section reserved for Finnish war dead from the World War Two period. The open area in the far right corner is the mall devoted to the Cross of the Heroes, as well as the graves of prominent Finnish military leaders.

convicted in Finnish war responsibility trials; men like Väino Tanner and Toivo Kivimäki. The graves of these men are not overly ornate or extravagant like that of Mannerheim, but they have received prominent placement along the main paths through Hietaniemi where any visitors are assured of passing these gravesites. This placement further solidifies their importance to Finnish popular memory of their wars with the Soviet Union. Despite their incarceration as war criminals on the official level, these men held enough importance in the popular memory of the wars that they still warrant reverence in the eyes of the Finnish people.

Although seen as criminals in the eyes of the Soviets, both Tanner and Kivimäki operated with the best interests of Finland in mind. During Tanner's term as Foreign Minister during the Winter War and as Minister of Trade and Industry during the Continuation War, he advocated for peace but prosecuted the wars to the fullest while necessary. For this reason, Väino Tanner received prominent billing on the Soviet's list of Finnish war criminals, receiving a five-and-a-half year prison term. Toivo Kivimäki also acted strongly on the behalf of Finland during Continuation War. Kivimäki, a former Finnish prime minister, was selected as an ambassador to Berlin and the Hitler government in 1941 following Finland's defeat in the Winter War. Kivimäki held strong pro-German sentiments, which were only bolstered by the Soviet invasion during the Winter War. During his time in Berlin, Kivimäki became an advocate of co-belligerency status with Germany due to rumors of a coming invasion of the Soviet Union. Due to his efforts on this front, Kivimäki also garnered a great deal of blame in the eyes of the Soviet Union receiving a five-year prison sentence. However, both Tanner and Kivimäki hold important places as Finnish leaders in Finland's popular memory because of these actions during the wars despite Soviet sentiments to the contrary.



Figure 8<sup>141</sup>

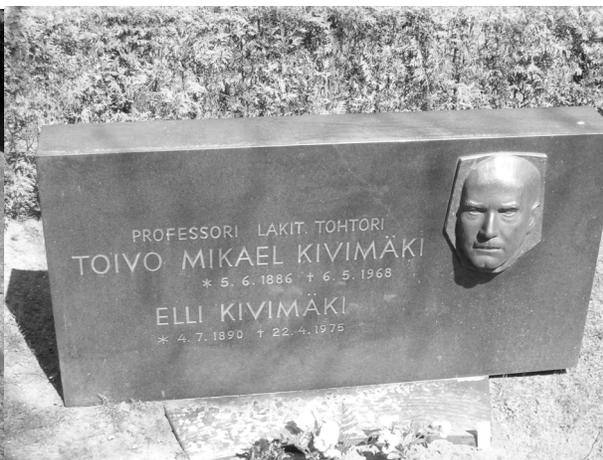


Figure 9<sup>142</sup>

Funerals held at the Hietaniemi Cemetery typify this designation. C.G.E. Mannerheim and Risto Ryti both received large, well-attended funerals in Finland's capital city, but still avoided open interference from the Soviet Union. Despite both individuals representing the Fenno-Soviet wars in Soviet eyes, the funerals were carried out. This was achieved through the nearly complete lack of official government involvement. Though very well attended by the Finnish people, hundreds of thousands in the case of Marshal Mannerheim's funeral, neither garnered the attendance of the Finnish government.<sup>143</sup> In point of fact, the Finnish parliament declared their intention to avoid attending in a very open and public manner in order to make the point that they did not consider these men to be national heroes. This action was clearly undertaken to maintain Soviet confidence in Finland's official memory of the Finno-Soviet wars. But, Finnish inaction in these matters illuminates just as much, if not more, than their actions. Choosing to allow these funerals to take place in the manner they did, shows the Finnish middle way. Rather than completely suppressing public mourning for these figures, the government

<sup>141</sup> Mosebar, May 2007. Hietaniemi Cemetery: Grave of Väino Tanner

<sup>142</sup> Mosebar, May 2007. Hietaniemi Cemetery: Grave of Toivo Kivimäki.

