Otto Ville Kuusinen Commemorated

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The Cold War and the Politics of History

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The legalisation of the Communist Party of Finland (SKP) and the foundation of the People’s Democratic League (SKDL), a wider organisation of socialists and communists, in autumn 1944 gave the communist movement better opportunities to become part of Finnish political life. A good 20 percent support and a position in the government in 1945–48, 1966–1971 and 1975–82 was far different from living under various restrictions or underground they did during the inter-war years. It was now easier for the communist movement to make known its own interpretation of its history and to challenge the identification of Finnish communism with the Soviet Union. For this purpose various articles and books on the activities of the movement in the 1920s and 1930s were published¹, important leaders were presented and Otto Ville Kuusinen commemorated.

Kuusinen, who had lived in the Soviet Union since the Finnish Civil War in 1918, served as a secretary of the Communist International in 1921–1939 and belonged to the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) from the 1940s, was a controversial figure in Finland after the Second World War. For the bourgeoisie he symbolised the Soviet origin and interests of the Finnish communist movement, as indicated by the establishment of the Terijoki government during the Winter War in November 1939 and participation in the war propaganda against Finland during the Continuation War. Among the communists, on the other hand, he was regarded as a great man with a remarkable international career.

This article studies how Kuusinen’s past was used as a means in the history struggle on Finnish communism. It also examines other purposes connected with the eulogies of Kuusinen delivered during his anniversary celebrations from the late 1940s to the early 1980s.

ANNIVERSARIES

It had not been customary in the Finnish communist movement to pay a great deal of attention to the anniversaries of its living leaders; the newspapers generally wrote briefly about the career of the person and published his/her photograph. In this respect the 65th birthday of Otto Ville Kuusinen in October 1946 indicated a change as Työ­kansan Sanomat, the organ of the SKP, published several articles on him. A bigger change took place in 1951 when the SKP made Kuusinen’s birthday an important part of its political activities and harnessed its whole organisation to celebrate him.

In doing so the SKP followed the example of the Soviet Union and the international communist movement, which had made the Lenin anniversaries important political occasions and created a cult for Lenin and Stalin. The celebration had assumed vast proportions especially in 1949, when the whole Soviet Union and the entire international communist movement celebrated Stalin’s 70th birthday. The leader cult was also adopted in the people’s democracies and western communist parties. Thus the SKP wanted to teach its members to pay proper respect

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to the communist leaders. But the celebration could also be regarded as an attempt to prove that the Finnish working class had leaders comparable to such bourgeois great men as Mannerheim, whose 70th birthday in 1937 and funeral in 1951 had reached national dimensions. Kuusinen’s anniversaries were, however, different from those – the absence of the birthday hero contributed to the general character of the occasions.

Various festive meetings assumed an important role in the birthday campaign of 1951, and the SKP went as far as to give up the yearly anniversaries of the party in order to organise the Kuusinen celebration well. In Helsinki the birthday festivities took place in Messuhalli (Fair exhibition hall) where the wall behind the stage was decorated with Lenin’s and Stalin’s reliefs, and connected by a red line to Kuusinen’s large photograph. Under these was the text Long live Kuusinen – the student of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin – the greatest Finnish flag-bearer of communism! On the stage Aimo Aaltonen, chairman of the SKP, gave a speech, and various greetings and a festive poem Pohjolan punainen honka (The red old pine of the North) were read. The festive meetings in other towns were not as bombastic, and epithets attached to Kuusinen not as conspicuous.

The celebration was not limited to festive meetings. On the fourth of October Kuusinen’s large photograph and the salutation of the party committee covered the whole front page of Työkansan Sanomat. Almost the whole paper was devoted to Kuusinen. The other papers did not give as much room; Keski-Suomen Työ in Jyväskylä, Kuusinen’s school town, and Kansan Tahto in Oulu used almost half of their pages for Kuusinen, and Vapaa Sana, the organ of the SKDL, three pages out of


6 People’s archive (KA), the archive of the SKP, instruction letters 1951, the plan for the 70th anniversary of O. V. Kuusinen; Educational department (Saara Kontulainen) to educational secretaries of the districts, 15 Sept. 1951.

