

individuals and groups, including the *Suomi-Apu*, offered financial and non-military material aid, either through the Red Cross or privately. In total, over \$290,000 in rye flour, apples, medical supplies, ambulances, bedding, clothing toiletries, wool, and fabric were sent with Canadian government aid.²⁴ Other Canadians hoped to help in a more direct way, and the Canadian government allowed individuals to volunteer to serve with the Finnish armed forces. By the time the Finnish-Soviet Armistice was signed in March 1940, over 300 men and women had made their way to Finland, and there were roughly 2,000 volunteers still organizing in Canada.²⁵ Over the next year Finnish aid groups continued to send parcels of food and clothing.

By the spring of 1941 reports of Finland's cooperation with Germany caused relations to cool, especially after it was learned that Finnish troops had joined in the German attack in June on the Soviet Union, which was now a Canadian ally. In the view of the Department of External Affairs, "Finland was occupied by Germany."²⁶ Under German pressure, Finland ordered the British Legation in Helsinki closed on 1 August, effectively breaking diplomatic relations.²⁷ Six days later Canada ordered all Finnish consulates closed. Finnish interests in Canada would be represented by Sweden. In Helsinki the United States fulfilled that function for Canada, until that country's embassy was closed in July 1944, turning over responsibility to the Swiss.

Still Canada, like Britain, was hesitant to declare war on Finland. Given the recent sympathy shown during the Winter War it would have been an unpopular move. It was hoped diplomatic pressure could convince Finland to withdraw from the war or at least restrain her offensive military action that was in effect aiding Germany. As the weeks passed, the Soviet Union exerted pressure on her Allies. When patience finally ran out, Britain declared war against Finland on December 6, 1941. Canada followed suit

the next day. The Finnish government had insisted it was not an ally of Germany, but rather a "co-belligerent" and fighting a "separate" war, which was a continuation of the Winter War, but the Canadian government did not see it that way. In his CBC radio address to the people of Canada, Prime Minister W.L.M. King explained "the present Finnish regime has persisted in its armed support of the Nazis; has become, indeed, an Axis ally in a general war."²⁸

Finland was now an enemy country, and Finnish nationals living in Canada were to be considered "enemy aliens." The problem was there were still thousands of Finns who had moved to Canada, but had not yet applied for citizenship. On the initiative of Norman Robertson at the Department of External Affairs a compromise was reached. Finnish nationals would still be "enemy aliens" and required to register, but would be issued an exemption from some of the harsher conditions under the Defence of Canada Regulations, such as internment. Finns were "technically" enemies, but the Prime Minister in his speech "recognized that most persons of Roumanian, Hungarian or Finnish origin or nationality residing in Canada are law-abiding, well-disposed and loyal inhabitants of this country, contributing to its war effort, and disavowing any allegiance to the Nazi controlled puppet governments of their countries of origin."²⁹ Mail service and money transfers to Finland stopped, some property was confiscated, but for the most part Finnish Canadians lent their full support to the Canadian war effort.

In the days that followed, Finnish-registered ships and individual Finnish crew members on ships operating on the western Atlantic were ordered detained by Canadian authorities. Over 100 Finnish sailors were interned and examined by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to see if they had pro-German sympathies. Those deemed safe were eventually allowed to join ships operating on North American trade routes. The Finn-

24 O.D. Skelton, USSEA to Alexander Loveday, Director of the Economic, Financial and Transit Department of the League of Nations, 4 December 1940. LAC, RG25 G1, Vol. 1994, File 11191 part 2.

25 Varpu Lindström, *From Heroes to Enemies: Finns in Canada 1937-1947* (Beaverton: Aphasia Books, 2000), 89-91.

26 Naval Message, Code, NCSO, Sydney to NSHQ, 27 June 1941, LAC, RG25 G2, Vol. 2899, File 2298-B-40.

27 Olli Vehviläinen, *Finland in the Second World War: Between Germany and Russia* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 97.

28 Statement by Prime Minister re declaration of war on Hungary, Roumania and Finland, December 6, 1941, LAC, RG25 G2, Vol. 2930, File 2859-40.

29 Canada had also declared war on Hungary and Romania. Statement by Prime Minister re declaration of war.