World War II in Finland, War Reparations, and the Sámi: The Side Effects of the war in Finland

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ABSTRACT: World War II was a time of chaos and upheaval across the globe, and Scandinavia was no exception. The war in Scandinavia had a significant impact on the Sámi, the indigenous people of Scandinavia. Sámi lands witnessed warfare, occupation, and destruction throughout the war. Sámi suffered greatly as they were forced from their homelands, forced into armed combat, and came home to lands ravaged by war. Because of accessibility, language barriers, and marginalization, little is written of the Sámi's plight. Recent literature, has begun to focus on the Sámi during this time, and the present paper builds on their work. I examine these publishings and connect the dots of history through this time of chaos, illustrating that the Sámi suffered immensely and that their culture was permanently altered due to World War II.

RÉSUMÉ: La Seconde Guerre mondiale a été une période de bouleversement dans le monde entier, et la Scandinavie ne fait pas exception. La guerre en Scandinavie a eu un fort impact sur les Samis, le peuple autochtone en Scandinavie, et leurs terres qui ont été occupées et détruites durant la guerre. Forcés de quitter leurs terres, de participer aux combats armés et de rentrer sur des terres ravagées par la guerre, les Samis ont beaucoup souffert. En raison de l'accessibilité, des barrières linguistiques et de la marginalisation, peu de choses ont été écrites sur le sort des Samis. Des ouvrages récents, sur lesquels je m'appuie, commencent à s'intéresser aux Samis pendant cette période. J'étudie ces publications et relie les points de l'histoire à travers cette période de guerre, en montrant que les Samis ont immensément souffert et que leur culture a été altérée à jamais par la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

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Finland had a unique experience during the Second World War. Despite many if not most of its citizens aligning politically and ideologically with the eventual Allied nations, such as the United States and Great Britain, the country soon found itself fighting alongside Germany. The alliance was as much about convenience and a common enemy as anything else, but nonetheless, when World War II came to an end, Finland found itself on the losing side. The upside was that Finland managed, against all odds, to maintain its relatively infantile sovereignty, but it did so at a significant cost. The Soviet Union, whom the Finns and Germans fought against together, demanded compensation for suffering at the hands of the Finns. Though the terms took years to finalize, parts kicked in immediately. The final sum included territory, political concessions, and $300 million USD in reparations (Heninen). The cost was not purely monetary; it consisted also of natural resources, manufactured goods, houses, vehicles, and more. The treaty's terms and reparation payments would have significant, long-term effects on Finland and the Sámi, the Indigenous peoples inhabiting parts of Scandinavia and Russia.

At the end of the war, Finland's economy was still transitioning, with fifty-five percent of the population still employed in agriculture (Pihkala 36-). Finland suffered significant destruction during the war and its border regions saw the near-constant presence of Finnish, German, and Soviet soldiers. The reparation payments represented a significant portion of their economy and significant investment in the mining and production industries. Considered alongside the loss of territory and the enforced isolation from western alliances such as NATO, the Moscow Armistice played a huge role in shaping the trajectory of both Finland and the Sámi into the present. It is the intent of this paper to detail just how far-reaching and destructive the war, the ensuing peace treaty, and reparations were. I examine both the Moscow Peace Treaty of 1940 and the Moscow Armistice of 1944 to connect the dots to numerous impacts these treaties had, as well as the war itself. Drawing on work from archaeologists such as Oula Seitsonen, historians including Marja Tuominen, and ethnologists such as Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, I demonstrate the effects of these treaties on post-war Finland. By the end of this paper there will be no doubt that not only was Finland impacted significantly, but that the Sámi people's entire culture was forever changed by its conflict with the Soviet Union and the war reparations that followed World War II.

