Jahvetti's Letterbox and Finnish War Propaganda on the Radio

Abstract

During World War II, radio was recognised globally as an essential propaganda machine used by all sides. At the time in Finland, one particular radio programme, *Jahvetin kirjelaatikko* (*Jahvetti's Letterbox*), aimed to discuss and resolve citizens' everyday worries and to simultaneously utilise a network of secret proxies who could gather information about and help to manipulate public opinion. *Jahvetti's Letterbox* came to be the most popular broadcast in Finland during the so-called Continuation War of 1941–1944 against the Soviet Union and provides evidence of radio's power in information warfare where citizens' trust in Finland's battle was at stake.

KEYWORDS: World War II, Finland, Soviet Union, Radio, Propaganda

Introduction

The findings of this article are mainly based on research conducted out by Lasse Vihonen which were first published in his 2010 book *Radio sodissamme 1939–1945* (Radio in our wars, 1939–1945). Vihonen's original work builds on two major sources of information: documents in various archives, mainly the National Archive of Finland, and the existing literature on the subject which has been published in Finnish only. Along with some substantial additions and adjustments, the information on the radio presenter Yrjö Kilpeläinen a.k.a. Jahvetti and his connection to the secret VIA organisation is for the first time presented here in English for the international research community. Indeed, to our knowledge, there has been no research on the subject published in English at all.

This article will examine the way Finnish radio propaganda operated during the war, how it sounded, what kind of language was used and how it commented on news from abroad and enemy propaganda. We will first give a brief overview of the political circumstances before and during the two conflicts between Finland and Soviet Union during the World War II era, i.e. The Winter War and The Continuation War. Finnish war history has been widely studied in Finland; the Winter War is generally regarded as one of the great stories constituting the nation.¹ Our focus will shift to portraying the character of Jahvetti, his personal style in radio broadcasts, his role as a popular voice trying to create unity among the social groups of the nation and his

later influence on Finnish broadcasting legislation. Afterwards, we will explain the secret VIA proxy network in order to give readers a broader view on the state's propaganda efforts in war time Finland.

The existing sources we have studied include various publications, documents in the National Archive of Finland (NAF) and sound recordings from the Sound Archive of Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle. Of the available literature Jahvetti's biography by Simppa (the pen name of Simo Juntunen) and *Valtion Tiedotuslaitoksen salainen sotakronikka* (The secret chronicles of the National Information Centre) by Eino Jutikkala deserve particular mention. The documents in the NAF contain the VIA organisation's archive including its staff catalogue, correspondence, news reports and opinion surveys. Of particular interest in the archive is a series of bulletins containing information gathered from foreign broadcasts on a daily basis during the war years. *Jahvetti's Letterbox* papers have been organised as a separate collection in NAF including radio programme manuscripts and correspondence. With a few exceptions, *Jahvetti's Letterbox* broadcasts have survived only as manuscripts in the NAF containing hundreds of items. For sound, only two broadcasts originally on lacquer discs exist in Yle's Sound Archive as authentic audio recordings.²

Propaganda and transnational radio

Our topic can be approached using at least two theoretical research frameworks. First, Propaganda Studies can enlighten us on the motives, practices, forms and narratives of the phenomenon of propaganda. Second, International Radio Broadcasting (IRB) and Transnational Radio Histories are of relevant research fields where we can apply theories of social construction

Figure 1. "Armas Äikiä häiritsee suomalaista radiolähetystä." An excerpt from a Finnish broadcast on 12 August 1941, interrupted by a Soviet transmission (in Finnish).

and media system dependency.³ It is useful to look more precisely at the terms ‘propaganda’. Short argued in 1983 that the concept of propaganda was essentially about the *persuasion* of the audience (in both totalitarian and democratic societies).⁴ In 2012 Jowett and O’Donnell made a clear distinction between propaganda and persuasion, in fact, they asserted that propaganda is a *subcategory* of persuasion: ‘Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.’⁵ The space reserved for this article prevents a detailed discussion on the very essence of propaganda, but it may be noted that in the 1930s the term carried less pejorative connotations in Finnish society than today. For example, the term was officially used in the names of organisations, such as ‘Puolustusvoimien propagandaosasto’ (Finnish Army Propaganda Division) or ‘Propagandaliitto’ (The Propaganda Union) which was established for the purposes of international marketing for the Olympics to be held (before being cancelled) in Helsinki in 1940. However, during the war years the word ‘propaganda’ was replaced with a word ‘tiedotus’ (information) in many cases. Indeed, when studying texts and documents from the era of World War II, one cannot help but notice how the word is often replaced by euphemisms such as ‘public service’, ‘information’, ‘education’, ‘psychological warfare’, et cetera.