7 Tyvänenlikkeen kunniakkaat perinteet’, TS 5 Oct. 1951.


9 TS 4 Oct. 1951.
eight. Kuusinen’s own speeches and articles from 1918 to 1949 were published in a book Kansainvälistä kysymyksiä (International issues), which was regarded as an important means to convey Kuusinen’s lessons to Finland.

Besides the festive meetings and literary assessments, a special reception was organised so the organisations and members of the movement could deliver their gifts and congratulations to Kuusinen. As Kuusinen was not present, the leaders of the SKP received the gifts. They included flags, handicrafts and articles such as a metallic globe and peace dove, a kantele, the traditional Finnish music instrument, and a rug picturing Kullervo, a character in the Kalevala. In Jyväskylä the communists wanted to give another kind of present, and sent the city council an initiative according to which the name of Puistokatu, leading from the centre towards Laukka, Kuusinen’s home village, should be changed to Otto Ville Kuusinen’s street.

Five years later, in October 1956, Kuusinen’s 75th birthday was no longer as important for the Finnish communist movement; the SKP sent its congratulations but there were no festive meetings and the pages of the newspapers were not covered with Kuusinen’s photographs or articles about his feats. The change reflected how the Finnish communists had adapted to Khrushchev’s disclosures about Stalin and his personal cult at the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956.

Those disclosures, or Kuusinen’s vast celebration in 1951 were not mentioned, however, when Mauri Ryömä, the chief editor of Työkansan Sanomat, explained the change. According to him, it was not in line with the principles of the labour movement to worship its distinguished leaders, to overestimate their contribution or to underestimate or despise ordinary people. Ryömä ascribed that kind of attitude to the bourgeoisie.

12 KA, the archive of the SKP, instruction letters 1951, Educational department to educational secretaries of the districts 15 Sept. 1951.
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but admitted that even the labour movement could occasionally be guilty of worshipping some great man. The principles of the labour movement did not, however, deny the importance of prominent individuals, and it was willing to honour those who expressed the will of the people, served its cause loyally and paved the way towards victory. According to Ryömä, Otto Ville Kuusinen was obviously such a person – he continued his article by describing Kuusinen’s career.\(^\text{15}\)

In 1961 the SKP had obviously found a balance; the party and parliamentary group of the SKDL organised modest festive meetings, the newspapers published some articles on Kuusinen and the SKP published a book, *Suuri vuosisata*, containing Kuusinen’s memoirs on his underground activities in Finland in 1919–20 and his speech on Lenin in 1960.\(^\text{16}\) After his death in May 1964, the SKP arranged memorial occasions in Helsinki and printed articles about Kuusinen’s career.\(^\text{17}\) The papers also covered his funerals in the Hall of Columns at the House of Trade Unions and in Red Square in Moscow and published the speech by Nikolai Podgorny, the president of the Soviet Union, at the funerals, but did not give Kuusinen the whole front page as did the Soviet papers.\(^\text{18}\)

Death did not separate Kuusinen from the SKP, and in June the party proposed the CPSU publication of Kuusinen’s articles and speeches, and dreamed of a special marxist-leninist research institute dedicated to Kuusinen. Such an institute, however, was not founded but similar activities were planned under the auspices of the Otto Ville Kuusinen Foundation, established in December 1964.\(^\text{19}\)

The SKP also continued to organise festive meetings on Kuusinen’s important birthdays, and in co-operation with the Otto Ville Kuusinen Foundation, they held various seminars where the leading Finnish


