

FINLAND IN THE SHADOW AND SHINE OF SANKT PETERSBURG

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“At least by us it’s one man from each house to meet the enemy.”
(Akhromeyev, C-in-C of the Red Army during a visit in Finland, 1989)
“... and by us it is two if the house is large.” (Old Finnish quip)

Abstract

Sankt Petersburg was established in 1703 on an ancient trade route to facilitate Russia’s access to Europe and to further its development toward modernity. The fringe location made the city vulnerable to enemy action, and the existence of a security zone is a permanent theme in its history. This means integration of neighboring areas, inhabited by alien people. Among them is Finland which, as a part of Sweden, thwarted these attempts for some 100 years and, when yielding, became an autonomous Grand Duchy. The advanced Swedish legal and administrative system made this status practicable and experience thereby achieved led to independence due to Russia’s military defeat 100 years later. Attempts to establish the old order were thwarted by alliances, skilful maneuvering, and good luck.

Key words: autonomy, cultural closeness, exposed location, independence, security zone

1 Introduction

This article is not strictly scientific. It is a story, simplified in details, because a full version would need several book volumes. It is not based on any theory, nor does it elaborate systematically existing sources. Some information is approximate, ethnic and military data in particular, simply because available sources diverge from each other. Questions such as land ownership, taxes and legal systems are quite complicated and can be discussed only superficially. Correct place names exist in Finnish, Swedish, Russian, and German. The most common variant of the time is selected. References within the text have been omitted. Without this choice, the length would have doubled. Now it outlines the mutual relations between Finns and Russians over several centuries. This length-of-time perspective is necessary because political argumentation may go that far back in time. The latest 300 years have been dominated by a megacity but the elements for its existence go back for at least 800 years. The city is Sankt Petersburg, founded in 1703 to be Russia’s commercial outlet and political center. Its population reached that of Finland in about

1990 where after growth continued beyond the city limit. The need for a defense zone led to Carelia’s and then Finland’s integration into the empire, following the sophistication of weapon technology. This link also exists today. It is in no way unique. Istanbul in relation to Bulgaria, Vienna to Slovakia, Copenhagen to Sweden, Buenos Aires to Uruguay, and Vientiane to Thailand feature the same situation although not necessarily the same urgency. To a casual observer, Finland’s case often looks enigmatic. Finland’s UN ambassador *M. Jacobson* recalled this comment from President *J.F. Kennedy* in 1961: “We Americans are particularly interested in why the Soviet Union has allowed Finland to keep independence in the extent as has happened.” The question disclosed the outsider way of thinking, based on power politics: small nations exist only because of the benevolence of Great Powers. Jacobson explained, and we will explain, too, although in more detail than he had the opportunity to provide. The words of a Petersburg museum director are equally revealing: “You Finns have got everything from us – nationality, independence and language.” Well, somethings have we got but then we developed it further ourselves.

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2 Early history

The Finnic (or Ugric) linguistic area covered northern Russia, mostly west of the Ural Mountains, down to the Kazan–Moscow line. The western border went approximately up to Valdai’s watershed area. These ancient roots became political currency at the turn of twentieth century when nationalistic ideas became popular – although only Finnish and Karelian are mutually intelligible. The genetic picture is totally different. Modern Finns are very similar to their neighbors around the northern Baltic. The linguistic boundary started moving north from the year 500 when Slavs emerged from the Pripyet marshes. Four-hundred years later they were at Lake Ilmen and the Moskva–Oka River watershed. They were tall and blond farmers of Christian faith. The aborigine Chudy were short, of dark complexion, hunters and fishers worshipping nature. When farmers infiltrated the best lands, the Chudy withdrew or intermarried rather than put up armed resistance. Some 10 percent of the Russian genetic stock is thought to be of Chud origin, visible also in the national character. Villages grew to cities, among them Novgorod at Ilmen Lake, founded in 913 by a Swedish chieftain, *Rurik*, who followed the ancient trade route by the Neva and Volhov Rivers. The Gulf of Finland received its coastal Swedish population in these times. Novgorod organized the fur trade of northern Chudy who could participate in the city’s democratic government, in sharp contrast to the knightly dynasties elsewhere.

Sweden’s center was moving north to its current location at Stockholm and expanded toward Finland. Novgorod in the south had the same ambition with three centuries of wars as a result. The antagonists christianized the population, Roman Catholic (subsequently Lutheran) and Orthodox faith respectively. The decisive phase came in 1240–1 when Novgorodians defeated Swedish and German armies at the Neva River and Peipus Lake, respectively. At Neva, victory came with the assistance of the local Izhorya, a Finnic tribe. After the battle, their chief, *Pelgois*, was given the task of “keeping an eye on the sea”. The Swedes

blocked the land route to the west with a castle at Viipuri in 1293. Peace was made in Nöteborg in 1323 (Fig. 1). The border started at the Siestar River, close to the Neva estuary and went NNW through the Karelian Isthmus and then to the Bothnian coast, splitting Karelians, a Finnish tribe, into two hostile camps. It left to Novgorod the trade routes along the Neva and the Oulu Rivers, blocked Swedish access to Lake Ladoga but allowed Novgorod access to the northern Saimaa Lake district. When Moscow had shed the Mongol dominance, it conquered Novgorod three times, weakening its ability to resist Finnish settlement. The Olavinlinna castle blocked Karelian access to

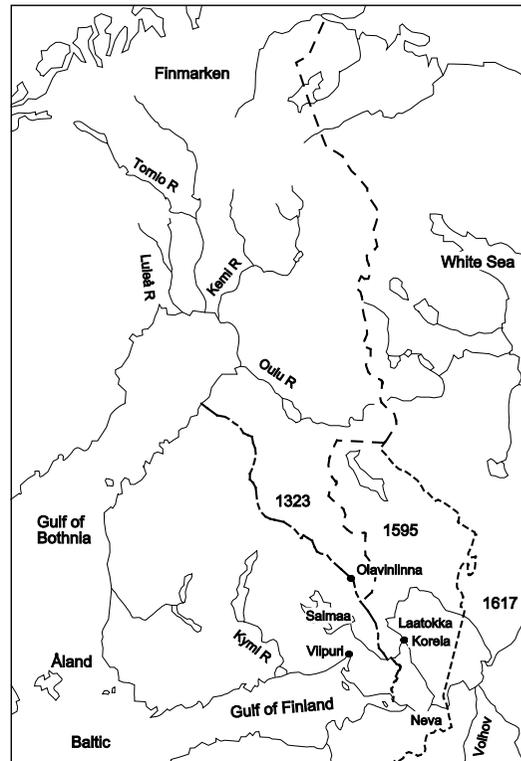


Figure 1 Finland’s borders, 1323–1617.

Source: Toivo, Raisa Maria, 2007. Suomen alue Ruotsin ajalla. In: Haapala, Pertti ja Raisa Maria Toivo (toim.), *Suomen historian kartasto*, 86–7 ja 94–5. Karttakeskus: Helsinki.

Saimaa fishing waters from 1475 and the border was transferred a good leap eastward.

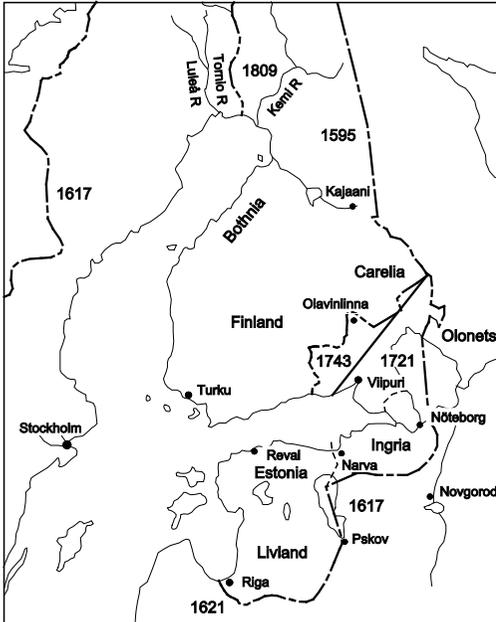


Figure 2 Finland's borders, 1617-1809.

Source: Toivo, Raisa Maria, 2007. Suomen alue Ruotsin ajalla ja Vähäväkinen maa – Ruotsin-ajan väestönkehitys. In: Haapala, Pertti, ja Raisa Maria Toivo (toim.), *Suomen historian kartasto*, 86-7 ja 94-5. Karttakeskus: Helsinki.

Sweden then escaped the medieval Danish dominance and got competent rulers in the *Vasa* family. These organized administration, state finances, the army and navy along modern principles, and created a metallurgical industry. The excellence was put to use in wars against Denmark, Russia, Poland, and the German Emperor. Swedish troops even occupied Moscow for some months and Novgorod for years. The reward was meted out in Stolbova in 1617, comprising the Novgorod half of Carelia and all Ingria, land south of the Neva River (Fig. 2). These were not integrated with the country proper but were considered colonies. Entry to the Neva from Ladoga was blocked by the Nöteborg castle. Sweden felt safe in the east and turned its attention toward the south. Large areas of Danish, Polish, and German Baltic coasts were won. The Danish provinces were ethnically related and easily assimilated. Their tax income constituted 25 percent of the total compared to Finland's 10 percent, and led to a refocus in for-

eign and defense policies. Southern engagement invited the Russians to attack in 1656. Orthodox Carelians joined the invaders, and when these retreated, Carelians emigrated to their brethren in Olonets and to Tver province, 100 km NW of Moscow. Tver Carelians preserved ethnic identity up to the 1930s and counted some 150,000 people. Finns believe that *A. V. Suvorov*, the general who never lost a battle and spoke fluent Carelian, was one of them. Perhaps he was born from a mixed marriage with a Carelian mother. The Orthodox population was replaced by Lutheran immigrants who soon considered themselves as rightful owners of the land.

