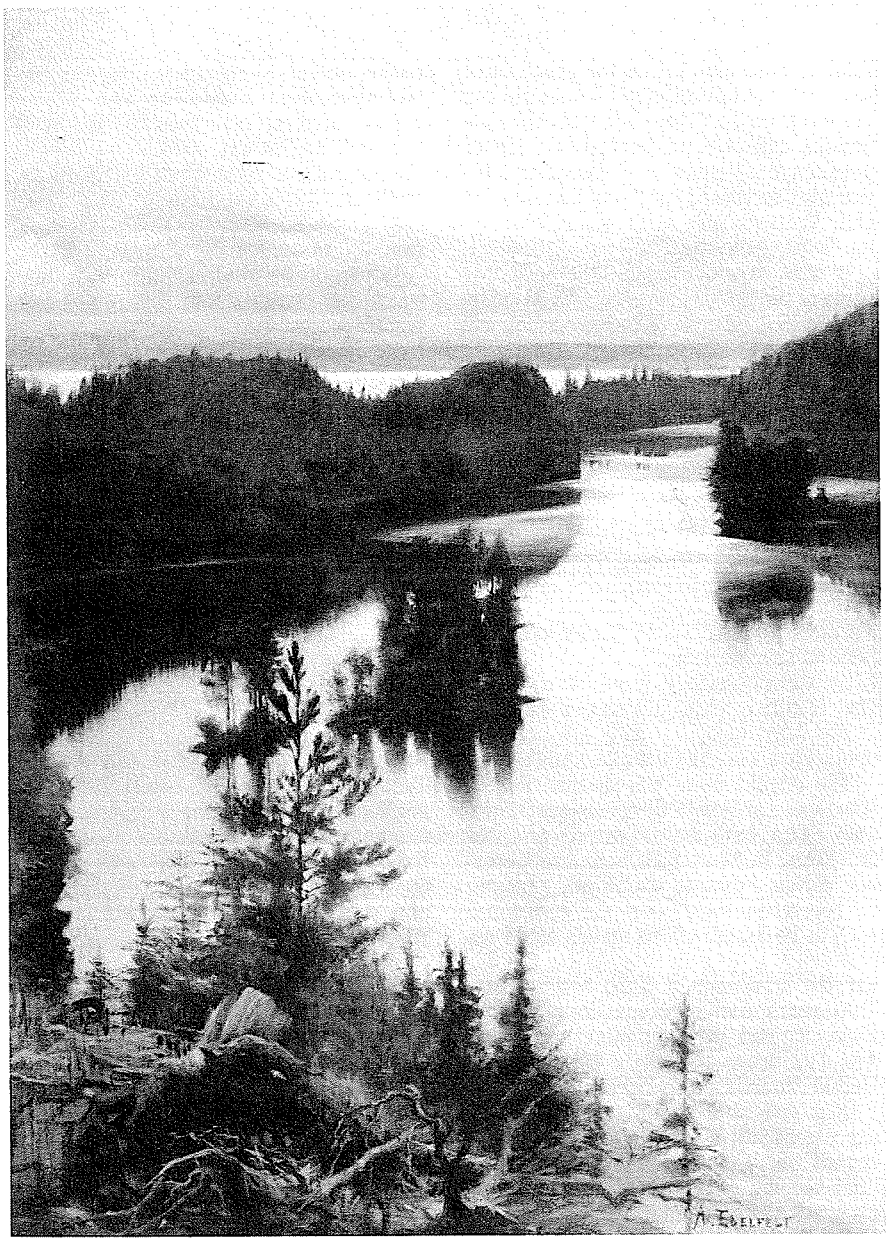

*Landscapes loom large in Finnish life and art. Before painting* Kaukola Ridge at Sunset *(1889), Albert Edelfelt wrote in a letter to his mother: "I must see wilder terrain... summer light, and real Finnish Finns. Tar boats, wilderness* [*and*] *rapids... are beginning to take hold of me."*

# Finland

Finland, as Finnish diplomat Max Jakobson observed, emerges "only occasionally and for brief moments above the horizon of international news media." Yet Finland, with no more people (4.9 million) than the state of Wisconsin, maintains a unique position on the world scene: a prosperous Western democracy living next door to the Soviet Union. To Americans, says Jakobson, this looks like an Indian rope trick: "a clever thing to do, but not quite believable." Here, Keith W. Olson surveys the Finns' turbulent history as innocent bystanders repeatedly caught between the great powers. Pekka Kalevi Hamalainen explains how, after the ordeals of World War II, the Soviets and the Finns finally learned, more or less, to get along.

## BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

*by Keith W. Olson*

In the early morning of November 30, 1939, the roar of Soviet bombers startled the rural folk living among the birch forests and fields of eastern Finland. From the Karelian Isthmus in the south to Petsamo in the north, 600,000 Soviet troops pushed across the 800-mile border. Joseph Stalin's advisers believed that Finland would fall in just 12 days. But they failed to reckon with the deep snows, the minus-40-degree temperatures, and the determination of 300,000 Finnish troops fighting for their country's survival.

Though ill-equipped and outnumbered, the hastily mobilized Finns defended themselves brilliantly. Sheltered in 20-man dugouts beneath the snow, the *sotilaat* held fast to the Mannerheim Line, an 88-mile fortified strip that ran across the Karelian Isthmus from the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ladoga. Soviet armored columns fell prey to Finland's "invisible wall"—white-clad, forest-wise ski troops, armed with submachine guns, backed up by artillery. Moving through forests of birch and spruce, the Finns repeatedly caught the Soviets by surprise. Small towns and villages such as Summa, Kolla, Tolvajärvi,

and Suomussalmi would become, as a Finnish colonel later recalled, "Finland's small Stalingrads."

Stalin's 46 divisions eventually wore down the Finns. For a time, Great Britain and France, already at war with Hitler's Germany, contemplated sending 100,000 troops as a rescue force to Finland via Norway and Sweden; wanting to remain neutral, both Oslo and Stockholm refused to allow the Allied forces to cross.* The Russians finally captured Viipuri, Finland's second largest city, on March 5, 1940. By the time President Kyösti Kallio sued for peace, some 25,000 Finns had perished, and 450,000 had been driven from their homes. From the front, *Life*'s Carl Mydans reported: "The symbol of Finland has become the blackened stalk of a chimney standing without its house."

## Sod and Birchbark

As a result of peace negotiations in Moscow, the Soviets pushed Finland's eastern border 70 miles westward, to 90 miles from Leningrad. They also won key ports on the Gulf of Finland, such as Uuraa and Koivisto, and the valuable sawmills of Karelia. But few Russians rejoiced over the victory. Nikita Khrushchev exaggerated the numbers—but not the enormity of the suffering—when he wrote, in his memoirs, that the Winter War had cost the Soviets one million men. Said one Russian general at the time, "We have won enough ground to bury our dead."

Finland had lost the war, but gained the respect of the world. On January 20, 1940, five months before he became prime minister of his own embattled country, Britain's first sea lord, Winston S. Churchill, observed, "Finland alone—in danger of death, superb, sublime Finland—shows what free men can do."

Churchill may have been impressed—but could not have been surprised—by Finland's determination. Nestled between the Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland on the Baltic Sea, Finland had always offered what the Russians wanted: a military buffer against the West, and an opening to the Baltic. Thanks to this geography, the two neighbors had fought over the same territory many times. In victory or in defeat, the Finns had always stood their ground with tenacity; somehow they had managed to hang on to their language, their cul-

*The Finnish resistance won popular admiration in the West; in New York City, all but one of Broadway's playwrights pledged one night's box-office receipts to Finnish war relief. The holdout was Lillian (*The Little Foxes*) Hellman, who, like some other American leftists, sided with Moscow.

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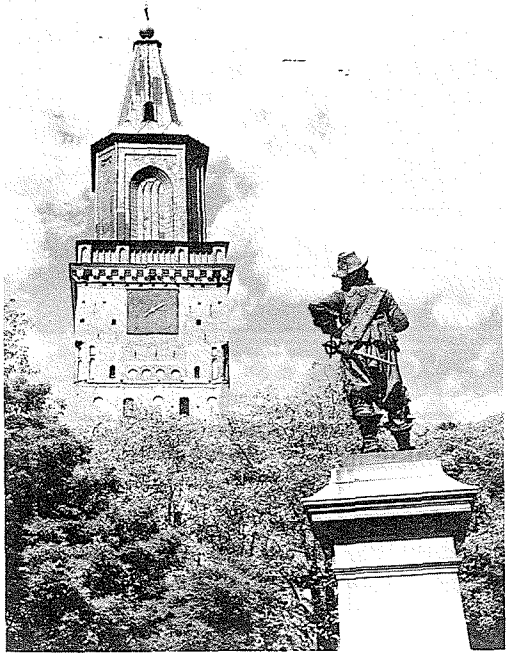


*The Swedish legacy: A statue of Sweden's Count Per Brahe (1602–80) stands before the medieval cathedral at Turku (Åbo in Swedish). Brahe, twice Finland's governor-general, founded the University of Åbo in 1640.*

ture, their distinctive identity.

