

Reputation by Committee? Finland's Committee for International Information, 1988-1990

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Summary

In October 1988, an ordinance of the Finnish government created the Committee for International Information (*Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta*, or Kantine). Kantine came as the last of a series of Cold War efforts to centrally define an image of Finland fit for foreign consumption, and to establish the communication methods through which state authorities and their partners could use this image as an economic and political asset. Established under the coordination of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kantine acts as a window into the evolution of Finnish national image management and its state at the end of the Cold War. However, the context of the late 1980s and the desire of Kantine's members to use the committee as the platform for a 'wide societal debate on Finland in the twenty-first century' gave it a broader scope than other 'national image committees' that had preceded it since 1945. This article will place Kantine in the evolution of Finland's national image management and image policy, and will summarize its work and consequences.

Keywords

Finland – Committee for International Information – *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta* (Kantine) – national image – communication methods – official image policy – public diplomacy

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A small state has to be the way others think it is.

SEPPO TIITINEN, 1979¹

Introduction: Previous Research and Sources

Finland's national image management at the hands of various Finnish actors — and especially Finland's authorities' efforts towards managing an official image policy² destined for foreign audiences — have attracted only little interest from historians of Finland's foreign relations. The work of the Finnish national movement before 1917 to define and spread a certain image of Finland has been studied in a few publications,³ while activities regarding the image policy of independent Finland have mostly been the subject of a two-volume chronicle of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Press and Culture Bureau between 1918 and 1981.⁴ 'Propaganda' activities appear in passing in general

1 '...pienen valtion on oltava niin kuin sitä pidetään', in Kimmo Rentola & Matti Simola (eds.), *Ratakatu 12 — Suojelupoliisi 1949-2009* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2009), p. 131. Unless specified otherwise, all translations from Finnish or Swedish, with their mistakes and misinterpretations, are the author's own.

2 A set of notions developed by Harto Hakovirta regarding the Finnish case will be used here. See Harto Hakovirta, 'Finland as a "Friendly Neighbour" and Finland as an "Independent Western Democracy": An Illustrative Case Study on the Problems of Image Policy', in Matthew Bonham and Michael Shapiro (ed.), *Thought and Action in Foreign Policy* (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1977), pp. 75-119. National image management will designate the use by various actors, private and public, of Finland's national image in their dealings with foreign audiences. Image policy designates the involvement of Finland's authorities in marshalling Finland's image among foreign audiences for economic and political purposes. The term 'public diplomacy', which encompasses more than the use of image (outreach policies towards foreign audiences, two-way cultural dialogue, and international broadcasting, etc.), has mostly been avoided here. For discussion on the notion, see Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. xiv-xvi; Jan Melissen (ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (London: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 1-16; and Gyorgy Szondi, *Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Differences and Similarities*, Clingendael Discussion Paper in Diplomacy (The Hague: Netherlands Institute for International Relations 'Clingendael', 2008), p. 2.

3 Ville Laamanen and Erkkä Railo (ed.), *Suomi muuttuvassa maailmassa* (Helsinki: Edita, 2010), pp. 76-114.

4 Pekka Lähteenkorva and Jussi Pekkarinen, *Ikuisen poudan maa, Virallinen Suomi-kuva 1918-1945* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2003); and Pekka Lähteenkorva and Jussi Pekkarinen, *Idän etuvartio? Suomi-kuva 1945-1981* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2008).

works dealing with the activities of Finland's diplomatic services during peacetime.⁵ Communication work during the 1939-1940 Winter War⁶ has been researched, while various private and public organizations have chronicled their 'work on behalf of Finland's image'.⁷ A few exceptions exist, which have tried to map the field of Finnish national image management during the Cold War,⁸ or which have observed the use by Finland's authorities of image as a resource in foreign policy,⁹ but much remains to be done to answer a variety of questions: why did the Finnish authorities dedicate resources and efforts to define and spread specific notions about Finland among foreign audiences? What were the actors, goals and consequences of this process? What does the process tell us about Finland's international relations, and more generally about the way in which small states see their position on the international scene?

Kantine's work, more specifically, has never been studied, the reasons being the scarcity of archives and lack of interest among researchers. On the first issue, and although archival sources are necessarily limited by the proximity of events, records that are relevant to Kantine's work have now been made available to researchers.¹⁰ They consist of various committees' reports, meet-

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- 5 Jukka Nevakivi, *Ulkoasiainhallinnon historia, 1918-1956* (Helsinki: UM, 1988); Timo Soikkanen, *Presidentin ministeriö, Ulkoasiainhallinto ja ulkopoliitiikan hoito Kekkonen kaudella, 1956-1969* (Helsinki: Edita/UM, 2003); and Timo Soikkanen, *Presidentin ministeriö, Uudistuminen, ristiriitojen ja menestyksen vuodet, 1970-1981* (Helsinki: Edita/UM, 2008).
 - 6 Martti Julkunen, *Tabvisodan kuva: Ulkomaisten sotakirjeenvaihtajien kuvaukset Suomesta 1939-1940* (Helsinki: Weilin & Goos, 1975).
 - 7 For example, Finnish radio broadcasters such as Lasse Vihonen, *Radio sodissamme* (Helsinki: SKS, 2010), and public relations professionals such as Elina Melgin, Leif Åberg and Pirjo von Hertzen (eds), *Vuosisata suhdetoimintaa: Yhteisöviestinnän historia Suomessa* (Helsinki: Otava, 2012), pp. 42-69. See Jyrki Pietilä, 'Agraari-Suomesta informaatio-Suomeen, propagandasta yhteisöviestintään', *Tiedottaja*, vol. 4, no. 5, 1997, pp. 6-7.
 - 8 Marjut Jyrkinen, *Suomi-kuva ja sen rakentajat: Käsitteellistä tarkastelua ja tapaustutkimuksia Suomi-kuvan kehittämisyrittämisestä ja kuvan poliittisesta ja taloudellisesta hyödyntämisestä*, Master's thesis (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, Department of Political Science, 1992); and Olavi Lähteenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa: Suomen ulkomaisen tiedotustoiminnan ongelmia* (Turku: Poliittisen historian laitos, Julkaisuja C:2, 1969).
 - 9 Anne Koski, *Niinkö on jos siltä näyttää? Kuva ja mielikuva Suomen valtaresursseina kansainvälisessä politiikassa* (Helsinki: Tutkijaliitto, 2005).
 - 10 Kantine's papers were released to researchers in 2010 following normal Finnish archival regulations. They are conserved at the Finnish Foreign Ministry's Archive Centre: Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' archives (*Ulkoasiainministeriön arkisto*, UMA), archive group 19, Kantine records (thereafter 'Kantine papers'). The author would like to thank Sami

ings' proceedings, and the organizers' correspondence. The second issue is more complex. Accounts of political developments in Finland during the 1980s have mostly concerned themselves with those elements of high politics approachable through open archives or witness accounts: relations with the former USSR; the 'rapprochement' with European integrated organizations; and the cautious slide away from the equilibrium of the Cold War that was characteristic of Mauno Koivisto's presidency. Kantine's members have — in comparison to Koivisto, for instance — a less obvious claim to the historians' interest, none of what they did weighed quite as much on Finland's destiny as the decisions of the president and his closest advisers. Studying their work, however, provides an opportunity to look at a different level of Finland's foreign relations: and societal debates. This is a level seemingly less momentous than the high politics that is conducted at the top. Nonetheless, it is interesting for those studying the state of Finnish society at the time and the specific part of Finland's foreign relations in which different actors, working towards different aims and confronted with a period of great geopolitical and social changes, tried to rehash and coordinate the way in which they would present Finland to the world.

From Propaganda to Communication: Finland's National Image Management

After Finland's independence in 1917, the efforts by private and public actors to define, manage and use Finland's national image in relation to foreign audiences, which had developed during the period of autonomy inside the Russian empire,¹¹ crystallized in certain circles. At the official level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Armed Forces developed the first efforts at 'international information' (*kansainvälinen tiedottaminen*) by spreading communication material in print and other media, or by chaperoning foreign journalists and guests. Meanwhile, a host of economic and political actors continued the informal work of pre-independence Finnish networks abroad. Incentives were often prosaic, from trade promotion by Finnish industrials and chambers of commerce to the foreign affairs' administration's efforts to mediate a specific

Heino warmly for his help in locating these papers. Finnish archival documents will be quoted under their original title.

11 See Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen, *Ikuisen poudan maa, Virallinen Suomi-kuva 1918-1945*, pp. 9-30.

image for their young country. Yet this activity was also one of the stages on which internal debates about Finland's national identity were played, and some of these actors felt an existentialist urge to underline the ideal contours of Finland's national project for the benefit of foreign audiences. This came up clearly in the vocabulary used, which emphasized a desire to 'enlighten' foreigners — with terms such as 'enlightenment work', *valistustyö* — or a necessity to work on behalf of an 'image of Finland' (*Suomi-kuva*). Discussions about Finland's image abroad and the concrete work of people dealing with national image management at various levels retained this 'national' edge far into the 1950s, born of a deep-seated concern as to what foreign audiences knew and should know about Finland.

In the context of the Cold War, image management took a new urgency for diplomats, politicians and a number of private actors as well.¹² Official image policy at various levels became mostly concerned with supporting a foreign policy of neutrality, the economic endeavours of Finnish firms and the promotion of tourism. The widening of the range of Finland's foreign relations from the 1950s to the 1970s, with an increasing number of actors and administrative departments involved, scattered official image policy among several organizations interested in various aspects.¹³ Private actors (such as corporations and communication professionals) also brought to this official level specific know-how, resources and incentives.

The field of national image management thus became more complex, more professionalized and also more scattered between official and non-official actors.¹⁴ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Press and Culture Bureau, along with the network of Finnish embassies, consulates and cultural institutes abroad, remained the main pole of 'general' image policy towards foreign audiences, but it increasingly had to work with other public, private or semi-public actors in a highly decentralized field.¹⁵ Inside the Finnish government, some aspects pertaining to national image policy were increasingly taken over by technical ministries. In January 1966, following debates regarding Finland's cultural relations, an International Department was created in the Ministry of Education to deal with various technical aspects: cultural treaties; exchange programmes;

12 See Soikkanen, *Presidentin ministeriö, Ulkoasiainhallinto ja ulkopoliittikan hoito Kekkonen kaudella, 1956-1969*, pp. 359-364; and Melgin, Åberg and von Hertzen (eds), *Vuosisata suhdetoimintaa*, pp. 46-52.

13 Matti Niemi, *Ministeriöiden kansainväliset suhteet Suomessa: Teoreettinen tulkinta sekä empirinen rakennepiirteiden ja kehityslinjoiden kartoitus*, Master's thesis (Helsinki: Helsinki University, Department of Political Science, 1977), p. 159.

