



**The Estonian Embassy in Athens
and
The Finnish Institute at Athens**

Programme

have the pleasure of inviting you to a

screening

of Imbi Paju's documentary

**“Sisters across
the Gulf of Finland”**

on Wednesday, 28 April at 7 p.m.
at the Finnish Institute, Zitrou 16,
Makrigianni

(210 922 1152)

*The director Imbi Paju
presents her documentary with
Dr. Tiina Kinnunen,
University of Eastern Finland*

Refreshments

The historical-psychological documentary "Sisters across the Gulf of Finland" tells the story of the cooperation and friendship between the members of the Estonian and Finnish voluntary auxiliary organizations for women (*Naiskodukaitse* and *Lotta Svärd*) that began in the 1920's and was cut off by World War II, the Soviet occupation of Estonia, and the subsequent realpolitik of the Cold War.

The reminiscences of Estonian and Finnish women, supplemented by rare archival materials and footage, illustrate the vulnerability of ordinary people and small nations in the power politics maelstrom of large totalitarian nations. The film also shows the rise of totalitarianism in Europe in the 1930's, peoples' surrender to mass psychosis and the decline of democracy.

The elderly women in the film "Sisters across the Gulf of Finland" have all experienced hard times, but with their warm and kind nature, they give the viewer hope that good can defeat evil. In the light of their humanity we can see the darker side of mankind, that which comes to the fore through political violence, when people are forced to remain silent, to withdraw into themselves and to forget.

The past is connected to the present when we see UN Special Representative Elisabeth Rehn, herself once a Girl Lotta, assisting civilian victims in crisis areas. The film shows how the patterns of violence tied to war keep repeating regardless of time or place.

Director, author and journalist **Imbi Paju** has won international attention with "Memories Denied", her award-winning documentary film and book of the same name. Both the film and the book deal with her mother's experiences in a Soviet slave labor camp, the occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and the attempts by totalitarian regimes to destroy human memory. The book has been translated into several languages and in 2007 it was selected for use in the Swedish school program "Living History," which deals with both Nazi and Communist crimes.

Imbi Paju has shown her film and participated in many international film festivals and history seminars and has helped to create an understanding of the nature of totalitarianism. Paju has been praised for her ability visually to portray traumas of the past, something that is hard to do with words alone.

Sisters across the Gulf of Finland

Documentary, 2009
59 minutes

Director: Imbi Paju
Scenario: Imbi Paju
Camera: Ants Martin Vahur
Montage: Riitta Poikselkä
Music: Arvo Pärt, Lepo Sumera
Production: Pille Rünk, Allfilm (Estonia),
Tiina Butter, Filmmagica (Finland)