

# From Silence to Historical Consciousness

## The Holocaust and WWII in Finnish History Politics

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**ABSTRACT:** Despite the fact that there are similar trajectories and turning points between Finland's and other European countries' responses to the Holocaust, it is still the case that trends in Holocaust studies and key debates within the field have had less impact on Finnish understanding of the Holocaust than one might suspect. Instead, as this article examines, the way in which Finland's Holocaust awareness has been developing since the end of the war in general, and in the 2000s in particular, has been intimately linked with the Finnish understanding of its own role in WWII. This tendency was most clearly illustrated in the controversy that took place during 2003 and 2004 with the publication of Elina Sana's book *Luovutetut* [The Extradited].

**RÉSUMÉ :** Malgré le fait qu'il existe des trajectoires et points-clés similaires entre la réponse de la Finlande et les réponses des autres pays européens à l'Holocauste, elle demeure le cas en vogue dans les études de l'Holocauste, et les débats-clés au sein de ce champ d'études ont eu moins d'impact sur la compréhension finlandaise de l'Holocauste que l'on pourrait le soupçonner. À la place, tel que l'examine cet article, la façon dont s'est développée la conscience finlandaise de l'Holocauste depuis la fin de la guerre en général, et dans les années 2000, en particulier, a été intimement liée à la compréhension finlandaise de son propre rôle dans la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Cette tendance a été le plus clairement illustrée dans la controverse qui a eu lieu en 2003 et 2004, avec la publication du livre d'Elina Sana *Luovutetut* [Les extradés].

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## Introduction

It is by now widely accepted that the end of the Cold War initiated a new phase in Holocaust historiography. The archives in the former Soviet Bloc opened possibilities to re-assess the importance of the East in the histories of the Holocaust. Further, the collapse of the Cold War world order has “meant that suppressed questions concerning collaboration, resistance and the true impact of Nazism and the Second World War are now being addressed” (Stone 1). This general trend, with the inclusion of the boom in memory studies in general and post-Holocaust memory and its representation in particular, has also been prevalent in the Scandinavian context—including Finland (Holmila and Kvist Geverts 521). However, as we will see, the way in which Finland’s Holocaust awareness has been developed since the 1990s has been intimately linked with the Finnish understanding of its own role in WWII. Conversely, then, trends in Holocaust studies and key debates within the field have had less impact on Finnish understanding of the Holocaust than one might suspect. Having said that is not to argue that the Finnish case would be somehow different or exceptional to European developments. Rather, there are similar trajectories and turning points—such as NBC’s miniseries *The Holocaust* (1979)—but if one wants to understand Finland’s responses to the Holocaust, it cannot be removed from the context of Finland’s responses and views of WWII, as will be discussed below.

## The Contexts of WWII: The Separate War Thesis and the Driftwood Debate

Ever since 1941 when Finland joined its military force with Nazi Germany, the nature of the alliance has been difficult for Finns to accept. Even during the war itself, Finnish leaders were at pains to explain the nature of comradeship with Hitler’s Germany. Given the geopolitical situation, Germany was the only European power that could offer any kind of security against Finland’s nemesis, the USSR. The Finns felt, quite rightly, that the Soviet Union presented an ongoing threat for Finnish sovereignty, and by 1941 the only way to balance the Soviet threat was to throw in its lot with the Nazis. To justify the alliance, the so-called “separate war thesis” was formulated. Primarily, it was developed for domestic purposes: its main function was to justify for the majority of Finns, soldiers, and civilians why Finland was cobelligerent with the Nazis. Secondly, the thesis also had a foreign policy function. While Finland was co-belligerent with the Nazis, the Finnish politicians had to take into account the West’s opinion and present Finland as ideologically part of the Western democratic family. As President Risto Ryti explained to an American journalist Henry J. Taylor in 1941:

“Finland is waging its separate war and our army will not march further than a prearranged defensive line” (Vilkuna 75).<sup>1</sup> Essentially, the thesis held that Finland’s war effort was purely a question of national survival and, as such, a defensive one; Finland fought against the Soviet Union in its own theatre of war in conjunction with Nazi Germany but not subordinated to it or its foreign policy goals. The war was seen as a continuation to the Winter War (1939-1940) and as such separate from the wider European war. Further, as one of the leading academic architects of the separate war thesis in the immediate postwar era, professor Arvi Korhonen, wrote in 1949, “Germany could not afford to force Finland to lose its attitude [of separate war]” (612), thereby implying that even the Germans recognized and respected Finland’s separate war.

However, the idea of separate war was contradictory from the beginning—even if Finland had no other viable political option than to align itself with Germany—not least since in Lapland the Finnish army was conducting its operations together with the German 6th Army, which controlled the theatre of operations in the northern part of Finland. Also, in terms of Finland’s food, fuel, and material supplies, the country was heavily dependent on German assistance. Despite these factors, throughout the war and in its aftermath Finnish political elite emphasized the separate nature of Finland’s war effort. The idea—although not accepted by the West—was to tell the world that Finland was not in the same sphere as German satellites. In contrast, the country was similar to other democratic nations, and its government was neither fascist nor dictatorial. In many ways, for the interests of national survival, the Finns operated in the same fashion as the Western allies. Whereas the USA and Britain allied themselves with Stalin, fully aware of the nature of the Soviet regime, Finland followed the same logic but on the other side of the table. The historical mission of Finland, as it was already seen in the Winter War, was to defend Western values against the Bolshevik onslaught. Finally, in the postwar era the separate war thesis sought to mitigate the questions of war crimes and participation in Nazi Germany’s war of extermination, including the Holocaust.