3 Russia takes over

Sweden had antagonized all its Baltic neighbors, who were waiting for an opportunity to settle scores. It came in 1700 when a disastrous famine had decimated one-third of the country's population and a 19-year youngster became Sweden's autocrat King *Carl XII*. It seemed unlikely that he could cope with four simultaneous aggressors. He did, but could not be everywhere simultaneously. During his absence, Russia's equally capable czar *Peter I* founded at Neva estuary a new town, Sankt Petersburg, in 1703, "to open a window towards Europe." He created a metallurgical base in Petrozavodsk at Lake Onega and shipped guns cast there along the Svir to Ladoga. Swedes had nothing to put against their large caliber and long range. Petersburg's location has puzzled people. It should not. Petersburg on the Neva's southern shore only replaced a Swedish town on the northern side. The marshy ground was overcome by Dutch construction techniques. There have been serious floods in 1777, 1824, and 1924, but today a solid dam protects the city. Farther from the shore, ground is sand and gravel, land is above flood level, and the site as a whole is quite acceptable. Riga, the alternative, with a shorter winter and still closer to Europe, had been part of Poland until 1621 and was now on the very border. Poland was a Great Power whose inner weakness became apparent only 50 years later. The new town, the

capital as from 1712, needed a security zone and Viipuri was duly conquered in 1710. Now Peter was ready for peace, but Carl was not. The invasion therefore continued, plague broke out, and Finland was either occupied or destroyed. Coastal raids around Stockholm finally broke the resistance. Peace was made in 1721 at Uusikaupunki. Peter was so anxious to get the deal done that he was prepared to let the Swedes keep Viipuri, but his generals delayed the critical message, which arrived too late. The new border coincided with the current one (Fig. 2). One-third of Finland's population had survived. Tver Carelians might have been given the option to return to their old habitation were it not for the fact that their new masters had then lost valuable labor.

During the war, Peter had laid the administrative foundation of his new territories. Ingria became a Russian province whereas Swedish administration and practices were left largely intact in Carelia. Religion and laws from the Middle Ages were maintained. The clergy was educated in Swedish Finland and delivered sermons in Finnish and Swedish. Administrators were initially imported from Balticum and used German and Swedish in parallel. Peasants could litigate with their landlord about taxes, this could not to punish them without legal trial, nor prevent them from moving or following another occupation. Ingrian serfs did not enjoy this protection (nor Danish, Polish, and German ones east of the Elbe River either). The hook was that all land belonged basically to the state and the Emperor (as the Czar was now called) could grant its tax income as salary. Emperors freely used this possibility all through the eighteenth century until one half of arable land had been so donated. Landlords could sell or pledge the donation but not its inhabitants, nor could they raise taxes without the government's consent. Taxes were defined as farm products or workdays, payable where the landlord wished, often in Petersburg. When disputes intensified, the Emperor decreed in 1826 that landlords were owners of land but not of its inhabitants. It was a massive property transfer, first from peasants to state and then to gentry.

Sweden built the Sveaborg naval base at Helsinki and tried to recover lost territory in 1741–3

and 1788–90 but failed and lost additional territory east of the Kymi River and south of Olavinlinna, which was integrated with Carelia (Fig. 2). The loyalty of Finnish gentry and even its army began to crack. Only peasants remained faithful, cognizant of the lot of their like in Russia. Ignored by the military establishment, they formed partisan units and managed quite well. Their independent thinking was a source of inspiration one hundred years later when independent Finland was creating its own army.

During the Revolutionary wars of 1789–1815, the Russians seized the opportunity and finished the job in 1808–9. Sveaborg capitulated without fight. The army fought but having exhausted its resources finally capitulated in northern Sweden. The Emperor *Alexander I* ordered his troops to behave well and made it known that civil order and laws would be maintained. For emphasis he arranged a formal occasion in Porvoo, February 1809, at which the Estates could pay homage to him. About one-fourth of the gentry deputies attended, one-third chose a simultaneous Parliamentary gathering (*riksdag*) in Stockholm, and the rest abstained from both. Alexander repeated his earlier promises and solemnly declared that the Finnish people had from now on been raised to the rank of a nation. The representatives answered by pledging full allegiance. Technically, they were traitors because no peace had yet been made. The ceremony was identical to those given a few years later in Curland (western Latvia) and Moldavia, and not too different from the one that Peter I had given in Riga in 1710 to Estonia's and Livland's Germanic gentry. The practice was called for by circumstances. Russia expanded so rapidly that administration simply lacked capacity to follow up. In Finland it was the beginning of autonomy; elsewhere it led to consolidation of existing privileges. The official text was in Russian but the speech in French was translated into Swedish. Finland was now a Grand Duchy, a rank held also by some Russian provinces. Its real content would be decided in practice.

4 Grand Duchy

4.1 Russian angle

The exact meaning of the Porvoo gathering has often been debated. Finland was no administrative unit but a colloquial concept for Swedish possessions beyond the Gulf of Bothnia. Therefore, was the gathering really a *riksdag* or only a *lantdag* (provincial assembly)? Exact delimitation came in the Hamina peace treaty in the autumn: eight Finnish counties (*län*) plus the Finnish-speaking area between the Kemi and Tornio Rivers, still short of the language border at the Kalix River and the famous iron ore deposits. What did the French word *nation* (“placé au rang des nations”) actually mean, only the people or also the area where they lived? Much later it was questioned as to whether Finnish and Swedish speakers were two different nations. Was the Declaration a personal commitment or did it also oblige successors? Which laws did the Declaration cover? Laws reflect changing social mores and some laws, the Constitution, are more permanent than others. But this concept was unacceptable for Russians because it deprived the autocrat his/her absolute power. Russian terms were Basic and Root Laws. In practice, each new ruler gave his or her personal pledge and avoided the hated word. But, also, the Constitution was an imprecise term: did it comprise the unilateral declarations of 1772 and 1789 by the Swedish king? These questions gained significance toward the end of the century. Perhaps Alexander only wanted to keep the audience happy. He was basically a very busy politician who could not afford the luxury of academic analysis.

Alexander wanted to emancipate serfs but could not act directly because their taxes were an essential part of officers’ and administrators’ remuneration. He had to proceed stepwise and one step was to transfer the Carelian province from Russia proper to the Grand Duchy at the end of 1812. From now on this part of Finland was called “Old” and the rest “New.” The transfer was heartily tested by Russian nobility and some leading Finns

questioned its wisdom. At the grass roots, similar voices could be heard if one cared to listen:

Nikolai I’s Finnish coachman, ostensibly Orthodox, reportedly complained to the Emperor about the difficulty to readapt oneself to the Swedish habits once one had got used to the Russian way. Why not let matters rest as they were? He really opened my eyes, commented the Emperor later on.

Ethnically, the move was appropriate although Ingria, still half Finnish speaking, was not included. With time, “Old” laws and habits were streamlined after “New.” Only the relation between landlord and peasant in Old Finland remained. Landlords were inclined to raise taxes although these were regulated by law and had to be agreed with the tiller. Since peasants were not serfs, they were free to make money outside the farmstead without landlord’s consent.

Landlords and, later, industrialists established sawmills, stone and marble quarries, ore mines, potteries, glass factories, metallurgical plants, shipyards, etc. These needed hundreds of horse teams, barges, and sailing ships for transports. Peasants also saw the opportunities offered by Piteri (colloquial name), Viipuri, and other towns to purchase manufactures and sell farm products, willow bark (for tanneries), cobble stones (for streets and foundations), and firewood, depending on the ware’s perishability, value per weight unit, and distance. Petersburg’s trade area grew with improving traffic networks and soon covered the Saimaa Lake District. Gradually, farmer-traders were overtaken by specialists. Someone opened a roadside inn or offered lodging at the destination. Others took a city job. A widening information field changed people’s thinking and mentality. They became habile, witty, and open-minded. They learned some Russian and adopted habits like drinking tea from a glass and baking “Carelian” pastry, as people in western Finland had adopted Swedish words and some of its habits, without being unpatriotic for that. But established people in the West got irritated: Carelians were talkative, not sturdy enough, and somehow unreliable.

The annexation raised at a stroke Finland’s population by 300,000 to over 1 million. Thereby it exceeded Petersburg’s size until 1990. Peters-

burg has grown mostly by immigration. In the early years, 40,000 serfs were brought there each year during the construction period. Subsequently, the voluntary migration field covered northern European Russia and expanded with time to Moscow and beyond (Fig. 3). In Finland, it comprised the entire eastern half and the largest cities. The Finnish population share in Petersburg, however, never exceeded 3 percent.

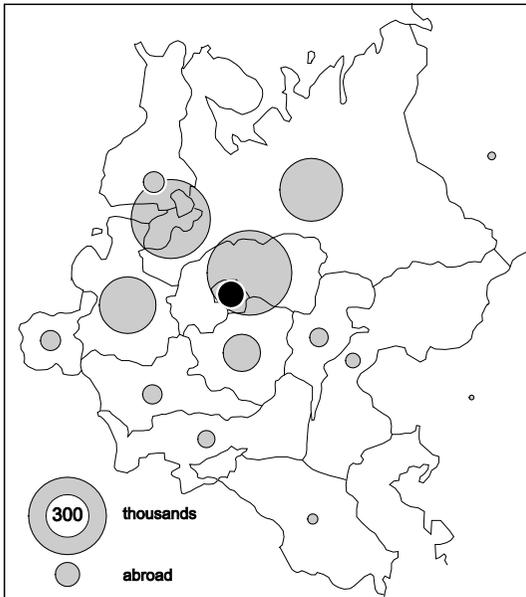


Figure 3 Petersburg's migration field, late 1880s.

Legend: Black marker Moscow.

Sources: Engman, Max, 2003. *St. Petersburg och Finland, migration och influens 1703-1917*. Finska Vetenskaps-Societeten: Helsingfors, 165. Kaila, Toivo T., 1914. *Euroopan Venäjän väestönsiirroista XIX. vuosisadan lopulla*. Helsingin Yliopisto: Helsinki, Taulut II (Muutot) ja III (Syntymäpaikka).

The first to arrive were captured soldiers and civilians but soon the city started to attract free migrants. Job opportunities were plentiful, wages exceeded agricultural income, were paid in cash, a change of job was possible at short notice, and ordinary people enjoyed unusual social freedom. Women became maids, nurses and, later on, textile workers; men became masons, carpenters, chimney sweepers, coachmen, goldsmiths (at *Fabergé*, for example) and, later on, metal work-

ers. Chimney sweepers came from a few adjacent villages, had a semi-monopoly, and were well paid because of their honesty with wealthy customers. When Bolsheviks started building up the secret police (*Cheka*), they were the choice agents because they knew the city thoroughly. Petersburg was the dominant textile town in the 1840s and the 1850s, and the largest engineering center as from the 1870s. Very young boys and girls were accepted into apprenticeships. There were some Finnish entrepreneurs, representatives of exporters, civil servants and, naturally, officers.