\(^{19}\) KA, the archive of the SKP, the secretariat of the SKP, minutes, 8 June and 5 Oct. 1964.
communists and Kuusinen’s Soviet co-workers Georgi Arbatov and Fjodor Burlatsky presented their views on Kuusinen.\textsuperscript{20} In January 1975 the Socialist Student Union (SOL) launched the slogan ‘Forward along the road paved by Otto Ville Kuusinen!’ in order to prove that students and intellectuals had been allies of the working class in the fight for the socialist society.\textsuperscript{21} Kuusinen’s celebrations were also carried on with the publication of books. In 1971 the book \textit{Otto Wille Kuusinen – suomalainen internationalisti} was published, in which foreign and Finnish communists remembered Kuusinen, and in 1981 \textit{Asian periaatteellinen puoli} consisted of Kuusinen’s articles in 1903–1918. A book, however, was not considered enough for the 100th anniversary celebration, and hand-made glass plates with Kuusinen’s face and signature were ordered for the foreign guests of the SKP congress in 1981. The plates, though, were subsequently viewed as representing the cult of personality and destroyed before the congress.\textsuperscript{22}

\textbf{‘THE EMINENT THEORETICIAN’}

The celebrations as such were important as an attempt to make Kuusinen known and accepted in Finland, but the characterizations of him at meetings and in articles revealed more about his role and significance in Finnish history.

In the official vocabulary of the SKP in 1951 Kuusinen was characterised as ‘the student of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin’, ‘the greatest Finnish champion for the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin’ or ‘the greatest Finnish flag-bearer for the victorious ideas of


\textsuperscript{22} KA, Typy Tapiovaara’s archive, objects.
Lenin and Stalin'. The articles about him showed little variation; he was ‘the distinguished propagandist of the doctrines of Lenin and Stalin’, ‘the man who knows the doctrines of Lenin and Stalin thoroughly’, ‘a faithful student of these great revolutionaries’ or ‘one of the most prominent theoreticians in the international communist movement’.

In the following years the names were replaced by a more general reference to the communist doctrine. Accordingly, in 1961 Kuusinen was hailed as ‘the most prominent Finnish representative of the great marxist-leninist ideas’ or was more modestly placed ‘in the vanguard of the Marxist theoreticians produced by the Finnish labour movement’. The change reflected the impact of revelations about the Stalin cult by Khrushchev, but also the fact that Kuusinen had established a name for himself in the field of theory after *The Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, written under his leadership, had come out in 1959.

The year 1956 witnessed another change anticipated by Ville Pessi, the general secretary of the SKP. In 1951 he wrote about Kuusinen’s creative application of the doctrines of Lenin and Stalin. After 1956 it was typical to emphasize how creative Kuusinen had been. After his death he was characterised as ‘the pre-eminent creative marxist-leninist theoretician in the Finnish labour movement’, and it was argued that he had ‘a bold creative attitude in theoretical studies and conclusions regarding the political struggle’.

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The image of Kuusinen as a theoretician was so strong that attempts to argue that he was also a politician and a prominent man of action remained in its shadow. Besides the respect for the priority of theory in the communist movement, this was also due to writers’ difficulties to express how his prominence had manifested itself. So it was common to write about Kuusinen’s deeds in general terms or to emphasize certain events. It was also in accordance with the idea that the history of the party was the same as that of the party leader.\(^{29}\)

Kuusinen’s merits in politics were often found in the fight against war and fascism and in the defence of democracy.\(^ {30}\) It was, however, more usual to present examples in relation to the history of the Finnish labour movement, to emphasize his role in the People’s Deputation in 1918, even to regard him as its leading character.\(^ {31}\) It was even more common to say that Kuusinen was one of the founders of the SKP\(^ {32}\) or, stressing Kuusinen’s role, to say that the SKP, ‘the party of a new type’, was founded ‘on the initiative of Kuusinen’\(^ {33}\). Regarding their later relation it was common to argue that the party had worked under his guidance in the 1920s and 1930s\(^ {34}\) or to say more modestly that Kuusinen helped the party on various occasions.\(^ {35}\)

Kuusinen’s guidance was often seen in questions regarding the attitude of communists to other political forces, especially social democrats. In 1951 it was stressed how Kuusinen had taught that the working class