<sup>143</sup> "Funeral of Marshal Mannerheim," *The Times*, 5 February 1951.

gave tacit approval by taking strictly official action to avoid the appearance of any change in official policy toward the wars. Despite the lack of government involvement, leaders of many nations and their representatives in Helsinki participated in Mannerheim's funeral, as well as wounded veterans, thirty Finnish generals, and numerous pieces of military equipment. Mannerheim's death received so much attention that it warranted the first military parade since the war years.<sup>144</sup>

In the United States, the war dead receive burial, if they choose, in national cemeteries throughout the country. These cemeteries have a commonality of design, which provides continuity and reflects the martial nature of their lives and their deaths. The most important aspect of national cemeteries that differentiates them from others is their sole purpose as military cemeteries. In contrast to the idea of national cemeteries, is the Finnish practice of local burial. Each local cemetery provides the uniformity of a national cemetery for the war dead, but without the overt designation. A notable exception to this appears through the use of more elaborate grave markers for national figures from Finland's wars. Official memory being what it was, it was impossible to construct separate sites of national memory like the American monuments to Abraham Lincoln or Franklin Delano Roosevelt. However, due to the local nature of Finnish cemeteries, grave markers could be designed with the dual purposes of a gravestone and a memorial. Mannerheim's grave in Helsinki typifies this approach. However, comparisons can be made between monuments constructed by other nations with the distinct purpose of openly honoring the sacrifice of their soldiers or the cause for which they fought and the more elaborate personal monuments for Finnish leaders.

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<sup>144</sup> "Rites for Mannerheim: Finland Pays Final Tribute to War Hero and ex-President," *The New York Times*, 5 February 1951.

Burial of war dead reflects the society's views toward the dead themselves. In the Finnish case, war dead received local burial throughout the war years and afterward. The overwhelming attitude toward death centered on the families and their communities. Having this attitude, no doubt, aided in allowing Finns to continue expressing the popular memory of the wars with the Soviets. Without a significant movement to construct national cemeteries, there was no need for suppression. Additionally, with expression of popular memory occurring at the local level, it stayed off of the international stage for the most part. Though lacking a national cemetery for the remembrance of war dead, the following three photographs illustrate the continuity that existed between local cemeteries and the remembrance of the dead.



**Figure 10**<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Mosebar, May 2007. Hietaniemi Cemetery: Section devoted to burial of war dead.



Figure 11<sup>146</sup>



Figure 12<sup>147</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Mosebar, June 2007. Jakobstad Cemetery (West Central Finland): Section devoted to war dead

In the eyes of Finnish families, the death of a loved one was a personal experience, to be mourned in a private way by only those in the family and community. Rather than viewing them as heroes of the fatherland, families considered the death as a private loss. Despite the local nature of the Finnish response to death, broad classifications can be identified for the way in which a loved one or a community member died and is remembered. This kind of distinction illuminates a contradictory strain in Finnish society. In the individual, specific cases of lost family members, death was personal, not heroic. However, in general, Finnish war dead were considered “our boys”.<sup>148</sup> This distinction shows that although burial was a private matter, the death also represented a sacrifice at the altar of the nation. Each death on the battlefield was a direct loss to the collective body of Finland. Finns looked at the soldiers fighting on the front line as Finns, not as Whites or Reds, or any other distinction. In this light, the dead became heroes who died to defend their families, communities, country, and civilization. This collective view of the war dead began as a single memory of the war held in both official and popular circles. However, following defeat in 1944, it persisted only as a component of the popular memory. The continuation of this view can be seen in cemeteries across Finland, both in metropolitan cemeteries and in much smaller towns and villages.

George Mosse explores the rise of a cult surrounding war dead during the first half of the twentieth century in his book *Fallen Soldiers*. The composition of a cult like this includes a wide variety of myths and practices. By intentionally creating a cult of fallen soldiers, governments

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<sup>147</sup> Mosebar, June 2007. Nedervetil Cemetery (West Central Finland): Section devoted to war dead in rural central Finland, photograph includes a memorial to soldiers killed in the wars with the Soviet Union.