Ingria Finns were peasants and benefited from their closeness to a giant market. Horse-drawn sledges loaded with large milk cans is a standard motif in ethnographic descriptions. Butter, eggs, poultry, pork, and firewood were other staples (not potatoes, a German specialty). Ten percent of the city's coachmen were Finns. An Easter ride in a light, Finnish sledge was traditional – and well paid. Much of the population was bilingual but cognizant of both their ethnic roots and provincial peculiarity. Marriage with a partner from Finland was frowned upon. The liberation of serfs in 1861 unleashed the demand for formal schooling. Authorities promoted Russian schools which would have led to rapid assimilation but villagers often opted for Finnish ones and, since they stood for the costs, they also got their way. A teacher's seminar was opened in 1863, only to be closed before World War I.

4.2 Finnish angle

The administrative groundwork was done in Finland. The country was a Grand Duchy but lacked upper administrative structure. After some experimentation, things settled down. The Emperor always made the final decision, usually having consulted with the Russian minister. Matters concerning Finland were introduced to the Emperor by a Finnish civil servant of minister's rank (*Ministerstatssekretär*) with office and residence a few blocks from the Winter Palace, the Emperor's residence. He had regular audiences, a privilege not available to most Russian ministers. He answered the Emperor's questions but was not allowed to argue his case. Russia was represented in Finland by the General Governor, a Russian cit-

izen, who was also the military commander. These were appointed to border provinces and were the Emperor's personal representatives. The institution was gradually dismantled but existed in Finland until independence. Finland's capital and university were soon moved from Turku to Helsinki, to be closer to Petersburg. The university, established in 1640, was named after Alexander and was the third oldest (after Vilna and Tartu) in the Empire. It soon became habit that the Crown Prince was its Chancellor. These three, with Petersburg, Moscow, and Kazan, made up the group whose examinations were fully interchangeable.

The Emperor was the origin of all laws. Those concerning Finland had, in principle, to be accepted by the Finnish government, called the Senate. It happened that this wished amendments or refused acceptance. The Emperor had three choices: change the law and resubmit it, announce a Decree instead, or carry on undisturbed. Each variant was used and all went well until the legal profession in Russia developed a theory about all-country and other (local) laws. The quarrel was ready because it was difficult to find important questions that had a strictly local bearing. Estates convened initially at the Emperor's request and, from 1869, every fifth year, but only got the right to suggest new laws in 1886. It all started in the enlightened mind of Alexander I and was continued during *Alexander II*. Helsinki's main business street, named after the former, and the latter's statue on Helsinki's parade square testify to Finnish feelings. The street plan and prestigious public buildings were designed by a German architect from Petersburg and largely paid for by the Emperor since the Grand Duchy lacked the necessary means. The ingredients of a modern state were there. This fact both astonished and irritated Russians when they started visiting the country in large numbers.

The first Russians were soldiers. Finland had been conquered to be a buffer against Sweden. The population's sympathies have been won by a generous autonomy. It would have been logical to let the country take care of its own defense under Russian overlordship. That went too far. Alexander I was very specific to a trusted friend: Swedes might attack and their kinsmen on the coast might

join them. That had happened in the 1808–9 war and could happen again. During the Crimean war, 1853–5, when a British–French navy burnt naval supplies in coastal cities and bombarded defenses, students had agitated against Russia. It was very naive but authorities did not take any chances. Poland had been granted its own army in 1815 and this had mutinied in 1831. With time, attitudes softened and a 5,000-strong infantry – but no artillery – was agreed for a 10-year period in 1878. It was one-fourth of what the country could bear demographically. The Russian military, 10,000–25,000 strong, was quartered in barracks along the coast and at traffic junctions. With it came Russian merchants who also soon gained rights to offer their wares in nearby towns. The captive market in garrisons offered a solid foundation and, within some decades, Russians dominated key sectors of the urban retail trade. Finland's most popular beer, "Koff," originates from one of them. Construction entrepreneurs arrived because Finnish labor lacked the skills needed for prestige construction. Some remained, became industrialists and established sugar factories, tanneries, shoe manufacturers, etc. Later on, Russians spearheaded advanced technical gimmicks such as cars and airplanes. They also sowed the seeds of the Jewish and Tatar communities. Some of today's largest confectionary chains are owned by ethnic Jews. Tatars excel in the fur business.

Wealthy tourists came during Nicolas I's reign. Visas for foreign travel were not given and Helsinki became a substitute destination. Burghers rented rooms and guests patronized classy baths, restaurants, and concerts. Imatra Rapids on the Vuoksi River also became popular and catalyzed the hotel business. Mass tourism arrived with railroads. The railroad between Helsinki and St. Petersburg was opened in 1870 and, owned by the Finnish state, was a key factor. Its end station was in central Petersburg, a one-way trip to Viipuri lasted a few hours and to Helsinki one night. It took city dwellers to the sandy beaches of the Gulf of Finland. Moneyed people bought lots and built vacation homes, the less moneyed hired rooms at farmsteads. The Finnish state had started buying estates and splitting homesteads to their tillers.

But sandy soil and a small homestead could not support a family, while guests needed coaches, handymen, construction workers, gardeners, and maids. In World War I, the overall summer population reached 100,000, compared to a year-round population of 30,000. At places the ratio was 40:1. A boundary separated this paradise from Petersburg. There were customs controls, the Finnish *markka* was a legal tender parallel to the rouble, and stamps were different. There was no guarantee that a Russian could use his own tongue with administrators. It is easy to imagine the irritation of a VIP at this red tape. In our time the zone would have been declared a Special Administrative Region but creative thinking had not yet reached that far. Worst of all, terrorists had discovered that they could operate with relative impunity from Finnish territory. It was decided in 1911 that the two nearest municipalities would be transferred from Finland to Russia proper. World War I came in between and the decision was never implemented. Stalin returned to the matter two decades later in completely different conditions. Farther west, at Kymi River estuary, the Imperial Family had its own hideout: Langinkoski (Fig. 1). It was built for *Alexander III* and his Danish spouse *Dagmar*.

The Emperor liked to watch salmon fishers, chopped fire wood and carried water. It was the base for trips by the Imperial yacht. He became worried at the sight of an outlying island where all trees had been cut: the practice should be forbidden, and was amazed when told that legislating such things would take years. There was nobody to meet them in Turku, not even a coach available (the yacht arrived too early), so the Empress and her sister walked two kilometers from port to town and had refreshments in a cafeteria. They were perfectly safe, among beloved subjects.

The three irritants – stamps, money, and customs duties – differed in importance. Own stamps were a useless demonstration and could well go. Swedish currency remained legal tender until 1835, to facilitate economic adaptation. Own money mattered because financial discipline in Russia was poor, due mainly to many wars. The Russian finance minister miraculously agreed and Alexander II finally consented. In 1865, the *markka* was tied to the price

of silver and in 1878 of gold, 20 years earlier than in Russia. The PR effect was naturally disastrous, and during World War I Finland was compelled to accept a seriously deteriorating rate of exchange. Custom controls were originally a Russian demand to contain Finnish competition. But times changed and with them the trade's structure. The charges mattered much for state finances, were subject to constant negotiations as in our days, and industrial fortunes changed accordingly. At independence, the Finnish paper industry dominated Russian markets whereas Finland depended on Russian grain deliveries.

The vacation zone appeared a comparative triviality. Unfortunately it was not. The upper crust of the capital was well represented and started agitating against Finland's autonomy at large. Particularly irritating was that Russian citizens were discriminated against in Finland whereas Finnish citizens had a free field in Russia. Alaska's last Russian Governor was a Finn: a Finnish general, the Emperor's personal friend, was appointed Bulgaria's prime minister in 1878 and another led an army at Sandepu in 1906. Some were war or navy ministers in Petersburg. By contrast, Russians needed permission to settle down permanently in Finland, could not demand services in their own tongue, nor could they become civil servants who, moreover, were better paid than in Russia. Finns, by contrast, were welcome to government jobs in Russia provided that they managed the language. Top military schools had quotas for them, linguistic skills were given a flexible interpretation, scholarships for language studies were freely available. Finally, compulsory education in Russian at schools was decreed. To no avail. Stubborn Finns refused to learn. The few people who excelled in Russian had either grown up there or were businessmen. In 1944, when the first government after the war was set up, both foreign ministers had this background: the one had started at the Guards but went over to business, the other was the son of a station master at the Finland Station in Petersburg. When argumentation reached a crescendo, they shifted from Swedish to Russian.

Language also had another dimension. Should the country's main language be Finnish or Swed-

ish? Finns were the majority, making up 80 percent of the population in the mid-1880s, and Swedes the minority. Swedes were educated and had the better jobs. The university operated in Swedish. Foreigners who settled in the country associated naturally with Swedes. Finns had the basic skills of reading and writing thanks to the educational policy of the Lutheran church since the mid-sixteenth century. But, if they wanted to continue, they had to change the language they spoke. Hardly anybody was satisfied with the situation, not even all Swedes. Russians might force a wedge between the two groups, associate themselves with Finns and marginalize the politically suspect Swedes. In a way this happened, Finnish should be usable on equal terms with Swedish from 1886; at independence, the numerical superiority of Finns in the educated classes was a fact. At the highest levels of society, the Swedish maintained their positions until World War II and continue to be the other national language with 5–6 percent of speakers.

Railroads had a pronounced military dimension (Fig. 4). The first line between Hämeenlinna and Helsinki in 1862 connected an inland lake system with an export/import port and the next line branched from it to the winter port of Hanko. But the rest basically radiated from Petersburg to all directions. East–west lines were added to link these “fingers” into a proper net. To this structure came short lines on the Carelian isthmus to serve fortifications and offer direct connection to the main set. The gauge was naturally the same as in Russia and the standard of track, rail, bridges, and rolling stock was raised to meet military requirements before World War I. Finns also fancied about a line from the northern Ladoga shore to Petrozavodsk and another one from Rovaniemi to the Arctic coast. Economically, both were white elephants. The true reasons were nationalistic and the Russians stalled in both cases. The Petrozavodsk line was completed in 1940 by the Russians themselves; the second one was replaced by a gravel road. Both gained significance in the early 1940s.

5 Toward independence

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the international atmosphere hardened: the kind of situation for which Finland had been conquered. Germany had been united and became Europe’s dominant country. Nationalism was the song of the time. The Russian middle class started questioning the gentry’s leading role. Workers had woken up and peasants realized that the ending of serfdom had not made them any wealthier. Administration tried to promote its own ideology centered on autocracy, Orthodoxy, and a Russian soul. Minorities should be integrated with Russians and administration put on an equal footing everywhere.