War propaganda on Finnish radio covered both international and domestic broadcasts. While our focus is on domestic activities, which were very much influenced by the broadcasts and propaganda from abroad, it is useful to note that Finland took part in international radio broadcasting (IRB) during World War II as well. During the Winter War, the Propaganda Office’s AM-broadcasts were aimed especially at British audiences but were received as far away as Italy and Romania. Yleisradio even inquired about the possibility of relaying broadcasts to the US via the BBC, but was turned down. Correspondents reporting for NBC and CBS from Helsinki became an important medium through which to conduct propaganda and on the eastern front broadcasts were targeted at the Red Army mainly from Vyborg. Later, when it became clear that the effects of IRB remained modest, the propaganda office chose a strategy to inform Swedish media in the hope of benefitting from the help of its non-belligerent neighbour to get out the Finnish position.⁶

The other relevant aspect of IRB is the extent to which Finnish audiences listened to foreign radio stations during the war. For example, in line with media system dependency theory, Wasburn argues that listening to IRB increases during major world crises.⁷ Looking at the number of radio licences purchased in Finland we see they more than doubled from 230,900 in 1938 to 496,500 in 1944.⁸

Finland’s path until 1940

After declaring its independence on 6 December 1917 from the collapsing Russian Empire in the final turmoil of World War I, Finland soon faced a serious challenge in the form of a civil war. The clash between the rebellious left-wing socialists Punaiset (The Reds) led by the People’s Delegation and supported by Soviet Russia and Valkoiset (The Whites), an army commanded by

the conservative senate led by General C.G.E. Mannerheim and aided by troops from the German Empire, only lasted four months. However, it left deep political divisions in society which were present for at least two decades.. The outcome of the civil war, the defeat of the Reds, came at a high price: in all, some 37,000 casualties from both sides succumbed during the red and white terror, either during battle or in camps.⁹

The unity of the nation was severely tested again in 1939, when the Soviet Union presented substantial claims for Finnish territory based on what Stalin felt was necessary for the security of Leningrad. Finland's refusal provoked a Soviet invasion and led to the conflict known as the Winter War which lasted 105 days and ended on 13 March 1940 with the Moscow Peace Treaty. During the period of peace that followed relations between the two countries remained tense. Demonstrations by extreme left-wing political activists, mainly organised by Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton rauhan ja ystävyyden seura (SNS, The Finland-Soviet Union Peace and Friendship Society), established on 22 May 1940, caused unrest in the capital Helsinki. The Finnish government even feared that SNS would become the fifth column in Finland.¹⁰

Political climate and opinion control

In the spring of 1940, several Finnish army units had established various associations to cherish what they saw as the legacy of the Winter War. The Ministry of Defence and a small group of right-wing politicians decided to use this movement to fight left-wing extremism. On 4 August 1940 they established Suomen Aseveljien Liitto (SAL, Finland's Union for Brothers-in-arms) to fight 'the enemy within' mainly by speeches, debate and leaflets. However, in some cases threatening language and even direct physical force was not shunned. As this kind of behaviour was not considered appropriate, another organisation Suomen Aseveljien Työjärjestö (SAT, Working Association for Brothers-in-arms) was established to unofficially carry on with the less respectable side of things. SAT's manager was Dr. Heikki Waris who would later become the first professor of social policy in Finland. While SAT's efforts were partly responsible for the curtailment of public activity by communists in Finland, the main reason it ceased to exist was because of a court order in October 1940 which shut down SNS.¹¹

During the Interim Peace, the Finns anticipated a new Soviet invasion attempt and thus they fortified the eastern border and partly mobilised the army. On the basis of their experiences from the Winter War they rearranged the information services and propaganda activities with Prime minister Risto Ryti creating a commission in August 1940 that was tasked with drawing up a plan for such activities. The plan provided for the establishment of an office of crisis information services: Valtion Tiedotuslaitos (VTL, National Information Centre). Part of its duties would be to manage the activities of the news agencies and the national broadcaster, Oy Yleisradio Ab. While the press was allowed to continue publishing freely, VTL would provide content for the newspapers. In case of war, censorship would control the publishing and radio. The official plan did not mention secret propaganda at all.

