

Introduction

Three Wars and Their Epitaphs

The Finnish History and Scholarship of World War II

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The Finnish participation in World War II started with the Soviet artillery barrage on the southeastern border and with air raids against Finnish towns on 30 November 1939. The last shots of 1939–45 in Finnish territory were fired between Finnish and German patrols in the northwestern corner of Finnish Lapland on 25 April 1945. In between, Finland fought three wars, each of them connected but also distinctly different from each other. First, in the Winter War of 1939–40 Finland had to face alone the Soviet aggression originating from the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939. Despite forcing the Red Army to compromise its invasion objectives and preserving its independence, the country was left shaken, with large territories ceded to the Soviet Union. After that Finland experienced a 15-month-long peace from 13 March 1940 to 25 June 1941; the so-called Interim Peace, which was a period of profound changes in Finnish foreign policy and orientation leading to the Finnish participation in Operation *Barbarossa*. During the so-called Continuation War from June 1941 to September 1944, Finland waged war side-by-side with Germany; first in 1941 to conquer back the lost

territories of the Winter War and to take Soviet Eastern Karelia, and then in the summer of 1944 to prevent the Red Army from occupying the country. Again, Finland managed to emerge from the war as a wounded but sovereign state: unlike any other warring country in continental Europe, with the obvious exception of the Soviet Union, Finland was never occupied by a foreign power. Finally, according to the armistice terms with the Allied Powers, Finland fought a campaign against the German troops in Northern Finland. This Lapland War lasted from September 1944 to April 1945, although the active period of fighting between the former “brothers-in-arms” was practically over by the end of November 1944. Finland signed the Paris Peace Treaty in 1947, the most crucial ramifications being the permanent loss of Finnish Karelia¹ and the large war reparations paid to the Soviet Union. Both of these had already been agreed on in the original armistice terms of September 1944.

On two occasions the Finnish wartime decision-making can feasibly be seen as having affected the developments of World War II at large. In the final stages of the Winter War in March 1940 the Finnish government turned down an offer by Great Britain and France to intervene in the Finnish-Soviet war by sending a military expedition through Northern Norway and Sweden. Instead, the Finns accepted the Soviet peace terms and stepped out of the war. Such a limited intervention would hardly have saved Finland militarily, but it could have had unpredictable consequences in bringing the Western Powers into conflict with the Soviet Union in the spring of 1940 and in putting the neutral position of Sweden into question. The second occasion came

¹ “Finnish Karelia” refers to Karelia, which was part of Finland before World War II. Its population was Finnish and the area consisted of the Karelian Isthmus and Ladoga Karelia. Finnish Karelia must be separated from “Eastern Karelia” or “Soviet Karelia,” which has never been part of Finland and the Karelian population of which, unlike the Finnish Karelians, is an ethnic Finnic people of its own. See Map 1 in Henrik Meinander’s chapter for the geographical boundaries of the different Karelias.

in September 1941, when the Finnish Army had a fully realistic chance to seal the siege of Leningrad by advancing the remaining 60 kilometers to meet the German Army Group North. Again, the exact consequences are impossible to know, but nevertheless such an operation would have seriously hampered the prospects of defending Leningrad. Despite the heavy German pressure, for political reasons the Finns refused to attack further and were consequently saved from guilt in the human tragedy of besieged Leningrad. Besides these two occasions a separate Finnish peace with the Soviet Union, which was seriously contemplated by various political circles in 1943 and in early 1944, would have had important consequences in the Baltic Sea region and in Scandinavia, but hardly any decisive effects for the general development of World War II. Similarly, the Finnish defensive success in the summer of 1944 (or the contrafactual collapse of the Finnish defenses, for that matter) did of course shape the postwar history of Finland and, consequently, all of Northern Europe. It also affected the German military decisions on the northern sectors of the Eastern Front. But it cannot plausibly be said to have had any real ramifications for the end result of World War II in Europe.²

From the point of domestic politics, the Finnish case in World War II is an example of surprising continuity in the midst of extreme violence and radical political turmoil in Europe. All through the war years, Finland remained a parliamentary democracy, albeit with notable restrictions,³ and the strong Social Democratic Party was

² These are the most feasible cases; there are, of course, innumerable what-if scenarios being tossed around by both historians and military history enthusiasts. With serious effort, for instance, the Finnish Army could have also cut the Murmansk Railway in 1941 and again in 1942, but this would hardly have had such dramatic consequences as the collapse of Leningrad in the autumn of 1941.

³ The communists had been outlawed and persecuted in the 1920s and 1930s and remained so until the autumn of 1944. During the Interim Peace and the Continuation War the inner circle around state

a key agent in the government – indeed an exceptional case among the countries that fought together with Nazi Germany. Important political changes took place after the Continuation War: the Finnish Communist Party was legalized and gained an electoral victory together with leftist socialists in March 1945; the small fascist party was banned; and eight Finnish wartime politicians were sentenced to prison in the so-called War Guilt Trials in 1946. Yet to a great extent the same people, who had already held key offices in 1939 or who had earned their spurs in the war effort against the Soviet Union, governed the country, occupied central positions and led the armed forces in the postwar years. This continuity is most clearly depicted by Marshal C.G.E. Mannerheim, who, after having been the commander-in-chief of the Finnish Army in 1939–44, acted as the state president in 1944–46 and was buried with great national honors in 1951. Postwar Finland took a path towards Nordic democracy and neutrality; it was spared the fate of the Baltic States and the people’s democracies of Central and Eastern Europe.

Such is the framework for the “great story” of Finland in World War II. Seen from 70 years retrospectively, this political and military history forms the core of a Finnish grand narrative, which, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, has been crowned with the attributes of success, righteousness and glory in national commemorations. Nevertheless, the wartime decisions and policies with their outcomes, which now seem logical and clear, were far from that at the time – they were often reached after complex and arbitrary developments, had realistic options and fully unintended consequences, and were shaped by factors outside the control of Finnish contemporaries. Furthermore, the streamlined narrative of 1939–45 overshadows various political, social and cultural issues, the history of which gives a much more

President Risto Ryti and Marshall Mannerheim exercised sufficient power, especially in Finnish foreign relations, to bypass the parliamentary system.

nanced and controversial picture of Finland in World War II than a mere consideration of political decision-making and operational military history would allow. From the 1980s, and especially from the 1990s onwards, the history of Finland in World War II has been celebrated as a story of national survival and determination, but there are also darker aspects in this history to be studied and remembered. Their integration into the Finnish history of 1939–45 is essential for a balanced understanding of the past; it is also essential for seeing Finland in the bigger picture of World War II.

It is the task of this book to introduce the reader both to the political and military history of Finland from 1939–45 and to the multitude of ideological, cultural and social topics rising from and giving shape to the Finnish war experience. This introductory chapter will first discuss the issue of “Finnish exceptionalism” in World War II – a rather deep-rooted idea that the Finnish history of 1939–45 was separate from the general context of World War II elsewhere in Europe. This tendency to understand Finland’s war history in a narrow national context – separate and exceptional – has been reflected in Finnish historiography, too; or further, it has to a major degree been created by Finnish historical scholarship. Yet the question of “exceptionalism” is worth considering, and it will be explicitly or implicitly present in many of the following chapters: What was special or indeed exceptional in the Finnish experience and history of World War II? Or can Finland be seen just as a case among others – in some important ways distinctive, but in many more ways connected to the general trends and developments of the great conflict? What is the wider European historical context that is best suited to making Finnish history understandable? After some preliminary notes on the question of exceptionalism the first section of this introduction will then present a general Finnish historiography of World War II, and the second section will introduce the themes of the following chapters.

Finnish Exceptionalism

The idea of Finnish exceptionalism in World War II both as a tendency in Finnish history writing and as a popular Finnish self-understanding has its obvious origins in the Winter War. From 30 November 1939 until 13 March 1940 Finland fought a lone war against its eastern neighbor, and the war left the Finns with mixed feelings of national pride and isolation. This experience was accentuated by the keen interest of the international press in Finland's struggle: the winter of 1939–40 was Finland's moment in the international spotlight, and foreign journalists praised the bravery of this largely unknown small country in its lonely victimhood. The Winter War and the events following it contributed to set Finland apart from its natural reference group of other Nordic countries, with which it shared most in historical, political, cultural and social terms. Although the Winter War certainly gave rise to sentiments of compassion and Nordic solidarity towards Finland, Sweden nevertheless remained neutral and Denmark and Norway were soon occupied by Germany. Thus, the Danes and the Norwegians experienced the same country, which the Finns in 1940–41 increasingly came to see as their only possible help against the Soviet Union, as their own brutal occupier.

The Winter War also separated Finland's fate from the other co-victims of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, namely the Baltic States and Poland. United by their vulnerable position between Germany and the Soviet Union and by their new or regained independence in 1917–18, there had been plans in the 1920s and the early 1930s to build a so-called "border-state entente" between Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, but in the end to no true effect. The events of 1939–40 left

Finland as the sole country in the group to preserve its independence, and the later military and political developments in World War II and in the postwar era only further underlined Finland's different path. But there were other distinguishing factors than the consequent German / Soviet occupations in 1939–40, 1941 and 1944–45, as Henrik Meinander will discuss in the following chapter. The Finnish political system throughout the interwar years had been parliamentary democracy, whereas Poland and the Baltic States were inclined to autocratic or (semi-)dictatorial solutions of various degrees. Indeed, after Germany had occupied Czechoslovakia in 1938–39, Denmark and Norway in the spring of 1940 and France and the Benelux countries in May–June 1940, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland remained the only sovereign democracies in continental Europe. Finland was the only one directly threatened by the Soviet Union and the only democracy to join Operation *Barbarossa*, whereas Sweden and Switzerland could hold on to their neutrality.

This brings us to the most politicized and debated area of Finnish exceptionalism. After Finland chose to participate in the German invasion of the Soviet Union, it found itself in the reference group of Hungary and Romania, also partly Italy, Bulgaria and the German puppet-states of Slovakia and Croatia – and even Japan – rather odd bedfellows from the prewar perspective. By its political system and culture, Finland clearly stood out from this group, although it would also be wrong to see the above-mentioned countries as an otherwise uniform group. Yet anti-communism and Russophobia were major ideological trends in Finland, and the common enemy in the east together with the German influence brought the above-mentioned countries closer. But as Michael Jonas will demonstrate in his chapter, Finland's position in the war in the east was in many ways relatively exceptional – as was its postwar history compared to that of Germany's eastern allies. Nevertheless, Finnish postwar historiography went

much further to distinguish the Finnish case from the greater scheme of Operation *Barbarossa* by developing a “separate war thesis”: accordingly, Finland fought its war in 1941–44 independently and separately from Germany and its “satellites” as the *continuation* of its own Winter War. The obvious idea was to distance Finland as far as possible from the contagious matter of Hitler’s criminal policies and Nazism. The separate war thesis will be discussed and commented on below as part of Finnish historiography and further in the coming chapters. Suffice it to say that in the overall light of historical knowledge – and despite the fact that there was no legally binding political alliance between Finland and Germany – this thesis has by now lost most of its academic currency: willingly integrated into the German war planning, economically dependent on German imports and with an army of over 200,000 German soldiers situated in Northern Finland, just to list the most striking examples, the idea of a “separate” Finnish war against the Soviet Union comes close to absurdity. Had the German *Blitzkrieg* of 1941 succeeded in defeating the Soviet Union, the Finns would have been ready to conform to the “New Order” in the east and in the whole of Europe.

Yet one more historical factor speaks for Finnish exceptionalism in 1939–45. Finland’s participation in the Holocaust was restricted to handing over eight refugee Jews to the Germans in 1942, whereas the Finnish Jews did not experience any persecution during the war years, thus making Finland a special case in the Nazi German orbit.⁴ As the later chapter by Oula Silvennoinen shows, the wartime history of

⁴ There is some ambiguity as to the exact number of Jews handed over to the Germans by the Finns and whether these handovers can be seen as participation in the Holocaust – the above-mentioned eight refugee Jews seem to be the clearest case of collaboration (see Antero Holmila’s chapter in this book). Furthermore, as Oula Silvennoinen shows in his chapter, there were 47 Jews in the group of 521 Soviet prisoners-of-war which the Finns handed over to the Germans, but it is not clear whether their Jewish identity had a role in the act.

Finland has its own dark record in the treatment of Soviet prisoners-of-war and the Russian population of Finnish-occupied Eastern Karelia. Yet the fact that the Finnish participation in the Holocaust was very limited has helped to set Finland apart from the general history of World War II, in which the suffering and extermination of European Jewry has a central significance.