In terms of memory production of Finland’s role in WWII in the first decade after the war, the leading Finnish politicians led the way. In the so-called Finnish War Guilt Trials eight wartime politicians were put on trial for initiating an aggressive war against the USSR. The defence speeches of the politicians, especially the wartime president Risto Ryti, gained wide publicity as all major newspapers discussed it (Kinnunen and Jokisipilä 440-441). In terms of content, Ryti and others set the paradigmatic interpretation of Finland’s role in the war as a separate war from Hitler’s. The influx of memoirs by the same political elite, the pinnacle of which was the 1951 memoir of the wartime Chief of Finnish Military, Marshal Mannerheim, cemented the separate war thesis as the dogmatic interpretation, which has many echoes even in the 21st century. For example, in 2005 Finnish President Tarja Halonen caused a stir when she claimed at the French Institute

of International Relations (*Institute français des relations internationales*, IFRI), that “for us the World War meant a separate war against the Soviet Union and we did not incur any debt of gratitude to others” (Halonen 2005). The debate that was sparked by the President went on for months and proved that the term still carried political and psychological weight 60 years after the war. When the Finnish afternoon paper *Ilta-Sanomat* asked its readers a few days after the Halonen incident if Finland fought a separate war from the Nazis in WWII, it received 6,376 replies. Seventy-two percent of the respondents held the view that Finland’s war was indeed separate (Jokisipilä 2007, 156).

If Finland’s war was seen as so separate from Nazi Germany’s, then the logical question that follows is how and why did Finland find itself at war with Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941? Coinciding with the separate war thesis was the so-called “driftwood debate,” which from an analytical standpoint also originated from the War Guilt Trials of 1945–1946. However, the debate about the way in which Finland drifted into the war began in the late 1950s.

With the exception of a group of minor, mainly Communist newspapers, the actual public debate started only in 1957 when an American academic, Charles Lundin, published his book *Finland in the Second World War* in reaction to Finnish accounts of the political background of the war. Lundin argued that Finnish leaders had shown poor political judgment in provoking unease in the Soviet Union during the interwar era and in choosing to ally with Nazi Germany (Lundin 194, 196–222). Lundin’s book was seen in Finland as inaccurate and moralizing; when Lundin gave a lecture in Helsinki some of the audience, including Edwin Linkomies (the Prime Minister in 1943–44), walked out.<sup>2</sup>

Lundin’s book and the public debate surrounding the topic provoked Arvi Korhonen, a professor and a former army officer, to launch a scholarly counterattack in *Barbarossa-suunnitelma ja Suomi* [The Barbarossa Plan and Finland] published in 1961. The emergence of new material (in part from Lundin) made it impossible to continue to deny that Finland had had alternatives to the German alliance. Yet for exactly this reason it became imperative to assert Finland’s fundamental powerlessness; Korhonen claimed that the Germans had taken advantage of the situation and dragged Finland into war and concluded by quoting German Ambassador to Helsinki Wipert von Blücher: “Finland was thrown into the swirl of power politics like a piece of driftwood carried by a surging stream” (von Blücher 237). An image drawn from a wartime memoir swiftly became a defining political and epistemological metaphor. Finland had no real political agency, but it was an object at the mercy of the great power politics.

Nonetheless, Lundin’s line was reiterated throughout the latter half of the 1960s in new interpretations by Anthony Upton in *Finland in Crisis 1940–1941* and by Hans Peter Krosby in *Suomen valinta 1941* [Finland’s Choice of 1941]. For Upton, most of the Finnish explanations were too deterministic; he emphasized that

even small nations can and have to make choices. Drawing mainly on German documents, Krosby's work, for its part, claimed that Finland's *drift* was voluntary, a purposeful alignment with Germany in the unavoidably strong current of WWII. Krosby criticized Finnish historiography as well, seeing it as selective and bent on a patriotic interpretation; for him, if a Finnish memoir and a German official document contradicted each other, Finnish historians usually decided that the German version presented an inaccurate view (Krosby 9-11, 15-23).

Krosby's and Upton's political and moral criticism was attacked furiously by Finnish politicians and historians. Heated debate of the Continuation War was part of everyday politics in the 1960s, a debate about events in which many of the discussants had been actively involved. The most obvious link to state politics was President Urho Kekkonen's use of a critical interpretation of the war to support his foreign policy, in which friendly relations with the Soviet Union were paramount. Kekkonen agreed with Upton that representatives of small nations have often tried to hide behind their smallness in order to disclaim responsibility; indeed, Kekkonen developed this policy to such an extreme that he warranted the concept known as *Finnlandisierung* [Finlandization].<sup>3</sup> This notion, referring to the influence of the Soviet Union on Finland's policies, resulted in public self-control, self-censorship, and the promulgation of pro-Soviet attitudes, while claiming a distinct, formal independence (Vihavainen 33, 41).