Meanwhile, Finnish political leaders approached Germany to seek political and military support against the Soviet Union in case of a possible future conflict, which suited Hitler well.

The Germans leaked Soviet foreign minister Molotov's claim in Berlin to 'get even with the Finns' to Finnish diplomats in November 1940. The resulting cooperation between Finland and Germany bound Finland more tightly, though without articulated political commitment, to Hitler's Barbarossa project.¹²

VIA, a secret proxy network

On the 26 June 1941, Finland was officially at war again with the Soviet Union and the Finnish army and VTL were mobilised as planned. In addition, a secret organisation was established at the VTL, based on the SAT member network, to observe public opinion. The proxy network's other main task was to 'prevent enemy propaganda in the homeland and to report on and if possible, revise the defects.'¹³ Because SAT's reputation had been marred by its violent behaviour, it was decided that the organisation would continue as an independent association so that the authorities were not responsible for its activities. At the same time, VTL management realised that a new organisation to observe and control public opinion should be set up under VTL guidance.

The constitutive meeting for the new organisation Vapaus – Isänmaa – Aseveljeys (VIA, Freedom – Fatherland – Comradeship) was held on the 11 November 1941. Formally directed by the Prime Minister's Office, the organisation worked closely with VTL. School counsellor L. Arvi P. Poijärvi was hired as a manager for VIA until August 1943, followed by the director for VTL's internal department Dr. Martti Ruutu who was in charge until September 1944, when the organisation was closed down.¹⁴

The VIA network consisted of units, or cells, of a few people, located throughout the country. The recruited agents represented a broad range of social and economic groups and were usually people who because of their occupation had large network in their home district, e.g. priests, teachers, shopkeepers, consultants, journalists, factory supervisors, et cetera. Persons known to hold extreme left-wing political views were excluded. In total the VIA network had up to 10,000 proxies, although due to the very nature of the activities, staff turnover was high.

The duties of a VIA unit included reporting biweekly on the public mood, gathered through interviews and observations in the district. A completed standard form had to be posted to the VIA office in an envelope where the recipient was marked as Uusi kirjeenvaihtokerho (New Correspondence Club) to avoid censorship treatment, a standard procedure during the war years. In small country towns there was usually only one cell, whereas in larger cities there could be tens of units. The members of a unit knew only each other and the manager of the district area by the name, but no one else in the organisation.

Once in a while the proxies were ordered to interview people on pre-written topics. For example, several times the agents were asked to ask whether the interviewees believed that Germany would be able to beat the Soviet Union in a war. The interview was to be conducted in such a delicate manner that the person interviewed should not be able to discern the spying function of the discussion. In this way, these discussions and the reporting were quite similar to the Wartime Social Survey conducted by the British government during the war.¹⁵

The abstracts of VIA reports were not only available to high level government officials and military leaders, Jahvetti also had access to reporting and was able to use the information on the radio.¹⁶

Jahvetti and his *Letterbox*

Yrjö Kilpeläinen (1907–1955), also known as Jahvetti, was born in modest circumstances in the town of Leppävirta, in the eastern part of Finland. A talented pupil in school, Kilpeläinen went to the University of Helsinki from where he graduated as Master of political sciences in 1932. His thesis was on the Finnish Communist Party and its underground, political and labour-related member associations. He first got a job as high school principal in Kuopio and later as rector of the Cooperative Store *Elanto* staff school. As a member of the Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP), he was recruited as associate principal for the Workers' Academy in Helsinki.

When Kilpeläinen started his career as radio host at the end of the 1930's in Yleisradio, the national broadcaster (established in 1926), he chose to be called 'Jahvetti'. While at the time in Finland, the name Jahvetti was generally considered a folksy name for a sluggish male character, this was a choice that turned out to be just the opposite in the case of Kilpeläinen.¹⁷

Figure 2. Jahvetti delivering his *causerie* in Yleisradio's studio. An undated photograph from the 1940's. Source Yle Photo Archive.

