Karelia lost or won – materialization of a landscape of contested and commemorated memory

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Raivo, Petri J. (2004). Karelia lost or won – materialization of a landscape of contested and commemorated memory. *Fennia* 182: 1, pp. 61–72. Helsinki. ISSN 0015-0010.

The national memory is often signified by means of monuments erected in the landscape, while commemorative historical sites always carry a story from the past, and it is not a matter of indifference how this story is told. Karelia, and particularly the areas of the Karelian Isthmus, the shores of Lake Ladoga and the Karelian Borderlands that were ceded to the Soviet Union as a consequence of the Second World War, are places where the commemorative sites have been objects of dispute for the last 60 years. Memories of Finnish Karelia have been erased, transformed and brought to life again: erased and transformed by the post-war masters of the area, for whom it was ideologically most appropriate to replace the Finnish narrative with one telling of victory in the Great Patriotic War and alluding to new sites commemorating the region's Russian history. The more recent revival of Finnish memories has been brought about not only by the Finns but also by Russians who have wished to tell the present-day inhabitants of Karelia about the forgotten and suppressed details of its more recent history.

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Introduction: the latter-day history of Peter the Great in Vyborg

There was a move in Imperial Russia at the beginning of the 20th century to erect statues throughout the empire to commemorate events in its history, one of the most popular topics being the Czar Peter the Great. Even the Grand Duchy of Finland, which had been incorporated into the empire from Sweden in 1809, was able to participate in this when the principal city in Karelia, Vyborg (in Finnish Viipuri), gained such a statue in 1910 to mark the 200th anniversary of its conquest. Apart from the timing of this commemoration, the place had also been chosen with great care, as the statue, three and a half metres high, was located on the hill of Tervaniemi, from which it could be seen from a prodigious distance. This was the same hill outside the city from which Peter the Great had watched the progress of the battle for Vyborg in his time. Thus the statue immediately became not only a symbol of the historical conquest of Vyborg and Karelia by the Russians but also, by virtue of the timing of its placement there, a symbol of the Russification of the region that occurred at the beginning of the century (Ahto 1979, 77–82).

Once Finland had gained independence in 1917, the monuments of the Russification era were obliged to give way to Finnish national symbols, and the statue of Peter the Great was toppled from its pedestal and removed to the inner courtyard of the National Museum in Helsinki, from where it was returned to the new Municipal Art Museum in Vyborg in 1930. Meanwhile a new monument in the form of a huge heraldic lion, created by the sculptor Gunnar Finne, was put up on the same plinth at Tervaniemi in 1927 to mark the tenth anniversary of Finland's declaration of independence (Ahto 1979, 77–82).

The struggle for symbolic hegemony over Vyborg and the whole region of Karelia did not end there, however. When the city came under Rus-

sian control once more in March 1940, under the Peace of Moscow, which brought the Winter War of 1939–1940 to an end, the monument was changed yet again. The new masters decimated not only the image of the heraldic Finnish lion but also the plinth on which it stood, originally part of the statue of Peter the Great, and then transported the latter statue back from the Art Gallery to stand on the original foundation stone. The czar's visit to his hill was nevertheless a brief one this time, for in the new war that broke out between Finland and the Soviet Union in June 1941, known in Finland as the Continuation War (1941–1944) and in Russia as the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945), Vyborg was restored into Finnish hands in August 1941 and Peter was taken down from his place of honour. The statue was still not destroyed, however, for when the Russians recaptured the city in 1944 it was safe and ready to be restored to its original place (Tikka et al. 2002, 30). Peter the Great still stands on the hill of Tervaniemi today, confirming not only the conquest that he once made but also the victories gained by the Red Army in Karelia and its principal city.

The colourful history of the statue of Peter the Great serves as a concrete illustration of the symbolic contest between the Finns and Russians over the past in Karelia and the resulting cultural traditions and memories, a discourse that reflects both old battles that took place centuries ago and the events of the Second World War and the subsequent changes in the national boundaries.

The area known as Karelia is a historical territory situated in the border region between these two countries, and may be divided on the grounds of its cultural history into Western, or Finnish Karelia, and Eastern, or Russian Karelia. Finnish Karelia as a historical entity comprises the Karelian Isthmus, lying between the Gulf of Finland, Lake Ladoga and Lake Saimaa, the north-western and northern shores of Lake Ladoga itself, including the area known as the Borderlands, and Northern Karelia, which still belongs to Finland today. Russian Karelia, on the other hand, has traditionally consisted of the Viena and Olonets regions lying between the White Sea, Lake Onega, the River Svir and Lake Ladoga.