At the beginning of the 1970s Colonel Keijo Mikola introduced a slight modification to the theory: the *riverboat* metaphor. The riverboat preserved the general idea of Finland as a vessel almost completely at the mercy of powers comparable to forces of nature; yet, in implying a modest ability to steer, the riverboat reflects the impact of new research by historians, political scientists, and even philosophers, critically considering not only whether the war could have been avoided but also how Finland might have acted differently (Soikkanen 38). Later, in 1987, the historian Mauno Jokipii published his monumental research in which he presented a detailed analysis of the Continuation War and showed irrefutably how Finland willingly went along with Germany, partly due to the necessities of the political situation and partly in order to regain the territories lost in the Winter War.

The fall of the Soviet empire in 1991 produced yet another extensive revision and re-evaluation of history as the real and imagined political restraints on discussion of the subject were finally removed. The end of Finlandization, though, led to a burst of nationalistic and patriotic emotions that had been constrained for decades, which affected historical research as well as practices of commemoration, political rhetoric, literature, and forms of popular culture, movies, and plays. In addition, wartime leaders such as President Risto Ryti, who had been sent to prison after the war, were rehabilitated by cultural and official measures, often by claiming that they had been innocent victims of the Soviet-led Allied Control Commission and the political machinations of Finnish Communists.

Now “the defensive victory of 1944” became the defining moment of the war: Finland had heroically prevented the Soviet Union from marching to Helsinki, and consequently it was Finland that had successfully protected Western Europe against Bolshevism. In practice this meant a return to the arguments formulated to defend Finland’s wartime leaders during the War Guilt Trials.

Since the 1990s, the emphasis in popular debate has returned closer to a patriotic interpretation of history. Consequently, there is a wide gulf between critical academic historiography and popular spheres of history culture concerning the Continuation War, the separate war thesis, and—ultimately—Finland’s role in the Holocaust. For example, when Markku Jokisipilä criticized the separate war thesis in 2004, a fierce debate followed. In addition, President Halonen’s aforementioned speech was criticized by Russian officials and among domestic researchers (Jokisipilä 2007, 153-160). Professor Henrik Meinander, for example, found that recent research at the beginning of the 21st century had shown that Finland’s co-operation with, as well as dependence on, Germany renders it impossible to use the concept of a “separate” war; Meinander also demanded that the war should be assessed in relation to the entire European situation (“Professori hautaisi” C4; Mäkinen C1).<sup>4</sup>

## The Era of Calm: Finland and Holocaust Memory from the 1940s to 1980s

When thinking about the Holocaust from a Finnish perspective, it was—for a long time—considered as an “alien” or “un-Finnish” theme in Finnish historiography. The dominance of the separate war thesis as the interpretative framework meant that the Holocaust was seen as purely a German matter out of Finland’s historical experience. Even the extradition of eight refugee Jews from Finland to German hands was described as a little mishap on the part of Finland’s Minister of Interior, Toivo Horelli, and not as a government policy. Further, the first generation of Finnish historiography argued that even the Germans did not consider the extradition of Jews within the framework of the Holocaust: “viewed from the German perspective the question [of handing over the Jews] was not about *Endlösung* but about the deal between the [German] criminal police and Anthoni [the head of Finnish State Police, *Valpo*]” (Polvinen 189). In essence, Finnish historiography—and culture—explained it as a German affair, and thus the Finnish attitude remained unproblematic and straightforward (Holmila and Silvennoinen 607). As in the grander scheme of issues, Finland had very little of its own political agency in the matter. The attitude as described above was established in the war’s wake, after 1945, when the press began to cover the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps and the International Military Tribunal’s proceedings against the major German war criminals at the so-called Nuremberg Trials. The Finnish press had no trouble writing about the sessions

in which the fate of Jews was scrutinized—after all, it was a German affair. However, oblivion and awkwardness set in when the context of criminality moved from German soil to Finland (Holmila 528). Most notably, between 1947 and 1948 in the trial of Arno Anthoni, the Finnish court did not recognize, or deliberately ruled-out, the premise of international law. Tellingly, the defence claimed in the closing speech that

the only thing that might prove Anthoni's guilt is that he has committed a crime against humanity, a crime that is not recognized in our domestic jurisdiction... despite the defence's hard effort, they have not been able to prove that as a result of the extradition any Jews had lost their lives.  
(Sana 1979, 267)

Thus, as the court's ruling made clear, Finland's wartime record and the Holocaust were separate entities. In terms of legal battles over the Holocaust's representation, it is interesting to note that the landmark case, the Eichmann trial, which was intensely followed and debated in Europe and the USA, did not elicit great interest in Finland. For example, when Eichmann appeared in the Finnish media, such as the leading weekly magazine *Suomen kuvalehti*, the story focused on his role of hiding Nazi gold, counterfeit British pounds, and some Nazi documents at the end of the war. The Nazi documents in question had nothing to do with the Holocaust either, but, as the story repeatedly mentioned, they were believed to disclose the European-wide network of Nazi collaborationists (Kringelbach 1961a; 1961b; 1961c; Holmila 534).

Hollywood-driven gossip also dominated the release of the film version of *The Diary of Anne Frank* in 1959 (Stevens). Rather than the grim subject matter, the writing about the film (which received three Academy Awards) focused on the fact that Millie Perkins, the actress who played Anne Frank, had no previous acting experience, but she had nevertheless beaten established film stars Audrey Hepburn and Susan Strasberg for the leading part (“Elokuva-aiten tähtikokoelma,” 1959, 27).