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31 ‘Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen 70-vuotias’, 468; Pessi 1951, 62; ‘Hänen työn säjälki pysyy’.
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could fulfil its historical task only by expelling the betrayers of the class struggle. Thus he had been active in the fight against the right-wing social democrats. 36 In Kommunisti, the theoretical organ of the SKP, the fight for the leninist line against various opportunist deviations was also considered an important part of Kuusinen’s political legacy. 37 In 1956 Jarno Pennanen, the chief editor of Vapaa Sana, regarded Kuusinen as ‘one of the most patient and far-sighted builders of the re-emerging working class unity’. 38 And in 1961 Ville Pessi, the general secretary of the SKP, emphasized that Kuusinen’s influence on the decisions of the SKP had been most evident in the moments the party had re-oriented its activities toward the masses. 39

Otherwise Kuusinen’s actual deeds were not discussed in detail, but there was a tendency to study even his pre-communist activities through communist glasses; his work in the parliament was seen in the context of the importance of mass activities and the draft of the constitution written by him in 1918 was equated with the dictatorship of the proletariat. 40

Short biographical articles written about him increased the impression that Kuusinen was the only leader of the SKP, but this idea was also strengthened by the fact that nobody wanted to remember Kullervo Manner, who had been the leader of the People’s Deputation in 1918 and the chairman of the SKP in 1920–1934, but who had been labeled as a deviationist and dismissed. This impression was also furthered by the use of the words ‘first’, ‘active’, ‘most skilful’ and ‘credited’ – and soon Kuusinen was ‘the iron helmsman of the SKP’. In October 1951 Kommunisti gave the impression that Kuusinen had been the first in every action and everything was done under his leadership or his initiative.


38 Pennanen, ‘O.V. Kuusinen’.

39 ‘Suomen työväenliike omnitelee’

40 ‘Hänen työnsä jäli pysyy’.
The official line of the SKP was mainly written by persons who had come to know Kuusinen as a Communist International functionary and one of the leaders of the SKP, and who had worked with him in the SKP. Thus it was natural for them to emphasize Kuusinen’s role in regard to the SKP. But their characterizations were also strongly influenced by their living in the Soviet Union and their adaptation to the celebration of communist leaders and to communist history writing initiated by Stalin in the early 1930s. That commitment led them to picture Kuusinen as a theoretical and political star of the communist movement.41

The characterizations of Kuusinen’s theoretical and political eminence were mainly directed to the members of the SKP for whom they were to teach respect and obedience towards the leaders of the communist party and the importance of a united and determined communist party. But they were also meant to demonstrate the significance of marxism-leninism as a scientific world view. Though some of the authors emphasised that by means of Kuusinen’s example the members could learn how to apply marxism-leninism, the articles did not describe how Kuusinen had applied the theory.

Among Finnish socialists and communists there were still persons who remembered Kuusinen as a schoolmate or a social democratic party comrade. These persons, whose recollections of Kuusinen were written in Työkansan Sanomat in 1946 and in Vapaa Sana in 1951, saw him in the context of the Finnish labour movement. They were content to admit Kuusinen’s capabilities and regard him as one of the leaders of the movement. Raoul Palmgren, the chief editor of Vapaa Sana, also brought up Kuusinen’s merits as a cultural person who was interested in music, literature and poetry.42 He did not, however, include Kuusinen as the main representatives of the labour movement in the fight for universal suffrage.43

41 Saarela, Suomalaisen, 9–10.
Though there were different emphases within the SKDL regarding Kuusinen’s assessment in the fields of theory and politics of the labour movement, everyone agreed on his merits as the builder of peace between Finland and the Soviet Union. This characterization also implied criticism towards the nationalist perspective of bourgeois Finland, and communists recommended a new kind of perspective based on internationalism and on the marxist-leninist principles – taught to them, of course, by Kuusinen.\footnote{44 ‘Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen’, TS 4 Oct. 1951.}