Karelia has been a contested territory throughout its history, and the frontier has been moved either eastwards or westwards time after time. It has been divided between Sweden and Russia, then between Finland and the Soviet Union, and today between Finland and Russia. Despite the fact that this area has never totally belonged to Finland, the Karelian heritage has been represented for more than a hundred years as a constant part of the Finnish national imagery (Paasi & Raivo 1998). The emergence of the Karelian territorial myth can be linked to the rise of nationalism and a nationalistic culture in nineteenth century Finland, then an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia. An especially strong boost was given to this process by the publication of the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic, the folk ballads contained in which were collected in Karelia. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the Karelian culture in general and the Karelian landscape in particular were the main themes in the thinking of the National Romantic Movement of Finnish artists and intellectuals, which was often referred to as Karelianism (Raivo 2002).

Finland's gaining of independence in 1917 and the subsequent Treaty of Tartu signed with Soviet Russia confirmed Western Karelia as a part of Finland, in accordance with the frontier defined by the Treaty of Stolbova (1607). The Second World War altered this situation, however, for after the Winter War Finland was forced to cede considerable parts of Western Karelia to the Soviet Union in 1940. These were recaptured in the course of the Continuation War that began in 1941, during which time the Finns occupied large areas of Eastern Karelia as well, but when the war ended in 1944 all these areas had to be relinquished once more, so that the net loss during the Second World War corresponded to about 10% of Finland's pre-war territory and included some areas in Lapland and most of Finnish Karelia. This also meant that 420,000 Finns had to leave their homes in the ceded areas (Laitinen 1995, 86). The parts of Karelia that remained in Finland after the war were formed into the provinces of Southern Karelia and Northern Karelia, while of the areas ceded to Russia, the Karelian Isthmus now belongs administratively to the Leningrad Region and the surroundings of Lake Ladoga together with the historical Russian Karelia to the Karelian Republic.

I will consider in this article the constitution of the national memory in Karelia in terms of places and landscapes. The purpose above all is to examine the processes by which the memories and traditions associated with the ceded areas of Karelia have been preserved, destroyed or regenerated during the time since the Second World War.

One crucial question to be asked throughout is whose narrative a landscape can recount and how. Special emphasis will be placed upon the geographical dimension of collective memory, i.e. the concept of *loci memoriae*. The empirical part of the work is divided into two chronological units, concentrating first on the processes by which the new Soviet authorities set about systematically stripping the places and landscapes of the ceded areas of their Finnish cultural history and producing a new, Russian past for them, and secondly on the ways in which the Finnish government and citizens' organizations have attempted in recent times to restore, re-build and commemorate monuments connected with the Finnish-Karelian past of these areas. Particular attention will be paid to the significance of monuments as part of the collective memory of the region, reflecting on the one hand the custom in the Soviet Union and modern Russia of remembering the Great Patriotic War as a victory over fascism and on the other hand the desire of the Finns to repair the war graves and place monuments at the old battlefields to commemorate those who gave their lives for the preservation of national independence.

Loci memoriae: places and landscapes of collective memory

Public monuments, and particularly those devoted to wars and conflicts, have been topics of increasing interest among human geographers in recent times, being regarded as pictorial representations of national sentiments, myths carved in stone or cast in metal which serve to construct and maintain narratives of nationalism, identity and community. In other words, the study of monuments and commemorative sites can give us access to the manners and processes through which nationalist discourses are articulated (Till 1999, 252). Human geographers have been especially eager to analyse war memorials in this sense, in order to understand the socio-spatial relations between a place and its political significance, and above all the spatial scale on which the cultural identity depicted by a memorial is constructed as a part of the local, regional and national narratives and of the nation's memory (Withers 2000, 521–522).

The recalling of past events is by nature a social function, in which the individual's own memory is linked to, and in part adapted to, the common memory and identity of a larger social group, a family, local community or nation. But the collective memory is not a static store or bank of the memories of the members of the community concerned, but rather an active process which weaves together events of the past and memories of these events, within the framework of which memories, stories and myths concerning the past are created, produced and renewed over and over again in the present (see Edensor 1997, 175; Osborne 1998, 433; Till 1999, 254–255). Since the purpose of such a collective memory is to reinforce group identity, it contains memories of past events that fit in with the group's common narrative of the past.

A parallel relation exists between identity and memory, which are interdependent, socially constructed representations of reality. In other words, no collective memory or identity that alludes to the past and gains its strength from the past can exist without social relations in the present, including interpretations of history and policies regarding how these interpretations should be put forward (Gillis 1994, 3–5). Also, memory and identity almost always have a geographical dimension. The individual, group, community, or nation will remember events, narratives and myths that concern it by binding these to specific places and points in time (Foote 1997, 33). Memories are revived not only by the physical features of places and landscapes that are linked with the past, but also by placenames and the narratives and meanings associated with them. It is indeed justifiable to speak of a specifically *geographical memory*, a form of collective, public memory that has acquired a spatial dimension (Hague & Mercer 1988, 105–107).