The first *Jahvetti's Letterbox* programme was broadcast on 23 August 1940 during the Interim Peace. For Finland, this period was internally challenging: as a result of the Moscow Peace Treaty more than 400,000 citizens from Karelia province had to be relocated to housing all over the country. Moreover, orphans and invalids had to be taken care of and vast amount of damaged property required replacement and refunding. These problems raised many questions among the general public which the national broadcaster Yleisradio aimed to answer during the *Letterbox* programme.¹⁸

Jahvetti's Letterbox was already popular with audiences when the Continuation War against the Soviet Union broke out. As part of Operation Barbarossa, Finnish Army troops had begun to proceed from the eastern side of Lake Ladoga towards the Svir River on 10 July 1941. As Kilpeläinen was drafted into the army, the production responsibility of the programme was handed over from Yleisradio to the VIA organisation.

The Letterbox was broadcast once a week for ten to fifteen minutes.¹⁹ A typical Letterbox broadcast would start with Jahvetti's greeting: 'Hyvät ystävät ja kylän miehet' ('Dear friends and fellow-villagers!')²⁰ Jahvetti would continue chatting in his light-hearted manner about current affairs for a few minutes. His trademark style was one of using humorous and folksy expressions for the persons and events that he covered. Usually he would have to talk about less popular topics such as the necessity of rationing, the drawbacks of black market commerce and people's everyday wartime sacrifices. He also often commented on the claims presented in Finnish by Soviet, British and US broadcasters. This was vital as listening to foreign radio stations was not prohibited by the Finnish authorities.

On 6 June 1942, Kilpeläinen reported in the first part of his Letterbox on the seventy-fifth anniversary festivities of Field Marshal Mannerheim, the commander of the Finnish Army, which had taken place two days earlier. The event had an exceptional guest: Adolf Hitler had paid a visit to Finland to congratulate Mannerheim:²¹

Hyvät ystävät ja kylän miehet! Suomen kansalla on ollut juuri eräs huomattavimmista historiallisista merkkipäivistään kunnioitetun sotamarsalkkamme täyttäessä 75 vuotta. Ja, sille on annettu asiaankuuluva arvo myöskin maamme rajojen ulkopuolella, sitä osoittaa parhaiten Saksan valtakunnankanslerin Suomeen tekemä ensimmäinen matka juuri tuona juhlapäivänä.

(Dear friends and fellow-villagers! The Finnish people have just had one of their most remarkable historic anniversaries when we celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of our honoured Field Marshal. And, this event has been given an appropriate value also outside our country as well, which is best shown by the fact that the German chancellor made his first trip to Finland on that very day.)²²

It is worth noting that Jahvetti acknowledged Hitler's first and last visit to Finland with just one sentence. As a social democrat, he probably was not willing to praise the dictator more than that. In his programme he often spoke of the wounds inflicted by the 1918 Civil War and their healing, not forgetting that Mannerheim was in command of the winning side of the army at

Figure 3. Hitler's visit to Immola in Eastern Finland on 4 June 1942 has provided an extraordinary document for historical research as Yleisradio partly recorded on reel-to-reel the discussions in Mannerheim's private railroad car during the encounter. The so-called 'secret' Hitler audio tape is believed to be the only existing sound recording containing the Reichskanzler's voice in a more or less informal situation, where he is not performing in front of an audience. Source: <https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2006/09/08/hitlerin-salaa-tallennettu-keskustelu-suomessa>.

the time. In this talk, Jahvetti stated that the change of attitude was clearly present as the Confederation of Finnish Trade Unions now also presented a congratulatory address to Mannerheim, although those who in 1918 had fought on the other side were among the signatories. With that pointed out, Jahvetti referred to Mannerheim's conciliatory statement in 1919: 'Let us let strength and gentleness join wisdom and vision, and build society in a way that everyone in this country could enjoy it.'