There are indeed grounds to emphasize Finnish exceptionalism, especially if one focuses on the hygienic sphere of high-level foreign policy and political history. Finnish history in 1939–45 was in many ways special – but so was that of, say, Denmark, Lithuania or Hungary, depending on the chosen context and perspective. The fact that Finland was able to preserve a degree of political autonomy obviously greater than that of the occupied or otherwise more vulnerable countries helped the Finns to shape their own history to a more substantial extent, thus strengthening the claim of exceptionalism. But when studying the everyday history of war, the exchange of ideas, ideologies and goods, or the phenomena of human experience and memory of war, the argument of exceptionalism becomes all the more irrelevant and the interdependence of various historical phenomena over the national borders all the more relevant. National identities, and the “exceptional” national histories, on which they are based, do matter, and they are interesting to study as such, but they should not blind us from seeing their wider contexts and links – and often their nature as nationalist constructions, in which history writing has had an essential role. Furthermore, seeing Finland as a singular agent with a monolithic national history distorts the complexity of the Finnish society at war. Being a multifaceted country in the midst of modernization, wartime Finland was a product of disparate and conflicting political, social and cultural factors. Thus the history of Finland in 1939–45, too, is obviously a combination of very different and often contrary trends and aspirations. It is a challenge for a book like this to present the

reader with a reasonably coherent picture of Finnish history in World War II while at the same time avoiding oversimplification and neglect of the many histories beneath this grand narrative.

Perhaps the very question of exceptionalism can be somewhat misleading. In a global conflict such as World War II there simply cannot be purely separate national histories. During the Continuation War, for instance, the Finnish fighter pilots, flying German-produced Messerschmitts, were combating Soviet pilots flying American Airacobras. These Airacobras had been delivered to the Eastern Front as a Lend-Lease Aid via the Murmansk Railway, which the Finnish-German troops threatened to cut in 1941. This, among other things, had brought Finland to war with the British Commonwealth in December 1941. One ideological impetus in motivating the Finnish advance into Soviet Eastern Karelia in 1941 was the strong anti-Bolshevism combined with aggressive nationalism – important factors in prewar Finland, but hardly exceptionally Finnish features in the Europe of the 1920s and 1930s. To return to the Finnish pilots, the bread in their canteen had probably been made from German-exported grain, which, in turn, the Germans had confiscated from occupied Poland and the Ukraine or bought from co-belligerents Romania and Hungary. The imported grain prevented the Finnish home front from starving in 1942–44; it also bound Finland closer to Germany. The dogfighting in the air may have been observed by Estonian soldiers serving in the Estonian volunteer regiment of the Finnish Army. The later fate of these men was to lose their lives or to be deported to Siberia for “betraying their Soviet homeland” – a tragic and absurd consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. But before this the volunteers took part in fighting against the Soviet attack on Finland in June and July 1944 – an offensive which was made possible by the German retreat from the outskirts of Leningrad in the winter of 1943–44 and which was coordinated

with the Allied landings in Normandy. Such examples could be continued further and further: the point is that since Finland was part of an international conflict of unforeseen global dimensions, it would be impossible to understand the nature of this history in hermetically national terms.

The history of World War II has been predominantly written from the perspective of the great powers at war, the Anglo-American narrative often overshadowing the histories of the small and middle-sized nations and the crucial significance of the war in the east. It might serve the scholarship of World War II better to include more strongly both the smaller countries at war and the social, economic and cultural intertwinements of war with the mainstream military history of 1939–45. In the case of smaller European countries it would also be useful to study the ideological context of war with some less totalizing conceptual blocks than fascism equated to Nazism, communism equated to Stalinism and liberalism equated to the Anglo-American model. Naturally crucial concepts in Finnish history too, they nevertheless fail to capture the reality of ideological drives at work in wartime Finland, whereby nationalist conservatism connected to traditional Germanophilia and Russophobia, social democracy and agrarian centrism connected to political reformism and anti-Bolshevism, and liberalism connected to Nordic orientation and constitutional legalism were major factors. Even Finnish communism and fascism cannot be understood simply as domestic imitations of Stalinism and Nazism: they had their own peculiarities and frictions with their parent ideologies. All in all, hardly any country or people is “representative” of the experience of World War II, but nor is there any country that would have been wholly unique and separate from the wider European context.

I. Finnish Scholarship of World War II: A Concise Historiography

National Frames: Disputes and Perspectives from the 1940s to the 1980s

The earliest histories of Finland in World War II were written by army officers, who had served in the war and who thus often brought their personal viewpoints and recollections to their narrative. The focus of these early military histories was operational: this best suited both the writers' professional ambitions and the understanding of "military history" as an applied science in the service of the armed forces. The experience of the summer battles in 1944 was still fresh in their minds, and to explain this dramatic battlefield history was a major concern for the officers-turned-historians. By confining their accounts to the operational and practical questions of warfare the military historians were safe from the more sensitive political and ideological issues of Finland's recent wars. In the politically fragile postwar situation – the Soviet-led Allied Control Commission had left Finland only a few years earlier in 1947 – there was certainly some reason for caution. Yet, as far as the greater context of World War II was touched upon, in the early histories there was no question of the legitimacy and basically defensive nature of Finland's wars in 1939–45.⁵ Most

⁵ For the early military history, Colonel Eero Kuussaari & Vilho Niitemaa, *Suomen sota vv. 1941–1945: Maavoimien sotatoimet* (Helsinki, 1948); General Harald Öhquist, *Talvisota minun näkökulmastani* (Porvoo, 1949); Colonel Wolf H. Halsti, *Suomen sota 1939–1945*, Vols. 1–3 (Helsinki, 1955–57); Major Lauri Jäntti, *Kannaksen suurtaisteluissa kesällä 1944* (Porvoo, 1955); General K.L. Oesch, *Suomen kohtalon ratkaisu Kannaksella 1944* (Helsinki, 1956); as well as from the German perspective, General Waldemar Erfurth, *Der finnische Krieg: 1941–1944* (Wiesbaden, 1950; Finnish ed. transl. General W.E. Tuompo in 1951); the memoirs of General Lothar Rendulic, *Gekämpft, gesiegt, geschlagen* (Wels, 1952); General Hermann Hölter, *Armee in der Arktis* (Bad Nauheim, 1953).

importantly, the posthumously published memoirs of Marshal Mannerheim in 1951–52 were a determined defense of Finnish wartime politics and military decisions. They made no concessions towards a more critical, not to mention pro-Soviet, interpretation.⁶

The early military histories and Marshal Mannerheim's autobiography were accompanied in the 1950s by the memoirs of some leading Finnish wartime politicians. All in all, the grand scheme regarding Finland's participation in World War II remained the same. The aggressive nature of the Soviet invasion of Finland in 1939 was not censored in these works, and the history of the Winter War together with the lack of other foreign political alternatives for Finland in 1940–41 explained the new war in 1941.⁷ There was no need for self-condemnation or moral reconsideration: Finland had fought its wars *candida pro causa ense candido*, “with pure arms on behalf of pure goals,” as had been the motto of Mannerheim. Thus, despite the War Guilt Trials of 1945–46, the basic line of reasoning regarding Finland's political position and decisions during the war remained largely coherent with the dominant wartime narrative.

[First pair of photos:]

⁶ Marshal C.G.E. Mannerheim, *Muistelmat*, Vols. 1–2 (Helsinki, 1951–52; Swedish, English and German ed. in 1951–54); as well as General Erik Heinrichs on Mannerheim, *Mannerheim Suomen kohtaloissa*, Vols. 1–2 (Helsinki, 1957–59).

⁷ Former minister of defense Juho Niukkanen, *Talvisodan puolustusministeri kertoo* (Porvoo, 1951); former foreign minister and the key social democratic leader Väinö Tanner, *Olin ulkoministerinä talvisodan aikana* (Helsinki, 1950); idem, *Suomen tie rauhaan 1943–44* (Helsinki, 1952); former foreign minister Carl Enckell, *Poliittiset muistelmani*, Vols. 1–2 (Porvoo, 1956); as well as the memoirs of the German minister to Helsinki, Wipert von Blücher, *Suomen kohtalonaikoja: Muistelmia vuosilta 1935–44*, transl. Lauri Hirvensalo (Porvoo, 1950; German ed. in 1951).

No. 1. After a Soviet air raid, summer 1941. The bombings from 25 June onwards gave Finland an official *casus belli*, but the Finnish Army had been mobilized already after mid-June and the Finnish participation in Operation *Barbarossa* had been agreed on. Photo: SA 23152.

No. 2. Finnish soldiers with *Panzerfausts* at the battle of Tali-Ihantala on the Karelian Isthmus, 30 June 1944. From the 1990s onwards at the latest, Tali-Ihantala has become an iconic event for the national history and memory culture of World War II in Finland. Photo: SA 155340.

As in many other countries, the “official” military history of Finland in World War II was written under the auspices of the Finnish Army. The work by the Office of Military History took off in 1951 with the history of the Continuation War (and, more marginally, the Lapland War) and resulted in the colossal 11-volume *Suomen sota 1941–1945* (“Finland’s War 1941–45”) published between 1951–65. Here, again, the approach was almost exclusively limited to military operations and organization, and political issues such as the Finnish occupation of Soviet Eastern Karelia or Finnish-German relations were discussed only very generally and in their relation to actual military affairs. Thick in military historical detail and jargon, there was not much room for the war beyond the frontlines and headquarters, either.⁸

It took an impact from abroad to cause a debate to flare up on Finnish participation in the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. In 1957 American scholar Charles L. Lundin published his study on Finland in World War II. Lundin left no doubt about the blatant nature of the Soviet attack in 1939, and he was not wholly unsympathetic to Finland’s difficult foreign political position after the Winter War. Nevertheless, he denied that Finland was a mere victim caught between the two totalitarian regimes of Soviet Union and Germany: the Finns were not completely

⁸ *Suomen sota 1941–1945*, Vols. 1–11 (Helsinki, 1951–65, Vol. 11 in 1975).

innocent in raising Soviet suspicion against Finland before the Winter War and Finland had actively sought to ally itself with Nazi Germany in 1940–41, thus compromising its democratic principles and political system.⁹

The debate that followed Lundin's study is in all likelihood the most discussed issue of Finnish history, a sort of Finnish *Historikerstreit*, and it has continued in various forms and arenas until today. The history of the debate has also created a historiography of its own.¹⁰ In short, Lundin's challenge was taken up by Professor Arvi Korhonen, whose study of Finland and Operation *Barbarossa* in 1961 staunchly supported the interpretation of Finland being a passive victim of war, a "driftwood" in the rapids of great power politics, fighting only to save its independence. First of all, there would have been no Continuation War had the Soviets not invaded Finland in 1939. And further, Finland fought its own "separate war" against the Soviet Union in 1941–44, without being allied to Germany.¹¹ Korhonen's argument was indirectly supported by Tuomo Polvinen's research in 1964, the explicit aim of which was to study the politics of the great powers *towards* Finland in 1941–44. Its merit was in embedding the Finnish case in the wider context of World War II, but it also reduced

⁹ Charles L. Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War* (Bloomington, IN, 1957).

¹⁰ Best summarized by Professor Timo Soikkanen in his articles "Uhri vai hyökkääjä? Jatkosodan synty historiankirjoituksen kuvaamana" in *Jatkosodan pikkujättiläinen* (2005) and "Objekti vai subjekti? Taistelu jatkosodan synnystä" in *Sodan totuudet* (2007), to which this sub-section, too, owes a great debt; in English, see Markku Jokisipilä, "Finnish History Culture and the Second World War," in Bernd Wegner et al., eds., *Finland und Deutschland: Studien zur Geschichte im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 2009), pp. 174–91. – See the chapters by Henrik Meinander, Michael Jonas, Tiina Kinnunen & Markku Jokisipilä and Antero Holmila in this book.

¹¹ Arvi Korhonen, *Barbarossa-suunnitelma ja Suomi: Jatkosodan synty* (Porvoo, 1961). Korhonen had defended this interpretation already soon after the war in his anonymously published book in the United States, *Finland and World War II: 1939–1944*, ed. John H. Wuorinen (New York, 1948).