Before the War

Finland has a long history as a semi-autonomous or autonomous region of other countries. From the 13th century until 1809 Finland was a part of the Swedish empire. It operated at various levels of independence, but always answered to a Swedish ruler. When Sweden was defeated by Russia in 1809 it was forced to concede a third of its territory, including all of Finland. At that point it became known officially as the Grand Duchy of Finland, experiencing a modicum of independence, but still falling under Russian rule until the Russian Revolution in 1917. At the turn of the 20th century there was a notable increase in "russification" efforts, spearheaded by Russian General Nikolai Bobrikov, who was appointed Governor-General of Finland in 1898 (Singleton and Upton 96). In 1901 Finnish army units were placed under Russian officers and their Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) were required to speak Russian (97). Tensions continued to rise, stoked by the Tsar's refusal to hear petitions and in 1904 Bobrikov was assassinated by a young Finn named Eugen Schauman (99). With Russia in upheaval from its revolution, Finland declared its independence. A brief, brutal civil war followed, contested by the Imperialists (Whites) and the Communists (Reds). The Whites were supported by the German empire while the Reds were backed by the Russians. The Whites were victorious, paving the way for a friendly relationship with the Germans and an intense dislike of Russians and communists. This was significant in the events leading up to World War II.

Meanwhile, the Sámi and their ancestors had inhabited parts of Scandinavia and Russia, including large swaths of Finland, since 10,000 B.C.E. (Solbakk 24). A semi-nomadic people with diverse professions, language, and culture, the Sámi existed alongside various civilizations through time. They paid taxes, sometimes to more than one ruler, but always maintained independence and a distinctive lifestyle, language, and culture (36). The different Sámi groups had a wide array of lifestyles, some relying on reindeer herding, others fishing and hunting, and still others in farming and sheep herding. From the 17th century onwards, various efforts have been made to "civilize" the Sámi in Scandinavia. Sámi suffered forced assimilation and discrimination. Beginning in the late 19th century, children were sent to boarding schools where their language, dress, and culture were forbidden (Lehtola 68). These schools can aptly be compared to residential schools found in North America. Despite this, Sámi culture persisted, but they would soon find themselves caught in the crossfire of a war started by borders they didn't recognize. While the Sámi have repeatedly faced border closures throughout their history, World War II combined strict closures with constantly shifting borders, especially in Finland. The Sámi also suffered at the hands of the Soviets.

While the Bolshevik Russian government originally supported minorities in their right to self-determination,[1] this policy shifted dramatically under Josef Stalin. Beginning in 1937, Sámi were included on the Soviets "Enemies of the People" list, and many were sent to labor camps (Lehtola 68). Numerous Sámi were arrested on trumped-up charges, while others were executed during the Great Terror (Kotljarchuk 62). The Sámi, already seen as a lesser people by nations they shared lands with, would suffer some of the direst, and least known, consequences of the Second World War.

The Beginning of the Conflict and First Evacuation

The Soviets invaded Finland on 30 November 1939 under the guise of retaliation to an attack that is widely considered a false flag operation (Jakobson 12-13). The Soviets invaded to regain territory lost during the creation of the Kingdom of Finland in 1918,[2] violating numerous non-aggression pacts in the process. This marked the entrance of Finland into World War II in what is now referred to as the Winter War.

On top of drawing the Finns into a war they had hoped to avoid, the outbreak of hostilities had a dramatic effect on the Sámi. Raids by Soviet partisans during the Continuation War were common and exacted a terrible toll on the local population who remained in the area. As the battles intensified, both the Finnish and Soviets conscripted help from the Sámi. This marked the first time in history that Sámi, a traditionally pacifist culture, were called up to fight on behalf of a nation (Lehtola 52). Both Finland and the Soviet Union relied upon the Sámi's expertise with reindeer and navigating an arctic land devoid of paved roads, the Soviets going as far as to form entire reindeer brigades (Kotljarchuk 69).

The Soviets expected a victory over Finland within two weeks, but this failed to materialize (Upton 20). Though the Soviets are remembered for their later triumphs over the Germans in winter warfare, the initial assault on Finland was nothing short of a total failure. The Finns, meanwhile, garnered nearly unanimous praise and sympathy from the international community, though little actual help. Despite this, the Finns stymied nearly every Soviet advance. Unable to adapt to an arctic environment, and with casualties quickly piling up, the Soviets began to seek answers for their tactical and manpower shortcomings. One direction in which they turned was to the Sámi.

The Sámi were most often used for transportation and navigation, but significant numbers perished in combat. The Kola Peninsula region alone recorded 24 Sámi who died during the fighting (Kotljarchuk 69). Given that Sámi casualties have rarely been accurate or even counted at all throughout history it is likely these totals are much higher. Sámi fought on both sides of the war,

making it plausible that these pacifist people were forced to fight against each other. The most likely location of this combat is at Petsamo, Finland (Lehtola 52).