14 Jyrkinen, *Suomi-kuva ja sen rakentajat*, p. 40 and throughout.

15 Niemi, *Ministeriöiden kansainväliset suhteet Suomessa*, p. 196.

promotion of the Finnish language and Finnish culture abroad; and relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other international cultural organizations, etc.¹⁶ A host of private and semi-public organizations conglomerated around the ministry, from cultural organizations to universities, prominent public figures, friendship societies¹⁷ and the like,¹⁸ dealing with the image of Finnish culture, the Finnish language and artistic activities in relations with foreign audiences.

This 'functionalist logic', which moved certain tasks that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been handling before to the technical ministries, along with a number of new tasks, also extended to the Ministry of Trade and Industry. In the early 1970s, a number of private–public organizations dealing with trade and tourism promotion emerged around the Ministry of Trade and Industry and its Department for Trade. The most significant of these organizations was the Foreign Information Coordination Committee (*Ulkomaantiedotuksen koordinaatiotyöryhmä*, УТКТ), which was placed under Bengt Pihlström.¹⁹ УТКТ gathered the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Centre

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- 16 Veli-Matti Autio and Markku Heikkilä, *Opetusministeriön historia: Jälleenrakennuksen ja kasvun kulttuuripoliittikkaa 1945-1965* (Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, 1990), pp. 67-85; Veli-Matti Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia: Suurjärjestelmien aika koittaa, 1966-1980* (Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, 1993), pp. 437-447; Lähteenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa*, pp. 116-129; Niemi, *Ministeriöiden kansainväliset suhteet Suomessa*, pp. 161-166; and Kalervo Siikala, Kristiina Uolia and Riitta Welin (eds), *Kansallisen kulttuurin kansainvälinen strategia 1996* (Helsinki: Painatuskeskus/Opetusministeriö — kansainvälisten asiain osasto, 1995).
- 17 Nils Erik Backman, *Jokamiehen diplomatiaa: Tutkinus suomalaisten ystävyysseurojen toiminnasta ja johtohenkilöistä*, Master's thesis (Turku: University of Turku, Department of Political Science, 1973).
- 18 Lähteenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa*, pp. 33-35; and Niemi, *Ministeriöiden kansainväliset suhteet Suomessa*, pp. 173-179. One of the best examples of these organizations working around the Ministry of Education was UKAN, the organization of lecturers and teachers of Finnish abroad. Established out of private initiatives in the inter-war period, UKAN worked abroad in cooperation with the Finnish Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education. For more on UKAN, see Maj Frick and Saija Merke (eds), *Suomea pitkin palloa: Ulkomaanlehtoriyhdistyksen 40-vuotisjuhlakirja* (Helsinki: Ulkomaanlehtoriyhdistys ry, 2011); and Paula Tuomikoski and Anna-Maija Raanamo (eds), *Kielisillan rakentajat: Katsaus ulkomaanlehtori- ja kielikurssitoimintaan ja toiminnan arviointi* (Helsinki: Opetusministeriö – Edita, 1997).
- 19 Jyrkinen, *Suomi-kuva ja sen rakentajat*, p. 32. Very little has been written about the history of these organizations. MEK's website published Bengt Pihlström's recollections (see online at <http://www.mek.fi/w5/mekfi/index.nsf/%28pages%29/Historia>; accessed on 12 March 2013), and Pihlström explained his own work in a 1969 book (see Lähteenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa*, pp. 102-115) and some articles (see Bengt Pihlström, 'Valtataistelu ja matkailun lujan kasvu johtivat MEK: in perustamiseen', *Matkailun silmä*, no. 1, 1988, pp. 4-7).

for Tourism Promotion (*Matkailun edistämiskeskus*, MEK),²⁰ the publicly-funded Finnish League for Foreign Trade (*Suomen ulkomaankauppaliitto*, SUL), and the economic information association Finnfacts Institute (a joint venture of Finnair, the Finnish employers' associations, and the event organizer *Suomen Messusäätiö*).²¹ УТКТ produced information on Finland and Finnish economic life, hosted foreign travellers in Finland, gave crisis communication capacities to its members, and promoted an agenda of internationalization, free trade, technological development, and Finland's opening to foreign investment and foreign students. In parallel, a Bureau of Export Promotion (*Viennin edistämistoinisto*) was created in 1972 inside the Ministry's Department for Trade.²²

Cooperation between these organizations in matters related to national image management was eagerly sought during most of the Cold War, especially in Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Plans for the creation of a Finnish equivalent to Sweden's *Svenska Institutet* were discussed immediately after the Second World War between the organizations of public relations professionals and Finland's authorities.²³ These coordination efforts did not, however, solidify into a formal organizational framework, and coordination was based on a series of ad-hoc committees.²⁴ Cooperation was facilitated by the physical and intellectual proximity of the people involved: in the confines of a small country, partners often knew each other, had the skills necessary to work in various environments, and moved easily between organizations, both in the public and private spheres. However, enduring personal and inter-agency squabbles were often the downside of this proximity.

Evolution in the vocabulary tended to show professionalization, but also an enduring emphasis on one-way 'communication' in contacts with foreign audiences. The term 'propaganda' was widely used before the 1950s. It was understood not only as a one-way attempt to impose certain notions on foreign

20 MEK was established under the responsibility of the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Department for Trade. It had been created in 1973 by the fusion of two ministerial offices dealing with tourism promotion. See Yrjö Kaukiäinen, Erkki Pihkala, Kai Hoffman and Maunu Harmo, *Sotakorvauksista vapaakauppaan, Kauppa- ja teollisuusministeriön satavuotisjuhlakirja* (Helsinki: Valtion Painotuskeskus, 1988), pp. 280-282.

21 Lähteenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa*, pp. 76-79, 90, and 97-101; and Melgin, Åberg and von Herten (eds), *Vuosisata suhdetoimintaa*, pp. 151-152.

22 Lähteenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa*, pp. 64-74; and Kaukiäinen, Pihkala, Hoffman and Harmo, *Sotakorvauksista vapaakauppaan, Kauppa- ja teollisuusministeriön satavuotisjuhlakirja*, pp. 280-281.

23 Melgin, Åberg and von Herten (eds), *Vuosisata suhdetoimintaa*, pp. 46 and 49.

24 Lähteenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa*, pp. 46-47.

audiences, but also as a byword for advertisement. It was progressively abandoned in the official discourse and in the works of communication specialists for more or less successful translations of English terms (*suhdetoiminta* for public relations, for instance). Propaganda, however, endured for a long time in colloquial conversation,²⁵ even if official image diplomacy moved to terms such as ‘foreign information’ (*ulkomaan tiedottaminen*), ‘information activities’ (*tiedotustoiminta*), ‘crisis communication’ (*kriisitiedotus*), ‘trade’ and ‘exports promotion’ (*kaupan-, viennin edistäminen*, often used synonymously), ‘tourism promotion’ (*matkailun edistäminen*), or ‘organized development of Finland’s image’ (*Suomi-kuvan tietoinen kehittäminen*)²⁶ and the like. Yet most of what the various actors did, out of the conviction that foreigners did not know enough about Finland, was the kind of one-way communication that G.R. Berridge dubs as propaganda, and that he sees constantly hiding under the sophisticated vocabulary of ‘public diplomacy’.²⁷

Already before Kantine, however, two terms with more subtle undertones of two-way dialogue with foreign audiences were also used. ‘Cultural export’ (*kulttuurivienti*) was most akin to the classical definition of ‘cultural diplomacy’. It included promoting the export of Finnish cultural and artistic artefacts, spreading abroad the teaching of Finnish and the knowledge of Finnish culture, but also developing general cultural exchanges from and to Finland. ‘Internationalization’ (*kansainvälistyminen*), on the other hand, is omnipresent in Kantine’s work and clearly belongs to the context of the late 1980s. It designated the necessity to open the country, develop exchanges both culturally and economically, and find the right balance between adaptation to a fast-moving, changing environment and the preservation of one’s own, specific culture.

Finland in the Late 1980s

The broadness of Kantine’s debates, where discussions on Finland’s image were also discussions on the future of Finland itself, can be explained in the troubled political context of the late 1980s. The years from 1987 to 1992 were marked by interactions between Finland’s social-democratic President Mauno

25 In 1951, for example, Janne Hakulinen debated the distinction between ‘propaganda’ and ‘advertisement’ (*mainonta*); see Janne Hakulinen, *Propagandan käsikirja* (Helsinki: Otava, 1951).

26 See Kaisli Kasurinen, *Suomi-kuva* (Helsinki: Haaga Instituutti, 1991), p. 11.

27 G.R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010), pp. 128–130.

Koivisto and the 1987 'red-blue' coalition government led by conservative Prime Minister Harri Holkeri. Growing speculation about Finland's relations with European organizations and the USSR mixed with domestic political squabbles between the three biggest political formations: Holkeri's conservative *Kokoomus*; his coalition partner the Social-Democratic Party (SDP); and the agrarian, traditionalist centrist party, *Keskusta*. Holkeri's governmental programme clearly stated the period's mix of caution and enthusiasm, fear of change and desire to adapt to 'the evolutions of the international division of labour, global structural economic changes, and internationalization'.²⁸ These preoccupations of an evolving Finnish society showed in the vocabulary that was used in Kantine's discussions — the competitiveness of Finnish companies in a liberalized, open European market, innovation, internationalization and liberalization were the talking points of Finnish society in the late 1980s.²⁹

In foreign policy, two wide-ranging developments touched Finland during these years: the slow unravelling of the Eastern bloc from 1987 to the demise of the USSR, and the quickening pace of Western European integration, with the negotiations between the European Free-Trade Area (EFTA) and the European Economic Community (EEC) and the 1992 transformation of the EEC into a European Union (EU). What this series of events brought for Finland was increasing pressures for a re-evaluation of its Cold War strategy and domestic equilibrium. This re-evaluation proceeded slowly, with consequences both political and economic. Koivisto remained cautious, but showed a desire to guarantee Finland's economic and political ties with the new European organizations.³⁰ Evolutions were difficult to see and to map clearly at the time, and for most Finns the years 1987-1991 appeared as a particularly marked but still uncertain episode of Cold War detente. Navigating between 'Europeanizers' and a 'Kekkonen line'³¹ of neutrality and isolationist nationalism, Koivisto hid

28 *Pääministeri Harri Holkerin hallituksen ohjelma 30.4.1987*, available online at http://valtioneuvosto.fi/tietoa-valtioneuvostosta/hallitukset/hallitusohjelmat/vanhat/holkeri/Hallitusohjelma_-_Holkeri112891.jsp.

29 Anu Kantola, 'Suomea trimmaamassa: suomalaisen kilpailuvaltion sanastot', in Risto Heiskala and Eeva Luhtakallio (eds), *Uusi jako: Miten Suomesta tuli kilpailukyky-yhteiskunta?* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2006), pp. 165-168; and Mari K. Niemi and Ville Pernaa (eds), *Suomalaisen yhteiskunnan poliittinen historia* (Helsinki: Edita, 2005), pp. 265-282.

