

# Finland in short 2024

## Dreams, Myths and Realities

**Laura Kolbe**

University of Helsinki

2024

[laura.kolbe@helsinki.fi](mailto:laura.kolbe@helsinki.fi)



Sweden = Swedish...



# Finland = Finnish...



...or the happiest nation in the world...?



**FI Shorts**  
Short News in 30 Seconds

Why is

**FINLAND**  
HAPPIEST COUNTRY  
in the world?



# Old Finnish People With Things On Their Heads

<http://imgur.com/gallery/W5NDX>

- [@OP](#), thank you for these. If you google image search for "Finnish people" your post is several of the top hits.
  - This is so strange and amuses me greatly.
  - Wonderfully quirky and inspiring.
  - Amazing!
  - Too weird.
  - Yes, these are traditional Finnish vodka hats.
- 
- Hi! I'm actually a Finnish guy and when i saw photos i was like what the fuck!?? IS NOT WHAT FINNISH PEOPLE LOOK LIKE.



Dream...

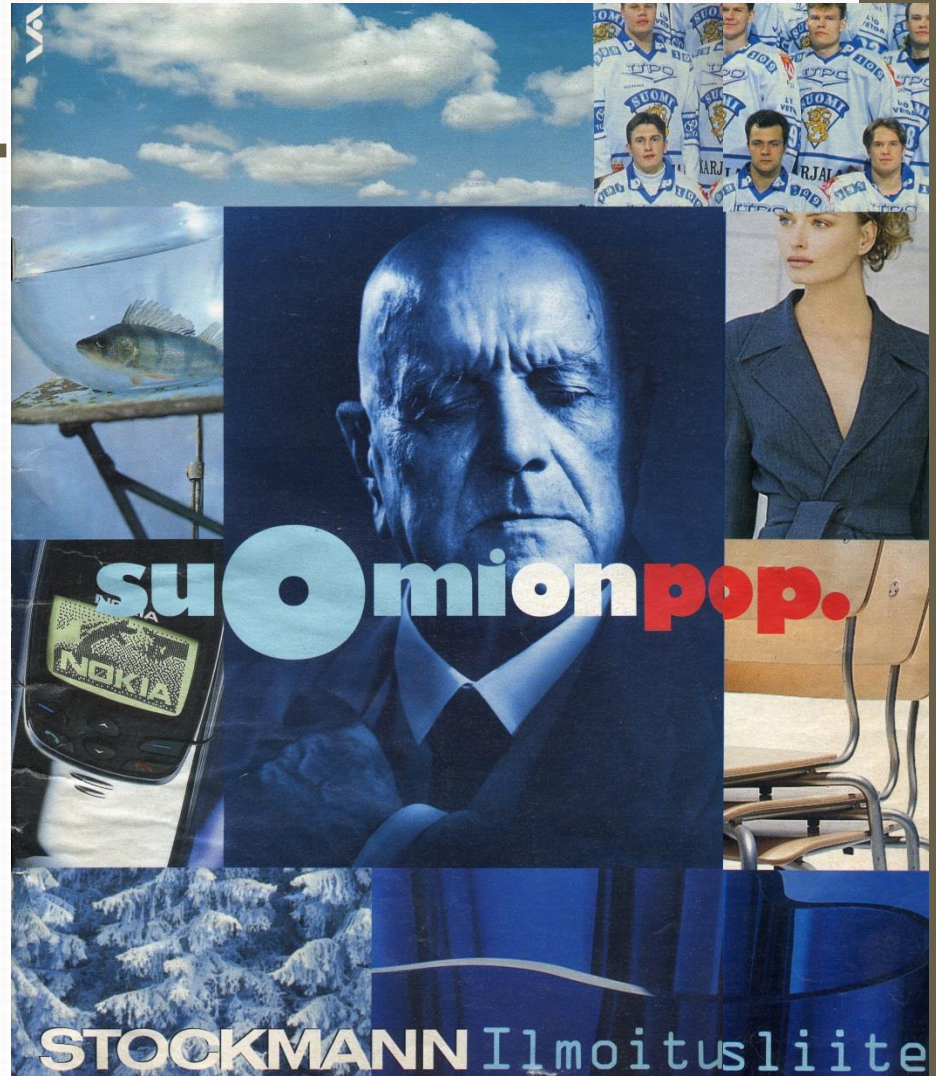


...and reality ?