Finland's chronicle begins relatively late in the history of the West. The Finns' forebears first started to migrate into Finland from the south shore of the Gulf of Finland—today's Estonia—around 2,000 years ago. They settled in three different groups: the Suomalaiset* along the southwestern coast; the Hämelaiset in the western lake district; and the Karjalaiset, or Karelians, along the western shore of Lake Ladoga. As the new settlements grew, the indigenous Lapps migrated northward, above the Arctic Circle.

During the short summers and long winters, the typical *talonpoika*, or pioneer-farmer, eked out a meager subsistence. To clear the wooded terrain, he felled trees in the autumn, and burned them the following spring. A birchbark roof, weighted with sod for insulation, covered his one-room log cabin. The small plots he tilled produced barley, oats, and rye. He raised a few horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats. During the spring and autumn, the *talonpoika* ventured into the woods to hunt and fish. He trapped lynx, marten, and fox, and sold or bartered their furs along the coast. Small Finnish trading vessels, hugging the jagged coastline, carried the goods to

*Finns today call themselves Suomalaiset and their country Suomi after this region.

Tallinn, Gdansk, and other ports along the Baltic coast.

Since the 12th century, Finland has stood between East and West. Legend has it that King Erik and Bishop Henry of Uppsala led the first major Christian crusade to Finland around 1155. (Henry, later martyred by an ax-wielding peasant named Lalli, became the Church of Finland's patron saint.) Church officials in Rome made the first written reference to Finland in 1172, while compiling a list of Swedish provinces. But Finland did not yet belong to the Swedish crown; it was still missionary territory, beyond Stockholm's reach. In 1216, Pope Innocent III authorized the Swedish king to bring Finland within his realm. The bishops of Turku ruled Finland as an autonomous ecclesiastical state and dispatched missionaries to spread Christianity across the peninsula. By 1540, the Church of Finland watched over more than 100 churches, adorned with statues of their saints—Olav, Lawrence, Anna, and Martin of Tours.

## Sweden's *Österland*

Western Christianity, however, did not go unchallenged. In 1227, missionaries under Novgorod's Duke Jaroslav ventured westward, forcing the Karelians to be baptized into the Eastern Church. Russian and Swedish forces clashed for decades before the two sides negotiated, for the first time, Sweden's (and Finland's) eastern border. The Treaty of Nöteborg (1323) delineated not only Swedish and Russian spheres of influence but also the boundaries of western and eastern Christianity, of Rome and Constantinople.

For the next 500 years, Finland would be Sweden's *österland*, her eastern territory. The arrangement was benign. Finns enjoyed all the privileges of Swedish citizens, including the right to help elect the Swedish king and to be represented in the Riksdag, the Swedish parliament. Finns joined the Swedes in their repeated military expeditions on the Continent; some 25 percent of all Swedish troops were Finns, who became known, like the Scots and the Swiss, for their qualities as warriors. Prayed the trembling Catholic followers of the Hapsburgs in the 17th century: "From the horrible Finns, dear Lord, deliver us."

Thus, for a half-millennium, the fates of Sweden and Finland were bound together. Swedish kings, by design or accident, shaped Finland's future. One of them, Gustav I Vasa, acceded to the throne in 1523. Vasa tried to govern Sweden-Finland as his private estate. He broke relations with Rome in 1524, transferred church lands to the crown, abolished the Mass, and banned the use of Latin in church services. Vasa even decreed that each church give the crown one of its bells—which, of course, could be bought back by the congregation at a suitable price.

Inadvertently, Vasa's eccentricities made Sweden-Finland fertile


*Nearly the size of California, Finland (130,119 square miles) is Europe's fifth largest country. Only 200,000 Finns live above the Arctic Circle, where, in winter, the sun does not appear at all for seven straight weeks.*

ground for the spread of another faith—Lutheranism. Foremost among the many Swedes and Finns who had fallen under Martin Luther's teachings at Wittenberg was Mikael Agricola, the bishop of Turku. By translating various religious writings into the vernacular—including the New Testament—Agricola brought the gospel of Christ to the common man. A well-known jingle testified to the popularity of Agricola's ABC primer and his *rukouskirja*, or Book of Prayers: *Kun ABCkirja ensin on / Siitä alku opista uskon* (When the ABC book came into being / The people began to learn the faith).