<sup>148</sup> Ilona Kemppainen, *Isänmaan Urhit: Sankarikuolema Suomessa Toisen Maailmansodan Aikana (The Nation's Heroes: Military Death in Finland During the Second World War)* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2006), 263.

steer popular responses toward support for the conflict in which the soldiers fell. When the soldiers' deaths become attached to the idea of the nation, their loss becomes the loss of an entire people, rather than simply the private loss of a single family or community. Methods for the creation of a cult surrounding war dead includes the construction of war memorials, national cemeteries for the remembrance of the fallen, anecdotes that paint the frontline soldiers as possessing everything positive about the nation and the people, and any number of other propagandistic methods for their elevation to mythical proportions.

In the Finnish case, a vital and central part of their cult of the fallen has been the return of all remains to their local cemeteries. The idea of bringing soldiers' remains back from battlefields is certainly not a new concept, however, in the Finnish case there were almost never interim burial sites. A great deal of effort was expended to have remains brought back from the front immediately after death. This aspect of the Finnish cult of the fallen is only reinforced by actions taken after the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, when Finns were allowed to re-enter Soviet Karelia for the first time since the wars with this purpose. According to Kemppainen, if at all possible every bone of the fallen would be returned to Finland and buried locally. This seems a natural reaction on the personal level, families wanting the remains of their loved ones buried at home. If this had occurred on a limited scale or if the war dead simply received burial on the fields of battle, as in the cases of British war dead at Flanders, little regarding popular memory could be gleaned from this aspect of Finnish burial practices. However, during the war any body that could be recovered was immediately removed to their local cemeteries and buried. Further, after the fall of the Soviet Union and the opening of the border between the two nations, any remains of Finnish soldiers that could be identified as such were exhumed and received burial in their local cemeteries. Devotion to these practices

throughout the Cold War points to the persistence of Finnish popular memory regarding their soldiers and the war. Finns believed that those who fought and died for Finland against the Soviet Union deserved to be buried at home in areas designated for the burial of war dead despite a conspicuous lack of recognition during the Cold War.

Mosse also delves into the importance of analyzing the meanings behind cemetery design and how it reflects a society's view of the dead. Finnish cemetery design reflects movements in both Europe and the United States during the nineteenth century while maintaining traditional aspects from the local churchyard cemetery. Nature, as in many other aspects of Finnish life, plays an important role in cemetery construction and design. In both the Helsinki cemetery and rural cemeteries throughout the country, natural elements surround and are interspersed with the graves and monuments to the dead as seen in Figure 14. In Helsinki, the cemetery reflects a combination of design from Père Lachaise and the park cemetery movement from the United States because of the way the cemetery is landscaped.<sup>149</sup> The whole cemetery is laid out in well-defined areas with walkways and other park-like structures throughout. This organization can be seen in Figure 13 with the well-marked thoroughfare.

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<sup>149</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 41.



**Figure 13**<sup>150</sup>

However, the location of the Hietaniemi Cemetery creates an atmosphere that places visitors much closer to nature, as it was located near the shore of Helsinki Harbor and the dense placement of trees that separate sections of the cemetery. From various points the visitor gets the feeling that nature has nearly compensated for the purpose of the cemetery.

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<sup>150</sup> Mosebar, May 2007. Hietaniemi Cemetery: Main pathway leading through the various sections of the cemetery.



**Figure 14**<sup>151</sup>

George Mosse explains that nature surrounds these sections to “enable people to grasp ‘the mighty system of nature’ with its cycle of creation and destruction”.<sup>152</sup> This idea of creation and destruction fits the highly Christian aspect of Finland’s culture because it is a physical manifestation of life followed by eternal salvation.

Though not immediately evident upon entering a Finnish cemetery, recognition of veterans holds a great deal of importance. In contrast to long rows of martially organized crosses, Finland’s recognition of veterans is much more subtle. For the same reason Finland lacks national cemeteries for war dead, they have no central area for burial of veterans from the Fenno-Soviet wars. Rather, Finland recognizes their veterans through the placement of medallions on grave markers to denote those who fought in the Winter and Continuation wars.

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<sup>151</sup> Mosebar, May 2007. Hietaniemi Cemetery: View of the dispersal of nature throughout the cemetery.

<sup>152</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 41.

