

## BUILDING THAT BRIGHT FUTURE

### Soviet Karelia in the Life Writing of Finnish North Americans

In the early 1930s, approximately 6,500 Finns from Canada and the United States moved to Soviet Karelia, on the border of Finland, to build a Finnish workers' society. They were recruited by the Soviet leadership for their North American mechanical and lumber expertise, their familiarity with the socialist cause, and their Finnish language and ethnicity. By 1936, however, Finnish culture and language came under attack and ethnic Finns became the region's primary targets in the Stalinist Great Terror.

*Building That Bright Future* relies on the personal letters and memoirs of these Finnish migrants to build a history of everyday life during a transitional period for both North American socialism and Soviet policy. Highlighting the voices of men, women, and children, the book follows the migrants from North America to the Soviet Union, providing vivid descriptions of daily life. Samira Saramo brings readers into personal contact with Finnish North Americans and their complex and intimate negotiations of self and belonging.

Through letters and memoirs, *Building That Bright Future* explores the multiple strategies these migrants used to make sense of their rapidly shifting positions in the Soviet hierarchy and the relationships that rooted them to multiple places and times.

SAMIRA SARAMO is a Kone Foundation Senior Researcher at the Migration Institute of Finland.

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of Finnish North Americans*

SAMIRA SARAMO

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