Despite the efforts of Vasa and his grandson, Gustavus II Adolphus (1594–1632), to give Sweden a centralized regime, Swedish kings allowed Finnish culture to flourish. Clergymen delivered their sermons in Finnish. Courts normally permitted the use of Finnish in oral proceedings. The Swedish army included separate Finnish-speaking regiments. A Finnish Diet, established in 1617, helped the King govern the Finnish-speaking provinces.

All in all, the link to Sweden proved extraordinarily fortunate for Finland. From the Swedes, Finns acquired a preference for democratic and constitutional government, for humanistic values, and for free speech and religion. In large part, this legacy explains why Finns identify with the West rather than the East today. "The Finlander," wrote the ethnologist James Latham in 1856, was "united with the Swede rather than subjected to him... his civilization is that of western Europe rather than eastern Europe."

## 'The Great Wrath'

Finland might well have remained attached to the Swedish crown. But time and again, geography would cast Finland in the role of Europe's innocent bystander, brought willy-nilly into political and military contests by the Continent's great powers.

Between 1700 and 1721, Peter the Great fought and defeated Sweden's King Charles XII in the Great Northern War. Peter sought, as he put it, "a cushion" upon which his newly established imperial capital, St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), "might be secure." As Sweden's eastern frontier, Finland suffered the most during the war. Nearly one-quarter of Finland's 400,000 inhabitants perished in the last eight years of fighting, later known as "The Great Wrath." Helsinki, Lappeenranta, Porvoo, and Pietarsaari were burnt to the ground. During the conflict, one Swedish official observed, "All the thrusts received by Sweden from her worst enemy have gone right through Finland's heart."

In the 19th century, Finland again became entangled in the great power maneuverings on the Continent. The peace that Napoleon and Tsar Alexander I made on a raft in the middle of the Niemen River at Tilsit also brought war to faraway Finland. Under the Treaty

of Tilsit (1807), Russia was obliged to bring her nominal ally Sweden into Napoleon's naval blockade against England. But Sweden's King Gustavus IV Adolphus refused to go along, forcing the tsar to declare war on Sweden.

On February 21, 1808, Russian troops struck across the Karelian Isthmus. With his troops underequipped and outnumbered, the Finnish commander-in-chief, W. M. Klingspor, ordered his men to retreat. Poet Johan Ludvig Runeberg immortalized the heartwrenching march northward through the snow:

> He scans the frozen contour of Siikajoki's plain,
> As desolate as a corpse before interment,
> But sadder is the thought of the army in his train,
> That fled from Russian war-cries of triumph and disdain.

After 13 months of resistance, the Swedes sued for peace. Under the terms of the armistice, Gustavus surrendered his Finnish territories to the tsar. As soon as the fighting ended, Alexander I convened the Finnish Diet at the village of Porvoo, 30 miles east of Helsinki. There, on March 25, 1809, the Diet pledged loyalty to the tsar, the "Grand Duke of Finland." In turn, Alexander accepted Finland into his empire as a self-governing constitutional state. Thus, 19th-century Finns would fare better than their Polish counterparts, who suffered under both Russian and Prussian oppression. On April 4, 1809, Alexander promised "to confirm and secure to them the maintenance of their religion and fundamental laws." The Diet managed to do what Finns had done before and would do again: preserve Finland's culture and identity in the aftermath of defeat.

## Fennomania

In retrospect, Finns might well have greeted Russia's victory with a sigh of relief. It was ironic that as a satrapy of Imperial Russia, Finland's traditional nemesis, the country would enjoy its longest period of uninterrupted peace. Passports read: "Finnish Citizen, Russian Subject." Although the tsar's personal representative, the governor-general, sat in Helsinki, Finns would experience little interference from St. Petersburg. Russian military conscription stopped at the border (though many Finns volunteered for the Imperial Army). As one governor-general, F. L. Heiden, remarked, it would be futile to force Finnish youth, "accustomed to eating salted herring, to eat buckwheat porridge."

Indeed, many Finns did not like the "taste" of Russian nationality, the tsar's restrained attitude notwithstanding. Finnish journalist and nationalist Adolf Iwar Arwidsson complained of feeling like a "squatter in a rotten province governed by stupid asses and sly

### THE *YKSINKERTAINEN* FINNISH LANGUAGE

In French, the word is *téléphone*; in Italian, it is *telefono*; in Russian, *telefon*; but in Finnish it is *puhelin*. Indeed, most Finnish words look and sound strange to many Europeans. That fact has helped Finns to preserve their own national identity, despite centuries of Swedish and Russian rule.