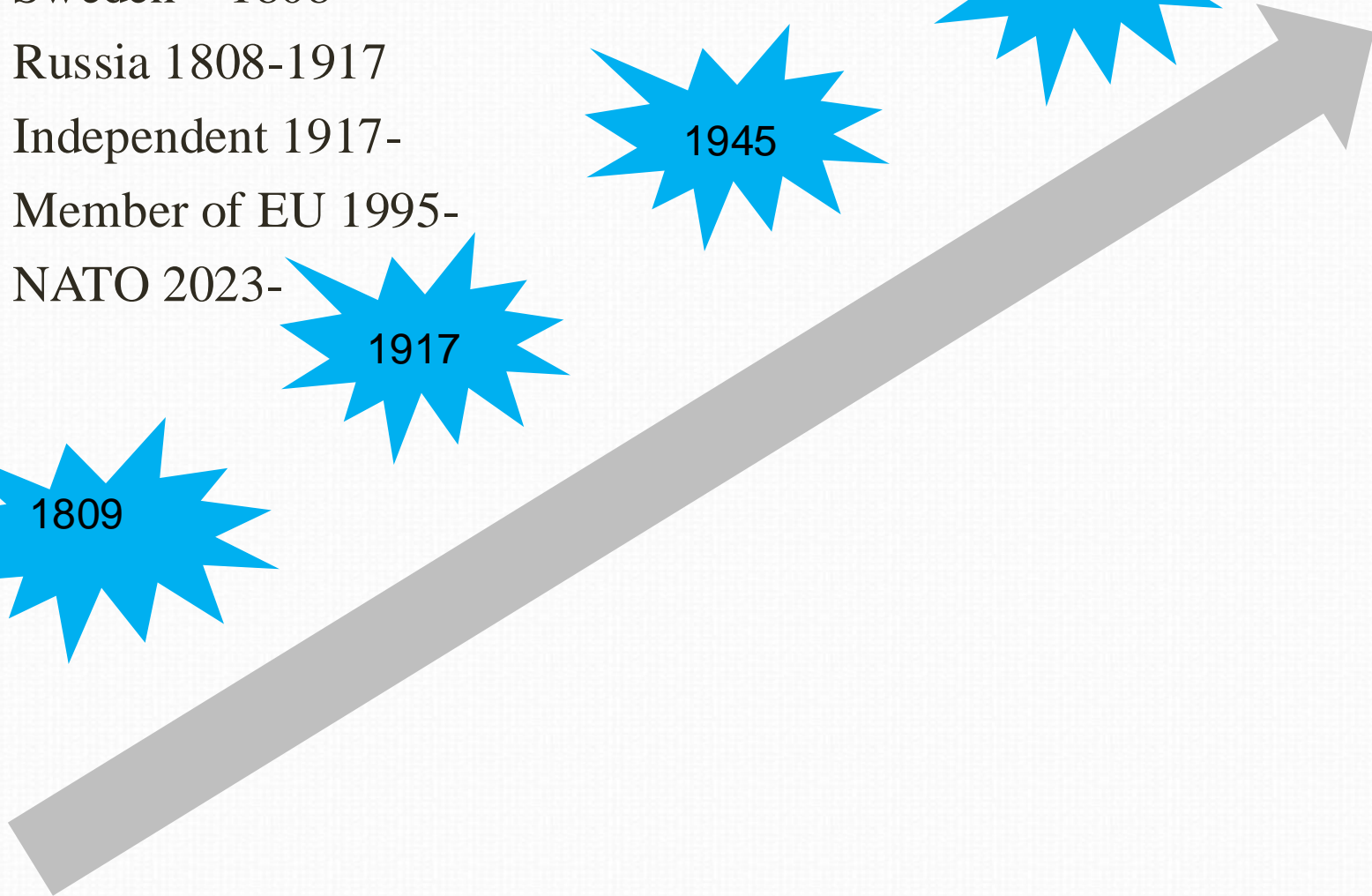
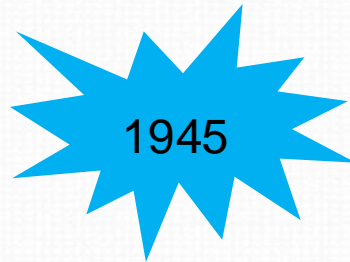
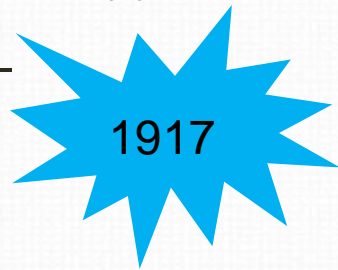
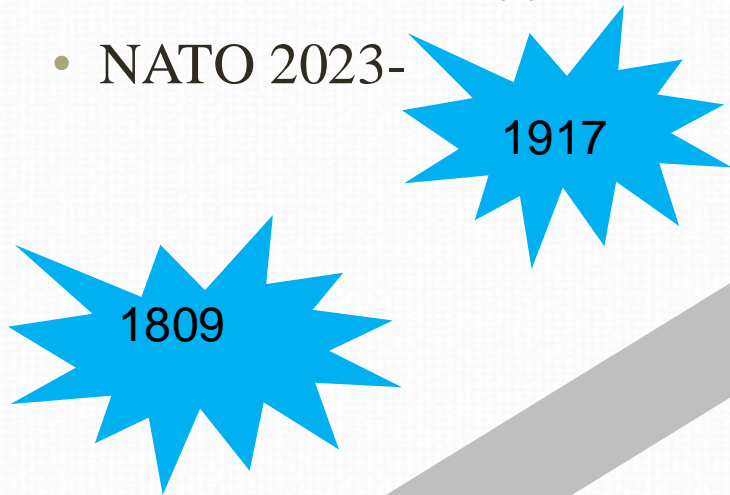