As has been shown above, the Holocaust appeared in Finnish historical culture and in popular culture from time to time. However, it was not until the late 1970s when the Holocaust started to take root in Finnish historical consciousness. Yet changes in historical consciousness took a while to take effect, and until the late 1970s the Holocaust still remained a marginal topic in Finland. For example, high school-level history textbooks in the 1970s mentioned the event on an average of two sentences in total (Ikonen 14).

If there are turning points in Finland's recognition of the Holocaust and its implications, 1979 is one of them. First, in the spring of 1979 the Finnish commercial TV channel Mainostelevisio broadcast NBC's television miniseries *Holocaust: The Story of the Family Weiss*. Second, later on in the year Elina Sana's

(she was writing under her maiden name Suominen) documentary-scholarly work, which detailed the extradition/deportation of eight foreign Jews from Finland into the hands of the Gestapo, was published. Both topics brought the treatment of Jews into the Finnish historical scene, forcing the issue to be considered in public. However, in keeping with hegemonic postwar narratives, the argumentation about Finland's role in the Final Solution was often defensive and in some cases belittled the Holocaust. In essence, the horrors that the miniseries mediated were quickly diluted by using a strategy that could never fail: comparing the numbers of the Holocaust's victims to the number of Stalin's victims.

In a sense, like the conservative German historical elite in the *Historikerstreit*, Finnish conservative elite played down the horrific nature of Nazism. Rather than revealing the unpleasant excesses of Finland's former co-belligerent, the Conservative popular historian Sampo Ahto offered a simple and "correct" historicization of the past:

More importantly than to hate, it would be to ask why our century has become a century of violence. How is it possible that the Nazis murdered five million Jews, that after the war at least 2.4 million Germans were murdered, that between 1937–1938 Stalin killed 7–8 million, but possibly 23 million of his own citizens.  
(56)

This line of argumentation reveals the dominant Finnish approach to World War Two: the relationship with and the crimes of the USSR, the old archenemy, was the dominant point of reference against which all other matters were relativized.

The Finns were confronted with their own relationship with the Final Solution when Elina Sana's *Kuoleman laiva S/S Hohenhörn* [The Ship of Death S/S Hohenhörn] was published in 1979. Anticipating a sensation, *Suomen Kuvalehti* ran an interview with a young reporter-researcher. Echoing the opinions of Elina Sana, the article was a direct accusation of wartime political leaders for "adopting the same policies as German-occupied countries did." (Ruokanen 52) The headline of the article made the point: "Archives Destroyed, the Guilty Ones Run Away. New Research Proves That Finland Was Ready to Deport Jews" (Ruokanen 52).

Responses to Elina Sana's work were diverse. Most of the historical elite severely criticized her work, while the public reception was more enthusiastic. For the professional historical cadres the main bone of contention was Sana's inability to solidly build her case on documentary evidence. To this end, Professor Yrjö Blomstedt argued:

The shadows of the extermination camps also reach Finland and the fate of those eight extradited is full of human tragedy. But from there it is still a long way to



the idea launched by Sana that Arno Anthoni would have been Adolf Eichmann's henchman in Finland.  
(146)

Although Sana overstated Anthoni's importance for the Germans, the way in which Blomstedt compared Anthoni and Eichmann effectively blurred the grey zone even more regarding Finnish-German police collaboration. Another strategy with which conservative history circles sought to limit the impact of Sana's work was the claim that the details she brought up were nothing new but had been known in academia and among the well-informed public for decades (Blomstedt 141).

Historians had indeed referred to the extradition, but Sana's work was the first one that subjected the matter to an in-depth analysis. However, many historians criticized her for poor source criticism and taking the sources at face value. Although some of the criticism was justified—for example, the omission of any footnotes or endnotes—the validity of Sana's work was only examined in reference to archival source material in Finland. This, again, is telling of the *modus operandi* of professional Finnish historical culture at the time, for Sana's work was in no small part a result of oral history (she had interviewed everyone she could find who was involved in the affair) and conducted extensive archival work in Germany, Switzerland, Poland, and Israel. On the whole, however, the fact that the public was more receptive towards Sana's work shows that the interest in the Holocaust and especially Finland's participation in it was increasing—not least due to the television series *Holocaust*, which also served as a reference point while debating Sana's study (Blomstedt 142).

In the 1980s and 1990s, when the Holocaust was becoming a hot historical topic globally, there was little said or written about it in Finland. Sana's book sparked interest in the topic in academic circles, and two studies about Finland and the extradition of Jews were published, but they did not elicit discussions about the topic beyond limited academic circles: Taimi Torvinen's *Pakolaiset Suomesta Hitlerin valtakaudella* [Refugees in Finland during Hitler's Reign] and Hannu Rautkallio's *Ne Kahdeksan ja Suomen omatunto: Suomesta 1942 luovutetut juutalaispakolaiset* [Those Eight and Finland's Consciousness: The Jewish Refugees and the Extradition from Finland in 1942]. Similarly, the landmark popular representation of the Holocaust in the 1990s, Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, was not discussed in Finland as "a Holocaust topic." The most cynical voices thought that Spielberg had chosen such a melodramatic topic for the simple reason of having a chance to win an Oscar (Holmila 551).

