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All of the President's Historians
The Debate over Urho Kekkonen

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SELDOM DOES A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE enter the discourse of popular music. Such though was the case in 1991 when the Finnish singer Juhani "Juice" Leskinen recorded the song "Siniristilippumme" [Our Blue and White Flag]. Like many of Leskinen's songs, this piece examines the Finnish condition. He sings about a country plunged into economic depression as well as caught between an integrating western Europe and a disintegrating eastern Europe. Many of the truths and beliefs of a country comfortably isolated during the Cold War no longer applied. Leskinen proclaims this Finnish twilight of the idols in the song's opening line: "Kekkonen hiihti! Kekkonen kalasti! Nyt se on Kekkonen riisuttu alasti" [Kekkonen skied, Kekkonen fished, and now Kekkonen is stripped bare].

When Urho Kaleva Kekkonen resigned as president of the Republic of Finland in the fall of 1981, few Finns could remember a time when he was not a leader much less the leader of the country. From his days as a student activist in the 1920s, Kekkonen's public career spanned seven decades. In 1956, he won the Finnish presidency by the narrowest of margins. He then held the office for the next quarter-century during which he faced the challenge of leading a small democracy in the shadow of the Soviet Union.

Over the last two decades, historians have reevaluated Kekkonen's presidency. In terms of its duration, impact on the historical profession, and resonance with the general public, this scholarly debate ranks among the most significant in the annals of historical scholarship in Finland. This debate has been fueled not so much by theses and interpretations as by a struggle over and for credibility. Throughout this debate, the credibility of participating scholars, primary sources, and President Kekkonen himself has been questioned.

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JUHANI SUOMI—KEKKONEN'S "COURT WRITER?"

The central figure in this debate has been the historian Juhani Suomi. In September 1986, the first installment of his eight-volume biography of Kekkonen appeared just days after the president's death. This first installment covers the years 1936–1944, during which Kekkonen started his long career in national politics. Even before the book reached stores, Suomi's credibility as a scholar of Kekkonen was questioned on several counts. He was the only scholar with unlimited access to two important archival collections: President Kekkonen's own papers as well as relevant classified material from the Finnish Foreign Ministry. Suomi owed these privileges to both his personal ties to Kekkonen and his position as a senior civil servant in the Foreign Ministry. He gave his research an even more opaque veneer by publishing it without source citations. He and his publisher did so in the hope of reaching the broadest possible audience, that is, maximizing sales (Suomi, *Myrrysmies* 10–3).

In an editorial in *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja,* one of Finland's leading historical journals, Jukka-Pekka Pietiäinen spoke for many historians in confronting Suomi's "monopoly" over the Kekkonen papers. Pietiäinen called for the deposition of all presidential archives in the State Archives (now the National Archives). He presented as a model the case of Kekkonen's immediate predecessor, J.K. Paasikivi, whose diaries in the National Archives remained closed to all until 1985. Not only were the rules fair for all scholars, but also interested researchers were helped by the publication of the first volume of Paasikivi's diaries in the same year. Pietiäinen echoed the criticisms of many reviewers by decrying the decision to publish the work without source citations. Their absence placed longer and darker shadows over the book's credibility, since the book's findings could not be scrutinized easily even if the archives were open to all scholars. Moreover, Pietiäinen condemned Suomi's complicity in the decision as "hämmästyttävää alistumista kaupallisiin intresseihin yliopiston dosentilta" ("Arkistojen" 2) [an astounding submission to commercial interests by a university docent] (see Paasikivi; Polvinen, "Paasikivien" 52–3).

Many antagonists in the debate over Kekkonen have focused more on undermining scholarly credibility than on challenging arguments and theses. In throwing stones, some have revealed that they live in glass houses. While condemning one scholar's "monopoly" over the Kekkonen archives, Pietiäinen was exposed for having received similar preferential

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treatment for which he criticized Juhani Suomi. In the research for his biography on Rudolf Holsti, one of Finland's most influential interwar politicians, Pietiäinen joined a select group of scholars permitted to use one of independent Finland's most important private archives: the papers of the Erkko family (Zetterberg 129–30). Pietiäinen blithely admitted his own privileged position while arguing that the openness of archives is "demokratian tärkeä mittari" ("En ole" 248) [an important measure of democracy]. This debate over the openness of source materials did not change the conduct of historical scholarship in Finland. A significant segment of research on twentieth-century Finland still is produced by those with special access to private and public archives. These privileges are granted by the holder of the collection, whose choice might be based on a scholar's perceived sympathies rather than real scholarly qualifications. The selection process itself could endanger scholarly credibility.

Juhani Suomi confronted the criticism that he was Kekkonen's "court writer" who lacked the credibility to write about the president objectively. He refuted accusations of preferential treatment by pointing to four other historians who had used the Kekkonen archives. Suomi failed to mention that they had received limited access to material specific to their research projects. Suomi accused his critics of laziness and jealousy. Anybody could have sought the access to the Kekkonen papers that he received. Indeed, Suomi's critics never have stated what they would have done had they been given such an exclusive privilege. The omission of footnotes was to Suomi's mind validated by the sale of some 40,000 copies of the book, a best-seller by Finnish standards. In any case, the biographer assured his colleagues that if they had any questions about specific sources, they could contact him personally (Suomi, *Myrrysmies* 10–3; "*Lähteistä*" 149–50).