# Finland as Myth...

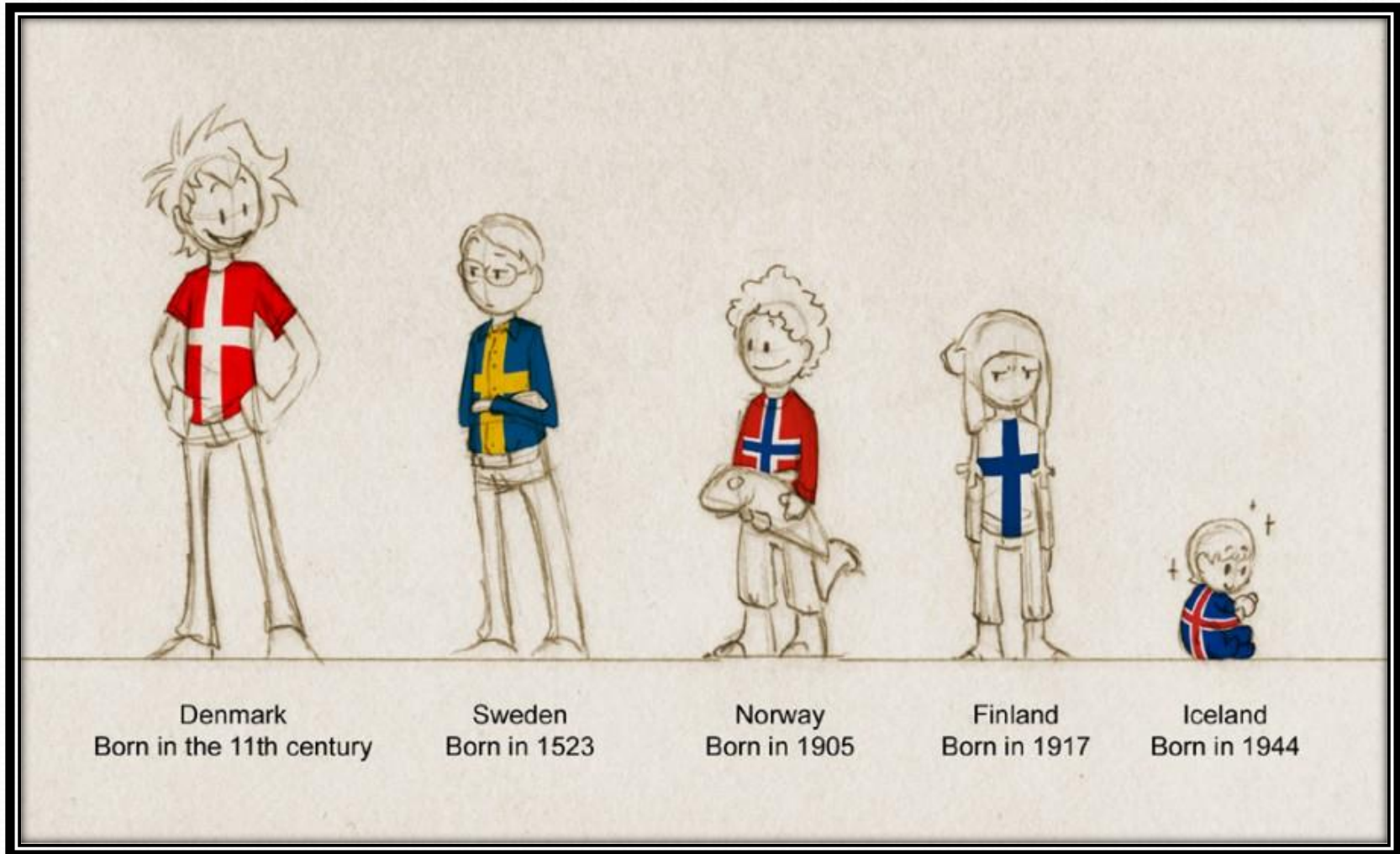


# ..and reality - Finland as part of...

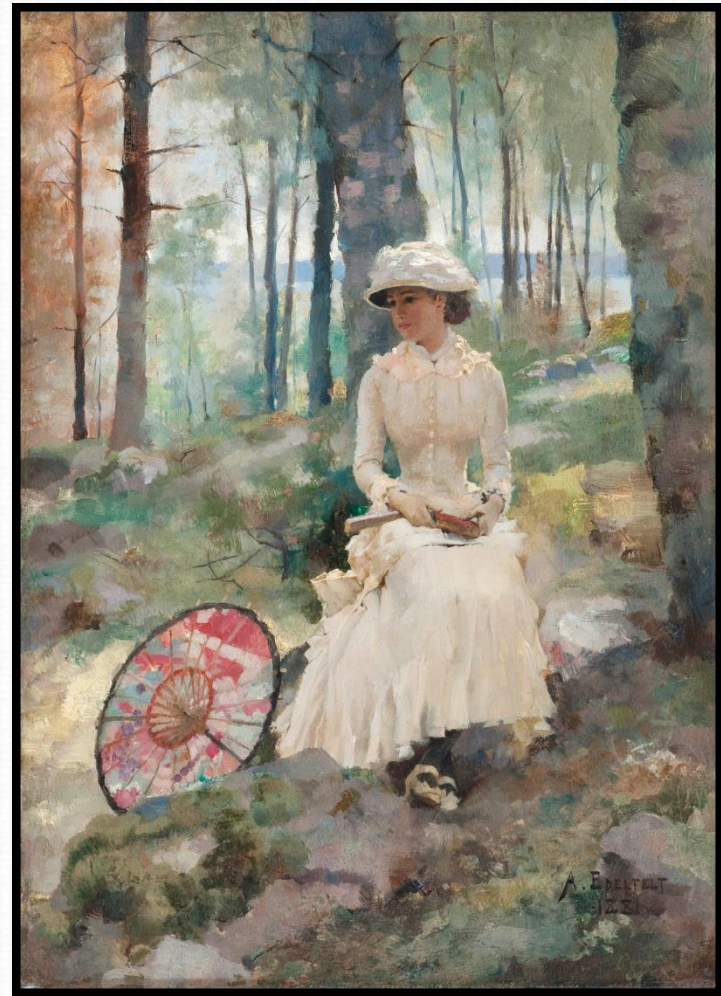
- Sweden – 1808
- Russia 1808-1917
- Independent 1917-
- Member of EU 1995-
- NATO 2023-



# Does history matter?



# Class society = whose story?



# Lake-Finland or Sea-Finland..?



# Swedish or Finnish culture...?



# Town or countryside..?



# Industries or ecology...?





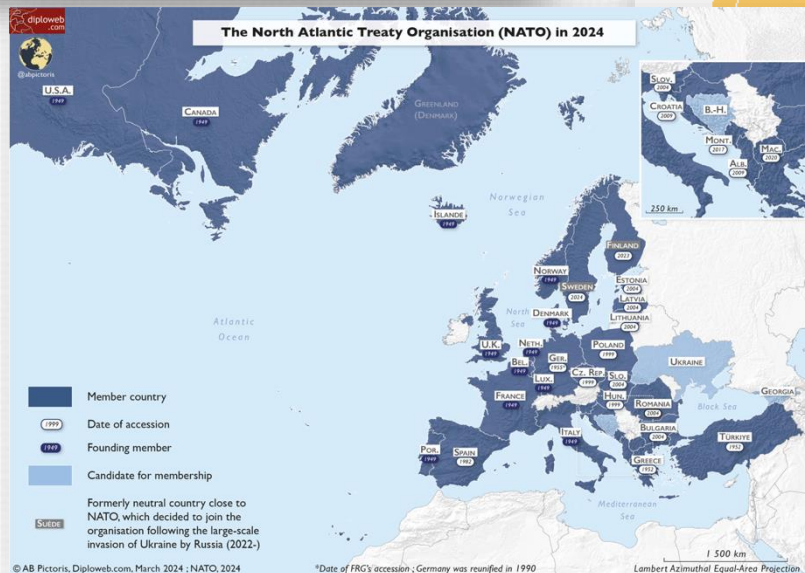
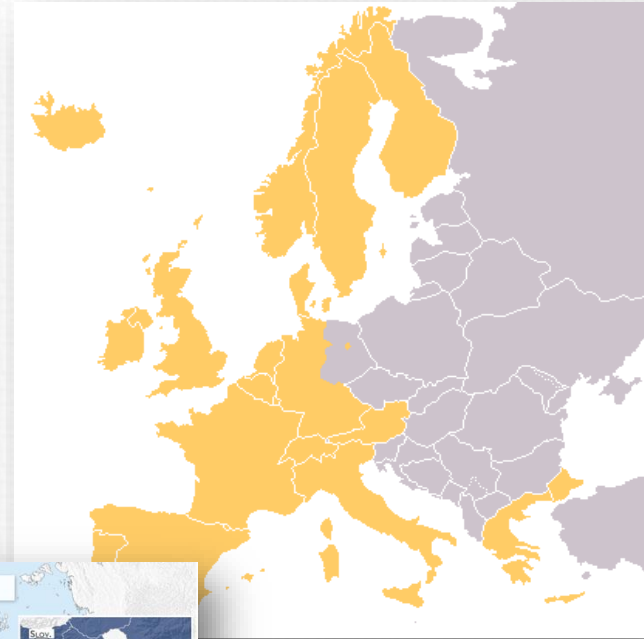
# Urban or rural...?