Finnish sociologist Mika Hannula summed up the Finnish historical culture in 1997 in relation to his discussion of Norbert Elias' work on the Germans' struggles to come to terms with the Nazi past. According to him, dealing with the national traumas was not only a German issue, but all nations, including Finland,

had to face the darker epochs in nations' historical records. According to Hannula, Finland's most troubling historical episodes "could be found in the events of 1918 and in the 1970s period of Finlandization" (Hannula C7). However, as the new millennium was approaching, things were about to begin to change, and ten years after Hannula's comment a similar type of assessment would have been impossible without a reference to Finland's darker side in WWII.

### *The Extradited and a Change of Paradigm*<sup>5</sup>

Upon its publication in 2003, Elina Sana's *Luovutetut: Suomen ihmislouvutukset Gestapolle* [The Extradited: Finland's Human Deliveries to the Gestapo] aroused a pointed controversy in Finland. Challenging the official figure of eight Jewish refugees handed over to the German authorities, Sana claimed that during the German-Finnish alliance, the Continuation War (1941–1944), Finland extradited almost 3,000 civilians and POWs, among them approximately 100 Jews. These extraditions were carried out in cooperation with the Gestapo, even though the discriminatory treatment of the Jewish community in the territories of the Third Reich was known by the Finnish authorities. Despite these human deliveries, however, in the aftermath of WWII Finland claimed a non-existing or insignificant role in the Holocaust, asserting it had remained a state governed by the rule of law with respect for human rights. Sana's book dramatized the politics undergirding the research establishment and its alleged objectivity, also showing the extent to which academic historiography had been, if not explicitly legitimizing, at least closely related to state politics, not least through its reliance on access to official documentary sources.

Elina Sana's "documentary book" proposed two different lines of contact between the Finnish and German authorities, especially between the secret state police and the military. The secret police extradited 129 people on a total of 13 occasions to the German authorities; the largest group comprised 99 individuals, all citizens of the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> After combining and cross-checking preserved documents from different archives, Sana concluded that between 1941 and 1944 the Finnish military extradited at least 2,829 POWs to Germany on 49 occasions; among the military extraditions were over 500 individuals who were defined as "Jewish" or "political" (i.e. Communist), or both (Sana 2003, 293, 350–353).

Sana concluded that Finland had extradited some 3,000 persons to Germany during the Continuation War. This enlarged the earlier known number of eight civilian Jewish refugees deported from Finland (via Tallinn) to Germany on the S/S Hohenhörn in 1942, a figure based on her earlier studies. According to Sana, Finnish authorities knew that Germany was particularly interested in Jews and Communists. Given this awareness, the pragmatic reasons for securing resources for the Finns are inseparable from ideological compliance because racially- and

ideologically-conditioned groups of people could be used to secure valuable resources from Germany, such as grain and oil.

The spark that ignited the 2003 debate was Sana's suggestion that Finland had extradited POWs and refugees to Germany on racial grounds. However, Sana herself repeatedly stressed that her purpose was not to force Holocaust guilt on Finland by equating Finnish officials with their Nazi colleagues (L. Kekkonen 53; Kotkamaa 12). What she wanted to do was point out that Finland did systematically extradite and deport Communists, Jews, and other groups labeled as possible threats to the nation and that these actions needed more attention and research than they had so far received. Directly challenging the "driftwood" thesis, *The Extradited* resurrected a crucial question: had the cooperation between Finnish and German officials been so close that what Sana described could have happened? (Kahan 14; Editorial 2).

The international media and a request on November 18, 2003 from the Simon Wiesenthal Centre to the President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, to investigate the matter amplified attention to Sana's claims. The Finnish government reacted swiftly, appointing Professor Heikki Ylikangas to examine Sana's results and consider how more thorough research on the extraditions should be carried out (Simon Wiesenthal Centre 2003; Pärssinen 2003a, 14; 2003b, 2; "Hallitus selvittää," 10). In December 2003 *The Extradited* was nominated by The Finnish Book Foundation for the 2004 Finlandia Literary Prize for Non-Fiction ("Tieto-Finlandia"), and it won the prize. Ylikangas's report in January 2004 drew considerable media attention, as did the acknowledgment of the report by the Wiesenthal Centre. While it was publicly recognized that the report did not find conclusive evidence of racially-motivated extraditions (Pohjonen 14; Jaakkonen 8), the report led to a government-funded project, *Finland, POWs, and People Handed Over to Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939-55*; the prize-giving ceremony and the publication of the report marked the decline of the debate in the mainstream media. The results of the project itself did not receive similar media attention, although collaborative publications, such as Oula Silvennoinen's 2008 dissertation about the cooperation between the Finnish State Police and the German RSHA in northern Finland, did gain recognition domestically and internationally. What is clear from this national and international controversy is that *The Extradited* did considerably more than rectify the numbers of the extradited. It forced a difficult, wider act of political history revision.

According to Sana, her original purpose was to alter Finnish self-understanding by changing the Finnish collective memory of the Continuation War, since "Finland's role in the Holocaust was much larger than has so far been admitted" (Hämäläinen D3). As her research progressed, her focus moved from Jewishness and antisemitism to anti-Communism, and thus the starting-point of the book is that political criteria could have been the decisive factor in both police and military policy. If Finland, then, was a co-perpetrator of the Holocaust, it was

for political reasons (Sana 2003, 19). Sana claimed that Finland was exceedingly pragmatic when it decided the fates of those who had been taken prisoner or those who were trying to seek refuge. Communism seemed to provide *an excuse for not recognizing* that handing over these people to the Gestapo was a deliberate death sentence, since unofficial information about the true nature of Nazi concentration camps was spreading relatively quickly around Europe, as Sana had argued in her previous research on the topic. If a POW was categorized as a Jew and a Communist, he could be certain of his fate.