30 Juhana Aunesluoma, *Vapakaupan tiellä: Suomen kauppa- ja integraatiopoliittikka maailmansodista EU-aikaan* (Helsinki: SKS, 2011), pp. 398-406; and Juhani Suomi, *Kohti sinipuna: Mauno Koiviston aika 1986-1987* (Helsinki: Otava, 2008), pp. 49 and 51.

31 Named for Finland's long-serving President Urho Kaleva Kekkonen (1956-1982), who was renowned for his 'active neutrality' policy, by which Finland tried to manage an interstitial position between the Warsaw Pact and NATO countries.

behind sibylline statements and packaged significant developments as a strengthening of Finland's neutrality. While most remained cautious,³² 1986-1987 were years of realization that a new Europe was emerging, to which Finland would have to adapt economically and politically.³³

There were strong cultural and political undercurrents to these discussions. 'Europe' was not only seen as a potential market, but also for many as a yardstick for domestic developments, a reference group, a civilizational pole towards which Finland naturally had to drift. In 1992, Risto E.J. Penttilä published *Moskovasta Brysseliin*,³⁴ a tract defending the change in Finland's orientation from Moscow to Brussels. This eagerness to 'normalize' Finland's relations with Western Europe was felt differently in different circles, and a possible integration of Finland into European organizations was mostly popular among employers and industrial associations, and the liberal and conservative elites.³⁵ Civil servants, intellectuals, politicians and businessmen were already on the move in the peripheries of Koivisto's foreign policy reserves, and Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was one of the arenas of this conflict. In these debates, economic and strategic conceptions about Finland's 'international reference group' mixed with cultural notions about Finland's 'European family' and political assumptions about the social and economic model that was more likely to serve Finland in a future without the USSR.³⁶

This 'Western' group was best represented among Holkeri's conservatives, the liberal and conservative press, and the 'European' wing of the social-democrats. *Keskusta*, the left of the SDP and the extreme-left, on the other hand, along with portions of the population (rural and less educated, etc.), expressed strong criticisms based on their appreciation of the merits and demerits of European integration and of its consequences for Finland (isolation from Scandinavia, economic uncertainties, worsening relations with the USSR and participation in a system dominated by great powers, etc.). Generally, open statements by politicians in support of Finland's application for the EEC

32 Sami Moisio and Vilho Harle, *Missä on Suomi? Kansallisen identiteettipolitiikan historia ja geopolitiikka* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2000), p. 154.

33 Antti Kuosmanen, *Finland's Journey to the European Union* (Maastricht: Institut européen d'administration publique, 2001), pp. 4-5; Henrik Meinander, *Suomen historia* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2010), pp. 261-268; and Suomi, *Kohti sinipunaa*, p. 331.

34 Risto E.J. Penttilä, *Moskovasta Brysseliin* (Helsinki: VAPK-Kustannus, 1992).

35 Moisio and Harle, *Missä on Suomi?*, pp. 156-157.

36 Anne Koski, *Niinkö on jos siltä näyttää?*, pp. 65-66; and Sami Moisio, 'Traditionalists, Prudence Principle and Westernizers', in Alpo Rusi (ed.), *The International Stand of Finland After the Cold War* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2003), pp. 124-163.

were scarce before 1991.³⁷ 'Rapprochement' with Europe's economic core was, however, already discussed in 1987-1989, alongside a general desire to 'open' Finland. After the 1988 presidential elections, Koivisto kept the most enthusiastic 'Europeanists' in check, while pushing for incremental changes in Finland's position and relations with the EEC.³⁸ Overall, these ambiguities remained until August 1991, when the failed coup in Moscow toppled the USSR.

Economically, changes in Finland were no less momentous, and no less influential on Kantine's work. Finland in the 1970s was a welfare state, paid for by the state-led marshalling of foreign trade, and where a semi-corporatist system managed relations between employers and workers under the attentive gaze of the authorities. The state was strongly involved in the management of what Tapani Paavonen has called 'consensus Finland'.³⁹ In matters linked to foreign trade, the Finnish state considered it necessary to assist companies,⁴⁰ and private firms thought it wise to coordinate their activities with the authorities. This slowly changed in the 1980s under the pressures of economic liberalization and market opening, and the financial and economic crisis that wreaked havoc on Finland's economy from 1990 to 1992 only sped up this process.

Setting Up Shop, 1987-1988

With this background, Kantine's immediate origins lie in a set of reflections started among trade-promotion actors around the Finnish Ministry of Trade and Industry. From 1985-1986, comments in the foreign press about Finland's official reactions to the Chernobyl accident,⁴¹ along with the fact that Finland was the only Nordic country not to be invited to join the Eureka programme,⁴² worried the Finnish authorities. MEK also produced a few reports that empha-

37 Aunesluoma, *Vapakaupan tiellä*, p. 401.

38 Osmo Apunen, *Linjamiehet, Paasikivi-seuran historia* (Helsinki: Tammi, 2005), p. 352; Mauno Koivisto, *Historian tekijät: Kaksi kautta II* (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1995), pp. 278-279; Kuosmanen, *Finland's Journey to the European Union*; and Moisio and Harle, *Missä on Suomi?*, pp. 153-155.

39 Tuomas Lehtonen (ed.), *Europe's Northern Frontier: Perspectives on Finland's Western Identity* (Helsinki: PS-Kustannus, 1999), pp. 50-85; and Tapani Paavonen, *Vapaakaupointegraation kausi: Suomen suhde Länsi-Euroopan integraatioon FINN-EFTAsta EC-vapaakauppaan* (Helsinki: SKS, 2008), pp. 42-44.

40 Aunesluoma, *Vapakaupan tiellä*, pp. 41-42.

41 Markku Kauneela, 'Suomi ulkomaisen lehdistön silmin vuosina 1976-1982', *Ulkopolitiikka*, no. 2, 1986; and Ilkka Timmonen, *Suomi ulkomaisessa lehdistössä tshernobylin voimalaonnettomuuden jälkeen* (Tampere: Tampereen Yliopiston Yhteiskuntatieteiden tutkimuslaitos, 1988), p. 12.

42 Aunesluoma, *Vapakaupan tiellä*, pp. 391-398.

sized Finland's image deficit among Western foreigners, just as parts of Finland's foreign trade seemed prone to be re-orientating themselves from the crude, state-led Eastern markets to their more complicated Western counterparts.⁴³ These issues made it into the press, which deplored the association made between Finland and Eastern Europe and the outdated image of the country.⁴⁴

Finland's Ministry of Trade and Industry thus established in July 1987 a 'committee to study the image of Finland' (*Suomi-kuva komitea*), gathering most of Finland's trade-promotion organizations.⁴⁵ This committee mostly concerned itself with improving and updating Finland's official communication materials and techniques, with a clear focus on selling Finland as a country of origin to export markets.⁴⁶ Finland's image problem was defined as a communication issue, dealt with by establishing a 'truthful' image of Finland and communicating it through efficient tools, under the coordination of technical ministries and UTKT. However, the committee's report also emphasized the need for a 'high-level delegation', a broad-based group with political legitimacy to discuss broader issues linked with Finland's image policy. This meant involving political and cultural figures, and naturally called for the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its 'generalist' networks. The results of these debates were, apart from increased funding for UTKT to the tune of 8 million Finnish marks, the transformation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Press and Culture Division into a ministerial department⁴⁷ and the creation of Kantine. While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' reactions to the 1988 report were generally lukewarm,⁴⁸ it did welcome the creation of a committee under its aegis.

Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs Kalevi Sorsa, a veteran social-democratic politician, saw an occasion to think anew about Finland's official reputation policy. He had expressed worries as to how little was known abroad about

43 *Matkailun edistämiskeskus: Suomi ulkomaalaisin silmin* (Helsinki: MEK, 1988); *Matkailun edistämiskeskus: Ulkomaanmarkkinoinnin suunnitelma 1989* (Helsinki: MEK, 1989).

44 Kasurinen, *Suomi-kuva*, pp. 30-31; and Martti Lauraeus, 'Kohteensa näköinen kuva', *Talouselämä*, no. 36, 1988, pp. 50-55.

45 Jyrkinen, *Suomi-kuva ja sen rakentajat*, p. 33; and Kasurinen, *Suomi-kuva*, p. 12.

46 *Kauppa- ja teollisuusministeriön Suomen kuva -työryhmän muistio* (Helsinki: MEK, 1987); UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *esittelymuistio* 112, 14 October 1988, Tero Lehtovaara; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, UaVM 1989 ao 26, *hallituksen kertomus vuodelta 1987*.

47 The old Press and Culture Division (*Lehdistö- ja kulttuurisyksikkö*) was made into a Department (*Lehdistö- ja kulttuuriosasto*) of the Ministry in 1987, and its budget significantly improved. As the head of this new structure, Ralf Friberg was tasked with modernizing its activities (interview with Ralf Friberg, 12 August 2013).

48 UMA, Files 80.40, dno 1988/7526, *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta Kantine v. 1988*, report titled *Suomen kuva-työryhmä suositusten jatkoesitys*, 19 February 1988.

Finland, and how outdated the few notions related to Finland were. Ralf Friberg, who since 1987 had been head of the Press and Culture Department, was given by Sorsa the task of creating a group that was able to 'gather opinions as to the process of improving knowledge about Finland, make proposals based on these views, examine the current dispositions, consider the size and allocation of resources, and instigate new projects'.⁴⁹ Friberg drew from a group that held close contacts with his department,⁵⁰ but he also extended recruitment beyond the diplomats and civil servants of previous coordinating committees into a varied set of business leaders, public intellectuals, civil servants and representatives of associations. As an administrative entity, Kantine thus stands between a specialized ministerial committee and a Finnish tradition of broad-based, consensus-seeking, multi-party seminars reflecting on great social, political, strategic and economic issues, and preparing decisions for government officials.⁵¹ The sense of common purpose of a small state's elite, while not guaranteeing unanimity, did make participation in such roundtables a natural reflex for most prominent public figures.⁵²

Two successive Finnish foreign ministers, both social-democrats and prominent figures in Finnish political life, chaired the committee: Sorsa until January 1989;⁵³ then Pertti Paasio.⁵⁴ Co-chairmanship was in the hands of Pertti

49 Quote from UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Esittelylista valtioneuvoston yleiseen istuntoon*, 27 October 1988, signed by Ralf Friberg. On Friberg's and Sorsa's role in the creation of the committee, see the interview with Ralf Friberg, 12 August 2013.

50 UMA, Collection 19/A, Box *Tiedotustoiminta 1956*, file titled *Komitea ulkomaille suuntautuvan tiedotus- ja valistustoiminnan hehittämiseksi ja tehostamiseksi, asetettu 28.6.1956*, document titled *Yhteenveto tiedotustoiminta-komitean mietinnöstä* 26.5.1961. This committee already wrote that 'communication work aimed at foreign countries, as well as participation in international cultural interactions belong to the duties of any independent state concerned with its national, political, economic and cultural interests.'