The *Letterbox* programme did not limit itself to covering domestic debates; when commenting on foreign broadcasts, the claims made by Soviet propagandists were often easy to disprove, as they were usually somewhat blatant and unreal. British propaganda was a more difficult challenge as it was mostly based on factual events and figures. In the later phase of the war, British broadcasts continuously spoke of the military potential of the Allies compared to Germany and encouraged the Finns to 'jump off the sinking ship before being demolished on Germany's side.'²³ As increasing numbers of Finns listened to British radio towards the end of the war, Jahvetti was ordered to launch counterstrikes against the Brits in his act.²⁴

Jahvetti's mail and correspondence

One of the most popular parts of *Letterbox* was when Jahvetti answered listeners' questions. The public was encouraged to send in questions on any subject addressed to Jahvetti at the national broadcaster Yleisradio from where they were redirected to the VIA office. In the office, Kilpeläinen's two assistants sorted the letters into twelve categories to be sent on to

specialists working in different organisations. These authorities in ministries, unions and institutions composed replies and returned them to Kilpeläinen who would then read the answers on the radio.

Common topics included social issues like disability aid, help for war widows and orphans, rationing, citizen care and so on. Quite often he answered questions about the dancing ban which the Ministry for internal affairs first imposed on 7 December 1939

and again during the Continuation War. The ban was an attempt to maintain moral control over citizens during the war, but was often violated by youth who organised secret ‘corner dances’ (*nurkkatanssit*) all over the country. Jahvetti had to adapt his answers according to official policy and warn the listeners against the harm caused by such frolicking :

KPK 3469:n kaverit taas kirjoittavat nurkkatanssikysymyksestä, josta jo kerran aikaisemminkin jorisimme. Kun silloin jo perustelimme kantamme tämän ilopelin suhteen teoriassa ja käytännössä, tyydymme nyt vain toteamaan uudestaan, että 1) Nykyinen sodanaika ei sinänsäkään ole tanssin aikaa. Ja 2), kun se on kerran julkisesti kielletty, niin se ei ole silloin sallittua salaakaan toisen sulojen kanssa juosta kilpaa soittopelin tahdissa. Viranomaiset ovatkin kiinnittäneet asiaan tarpeellista huomiota, sillä muun muassa Viipurissa joutui äskettäin tanssitautilisia edesvastuuseen.

(The lads from KPK 3469 inquire again about the corner dance question which we have already chatted about. Since we have previously explained our opinion on this game of joy issue in theory and in practice, all we can say is 1) the current times, the war times are not dancing times, and 2) it is officially forbidden, therefore it is not allowed unofficially to chase anybody accompanied with music either. The authorities have paid necessary attention to this matter and recently a group of individuals suffering from ‘dancing mania’ in Vyborg had to take responsibility for their act.)²⁵

Overall, Jahvetti received some 100,000 letters from the public during the period in which the programme was broadcast. The sheer amount of correspondence did not allow for a response to every message individually on air, but all enquiries always received a written reply. Such replies numbered 70,000 so we can assume that approximately 30,000 letters were answered during the broadcasts.²⁶

Jahvetti's popularity and feedback

The *Letterbox* programme gained huge popularity among audience and quickly became the most listened to programme on Finnish radio. This is not really surprising given that the topics covered touched almost everybody in war time Finland. The majority of the listeners were drawn to Kilpeläinen's chatty style. However, there was also some criticism. One example of this is seen in a letter dated 17 December 1943, which Kilpeläinen received from the Yleisradio's Programme Manager Jussi Koskiluoma. He described the results from

Figure 4. Yrjö Kilpeläinen and his two assistants sorting the Letterbox correspondence on the 20 October 1942. During the war years *Jahveti*'s identity was covered and Kilpeläinen posed incognito in published photographs. Source Yle Photo Archive.

a tour in Southwest Finland where the management was gathering audience feedback and quoted one interviewee:

Jahvetin kirjelaatikko tuntuu jatkuvasti olevan kuuntelijoiden suosiossa. Sen lopettaminen ilmeisesti saisi aikamoisen kohinan. Köyhä kansa pitää Jahvettia puoltajaan ja Jahvetin sanaan vedotaan kuin Jumalan sanaan. Viranomaiset saavat tuon tuostakin kuulla repliikin, 'Ensin kysytään Jahvetilta'.