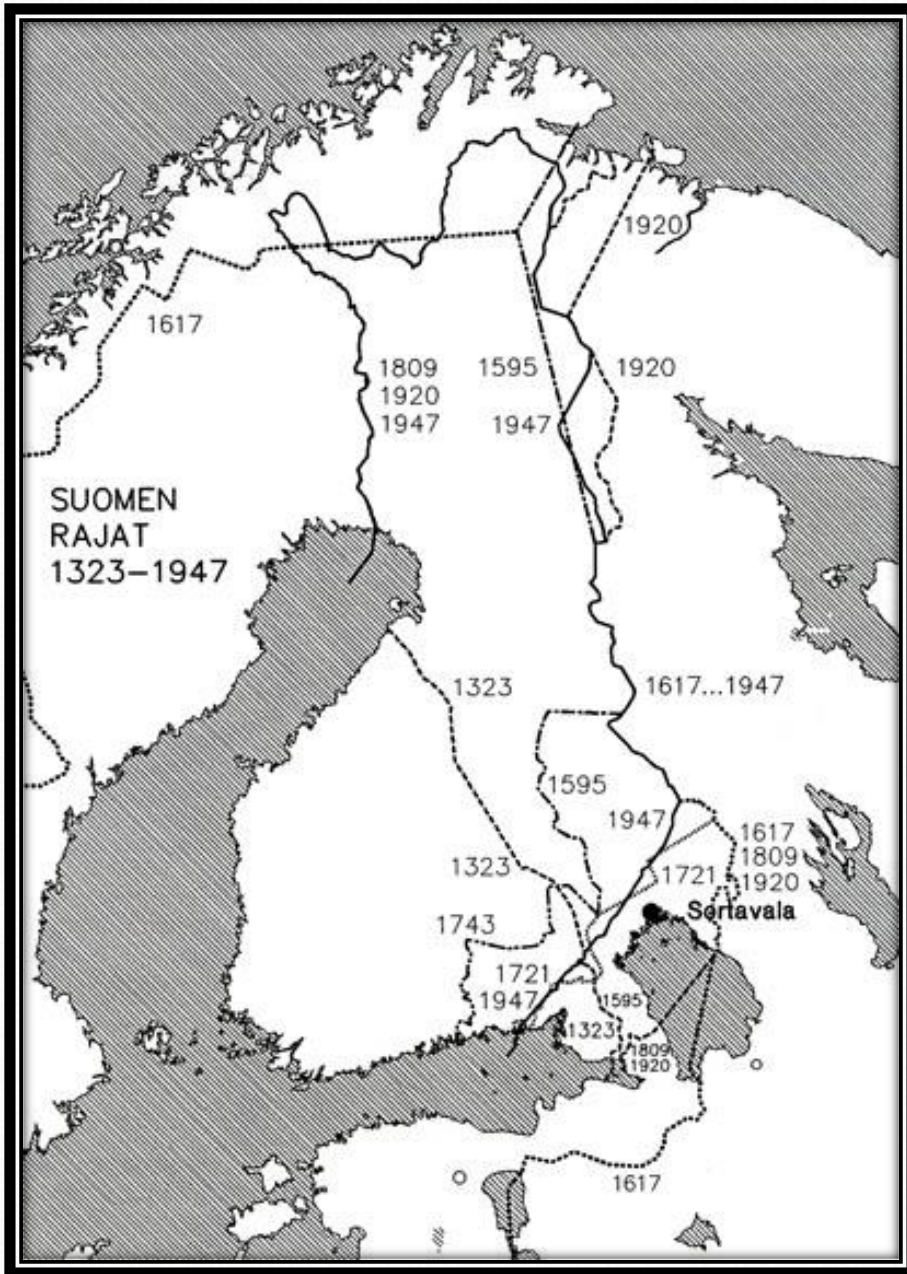


# Political bubbles...?



# I The East or the West of Europe?





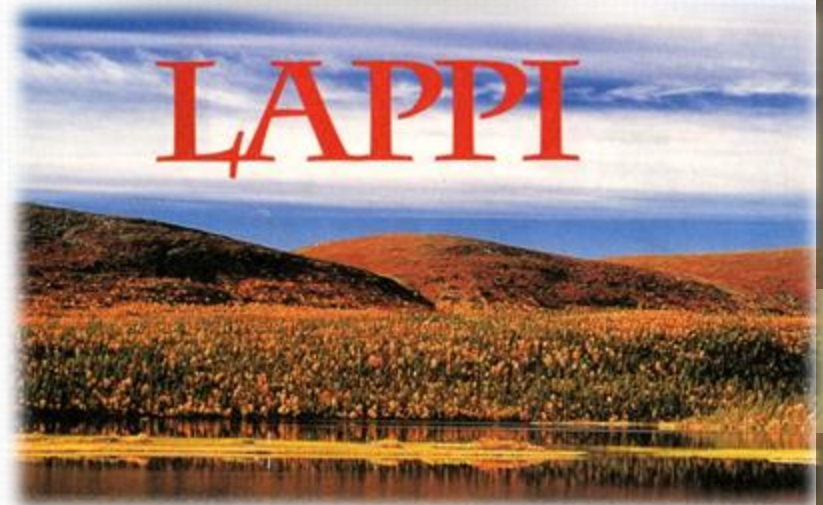
# Russian Emperors in Helsinki



V.I. Lenin gave Finland the  
independence in 1917



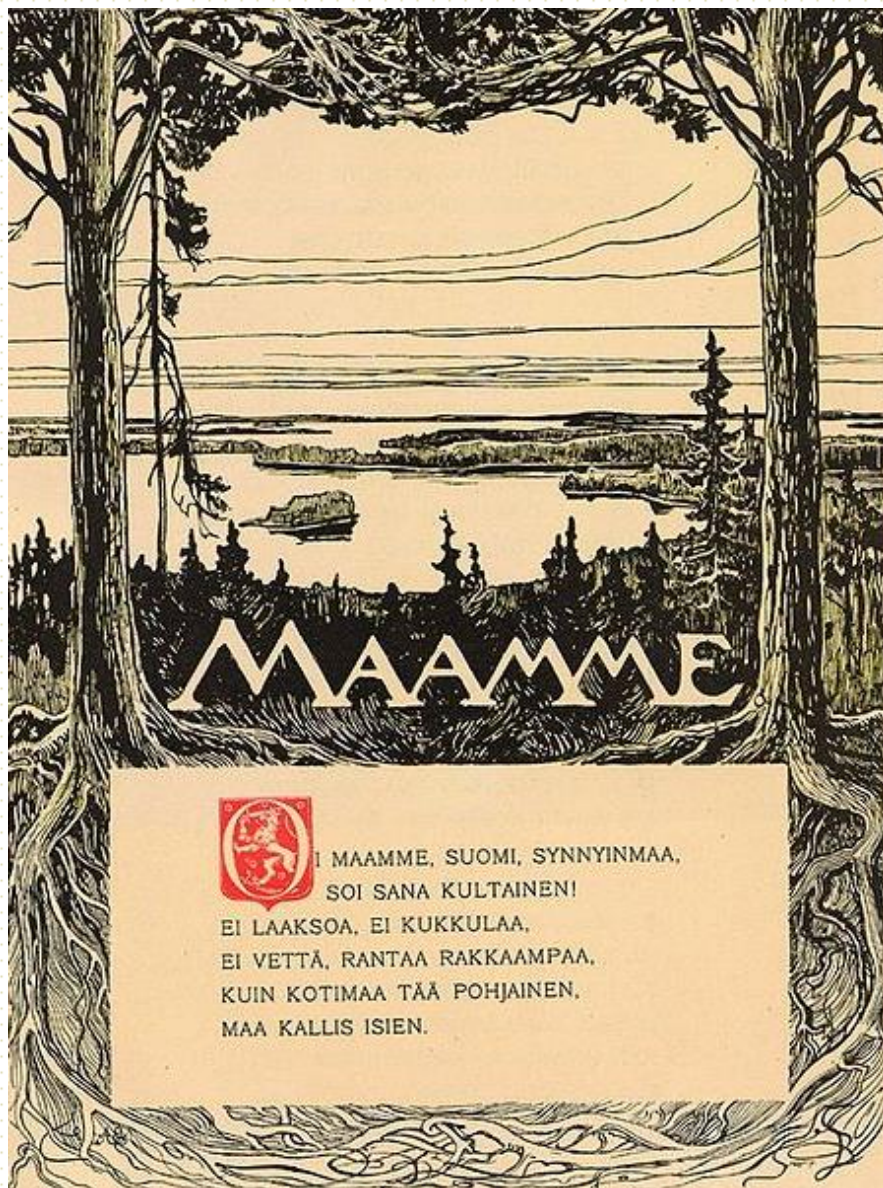
# The Cold War -1989



## II Nationalism and Nature

- Nature and the belief on its inviolability emerged a undelyining foundation of Scandinavian identity
- In Finland lake districts and virgin forest shaped the cultural and national identity
- Belief in the moral superiority of agrarian life / today "natural life" – closeness to the nature
- Apolitical tendency towards urbanity, money making, profit, luxurious life
- North as the New Greece – pure simpilicity, quiet greatness, modesty





I MAAMME, SUOMI, SYNNYINMAA,  
