

# The Cold War and the Politics of History

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The Cold War and the Politics of History explores selected themes on the role of history, historians and historical debates during the Cold War, and the ways in which the Cold War still influences present day politics and our views of the past 20th century.

The authors of the volume look at how people from various countries and contexts viewed the conflict as history at the time and how history influenced their views of the conflict itself. They analyse how the Cold War was and still is present in symbols, popular representations and acts of commemoration in different parts of Europe, from Berlin to Budapest, from Tallinn to Tampere.

The contributors of the book are leading scholars of contemporary European and international history and politics. The book is published on the occasion of Professor Seppo Hentilä's, Chair of Political History at the University of Helsinki, 60th birthday.

**EDITA**

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## Preface

The Cold War, the role of historians and historical debates during it and the political uses of Cold War history in the present, have been among Professor Seppo Hentilä's main interests for a long time. This collection of articles is published to celebrate his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday on 10 April 2008. It explores Cold War history politics in different times, countries and contexts, and looks at the various ways in which the Cold War influenced history writing, public debates and popular representations about the past. Most importantly, it looks at how Cold War history still plays an important role in the politics of the present world.

Seppo Hentilä began his academic career as a researcher of the history of socialist labour movement. In his theoretically ambitious doctoral thesis (1979), he explored the early developments of Swedish social democracy. His great merits in labour history include the three-volume history of the Finnish labour sport movement (1982, 1984, 1987). Since the early 1990s, his prolific research activity has focused on Cold War history. It has resulted in several important and highly esteemed historical works on the divided Germany and the relationships between Finland and the two Germanies, including the recently published book *Neutral zwischen den beiden deutschen Staaten. Finnland und Deutschland im Kalten Krieg* (2006).

In his analysis on 'divided history in the divided Germany' (*Jaettu Saksa, jaettu historia*, 1994), Hentilä excellently combined his historiographical interest and expertise with research on Cold War Germany. A crucial subject in his monographs and articles on German and German-Finnish Cold War history has been history culture and history politics, i.e. the cultural and political presence of the past. He has also influentially contributed to scholarly and public debates on approaches and concepts in this very topical field of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

Hentilä has taught political history at the University of Helsinki since 1971, where he has held a chair of political history since 1998. He has also authored several popular textbooks that are widely used at schools and universities, not only in Finland but also in many other countries.

Hentilä has been in charge of several successful research projects, especially on Cold War history, supervising and educating numerous young researchers and creating an inspiring research milieu and networks of lively international collaboration.

For their part, the articles of this book, written by Hentilä's colleagues and previous students, indicate his achievements in researcher training and international research cooperation. As editors of this book, we wish to thank all contributors for good cooperation in realising our aim of an interesting and thematically coherent scholarly anthology. We also wish to thank Klaus Lindgren, Ohto Rintala and Marjo Marin for their valuable assistance in various phases of the publication process.

On behalf of all those who have contributed to the making and publishing of this book, we wish to convey our warm congratulations to Seppo Hentilä on the occasion of his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Helsinki, March 2008

Juhana Aunesluoma

Pauli Kettunen

# History in the Cold War and the Cold War in the Present

PAULI KETTUNEN AND  
JUHANNA AUNESLUOMA

This book is on the Cold War and the politics of history. It is a multidimensional subject. On one hand, it concerns the different roles of history in the confrontations called the Cold War. The topic includes, on the other hand, the many-faceted presence of Cold War experiences, interpretations and conclusions in post-Cold-War politics.

The very concept of the Cold War should be seen as a historical interpretation that has varied and changed over time. The way in which it has been periodized in post-1990 historical research obviously differs from the ways people between the late 1940s and the late 1980s conceived of their experiences and expectations.

For many of them, ‘the Cold War’ was a concept referring to certain phases of the East-West confrontation rather than to this confrontation itself. The Cold War proper had started with the breakdown of the wartime Grand Alliance in the mid-1940s, reached its high point during the Korean War 1950–53, and ended in the so-called first *détente* in the mid-1950s. As people saw it, the crises of 1958–62 from Berlin to Cuba had brought the world on the brink of an actual war. Then there were phases in which one spoke about a return to the Cold War, or ‘the Second Cold War’, as Fred Halliday provocatively entitled his book in 1982 on the increased tensions in the late 1970s and early 1980s between the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*. London: Verso 1983.

For many contemporaries, the East-West confrontation, as such, gradually came to represent a mode of existence of the present and future world that was, more or less, taken for granted. The term 'war' in 'the Cold War', with its inherent notion of temporal emergency condition, does not meet such an experience of normalcy in the bipolar world. On the other hand, the metaphorical 'war' in the current usage of the concept of 'the Cold War' may ignore the unique fatality that was associated with the next world war, nuclear war, in people's minds and fears during the so-called 'balance of terror' and 'mutually assured destruction'.

Further, there have appeared historical interpretations about the epochal change around 1990 for which the 'the end of the Cold War' is far too limited an expression. In the aftermath of the revolutionary upheaval in East and Central Europe in 1989 the historian Tony Judt, highlighting the resurgence of populism, nationalism, anti-Semitism and other counter-Enlightenment movements in the post-communist societies, declared 1989 not only the end of the Cold War, but also as the end of the Enlightenment era.<sup>2</sup>

In a similar vein, the theses on 'the end of history' have suggested that the epoch then reaching its end was much longer than just the one of the post-Second World War international confrontation. Two main variants of the end of history -interpretation exist. The most famous one is the Hegelian thesis that Francis Fukuyama developed with support from Alexandre Kojève, claiming that through the victory of liberal capitalism and political democracy in the Cold War, history had reached its goal.<sup>3</sup> Another variant, drawing from the anti-Hegelian critique of 'historicism' by Karl Popper, argues that as the outcome of Cold War, the ideologies based on the view on History with capital H, i.e. history as a supra-personal power oriented to certain direction, suffered a decisive defeat. Thus, no one could any longer claim to be the true agent of a law-like historical process.<sup>4</sup> In different ways, these both variants of the end of

2 T. Judt, 'Nineteen Eighty-Nine. The End of *Which* European Era?', in V. Tismaneanu (ed.), *The Revolutions of 1989. Rewriting Histories*. London and New York: Routledge 1999, 165–180.

3 F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press 1992.

4 A. Touraine, *Critique of Modernity*. Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell 1995, 61–87.

history -thesis have linkages with post-modernist theses on the end of 'grand narratives'.

One does not need to delve very deeply into these discussions to find that while all these different notions of 'end' are dubious, they, at the same time, imply the significance of history as a dimension of Cold War confrontations. We may distinguish between three levels of conflict. At each level, history played crucial although divergent roles as an aspect of the conflict.

At the first level, the period defined from the post-1990 perspective as the Cold War was characterised by the political-military confrontation between the East and West blocs, dominated by the Soviet Union and the United States, respectively. At this level, some space also existed for neutrality recognised by both parties. One might say that, at this level, history as an aspect of the conflict was actualised, in the first place, from a realist perspective of international politics. For the actors of international power politics, e.g. Henry Kissinger who is examined by Jussi Hanhimäki in this book, history appeared as *magistra vitae*, i.e. as a store of lessons and the knowledge on previous similar cases to be utilised in decision-making. The tendency to view history, for example the case of democratization of West Germany, as a guide for current policy-making, has not disappeared, as is shown by Heinrich August Winkler in the book's finale.

Other Cold War era statesmen, such as Finnish presidents J. K. Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen, rooted their statecraft too on long historical continuities, external necessities and immutable geopolitical realities – as they perceived them – and as are analysed by Dörte Putensen, Raimo Väyrynen, Timo Soikkanen and Kimmo Rentola in the last section of the book.

According to the school of thought represented by Kissinger and other realists, the Cold War was not a unique phenomenon in itself, but only another phase in the *longue durée* in the history of international politics and great power conflicts. If this was the case, then ancient principles in the uses and usefulness of diplomacy, deterrence and military force, were still relevant, irrespective what the geopolitical particularities of the Cold War international system were. For others, however, the Cold War, with the dual appearance of previously unseen weapons of mass destruction and ideologies as driving forces of foreign policy, meant that the conflict was not just another cold war, but a Cold War with capital letters.

This leads us to the second level of the Cold War, which included the conflict between rivalling socio-economic systems, socialism and capitalism. Of course, the notion of inter-systemic conflict, namely the conflict between capitalism and socialism, was a political reality long before the Cold War. Moreover, it is reasonable to question whether the East-West conflict ever managed to encapsulate the rivalry between socialism and capitalism. Nevertheless, such an effort, based on the authority of history, was a crucial part of the Cold War as this inter-systemic conflict was in the core of the legitimation of Soviet communism.

It may be useful to recall that in his book *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* from 1942, Joseph A. Schumpeter asked whether capitalism can survive and answered: 'No, I don't think it can'. On the subsequent question, 'Can socialism work?', his answer was unambiguous: 'Of course it can.' Far from being any advocate of socialism, Schumpeter found in the dynamics and achievements of Western capitalism an inherent tendency towards socialism that had been accelerated by the First World War, the Great Depression and the Second World War. According to his prefaces to the second edition in 1946 and the third edition in 1949, post-war developments, notably in Britain and the United States, had provided further support for his argument.<sup>5</sup>

While highly original in his analysis, Schumpeter was but one of the intellectuals that during the wartime and the immediate post-war years constructed images of a future society within a framework dominated by the confrontation between capitalism and socialism. Most notably, his analysis is an example of the fact that in 1946 or even in 1949, it was far from self-evident to identify this confrontation with the conflict between the West and the East. The socialism Schumpeter foresaw winning in Britain and the United States did not result from an expansion of the Soviet power sphere and a subsequent implementation of the Soviet model. Actually, the Soviet Union and communism represented for Schumpeter a 'non-orthodox' form of socialism which, though, might later evolve towards Western socialism, including the Western ways in which socialism and democracy would be combined together.

Two influential interpretations of the Cold War conflict have made it easy to reduce the conflict between socialism and capitalism to the

5 J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. Introduction by R. Swedberg. London and New York: Routledge 1995 [orig. New York: Harper and Brothers 1942].

East-West conflict. First, an integral ideological ingredient of the East-West confrontation was the Marxist-Leninist theory on two confronting camps that represented two historically successive social formations, capitalism being the lower and socialism the higher stage of world history. This theoretical view also preconditioned the role and orientation of historical research, as appears from Manfred Menger's account of the institutionalisation of academic history in the German Democratic Republic in this book, as well as from Seppo Hentilä's numerous works on historical research in the divided Germany.<sup>6</sup>

Second, also the neo-liberalist view on historical progress that became highly influential after the collapse of the Soviet Union tended to identify the conflict between socialism and capitalism with the Cold War conflict. According to the latter interpretation, the solution of the Cold War had universally liberated the natural and, consequently, right mode of economic and social dynamics and wealth creation. Reverberations of this vision of capitalism having passed the test of 'war' against its binary opponent have not only been felt in the United States and the Western democracies<sup>7</sup>, but also in the ex-socialist countries of Central and East Central Europe. As Katalin Miklóssy shows in her study of the identity reformation of the Hungarian left after 1989, the successor party of the old regime had to adapt to neo-liberal ideals and individualism, and also

6 S. Hentilä, *Jaettu Saksa, jaettu historia. Kylmä historiasota 1945–1990* – Zusammenfassung: Geteiltes Deutschland, geteilte Geschichte. Etappen eines kalten Geschichtskrieges 1945–1990. Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura 1994; S. Hentilä, 'Der Kampf um die deutsche Geschichte: vergleichende Überlegungen zur Geschichtsschreibung im geteilten Deutschland', in *Vom öffentlichen Umgang mit Geschichte*. Tampere: Tampereen yliopisto 1995, 63–85; S. Hentilä, 'Saksan historiantutkimus yhdistymiskriisin kourissa', *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 93 (1995:2), 138–144; S. Hentilä, 'Über den öffentlichen Gebrauch der Geschichte', *Nordeuropa forum* (1998: 2), 83–90; S. Hentilä, 'Historieforskningen i DDR kontrollerades av "Sanningens ministerium"', *Historisk tidskrift för Finland* (2005:1), 108–122; S. Hentilä, 'Löytyykö totuus komissioista. Historiantutkimus ja totuuskomissiot', *Tieteessä tapahtuu* 8 (2005), 5–12, also published in *Suomalainen tiedeakatemia. Vuosikirja 2005*, Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia 2006, 87–96.

7 See for example the contributions in E. Schrecker (ed.), *Cold War Triumphalism. The Misuse of History After the Fall of Communism*. New York and London: The New Press 2004.

to face the difficulties involved in making a distinction between pre-1989 reformist socialism and post-1989 social democracy.

On the third level, the Cold War was a conflict of political regimes, including the dimensions of democracy, citizenship and human rights. Here, the role of history was associated with the rivalry between conflicting visions on human agency and the relationships between the individual, society and the state.

After the end of Cold War, the so-called history-political debates concerning the period have very much focused on this particular level of the conflict, and the other levels of confrontation – those of the political-military conflict and the conflict of socio-economic systems – are discussed from the point of view of the third level. Thus, the history-political controversies analysed in many chapters of this book include not only accounts of the repression people faced in the countries of communist rule, but also debates in which politics and politicians of the Cold War era in non-communist countries like Denmark or Finland are criticised for having ignored the evilness of the communist system, as shown by Poul Villaume in his article on the Danish case.

This means, that the frame in which individuals and individual acts and decisions are often seen in the post-Cold War world, is through the prism of this ‘master conflict’ between two different political regimes. The pertinent question of the 1940s, in time of alliance and bloc building about ‘whose side were you on’, became again increasingly relevant after 1990. Irrespective of what the individuals’ views and positions on the first and second dimensions of the conflict had been, their actions in subsequent analysis could be judged using the yardstick of the final outcome of the conflict between the two political regimes.

Henry Kissinger and other realists could be criticised for having engaged in negotiations with a lethal enemy and President Urho Kekkonen – at least momentarily – for assessing socialism’s inner strengths too high over US-style capitalism, or promoting a positive image of Lenin as a guarantee of Finland’s independence, the phenomenon investigated by Joni Krekola in this book. Lesser politicians and individuals could be accused for having become fellow travellers, finlandized, soft on issues such as German reunification and NATO-policies, or guilty of undue impartiality in the general portrayal of the two competing systems in popular histories, television programs, newspaper articles and school books, the latter of which are scrutinized here by Sirkka Ahonen. As the

defeated side appeared as an oppressive regime, it became easy to take for granted that the victorious side must stand for liberty. The call from the US in the 1940s for Europeans 'to stand up and be counted' in the struggle against communism, echoed in the 1990s as a call for Cold War contemporaries to exclaim where they had exactly stood at the time. This call has applied as much for historians as for anyone else in a public position during the 'war', whether they at the time realised that they were players in it or not.

In this history political reassessment of Cold War experiences historians have been involved in several different ways. The currents of the Cold War itself influenced general historical interpretations of it, and most famously on its origins. Traditionalist, revisionist and post-revisionist interpretations emerged as the conflict matured.<sup>8</sup> As Western authors were preoccupied in figuring out the sequence of events that had dissolved the wartime alliance, in the Soviet Union and in the other socialist countries, correct views of history played an even more important role, as Aappo Kähönen shows in his article on the linkages between legitimacy, reforms and Soviet history politics. In post-war Germany, discussed by Wilfried Loth and Hannes Saarinen, history perhaps more than anywhere in the Cold War world concerned the future and the present, and maybe not so much the past at all. In countries such as Finland not only Cold War history, but any type of national or international history could be viewed through the prism of Cold War ideological rivalry, as seen in controversies on national history and commemoration, analysed by Tauno Saarela and Heino Nyssönen in this book.

After the Cold War a twofold task and challenge for historians emerged. As the main intellectual currents among the profession led away from the aim of establishing final truths about the past, especially on issues of the magnitude and complexity as the Cold War was, a public call was made for historians – and by some historians – now to tell what the Cold War really had been about. Some heeded the call, starting from the premise that only after events had taken their full course from 1941 (or 1917) to 1991, could a final judgement of the conflict be given.<sup>9</sup> In

<sup>8</sup> See the classic outline by John Lewis Gaddis in J. Gaddis, 'The Emerging Post-Revisionist Thesis on the Origins of the Cold War', *Diplomatic History* 7 (1983), 171–190.

<sup>9</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know. Rethinking Cold War History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997.

spite the criticism levelled against this approach to what ‘the New Cold War history’ is and should be concerned with, this may in the end not have been the most problematic challenge historians faced in the post-Cold War world.

As the opening contributions of the book show, history, and by implication historians, became closely involved in a public process of reassessing the ‘burdens of the past’, and the ways in which the public would become aware and eventually get rid of them. These attempts at ‘managing the past’ have been closely entwined with contemporary power struggles, as shown by Pilvi Torsti in her chapter on the Bronze Soldier dispute in Estonia. In the post-communist countries physical and symbolic relics of the ancient regime became a field of heated debate and political contest. However, and somewhat surprisingly, the calls for truth commissions, official inquiries and commissioned histories of Cold War events and experiences, found resonance in the victorious West as well as in the East, where Cold War history could also be brushed aside altogether, as has happened in present day Russia. In this situation professional historians faced a difficult task to combine their public duties as important actors in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, i.e. collective dealing with the past, but also as individual scholars tasked to understand, sometimes explain, and not to judge.

Maybe Cold War history always was and still is too important a subject to be left for historians alone. But historians cannot leave it alone, for reasons we hope will become clear in the chapters that follow.

I

The Cold War in  
the Present

# Why do History Politics Matter? The Case of the Estonian Bronze Soldier

PILVI TORSTI

In my earlier work I have developed the various concepts and phenomena related to the presence of history.<sup>1</sup> In this article I attempt to analyse the Estonian Bronze Soldier dispute in spring 2007 as an example of history politics and other phenomena related to the presence of history. Finally I shall close with a discussion of the significance of history politics through analysing the consequences of history politics in Estonia and elsewhere.

## THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THE ESTONIAN BRONZE SOLDIER CASE

In 1947, a statue of a bronze soldier was erected in the capital of Estonia, three years after the arrival of Soviet troops and defeat of the Nazis. It was a Soviet war memorial, 'a Monument to the Liberators of Tallinn'. It was located in a park in central Tallinn above a burial site of Soviet soldiers' remains, which had been reburied on the site in 1945. In 1964 an eternal flame was placed in front of the monument.

<sup>1</sup> See P. Torsti, *Divergent Stories, Convergent Attitudes. Study on the Presence of History, History Textbooks, and the Thinking of Youth in post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Helsinki: Taifuuni 2003, 45–53.

When Estonia re-established its independence in 1991, the theme of liberation, which formed the core of the Soviet approach to history in the Baltic states, was rejected. In this connection, the bronze statue was re-named 'For Those Fallen in the Second World War'. The eternal flame was put out at the same time and the name of the square was changed from 'Liberators' Square' to Tõnismägi.<sup>2</sup>

Preparations for relocating the memorial started after clashes at the monument in 2006. In February 2007, the Law on Forbidden Structures (which would have banned the public display of monuments glorifying the Soviet Union or Estonia's fifty years of Bolshevism, and aimed specifically at the Bronze Soldier) was vetoed by the Estonian President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who argued that the bill did not comply with the Estonian constitution.<sup>3</sup> Estonian Russians and Russia voiced their disagreement with the bill when it was being discussed in the Parliament.<sup>4</sup>

According to the latest census (2000) ethnic Russians form 26 per cent of the Estonian population. Based on a 2006 estimation, about one third of Estonia's Russian speakers are Estonian citizens, another third have Russian citizenship, and around nine per cent are of undefined citizenship. The Estonian population, which made up 82 per cent of the country in 1934, had decreased to 62 per cent by 1991 as a result of mass deportations of ethnic Estonians during the Soviet era, together with migration into Estonia from other parts of the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup> In the 2000 census the figure was 68 per cent.<sup>6</sup>

The job of relocating the statue and the remains of the buried soldiers in the Defence Forces Cemetery of Tallinn finally started in April 2007,

2 *Helsingin Sanomat (HS)*, Aljosan lähtöä Tallinnasta edelsi vuoden kestänyt riita. 28 Apr. 2007.

3 *International Herald Tribune (IHT)*, Estonian president vetoes law calling for removal of Soviet monument. 22 Feb. 2007. <<http://www.iht.com>>. 28 Aug. 2007.

4 *HS*, 28 Apr. 2007.

5 After the Russian population the biggest ex-Soviet single groups in 2000 were Ukrainians (2%) and Belorussians (1%).

6 *UN Demographic Yearbook 2002*. Population by national and/or ethnic group, sex and urban/Rural residence: each census, 1985–2002. <<http://unstats.un.org>>. 27 Nov 2007; *U.S. Department of State*, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. Background Note: Estonia. <<http://www.state.gov>>. 27 Aug. 2007.

just some two weeks before Victory Day on 9 May, the most important annual celebration of Estonian Russians. The celebration was to take place by the statue. Before the relocation the remains of the soldiers were exhumed and identified, and their families were given an opportunity to reclaim the remains and bury them elsewhere if they so wished. In the absence of the law vetoed by president Ilves, the relocation was based on a different law, which allowed the Estonian authorities to place the remains of the buried soldiers and the statue in a less controversial location outside the centre of Tallinn. The remains of Red Army soldier were an essential factor if the Estonian authorities were to have a legal basis for removing the statue. The precise time of the relocation of the statue and the graves was not announced in advance. The process started when the authorities covered the statue with a tent and encircled the park surrounding the statue with riot fences on 26 April.<sup>7</sup>

Relocation of the statue and related activities led to controversy in particular between Russia and Estonia and internally between Estonian Russians and other Estonians. The Estonian embassy in Moscow was besieged for a week and violent riots continued in Tallinn for two nights, resulting in extensive coverage in the media and international attention.

The diplomatic relationship between Russia and Estonia has generally been problematic after Estonia claimed independence. Major disputes in recent years have included the borderline dispute between the two countries and the planned building of a gas pipe between Russia and Germany. Journalists have described Russia's relations with Estonia and its neighbouring Baltic state Latvia as 'freezing', and characterised by 'difficulties in agreeing on any minor or major issue'.<sup>8</sup>

7 K. Kunnas, *Viro valmistautuu kaivauksiin sotilaspatsaan luona*. Helsingin Sanomat (HS), 26 Apr. 2007; K. Kunnas and K. Koponen, *Tallinnan sotilaspatsaan siirtoa vastustanut mielenosoitus kääntyi mellakaksi*. Helsingin Sanomat (HS), 27 Apr. 2007.

8 S. Niinivaara and K. Kunnas, *Venäjän ja Baltian maiden hyiset suhteet estävät yhteistyön*. Helsingin Sanomat (HS), 26 Jan. 2006.

Pilvi Torsti

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:  
HISTORICAL CULTURE AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS  
IN THE SERVICE OF HISTORY POLITICS

*Historical culture* presents a form of relating to the past that is open to all the people in a society.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in contrast to academic historical research, it is not a professional relation with the past, but a relation expressed through the daily culture of a society. History culture is considered that part of the culture in which people face the past and try to come to terms with it: the arena/forum for the use of history. It includes mechanisms and avenues where knowledge about the past can be produced, transmitted, presented, used and experienced within a society. A list of examples for avenues of historical culture includes books, cartoons, videos, films, novels, museum presentations, contemporary political debates, political practises, historical exhibitions, television, personal histories, theatre, tourism, advertising, monuments, buildings and so forth.<sup>10</sup>

Typically all the definitions understand historical culture as having a many-sided nature and appearance within the society. Crucially important is the understanding that historical culture exists within society in several forms as part of the culture, and that historical culture emerges through a group of channels, from state approved memorials and curricula to the sphere of cultural institutions, architecture and mass consumption.

Although we define historical culture as ‘the forum/arena where history can be used’, it is important to emphasize that the idea of ‘using history’ here serves only as a tool for understanding, not as a condition

9 Historical culture (Geschichtskultur) as a concept became part of the history discussions in Germany in the 1980s, and therefore the German interpretation of its content has been very influential.

10 S. Hentilä, ‘Historiapolitiikka – Holocaust ja historian julkinen käyttö’, in J. Kalela and I. Lindroos, Ilari (eds.), *Jokapäiväinen historia*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura 2001, 26–49, 32. K. Füssman, H. T. Grütner and J. Rösen (eds.), *Historische Faszination. Geschichtskultur heute*. Köln, Weimar and Wien: Böhlau 1994. P. Aronsson, ‘Historiekultur i förändring’, in P. Aronsson (ed.), *Makten över minnet. Historiekultur I förändring*. Lund: Studentlitteratur 2000, 7–33. S. Ahonen, ‘Historiakulttuuri, historiantutkimus ja nuorten historiatietoisuus’ (History culture, history research and the historical consciousness of youth). *Oral presentation at the Finnish Historical Society in Helsinki 25 Mar. 2002*.

for historical culture. Historical culture appears as a collective concept for all kinds of products and narratives through which history exists in the daily culture, regardless of whether one can detect active and intentional attempts 'to use history'. The product-nature of historical culture is essential; we are talking about usable cultural products and commonly held stories (e.g. myths) of the society or smaller groups, which embody the historical culture of a society.