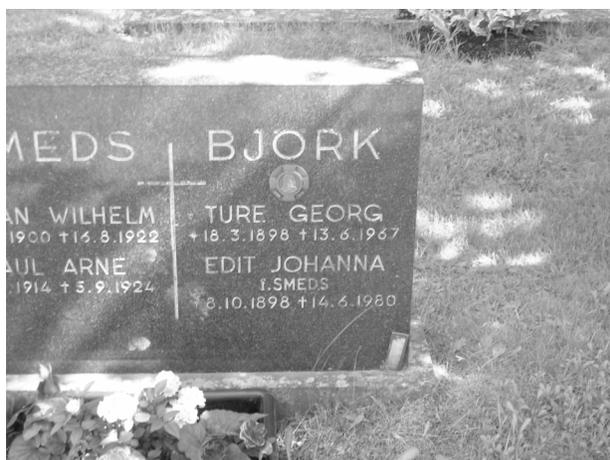


Figure 15

Figure 16<sup>153</sup>

The medallions placed on the gravestones show a soldier with snow camouflage facing away from the viewer. Though it is a more solemn image than is typical in places like Britain or the United States, it shows that veterans still garnered respect throughout the Cold War, despite lacking official attention at the national level.

### Cartoons

During the wars, Finnish media tried to help maintain civilian and military morale through the publication of stories and cartoons, just as many other countries have done throughout the history of warfare. George L. Mosse devotes a significant portion of his book, *Fallen Soldiers*, to a discussion of images used to create identity and to develop the cult of the fallen soldier. The cartoons “Happy Easter” and “Gas Attack” helped Germans in World War I to maintain morale by making light of horrible conditions at the front and almost certain death.<sup>154</sup> Finnish media also released cartoons designed to enforce certain popular memories about the war. In this cartoon (Figure 17), the portrayal of the soldier attempts to enforce the identity of Finland’s soldiers as maintaining a grim sense of humor throughout the hardships of war.

<sup>153</sup> Mosebar, June 2007. Jakobstad Cemetery: All three veterans pictured here died during the Cold War, showing that veterans received recognition throughout the period.

<sup>154</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 133,135.



"So many Russians. Where will we bury them all?"  
 Cartoonist: JUSSI AARNIO. Used by permission, Oy Lehmus, Tampere, Finland.

**Figure 17**<sup>155</sup>

In another example, a Finnish soldier is seen sitting down to eat in a driving storm. He uses his "foot rag" as a napkin in order to keep a certain level of civility in the face of the horror of warfare. The attitude expressed in this cartoon shows a common thread that ran through the popular memory in Finland, that despite the horrors of war with the Soviet Union, Finnish soldiers maintained what they saw as traditional Finnish virtues.

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<sup>155</sup> Engle and Paananen, *The Winter War*, 18.



"Cleanliness is half the meal." The Finn soldier uses his "foot rag," which was worn in place of socks, as a napkin.  
 Cartoonist: JUSSI AARNIO. Gag: JUSSI SARVA. Used by permission, Oy Lehmus, Tampere, Finland.

**Figure 18**<sup>156</sup>

These cartoons did not follow the official line of the Finnish government during the Cold War, but that did not stop common Finnish citizens and veterans from remembering the wars years based on images like these. Though these were published during the wars, they remain useful because they expressed the popular view of the wars and the Soviets that persisted throughout the Cold War. Along these lines, anecdotes illustrate the attitude depicted in these cartoons. For example, there is a joke about an American asking a Finn why they quit when they did so well (one Finnish soldier could handle ten Russians), and got the answer: What do you do when the eleventh comes?

This kind of attitude suggests that though Finns saw their role as righteous, they took a pragmatic approach to their popular memory. They strongly believed that their soldiers achieved extraordinary feats but they also knew that they had limits. Once these limits were reached in March 1940 and again in September 1944, Finnish leaders chose the realistic path and concluded armistices with the Soviet Union. However, the conclusion of hostilities had little impact on

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<sup>156</sup> Engle and Paananen, *The Winter War*, 31.

