



Jukka Nevakivi

* 8.10.1931 † 15.1.2024

Jukka Taneli Nevakivi, Professor Emeritus of Political History at the University of Helsinki, died in Helsinki on 15 January 2024. He was born in Pudasjärvi on 8 October 1931 and was 92 years old at the time of his death.

Nevakivi completed his PhD on the topic of British Middle East policy during the First World War in 1963 at the London School of Economics under the supervision of Wolfram Wilhelm Gottlieb and William Norton Medlicott.

Based on his doctoral thesis, the work entitled *Britain, France and the Arab Middle East 1914–1920* was published in 1969 in the University of London Historical Studies series. For a long time, it remained one of the most internationally cited Finnish historical research papers.

In 1963, Nevakivi began working at the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The post took him to Budapest, Cairo and Paris. In between, he also served as a visiting professor of Finnish History and Culture at the Sorbonne Nouvelle University (Paris III) 1972–1974.

One of Nevakivi's major works is *Muurmannin legioona: suomalaiset ja liittoutuneiden interventio Pohjois-Venäjällä 1918–1919*, published in 1970. The work

reveals Nevakivi's skill in placing Finland in a broad and natural international context. For this book, he managed to interview the last surviving men who had been part of a battalion made up of Finnish Red Guards who joined the English side in 1918–1919.

Nevakivi drew methodological inspiration from the research of French historians Pierre Renouvin and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle. Economic interests and pressure groups remained in the background as explanatory factors focused on broader *forces profondes*, consisting above all of geography, climate and mental forces.

The works entitled *Apu jota ei pyydetty: liittoutuneet ja Suomen talvisota 1939–1940* (1972) and *Ystävistä viholliseksi: Suomi Englannin politiikassa 1940–1941* (1976) were Nevakivi's next two monographs. The former book was published in England as *The Appeal that Was Never Made: the Allies, Scandinavia and the Finnish Winter War 1939–1940* (1976). In 2000, Nevakivi published a new edition of the book entitled *Apu jota ei annettu*.

Ystävistä viholliseksi deals with the English approach towards Finland after the Winter War. In the conclusions of his study, Nevakivi discussed the “general pol-

icy” that England had adopted towards Finland: despite all its economic and cultural interests, England was unable to resist Soviet influence in Finland, nor was this particularly necessary in light of any interests that were important to England.

In 1980, Nevakivi moved from his position as Minister Counsellor at the Embassy of Finland in Paris to become Professor of Political History at the University of Helsinki, a post from which he retired in 1995. Alongside his academic work, Nevakivi was one of the last travel writers of the good old days. His curiosity and thirst for

knowledge led him on expeditions and adventures to foreign cultures as far as Afghanistan, Tierra del Fuego in South America, Greenland and the coral islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Jukka Nevakivi was one of the most international scholars among the leading Finnish historians of his generation. He represented the Finnish scientific community at the International Committee of Historical Sciences from 1983 to 2005. Nevakivi was a member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters since 1990.

Obituary by Seppo Hentilä