Historical culture can of course be analysed in different ways. We can be interested in different forms of historical culture, which seem central in different societies, or in changes in historical culture over time.

Definitions of *historical consciousness* (historische Bewusstsein), have varied among scholars within Europe. The most commonly held definition among German and Scandinavian scholars<sup>11</sup> has characterised historical consciousness as 'a complex connection of interpretations of the past, perceptions of the present and expectations of the future'.<sup>12</sup> Following this definition, Sirkka Ahonen has described historical consciousness as 'the rational way in which humans are connected with temporality' thus echoing the modern understanding of time.<sup>13</sup> Historical consciousness can help one orientate oneself in time; knowing and understanding the past can help one comprehend the present and influence future expectations. Thus historical consciousness is the way people and communities deal with the past in order to understand the present and future. Historical consciousness links the past and the future, and can construct a sense of continuity.

Analysing historical consciousness and its dimensions can be seen as cognitive history research which attempts to understand the mechanics of history politics and the meanings people attach to various aspects of the past.

This leads us to the third concept, *History politics* (Geschichtspolitik), which is the key concept of this article. Habermas introduced the concept

11 See for example J. Rüsen, *Historische Orientierung: über die Arbeit des Geschichtsbewusstseins, sich in der Zeit zurechtzufinden*. Köln: Böhlau 1994; G. Schneider (ed.), *Geschichtsbewusstsein und historisch-politisches Lernen*. Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus 1988.

12 M. Angvik and B. von Borries (eds.), *Youth and History, A Comparative European Survey on Historical Consciousness and Political Attitudes among Adolescents*. Habburg: Körber Stiftung 1997, A22, A36.

13 Ahonen, 'Historiakulttuuri, historianitutkimus ja nuorten historiatietoisuus'.

to refer to those conservative historians who in his opinion had used their professional skills, knowledge and positions for political interests when attempting to explain Nazi Germany not as part of 'normal' German history, but as an 'Asian act' which followed Stalin's persecutions.<sup>14</sup>

In my earlier works I have relied on the definition of history politics that emphasizes its active and conscious nature; the use of history for certain purposes is intentional, history is used for certain purposes. History politics is about using the results of history research, commonly held ideas and conceptions of history or products of historical culture to support and legitimise certain arguments and aims in the current situation. History politics is not a form of relating to the past but rather a societal phenomenon characterised by the interests and aims that direct the use of history in a society.<sup>15</sup>

In relation to historical culture and historical consciousness, history politics can be understood as a second level category, which makes use of different forms of relating to history because of political interests and purposes.<sup>16</sup> This leads to the idea that in a way history politics is based on a conscious or unconscious understanding of historical consciousness as something that a) can be influenced (ie. through historical culture) and b) can be appealed to, for example, for political purposes.

Producing historical culture is history politics in the same way as producing curricula is education politics. In an open society history politics can be practised not only by authorities in the form of school textbooks, museums and monuments, but also by such actors as journalists or non-governmental associations.

Finally, the interest in history politics is related to goals that seem to direct it. In his recent work Hentilä has further developed the idea of the intentionality of history politics by stating that history can be used to support political structures even without the actors' awareness of using

14 J. Habermas, *Eine Art Schadensabwicklung*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1987, 137–148.

15 Torsti, *Divergent Stories*, 52. Hentilä, 'Historiapoliittikka – Holocaust', 33. See also S. Hentilä, *Harppi-Saksan haarukassa. DDR:n poliittinen vaikutus Suomessa*. Helsinki: SKS 2004, 307.

16 Torsti, *Divergent Stories*, 53.

history as part of their arguments. In such cases, intentionality is a hidden yet relevant subject for analysis.<sup>17</sup>

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRONZE SOLDIER AS PART OF  
HISTORICAL CULTURE AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The Bronze Soldier in Estonia is a classic product of the *historical culture* constructed by the previous regime. Even after the regime change it has continued to form an arena or forum where history is being displayed. The importance of the Bronze Soldier monument as a historical cultural product for the Russian-speaking Estonians and in particular for the World War II Red Army war veterans is demonstrated through its use as a place for celebrating historically significant dates. The celebration of Victory Day on 9 May and Liberation of Tallinn Day on 22 September have gathered war veterans displaying other products of historical culture, namely Soviet flags and symbols.<sup>18</sup>

A competing historical culture has also appeared at the monument. A non-violent group of Estonians with flags and other Estonian symbols approached the celebrating Red Army veterans on 9 May 2006. Police led the Estonian group away but the angry comments among the public continued, with threats to blow up the monument unless authorities removed it.<sup>19</sup>

Thus the statue debate in Estonia provides a good example of the dynamics between history politics, historical culture and historical consciousness. In this case the Bronze Soldier statue and the Victory Day celebration, both important products of historical culture, were subject to a political decision officially aimed at lessening possible tensions at the site of the statue. But the decision was also a clear message from the Estonian authorities as to who presently controls historical culture.

Here we can note the law vetoed by President Ilves, which would have allowed for the removal of all visible history culture from the

<sup>17</sup> Hentilä, *Harppi-Saksan haarukassa*, 307.

<sup>18</sup> *BBC News*, Estonia split over WWII memorial. 15 Feb. 2007. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk>>. 28 Aug. 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Several articles in the Estonian newspaper *Postimees*. Quoted in *Wikipedia*.

Soviet era. This act of President Ilves also demonstrates the importance of control in relation to historical culture. Historical culture can also be evaluated. For example, historical culture in Germany has been evaluated as open and able to handle its difficult and painful past. Such openness can be considered as one of the fundamental conditions for democratic development, and the greater the stability of a democracy, the more critical, open and permissive the historical culture. Such a historical culture is also able to tolerate disagreements and conflicts.<sup>20</sup> Clearly, the historical culture has not been open in Estonia as regards the Bronze Soldier dispute.

From the point of view of *historical consciousness* we can look at the Bronze Soldier case as an example in which the parallel between past and present thinking can be observed among both Estonian Russians and ethnic Estonians.

As noted, the Bronze Soldier has significant symbolic value to Estonia's community of ethnic Russians. In regard to the past, it symbolises the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany. The Russian-speaking population views Estonia's annexation to the Soviet Union as a legitimate process connected to the defeat of Nazism by the Red army. This is based on the official position of the Russian federation.<sup>21</sup> In regard to the present, the statue symbolises Estonian Russians' claim to rights in Estonia, in particular to language rights and their right to live in Estonia as descendants of those who liberated the country from fascism. Past and present thinking are thus interconnected.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, many Estonians consider the Bronze Soldier a symbol of Soviet occupation and repression. In terms of the present

20 Hentilä, 'Historiapolitiikka – Holocaust', 47–48.

21 Since Russian-speakers do not have their own television channels in Estonia it is also quite understandable that they continue to form their political views on the basis of official Russian positions as communicated through the Russian media, which they continue to follow. K. Kunnas, *Ei mitään voiton päiviä*, Helsingin Sanomat (HS), 6 May 2007.

22 L. Hietanen, *Venäläiset jättivät jäähyväisiä pronssipatsaalle*, Taloussanomat 26 Apr. 2007 <<http://www.taloussanomat.fi/ulkomaat>>, 28 Aug. 2007, K. Kunnas, *Kenen patsas*, Helsingin Sanomat, Sunnuntai, 29 Apr. 2007. A. Daniel, *The problem is how to live together if the two peoples have such a different memory*, REGNUM News Agency 4 May 2007, in: <<http://en.wikipedia.org/>>, 24 Aug. 2007.

day attitudes of Estonians, many commentators saw the relocation of the statue as a demonstration of the unwillingness of Estonians to allow Russians to integrate and assimilate into Estonian society.<sup>23</sup>

In both cases we can also note Braembussche's definition of historical consciousness, which is slightly different and more critical than the simple notion of historical consciousness as describing the connection between past, present and future. Braembussche has namely emphasised the role of the present in his definitions of historical consciousness; people are reminded of past experience through its presence in the current situation. Historical consciousness may also illustrate how an individual or a community attempts to deal with the past in the current situation. For Braembussche, a historical experience is about attempting to reconstruct the past, while historical consciousness constructs the past because of the present. Thus historical consciousness 'forgets' parts of the historical experience. This forgetting can lead to historical traumas when people are faced with a difficult situation (e.g. the holocaust). According to Braembussche, historical consciousness should not 'forget' possible traumas but instead work them out. If historical traumas are not worked out, the memory of the traumas has a tendency to become mythical and an object of taboo formation.<sup>24</sup>

In the case of Estonia there seems to be the danger of such historical consciousness being prevalent among both major groups of the society. Ethnic Estonians focus on the independent Estonian state, and consider the past Soviet occupation as the anti-image (and Estonian Russians as part of it). They sometimes fail to see that Russians in Estonia were also victims of the system brought to Estonia as part of Soviet politics. On the other hand, Estonian Russians, in order to defend their right to exist in Estonia, focus their past-related thinking on the victory of the Soviets over the Nazis, a commonly acknowledged enemy, and fail to acknowledge the need to reconsider the Soviet version of the history of World War II.<sup>25</sup>

23 Ibid.

24 A. Braembussche, 'History and memory – Some comments on recent developments', in P. Kettunen, A. Kultanen and T. Soikkanen (eds.), *Jäljillä. Kirjoituksia historian ongelmista*. Osa 1. Turku: Kirja-Aurora 2000, 76, 80, 84, 87–88.

25 *BBC News*. Views diverge on Estonia's history. 27 Apr. 2007. <<http://news>.

*Pilvi Torsti*

An opinion poll gives us further information about the attitudes of Estonians towards the Bronze Soldier dispute and differences between the groups within the society. The poll conducted 5-22 April 2007 showed that 37 per cent of the population supported the relocation of the monument while 49 per cent were against it and 14 per cent had not formed opinion on the subject. Forty-nine per cent of Estonian speakers and only nine per cent of Russian speakers supported the relocation.<sup>26</sup>

INTERNAL HISTORY POLITICS:  
THE RUSSIAN SS-CAMPAIGN AND ESTONIAN RESPONSE

History politics is an overall concept that can be seen to include historical culture and historical consciousness. History politics can attempt to influence the kind of historical culture that is created or destroyed. Relocation of the Bronze Soldier in itself is naturally an intentional act, and as such history politics whose object is the product of historical culture, namely the statue. In the case of historical consciousness we can see, for example, Russian television as making history politics and thereby attempting to influence the historical consciousness of Estonian Russians.

In the following I have collected public statements and comments on the Estonian Bronze Statue dispute. The selection is not exhaustive. It is based on the collection available on Wikipedia in August 2007, as well as on articles I collected during the dispute. It serves to demonstrate how different history-political motives can be observed in the comments of various countries and communities.

The major history-political campaign was carried out in the Russian media. Allegations against Estonia of fascism, glorification of the collaboration with Nazi Germany, glorification of Nazism, resurrection of Nazism and pro-Nazism came from official Russian spokesmen, religious leaders and associations.<sup>27</sup>

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bbc.co.uk >. 28 Aug. 2007.

<sup>26</sup> *Wikipedia*.

<sup>27</sup> *Voice of Russia*. Estonia is Encouraging a Resurgence of Nazism in Europe. 10 Nov. 2006. <<http://www.ruvr.ru>>. 29 Aug. 2007, *The Daily Telegraph*. Estonia

For example, the Federation Council of Russia approved a statement which urged the Russian authorities to take the 'toughest possible measures' against Estonia: The dismantling of the monument on the eve of Victory Day on 9 May was 'just one aspect of the policy, disastrous for Estonians, being conducted by provincial zealots of Nazism,'.... 'These admirers of Nazism forget that politicians come and go, while the peoples in neighbouring countries are neighbours for eternity. The dismantling of the monument and the mockery of the remains of the fallen soldiers is just more evidence of the vengeful policy toward Russians living in Estonia and toward Russia'.<sup>28</sup> Thus we can see direct references to the present situation using the past as part of the argument.

History politics was also practiced on Youtube, where a number of video clips filmed with cell phone cameras appeared under the keyword eSStonia. The clips mainly supported the claims of police brutality during the riots.<sup>29</sup> According to an Estonian newspaper most of the clips were mislabeled, thus serving as mere propaganda in trying to present the recorded incidents as evidence for anti-rioters' brutal violence.<sup>30</sup>

The Russian Ambassador to Estonia, Nikolay Uspensky, declined an invitation to attend the reburial of the exhumed remains of those soldiers buried at the time when the Bronze Soldier was erected, who had not been claimed by their families. The Ambassador claimed, again referring to history, that his non-attendance was an 'expression of Russias highest-level disapproval of the removal of the monument, the exhumation, and the accompanying attempts to revise history to suit the political conjuncture'.<sup>31</sup>

Russia's chief rabbi Berl Lazar, who conducted one of the reburials of the soldiers buried at the site, denounced all statements describing

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blames memorial violence on Russia. 1 May 2007. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>>.

29 Aug. 2007, *Interfax*, Europe must assess neo-Nazism in Estonia - Kokoshin. 13 Nov. 2006. <<http://www.interfax.ru>>

28 Interfax 27 Apr. 2007. Quoted in *Wikipedia*.

29 *Youtube*. <<http://www.youtube.com>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

30 T. Aug. *Vandaalide videod koguvad Youtube'is vaatajaid*. Eesti Paevaleht. 29 Apr. 2007. <<http://epl.ee>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

31 K. Kunnas, *Venäjä jää pois Viron hallituksen järjestämästä muistopäivän juhlasta*. Helsingin Sanomat (HS), 8 May 2007, *Postimees*, Ümbermatmisel osales Vene sõjaväeatašee, 3 Jul. 2007. <[postimees.ee](http://postimees.ee)>. 30 Aug. 2007.

the Soviet soldiers as occupants and called on the Estonian authorities to review their position regarding the reburial of the remains of Soviet soldiers in Tallinn. Making direct parallels between past and present and thus appealing to the historical consciousness of people, he said that 'when Nazism unfortunately rears its ugly head in Europe today and as there have been attempts to deny the Holocaust, Estonia is acting in a manner that insults memory, which alarms us', adding that 'the Jewish people will always regard what the Soviet soldiers did as a heroic feat'.<sup>32</sup>

The Russian Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Associations (KEROOR) also issued a history political statement criticizing the Estonian government for relocating a Soviet WWII memorial in Tallinn and for alleged Nazi sympathies: 'The demonstratively defiant form in which the Estonian authorities have dismantled the Monument to the Liberator Warrior and are relocating the nearby grave of soldiers who gave their lives fighting fascism is not an accidental or spontaneous act,' the KEROOR said. 'Estonian authorities prefer to gloss over the fact that punitive detachments and the Estonian SS legion killed between 120,000 and 140,000 Russians, Jews, Ukrainians, Belarussians, Gypsies, and people of other ethnic groups during 1941-1944.'<sup>33</sup>

The Estonian side attempted to undermine the historical arguments of Russia and Russians and focused its on hooliganism. President Ilves stated that 'All this had nothing to do with the inviolability of graves or keeping alive the memory of men fallen in the Second World War... The common denominator of last night's criminals was not their nationality, but their desire to riot, vandalize and plunder'.<sup>34</sup> Prime Minister Andrus Ansip said in a televised address in Estonian and in Russian that the memory of dead soldiers was not served when 'a picture of a drunk shoplifter is being shown all over the world'.<sup>35</sup>

32 *Interfax*. Russia's chief rabbi urges Estonia to reconsider Soviet soldiers' reburial. 7 May 2007. <<http://www.interfax-religion.com>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

33 *Interfax*. Russian Jewish community slams Estonia over Soviet war memorial. 4 May 2007. <<http://www.interfax-religion.com>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

34 J. Tanner, *Estonia Removes Soviet War Memorial*, Washington Post, 27 Apr. 2007. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

35 *Reuters*. Estonia calm after Red Army site riots, Russia angry. 28 Apr. 2007. <<http://www.reuters.com>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

HISTORY POLITICS FROM OUTSIDE: VIEWS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Ex-Soviet countries echoed the statements of Russia and Estonia in their statements and comments, which all used history to support the arguments. The President of the Republic of Lithuania, Valdas Adamkus, announced that Lithuania was concerned and following the events in Tallinn. The President expressed his full support for Estonia, appealing to history: 'There is no doubt that respect should be shown to the memory of the fallen soldiers. However, the Soviet Army didn't bring freedom to the Baltic states, so can we blame Estonia if the Soviet soldiers' remains from a central Tallinn square are reinterred in another cemetery?'.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus defended the sentiments of Estonian Russians by referring to the historical suffering of Belarus in the Second World War: 'Belarus is the country that lost every third of its citizens during the Second World War. Any outrage upon the memory of the victims of that war causes us the sentiments of deep indignation and regret. .... We regret that the Estonian leadership has failed to have enough political wisdom not to fight the dead.'<sup>37</sup>

The Tajik Council of War Veterans condemned the removal of the statue, making a history-political claim that 'Estonian bureaucrats are behaving like fascists' and the Kyrgyz Parliament condemned the dismantling of the monument, calling it 'an act against history.'<sup>38</sup>

Representatives of the EU and Nordic countries provided statements that mainly supported Estonia. At the time of the Bronze Soldier dispute the EU Parliament adopted a formal resolution criticizing Russia's human rights record. In the related debate, history was used to demonstrate the strong and united support for Estonia. 'Today, we are all Estonians', stated Joseph Daul, the leader of the biggest European party, EPP-DE, echoing John F. Kennedy's famous phrase in 1963, when he visited

36 President Urges to Search for New Forms of Cooperation with Russia. Press release. <<http://www.president.lt>>. 27 Aug. 2007.

37 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus. Belarusian MFA Press Secretary Andrei Popov Comments to BelTA Information Agency on the Events in Estonia. 27 Apr. 2007. <<http://www.mfa.gov>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

38 *Russian News and Information Agency Novosti*, World Russia's upper house calls for cutting ties with Estonia. 27 Apr. 2007. <<http://en.rian.ru>>. 29 Aug. 2007, Itar-tas news referred in *Wikipedia* 24 Aug. 2007.

West Berlin shortly after East Germany had erected the Berlin wall.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, however, a different comment was given by the former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who stated that ‘the way Estonia is dealing with the memory of young Russian soldiers who lost their lives in the fight against fascism is in bad taste and irreverent.’<sup>40</sup>

Statements by the Nordic countries echoed their historical relations with Estonia and Russia and their foreign policies in general. Carl Bildt, minister of foreign affairs in Sweden, said that what was happening in Estonia was an internal matter and that the outcome formed an intricate part of Estonia’s independence. He said he had faith in the Estonians to sort it out and that he believed it to be important that they did so themselves, without international interference. Carl Bildt also pointed out that he understood why the popular reaction about the statue had been so ‘sharp’.<sup>41</sup> Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen followed suit but put more emphasis on the willingness of the Finnish government to remain neutral than on the importance of local democratic process in Estonia, which was the emphasis of Sweden: ‘Neither Finland nor other countries need to get involved. As they [events] are occurring in an area near Finland, then we will of course keep a very close eye on them [events].... It is not part of international protocol for politicians to request the resignation of a foreign government’s ministry, it just isn’t suitable.’<sup>42</sup> Jonas Gahr Støre, Norway’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, stressed in his announcement the importance that both sides stop the violence and respect each other.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, as a curiosity I include the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia to demonstrate how a dispute such as the Bronze Soldier case in Estonia enables different actors to voice their own history political

39 *European Parliament*. Wednesday in Plenary: EU’s relations with Russia centre stage. 10 May 2007. <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

40 *M&C News*, German ex-chancellor condemns Estonia war memorial removal. 27 Apr. 2007. <<http://news.monstersandcritics.com>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

41 *Alla dessa dagar*. Tallinn. <<http://carlbildt.wordpress.com>>. 29 Aug. 2007, C. Svahn, *Bildt talade med presidenten*. Dagens Nyheter 29 Apr. 2007. <<http://www.dn.se>>. 29 Aug. 2007.

42 *Helsingin Sanomat (HS)*, Vanhanen tyrmää venäläisten vaatimukset Viron hallituksen erosta. 1 May 2007.

43 Aftenposten 27 Apr. 2007. Referred to in *Wikipedia*.

views. Here we see Serbia, in its reference to history, as displaying itself along with Germany as the great condemner of Nazi atrocities. The official statement states: 'The future of Europe is also based on full commitment to the shared and best pages of European history, whereas the victory over nazism and fascism more than half a century ago undoubtedly ranks among those pages deserving lasting admiration among all in Europe and in the world.' Condemning the unilateral action by Estonian authorities on the eve of 9 May as contrary to this commitment, it continues: 'The highest respect for such monuments in today's Germany is noteworthy. We in Serbia shall forever place flowers on the graves of the Red Army soldiers fallen in the battles for the liberation of Serbia and Belgrade from Nazi occupiers. We shall do so also on 9 May this year.'<sup>44</sup>

#### WHY DO HISTORY POLITICS MATTER?

History politics matter because we can often observe the concrete consequences of history being used for political purposes. In the exemplary case of this article, the Estonian Bronze Soldier dispute in May 2007, we can itemise at least five types of consequences.

The first, very serious consequence was the violent protests which led to the worst riots and looting Estonia has seen since its independence in 1991. Hundreds of people were arrested and police had to use force to stop the riots that lasted for two nights. Many people were also injured and one person died as a result of the violent riots.<sup>45</sup>

The second consequence was the enormous material losses caused by the riots and looting. According to Edgar Savisaar, the Mayor of Tallinn, the direct losses exceeded 40-50 million Estonian kroons (2,5-3 million euros).<sup>46</sup>

The third consequence was the losses suffered by Estonian businesses as a result of the dispute. In late April 2007, three large Russian supermarket networks, Seventh Continent, Kopeika and Samokhval, banned all Estonian commodities, and in May 2007 Moscow's mayor,

<sup>44</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia. Referred to in *Wikipedia*.

<sup>45</sup> K. Kunnas, *Viron poliisi varautui uusiin mellakoihin Tallinnan keskustassa*. 28 Apr. 2007. <http://www.hs.fi/arkisto>. 30 Aug. 2007.

<sup>46</sup> Delfi. Referred to in *Wikipedia*.

Yury Luzhkov, proposed to boycott everything related to Estonia for 'actions taken against the Bronze Soldier Monument and graves of our soldiers'. He said that Russian companies should cut off their relations with partners in Estonia. 'One should tell our business: stop contacts with Estonia. The country showed its negative, and I would say fascist face,' the mayor said, adding: 'No one will be able to re-write history.'<sup>47</sup>

The fourth consequence was related to the EU and foreign policies. The EU-Russia Summit took place some three weeks after the relocation of the Bronze Soldier and related events. The hoped-for cooperation agreement between the EU and Russia was not reached, one of the reasons being the Bronze Soldier dispute in Tallinn, and the willingness of the European Union to show support for its member state Estonia.<sup>48</sup>

The fifth and perhaps most important consequence of this history political dispute was that it revealed underlying social problems. The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights stated that 'the riots in Tallinn and other Estonian cities served to highlight remaining problems relating to the integration of the country's Russian-speaking minority, which constitutes about one third of the 1.4 million residents. Despite a number of important legislative reforms since the first years of independence, this minority is still not officially recognized as a *linguistic minority* and continues to face discrimination and exclusion in everyday life, thus fostering frustration and resentment among its members. Many Russian-speakers still lack Estonian citizenship, Russian-language education has gradually been reduced and stringent language requirements restrict access to the labor market for Russian-speakers.'<sup>49</sup>

This illustrates the idea about the necessary role of the present situation in regard to interest in the past. In the Estonian case the Russian minority hangs on the historical monument of the Bronze Soldier and its location at least partly because of their present unresolved social problems in the

47 *Interfax*. Luzhkov proposes boycotting Estonia. 1 May 2007. <<http://www.interfax.ru>>. 30 Aug. 2007. Lenta.ru internet source 28 Apr. 2007 referred to in Wikipedia: <<http://lenta.ru/news>>. 30 Aug. 2007.

48 *Helsingin Sanomat (HS)*, Venäjän asenne yhdistää EU:ta. 22 May 2007.

49 *International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights*. Estonian Authorities Must Investigate Allegations of Police Brutality during War Memorial Riots. 30 Apr. 2007. <<http://www.ihf-hr.org>>. 30 Aug. 2007.

Estonian society. The important notion here is the idea of the politics of tomorrow: the major dimension of the influence of history is the future and politics and decisions related to it.<sup>50</sup> Taking a somewhat idealistic stance, one had hoped that the events in May 2007 would have led to concrete actions, 'politics of tomorrow', concerning the social problems of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia.

More generally we can note the practical consequences of history politics in different parts of the world. History textbook battles in China, Japan and India have led to riots in Gujarat and to attacks on Japanese companies and products in China.<sup>51</sup> The most extreme form of violence, war, can be largely motivated by utilising history politics as part of propaganda. The former Yugoslavia provides sad examples of this. In Poland, but also in other post-socialist countries, history politics has recently led to legislation enabling political purges of those involved in the communist system.<sup>52</sup>

I would conclude by stating that because history politics matters in a very concrete sense in societies, the analysis of history political interests should be seen as one important dimension of historical research. The objects of history political research are the different ideas of history held by individuals and communities and the motives behind those ideas. I would very much agree with the thesis that historical research has a two-level mission: the production of new historical knowledge and the analysis of the history political interests related to that knowledge.<sup>53</sup> Therefore an understanding of the notion of history politics in relation to history research is vital for historians as well as for active citizens of societies.