The French historian Pierre Nora (1996) employs the term *lieu(x) de mémoire*, or the Latin equivalent *loci memoriae*, in this connection, although extending the notion somewhat to include: 1) geographical places, 2) historical figures, 3) monuments and buildings, 4) works of art and literature, and 5) emblems, symbols and rituals, while the British scholar Simon Schama (1996) speaks of the memory of a landscape, referring to the meanings associated with the past and its traditions and history that a geographical space can acquire. In such cases a powerful bond exists between a geographical space and a memory of the past, which is thereby manifested *materially*, *symbolically* and *functionally*. Its manifestation is

material in the sense that it is physically and concretely present, as a visible trace in the landscape or as a spot identifiable as the location of a historical happening, the existence of which renders the memory real, visible and tangible, in the present day. It is also symbolic in the sense that the location has acquired cultural meanings such as national or local values on the grounds of which people wish to remember it, and functional in the sense that there exist rituals, functions and ceremonies by which the memories of the material and symbolic places of the past are perpetuated.

The national memory is often marked physically by means of monuments, and the places identified in this way, on historical grounds, constitute a kind of map or narrative of the continuous history of the nation from past to present engraved on the landscape (Gruffudd 1995, 60). Historical monuments and the rituals associated with them form an important part of the nation's collective memory and traditions, and serve as places that bind the members of the community to the past of their nation. It is the socially active and constitutive role of memory that endows events in the past with significance for the present (Withers 1996, 325). Thus a nation's collective memory may refer back to the past in such a way that it effectively becomes a part of the present, or at least an element of the past that has been revived and interpreted in the present. Examples of representations of the past in the present and places associated with such memories include days that commemorate historical events, old buildings, monuments, folk customs, traditional handicrafts, objects exhibited in museums and historical places and landscapes (Wright 1985, 145–146).

In the landscape of memory it is not so important what precisely happened; more important is what can be remembered and what people want to remember. The meanings acquired by places from the past and the historical interpretations associated with these do not form of their own accord but are constantly being produced, confirmed and projected. In spite of their historical dimension, the essence of these places and landscapes lies in the fact that they are bound to the present. They are with us here and now and the aspects of the past that are associated with them are interpreted via the present. Thus a monument, for example, tells us more about the history of remembrance of the past than about the event that it is intended to commemorate.

The post-war Russification of Karelia

There were two wars on the Isthmus, in which many a contingent of troops and many a commander, officer or general performed with distinction, and we should give them all credit for that. We should set out not from the standpoint of simply translating names from Finnish into Russian, but we are obliged to record the battle for the Karelian Isthmus for posterity as a victory in the Great Patriotic War, and to acknowledge that the Isthmus is an inseparable part of the Leningrad Region and the city of Leningrad itself. (Excerpt from the shorthand transcript of a speech by Comrade Bodayev at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council for the Leningrad Region on 10th February 1948, quoted by Tikka et al. 2002, 46.)

The area of Finnish Karelia that had to be evacuated at the end of the war and ceded to the Soviet Union was empty, a void. More that 400,000 inhabitants had been transferred to the remaining part of Finland. They were gone, but their cultural landscape persisted. Although war had led to the destruction of a large proportion of the Finnish buildings in those areas that had been the scene of hostilities in 1939–1940 and in 1941 and 1944, there were many places where no fighting had occurred that were more or less untouched. It was easy for the Soviet authorities to attract new inhabitants, as much of Russia otherwise had been devastated during the war, whereas large tracts of Karelia had survived. Not all the people came voluntarily, however, as many were forced to move to the area.

The new masters of the ceded area had no respect for visible elements in the landscape that alluded to its Finnish past, and it may be said that those features of the Finnish village landscapes that had survived the war were eventually destroyed by the subsequent changes that took place in the social order, spurred on by the new ideology and its desire to erase all traces of the Finnish history of the area and the associated *loci memoriae*. Particularly harsh treatment was meted out to places of significance for the history of Finnish settlement or cultural identity.