51 Johanna Rainio-Niemi, 'State Committees in Finland in Historical Comparative Perspective', in Risto Alapuro and Henrik Stenius (eds), *Nordic Associations in a European Perspective* (Berlin: Nomos, 2010), p. 241; Soikkanen, *Presidentin ministeriö, Uudistuminen, ristiriitujen ja menestyksen vuodet, 1970-1981*, pp. 49-51; *Suomen komitealaitos* (Helsinki: Valtion painatuskeskus, Valtiovarainministeriön järjestelyosasto, 1976); and *Valtion komiteanmietinnöt, 1976-1990* (Helsinki: Eduskunnan Kirjasto, Valtion Painatuskeskus, 1992).

52 Risto Alapuro, *Suomen älymystö Venäjän varjossa* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1997), pp. 195-197.

53 Sorsa's biographical details on Finland's national biographical database are available online at <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/639/> (accessed 4 May 2012).

54 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Pöytäkirja*, 8 March 1989 meeting. For Paasio's biographical details, see online at <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/4063/> (accessed 4 May 2012).

Salolainen,⁵⁵ a conservative cabinet member, and Tankmar Horn, a former diplomat and at the time the Chairman of the Board of one of Finland's main private export companies, the manufacturer Wärtsilä.⁵⁶ Petri Tuomi-Nikula, then recently nominated Assistant Director in the Press and Culture Department, coordinated the debates along with two secretaries who were recruited in 1989 from media and ministerial circles: Matti Karhu;⁵⁷ and Maimo Henriksson. From the diplomatic community, Friberg picked out the former ambassador Jaakko Iloniemi,⁵⁸ who had published on the place of image in Finland's foreign policy,⁵⁹ before moving to the private sector after his retirement. In 1988, Iloniemi was on the board of the bank *Yhdyspankki*, and led the Finnish Business and Policy Forum, a business think-tank and lobby group (*Elinkeinoelämän Valtuusto*, EVA).

Kantine also gathered people with previous contacts to the ministry and positions of political, economic, cultural, administrative, or even athletic prominence in Finnish society. A writer and movie-maker, and since 1987 also a legislator for the Swedish People's Party, Jörn Donner was an old-timer of Finland's political and cultural life.⁶⁰ Martti Häikiö, a well-connected non-fiction writer and conservative public intellectual, was brought in as the head of *Suomi-seura*, an organization that had been created during the inter-war period to manage cultural and political ties with Finns and Finnish-speaking populations abroad — a traditional target group and relay of Finland's national image management. Seppo Kimanen, a cellist educated in Prague and Paris, worked as the artistic director of the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, a

55 Salolainen's biographical details are available online at <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/4089/> (accessed 4 May 2012). Salolainen is referred to in documents as the Minister of Foreign Trade. However, he did not have an established ministry: he coordinated a collection of departments working with foreign trade and situated both in the Ministry of Trade and Industry and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Minister of Trade and Industry at the time of Kantine was the conservative Ilkka Suominen.

56 Horn's biographical details are available online at <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/8020/> (accessed 4 May 2012).

57 Following Kantine, Karhu made a career as a journalist, media and communication consultant. See Matti Karhu and Arto Henriksson, *Skandaalit & katastrofit: Käytännön kriisiviestintäopas* (Helsinki: Infor oy, 2008); and Melgin, Åberg and von Hertzen (eds), *Vuosisata suhdetoimintaa*, p. 34.

58 Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen, *Idän etuvartio?*, pp. 245, 296 and 329-333; and Soikkanen, *Presidentin ministeriö, Uudistuminen, ristiriitojen ja menestyksen vuodet, 1970-1981*.

59 Juhani Suomi (ed.), *Näkökulmia Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikkaan 1980-luvulla* (Helsinki: Otava, 1980), pp. 98-106.

60 Donner's biographical details are available online at <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/4831/> (accessed 4 May 2012).

summer festival that had managed to attract international attention.⁶¹ Erkki Pohjola was mostly known abroad as the Director of the Tapiola Choir and a musical pedagogue,⁶² while Tarmo Kunnas was a literature professor at the University of Jyväskylä, who in 1990 became the director of the semi-public Finnish Institute in Paris.⁶³ Antti Nurmesniemi was a prominent architect and designer,⁶⁴ and Pirjo Häggman was an athlete, who in 1981 had become the first-ever woman member of the International Olympic Committee. All of these figures had previously cooperated with official boards and projects.

Finally, Kantine gathered a number of prominent business and trade-promotion figures. Aatos Erkkö, the first and most active among them, stood slightly between business and culture.⁶⁵ Heir to a family of press barons, intellectuals, businessmen and politicians, Erkkö had been the managing editor of the press group *Sanoma OY*, and had extensive networks both in Finland and abroad in press and telecommunications companies. Others were more classical export-promotion figures, rooted in industrial circles that were used to cooperating with official authorities: Antti Potila was the former CEO of *Rauma Repola oy*, a wood-processing and shipyard company, Finnair's CEO at the time of Kantine, and a member of the board of several companies with an interest in tourism (including the travel agency *Area* and travel organizer *Aurinkomatkat*, etc.); Ralf Sändström was the CEO of the ferry company Silja Lines; Timo Relander worked as the chairman of SUL; Timo Kivi-Koskinen, who replaced Pirjo Häggman in 1989, was the head of public relations for the company *Partek*; and finally, Rigni Rissanen was the managing director of the Rivoli Corporation, the owner of several hotels and restaurants in Helsinki and Kuopio, and a high-profile businesswoman in 1980s' Finland.

Kantine thus gathered a group of internationally connected figures, legitimate in their fields, well linked to official circles, and representing areas that had for years been at the heart of Finland's national image management: sports; the arts and 'national culture'; foreign policy; trade; and tourism promo-

61 Kimanen's biographical details are available online at <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/8451/> (accessed 4 May 2012).

62 Pohjola's biographical details are available online at <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/1508/> (accessed 4 May 2012).

63 Jenni Helenius, *The State of the Art: Cultural Diplomacy in France and Finland*, Master of Arts thesis (Turku: University of Turku, 2011); and *Kuka kukin on / Who's Who in Finland, 2011* (Helsinki: Otava, 2011), p. 443.

64 Nurmesniemi's biographical details are available online at <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/8340/> (accessed 4 May 2012).

65 Erkkö's biographical details are available online at <http://www.kansallisbiografia.fi/kb/artikkeli/8340/> (accessed 4 May 2012).

tion. Some of these people also had long-term experience in official image diplomacy. For example, Donner, Iloniemi and Sorsa had already in April 1969 participated in a seminar organized by the Press and Culture Bureau on the subject.⁶⁶ More than a common political background, they shared a series of concerns that were present among the political right, the furthest-right part of the social-democratic party, civil servants in Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and industrial and economic circles: an interest in international contacts with Western Europe and the United States (where these people had often sojourned and worked); a 'European' outlook; a concern for Finland's relations with Western Europe and Western European markets; and the position of Finland on Europe's strategic and mental map. Many of the figures represented economic interests with a stake in economic internationalization and improving the image of Finland, and most of them were also intellectual, cultural 'Westernizers', advocating a more open, capitalist, democratic and 'European' Finland.⁶⁷ While they did not explicitly take a stand on Finland's foreign policy, Kantine's members certainly shared an interest in internationalizing the country and its companies.⁶⁸

Compared with previous image-management committees, Kantine reserved more seats for the business community and came at a time when the methods, preoccupations and vocabulary of media, communication and marketing influenced the activities of the Press and Culture Department. The Department had recruited among journalists since the 1950s, but it extended its recruitment to specialists from the audiovisual media and public relations specialists: Tuomi-Nikula had worked for the television channel MTV3 and for the news agency STT;⁶⁹ and Friberg had worked for YLE in the 1960s, before being elected as a legislator in the 1970s and moving to the Information Department of the Nordic Council. Both had started in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as press attachés in the 1970s and 1980s, with powerful political backing from the left in

66 Jörn Donner (ed.), *Suomen kuva maailmalla: Ulkoministeriön huhtikuussa 1969 järjestämän seminaarin alustukset* (Helsinki: Ulkoasiainministeriö, 1969).

67 Jörn Donner, *Uusi maammekirja: raportti Suomesta* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1967); Jörn Donner, *Eurooppa-raportti* (Otava: Helsinki, 1990); and Martti Häikiö, *Puolueeton Suomi puolueellisessa maailmassa: Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikan haasteita avaruusaseiden aikakaudella* (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1985).

68 Jyrkinen, *Suomi-kuva ja sen rakentajat*, pp. 27-36. Iloniemi participated in 1987 in a round of interviews undertaken by the monthly journal *Kanava* under the title 'Is Finland moving towards capitalism?' (*Kanava*, no. 7, 1987: 'Onko Suomi siirtymässä kapitalismiin?'). While remaining cautious, Iloniemi emphasized the need for more economic openness and a more fluid economic system.

69 *Kuka kukin on/Who's Who in Finland, 2011*, pp. 1041-1042.

Friberg's case.⁷⁰ Salolainen also had experience in the news sector, as the correspondent for YLE in London from 1966 to 1969.⁷¹ As for the field of marketing and communication, it had experienced a boost during the Second World War, when the Finnish Army had educated 'communication officers', who moved after 1944 to private companies, adopting American methods and developing corporate as well as official public relations as specific fields of expertise.⁷² These circles had throughout the Cold War retained a keen interest in public affairs and strong links with official authorities: in a relatively young nation where notions such as preserving Finland's independence and defending the common interest were intensely felt, where technical expertise and international contacts were valued resources, and where the range of international relations had increased considerably, the division between private and public spheres remained porous. Technical PR professionals tended to find their way in public or semi-public employment, bringing their own methods and ideas.⁷³

However, these PR specialists mostly remained on the fringes of a process that was dominated by journalists, trade-promotion businessmen, cultural figures and diplomats. While Kantine clearly came in the wake of a 'professionalization' of communication, and some of its members had solid experience in media relations, it also retained a general, diplomatic, 'cultural' feel. It was not dominated by the expertise, vocabulary, *modus operandi* and preoccupations of marketing and communication, but mostly by a multifaceted concern for Finland's 'national interest', the country's image abroad and the future developments of Finland's domestic and foreign policies.

'Our Negative Reputation Is Our Own Fault': Kantine's First Discussions

Kantine's work started in November 1988 with a general meeting in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁷⁴ During the first months, two central notions emerged from the debates. First, the committee expressed the conviction that Finland's

70 *Kuka kukin on/Who's Who in Finland, 2011*, pp. 130-131; and Soikkanen, *Presidentin ministeriö, Uudistuminen, ristiriitojen ja menestyksen vuodet, 1970-1981*, p. 126.

71 *Kuka kukin on/Who's Who in Finland, 2011*, p. 890.

72 Lähteenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa*, pp. 9-31; Melgin, Åberg and von Hertzen (eds), *Vuosisata suhdetoimintaa*, pp. 128-129; and Pietilä, 'Agraari-Suomesta informaatio-Suomeen'.