50 Hentilä, *Harppi-Saksan haarukassa*, 308–309.

51 History teaching shapes identity. *Oxford Analytica – International*. 9 Aug. 2005.

52 *Boston Globe*, Eastern Europe confronts its communist past. Russia warns of souring relations if statues removed. 24 Apr. 2007. <<http://www.boston.com>>. 30 Aug. 2007.

53 Hentilä, *Harppi-Saksan haarukassa*, 308.

# Confronting the 'Small State Syndrome': Danish Post-Cold War Foreign Policy and the Use of Cold War History

POUL VILLAUME

During and immediately after the Cold War, the main thrust of Danish Cold War foreign policy was generally seen by scholars, politicians, and the public alike in Denmark as having been basically loyal to the NATO Alliance. This was the case although, as historical research of the late 1980s and the 1990s demonstrated<sup>1</sup>, the Danish policy profile in NATO during the Cold War was characterized by more, and partly more far-reaching, reservations towards certain aspects of US and alliance policies than most other member nations including the smaller ones, perhaps with the exception of like-minded Norway.

However, this image of the Danish Cold War foreign policy profile has gradually been contested by some political and scholarly quarters, especially during the late 1990s and in the beginning of the new millennium. The present article attempts to outline the extent to

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., P. Villaume, 'Neither Appeasement nor Servility: Denmark and the Atlantic Alliance, 1949–1955', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 14 (1989), 155–179, and P. Villaume, *Allieret med forbehold: Danmark, NATO og den kolde krig. En studie i dansk sikkerhedspolitik 1949–1961*. København: Eirene 1995. A bibliographical essay is in P. Villaume, 'Denmark during the Cold War, 1945–1989. A Stocktaking of Post-Cold War Research Literature' in T. Borring Olesen (ed.), *The Cold War - and the Nordic Countries: Historiography at a Crossroads*. Odense: Odense University Press 2004, 17–41.

*Poul Villaume*

which this process of reinterpreting and rewriting recent Danish Cold War history has been motivated by, and/or has served to underpin, the gradual reorientation of Denmark's foreign policies towards militant so-called 'activism' after the end of the Cold War, and especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. Most recently, Denmark has consistently been one of the staunchest supporters in NATO of the US led military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001 and 2003.

Thus, the article should throw some empirically based new light on the old question of the mutual relationship between (foreign) policy change and the role of historical (re)interpretations in this process.

#### EARLY COLD WAR FOREIGN POLICY PROFILE

First, we must capture some basic features of Danish foreign policy after 1945. It is important to bear in mind that Denmark came out of the Second World War with the rather traumatic experience that its traditional neutralist security policy and low-key military posture ever since the disastrous defeat in 1864 to Prussia had indeed failed to save the country from a Nazi-German occupation. However, due to the Danish Government's so-called policy of negotiations and cooperation with the German occupation power during the war, Denmark did not suffer the same harsh consequences of Nazi rule that most of occupied Europe did. The inherent delicate political compromises and moral dilemmas which this policy entailed, however, did create some degree of domestic political bitterness and strife, although there was widespread political consensus in 1945 in Denmark to 'look forward'.

The post-War consensus included the slogan 'Never again an April 9', alluding to the date in 1940 when Denmark was invaded by Nazi Germany, hardly without any shots being fired. In other words, not only the Conservative Party (*Det Konservative Folkeparti*) and the Liberal Party (*Venstre*), but even the Social Democratic Party (*Socialdemokratiet*) and the Social Liberal Party (*Det Radikale Venstre*) now agreed that the foreign policy of isolated neutrality was no longer feasible. Instead, all political parties paid tribute to the principle of collective security, i.e. Danish membership of the United Nations. There was also a consensus that Denmark should be prepared to contribute with military forces to

permanently prepared armed forces under UN Security Council auspices and control, to be deployed anywhere against possible aggressors and violators of the UN charter.

However, as the Cold War systemic and ideological contest between the former wartime allies in East and West intensified from 1947–48, and as Soviet power expanded and was consolidated in Eastern Europe, it soon became the conviction of most Danish politicians that the UN security system would not be sufficient to protect small states such as Denmark against the threat of aggression and another occupation.

Still, Denmark's road to joining the Atlantic Treaty in 1949 was not an easy one. To the social democrats in particular, but also to the social liberals as well as to certain conservatives and liberals, the abortive Scandinavian Defence Union (SDU) was the preferred solution to Denmark's security problem under the new great power constellation of the Cold War. The SDU failed to materialize in early 1949, in essence, according to the perception of key Danish social democrats, because of Norwegian refusal to accept Swedish insistence on a non-aligned SDU. Many top social democrats in Denmark, including party leader Hans Hedtoft, regarded Danish membership of the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT) alliance only as the lesser of 'two evils' – the major evil being renewed isolated Danish neutrality. Indeed, leading social democrats feared that the neighbouring Soviet Union would regard Denmark's joining the NAT as so provocative that Moscow might use it as an immediate excuse to occupy at least parts of Danish territory.<sup>2</sup>

When Danish top decision makers' suspicion was confirmed in 1950 that NATO's secret defence plans did not at all cover Denmark (nor Norway) in case of Soviet military aggression in the short term (i.e. prior to the mid-1950s), official Danish attitudes towards NATO hardly became more confident. On the other hand, decision makers did not have much choice other than hoping for the best, contributing to the common military build-up and deterrence posture of NATO, and with the US nuclear umbrella as the ultimate – and awesome – security guarantee.

2 H. Branner, 'Vi vil fred her til lands... En udenrigspolitisk linie 1949-1949-1989', in *Vandkunsten* 3 (1990), 47–90; Villaume, *Allieret med forbehold*, 100–120; T. Borring Olesen (ed.), *Interdependence versus Integration: Denmark, Scandinavia, and Western Europe, 1945–1960*. Odense: Odense University Press 1995; T. Borring Olesen & P. Villaume, *I blokopdelingens tegn. Dansk Udenrigspolitik Historie 1945–1972*. København: Gyldendal 2005, 105–125.

Although Danish defence budgets were criticized by the major allies as too low and insufficient throughout most of the Cold War, no one ever raised doubts about the value of Denmark as a staunchly anti-communist and utterly democratic ally with a highly developed social liberal welfare state system. Thus, in this respect Denmark as a NATO member served both as a role model and as a show-window to the peoples of communist-ruled Eastern Europe. In addition, Danish authorities closed their eyes to very important top secret US military activities – including storage of nuclear weapons – at Thule and other US bases in Greenland.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, Denmark insisted upon several more or less substantial open and confidential reservations in NATO, political and military; at times, some of these reservations were indeed regarded as annoying by the major allied powers. The most well-known cases in the early 1950s were Denmark's no to foreign troops (US air wings) on Danish soil in peacetime, and in the late 1950s the corresponding no to nuclearization of the Danish defence forces, a reservation that was consolidated in the early 1960s – although highly secret – to include even wartime.<sup>4</sup>

The basic concern behind these reservations, at times explicitly formulated at closed NATO meetings, was the risk that Denmark would be drawn into a major nuclear war between the big powers, and that such a war would result in nothing less than the physical annihilation of the small and densely populated country. Therefore, while integrating into North Atlantic alliance structures, Denmark should take no military steps which could be construed or presented, with or without justification, as unnecessarily provocative as seen from the Soviet side. In more general terms, this is what is generally described as the 'alliance dilemma' of small states in a great power alliance, which often also involves the so-called 'security dilemma'.<sup>5</sup>

3 N. Petersen, 'The H.C. Hansen Paper and Nuclear Weapons in Greenland', in *Scandinavian Journal of History* 23 (1998), 21–44.

4 Borring Olesen & Villaume, *I blokopdelingens navn*, 153–236 and 288–347.

5 Glenn H. Snyder, 'The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics', in *World Politics* 36 (1984), 461–495; Villaume, *Allieret med forbehold*, 22–32; cf. also C. Due-Nielsen and N. Petersen (ed.), *Adaptation and Activism: The Foreign Policy of Denmark 1967–1993*. Copenhagen: DJØF Publishing 1995, 11–43.

Although the bans on foreign troops and nuclear weapons in peacetime were probably the most substantial and spectacular of the specific Danish reservations, they were far from the only ones. The slogan 'For the Atlantic Treaty – No to Yes-men' was coined in 1952 by the social democratic leadership, but in practice the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party were also inclined to adapt to its political content, if nothing else because at no time they could form a parliamentary foreign and security policy majority without the support of the social democrats. Thus, the slogan encapsulates a dominant tenet of Danish alliance policies up until at least the early 1960s: Basically, Denmark was a loyal ally in NATO, yet Danish decision makers did not uncritically embrace or automatically support any political guidelines or strategic directives which the major NATO allies, including the United States, came up with. What guided Danish reservations in NATO more than anything else was, to put it simply, a concern that the alliance would focus too much upon military and strategic deterrence at the cost of political and diplomatic negotiation and dialogue with the communist adversary.

Characteristically, key Danish decision makers argued confidentially in NATO that in its threat analyses, the alliance should not focus exclusively upon Soviet military capacities, but also on probable Soviet intentions and concerns. According to the Danes, the frequent more or less propagandistic Soviet disarmament proposals should be tested by NATO in practice, and countered by concrete NATO initiatives for a reduction of tensions and for disarmament, so that the Soviets did not gain a 'monopoly' in this respect. In the same vein, Western cooperation in the so-called COCOM, which involved tight strategic trade embargo against the Eastern bloc countries, met with more behind-the-scenes criticism and resistance from Denmark than from virtually any other NATO country; the Danes insisted in the early 1950s that the US definitions of 'strategic goods' were so broad that the embargo rather resembled 'economic warfare', thus contributing to the risk of 'hot' war. On the ideological front, the Danes were sceptical towards any form of coordinated US or NATO propaganda, which they feared to be counterproductive. The Danes preferred a low-key and matter-of-fact information effort.

Back on the military side, the Danes retarded and postponed for years NATO's demand to establish a joint Danish-West German Baltic NATO Command (COMBALTAP). It took the acute Berlin crisis and the personal initiative of NATO's Supreme Commander in the summer

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of 1961 to persuade the Danes to accept a somewhat 'softer' version in the form of a multinational NATO solution instead of the initial bilateral Danish-German one.<sup>6</sup>

#### FROM DIPLOMATIC DÉTENTE ACTIVISM TO 'FOOTNOTE POLICIES'

Still, the COMBALTAP constituted a major Danish integration step into NATO's military structures in the sensitive northern region bordering Soviet bloc waters. In an apparent attempt to compensate for this step, Danish governments initiated, in the early 1960s, what should be termed an activist diplomatic offensive in Eastern Europe. Officially, the aim was to build diplomatic (and economic) bridges across the Iron Curtain in order to enhance a relaxation of East-West tensions, and between the smaller countries of NATO and the Warsaw Pact in particular. Confidentially, the early Danish 'Ostpolitik' also and explicitly aimed at contributing to loosen the Kremlin's political and military grip on its East European satellites.<sup>7</sup>

The Danish initiative at the NATO Council Meeting in June 1966 to propose the calling for an all-European security conference should be seen in this light. Although the Danish proposal was rejected by the NATO allies as premature at best, the Danes stuck to their proposal. However, not until December 1969 did the NATO Council eventually agree to engage in preparatory talks with the Warsaw Pact countries on détente in Europe. At this point, West German Foreign Minister and (from 1969) Chancellor Willy Brandt had initiated his version of détente policies towards Eastern Europe ('Wandel durch Annäherung'). Danish governments of different political colours – social democratic, conservative, and liberal alike –

6 Villaume, *Allieret med forbehold*, chapters 3, 4, and 9; K. C. Lammers, 'Denmark's Relations with Germany Since 1945', in H. Branner & M. Kelstrup (eds.), *Denmark's Policy Towards Europe After 1945: History, Theory, and Options*. Odense: Odense University Press 2000, 260–281; P. Villaume, 'Leaning on England: Danish Cold War Alliance Policies in the 1950's between Great Britain and the United States', in J. Sevaldsen et al. (ed.), *Britain and Denmark: Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press 2003, 575–593; Borring Olesen and Villaume, *I blokopdelingens tegn*, 288–354.

7 Borring Olesen and Villaume, *I blokopdelingens tegn*, 575–587.

strongly supported this policy and took several independent initiatives during the preparatory talks in Helsinki and Geneva from 1972 to 1975 on a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Danish diplomats were particularly active in the preparation of 'basket III' of the Final Act of the Helsinki summit in 1975, dealing with human contacts and human rights ('détente from below').<sup>8</sup>

At the same time Denmark, often together with Norway, contradicted policies of the US and major European NATO powers by being the most outspoken NATO member country in criticizing the military junta in Greece (1967–1974), the Portuguese colonial wars in Africa, and the white apartheid regime in Southern Africa. From 1972 Denmark even provided humanitarian aid to liberation movements in Southern Africa.<sup>9</sup>

The renewed tensions of the 'Second Cold War' in the 1980s lead to the most controversial period of Danish Cold War security policies, the so-called 'footnote policy'. In the late 1970s, social democratic leader and Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen, always a strong supporter of Danish membership of both NATO and the European Community, developed an increasingly sceptical attitude towards the escalating nuclear arms race between East and West. Under his auspices, social democratic members of parliament, party activists and trade union leaders gradually joined many of the activities and slogans of the emerging independent anti-nuclear peace and grass-root movements.

When a conservative-liberal minority coalition government took over in 1982, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, the new foreign minister, seemed determined to turn Denmark, for the first time, towards the role as a 'core country' of NATO. The social democratic opposition, supported by the socialist left wing parties and the Social Liberal Party, opposed this new effort, and the oppositional so-called 'alternative majority' gradually radicalized its critique of aspects of US and NATO security and armaments policies, thus forcing the conservative-liberal government to pursue their own line in NATO – typically by passing parliamentary

8 Borring Olesen and Villaume, *I blokpedelingens tegn*, 648–665; cf. D. C. Thomas: *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2001, 52 ff.

9 Borring Olesen and Villaume, *I blokpedelingens tegn*, 678–681; C. Morgenstjerne, *Denmark and National Liberation in Southern Africa*. Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute 2003, 41–97.

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majority resolutions to be implemented as Danish reservations in the form of 'footnotes' to joint NATO Council documents.

For several years, the Danish government acquiesced to this unprecedented way of operating, primarily because the Social Liberal Party consistently voted with the government on all major economic and social issues, which the government considered decisive. Examples of the security policy 'footnotes' were the official Danish support of a postponement of the deployment of NATO's tactical nuclear missiles in Western Europe, a nuclear 'freeze' in the West and the East, a Nordic nuclear-free zone, an international ban on nuclear tests etc.<sup>10</sup>

The 'footnote period' ended abruptly after the 1988 Parliamentary elections when the Social Liberal Party left the security policy opposition role and fully joined the conservative-liberal government. At the same time, of course, the international Cold War confrontation and the arms race between the two superpowers already seemed to be heading towards a peaceful settlement.

The domestic political polarization over Denmark's security and defence policies during the 'footnote period' lasted less than a decade of the Cold War. Yet the effects were almost traumatic, and were to have long-term political and personal consequences to involved politicians and other actors on both sides of the main political divide, and on different levels. As we shall see, even post-Cold War Danish historical research on the Cold War has been influenced by this period.

#### LEGACIES OF DANISH COLD WAR POLICIES

During the first period after the end of the Cold War, consequences of the 'footnote period' appeared to be few, however. True to official Danish ideals of establishing a strong international legal order, Denmark was always, during the Cold War, a relatively substantial contributor of military forces to peacekeeping operations under the clear auspices and command of the United Nations (especially in Suez, Congo, and

10 N. Petersen, *Europæisk og globalt engagement: Dansk Udenrigspolitik Historie 1973–2006*. København: Gyldendal 2006, 241–311; P. Villaume, *Lavvækst og frontdannelser, 1970–1985. Politiken/Gyldendals Danmarkshistorie 15*. København: Politiken/Gyldendal 2005, 329–351.

Cyprus). In 1990, the first slight change in this policy occurred with the deployment of a corvette of the Danish Navy to the Persian Gulf to participate in the enforcement of UN sanctions against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait. Although the operation was based on a UN mandate and on a broad political consensus in Denmark, the military operations which the Danish corvette was part of were de facto dominated and commanded by the United States, not by the United Nations.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, the substantial number of Danish military units in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans from 1992 onwards was under formal UN command. Even so, the Danish military hardware, including heavy tanks, which were deployed in the Balkans in the early and mid-1990s even in operations with elements of peace-enforcement, suggested a certain novel degree of military 'activism' and 'militarization' of Danish security policies that had been unseen during the Cold War.

Still, a continuation of the traditionally strong Danish support for the diplomatic CSCE process was reflected during the peaceful transformation of the European security landscape of the early 1990s, after the disappearance of the Soviet bloc. For instance, in a mid-1993 comprehensive Foreign Ministry report on principles and perspectives of Danish foreign policy towards the year 2000 it was proclaimed that it was the new social democratic government's objective to "make the CSCE a central organization for peace and security in Europe".<sup>12</sup>

However, there was little evidence that the United States, nor major European NATO powers, took much interest in strengthening the role and influence of the CSCE (in 1995 formalized as OSCE, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), and definitely not at the potential cost of NATO. On the contrary, it became the explicitly – although confidentially – formulated policy of the Bush Administration in 1992 to 'prevent the emergence of security arrangements exclusively for Europeans, which would undermine NATO'. Therefore, 'a substantial

11 This was a situation similar to that of the Korean War in 1950–53, but at that time the questions of command probably contributed to Denmark's refusal to provide military units for the Korean operations, despite the fact that formally they were conducted under a 'UN hat' (P. Villaume, *Allieret med forbehold*, 645–652).

12 Udenrigsministeriet, *Principper og perspektiver i dansk udenrigspolitik på vej mod år 2000*. København: Udenrigsministeriet 1993, 50.

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US presence and continued cohesion of the Western Alliance' remained 'vital'.<sup>13</sup>

The Danish government's foreign policy report of 1993 did indeed conclude that despite the fact that there was no threat of any military aggression against Denmark in the foreseeable future, NATO would remain 'the central defence organisation in Europe', and that even in the future NATO would be 'the irreplaceable guarantor of Denmark's territorial integrity'. The stated reasons were, first, that NATO's integrated military cooperation prevented a re-nationalization of defence policies and defence forces of the member countries, and, second, that the alliance remained the principal instrument for securing the engagement of the United States in the security of Europe, which in itself had been a long-standing foreign policy interest especially for small states such as Denmark. Third, NATO was expected to have an expanding role as an 'entrepreneur' for universalist security organizations such as the UN and the CSCE/OSCE.<sup>14</sup>

Significantly, the question of NATO's geographical enlargement towards the east was not mentioned at all in the 1993 report. Indeed, this was not yet an issue for NATO as an alliance, probably because the Russian government had voiced clear opposition to such an undertaking since 1992. Not until a resolution passed by the NATO Summit in January 1994, reinforced in a subsequent statement by President Bill Clinton in Prague, the issue of NATO membership expansion quite abruptly became a question of high priority for the alliance – indeed, it seems, the new issue on which NATO was to concentrate its attention and resources; 'expand – or die' was the unofficial slogan to be heard in the corridors of NATO quarters at this time. At the same NATO summit, a US proposal was adopted to initiate the 'Partnership for Peace' (PfP) offer to selected former Warsaw Pact countries in Central and East Europe; PfP was conceived as a flexible platform which could lead to full NATO membership at a later stage.

From 1994 on, the Danish social democratic-social liberal coalition government, supported by the conservative-liberal opposition, unequivocally embraced not only the PfP concept but in particular the

13 Pentagon-National Security Council Overall Planning Directive, leaked to *International Herald Tribune*, 12 March 1992.

14 Udenrigsministeriet, *Principper og perspektiver*, XII, 53 f., 62–67, 200.

idea to expand NATO towards East and Central Europe, even despite vocal Russian protestations. Admonitions from some security experts that early NATO membership for some of the East and Central European countries might provoke or fuel Russian anti-Western nationalism and dangerously contribute to isolation of Russia, carried little weight in official Danish security policy elite circles. In 1994, Denmark signed comprehensive framework agreements on defence cooperation with Poland and the Baltic countries, including the build-up of the Baltic Battalion, and in 1996 Denmark, as the only NATO country, even began to openly advocate full membership of NATO for the three Baltic countries. In 1998, Denmark also initiated participation in a PfP program on military advising in the Caucasian region.<sup>15</sup>

Denmark also actively supported NATO's new mobile 'Rapid Reaction Forces', RFF (from 1992). In 1993 the Danish Parliament decided to establish a 4,500 men 'Danish International Reaction Brigade' (DIB), which would be available to the RFF (as well as to the UN and the CSCE/OSCE). The DIB has contributed, for instance, to the NATO-led UN Stabilisation Force (SFOR/IFOR) in Bosnia. Another post-Cold War military creation of NATO, the 'Combined Joint Task Forces', CJTF, also received active Danish support from its initiation in 1996. The main idea behind the CJTF was to create a more flexible and mobile instrument for use of the alliance's military resources, in particular in peace-supporting or peace-enforcing out-of-area operations, also known as non-Article 5 operations.

#### 'HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM' AND MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

As can be seen from the above, Denmark fully supported and followed the military and political transformations of NATO throughout the 1990s, including any preparations for NATO membership expansion among former Warsaw Pact member countries. Early on, this development was characterized by a senior Danish security researcher as a distinct 'militarization' of Danish foreign policy as compared to the Danish

15 P. Villaume, 'Denmark and NATO through 50 Years', in B. Heurlin and H. Mouritzen (eds.), *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 1999*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute of International Affairs 1999, 50 f.

profile during the Cold War (and even before the Second World War), in the sense that Danish armed forces were now being used as an active and integral part of the country's foreign policy.<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, since the late 1990s the militarization of Danish foreign policy has escalated significantly in connection with Danish active – or 'activist', to use the official phrase – participation in more or less unilateral Western/NATO out-of-area military operations against Serbia (Kosovo), Afghanistan, and Iraq.

In an unprecedented move, the Danish social democratic-social liberal government in February 1998 placed, with the support of the conservative-liberal opposition, Danish military assets at the disposal of the US-led command poised for attack against a sovereign country without the explicit consent of the United Nations Security Council, namely against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Quite similar operations were approved by the Danish parliament twice again in 1998, first in October against President Slobodan Milosevic's ex-Yugoslavia and then, in December, against Hussein's Iraq. In all three cases independent Danish and international experts questioned whether or not there was sufficient international legal basis behind these military actions.

This was also the case in March 1999 when Denmark contributed eight F-16 fighter-bombers to the massive US led NATO air offensive for 78 days against Ex-Yugoslavia. The immediate purpose of the NATO campaign was to force President Milosevic to accept the Western ultimatum at the Rambouillet talks to admit NATO forces on Yugoslav and Kosovo soil to ensure political autonomy for Kosovo. The NATO operation was unilateral in sense that it was not authorized by the UN Security Council; it was also the first offensive NATO military operation ever 'out-of-(NATO)-area', and it was even, according to many observers, 'out-of-charter', since Yugoslavia could not in any meaningful way be said to threaten the security of any NATO country. The Danish government conceded that the operation might not be 'legal' in the traditional sense, but like the US government and the NATO alliance as such it insisted that the operation was fully 'legitimate' since the lives of thousands of

16 B. Heurlin, 'Danish Security Policy over the last 50 Years – Long-Term Essential Security Priorities', in B. Heurlin and H. Mouritzen (eds.), *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2001*. Copenhagen: Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Institut 2001, 29–50.

Albanian Kosovars were at stake faced with impending atrocities – or even genocide – from the Serbian forces in Kosovo.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the novel concept of 'humanitarian intervention' was used to legitimize NATO's air war against ex-Yugoslavia. As in Western public discourse in general, it was surprisingly soon forgotten or repressed in Danish public debate and among decision makers that the Serb atrocities, killings, and 'ethnic cleansing' against the Albanian Kosovars on a mass scale occurred *after* and in part as a direct consequence of the initiation of the United States and NATO air offence, not the other way round. In justification of the air war, chronology was reversed. In the same vein, it was ignored or forgotten that NATO's Supreme Commander, US General Wesley Clark, explicitly told US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright shortly before the air war started that the reason for the war was that 'NATO's credibility [had been put] on the line', and that similar statements were made publicly at the time by President Bill Clinton and by British Prime Minister Tony Blair.<sup>18</sup>

Notwithstanding, so-called human rights activism, in combination with a certain kind of moral absolutism, gained further ground in official Danish security policy vocabulary after the Kosovo experience.<sup>19</sup>

Immediately after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, the shocked Danish social democratic Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen publicly assured that Denmark would 'stand shoulder to shoulder' with the United States and would be 'behind the US all the way' in what U.S. President George W. Bush had already termed 'the war against terror'. War was to be launched, in other words. As Washington started its air war against Afghanistan in October, 2001, the Danish government accordingly sent special forces as well as air

17 T. Brems Knudsen, 'Humanitær intervention i Kosovo: Konsekvenser for FN og det internationale samfund', in *Militært Tidsskrift* 128 (1999).