Interestingly, there was little argument over the findings and theses of Suomi's book itself. Reviewers did not challenge the book's major new finding: Kekkonen's wartime conversion from a virulent anti-Soviet stand to a supporter of prudent appeasement of the eastern neighbor was not an opportunistic u-turn in the face of Germany's retreat. Rather, it resulted from a long examination of Finland's situation that preceded Germany's defeat at Stalingrad. Suomi convincingly argues that Kekkonen did not enthusiastically embrace Germany's war effort or Finland's expansion beyond the pre-1939 borders. He devotes a significant segment to charting Kekkonen's inner conflict between his search for peace on the one hand and desire for national unity on

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the other. The biographer makes it abundantly clear that the man who would lead Finland's foreign policy for some twenty-five years entered the political arena with a narrow focus on domestic policy. While finding Suomi's conclusions plausible, reviewers reserved final judgment until Kekkonen's archives were opened to all scholars (see Apunen; Häikiö, "Komea"; Jakobson, "Kekkonen ei ollut"; Kallenautio; Mylly; Seppälä; Uino, "poliittinen"; Virmavirta).

Suomi accepted the criticism concerning the absence of footnotes and employed them in successive installments of the biography. The next two volumes, published in 1988 and 1990, examine Kekkonen during the years 1944–1950 and 1950–1956 respectively. During this period, Kekkonen served in several positions such as prime minister and speaker of parliament. He became one of President J.K. Paasikivi's most trusted allies and most likely successors. The scholarly reception of these two works was much more restrained. Reviewers continued to reserve final judgment until the archives were opened to all. Scholars concurred that the first three volumes of this biography reveal little about Kekkonen's private sphere: his relationship with his wife, family, friends, and the many rumored extramarital affairs. Suomi had increased the factual knowledge about Kekkonen but contributed little in terms of understanding the man. Reviewers agreed that the biography is not particularly critical of Kekkonen. If the work has an overarching thesis, it is that Kekkonen was a great leader (see Haataja, "Tosi"; Hakovirta; Häikiö, "Kekkonen"; Jakobson, "hirumuinen"; Paavolainen; Uino, "vaaran vuosina"; for reviews of volume two. For reviews of volume three, see Haataja, "Perkele"; Jakobsen, "kirjoittamattomien"; Tervonen). This consensus view continued to prevail through the publication of all eight volumes.

Over time, Juhani Suomi's scholarly credibility has been enhanced by the gradual opening of the Kekkonen archives to scholars during the 1990s coupled with the publication of Kekkonen's diaries edited by Juhani Suomi himself (see Kekkonen). His symphonic biography of Kekkonen will endure as a model of scholarly stamina. It has served and will continue to serve as a useful corrective in a debate that at times has been very prosecutorial in tone and approach.

KEKKONEN AND "FINLANDIZATION"

The relative calm surrounding volumes two and three represented a mere transition to a new and even longer storm of debate. As Suomi

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was writing the fourth installment of the biography, which appeared in 1992, Kekkonen became a truly historical figure. The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Finland dropped its official postwar foreign policy, the "Paasikivi-Kekkonen line," and sought to redefine itself in the new Europe. A widespread public discussion ensued about Finland during the Cold War (see Browning). After decades of national denial that the USSR did not have extraordinary political influence in Finland, many in Finland started to use the term Finlandization to describe the country's relationship with the USSR. During the Cold War, foreign scholars defined Finlandization as a small power's servile policy toward its larger neighbor. This unfavorable understanding of Finnish-Soviet relations made the term taboo in Finland. Since the end of the Cold War, Finns have used the term as defined by the historian Jukka Tarkka: "ulkopolitiikalla tehtyä sisäpolitiikkaa" (Tarkka, "Suomettumisen" 95; see also Vihavainen 14) [domestic policy conducted by foreign policy]. In the national discourse about Cold War Finland, many have questioned Kekkonen's credibility as a leader in the most sensitive terms of patriotism.

A major catalyst for starting this discussion was the publication in 1991 of Timo Vihavainen's book *Kansakunta rähmällään: Suomettumisen lyhyt historia* [A Nation Prostrate: A Short History of Finlandization]. Vihavainen argues that the preponderance of Soviet influence in internal Finnish affairs after World War II did not stem from direct Soviet pressure but rather from the Finns themselves. Finnish history is replete with examples of politicians seeking to strengthen their position in domestic politics by currying Russian favor. During Kekkonen's presidency, this practice was carried to unprecedented heights. Between the early 1960s and early 1970s, the country's major political parties sought to improve their fortunes by backing the Finnish president. Like Kekkonen, they cultivated ties with the USSR for domestic political gain. In 1973, opposition to the president had dwindled to the point where the Finnish parliament by a five-sixths majority gave him a four-year extension to his term scheduled to end in 1974. In Kekkonen's last decade in office, the country's leaders sought mandates not through elections so much as through participation in the president's "court" and sauna evenings at the Soviet embassy. Any criticism of the president was by definition considered detrimental to national unity —and the "trust" between Finland and the USSR. The weakening of democratic values did not stem from overwhelming Soviet pressure but rather from the collaboration of the elites of Finnish society (Vihavainen 77–271).

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Like most scholars of Cold War Finland active since the early 1990s, Vihavainen searches to find that moment at which a foreign policy originally designed to keep the USSR out of internal Finnish affairs became one that welcomed Soviet power into the domestic sphere. For Vihavainen, the turn came with Kekkonen's election to the presidency in 1956 (Vihavainen 1–76). This transition is treated in even greater detail by Jukka Nevakivi. Using newly opened Soviet archival sources, Nevakivi charts Finlandization's development. He draws a clear distinction between how presidents Paasikivi and Kekkonen conducted diplomacy with the Soviet Union. Paasikivi sought to restrict Soviet influence in Finland while recognizing the great power's legitimate security interests. Enjoying broad support during his ten-year presidency, Paasikivi did not need to play the Moscow card against domestic political enemies. His high popularity strengthened his hand in confronting the Soviets. This Finnish version of containment was corrupted by Kekkonen. Winning the presidency with a weak mandate in 1956, he retained the office by exploiting crises between Helsinki and Moscow. Ultimately, the growth of Soviet influence in the country stemmed from Finnish—not Soviet—actions (Nevakivi 21–5, 219–28).

