

Abstract: The miserable and oppressed peasants of Old Finland. A long-lived myth

The idea that the peasants of "Old Finland" – the provinces incorporated into Russia in 1721 and 1743 – lived in great poverty and under oppressive rule has prevailed in Finnish historiography until fairly recent times. This view was primarily based on political documents produced in the 1810s when the area was "re-incorporated" with the recently conquered Swedish Finland. The present article re-examines the conditions of the province by exploiting more factual 18th- and early 19th-century sources, in particular quantitative data of economic and social development. In terms of variables such as population, field area or animal husbandry, Old Finland was not an exceptionally poor province, neither was its overall development on the decline. It is true that a higher proportion of peasants than in Swedish Finland (about a third) lived as tenants on land donated to Russian nobility, but their burden of taxes and corvée was, on average, clearly lighter than in Sweden. Much heavier "oppression", facing all peasants, resulted from the billeting of Russian regiments in the countryside – mainly because of the arbitrary behaviour of the armed forces.

Keywords: Finland, Russia, peasants, taxation, the nineteenth century

Anssi Halmesvirta

Abstract: The Casement Report on the Congo, foreign policy and public moralism in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom (1903–1904)

In this article, the parliamentary report of Consul Roger Casement on the administration of the Congo (1903) and the heated debate it aroused in the British Parliament are analysed. The report disclosed the harsh methods of accruing profits (forced labour) used by the king of Belgium, Leopold II. Applying Stefan Collini's concept of "public moralism", the moral outrage and arguments of the members of the Parliament are disentangled. As Leopold had breached the 1885 international agreement to protect and "civilize" the Congolese, the MPs, mainly from the Liberal party, demanded action from the government, which seemed to hesitate and sway in this critical matter.

Finally, when the pressure mounted to the point of threatening to bring the Government down, a note demanding an explanation was sent to Belgium. What was remarkable in the parliamentary debate was that it made the Government, usually the sole agent in foreign policy, listen to MPs and acquiesce in their demands, so unanimous was the moral indictment against Leopold's administration. The political rhetoric was imbued with moralistic lessons, referring to British honour, responsibility towards the Congo, humane and just treatment of the native population, and freedom of trade and movement.

Keywords: the Congo, the Casement report, 20th century, public moralism, parliamentary debate, Britain

Olli Kleemola

Abstract: Loathed, Feared, Desired? Dead Women in Finnish and German War Photographs from the Eastern Front (1941–1945)

In this article, I analyse from a comparative viewpoint photos which were taken by Finnish and German soldiers during the Second World War and which show dead Soviet women, both civilian and soldiers. I seek to discuss the different meanings soldiers gave to these photos as well as the different ways of photographing dead women in both countries. My article shows that photographing dead women was often caused by fear, hatred or sexual needs – or all of them together. The reasons for photographing such motifs may have been unclear even for the photographer himself.

Keywords: Germany, Finland, Second World War, photography, Soviet women, new military history, visual history

Risto Degerman

Abstract: The occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 as radio news

In 1968, the radio newsroom of the The Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) faced its biggest challenge up to that point, when the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia during the night of August 20–21. The Soviet Union and its allies refused to comment on the occupation due to which the reports from Yle correspondents in Mos-

cow, Warsaw, Washington, and especially in Prague, were important sources for the newsroom. Getting a neutral overall view of events was, nevertheless, a challenge for journalists and, the events were unique opportunity for the Finnish radio to prove its value as a modern news media outlet. This was also the first time in Finnish radio history that listeners heard how modern radio news reacted to a big crisis.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia, Finland, Czechoslovakia occupation, Finnish radio journalism, 20th century

Sirkka Ahonen

Abstract: History without great narratives. The problem of politics in teaching history

History education is part of public history, and as such is exposed to political persuasion. Especially in post-communist Eastern and East-Central Europe, politicians are currently urging history teachers to mediate nationally motivated grand narratives of the past. However, monoperspectival narratives contradict the nature of historical knowledge, which is multiperspectival and dynamically evolving, and, moreover, the ethics of history, according to which minorities in a society are also entitled to the recognition of their own historical identity. Referring to post-positivist theories of history and to the recent history politics in Russia and Hungary, the author reflects on the preconditions of sustainable history education for an open society.

Keywords: History education, grand narratives, post-conflict use of history, historical identity