The civilian population in the Finnish region of Lapland and the contested region of Karelia suffered greatly during the Winter War. This conflict marked the first time these regions faced evacuation. Though not as severe, or prolonged, as the second evacuation, it was nonetheless highly traumatic. Marja Tuominen, T.G. Ashplant, and Tiina Harjumaa's *Reconstructing Minds and Landscapes: Silent Post-War Memory in the Margins of History* highlights social, cultural, and religious differences as some of the key issues for refugees. The Karelian region has shared Finnish and Russian history and was hotly contested by both before and during the war. Evacuees from this region entering Finland or Sweden were often seen as "Ruskies" and many were Orthodox Christians (Tuominen, Ashplant, and Harjumaa 9). Historical grievances between Sweden and Finland with Russia often led to these refugees experiencing a hostile reception.

The Soviets, owing to far superior manpower and a reshuffle of leadership, eventually overcame the Finns, who were forced to sue for peace. The result was the Moscow Peace Treaty, signed on 12 March 1940. Finland ceded roughly nine percent of its territory, including half of the industrially and historically significant region of Karelia ("Finland-Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" 127-30). However, Finland was able to thwart the initial goal of complete takeover, and that the Finns maintained sovereignty, was seen as a moral victory and the Winter War is still celebrated in Finland today. The harsh terms of the Moscow Peace Treaty were nonetheless ill-received and led Finland to ally with Nazi Germany.

Continuation War, Finnish Camps and Second Evacuation

Germany launched their invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, opening a new European front and a new phase of the war for Finland. Discontent with the Moscow Peace Treaty, the Finns allied with the Germans to win back the territory they were forced to concede. This alliance had numerous, long-lasting effects for Finland, with tangible impacts felt at least until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In the immediacy it began the Continuation War, saw more than 200,000 German troops enter Finland, and witnessed the resumption of armed conflict on Finnish soil (Tuominen, Ashplant, and Harjumaa 27).

Finland benefited with the recapture of Karelia, restoring control over a vital industrial sector. However, it left them in possession of large numbers of

Prisoners of War (POWs). Roughly 85,000 Soviet civilians, who had moved into the area after the Moscow Peace Treaty, also fell into Finnish hands (Megargee 81). The result was a hastily constructed system of concentration camps. These camps were brutal and more than 18% of inmates perished at Finnish-run camps for civilians, primarily from disease (81). The POW camps were even worse. Prisoners in Finnish and German-run camps alike were forced to perform hard labor, often in an Arctic climate and without proper equipment. There was also significant ethnic-rooted bias. A POW of Finnish descent could expect better treatment than a Russian. Approximately one-third of all POWs in Finnish-run camps perished, and Russians did so at an even higher rate (82). The atrocities in these camps were largely forgotten, successfully buried deep in post-war archives. Less than a thousand Finns were prosecuted for war crime and the only conviction for the Finnish secret police, or *Valpo,* was their leader Arno Anthoni, who helped orchestrate the deportation of Jewish refugees to the Germans and had a close working relationship with Heinrich Himmler.[3] Even his conviction was quickly overturned, and he was compensated for his time served (Megargee 84).

Again, one of the biggest victims of the war in Finland were the Sámi. Sámi refugees were sent to a variety of locations, some to neighboring regions in Finland and some to Sweden (Lehtola 54). This dispersion caused numerous problems, such as culture clash and isolation. Finnish peasants clashed with the Sámi refugees they hosted in their homes, especially the *Skolt,* who were heavily influenced by Russian culture and religion (54-55). Many Finns harboured skepticism against anything with Russian or communist ties, stemming from the Finnish Civil War and the Soviet invasion of Finland in November of 1939. The Sámi who were sent to coastal regions also suffered from a change in diet and climate. Many Sámi groups also suffered from poor immunity, a side-effect of their semi-nomadic lifestyle. Like many Indigenous populations, the Sámi's genetic makeup is less conducive to adapt to rapid change in diet and lifestyle (Ross 561-62). During the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918-19, the Sámi-dominated regions of Karasjok and Alta-Kautokeino had flu and pneumonia mortality rates 350 and 490 percent higher respectively than the average in Norway (Mamelund 85). Particularly vulnerable to disease were the reindeer-herding Sámi, who had less opportunity to develop natural immunity living outside of large population centers. Erkki Rautio's 2004 thesis *Pohjoiset Pakolaiset* notes that children in these World War II refugee camps were particularly susceptible to disease (Rautio, Korteniemi, and Vuopio).