Finnish stands well apart from English, French, Spanish, German, and other Western tongues because it belongs to the Finno-Ugric—not to the Indo-European—family of languages. The Finns' ancestors, anthropologists believe, began to disperse from their homeland in the southern Ural mountains around 3000 B.C. The Uralians divided into two groups; some eventually settled in present-day Hungary, while others migrated to Estonia and Finland. With some practice, modern Finns and Estonians can understand each other; Hungarians and Finns cannot.

Just how different is Finnish? Imagine an American student in Helsinki, learning a language with no gender, no articles, few prepositions, 15 cases, and words that seem to stretch halfway across the page. Even "simple" is not: *yksinkertainen*. The Finnish language relies heavily on a bewildering array of prefixes, suffixes, and infixes (particles within a word). Thus, *pöytä* means "table" and *pöydällä* means "on the table." One noun with several particles can express what would need a whole phrase in English. "Let's have a look" equals *katsotaanpa* in Finnish. And thanks to the oddities of the Finnish transliteration, our student would even find imported words such as *pankki* (bank) impossible to recognize.

Nor does mastery of Finnish pronunciation come easily. The sole difference between saying *tapaamme* (we meet) and *tapamme* (we kill), for exam-

foxes." Now was the time, he said, for Finns to create their own nation: "We are no longer Swedes; we cannot become Russians; we must be Finns."

Central to Fennomanian aspirations was the fate of the Finnish language. While 85 percent of the population spoke one of the many Finnish dialects, few were educated in that tongue. The Finnish elite learned Swedish, the language of the schoolroom, the lecture hall, and the bureaucracy. But with Finns no longer taking guidance from Stockholm, Swedish and Finnish would be, in the view of Finnish nationalist Johan Vilhelm Snellman, like the shell and the kernel. While the shell would rot, the kernel "will not spoil during the long winter, and will germinate when the time comes."

The Fennomanians, however, feared that the tsar would impose the Russian language. But again the tsar proved accommodating. In fact, St. Petersburg required that clergymen and judges appointed to Finnish parishes and districts be conversant with the vernacular. And in 1863, Tsar Alexander II signed an edict that elevated Finnish to the status of "official language" [see box, above].

ple, is that pronouncing the first word requires a slightly longer "a."

As a literary language, Finnish is young, and has matured slowly. Finnish was not an official language until Tsar Alexander II so declared it in 1863. And the University of Helsinki—where classes had long been taught exclusively in Swedish—did not become bilingual until 1923.

The task of fashioning everyday Finnish into a literary form fell to assorted scholars and amateur linguists. The physician and future University of Helsinki professor Elias Lönnrot (1802–84) was one of them. While practicing medicine in the Karelian village of Kajaani, Lönnrot transcribed thousands of verses from Karelian cantos, or *runes*. From these he constructed a single long, connected oral poem, which he called the *Kalevala* (1835). Here was an epic work, many thought, an expression of the genius of ordinary Finns. As it turned out, Lönnrot had written many of the verses himself. "I myself began to conjure," he later admitted. "I myself began to sing."

In any case, the 12,000-line *Kalevala*, with its vivid descriptions of Finnish landscapes, nature, customs, and folk life, spurred a sense of pride—the quintessence, it seemed, of Finnish culture and nationhood:

> O thou lovely little village, / Fairest spot in all the country! / Grass below, and cornfields over, / In the midst between the village. / Fair the shore below the village, / By the shore is gleaming water, / Where the ducks delight in swimming, / And the water-fowl are sporting.

Not surprisingly, the *Kalevala* played a central role in Finland's national awakening, and inspired the paintings and frescoes of Akseli Gallén-Kallela (1865–1931) and the pastoral moods of Jean Sibelius's *Finlandia* (1899) and other musical compositions.

As a Grand Duchy of Russia, Finland moved forward on all fronts. Geographically, the country expanded when, in 1812, Alexander I restored to Finland territories that had been lost to Russia after the Great Northern War. At the same time, public education became much more available. Between 1875 and 1917, the number of public school students soared from 15,000 to over 200,000. Thousands of boys and girls, once busy only with domestic chores, found themselves reading Finnish literary classics, such as Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala*, a compilation of Karelian poems and songs, and Johan Runeberg's patriotic *Tales of Ensign Stål* (1848).