popular memory. Political cartoons produced during the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 show similar sentiments to those expressed in Figures 17 and 18. Figures 19 and 20 show that despite conciliatory rhetoric from the government, Finns still harbored deep-seated fears of possible invasion from their eastern neighbor. In a political environment where Soviet military units had entered a sovereign nation to enforce their policies, expression of fear and distrust toward the Soviet Union outweighed decisions for self-censorship. These cartoons use very powerful imagery to produce the desired emotions in their readers, particularly in Figure 19. It shows members of the Finnish coastal defense force preparing to repulse any Soviet attack on Finnish shores. The soldier in the background is raising the Finnish battle flag in defiance, while the others in the cartoon prepare the defense of the coast, despite overwhelming odds, just as in Figure 17. In both cartoons the source of invading ships and tanks shows bright red, signifying Soviet communism as distinctly negative. This kind of imagery used the traditional animosity from the Civil War and the Winter War to elicit strong negative responses from Finnish readers. The traditionally negative feelings toward both Russia and communism come through very clearly in both of these cartoons, as well as the Finnish defense forces' devotion to the protection of the homeland. These cartoons were able to effectively in elicit specific emotions because they remained strong through a popular memory of the wars with the Soviet Union.



Figure 19<sup>157</sup>



Figure 20<sup>158</sup>

<sup>157</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat*, 24 August 2008.

No branch of the Finnish government expressed the view of the Soviet Union contained in these cartoons; rather official memory portrayed the Soviets as peace-loving neighbors.

Cartoons, unlike many other avenues of expression in the Finnish media seemed to continually push the boundaries set by the government in Helsinki. Esko Salminen devotes a section in his analysis of Finnish media to the role of cartoons in challenging the conciliatory tone of the Finnish media during the Cold War. He singles out one particular cartoonist named Kari that worked for Helsinki's primary daily paper, *Helsingin Sanomat*. According to Salminen, Kari's cartoons continually placed the newspaper, its owner, and its editor in hot water with the main organs of the Finnish government. One cartoon lampooning the tenth anniversary of the return of the Porkkala naval base in 1966 drew the direct attention of both the Finnish foreign minister and President Kekkonen. In fact, political cartoons published in Finland's newspapers received as much attention as official state communiqués.<sup>159</sup> In the memoirs of both Urho Kekkonen and Mauno Koivisto, this kind of rogue journalism, on the style practiced in the United States and the United Kingdom, was not prudent for a country in such a precarious position between east and west. This level of attention illustrates how important these cartoons were for the expression of the undercurrent of Finnish popular memory. The government's response to these cartoons also shows how influential this kind of media could be.

### **Popular Expression: Films, Literature, and the Media**

Popular media in Finland during the Cold War did not reflect the popular memory of the 1940s. The Finnish film industry became known for art films, projects that presented little

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<sup>158</sup> *Helsingin Sanomat*, 24 August 2008.

<sup>159</sup> Esko Salminen, *The Silenced Media: The Propaganda War Between Russia and the West in Northern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, INC., 1999), 57.

opportunity for filmmakers to offend the Soviet Union. There were, however, some films during the Cold War that attempted to express the popular memories of the war years. These films did not show the Finnish soldiers to be pristine, they presented a distinctly negative view of war in general while still managing to portray the Finnish soldiers as stalwart defenders of the homeland. Along these same lines, some literature was published that served a similar function. In fact two of the most prominent books published about the war years were made into movies soon after their publication. Four films, produced during and after the Cold War, help to provide a framework for the expression of the popular memory of the wartime period.

The first major film to deal with Finland's wars with the Soviet Union was released in 1955. Based on a novel by Väinö Linna, *Tuntematon sotilas* (*The Unknown Soldier*) deals with an unusually mixed unit, fighting during the Continuation War. Despite covering a tender subject in the eyes of the Soviet Union, Linna's tale walks a tightrope that allowed it to become extremely popular among Finnish moviegoers, yet still pass without Soviet objections. Linna portrayed the Finnish soldiers in the film as stalwart and courageous in their defense of their homeland, while at the same time advocating strongly against any kind of war. This anti-war sentiment was the primary reason that the Soviets allowed the film to be made. The outward argument made by Soviet authorities regarding this period in Finnish history was that Finland invaded the Soviet Union due to militaristic leadership and a militaristic, capitalist society. By creating a distinctly anti-war attitude among the Finnish soldiers in the film, Linna countered one of the major arguments that the Soviets could have levied. This film became a significant piece of Finland's collective memory of the Continuation War.