From this perspective Kuusinen was portrayed as a great patriot and fighter for the brotherhood of nations.\footnote{45 E.g. ‘Suuren isänmaanystävän ja rauhantaistelijan merkkipäivä’; O.W. Kuusinen – suuri isänmaanystävä ja kansojen veljeyden esitaistelija’, TS 4 Oct. 1951.} Thus he had fought for the independence of Finland from the beginning of the 20th century but at the same time realised the importance of safeguarding the friendship between the peoples of Finland and the Soviet Union. He was the pioneer and had done more than any other Finn in this field.\footnote{46 T. Lehen, ‘O.W. Kuusisen ajatuksia’, in SKP Taistelujen tiellä 1951. Vuosikirja VII. Helsinki: SKP 1951, 22, 30; Äikiä, ‘Lukijalle’, 12; M. Ryömä, ‘Otto Wille Kuusinen Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton kansojen ystävyyden esitaistelijana’, Kommunisti 9 (1951), 475–482.}

The Finnish communists did not find it difficult to connect these two aims. Accordingly, the party committee considered in 1951 that the war between Finland and the Soviet Union would not have broken out in 1939 and all the controversial issues would have been solved peacefully, if Kuusinen’s advice had been followed.\footnote{47 ‘Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen’, TS 4 Oct. 1951; see also Äikiä, ‘Sosialistisen työväenliikkeemme’, 131–132; Ryömä, ‘Otto Wille Kuusinen Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton kansojen ystävyyden esitaistelijana’, Kommunisti 9 (1951), 475–482.} Even Raoul Palmgren, who had felt confused in late 1939, but gone to the front to defend Finland, regarded Kuusinen’s participation in the government as an attempt to prevent the war from becoming a national disaster.\footnote{48 R. Palmgren, ‘O.W. Kuusinen 65 vuotta’, VS 4 Oct. 1946; ‘R. Palmgren, O.V.K.’, VS 4 Oct. 1951; on Palmgren in 1939, e.g. K. Kalemaa, Raoul Palmgren – suomalainen toisinajattelija. Helsinki: Tammi 1984, 112–115.}

The assessment was
repeated on some later occasions but there was a growing tendency not to mention the Terijoki government as one of Kuusinen’s great achievements.

The depiction of Kuusinen’s eminence in the fields of theory and politics and his connections to the leaders of the international labour movement was an attempt to say that Kuusinen was an important Finnish person. What was demanded was a new concept of great men and of history. Mauri Ryömä had tried as early as 1946 to teach the ideas of marxist history and explain that the great men were those who were able to perceive the historical and social forces of development and interpret the needs of the masses. Kuusinen filled these requirements since he had taken into account the needs of the Finnish people but had also been an example for other peoples.

Ryömä, therefore, wanted to position Kuusinen alongside other national great men such as J. V. Snellman and Yrjö Sirola. In 1951, however, Kuusinen’s merits were compared more often with those of the contemporary bourgeois leaders; Kuusinen was considered more patriotic than Mannerheim, who had been glorified by the bourgeoisie, but Mannerheim was not mentioned when the communists emphasized that no other Finn had had a comparable international influence or career and therefore wanted to include Kuusinen among the national great men. The international significance of Kuusinen was also referred to in the connection with the messages of congratulations received from the world in 1951 and by the awards granted to Kuusinen in the Soviet

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Union – in 1951 he was awarded the Order of Lenin, in 1961 the title of Hero of Socialist Labour.54

Though the communists campaigned rather extensively for Kuusinen, they were not able to have a great impact on the dominant ideas concerning him. Thus Kuusinen’s street did not find its place in Jyväskylä because the other political groups were against naming a street after a living person.55 In Kotka the response to the attempts to declare Kuusinen the greatest Finnish patriot and to see the Terijoki government in this light was much sharper; the strips of window paper attached to the posters advertising Kuusinen’s birthday in 1951 read ‘the destroyer of Tiutinen’.56 The negative attitude to Kuusinen was also evident during the 40th anniversary of the SKP in 1958; he was not considered welcome, and because of ‘his personal past’ and its negative influence on the atmosphere of friendship and good will, he was not given a visa to Finland as the head of the CPSU delegation.57

‘FINNISH LITTLE KAUTSKY’