The systematic destruction of everything in Karelia that spoke of the area's Finnish past began just before the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1947 and the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in 1948. It was in these agreements that the boundary changes were officially ratified and clear targets were laid

down for "an appropriate governmental structure and cultural development" in the areas of Karelia, which meant in practice a tight commitment to the Soviet Union and identification with its aims and notions of history. At the same time, emphasis began to be placed on the nature of Karelia as an integral part of the Soviet territory, on the grounds of both the Russian aspects of its history and the victories achieved by the Red Army there. Every opportunity was taken to destroy and deface the physical, symbolic and ritual *loci memoriae* of the area's Finnish past, especially its cemeteries and historical monuments, and to install Russian monuments and placenames in their place. The erasure of former memories from the landscape in conquered areas was an overt policy in the Stalinist era, representing a forcible implementation of the desired interpretation of history for the purposes of achieving a socialization and Russification of the cultural history of Karelia.

Placenames

The Russification of the history of the area began with manipulation of its geographical memory, i.e. its set of placenames. At first the names on signposts and maps were rewritten in Cyrillic script, but in 1948 an order was issued from above that the names should be systematically changed for suitable Russian ones (Tikka et al. 2002, 45). Thus the Finnish names were wiped out on the Karelian Isthmus in 1948 and 1949, under a decree of the Supreme Soviet that declared them to be "unnecessary, impracticable and detrimental". Elsewhere in Karelia, however, the original names were preserved or adapted to a Russian form of pronunciation. The reason for this discrepancy may well have been that the Isthmus belonged to the administrative region and military district of Leningrad, so that the Finnish placenames would have been an embarrassing reminder of a quite different history, whereas the Borderlands and the surroundings of Lake Ladoga belonged administratively to the Karelian Republic, so that the Finnish and Karelian placenames formed a more nature part of its new identity.

Placenames are an important part of the geographical memory of an area, and names, places and structures that incorporate a historical memory form excellent examples of intersections between ideological structures and everyday spatial structures. Their power lies in their ability to fix history as an inseparable element of reality that is constantly being construed, experienced and perceived through the routines of everyday life. It is through placenames that history is woven into a self-evident, unproblematic part of our everyday lives (Azaryahu 1996, 321). The decision to exchange the placenames for Russian ones served two ideological ends. Firstly it enabled emphasis to be laid on the construction of socialism and the victories of the Red Army, by allowing new names to be given to places in accordance with these themes, and secondly it helped people to forget, or at least neutralize, the Finnish history and cultural traditions of the area, by exchanging the Finnish names for typical Russian ones, which described natural forms of the land or the locations of places (Tikka et al. 2002, 9).

The names were changed remarkably quickly, especially in the towns, many of the old names being replaced by ones referring to the heroes of socialism, so that practically every town in Karelia had streets named after Karl Marx, Lenin, Kirov or Kalinin, and the victorious Red Army was commemorated with numerous streets and squares (Tikka et al. 2002, 10). The placenames that commemorated heroes and events served in effect to bind the landscape to the immediate past and its myths, and at the same time the past, as remembered and desired, was embodied in the physical environment, as it were, so that the imagined "natural" state of existence of these thing was confirmed (Azaryahu 1996, 319–320). Thus the changes of name in Karelia served to convince the local people gradually that these areas were age-old Russian territories.

The memory of the Great Patriotic War

It was also important for the new masters of Karelia to create memorials and monuments dedicated to events in the Russian history of the newly captured area, the construction of socialism and the victories of the Red Army, and these similarly began to spring up quickly, as soon as the hostilities had come to an end. The first priority was to find sites linked to the Russian cultural history of the area, one such candidate being the villa that had belonged to the artist Ilya Repin at Kuokkala, at the eastern end of the Isthmus, which had in fact already been made into a museum by the Finns, while another one that quickly came to hand was the statue of Peter the Great in Vyborg, as discussed above. Some amusing incidents also

took place in the course of destroying all memories of Finnish connections and searching for Russian ones. One ancient symbol of Finnish culture, the statue of the legendary bard Petri Shemeikka in the town of Sortavala in the present-day Karelian Republic, was allowed to remain because the local leaders and public employees were not sure whether this hero of the Kalevala ballads might not have been a proletarian originally (Tikka et al. 2002, 10–11).

A new contribution to the Karelian landscape was provided by the innumerable memorials to the Red Army's victories and to those killed in action. The Second World War and related events have done much to shape the collective memory of the former Soviet Union and modern-day Russia, and there can scarcely be any other country that was involved in that war where the myth of war experiences and the associated cult of those who fell in the course of the fighting has lived on so vividly as in the Soviet Union (Mosse 1990, 213). The whole post-war national identity was founded on the myth of the Great Patriotic War, in which the Soviet people, hardened by their sufferings, succeeded in crushing fascism. One comes across this myth and the monumental narrative of it that is carved into the landscape at every turn when visiting Russia, for the anti-Fascist monuments, the colossal statues of liberators that dominate the towns and the eternal flames in the cemeteries that commemorate those who died in battle are *loci memoriae* that recur throughout the country. The Day of Victory, 9th May, is still the most popular of all public holidays after New Year's Day, even in modern Russia (Forest & Johnson 2002, 524–538).