Finland to an object of forces outside of its control and influence. Finland's destiny had been decided in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939 and consequently at the negotiation tables and cabinets of the great powers, not in Helsinki.¹²

The debate was not over yet, and in the 1960s it raised wide public interest outside academic circles. The issue was evidently central for the core Finnish self-understanding, for the experience and memory of war and for the changed postwar political situation. Again, the new initiatives in the debate came from outside Finland, when British historian Anthony F. Upton and American historian Hans Peter Krosby published their studies on Finland during the Interim Peace of 1940–41. Both of them emphasized that Finland had not merely been an object of foreign powers, but a subject capable of and responsible for its own decisions. And this conscious choice in 1941 had been to integrate Finland into the German orbit and to take part in Operation *Barbarossa*. The Soviet bombing raids against Finland on 25 June 1941 were not the true cause of war; Finland was already determined to join the German invasion and in reality there was no such thing as Finland's "separate war." Yet Upton and Krosby made serious efforts to understand the historical circumstances of the Finnish decision and showed a great deal of sympathy towards the small country they studied; indeed, Upton dedicated his work "to the Finnish people" and Krosby considered the Finnish participation in war in 1941 as the best available choice.¹³ Yet the reception of the two studies by Finnish academia was rather cool and annoyed: these "foreigners" passing

¹² Tuomo Polvinen, *Suomi suurvaltojen politiikassa 1941–44: Jatkosodan tausta* (Porvoo, 1964); followed later by his *Suomi kansainvälisessä politiikassa 1941–1947*, Vols. 1–3 (Porvoo, 1979–81).

¹³ Anthony F. Upton, *Finland in Crisis 1940–1941: A Study in Small-power Politics* (London, 1964); Hans Peter Krosby, *Suomen valinta 1941* (Helsinki, 1967). Also on the role of the Finnish Pechenga nickel concession in international diplomacy, Hans Peter Krosby, *Nikkelidiplomatiaa Petsamossa 1940–1941* (Helsinki, 1966; English ed. in 1968).

their judgments could not understand the Finnish viewpoint and the exceptional features of Finnish history.

Although the debate on the separate war thesis and Finland's decision in 1940–41 continued, it suffered from the lack of more specific academic research. Next to Korhonen's and Polvinen's work, there was practically no new Finnish history writing regarding the issue in the 1960s. Almost the sole exception was Mauno Jokipii's study on the Finnish Waffen-SS volunteer battalion in 1968, which of course linked in to the more general question of Finnish-German relations. The battalion had already been secretly recruited in the spring of 1941, well before Operation *Barbarossa*, and it operated on the Eastern Front until 1943. Thus its history emphasized the Finnish connection to Germany's war in the east.¹⁴ After a long pause, Finnish scholarship on World War II began to accumulate during the 1970s. The leading perspective was that of high-level political history, and as a consequence of the earlier debate the major research question was to study the available options for Finnish foreign policy during and after the Winter War. Had there been other alternatives than the orientation towards Germany and if so, why did they not materialize? How did Finland's isolated geopolitical position in and after 1940 affect its foreign policy? And could the Winter War have been avoidable in the first place? New studies on Finland and the Western Powers in 1939–40 and on Finnish-Swedish relations showed that Finland's room for maneuver in foreign policy was indeed limited. But they also showed that Finland was not just a passive object in the escalating European conflict: active diplomacy was

¹⁴ Mauno Jokipii, *Panttipataljoona: Suomalaisen SS-pataljoonan historia* (Helsinki, 1968; 2nd complemented ed. 1969); later also from a comparative perspective idem, *Hitlerin Saksa ja sen vapaaehtoisliikkeet: Waffen-SS:n suomalaispataljoona vertailtavana* (Helsinki, 2002). Also relevant hereby is Helge Seppälä's early study on Leningrad in Finland's wartime history and on the role of Finland in the siege of the city, *Taistelu Leningradista ja Suomi* (Porvoo, 1969).

pursued and several options were kept on the table. Finland was an active agent in its own history.¹⁵

In the 1980s, after a long ongoing debate and with a growing amount of new research available on various aspects of Finland at war, some of which will be discussed below, there were also highly critical Finnish voices on the aims and nature of Finland's participation in Operation *Barbarossa*. Officer and military historian Helge Seppälä represented the most poignant criticism in 1984: according to Seppälä, "adventurous" politics had brought Finland to war in 1941 and Finland was, in essence, one of the German satellites on the Eastern Front.¹⁶ Finally a moment for synthesis came in 1987, when Mauno Jokipii published his research *Jatkosodan synty* ("The Birth of the Continuation War"). This massive 750-page work thoroughly documented and analyzed the Finnish-German military cooperation in 1940–41. Jokipii's main thesis was that Finland was unquestionably and willingly integrated into the German offensive plans from relatively early on and that this happened because of conscious decisions within the inner circle of the Finnish political and military leadership. But Jokipii also showed

¹⁵ On the Allied foreign policy and intervention plans during the Winter War, Jukka Nevakivi, *Apu jota ei pyydetty: Liittoutuneet ja Suomen talvisota 1939–1940* (Helsinki, 1972; English ed. in 1976); on the foreign political background of the Winter War, Juhani Suomi, *Talvisodan tausta: Neuvostoliitto Suomen ulkopoliitikassa 1937–1939* (Helsinki, 1973); on Germany and the Winter War, Risto O. Peltovuori, *Saksa ja Suomen talvisota* (Helsinki, 1975); on British policy towards Finland, Martti Häikiö, *Maaliskuusta maaliskuuhun: Suomi Englannin politiikassa 1939–40* (Porvoo, 1976); on Finnish-Swedish relations and state union options after the Winter War, Ohto Manninen, *Toteutumaton valtioliitto: Suomi ja Ruotsi talvisodan jälkeen* (Helsinki, 1977).

¹⁶ Helge Seppälä, *Suomi hyökkääjänä 1941* (Helsinki, 1984).

that this development was quite understandable after the experience of the Winter War and under continuing Soviet pressure.¹⁷

Meanwhile in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the Finnish scholarship of World War II was expanding in new directions. Influenced by the separate war debate, but not only limited to the issue of Finnish-German relations, the question of Finland's own war aims in 1941 attracted academic attention. Important hereby was Toivo Nygård's doctoral dissertation on the prewar idea and practical efforts to create "Greater Finland" by attaching Eastern Karelia and other areas of Northwestern Russia to Finland.¹⁸ Handling influential ideology of early independent Finland, this history set up the background for the Finnish war aims in 1941, which was the object of Ohto Manninen's study *Suur-Suomen ääriiviivat* ("The Outlines of Greater Finland," 1980). Manninen's argument was twofold: the Finns clearly had far-reaching expansive aspirations in 1941, but they were based on the post-Winter War need for creating better security for the Finnish heartland. Accordingly, the Finnish leaders kept options available, but did not bind themselves too closely to any exact aims of conquest in the war in the east.¹⁹

The wartime history of Greater Finland and the Finnish occupation of Soviet Eastern Karelia in 1941–44 was given its first scholarly presentation in 1982, when Antti Laine published his study. Detailed and unembellished, Laine did not shun away

¹⁷ Mauno Jokipii, *Jatkosodan synty: Tutkimuksia Saksan ja Suomen sotilaallisesta yhteistyöstä 1940–41* (Helsinki, 1987); for an earlier attempt at a synthesis of German-Finnish relations in 1940–44, Olli Vehviläinen, ed., *Jatkosodan kujanjuoksu* (Porvoo, 1982).

¹⁸ Toivo Nygård, *Suur-Suomi vai lähiheimolaisten auttaminen: Aatteellinen heimotyö itsenäisessä Suomessa* (Helsinki, 1978).

¹⁹ Ohto Manninen, *Suur-Suomen ääriiviivat: Kysymys tulevaisuudesta ja turvallisuudesta Suomen Saksan-politiikassa 1941* (Helsinki, 1980).

from the grim facts of the Finnish occupation policy. Laine's work can indeed be considered pathbreaking: for the first time in Finnish academic research on World War II, the similarities as well as the differences in Finland's wartime policies to those of German occupation policies in the east were openly discussed. Furthermore, deviating from the tradition of purely military and political history of war, Laine paid attention to the social history of the Finnish occupation from the perspective of the Eastern Karelian civilians.²⁰

This widening perspective was not only due to Laine's insight, but it reflected a more general change in the perceived scope of writing the history of war. The tradition of military history written mainly by professional soldiers, on the first hand, and the prolonged for-and-against quarrelling around the separate war thesis, on the other, had clearly overshadowed a major part of Finnish history in World War II. The idea that the history of war should be confined to purely military and political matters was outdated, and the social, economical and cultural issues of wartime Finland had been left unstudied. In the mid-1970s a large research project "Finland in the Second World War," with the aim of writing a more complete history of Finland at war, had taken shape and it continued to the 1980s. Although the project could not be realized in its original schedule, it finally resulted in a three-volume work *Kansakunta sodassa* ("Nation at War," 1989–92), which succeeded in extending the Finnish historiography of war to the home front, evacuees, rationing, culture, censorship, children and so on. As such it was the first Finnish attempt to write a comprehensive social history, or

²⁰ Antti Laine, *Suur-Suomen kahdet kasvot: Itä-Karjalan siviiliväestön asema suomalaisessa miehityshallinnossa 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 1982). For later studies on the issue, Jukka Kulomaa, *Äänislinna: Petroskoin suomalaismiehityksen vuodet 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 1989); Helge Seppälä, *Suomi miehittäjänä 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 1989); lately also Osmo Hyytiä, "Helmi Suomen maakuntien joukossa": *Suomalainen Itä-Karjala 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 2008).

Gesellschaftsgeschichte, of war. The perspective of the work was national: the idea was to include the history of “ordinary people” within the grand narrative of Finland at war.²¹ The project and its social historical paradigm were accompanied by studies on the economic history of war.²²

The end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s seem to have provided the momentum for a self-critical turn in the Finnish writing on war history. This may have been partly caused by the strong leftist trend at the Finnish universities and society at large, which then, with some delay, became visible in studies and perspectives. This was also the time when the Holocaust had finally become a focal topic in Western publicity and research. As Antero Holmila will discuss in detail in his later chapter, Finland’s history regarding the extermination of European Jews also came under scrutiny. The initiative came from outside academia, when journalist and non-fiction author Elina Suominen (later Sana) published her book on the Finnish deportation of eight refugee Jews, who ended up in the hands of the German Gestapo. Suominen saw this as Finland’s participation in the Holocaust, a comparatively small but important act

²¹ *Kansakunta sodassa*, Vols. 1–3, eds. Silvo Hietanen et al. (Helsinki, 1989–92).

²² On the terms and ramifications of the wartime Finnish foreign trade, Ilkka Seppinen, *Suomen ulkomaankaupan ehdot 1939–1944* (Helsinki, 1983); on the question of postwar reparations to the Soviet Union, Hannu Heikkilä, *Liittoutuneet ja kysymys Suomen sotakorvauksista 1943–1947* (Helsinki, 1983; English ed. 1988); on the Pechenga nickel mines in international politics, Esko Vuorisjärvi, *Petsamon nikkeli kansainvälisessä politiikassa 1939–1944: Suomalainen todellisuus vastaan ulkomaiset myytit* (Helsinki, 1990). Besides the work of Professor Erkki Pihkala on the wartime economy as part of the general Finnish economic history, the most comprehensive study on the issue is Ilkka Nummela, *Inter arma silent revisores rationum: Toisen maailmansodan aiheuttama taloudellinen raskaus Suomessa* (Jyväskylä, 1993).

of collaboration with the Nazi extermination policy.²³ Suominen's book was followed by Taimi Torvinen's academic research on refugees in Finland before and during World War II, which was more reserved in its conclusions. Still later on, Suominen's argument was attacked by historian Hannu Rautkallio, who denied the deportation's link to the Holocaust and saw it as a normal wartime security operation: according to Rautkallio, the eight Jews were deported as a part of a larger group and their Jewishness played no role in the incident.²⁴ As we will see, this debate returned to public attention later in 2003–05.

Nevertheless, the question of anti-Semitism was never central to the Finnish history and historiography of World War II. The Finnish Jewish population was very small and it was altogether saved from the Holocaust. Yet there was a question of xenophobia and racism, which was much more central for Finnish culture: the tradition of Russophobia. Historian Matti Klinge had already written on prewar Finnish Russophobia in the 1970s and Charles L. Lundin had discussed the matter at some length when he explained the Soviet prewar suspicions regarding Finland. The widespread Finnish animosity towards the Russians was also more or less explicitly present in the studies on Greater Finland and the occupation of Eastern Karelia. In 1986 Heikki Luostarinen's doctoral dissertation on the enemy image of Russians and the Soviet Union in the Finnish conservative and right-wing press during the Continuation War focused on the issue in detail and showed the deep racial hatred in the wartime media and mentality. Luostarinen also compared his Finnish findings to the German war

²³ Elina Suominen, *Kuoleman laiva S/S Hohenhörn: Juutalaispakolaisten kohtalo Suomessa* (Porvoo, 1979).