The second major film to appear during the Cold War was produced in 1989 and was also based on a novel. *Talvisota* (*The Winter War*) follows a unit of Finnish infantry during the

Winter War from their induction in the weeks prior to the Russian invasion, through the armistice in March 1940. Just as in *The Unknown Soldier*, *The Winter War* shows Finnish soldiers defending their homeland and their families bravely. Antti Tuuri, author of the novel, also produces an anti-war undercurrent in his novel and the movie. The main characters in *The Winter War* are forced to fight against clearly unequal odds and become exhausted both physically and mentally from their daily combat. Again, just as in *The Unknown Soldier*, the author and the filmmakers reinforced the popular memory of Finnish soldiers without encountering interference from Soviet authorities.

In the decade following the end of the Cold War, Finns became increasingly able to express their popular memory of the World War Two period through the media and government pronouncements. One aspect of that new freedom of expression manifested itself in a film boom beginning in 1999. The film boom had two aspects, the increase in patronage to multiplexes to view movies from all over the world, and a sharp spike in production of movies in Finland. 1999 saw the production of the most popular movie of the entire decade with *Rukjärven tie (Ambush)*. This film glorified the role of the average Finnish soldier and was unapologetic about the Continuation War itself. The production of this kind of war related film would not have been possible in Finland prior to the 1990s due to the organization of the Finnish Film Foundation during the Cold War. This organization, established in 1969, sought to fund native film production in Finland. However, the process established for that purpose yielded many art film projects that received critical acclaim but very little patronage from Finnish moviegoers.<sup>160</sup> Choosing to fund these projects rather than films that would appeal to the Finnish people suggests a hesitancy to push the boundaries of what would be acceptable to the government and

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<sup>160</sup> Andrew Nestingen, "Nostalgias and the Publics: The Finnish Film Boom, 1999-2001," *Scandinavian Studies* Vol. 75 Issue 4 (Winter 2003): 550.

others. Monetarily popular movies, especially in the United States, seem to play to popular views and opinions held by a large percentage of the population. They allowed people to finally openly reflect the nostalgia of this period through a widely distributed medium. Reflecting popular memory in Finland during the Cold War would have produced strong protests from the Soviet government, just like the cartoons that were published throughout the 1960s.

The other two films that compose this framework of popular memory were produced after the end of the Cold War. The first of them came out of the Finnish film boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the other was produced in 2007. Both of these films mirror the heroic portrayal of Finnish soldiers seen in *The Unknown Soldier* and *The Winter War*, but there are elements to these war films not seen in those made during the Cold War. A sense that the wars were justified, especially in *Ambush*, suggests that the undercurrent of popular memory was finally being allowed back in the light of mass media. *Ambush* follows a more traditional war film narrative by detailing the lives of a single couple within the greater events of the Continuation War. When the main character believes his fiancé to have been killed by a Soviet ambush, he takes a harder line toward the Soviets he meets in battle. He and the soldiers in his unit all do their duty, some happily, and reflect a very heroic image of Finnish soldiers in the Continuation War.

Finally, *Tali Ihantala* presents a narrative of the last major Soviet offensive of the Continuation War. This movie, produced in 2007, shows Finnish soldiers as willingly doing their duty to defend their homeland against the Soviet invaders. Something not directly referenced in the film, but prominent nonetheless, is the presence of a great deal of German military equipment. Without material support from Nazi Germany in 1944, the Finnish military would have had no way of holding off an offensive that utilized armor to such a great degree.