18 For documentation on these points, see, e.g., A. J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities & Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2003, 181–197; and N. Chomsky, *Failed States: The Abuses of Power and the Assault on Democracy*. New York: Metropolitan Books 2006, 94–101.

19 For an introductory argument, see Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Institut [DUPI], *FN, verden og Danmark*. Copenhagen: Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Institut 1999, 211–250; DUPI, *Humanitær intervention. Retlige og politiske aspekter*. København: Dansk Udenrigspolitisk Institut 1999.

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support for the US 'Operation Enduring Freedom' aimed at toppling the Taliban regime and installing a pro-Western regime in Kabul.

Since 2002 Denmark, from now on under the liberal-conservative government of Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, has contributed to the NATO-led international stabilization force in Afghanistan (ISAF) with a relatively high-profile force of several hundred troops, especially in the southern Helmand province, a traditional stronghold for the Taliban. In 2007 the number of Danish troops in Afghanistan was even substantially increased, and with the support of the social democratic opposition.

In late 2002 and early 2003, the Danish liberal-conservative government signalled its preparedness to participate in a US led war on Iraq, with or without prior authorization from the UN Security Council. Remarkably, the government insisted that Denmark had reasons of her own to go to war against Iraq, reasons which had not to do with any existence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Rather, the ostensible defiance of Saddam Hussein's regime of several UN Security Council resolutions on Iraqi WMD was the sole reason for Denmark's active participation in the invasion of Iraq. Despite the insistence of the government to present its decision as concern for the reputation of the United Nations, many observers pointed to the fact that Iraqi WMD were actually mentioned about a dozen times in the very parliamentary bill of March 2003 which the government presented as the basis for Denmark's participation in the US-led attack against Iraq. The bill was passed with the votes only of the government and its populist-right wing supporting party, the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*).

The most recent major step in consolidating the new direction of Danish security and defence policies was taken with the 2004 defence agreement in parliament, covering the period 2005–2009. The agreement was supported by a broad parliamentary majority, which included the conservative-liberal and the social democratic opposition party. According to this agreement, Danish defence forces are no longer designed for the territorial defence of Denmark, but exclusively for international operations, especially combat operations, and in conjunction with US and other Western forces.<sup>20</sup>

20 B. Heurlin (red.), *Nationen eller verden? De nordiske landes forsvar i dag*. DJØF-forlagene: København 2007, chapter 3; for the text of the 2004 parliamentary

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In sum, then, it appears obvious that since the end of the Cold War, Danish governments, social democratic and conservative-liberal alike, have pursued a novel course in the country's foreign and security policies, marked by (1) clearly more focus on the use of Danish military forces as an integral part of policies, and (2) an intimate security policy in tandem with the administrations in Washington, regardless of political colour (Bush Sr., Clinton, Bush Jr.).

How to account for this change of policies, i.e. from being a loyal, yet independent ally with reservations during the Cold War to being a super loyal – uncritical, some would say – ally of the United States after the end of the Cold War? Several explanations have been suggested.

First, the new policies have been explained in terms of geopolitical theories, implying that after the Cold War, Denmark as a small state has a foreign policy interest in forging even closer ties with the distant transatlantic superpower as a counterweight to the reunified German neighbour as part of the emerging European Union.<sup>21</sup>

Second, it has been pointed out that increasingly strong Danish commercial and technological interests link Denmark to US strategic initiatives and defence policies. For instance, since the Gulf War in 1990, key Danish shipping company A.P. Møller-Maersk has become the third most important contractor in the world of transportation services for the US government, primarily the Pentagon. At the same time, certain Danish high-tech companies have gained important contracts from the Pentagon.<sup>22</sup>

Third, Denmark's possession of Greenland in the strategically important and potentially resource-rich arctic area has been regarded as an additional reason for close ties between Denmark and the American superpower in the prospective international scramble for oil and sea-

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defence agreement, see <http://forsvaret.dk/NR/rdonlyres/BD0DB719-4F0F-41A4-AEDB-4F28C602FCE0/0/20050318Implementeringsnotatet6.pdf>

21 O. Wæver, 'Fra halvneutral til hyperallieret – men hvor længe?', in *Atlantsammenslutningen, På sporet af europæisk sikkerhed?* København: Atlantsammenslutningen 2000, 57–72; see also H. Mouritzen & A. Wivel (eds.), *The Geopolitics of Euro-Atlantic Integration*, London: Routledge 2005.

22 For details, see *Børsens Nyhedsmagasin* (Copenhagen), 15 June 2007.

routes, and in connection with the establishment of the US Missile Defence System.<sup>23</sup>

Fourth, unusually close personal ties and individual inclinations among key decision makers in Denmark and in the United States since the early 1990s have consolidated the intimate official relations between Copenhagen and Washington.<sup>24</sup>

Fifth, the new policies may be seen as a kind of compensation or ‘doing penance’ for the controversial – traumatic, to some – ‘footnote period’ of the late Cold War period which, according to Danish conservative and liberal forces in particular (although also, more indirectly, according to certain leading social democrats), seriously threatened the credibility of Denmark as a loyal NATO ally in the eyes of Washington and major European NATO countries.<sup>25</sup>

Sixth, and closely related to the previous point, even after the end of the Cold War the national security of Denmark is regarded as basically depending on the power – and ultimately the nuclear power – of the United States. Also in the age of terror and Islamic fundamentalism, it is in the fundamental short and long-term interest of Denmark to forge as close political, commercial, and military relations with the United States as possible.

The crucial point in this connection is that in the public and official justification of the post-Cold War Danish ‘militarized’ security policy in close conjunction with Washington, the Danish liberal-conservative government, and Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen in particular, has put overriding focus upon the fifth and sixth of the reasons listed above. This may be seen as part of the government’s proclaimed ‘contest of values’

23 This point is stressed in B. Lidegaard and T. Højrup, ‘Suverænitetssarbejde og velfærdsudvikling i Danmark’, in T. Højrup & K. Bolving (red.), *Velfærdssamfund – velfærdsstatens forsvarsform?* København: Museum Tusulanums Forlag 2007, 209–246.

24 Individuals to be mentioned in this connection include, in particular, Hans Hækkerup, former social democratic Minister of Defense, who developed close ties to officials in the Pentagon and the RAND Corporation, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, former social democratic Prime Minister, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, liberal Prime Minister since 2001, who developed personal ties to Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, respectively.

25 Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, *Fodfejl. Da Danmark svigtede under den kolde krig* København: Gyldendal 2004.

(*Kulturkampf*), which includes a confrontation with the so-called Danish 'small state syndrome'.

A striking example of this point was given by Anders Fogh Rasmussen in a major magazine interview on September 11, 2006, where he levelled an unprecedented general criticism of Danish foreign policy "during the past century". According to the Prime Minister, the country's 'foreign policy was filled with double standards and hypocrisy' because the epoch was

dominated by a typical small state thinking of living quiet and unnoticed, pretending to be neutral and offending no one. This kind of thinking has to be changed. [...] In the 1930s, during the [Nazi German] occupation and to a large degree during the Cold War, the basic attitude was that we should enjoy liberty and peace while others were fighting for it. This is not an acceptable way of thinking in the world we live in today. We must also make our contribution, even though we are a small country.<sup>26</sup>

This was indeed a revisionist reinterpretation of Danish foreign policy history of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It not only criticized the small state policy of quiescence, acquiescence and cooperation vis-à-vis Nazi Germany during the 1930s and during the Second World War. It also defamed the entire Cold War foreign policy of not only the social democrats and the Social Liberal Party, but also that of the Prime Minister's own Liberal Party and, by implication, that of the Conservative Party as well. According to the Prime Minister, these parties had in essence been pusillanimous, coward and defeatist confronted with the Soviet neighbouring power and military threat. How may this fundamental historical reinterpretation of recent Danish Cold War history be explained?

#### 'WHICH SIDE WERE THEY ON?'

First of all, it must be noted that statements such as the above had been long in the making. During the so-called 'footnote period' of the 1980s, voices were admittedly heard to the effect that the policies of the parliamentary 'footnote majority' were less than loyal to the United States and the

26 *Mandag Morgen* 30, 11 September 2006.

NATO alliance as such. It was no coincidence when conservative Prime Minister Poul Schlüter asserted in Parliament in 1988 that ultimately these policies would 'jeopardize Denmark's full membership of NATO'.<sup>27</sup> However, the conservative-liberal government at the time consequently refused to step down as a result of being 'voted down' in parliament on security policy issues, since it regarded its 'restoring economic policies' as in effect more important; a parliamentary majority was behind these policies since they were supported by the Social Liberal Party which otherwise was one of the 'footnote parties'.

Therefore, hardly anybody else at the time than probably extreme right wing fringes would openly accuse the 'footnote parties' as such of being outright and consciously disloyal and treacherous to the country and to the alliance. But this situation changed decisively during the following decade and afterwards. It developed slowly, but accelerated as the 1990s progressed. In 1994, the conservative intellectual weekly newspaper '*Weekendavisen*' opened a major critical debate on the political excesses of the Danish extreme left wing of the 1970s and 1980s, in particular its alleged fascination of the totalitarianism of communist-led states.<sup>28</sup>

The public newspaper debate escalated during the late 1990s, and was accompanied by the additional publication of a number of books originating from both sides of the divide. In contrast to the early and mid-1990s, when the debate unfolded between intellectual former (or current) members of radical leftist organisations and outspoken liberal-conservative individual debaters, the two sides now encompassed

27 In 1987 Danish history professor Bent Jensen published a monograph, based on open sources only, on Danish-Soviet Cold War relations (*Tryk og tilpasning: Sovjetunionen og Danmark siden 2. verdenskrig*. København: Gyldendal 1987). Jensen suggested that Danish foreign and security policies since 1945 had been formed, to a large degree, by Soviet pressures and Danish adaptation to Soviet policies. Generally, Bent Jensen's book received rather cool and sceptical reviews.

28 Ten years earlier, Bent Jensen had published a monograph of a somewhat similar character, namely on Danish intellectuals, Communists and 'fellow travellers' who had expressed various degrees of sympathy with Stalinist Soviet Union during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s (*Stalinismens fascination og danske venstreintellektuelle*, København: Gyldendal 1984). The book aroused some debate, but primarily in quite narrow circles due to the historical nature of book; most of the individuals who came under fire in the book were no longer alive.

representatives of the broad liberal-conservative spectrum on the one hand, and on the other hand representatives of the whole range of socialist and social democratic oriented groupings and parties, and included even the Social Liberal Party, i.e. the so-called center-left 'cultural radical tradition' in Denmark.

The new tenet of conservative-liberal criticism in the late 1990s contained more or less open intimations that the Social Democratic Party and the Social Liberal Party had, in effect, joined the communist and socialist left wing in crossing the line of demarcation between freedom and totalitarianism. The title of a book on the responsibility of the social democratic opposition during the 'footnote period', written by Nils Jæger, a retired top official of the Danish Foreign Ministry and published in 1999, was indicative in this respect. The title, 'The Historical Desertion' (*Det historiske svigt*), pointed to the author's outright accusation against the parliamentary majority of 'siding with the enemy in the great world conflict'.<sup>29</sup> That same year, history professor Bent Jensen published a lengthy monograph on Danish-Soviet relations from 1945 to 1965, primarily based upon declassified Soviet source material. Although his analysis and conclusions were in fact somewhat ambiguous (or contradictory) as to the degree of actual Soviet influence upon Danish security policies during the early years of the Cold War, his book was uncritically interpreted by most media as supporting a thesis of general Danish acquiescence or even appeasement towards Soviet demands.<sup>30</sup>

A third book published in 1999 went much further, namely 'Which side were they on?', edited by Bertel Haarder, former Minister of Education and long-time leading member of the Liberal Party (*Venstre*). The main thrust of the book was contained in its remarkable introduction, written by Anders Fogh Rasmussen, then leader of the opposition in parliament and leader of the Liberal Party. Fogh Rasmussen announced that

29 N. Jæger, *Det historiske svigt: Socialdemokratiet og venstrefløjen i den kolde krig*. København: Gyldendal 1999, 29.

30 B. Jensen, *Bjørnen og haren: Sovjetunionen og Danmark 1945–1965*. Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag 1999. For nuanced reviews, see T. Borring Olesen & N. S. Sørensen, 'Spiser bjørne harer?', *Historie 2* (2000), 358–366, and P. Villaume, 'Mellem "skræmt neutralisme" og "sikker dømmekraft"', *Arbejderhistorie 2* (2001), 74–80.

a showdown is badly needed [...] with the forces who, during the Cold War, played into the hands of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, [with] those people who were not able to grasp that there is, after all, a difference between friend and foe. The simple – yet depressing – fact is that here we have to do with people who have in fact committed great intellectual and moral betrayal, yet has entirely escaped any charge.

Against this background, Fogh Rasmussen proposed the appointment of an independent commission to look into the history of Denmark during the Cold War. The liberal leader did stress that the purpose of the commission should ‘not be to punish’; the reason was not, apparently, that there was no reason to punish, but rather that it was ‘difficult to see any purpose in placing a legal responsibility for something that happened decades ago’. Thus, the real purpose was not revenge, but ‘to come to grips with our past’.<sup>31</sup>

Nils Jæger’s and especially Fogh Rasmussen’s nearby-accusations against the ‘footnote majority’, including the social democrats and the Social Liberal Party, of outright treason was soon followed by other similar voices in the ongoing newspaper debate.<sup>32</sup> From this point of time on, the extraordinarily strong connotations of words and expressions such as ‘betrayal’, ‘close to treason’, ‘useful idiots’, ‘desertion’, and ‘siding with the enemy’ became part of a broadly accepted public discourse on Denmark during the Cold War. The notion ‘betrayal’ seemed to have become, to use the habermasian expression, a ‘communicative act’, in the sense that it has been incorporated in the consensus that constitutes a significant part of the Danish debate over Cold War history.<sup>33</sup>

31 A. Fogh Rasmussen, ‘Introduktion’, in B. Haarder (red.), *Hvem holdt de med?* København: Peter la Cours Forlag 1999, 8 f.

32 See especially contributions by Kjeld Olesen and by Peter la Cour, in B. Blüdnikow (red.), *Opgøret om den kolde krig*. København: Peter la Cours Forlag 2003, 340 and 359, respectively.

33 It should be noted that in former Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen’s book *Fodfejl* on Denmark during the Cold War, the notion ‘betrayal’ is not used. ‘Desertion’, on the other hand, is indeed used in the subtitle of the book (‘When Denmark Deserted During the Cold War’). For a similar approach, see the book by Danish Lieutenant General K. Hillingsø, *Trusselsbilledet – en koldkriger taler ud*. København: Gyldendal 2004.

#### COMMISSIONED COLD WAR HISTORY

The following year, in June 2000, the social democratic Nyrup Rasmussen government actually assigned a research commission under the auspices of the independent but government-sponsored Danish Foreign Policy Institute, DUPI (from 2003: Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS), to look into the external Cold War threat to Danish security originating from the Warsaw Pact. Initially, the liberal-conservative opposition agreed that this investigation should be a supplement to the so-called PET Commission already assigned in 1999 by the social democratic government. On the basis of the archives of the Intelligence Service of the Police (PET), the latter commission was to look into the internal security threat from leftist and rightist parties and groupings during the Cold War.

However, general elections in late 2001 led to a change of government, and in 2002 the new liberal-conservative government under Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen insisted, prompted by the government's parliamentary basis, the populist-right wing Danish People's Party, that the mandate of the DUPI Cold War Commission be expanded to include an investigation of official Danish security policy and the security policy debate, with special emphasis on the late period of the Cold War, i.e. the 'footnote period'. In particular, attempts by the Warsaw Pact countries to exert direct or indirect influence, through Danish parties and organizations, on Danish debates and foreign and security policy formulation was to be examined.<sup>34</sup>

An intermezzo followed in 2003 when the Danish People's Party insisted that this was not enough. MPs from the DFP explicitly stated that additional funding should be given to a research project on the Soviet Gulag system, headed by history professor Bent Jensen from the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). As a result of the intervention of the Danish People's Party (DPP), four million Danish kroner (0.6 million euros) were actually earmarked on the budget for such a project and allocated to the SDU, although the DPP readily managed to change

<sup>34</sup> See Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier [DIIS], *Danmark under den kolde krig. Den sikkerhedspolitiske situation 1945–1991*. København: DIIS 2005, vol. 1, 15. See also T. Borring Olesen, 'Truth on Demand: Denmark and the Cold War', in N. Hvidt and H. Mouritzen (eds.), *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook 2006*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies 2006, 82–87.

*Poul Villaume*

the project in the direction preferred by Bent Jensen, namely 'Domestic conflicts during the Cold War'. As the SDU leadership considered this to be a somewhat too direct political involvement in the research of the university, the SDU launched an open Cold War research competition which resulted in the allocation of only 42 per cent of the total funding for Bent Jensen.

Upon this only partial success, the DPP managed during the budget negotiations in 2004 to insert a clause by which the government and the DPP (i.e. the parliamentary majority) would assess whether the upcoming DUPI/DIIS Commission Report on Denmark during the Cold War was satisfactory, or whether there was any need for further studies.

Thus, the stage was set for the next act when the DIIS Commission Report, 'Denmark during the Cold War', was published in the summer 2005. Its 2,350 pages in four volumes was the result of five years of collective research team work under the guidance of three experienced senior scholars, and based on a wealth of Danish and international archival sources and research literature. However, much of the report was immediately assailed by leading representatives of the DPP and of the government, including Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen, strongly supported by professor Bent Jensen and a few other researchers as well as by numerous editorials and articles in the conservative and liberal press (*Jyllands-Posten*, *Berlingske Tidende*, *Weekendavisen*). A main target of attack was one of the cautiously formulated conclusions of the report to the effect that the 'footnote policy' and the temporary breakdown of domestic security policy consensus in the 1980s had only 'to some degree' negatively affected Denmark's position and influence within NATO.<sup>35</sup>

The DPP and other critics of the DIIS Report claimed that their scepticism towards 'closed and official commission writing' of Cold War history was fully vindicated, and during budget negotiations in late 2005 the DPP managed, once again and with even greater luck, to secure additional funding for research of Danish Cold War history. This time, no less than 10 million Danish kroner (almost 1.6 million euros) were earmarked for 'free and independent' Cold War research, by which the DPP explicitly meant research done *outside* of the universities. In the end, the funds were allocated to a new, temporary Cold War Research

<sup>35</sup> A comprehensive outline of the DIIS report and of the critical public debate on the report is in Borring Olesen, 'Truth on Demand', 89–107.

Centre physically located at the Danish Defence Academy, and the government and the DPP even formulated, in early 2006, an unusually detailed objects clause for the new Centre, pinning out several specific themes of research to be pursued.<sup>36</sup> The government also handpicked the board of the new Cold War Research Centre.

The position of research director of the Centre was, of course, out in open competition. Yet it hardly came as a surprise in early 2007 that the chosen scholar for the job was indeed professor Bent Jensen, who, on his part, insisted that the research to be conducted at the Centre will be absolutely free of any outside political interference, and will be independent and, not least, unpredictable.

It should be pointed out, though, that unpredictability, at least, does not appear to be the expectation of key politicians who helped the Centre into existence. As Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated in parliament in May 2007, writing the history of the Cold War is important, in his opinion,

so that we can learn from it, so that hopefully future generations will never again repeat the despicable policies and the security policy fallacies which the left wing was behind, not least during the “footnote period” of the Cold War, which put Denmark in a pitiful position in the eyes of the international community. It is in order to avoid that the left wing repeats such fallacies, among others, that I believe it is interesting to have research in the Cold War.<sup>37</sup>

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Danish foreign and security policy, then, underwent a gradual process of transformation during the first 17 odd years after the end of the Cold War, a process that appears to be still in progress and consolidation under the liberal-conservative government of Anders Fogh Rasmussen since 2001. The trail was blazed, however, by Prime Minister Poul Schlüter's

<sup>36</sup> See Borring Olesen, 'Truth on Demand', 109.

<sup>37</sup> *Folketingets forhandlingar* [Parliamentary Records], København: Folketinget 2007, May 9, 2007.

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conservative-liberal coalition government in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, and in particular by Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's social democratic-social liberal coalition government (1993–2001).

Recent collective memory (and amnesia) of the domestic political controversies of the 'footnote period' of the 1980s were used effectively by liberal and conservative opinion leaders and politicians during the 1990s to silence centre-left forces of the political spectrum or to put them on the defensive, thereby blocking effective opposition to the radicalized version of the 'militarized' Danish security policies under the Bush administration from 2001, and in particular Denmark's active military role in the Iraq war since 2003.

A powerful instrument here was here rhetorical simplicity of concepts and expressions such as 'betrayal' and 'siding with the enemy', with implicit connotations of 'treason'. The moral and even socio-psychological dimensions of these concepts were difficult for the centre-left political forces to cope with and to counter. Firstly, and paradoxically, because the social democrats and the social liberals themselves had been so instrumental in bringing about the preconditions for the policy change. And secondly because at the same time, the liberal-conservative government and its right-wing supporting party engaged in a *Kulturkampf* which involved attempts to change gradually traditional aspects of Danish political and foreign policy culture and ultimately, by implication, Danish national identity as a small state with security concerns and norms which do not necessarily or always coincide with those of Denmark's major Western allies.

In this act of exercising 'communicative power', efforts to transform the collective memory of the recent past, including the Cold War period and the international role of Denmark in the East-West conflict, seems to have played an important part. In more general terms, then, this seems to be yet another example, and some would say a rather coarse one, of how history needs to be rewritten in order to fit the (recent) past with present requirements and policies.

Shadows of the Communist Past:  
The Consolidation Project of  
the Hungarian Left  
– Transitional Identity and the  
Demarcation of History

KATALIN MIKLÓSSY

IDENTITY-BUILDING IN TRANSITION

Creating time-boundaries as political agenda is never as apparent as during great social transitions such as was the case after the collapse of the communist system in Central and Eastern Europe. Any transitional phase presupposes the temporary survival of old elements along with the new. Nevertheless, the governing political rhetoric can accentuate exclusively the divergences from the previous era. Quick and thorough change with a categorical denial of the past can create a need for re-identification with new ideals; hence it might accelerate the establishment of the new system.<sup>1</sup>

In this comprehensive process of reformulating the social Self, identity-building of ex-communist parties represented an extraordinary

<sup>1</sup> Evans, J. Richard, 'Introduction. Redesigning the Past: History in Political Transitions', *Journal of Contemporary History. Special Issue: redesigning the Past* 38 (2003:1), 5.

example in which coming to terms with the Past became decisively important. Defining the basic values and goals of democratic statehood after an authoritarian system inflicted peculiar difficulties for the successor parties. First, they had to rule out old habits and behavioural patterns in policy-making and introduce new standards not only for the party elite but also for the loyal membership and sympathisers the parties inherited from the previous system. They had to convince the general public that the ex-communists had left behind old practices and were now fully committed to democracy. In other words, the past was present, on the one hand, in the political culture and, on the other, in the immanent political discourse. In addition, there occurred another challenge: the successor parties constituted the backbone of the new left-wing now called either social democratic or socialist parties. Thus, besides their facing the huge task of democratising the party organisation and its operational methods, they had to modernise the leftist ideology as well. It was not only a question of how to distinguish the new platform from the communist mind-set but also what the new leftist idea should incorporate in the post-modern period societies had now entered.

This article investigates this post-communist identity re-construction under the pressures of political discourse over the significance of past events for contemporary changes. We chose the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP, in Hungarian *Magyar Szocialista Párt*) as a case-study, in which we focus on the difficult process of abandoning the label of being a successor party and becoming a convincing social democratic force. The party of the communist period, the Hungarian Socialist Worker Party (Hung. *Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt*), simply changed its name in 1989 to the contemporary one, leaving only the ‘worker’ attribute out. This rather smooth modification accentuated the problem of continuity, particularly because it was not the first time in the party’s history. After the defeat of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 the Hungarian Workers’ Party (Hung. *Magyar Dolgozók Pártja*) took the above mentioned name, Hungarian Socialist Worker Party, in order to mark the Soviet-dominated change in leadership from the independence seeker Imre Nagy’s circle.<sup>2</sup> Since the revolution holds a special place in the Hungarian national

<sup>2</sup> See the document about changing names ‘A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Ideiglenes Központi Bizottságának 1956 november 6-I felhívása a kommunistákhoz’ in S. Rákosi (ed.), *1956 júliustól 1957 júniusig. Dokumentumok 1956–1957 történetéhez*. Budapest: Kossuth 1981, 101–104.

consciousness, the method of changing names is still well-remembered.