²⁴ Taimi Torvinen, *Pakolaiset Suomessa Hitlerin valtakaudella* (Helsinki, 1984); Hannu Rautkallio, *Ne kahdeksan ja Suomen omatunto: Suomesta 1942 luovutetut juutalaispakolaiset* (Espoo, 1985). Rautkallio has continued the debate in his later publications on the issue.

propaganda and thus situated Finland within the wider context of the ideological warfare in the east. Luostarinen's dissertation was the first Finnish work in which new theoretical approaches – semiotics, structuralism and the critique of ideology – were applied to a historical study of war. Maybe revealingly, Luostarinen's academic subject was not history, but communication theory and mass media.²⁵

After a slow start during the early postwar decades, in little over ten years from the mid-1970s onwards the Finnish historiography of World War II had taken some important steps from the black-and-white separate war debate towards a more nuanced and colorful (or better, grey-shaded) picture of war. Dark and hidden topics had been brought onto the research agenda, and the strictly military and political history of war had been supplemented with social, economical and cultural approaches. Yet the more traditional issues of military and political history were far from settled, either.

Rehabilitation and Myth Breaking: National Reassessments from the 1980s to the 2000s

In the 1970s and 1980s the Office of Military History and later the Department of History at the National Defence University continued to work on the official military history of World War II. A four-volume history of the Winter War was published in 1977–79, and, as time had passed since the original *Suomen sota 1941–1945*, the

²⁵ Heikki Luostarinen, *Perivihollinen: Suomen oikeistolehdistön Neuvostoliittoa koskeva viholliskuva sodassa 1941–44, tausta ja sisältö* (Tampere, 1986); also an earlier study of Finnish war propaganda, Touko Perko, *TK-miehet jatkosodassa: Päämajan kotirintaman propaganda 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 1974). Around the same time as Luostarinen's work, the treatment and fate of the Soviet prisoners-of-war in Finnish custody became an issue, albeit in a less academic fashion, in novelist Eino Pietola's documentary book *Sotavangit Suomessa 1941–1944* (Jyväskylä, 1987).

Continuation War received a new six-volume history in 1988–94.²⁶ The focus of these works was quite strictly on Finnish military affairs, operations and organizations, the histories of which were now meticulously written down for the whole of 1939–45. As the viewpoint of the officers and headquarters was dominant and the writers did not aspire to step outside the genre of traditional military history, the result was a detailed but conventional history full of tactical arrows, orders-of-battle and military jargon – familiar to professional soldiers and military history enthusiasts, but only of limited value for a wider understanding of the Finnish society at war. Furthermore, as the history of the Lapland War in 1944–45 had been greatly neglected in earlier research, officer and historian Sampo Ahto wrote the still-pivotal study on the subject in 1980. Ahto’s study, too, was centered on the military operations; nevertheless, its merit was in attempting to take into account the experience and mentality of the ordinary soldiers on both sides of the Finnish-German conflict, even if only as anecdotes.²⁷

The political context of writing the Finnish history of World War II changed dramatically at the beginning of the 1990s, when the Soviet Union ceased to exist. During the earlier decades, as we have seen, Finnish historiography was hardly self-censored or pro-Soviet, but the sensitive political relations with the eastern great power certainly required some moderation. Also, the tensions in domestic politics had made many war-related issues highly politicized in the 1960s and 1970s: contrasting views on the history of 1939–45 (and on the Civil War of 1918) were still fundamental for competing political identities and for the different variations in national self-understanding. The new politics of the Gorbachev-era Soviet Union and the domestic

²⁶ *Talvisodan historia*, Vols. 1–4 (Porvoo, 1977–79); *Jatkosodan historia*, Vols. 1–6 (Helsinki, 1988–94).

²⁷ Sampo Ahto, *Aseveljet vastakkain: Lapin sota 1944–1945* (Helsinki, 1980).

easing of the fear of communism already in the 1980s made way for less cautious interpretations of the past wars; indeed, for a “neo-patriotic” turn later in the 1990s.

Although the proper place of “neo-patriotism” was not so much in research as in popular presentations of the war, there seemed now to be a demand for writing the history of 1939–45 from a more “rehabilitating” perspective. Consequently, a number of biographies on wartime generals appeared from the end of the 1980s onwards. Even if competent as academic studies, the subtext of these works has also been to pay homage to the Finnish military leadership and soldiers in war.²⁸ The real curiosity of the Finnish “great men genre” in academic research is that there exists no updated biography of Marshal Mannerheim. Mannerheim has enjoyed vast popularity in a multitude of non-fiction books and presentations, but his status as a national champion has not yet attracted any critical academic treatise. Nevertheless, the frictions in personal chemistry and the shape of operational planning at the Finnish High Command – and partly also Mannerheim’s role hereby – has been studied to some extent.²⁹

Probably the most prominent figure in the Finnish military history of the last two decades has been Ohto Manninen, long-time professor of history at the National Defence University. He has been highly influential in contributing to the historiography

²⁸ E.g., among others, Martti Turtola, *Erik Heinrichs: Mannerheimin ja Paasikiven kenraali* (Helsinki, 1988); idem, *Aksel Fredrik Airo: Taipumaton kenraali* (Helsinki, 1997); idem, *Jääkärikenraali Einar Vihma: Ihantalan taistelun ratkaisija* (Helsinki, 2005); Helge Seppälä, *Karl Lennart Oesch: Suomen pelastaja* (Jyväskylä, 1998); Mikko Uola, *Jääkärikenraalin vuosisata: Väinö Valve 1895–1995* (Helsinki, 2001); Päivi Tapola, *Ajan paino: Jalkaväenkenraali K.A. Tapolan elämä* (Helsinki, 2004); Jukka Partanen, Juha Pohjonen & Pasi Tuunainen, *E.J. Raappana: Rajan ja sodan kenraali* (Helsinki, 2007); Jarkko Kemppe, *Jalkaväenkenraali A.E. Martola* (Helsinki, 2008).

²⁹ Lasse Laaksonen, *Eripuraa ja arvovaltaa: Mannerheimin ja kenraalien henkilösuhteet ja johtaminen* (Helsinki, 2004); also Mikko Karjalainen, *Ajatuksista operaatioiksi: Suomen armeijan hyökkäysoperaatioiden suunnittelu jatkosodassa* (Helsinki, 2009).

of Finnish political and military history in 1939–45 in various research articles, work groups and popularizations. Having utilized also the Russian archives, which partly opened to foreign scholars in the 1990s, Manninen has emphasized the difficult position of wartime Finland between the two totalitarian regimes, and the decisive role of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Soviet invasion of Finland in 1939 in the further development of Finnish wartime history. Regarding the Continuation War, he has also continued to support the decisions of Finnish wartime leaders and the separate war thesis; the very exceptional and independent role of Finland in relation to the German war in the east.³⁰

After the disputes on Finnish-German relations and on the Finnish war aims in 1941 had dominated so much of the earlier field of research, the history of the Winter War gained new attention in the 1990s. If there had been any more doubts on the Soviet aims of conquering the whole of Finland, on the tragic consequences of this scenario or on the justified nature and necessity of the war on the Finnish side, the new political and military history of 1939–40 did its best to push such doubts aside.³¹ In research as well as in popular commemorations, the winter of 1939–40 presented a great Finnish national narrative par excellence; it lacked the troublesome and less elevating aspects of the Continuation War. Besides the strong consensus in research, the one debate about

³⁰ E.g. Ohto Manninen, *Molotovin cocktail – Hitlerin sateenvarjo: Toisen maailmansodan historian uudelleenkirjoitusta* (Helsinki, 1994); idem, *Stalinin kiusa – Himmlerin täi: Sota-ajan pieni Suomi maailman silmissä ja arkistojen kätköissä* (Helsinki, 2002).

³¹ Olli Vehviläinen & O.A. Ržeševksi, eds., *Yksin suurvaltaa vastassa: Talvisodan poliittinen historia* (Helsinki, 1997); Ohto Manninen & O.A. Ržeševksi, eds., *Puna-armeija Stalinin tentissä* (Helsinki, 1997); Ohto Manninen, *Miten Suomi valloitetaan: Puna-armeijan operaatiosuunnitelmat 1939–1944* (Helsinki, 2008); Timo Vihavainen & Andrei Saharov, eds., *Tuntematon talvisota: Neuvostoliiton salaisen poliisin kansiot* (Helsinki, 2009).

the Winter War touched upon its final stages in March 1940. First, Lasse Laaksonen's doctoral dissertation on the condition of the Finnish troops at the end of the Winter War showed that the battle-fatigued Finnish Army was at the edge of collapse under ever-increasing Soviet pressure. This result hit the myth that the Finns could have continued their fight with possible support from the Western Allies.³² Second, Professor Heikki Ylikangas claimed that the Finnish government accepted the harsh Soviet peace terms of March 1940 because the Germans would already have informed key Finnish politicians of their imminent plans to invade the Soviet Union. Thus, the initial decision to integrate Finland into the not-yet-named Operation *Barbarossa* would have been made very early in 1940. This new version of the origins of the Continuation War caused much alarm and dispute, but Ylikangas got very little support for his interpretation.³³ Besides the political and military issues of 1939–40, the “Spirit of the Winter War” – the surprising unanimity and determination against the backdrop of the Finnish Civil War and prewar political divisions – has required a scholarly explanation.³⁴ Quite recently studies on the Winter War have focused on Finland's struggle as it was seen abroad.³⁵

³² Lasse Laaksonen, *Todellisuus ja harhat: Kannaksen taistelut ja suomalaisten joukkojen tila talvisodan lopussa 1940* (Helsinki, 1999).

³³ Heikki Ylikangas, *Tulkintani talvisodasta* (Helsinki, 2001); contra Ohto Manninen & Kauko Rumpunen, eds., *Murhenäytelmän vuorosanat: Talvisodan hallituksen keskustelut* (Helsinki, 2003), followed by a debate in *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* journal in 2003–04.

³⁴ Sampo Ahto, *Talvisodan henki: Mielialoja Suomessa talvella 1939–1940* (Porvoo, 1989); recently also Olli Harinen, Göran Lindgren & Erkki Nordberg, *Talvisodan Ässä-rykmentti* (Helsinki, 2010).

³⁵ On the Winter War and Italy, Pirkko Kanervo, *Italia ja Suomen talvisota: Il Duce Mussolini maailman urheimman kansan apuna* (Helsinki, 2007); on the Winter War in foreign press, Antero Holmila, ed., *Talvisota muiden silmin: Maailman lehdistö ja Suomen taistelu* (Jyväskylä, 2009).

It was not only the history of the Winter War, which gave rise to the sentiments of national pride and patriotism in the 1990s. The defensive battles in the summer of 1944 were also increasingly celebrated as an epic of national survival. Although the official military histories had by no means downplayed the importance of halting the Soviet offensive in 1944 nor depicted it as a military defeat, the experience of 1944 had been much more controversial than that of the Winter War. Now, from the end of the 1980s onwards, the battles of 1944 came to be widely understood as a clear and glorious victory, albeit as a defensive one.³⁶

However, notwithstanding the political history of the Finnish-German “brotherhood-in-arms,” the military aspects of the Continuation War could not be comprehended without references to its gloomy and even inglorious chapters. A pioneering study appeared in 1995, when Jukka Kulomaa published his doctoral dissertation on military desertion, evasion and their countermeasures in the Finnish Army of 1941–44. The phenomena in Kulomaa’s study were in stark contrast to the cherished ideal of the Finnish Army: despite their unquestionable military achievements, Finnish soldiers also evaded their service, objected to orders they received, lost their nerve or chose to desert. Finally in 1944, the Army itself used draconic measures to subdue the desertions. Kulomaa managed to combine the traditional perspective of military history with the analysis of interacting social, political and psychological factors. He also documented reliably an issue, which had caused much speculation and rumors ever after the war: the number of court-martialed and executed Finnish soldiers during the Continuation War. In this regard his work was

³⁶ In research, this trend manifested most clearly in U.E. Moisala & Pertti Alanen, *Kun hyökkääjän tie suljettiin: Neuvostoliiton suurhyökkäys kesällä 1944 Karjalan kannaksella veteraanitutkimuksen ja neuvostolähteiden valossa* (Helsinki, 1989); also Tapio Tiihonen, *Karjalan kannaksen suurtaistelut kesällä 1944*, Vols. 1–3 (Helsinki, 1999).

soon supplemented by Jukka Lindstedt's thorough study of wartime capital punishment in general.³⁷ The dramatic events following the Soviet offensive against Finland in June 1944 continued to attract both public and academic attention. In particular, the Army's countermeasures against desertion and the alleged shooting of a much greater number of Finnish soldiers by the military in 1944 caused ruction among scholars.³⁸

What has been central in these approaches and disputes is that the classic idea of military history, its bird's-eye view on battlefields and soldiers, has been challenged by the less "official" and staff officer-dominated perspectives. This is not to say that the traditional military history would not do well in Finland – it enjoys great success in book markets and libraries. The histories of military events have been pursued to the level of even the smallest of military units.³⁹ But academically speaking there seems to be very little that the study of Finnish operations in 1939–45 could offer, if such a study were not combined with the analysis of wider social, cultural and psychological factors or at least with a consideration of politics, logistics, training and motivation. In this regard the most valid Finnish study on the soldiers' socialization and mentality remains

³⁷ Jukka Kulomaa, *Käpykaartiin? 1941–1944: Sotilaskarkuruus Suomen armeijassa jatkosodan aikana* (Helsinki, 1995); Jukka Lindstedt, *Kuolemaan tuomitut: Kuolemanrangaistukset Suomessa toisen maailmansodan aikana* (Helsinki, 1999).