Isolation, and the dramatic change in lifestyle, had a devastating impact on the Sámi. The expedited evacuation, and the wide, scattered areas they were sent to, separated families, friends, and cultures. Refugees who were able to remain in Finland, especially near their homelands, tended to fare better. Particularly those who stayed in the farmlands of Ostrobothia usually

maintained contact with relatives (Seitsonen and Koskinen-Koivisto 430). For those who were sent to distant locations, especially Sweden, there were significant consequences. Prior to World War Two there were 10 distinct Sámi languages. In the present day two of them, *Ter* and *Akkala,* are believed to be extinct or to have only one or two speakers remaining (Scheller 395-96). Though other factors played a role, such as Russian persecution including being listed as an Enemy of the State by Stalin, and more research is needed to concretely prove the link, it hardly seems a coincidence that both *Ter* and *Akkala* originate from the Kola peninsula, one of the regions most impacted by the war.

The expedited evacuations of Lapland, Karelia, and other affected regions had a dramatic impact upon the youth, Finnish and Sámi alike. More than 70,000 children were sent to foster homes in Sweden for various reasons, many were sent away during times of relative peace (Koskinen-Koivisto 112). At the end of the war, as many as 15,000 of the children remained in Sweden with their foster families. Some remained because their parents had died; others because they had lost contact with their parents and native language; still others did not return because their family could not afford it (113).

Finnish historian Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto points out the evacuated children fared worse than those who remained in Finland. Refugee children faced malnutrition, neglect, isolation, and even violence and sexual abuse at the hands of their foster families. This led to long-term struggles with mental and physical health post-war, in addition to loss of their native language and connection with their birth families (111-14, 119-20). Sámi children who were sent to Swedish refugee camps were subject to additional humiliation, particularly in the delousing process that greeted their arrival, a process Sámi elders refer to as, "A tit exhibition for Sweden's soldiers" (Seitsonen 429). It would be a long wait for the situation to improve for the refugees. The end of the war between the Soviet Union and Finland and Germany may have been greeted with optimism, but it merely marked a new phase of suffering for many Finns and Sámi.

The Moscow Armistice and the Destruction of Lapland

With the tide turned firmly against Germany in the war, and the Soviets making gains, Finland was once again forced to sue for peace to maintain its independence. This culminated in the Moscow Armistice, signed on 19 September 1944, but not fully ratified until 1947 (Heninen). The treaty had three key outcomes: loss of territory; war reparations; and the expedited removal of German troops from Finnish territory. The war reparations and loss of territory will be discussed shortly, but the removal of German soldiers is worthy of close examination, so destructive was its outcome.

The Moscow Armistice stipulated that all German troops withdraw from Finnish territory by September 15, 1944. Any who remained were to be expelled by force or handed over to the Soviets as prisoners (Heninen). Given that negotiations had only begun at the beginning of the month, this request was impossible. Over 200,000 German soldiers remained in Finland. Impatient with the delay, the Soviets pressured the Finns into military action, which began on September 28th. Recent allies now fought against each other. The Germans considered this as nothing short of betrayal, and resorted to scorched-earth tactics in response. Finland, and Lapland in particular, would pay a heavy price.

As the Germans retreated, they destroyed virtually everything in their path. The hardest-hit areas, such as the Lapland capital of Rovaniemi, saw as much as 90% of infrastructure destroyed (Seitsonen 430). Roads, bridges, electrical poles, culverts, even post offices, were subject to annihilation. It is estimated that more than 16,000 buildings and 700 bridges were blown up by the retreating Germans (Nissen 315). The Germans also slaughtered tens of thousands of cattle and reindeer, eliminating entire herds, and devastating the livelihoods of many Sámi (Seitsonen and Herva 181). The Fishing Sámi fared even worse, as the Germans decimated virtually their entire fleet (Lehtola 55). When the time came to rebuild, the returning inhabitants of Lapland had to do so from scratch, in the middle of an Arctic wilderness, and beginning in winter. The first returnees often slept outside or in makeshift shelters until homes could be constructed. Because of this, the rebuild process was slow to start and many inhabitants of Lapland did not return until the spring or later.