73 Melgin, Åberg and von Hertzen (eds), *Vuosisata suhdetoimintaa*, pp. 10 and 22-39.

74 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *pöytäkirja*, 24 November 1988 meeting.

image, while improving,⁷⁵ was still pulled down by negative features that were rooted not in faulty communication, but in the country's domestic conditions.⁷⁶ The committee used a collection of reports from ambassadors,⁷⁷ opinion polls,⁷⁸ the press and review articles to paint a rather grim picture of these negative features.⁷⁹ According to embassies, the overwhelming sentiment abroad was a resounding lack of interest for Finland. When there was interest, Finland's foreign policy and society were generally acknowledged as a subtle variation of Eastern European standards. In late 1989, a collection of memorandums gathering foreign impressions about Soviet Premier Gorbachev's visit to Helsinki reinforced this notion among Kantine's members.⁸⁰ Foreigners appeared generally hesitant to qualify Finland as 'Scandinavian', decried Helsinki's unfriendly service, run-down accommodation and high prices, and criticized Finland's hostility to foreigners and self-centred, unworldly cultural

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- 75 In a memo for Kantine's first meeting, Tuomi-Nikula reminded everybody of positive developments. The term 'Finlandization' had disappeared from articles, while the purchases of foreign companies by Finnish corporations during the boom years of the 1980s had boosted Finland's image. Changes in the USSR also had an effect on Finland, which was described in less dramatic terms and no longer solely as a function of Soviet policies: Finland was emerging on its own, although its image was dramatically outdated (see UMA, Ry 6, 80.40, dno 1988/7526, *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta Kantine v. 1988*, *muistio* 166, 23.11.1988, signed by Petri Tuomi-Nikula).
- 76 See reports in UMA, Kantine papers, Box 6. Kantine also used a questionnaire given by MEK to foreign travellers in Finland (*Matkailun edistämiskeskus: Suomi ulkomaalaisin silmin*).
- 77 In its first year, the committee asked for funding to conduct its own opinion polls on Finland's image, but was turned down (UMA, Kantine, Box 1, *Pöytäkirja*, 15 September 1989 meeting). The committee requested 786,000 Finnish markka for its second working year in order to conduct three studies: a survey of Finland's image in the United States, West Germany, Norway and France; a survey on the necessity of creating a 'Finland Institute'; and a marketing survey on 'Brand Finland'. Kantine was also in touch with one of Finland's main advertising companies, *Topi Törmä oy*, and used some of the company's documents in its work (see UMA, Kantine papers, Box 6, report, *Törmä, Suomen kuvan kehittäminen ulkomailla — seminaari*, 22 April 1988). On Topi Törmä's career, see Visa Heinonen and Hannu Kontinen, *Nyt uutta Suomessa! Suomalaisen mainonnan historia* (Helsinki: *Mainostajien liitto*, 2001), pp. 117-123, 144 and 249.
- 78 In particular a questionnaire realized in January-April 1989 among a group of UK-based companies: see UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Questionnaire, January-April 1989, compiled for and on behalf of Telepartner A/S, publishers of Telefax Scandinavia*.
- 79 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 7, copy of Joachim Barth, 'Das moderne Finnland — und unser Finnland-Bild', *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, no. 11, 1989, pp. 5-25.
- 80 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 7, *Pääsihteeri Gorbatsšovın Suomen vierailu: ulkomaalaiset mediakommentit*, 7 December 1989.

life. Finnish ambassadors emphasized that Finnish companies abroad did not use Finland's image, which did not stand out for anything in particular.⁸¹

The second important notion emerging from Kantine's first discussions was the conviction that the committee's task ought to be much wider than what was written in the governmental ordinance.⁸² For Kantine, Finland's image problem depended on more than efficient communication. Foreigners' ignorance or deficient communication were not to blame for Finland's problematic image; the country itself had to change in order to improve its image.⁸³ For Kantine, this change had to be brought about by a change in the emphasis of public action: a wide-ranging reflection on policy proposals, specific measures and projects had to be conducted in order to make Finland a truly Scandinavian and West European society.⁸⁴ Kantine would thus not concentrate on defining a wholesale image and communication techniques to sell Finland efficiently; it would draft an ambitious blueprint for political, economic and social development, along with several concrete measures.

Kantine's first months were also busy with the examination of a set of recommendations that had been submitted by various organizations interested in Finland's foreign relations.⁸⁵ These recommendations generally insisted on the necessity to do something to help Finland adapt its national image to a new environment. The most striking of these proposals demanded a sharp break with older efforts at national image management, from one-way communication to dialogue and opening, and from an emphasis on history, sports and national artefacts to a more modern image and softer approach to the definition of national identity. Two public organizations that were interested in technological and scientific development, Tekes and the Academy of Finland, were

81 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Tähänastiset Suomi-kuva tutkimukset*, 19 December 1988, Petri Tuomi-Nikula. The Finnish Embassy in Denmark signalled that most Danes would associate Finland primarily with drunken misbehaviour, not with a successful wood-processing industry (see UMA, Kantine papers, Box 6, telex, Copenhagen, 14 November 1988).

82 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *esittelymuistio* 112, 14 October 1988, Tero Lehtovaara.

83 This was something that the local daily *Borgåbladet* summarized by writing that Finland's bad image 'was our own fault' (*Negativ Finlandsbildär vårt eget felt*, *Borgåbladet*, 1 December 1990).

84 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Päätösesitykset*, 21 December 1988 meeting; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Pöytäkirja*, 21 December 1988 meeting; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Pöytäkirja*, 24 November 1988 meeting; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Muistio, Tähänastiset Suomi-kuva tutkimukset*, 19 December 1988, signed by Petri Tuomi-Nikula.

85 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Yhteenveto*, 8 March 1989; and UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Lausuntopyyntö*, 12 January 1989. All of the recommendations are in Kantine papers, Box 6.

especially insistent on these aspects. Foreign researchers were an essential resource, and they would be attracted by the image of a technological, modern and open country, not by stringent declarations about Finland's historical hardships and national landscapes. 'The times when nature and national traditions dominated our marketing efforts are over', concluded Tekes' representatives.⁸⁶ The Academy of Finland also insisted on education, the mobility of researchers, participation in European scientific cooperation, and adaptation to an opening, modern world.⁸⁷

Most recommendations sent to Kantine were disguised applications for funding, or simple demands for up-to-date communication material. Some of these proposals also heralded potential divisions within the committee. Kantine obviously served as a field for administrative skirmishes among trade-promotion actors, the Ministry of Education, and the Press and Culture Department. Trade-promotion organizations, in particular, sent critical recommendations insisting on the task that had been established by the 1988 report to this new committee. The Ministry of Trade and Industry, Finnfacts and SUL insisted on the necessity of avoiding the excessive 'politicization' of Kantine, which would blunt its efficiency and waste resources: the emphasis should remain on trade promotion through efficient communication of a 'national brand', with cultural diplomacy, tourism promotion and the like being managed through other channels.⁸⁸ The Ministry of Education, although in milder terms, also expressed criticism, continuing the disputes over responsibilities that existed between the Ministry of Education's International Department, led by Kalervo Siikala, and Friberg's Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁸⁹

These disputes were not only administrative skirmishes between organizations pulling to themselves a limited blanket of resources and responsibilities; they showed diverging ideas about the emphasis of national image management and the role of state authorities in the process. This appeared clearly in March 1989, when the committee discussed the organization of a new sub-committee dealing specifically with trade and economic affairs (*kauppallistaloudellinen työryhmä*), charged with writing a report on Finland's 'brand'

86 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Lausunto*, 1 December 1988, *Teknologian ja innovaatioiden kehittämiskeskus*.

87 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Lausunto*, 13 February 1989, *Suomen Akatemian lausunto*.

88 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Lausunto*, 8 March 1989, *Suomen Ulkomaankaupanliiton lausunto*.

89 Veli-Matti Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia: Vakiintuneisuudesta uusien muotojen etsimiseen, 1981-1995* (Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, 1997), pp. 261-263.

(*merkkitaavaratutkimus*).⁹⁰ Clearly, Kantine had already in its first months taken too much of a 'cultural' feel, and industry and business representatives felt the need to push back.⁹¹ Relander and Potila led this movement to shoe-horn a more concrete and economic feel into the final report. A distinct chapter was added, and parts of the report were rewritten to remind of the role of industry in Finland's reputation, the necessity to use Finland's image as a tool for international competitiveness, and to keep Kantine's proposals as concrete as possible.⁹² In September 1990, a memorandum drawn by the sub-committee reminded Kantine of the developments in European integration, the quickly deteriorating situation of Finland's economy, and the sudden crumbling of trade with the Eastern bloc.⁹³

Redefining Finland?

In February 1989, Kantine went through the motions, well-rehearsed during previous committees, of defining evocative themes linked to Finland around which its communication could revolve.⁹⁴ During these conversations, Erkko especially insisted on the fact that the national image used in communication efforts should correspond to shared elements of collective self-definition in order to enlist the support of private interests and the population at large. These general notions about the national image's necessary 'truthfulness' in order for it to be accepted by the populace came in a distinctly Finnish context. Finland had a long record of national image management at the hands of private actors, both at home and abroad. Travellers, researchers, businessmen, artists, friendship societies, political parties and various transnational networks had served as 'informal ambassadors' of their country's image. Kantine's members clearly had this in mind when they insisted on the fact that official

90 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Pöytäkirja*, 8 March 1989 meeting.

91 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 2, *Pöytäkirja*, 19 September 1990 meeting.

92 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Kauppalis-taloudellisen pääehdotuksen liittäminen loppuraporttiin*, 16 August 1990; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 6, *Kauppalis-taloudellinen Suomi*, 25 September 1990.

93 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, *Kokoukseen keskustelun pohjaksi, Kauppalis-taloudellinen ehdotus, luonnos / MH 14 9 1990*, 14 September 1990, signed by Maimo Henriksson. In 1989, a series of spectacular events reminded everyone of Finland's dependency on external evolutions, notably Wärtsilä's bankruptcy, the biggest ever in the history of Finland.

94 Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen, *Idän etuvaratio? Suomi-kuva 1945-1981*, pp. 115-121; and UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Pöytäkirja*, 3 February 1989 meeting.

discourse had to correspond to images of Finland that were present in the population.⁹⁵

This concern for domestic reactions gives the list of themes studied by Kantine a rather traditional feel. However, among familiar notions, Kantine cherry-picked the ones that were most fitting to a new 'ideal-type' for Finland: international; competitive; European; worldly; open; and attractive. Some classical elements of Finland's ethnic and cultural nationalism (such as sports, the staunch defence of national independence, cultural artefacts and *Kalevala* lore, and Finland's seminal nature) retreated into the background, or were re-hashed, woven into a tale of democracy, neutrality, welfare, creative culture, technological and economic development, and Finland's simple and friendly everyday life. Economically prosperous, Western, law-abiding and democratic Finland had, of course, been a staple of Finland's foreign-language presentations since the nineteenth century, but Kantine's aim was to bend old themes to fit a new era.