The Grand Duchy should become a standard province: own stamps were phased out, coastal pilots integrated with the Russian service, customs officials adopted Russian uniforms, knowledge of Russian became obligatory in many branches of the administration, its education at schools was radically increased, courts had to apply laws enacted by Russian legislators, the secret police became visible, recruits should be sent to the Russian army. It all happened during two decades and created much bitterness. The real meaning of the Porvoo *lantdag* became important. The Russian interpretation naturally prevailed. Their argument was undisputable: Finland had been integrated into Russia and not the other way around. Recalcitrant civil servants were fired or expelled to Siberia. Replacements were unfamiliar with local conditions and lacked popular support. Opinion leaders were exiled or left the country voluntarily. The draft was boycotted and replaced temporarily by a financial contribution. Russia was no longer a benevolent protector but an alien occupant.

During the Russo-Japanese war (1904–6) there were disturbances in Helsinki. The General Governor moved to a warship, wondering whether the rebellious city should be bombarded. A fighting organization, “Voima” (Power), had been created and the Japanese sent it a shipload of arms from Antwerp. When the police went on strike, “Order Guards” were organized by labor unions and stu-

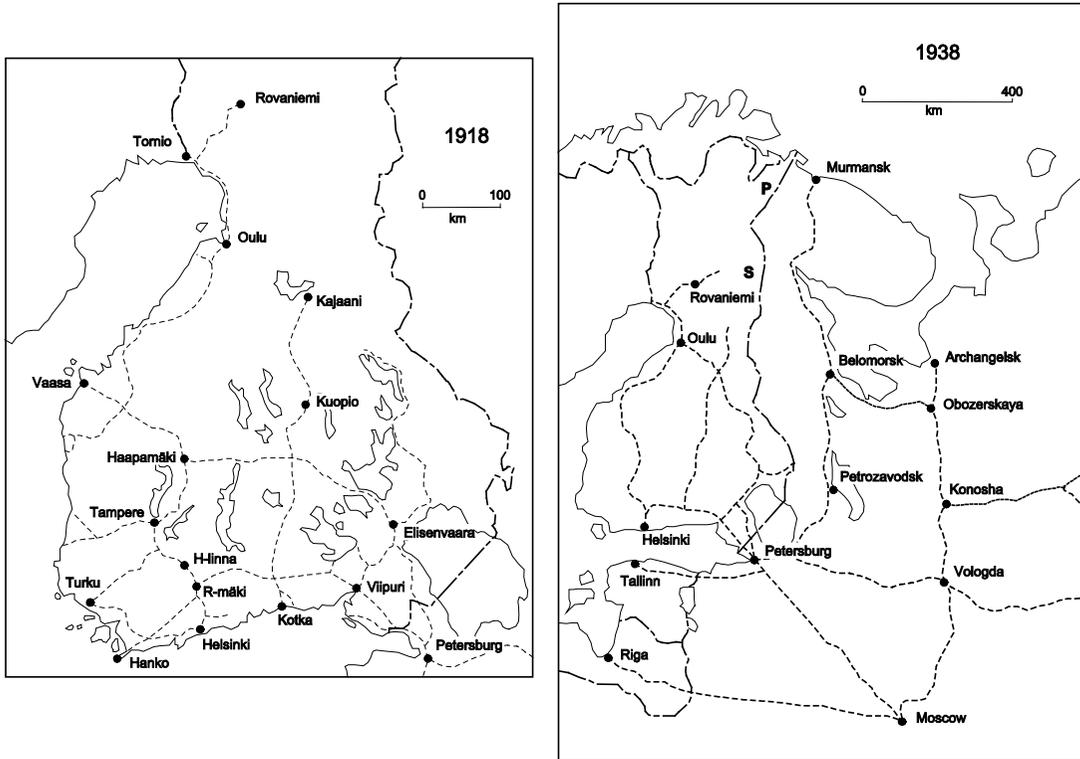


Figure 4 Main railroads in Finland and northern Russia, 1918-1938.

Legend: Broken line = existing; solid line = planned.

Sources: Juntunen, Alpo, 1997. *Valta ja rautatiet*. Historiallisia tutkimuksia, Suomen

Historiallinen Seura: Helsinki, 161 (Kartta 4). Polvinen, Tuomo, 1962. *Die finnischen Eisenbahnen in den militärischen und politischen Plänen Russlands vor dem ersten Weltkrieg*, 295 (Beilage IV).

dent corporations. Political life took on features of a class struggle. *V.I. Lenin* returned from abroad and called Bolshevnik leaders to a meeting in Tampere. It was in Tampere that *I.V. Stalin* met Lenin for the first time. The Emperor promised changes but soon resorted to delaying tactics. General and equal voting rights at Finnish parliamentary (but not municipal) elections could not be withdrawn, however, and became a fact of life from 1906. This was in sharp contrast to the Russian Duma, where monied people dominated. Anticipating war with Germany, Russia started strengthening defenses in Finland, the northern flank of the Petersburg Military District. World War I affected Finland only indirectly before the Revolution. Troops numbered 100,000 but maintained discipline. Coastal defenses were strengthened at Helsinki where the

Baltic Navy was also concentrated. Manual labor was hired from all over the country and subsequently became the local nucleus of Red Guards.

When news about the March 1917 Revolution arrived in Helsinki, troops mutinied and discipline collapsed. Continuing military misfortunes and aggravating shortage of foodstuffs released the October Revolution and Bolshevniks took over. Their first attempt had failed and Lenin was whisked by local Finns to the Isthmus where he kept hiding until October. Having risen to power, he made peace with Germany and promised independence to Russia's minority people at request, expecting that they would rejoin once Socialism had won. The promise about independence was not a clumsy "red herring" as often suggested but a principle accepted already in 1903 at the second party congress in

London. Lenin also promoted double citizenship for Russians and Finns but found no response. Its time came 80 years later but in a European context. Stalin was sent to Finland in November to raise workers but these hesitated. Finns had already declared independence and their Conservative prime minister arrived in Petersburg with a formal application. Stalin, in the capacity of People's Commissar for Nationality Questions, presented the case to the Executive Committee. The decision was positive and unanimous.

Stalin's efforts bore fruit in January 1918 when the youth wing of the Socialist Party asked Lenin for arms. Two days later, the arms arrived and the revolt could start.

O. V. Kuusinen was the key force. When a refugee in the Soviet Union after the Civil War he founded the Communist Party of Finland, assisted Lenin and Stalin as an authority of Marx's theories, was prime minister in the intended Socialist Government of Finland in 1939, and sat later in the Presidium of the Central Committee, the highest post any Finn has ever reached in Russia.

By a trick of fate, White Guards went into action the same night. They had bases in southern Bothnia and Carelia, and had opted for Germans who organized military training for a strengthened battalion. Its "graduates" constituted the cadres for training and battle who provided qualitative superiority, not to say staff officers, often Swedish volunteers, who were professionals.

The commander was lieutenant-general *C.G. Mannerheim*, a well established baron in the highest circles of Petersburg, married to a Russian lady and with 30 years of service in the Imperial army. He had participated in the Japanese war, made a 2-year reconnoitering ride in Chinese Turkestan and led an army cor

ps in WWI. After the Civil War he functioned as Regent, during WWII as Commander-in-Chief and finally President.

The Civil War was fought in the shadow of international politics. There were still 50,000–60,000

Russian soldiers in the country. Whites (60,000) disarmed everybody within reach, whereas Reds (70,000), by contrast, welcomed thousands of volunteers. Their operative brain was a Russian colonel. Red's initial attacks were beaten back, where after Whites encircled opposing Reds at Tampere and forced them to capitulate. Simultaneously, a German division arrived in Hanko to thwart the build-up of a new front by the British along the Murmansk Railroad. In practice, Germans occupied Helsinki and interrupted the Red withdrawal to Carelia. They also neutralized the Russian navy in Helsinki, a task beyond White capabilities. These turned attention to the Isthmus and compelled Reds to capitulate. Lenin did not intervene. The struggle was over and camps full of Red prisoners, of which 15 percent died in hunger and diseases. Roughly 7,500 prisoners, 40 percent more than battle losses, were executed summarily. Their memory poisoned human relations for decades. The urban population was starving because grain deliveries from Russia did not arrive and foreign trade was at a standstill.

Germans were popular among Whites. A disastrous trade agreement escaped notice by most. A German king appeared to guarantee a happy future. But before he arrived, Germany had mutinied and sued for armistice. Finland had to change policy, and rapidly. Mannerheim was selected Regent, allies were begged for provisions, a republican Constitution replaced the royalist one, and Germans were replaced by the British navy. It located at Koivisto and made daring raids against Kronstadt where Russians lost two major and several minor ships (Fig. 5). The raids were a real *pas faux* by Finland. It had got a new protector but was unable to control it. The bill would fall due later on. Russian civilians were expelled. But when Bolshevik terror in Petersburg intensified, many returned as refugees, *Ilya Repin* for example. The wealthy ones continued to France, Great Britain, and the USA; others did their best to stay. Some changed their family name. They and their talented and flexible children became a national asset.

6 Dreams and reality

Independence intoxicated the winners. Mannerheim fantasized of liberating Petersburg from Bolsheviks and gaining conservative Russia's gratitude. Responses to feelers sent out to that effect were entirely negative, however, and the rank-and-file of his army wanted to go home. Lenin moved the capital back to Moscow in 1918 and recalled: "Finns did not attack, Judenitsh (coming from Estonia) was defeated, and Revolution was saved." Overblown self-confidence then took other forms. One wished to liberate Finns and Carelians in Russia and, if possible, integrate their territories with Finland, another to get access to the Arctic Sea either by annexing Petsamo or parts of Finmarken. Revolts in Ingria and East Carelia were basically protests against enrollment into the Red Army and confiscation of farm products. Their Finnish support had nationalistic motives. The Finnish minority in northern Sweden was also observed, whereas Sweden's ambitions in Åland, supported by a unanimous population, were hotly contested.

In Ingria the Finnish goal was cultural autonomy. The Finns counted 140,000, a third of the rural population, in 1917 and had a distinct identity, a situation similar to the surroundings of Helsinki where the Swedish population had cultural autonomy at the municipal level. Of course, the political influence of Swedish speakers was something else than of Finns in the Soviet Union but that does not invalidate the principle. Although Soviet dignity did not allow the acceptance of Finnish suggestion as such, it was partially implemented, until Stalinistic ideas replaced Leninistic ones. Ultimately, most Finns either perished or were dispersed during World War II. Thereby was lost an important lever for future friendly relations.