SOI SANA KULTAINEN!  
EI LAAKSOA, EI KUKKULAA,  
EI VETTÄ, RANTAA RAKKAAMPAA,  
KUIIN KOTIMAA TÄÄ POHJAINEN,  
MAA KALLIS ISIEN.

## Our Land

Oh, Our Land Finland  
Fatherland  
Echo Loudly Golden Word  
No Valley No Hill  
No Water Shore More Dear  
Than This Northern Homeland  
This Precious Land Of Our  
Fathers

(1848, *Our Land* –anthem)





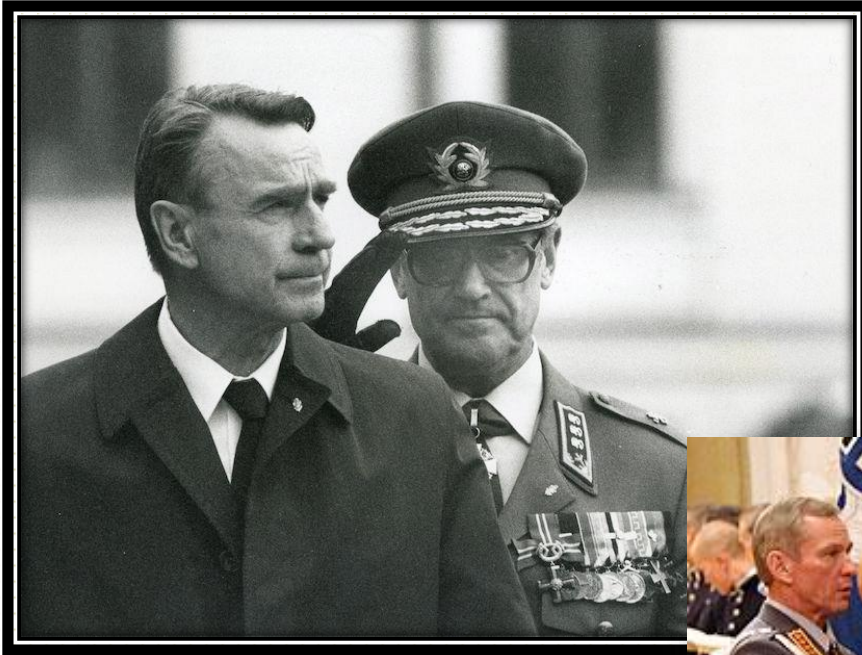
# Finland as an eternal rural utopia

- A country without history
- Pastoral virtues and rustic culture (civilization)
- Simplicity as an ideal
- "Peasant" values: honor, loyalty, hard working
- Leisure, rest and recreation, creativity
- Nature and "naturalness" / a counterbalance to the life in big cities cultural innocence and "originality"
- "National" awakening and national image at the end on 19<sup>th</sup> century