The articles written on Kuusinen by the Finnish communists in the late 1960s indicated a strengthening of the Finnish point of view. This reflected the general orientation of the movement, whose acceptance as part of the Finnish society grew at the same time as the ‘white’ interpretation of events in 1918 (i.e. as solely the outcome of Russian propaganda) started to lose credibility. From the mid-1960s there was also a certain attempt by the SKP and SKDL to adapt the movement to Finnish conditions. This was also evident in history writing within the SKDL; it tried to take advantage of studies written outside the movement

and to see its own history in the context of the events and other political forces in Finland.58

The new historical orientation was most manifest in the works of Erkki Salomaa, trade union man and teacher, and the vice chairman of the SKP in 1966–71.59 His biography of Yrjö Sirola helped him to realise that the work in the Finnish labour movement created the basis for the activities in the communist movement.60 The article on Kuusinen was mildly critical of the tendency to see his whole career as determined by his position in the international communist movement. By reminding his readers that Kuusinen was named ‘little Kautsky’ in the Finnish labour movement, Salomaa pointed out that there were other sources for Kuusinen’s thinking besides the Russian version of marxism.61

Salomaa was also willing to take advantage of the studies carried out on Kuusinen in the late 1960s and early 1970s62 and to give a sense of proportion to Kuusinen’s role in the People’s Deputation in 1918.63 The draft of the constitution written by Kuusinen, devoid of any means of coercion and full of radical democracy, was newly emphasised as being in harmony with the democratic demands of the movement in the late 1960s. Salomaa did not hesitate to deal with the difficult questions of personality cult, purges in the Soviet Union and Kuusinen’s survival, though he did not have any new information on Kuusinen’s attitudes

58 Saarela, Suomalaisen, 10.
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and behaviour. He admitted that during the formation of the Terijoki government, the opinions of its members were not consulted. Although Salomaa used epithets of Kuusinen, he used them in less inflated terms; he described him, for example, as ‘a scholar who used scientific methods with a firm grip’.

KUUSINEN AND MARXISM-LENINISM

The attempt to study Kuusinen in his actual contexts was, however, short-lived. In the 1970s it again became more common to see Kuusinen in the context of the international communist movement. That was evident in Otto Wille Kuusinen – suomalainen internationalisti; the book mainly consisted of articles by representatives of various communist parties who, in the genuine style of the 1950s, extolled Kuusinen’s merits.

There were practical reasons for the change; after Erkki Salomaa’s death in 1971 there was no one in the SKP to continue his approach. Some of the party functionaries, however, took advantage of the accessibility of the SKP archives in Moscow when writing on the SKP during the interwar years and also produced some new information on Kuusinen in the Communist International. The visits of Kuusinen’s co-workers directed the interest towards Kuusinen’s later career in the CPSU.

In a way the change reflected the general orientation of the SKP which, despite its strong commitment to Finnish daily politics in the government, had a tendency to follow Soviet interpretations of marxism-leninism in theoretical questions. This orientation was consolidated by inner disputes in the SKP (which, despite the formal unity, was in fact divided into two parties as from 1969), and by the eager, occasionally

65 The writers included German Walter Ulbricht, French Jacques Duclot, Swede Hilding Hagberg, British Rajani Palme Dutt, Austrian Friedl Fürnberg, Norwegian Emil Lövlien and Hungarian Dezső Nemes.
even fiery, commitment of the minority of the party, especially its youth, to marxism-leninism.

This indicated a return to the model in which Kuusinen was mainly seen in the context of marxism-leninism, not in the context of actual events and other political forces in the Finnish or Soviet societies. Studies on Finnish communism from outside the movement, which had contributed to more information on actual events, were also forgotten. In a sense, Kuusinen’s life history was harnessed to demonstrate the power of marxist-leninist theory.

Lenin’s 100th anniversary stimulated interest in Kuusinen’s orientation along Lenin’s thoughts; Kuusinen became ‘a prominent agitator and teacher of leninist thoughts’, even during the phase when he hardly knew much about them. Some communists were more modest and saw Kuusinen’s meeting with Lenin in Helsinki in August 1917 of crucial significance for Kuusinen’s move to leninism – thus forgetting Kuusinen’s own writings stating that one did not become a leninist immediately. Everyone, however, remembered Lenín’s words about Kuusinen in 1921: ‘he knows and thinks’.