One example of this reshuffling of old themes was the committee's use of nature. While 'national' landscapes were emphasized as touristic attractions, in Kantine they lost the political and ideological vibe that they had held in previous efforts as symbols of purity, hard work, and unique national landscapes. The notion of 'environment', on the other hand, was emphasized as a broader theme. A corollary to technological development, 'environment' suggested a niche of specialized expertise that Finland and Finnish companies could sell, a knowledge that the Finnish state could use to weigh in international, multilateral settings and European organizations.⁹⁶ 'Environment' thus dovetailed into old cultural conceptions about nature, while also bringing up images of modernity and technological know-how.⁹⁷ Kantine also questioned the uniqueness of Finnish nature, and insisted on the generally utilitarian Finnish attitude to nature, which left little space for environmental protection. This had to change, the committee emphasized, for Finland to project a more modern image. 'Environment' was raised in October 1989 as a priority issue, while clean nature and Finland's agricultural tradition were emphasized

95 The themes emphasized by Kantine bear an obvious resemblance to themes emphasized in the 1960s (see Lähteenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa*, pp. 46-47) and in the 2010 'nation-branding' report delivered to the Finnish government.

96 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Muistio*, 16 April 1989.

97 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Ympäristökysymykset Suomi-kuvan osana 1990-luvulla: ympäristökeskusteluissa esiintuotuja muita tavoite-ehdotuksia (täydentää Aira Kalelan muistiota)*, 16 March 1990, signed by Maimo Henriksson.

mostly as accessories that were necessary to gather political support for the report's recommendations.⁹⁸

Other themes were 'repackaged' during these discussions: the necessary insistence on Finland's Scandinavian and European nature, the country's rich and peculiar artistic culture, its welfare society, high level of education and technical skill, simple and agreeable life, level of services, the democratic system of government and Helsinki as the 'pearl of the Baltic'.⁹⁹ The stability of Finland's foreign policy was also mentioned in the first short-list of key notions, but this remnant of the Cold War quickly faded from discussions, along with any reference to history, and especially the history of Finland's wars.

As summarized in an October 1989 general meeting, discussions during Kantine's first year were extremely wide-ranging.¹⁰⁰ Kantine's members covered textbooks and education policy, crisis communication procedures and cultural trade promotion, exhibition and concert halls in Helsinki,¹⁰¹ the availability of English-language services,¹⁰² student mobility, and state support for event organizers, etc.¹⁰³ The emphases of public action to improve official image policy in Finland and abroad were discussed, along with the target audiences, which were considered as including foreign political elites, international organizations, the political press, the business community, the cultural world, tourists, and youth in a list of countries considered as Finland's main export markets and political partners (predominantly the United States, Japan, the USSR, Nordic countries, EFTA, the EEC and the COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) countries. Methods discussed included publications, exhibitions, guests travelling to Finland and media communication. Scheduled for 1992, the follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki was described as a 'measure of Finland's position and credibility'.¹⁰⁴

98 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Ympäristökysymykset Suomi-kuvan osana 1990-luvulla*, 16 May 1990, signed by Aira Kalela; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Ympäristökysymykset 1990-luvun kansainvälisen yhteistoiminnan painopisteeksi*, 5 February 1990, signed by Aira Kalela; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *YK-asiain neuvottelukunnan seminaari, Suomen kansainvälinen ympäristöpolitiikka 1990-luvulla*, speech by Pertti Paasio, 6 February 1990.

99 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Pöytäkirja*, 3 February 1989 meeting.

100 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Puheenjohtajanmuistio, Königstedt*, 6 October 1989.

101 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, *Pääkapunkiseudun suurhallihanke*, 7 September 1990, signed by Maimo Henriksson.

102 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, *Helsingin kansainvälinen rooli*, 29 November 1989, signed by Ralf Friberg.

103 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Tiedotusjaosto: jaoston lausunto neuvottelukunnan yleiskokoukselle*, 15 May 1989.

104 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Pöytäkirja*, 29 May 1989 meeting.

Education, Environment, Culture: Drafting Kantine's Final Report¹⁰⁵

Kantine's final report was released during an official ceremony in November 1990. Speeches by Holkeri, Paasio and Salolainen welcomed the report, and were followed by a press conference, the presentation of a book on Finland's image written by Häikiö and Donner, and the release of a report on cultural exchanges written by Mauri Elovainio from the Ministry of Education.¹⁰⁶ Well in line with what had been discussed for two years, the speeches insisted on the necessity to move away from the notion that 'real Finland' had to be explained through propaganda campaigns to passive foreigners, and emphasized the necessity of domestic change, international dialogue and openness in changing both Finland and outside perceptions of Finland.¹⁰⁷

The committee summarized two years of discussions into three major themes, along with a series of 115 concrete proposals.¹⁰⁸ Education was drafted as the first theme, the final report proposing to 'dramatically raise Finland's education level' by the end of the century.¹⁰⁹ A more active official education strategy was to become a way to foster innovation, attract students and researchers, boost the image of Finnish products, and reaffirm Finland's 'European' credentials. The second theme was 'environment', a concept susceptible to be used by Finland in its foreign relations and in the marketing of Finnish firms. The place of culture, the arts and artistic artefacts in Finland's image had also been discussed at length during Kantine's meetings, and was raised as the third main theme.¹¹⁰ Kantine emphasized the necessity to present Finland's idiosyncratic yet Scandinavian culture indirectly, with an emphasis on alternative cultural expressions,¹¹¹ and without the insistence on 'true'

105 See the report *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta, loppuraportti* (Helsinki: Valtion painotuskeskus, 1990).

106 Mauri K. Elovainio, *Kulttuurivientimme kasvava merkitys: Suomi-instituutti — 'viisasten kivi' vaiko 'ojasta allikkoon': kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunnalle laadittu selvitys* (Helsinki: Ulkoasiainministeriö, 1990).

107 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 2, Press communiqués: *Päämin Harri Holkerin vastauspuhe Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunnan loppuraportin luovutustilaisuudessa 29.11.1990 valtioneuvoston juhlahuoneistossa; Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunnan varapuheenjohtajan ulkomaankauppaministeri Pertti Salolaisen puhe neuvottelukunnan loppuraportin luovutustilaisuudessa valtioneuvoston juhlahuoneistossa 29.11.1990.*

108 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 2, *Pöytäkirja*, 19 September 1990 meeting.

109 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Ehdotus sisältöjaostolle: Kansallinen koulutusstrategia Suomen kuvan keskeisenä osatekijänä 90-luvulla*, 15 March 1990.

110 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Kulttuurijaosto, Suomalaisen kulttuurin osuus Suomen kuvan muodostamisessa; tavoitteet*, 7 March 1989.

111 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Pöytäkirja*, 22 May 1990 meeting.

national culture that had been at the heart of previous efforts. It proposed the creation of a foundation that was able to support and coordinate cultural exchanges, the emphasis on Helsinki as a Scandinavian cultural centre, the creation of a Finno-Ugric research institute, and the production of radio and television programmes to be aimed at foreigners and dealing with Finnish culture. Cultural exchanges were also touched upon, with an emphasis on students and youth exchanges.¹¹²

Kantine's members agreed several times on the necessities to practise this active cultural policy as near as possible to the people, with a concern for direct expression, initiative and accessibility.¹¹³ Most of the report's proposals aimed at creating places, structures and activities through which creativity could blossom in an international setting that was open to external influences.¹¹⁴ Funnily enough, this ambitious programme of open and creative citizens, innovation, decentralized decision-making and local initiative was to be realized, if not solely then at least essentially through state-funded policy programmes such as the 'internationalization courses' described in the report. These aimed at teaching to a number of happy few the rudiments of Finnish history, table manners, negotiation skills, languages, and 'small-talk skills'. Aimed at civil servants, business leaders, corporate employees, journalists, artists and young athletes, these courses would prepare them for the role of 'informal ambassadors'.¹¹⁵ Old habits of state involvement endured well, despite the emphasis on a more liberal, spontaneous and open society.

Following these three themes, the report dedicated most of its space to a long list of policy proposals, some very specific and others quite wide. Several observers would point out the over-ambition of these measures,¹¹⁶ but Kantine insisted that the proposals were essential to improve aspects of Finland that

112 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 2, *Pöytäkirja*, 27 March 1990 meeting; and UMA, Kantine papers, Box 2, *Kulttuuri osana 1990-luvun Suomi-kuvaa*, 24 March 1990, signed by Petri Tuomi-Nikula.

113 See, for example, UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Pöytäkirja*, 22 March 1990 meeting.

114 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 5, *Pöytäkirja*, 27 February 1990 meeting.

115 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, *Kansainvälisyyskurssi*, 7 September 1990, signed by Maimo Henriksson. The rally driver Ari Vatanen — although seemingly the ideal 'informal ambassador' — turned out to be an embarrassing communication hazard. During the 1989 World Ski Championship in Lahti, while attending a seminar organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he declared that Finland was a 'cold, isolated, expensive and communist' country (see UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Kantinen tiedotusjaoston muistio neuvottelukunnan kokoukselle*, undated, Aatos Erkko).

116 For example, the proposal concerning an increase in the use of church music during mass and spiritual events was singled out by the Finnish ambassador in London as particularly odd (see UMA, Kantine papers, Box 5, Frank Hellstén to Ralf Friberg, 19 December 1990).

stained the country's reputation, to develop new tools of communication, create new ways to 'relate' and to link Finland to the world. Most of these punctual measures had already been discussed by other committees, and included Rovaniemi's Arctic Research Centre, a Design Education Centre in Helsinki, youth exchanges and youth travels, a modern art museum, and participation in the transmission satellite project Eutelsat II.¹¹⁷ Among other concrete measures were the use of international sporting events and internationally recognized Finnish athletes for publicity purposes,¹¹⁸ classical measures of cultural diffusion such as the improvement of Finnish-language courses for foreigners, better cooperation between the international activities of cultural associations, singing festivals and international cultural events, the construction of a Christmas-themed park in northern Finland, and the creation of a theme park in Porvoo dedicated to Tove Jansson's Moomins. One of the most striking proposals aimed at changing the way that Finland looked was the 'Clean Finland' (*Suomi siistiksi*) campaign, which aimed to bring the level of public cleanliness in Finnish towns to 'Scandinavian levels.'¹¹⁹

In its efforts to rationalize the field of image policy, however, Kantine did not bring things much further than previous committees. The problem remained of a notoriously volatile and scattered field.¹²⁰ In the field of culture, Kantine followed Elovainio's memorandum, which spoke against the creation of an all-encompassing Finnish Institute on the Swedish model.¹²¹ The final report proposed the creation of information and discussion centres to be placed under an informal reflection group on cultural exchanges and in contact

117 For the example of Rovaniemi's Arctic Centre, see *Arktisen keskuksen työryhmän mietintö* (Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, 1987); eUMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Sisältöjaosto, Arktinen keskus*, 29 August 1990; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Euroopan kulttuurisäätiön Suomen osasto, PM*, 21 August 1990; and *Kansallisarkisto* (KA, or Finland's National Archives), *Valtioneuvoston kanslian arkistot*, Collection *Suomen itsenäisyyden 70-vuotisjuhlatoimikunta*, Box 10, *Komitean loppuraportti*, 31 July 1988.