# ...and urban reality



# III War & Peace



# Finland, Sweden, Russia...

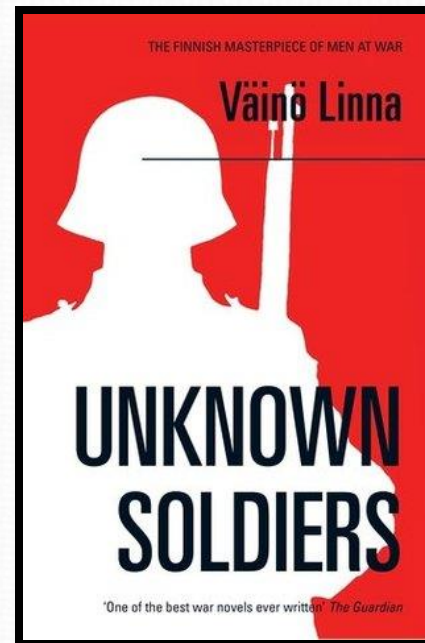


# 1917 revolution and independence



# A country of civil war 1918...?







Winter War 1938-1940

Continuation War 1941-1944

Lapland War 1944



# Finno-Soviet Treaty of 1948-1991

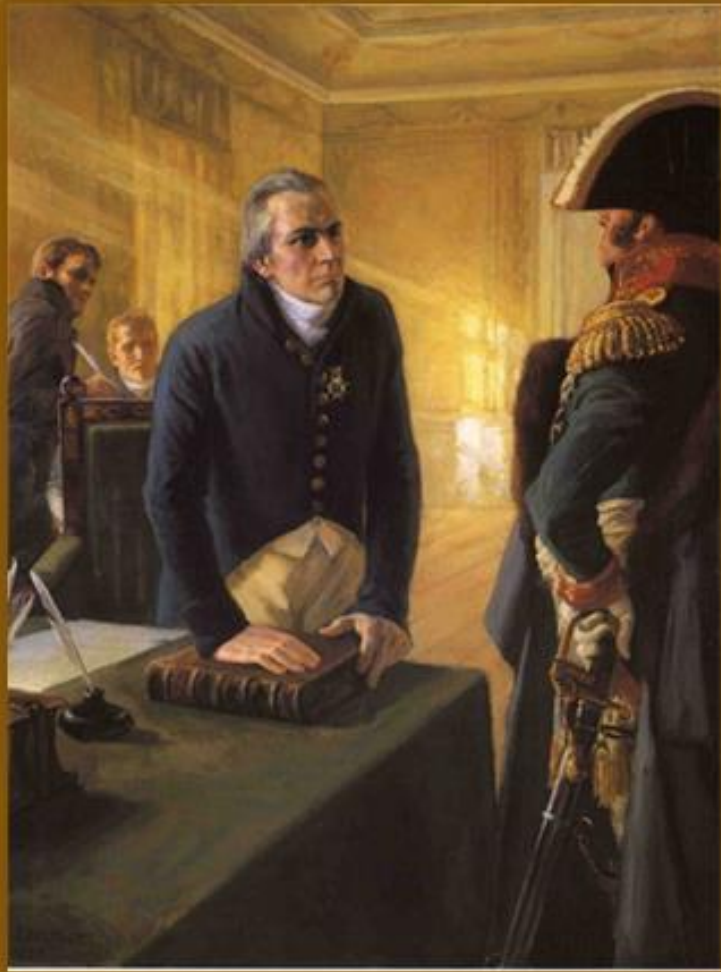




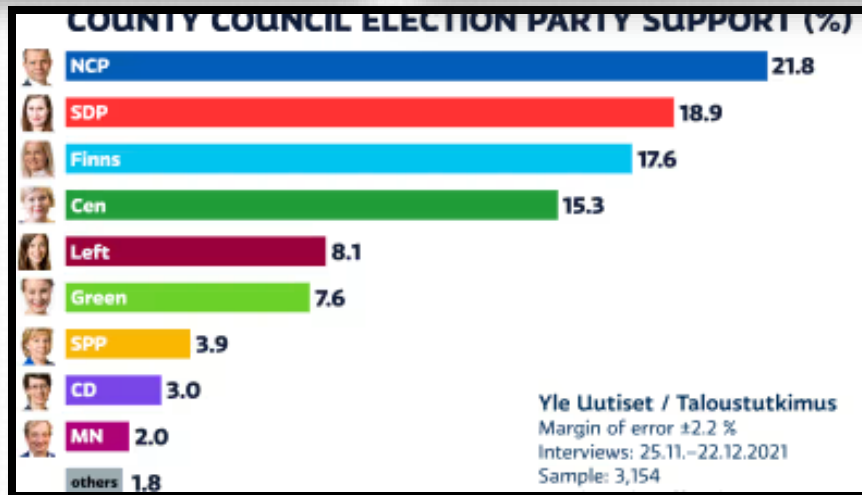


# IV Legalism, Law and Nation





# The Parliament, municipalities & political parties



# V Education & Equality





# National or European culture?

The Swedish-speaking liberals wanted to present Finland as a modern, western industrial nation

Finland's political autonomy was emphasized

For Finnish speaking Finns important was

- National culture = local culture
- Long cultural roots = rural roots
- “Finnishness”, originality, the people
- Education and equality
- “Creative Finland” and its national romantic origin