Meanwhile, the man credited with defining the Finnish version of the term "Finlandization" redefined his own understanding of Kekkonen. In 1992, Jukka Tarkka published a survey of Finnish foreign policy during the Cold War. Tarkka, who had been known as one of President Kekkonen's most visible critics during the Cold War, argues in his book that Kekkonen based his policies toward the Soviet Union on realism. Post-Cold-War analysts who criticize Kekkonen for his authoritarian style forget Finland's precarious situation during the Cold War. During World War II and the immediate postwar period, the Soviet Union tried to control Finland through military force. The Soviets then sought to pressure Finland with political means during the 1950s and '60s. The USSR expanded its influence most effectively in Finland during the 1970s, when it channeled its efforts into the intellectual and ideological arenas. Finland's elites succumbed to this last form of pressure (Tarkka, *Suomen* 203–8).

Tarkka argues that the president did not contribute to the creation of the political culture known as Finlandization, but the opportunistic elites did. Kekkonen's "tragedy" according to Tarkka was that "Hän oli liian suuri johtaja siihen kehittymättömään poliittiseen kultuuriin, jota hän joutui johtamaan" (*Suomen* 206) [he was too great of a leader

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for the undeveloped political culture that he had to lead]. He does not elaborate on what he means by an "underdeveloped political culture." This absolution of the president's responsibility serves as a useful but exaggerated corrective to the tendency to assign blame for the development of Finlandization solely to Kekkonen. However, he ignores the overwhelming body of evidence that Kekkonen remained in office for so long as a result of his conduct of foreign policy.

Vihavainen, Nevakivi, and Tarkka all seriously problematize the connection between Kekkonen and Finlandization. Their works embody the major characteristics and dilemmas of the current debate. One tendency strongly suggests that Finlandization was the product of one man's—Kekkonen's—work. Another tendency emphasizes the widespread and voluntary collaboration of Finland's elites in creating this unique political culture. Some have even called for truth commissions or tribunals to prosecute the guilty parties (Hentilä 68–9). In this discussion, there has been an undercurrent of collective guilt.[1] One frequently hears in Finland today how "we Finns Finlandized ourselves." Historians have long understood the problems of collective guilt. Such a judgment spreads the burden so thinly that it becomes, in effect, a collective absolution. Collective guilt risks discouraging historians from seeking to understand a complex and transformative period in Finland's history. Among a wider populace, collective guilt can engender collective amnesia.

HANNU RAUTKALLIO, JUHANI SUOMI, AND KEKKONEN'S FIRST TERM

The darkest shadows over Kekkonen's credibility as president have been cast by the historian Hannu Rautkallio. His work on Kekkonen primarily focuses on the president's first term in office (1956–62), by far the most contentious period of his entire presidency. The controversy stems in large measure from two major crises in Finnish-Soviet relations: the Night Frost government and the Note Crisis. The first of these occurred in the fall of 1958. After parliamentary elections, a new

[1] For example see Jukka Tarkka's "Suomettujan tunnustuksia." This article is reprinted in a collection of essays by members of Finland's elite remembering their experiences during the Cold War edited by Johan Bäckman and entitled *Entäs kun tulee se yhdestoista? Suomettumisen uusin historia.*

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cabinet was formed under the Social Democrat Karl-August Fagerholm. The new government raised Soviet ire for two reasons. First, it left in the opposition the Communist-dominated Finnish People's Democratic League (SKDL) even though it had won the elections and was the largest party in parliament. Second, the recently elected chairman of the Social Democrats, Väinö Tanner, had been on the Soviets' list of Finnish political enemies since the Winter War (1939–1940). From the Soviet standpoint, the new cabinet threatened to entrench Finland more deeply into the Western camp. Moreover, the government entered office during an episode of heightened Soviet concern over Germany. The new cabinet experienced unprecedented Soviet attacks. They froze trade talks and placed other forms of diplomatic interchange on the slowest possible track. Kekkonen did little to defend the cabinet, which he had appointed. By the end of the year, the government collapsed. Never before had a Finnish cabinet resigned under Soviet pressure. Kekkonen worked hard to insure that such a crisis would never occur again during his presidency.

The second and even more controversial affair, the Note Crisis, erupted in October 1961, when the Finnish government received a Soviet note requesting consultations based on the 1948 Finnish-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance (also known as the YYA-treaty). Scholars have long debated the reasons for the Soviet action: were the Soviets motivated by growing tensions in Europe or by fears of Kekkonen's possible defeat in the presidential election scheduled for January 1962? The crisis broke the unity of Kekkonen's opponents, who supported a common candidate, Olavi Honka, insuring Kekkonen's reelection (Jussila, Hentilä, and Nevakivi 272–81).

Rautkallio's first two books about Kekkonen, published in 1990 and 1991, examine Anglo-American views of Finnish foreign policy 1945–1956 and 1956–1962 respectively. His research rests on American and British archival sources. Rautkallio argues that the United States and Great Britain doubted Kekkonen's ability and desire to keep Finland in the family of Western democracies. From the perspectives of Washington and London, Kekkonen exploited Soviet power and in particular tensions between Moscow and Helsinki in order to keep his hold on Finland's presidency. Rautkallio shares this conclusion (see *Paasikivi* and *Kekkonen*).