118 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, Timo Kivi-Koskinen to Tuomi-Nikula, 3 October 1989.

119 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 5, Lea van Fieandt to Tuomi-Nikula, 4 May 1990.

120 UMA, Files 80.40, dno 1988/7526, *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta Kantine v. 1989, muistiolounnos* 59, signed by Riitta Jokinen, 26 April 1989.

121 UMA, Files 80.40, dno 1988/7526, *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta Kantine v. 1989*, memo, signed by Ralf Friberg, 22 May 1989. In November 1989, Tuomi-Nikula and Henriksson were in Sweden to meet with the main actors of Sweden's public diplomacy: the *Sveriges Exportråd*, *Svenska Institutet*, *Turisträdet*, *Utbildningsdepartementet*, etc. (UMA, Files 80.40, dno 1988/7526, *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta Kantine v. 1989*, memorandum titled *Delegationen för internationell information, Reserapport*, 4 December 1989).

with the UTKT.¹²² As international developments were weakening the influence of official authorities in international cultural promotion, resources dedicated to cultural diplomacy and to cultural exports were seen to be better utilized by private actors.¹²³ This argument was not new, as the debate had progressed along the same lines since the 1950s.¹²⁴

These questions of cultural exchanges were discussed under several angles, from the most economic (that is, how to help Finnish artists and cultural actors to disseminate their work abroad),¹²⁵ to the most cultural and diplomatic (to coordinate more efficiently the image of Finnish culture and language abroad). Several proposals were made, mostly aiming at better coordination between organizations and the use of new telecommunication technologies.¹²⁶ Other proposals detailed actions helping the diffusion of Finnish music, cultural centres in the world's main capital cities, courses in the Finnish language and Finnish culture for foreigners, or better official support for the network of Finnish lecturers abroad, considered as an especially worthy relay for spreading notions on Finnish culture and language.¹²⁷

In concrete proposals, Kantine also dealt with the state of Finland's crisis communication.¹²⁸ Both Chernobyl and the accidental drop of an unarmed Soviet missile in northern Finland in 1984 had shown the Finnish authorities' difficulties in communicating with the media, especially with foreign correspondents. Reporting on the issue, Iloniemi concluded that if the current instructions were sound, Finland's civil servants had to be more conscious of their 'duty to communicate.'¹²⁹ In the case of a quickly progressing crisis with

122 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, *Suomen kulttuurivienti ja — tuonti — vaihtoehto Suomi-Instituutille*, 11 September 1990, signed by Maimo Henriksson; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, *Suomen kulttuurivienti ja — tuonti — vaihtoehto Suomi-Instituutille*, 14 September 1990, signed by Petri Tuomi-Nikula.

123 Elovainio, *Kulttuurivientimme kasvava merkitys*, p. 81; and UMA, Kantine papers, Box 2, *Pöytäkirja*, 19 September 1990.

124 Lähtenmäki (ed.), *Suomi tiedottaa*, p. 35.

125 For example, see UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, PM, *Kuvataiteen vienti-projekti*, 17 April 1990, signed by Petri Tuomi-Nikula.

126 For example, see UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, *Suomessa toimivien suomalaisen kulttuurin yhteisöjen yhteistyömalli*, undated.

127 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, UKAN to Kantine, 6 September 1990; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 4, *Toimenpidejaosto, Ulkomaanlehtorit Suomi-tietouden viestittäjinä report*, 7 September 1990.

128 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Tiedotusjaosto*, PM, *Kriisitiedotuksen tämänhetkinen toimivuus*, 12 September 1989.

129 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Pöytäkirja*, 15 September 1989; and 'Peili ei valehtelee', *Suomen Kuvalehti*, no. 40, 1989.

international ramifications of interest to several ministries, responsibility for communication was to be quickly handed to Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The idea of creating the post of governmental spokesman was debated at length, but finally rejected as unpractical in the context of Finland's cabinet practices.¹³⁰

Internationalization did not appear among Kantine's three main themes, but one can see it running through the whole report. The committee came out with a series of measures to improve language skills, prepare people for intercultural dialogue, simplify immigration procedures and improve the well-being of foreigners in the country. Finland's policy towards foreigners and migrants was especially emphasized as part of this internationalization process. For the committee, it was important for Finland to raise its refugee and migration policy to Nordic standards, and also to allow entry of skilled workers, students and researchers. Rules and regulations for the entrance and presence of foreigners in Finland should be made easier and clearer, and the committee proposed working towards changing Finland's mentality towards foreigners, especially by guaranteeing that their basic rights would be respected and that immigration procedures would be fair, consistent and quick.¹³¹

'An Investment in the Future'? Reactions to Kantine¹³²

Kantine's leaders, and particularly Tuomi-Nikula, did not wish the report to remain a cabinet secret. During Kantine's discussions, Tuomi-Nikula fed the press with the best parts of the committee's reflections,¹³³ and after November

130 Friberg was in favour of such a system (see UMA, Kantine papers, Box 1, *Muistio*, 5 April 1989, Ralf Friberg). He reminded the committee that, during the 1961 Finno-Soviet diplomatic crisis, the diplomat Max Jakobson acted as a *de facto* governmental spokesman. His declarations often clarified matters to foreign journalists, who would otherwise have been left to feed on rumours. Iloniemi, however, emphasized that a proper spokesperson would be difficult to organize in a country where coalition governments were frequent and often internally divided.

131 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Pöytäkirja*, 3 September 1990; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Sisältöjaosto: Ulkomalaiset Suomessa*, 29 August 1990.

132 Press articles are drawn from the press book gathered in UMA, Kantine papers, Box 7, *Lehtileikeet*. Comments by organizations and administrations are drawn from UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Loppuraportti + loppuraportista annetut lausunnot*.

133 See '*Peili ei valehtelee*', *Suomen Kuvalehti*, no. 40, 1989. The journalist reproduced *verbatim* Tuomi-Nikula's reflections on Kantine's work, adding very little to the interview. See also UMA, Files 80.40, dno 1988/7526, *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta Kantine v. 1990-1991*, Petri Tuomi-Nikula to Matti Louekoski, 29 November 1990.

1990, he aimed to start a debate based on the report itself, on a book by Häikiö and Donner,¹³⁴ and on the feedback from various organizations and personalities.¹³⁵ Kantine received 42 reactions — mapping a large chunk of Finland's public life — from ministries and administrations to local private and public actors.¹³⁶ If the main themes were generally considered as sound, the measures were seen with a mix of interest, amusement, acrimony and, sometimes, downright hostility.

Reactions from trade and tourism-promotion actors showed clearly enough the quarrels between communicational trade promotion and a more general cultural reflection on Finland's image. They reminded Kantine that its focus should have been on the trade–economic aspects, bearing in mind Finland's preparation for European competition.¹³⁷ The most critical reaction came from Finnfacts' director Matti Kohva, who stated that Finland's image management should be left by generalists to the professionals of focused international communication: as with any other product, Finland's image had to be defined simply and spread through efficient, professional marketing techniques that were aimed at the foreign media. In this vision, Kantine's cultural reflections and tinkering with policy-making were beyond the mark: limited resources in a context of economic crisis called for limited actions and a clearer focus than the vast national house-cleaning that was suggested by the report. Pihlström pulled in the same direction: pure communication had to be emphasized; trade promotion recognized as the main goal of official image policy; and the UTKT raised as the main coordinating body.¹³⁸

On the part of organizations that Kantine proposed to fund, reactions were, of course, positive.¹³⁹ Feedback from local districts, regions or towns, however, often expressed disgruntlement over the report's focus on Helsinki.¹⁴⁰

134 Jörn Donner and Martti Häikiö, *Suomi-kuva vuonna nolla* (Helsinki: Edita, 1990); UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *Kantinen julkaisu, tapaaminen Jörn Donner, Martti Häikiö, Maimo Henriksson*, 13 December 1989; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 3, *PM, Ehdotus Kantinen julkaisuksi*, 8 December 1989.

135 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 5, *Lausuntopyyntö, PM Harri Holkeri, hallitusneuvos Heikki Aaltonen*, 18 February 1991; and UMA, Kantine papers, Box 2, list of correspondents, 9 January 1991.

136 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, Nils Wirtanen to Tuomi-Nikula, 18 April 1991.

137 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Kauppa ja Teollisuusministeriö*, 18 April 1991.

138 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Finnfacts ry*, 8 April 1991; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Matkailun edistämiskeskus/ Ulkomaantiedotuksen koordinaatiotoimikunta*, 9 April 1991; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Suomen Ulkomaankauppaliitto*, 9 April 1991.

139 For example, UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Lausunto, Finland festivals ry*, 8 May 1991.

140 For example UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Keski-Pohjanmaan Maakuntaliitto ry, Lausunto kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunnan loppuraporttiin*, 7 May 1991; UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Lausunto*, 29 April 1991, *Tampereen kaupunki*.

Reactions among the academic community and organizations concerned with education policy oscillated between scepticism and enthusiasm, but generally celebrated the report's focus on education.¹⁴¹ Finland's Minister of Education Ole Nörrback personally announced his support, concluding: 'Education is an investment in the future, which should not be squandered for short-sighted reasons of costs'.¹⁴² Some commentators also signalled mistakes and made suggestions,¹⁴³ while farmers' organizations demanded that more attention be paid to rural life as a part of Finland's image and culture.¹⁴⁴ Several organizations missed a clearer mention of 'athletic culture', something that had been a staple of Finland's national communication.¹⁴⁵ Generally, the reactions were more positive among cultural or artistic organizations than among economic or trade actors, and were more positive in Helsinki than elsewhere.

Probably the most devastating official reaction to Kantine, however, came from Finland's Ministry of Finances.¹⁴⁶ Concluding that the proposals of the report would provoke an increase in the state's spending in times of rapidly developing crisis and depleted budgets, the ministry's Budget Chief Raimo Sailas flatly stated in a short answer that none of the proposals should be considered as realistic and worthy of public money. In times of increasing economic tensions, this clearly made the realization of Kantine's most ambitious proposals more difficult, and this question of resources came back in several other reactions.

Despite every effort to present the report as a non-partisan endeavour, Kantine was wrapped in the modernizing politics and lingo of Holkeri's government, and was analysed as a part of the government's agenda. In the press, articles did not delve too deeply into the technical aspects of national image management as a diplomatic activity; they either copied the news brief written by the ministry,¹⁴⁷ or stirred the debate towards a discussion of national identity, collective self-esteem and self-definition. Press reactions focused much more than the committee itself on replaying dialogues familiar to any observers of Finnish debates: most articles mixed self-depreciation with

141 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Korkeakouluneuvosto, Lausunto kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunnan loppuraportista*, 2 May 1991.