The Germans also sowed hundreds of thousands of land mines in Lapland (Seitsonen and Koskinen-Koivisto 430). These mines have been attributed to upwards of 2,000 deaths after the end of the war (Seitsonen, Herva, Myers, and Moshenska 177). Though fighting between the Finns and Germans had largely ceased by the end of 1944, the return of Lapland's inhabitants, and the rebuilding effort, was delayed because of the mines. When people did return, the mines posed a significant hazard to children, who were often unsupervised while the adults rebuilt. One Sámi elder recounted how he played with grenades and mines as a child (Seitsonen and Herva 182). He lived to tell his tale unscathed, but many were not as fortunate. Even with a concerted effort to remove them, mines (and other unexploded ordnance) were responsible for accidents in Lapland as late as the 1960s (Tuominen, Ashplant, and Harjumaa 138).

War Reparations and Rebuilding

Finland paid a heavy price for their alliance with Germany in World War II. Though it was the Soviets who initiated the conflict in 1939, they insisted

Finland pay reparations as terms of the Moscow Armistice and maintaining independence. After significant debate, the total of reparations amounted to $300 million US (more than $6 billion today), and were mostly non-monetary in nature (Heninen). The war sent Finland's national debt skyrocketing, a twenty-fold increase from 1939 to 1944 (Nissen 315). Finally, Finland owed debts to Germany, who had supported them economically, especially via food, throughout the war. These were comparatively small, but debts nonetheless. The efforts to make these payments, and to rebuild after years of war, were monumental and had myriad side effects.

Finland's payments consisted primarily of natural resources, manufactured items, locomotives, and ships. The makeup was dictated by what the Finns had available to give, but also what the Soviet Union needed. For instance, the Finns had no shortage of lumber and paper products, owing to their large forests. However, the Soviets also had an ample supply of their own timber and therefore demanded other goods as payment. After negotiations, Stalin set the final terms- no more than one-third of payments could consist of wood and paper (Jakobson 27).

The remainder of the bill hugely stressed Finland, reshaped its economy, and had long-lasting impacts on its people, the environment, and the Sámi. Roughly 25% was paid for in ships, the majority of which needed to be new, requiring new shipyards to be built (J.H.J. 309). The remainder consisted primarily of manufactured items. This included the demand for manufactured wooden homes, something that proved irksome to the Finns. While many in their own country, especially in Lapland, were without proper shelter, the Soviets were sent some 400,000m2 worth of homes ("Pateniemi toimitti sotakorvauksena Neuvostoliittoon 522 puutaloa"). The weight of these payments was hugely significant. In the first five years following the war the payments represented between 5 and 6 percent of the gross national product (GNP) (Fredrickson 20).

The re-ceding of territory in the Moscow Armistice was hugely significant. Finland once again lost the industrially significant Karelian region, responsible for between 12 and 13 percent of pre-war national income (Fredrickson 22). Finland also ceded Petsamo, which provided an ice-free port and valuable nickel mines. All told Finland lost roughly 10% of its land, 10% of both its forestry and industrial production, and 25% of its hydroelectric power (Fredrickson 18). The loss of territory also required the re-settlement of more than 400,000 people.

Some of these refugees made their way to cities, where they quickly depleted housing, still scarce from the war's destruction. Others were compensated with new land clearings, making up for what they lost in their homeland. Soldiers who fought in the Continuation War were also eligible for land as a reward. Around 12% of all farmed land came into the hands of these newly settled people. The land came from public, private, and church-owned

lands (Pihkala 36-37). Among the resettled included a number of Sámi, many of whom preferred to move inside new Finnish borders, rather than to fall under Soviet jurisdiction.

Most affected were the *Skolt*, one of the most nomadic Sámi groups. At the end of the war Finland lost the Petsamo region, which includes the traditional lands of the *Skolt* Sámi to the Soviet Union as part of the terms of the Moscow Armistice. Rather than remain on these lands under Soviet control, where the Sámi were on Stalin's Enemy of the State list, the *Skolt* moved to lands inside the new Finnish borders (Lehtola 68). For a people highly dependent on knowledge of the land for reindeer breeding, feeding, and calving, this proved especially problematic.