From the point of view of our analysis there is a further peculiarity in the Hungarian situation: the political map has been divided into conservative-nationalist and liberal-leftist groupings since the early 1990s, but after 2000 the political arena has been dominated by only two parties: the right-wing FIDESZ (Alliance of the Young Democrats) and the Hungarian Socialist Party (accompanied by small client parties) constituting basically a bipolar system. Since the FIDESZ, a characteristically new-born party (formed in 1988), is in a favourable position concerning the discourse over the past, this situation provides grounds for extremely pointed debates.

The first important question to be answered here is how the past emerged in the self-perception of and accusations against the HSP under the above-mentioned circumstances. Secondly, we examine how the major split of the Hungarian political field between nationalist and liberal forces affected the consolidation of the socialists as social democrats.

Our hypothesis is that a liberal, non-nationalist political group was better equipped ideologically to adjust to a globalizing post-modern era than those parties that were anchored to a dated, typically modernist idea like nationalism. Consequently, according to our presupposition the main collision in the domestic political arena has its origin in the clash of different time-related ideas and their representatives. Since all these issues fitted the discourse over the past extremely well they emerged most often as history-debates. In conclusion, we also argue that for no other political actor did the Past play such a consequential role during the transition as for the emerging new left.

#### SEARCH FOR A NEW IMAGE

The collapse of an entire social-political construction launched an extraordinary crisis situation in the whole region where entire societies were desperately trying to cope with the demanding and harsh circumstances of rebuilding a new basis for social existence. With the collapse of the communist system the artificially prolonged image of the industrial society was also jeopardised. The industrial workers, who were considered as the leading class and backbone of state-socialism, suffered,

if probably not the most, at least a great deal in the transformation process. They mutated from a privileged class into an ordinary employee category, and became part of a heterogeneous mass without a point of reference.<sup>3</sup> Insecurity, fear of marginalisation and unemployment, loss of societal position, and confusion about the fast changing political and economic situation established a need for strong left wing representation, especially in those who were ill-prepared to face transition. The question in the Hungarian case was: could the HSP meet the people's expectations? It seemed that as a successor party the socialists were well endowed to face the challenges. In the case of a political party, there appears most likely a double identification process where, on the one hand, the party defines itself and on the other, aspires to identify with supporters. In other words, it is a question of the identity of the party and its image.<sup>4</sup>

Transition can be perceived from one angle as the complete reform of the state structures and their relation to other spheres of the economy and society. As the legacy of the previous system, the ex-communists had the advantage of long work experience in running the state, in contrast to the beginners of the early 1990s. People became disappointed with the hardships the major transformation caused in their lives and blamed the political newcomers for their problems. Due partly to their reputation as professional politicians the successor parties were elected back to power almost everywhere in Eastern Europe in the second round of free elections in the mid-1990s. Similarly, the HSP won in 1994 with an outstanding result of 54 per cent of all votes,<sup>5</sup> which would have legally authorized the socialists to form a government all by themselves. Nevertheless, they did not dare to do so because they feared that it would have sent a false message about the comeback of the communist regime.

In the process of reformulating identity there occurred a peculiar problem for the HSP, namely, how to reach a proper balance between

3 A. Ágh, 'The ECE Social Democracy in Social and Political Trap: Social Democrats between Europeanization and Post-Accession Crisis' Conference Paper at the Conference *Shaping and Reshaping Social Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*, Brussels, 28.–29.9.2007, organised by CEVIPOL of ULB.

4 S. Rokkan, *Citizens, elections, parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Processes of Development*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 1970, 154. C. Tilly, *Stories, Identities and Political Change*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Pub. 2002, 45–56.

5 <http://www.vokscentrum.hu/vtort94.htm> (downloaded 28.12.2007)

continuity and change, between old elements that could be adjusted to the changed circumstances and those that had to be reinvented. The predecessor communist leadership had a unique but not widely known tradition of pragmatist tendency. The realm of ideology was already questioned during the mid-phase of socialism, starting gradually from the late 1960s. The eventual identification with market economic values was coupled with a liberal attitude toward society. In consequence, this atmosphere affected the way of thinking of the communists, causing severe damages in the ideological foundation. The official attitude change towards the ideological establishment became apparent finally in 1976–77 when the Stalinist old-liners were excluded from the party. This represented an unveiled rise of economic thought and technocratism, which heavily coloured pragmatic policy-making.<sup>6</sup> By the early 1980s the mid-level party elite were rejuvenated and young professionals strengthened the reformist spirit.<sup>7</sup> Political decision-making became entirely restricted to economy-based considerations. What the successor party inherited from the previous system was an utter disinterest in ideological matters.

The consequence of this heritage, however, was dubious in many respects. The question was how to distinguish the old platform from the new: what was the difference between reformist socialism and the rather unfamiliar social democracy? During the whole 1990s the social democratic platform appeared only on a declarative level without reflections on any deeper ideological content. This was due to the fact that there was no mutual understanding in the party leadership about the adequate proportion of necessary changes and acceptable continuities. Besides the party elite, also the membership was a mixed group of more conservative ex-communists and modern social democrats.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the party failed to provide a synthesizing melting pot where a

6 M. Kalmár, 'Az optimalizálás kísérlete. Reformmodell a kultúrában 1965–1973' in M.J. Rainer (ed.) *'Hatvanas évek' Magyarországon. Tanulmányok*. Budapest: 1956-os Intézet 2004, 161–197. See also K. Miklóssy, 'Khrushchev after Khrushchevism. The Rise of National Interest in the Eastern Bloc' in J. Smith – M. Ilic (eds.) *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: State and Society in the Soviet Union, 1953–1964*. London – New York: Routledge (forthcoming 2009).

7 Interview with László Kovács, 4 May 2007. The recorded discussion is in the possession of the author.

8 Ibid.

consensus of different ideas could be reached. Instead it was more like a loose forum of coexisting divergent opinions. Consequently, the party had no common, ideologically identifiable, consistent political line as a backbone for decision-making. Due to the lack of a recognisable ideological background, decisions were made on a day-to-day basis, motivated completely by pragmatic incentives.

There occurred a consistent tendency to sidestep this problem. In the midst of the 1989 changes, there was an attempt to acquire the name of 'Social Democratic Party', and thus a new profile with it. As Pekka Korhonen pointed out, a name in its shortness is appropriate for repetition; it serves as a reminder of a basic argument and emphasizes it.<sup>9</sup> The argument hidden in this name brings back the memory of the historical social democratic party, which existed before the communist take-over. It symbolises the most respected democratic traditions of the Hungarian working class movement.<sup>10</sup> By choosing this name the socialists tried to create an image of their theoretical continuity with social democratic ideas instead of communist ones. However, the name had already been taken by the reorganized Hungarian Social Democratic Party (SDP) which had been eliminated in 1948 by the communist party. So, the only thing left for the socialists to do was to stick to their old name and reshape the political content.

The difficulty in crystallising a sound, new ideological basis was partly due to the extraordinary situation of the underlying societal transformation. With the decline of social classes the traditional working class rhetoric was seemingly hard to replace convincingly. The left wing had to address a now fairly unknown and thus unpredictable complex multitude of employees, which every other party was also trying to influence.

A consistent ideological foundation can clarify the set of values, ideals and long term objectives that are the essence of party-identity. However, it seemed in the 1990s in the transition countries that the parties had difficulties to come up with a compact ideological base that affected the

9 P. Korhonen, 'Naming Europe with the East', Manuscript of the forthcoming article (2008).

10 The Hungarian Social Democratic Party was established in 1890. See also I. Simon, *A „peyerizmus” mint történelmi kategória értékelése és elhelyezése a „Peyer-kérdés” problematikájában*. Ph.D Thesis Manuscript, Debreceni Egyetem, Történelmi Intézet, Doktori Iskola 2006.

electoral behaviour generally. Since people did not have an ideological basis to identify with they supported certain policies for awhile without party loyalty. Berglund (et al) argued that the transition societies inherited a basically atomized, fragmented structure that influenced people's relations with the sphere of politics and their trust in politicians.<sup>11</sup> Ralph Dahrendorf pointed out that people became increasingly impatient with the transition process, requiring instant benefits without being interested in their costs.<sup>12</sup> In this situation lurks considerable danger, especially in the case of the post-communist left wing. If the people have no clear idea of what a non-communist leftist ideology is, they might identify social or economic policy with leftist values. In the transition period when the new democracies are called on to make painful decisions<sup>13</sup> this inappropriate identification pattern can cause alienation and loss of the electoral base. This happened in the late 1990s in most of the East Central European countries where disillusionment of the left-wing governments' performance emerged. Moreover, this situation can also further populism in the political arena since populists operate on the short-term, pragmatic decision-making level, promising/demanding economically questionable social improvements, and fast answers to difficult problems. They can appeal to voters that are traditionally leftist sympathisers. It is not by chance, for example, that the major political opposition of the Hungarian socialists is the FIDESZ, a characteristically populist party.

In addition, people in Hungary found it difficult to identify pragmatic social policy decisions with the declared leftist values because left-wing administrations (1994–1998, 2002– ) conducted neoliberal, strictly monetarist economic policies with major cut-backs on social welfare.<sup>14</sup>

11 S. Berglund – F. H. Aarebrot – H. Vogt – G. Karasimeonov, *Challenges to Democracy. Eastern Europe Ten Years after the Collapse of Communism*. Cheltenham, UK – Northampton, USA: Edward Elgar 2001, 45–79.

12 R. Dahrendorf, 'The politics of frustration' in <http://www.thedailyjournalonline.com/article.asp?ArticleId=200655&CategoryId=13303> (downloaded 15.9.2007)

13 T. I. Berend, 'Changes in Central and Eastern Europe in the Last Quarter of the 20th Century' Paper for the Session on Historical Views on the Recent Changes in the World Economy, 1980–2000, *XIII. International Congress of Economic History*, Buenos Aires, in <http://eh.net/XIIICongress/cd/papers/7Berend63.pdf> (downloaded 15.9.2007)

14 Ferge, Zsuzsa, 'Egy mítosz társadalmi ára' in *Társadalmi Szemle* 8–9/1998. T. Tiusanen – S. Vinni, *Hungary in the 1990s. Business Opportunities in*

*Katalin Miklóssy*

Furthermore, the leading politicians sent confusing messages about their understanding of aspired goals of social development. As the Prime Ministers Gyula Horn in 1995 and, later, Péter Medgyessy in 2003 declared, they wanted welfare but not a welfare state, which they considered an outdated illusion.<sup>15</sup> The HSP tried to clarify its ideological stand as late as 2004, 15 years after its reorganisation. The newly elected party leader, István Hiller announced the programme of 'New Hungarian Social Democracy' which can be perceived as a systematic and articulated identification with social democratic values.<sup>16</sup> However, it is one thing to make statements about social democratic ideals but another thing to provide a plausible representation of it. Since 2004 the unflattering nickname for the leftist administrations has been 'banker governments', which indicates that people are unable to perceive the socialists as representatives of the poor.

It can be argued that for the HSP creating a new ideological structure and its realisation in policy-making suffered from the survival of old ideas. It recalled the elementary gap between political language and the actual decision-making of state socialism. For a successor party it was seemingly difficult to abandon communist practices in which communication with the people was irrelevant for maintaining power. The problem here, however, was that if rhetoric diverged a great deal from political 'reality' how could the people be convinced of the identity-change the party had gone through.

#### REINTERPRETING HISTORY: DEFINING 'GUILT'

The image the HSP desperately sought for was an ultra-modern party that was totally capable of handling challenges in a fast changing world. This dynamic image was to prove the radical departure from being a successor party troubled by the burden of its past. However, in the Hungarian case

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*a Successful Transitional Economy. Studies in Industrial Engineering and Management.* Lappeenranta: LUT 1999.

<sup>15</sup> Medgyessy announced the dead-end of the welfare state in public on 19.8.2003. See, for example, the evening news of MTV1 and MTV2. See also *Mozgó Világ* 2004/3.

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.szocialdemokracia.hu/index\\_2.php](http://www.szocialdemokracia.hu/index_2.php)

the problem was that – as it became evident – the party went through a more rapid change than the surrounding society and political discourse.

The discourse on such interlinked notions as ‘*guilt*’, ‘*crime*’ and ‘*victim*’ had decisive power over the perceptions of the past and hence influenced directly the re-identification process of the post-communist communities in Eastern Europe. The difficulty of applying these concepts in the Hungarian context is that, considering the extraordinary liberal recent decades of the socialist period, their content is blur and ambiguous. Since the communist past was not easy to judge by simple terms in Hungary, a plausible example was needed to demonstrate the essence of the ‘past crimes’ and, as it turned out, the Hungarian commemoration of the 1956 revolution was just what the guilt-discourse required. October the 23rd represents not only a historical trauma that became canonised as a common tragic experience of the nation, but it also symbolises the collapse of the communist system since Hungary became a republic on that date in 1989. Thus, this day encapsulates the memory of a shared sacrifice, but also the message that it was worth it.

The main political discourse ever since 1989 has been centred on the ultimate question: who has the right to remember on that day? According to the right-wing, the revolution was a manifestation of the Hungarian people’s struggle against communism. The violent suppression by the Red Army constituted a legitimacy crisis for the Kádárist regime, which stepped in. In this light, the contemporary Socialist Party is pictured as the successors of the Hungarian Socialist Worker Party, who applied a harsh vengeance policy after 1956 and came to power against the will of the people.

From a political party’s point of view, it is vital for its existence to create an acceptable public image of its past, and consequently have the chance to influence the historical consciousness of the people. We could argue, relying on Jürgen Habermas<sup>17</sup>, that the representation of one’s past should be consistent on a minimum level with the prevailing history culture of the society in general, but at the same time it should also be defensible in the arena of political debates over history. It has been difficult for the Hungarian socialists to respond properly to the accusations because too many public figures in their rank and file who were directly

17 J. Habermas, *The Past as Future*. Cambridge: Polity Press 1994, 55–72, 121–142.

involved in the suppression of the revolution. Subsequently, indications that many communists took sides with the people and fought against the invading Red Army, or that the very symbol of 1956, Imre Nagy, was a devoted communist, bear no weight in this debate. Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy asked for forgiveness for the Kádárist harsh reprisals against the revolutionaries after the suppression.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, pleading for forgiveness is not a satisfactory substitute for the demanding process of coming to terms with a moment in the past that symbolises a key memory.

Political rituals are unilateral exercises of power by the political elites, which may not only divide people but conceal the lack of consensus in society.<sup>19</sup> Concerning the commemoration of 1956, it is rather obvious that this day in particular does not constitute national unity – it is not even supposed to aspire to it. Through this grave juxtaposition of the political elite, the people are also compelled to assume bipolarity during the celebrations, since instead of one, two opposing political images are offered to the people to identify with.

In times of great changes, when whole societies re-identify themselves, one's past can become a traumatic burden – and as a result, coming to terms with one's past can turn out to be a traumatic experience that one tries to avoid by all costs. This stalemate situation concerning the governing interpretation of a central memory piece induced the Hungarian Socialist Party to initiate major changes in order to overstep this divisional line. With the change of leadership in September 2005, a more active struggle for reinterpreting 1956 started. The new generation of leaders were in their early 40s, and hence literally free of accusations. Consequently, they could claim to share the national remembrance. In 2005, for the first time, the new leadership celebrated the national day openly and in a more relaxed way than ever.<sup>20</sup> As a result, in 2006 the main discourse on 1956 had changed. Now, the direct accusations of past guilt were dropped and turned into a covert anticommunist discourse where

18 He made a speech in the Parliament on June 16, 2004, which was released in the evening news and published in *Magyar Nemzet* the next day (17 June).

19 N. Couldry, *Media rituals: a critical approach*. London: Routledge 2003, 63–67.

20 The Evening News of the National Broadcast, Channels 1 and 2 23 October 2005; dailies *Népszabadság* and *Magyar Nemzet* 24 October 2005.

any contemporary criticism of the socialist-run government strengthened the same old argument. In 2006, the subject of the fraudulence of the socialist regime was raised because of the release of the PM Ferenc Gyurcsány's speech in a closed party meeting where he referred to the party's policy of withholding the truth about the economic situation from the people.<sup>21</sup> The revolution was remembered as the right to fight against the usurpation of power by dishonest means.<sup>22</sup> So, it seems that waiting until the last 1956-communist dies is not a good strategy for coming to terms with the past because the anti-communist discourse reproduces itself in different situations.

The guilt discourse is also a remarkable opportunity for a new elite to take shape and elaborate the boundaries toward the unpleasant legacies, as a new force of change. To expose traces of the wrong kind of legacy of a political opponent can undermine his/her political credibility while strengthening one's own in contrast. In the Hungarian political debates the communist era has been repeatedly referred to by the right wing rhetoric as *a time outside history*. A rather widespread view concerning socialism throughout East Central Europe states that communist rule actually sent this region off its *natural* rails and bound it to an *alien* civilisation. The mutual understanding about what the 'right' course of history should have been is based on the old idea, dating back to the Enlightenment, of two different Europes, East and West, where the opposing sides only slightly influenced each other's cultures.<sup>23</sup> A mediating view of the same division was presented by Jenő Szűcs, who argued that the line between East and West is not a strict line but an area where the cultural influences from both poles meet and create a unique heterogeneous area as an outcome. The 'Europe Between' is, however, not a crystallised entity, but its regions are exposed very differently to the magnetism of East and West due to historical reasons. Those that belonged to the hemisphere of the Carolinian Empire in the Middle Ages are susceptible to Western

21 Gyurcsány Ferenc: Speech at Balatonöszöd, 26 May 2006. (Teljes balatonöszödi beszédének írott változata) Published in 17 September 2006. Downloaded from the website: [http://hu.wikiquote.org/wiki/Gyurcs%C3%A1ny\\_Ferenc](http://hu.wikiquote.org/wiki/Gyurcs%C3%A1ny_Ferenc)

22 *MTV 1 Evening News*, 23 October 2006, *Magyar Nemzet* 24 October 2006.

23 W. Larry, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilisation on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994; F. Braudel, *A History of Civilisations*. New York: Allen Lane, 1993; S. P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: Free Press 2002.

influences while those that were connected to Byzantium are more likely to respond to Eastern affects.<sup>24</sup>

This argument attempts to modify the public's history-consciousness about the idea of selection; in other words, it clarifies what moments of the common past can or cannot be considered as part of *national history*. Subsequently, those who can be identified with the unwanted period(s) are excluded from the definition of the nation through the new codification of history. A vivid example is the public attempt to discredit a central political figure by denying state honours. The man in question, Gyula Horn, was a very successful transition politician of the 1990s (prime minister in the period 1994–1998) who led Hungary into EU-negotiations and launched an unquestionable economic revival after a grave depression. On Horn's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday the socialist PM, Ferenc Gyurcsány wanted to remember his transition achievements by proposing an award but the right-wing President refused to accept this. President László Sólyom replied that Horn had an ill-famed reputation of being involved in the suppression of workers' strikes in the aftermath of the 1956 revolution.<sup>25</sup> In this case it is not only a question of the hierarchy of past events but also of an ongoing struggle to establish a competitive evaluation of the present.

Identity can be understood as a continuous process organised across difference. As Stuart Hall pointed out, it is a positioning of a subject that accentuates its position in relation to the Other that is situated at the opposite pole.<sup>26</sup> In our case, the accepted image of history becomes the basis of positioning. Ernesto Laclau describes this as the relation of 'marked' and 'unmarked' poles of constructing otherness where the unmarked stands for *normality*, referring to the basic governing rule, and signifying in this sense the majority.<sup>27</sup> The concept of national history

24 J. Szűcs, 'Vázlat Európa három történelmi régiójáról' in *Történelmi Szemle* 1981/3, 313–359.

25 About the polemic see *Magyar Nemzet* 4 July 2007, *Magyar Hírlap* 4 July 2007, *Népszava* 6 July 2007, *Népszabadság* 7 July 2007.

26 Stuart Hall defined this two-sided process of identity formation: 'The notion that an effective suturing of the subject-position requires, not only that the subject is "hailed", but that the subject invests in the position, means that suturing has to be thought of as an articulation, rather than a one-sided process.' S. Hall, 'Introduction: Who needs identity?', in S. Hall and P. du Gay (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage 1996, 6.

27 According to Laclau: 'Derrida has shown how an identity's constitution is

includes the unmarked position where there is no need to specify the content of the notion, while marking the Other with the label of being a part of the time outside history puts the counterpart into a defensive position automatically. Unmarking creates a presupposed knowledge, a common understanding, but it is also a cunning rhetorical strategy, a means of relegating a topic outside the discursive sphere. Thus, certain issues became non-negotiable in the community; in this case, the hierarchy of past events and their significance for the present value-system.

In consequence, the dominant right-wing rhetoric accuses the HSP of not being a national political force but alien by nature to the genuine Hungarian political traditions. If we remember that the HSP is the biggest left-wing party in the contemporary bipolar political arena the above-mentioned argument is a significant discursive strategy to disqualify the opponent in the struggle for power.

#### THE ACHILLES-HEEL OF IDENTITY: THE NATION-DISOURSE

Plain labelling, like alien-national differentiation, has a grave side effect: people understand the left wing values as being non-national. This widely spread conception especially favoured by right-wing rhetoric was rooted in a simplified image of state socialism. Accordingly, the communist system relied on the principle of internationalism, an idea that the regime itself strongly identified with and propagated extensively. Internationalism was on the one hand a basic theoretical demand of proletarian solidarity without acknowledging the importance of national borders. On the other hand, it was also a political action plan that worked as a compulsory guideline for the intra-relations of the Eastern bloc countries. Although this concept had changed from time to time the redefinitions always came from the Kremlin; thus, it became an

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always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the two resultant poles – form/matter, essence/accident, black/white, man/woman, etc. In linguistics a distinction is made between “marked” and “unmarked” terms. The latter convey the principal meaning of a term, while marked terms add a supplement or mark to it. ... What is peculiar to the second term is thus reduced to the function of an accident, as opposed to the essentiality of the first.’ E. Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. London: Verso 1990, 32.

instrument of command in this centre-periphery structure.<sup>28</sup> The practical aspect of this guideline in the Cold War situation was that the outward appearance of brotherhood and unity of the Bloc had to be maintained by downplaying national controversies. Although propaganda and political practices diverged a great deal especially in the post-Stalinist period<sup>29</sup> this officially cherished attitude caused a great deal of harm for the overall image of the socialist era. Since the general public had no insight into the secret decision making that ran counter to the propagated line, after the collapse, the official historians' black and white images furthered a simplistic understanding which actually reflected the propaganda machine's message of the previous period.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, this false knowledge has resulted in two major integral misperceptions in the right wing accusations: (1) the communist elite were loyal first and foremost to an outside great power; (2) they denied national sentiment par excellence on a theoretical basis. From this point of view, a successor party simply had no choice but to try to change this non-national, non-patriotic image. Transition was a process of reconstructing the states, and moreover it was a huge endeavour to redefine 'nation' for the new era.

We argue that those successor parties with an accentuated internationalist image during the socialist era faced comparably graver difficulties in reconstructing their relation to the national discourse than those that openly displayed the national character. So, in this respect the Romanian Social Democratic Party, for example, is in a much better position due to the previous Ceauşescu regime's overtly emphasised national policy. During the 1990s the party became one of the major EU-critical forces, declaring the importance of maintaining a non-servile, independent line towards outside powers.<sup>31</sup> The Romanian party was

28 F. Barnard *Pluralism, Socialism and Political Legitimacy. Reflections on Opening up Communism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991, 66–81. K. Miklóssy, *Manoeuvres of National Interest*. Helsinki: Kikimora Publications 2003, 51–61.

29 Miklóssy 2003.

30 As Károly Szerencsés put it: 'Kádár was a nation-denier ('nemzettagadó')' See the documentary of K. Szerencsés – I. Szöllös, 'Az elátkozott XX. század. Part 9. A végzetes konszolidáció.' Presented on MTV2 26 January 2002.

31 I. Iliescu, *Communism, Post-Communism and Democracy. The Great Shock at the End of a Short Century*. New York: Boulder 2006, 327–356. See also F. Abraham, 'The Social Democratization of the Romanian Left' Conference Paper

never accused in the public discourse of being a non-national force like its Hungarian or Polish counterpart. Similarly, the Bulgarian successor party uses openly nationalist, populist rhetoric in relation to the country's Turkish minority much the same way as in the communist system.<sup>32</sup> The continuity of nationalist discourses helps these parties by consolidating them as *the national left*.

To establish credibility in front of the public, it is imperative for any party to connect to nationally important discourses in order to get a foothold in society. In this respect the party formulates its own attitude to the central notions of national self-perception and hence defines its stand as well as itself as a party. In other words, it puts itself on the national palette and declares its true colours. By doing this, the party participates in the modification or even reformulation of the national idea on a general level.

In times of comprehensive modernisation processes, as in our case during the democratic transition where the whole social being comes under reconsideration, taking an active part is vital for the political parties. By having a say in the reconstruction they also firmly establish themselves in the new system being formulated and, by the same token, by avoiding involvement in certain areas they effectively exclude themselves from these spheres. Consequently, there are central issues in major processes that the parties can not afford to be unconcerned about. In the post-communist transition, the state and the nation were closely interlinked mega-spheres to be transformed structurally. Their intimate connection meant that they were inter-dependent concerning the huge reformation and therefore both had to be reconsidered simultaneously. Political actors had to come forward with constructive ideas for the modernisation of both areas.