(*Jahveti*'s Letterbox seems to be very popular among the listeners. To discontinue the show would probably cause quite a fuss. The poor people have *Jahveti* by their side and believe his word like God's word. The authorities have to hear every now and then: 'Let us ask *Jahveti* first!')²⁷

The critics (presumably authorities and employers) claimed that Kilpeläinen was not objective enough and tended to twist his answers in such a way that the authorities and employers had a hard time running their business. Koskiluoma admitted that in many ways the listeners were also to blame for this. Finally, he specifically mentioned one farmer's concern: '*Jahveti* causes a lot of trouble to farming as he encourages workers to stand up for their rights and their entitlement to free time.'²⁸

It can be argued that such a comment is evidence of the role which *Jahvetti's Letterbox* played in the 'fight for the souls of the nation'. In other words, for a small country like Finland, it was crucial to reach out to as many citizens as possible to justify acts of war and for them to all do their part for the common cause. VTL's motto 'For a more equitable Finland' emphasised the role of social justice in propaganda. It may not be an exaggeration to claim that *Jahvetti's Letterbox* partly helped Finland remain unified and hold on to its democratic constitution through World War II and the political turmoil that followed.

Dogfight on the airwaves

In addition to V.I. Lenin's beloved cinema, radio had become an important means of communication for the Soviet Union to bridge the vast distances within the country. Compared to printed newspapers, the medium of the wireless had the advantage of being able to carry a message to the masses, including illiterate citizens, rapidly and at a considerably low cost. Understanding this opportunity, the Soviet government had built a network of powerful transmitters by the mid-1930s.²⁹ During the war years 1941–1944, the Russians recruited several Finnish-born propagandists to work for them. Soviet transmitters managed to broadcast on the Finnish radio frequency used by the AM-station in the town of Lahti. On the same wavelength the Russians could interrupt and comment on the Finnish radio broadcast. Once the interruption was noted, the Finns would start a counter-propaganda offensive, first by playing a special record manufactured for the purpose. On the record Jahvetti said:

Hyvät ystävät ja kylänmiehet! Monet teistä kuulivat mitenkä bolshevikki äsken loikkas taas Lahden radioaallolle ja pyöritti tuttuja levyjään. Mutta siitä sen maha ei kyllä paljoja paksune. Vai mitäs siitä meinaa oikein jämerä suomalainen Matti? Sanokaapas nyt mielipiteenne ihan suoraan!

(Dear friends and fellow-villagers! As you may have noticed, there jumps that Bolshevik on the Lahti wavelength again to babble about his tales heard so many times. Well, I tell you folks, by that he won't feed even his own appetite. But what says the sturdy Finn Matti? Tell us how you see it!)

³⁰

Then a male choir would sing a popular Finnish version of the American folk song 'Intian kuu' (Indian Moon):

Juttele sinä vaan, kyllä sinut tunnetaan. Ja vaikka sen valeheksi vannotkin, niin kyllä sua kuunnellaan!

(Just rave on, we sure know you. Even though it is just a lie you swore, we listen!)

³¹

This counter-propaganda announcement was followed by loud music in order to block the Russian interference. There were several occasions when Kilpeläinen was on duty, and he would

start arguing live on air with the speaker from the Soviet side. Listeners would particularly remember the broadcast quarrels between Jahvetti and Finnish-born Soviet propagandist Armas Äikiä. Due to the challenging nature of this warfare with words, only Kilpeläinen was considered eloquent enough to be allowed to perform on air in these propaganda battles.

Lex Jahvetti

When the hostilities between Finland and the Soviet Union ended with the Moscow Armistice on 19 September 1944, Finnish radio immediately stopped its Anti-Soviet propaganda. Perhaps surprisingly, *Jahvetti's Letterbox* programme was allowed to continue broadcasting until January 1945. Obviously, Kilpeläinen was not allowed to mock the other side in the same manner as he used to, but his programme was still considered useful as a means to answer a great number of listeners' questions about demobilisation and other actual war-related issues.