142 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 5, Ole Nörrback to Pertti Paasio, 22 February 1991.

143 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö*, 30 April 1991.

144 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Maatalouskeskusten liitto*, 12 April 1991.

145 For example, UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Lausunto*, 16 April 1991, *Suomen Valtakunnallinen Urheiluliitto*.

146 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 8, *Valtiovarainministeriö, Lausunto Kantinen loppuraportti*, 9 May 1991, Raimo Sailas, Erkki Virtanen.

147 For example, 'Suomi-kuva ei ehostu vippaskonstein', *Helsingin Sanomat*, 1 December 1990; and 'Suomelle luodaan läntistä imagoa', *Ilta-Tampere*, 30 November 1990.

national pride, isolationism with an unreflective desire to be acknowledged as part of Western Europe. Along with criticisms related to the proposals' cost,¹⁴⁸ mockery and national soul-searching, some reactions also underlined the ambiguities of official image management or criticized specific measures. Others mixed an instinctive worry about Finland's image among foreigners with a dismissive attitude towards the ministry's efforts to manage or improve it,¹⁴⁹ and presented the report's modernist, innovative formulas as self-deluding propaganda or a 'rightist' agenda.¹⁵⁰

Published in 1990, Häikiö and Donner's book became part of this debate. The book was more political and more trenchant than Kantine's report. In times of change, what Finland needed was to become part of a reference group that was able to support the country economically and politically, and to anchor it culturally in Western Europe. In one of the chapters, Donner concludes: 'The question is not to know whether or not Finland will become a member of the EC, but how many months before Hungary it will become a member.'¹⁵¹ The authors also insisted on abandoning old references to Finland's clean nature, arguing that 'environment' should be used only in reference to industrial needs and technological processes.¹⁵² As a whole, the book was a stronger statement of modernity and political change than Kantine's report, but it essentially sprung from the same feeling and ideas on Finland's future developments.¹⁵³

Beyond these reactions and the debate spawned by the final report, it is difficult to track down Kantine's immediate, concrete effects. While Friberg, in February 1991, considered that things were entirely in the hands of the Finnish government, other committee members were more active in deploring the

148 For example, '*Hyviä haaveita lama-Suomessa*', *Aamulehti*, Matti Mörntinen, 30 November 1990.

149 For example, '*Suomi ei ole Itä-Euroopan maa, eihän[...]*', *Aamulehti*, 30 November 1990; and '*Suomalaisten itsetunnon alemustila*', *Pohjolan-Sanomat*, 3 December 1990.

150 Juhani Suomi, always quick to criticize the Koivisto era, quotes the writer Paavo Haavikko: 'Propaganda written for oneself is addictive — all the more when it comes to be seen as truthful' (Suomi, *Kohti sinipunaa*, p. 13).

151 Donner and Häikiö, *Suomi-kuva vuonna nolla*, p. 105.

152 Häikiö and Donner's scathing remarks on environmental preservation are in no small amount influenced by their ideological distaste for Finland's nascent Green movement. Häikiö goes on to underline in the book that in Finnish discussions in the late 1980s 'Nature, ecology, greenness have now taken Lenin's place. The brave new world that is proposed to us is now based on ideas of nature preservation'; see Donner and Häikiö, *Suomi-kuva vuonna nolla*, p. 121.

153 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 7, transcript of television broadcast, TV1, *Seitsemän jälkeen*, 29 November 1990; and '*Suomi on pysähtynyt paikalle*', *Uusi Suomi*, 5 December 1990.

report's slow implementation.¹⁵⁴ In early 1991, Tuomi-Nikula wrote a draft letter to be sent to the government,¹⁵⁵ where he requested a decision of principle (*periaatepäätös*) concerning the report's implementation. Things gathered steam in April 1991, in the context of the new government of the Centre Party's Esko Aho. Aho turned his interest towards the project and towards Kantine's report, and on 13 February 1992, the Finnish government decided to start an evaluation of Kantine's proposals, especially those related to culture and environment. All material related to Kantine was moved to Finland's Ministry of Education, where most of the proposals on culture, education and environment were considered as already acted upon — despite governmental inertia, 'time had taken care of most proposals'. This did not seem to satisfy Erkkö, who in September 1993 went on publically to deplore, in front of three ministers and Aho himself, the 'dispirited, clueless, and undecided' implementation of Kantine's report.¹⁵⁶ After this, the report became bogged in a wider set of existential debates on Finland's 'moral state' and 'values' that ran through most of the 1990s. In 1993, discussions had already drifted away from image policy, into the meanders of various ad-hoc committees led by philosophers and public intellectuals, reflecting on the Finnish national project, its moral values and its future.

Conclusion: Kantine's Place in Finland's Post-1945 National Image Management

Official national image management and image policy developed in Finland at several levels as the result of concerns for national identity, trade, cultural exchanges and Finland's strategic position. Kantine was one step in the evolution of this process, one pattern of organization for the various actors, interests, methods and goals involved. Marjut Jyrkinen identified three chronological phases in the developments of Finland's post-1945 official image policy: the political promotion of Finland's neutral status in the 1950s and 1960s; the promotion of trade and economic interests in the 1970s and 1980s; and Finland's adaptation to European integration in connection with the end of the Cold

154 UMA, Files 80.40, dno 1988/7526, *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta Kantine v. 1990-1991*, Ralf Friberg to Matti Korhonen.

155 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 5, *Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunnan pääehdotusten toteuttamisesta*, 6 February 1991, signed by Tuomi-Nikula.

156 Both quotations are found in the draft report (pp. 187-188) attached to UMA, Files 80.40, dno 1988/7526, *Kansainvälisen tiedottamisen neuvottelukunta Kantine v. 1995*, fax and attachments, Sirpa Moitus to Petri Tuomi-Nikula, 18 December 1995.

War.¹⁵⁷ Jyrkinen's model should be nuanced on the basis of this study, by replacing Kantine into four sets of evolutions that marked Finland's national image management since the country's independence.

First, Kantine finds its place in the tensions among actors interested in defining and diffusing certain notions about Finland towards foreign audiences. It clearly represented a swing of the pendulum towards the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the 1960s and 1970s, technical ministries and various semi-public (such as export promoters and broadcasters) and private actors (such as Finnish lecturers abroad, private companies and associations) had increased their role in national image management, bringing with them specific concerns and practices.¹⁵⁸ Coordination had been sought,¹⁵⁹ but Kantine can be seen as a strong statement by the Press and Culture Department of its centrality in national image management, and of the importance of diplomats as overseers of a country's foreign relations. This statement was aimed at other organizations, but also at advancing within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the idea that communicating was one of the most significant tasks of a foreign policy administration.¹⁶⁰

On another axis, Kantine was also a field of debates on the nature of national image management with regard to foreign policy, national identity, trade and culture. The committee showcased the tensions existing between a 'national' function linked with the narration of 'Finland' as a national reality, a foreign political function linked with supporting Finland's foreign policy options, and more prosaic functions linked to trade promotion or cultural exchanges. Reflections on collective self-identification and national values carried on in Kantine, although in muted tones. The Cold War had seriously dampened their urgency, moving the cursor from stridently nationalist statements that were aimed to 'enlighten' foreigners about Finland's achievements, to the definition of a cultural identity that was intended to attract investments, students, scholars, tourists and buyers. National image management came to lean more towards a professional process aimed at selling a specific foreign political stand (that is, neutrality) and supporting the competitiveness of Finnish companies. As Häikiö would declare during an interview, Finland was now 'mature as a

157 Jyrkinen, *Suomi-kuva ja sen rakentajat*, pp. 27-36.

158 Jyrkinen, *Suomi-kuva ja sen rakentajat*, p. 40 *et al.*

159 Niemi, *Ministeriöiden kansainväliset suhteet Suomessa*, p. 62 *et al.*

160 This was a claim that was made forcefully in 1988 by the diplomat and foreign policy adviser Alpo Rusi. See Alpo Rusi, 'Image Research and Image Politics in International Relations: Transformation of Power Politics in the Television Age', *Cooperation and Conflict*, nos. 23-29, 1988.

nation'; its society only needed improvement to be well considered in a new Europe.¹⁶¹

The third evolution is a function of the dialogue between diplomacy and the field of communication expertise. In his study of Sweden's Cold War image management, Nikolas Glover emphasized the links between the history of Swedish image policy and the history of public relations, advertising and marketing as specific fields of expertise.¹⁶² In the American case, Susan Carruthers also presented the links between policy-makers, academic specialists of communication and propaganda studies, and public relations and communication practitioners.¹⁶³ The trickling down of this expertise, from the business and academic world into the sphere of foreign policy and administration, was a slow and ambiguous phenomenon in Finland as well, but an important one. While Kantine did not yet make explicit use of the methods and practices of the advertising and public relations' communities, its key members were at least enlightened amateurs in the field, who used the vocabulary of brands and communication, etc. They also had contacts with advertising firms and communication experts, and had reflected on target audiences, media relations and the like.

Kantine also finds its place in a fourth development: the evolutions of Finland's domestic and international environment and their influence on Finland's national image management. With Finland's independence in 1917, the national networks that handled image management for political, cultural and 'national' reasons found their way into embassies and Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The goal was then — for a stringently nationalist generation — to spread 'true' notions about Finland as a nation, an economy, a culture and a worthy international actor. At the same time, private actors continued to carry on export-promotion efforts using a wider image of Finland. The Second World War, with its traumatic events, served as a reference point and a time of development for propaganda networks, mixing private and public actors. After 1944, and as a neighbour to the powerful and triumphant Soviet Russia, Finland engaged in a difficult balancing act, where the parts of Finnish foreign policy were an essential element. The parts of Finnish foreign policy

161 UMA, Kantine papers, Box 7, transcript of television broadcast, TV3, *Seitsemäs hetki*, 30 December 1990.

162 Nikolas Glover, *National Relations: Public Diplomacy, National Identity and the Swedish Institute, 1945-1970* (Stockholm: Nordic Academic Press, 2011), pp. 13-16.

163 Susan I. Carruthers, 'Propaganda, Communications and Public Opinion', in Patrick Finney (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in International History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 189-222.

that were not dedicated to managing relations with the USSR were geared towards making Finnish neutrality credible to the West.

In the late 1980s, the process changed again and Kantine developed in an atmosphere of increasing liberalization, promises of change and rapid evolution of Kekkonen's 'official foreign-policy line'. Image policy became less concerned with the life-or-death questions of Finland's neutrality, and became more involved in trade promotion, competitiveness, cultural exchanges, internationalization and managed societal change. In this context, Kantine marked a move from a Cold War image policy to a wider set of practices, resembling more closely what we would nowadays call 'public diplomacy'. In its small ways, Kantine was also part and parcel of an effort to make sense of the evolutions of Finland itself: out of the Cold War and towards a new optimum of economic openness, 'competition state', and European integration.

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