Under the tsars, the Finns would enjoy material progress. Lacking large deposits of coal and iron ore, 19th-century Finns, it seemed, would be forever dependent on fishing, farming, and fur trading. In 1850, 90 percent of all Finns still tilled the soil. But industrialization in Western Europe soon spurred demand for Finland's wide range of timber products—pit props for coal mines, plywood for crating and packaging, poles for telegraph companies. Lumber-hauling paddle steamers snaked through Finland's 3,000-mile web of interconnect-

ing canals and lakes. Steam-powered ferries took lumber and dairy products from Finland's southwest coast to Stockholm. Icebreakers, first launched from Finnboda wharf at Stockholm in 1890, kept the ports in the Gulfs of Bothnia and Finland open all year round. By the turn of the century, dozens of steamships, many operating out of Helsinki and Hanko, hauled textiles from Tampere and Turku and glassware from Nuuttajärvi to other European metropolises, such as Hamburg and Stettin.

The belated Finnish economic boom may have been too much of a good thing. Seeing advantages in bringing a prosperous Finland more directly under the empire's control, Tsar Nicholas II set out to Russify the peninsula. His February Manifesto of 1899 essentially ended the lawmaking powers of the Finnish Diet. Finland's ruling elite—mostly Swedish-speaking liberals—were shocked and angered. Within 10 days, some 523,000 Finns (half of the country's adult population) signed a petition protesting the Manifesto, which a delegation of Finnish luminaries presented to the tsar in St. Petersburg. Nicholas paid no attention.

## Courting the Kaiser

The tsar's resistance deepened the crisis. Increasingly, events in Helsinki paralleled those in St. Petersburg. The burgeoning working class nudged the new Social Democratic Party further and further to the Left, while Russian political exiles in Finland propagated the ideologies of Karl Kautsky and Karl Marx. Students and intellectuals joined in forming secret societies, such as the Kagal, which exhorted young male Finns to resist passively the newly expanded Russian military conscription. Less than half of all Finns summoned for duty showed up to serve. In 1904, one member of the Finnish Activists, Eugen Schauman, assassinated the governor-general, Nikolay I. Bobrikov, in his office in Helsinki. Suddenly, Finland—so quiet, remote, passive, and parochial—began to look like anywhere else.

By the time World War I began in 1914, Finnish nationalists were courting Russia's enemies, notably Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany, as logical allies in their own struggle to liberate Finland. Some 2,000 young Finns received military training at Hamburg's Feldmeister School. As members of the 27th Royal Prussian Jaeger Battalion, they eventually fought alongside German troops, against the Russians near the Gulf of Riga. Finnish novelist Joel Lehtonen wrote that the atmosphere in Helsinki before World War I was "like the period before a thunderstorm, stifling, suffocating, making one restless, almost as if longing for some sort of explosion."

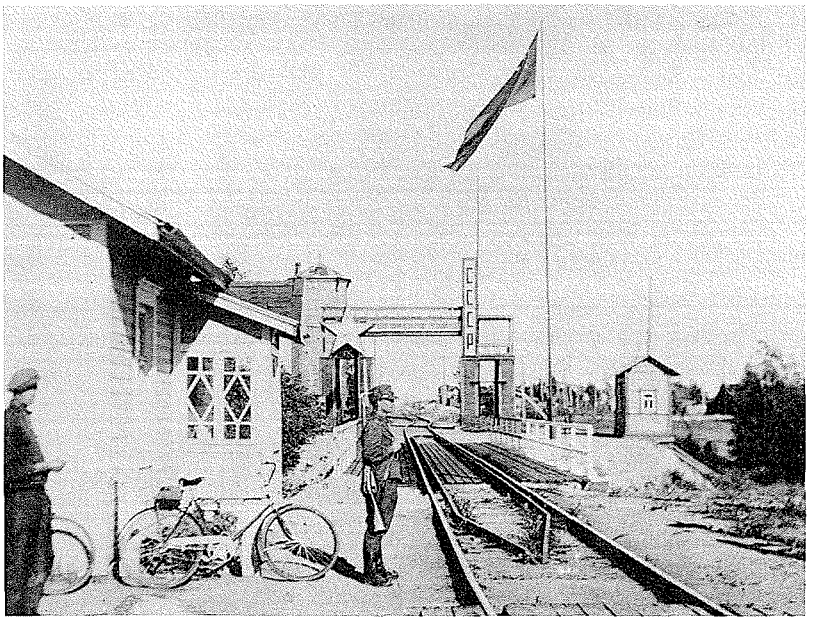
The first thunderclap sounded on March 15, 1917, when Tsar Nicholas II abdicated; his regime was later replaced by Aleksandr Kerensky's provisional government. In Finland, the end of Russia's

1,000-year-old monarchy raised more questions than it answered. Who now would inherit the power of the absent tsar?