Many Sámi, *Skolt* included, have sacred places that are often represented by a natural landmark, such as a rock formation or a mountain. Moving to new lands and restricted by borders their culture did not recognize, the *Skolt* Sámi no longer had access to these sacred sites, even on lands that were less than 100 kilometers from their previous home. This furthered their feelings of isolation and loss of purpose. A survey of *Skolt* culture and traditions shows a sharp decline in these areas in the 25 years after World War II. By 1970 the *Skolt* Sámi went from a largely bilingual people to one that suffered serious degradation in their own, unique language; saw the disappearance of traditional crafts, such as weaving and manufacturing of items such as sleds and boats; and completely lost their traditional reindeer herding methods (Pelto 56).

The *Skolt* Sámi also had numerous conflicts with Finns and other Sámi communities over their settlement on these new lands. After resettlement the *Skolt* Sámi petitioned the Finnish government for their own reindeer association, but were denied. Instead, they were incorporated into two different reindeer associations, where they conflicted with the wealthier and more established groups such as the Inari Sámi. This conflict was exacerbated by new technologies, especially snowmobiles, that benefited the wealthier herders, but were largely out of reach of the *Skolt.* The Finnish government finally granted the *Skolt* their own district in 1969, but it came too late to prevent a major decline of the *Skolt* reindeer herd population and a massive degradation of traditional *Skolt* herding methods. For a community that views reindeer herding as "the ultimate symbol of their cultural identity," this was especially damaging (Pelto 59).

The Final Toll: Fallout from Reparations and War

Prior to World War II, 55% of Finnish people depended on agriculture and forestry (Pihkala 36). Finland needed to dramatically reshape their economy to make reparation and debt payments, as well as rebuild their own country. Some

of this was straightforward, but much of it had layers of complexity and significant hurdles to clear. Few new factories were needed, it was possible to simply convert the output of existing ones. Numerous armament factories began producing sewing machines, paper products, and electrical parts instead of guns and ammunition (Pihkala 38). But the massive increase in industrial production also required proportional increases in electricity, something that would have drastic consequences for the Finnish environment and to the Sámi.

The primary source used to meet the new electricity demands was hydroelectric, for two reasons. First was the shortage of coal in Europe. Because Finland was seen as a belligerent by the Allies, they received significantly less aid than other nations, such as Norway, Belgium, and the Netherlands. This included coal. The second factor was Finland's abundance of rivers, making hydroelectricity a natural solution. Finland also needed to replace the power lost in the ceding Karelia, responsible for 25% of pre-war hydroelectric power (Fredrickson 18). This culminated in large-scale construction of dams and power plants throughout Finland. Twenty-one new hydro-electric plants were built to help meet the country's energy demands (Tuominen, Ashplant, and Harjumaa 207). Most affected by this construction were the regions in northern Finland, and the Sámi inhabitants.

In 1941 the hydroelectric company Oulukoki Oy was founded specifically to construct power plants along the Oulu River, against objections from the local population, who relied upon the river for salmon and whitefish (Lähteenmäki 109). Further, Finnish historian Maria Lähteenmäki notes the construction along the Kitinen and Luiro rivers necessitated the evacuation of 600 inhabitants, whose lands were flooded for the building of reservoirs (110). Some of the Sámi on the Kola Peninsula, especially near the Tuloma River, had to move twice because of hydroelectric construction (Lehtola 68). This relocating concentrated the Sámi into larger settlements, further hampering their way of life. Nowhere was the impact of dam and power plant construction more noticeable than on the Kemijoki River. Construction on the first plant soon after the end of the war. Prior to this the Kemijoki was, "The most important salmon river in Europe until the 1940s" (Tuominen, Ashplant, and Harjumaa 207). After construction, fish migration ceased completely, as did fishing. The damage to the environment, and to the local population, was irreversible and has been referred to by sociologist Outi Autti as a cultural trauma (208).

Two sites of hydroelectric construction, Lokka and Porttipahta, stand out as especially damaging to the environment. These sites saw extensive clear-cutting of forests used to pave the way for reservoirs, forcing the relocation of more than 5000 reindeer and the complete loss of valuable autumn grazing grounds (Huntington, Fox, Berkes, and Krupnik 85). Beyond the loss of these vital lands, Sámi elders from the region have noted significant climate changes in the aftermath of the clearing and construction, including new weather

patterns, snowfall totals, and ice formation (85). Other elders highlighted the nearly complete loss of birds in the area, harming the ecosystem and removing a reliable food source for the local Sámi (86).