Sana said that presenting the Winter War as a heroic battle against evil is relatively easy, but explaining the Continuation War is notoriously difficult. She claimed that the Finnish choice has been to examine the Continuation War almost solely as an effect of the Winter War, which obscures the overall consequences of Finland's political decision to ally with Germany. Sana argues that the Finnish authorities knew what had been going on in Germany since the mid-1930s but decided pragmatically to look the other way. And, in Finland, as was the case in Nazi Germany, since antisemitism was virtually impossible to distinguish from anti-Communism (although this term would not have been used), anti-Communist policies in the war led in practice to antisemitic actions (L. Kekkonen 51–3).

Sana's revision brought Finland's history of anti-Communism to bear on its wartime extradition practices. The struggle against Bolshevism constituted an integral, common denominator for cooperation between the Finnish State Police, the Swedish State Police, and the Gestapo. The combination of being a Communist, a refugee, and a Jew was fatal in Finland during the Continuation War—in that very order (Berggren 5; Nikkilä-Kiipula 2003a, 7; 2003b, 4). According to Max Jakobson, a leading Finnish intellectual, diplomat, and a war veteran himself, who wrote an extensive review of *The Extradited*, the cruelties of the Nazi regime and the violations of international human rights were silenced when Finland followed Germany into the war. For Jakobson, the crucial new information in Sana's book was that in the context of the war, human rights were easily abandoned by Finland, which has often claimed to have been above such actions. Thus, Sana threw one of the key "driftwood" assertions into question: the claim that Finland had remained a democratic state and respected human rights despite being in alliance with a totalitarian state. Jakobson undermined the answer given by Prime Minister Jukka Rangell to Heinrich Himmler: "Wir haben keine Judenfrage" [We don't have a Jewish question]—a reply that ended the allies' discussion of the status of Jews with Finnish citizenship, which is generally taken to mark Finland's unequivocal protection of "its" Jewish population (Jakobson C5).

In his report to the Finnish government, Heikki Ylikangas supported the notion that anti-Communism was the key criterion for the extraditions, suggesting that there is no evidence that Finland deported or extradited people to Germany solely on the grounds of race or religion (Ylikangas 7–8, 24–6, 33–6). Ylikangas proposed several research projects of which the most important was one

examining all extraditions of both civilians and POWs to Germany during the war and to the Soviet Union after the war. The Academy of Finland declared this proposal for a major research project on the extraditions and deaths of POWs to be of urgent national importance, not only for historiographical reasons but also for Finnish culture as a whole and for the openness of political debate and democracy. Sana's pressure made an impact: it was the duty of an open and democratic society to allocate resources to research decisive moments in the state's history, even if it revealed uncomfortable information about the past. In addition to the aforementioned project led by Lars Westerlund, treatment of POWs, other prisoners, refugees, and their extradition to the Soviet Union after the war has been brought under focus in recent research, often with criticism towards Sana's results (see Kauppala).

But the consequences of *The Extradited* extended beyond a revision of the framework for interpreting the Continuation War; they touched on the deeper role that anti-Communism has played in the Finnish historical self-understanding. The struggle against Communism has been part of Finland's official ideology since the early years of independence: in Finland, a brick in the wall against Communism, the threat of Communism could be used to justify extreme measures. A consequence of this harsh ideological stance was that leftism could be demonized and Communists could be dehumanized, left without the protection of human rights (see Harle 159–86; Browning 129–39).

Sana's impact was recognized with the publication of *The Extradited*. Rony Smolar, the autobiographer of Abraham Stiller (who actively resisted the extradition of Jewish refugees in 1942), wrote forthrightly that "it is to be hoped that the Finnish authorities will now face facts they have ignored since the end of the war" (A5). Jörn Donner, a Swedish Party MP and a former Social Democratic Party MEP, said that there are various black holes in Finland's past and denying them is why he sometimes feels sick in Finland (4). Later, Green Party MP Irina Krohn declared that the dark sides of Finland's history must be revealed and that the genocide of European Jewry must not be forgotten—especially now [in 2004] when the EU was attempting to create a new, humane constitution for itself. Krohn also claimed that "one of the key elements of national identity, the Continuation War, has been made into mush, according to which Finland has always only tried to do the honorable thing" (16). To Professor Jukka Kekkonen, *The Extradited* had touched a sore spot in Finnish history, which has mainly tried to legitimate the success story of a small country surviving in the tumult of world politics; writing history in Finland, it is more common and more applauded to write books that praise great men than to conduct critical research into their actions (8). This opinion was shared by the historian Jari Sedergren, who pointed out that it is precisely the political task of critical historiography also to remember the dark sides of the past (Hirvasnoro 7; Sedergren).