If we compare these two aspects of this overwhelmingly massive task of post-communist transition we can find an interesting imbalance between the two. The reconstruction of statehood relies to a greater extent on institutional restructuring of the political, legal, economic and social

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at the Conference: *Shaping and Reshaping Social Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. Brussels, 28.–29.9.2007, organised by CEVIPOL of ULB.

32 N. Stoyanova, 'Desecuritising Identity in Southeastern Europe: the Bulgarian Turks from the 'Revival Process' to Euro-Atlantic Integratio', Conference Paper at the *BASEES Conference*, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, UK, 31.March – 2 April, 2007.

spheres. It means a huge number of clear-cut changes, the introduction of totally new elements – in other words, a transparent distinction from the past. The reappraisal of the nation-concept is deeply bound up with the emphasis of continuity axiomatically. In the construction of a national identity the concept of the past plays a central role<sup>33</sup>: basic common denominators are necessarily time-related elements like language, myths, common fate, territory and historical consciousness.<sup>34</sup> We argue that the nationhood discourse is accentuated especially in times when the political elite feel themselves threatened or insecure in relation to power. And the period of transition was nothing else but a time of uncertainties and instabilities owing to the radical changes in every sector of social being.

In the Hungarian historical consciousness besides the idea of political nation there is a wider connotation of an ethnic nation. *Political nation* refers to the concept of citizenship and thus to that of the state. The term ethnic nation is, ironically, connected also to the notion of the state but on a more ancient level, as an indirect reference to the first kingdom that established statehood for the Hungarians. The memory of this ideal state lives on in the culturally based definition of *outlander Hungarians*<sup>35</sup>, a population that is scattered around the borders of modern Hungary. Whereas political nation is remembered in the trauma of 1956, the idea of the ethnic nation, on the other hand, is crystallised in the Trianon trauma, which refers to the sorrow caused by the loss of territories and population after the disaster of the First World War.

In the case of socialist identity formation, neither of these key points of reference can be absorbed easily. In addition to the earlier mentioned problems of connection with the memory of 1956, the idea of the ethnic nation turned out to be an insurmountable notion to relate to. The party tried to avoid discourse on it throughout the 1990s and as an

33 Benedict Anderson referred to the artificiality of the idea of the nation which has been created to be politically aware and is presented with a ready-made concept of identity. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London – New York: Verso 1996, 37–45.

34 A. D. Smith, *National Identity*. London: Penguin Books 1991, 10–14.

35 Hungarian ethnic groups living as minorities in the neighbouring countries. The term ‘Hungarians living outside the borders of Hungary’ (in Hungarian: ‘*határon túli magyarság*’) has settled in the political language and also in scientific literature during the 1990s.

auxiliary strategy it started to stress the importance of EU-membership. The emphatically right-wing agenda of advocating the improvement of minority rights for the Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries was not acknowledged in the socialist foreign policy goals. In contrast, for the left the EU served as a means of salvation for all problems, including minority rights. However, this tactic meant that the socialists simply withdrew from the 'nation' idea which helped to strengthen their internationalist image but linked them to a 'wrong' past. By ignoring the whole subject, the HSP has overlooked the significance of the urgent present need for modernisation of the nationhood idea. This unwillingness is rooted obviously in the past attitude the party has been accustomed to. To a great extent it is a failure in communication since the party relates to subjects it feels comfortable discussing and not to subjects that need to be discussed.

Looking at it from another angle, it is fair to say that the HSP as a successor party has long been socialised to neo-liberal ideals and individualism, first by the reform in communist thinking in the late socialist period, and then by the pragmatic attitude towards policy making in the 1990s. On the one hand, this might partly add to the extraordinary success of the HSP, which is unmatched among the left-wing parties in the whole region (being elected to power in 1994, 2002 and 2006). On the other hand, this ideological affinity makes it difficult for the party to absorb and adjust to the nation concept, which is characteristically based on the idea of communality. Consequently, it partly explains the reinterpretation of the applied left wing ideology itself, which can be categorised as a typical 'third way' platform in spite of the solemn party declarations.

#### CONCLUSION: LEFTIST IDENTITY IN TRANSITION

In great systemic transformations identity, based on historical self-perception, is considered with impatience, as if it were not an integral part of the overall transitional phenomenon in which the old structures gradually fade away. In constructing a new system after the collapse of communism it was necessary to create a watershed in order to visibly mark a change from the previous era. Transition is a *coup d'état of minds*

where identification with the basic values of the new era is expected to happen overnight. The underlying reason can be found in the complexity of the situation. On the one hand, a sudden identity change is supposed to ensure the irreversibility of the change in the system by denoting a wide consensus of new values. This mutual understanding is also needed for the huge project of restructuring the whole system. On the other hand, this requirement of quick identity change helps the new elite to come to the fore and seize power. For this reason, it is also in the interest of this elite to demand a division between old and new identities.

Identity is a social construction that manifests a deeply political relation between the past and present, in which the contact of different time-dimensions always involves interpretation, argumentation, manipulation and rhetoric.<sup>36</sup> The transitional period was a time to rebuild party identity and its image for the outside world. Reformulating party identity relied on the success of reinventing a non-communist leftist ideology and of reflecting it in political practice. The problem, as it appeared, was that like any other successor party the HSP carried the weight of old practices and had long diverged from value-based policy making; in addition it had no genuine social democratic experience of its own.

The direct and indirect discourses on the past also caused serious difficulties because they set any successor party into a defensive position automatically. From a defensive position it is not easy to take part in the reinterpretation process of the past that the transitional societies had to conduct for their future's sake. The demarcation of an acceptable past from the unacceptable also accentuated the new boundaries for the identity of the community. The struggle to be incorporated into the national history actually meant a deserved place in society.

Nonetheless, the transition periods can produce extraordinary situations where identity has not yet been crystallised, therefore weak, and hence the image becomes a substitute for it. Image in itself is a strong discursive power that can shape unsettled identity on its own, which is why politicians' contradictory representations can be harmful for identity building. It can not only prolong the accomplishment of this re-identification process, but controversial statements can undermine the

36 P. Anttonen, 'Menneisyyden politiikka', in P. Kettunen – A. Kultanen – T. Soikkanen (eds.), *Jäljillä. Kirjoituksia historian ongelmista*. osa 2, Turku: Kirja-Aurora 2000, 11–12.

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reliability of a compact image. Still, the greater problem in the case of formulating the new left is the loss of points of reference for what the essence of leftist values is. Thus, problems in the identification process can launch a complex crisis also in the society, where people are confused about which leftist values can be accepted without the shadow of the communist past.

# Symbolic Places in Berlin before and after the Fall of the Wall

HANNES SAARINEN

In 1945 Berlin was taken by Soviet forces. Shortly afterwards the former capital of the German Reich was occupied by the four wartime Allies and eventually divided into a 'western' and an 'eastern' half. In the course of the Cold War Berlin was not only a focal point of international political power demonstrations and crises, it also assumed quite different symbolic functions.

On the one hand there were signals tinged with propaganda. They were associated with the name of the city and indirectly connected with the city's former, current and future role as capital. On the other hand Berlin, which in 1991 was again elected capital of Germany, became a place of historical significance conveying Germany's recent past, a place of meaningful remembrance culture with visual symbols, such as memorials, historical buildings and memorial sites, and 'atmospheric symbols', such as streets and urban spaces. In this context the term symbolic places signifies both concrete objects and a mostly politically intended desire or attitude to remember certain events of the recent past.<sup>1</sup> In post-war Germany, and today perhaps even more than ever, memorialisation has become a part of 'national education'.<sup>2</sup>

1 The German publication, *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* [Places of Memory] vol. I-III, (edited by Etienne Francois, Hagen Schulze). München: C. H. Beck 2001, contains articles about several such places in Berlin with significance for the nation's memory, as the Reichstag, the Wall, the Brandenburg Gate, the Freedom Bell, the Palast der Republik and the Museumsinsel. See also A. Kaminski (ed.), *Orte des Erinnerns. Gedenkzeichen, Gedenkstätten und Museen zur Diktatur in SBZ und DDR*. Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag 2007, 45–154.

2 See E. Wolfrum, *Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Der*

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The most well-known edifice of the Cold War is doubtless the Berlin Wall and ‘The fall of the Berlin Wall is one of the defining images of the late twentieth century.’<sup>3</sup> It did not prove itself a successful and permanent solution for the preservation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), as desired by the Communist party dictatorship. Instead it was, and always remained, a negative symbol for a state which had never been democratically legitimated and depended on this construction for its very existence.

For years, even after the GDR’s international recognition in 1972 with East Berlin as its capital, slogans such as ‘peaceful coexistence’ and ‘normalisation’ concealed the fact that Berlin as a whole was still a symbol of division, and visible proof that the ‘German question’ was still unsolved. After the fall of the Wall in 1989 the city became a symbol of unity, a seismograph and laboratory for monitoring the unification process. The information and media society, and the constant flow of images, also act as driving forces in the formation of historical myths surrounding the city of Berlin.

The subject I am dealing with here is both extensive and complex from a scholarly point of view, so I shall focus on six topics, mainly in chronological order: beginning with the name of the city, how it was used during the Cold War, and then the way in which the ‘negative’ past of the city was cleaned up. This concerns, for example, street names and public monuments. Berlin’s 750th anniversary celebrations in 1987 marked a turning point, when both halves of the city tried to demonstrate their links with the older historical heritage in a positive manner. Only two years later the Wall came down. This leads us to the question of the symbolic character of the old and new capital Berlin. The last two chapters are located in the present. Firstly how does the city remember the bygone GDR and the presence of the four Allies, and secondly what are the symbols of the German capital of today. This contribution concludes with some remarks on two of Berlin’s most outstanding and timeless

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*Weg zur bundesrepublikanischen Erinnerung 1948–1990.* Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges. 1999; K. von Schilling, *Scheitern an der Vergangenheit. Das deutsche Selbstverständnis zwischen Re-Education und Berliner Republik.* Berlin: Philo Verlagsgesellschaft 2002.

3 C.A. Constabile-Heming et al. (eds.) *Berlin – The Symphony Continues: Orchestrating Architectural, Social and Artistic Change in Germany’s New Capital.* Berlin: de Gruyter 2004, 3.

architectural symbols, the Reichstag Building and the Brandenburg Gate, both of which are defining monuments which survived all the regimes of the first German nation state.<sup>4</sup>

#### CLAIMING THE NAME OF BERLIN

In the years of division the two city sides claimed they represented the real, original Berlin. The name had a signal effect. Well into the eighties 'Berlin' was used without qualification in western terminology to denote the western part of the city, but in the broader sense it always referred to the whole of the divided city. In eastern officialese terminology Berlin tended to refer mainly to the eastern part of the city. The 'western sectors' were presented, for instance in illustrated books, as a vivid example of capitalist exploitation. This suddenly changed after 1961: in maps printed in the GDR, 'WB' or 'Westberlin' was a blank white area, a nonentity, an alien place.

The only solution was for each side to find a more straightforward term or description for its own part of the city. The simplest and clearest form of distinction was East and West Berlin. This was the convention in the west. As is well-known, in those days the terms East and West had different connotations. They still live on. In the fifties 'the golden West' was in widespread use among GDR inhabitants, much to the annoyance of the SED, the ruling Communist party. On the other hand the party probably never tried, and certainly never succeeded in, reversing the negative connotations associated with 'the East'. The eastern attribute which was often used pejoratively in western Germany (eastern zone, eastern sector, East Berlin) simply became a non-word in the SED vocabulary. The term 'Soviet' was also unpopular, which probably explains why the 'Soviet sector' dubbed itself the 'democratic sector', and why in the fifties GDR publications referred to 'democratic Berlin' as opposed to East Berlin.

In the process numerous positive self-descriptive terms were generated by east and west and often ironically rebuffed by the opposite

<sup>4</sup> For the history of Berlin since 1945 and further literature used here, see W. Ribbe, *Berlin 1945–2000. Grundzüge der Stadtgeschichte*, Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag 2002.

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side. Here, from the western standpoint: a 'showcase of the free West' with a 'bargaining chip of Communist tyranny' over there. Or, from the eastern standpoint: a 'hotbed of subversive imperialist warmongers' over there, here the national home of 'democratic progress'. In the west: capitalism, a free market economy, but in the same city, in the east: a planned economy, socialism and the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. When the west spoke of an 'island of freedom', the east pointed an accusing finger at unemployment in the west of the city which was still very high in the fifties. Later, when the east spoke of a 'city of peace', the west merely had to mention the victims of the Wall. The western side saw itself protected by the USA (and the British and French) while the east was occupied by the Soviets, and vice versa from the opposite perspective.

At that time some of the most effective propagandistic descriptions for Berlin came from Bonn, the provisional federal capital. Addressing the *Bundestag* in October 1949, Adenauer called (West) Berlin the 'stronghold of democratic western Europe', prompting jeers of 'American imperialism' from the KPD which was still represented in parliament.<sup>5</sup> Adenauer liked to belittle the GDR government, which had claimed Berlin as its capital in 1949, by constantly calling it the 'Pankow regime'. During the fifties West Berlin was also dubbed the West's 'cheapest atom bomb', the 'thorn in the flesh of the East' and the 'front-line city'. In the eighties Honecker once again cited these western epithets as imperialist positions which history had disproved.<sup>6</sup> In retrospect the thorn in the flesh of the GDR seems quite an apt image, since the western radio and TV transmitters in West Berlin could broadcast almost throughout the GDR.

Today only one of Berlin's many attributes has retained any appeal. The current Berlin Senate seems to wish to cultivate Berlin's international image with the slogan 'the city of freedom',<sup>7</sup> but the concept of freedom used here is much broader than the classic political liberties of the citizens. East Berlin and West Berlin are still commonly used terms. And today in some areas, such as in youth culture, and only in Berlin, the old negative-positive contrast has actually been reversed: the east is trendy, while the west is slow and rather uninteresting.

5 F. Matthey (ed.), *Entwicklung der Berlin-Frage*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1972, 52.

6 E. Honecker, *Aus meinem Leben*. Berlin: Dietz Verlag 1981, 202.

7 *Berliner Morgenpost* 16.8.2007.

The SED, which spent decades after 1949 doggedly pursuing the 'universal recognition' of the GDR, definitely had no interest in registering its capital under the 'East Berlin' trademark. After all, the city's historical centre belonged to them. The resulting, rather cumbersome official term was 'Berlin capital of the GDR'. No real capital in the world had a name like that. So the city's addendum was soon increasingly omitted, which meant that atlases printed in the GDR then looked like this: there was a city with the name of Berlin in bold print, this was the socialist capital. Depicted next to it was a second city, 'the separate political entity' called 'Westberlin', an isolated enclave within the confines of the GDR state border.<sup>8</sup> A comparison of two German encyclopaedias provides a similar picture. The western introduction stated: 'Berlin, former capital of the German Reich, divided as a result of World War II...', while the eastern version simply said: 'Berlin, capital and political, economic and scientific-cultural centre of the GDR...'. If readers wanted to know about the western part, they had to look under the headword 'Westberlin'.<sup>9</sup>

But what about the Berliners themselves? In this respect President John F. Kennedy definitely won the contest of symbolic meanings. Speaking in a symbolic place, at Schöneberg Town Hall beneath the freedom bell donated by America, he finished as follows: 'All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words "Ich bin ein Berliner".' This final key sentence in German circled the globe. But today his words have little meaning without knowledge of the original context. At the time they confirmed how astonishingly quickly, especially since the beginning of the Cold War, the name Berlin had developed a positive note in American ears. After all, the Americans had also once seen the capital of the Third Reich as the bulwark of evil. A decisive event fifteen years before Kennedy's speech contributed to this major image change amongst the Western Allies: the cutting-off of West Berlin and Stalin's attempt in 1948 to bring the whole city under Soviet control. The ensuing, often dramatic airlift was successfully carried out by the Western Allies. In the west it came to symbolise the upheld freedom of two million (West)

<sup>8</sup> *Haack Weltatlas*, 7. Auflage, Gotha: VEB Hermann Haack Geographisch-Kartographische Anstalt 1987, 28.

<sup>9</sup> *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon in 25 Bänden*, vol. 3, Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut 1971, 840; *Meyers Universallexikon*, vol. I, Leipzig: VEB Bibliographisches Institut 1978, 260–61.

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Berliners. In 1951 Berlin's first western political memorial was erected, the Airlift Memorial, dedicated to the airlift and the airmen and Berliners who lost their lives.

#### CLEANING UP THE PAST

According to eastern propaganda only the East Berliners lived 'in freedom', in contrast to the West Berliners, in other words the East Berliners had been liberated from fascism and exploitation. The date of reference was the unconditional capitulation of the German Reich on 8/9 May 1945 in Berlin-Karlshorst. This is where we find the first symbolically loaded edifice of the post-war years. The scene of capitulation was turned into a memorial site for the 'victory of the Soviet Union and its allies over fascist German imperialism'. It was the place to illustrate how the Soviet Union, which had been attacked by Hitler's Germany, had defeated fascism and liberated Berlin. This indicated that the subsequent 'anti-fascist' GDR was on the right side, the side of the victorious nation. There is no need to stress that the topic of rape by members of the Red Army was absolutely taboo at that time, and that nowadays the bigger picture of Germany's defeat, occupation and liberation is far more differentiated.

However, the four wartime Allies did agree in principle on one point concerning the former capital of the German Reich: all surviving visible references to and political symbols of the Third Reich should disappear. The prime candidate in terms of buildings was Hitler's new Reich Chancellery in the Soviet sector. The partially war-damaged building was demolished.

In general the top priority was a new beginning rather than reconstruction. In contrast to Warsaw, where the national architectural heritage was completely and systematically destroyed by Nazi Germany, and then buildings, including the palace, were recreated from nothing, the aim in the whole of Berlin was to make a break with the past. The most radical act in this respect was carried out by the leading communist functionary Walter Ulbricht five years after the end of the war, with the explicit political aim of destroying a political symbol. In a spectacular demolition event he ordered the detonation of the burnt out shell of the Royal City Palace, a baroque masterpiece by Schlüter which had

marked the city centre for 250 years. Reconstruction would certainly have been possible. Although the palace had symbolised the power of the Hohenzollerns in earlier times, after 1918 it had only been used as a museum and, as Bertolt Brecht once noted, great buildings were made by workers, not by rulers. Premier Otto Grotewohl is said to have cynically remarked at the time: 'Nobody will care two hoots once the palace has gone'. He was wrong. The *Bundestag* has now voted in favour of reconstruction in the original dimensions and using parts of the original facade to create the 'Humboldt Centre' which will act as a new cultural complex. Seeing this as a tribute to the rulers of Prussia is a popular misconception. It is simply a reconciling gesture in honour of Berlin's best architect for this urban space, even though he died almost 300 years ago.

The competition between the two political systems during Berlin's post-war reconstruction is symbolised by two rival model quarters: first, *Stalinallee* (now *Karl-Marx-Allee*) in the east, a neo-classical palatial boulevard, and in response, the *Hansaviertel* with its slogan 'the city of tomorrow'<sup>10</sup> in the west, a relaxed residential complex designed by international architects. Meanwhile, the classicism of the former *Stalinallee* has been ennobled. Like the *Hansaviertel*, it has now been added to Berlin's catalogue of protected buildings. This could be a sign of reconciliation, but the visible contrast remains. They were singular products of the Cold War, both without any normative influence for later urban planning.

Berlin was spared a cultural palace similar to Stalin's dominating gift to Warsaw. Such ideas for a 'central building', a key landmark in the old city centre, were restricted to the drawing board.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, the Americans made their mark on the city architecture of the fifties with their democratic and cultural sense of mission. These buildings included the daringly designed Congress Hall on *John Foster Dulles Allee*, an America Memorial Library and the Henry Ford Building of the new Free University in the west. In 1989 the Congress Hall was transformed into a multicultural 'House of World Cultures' possibly signalling a change in attitude towards America. Around 1968 the American cultural centre

<sup>10</sup> *Interbau Berlin 1957. Amtlicher Katalog*, Berlin 1957, 55.

<sup>11</sup> See P. Müller, *Symbolsuche. Die Ost-Berliner Zentrumsplanung zwischen Repräsentation und Agitation*. Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag 2005, 106–154.

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‘Amerika-Haus’ definitely became an early example of how a young generation questioned belief in America’s freedom mission and vented their anger by attacking the building.

It was only in the sixties and seventies, after the construction of the Wall, that the GDR capital created a modern, ‘socialist’ centre between the old Royal City Palace site (meantime *Marx Engels Platz*) and *Alexanderplatz*. The areas’ unique barrenness is still a conspicuous oversized relic of planned economy. The city landmark was a technological, future-oriented edifice, an over 300-metre-tall television tower which has dominated Berlin’s skyline ever since. During the Wall era the viewing area offered spectators an excellent view of the city, including West Berlin. It created an unavoidable, not exactly explicit, but nevertheless political power symbol in the heart of the old city.<sup>12</sup> And it became the prime symbol of the GDR capital. The tower was popular with the public, and some probably still see it as a nostalgic monument of the vanished GDR.

The population assessed the two competing economic and social systems mainly on the basis of the available levels of prosperity and living standards. And corresponding symbols emerged, such as specific central boulevards with an accompanying atmosphere. Berlin’s major pre-war boulevard, *Unter den Linden*, had been destroyed. It now lay in the east. As an alternative in West Berlin the *Kurfürstendamm* was successfully revamped to become a glittering ‘showcase of the west’. It was enticing bait. It had everything: expensive shops, cinemas, theatres, cafés, nightlife and big-city traffic. At one end stood the impressive ruin of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church (*Gedächtniskirche*), consecrated in 1897. This became West Berlin’s visual symbol, but not in honour of Kaiser Wilhelm I, the founder of the Reich. Quite the opposite: his name was usually omitted. The ‘memorial’ was now seen as an earnest reminder of the Reich’s demise and of the wartime suffering. Not far away was probably the west’s most enticing and opulent consumer paradise, the ‘Kaufhaus des Westens’ or KaDeWe. A tradition was cultivated: the store’s name dates back to 1907, but even then it was seen as evidence that the so-called New West was something grander in the expanding city.

12 P. Müller, *Symbolsuche*, 248–280.

The east had nothing comparable, because the corresponding consumer world could not be created, nor was it officially desired. Despite the reconstruction of a few 18th century public buildings, the once legendary *Unter den Linden* never regained its once lively atmosphere during the GDR era. A further attempt was made with the modern design of the traffic hub at *Alexanderplatz*, where East Berlin's first large department store was built. As demand was still unrequited, the refurbishing of *Friedrichstraße* was started during the years of Erich Honecker, but the project was interrupted by the fall of the Wall. Meanwhile the mythical splendour of the *Kurfürstendamm* has also faded: it is now a victim of capitalist profit maximisation.

Nowadays the new capital's symbolic urban space is *Potsdamer Platz*: in pre-war Berlin the city's Piccadilly Circus, during the Cold War the meeting point of three sectors, the British, American and the Soviet. When the Wall was built it was simply one of the wastelands, where the effects of division could be viewed – only from the west, of course. Today it is a lively mixed quarter: three miniature commercial skyscrapers, a theatre, a shopping mall, the international film festival centre, hotels, apartments. Some strategically placed remnants of the Wall for the tourists and markings on the ground tracing the Wall are the only reminders of the past division.

But the symbolic nature of names is not limited to some famous streets and squares. After 1945 the naming and renaming of streets often acquired politically charged significance, especially in Berlin. National Socialist names were of course erased, but the Soviet sector went beyond this. Names from the Wilhelminian era, even from the 18th century, vanished. *Wilhelmstraße* was redubbed because it was once a German Reich power centre. Representative streets were then named after leaders and heroes of the workers' movement and GDR politicians. To give a few examples: *Wilhelmstraße* was renamed after the first East German premier and became *Otto-Grotewohl-Straße*, *Danziger Straße* was renamed after Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian communist who played a famous role in the Reichstag Fire Trial, *Kaiser Wilhelm Straße* became *Karl-Liebknecht-Straße*, and *Horst-Wessel-Platz* (before 1933 *Bülowplatz*) became *Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz*. Of course the names of Marx, Engels, Bebel, Lenin and Stalin were also commemorated.

Berlin's east administration also applied another cleansing method to its historical urban space. All public monuments to Prussian rulers were removed from the streets, a 'revolutionary act', a punishment and revenge well-known in history. This included the national monuments to the unification emperor Wilhelm I, and King Friedrich II (the Great), who was an undesired figure on the official parade and demonstration arena of *Unter den Linden*. The large monuments to nineteenth-century German unification and the wars of 1864 to 1871, the Victory Column, Moltke, Roon and Bismarck have survived to the present – they stood in the British (not the French) sector.