Seemingly insignificant, the presence of German military equipment alludes to the co-belligerent status with the Germans during the Continuation War. References to this in films during the Cold War in anything but decidedly negative tones would have produced a significant reaction from the Soviet government. So not only does this film show Finnish soldiers as heroic defenders, it portrays the war as justified, and it openly makes reference to connections between Finland and Nazi Germany.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout the Cold War a consistent undercurrent of popular memory existed alongside the openly professed official memory of the Finnish government. By analyzing cemeteries and expressions of popular memory through various branches of the popular media, the co-existence, and mutual support of these two sets of memory become evident. Cemeteries provide a window into the true views of the wars, war dead, and veterans that persisted through the Cold War. Their location at the local level allowed these expressions to continue unfettered throughout a nearly fifty-year period of voluntary censorship. Political cartoons during the Cold War expressed deep-seated views of the Finnish populace toward the Soviet Union and communism, while film production illustrated popular memory and the extent to which it could be expressed in the Cold War atmosphere. Both post-Cold War films played to a popular memory of the wars with the Soviet Union that had existed throughout the Cold War period. Their success and the commonality of their themes suggest that popular memory continued to flourish during the years of government conciliation to the Soviets between 1944 and 1990.

## Conclusion

Finns, like any other group of people, continue to develop the way they remember and commemorate the World War Two period. They do so with opinions that have been formed by the combination of memories that come from the official body of memory of the Finnish government, the undercurrent of popular memory that persisted throughout the Cold War, and views of Russia that have developed over the centuries. Their expression of this memory has flourished openly since the end of the Cold War and the control exercised by the Soviet Union over their ability to express their memories. As they continue to express these memories, scholars of collective memory will be able to benefit greatly from recent Finnish history because of the unique way in which Finnish war memory has evolved. Observing how Finnish popular memory survived a period that saw a great deal of repression practiced in nearby quarters will help to hone how scholars define official and popular memory development. It will also enable historians to have an expanded palette from which they can provide more precise explanations for how memory develops.

The Finnish national identity that existed before the Winter War and was expanded between 1939 and 1944 was one of pride in their success against all odds. By 1939, Finland had only been independent for twenty-two years. In addition to that, Finns began developing their own national identity in the mid-nineteenth century, long before they attained their goal of independence from Russia. This identity, then, was a very dear part of Finland's past and present. Despite being under the control of one of their neighbors from 1155 until 1917, the Finnish people had survived as a group through famines, plagues, and numerous conflicts. On at least two separate occasions nearly half of their population had died or been deported, yet Finns, as a people, continued to survive and flourish. This "survive at all costs" attitude composed a

significant portion of their collective identity. So when the Soviets began their invasion of Finland in November of 1939, it was seen as yet another trial involving their traditional enemy, through which they intended to persevere.

By the end of 1944, Finland had managed to keep Soviet forces from overrunning Finland twice while still losing the larger war. After the second defeat, the Finnish government was forced to cede even larger areas of Finnish territory to the Soviet Union and accept the presence of a control commission in Helsinki. The placement of a control commission in Helsinki to oversee Finnish adherence to the peace treaty made it impossible for Finland, as a nation, to continue development of a national memory due to its negative view of the Soviet Union. By the end of the first decade after their wars had ended, the Finnish government had tried a number of wartime leaders for war crimes and in greater Europe the Cold War spheres of influence had hardened. In this environment, the Finnish government fabricated an official memory of the Fenno-Soviet wars that allowed them to retain control. It was the development of this official memory that helped prevent the installation of a satellite government in Helsinki.

The nature of Finland's official memory development after the end of the World War Two period allowed the government to maintain autonomy despite events occurring elsewhere along the Soviet Union's western border. Presidents Mannerheim, Paasikivi, Kekkonen, and Koivisto focused their attention on steering Finland through a political environment that threatened to overwhelm them on numerous occasions. In memoirs by Kekkonen and Koivisto they expressed the opinion that governing without acknowledging the Soviet presence on their border would have been reckless in the extreme. They advocated a pragmatic approach to setting both internal and external policies. By always considering the Soviet attitudes toward their decisions, these leaders prevented the fate of Hungary and Czechoslovakia from befalling

Finland. Policies that appeared to western observers as openly conciliatory to the Soviet Union were made in order to keep Finland's government free of direct Soviet control. By doing this, Finland, alone among nations along the Soviet Union's border, avoided the imposition of a puppet government. Through a utilitarian approach to diplomacy and internal governance, Finnish leaders crafted diplomatic agreements that were friendly toward the Soviet Union while still affording domestic leaders the autonomy to make ultimate decisions regarding the future of the Finnish republic.