# Where is the real Finland?



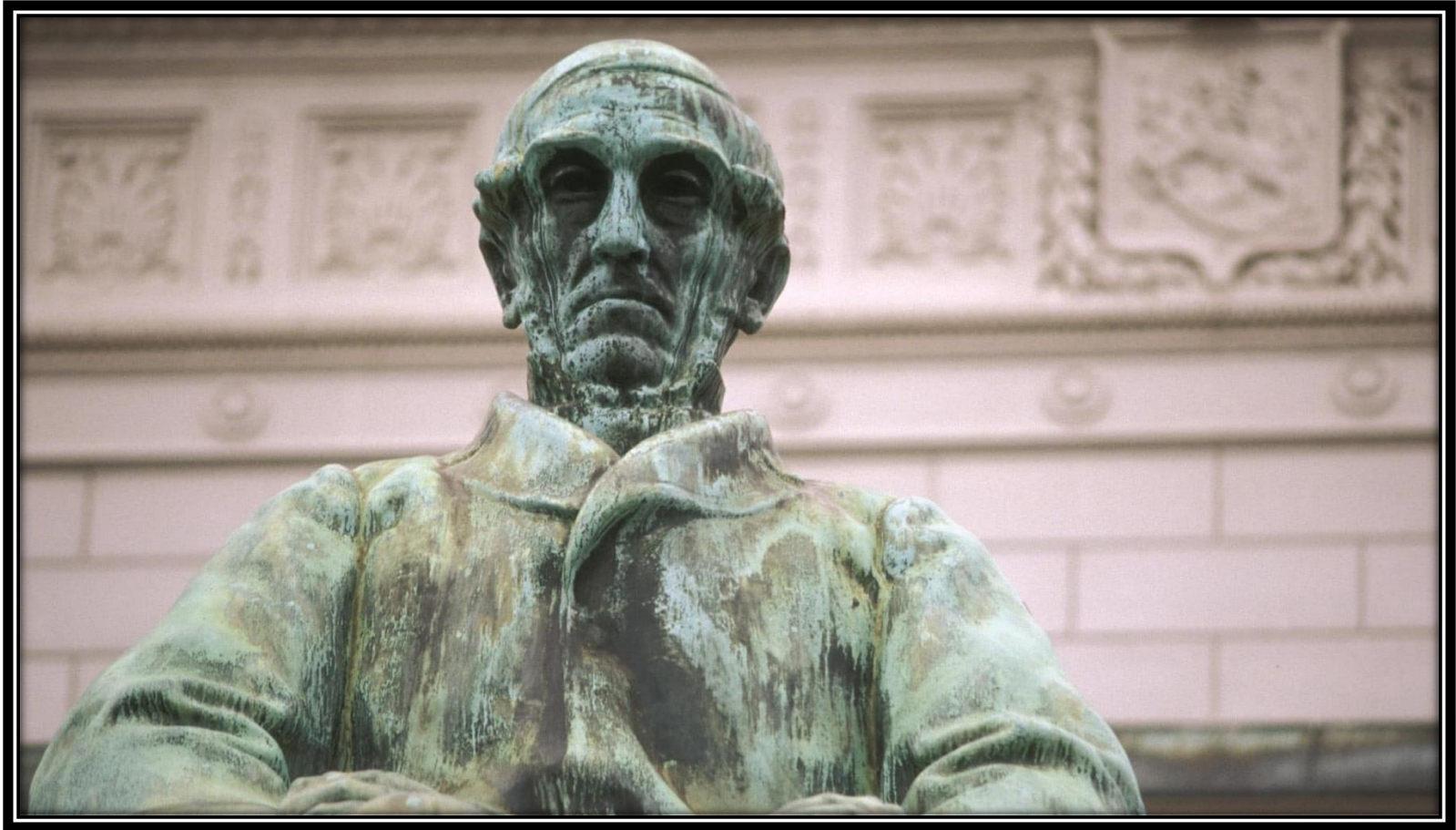
# *The Seven Brothers* (Aleksis Kivi, 1875)

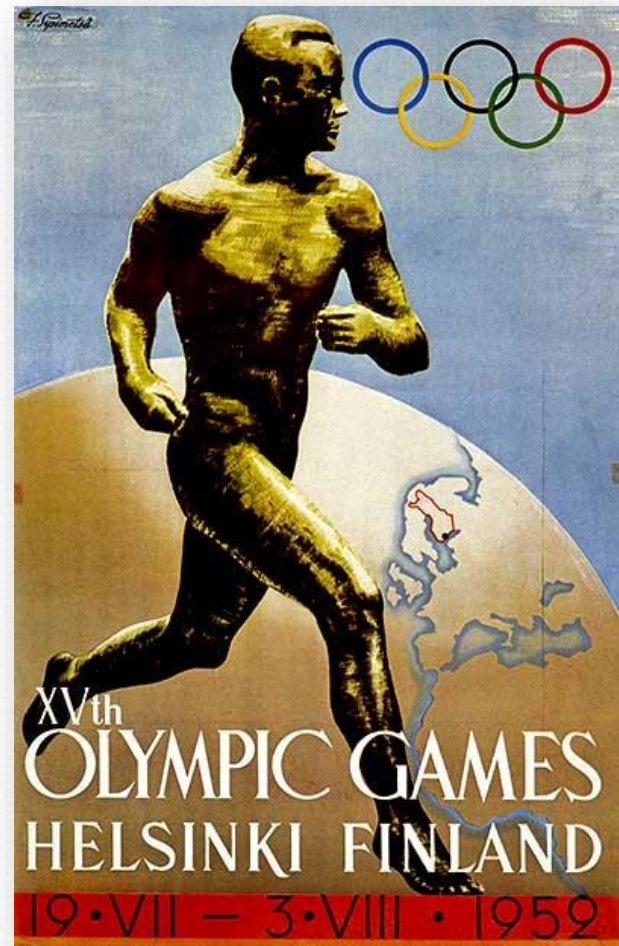
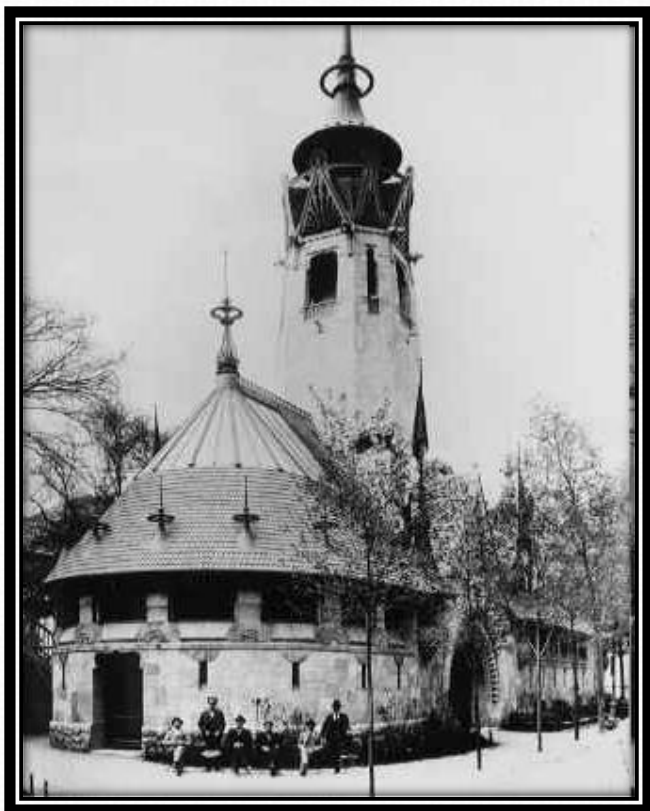