In 1980 Erich Honecker justified the return of the Friedrich monument. Like other reinstated Prussian statues, he said it had been created 'by famous sculptors' and was thus 'part of the people's culture'. This was a somewhat feeble attempt to protect himself from the (interviewer's) suspicion that it could be risky for the 'GDR and the FRG to celebrate some of the same past national heroes.'<sup>13</sup> It was indeed risky. East Berlin did, of course, erect new 'socialist' monuments. The rather insignificant Stalin statue existed for just ten years. The SED's most ambitious enterprise was to create a suitable monument for the 'fathers' of Marxism, 'for the greatest sons of the German people', Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. But the result in 1986 was a fairly modest, very conventional sculpture. It was left standing after 1990, whereas the colossal Lenin monument, erected shortly before his 100th birthday, was demolished after 1990. However, a larger-than-life statue dating from 1986 and depicting the communist leader in the Weimar years, Ernst Thälmann, still acts as a reminder of the communist movement. It stands in a residential area on the outskirts of the city.

Renaming in the west rarely discriminated against figures of Prussian or Wilhelminian history: Bismarck, Hindenburg, Kaiser Wilhelm (I) survived in West Berlin. The *Straße des 17. Juni* was the only street renamed after a contemporary political event, the East Berlin uprising of 1953. The symbolism and tribute to the victims was all too clear, since the road ran east, straight to the Brandenburg Gate, and the eastern sector border.

After 1990 local CDU and SPD politicians successfully reinstated almost all of the traditional street names – except for the one com-

13 Honecker, *Aus meinem Leben*, 437. (Interview on 4.7. 1980)

memorating Kaiser Wilhelm I – in the city centre (in the east). The artificially created *Marx-Engels Platz* was dispensable, since Karl Marx was still honoured with streets in west and east. As ‘victims of the revolution’ Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were sacrosanct. The Greens disliked the return of *Wilhelmstraße*, but their alternative ‘*Toleranzstraße*’ failed. All the names of SED and Eastern Bloc celebrities disappeared, and *Leninplatz* became the *Platz der Vereinten Nationen*.

THE RIGHT AND THE POWER TO INTERPRET THE CITY’S HISTORY:  
THE 750TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Just three years before the unexpected end of the GDR in 1990 both halves of Berlin elaborately celebrated the city’s 750th anniversary. Looking back, the self-assurance of the GDR state celebrations in their semi-capital is quite striking. While West Berlin wanted to illustrate the historically evolved and, despite the Wall, still existent common denominators, the east was interested in stressing only the dividing aspects. They even claimed to be the sole legitimate bearer of the name Berlin. Some western commentators saw this, quite correctly, as the GDR capital’s claim to an ‘exclusive right of representation’,<sup>14</sup> even though East Berlin was smaller in terms of population and area than its western counterpart. It was irrelevant that the Federal Republic of Germany with its much larger population had long since abandoned the exclusive right of representation for the whole of Germany, as was the practise in the fifties and sixties. Although the SED leadership had constantly attacked this position, in the context of the situation and from a democratic majority perspective, it seems to me, it was more plausible.

Marxist historians pointed out that the GDR was founded in Berlin, whereas the western ‘imperialist dividers’ of the German people had ‘retreated to Bonn on the left bank of the Rhine’.<sup>15</sup> The implication was clear: the GDR supposedly possessed greater legitimacy than the Federal Republic of Germany, because it was founded in Berlin. Thus the better German state, the ‘socialist German fatherland’, was unquestionably the

<sup>14</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 29.9.1986.

<sup>15</sup> *750 Jahre Berlin: Thesen*. Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild 1987, 53

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GDR. The idea was probably to discredit the prevailing political and historical 'west orientation', the 'road to the west' which west German historians, such as Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Heinrich August Winkler,<sup>16</sup> had recognised since the seventies as a lucky coincidence and the only right decision.

In 1987 recollections of the older native historical heritage were, and still are, clearly manifested in East Berlin in a particular place, the so-called Nikolaiviertel. A small section of the old city, a characteristic of all old central European cities, was simply recreated with prefabricated concrete panels. Since cultural and building policies lacked orientation and modern design lacked appeal, a hold was sought in the past, in reconstructed 'islands of tradition'. The trend was by no means confined to the GDR. Things were similar, and increased, in western Germany. The recently decided reconstruction of the Royal City Palace in Berlin also belongs in this context.

Representation through a combination of older history and modern design, of culture and politics – this was illustrated by the venues the GDR leadership chose for the two highlights in its 1987 Berlin celebrations: the opening in the reconstructed *Schauspielhaus*, and the 'state ceremony' in the 'Palast der Republik'. This building, completed in 1976 in a record 'thousand days', contained the People's Parliament and public restaurants. It was supposed to express the modernity of socialism, but strangely needed the feudal-sounding word 'Palast'. Its architecture, the marble facade, its use of form, was neither socialist nor GDR specific. In private it was compared with a western department store. Its design was unspectacular. But according to contemporary witnesses, this palace for workers and farmers, built on the old Royal City Palace site, was very popular – and the slow demolition process starting in 1997, due to asbestos content, and intensified since 2006, caused protests. Opinions differ. What did the palace stand for? For a dictatorship, or for petty bourgeois everyday geniality? Should not a western democracy have preserved it as testimony to a historical phase? Again there is an interpretation conflict between purpose, content and form – and a distinct fear of the symbol.

16 See H. A. Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West, Volume Two, 1933–1990*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2007.

The GDR capital always wanted to mirror its 'international standing'. The *Schauspielhaus*, a historicising new creation, a concert hall in the old shell of 1821, linked up with the Old Prussian bourgeois-monarchic culture of representation. And there was an element of competition with West Berlin too. Berlin's international fame as a city of music was inspired by the philharmonic orchestra. But it resided in the western city, and thanks to the prestige of its conductor Herbert von Karajan, also had a stunningly modern, internationally renowned home, the *Philharmonie*. On her visit to West Berlin in 1987 Queen Elizabeth II pointed out that the city symbolised 'the German nation in the sphere of culture and the sciences',<sup>17</sup> a distinction to which West Berlin aspired. It is worth noting that a 'state ceremony' with Federal President von Weizsäcker marking Germany's unification took place in the *Philharmonie* on 3 October 1990, not in one of the halls in East Berlin.

#### THE FALL OF THE WALL AND THE DEBATE SURROUNDING THE CAPITAL

During the years of so-called peaceful coexistence of the Soviet Union and its allies towards the capitalist world in the late sixties and in the seventies, the western side tried to come to terms with East Berlin being the GDR capital, while struggling to secure West Berlin's existence as far as possible. One result in connection with Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* was the Quadripartite Agreement which was reached by the four former allies on the Berlin area and came into effect in June 1972. This agreement significantly eased the situation of West Berliners on their 'island'. Today it is tempting to see West Berlin's continuing existence differently, but not only *Der Spiegel* once saw it as a city in demise.<sup>18</sup> The question, whether the collapse of the GDR and reunification was foreseeable in the eighties, was universally denied around 1990. But shortly before, a number of western politicians had again emphasised Berlin's special role as proof of the ongoing German question. Heinrich Albertz, former governing mayor of West Berlin, said in 1983: 'Berlin is the only bit of Germany that has still not finally been settled...', and Federal President

<sup>17</sup> *Der Tagesspiegel* 27.5.1987. At the same time M. Gorbachev was on visit in East Berlin.

<sup>18</sup> 'Berlin- Stadt in Bedrängnis', *Der Spiegel* No. 42, 9.10.1967

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Richard von Weizsäcker cited the city's most famous architectural symbol in 1987 with striking intuition: 'The German question will remain open as long as the Brandenburg Gate remains closed'.<sup>19</sup>

In 1990 Richard von Weizsäcker stressed in a highly regarded speech, that Berlin was the only place where Germans came from both east and west, but were nevertheless united. Even the PDS, the successor to the former Communist party in the GDR, saw things similarly: Berlin was 'the only east-west city' in Germany,<sup>20</sup> and should thus be Germany's capital again.

The event that had accelerated Berlin's division in 1948, the introduction of two currencies, was reversed on 2 July 1990, when the DM replaced the GDR Mark in the east. The DM was a highly sought-after symbol of the west, and many an East Berliner had associated it with West Berlin. Finally it had arrived – but not as a blessing for the budget of the soon unified city, quite the opposite. The unification of Berlin resulted in a deficit. Without going into details, it was due to the loss of the federal subsidies, almost total de-industrialisation, and above all the lacking economic attraction of the nominal capital. The federal capital's failing self-sufficiency has since created a debt problem, harming its image compared with the rich federal states. Who pays for a historical symbol? It no longer has a Prussian state to support it.

The capital city function opens up special perceptions and expectations of a city. Is it, should it become, or can it feasibly be the cultural, political and economic centre, and thus a dominant emblem of a state? Did the Federal Republic, a federal state with strongly established centres, need a prime city again, a metropolis that dominates all areas of politics, economics and culture? Did it need a city which 'functions as a national symbol', as Berlin's Senator for Construction and Housing, Wolfgang Nagel rapturously declared, just because reunification had surprisingly expressed an existing German national sentiment?<sup>21</sup> Johannes Rau, prime minister of North Rhine-Westphalia, prudently warned that opting

19 H. Albertz et al., *Lokal 2000: Berlin als Testfall*. Reinbek: Rowohlt 1983, 258

20 Gregor Gysi in H. Herles (ed.), *Die Hauptstadtdebatte*. Bonn: Bouvier 1991, 25

21 *Kongreßbericht. Erste Stadtkonferenz Berlin. Planen, Bauen, Wohnen* (edited by Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen). Berlin 1990, 12.

for Berlin as a 'symbolic decision' harboured certain dangers.<sup>22</sup> Many agreed with him that the 'modest' city of Bonn would guarantee the continuity of a decidedly western democracy, a democracy based on non-national constitutional patriotism and championed by people such as the political scientist Dolf Sternberger and especially the philosopher Jürgen Habermas with his theory of the 'post-national constitutional state'. Did Berlin hold the lure of power, or was it more like a healthy warning? The question came to a head in fierce discussions about the concept of the 'Berlin Republic' which then faded into oblivion.<sup>23</sup> Today, one thing is certain: if the 'Berlin Republic' really is different from the pre-1990 Federal Republic, the change cannot be ascribed to the place called Berlin.

The former GDR population was never particularly enamoured with its privileged Berlin. But they would have been very irritated if everything had been decided in the west after their accession to the Federal Republic of Germany. In the summer of 1991 the *Bundestag* vote for Berlin as seat of government was carried by a narrow majority. Minister Wolfgang Schäuble's speech helped tip the scales. He said that Berlin had always been the 'symbol of unity and freedom, of democracy and the constitutional state, for the whole of Germany', but he made his appeal mainly with the future in mind. Willy Brandt again reminded everyone of promises from the Adenauer era and of 'West Berlin's free self-assertion', but also of the fact that Berlin was 'a symbolic form of solidarity with the East'.<sup>24</sup>

Although historical arguments, including Adenauer's capital city promise of 1949, were presented in favour of Berlin, they were not particularly convincing. Champions of the cause preferred to stress Berlin's East-West mediator role and its central position in the new Europe. CDU Chancellor Helmut Kohl felt a permanent need to couch national sentiment in the European context. Pure German nationalism was much scorned in the 'old' federal republic and despite everything still aroused suspicions abroad of revived German aspirations to power.

<sup>22</sup> *Die Hauptstadtdebatte*, 84.

<sup>23</sup> H. A. Winkler, 'Die "Berliner Republik" in der Kontinuität der deutschen Geschichte' in Werner Süß/ Ralf Rytlewski (eds) *Berlin. Die Hauptstadt*. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 1999, 235–244.

<sup>24</sup> *Die Hauptstadtdebatte*, 29–30, 38.

Berlin's history was here to stay, but what was the main focus now? During these months a new theme crystallised in both west and east to form an almost set phrase: 'Berlin – it's the city that mirrors German history like no other.' East Berlin's last mayor, Tino Schwierzina, put it this way: 'We forget and repress nothing. Here was the centre of the Third Reich, here was the headquarters of Nazi terror. The Holocaust was decided here.' He did not mention that it was also the centre of the second German dictatorship, but his audience either knew that anyway, or were afraid of the details. The idea now was to link up with 'the city's democratic and republican traditions', with 'liberal' Prussia, the 'struggle for liberty' of 17 June 1953 and the 'democratic movement of 1989'.<sup>25</sup> Antifascism and resistance, Weimar and the Empire were still clearly absent.

Around 1990 there was a widespread tendency to blame Berlin for Germany's recent history. It was even called the 'symbol of German guilt'.<sup>26</sup> A much older Berlin tradition was associated with Prussia, with magnificent 18th century buildings and intellectual principles, such as tolerance and enlightenment. But in other parts of Germany, especially in the west, Prussia seemed to be eternally associated with negative values, such as subservience, discipline and militarism. In the capital-city debate some advocates saw Berlin's supposed lack of tradition as an advantage: Berlin had always been a future-oriented city of the modern age.

Berlin's reunification and the prospect of becoming the German capital came as a blessing to urban designers who outbid each other with their visions of a new metropolis. Historical symbolism also played a big role. 'Critical reconstruction' became the key theme. The aim was to rescue the 'remains of the middle-class world' of old Wilhelminian Berlin which post-war generations in 'east and west' had eradicated with 'unparalleled fury' driven by a hatred of the past and a belief in progress.<sup>27</sup> But above all, the Wall had left a deep gash in the body of the

25 *Ganz Berlin im Aufbruch: Richtlinien der Magistratspolitik*. Edited by Magistrat von Berlin 1990, 14

26 Konrad Weiß (Bündnis 90) in *Die Hauptstadtdebatte*, 99.

27 Hans Stimmann, 'Berlin nach der Wende: Experimente mit der Tradition des europäischen Städtebaus', in *Berlin. Die Hauptstadt*. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 1999, 543, 550.

city, a wound that needed healing open-heart surgery. Others saw signs of a 'dawning neo-Teutonism' in the architectural debates of 1994.<sup>28</sup>

It is amazing how vehemently the Third Reich guilt syndrome was projected onto the urban environment after 1990. Berlin's Senator for Construction and Housing, Wolfgang Nagel, reckoned the 'age of fascism' urgently needed 'reappraisal', and it was thus essential to 'finally make the Holocaust visible' too.<sup>29</sup>

This happened in 2005 with the dedication of the 'Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe' in a very central location, a few paces away from the Brandenburg Gate. There has seldom been such a heated and controversial debate, about collective guilt, responsibility of the nation and the purpose of remembrance set in stone.<sup>30</sup> The remarkable museum of German-Jewish history had opened a few years earlier in Kreuzberg, and planning began on extensions to the museum 'Topography of (SS) Terror'. The Holocaust memorial, with some 2,700 granite stones in an area of 20,000 square metres, stands in the former so-called ministerial garden at *Wilhelmstraße*. A place steeped in history. Although unintentional, the Goethe memorial of 1880 stands opposite on the western side like an earnest reminder of German humanism. Between the two runs a further symbolic reminder of German history: a trail of cobble stones marks the route of the fallen Wall.

It was only a matter of time before other victims spoke out, including Sinti and Roma and homosexuals, claiming a memorial of their own in the government quarter. One Berlin newspaper referred to a veritable 'memorial quarter' in the centre of Berlin.<sup>31</sup> Silence surrounded the long-standing central memorial of the Federal Republic of Germany dedicated to 'the Victims of War and Tyranny' on *Unter den Linden* in the former 'New Guardhouse' designed by Schinkel. In the GDR a daily military ceremony took place at this 'Memorial to the Victims of Fascism and Militarism' as it was then called. Federal Chancellor Kohl ensured its

28 K. Hartung, 'Doppelgesicht: über die Paradoxien Berlins', in *Kursbuch* 137. Berlin: Rowohlt 1999, 9.

29 *Kongreßbericht. Erste Stadtkonferenz Berlin*, 11.

30 On the significance of this question for German identity, see M. Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust*. Cambridge: Polity Press 1999.

31 *Tagesspiegel* 5.6.2007.

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rededication and extended the circle of victims by explicitly including the second German dictatorship. But critics complained that the naming of victims was too vague, and that the perpetrators were included.

During the Cold War both sides had already erected remembrance sites for the victims of the years before 1945. By chance, Berlin's division saw the memorial site of Count Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg's execution in West Berlin, while *Lichtenberg* Cemetery was in East Berlin. This was where the bodies of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were interred in 1919. After the war all GDR dignitaries were buried at this 'Socialists' Memorial Site' which is still a rallying point for the 'left'.

In the past 100 years one development is clear: the growth of 'warning' memorials and 'memorial sites' as opposed to simple 'monuments'. Whereas individuals were once remembered for their commitment *to* something, people are now remembered as the victims *of* something. One aim of these remembrance sites is doubtless the awakening of a sense of responsibility and the development of civil consciousness. This requires a certain level of reflection and knowledge on the part of the observer. Can this form the basis of a positive attitude to the nation state, or is the objective prevention?

#### REMEMBERING THE GDR AND THE FOUR ALLIES

The war ended over sixty years ago, the Cold War is over and Germany is unified, but political experts still treat recent German history with an element of trauma or mourning. Educational goals such as 'warnings', 'overcoming the past' and 'coming to terms with the past' illustrate this. As the former capital of three fallen German states and today's seat of government, Berlin is – as stated at the outset – predestined to be a living museum and a place of symbolic remembrance culture. But, as yet, there are few reminders of Germany's division, which is still part of many people's living memories. The 17 June, commemorating the 1953 people's uprising in the GDR, was a national holiday in the Federal Republic of Germany up to reunification. A few years ago, at the place where East Berliners once demonstrated against their government in front of the GDR House of Ministries, today's Ministry of Finance, a modest

work of art was installed in the pavement as a reminder of the uprising. In contrast the building's surviving large external mural 'In Praise of Socialism' of 1951 is far more overriding.

As yet Berlin has no explicit monument to German unification, but a debate seems to be under way. Only Eduardo Chillida's Berlin sculpture in front of the Federal Chancellery suggests the ongoing process of growing together. Whether it is too soon, whether a democracy has no need for triumphal stone monuments, whether it is care to avoid new nationalism, or simply the fact that things happened so peacefully without victims to be remembered – who can tell? We should also bear in mind that the euphoria of 1990 was short-lived.

The ways of 'remembering' the GDR are contradictory and still in flux. All former sites of the Ministry of State Security, offices and prisons are open to the public. Yet complaints can be heard that, despite debates about the secret police and shoot-to-kill orders, the history of the 'second German dictatorship' is still being neglected, or even played down. The Museum of German History is 'critically assessing' the GDR dictatorship as part of over 1,000 years of German history. Old everyday culture is of great interest, as the current wave of so-called 'Ostalgia' shows – and there is a small GDR museum with a fully equipped living room of the times. For the time being at least, the history of the GDR seems to be mutating into a nostalgically idealised memory of everyday life.

The Berlin Wall was the overriding negative symbol of the Cold War and division, and a key symbol standing for the 'inhumanity of Communism'. In reality the 164 kilometres of boarder installations and blocking systems were only visible from West Berlin. In the East access to the 'border area' was impossible. Today the Wall with all its intricacies can no longer be viewed for what it was and what it stood for: a 'barbaric construction that separated our city and the Berliners for over 28 years'.<sup>32</sup> After reunification, in the euphoria of those months it was quite easy to understand that the Berlin Senate wanted to get rid of the Wall as soon as possible: It concretely separated the people, it was an obstacle to traffic, it was ugly, but not simply that, it was the symbol of finally overcome oppression and inhumanity. Only a few relics remain. There is a remembrance site in *Bernauer Straße* which is currently being extended. And a border-crossing building, the so-called

32 T. Schwierzina in *Ganz Berlin im Aufbruch*, 3.

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'palace of tears' at *Friedrichstraße* Station, has symbolic character. But here in particular, the problems surrounding authentic building shells become clear. The content has vanished in every respect and is hardly understandable now. Only those with real memories have associations with the building. Nothing is authentic at the famous border crossing for foreigners: Checkpoint Charlie. But the place has gained a mythical aura through literature and is a major tourist attraction. The imagination and scant knowledge is fired by a museum full of related films, photos and objects. But there is no explicit memorial, here or elsewhere in Berlin, to over one hundred people killed at the Wall (and over 1,000 killed on the inner-German border).

In one place monumental symbolism from the Cold War years has been preserved. The colossal *Treptow* 'Monument to the fallen Soviet Heroes' is the city's largest post-war memorial. Of the four Allies only the Soviet Union had such large-scale cult monuments erected on conquered enemy territory. They were far more than resting places for the thousands of fallen soldiers. They were victory monuments. This is borne out by the pathos of the reliefs, and especially by the newly gilded Stalin quotes carved in stone. When the last Russian troops left Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany signed a contract with Russia promising to maintain this and similar Soviet sites on former GDR territory.

Probably a more significant memento for the Germans in their capital, a reminder that the Soviet Union had conquered Hitler's Germany and that Moscow held the key to solving the German question, is a similar but much smaller monument with a martial bronze statue of a soldier located right in the city centre. It is strategically placed just a short way from the Reichstag Building and the Brandenburg Gate. The Soviet powers had it erected straight after the war, but it lay in the British sector, in subsequent West Berlin. It stands within visible distance of the already mentioned Victory Column which commemorated the Prussian victories in what are known as the German wars of unification. The rise and fall of the nation state from 1871-1945 are symbolically documented in a very confined urban space.

After 1990 the western Allies were content to make contributions to a museum that remembers their role as 'protecting powers' in Berlin. It is located in a one-time US army cinema on *Clayallee*, itself dedicated to the man who engineered the airlift. The museum in Karlshorst, with the unchanged hall where Germany capitulated, has now altered its name

and purpose to accommodate German-Russian ‘understanding between nations’. Barracks once used by allied forces, especially the huge Soviet army complexes, for instance near Nauen and in Wünsdorf, often stand empty and decaying. But the latter are vivid reminders of the explosive Cold War military confrontations, and of how heavily West Berlin was surrounded by military presence.

Did the four Allies have nothing in common that is manifested today? The buildings where the Allied Control Council and the Allied Kommandatura met for a few years, both in West Berlin, are acknowledged as such with plaques, but they are not memorial sites. One of the last jointly run institutions was Spandau Prison in the British sector. It was completely demolished after the suicide of its last prisoner Rudolf Hess, to prevent it ever becoming a ‘martyr’s shrine’ for neo-Nazis.

#### NEW AND OLD CAPITAL CITY SYMBOLS

Once Berlin had been chosen as capital in 1991, decisions had to be made about the federal institutions. The Federal Republic also expected to represent itself with symbolic buildings in its new seat of government. Again the same question arose: Was historical continuity desirable or even possible? Should the now unified Germany start from a new beginning? As so often the result was a more or less pragmatic compromise, the old Reichstag Building was accepted as the seat of parliament – as will be shown later, but reanimating *Wilhelmstraße* was out of the question. With just one exception, the ministries that moved to Berlin received offices in existing buildings in the district of *Mitte*, in former East Berlin. The *Bundesrat* moved into the former Prussian upper house. The federal president took up residence in the west, or rather, he stayed there, since Bellevue Palace had been his ‘second official residence’ since 1959.

The real nerve centre with parliamentary offices and chancellery was sited near the Reichstag Building. The architects Axel Schultes and Charlotte Frank designed a chain of buildings, a symbolic ‘federal ribbon’ that joins west and east, beginning with the rather large chancellery in the west close to the old sector border and ending in the east with the Bundestag library. At this point the Spree was once separated by the border. Now, with its new embankment promenades, it makes you

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particularly aware of something long ignored: a river flows through the heart of Berlin. But the River Spree, Berlin's quietly flowing, oldest natural city link, does not possess the same symbolism that the mythical Rhine gave to Bonn.

This leaves us with the two timeless architectural symbols of the capital which survived all the regimes of the first German nation state and following times: the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag Building. An arc can be drawn, from Prussia through Bismarck's empire to the present day. When the *Bundestag* in Bonn decided to move the seat of government and parliament to Berlin, a building also had to be chosen. The *Palast der Republik* with the People's Parliament chamber was clearly out of the question, although it fulfilled all the technical requirements and was easy to reach in the city centre. It was simply the wrong symbol. But in the west, immediately next to the Wall, was the Reichstag Building. As a symbol it was predestined to house the German parliament again, despite its worst defeat there in 1933. The building was completely gutted and remodelled ready for the move. The members wanted a glass dome, which the architect Sir Norman Foster duly provided. It became a new symbol of the 'Berlin Republic'. In the language of architecture glass symbolised transparency, and transparency symbolised democracy.

A great deal of historical significance is concentrated in and around this building: outside, inconspicuous white crosses for some who died at the Wall, inside the restored graffiti left by the Red Army in 1945. Most of the external allegorical decorations from the Wilhelminian era, such as a Germania statue, have vanished. There was even a debate about renaming the 'Reichstag'. The *Bundestag* deserved a building with a new, modern name. Apart from this the word 'Reich' itself was negatively charged. The name remained – the building is still generally called the Reichstag.

When Berlin was divided by the Wall, the Reichstag bore the German flag of black-red-gold which had been reintroduced in the whole of Germany after 1945. The same flag flew on the neighbouring Brandenburg Gate, but this one bore the GDR insignia created in 1956. The Brandenburg Gate had always been Berlin's most famous city symbol since it was built with its grand, ancient Greek-style pillars in

1788. It was originally a city entrance gate presenting an impressive view of the main thoroughfare *Unter den Linden*. As Berlin grew, the gate no longer stood on the edge but in the centre of the city.