In Petrograd, the Kerensky government refused to let the semi-autonomous Finnish parliament, or Eduskunta, the new unicameral assembly that had replaced the old Diet in 1906, establish home rule. But when Lenin's Bolsheviks toppled the Kerensky regime on November 7, 1917, most Finns were ready to insist that their country should be sovereign. On December 6, 1917, the Eduskunta, led by a coalition of nonsocialist parties, proclaimed Finland independent with "the legislature the repository of supreme power."

Finnish socialists, however, were not going to let power slip into bourgeois hands so easily. Buoyed by Lenin's triumph in Petrograd, they were eager for their own Bolshevik revolution in Helsinki. Social Democratic Party leaders sanctioned the formation of Red Guard units, and, on November 13, had proclaimed a nationwide strike. The Eduskunta responded by setting up its own police force—the Civic, or White, Guards—to expel the 40,000-man Russian garrison from Finland and restore order. Suddenly, Finns—normally unified in the face of a Russian threat—found themselves both divided and mired in a nasty civil war.

Fighting broke out on January 19, 1918, when the Whites at-



*West meets East at the Finno-Soviet border, near Terijoki (1930s). Reads the Soviet banner on the frontier bridge: "Workers of the World, Unite!"*

tempted to break up Red Guard gunrunning between Petrograd and Viipuri. On the same day, Gen. Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim traveled incognito, as the merchant "Gustaf Malmberg," to the city of Vaasa on the Gulf of Bothnia. From there he would command the White troops—a "farmer's army" of 70,000, mostly small landholders and country lads. Nine days later, the Red Guards—now some 100,000 strong—occupied the government offices in Helsinki, forcing chief executive Pehr Svinhufvud and other White leaders to join Mannerheim in Vaasa. Mannerheim's counterrevolutionary forces, buttressed by 12,000 German troops and the Finnish Jaegers, eventually managed to re-establish order and take control of Red strongholds in the south. On May 16, 1918, the victorious White forces paraded through the streets of Helsinki.

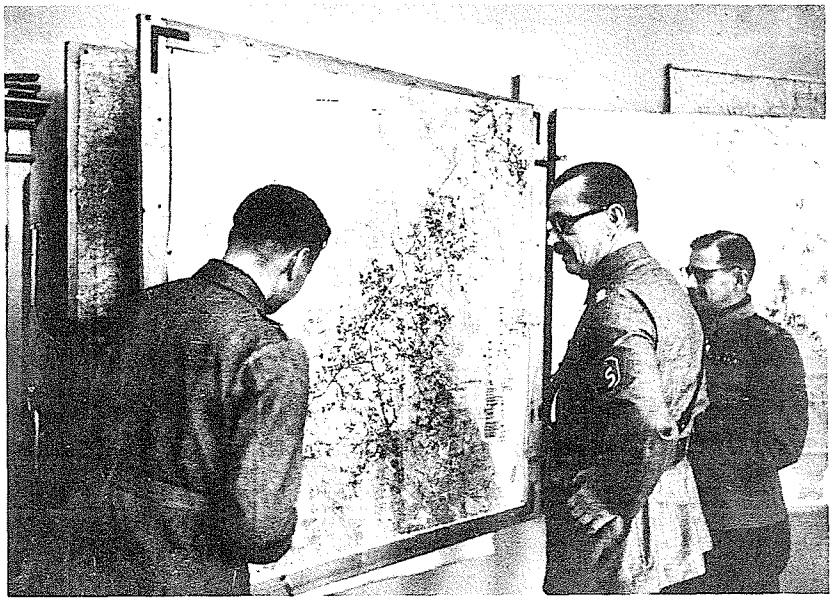
Finally, Finland belonged to itself. But the price had been high. Cruelties on both sides left deep psychological wounds. Some 21,000 Finns had died in the civil strife. More than 8,000 Reds were executed in the war's aftermath; nearly 10 times as many were herded through prison camps during the summer of 1918. Many died of disease and starvation. Others fled to Sweden, the Soviet Union, or the United States. Those who returned to their towns and villages did so bearing the onus of having sided with those who had tried to overthrow the government.

Now a sovereign nation, Finland, for the first time in its history, would conduct its own foreign affairs. The privilege, of course, brought commensurate burdens. During the 1920s and '30s, Finnish presidents found themselves in roughly the same position as the early Swedish kings: maintaining a guarded, uneasy relationship with the big eastern neighbor. Not even the 1939–40 Winter War would reconcile, as Finnish diplomat Max Jakobson has put it, "Finnish will to independence with the great power ambitions of Russia."