Over the course of his research, Rautkallio has targeted not only the credibility of Kekkonen, but that of Juhani Suomi as well. He concluded

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his second work about Anglo-American views of Finnish foreign policy with a brief commentary about archival sources, a significant part of which is devoted to his experiences with the Kekkonen archives. In his statement, Rautkallio joins the chorus of critics of the archives' gatekeepers. Rautkallio insinuates that the archives' denial of access to him was based on the fact that Juhani Suomi, a member of the archives' board of trustees, had not yet finished his book on Kekkonen's first term as president. Rautkallio derides Suomi's biography as Kekkonen's "muistelmat" [memoirs]. In a final dig at Suomi's scholarly credibility, Rautkallio opines that "Mielestäni Kekkosta koskevan tutkimuksen tila olisi korjattava aikaamme ja länsimaista tutkimustraditiota vastaavaksi" (*Kekkonen* 458) [in my opinion the situation concerning research about Kekkonen should be corrected in accordance with our time and the Western tradition of research].

Juhani Suomi has responded by questioning Rautkallio's scholarly credibility in two respects. First, he has criticized Rautkallio's use of American and British sources by arguing that they are biased against Finland and Kekkonen ("Kiireisen" 58–61; "Tarvittaisiinko"). Suomi's assertion upholds the belief that prevailed in Cold War Finland that the West did not properly understand the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line. Professor Suomi ignores the basic reality that Anglo-American views of Finland, no matter how misinformed, guided Anglo-American policies toward Finland. As Seppo Hentilä has pointed out, Suomi has set himself outside of a growing scholarly consensus that accepts the motion that the West had a better understanding of Finnish foreign policy and its domestic impact than was believed in Finland during the Cold War (Hentilä 64–5). Second, Suomi has accused Rautkallio of overstating his case and sometimes outrightly misusing sources. In fact, he takes as the title for one review the rhetorical question, "Tarvittaisiinko historiantutkimukseenkin tuotevastuulakia?" (Suomi, "Tarvittaisiinko" 144) [Does historical scholarship also need a product liability law?]. These criticisms of Rautkallio's research methods are shared widely among historians of Finland. On the one hand, Rautkallio better than any other scholar understands that, in spite of the length and width of Kekkonen's paper trail, his presidency had a silent, implicit quality as well. He was in office so long that his policies—foreign policy in particular—became assumed and internalized truths. On the other hand, in many instances, Rautkallio tends to fill these silences with conspiracy theories that assume the worst about Kekkonen's motives (see Häikiö,

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"Malmipora"; Jakobson, "Suomi"; Peltoniemi; Tarkka, "Kremlin"; Visuri, "Kohukirja").

This proclivity toward conspiratorial explanations is most prominent in Rautkallio's work on Kekkonen and the Soviets. They repeat the theme that Kekkonen relied on cooperation with Moscow in order to stay in power (see *Novosibirskin*; *Laborotorio*; *Agenda*). Rautkallio was one of the first Finnish scholars to use the newly opened Soviet archives. He was not bothered by a new problem with scholarly credibility: a weak command of Russian that forced him to employ translators to help him through this new trove of sources (Bergholm 52; Polvinen, "Idänsuhteet" 78–9). The first product of Rautkallio's research in the Soviet archives was an examination of the Note Crisis entitled *Novosibirskin lavastus* [A Play at Novosibirsk] that appeared in 1991. In the book, Rautkallio argues that concerns about Kekkonen's political future drove the Soviets to create the crisis. This understanding has existed since the time of the Note Crisis itself (see Junnila). Rautkallio defends one of the more extreme factions of this school of thought by arguing that the note was prepared with Kekkonen's knowledge and acquiescence. He does not, however, hold the most extreme view that Kekkonen ordered the note. Although having studied the Soviet sources, much of Rautkallio's argument is driven by a reinterpretation of well-established facts within a theoretical framework of conspiracy between Kekkonen and the Soviets. At the beginning of the affair, Rautkallio sees collusion in that Kekkonen, in the United States on a state visit when the note was issued, did not respond by flying back to Finland immediately. When Kekkonen ended his American visit and arrived in Novosibirsk in November 1961 to discuss the note with Soviet leader Khrushchev, the matter was quickly resolved. The Soviets decided to suspend their request for formal consultations. By this time, the Honka League had dissolved clearing the road to a second presidential term for Kekkonen and, moreover, a presidency that would last another twenty years (Rautkallio, *Novosibirskin* 144–5, 201–14, 239–40).

Suomi provided a comprehensive response to Rautkallio's work in his study of Kekkonen's first term, *Kriisien aika* [A Time of Crises], the fourth volume of his biography published in 1992. Where Rautkallio places Kekkonen's dealings with Moscow in a framework of conspiracy, Juhani Suomi understands them as normal diplomatic conduct. For example, Suomi canvasses Kekkonen's vast contacts with Soviet diplomatic, Communist Party, and KGB officials. Some of these encounters

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occurred in secret at the home of the president's son, Matti (Suomi, *Kriisien* 77). Suomi sees nothing in Kekkonen's actions that warrants comment or analysis. This understanding hearkens back to the Cold War when official Finland proclaimed incessantly to the world that there was nothing abnormal about Finnish-Soviet affairs (Jakobson, "Substance" 1034–44).[2] If Kekkonen's encounters with the Soviets were indeed normal, then one could expect Kekkonen to have conducted Finland's foreign policy in a similar manner with other states. Such was not the case. In a study of Soviet espionage in postwar Finland, Kimmo Rentola illuminates and analyzes the complex exchange of information between Finnish and Soviet official that sometimes amounted to outright theft. Rentola describes the association between Kekkonen and the KGB head in Helsinki, Viktor Vladimirov, by the end of the 1950s as "näin syntyi se merkillinen ja Suomelle ominainen tilanne, että KGB:n ulkomaantiedustelun residentti oli samanaikaisesti sekä neuvostovakoilun päämies Suomessa että tasavallan presidentin luottamuksellinen väylä neuvostojohtoon" (*Niin* 499) [a remarkable and peculiar situation for Finland, in that the KGB's station chief was at the same time both the head of Soviet espionage in Finland and the president of the Republic's confidential channel to the Soviet leadership].