It was common to reiterate how great Kuusinen’s influence on the development of party had been, that he had acted as an intermediary informing the SKP of the experiences of the international communist movement and guided it to becoming a marxist-leninist party. Besides guiding the SKP, he had fought against the white terror and fascism in Finland. Regarding Kuusinen’s career in the Communist International it became customary to concentrate on his contribution to the organizational thesis in 1921 and the creation of the people’s front policy in the mid-1930s, sometimes even his strong position in the International in the late 1920s. In this connection it was common to mention Kuusinen as Lenin’s


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student and associate. Sometimes Kuusinen’s contribution to the fight against ‘deviations’ represented by Lev Trotsky, Grigori Zinoviev and Nikolai Bukharin was mentioned, but no-one remembered Stalin.71

The internal disputes of the SKP had some influence on the Kuusinen commemorations. In the 1971 festive meeting the legacy of Kuusinen was connected to the problems concerning the unity of the communist party. Although Aarne Saarinen, the chairman of the SKP since 1966, emphasized Kuusinen’s criticism of ‘rigid, narrow, one-sided and unrealistic attitudes’ in the inner disputes of the SKP and his speeches of ‘sectarianism’, it was not an attempt to find examples of Kuusinen’s activities in various situations and to use them against the minority of the party. It was rather the general idea of ‘a tight and united communist party’ that was regarded as Kuusinen’s heritage.72

Since the policy of friendship between Finland and the Soviet Union was becoming official in Finland, it was not necessary to refer to Kuusinen’s pioneering role in this field. The attitude to the Terijoki government varied; in the SKP festive meetings and in the book Otto Wille Kuusinen – suomalainen internationalisti the issue was not mentioned,73 but in the festive meeting of SOL in September 1971, Urho Jokinen, the chief editor of Tiedonantaja, the organ of the SKP minority, made the government his main topic and regarded its foundation as a duty imposed by proletarian internationalism. Thus he left out the patriotism that communists had connected with internationalism in the 1950s and considered, in a more straightforward way, the Soviet interests primary for Finnish communists, too.74 In 1981 Seppo Toiviainen and Juri Krasin revived the old connection between patriotism and internationalism but did not try to ponder the question from various points of view. They claimed that the foundation of the Terijoki government had manifested

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the real patriotism of the Finnish people. The representatives of the
majority, in contrast, regarded the Terijoki government as a result of
growing difficulties in Finland and ‘the phenomena connected with the
period of the cult of personality.’

Kuusinen’s co-workers, Georgi Arbatov and Fjodor Burlatsky,
emphasized Kuusinen’s interest in questions concerning state monopolist
capitalism, the democratic front against monopolies and the peaceful
transition to socialism. They did not, however, relate Kuusinen with other
persons in the CPSU or the theoretical heritage of Stalin. Some Finns
adressed the same questions in order to legitimise the SKP’s prevailing
line.

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In Finland the communist leader cult could not legitimise the power of
a small ruling group, to manage potential conflicts between the ruling
group and the wider society as in those countries where communists
were in power. In Finland, the Kuusinen cult consolidated obedience to
the Soviet interpretations of marxist-leninist theory within the SKP and
SKDL, though there were also attempts to give the Kuusinen celebrations
a significance more in accordance with the traditions of the Finnish labour
movement. The attempt to use Kuusinen to challenge the dominant view
of history in Finland was doomed to failure from the very beginning.

76 E. Kauppila, ‘SKPn historian suuruus ja sen tutkimisen ongelmat’, KU 29
77 G. Arbatov, ‘Etevä tiedemies ja marxismin teoreetikko’, in Mikkola (ed.),
78 E. Rautee, ‘O.W. Kuusinen ja kapitalismin kriisin uusi vaihe’, Kommunisti 12
(1978), 976–979; ‘Otto Wille Kuusinen’, Kommunisti 10 (1981), 730; E. Rautee,
‘O.W. Kuusinen ja kommunistien strategia tänään’, Kommunisti 10 (1981), 746–
749.
Leader Cult, 21–22.