

## **ЕСТЬ МНОГО РАЗНЫХ КАРЕЛИЙ — ON MONTA ERI KARJALAA — THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT KARELIAS**

The project *There are many different Karelias* has established a new framework to facilitate, coordinate, and strengthen collaboration of scholars to develop and promote knowledge of the shared, complex history of Finland and Russia and to make that knowledge widely accessible. Rather than a single research project, *There are many different Karelias* acts as an umbrella to unite different projects, individual researchers, events, activities, and publications that have shared and complementary goals. The umbrella project was initiated in 2018 with an aim of popularising historical knowledge about central topics in the common history of these nations. In order to accomplish this, the project provides a framework in which to effectively organise the activities of Russian and Finnish experts studying and teaching the history and culture of Finland in Russia and vice versa.

Although the people of Russia and Finland have been neighbours for centuries, they do not know each other very well. For many Finns, the concept of “Karelia” is primarily associated with the territories lost in 1944, whereas for Russians it is only the present Republic of Karelia. Few people realise that there have been many different Karelias at different points in history and that Karelians have lived on both sides of the shifting border, separated geographically, linguistically, religiously and culturally, and yet have maintained close ties with each other for centuries. This umbrella project is important for overcoming outdated stereotypes and developing positive perceptions of people in the neighbouring country. Popularisation of historical knowledge is crucial for creating mutual understanding by getting to know one another.

*There are many different Karelias* was established on the initiative of the Petrozavodsk State University (PetrSU) and the Interdisciplinary Research and Educational Centre for Baltic and Finnish Studies “FENNICA”. PetrSU is working closely with the Institute of Linguistics, Literature, and History of the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Interdisciplinary Research and Educational Centre for Northern European Studies “NORDICA” (Petrozavodsk), and the Karelian Culture Society (Karjalan Sivistysseura, Helsinki).

### **Many Karelias**

Karelia is a territory situated on both sides of the current Finnish–Russian border. It extends from the Gulf of Finland to the White Sea, caught for centuries between the two powerful neighbouring countries, Sweden and Russia, beginning already from the Middle Ages. The border between them shifted several times. Finland remained the eastern part of Sweden until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was ceded to Russia and became an autonomous Grand Duchy.

Shortly thereafter, White Sea Karelia or Viena Karelia became a site of inspiration for Finland’s political, intellectual, and artistic elite. Reimagining White Sea Karelia as the mythical cradle of Finnish culture played a central role in the awakening

of the Finnish national movement and the construction of Finnishness. Ideas connecting national identity with language, culture, and ethnicity became a rallying point for independence, and, around the turn of the 20th century, it also led to a dream of joining the kindred peoples on both sides of the border under a single state.

The beginning of the 20th century was a time of great upheaval with huge impacts on the people along the Finnish-Russian border. Revolutions and civil wars in both countries, as well as the so-called Wars of Kindred Peoples (*Heimosodat*) with its dream of Greater Finland and the Soviet Great Terror not only affected the borders and power relations between two neighbouring countries: they also affected hundreds of thousands of people through the thousands who were killed, displaced, or lost their freedom, resulting in countless broken families and shattered lives.

The Great Terror was followed by the Second World War. Finland was pulled into the German military expeditions and advanced into Karelia, occupying large territories that included Petrozavodsk. Under the Moscow Armistice of 1944, the Finnish–Russian border was redrawn for the last time, and Finland had to cede large areas of Finnish Karelia to the Soviet Union. Almost the entire native population was evacuated causing some 430,000 people to be resettled in other parts of Finland.

The relationship between Russia and Finland has been stable since 1948, first with the establishment of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, and under a new treaty of 1992 for the post-Soviet era. The Treaty of 1948 underlined Finland's neutrality and enabled large-scale cooperation in economics, industry, science, and art. The collapse of the USSR severely affected the economies of both countries, resulting in economic crises, and it also began a new wave of immigration into Finland, mostly of Ingrian and Finnish repatriates.

Major turns of events across the past 100 years continue to impact people in both countries, which creates the importance of those events in people's lives today and makes them topics of tremendous interest. They are surrounded by discussion because of their significance to identities and understanding personal, family, ethnic, and national pasts. These discussions shape perceptions, preconceptions, and various understandings of the historical events and their consequences. People involved in these discussions end up with different places and things in focus that they call 'Karelia' or 'Karelian'.

### **Aims and activities of the project**

*There are many different Karelias* is aimed at the dissemination of contemporary scholarly knowledge of Russia's and Finland's common history. The long-term project's framework supports public scholarly lectures for wider audiences in both Russia and Finland, translations of relevant research and historical literature between national languages, the organisation of Russian-Finnish seminars, and popularising historical knowledge in the media, including on-line. It encourages the involvement of young researchers from both countries in joint academic research on key issues of our common history.

The project follows current topics in the media related to the history of Finland and Russia in order to be able to respond immediately with expert perspectives from scholarship in both languages. Recent topics like these include, for example, the role of Red Finns in the Soviet Union in the 1930s; attempts of the Russian Military Historical Society to rewrite the history of Sandarmokh; the history of Ingrians as refugees and as targets of the Great Terror; Internment and transfer camps in Soviet Karelia occupied by the Finnish military in 1941–1944, and so on.

*Popular scholarly lectures in Russia and Finland*

A significant part of the project's strategy is to organise popular scholarly lectures that bring specialists across the Finnish-Russian border as well as arranging joint seminars and public discussions. These will be held both in the capital cities of Helsinki and Petrozavodsk but also in other places in order to increase accessibility to wider audiences and foster interest in diverse communities. Some lectures may be organised 'on the move' so that participants can simultaneously visit interesting and relevant historical sites.