With respect to the Night Frost government, Suomi repeats the long-standing consensus that Soviet actions stemmed from both a dissatisfaction with the Finnish government and East-West tensions over Germany. He fails to confront the long-range outcome of the crisis: that, as Max Jakobson has stated, Kekkonen would allow the Soviets to act as an "äänetön yhtiömies" [silent partner] in the formation of future Finnish cabinets (Jakobson, "Näköala" 588–90). In fact, the only foreign interference that Suomi observes during both the Night Frost government and Note Crisis consists of the West's careful statements of support for Finland (Suomi, *Kriisien* 511–2, 537). With respect to the Note Crisis, Suomi argues that the Soviets issued the note primarily out of concern about the larger European situation, in particular tensions over Berlin and West German rearmament. He explicitly rejects any connection to Kekkonen's reelection campaign since there is no evidence to prove it. While admitting that Finnish officials knew for some months beforehand that the USSR would issue a note, Suomi

[2] Jakobson's article was circulated by Finland's Foreign Ministry during the 1980s in its *Finnish Features* brochures designed for foreign consumption.

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denies that the note was the product of Soviet collusion with Kekkonen. Any discussions that Kekkonen had with Soviet officials about his bid for reelection were purely coincidental and did not instigate the Soviet action (Suomi, *Kriisien* 418–44). Suomi refuses to entertain the possibility that the note resulted from indirect discourse. Good friends often give help without being asked (Visuri, "Noottikiriisin" 59–60). He asks why would Kekkonen want a note when he was on a state visit to the United States, a trip that was meant to strengthen his credibility in the West (Suomi, *Kriisien* 550). One possible interpretation that neither Suomi nor Rautkallio has considered is that the note had in respect to Finland a double purpose: it was intended to get Kekkonen reelected, and it was a warning to Kekkonen not move Finland too far west (Junnila 72).

In the research for the fourth as well as successive volumes of the Kekkonen biography, Suomi relinquished the opportunity to evaluate newly available Soviet archival sources. In connection with the Note Crisis, he states that one written record of the discussions between Khrushchev and Kekkonen—the translator's notes—might exist in the Soviet archives. He doubts the reliability of this possible document because of the poor language skills of the translator and the need for the translator to write something that would please his superiors. Again Suomi casts doubt on the credibility of a foreign voice. Moreover, Suomi believes that any new finds in the Soviet archives would just support his interpretation of the Note Crisis (Suomi, *Kriisien* 524, 541). Suomi repeats his disparagement of Soviet sources in a debate with Jukka Nevakivi in the journal *Ulkopolitiikka* over the genesis of one of Kekkonen's most visible foreign policy initiatives—the proposal for a Nordic Nuclear Free Zone in 1963. Using Soviet as well as Finnish archival sources, Nevakivi sees Kekkonen's proposal as a result of a Finnish-Soviet dialogue. Kekkonen did not consult Moscow before making the specific proposal, but he did not have to. Nevakivi emphasizes the totality of the discussions and not a specific moment. Suomi responds in the same article by arguing that Nevakivi read the Soviet sources tendentiously. He does not give an alternative reading. He then argues based on Finnish sources that the nuclear-free zone was a purely Finnish enterprise. Any correspondence with Soviet policy was purely coincidental. To Suomi's mind, Finnish provenance is proven sufficiently by Kekkonen's inclusion of some of the areas of the Warsaw pact in his proposal (Nevakivi and Suomi 54–8).[3]

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[3] Suomi repeats his position in "Rautkalliolle ja Häikiölle" (195).

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Juhani Suomi and Hannu Rautkallio have fought three separate battles over credibility. The first is over Kekkonen himself. Juhani Suomi understands Kekkonen as a great statesman. Rautkallio portrays a president who essentially became a Soviet agent. Rautkallio gives no allowance for the realities of Soviet power or the difficult position of Cold War Finland. In spite of the notoriety surrounding their works, both Rautkallio and Suomi have succeeded in only confirming the two long-standing orthodoxies concerning Kekkonen: that he was either, as Max Jakobson has stated, "isänmaan pelastaja vai Kremlille sielunsa myynyt Faust" (Jakobson, "Isänmaan" 723–5) [a savior of the fatherland or a Faust who sold his soul to the Kremlin]. In terms of the Note Crisis, interpretations of both Rautkallio and Suomi stand outside the current scholarly consensus that maintains that the Soviet action stemmed from concerns about both East-West tensions and Finland's domestic politics (Jussila 278–81). Both share a narrow focus on the president. Neither scholar has made an attempt to include the scholarship and public discussion on Finlandization in his work.

The second struggle centers on the credibility of available sources and their use. One believes in the authority of foreign sources. The other upholds a long-standing and widespread scholarly opinion in Finland that foreign voices whether in the form of primary sources or secondary scholarship always misunderstand Finland.[4] Suomi pays careful attention to the sources that he uses often presenting them without a strong thesis or theoretical framework. Rautkallio for his part argues and polemicizes often without attention to detail and source criticism.

Thirdly, the antagonists have questioned each other's scholarly credibility. This mutual contempt is evidenced by their refusal to confront the central issues that divide them. Juhani Suomi has never formally addressed Rautkallio's central argument: that Kekkonen exploited Soviet power for his own domestic political advantage. In doing so, he is avoiding a confrontation with an opinion now widely held in the Finnish public. Rautkallio for his part has never formally responded to Juhani Suomi's very specific charges concerning methodology and argumentation (see Häikiö, "Uusia"; Rautkallio, "Juhani"; Suomi, "Kunniasta" and "Rautkalliolle" 195).