³⁸ These allegations were supported by Heikki Ylikangas, *Romahtaako rintama? Suomi puna-armeijan puristuksessa kesällä 1944* (Helsinki, 2007); and opposed by Jukka Kulomaa & Jarmo Nieminen, eds., *Teloitettu totuus – Kesä 1944* (Helsinki, 2008). Also the traumatic collapse of the Finnish defense of Vyborg on 20 June 1944 gained attention, Eero Elfvingren & Eeva Tammi, eds., *Viipuri 1944: Miksi Viipuri menetettiin?* (Helsinki, 2007).

³⁹ There exists an impressive quantity of more or less qualified Finnish histories on specific battles, events, locations and areas, prominent officers and soldiers, service branches, units and equipment in war, the totality of which cannot be described here at any reasonable length. The periodical of Finnish military history *Sotahistoriallinen Aikauskirja* has been important in contributing to this genre of studies.

Knut Pipping's classic sociological treatise in 1947, in which he closely analyzed the behavior and attitudes inside one Finnish infantry company by utilizing his own wartime observations.⁴⁰

As with the biographies of Finnish generals, the post-Soviet atmosphere seemed to call for the re-evaluation of the wartime political leadership, the War Guilt Trials of 1945–46 and the dissolution of various national defense, right-wing and nationalist organizations as had been required by the armistice terms in the autumn of 1944. Here, too, the scholarly ambitions were accompanied by a will to rehabilitate the leaders and organizations concerned from the “shame and unjust” they had suffered after the war.⁴¹ Yet more relevant for Finnish political history was the question of why postwar Finland did not follow the path of Central and Eastern European people's democracies and remained, instead, a Nordic democracy and a free-market economy. A number of studies on the postwar Finnish political left, international position and general domestic political developments took on this issue and showed the importance, among other

⁴⁰ Knut Pipping, *Kompaniet som samhälle: Iakttagelser i ett finskt frontförband 1941–1944* (Turku, 1947; Finnish ed. in 1978); now available also in English, *Infantry Company as a Society*, ed. and transl. Petri Kekäle (Helsinki, 2008).

⁴¹ Mikko Uola, “Suomi sitoutuu hajottamaan...” *Järjestöjen lakkauttaminen vuoden 1944 välirauhansopimuksen 21. artiklan perusteella* (Helsinki, 1999); Lasse Lehtinen & Hannu Rautkallio, *Kansakunnan sijaiskärsijät: Sotasyllisyys uudelleen arvioituna* (Helsinki, 2005); as well as the biography of President Ryti, Martti Turtola, *Risto Ryti: Elämä isänmaan puolesta* (Helsinki, 1994); also the wartime history of the Civil Guards Defense Corps, banned in the autumn of 1944, appeared, Kari Selén & Ali Pykkänen, *Sarkatakkien armeija: Suojeluskunnat ja suojeluskuntalaiset 1918–1944* (Helsinki, 2004). For earlier studies on the War Guilt Trials, postwar political history and the Allied Control Commission in Finland, Aulis Blinnikka, *Valvontakomission aika* (Porvoo, 1969); Hannu Rautkallio, *Suomen suunta 1945–1948* (Espoo, 1979); Jukka Tarkka, *13. Artikla: Suomen sotasyllisyyskysymys ja liittoutuneiden sotarikospolitiikka 1944–1946* (Porvoo, 1977).

factors, of intact political and administrative structures not shattered by occupation, of social democratic anti-communism backed by the Western Powers and of the relative unwillingness of the Finnish communists and the Soviet Union to seize power by pure force after 1944.⁴²

After Mauno Jokipii's study in 1987, the Great Debate on Finnish-German relations before and during the Continuation War had been given some academic respite. Nevertheless, the issue returned to the agenda in the 2000s, when first Markku Jokisipilä in 2004 and then Michael Jonas in 2009 published their doctoral dissertations. Instead of the origins of the Continuation War in 1940–41, Jokisipilä studied Finnish-German relations in the latter stages of the war, most importantly in the summer of 1944. He demonstrated how vague the claim of Finland's separate war was in light of the Finnish dependency on German economic and military support. Michael Jonas analyzed the long line and frictions of German policy towards Finland in the 1930s and 1940s by focusing on the German minister to Finland, Wipert von Blücher. Drawing from the German archive material and perspective, Jonas set Finland in the context of overall German war planning and strategy (and the lack of them). Although highly critical of the exclusive Finnish postwar historiography, both Jokisipilä and Jonas also brought new information on the exceptional features of the Finnish-German

⁴² On the political history of the postwar years in general, Osmo Jussila, *Suomen tie 1944–1948: Miksi siitä ei tullut kansandemokratiaa* (Porvoo, 1990); on Finnish communists and social democrats, Hermann Beyer-Thoma, *Vasemmisto ja vaaran vuodet*, transl. Marjaliisa Hentilä (Helsinki, 1990); Kimmo Rentola, *Kenen joukoissa seisot? Suomalainen kommunismi ja sota 1937–1945* (Porvoo, 1994); Mikko Majander, *Pohjoismaa vai kansandemokratia? Sosiaalidemokraatit, kommunistit ja Suomen kansainvälinen asema 1944–51* (Helsinki, 2004).

relationship: clearly, Finland was not just a German satellite, but a case of its own, evading any easy generalizations and moralizations.⁴³

The fact that there was no binding political alliance between Finland and Germany in World War II did not mean that there was no close cooperation on the level of everyday practices, policies and personal connections. Oula Silvennoinen's doctoral dissertation in 2008 on the cooperation of the German and Finnish security police in 1933–44 has been the most important academic contribution in this respect: by examining the mostly secret liaisons it also revealed the extent and limits of the Finnish security officials' knowledge of and involvement in the Nazi war of annihilation in the east.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the studies on Finnish scientists and scholars in World War II made clear the strong orientation to Germany both before and during the war. Finnish universities and researchers were not especially "Nazi-minded," but the traditional links to Germany as well as the "brotherhood-in-arms" in 1941–44 kept them close to German academic circles and paradigms.⁴⁵

⁴³ Markku Jokisipilä, *Aseveljiä vai liittolaisia? Suomi, Hitlerin Saksan liittosopimusvaatimukset ja Ryttin-Ribbentropin sopimus* (Helsinki, 2004); Michael Jonas, *Wipert von Blücher und Finnland: Alternativpolitik und Diplomatie im "Dritten Reich,"* PhD thesis (University of Helsinki, 2009), with German and Finnish editions to be published by Schöningh and Gummerus in 2010. Also on Finland in the German press after the Winter War and during the Continuation War, Risto Peltovuori, *Sankarikansa ja kavaltajat: Suomi Kolmannen valtakunnan lehdistössä 1940–1944* (Helsinki, 2000).

⁴⁴ Oula Silvennoinen, *Salaiset aseveljet: Suomen ja Saksan turvallisuuspoliisiyhteistyö 1933–1944* (Helsinki, 2008).

⁴⁵ On Finnish researchers in World War II, especially on their relations to Germany, Marjatta Hietala, ed., *Tutkijat ja sota: Suomalaisten tutkijoiden kontakteja ja kohtaloita toisen maailmansodan aikana* (Helsinki, 2006); as well, on Finnish researchers and cultural policy in Eastern Karelia, partly influenced by the German scholarship and links, Tenho Pimiä, *Sotasaalista Itä-Karjalasta: Suomalaistutkijat miehitetyillä alueilla 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 2007). Also Britta Hiedanniemi's earlier study on German

Silvennoinen's dissertation had been preceded by a revisited debate in 2003–05 on the Finnish relationship to the Holocaust and the genocidal Nazi policies in general. The debate was born of Elina Sana's (née Suominen) new book on the alleged Finnish handing-over of communist and Jewish prisoners-of-war to the Germans during the Continuation War. The source material and method of Sana's work were not academically sufficient; nevertheless, the book's findings were enough to raise doubts as to whether the Finns had been more involved in Nazi policies than earlier histories had depicted.⁴⁶ Consequently, a large research project took off under the auspices of the Finnish National Archives with the aim of documenting all the Finnish wartime and postwar deportations of soldiers and civilians as well as the prisoner-of-war and civilian internee deaths during World War II. Thus, both the wartime deportations to Germany and the much larger postwar deportations of Soviet citizens to the Soviet Union were included. One of the project's most important results was in establishing the mortality figure of Soviet prisoners-of-war in Finnish custody, whose history belongs to the grimmest chapters of wartime Finland.⁴⁷ Antti Kujala's study on the actual killings of

cultural relations and propaganda on Finland is interesting in this regard; Britta Hiedanniemi, *Kulttuuriin verhoittua politiikkaa: Kansallissosialistisen Saksan kulttuuripropaganda Suomessa 1933–1940* (Helsinki, 1980).

⁴⁶ Elina Sana, *Luovutetut: Suomen ihmisluovutukset Gestapolle* (Helsinki, 2003).

⁴⁷ As an overview on this research, Lars Westerlund, ed., *POW Deaths and People Handed Over to Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939–55: A Research Report by the Finnish National Archives* (Helsinki, 2008); see also the English website of the project, <http://kronos.narc.fi/frontpage.html>; as well as on the earlier research on the postwar deportation of Soviet citizens back to the Soviet Union, Heikki Roiko-Jokela, *Oikeutta moraalien kustannuksella? Neuvostoliiton kansalaisten luovutukset Suomesta 1944–1955* (Jyväskylä, 1999); Jussi Pekkarinen & Juha Pohjonen, *Ei armoa Suomen selkänahasta: Ihmisluovutukset Neuvostoliittoon 1944–1981* (Helsinki, 2005).

prisoners-of-war by the Finns complemented the picture.⁴⁸ Finally, the harsh fate of the Finnish prisoners-of-war in Soviet hands was also examined – the topic had not been considered quite politically correct during the Soviet era.⁴⁹

During the 1990s and 2000s the military and political issues of Finland in World War II gained an expanding amount of academic studies, which consequently gave rise to a further set of questions. In general, the Finnish historiography of war seems to have split to create two trends: first, especially in popular presentations, there has been a bid to rehabilitate and foster the “patriotic heritage” of Finland at war after the earlier restraints; and second, especially in academic dissertations, the idealized and glorified wartime history has called for “myth breaking” and critical views. Both trends share the national framework, inside of which they mostly discuss and pose their questions; the issue at stake is Finland’s history as a nation. The scholarly initiatives hereby have mostly been in finding unexplored topics and source material and not so much in new theoretical approaches: the questions of military and political history have been answered with the relatively traditional methodology of historical scholarship. Meanwhile new theoretical trends in history writing were also starting to make their appearance in the historical study of war.

Social and Cultural History of War from the 1990s onwards

⁴⁸ Antti Kujala, *Vankisurmat: Neuvostosotavankien laittomat ampumiset jatkosodassa* (Helsinki, 2008); as well as Heikki Roiko-Jokela, ed., *Vihollisen armoilla: Neuvostosotavankien kohtaloita Suomessa 1941–1948* (Jyväskylä, 2004).

⁴⁹ Dmitri Frolov, *Sotavankina Neuvostoliitossa: Suomalaiset NKVD:n leireissä talvi- ja jatkosodan aikana* (Helsinki, 2004); Timo Malmi, *Suomalaiset sotavangit Neuvostoliitossa 1941–1944: Miehet kertovat* (Jyväskylä, 2001).

Despite the busy Finnish academic activity around the issues of war from the 1970s onwards, the general view of Finland at war remained seriously partial. The most apparent lack in almost all of the above-mentioned studies was the near-total absence of women. Even in *Kansakunta sodassa* of 1989–92, which must be seen as the most social history oriented work of the whole war so far, the role of women was still marginal and the traditional themes of warfare and politics took up the majority of the presentation.⁵⁰ Although women's studies had also become a major trend in Finnish historical scholarship by the end of the 1980s, the history of war seemed to be a field of study written by men, about men and for men.