At the Tieto-Finlandia award ceremony, journalist Hannu Taanila, who chose *The Extradited* for the prize, remarked that *The Extradited* had provoked “typical hooray-nationalist mumbo-jumbo” from those people who think that “one should not pry into things that one should not pry into.” He suggested that the belief that Finland is never a willing agent but a “virgo semper immaculate” is extremely useful for certain purposes: it relieves Finland of responsibility, both politically and, more importantly, morally. His comments were echoed two weeks later by the President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, at a ceremony on Holocaust Victims’ International Day of Commemoration. Referring to *The Extradited*, she said that the time seemed ripe for a critical examination of the issue since it was “vital for national self-esteem that its collective mind is not traumatized by unsettled issues.” This reexamination is especially “important now, when signs of racism and antisemitism are becoming more visible all the time” (Halonen 2004).

### **Manipulation and Poppycock: Conservatives Strike Back**

Elina Sana’s political connection between Finland and the Holocaust was criticized by conservative media and researchers whose results *The Extradited* questioned. Even before official publication of the book, Hannu Rautkallio proclaimed that *The Extradited* could not contain new information since the material used for its writing was available in different archives to anyone who bothered to look. Rautkallio’s own studies, based mainly on official documents on Jews in Finland during the Second World War, make a strong claim that, apart from the eight refugees who were deported in 1942 (many of whom had earlier criminal convictions), the rest of the refugees as well as the Finnish Jews were saved from the Holocaust. None of the Finnish Jews were deported; moreover, many took part in Finland’s alliance with Germany, a sign of their security within the Finnish state. Rautkallio also claimed that Jewish POWs were treated exceptionally well in comparison to other prisoners, precisely because they were kept separate, held in their own group with privileges relating, for example, to religious practices. Consequently, Rautkallio stated that there are only speculative reasons why Jewish POWs were concentrated in certain camps in 1941–1942 (Pärssinen 2003c, 6; see also Rautkallio 1987; 1994; 2004a; 2008).<sup>8</sup> Finnish Jews did fight on the same side with Germany and were protected from the impact of the racial policies of the Nazis; nonetheless, it is not hard to imagine what consequences would have emerged for them had the Third Reich been victorious. The latest academic research has shown that these Jews and political prisoners, contrary to Rautkallio’s claims, were not privileged. In contrast, prisoners of Finnic background (for example Ingrians and Karelians) were located in a separate camp with better conditions and treatment than Jews, Cossacks, and Russians—who were at the bottom of the hierarchy (Suolahti 153-4).

The more serious effort to discredit Sana's accounts was the argument that she *intentionally* connected Finland to the Holocaust. For Rautkallio, the first and most important research question should be *why no more people had been deported* or extradited from Finland during the Second World War, and not *why those specific individuals were extradited*. Rautkallio implies that the value of a human being can be measured in quantity, that the fate of those deported or extradited is overshadowed by the majority of those who were not; he criticizes Sana for associating Finland with the Holocaust without understanding the historical reality of the time. Sana's interpretation of the criteria of extraditions—Jewishness, Communism, and their mixture—was simply ignored by Rautkallio, who insisted there was no documentary proof of anyone being extradited due to ethnicity. Rautkallio concluded that Sana clearly had selected her material to support her a priori aims in order to drag Finland into the sphere of all-European collective guilt for the Holocaust. In this sense, as Rautkallio proclaimed, Sana resembled David Irving.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Rautkallio claimed that *The Extradited* had been published exactly at the right time for the Wiesenthal Centre because the Centre seemed to have run out of targets (Rautkallio 2004b, 33-4).

If, as Rautkallio and others suggested, Finnish cooperation with the Gestapo was yesterday's news, then the furor aroused by *The Extradited* reveals the involvement of the history establishment in history politics.<sup>10</sup> A journalist by profession, Elina Sana made explicit her suspicion of established historiographers in several public comments, suggesting that the extraditions and co-operation with the Nazis had been a topic academic historians had avoided. In her acceptance speech for the Tieto-Finlandia prize she suggested that "this book has touched some kind of crucial nerve of Finnishness: people have sent me mountains of emails, letters, flowers, and their own writing on the topic, and some journalists have even started to conduct local research on extraditions and POWs," implying that academic accounts of the past have detached themselves from reality and from people's own memories of what actually happened (Sana 2004b; Kotkamaa 12).

*The Extradited*, then, touched on many crucial themes: antisemitism, anti-Communism, the role of official Finland in the Continuation War alliance, the impact of the war on the Finnish national self-conception, the role of professional historians in preserving a specific vision of the state. Surprisingly, in the patriotic fervor of the post-Soviet era, Sana was also seen as part of another troubling narrative of Finland's past, not the wartime alliance but as a remnant of the Finlandization era of self-blame and mortification. While the leftist newspapers, such as *Kansan Uutiset* and *Uutispäivä Demari*, emphasized the importance of Sana's results, the overtly rightist and moderate press was far more suspicious, discrediting Sana as a human rights activist and a left-wing writer. *Nykypäivä*, the newspaper of the right-wing National Coalition Party, described *The Extradited* as an example of misleading "Holocaust fiction" (Hirvasnoro 7;