The latest round in this battle over scholar credibility occurred in the fall of 2000, when Juhani Suomi unveiled the last of his eight volumes on

[4] An excellent example of this mentality is Ohto Manninen's "Tarvitseeko Suomen historia tuomareita."

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Kekkonen. He used the press conference to declare that Hannu Rautkallio "on yleisesti katsottu ulos" ("Kunniasta" 353) [is considered outside] of the community of historical scholarship. In a defense of Rautkallio in *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja,* Martti Häikiö accused Suomi of writing an uncritical biography of the president. In respect to the divisive issue of Kekkonen's dealings with Moscow, Häikiö writes that, "Presidentti Urho Kekkosen ja hänen ihailijoidensa mielestä sopivaisuuden ja isänmaallisuuden raja oli Kekkosen toimissa. Juhani Suomelle Kekkonen oli tässä suhteessa lähes erehtymätön" ("Uusia" 282) [for President Kekkonen and his admirers the limit of acceptability and patriotism was in the actions of Kekkonen. For Juhani Suomi, Kekkonen was in this respect almost infallible]. Suomi responded somewhat predictably that if he had treated Kekkonen in an uncritical fashion, then Häikiö should provide the evidence. However, for Juhani Suomi the only acceptable evidence seems to lie in the Kekkonen archives, whose sources present events from the president's point of view (Suomi, "Kunniasta" and "Rautkalliolle" 195).

JUHANI SUOMI VERSUS WRITERS OF MEMOIRS

As Professor Suomi has defended himself from scholarly attacks, he has seized the offensive against those who have shared their memories about the president with the Finnish public. Two writers have been of particular concern to Kekkonen's biographer: former President Mauno Koivisto and diplomat Max Jakobson. The sixth volume of Suomi's biography of Kekkonen covers the years 1968–1972, during which Mauno Koivisto was a rising star in Finnish politics. Much of Suomi's examination of Koivisto consists of pages of constant criticism drawn from Kekkonen's papers with little analysis. One commentator has suggested that Suomi sees no need for scrutinizing Kekkonen's writings because he considers them to represent objective truth (Järvinen 713–5; Suomi, *Taistelu* 154–98, 254, 267, 317–62).

In 1997, Koivisto responded with a new installment of his memoirs that covers his first term as prime minister (1968–1970). In that book, he challenges Juhani Suomi's understanding of his relationship with Kekkonen. In particular, Koivisto focuses on the negotiations for the creation of a Scandinavian free-trade zone known as Nordek. Suomi strongly suggests that Prime Minister Koivisto blithely ignored

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Kekkonen's reservations about the impact of Nordek membership on relations with the USSR (Suomi, *Taistelu* 154–98, 254, 267, 317–62). Koivisto in his account counters that Kekkonen backed his negotiations for Nordek until Soviet opposition proved unshakeable. Moreover, he crosses swords with Juhani Suomi in two other respects. First, he complains that in the writing of his memoirs he did not receive the promised full access to the Kekkonen archives. President Koivisto openly wonders, as have many historians, whether Juhani Suomi evaluated all of Kekkonen's papers or ignored compromising material. Second, Koivisto reveals how little he knew as prime minister about Kekkonen's initiatives in foreign policy (Koivisto 7–9, 41–2, 147–9, 220). For example, in 1968 President Kekkonen proposed to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev an exchange of the eastern part of Finnish Lapland for the city of Viipuri and its environs that were lost to the USSR after World War II. In the exchange, the president was also ready to grant diplomatic recognition to the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) at a time when Finland recognized neither German state. Kekkonen's proposal remained a secret to Finns—Mauno Koivisto included—until Juhani Suomi revealed it in the biography's sixth volume (Suomi, *Taistelu* 50–66). In his memoirs, Koivisto confirms his ignorance of Kekkonen's plan. Unlike Suomi, Koivisto lists the problems that the proposal would have created had the Soviets agreed to it. Among them, the credibility of Finland's neutrality would have suffered. The deal would have damaged relations with West Germany and Norway. A major Finnish initiative at the time, a proposal for a Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), would have been in danger (Koivisto 147–9).

Juhani Suomi in turn denounced Koivisto's book as a savage assault on a man who no longer could defend himself. In the public discussion about Koivisto's memoirs, Juhani Suomi has stood alone in his opinion about Koivisto's treatment of Kekkonen. As a self-appointed advocate for Kekkonen, Suomi challenged Koivisto to a live television debate. He did not specify his differences with Koivisto. Suomi seemed moved to action by the very fact that Koivisto dared to challenge his authority as the guardian of the memory of Kekkonen. The television debate never materialized: the former president rejected the former civil servant's demand (Hentilä 66; Järvinen 713–5; Hämäläinen, "Koivisto" A6 and "Suomi" A7). Suomi avenged the snub in writing the eighth and final installment of his biography, which covers Kekkonen's last five years in

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office (1976–1981). In it, Suomi repeats his scholarly treatment of Mauno Koivisto, who served his second term as prime minister 1979–1982. During this time in office, Koivisto displayed a level of independence from the president not seen in most others of Finland's elites at the time. This independence helped pave Koivisto's own road to the presidency when Kekkonen resigned in 1981 (see Hentilä 66; Jakobson, "Isänmaan" 723–5; Meinander 725–6; Suomi, *Umpeutuva* 656–86).