This is not to say that the history of the Finnish home front had been wholly neglected. Besides *Kansakunta sodassa*, a number of specific studies had appeared by the beginning of the 1990s.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the role of wartime women as historical agents – not merely as the objects of man-made history – remained unwritten. A path-breaking work in this regard was *Naisten aseet* (“Women's Weapons”) edited by Riitta Raitis and Elina Haavio-Mannila in 1993. For the first time, women's history in war

⁵⁰ Revealing the state of affairs, the eight members on the advisory board of *Kansakunta sodassa* were all men, and among the 13 writers of the three volumes there were only two women.

⁵¹ E.g., an early presentation on the changing moods and attitudes on the Finnish home front during the Continuation War, *Kotirintama 1941–1944*, eds. Martti Favorin & Jouko Heinonen (Helsinki, 1972); on the war damage, civilian evacuations and reconstruction in Northern Finland, Martti Ursin, *Pohjois-Suomen tuhot ja jälleenrakennus saksalaissodan 1944–1945 jälkeen* (Rovaniemi, 1980); on the politics of resettling the Finnish Karelian evacuees, Silvo Hietanen, *Siirtoväen pika-asutuslaki 1940: Asutuspoliittinen tausta ja sisältö sekä toimeenpano* (Helsinki, 1982); on the history of the Ingrian Finns evacuated to Finland in 1943–44, Pekka Nevalainen, *Inkeriläinen siirtoväki Suomessa 1940-luvulla* (Helsinki, 1990); on law enforcement in war, Tuija Hietaniemi, *Lain vartiossa: Poliisi Suomen politiikassa 1917–1948* (Helsinki, 1992).

was written on its own terms; a history of women's active participation in making wartime Finnish history, not simply subordinate to "more serious and important" manly matters.⁵² Followed soon by Maarit Niiniluoto's study on the entertainment and home front culture in 1939–45, in which wartime mentalities, social interaction and gender relations were articulated, the picture of war in Finnish historiography was about to expand.⁵³ This did not only concern women's history and the home front. The men in the trenches had also escaped the view of traditional military history, which had focused so dominantly on the military operations as if they were maneuver exercises in general staff training. Now, at the end of the 1990s, the idea of writing the social or everyday history of ordinary people gave voice to the war experiences of Finnish soldiers and civilians, although there is still much to be studied in this respect.⁵⁴ Marianne Junila's doctoral dissertation in 2000 on the Finnish civilian population and the German soldiers in Northern Finland in 1941–44 is as yet the most comprehensive academic study on the wartime home front, and it brought to the fore a question which also has been studied elsewhere in Europe: the socially and culturally problematic relationships between local women and foreign soldiers. Junila also showed the political dimensions of the home

⁵² Riikka Raitis & Elina Haavio-Mannila, eds., *Naisten aseet: Suomalaisena naisena talvi- ja jatkosodassa* (Porvoo, 1993).

⁵³ Maarit Niiniluoto, *On elon retki näin, eli: Miten viihdestä tuli sodan voittaja; Viihdytyskiertueita, kotirintaman kulttuuria ja Saksan suhteita vuosina 1939–45* (Helsinki, 1994).

⁵⁴ For a pioneering Finnish study in the everyday history of war, Maria Lähteenmäki, *Jänkääjäkäreitä ja parakkipiikojä: Lappilaisten sotakokemuksia 1939–1945* (Helsinki, 1999); later also Heikki Annanpalo, Ritva Tuomaala & Marja Tuominen, eds., *Saatiin tämä vapaus pitää: Tutkija kohtaa rovaniemeläisveteraanin* (Rovaniemi, 2001).

front, when Finnish-German relations met and shaped the everyday practices of wartime in Northern Finland.⁵⁵

[Second pair of photos:]

No. 3. The idyll of Finnish-occupied Eastern Karelia: Karelian girls returning from school, May 1942. At the same time almost 24,000 people of the area, mainly ethnic Russians, were interned in the camps.

Photo: SA 87446.

No. 4. War's gendered roles: a member of the Lotta Svärd Organization feeding a wounded soldier, August 1941. *Lottas'* work was crucial for the Finnish war effort, and they also had a symbolically important position as the bearers of "Finnish womanhood." Photo: SA 36571.

Two previously discussed trends – the rehabilitation of the wartime “national heritage” and the call to write women’s history in war – met in the 2000s, when an academic research project on the Lotta Svärd Organization was carried out under the auspices of the Finnish Lotta Tradition League. Lotta Svärd had been the most important women’s civic national defense organization in prewar and especially wartime Finland. Being closely connected to the Civil Guards Defense Corps and ideologically to nationalist conservatism, it had been banned by the armistice treaty and the Allied Control Commission in late 1944. Now in the post-Soviet atmosphere of the

⁵⁵ Marianne Junila, *Kotirintaman aseveljeyttä: Suomalaisen siviiliväestön ja saksalaisen sotaväen rinnakkainelo Pohjois-Suomessa 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 2000). In the Finnish case the German soldiers were not occupiers but “brothers-in-arms”; yet the issue of women’s required chastity connected to Finnish national honor remained much the same as in the case of the occupied countries.

1990s, the history of the organization and women's participation in the Finnish war effort through it was academically reassessed.⁵⁶

Next to women, the history of wartime childhood and youth had been greatly neglected and was studied more widely only in the 2000s.⁵⁷ Important in this regard was the four-volume work *Sodassa koettua* ("Experiences of War," 2007–09), the first two volumes of which were exclusively written about the war's manifold effects on Finnish childhood and youth and on the role of children in the Finnish war effort. The discussion was now expanding outside the traditional war-related themes to include, for instance, the psychological, cultural and generational issues of war.⁵⁸ Relevant motivation hereby was Marja Tuominen's doctoral dissertation from 1991 on the generational conflict in the Finnish 1960s, which did not actually study war, but nevertheless touched upon the psychological heritage of the wartime era as it was

⁵⁶ The project covered the complete history of the Lotta Svärd from 1920 onwards, altogether four monographs published by 2010. On the wartime history of the Lotta Svärd, Pia Olsson, *Myytti ja kokemus: Lotta Svärd sodassa* (Helsinki, 2005); also outside the project from a cultural history perspective, Kaarle Sulamaa, *Lotat, uskonto ja isänmaa: Lotat protestanttis-nationalistisina nunnina* (Helsinki, 2009).

⁵⁷ An early study on the Swedish aid and sponsorship especially regarding the Finnish children, Aura Korppi-Tommola, *Ystävyyttä yli Pohjanlahden: Ruotsin ja Suomen välinen kummikuntaliike 1942–1980* (Helsinki, 1982); on the Finnish "war children" sent to Sweden and Denmark, Heikki Salminen, *Lappu kaulassa yli Pohjanlahden: Suomalaisten sotilasten historia* (Turku, 2007); on the children and youth in the Lotta Svärd and the Civil Guards, Seija-Leena Nevala, *Lottatyöt ja sotilaspojat* (Helsinki, 2007); on the boys' experience of war and war-affected fatherhood, Erkki Kujala, *Sodan pojat: Sodanaikaisten pikkupoikien lapsuuskokemuksia isyyden näkökulmasta* (Jyväskylä, 2003).

⁵⁸ *Sodassa koettua*, Vols. 1–2: *Haavoitettu lapsuus / Uhrattu Nuoruus*, ed. Sari Näre et al. (Helsinki, 2007–08).

challenged by the children of the war generation.⁵⁹ The two latter volumes of *Sodassa koettua* focused on the home front in general, picking up unstudied themes and contributing to an updated concise history of Finnish society at war.⁶⁰ Furthermore, besides the experiential and emotional consequences of war, the short- and long-term ramifications of World War II to Finnish society at large have been gaining increasing attention, together with the political and social coping and transition strategies in 1944–45 and after.⁶¹ Also, the postwar histories of war veterans and invalids have been studied, albeit mostly from the perspective of their organizations and associations.⁶²

As we can see, one of the main veins in recent Finnish studies on war has been to understand the researchers' field of interest much more extensively than as strictly military and political history. There is actually a conceptual problem in the very name of Finnish military history: the Finnish term for military history translates as “war history” (*sotahistoria*, with the same connotations as the earlier German *Kriegsgeschichte*) and thus has its obvious limitations in grasping the widening scope of war-related studies. The available term *militäärihistoria*, which might better include the

⁵⁹ Marja Tuominen, “*Me kaikki ollaan sotilaitten lapsia*”: *Sukupolvihegemonian kriisi 1960-luvun suomalaisessa kulttuurissa* (Helsinki, 1991).

⁶⁰ *Sodassa koettua*, Vols. 3–4: *Arkea sodan varjossa / Yhdessä eteenpäin*, eds. Martti Turtola et al. (Helsinki, 2008–09).

⁶¹ Petri Karonen & Kerttu Tarjamo, eds., *Kun sota on ohi: Sodista selviytymisen ongelmia ja niiden ratkaisumalleja 1900-luvulla* (Helsinki, 2006); also an earlier and more traditional work on the Finnish transition to the postwar, Jukka Nevakivi et al., *Suomi 1944: Sodasta rauhaan* (Helsinki, 1984).

⁶² On the Finnish war veteran organizations, Tero Tuomisto, *Eturintamassa veteraanien hyväksi: Rintamaveteraaniliitto 1964–2004* (Helsinki, 2004); and Kaarle Sulamaa, *Veteraania ei jätetä: Suomen Sotaveteraaniliitto 1957–2007* (Helsinki, 2007); on the war invalids and their rehabilitation and families, Irmeli Hännikäinen, *Vaimot sotainvalidien rinnalla: Elämäntehtävänä selviytyminen* (Helsinki, 1998); and Markku Honkasalo, *Suomalainen sotainvalidi* (Helsinki, 2000).

multitude of historical phenomena outside the martial events and which is not so compromised by the long tradition of operational staff histories, is not very well established in Finnish usage. Having the “military” as its defining attribute may restrict its application, too. Many of the present researchers studying the Finnish wartime in 1939–45 would probably have difficulties in identifying themselves as “war” or “military” historians, and these labels are now largely reserved for the traditional branch of military history, which, again, is largely confined to studies made at the National Defense University and to the ever-popular genre of battle documentations, soldier’s biographies and unit histories.

Indeed, there seems to be quite a chasm in perspectives between traditional military history and the new initiatives to study war. This is the case especially when one looks at the (still very few) Finnish cultural histories of war, to which the changing general paradigms in history writing and methodology have given impetus. After Heikki Luostarinen’s above-mentioned work in 1986, the next study on war inspired by new cultural theory appeared in 1995, when Anu Koivunen published her thesis on the wartime Finnish film.⁶³ Drawing from the theoretical premises of Judith Butler, Teresa de Lauretis, Michel Foucault and Julia Kristeva, among others, Koivunen studied the films as a discursive gender technology representing and constructing wartime and postwar Finnish womanhood. Quite emblematically for the coming cultural studies on war, Koivunen’s work took up the issue of the nation and nationalism itself, and the theoretical concept of gender occupied a central position in her analysis. Just as with Luostarinen, the subject of Koivunen’s thesis was not history but media research.

⁶³ Anu Koivunen, *Isänmaan moninaiset äidinkasvat: Sotavuosien suomalainen naisten elokuva sukupuoliteknologiana* (Turku, 1995); later also Tuula Juvonen’s queer theoretical study on Finnish homosexuality, which briefly discussed the wartime history, contributed to this field, *Varjoelämää ja julkisia salaisuuksia* (Tampere, 2002).

Finally in 2006, when Ilona Kemppainen published her doctoral dissertation on the culture of soldiers' deaths in wartime Finland, the Finnish cultural history of war received its first full-blooded monograph in the sense that it applied the developments and concepts of cultural (and gender) theory within the historical scholarship.⁶⁴

Kemppainen analyzed the nationalist ideology embedded in the soldiers' sacrifice and thus the self-image of the wartime Finnish nation and people. Her main interests were in the constructions of ideal manliness and womanhood, especially motherhood, in the representations and practices of military death and burials.

At about the same time as Kemppainen's dissertation, the new cultural, social and psychohistorical perspectives on wartime Finland were brought together in the edited volume *Ihminen sodassa* ("Human in War," 2006).⁶⁵ Drawing ideas from the internationally emerging "new military history" and from the German "history of experiences" (*Erfahrungsgeschichte*), this book was a critical opening on the premises and nature of writing the history of war in Finland. Some useful discussion on the issue followed, but the precise effect of the work on Finnish historiography is yet to be seen. Not so much a concise overview of the whole Finnish society at war as a collection of new ideas and themes, many of the book's articles were written by doctoral students, whose dissertations are now about to be finished.⁶⁶ The relevant themes hereby include,

⁶⁴ Ilona Kemppainen, *Isänmaan uhrin: Sankarikuolema Suomessa toisen maailmansodan aikana* (Helsinki, 2006).