Potential topics for lectures and seminars include:

- Red Finns in East Karelia from 1918 to 1922 (Studia Generalia, Helsinki 2019)
- The border between Russia and Finland (Studia Generalia, Helsinki 2019)
- Edvard Gylling as head of Soviet Karelia in the 1920s and 1930s (Studia Generalia, Helsinki 2019)
- Refugees escaping Russia from 1917 to 1944 in history writing (Studia Generalia, Helsinki 2019)
- Migration in the late 19th and early 20th century
- Civil Wars in Finland (1918) and Russia (1917–1922)
- Politics and Terror in Stalinist Russia (1920–1939) targeting Finns in Soviet Karelia
- The Kronstadt Rebellion in 1921
- Anniversaries of the Continuation War and Great Patriotic War

*Translating and publishing historical literature*

*There are many different Karelias* also promotes the sharing and popularisation of knowledge across the border by organising and coordinating translations of relevant research and historical literature as well as the development of publications oriented to different audiences. Organised within this framework, translation and publishing activities are already well underway in the ongoing project *Karelia in the notes of travellers and researchers* of the Karelian Culture Society and the Institute of Linguistics, Literature and History of Karelian Research Centre of Russian Academy of Sciences. This work includes:

- I. K. Inha, *In the Songlands of the Kalevala* (translated from Finnish into Russian, published in 2019)

- Ivan Olenev, *Karelia and its Future in Connection with the Building of the Murmansk Railway* (translated from Russian into Finnish, published in 2019)

- A. V. Ervasti, *Travelling in Russia in the Summer of 1879* (translated from Finnish into Russian, ongoing)

- Mihail Krukovsky, *Travelling in Olonets Karelia in the 1890s* (translated from Russian into Finnish, planned)

Collaborators of the project are also preparing scholarly works for popular and academic audiences, as well as corresponding translations, such as:

- A collection of articles by Associate Professor Irina Takala, primarily on the impact of Stalin's repression of North American immigrants and Finns who moved to Soviet Karelia in the 1930s

- Pekka Vaara, *White Sea Karelia 1918: When the World War Came to Karelia* (translated from Finnish into Russian, ongoing)

#### *Russian-Finnish seminars for historians*

Russian-Finnish seminars for historians are intended to be an ongoing part of the project, with specific venues for these already under consideration for 2020 and 2021. The primary forum for the seminars is the annual Finnish-Russian Cultural Forum. These joint seminars used to be held there and the project is seeking a collaboration with the Finland-Russia Society in order to re-establish them, hopefully already in 2020, when the forum will be held in Lahti, Finland.

Another possible venue for such history seminars in 2020 is the Finnish Institute in St. Petersburg. The project may carry the discussions at such seminars forward into publication, as might be done for the colloquium organised for young researchers in Moscow in October of 2019.

#### *Research projects*

As an umbrella project, *There are many different Karelias* supports and coordinates research and disseminates results of relevant projects, some of which are already ongoing or in planning:

- *Self-organisation of the White Sea Karelians from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century* (Institute of Linguistics, Literature and History of Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, ongoing)

- *Karelian refugees in photos and archival sources* (Republic of Karelia, National Archive, ongoing)

- *American and Canadian Finns and the Development of the Forest Sector of Russian Karelia in the 1930s* (ongoing)

- *Mobility in the Borderlands* (under planning)

In order to encourage young scholars to study the common history of Finland and Russia, the project invites potential candidates to present papers at events organised by the project, discussing topics that already include, for example:

- Soviet Karelian identity
- Material culture in the Soviet Union
- The fight for the Russian Empire: Finland and White Russian combat organizations from 1918–1939
- The Karelian Labour Commune and how the journal *Red Karelia* emerged
- Printed Soviet propaganda in Russian Karelia between 1918–1922
- Deportations and the forced exile of Ingrian Finns in the Soviet Union during the 1930s and 1940s using private letters and oral histories

#### *Popularising a shared history*

The goal of increasing historical awareness and popularising a shared history on both sides of the border can be achieved through a number of strategies that may include:

- Organising public seminars and lectures, research seminars, and also streaming presentations and lectures
- Publishing translated literature, brochures, and leaflets
- Using web pages and on-line newsletters of the project partners
- Publishing in Russian and English in the *Nordic and Baltic Studies Review* of PetrSU
- Creating a project page on Facebook
- Presenting at annual meetings such as the *Heimopäivät* or the festival of the Karelian Culture Society (Helsinki, April)
- Presenting at various symposia such as the biennial *Tie Vienaan — The Path to the White Sea Karelia* (Kuusamo, Finland, 2020)

#### **Project Sustainability**

The project makes use of materials (documents, textbooks, writings and articles, manuals, maps, and statistical and research reports) available in the National Archives of both Finland and the Republic of Karelia, in the National Museum and the National Library of the Republic of Karelia, and in the archives of the Karelian Culture Society and the Finnish Literature Society. Materials gathered and developed during the course of the project will be made available on websites of the project partners and through electronic publications, while some of the materials published during the course of the project will be made available for purchase.

#### **Towards a model for stable future cooperation**

Close collaboration of the project's partners will foster the development of a model for stable future cooperation that will be sustainable and promote publicising

and popularising historical knowledge on both sides of the border so that these activities continue long into the future.

The umbrella project will join Finnish-Russian Cultural Forums to find new partners, which may be universities, research centres, archives, museums, libraries, non-governmental organizations, other communities, and so forth. Through its activities and collaborations, *There are many Karelias* will increase the level of knowledge about the shared history of Finland and Russia among a broader audience in both countries, shaping more informed perspectives about the history of each nation.

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