Simultaneously, popular memory of the World War Two period among the Finnish population continued to be expressed through a number of venues, but most specifically, through cemetery design and burial practices for those who fought and died in the wars. By keeping remembrance of the war dead and veterans at the local level, the reverence afforded them remained out of the international spotlight. In addition to continued development of popular memory surrounding those who fought in the wars, views toward the motivations for going to war progressed. Despite many wartime leaders being convicted as guilty of "war responsibility", they received both trust and acclaim following their release from prison. Risto Ryti, given a majority of the blame for starting the Continuation War, received a very well-attended funeral upon his death in 1956. One leader, Väinö Tanner, even managed to re-enter politics for the Social Democrats during the 1950s and '60s. This, combined with sporadic appearances of contrary threads of memory in the media, illustrated the continued survival of Finnish popular memory throughout the Cold War.

Some of the most telling markers for the existence of a separate popular memory come from actions taken in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Films and other form of popular media appeared very soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union that expressed

aspects of the popular memory that had developed among the Finnish people. Though some aspects of the official memory continued beyond the Cold War, like attempts to maintain trading relationships, popular war memory re-entered the public media. This popular memory cemented itself by the late 1990s in the form of a film boom within Finland. The topics of these new films, as well as their tone, reflected a pride in being Finnish and the accomplishment of the World War Two period that could never have been expressed during the Cold War. The fact that such a clearly defined popular memory reappeared so quickly after the fall of the Soviet Union suggests that the memory never disappeared, but that it continued to develop under the surface. One striking example of the expansion of public reverence for military leaders from the World War Two era as well as for veterans and the war dead is their appearance, for the first time, on Finnish collector coins in 1990. Despite a long history of producing collector coins throughout the Cold War, the Finnish government avoided choosing topics for commemoration that could be inferred as offensive to the Soviet Union. By producing a coin to celebrate wounded veterans in 1990, Finland began to reassert their popular memory of the wars. By the new millennium, Finland produced coins for both Marshal Mannerheim and Finland's unknown soldier. These openly expressed Finnish patriotism in regard to the wars fought with the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1944.<sup>161</sup>

The relationship between these two sets of memory that allowed them to co-exist makes the Finnish case an interesting one and one that can serve a useful purpose within the larger field of memory studies. In his book *Remembering War*, Jay Winter discusses his reasoning behind altering the terminology that he planned to use when discussing memory development. He made a conscious decision to use "collective remembrance" rather than "collective memory" because

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<sup>161</sup> Finnish Mint, <<http://www.rahapaja.fi/en/collector-coins>>.

he considered the people involved in this creation as having agency. They had active roles in creating a collective remembrance of a given experience or event. This terminology applies very well to the official memory illustrated in the Finnish case. The leaders who fabricated the official memory chose to pursue the Paasikivi Line because they understood that Finland could not enjoy all of the freedoms afforded to autonomous nations because of both geographic and diplomatic proximity to the Soviet Union. Their policies of conciliation toward the Soviets prevented overt interference from Moscow beyond diplomatic protests. Thus, the official memory developed by Finnish leaders between 1946 and 1968 and continued until the end of the Cold War allowed Finns to maintain control over their own country.

Development of Finnish popular memory continued during the Cold War alongside governmental efforts to fabricate official memories and identity that would be more amenable to the Soviet government. Just as with Finland's official memory development, the thread of popular war memory, national identity, and views toward the Soviet Union survived and flourished among the common people. Finns actively maintained these memories throughout the Cold War, which was reflected through the continued remembrance of soldiers at the local level in their cemeteries. Remembrance at the national level also persisted through popular media and certain modes in newspapers. Production of films that provided positive images of Finnish soldiers fighting the Soviet military and tacitly allowing critical political cartoons illuminates a public that still held fast to their memories of war with the Soviet Union. Maintenance of these modes of memory expression show that Finns actively chose to hold on to their popular memories in spite of the presence of a contradictory thread of memory development. The fact that both the Finnish government and the Finnish people made conscious decisions to continue development of their respective threads of memory with the knowledge of each other's existence

makes Finland a unique case in the field of memory studies. Further exploration of memory development in Finland during the Cold War may aid in understanding both the intent behind memory development and the modes that it utilizes.

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