Finland's forests were a major casualty of post-war reconstruction and industrialization. The war caused extensive damage to many forests, due to artillery, gunfire, and the felling for use for shelter and warmth. This preceded what is referred to as the "Totally unrestrained capitalist exploitation of forest resources that followed in peacetime" (Tucker and Russell, 124). Areas untouched by war became prime real estate for logging companies and conservation groups noted that forests that had been touched by war and peacetime logging looked strikingly similar (181). Paper and pulp production increased significantly and caused so much pollution to the Baltic Sea that it led to widespread protests by environmentalists. It wasn't until the 1980s that proper pollution controls were in place at these plants (187). To meet the high demand for lumber, proposals were put forth calling for felling forest areas totaling more than 100,000 hectares (Tuominen, Ashplant, and Harjumaa 205-206).

The clear-cutting of forests would also have a devastating impact on reindeer and, by extent, their Sámi herders. Old-growth forests are a prime source for lichen, a primary food source for reindeer in the winter.[4] Lichen thrives in areas with limited snow cover, but with a warming climate, the loss of cover from forests, and soil erosion stemming from deforestation, lichen is at risk of being out-competed by other vegetation that is more suited for the warming climate (Pape, Roland, Löffler 429). The loss of some lichen-rich grounds also led to a higher concentration of reindeer in surviving lichen grounds, which poses an increased risk of trampling, something that lichen is extremely vulnerable to (424).

Sámi culture was impacted heavily by rebuilding efforts. As noted, the Sámi, especially in the Lapland region, returned home to total destruction. Rather than take input from the Sámi, reconstruction was conducted entirely in a Finnish manner. Homes were of Finnish make and style and clothing produced was not the traditional Sámi wear. All major institutions, such as health services, police stations, and post offices, were run using only the Finnish language. Agricultural development by newly settled farmers eradicated much of the economic base for Sámi who collected, used, and sold hay from wilderness meadows. The result was a significant degradation in Sámi culture, lifestyle, fashion, and tradition. The heavy Finnish influence is visible to this day (Lehtola 52-54).

Concluding Thoughts

World War II in Finland is a fascinating subject, one with many different phases and outcomes. The post-war recovery and impact from war reparations

owed to the Soviets is equally captivating, unique among all World War II participants. In 1952, Finland made its last reparation payment to the Soviets, becoming the first (and still the only) nation to successfully pay all its required reparations from the war ("Russia to Get Last Payment from Finland" 3). Today Finland is seen by many as a leading model in nation-building, having achieved socialized healthcare, free education, and many other social services. It also consistently ranks as one of the happiest countries in the world. But the road to get to this point has not been easy, and often overlooks many side effects.

World War II in Finland caused significant damage to its infrastructure, population, and environment in all three phases of the war (Winter War, Continuation War, Lapland War). The alliance with Nazi Germany and the prisoner camps tarnished Finland's reputation and has still not been fully reconciled with. Post-war reparations and reconstruction caused a complete restructure of Finland's economy and led to wide scale environmental destruction and constant resettlement. The Sámi, especially the *Skolt,* were victims of the environmental damage that stems directly from post-war reconstruction and industrialization.

Torn from their lands, the *Skolt* were forced to rebuild while also competing with other Sámi communities for resources and recognition from the Finnish government. The first quarter-century of the post-war era saw the *Skolt* suffer devastating, and potentially irreversible, losses in culture, language, and reindeer herding methods. Other Sámi communities, particularly those residing near major rivers, suffered the effects of hydroelectric construction and damming of rivers. All local people, Sámi and Finns, suffered from the pollution of the rivers and lakes, deforestation, and the loss of fish available for harvest. With all of this in mind, it is indisputable that World War II and the post-war reconstruction era forever changed Finland and completely altered the trajectory of the Sámi, who are so often pushed to the edges of history.

NOTES

1. This right to self-determination directly led to the creation of the Kingdom of Finland.

2. During the Russian revolution, Finland fought a civil war and won its independence on December 6, 1917 (Tepora 488).

3. Anthoni had a cigarette box with a personal inscription from Himmler (Holmila and Oula Silvennoinen 614).

4. Lichen comprise as much as 80% of reindeer's winter diet (Pape, Roland, Löffler 424).

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