East Carelia, i.e., western parts of Olonets and Viena, was equally complicated. The Murmansk Railroad from Petersburg was a supply channel for Allies and strategically important. Its construction had brought an influx of Russians, although Carelians still constituted one-half of the total count 165,000 people, more in the north and

less in the south. East Carelia had risen to Finnish consciousness when a provincial doctor, *E. Lönnrot*, had collected old runic verses there, compiled them into a book, *Kalevala*, and launched the idea that here were the remnants of an ancient Finnish culture. Similar material could have been collected among the Russian population too, but would have destroyed the myth. Such a province and people obviously needed liberation and now the opportunity had arrived. The government was lukewarm but young enthusiasts were unstoppable. They organized several expeditions in 1918–22, got arms from sympathizers in the army, and some support from the local population, particularly in the north, before the British and Bolsheviks chased them away. The region became an autonomous Soviet republic, refugees from Finland constituted its highest social layer, with Finnish as the other administrative language. It exported boards, pulp, and paper. Allowed to keep a good share of earned currency, it prospered. During Stalin's industrialization it lost the privileges, the Finnish elite was purged as nationalists, artificial Carelian was introduced at schools, and Russian became the language of administration.

Finland's drive to the Arctic succeeded in Petsamo, promised as compensation for a rifle factory at the Siestar River (Fig. 4). The Finns took the matter up at peace negotiations in 1920 and the Russians agreed to cede a wide corridor. A quay was built at Liinahamari, 530 km from Rovaniemi. Then nickel ore was discovered at Kolos River, a British–Canadian company opened a mine and the attached smelter became operational in 1942. After Norway's occupation by Germany in 1940, Liinahamari became an outlet for Finland and Sweden. The situation in Finmarken was more diffuse. Norwegians had been there since the fourteenth century and Finns arrived in mass 500 years later, to work in fisheries, forming the Kveinish community. Now Finnish nationalists also wanted to "liberate" them and catalyzed repressive measures by Norwegians. The long NW "arm" of Finnish Lapland, 39 km from the Lyngenfjord, was a heritage of czarist policy.

Åland's population had sent representatives to Stockholm in 1918 to ask for unification. Sweden

sent a naval unit which withdrew when the German navy arrived. Locally, the archipelago's language and neutrality were the issues. Internationally, the issue was the control of the northern Baltic. The dispute was left to the League of Nations in Geneva. They sided with Finland on condition that Åland was granted autonomy except during war when temporary occupation was allowed. In practice, the province is semi-independent with permanent *lantdag*, immigrant controls to preserve Swedishness, its own budget, flag, stamps and exemptions from the EU's tax legislation: a Grand Duchy in miniature. It has the best of both worlds.

The Soviet Union became a closed market but was rapidly replaced by Western ones. The wounds of the civil war gradually healed. The Labor movement split into Social Democrats and Communists. The former started operating within months of the end of hostilities. The latter, perhaps 15–20 percent of voters, were handled as traitors. The brawl between Finnish- and Swedish-speakers calmed down in the 1930s. Nationalists tried a coup in 1932 but were scolded by the President, the same man who had filed the application for independence, in a wireless speech and returned home puzzled. Nazi pageantry did not tally with the Finnish mentality and racially Finns were classified very low. Parliamentary support for the nationalists declined to 4 percent.

7 Greatest pride

Meanwhile, dark clouds were gathering in the international sky. Hitler was preparing for war and Stalin believed that he had ten years at his disposal. Hectic industrialization with an emphasis on metallurgy was started. The point of gravity was transferred toward the Urals, beyond the range of enemy aviation. Harsh measures created resistance, suppressed by merciless terror. "The human price was very high," admitted President *V.V. Putin* decades later. A large-scale purge of officers proved almost fatal.

Diplomatic activity followed suit. An unassuming diplomat at the Russian embassy made contact with the Finnish foreign minister in April

1938. He pointed out how close (30 km) the international border was to Leningrad – a familiar theme already in 1911. Wasn't it time to reorganize? His talk lacked the conventional phraseology and the minister informed his colleagues. Mannerheim was also contacted. An invitation to formal negotiations came in October 1939, few weeks after deals had been made with the Baltic countries. The Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact had allocated Finland to the Russian sphere of interest. The border on the western Isthmus should be moved so that the Koivisto anchorage, deepest (9 m) in the eastern Gulf, would be in Soviet territory (Fig. 5). Part of the main defense line would thereby be lost. A threefold slice of East Carelia was offered as compensation. Finland should, in addition, rent Hanko for 50 years to be used as a naval base. Since the port was important for winter traffic, a nearby anchorage would also do. Both alternatives were rejected. On the Isthmus, Mannerheim suggested concessions, followed by new fortifications and rapid arming. Troops were mobilized and put to work. But the Great War had already started. Who would sell arms at short notice? Stalin was genuinely amazed. He had offered a fair deal and these Chuhnas (derogatory word) refused to accept it. "It seems that soldiers must handle the matter then," *V.M. Molotov* said to Finnish negotiators, who did not understand that time had ran out. But Stalin had also overlooked something: credibility. Finns suspected that new demands would follow at the next opportunity.

On paper, Finnish odds were poor and deteriorated rather than improved: 1:2 in infantry; 1:4 in artillery; 1:10 in airplanes; practically no tanks; far too little artillery ammunition. Inferiority in technology is a feature typical of a small country challenging a Great Power. Finns were also short of uniforms and had not trained all their manpower because Communists were considered unreliable. In practice, the Communists proved as patriotic as the rest. Many had relatives in the Soviet Union and were aware of their fate in the purges. The White Guards had 60,000 well-trained fighters and as many female auxiliaries (*lotta*). Transportable tents with portable stoves were an important asset. All could use skis. The Soviets lacked seasoned

officers, tents, could seldom ski, and training was for open terrain. Their clothing was adequate and weapons were excellent, however.

The attack came at the end of November simultaneously with threatening news: a democratic government had been formed “somewhere in Finland” with Comrade Kuusinen as the prime minister. It welcomed the Red Army as liberators. East Carelia had recently been raised to the status of a Finnish–Carelian Soviet Republic and “now the time had arrived to make the old dream true by uniting the Finnish and Carelian people”. The perspective was truly sensational but was opened too late and lacked the backing of the *Realpolitik*, for example how Srbs (Sorben) were treated in Germany, to be applicable in the case at hand. Most territorial gains were subsequently added to Soviet Carelia – but only for a short period. Finns saw such measures as a clumsy imposture. The Soviet air force strafed cities and rail traffic, but

its army could not break through the main defenses. Some quiet weeks followed, during which the Soviets brought more divisions and retrained their troops. Along the 1,000 km-long eastern border, they had two-to-three-times more divisions than anticipated. Finns encircled several of them and the legend of skiing forest fighters was born. But the Russians built field fortifications and maintained their fighting spirit even after -30°C nights around open camp fires. Nor did they hesitate to wade over flooded ice like at Viipuri Bay. The booty from encirclements (*motti*) was formidable and surpassed Swedish deliveries. Then Russian superiority began to count. Finns could not compensate for losses and troops never got rest. A Swedish volunteer corps was a drop in ocean. The French and British talked about military help but Sweden refused thoroughfare. The real goal was the iron ore mines between the Kalix and Luleå Rivers which supplied Germany. When the Sovi-

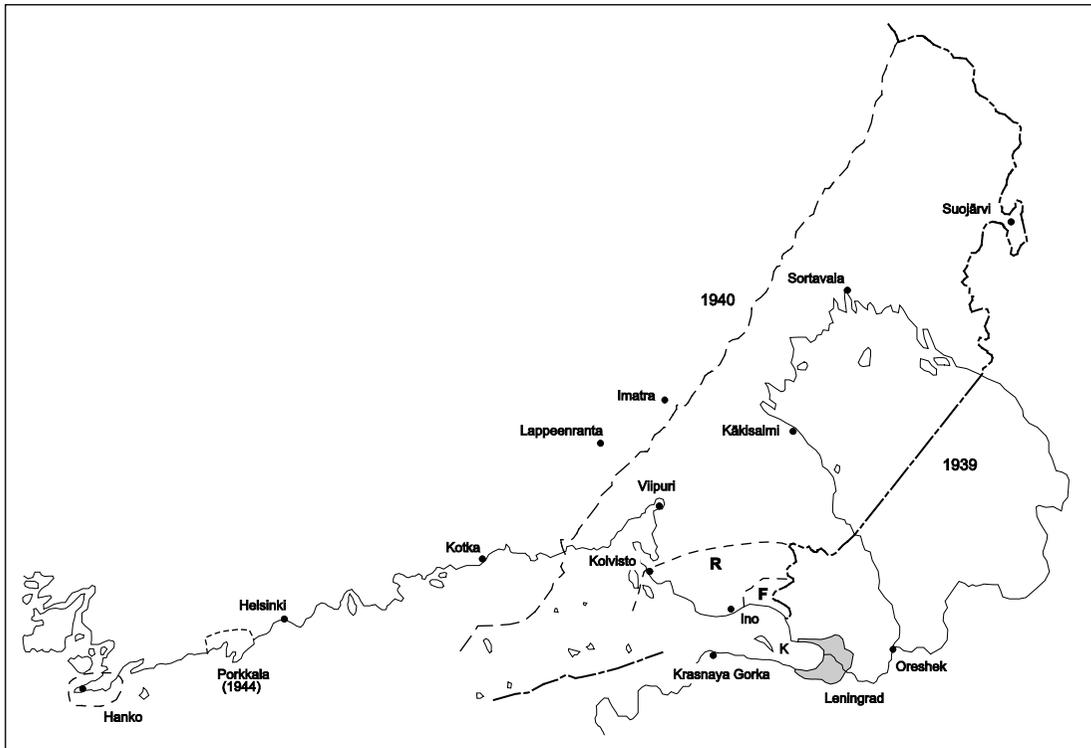


Figure 5 Border negotiations, Oct.–Nov.1939.

Legend: F = Finnish suggestion; R = Russian suggestion; K = Kronstadt. Ino, Krasnaya Gorka and Kronstadt fortifications. Ino without guns 1918–1944.