In March 1945 Kilpeläinen stood in elections for Parliament as a candidate for the Social Democratic Party. The popularity gained through his *Letterbox* programme helped him get duly elected. In his new post he maintained a key interest in radio. As the political landscape changed in post war Finland, Yleisradio's general director Hjalmar Vakio was forced to quit and was replaced with the well-known Estonian-Finn left-wing author Hella Wuolijoki. Kilpeläinen disliked Yleisradio's new programme policy; as criticism of Wuolijoki surfaced in Parliament, Kilpeläinen proposed a bill to change the way Yleisradio's Administrative Council was appointed whereby Parliament rather than government could decide. The bill was passed into law in 1948 and since then has been colloquially referred to as 'Lex Jahvetti'.³³

As Kilpeläinen had planned, the new Council suspended Wuolijoki in June 1949. In this way Kilpeläinen had once again been able to make his mark on Finland's radio scene. A mark that has proved to be long-lasting: after seventy years, the Administrative Council, the highest decision-making body of the national broadcaster Yle, is still elected by the Finnish Parliament.

Notes

1. For literature in English see for example: Gordon F. Sander, *The Hundred Day Winter War: Finland's Gallant Stand against the Soviet Army* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013); Vesa Nénye, Peter Munter and Toni Wirtanen, *Finland at War: The Winter War 1939–40* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2015); Vesa Nénye, Peter Munter, Toni Wirtanen and Chris Birks, *Finland at War: The Continuation and Lapland Wars 1941–45* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2016); Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki, *Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Henrik O. Lunde, *Finland's War of Choice: The Troubled German-Finnish Alliance in World War II* (Newbury: Casemate Publishers, 2011); Olli Vehviläinen, *Finland in the Second World War: Between Germany and Russia* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).
2. *Jahvetin kirjelaatikko* aired June 11, 1944, Radio broadcast on audio reel tape ARK-631-1 copied from a lacquer disc. Yle Radio Archive. Available online, accessed April 25, 2019, URL: <https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2006/09/08/jahvetti-torjui-vihollispropagandaa-radiossa>.
3. Philo C. Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda: International Radio Broadcasting and the Construction of Political Reality* (Westport: Praeger 1992), 54–66.
4. K. R. M. Short, ed., *Film & Radio Propaganda in World War II* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 2.

5. Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, ed. Garth S. Jowett, Victoria O'Donnell. 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006), 7.
6. Lasse Vihonen, *Radio sodissamme 1939–1945* (Radio in our wars 1939–1945) (Porvoo: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2010), 98 and 110–111.
7. Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda*, 65.
8. Vihonen, *Radio sodissamme*, 309.
9. “Suomen sotasurmat 1914–1922”, statistics by the National Archives of Finland War Victims 1914–1922 project, posted March 5, 2002, accessed April 25, 2019. <http://vesta.narc.fi/cgi-bin/db2www/sotasurmaetusivu/stat2>.
10. Raimo Salokangas, “Itsenäinen tasavalta” (The independent Republic) in: *Suomen historian pikkujättiläinen* (The little giant of Finnish history), ed. Seppo Zetterberg (Porvoo, Helsinki, Juva: WSOY, 1997), 615–619.
11. Antti Laine, “Suomi sodassa,” (Finland In War) in: *Suomen historian pikkujättiläinen* (The little giant of Finnish history), ed. Seppo Zetterberg (Porvoo, Helsinki, Juva: WSOY, 1997), 709–712.
12. Vihonen, *Radio sodissamme*, 134–146.
13. Tomi Mertanen, “SAT/VIA – Myyräntöön mestarit,” (SAT/VIA – The masters of sabotage) *Sotahistoriallinen Aikakauskirja* (Journal of war history) 25 (2006): 202.
14. Mertanen, “SAT/VIA”, 184.
15. Eino Jutikkala, *Valtion Tiedotuslaitoksen salainen sotakronikka* (The secret chronicles of the National Information Centre) (Porvoo, Helsinki, Juva: WSOY, 1997), 37–38.”
16. Jutikkala, *Valtion*, 39–40.
17. Vihonen, *Radio sodissamme*, 261; Simppa (Simo Juntunen), *Jahveti, legenda jo eläessään* (Jahveti, a living legend) (Porvoo: WSOY, 1976), 69–87.
18. In order to find out what opinions and decisions resulted in the creation of the Letterbox programme, we inspected the archive of Yleisradio's Administrative Council minutes from the World War II years. However, we noticed that the council meetings did not deal with individual programmes. Then we looked at the Programme Council's papers only to notice that the minutes from the years 1939–1940 are non-existent. It is not clear when they disappeared.
19. Yleisradio's programme schedules in the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*, 1940–1944.
20. This expression was a direct reference to the Heinrich Zschokke's (1771–1848) novel *Das Goldmacherdorf*, a social utopia telling a tale of a decayed village which rises to its heyday by the efforts of an innovative protagonist. Zschokke's novel was first published in Finnish in 1834 named ‘Kultala’. Heinrich Zschokke, *Kultala: hyödyllinen ja huwittawa historia, yhteiselle kansalle luettawaksi annettu* (Helsinki: Frenckell, 1834).
21. Hitler's visit to Immola in Eastern Finland on 4 June 1942 has provided an extraordinary document for historical research as Yleisradio partly recorded on reel-to-reel the discussions in Mannerheim's private railroad car during the encounter. The so-called ‘secret’ Hitler audio tape is believed to be the only existing sound recording containing the Reichskanzler's voice in a more or less informal situation, where he is not performing in front of an audience. The recording is available online at: <https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2006/09/08/hitlerin-salaa-tallennettu-keskustelu-suomessa>.
22. Yrjö Kilpeläinen, Jahvetin Kirjelaatikko. Manuscript for radio broadcast June 6, 1942. Series Jahvetin Kirjelaatikko Db:1 Vastauksia Yleisradiossa. National Archives of Finland. The archive of Jahvetin kirjelaatikko papers. Translated from Finnish by P. Salosaari.
23. This exhortation was heard several times on the radio during the spring and summer of 1944. It has been quoted in Jutikkala, *Valtion Tiedotuslaitoksen*, 271.
24. Vihonen, *Radio sodissamme*, 280.
25. Yrjö Kilpeläinen, Jahvetin Kirjelaatikko. Manuscript for radio broadcast June 6, 1942. Series Jahvetin Kirjelaatikko Db:1 Vastauksia Yleisradiossa. National Archives of Finland. The archive of Jahvetin kirjelaatikko papers. During the war censorship prevented direct references to army units so post codes like these were used. KPK is abbreviation for ‘Kenttä Posti Konttori (Field Post Office).
26. Vihonen, *Radio sodissamme*, 264.
27. Jussi Koskiluoma. Jussi Koskiluoma to Yrjö Kilpeläinen, December 17, 1943. Letter. Series Jahvetin Kirjelaatikko Ea Saapuneet kirjeet. National Archives of Finland. The archive of Jahvetin kirjelaatikko papers.
28. Ibid.
29. Stephen Lovell, *Russia in the Microphone Age: A History of Soviet Radio, 1919–1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 10–11 and 25–26.

30. "Moskovan radio lähettää propagandaa, häirintää yleisradion ohjelmien päälle" ("Radio Moscow's propaganda, interference over Finnish programme"), aired August 12, 1941, Radio broadcast on audio reel tape ARK-619-3 copied from a lacquer disc. Yle Radio Archive. Available online, accessed April 25, 2019. URL: <https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2006/09/08/jahvetti-torjui-vihollispropagandaa-radiossa>.
31. Ibid.
32. Lasse Vihonen, "Hella Wuolijoki ja Lahden radioaalto," (Hella Wuolijoki and the Lahti's wavelength) *Radiot: radiohistoriallinen kausijulkaisu* (Radios: Journal of Radio History) 1 (2014): 13.
33. Vihonen, "Hella Wuolijoki".

Biography

Lasse Vihonen (1946) studied Finnish history at the University of Helsinki. His thesis *Valtiorikosoikeudet Suomessa 1918* studied Treason Courts during the Finnish Civil War in 1918 and was accepted in 1977. In 1972–1978 he was researcher in the Finnish National Archive. Between 1991 and 2009, Lasse worked as the head of Radio Archives at national broadcaster Yle. After his retirement he has continued his research on the history of radio. He is the vice president for the Historical Society of Finnish Radio and Television.

Pekka Salosaari (1967) studied ethnomusicology, information science and mass communication at the University of Tampere from where he graduated in 1998. His thesis work *MUSIR- A Retrieval Model for Music* presented n-gram representation for music retrieval and was accepted by the Department of Information Studies. After holding a position of information specialist at the Helsinki School of Economics, since 2001 Pekka has worked for the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle Archives as Archive and Collections Manager.