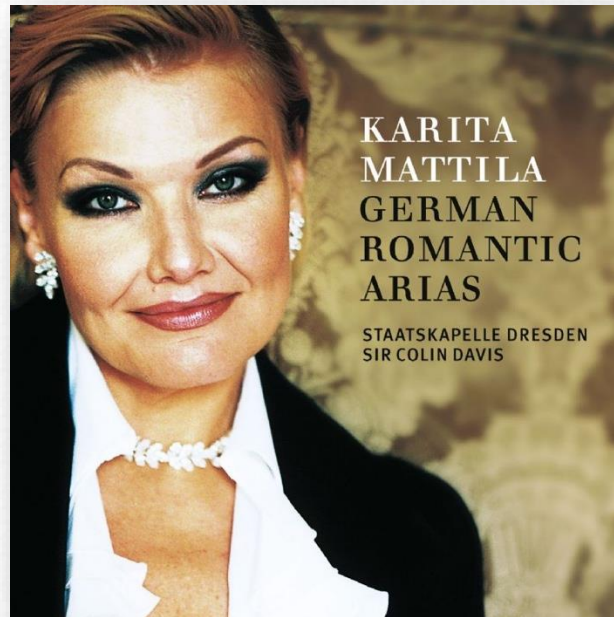
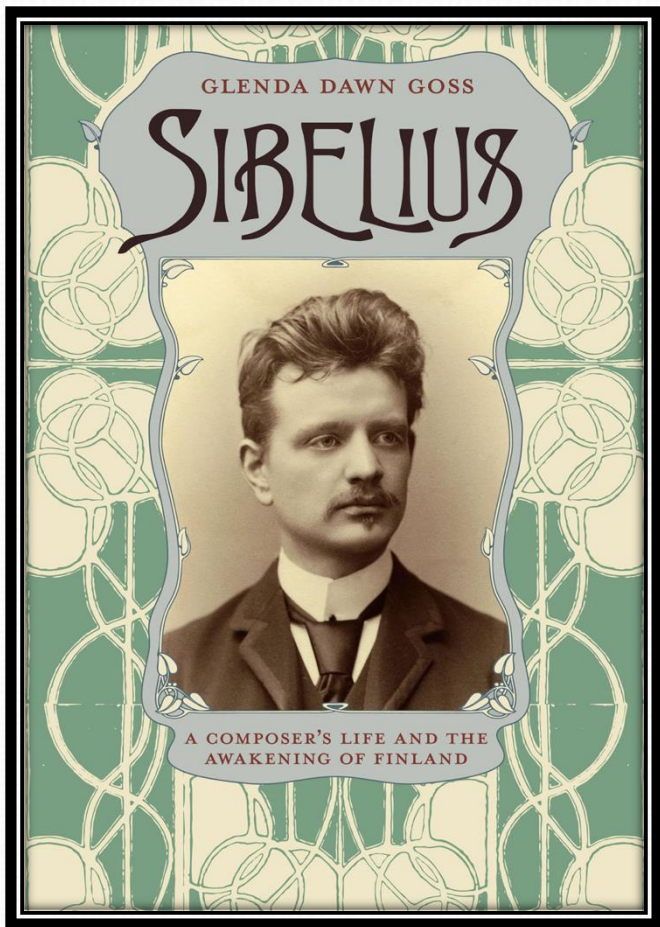




# VI Creativity & Culture & "Weirdness"















:kalsarikännit:

# KALSARIKÄNNIT

The feeling when you are going to get drunk home alone in your underwear – with no intention of going out.

# Aki Kaurismäki - films



# Wife-carrying world competition



ESPAÑJALAISILLA  
ON.  
HÄRKÄ-  
JUOKSUNSA.

Meillä taas on suomalaista rehellisyyttä ja rohkeutta. Ja omaperäinen tekemisen meininki. Kuten Leijonalla.

Tutustu laajaan kellomallistoomme osotteessa [leijonakellot.fi](http://leijonakellot.fi)



**LEIJONA**  
KELLO, JOKA KÄY SUOMALAISILLE

 **LAATUKORU** Katso lähin palveleva myyntipisteesi: [laatukoru.fi](http://laatukoru.fi)

# WIFE CARRYING - THE MOVES

Estonian style



Piggyback



Fireman's carry



Graphic - David Stenhouse

## THE RULES

Course = 253.5M

No less than  
**49kg**

One dry obstacle  
+  
One wet obstacle

- Wife need not be married to carrier
- Wife must be at least 17 years old
- Wife must wear a helmet

# Weird Finland? Does it exist?



...yes, it does, but otherwise Finland is an European country with many layered heritages...





- Thank you so much !