Source: Seppälä, Helge, 1969. *Taistelu Leningradista ja Suomi*. WSOY: Porvoo – Helsinki, 67.

ets crossed the Viipuri Bay and cut off the coastal road to Helsinki, Finns sued for peace. The Soviets consented. They did not wish for confrontation with Western Allies. Peace was made on March 15 at terms much worse than in negotiations: Peter I's border, Hanko town, and Salla region. Petsamo was not mentioned – Norwegians should not be alarmed and the British–Canadian mines were there. Finland lost 20 percent of its industrial capacity and 400,00 people left their homes. Kuusinen's government was quietly shelved.

8 The Great War

Germans occupied Denmark and Norway from April 9, 1940, and the Low Countries from May 10. The British withdrew to their islands and the French made armistice in June. The Soviet Union integrated the Baltic republics at the same time. What would have been Finland's fate if peace had been delayed by three months? The same as Estonia's, which ultimately lost one-fourth of its population? These time windows come and go. The Germans considered an invasion of England and launched air raids which peaked in August but could not defeat the British air force. The Soviets maintained pressure in Finland, vetoing unsuitable candidates in presidential elections and the Finnish–Swedish defense alliance, while requiring a majority participation in the Kolos River nickel complex. The Finns stalled at Kolos River and got secret support from Germany. It was the only nickel source within their reach. Troop movements beyond the border were observed and a Russian attack was expected on several occasions. In August, the Germans indicated a willingness to sell arms. The purchase was the first move from the Soviet to the German camp; the transit of German vacationers was the next one. The decisive event occurred in November. Molotov demanded that the Pact should also be respected in Finland but Hitler did not wish a new war in the north. Now Finland had a protector as in 1918 and adapted foreign policy accordingly.

The transit of German vacationers was due to geography. Finmarken lacked land connection to

the south and the British dominated the sea. Travel through Finland was safer and speedier. That suited Finns: with Germans in, Soviets would stay out. Sweden agreed to similar traffic. Then the Germans wanted to exchange troops in Finmarken. More arrived but nobody left. The newcomers also seemed to prefer Finnish forest to Norwegian tundra. Soviets were well informed. Some Finnish airfields were handed over. German naval units hid in the Finnish archipelago. There was no formal treaty and the Finns wondered whether it was business or bluff, to conceal activity elsewhere. On June 22, the veil was raised. It was business and the Soviet air force raided Finnish territory. The German and Finnish navies closed exit from the Gulf of Finland. When raids continued, Finns declared themselves at war with the Soviet Union. The opportunity to regain lost territory was there. When guilt was debated after the war, Molotov accused: "You had Germans in the country." Indeed, but there were Soviets also, at Hanko.

The Germans planned to reach the Volga River before the onset of winter and go then to winter quarters. It was an unrealistic idea considering that the opponents were Russians. There were three diverging wedges and distances were long for a single campaign. Much depended on the firmness of Soviet resistance. Finnish officers with experience of the country were skeptical. The main rule was that Finland should not participate in a direct attack against Leningrad. That was a quiet confession that the idea of ousting Bolsheviks from Petersburg in 1918 had been unsound. The C-in-C enjoyed unlimited authority and was given the right to conclude armistice without consulting anybody. The Germans were prepared to subordinate their army in Finland under his command. Since that would have implied the C-in-C's subordination to the German High Command, he declined. Finns conducted three consecutive operations in the south: a wedge between the Carelian Isthmus and Olonets, a dash to the old border opposite Leningrad, and another one along Ladoga's eastern coast to the Svir River.

The Germans advanced rapidly in the first weeks. Then centrifugal forces made themselves felt and movement slowed. They reached Neva

River at Oreshek in early September. Finns were at the old border 50 km north, facing Leningrad's fortifications. They had infantry but lacked heavy artillery, perhaps intentionally. Their reluctance to continue was observed by the Soviets. In Olonets, they had reached the Svir. To get Finns to advance further, the Germans humored them by offering a border along the Neva. In vain. Frontal attack from the south was impossible with the forces available. Finally, the Germans tried to close the trap at the Svir in November but failed. Leningrad's siege began (Fig. 6). It was the cradle of the October Revolution and Lenin's town. Surrender would have been disastrous for morale. Moreover, its defense neutralized 200,000 Germans and the key industries had been evacuated. The remaining civilians could be supplied somehow via Ladoga. Or could they? What might have happened if the old border had remained? The Soviets would have used Finnish territory for evacuation and supplies, thereby catalyzing German countermeasures. Would Finland have sided with the Soviet Union, possibly against territorial concessions?

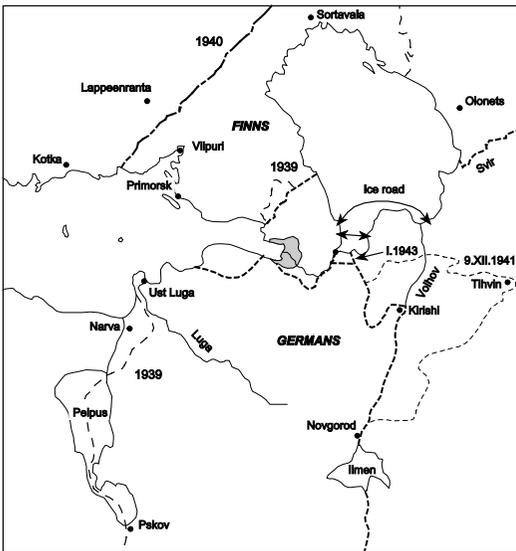


Figure 6 Siege of Leningrad, 1941-1944.

Source: Seppälä, Helge, 1969. *Taistelu Leningradista ja Suomi*. WSOY: Porvoo – Helsinki, 180.

In East Carelia, Lake Onega was reached in early December (Fig. 7). All had agreed on the

advance to the old border. Leftists wanted to stop there: East Carelia was not Finnish territory. Moderates considered it a buffer zone. Defense along the Svir, Onega, and White Sea coast would be easier. The richly mineralized Kola Peninsula was attractive. Also, the Germans and Norwegian nationalists wanted to participate. Defense on the White Sea was overlooked. Perhaps the German navy would take care of that. British interests were ignored. These came to day in *Churchill's* letter to the C-in-C which demanded an immediate halt. This was forthcoming, but correspondence with Germany's enemy was out of the question. Britain declared war. It shocked the political establishment but not the army in the Carelian forest. The land of runes and untamed nature was now Finnish – at least for the time being. Most of the population had been evacuated. Remaining Russians were put into camps, to wait transport to the east, and used in occasional jobs. Wages were differentiated: Finns 100, Carelians 70, Russians 50. When Finnish hopes faded, they were equalized. Camps were congested and food was poor, but with time mortality reached normal levels. Idealistic Finns worked hard to raise living standards but met little response since the population expected a Soviet return. Logically, it also escaped collective punishment after the war. A former administrator published decades later a book titled *The Land Which Did Not Exist*.

In the north, the Germans wanted to cut off the Murmansk Railroad. Their troops were not suited for the task and the sparse roadnet made large concentrations impossible. The Finns came to help and the front started to move, but now the Americans became alarmed. They considered the Soviet Union a smaller ill than Germany and wanted to keep supply lines open. At the end of October, a secret ultimatum was given: stop the advance or we will declare war. That helped. Troops could not understand. The Germans were furious but kept face. The railroad had a link at Belomorsk to the Archangel Railroad (Fig. 4). The Germans suggested a joint operation against it in the spring of 1942. The Russians were well prepared and the Finns complained of a lack of forces. The idea was shelved. After the war, it was estimated that Arctic

ports handled only 10 percent of the traffic during the critical 1941–2 period. Rumors started circulating about the harsh treatment of Estonians and people began to wonder about Finland's fate after the "final victory". In Finland, civil administration always remained with domestic authority.

Finland had over 0.5 million (16 percent) of its population in the armed forces. That could not be sustained and the eldest cohorts were released. The death toll was 25,000 and as many would be permanent invalids – equivalent to three infantry divisions out of fifteen. Refugees were not yet fully settled. Food rations were 60 percent of normal consumption. German deliveries had not arrived because the Baltic was in thick ice up to the Danish sounds. A temporary famine was a fact. The German invasion in Russia had been beaten back. The USA escorted convoys halfway over the Atlantic. Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor which took some heat off Europe. This encouraged *Hitler* to declare war on the USA. Now President *Roosevelt* could set priorities: "Europe first." The gamble had failed. Peace would be concluded with Stalin. It was important to maintain a low profile.

9 Endgame

The army spent time building fortifications, prefabricated houses, making wooden artifacts, arranging sporting contests, and studying by distance classes; but not honing fighting skills. Equipment was becoming outdated and tactical developments were ignored. Many wished that peace would be made at friendly terms and that the 200,000 Germans in the north would go home freely. The main obstacle was that their industry got 75 percent of its nickel from Finland and also most of the molybden, used in the manufacture of synthetic gasoline. Mannerheim thought that there would be negotiations, with East Carelia as a barter object. The Soviets observed the deteriorating morale and decided to force Finland to peace before the endgame in Central Europe. Feelers had been sent out already in 1941 and this was repeated in 1944. Finnish negotiators even went to Moscow via Stockholm but the terms were

too harsh. The Germans got wind of this play and discontinued essential deliveries for a time. The Russians tried to soften the Finns with air raids against Helsinki. But their air force was designed for cooperation with the army and not for strategic bombing. The Finns were prepared and only 5 percent of the bombs fell on the city.

When air raids failed, the Russians opted for a ground attack. They had revamped tactics and used massive artillery fire. The Germans had been pushed to the Narva–Pskov line and operational freedom was achieved (Fig. 6). There was a time window in June/July 1944. Two-thirds of the Finnish army was in East Carelia, where fortifications were the best, a legacy of the Siege. Signs of forthcoming attack were ignored. Had the C-in-C lost his grip? He was already 77 years old, plagued by stomach pains and nervous eruption in his hands. When the attack came, key commanders were on vacation, artillery horses loaned to farmers, new antitank weapons in the depot, and bureaucracy slowed the supply of ammunition. Some units collapsed and spread panic during their flight. The Russians advanced to Viipuri in ten days, where water bodies and rocky terrain slowed movement. The German foreign minister arrived in Helsinki ten days later demanding a formal treaty. The president signed a declaration that he would not stop fighting (the Ribbentrop Pact). It was a ploy, but more was not available. The USA had expelled the Finnish ambassador a few days earlier but did not declare war. Then countermeasures started to bite. The commanding structure was revamped. Reinforcements from East Carelia started to arrive. Innovative artillery tactics did wonders. Help was asked for from the Germans. These sent materiel, a 70-plane dive bomber squadron, a tank brigade, and an infantry division. Valiant bomber crews destroyed 250 tanks out of the original 800. The main battle raged for three weeks with 150,000 combatants involved. The Russians started withdrawing troops in early July. Their time window had closed. The Germans returned to Estonia. East Carelia was abandoned. Fighting slowed down. The Finnish Parliament selected the C-in-C as president. He had not given promises. Now he waited until the Germans had left Estonia

and then restarted sending out peace feelers.