The Soviet Union had its own good reasons for commemorating the Great Patriotic War and the victims of it, just as Russia has today, for the Soviet Union did indeed suffer from the ravages of that war more seriously than any other participating country, and there is much truth in the claims that it fought a solitary battle against fascism. The Allies' victory in Europe was determined and sealed very largely by the massive operations on the Eastern Front, in which it was the Soviet Union that dealt the blows and the Soviet Union that received the worst blows. But in spite of these solid facts, the preservation of the memory of the Second World War in the Soviet Union is a textbook example of the "invention of tradition" (see Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983), a process in which the past is subjugated to the exigencies and objectives of the present by ritualizing its memory and purging it of all embarrassing discords.

The cult of the Second World War in the Soviet Union and modern Russia has been a conscious attempt to graft meanings onto the present by exploiting a reserve of sufferings accumulated in the past. The outcome, however, is that the memorials to this carefully filtered tradition are as much symbols of oblivion as symbols of memory. It is obvious that they commemorate only those elements of the past that it is felt desirable to commemorate. As far as the Soviet narrative of the Second World War is concerned, merely the dates on the monuments serve to reveal a lapse of memory, as they begin only in 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union, conveniently ignoring the period from 1939 onwards when the Red Army invaded eastern Poland and attacked Finland. It is evident that the purpose of war memorials in Soviet times was to help people to forget and not to remember. Apart from the incursions into Poland and Finland, they served equally well to divert attention away from the Stalinist oppression and purges, which did much to crush the country's military and moral backbone. By remaining silent about all this, the memorials have served in a way as a defence for the sacrifices and acts of terrorism, which did not by any means begin in 1941 but were prevalent from 1929 onwards (Ignatieff 1984, 158–160).

The memorial culture of the Great Patriotic War made its appearance in Karelia in the form of rapidly improvised monuments erected at scenes of battles and the mass graves provided for men of the Red Army, these monuments often being fashioned out of old gravestones and memorials from Finnish cemeteries (Tikka et al. 2002, 13). Later official war memorials began to be set up in the villages and on the collective farms. In Karelia, too, the Russian war memorials, with only a few exceptions, apply only to the years 1941–1945, i.e. to the Great Patriotic War, in which Finland was looked on as the "Usurper of Karelia", an ally of Germany and an invader of the Soviet Union, while the latter was portrayed as the defender of its Karelian territories. The Winter War, in which the situation was quite the reverse of this, and which provides the key for understanding the role of Finland in the Second World War as a whole, is entirely ignored. No other interpretation was ever put forward, certainly not in Soviet times.

No accurate figures are available on the number of monuments to the Great Patriotic War

to be found at present in the ceded areas of Karelia, but the Ministry of Culture for the Karelian Republic reports that there are altogether 415 officially registered monuments located at sites of historical events or war graves in its territory, of which a large proportion, 337, mark mass graves of Russian soldiers. The others include monuments marking historical frontlines or scenes of battles, and some that were erected to commemorate distinguished contingents of troops or Soviet heroes. In addition, Ministry of Culture inspectors estimate that there are at least thirty memorials located in villages or on collective farms that are not documented in the official registers (Barbashina 2003). No corresponding figures are available at all for the Karelian Isthmus, which belongs to the Leningrad Region, but it is probable that the area contains well over a hundred such monuments. It may thus be roughly estimated that some 650 memorials to the Great Patriotic War were erected in Karelia in the post-war period, a large proportion of which were concentrated in the former Finnish Karelia.

The lost Karelia: Finnish memories and their perpetuation

In Finland the outcome of the Second World War altered the spatial dimensions of the Karelian myth once again, leaving images of the ceded areas, of distant nostalgic sites and landscapes, in the collective memory of the Finnish evacuees (Raivo 2002). The concept arose of a lost, forfeited Karelia that no one wished to forget but for which all notions of time and space came to a standstill at the moment of evacuation. The remembrance of everything that was lost has been strengthened with books of photographs, local histories, maps, books of recollections, other publications concerned with local traditions and a wide selection of factual and fictional writing, all of which have been produced prolifically over the last 60 years. The Karelians have maintained their identity and their association with their home areas through numerous local societies and organizations, including the national Karelian Association, founded in 1940. This identity and the people's nostalgic attachment to their lost homes have also featured prominently in annual summer gatherings of Karelians and of families from specific areas or villages, and the same identity has been maintained and emphasized through the use of national costumes, the preparation of traditional foods and the propagation of Karelian songs, games and folk dances. Various symbols and commemorative objects such as maps, coats of arms, flags and standards that refer to the old political and administrative divisions of Karelia have remained in use, the most conspicuous symbol of all being the red and black coat of arms of Karelia itself, which depicts a western sword and an eastern scimitar clashing together (Raninen 1995).