⁶⁵ Tiina Kinnunen & Ville Kivimäki, eds., *Ihminen sodassa: Suomalaisten kokemuksia talvi- ja jatkosodasta* (Helsinki, 2006).

⁶⁶ Published at the same time as the writing of this introduction are Anders Ahlbäck, *Soldiering and the Making of Finnish Manhood: Conscripted and Masculinity in Interwar Finland, 1918–1939*, PhD thesis (Åbo Akademi University, 2010); Tuomas Tepora, *Lippu, uhri, kansakunta: Ryhmäkokemukset ja -rajat Suomessa 1917–1945*, PhD thesis (University of Helsinki, 2011).

for instance, the gendered aspects of war and the military, social, cultural and psychological factors in the formation of war experiences, the issues of memory and the substance and scope of Finnish wartime nationalism. Indeed, one unifying theme in the newest publications and in the ongoing research projects on the cultural history of war seems to be to take the wartime nation as an analyzable object for a treatise, whereas the earlier studies have taken the nation and national perspective as the axiomatic framework for scholarly work. Also war's brutal history has recently been revisited in the book *Ruma sota* ("The Ugly War," 2008), which had the explicit aim of deconstructing the glorified history of war and focusing on the actual violence and adversities largely hidden in the "official" military histories.⁶⁷ But the cultural and psychohistorical approaches are not limited only to revealing the violence and aggression of war: the collective "Spirit of the Winter War," for instance, deserves a thorough cultural and psychological analysis.⁶⁸

An important branch in the cultural histories of war has been the study of the memory and commemoration of war. Influenced by oral history tradition in general and by the folkloristic memory studies of Ulla-Maija Peltonen on the Finnish Civil War of 1918, the memory culture of 1939–45 is at the moment attracting a growing amount of research. Sirkka Ahonen's study on the memory of World War II in shaping the historical consciousness and national identity of Finnish youth in the 1990s has been

⁶⁷ Sari Näre & Jenni Kirves, eds., *Ruma sota: Talvi- ja jatkosodan vaiettu historia* (Helsinki, 2008).

⁶⁸ On the "Spirit of the Winter War" and the constitutive image of the Soviet threat in the Finnish press in this regard, Sinikka Wunsch, *Punainen uhka: Neuvostoliiton kuva johtavassa suomalaisessa sanomalehdistössä maaliskuusta 1938 talvisodan päättymiseen maaliskuussa 1940* (Rovaniemi, 2004); from the perspective of military sociology combined with the insights of cultural studies, Juha Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito: Kansalaissotilas- ja ammattisotilasarmeijan rakentuminen 1920- ja 1930-luvulla "talvisodan ihmeeksi"* (Helsinki, 2008).

very illuminating on the continuing significance of past wars to present Finnish self-understanding.⁶⁹ As we have seen above, the Finnish postwar politics of memory have had an effect on academic historiography, too; other memory-related topics in recent Finnish research include the memories of the Karelian evacuees and the issue of the Lotta Svärd in the Finnish memory culture of war.⁷⁰ Finally, there are historically relevant literary studies published on war in Finnish postwar fiction, especially on the key role of author Väinö Linna and his *Tuntematon sotilas* (*The Unknown Soldier*, 1954) in creating the still-dominant Finnish narrative of war.⁷¹

By now, the reader may well be exhausted by the bibliographical detail and crisscrossing tendencies of Finnish history writing, although, for reasons of economy, the presentation above is limited almost exclusively to scientific monographs and excludes the plethora of published articles, chapters and non-fiction on war. Although there are, of course, plenty of important topics still left unstudied, especially with the

⁶⁹ Sirkka Ahonen, *Historiaton sukupolvi? Historian vastaanotto ja historiallisen identiteetin rakentuminen 1990-luvun nuorison keskuudessa* (Helsinki, 1998).

⁷⁰ For the earliest treatise to discuss the memory and heritage of war, Lauri Haataja, ed., *Ja kuitenkin me voitimme: Sodan muisto ja perintö* (Helsinki, 1994); on the Finnish Karelian evacuees, Tarja Raninen-Siiskonen, *Vieraana omalla maalla: Tutkimus karjalaisen siirtoväen muistelukerronnasta* (Helsinki, 1999); on the members of the Lotta Svärd in the postwar period, Tiina Kinnunen, *Kiitetyt ja parjatut: Lotat sotien jälkeen* (Helsinki, 2006); on the Finnish memory and historiography of war in general, Markku Jokisipilä, ed., *Sodan totuudet: Yksi suomalainen vastaa 5.7 ryssää* (Helsinki, 2007).

⁷¹ On the Finnish war fiction in general, Juhani Niemi, *Viime sotien kirjat* (Helsinki, 1988); on Väinö Linna and his continuing influence, Jyrki Nummi, *Jalon kansan parhaat voimat: Kansalliset kuvat ja Väinö Linnan romaanit Tuntematon sotilas ja Täällä Pohjantähden alla* (Porvoo, 1993); Yrjö Varpio, *Väinö Linnan elämä* (Helsinki, 2006); Antti Arnkil & Olli Sinivaara, eds., *Kirjoituksia Väinö Linnasta* (Helsinki, 2006); recently on Yrjö Jylhä, the celebrated poet of the Winter War, Vesa Karonen & Panu Rajala, *Yrjö Jylhä: Talvisodan runoilija* (Helsinki, 2009).

insight of new methodologies, it is fair to say that the history of World War II is hardly a “silenced” or “censored” theme in Finnish historiography – quite the contrary.

Wartime history has attracted heavy multivolume compilations at regular intervals, but they have been closer to semiofficial repetitions of the grand national narrative than innovative reinterpretations of the wartime past.⁷² At the moment the problem in Finnish studies on war lies rather in the lack of overviews integrating the multitude of current perspectives and research results than in the lack of actual research. Henrik Meinander’s recent study on the year 1944 as it was experienced in Finland is an important exception, as it combined both the traditional military and political histories and the new culturally and socially oriented studies. It also went further to outline the history of emotions in war.⁷³ Such an integrative effort is also the task of this present volume.

The second serious handicap of the Finnish historiography of World War II is that publications in English are lacking. The best concise presentation at the moment is Olli Vehviläinen’s *Finland in the Second World War*, published in 2002.⁷⁴ It works well as a handbook on the general military and political aspects of Finland in 1939–45, but naturally it cannot discuss the newest issues in the Finnish history writing of the 2000s.

⁷² Besides the official military histories and the multivolume series mentioned above: *Suomi taisteli: Sotiemme suurlukemisto*, Vols. 1–6, eds. Jukka L. Mäkelä & Helge Seppälä (Porvoo, 1977–80); concise handbooks on the Winter War, *Talvisodan pikkujättiläinen*, and on the Continuation War, *Jatkosodan pikkujättiläinen*, both eds. Jari Leskinen & Antti Juutilainen (Helsinki, 1999 and 2005); *Suomi 85: Itsenäisyyden puolustajat*, Vols. 1–4, eds. Lauri Haataja et al. (Espoo, 2002–03), followed by Ari Raunio & Juri Kilin, *Itsenäisyyden puolustajat: Sodan taisteluja*, Vols. 1–2 (Espoo, 2005); in Swedish, *Finland i krig*, Vols. 1–3, ed. Henrik Ekberg (Espoo, 2000–01).

⁷³ Henrik Meinander, *Finland 1944: Krig, samhälle, känslolandskap* (Helsinki, 2009).

⁷⁴ Olli Vehviläinen, *Finland in the Second World War: Between Germany and Russia*, transl. Gerard McAlester (Basingstoke, 2002).

Next to Vehviläinen and to a number of scientific articles in English on specific war-related themes, a bibliography of which can be found at the end of this book, there is very little, if anything, available in English on Finland in World War II. Interestingly, the history of the Winter War has created a small sub-genre of military history published in the United States and Great Britain, but its academic quality is quite weak and it rather reflects a Cold War era fascination with Finland's "epic" good-versus-evil struggle against the communist super power.⁷⁵ Symptomatically, the Finnish Continuation War, fought together with Nazi Germany, has not attracted the same interest, and its written history in English is practically non-existent.

The near-absence of up-to-date English presentations on Finnish wartime history has sometimes given birth to claims abroad that the Finns have an embellished or idealized picture of their past. This may well be true as a characterization of the popular Finnish mentality about the wars of 1939–45; it may also be true for parts of Finnish historiography. Yet, as this introduction has hopefully shown, it would be a false generalization as regards Finnish history writing on war taken as a whole. During the last three to four decades the grey, dark and outright inglorious chapters of the war have made their way into academic research and partly also into the public consciousness, even if sometimes after painfully slow proceedings and strong protests.⁷⁶ Furthermore,

⁷⁵ Allen F. Chew, *The White Death: The Epic of the Soviet-Finnish Winter War* (East Lansing, MI, 1971); Eloise Engle & Lauri Paananen, *The Winter War: The Russo-Finnish Conflict, 1939–40* (London, 1973); William R. Trotter, *Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish Winter War 1939–1940* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991); Carl Van Dyke, *The Soviet Invasion of Finland 1939–40* (London, 1997); Robert Edwards, *The Winter War: Russia's Invasion of Finland, 1939–40* (New York, 2008).

⁷⁶ What, indeed, would be a completely unstudied "taboo" of the Finnish wartime past? Such topics might still be found from the margins of society. The harsh treatment of conscientious objectors, a majority of whom were Jehovah's Witnesses, would deserve a study, as well as the starvation among Finnish mental

although there certainly are powerful (neo-)patriotic currents in narrating Finnish history in World War II, there is no longer such a thing as a monolithic, unequivocal Finnish historiography of 1939–45. As with the other branches of historical research, the time of an easily definable national paradigm is also over in the historical study of war; instead, a more heterogeneous, theoretically oriented and critical scholarship will be dominating in academic research.

Why, then, does the Finnish history of 1939–45 and its consequent historiography raise a continuous demand for myth breaking and critical deconstruction? The reason may be in the nationally crucial nature of these past wars rather than in the content and style of their written histories, which, at least regarding the current serious academic works, cannot be said to openly mythologize or glorify the war. Still central for the Finnish identity and nation building, the wars of 1939–40 and 1941–44 necessitate both public and scholarly attention on a regular basis. There is no reason to expect this to fade away in the near future; writing about the events of World War II in Finland still means writing about the relevant, contemporary Finnish self-understanding of the 2010s. It might be this keen exercise of repetitive revisits and reinterpretations – a kind of academic ritual encircling the core of war – that reveals the mythological quality of the past wars for today’s Finnishness. Ironically, the very efforts of myth breaking seem to become part of the expanding myth of war, notwithstanding the best academic aspirations to the contrary.

II. Current Volume

asylum inmates during the Continuation War – a topic which is touched upon by Helene Laurent in her later chapter.

Our present book is divided into four parts, the subjects of which naturally overlap, but which nevertheless focus, respectively, on distinctive themes of political and military history; social relations and experiences; ideologically influenced practices; and, finally, the memory and commemoration of World War II in Finland. Part One, “Politics and the Military,” addresses issues that have for decades been central in the historiography regarding Finland in World War II, namely the politics, diplomacy and military operations. Yet the approaches hereby aim at challenging the national paradigm of a separate Finnish war, which has influenced much of the Finnish scholarship until recently. Chapter 1 of the book, written by *Henrik Meinander*, examines Finland’s geopolitical position in Northern Europe and answers the question of how changing German-Soviet relations and the later events of World War II influenced the decision-making processes in Finland before and after the outbreak of the Winter War, during the Interim Peace of 1940–41 and during the Continuation War of 1941–44. As a result of his analysis, Meinander underlines that geography played a crucial role, but that it does not suffice as the only explanation for Finland’s history in 1939–45. Consequently, the political and ideological currents of both prewar and wartime Finland are examined against the background of geopolitical changes. Anti-communism, Germanophilia and Scandinavian orientation shaped Finnish politics and mentality during the period in question. The chapter is concluded with a brief look at Finland on the eve of the Cold War. Part of the new postwar political orientation was the War Guilt Trials in 1945–46, in which prison sentences were passed on the leading Finnish wartime politicians. In the end the “normalization” of Finnish-Soviet relations after 1944 did take place surprisingly swiftly and with a fortunate outcome for Finnish postwar history.