The Russians did not request surrender as previously. President Roosevelt's stand in Tehran (1943) had helped. Sweden's sustained neutrality depended on developments in Finland. Occupation with an ensuing partisan war would need one million men to suppress, forces badly needed in Germany. Weapons were hidden all over the country for that possibility. When they were discovered after the war, the Russians did not react. Perhaps they had known. Other terms were broadly unchanged: expulsion of Germans, demobilization of army, 1940 borders plus the loss of Petsamo, the lease of Porkkala peninsula instead of Hanko, war reparations USD 300 million in six (later eight) years, and the trial of war criminals (Fig. 5). Mannerheim was promised immunity. A shadow government of left-wing politicians in Stockholm was ignored. The army would never have respected their deal. Armistice came into force September 15. Formal peace would wait until the Allies had agreed upon overall terms. Porkkala was 25 km west of Helsinki and would become a naval base. Its largest guns reached Helsinki – tables had turned. Porkkala looked more dangerous than it actually was, and was returned to Finland without compensation in 1955 when *N.S. Chruschev* tried to get the Americans to abandon their foreign bases. Reparations were in gold dollars, 600 million at current prices. That was a nasty surprise but in the wake of the Marshall Plan, the amount was lowered to USD 450 million. The amount was still high but not overwhelming – 15 percent of GNP. War expenses had been 25 percent of GNP during the quiet years, against 55 percent by the main belligerents. When the 1944 anniversary of the October Revolution arrived, the President sent congratulations to Generalissimus Stalin. He used French, the language of diplomats and his domestic language in Petersburg, and signed: Mannerheim, Maréchal de Finlande, Baron. A chapter in the Finnish–Russian relationship was closed.

10 Best friends

Germans in the north had to withdraw to Fin-

marken. They evacuated civilians to Sweden and, to slow Finnish advance, destroyed bridges, mined roads, and burnt buildings. The Russians demanded drastic measures from the Finns and were at times threatening. They had a Supervisory Commission in Helsinki, headed by *A.A. Zhdanov*, the Leningrad party boss. Mannerheim was hospitalized and *J.K. Paasikivi*, the prime minister, took over. The immediate problem was how to feed the population. Granaries were empty, German deliveries discontinued, and Swedish reserves eaten up. Stalin promised 59,000 tonnes, one-fourth of the German quota. It was not the first time. When Paasikivi returned home from Moscow at the end of May 1941, Stalin gave him 20,000 tonnes as a token of personal appreciation. The main interest was in war reparations with an emphasis on machinery, ships, cables and prefabricated houses. That necessitated much new capacity which might remain unused once the reparations were over. “Then we will buy all that you can produce,” was the reply. Good quality and timely deliveries created good will. It was the beginning of bilateral trade. The trial of war criminals became acrimonious. Political verdicts do not exist in Finland. The Soviets were adamant: “Either you sentence them or we will move the trial to Moscow.” *U.K. Kekkonen*, then Justice Minister, bit the bullet and saw to it that each accused was sentenced, the top men to ten years with hard labor. In practice, they wrote memoirs or were hospitalized and subsequently pardoned if seriously ill.

U.K. Kekkonen fought on the White side in the Civil War, worked as Secret Service agent, became Law Doctor, and was Minister of the Interior 1937-9. A political “Hawk” until late 1943 when contacted Soviet and US representatives in Stockholm. Negotiated Porkkala's return, enjoyed Soviets' trust, advocated non-aligned foreign policy, and welcomed Communists as a junior partner to the government.

Formal peace was made in Paris in 1947. Within a year the former allies were in a heated quarrel. Stalin had created national party alliances that he controlled. The USA offered economic help (the

Marshall Plan) and launched NATO. The Soviet Union responded with the Warsaw Pact. Finland guarded the northern approaches of Leningrad. Inclusion in the Warsaw Pact would rock the boat but what about a defense pact (Friendship Treaty)? An invitation to Moscow arrived in 1948. Kekkonen led the delegation, with Paasikivi at home as the final arbiter. It was clear that a pact would be concluded. Discussions were about content and wording. These were favorable for Finland. Its wish to stay outside international conflicts was mentioned. Did it mean neutrality? A decade later, Finns started making hints to that effect, whereas Russians emphasized a *de facto* alliance. Argumentation ended only at the Soviet Union's disintegration. If invasion by (Federal) Germany or its allies threatened, negotiations would be started on how to counter it. But who decided the threat's existence? Both sides would help the other to beat the invasion back. The idea was by no means new. Mannerheim had suggested it to Zhdanov in 1945, just to preserve the army. This had declined, perhaps unwisely. Now the Soviets themselves suggested joint exercises and their high brass came repeatedly to them. The Finns avoided even discussions but purchased war material which was both inexpensive and of high quality. It was also agreed that Finnish commanders could attend classes at the *Frunze Academy*, the highest officer school. That gave insight to Russian thinking and has continued to this day.

Kekkonen was both Paasikivi's and the Russians' favorite for presidency. In 1940, the Russians had vetoed assumed antagonists. Now they promoted one candidate and discriminated against select parties, showing displeasure very clearly: their ambassador was called home and no replacement arrived, trade negotiators were all on vacation, Federal Germany's foreign policy necessitated consultations. Kekkonen stayed president for 25 years, when one term was six years. That was much resented but also had a positive side. Russians appreciate political stability and quiet diplomacy. Get their trust and many things become possible. Kekkonen's "best friend" was Chruschev, with whom he took steam baths, along with *A.N. Kosygin*, the economy czar during the

Brezhnev era, with whom he wandered over the Caucasus. During the war, both had organized evacuations, Kekkonen from Carelia and Kosygin from Leningrad. Many construction projects resulted from their discussions.

The Soviets operated in several sectors. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs took care of formalities, with skill and courtesy. The Communist Party kept contact with its namesake and, gradually, other parties as well. It set political goals and kept control of the purse strings. Several administrations gathered intelligence. If an ambassador was a party man, the host country belonged to the Socialist camp. If he came from the Foreign Ministry, the country was Capitalistic. In the 1980s, Finland belonged in the former group. A trusted contact among the Soviets intermediated messages to the correct persons and returned responses rapidly and fairly reliably. He may have been the closest equivalent of a "Resident," as used by the British in India. The trick was to know to whom he reported and their rank in the pecking order. The contact was frequently fluent in Finnish whereas Finns used interpretation. This was also Kekkonen's shortcoming. He was often invited to Zavidovo, the Central Committee's hunting ground close to Moscow. Photos reveal that he was a bit of a silent outsider. Routine could still be handled in Leningrad. During Chruschev's and Bulganin's visit in 1957, the locomotive upon which Lenin had escaped adversaries in the summer of 1918 was given as a gift. It had previously been forgotten at a railroad depot. The Finns also shot a movie, "Trust", in recognition of Finland's independence. It was no money-spinner but that was unimportant. The goal was political. In Russian culture, a heritage from Mongols and ultimately possibly the Chinese, a highly placed person can do no wrong. If Lenin and Stalin had together given Finland independence, nobody could take it away. End of story. The relations became so cordial that jealous neighbors introduced a new political term: *Finnlandisierung*.

Trade was bilateral at world market prices, if any existed. Soviet five-year plans provided the framework, and details were agreed annually. Clearing accounts at central banks were also balanced an-

nually. Credit risk did not exist and payments were timely. Complacent Finns neglected product development. When the system collapsed in 1991, many export products to the Soviets were uncompetitive in the West. Finns desired energy carriers, grain and raw materials, but avoided cars, trucks, and machinery that were often outdated. The Soviets asked for machinery, ice-breakers, other ships, paper, and consumer articles for Leningrad. Kekkonen succeeded in selling construction projects, at Norilsk Nickel among others, and agreed to buy a steel mill and a nuclear power plant. The Soviets also got embargo products. Finns had for a while a quasi-monopoly in Soviet phone exchanges. These contained US components and the Soviets suspected that there might be a secret switch to deactivate the gadgets. It took years to convince them that there was none. Then it took time to convince Americans that they now got reliable information about the pace of renovation of the Soviet communication network.

Kekkonen's last services to his country were the Helsinki Security Conference in 1975 and the abolition of customs duties with the EEC in 1977. The Conference may have been Kekkonen's idea, to strengthen the image of non-allied Finland, but was readily accepted by Soviets who saw in it a possibility to consolidate their influence in Eastern Europe. The passage about freedom of speech was insisted on by Western countries because it made the suppression of unorthodox opinion more difficult. The EEC deal had both economic and political dimensions. Duties were crucial for exports because most markets were in Europe. The Russians admitted it. They were suspicious about political consequences. Kekkonen put his authority into play: He would personally guarantee an unchanged political line. Ultimately, the Soviets were right. The EEC became the European Union, Finland entered it in 1995, but Russia was kept out.

11 Conciliation

Kekkonen and Brezhnev left the scene almost simultaneously. Both countries desired a political thaw. In the Soviet Union, this meant *Gorbat-*

shev's perestroika, followed by imperial disintegration during Yeltsin's reign and Putin's guided democracy thereafter. In Finland, it meant a return to normal parliamentary practice, disempowerment of the president, and an end of the Friendship Treaty. Economically, it meant the end of bilateral foreign trade. During the attached economic disorder it was Finland's turn to supply Petersburg with 200,000 tonnes of grain and other foodstuffs. The clearing balance was heavily in Finland's favor and many doubted that one would ever see the money. Nothing of the kind. Russia paid in full and much sooner than promised. Finland was no longer alone in the club of countries who pay their debts.