The bitter blow of losing Karelia and the nostalgic sense of a distant time and place that remained were perhaps relieved somewhat by the fact that it was not even possible to visit the ceded areas, for the majority of Russian Karelia and the Leningrad Region were closed to foreigners until late in the 1980s. It was only under the influence of *glasnost* around 1989–1990 that the border began to be opened and travel to both the Karelian Republic and the Karelian Isthmus, in the Leningrad Region, became possible. The majority of the visitors in the early days were indeed Karelians returning to see their former homes or those of their parents or grandparents, for the first time after almost 50 years, although admittedly there were also some speculative tourists attracted merely by cheap petrol, alcoholic drinks and cigarettes available there on account of the low standard of living in Russia. Total border crossings by passengers rose from 0.96 million in 1990 to 4.1 million by 1996, while the numbers of Russian travelling to Finland also increased from 1994 onwards to reach almost two million in 1997 (Paasi & Raivo 1998).

Lost homes, desecrated churches and unidentifiable graves

The opening of the border soon made it clear to the visitors that there was practically nothing at all left of the old Finnish Karelia that they had cherished in their imagination for almost 60 years, and that the places that they remembered, their former homes and the churches, monuments and graves, had disappeared almost entirely. The few fragments that were still to be seen were badly neglected or had simply been overlooked completely by the new masters of the area. The people were horrified not only at the destruction of their own homes but also at the fate of their local churches and cemeteries.

Altogether 57 cemeteries belonging to the parishes of the ceded areas had remained on the oth-

er side of the new boundary defined in the Treaty of Moscow in 1944, and it had been possible to remember those buried there only through commemorative stones erected in the evacuees' new places of residence. Now it transpired that the new inhabitants of Karelia had treated the true places of memorial badly. Some of the old churches and cemeteries had been used for quite different purposes, and many had been quite deliberately desecrated to a greater or lesser extent. Thus, by the early 1990s, there was nothing left of the majority of the old parish churches and cemeteries other than a forested mound where the church had been, perhaps with the old foundations still visible, and next to it a virtually unrecognisable area that had been the cemetery (Koponen 1999, 7). Almost everywhere the gravestones and memorial stones had been knocked over, broken or taken away for other use, for monuments to the Red Army, the foundations of buildings or the supports of bridges. In some places the old cemeteries were still in use, but in many instances they had deliberately been taken over for some other purpose, as sites for roads, streets or sewerage systems or for the grazing of cattle. Some cemeteries have even been incorporated into military barracks nowadays and are used as football pitches or parking places for tanks (Lahikainen 1993; Tuomisto 1998, 301; Hakala & Lipponen 1999). In many places the graves themselves had been opened in the hope of finding money or jewellery buried in them, and this habit appears to be continuing nowadays.

Soon after the first visitors had returned, voluntary groups of Karelians and their relatives began to arrive to clear and renovate the areas of the old churches and cemeteries and put up memorial stones in the old places. Although the various Karelian societies and organizations had no concerted plans for this, they appear to have carried the work out in more or less the same order everywhere. They usually concentrated first on restoring the war graves and erecting a new war memorial, after which they cleared the ruins or site of the church and put up a memorial there, and thirdly they set about renovating and tidying the civilian parts of the cemeteries and their gravestones (Koponen 1999, 8).

The work of tending the cemeteries and churchyards was difficult at first, and in many places it met with opposition from the local authorities. The situation altered only after Finland and Russia had concluded an agreement in 1992 for the honouring of the memory of the Finnish soldiers and of the Russian soldiers who had been killed in Finland (Hakala & Lipponen 1999, 5). This obliges both parties to respect the graves and memorials of those who died on alien soil in the war and to permit relatives to visit these graves. The outcome in Finland has been that the Ministry of Education has granted sums of money to local Karelian societies for this purpose since 1992, primarily for the renovation and management of war graves and the erecting of memorials (Koponen 1999, 8). Apart for the official monuments financed by the Finnish government, the local Karelian societies have provided more than 60 memorial stones, mostly beside the war graves in the cemeteries of their former towns and villages. This means that the ceded areas of Karelia now possess about 80 memorials altogether that were erected between 1991 and 1999 to honour the memory of past generations and tell the present inhabitants of the Finnish aspects of the region's history.