## Hitler's Co-Belligerent

Indeed, just weeks after the Winter War ended, Finland found itself afflicted once more by geography, caught between two great powers. On April 9, 1940, Nazi troops invaded Denmark and Norway, and quickly occupied Oslo, Bergen, and Narvik, the tiny port from which the Nazis exported Swedish iron and Finnish nickel to Germany. The Finns later allowed German troops and materiel to transit through Finland, to and from northern Norway. In July, the Soviets won *their* concessions: transit rights for military supplies on Finnish railroads from the Soviet border to the Soviets' Hanko naval base on the southern coast.

Clearly, each totalitarian power had designs on Finland. From November 10 to 12, the Soviet and German foreign ministers, Vyacheslav Molotov and Joachim von Ribbentrop, met in Berlin to



*Field Marshal Carl Gustaf Mannerheim (1867–1951), Swedish-born aristocrat, is shown here at his wartime command post at Mikkeli in 1942.*

discuss the future of Finland. Russia's interest in applying "a settlement on the same scale as in Bessarabia to Finland" collided with Hitler's desire to secure supplies of Finnish nickel needed for his war effort. By June 1941, the Germans had deployed five divisions in Finnish Lapland, with the approval of Helsinki.

On June 22, 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, attacking Russia all along its western border. On June 25, the Red Air Force bombed Kerimaki, Turku, Porvoo, and other Finnish cities. Two days later, Finland's 400,000-man army counterattacked; some 60,000 German troops joined in the advance in northern Finland. Hitler wasted no time in bragging that his Wehrmacht was fighting "side by side with their Finnish comrades."

But the Finns did not quite see it that way. Their military effort was a "continuation of the Winter War"; Germany and Finland, as "co-belligerents" (not allies), shared nothing more than a common enemy. Hitler demanded that the Finns join in the Wehrmacht siege of Leningrad, and in a planned attack on the Murmansk-to-Moscow railway, along which came boots, blankets, and other supplies for the Red Army, carried by Allied convoys to Murmansk. In both campaigns, the Finns refused to participate. Finland's leading Social Democratic daily, the *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, claimed that co-bellig-

erency with Germany would not "limit Finland's freedom of action; it does not change our relations with other countries; it does not tie us to any foreign ideology."

Nevertheless, Great Britain and the United States could not dismiss the reality that Finland was fighting alongside the Germans, against an ally. And Finnish operations, contrary to their claims, were not entirely defensive. By August 1941, Finnish troops had crossed the pre–Winter War frontiers into Soviet territory. On December 6, 1941, Finnish Independence Day, Churchill declared war on Finland. Allied suspicions seemed confirmed when Finland's President Risto Ryti wrote to Hitler on June 26, 1944 that he would not "make peace with the Soviet Union except in agreement with the German Reich." Four days later, U.S. officials lowered the American embassy's flag in Helsinki; the U.S. ambassador went home. "Most Americans," according to an editorial in the *New Republic*, were "badly troubled in their minds about Finland."

As the Third Reich crumbled, Finland's Continuation War ended in much the same fashion as the Winter War: The Soviets captured the Karelian Isthmus (in June 1944) and forced Finland to sign an armistice. This time, Finland would have to surrender not only much of the Karelian frontier zone but also its valuable nickel mines near the far northern city of Petsamo. The Finns were forced to lease the Porkkala Peninsula—which lay just 18 miles west of Helsinki—to the Soviets for 50 years.

The peace settlement also stipulated that the Finns expel 200,000 German troops remaining in Lapland—which they did, between September 1944 and March 1945. As the Germans retreated under Finnish harassment into Norway, they left behind a wasteland, destroying buildings, bridges, and telephone poles.

Thus, Finland was the only nation involved in World War II to fight both Germany and the Soviet Union. It was also the only European nation bordering on the Soviet Union to remain a Western-style democracy after Hitler's demise.

Why the Soviet Union never simply took over Finland—as it did the Baltic republics and parts of Poland and Romania to the south—remains a matter of scholarly debate. Stalin may have judged such a step too costly in terms of possible Western reactions in 1944–45. Or perhaps the Soviets' study of Finnish history imparted a lesson, which has not been forgotten by the Kremlin today. "The Russians have learnt," as British historian Paul Winterton observed, "that the Finns are an indigestible people, but [the Russians] also know that they do not have to swallow Finland in order to get what they require."