Another memoir writer whom Juhani Suomi has targeted is former diplomat and historian Max Jakobson. During Kekkonen's presidency, Jakobson held many key diplomatic posts ranging from the director of the Finnish Foreign Ministry's press department to Finland's ambassador to the United Nations. As Finland's representative to the world body, Jakobson was a candidate to succeed U Thant as the United Nations' secretary-general, a position eventually won by Austria's Kurt Waldheim. While holding these official positions, Jakobson became Finland's unofficial spokesman to the Western democracies through his books and articles for Western audiences about Finland's foreign policy (Jakobson, *Finnish* and "Substance"). Since his days as a correspondent in London after World War II, Finns have valued his commentaries about world politics. His history of the Winter War has been used by scholars for decades (Jakobson, *Diplomaattien* and *Diplomacy*).

In the fall of 2001, Jakobson published a volume of his memoirs that covers his career from the end of World War II until his defeat at the United Nations in 1971. In this work, Jakobson makes two broad arguments. First, in Cold War Finland, neutrality meant independence. Jakobson argues that Kekkonen sought to keep Finland neutral, but the proximity to Soviet power coupled with the strength of the far left in Finland made the ship of state list toward the east. Jakobson counts himself as one of those diplomats who leaned westward in order to keep the ship balanced (Jakobson, *Pelon*). Second, contrary to popular belief, heightened tensions between East and West expanded Finland's room for manoeuver. Moscow sought to pull Finland into a closer orbit whenever Finland's self-defined position outside of great-power conflicts lost any of its relevance. Kimmo Rentola in a recent article on Finnish-Soviet relations in the late 1960s and early 1970s has confirmed Jakobson's thesis with comprehensive empirical research. As *détente* became the watchword in the East-West affairs starting in the late 1960s, the Soviets sought to keep Finland on an ever tighter leash (Jakobson, *Pelon* 72; Rentola, "Suomi" 137–52).

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Juhani Suomi's ferocious response has addressed neither of Jakobson's theses. His review of Jakobson's book focuses on three points: Kekkonen's role in the negotiations for the YYA-treaty in 1948, Finland's response to the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, and Jakobson's candidacy for the post of UN secretary-general in 1971. In total, these topics cover about twenty pages of the book's almost 500 pages. Suomi states that Jakobson's treatment of all three cases shows that he wrote the book as a vendetta against Kekkonen (Suomi, "Juhani"). In all three instances, Jakobson states nothing that is not already known. Kekkonen was more flexible than Paasikivi with respect to Soviet demands in 1948. As a newly elected president, Kekkonen refused to support the United Nations' explicit condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Hungary. He did not put all of his prestige and influence on the line to insure Jakobson's election to the UN's top job (Jakobson, *Pelon* 55–6, 202–13, 482–9). Other reviewers have not considered Jakobson's memoirs as an attack on Kekkonen (Hakkarainen 120–5; Rentola, "Älyn" B6).

Seeking to undermine Jakobson's credibility, Suomi argues that Jakobson's analysis is based on only his six years in the Foreign Ministry in the late 1950s and early '60s. Professor Suomi is only counting the years that Jakobson worked for the Foreign Ministry in Helsinki. He ignores the years that Jakobson spent representing Finland in Washington, New York, and Stockholm, all important stages for the conduct of Finland's foreign policy. Suomi assails Jakobson for writing in a self-centered, self-serving way. To Suomi's mind, Jakobson has either exaggerated his influence over Kekkonen, or Kekkonen was not the strong president that Jakobson suggests. "Kun lukija on ehtinyt kahlata kirjan loppuun, hän on vakuuttunt siitä, että sen päähenklö on kaikkitietävä, kaikkitaitava, ja kaukaa viisas" (Suomi, "Juhani" par. 36) [When the reader has managed to wade to the end of the book, he is convinced that the book's main character is omniscient, omnipotent, and very wise]. Memoirs by definition highlight the significance of the author. Moreover, the book has long passages in which Jakobson does not write about himself at all.

Suomi's response is particularly unfair in light of Max Jakobson's largely positive reviews of each of Suomi's eight volumes of his biography of Kekkonen. In these reviews, Jakobson withholds comment on Suomi's treatment of him in various volumes (see Jakobson, "Kekkonen ei ollut" 1018–9; "hirumuinen" 1006–7; "kirjoittamattomien" 69–70; "Näköala" 588–90; "Moskovan" 759–60; "Kekkonen ja uudet" 924–5;

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"Kekkosen" 922–3; "Isänmaan" 723–5). In his memoirs, Jakobson cites Juhani Suomi's biography of Kekkonen fifteen times. In no instance does he challenge Suomi's work. Rather, he uses it to corroborate his own observations and memories (Jakobson, *Pelon* 72, 212, 230, 274, 276, 317, 329, 330, 340, 342, 355, 464, 478, 487, 489). While Suomi's criticisms follow a well-known pattern, the venue for the criticism is new. Suomi's most visible review of Jakobson's book is not in a print journal but on the web site of both Suomi's and Jakobson's former employer—the Finnish Foreign Ministry. The decision to put the review on the internet might have been influenced by another historian—Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja (Suomi, "Juhani").

Juhani Suomi has risked his own credibility in the way that he has attacked the work of two highly respected public figures. His hostility toward President Koivisto and Max Jakobson suggests a personal investment in Kekkonen surpassing that of most biographers in their subjects. The tendency to employ slash-and-burn responses against those who display even the smallest divergence from his own understanding of Kekkonen further suggests that Suomi seeks something greater than any monopoly over Kekkonen's papers—a monopoly over the very memory of Kekkonen himself. Such intellectual and cultural monoliths existed during the Cold War when the national discourse in Finland was essentially a national monologue. In recent years, Finland has become a society more tolerant and welcoming of diversity of all kinds. Moreover, popular memory, even under the most controlled conditions, is reconstructed by each new generation, often with little regard to the statements of scholars. According to a recent study, Finns born in 1980 have largely a positive impression of Kekkonen. These Finns with no personal memory of Kekkonen seemingly have inherited the equally favorable view of their parents, most of whom had known only one president until Mauno Koivisto replaced Kekkonen in 1982. Those born in the late 1960s and the 1970s have been identified as having the least positive opinions of Kekkonen. This generation for whom the president remains but a childhood memory also has been critical of their elders' attitudes toward the president while he was in office. History students at the University of Tampere have founded The Urho Kekkonen Church, an organization that through its web site lampoons Kekkonen's cult of personality. Students at the University of Helsinki have founded a similar association (Ahonen; Partanen D1–D2).[5]

[5] The web site for the Kekkonen church is <www.uta.fi/~ma54441/urkki.html>.