Bearing in mind that more than 7600 soldiers who died in the war were buried in the cemeteries of the Karelian Isthmus, the Lake Ladoga region and the Borderlands in 1941–1944, it is understandable that these war graves should be especially important *loci memoriae* for the Finns and should constitute the most visible aspect of the nation's collective memory of the Second World War. Some 93,000 Finns died in the wars that took place between 1939 and 1945 and more than 200,000 were injured, which are exceptionally high figures when one remembers that the total population at that time was well under five million. Altogether some 83,000 persons killed in action during the wars are buried in 622 cemeteries in present-day Finland (Tuomisto 1998, 276).

Unlike most other countries in Europe, the experience of war which established Finland's manner of commemorating those killed in action was not the First World War but the Civil War of 1918, the idea that the bodies of the fallen should be transported home and buried in a separate area of war graves within their parish cemetery having originated with the victorious White faction. The same tradition was then pursued during the Winter War, but with the distinction that it now applied to the whole population and not just to a selected few. Indeed the notion that the whole nation was united in arms against the external enemy is one essential aspect of the memory of

the Second World War in Finland, and the solid rows of crosses and stones are a physical manifestation of this (Raivo 2000). These war graves have now become substantial locations of collective memory for the Finnish people, of the kind that might be referred to as "memoryscapes", containing as they do historical strata that cover both the events of 1918 and those of 1939–1945. Especially in the case of the memorials erected in the ceded areas of Karelia, all these periods in time are comprehended within the same national narrative. In earlier days memories of the Civil War were often controversial, but sufficient time has evidently now elapsed for these to be integrated into the general military history of the independence period and the associated memories of the nation's will to defend itself.

One of the old areas of war graves that has now been renovated is located in the old cemetery of Ihantala close to Vyborg, not far from the Finnish border. Before the Second World War Ihantala belonged to the rural district of Vyborg, which contained 71 villages and had a population of about 48,000 persons at its peak (Jaatinen 1997, 9). Although the rural parish of Vyborg had traditions going back several hundred years, the history of Ihantala as an independent parish was a short one. It was formed only in 1926 and gained a church of its own in 1927. The church, on its hill, survived the Winter War undamaged, but was demolished by the Russians when peace was declared. Ihantala was recaptured by the Finns during the Continuation War, however, and an area of war graves was established in its cemetery in 1943. This area with its white crosses was completely destroyed a year later, when a fierce battle was waged in the area in summer 1944 and the cemetery itself became part of the battlefield, with trenches and dugouts (Koponen 1999, 210). After the war it was used for grazing livestock (Tuomisto 1998, 303).

As elsewhere in the ceded territories, the situation altered only after the former inhabitants of Ihantala and their descendants were allowed to visit there in the early 1990s and saw the lamentable state that their church and cemetery were in. This led them to form a Memorial Committee in 1991 and to begin negotiations with the local Russian authorities to have the surroundings of the church and cemetery marked off as places of remembrance. Agreement was reached and a contract was signed in 1992. In the summer of the same year a commemorative ceremony attended by 400 visitors from Finland took place in the former churchyard, at which a war memorial was unveiled, consisting of a block of red granite two metres high inscribed with the dates 1939–1944 and the words "To the memory of those members of the parish of Ihantala who fell in the wars. Former parishioners of Ihantala, 1992." A separate memorial stone was also unveiled on the site of the church itself (Koponen 1999, 212). The same group of former inhabitants later marked out the area of the original cemetery and renovated it as a memorial park and separated off the area of war graves with stone posts and iron chains. The Finnish government has now leased the area of the Ihantala monument from the Russians, fenced it in and made provisions for it to be tended regularly (Fig. 1).

The local people have usually been sympathetic to the Finns' requests to erect monuments, and joint war memorials have been put up in some places such as Räisälä, Kaukola, Suojärvi and Salmi (Lahikainen 1993, 90; Tuomisto 1998, 301). There are also places where the local people help to look after the cemeteries. For others, however, the appearance of Finnish monuments has been too much, and they have reacted violently, by breaking or overturning them. The stone erected in 1993 in the yard of the old Cathedral in Vyborg, for instance, was defaced immediately, and that marking the site of the famous battle of Kollaa during the Winter War has been overturned. Significant buildings surviving from Finnish days have also been burned down intentionally, perhaps the most despicable of these acts being the destruction of the church at Kurkijoki by fire in 1991.