Bamberg 18; *Virmavirta* 12). In other papers, it was branded as “political,” “outrageously biased,” “a political pamphlet,” “subjective,” “leftist,” “purposeful,” “a jumble of fact and fiction,” “manipulative,” and “poppycock” (Turtola 24; “Tieto-Finlandia-palkinnon,” 4.) Moreover, *Nykypäivä* demanded the withdrawal of the Tieto-Finlandia prize because Elina Sana’s “political pamphlet” had beaten out proper research.<sup>11</sup> Sana, it was alleged, was idolizing those who had fought on the Red side during the Civil War of 1918 and were later imprisoned during the Second World War, although they were clearly “minions of foreign powers” (*Virmavirta* 12). It seemed to her critics that Sana had forgotten that Finland was at war against the communism of the Soviet Union. It was also claimed that Ylikangas’s proposal to start several research projects was the least he could do, but luckily “the mafia behind Elina Sana did not fully have its way” (*Virmavirta* 12; Puuperä 68). In addition, colonel Jukka Suviniemi proclaimed that “Sana’s and Taanila’s bias was understandable based on their previous actions,” but the colonel was astonished since it seemed to him that Ylikangas had tactically not acknowledged the existing information regarding the extraditions (for example research by Ohto Manninen) in order to receive governmental funding for “certain research projects” (Suviniemi 4). Sana’s book, then, was seen by the right as part of a long-term, communist-tinged effort to undermine the consensual—and correct—understanding of Finland in the Second World War. History should be left to the specialists, and amateurs should not intervene in order to “manipulate the past”; a left-wing perspective automatically denotes being dubiously, unacceptably “political.”<sup>12</sup>

In general, the debate on *The Extradited* reflects all the main themes of this article, spanning from across all the decades since the end of WWII. First, it shows in its part how the Holocaust discussion in Finland is intimately bound to the larger discussion of Finland in World War II. Second, interpretations of Finland’s relation to the Holocaust are essentially connected to the real and imagined threat of Communism, often resulting with a focus on finding out the exact number of victims instead of discussing human rights and political choices. Third, although nowadays a fair amount of critical Finnish research exists, it has quite often been initiatives either from abroad or outside academia that have functioned as catalysts—and received a large amount of criticism.

#### NOTES

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are our own.
2. Edwin Linkomies was appointed as Prime Minister for the purpose of disengaging Finland from the war. In 1944 Linkomies’s government negotiated for peace twice but on both occasions deemed that the conditions set by the Soviet Union were too harsh. Instead, President Risto Ryti and Linkomies decided to accept German help and thus enhanced Finland’s ties to Germany. After the massive Soviet counteroffensive in 1944



Linkomies (and Ryti) resigned, and thus the new government led by Antti Hackzell could start fresh negotiations for detaching Finland from the war.

3. *Finnlandisierung* (lit. “to become or to be made like Finland”) is a concept originally used in German debates of the 1950s and 1960s to criticize policies that were extensively pro-Soviet Union.
4. In a survey conducted in October 2008 by *Helsingin Sanomat*, 16 out of 28 Finnish professors of history held the opinion that Finland was Germany’s ally, whereas six professors saw Finland as having waged a separate war. Six professors did not give a clear answer (Mäkinen C1).
5. This section of the article is based on Tilli’s chapter “Elina Sana’s *Luovutetut* and the Politics of History” originally published in Hana Worthen and Simo Muir (eds.), *Finland’s Holocaust. Silences of History* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 151–172. It is reproduced here with the permission of Palgrave Macmillan.
6. Sana speculated that the number extradited might be between 78 and 129, underlining the impossible task of giving both an exact number of those extradited and an exact account of the State Police [Valpo] and its collaborative operations since essential documents from the Valpo archives were deliberately destroyed in the aftermath of the Soviet offensive in the summer of 1944.
7. The report of the project is available online in English at [http://www.arkisto.fi/uploads/Palvelut/julkaisut/POW%20deaths\\_web.pdf](http://www.arkisto.fi/uploads/Palvelut/julkaisut/POW%20deaths_web.pdf).
8. There seems to be a personal dimension in the strife between Rautkallio and Sana as well. Hannu Rautkallio was annoyed by Sana's omission of his own research from her sources; under attack, Sana responded that Rautkallio's own initial research on the topic (in 1985) plagiarized her award-winning 1979 study. See Sana 2004a.
9. Irving (b. 1938) is an English author focusing on Nazi Germany. He has been shown to have deliberately manipulated historical evidence in order to promote Holocaust denial, particularly pertaining to Adolf Hitler’s role in the Holocaust.
10. Rautkallio's criticism of Sana's work was supported by counsellor and historian Ilmari Laukkonen who stated that Hannu Rautkallio's arguments were “so convincing and the issue in question so familiar to him that there is no hesitation that his assessment would not be on the mark.” In addition, Laukkonen proclaimed that despite all the commotion one truth remained: the world would not become better by delving in “old, difficult crises” (Laukkonen 2).
11. Interestingly, Professor Jukka Kekkonen stated that *The Extradited* is research that fulfils academic requirements and that it is extremely difficult to reject it based on such criteria (J. Kekkonen 8).
12. Heikki Ylikangas's report also provoked criticism. Professor Ohto Manninen from the National Defence University repeated in several newspapers the above-mentioned argument that Ylikangas also fails to mention the fact that information about the extraditions had been available to both researchers and the general public for some time. In particular, Manninen mentions his own 1994 article in the *History of the Continuation War* anthology. He felt that his article should have been mentioned in Ylikangas's list of references. Thus *The Extradited* was considered not to have revealed

anything new, especially to those researchers whose results Sana challenged (Manninen 2004a, 4; 2004b, A5).

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