Finland’s relations with the Third Reich in general and Operation *Barbarossa* in

particular have been sensitive issues in Finnish postwar political memory and historiography. Today, historians mostly refute the concept of a separate war, dominant since the war ended, and emphasize Finland's military and economic dependency on Germany in 1941–44. In 1941, suffering from the losses of the Winter War, Finland willingly joined the new war against the Soviet Union and took responsibility for a strategically important northeastern front sector close to Leningrad. Chapter 2 by *Michael Jonas* offers an in-depth analysis of the Finnish-German alliance in 1940–44. Jonas examines the different stages of the relationship with relevant comparisons to the German-Romanian relationship of the same period. He situates Finland in the grand scheme of German war strategy and planning, but also shows the difficulties posed to the Germans by the Finnish reluctance to submit their independent decision-making to German influence. By looking at the history of Finnish-German wartime relations in detail, Jonas makes it clear that the issue of co-belligerence avoids too easy categorizations and judgments: although the Finnish separate war thesis is clearly outdated in its exculpatory nature, the Finnish case in the German orbit had its exceptional features and cannot be characterized as a capitulation to German-controlled politics.

Chapter 3 by *Pasi Tuunainen* offers a concise chronological overview of the main military events for Finland in 1939–45, including a discussion of the prewar preparations and training. Tuunainen concludes that, in terms of military effectiveness and innovativeness, the Finnish Army in World War II performed reasonably well. Most importantly, it did not disintegrate at the crucial moments of March 1940 and in the summer of 1944. On the contrary, it was able to stop the advances of the Red Army – in 1944 with substantial assistance from Germany – and to make the Soviet leaders to look for a political settlement instead of occupying the country militarily. Tuunainen's

analysis is deepened by military sociological and social psychology viewpoints. According to him, the most important factor explaining the Finnish combat effectiveness was the human element. The Finnish soldiers were properly trained and their fighting spirit and morale were high enough for the tasks they were required to fulfill. Although there were some serious cases of demoralization, the soldiers largely accepted the core purposes of these tasks, especially in the defensive battles of 1939–40 and 1944.

Part Two, “Social Frameworks, Cultural Meanings,” historicizes everyday life on the front, the home front and the interaction between these two by drawing on social and cultural history approaches. It also pays attention to the political and national dimensions of the war experiences. First, in Chapter 4, *Marianne Junila* sketches the economic and social framework of the Finnish wartime home front and society at large. The wars of 1939–45 demanded a total mobilization of economic and human resources, plus a state-controlled steering of the public mind. In the Finnish case this mobilization succeeded comparatively well in creating a sustainable war effort and in stabilizing the society at war. Yet it took a heavy toll on people’s lives and endurance; these everyday burdens of the home front have often been overshadowed by the focus on a purely military and political history of war. The experiences and social ramifications of 1939–45 also greatly shaped Finnish society through new encounters, policies and interactions. An interesting case of its own is the relations between Finnish civilians and German soldiers in Northern Finland in 1941–44, which Junila also discusses.

In Chapter 5 *Ville Kivimäki* and *Tuomas Tepora* study the cultural history of wartime Finland and emphasize that the social cohesion of the Finnish national community at war was largely determined by how successfully the soldiers’ violent deaths were given a regenerative, nationally unifying meaning. This creation of social

cohesion in 1939–45 was especially crucial against the background of the bitter Finnish Civil War in 1918 and the prewar political and cultural tensions of Finnish society. In 1939–40, the fratricidal violence of 1918 was undone through reconciling sacrifices in a fight against the external enemy. In their analysis Kivimäki and Tepora conclude that Finnish society was, by and large, able to consign a continuing collective significance to soldiers' and civilians' hardships and suffering. In this process, the funerals of the fallen soldiers together with other commemorations played a crucial role. There was, however, an important difference between the Winter War and the Continuation War, so that in the course of 1941–44 the sacrifices became experienced in more down-to-earth terms as general war-weariness took its toll. Also the direct experiences of meaningless violence contributed to corrode the “crusader spirit” of the offensive of 1941.

Wartime social cohesion was not only established through the national cult of the fallen soldiers and through the various policies of the state authorities. The war period was characterized by the experiences of violence and forced separation between family members, and this resulted in severe mental and material insecurities. On a personal level these challenges underlined the importance of emotional trust and support given to one's loved ones; a capacity to share meanings and to find comfort. Based on her in-depth analysis of the interplay and dialogue between the soldiers and their families during the long Continuation War of 1941–44, *Sonja Hagelstam* shows in Chapter 6 that the notion of two separate, even antagonistic, spheres of the front and the home front in war has to be revised. She shows how the relationship between family members was maintained through written correspondence during the long-term separation. The regular exchange of letters lessened the risk of soldiers' alienation from the civilian sphere and contributed to the bridging of the spatial and experiential gap between front and home, which must be seen as one central factor in sustaining the

prolonged war. Hagelstam emphasizes the historical and social role of emotions in war; a subject that has not yet been fully integrated into the studies on war.

Part Three, “Ideologies in Practice,” examines the transformation of Finnish prewar and wartime social and political ideologies into everyday practices. The advances in the field of social policy had long-term effects on Finland’s future. The postwar construction of the Finnish welfare state has been narrated as a success story, although its roots have seldom been traced back to the war years. Chapter 7 by *Helene Laurent* addresses the prewar and wartime developments in this respect. The war’s ramifications for Finnish social policy and citizenship are discussed, with a focus on health issues. In addition, Laurent studies the practical implementation of the Finnish social policy ideology and the crucial role of international contacts and aid for Finland at war. In Western Europe, the experience of World War I had generally increased the state’s responsibility and role in the lives of its citizens. In Finland these state-centered ideas of social policy were largely neglected until the latter half of the 1930s, and then the outbreak of World War II brought to a halt a number of emerging new initiatives. Due to the difficult economic circumstances after the war, they had to be postponed until the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless, as Laurent argues, the war years also acted as a kind of catalyst, a period of experiment and rehearsal for the new social policies and practices, in which the state and its institutions would have a key role. In particular, Finnish health policies for children and mothers took many important steps during the war years and paved the way for the emerging social state.

The treatment of Soviet prisoners-of-war and the Finnish occupation of Eastern Karelia in 1941–44 have been sensitive spots in the Finnish collective memory of war. Chapter 8 by *Oula Silvennoinen* reveals these often grim and until recently scarcely researched aspects of wartime Finland. The fate of both prisoners-of-war and the

Russian population of Eastern Karelia reflect the anti-Bolshevist and Russophobic trends in Finnish nationalist ideology. Silvennoinen addresses the question of how Finland dealt with enemy nationals and whether the international stipulations concerning their treatment were followed. He concludes that in 1941–44 at least 19,085 Soviet prisoners-of-war out of the total of approximately 65,000 died in Finnish custody and that at least 4,279 civilian internees of Eastern Karelia died in Finnish camps. The most fatal period was the “hunger winter” of 1941–42, when the Finnish authorities’ inability to adhere to the needs of the starving inmates bordered on intentional negligence. These fatalities had an ethnic character, as the Russians suffered worst and the prisoners and internees with Finnic ethnicity were given privileged treatment. Silvennoinen also studies the German prisoner-of-war administration in Northern Finland and the close cooperation between Finnish and German officials. The Finnish authorities handed over 521 Soviet political officers and active communists to the Germans, among them also 47 soldiers identified as Jews.

In prewar and wartime Finland academic research – particularly in humanities – was also permeated with nationalist ideology. In Chapter 9 *Tenho Pimiä* discusses the role of Finnish researchers in the construction of “Greater Finland,” which had motivated the occupation of Soviet Eastern Karelia in 1941. The beginning of the Continuation War seemed to open up unprecedented opportunities for ethnological research in Eastern Karelia. In accordance with the expansionist politics, the Finnish scholars wanted to justify the occupation of Eastern Karelia by proving that the region had an organic connection to Finland through a common past and culture. Consequently, as Pimiä shows, one of the largest projects recording and collecting Finnic cultural heritage was realized in the occupied regions between 1941–44 in cooperation with Finnish scholars and the military administration. In addition, the Finnic prisoners-of-

war and the Ingrian Finns transferred to Finland in 1943–44 attracted academic attention. Yet the Greater Finland idealism and the scholarly enthusiasm of the Finnish researchers had to meet the harsh realities of Eastern Karelia: the results of mapping living cultural heritage and Finnic roots were mostly disappointing. Finally in 1944, after the Finnish retreat from Eastern Karelia, the project and its nationalist motivations faded into oblivion.

Part Four, “Wars of Memory,” describes the long shadow and the continuing national significance of World War II in Finland. The Finnish memory cultures of war have been shaped by their changing political and cultural contexts in the long postwar period. Yet despite the varying emphasis, nuances and forms of expression, the fundamentals of remembering the wars of 1939–45 have remained largely the same: the Winter War and the Continuation War are presented as a great epic of national survival and victimhood, whereas the Finnish-German “brotherhood-in-arms” and the Lapland War of 1944–45 have remained marginal issues in public commemorations. Chapter 10 by *Tiina Kinnunen* and *Markku Jokisipilä* focuses on the general trends in the Finnish memory culture from the 1940s to the present day, with a detailed discussion on the current Finnish trend of “neo-patriotism.” Although the long postwar period – characterized by the pressure to accommodate Finnish public discussions to the political demands and sensitivities of the Finnish-Soviet relationship – certainly suppressed such voices, which could have been interpreted as overtly revanchist or critical of the Soviet Union, the public commemorations of war in Finland were hardly as self-censored and repressed as they are now sometimes suspected to have been. As Kinnunen and Jokisipilä show, there have been several simultaneous and conflicting memory trends in postwar Finland: the unbroken fostering of the “wartime heritage,” the leftist and pacifist challenges to this national epic, the (neo-)patriotic glorification of the war and

the diverse reminiscences of different Finnish memory communities – now also including the groups that were earlier pushed to the margins. For a “post-nationalist” interpretation of World War II to gain ground also in Finland, the public commemoration of war should be more open to recognize the suffering and violence on both sides of the conflict and to overcome the black-and-white dichotomy along the national borders, which so often still dominates in the Finnish narratives of war.

The most dramatic national loss brought on Finland by World War II was the Soviet annexation of Finnish Karelia, first in March 1940 and then for good in September 1944. In political and economical terms this meant the ceding of one of the most vital Finnish regions, and in social and psychological terms the difficult resettlement and readjustment of over 400,000 evacuees. Furthermore, Karelia had had a special place in Finnish nationalist thinking and imagination – maybe something similar to Alsace-Lorraine in French nationalism. In Chapter 11 *Outi Fingerroos* discusses the different stages of the “Karelia issue” in Finnish politics and memory culture. She shows how the Finnish focus on Karelia has changed from the expansive Greater Finland ideas of the early twentieth century to the postwar claims to restitute the Karelian Isthmus and Vyborg back to Finland. The latter aspect of the Karelia issue is still relevant in present-day Finland, and it is intertwined with the personal memories of loss and nostalgia in the Finnish Karelian memory culture. The Karelian evacuees and their descendants have upheld their hopes of returning to their old homesteads in Finnish Karelia. Fingerroos studies in detail the story of one Karelian evacuee, and she utilizes the concepts of utopia and pilgrimage to understand the enduring need of the Finnish Karelians to visit and imagine their own, lost Karelia in modern Russia.

As mentioned above, the history of the Holocaust has not had an integral place in the understanding of Finnish history in World War II. The book is concluded by

Chapter 12, in which *Antero Holmila* analyzes the Finnish attitude to the Holocaust from the wartime to the present. First, Holmila briefly sums up the history of Finnish Jewry during the war years and discusses the extent of Finnish cooperation with the Nazi policies of extermination. A crucial event in this was the Finnish handing-over of eight refugee Jews to the Germans in 1942; an event, the nature of which has caused disputes over the purposes and motivations of the Finnish authorities responsible. Second, Holmila records the troublesome entry of the Holocaust into Finnish public consciousness and historiography. Following the separate war thesis, the general Finnish attitude regarding the extermination of the European Jewry has been to see it as a tragic phenomenon of World War II, which nevertheless has no connection to the Finnish history of 1939–45. Those historical instances, which have brought Finland closest to the Holocaust, have been pushed aside from the grand narrative of Finland at war. Yet, as the Holocaust has a central place in the memory of World War II and in the emerging European historical identity, Finnish “exceptionalism” in this regard causes problems for contemporary Finnish history politics in its integration into the wider European context.

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All the chapters of the present book are studies in their own right, and they can be read independently. Yet we would like to encourage a reader with limited knowledge of Finnish history to start with Henrik Meinander’s chapter, which will give a good basis for understanding the more specific themes in other chapters. For those readers who might want to find further reading on Finnish wartime history, at the end of the book we have compiled a selected bibliography on scholarly monographs and articles currently

available in English. Finally, a note on the book's illustrations: Most of the photographs have been chosen from the wartime collections of the Finnish Defence Forces Photographic Centre (the so-called "SA Photos"). They present the official and controlled view of the war as depicted by the photographers working for the armed forces in 1939–45. Thus this illustrated narrative running parallel with the written chapters is as much a story of the construction of the Finnish self-image in war as it is a photographic documentation of the wartime past.