The Russians themselves, however, have begun to remember and honour the Finnish aspects of the history of Karelia in more recent times. This has partly taken place through official co-operation between the Russian authorities and instances in Finland and partly through groups and individuals operating outside official circles. One of the latter groups is the Kareliya Association, an entirely unofficial organization which has financed the erection of signs displaying Finnish placenames in various parts of the Karelian Isthmus, often alongside the Russian names, and is otherwise attempting to preserve Finnish historical monuments. This voluntary action on behalf of the geographical memory of the area has not been without problems, however, and the organization has had many difficulties with the author-

Fig. 1. The memorial to Finnish soldiers killed in the wars in the cemetery of Ihantala, near Vyborg. The area of war graves set aside in 1943 was destroyed in the hostilities of summer 1944, but it has now been renovated and fenced in. The memorial stone dates from 1992. (Photo Petri Raivo, 2002).

ities. Some of its signboards have disappeared, presumably because reminders of the area's Finnish past have not been to the liking of all the inhabitants (Mikkola 2000). Russians interested in preserving memories of the Finnish past of the Karelian Isthmus have also put up unofficial signs commemorating some of the battlefields of the Winter War, and these together with Finnish commemorative plaques and Russian nationalist and anti-nationalist inscriptions form a complicated mixture of interweaving layers of narratives that nowadays mark the memory and *loci memoriae* of the war (Fig. 2).

Summary: places and landscapes of contested memory

There has been a desire on the part of both nations implicated in the recent history of the ceded areas of Karelia to engrave the past – real and imaginary – in stone for the benefit of future generations and the present Russian population. Lying behind these representations and manipulations are not only current needs but also those of the future. The street names, war memorials and battlefields form part of a nostalgically coloured narrative of the Karelia of the past, a lost Karelia for many people. Landscapes and their elements are always an essential part of the field of discourse in which cultural hegemony is produced and renewed, and a historical landscape is thus always someone's landscape, since it has its makers and its viewers, who both produce and reproduce processes of signification, texts and discourses connected with it. It is always a question of what is seen, who sees it and how, and it is also always a question of power and control – either symbolic or concrete – as one aspect of the values and meanings connected with a landscape. Monuments, commemorative plaques and the historical names of streets and places are thus powerful mechanisms of cultural legitimisation, conventional elements in a landscape that link it with the past and its myths. The effect is a two-directional one in fact, in that a landscape is lined with symbolic meanings and at the same time recollections of the past are concretized in the physical environment until they are taken for granted and become part of the natural order of things.

It is necessary, however, in connection with monuments and sites of memory to make a distinction between 1) the politicization of memory, and 2) the politicization of presentation. The former refers to how we remember a historical event, what facts are emphasized, how they are

Fig. 2. Remains of the Finnish command bunker in the village of Summa from the Winter War. The concrete wall carries a very symbolic dispute over the wartime history of Karelia and the strata of interpretations that can be connected with it. There is a plaque fixed to it by veterans of the 15th infantry regiment that served there in the Winter War in honour of their fallen colleagues, but there are also the words "Long live Russia" scrawled on it in Russian and "they gave their lives for their country in the war of liberation -39–40" in Finnish, both apparently the work of Russians. (Photo Petri Raivo, 2002).

grafted on the present, and what facts may perhaps be forgotten, while the latter refers to the presentation of memory in the present day, how what is past and gone can be made actual at this moment, and in what way and on whose conditions they may be remembered. The commemoration of historical facts at a certain place and in a certain landscape, or the decision to ignore those facts, may be seen as something in the nature of a dynamic process. Sometimes places that have been commemorated will disappear, and sometimes people will wish to recall forgotten facts of history. It is very much a question of what events and associated places our geographical memory regards as important parts of our cultural identity at a particular moment.

One significant source of historical memory and identity in the nationalistic narrative of a nation is represented by places and landscapes connected with conflicts and wars. Battle sites, defence lines dating from different times, statues of heroes and victors and memorials to those who fell in the wars are essential parts of the iconographies of nation-states. Frequently these national sites of memory also have a functional role as parts of certain rituals or festivities. War memorials, in which nationalism and patriotism find a powerful means of material, symbolic and functional expression, are the most widespread public use of sculptures all over Europe, and their purpose is partly to support and give credibility to a narrative of the existence of a nation's history and culture extending from the past up to the present day. Memorial environments are thus places where the narrative of a nation and the associated myths and teachings are engraved on the landscape.

All this can be seen in the ways in which both the Russians and the Finns remember Karelia and its past. Especially in present-day discourses of memory, it is not so important who the ceded areas ought to belong to now or in the future as who their past belongs to. In spite of the differences in the collective memories associated with the Second World War, these sites of memory have opened up a possibility for adopting a new perspective on this difficult matter and offer prospects of fruitful co-operation at the level of both intergovernmental agreements and concrete local joint action. Nowadays at least, both parties to the last war realise that there are two parallel narratives associated with the memory and traditions of the areas of Karelia ceded to the Soviet Union in 1945: a Finnish past and a Russian present.

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