Russia's behavior in general became conciliatory. *B.N. Yeltsin* apologized for the meddling in Finland's internal affairs, Putin laid a wreath on Mannerheim's grave, and both parties started raising memorials to war heroes in each other's territory. It was quite incredible and opened doors that had been closed for decades. Carelian societies naturally started agitating for border adjustment on the Isthmus. Once it happened during a live TV program with President Putin attending. He had difficulty controlling himself: "Borders are defined in the Peace Treaty and will remain as they are." Applicants apparently thought that a humble request would do the thing. Kekkonen had received a corresponding answer in the 1960s when he tried to swap the Viipuri area against a vast tract in Lapland. His next try was a long-term lease of the Saimaa Canal, taken into traffic in 1856 but unused since 1940. The Russians consented but leased so little land that nothing could be built alongside. Later on, the return of Viipuri with surroundings was the political currency for the DDR's eventual recognition.

The Isthmus had been used by the military for training, but Putin had economic ideas: the oil terminal at Primorsk (Koivisto) with attached oil refinery and a dry bulk terminal at Ust Luga, Ingria. Petersburg's own port is comparatively shallow and cannot be extended because of the surrounding city. Pending Ust Luga's completion, container cargoes with attached land transports have been handled by Finnish ports, Kotka in

particular. When one-fourth of Hamburg's outgoing containers are destined for Petersburg, which handles about one-half of Russia's imports, the logistical challenge becomes understandable. It is expected that Finnish ports will also have a role to play in clearing traffic peaks when Ust Luga has become fully operational.

Holiday houses are spreading along the coast as before the Revolution. A small cluster is also emerging north-east of Lappeenranta, Finland. Owners arrive by car from nearby industrial towns, Viipuri and even Moscow: wealthy, courteous people. Real estate prices have risen substantially to the great delight of sellers who now can emigrate to Thailand or some other "in" location. Few bother about long-term effects, encountered in the turn-of-the-century Isthmus vacation zone and ignore Russia's declaration that all ethnic Russians living abroad enjoy its protection. Of course they do, but the phraseology is from colonial times. Finland's foreign minister advised: "We must balance things by buying real estate in Russia. Why don't you guys make a try?" It was not so simple in practice. There was no cottage market. Occasional available lots had not been surveyed and Land Books, if they existed, were apparently in disorder. Russians have subsequently decided that foreigners cannot own land in Russia. The sharp end is pointed towards Asia but the effect is felt overall. Danes also have a cottage-buyer dilemma on Jutland's west coast which swarms with German guests. But Danes are shrewd. There is a law that allows foreign ownership only if a long-term tie with Denmark can be proved. What does the tie look like? There are no written rules; it all depends on administrative judgment. "Would ten years of vacationing, a half-term university job, citizenship in another Nordic country and knowledge of the language be sufficient?" "Impossible to say but do send an application. We'll be happy to look at it."

The southwestern archipelago is still an underused vacation asset, well suited for the upscale market. One could develop the tradition of Langinkoski further. The state could construct a romantic "wholesaler villa" with a sauna and mooring for a large yacht, place it at the disposal of the

Russian president during his period in office, and invite the inhabitants for dinner or afternoon tea to the Finnish president's summer residence near Turku, a relaxed surrounding for informal discussions. The environmental future of the northern Baltic would certainly get the best possible attention, as a byproduct.

Russian tourism exceeds one million nights, by some margin the dominant ethnic group. Petersburg with 75 percent is the largest city of origin for these visitors, followed by Moscow with 10 percent. Some visitors come from Siberia, to see Helsinki with its Russian history, the Saimaa Lake District, possibly the southwestern archipelago, to shop at Stockmann's which has answered in kind by building a fairly large store in Petersburg and smaller units in Moscow and Ekaterinburg. Finnish grain products have one-third of Petersburg's and one-tenth of Moscow's market. But curiously, attempts to offer the supporting linguistic skills in primary education have been repeatedly thwarted at the national level. There still appears to be two Finlands, West and East. Helsinki and Petersburg are connected by "high-speed" trains: with formalities on the train and a travel time of 3.5 hours. Russians have suggested the abolition of visas but Finns are ambivalent. The EU experience has not been entirely positive.

Military questions have not disappeared. There was a lull when things seemed to have settled down, when NATO and the Soviet Union agreed on a reduced military presence in Europe. Both sent troops home and East Europe's *de facto* occupation ended. Then, NATO expanded to the Soviet's old boundary and the missile shield was part of it. A Polish journal named it "Achilles' shield," an allegory to the Greek Achilles who was immortal except at his heel. The Soviets were explicit: "The first target will be the radar bases. Ballistic missiles with nuclear heads will be used." The European Union might have been a balancing factor but lost credibility in lax budgetary controls and mutual bickering. Finland's allegiance in this new world naturally resurfaced: NATO or Russia? Distant or close friend? Kekkonen had opted for the close one, as do the great majority of Finns. Russia's main interest seems to be an early warning

system in western Finland – run by Finns, if so agreed. In all likelihood, it would become a Finnish variant of the Achilles' heel. Generals plan against a surprise attack by airborne troops with ensuing occupation of the country. Armaments at their disposal are of mixed origin, although NATO dominates the critical air defense. But is NATO a realistic option? How did it help Georgia (admittedly a non-member) when they challenged Russia's territorial interests? Below the military level is the political plateau. NATO (read: "USA") and Russia currently lock horns on several issues. But they can also agree about spheres of interest in the way the Soviet Union and Germany did in August 1939. Would Finland still remain unaligned?

12 Conclusion

Finland's rise from among "unassorted" Swedish counties to an independent state over the past 200 years has many layers and Sankt Petersburg has played a role in most of them. There is the military layer and its corollary, the location of the border. Then there is the administrative layer, best reflected in the status of Grand Duchy. The ethnic layer made itself felt comparatively late but has in reality underscored everything else. It splits into popular or grassroots culture and the refined variant.

The military layer remained for a long time unchanged. Its first manifestation was Peter I's border and, had Sweden accepted it, that may well have been the end of the story. But Sweden looked for a revanche and ultimately lost all territory east of the Gulf of Bothnia. That meant a radical extension of Petersburg's formal security zone, needing more troops and fortifications. An aggressor could choose between the two coasts of the Gulf of Finland and numerous ports. The southern alternative implied longer marshes with an unprotected right flank but ended closer to the city center. The northern alternative meant poor, hilly roads, a crossing of the Kymi River (later also the Saimaa Canal) and a break-through at the Viipuri narrows. This made a landing at Koivisto worth considering. It could best be prevented by

closing the entry to the Gulf of Finland by fortifications at the Tallinn–Helsinki level. This was what Russia tried to do 1830–1960. Long-range bomber fleets and missiles have changed the equation. Their shortest route from the Norwegian Sea to the Russian heartland goes over Finnish territory. It became important to get more depth to the defense, which means radar stations and air bases along the Bothnian coast. That is the core of the attempted joint defense policy. From a wider perspective, closeness to some border – or ocean shore – has lost much relevance in our time. There is no such thing as absolute security any longer. A rational solution is to disperse truly sensitive functions. Enhanced survival chances is one reason why Swedes and Finns have decentralized core societal functions among second-tier urban centers. It is only shrouded in the guise of balanced growth.

Finland's status as a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire reflected two things: Sweden's administrative superiority and the need to organize the newly acquired territories rapidly. The best testimony to Sweden's administrative excellence was Peter I's desire to adopt the Swedish law as such in his own country. That could not be done, however. The existing structures and ways of thinking were too different. Agreed, the idea to adopt a complete law, lock, stock, and barrel, was not entirely utopian. The current Commercial Law in Russia is a rather exact copy of the Dutch one. Why Dutch? Because it happened to be the most recent one when adopted (Yeltsin regime). But the Swedish legal system as a whole rose from the social fabric itself. The King could not make laws or raise taxes without the consent of the four parliamentary Estates. Peasants were one of them and often joined the King against the rest. Peasant representatives also sat on rural courts and could overrule the professional judge when unanimous. Farmhands, the lowest social layer, normally shared meals and lodging with the peasant family and could change employer after the harvest. This kept the social distance bearable. The homestead was actually a remnant of the old, egalitarian, Viking society which had survived in Europe's agricultural margin such as

in Norway and Sweden – but not in Denmark. The modern, individualistic society was built upon this fundament.

There were two ethnic spaces: between aboriginals and Russians, and between Swedish and Finnish speakers. The first space remained marginal up to the last decades of cohabitation because the shares of permanent inhabitants remained so small, 2–3 percent in both directions Finland/Petersburg, their closeness notwithstanding. Thereupon come as many Finns who emigrated beyond St. Petersburg. The discrimination against Russian migrants in Finland naturally contributed, but Petersburg's existence as an intervening opportunity for Russians and the barrier effect of Cyrillic *versus* Latin alphabet in both directions should also be acknowledged.

The Swedish–Finnish dimension became important with the availability of primary education. It has been speculated as to whether the Russian conquest really released the Finnish language from the shackles of Swedish, or whether it would have been reduced to an ethnographic curiosity in the way the Irish language has been in Eire. Both alternatives existed. But the adoption of English by most Irish people has not made them British, due to ethnic discrimination and the controversy between the Roman Catholic *versus* Anglican and Presbyterian churches. Instead, they have been thoroughly integrated into the worldwide community of native English speakers with the attached competitive advantage. The adoption of Swedish as the only national language would have integrated the Finnish element properly into the Scandinavian mainstream. Whether that would have been beneficial or harmful is beyond this author's judgment.

Elements of common Finnish-Russian ethnicity are natural considering the 1,000-year neighborhood. Reference has been made to the genetic liaison. Conspicuous is the popularity of melancholic minor tones (*moll*) in music played at inland dance parlors or the reworded romances of Russian Gypsies. This is in sharp contrast to the cheerful major modes (*duuri*) prevalent at the dance halls of the Swedish coastland. Finnish and Russian peasants love their bath houses (*sauna*),

indispensable during periods of dirty and heavy agricultural work, but rare in Swedish regions. At the refined end of culture, the world-class educational facilities and estrades of performing arts in Petersburg have not received the recognition they deserve. Pre-independence Finnish painters and sculptors normally went to France and Italy, and Sibelius' music was distributed in Europe by German publishing houses. Post-World War II Helsinki residents could regularly enjoy artistic pearls from the Maria/Kirov and Bolshoi Theaters, performances available at the New York Metropolitan only sporadically.

Petersburg's nearness has undoubtedly added heat to diplomatic intercourse and been the origin of many wars. But it has also had a civilizing effect on this savage group of forest dwellers and marsh drainers, and a cradle of cultural impulses. It has been a gateway to another world, a world different from the familiar one. All one needs to do is to make a 180° turn, away from the setting sun, and look toward the rising one.

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