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FUTURE RESEARCH ON KEKKONEN

Since the mid-1980s, the scholarly debate over Urho Kekkonen has ventured little beyond the parameters of credibility. Beyond these borders lie two vast unplowed fields of scholarly inquiry concerning Finland's transformation under Kekkonen. The first field encompasses questions relating to the political culture known as "Finlandization." Greater attention needs to be paid to the continuities and discontinuities between Kekkonen's presidency and that of his predecessor, J.K. Paasikivi. During the Cold War, the name of Finland's official foreign policy, the "Paasikivi-Kekkonen line," implied continuity in the two presidents' conduct of relations with the USSR. Since the end of the Cold War, the growing number of Kekkonen's scholarly critics, such as Vihavainen, Nevakivi, and Rautkallio, has drawn a line between what they see as Paasikivi's Finnish version of containment and Kekkonen's acceptance of Soviet influence in Finnish domestic affairs. These revisionists must confront the fact that Paasikivi lectured his countrymen that "ulkopolitiikka käy kaiken muun edellä" [foreign policy goes ahead of all other concerns]. To what extent did Paasikivi's priorities create a political culture that allowed future leaders to rule domestically through foreign policy?

Another question is to what degree did Kekkonen influence the development of Finlandization? The current discourses emphasize either Kekkonen's central role and/or the significance of the collaboration of Finland's elites in creating this unique political culture. The theses have been built without systematically investigating the interaction between Kekkonen and the elites in the creation of Finlandization. Any true understanding of both Kekkonen's presidency and Finlandization requires a thorough examination of this relationship.

A more thorough grasp of the Kekkonen regime's political culture would serve as a catharsis that comes with a nation honestly and critically confronting its past. Moreover, it can provide practical applications for the future. Finland currently faces some important foreign policy choices, such as possible membership in NATO. The question of the European Union's future development occupies the country's leaders. An honest confrontation with the recent past could help prevent future Finnish leaders from using the "Brussels card" as a weapon of domestic policy as Kekkonen and others played the "Moscow card."

The second large field of inquiry consists of questions concerning the impact of Kekkonen's presidency on Finland beyond the domestic and diplomatic dimensions of Finnish-Soviet affairs. The real expansion

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of presidential power under Kekkonen occurred in domestic affairs. Kekkonen expanded the reach of the presidency deep into all parts of Finland's civil society. This growth of presidential power occurred without changing the constitution but a new constitution was needed to contract presidential power after Kekkonen. An example of this type of needed scholarship is Pekka Niiranen's book on Urho Kekkonen and the Finnish Lutheran Church, *Kekkonen ja kirkko: Tasavallan presidentti Urho Kekkosen ja Suomen evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon suhteet vuosina 1956-1981*. The book reveals a president who displayed indifference to religion in public but in private was a believer. As president, he took very seriously his constitutional duties of naming high church officials. This study of the president's religious views opens perspectives into his private life that researchers focused on foreign policy have largely ignored. Moreover, Niiranen's book exemplifies the more specialized scholarship that should have been written before the large biographies of Kekkonen were undertaken (see Niiranen).

So far, historians have given only passing recognition of Kekkonen's role in Finland's economic transformation. Juhani Suomi has argued that Kekkonen considered economic development key to maintaining Finland's democracy and independence (Suomi, *Kriisien* 41–2, 65). Martti Häikiö, a historian who has been critical of Suomi's scholarship, concurs more succinctly that "Suomen selviytyminen kylmästä sodasta oli loppujen lopuksi enemmän kiinni taloudesta kuin politiikasta: jos Suomi olisi jäänyt teknologisesti ja elintasoltaan jälkeen Neuvostoliitosta, siirtomaaksi olisi päädytty" ("Uusia" 284) [Finland's survival of the Cold War stemmed more from economics than politics. If Finland had fallen behind the Soviet Union in terms of standard of living and technology, it would have become a (Soviet) colony]. As of yet, Kekkonen's impact on the economy has not been comprehensively studied (see Relander). This *lacuna* in the scholarship is even more striking because economic history enjoys a prominent position in Finland's community of historians.

On a more general level, the question of whether Kekkonen was a savior or a Faust needs to be shelved. In examining Kekkonen's presidency, a cost-benefit analysis might prove more fruitful than a search for guilt or continuation the arguments over credibility.[6] This alternative approach would address the ambivalence that many Finns

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[6] A useful opening in this respect is Johan Bäckman's *Entäs kun tulee se yhdestoista?*

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feel about the president and his time. During a seminar commemorating the centenary of Kekkonen's birth on 3 September 2000, Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen articulated the difficulty that many Finns have in remembering their former president. On the one hand, Kekkonen was a gifted individual who served his country for virtually his entire adult life. He created a stable position for Finland in Europe and brought greater consensus to the country's domestic affairs. During his tenure in office, the country reached ever higher levels of prosperity. On the other hand, many in Finland believe today that the price of his presidency was a diminution of democracy and national independence (Lipponen; Hämäläinen, "Lipponen" A8). Many question not the high price of Kekkonen's successes but the necessity of having to pay the price at all. In these great benefits and high costs lies the real challenge of understanding the Kekkonen regime.

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