Who owned the gate after 1945? The district border between *Mitte* (Soviet sector) and *Tiergarten* (British sector) ran a few metres west of the gate, which was thus in East Berlin's custody. It was now the entrance to the 'democratic sector', a kind of initial visiting card. East Berlin's city council renovated the war-torn gate in 1957. The crowning quadriga was recast in West Berlin. The Prussian insignia were removed in the East, but without any addition of socialist symbols.

This gate, shut and impassable since 1961 at the heart of a city of millions, epitomised the division of the one-time imperial capital, and of Germany itself. Seen historically it would be easy to wag a moralising finger: wasn't this gate too often used as the setting for demonstrations of military and political victories and power? But again this depends on the standpoint. Alongside the picture taken by Jevgeni Chaldei on the roof of the Reichstag, the photo with the Red Flag implanted on the shattered Brandenburg Gate with its bullet-ridden Victoria, is the most famous visual document of victory over the National Socialist dictatorship, but also of Germany's total defeat.

After 1961, from the eastern perspective, the massive Wall lay behind the gate and was hardly visible, but from the western side it was blindingly obvious. It became the ritual site for western politicians to decry the GDR regime and communism in front of running cameras, right through to President Reagan who demanded in summer 1987: 'Mr Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr Gorbachev tear down this wall!'<sup>33</sup> At the time many, including westerners, regarded this as a hopeless, futile provocation.

The east referred back to the original gate of peace in an effort to cleanse it of 'militaristic and imperialistic' connotations. But it was risky trying to turn the Brandenburg Gate into *the* symbol of a promising socialist city. Even so, it still appeared on stamps and in every illustrated (East) Berlin book. Ignoring the Wall in the latter would have been counter-productive, so standard phrases emerged ranging from 'anti-fascist protective wall' to 'GDR state border'. The new East Berlin landmark, the Television Tower, was much easier to handle, but lacked the historical aura. The signal effect of Berlin images, desired by both

33 <<http://www.reaganfoundation.org/reagan/speeches/wall.asp> 20.8.2007>

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west and east, was solved as follows: a western encyclopaedia printed an aerial view of the Brandenburg Gate, including the Wall and thus the city's division; an eastern encyclopaedia showed the neo-classical section of *Karl Marx Allee* (previously *Stalinallee*) with the Television Tower.<sup>34</sup>

After the fall of the Wall the gate became the symbol of German unity and the peaceful overthrow of the GDR. Could this be the missing monument to German unification? In metaphorical terms it certainly became a vehicle of national meaning. Everywhere, at home and abroad and in all visual media, this was the favourite image for references to recent German history and the present. The gate was restored at great expense as the most valuable authentic gem in the city's heritage. The Prussian insignia of victory, the eagle and iron cross of 1814 were reinstated on Victoria's sceptre. The Brandenburg Gate: as history's plaything of interpretation, the four horses could even – anachronistically – be seen to symbolise the four Allies whose embassies now stand in the gate's immediate vicinity, as they last did in 1939.

#### OUTLOOK

Nearly every capital in Europe has a symbolic function for its country and special symbolic places to illustrate this. Having been the capital of three vanished states, Prussia, the German Reich of 1871 and the German Democratic Republic, having endured division during the Cold War, Berlin re-emerged in the nineties as capital of the whole of Germany, but mainly as the seat of government, lacking the traditional concentration of financial and economic power. However, over the centuries Berlin has accumulated a unique collection of memorial sites and other architectural relics. In addition to this the four powers, the United States, Great Britain and France on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other, left their marks whilst piloting and accompanying the process of re-education in post-war Germany. In 1945 at the end of a disastrous dictatorship each side propagated its own idea of democracy, a new trust in freedom and peace at one of the most sensitive points in divided Europe. This in turn

<sup>34</sup> *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon in 25 Bänden*, vol. 3, 842; *Meyers Universallexikon*, vol. I, 260–61.

evolved into an ongoing struggle over the right to interpret history and its visual symbols. The confrontation in Berlin resulted in a special symbol of the Cold War period, the Wall.

More than anywhere else in Germany Berlin has become a sphere of politically intended remembrance, a place of national education and image-making. Two years ago, when *Der Spiegel* announced in its title story the 'Comeback einer Weltstadt', the cover featured several of the architectural symbols already mentioned here with a design echoing the famous *New Yorker* style: the Brandenburg Gate acted as the central eye-catcher, leading to the Prussian Victory Column and flanked by a variety of edifices, such as the Reichstag, the *Gedächtniskirche* and the Bode Museum, all erected in the time of the Prussian and German monarchies. Relegated to the sideline in the background we can make out a slender Television Tower, a single reminder of the GDR, while the Federal Chancellery and Potsdamer Platz act as representatives of the new 'Berlin Republic'.<sup>35</sup> Remarkably, the picture shows no trace, not even the slightest hint, of the Wall. It has vanished. Although the concrete Wall was rapidly demolished after reunification, it is well worth considering, whether it nevertheless continues to exist 'in the minds' of the people, as the saying goes, and pondering how long this will last.

The question remains how all these symbolic places will be perceived by the now growing young generation in Berlin, Germany and abroad. For the future of these young people a recent artistic symbol in Berlin could be of greater relevance. At the heart of the Parliament's Reichstag Building, in contrast to the old 1916 inscription on the façade 'To the German people', the artist Hans Haacke created a new hotly debated dedication 'To the Population'. With this he embraced the growing proportion of migrants in German society. Will they be integrated into a German nation – and its complexly symbolic history, or will such questions be of less significance to a population more deeply involved in the great cultural diversity which exists in society today?

Translation from German by Ann Robertson, Berlin

<sup>35</sup> *Der Spiegel* No. 12, 19.3.2007.

# Lenin Lives in Finland

JONI KREKOLA

During the Cold War era, Finland's foreign policy was based on friendly neighbour relations with the Soviet Union. Officially, the state relations were defined in the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (the YYA Treaty, 1948). Culturally, the Finns had to create and maintain a more positive image of their former enemy. The politicians and historians had to, among others things, reconsider their relation to Vladimir Lenin, who had become the canonized symbol of the Soviet system.

The legacy of Lenin in Finland, especially since the late Cold War era of the 1960s, is the subject of this article. Lenin's grip on Finland is explained by his personal contribution to the history of Finland, an issue that has been debated since the gaining of independence in 1917. After the first demonizing decades and the Second World War, Lenin's public representations became more positive in Finland. A museum was dedicated to him in 1946, and later Lenin started to appear in names and statues that still exist in Finland. In this respect, but to a far lesser extent, Finland resembles the Eastern European countries that became People's Democracies:

In Eastern Europe not Leninism, not Lenin but the external trappings of the Lenin cult – the monuments, the posters, the renamed streets, squares, and cities – composes what today might be called the “material culture” of the Soviet empire abroad.<sup>1</sup>

In the Eastern European countries, the end of the Cold War era resulted in attacks on the statues and street names that were connected to the

<sup>1</sup> N. Tumarkina, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*. Enlarged edition. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press 1997, 270.

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former Soviet occupier.<sup>2</sup> Nowadays museums displaying the horrors of Soviet crimes, terror, GULAG and deportations have been opened. The material culture of the Soviet era is collected in statue parks that could be called, ironically, concentrations camps for the historical symbols of Soviet oppression.<sup>3</sup>

During the 1990s, Russians themselves gradually purged the most striking Soviet monuments from their towns. However, the Lenin mausoleum still dominates the most central place in Moscow's Red Square, and thousands of monuments to the great leader remain in the countryside, obviously because no one has bothered to remove them. The Lenin cult has ceased to exist; instead there are signs of nostalgia for the good old Soviet times, and on the other hand, the commercial trivialization of the former sacred figure.<sup>4</sup>

Public artefacts, like statues that are connected to the political past, are always signs of conscious history politics, which attempts to influence people's consciousness of history. The founding of a monument activates certain images of the past. The destruction of statues of fallen heroes means an active aspiration to forget.<sup>5</sup> The Finns have remained relatively indifferent to their own surroundings. The few monuments and places that were dedicated to Lenin have mostly been allowed to rest in peace.

Are the Finns not sensitive to the sufferings of their neighbours, who became victims of the Second World War? If anything, should we analysed why Lenin still has a foothold in Finland?

2 Tumarkina, *Lenin Lives!*, 278–279.

3 H. Kuusi, 'Prison Experiences and Socialist Sculptures – Tourism and the Soviet Past in the Baltic States, in A. Kostainen and T. Syrjämaa (eds), *The Uses of History in Tourist Development*. Finnish University Network of Tourist Studies, forthcoming 2008. A description of mixed feelings of a Finnish visitor ('spoiled by democracy') of *Gruto Parkas* in Lithuania, see C. Nynäs, 'Statyparken – Lenin ner på jorden', *Finsk Tidskrift* (2003: 8–9), 643–645.

4 T. J. Smith, 'The Collapse of the Lenin Personality Cult in Soviet Russia, 1985–1995', *Historian* 60 (1998: 2), 325–343; T. Vihavainen, 'Vladimir Iljitšin toinen elämä eli de-leninisoinnin kysymyksiä', *Kanava* (2001: 6), 347–353.

5 H. Salmi, 'Menneisyyskokemuksesta hyödykkeisiin – historiakulttuurin muodot', in J. Kalela and I. Lindroos (eds), *Jokapäiväinen historia*. Helsinki: SKS 2001, 146.

## SILENCED TRAUMA OF 1918

It is a historical fact that Lenin spent one and a half years of his life, in short periods, in Finland that was a suitable hiding place for the Bolshevik leaders of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finland was near enough to St. Petersburg, and revolutionaries were not under as close surveillance as in Russia. Lenin paid his first visit to Tampere Workers' Hall in 1905, which was later honoured by a bronze relief (1965).<sup>6</sup> The longest period that Lenin hid in the Grand Duchy was between 1906 and 1907, but the most famous of these sojourns, surely, was on the eve of the October Revolution of 1917 when he wrote his *State and Revolution* in Helsinki. Before 1917, Lenin was a relatively unknown figure in Finland. After seizing power, however, Lenin and his Bolshevik government signed Finland's declaration of independence on the last day of 1917. The recognition of the other states soon followed.

Lenin's stays in Finland and his personal contribution to the recognition of Finland's independence are the basis of the positive Lenin image. His true motive behind this recognition has been debated ever since. During the first decades of Finnish independence, Lenin symbolized the Bolshevik power that was the main enemy for the majority of Finns.<sup>7</sup> The Finnish revolutionaries, the 'Reds', had been beaten in the Civil War of spring 1918. The Finnish publicity was filled with the 'White truth', which regarded Lenin's support of Finnish independence as tactical. The voice of the beaten working class could not be heard for a more balanced picture. Professional history writers did not touch the delicate subject.

After the Second World War the legacy of Lenin became the cornerstone of the friendly neighbour relations between Finland and the Soviet Union. The members of the Finnish government set an example for the citizens by joining the Finnish–Soviet Friendship Society, and the first Lenin museum outside the USSR was founded in Tampere in 1946. However, the image of Lenin was overshadowed by Stalin,

<sup>6</sup> The text on the relief: 'V.I. Lenin has expressed his sympathy towards our people's independent will in the historical meetings of 1905 and 1906 held in this building.'

<sup>7</sup> K. Immonen, *Ryssästä saa puhua... Neuvostoliitto suomalaisessa julkisuudessa ja kirjat julkisuuden muotona 1918–1939*. Helsinki: Otava 1987, 151–155.

who proclaimed himself as the continuator of Lenin's legacy. In any case Lenin's and Stalin's Finnish supporters now had the legal right to participate in Finnish politics for the first time. The Finnish People's Democratic League (SKDL), including communist party members, had a post-war electoral support of 20 per cent. There was little further analysis of the controversial question of Lenin and independence; the first scientific historical study on Finnish independence by Juhani Paasivirta (*Suomen itsenäisyyskysymys 1917* vol. I–II, 1947–1949) recognised that Lenin's role had been neglected earlier.<sup>8</sup>

In processing their historical traumas, the Finns had to start from the year 1918, which had divided the newborn nation. The memory of the hard experiences suffered by the Reds had been maintained quietly as oral tradition and communal folklore. The history debate among the public was not initiated by the conservative historians, but by novelists like Väinö Linna (*Täällä Pohjantähden alla* I–III, 1959–1962), who challenged the 'White truth', as well as the academic historians who had, except for one relatively unbiased study, conformed to it. The viewpoint of the Reds was acknowledged by historians some years later. It would have been done without Linna, but his criticism undoubtedly forced the historians to react faster.<sup>9</sup> The political integration of the Finnish labour movement led to the left-agrarian coalition in 1966. In the field of history writing, the government further supported the healing of the wounds of 1918 by appointing a state financed history committee to investigate the Red Guards.<sup>10</sup>

The general reassessment of the history of 1918 in the 1960s was perhaps a prerequisite for reawakening the discussion of Lenin's role in Finnish history. In addition to the novelists, history writing was now challenged by the highest quarter, President Urho Kekkonen.

8 T. Vihavainen, 'Suomalaisten arvioita Leninistä', in *Lenin ja Suomi*. Vol. III. Helsinki: Opetusministeriö 1990, 46–48.

9 *Suomi vuonna 1918* by Juhani Paasivirta (1957) had taken the Reds seriously. P. Haapala, 'Väinö Linnan historiasota', *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* (2001: 1), 25–34.

10 P. Kettunen 'Politiikan menneisyys ja poliittinen historia', in P. Ahtiainen et al. (eds) *Historia nyt*. Helsinki: WSOY 1990, 185–186, 191. In the 1980s, the committee published four massive studies, which resulted in three dissertations, under the common title *History of Red Finland 1918*. O. Jussila, *Suomen historian suuret myytit*. Helsinki: WSOY 2007, 285–288.

LENIN, KEKKONEN AND HISTORY

It is really startling that the bourgeois politicians of the 1970s and the 1980s refer to Lenin with the same ease that was characteristic of their predecessors, before 1944, who considered the Bolsheviks' Russia as the one and only, but even more dangerous enemy of Finland's independence. When seen from the 'Western' viewpoint, the current Finnish attitude to Lenin raises the question whether this kind of approach would be 'Finlandization' which means that the Finns have resorted to distorting the historical reality in order to preserve good relations with their Eastern neighbour.<sup>11</sup>

The most favourable era for public Lenin memorials in Finland began at the end of the 1950s. Nikita Khrushchev had denounced the Stalin cult, stressed the original founder of Soviet socialism, and created instead his own personal cult. For the Finns, it was Stalin who had persecuted ethnic Finns in Red Karelia, started the Winter War, and claimed the harsh war indemnities after the Second World War. During a short wave of openness in 1956–1958, the Finns published shocking memoirs of Soviet experiences during the Stalin era.<sup>12</sup> Their main enemy was no longer Lenin, whose relations with Finland were favourably documented by Sylvi-Kyllikki Kilpi (*Lenin ja suomalaiset*, 1957).

However, enough time had passed since the war for the Finns to get used to Soviet influence on Finnish politics. Urho Kekkonen, who had become a master at fostering friendly Finnish–Soviet relations since the war, was elected president in 1956 after having been prime minister for five years almost uninterruptedly. Kekkonen used his prerogatives to the extreme in negotiating personally with the Soviet leaders. Despite some setbacks, he was able to increase Finland's room for manoeuvre with the Soviets and strengthen the Western integration of his country. One of his trumps in this game was Lenin himself. After the resolution of the famous 'Night Frost Crisis' in January 1959, Kekkonen for the first time connected Finnish independence with the strongest Soviet authority,

11 J. Kalela and J. Turtola, *Lenin ja Suomen työväenliike*. Unpublished manuscript, 1980, 3.

12 For an overview of the Finnish gulag memoirs, see E. Vettenniemi, *Surviving the Soviet Meat Grinder: The Politics of Finnish Gulag Memoirs*. Helsinki: Kikumora Series A6, 2001.

Lenin. As a present from the grateful Finnish people, Kekkonen donated a commemorative plate to Lenin's workroom in Leningrad. From then on, Lenin was institutionalized and publicly honored in Finland.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1960s, memorial plates of Lenin started to appear in the various places of Finland where he had visited. They grew to statues in two towns, Turku and Kotka, in the late 1970s.<sup>14</sup> The unveiling ceremonies of the memorials were honoured by local and national leaders, and liturgical speeches to the Soviet guests: 'This plate will remain a visible reminder of the bonds to Finland and to its capital of the great leader of the Soviet Union, its founder and friend of Finland, Lenin. It symbolizes the fortunate, close and confidential relations of friendship and neighbourly spirit between Finland and the Soviet Union.'<sup>15</sup>

President Kekkonen fostered an image of Lenin as the decisive force in the recognition of Finnish independence and the friendly relations between the neighbouring countries. Kekkonen did not hesitate to use a freer interpretation of history for increasing Soviets' confidence. He even challenged the professional history writing that had eventually produced a solid version of Lenin's role in Finnish independence. Lenin's value for the Finns increased especially after 1968 when the Soviets had questioned the earlier formulations of Finnish neutrality. The calculations based on the current political realism, however, led to unnecessary concessions; Kekkonen stated, for instance, that it would have been better for the Finns if Lenin had lived longer. Kekkonen's history interpretations appealed to Moscow so much that he was twice awarded the Lenin prize (1964, 1980).<sup>16</sup>

13 O. Apunen, *Tilinteko Kekkonen aikaan: Ulkopoliittinen valta ja vallankäyttö Suomessa*. Helsinki, Kirjayhtymä 1984, 141. O. Jussila, *Suomen historian suuret myytit*, 205.

14 Sites of the Lenin plates in Finland and their unveiling year: Kotka 1957, Lahti 1962, Turku 1964, Tampere 1965, Helsinki 1965; 1970, Tornio 1967, Parainen 1970. Lenin statues: Turku 1977, Kotka 1979. People's Archives, Helsinki, Vladimir Iljitsh Lenin, Lenin-muiston vaaliminen.

15 The chair of the city council Teuvo Aura at the unveiling ceremony of the Lenin plate in Helsinki, 1965. L. Kolbe, *Unelmien Helsinki. Kadut ja korttelit kertovat*. Helsinki, Jyväskylä: Minerva 2007, 148–149.

16 V. Pernaa, 'Lenin, Kekkonen ja Suomen itsenäisyys – malli 1970', in V. Vares (ed.), *Vuorovaikutuksia: Timo Soikkasen juhlaKirja*. Turku: Turun historiallinen yhdistys 2007, 241–242; K. Rentola, *Vallankumouksen aave. Vasemmisto*,

Tuomo Polvinen's *Venäjän vallankumous ja Suomi, 1917–1920* (vol. I 1967) was the first academic study that placed the question of Finnish independence into a wider historical and international context. Polvinen presented the Bolsheviks as the one and only Russian party that accepted the secession of the Finns. They acted according to Lenin's national politics, but simultaneously believed in the world revolution that would have solved the Finnish problem too. Behind the myth of a benevolent Lenin was a realistic statesman that had chosen the most advantageous alternative at a certain historical moment. He never hoped for a bourgeois national state Finland to emerge. Despite 'painful cuts' into the mythical Lenin image, Polvinen represented history writing that supported friendly neighbour relations built on the 'common interests' between the countries.<sup>17</sup>

President Kekkonen gave a speech on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Lenin in 1970. Despite Polvinen's explanatory study on Lenin's role, Kekkonen preferred his political version in which Lenin had defended Finnish autonomy and crowned this intention by recognizing its independence. According to Kekkonen, as a realist Lenin accepted the result of the turbulent phase of 1918. 'White' Finland was good enough for the formation of decent state relationships. Kekkonen wanted to equate Lenin's policy with Khrushchev's peaceful coexistence, a favourable slogan for the Finns since 1956.<sup>18</sup>

The national climax of the Lenin celebrations was surely Lenin Park (*Lenin-puisto*), which appeared on the map of Helsinki in 1970 and was located behind the headquarters of the Communist Party of Finland. There were over one thousand different Lenin festivities in the whole country. They included symposiums, exhibitions, Lenin quizzes for the schoolchildren, a Lenin stamp, and various Lenin publications. The main event for the international audience was the symposium 'Lenin and the development of science, culture and education', which was organised in Helsinki with the support of UNESCO. Polvinen, the original chair of the symposium, was replaced by Professor Lauri Posti, who echoed

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*Beljakov ja Kekkonen 1970*. Helsinki: Otava 2005, 164.

17 P. Kettunen 'Politiikan menneisyys ja poliittinen historia', 189–191.

18 T. Vihavainen, 'Suomalaisten arvioita Leninistä', 57–60. O. Jussila, *Suomen historian suuret myytit*, 205–206.

Kekkonen's interpretations of Lenin's role.<sup>19</sup> Actually, events similar to the Lenin year had already been arranged in 1967 when the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Finnish independence was connected with the festivities of the October Revolution.

Did Finnish politicians have to go this far in flattering the Soviets? The political motif of highlighting Lenin on the state level, especially in 1970, was the guaranteeing of Finnish independence in the future by invoking the Soviets' most sacred leader. What Lenin had given could not be denied by Brezhnev. The balance of the Soviet block had been shaken by 1968 and the occupation of Prague in particular. Moscow was worried about anti-Soviet opinions in Finland as well. Official Finland used the legacy of Lenin in its foreign policy to strengthen Finnish neutrality. It satisfied the Soviet leaders although they must have been aware of the tactical motives behind the liturgical surface.

The praises for Lenin may have been a low price for Finland's neutrality in the 1970s, but there surely were excesses that are irritating to recall afterwards. The political left was genuinely in favour of the celebrations, as were the radicalized youth and student movement. The Finnish student protest of the 1960s had evolved from value radicalism through the New Left ideas towards the bureaucratic party politics of the 1970s. Part of the protest had been the younger generation's uprising that challenged their parents' War Generations. The fathers had defended Finland against the Soviet aggressor and offered their lives for the nation. What could be more insulting, then, than youth proclaiming to follow the path paved by Lenin? The relatively strong Moscow orientation of the Finnish student movement of the 1970s differs from most of the European and Scandinavian countries where the Maoists and Trotskyites were more popular.<sup>20</sup>

The Lenin hype influenced the adversaries. It was almost impossible to criticize Lenin or the Soviet system without being labelled an anti-Soviet. Tendencies of self-censorship in the press and in some publishing houses prevented the publications of some Soviet-critical books. Consequently, the average person could not necessarily distinguish between tactical Lenin rhetoric and the true expressions of a friendly neighbour. I myself, for example, grew up in this context of doublespeak.

19 Rentola, *Vallankumouksen aave*, 142–173; Perna, 'Lenin, Kekkonen ja Suomen itsenäisyys – malli 1970', 242–245.

20 Rentola, *Vallankumouksen aave*, 163–164.

HISTORY PROJECTS: *LENIN AND FINLAND*

The Finnish communists were usually defenders of Lenin's glory in Finland. The Communist Party of Finland had good reasons for celebrating Lenin in 1970. One of the preparatory projects that its educational section started in late 1968 was dedicated to Lenin and his sojourns in Finland. The historians of the party were gathered into a committee that was ordered to study Lenin's visits in Finland and his connections to the early Finnish labour movement.<sup>21</sup> A research plan that included four chapters was established:

1. Lenin's sojourns in Finland
2. Lenin and the Finns
3. Cooperation between the Finnish and Russian revolutionary movement
4. Detailed questions<sup>22</sup>

A complete bibliography of Lenin's texts in Finnish

The controversial question of Lenin's contribution to Finnish independence was hardly mentioned. Had this plan been carried out, the result would have been a reconstruction of Lenin's routes and his contacts in Finland. The sacred figure was not planned to mess with politics. As a modest result, a collection of Lenin memoirs, edited by a committee member, was published. In addition, a symposium organized by the Soviet Peace Committee and *Suomen Rauhanpuolustajat* was held in Leningrad.<sup>23</sup>

The professional historians could not keep silent about Lenin and Finland either. It was the main theme of the 2<sup>nd</sup> joint seminar of Finnish-Soviet historians held in Moscow in May 1969. According to the Finnish

21 People's Archives, Vladimir Iljitsh Lenin, vuosijuhlat, 100-vuotissyntymäpäivään liittyviä tutkimusaineistoja 1969, Aarne Vuori to Veikko Sippola, 7 Nov. 1968.

22 Clarification was needed, for example, to the burning question of whether the persons that made up Lenin as a barber were really members of the drama club of the Helsinki Workers Theatre. People's Archives, Helsinki, Vladimir Iljitsh Lenin, vuosijuhlat, Leninin syntymän 100-vuotispäivän johdosta suoritettavat tutkimukset.

23 T. Lehén, *Lenin suomalaisten muistelmissa*. Helsinki: Kansankulttuuri 1969. 'Lenin ja Suomi. Symposium Leningradissa 1.11.1969', *Ihminen ja yhteiskunta*, APN:n kirjasarja 1969: 16. *Suomen Rauhanpuolustajat* was a member organisation of the Soviet-dominated World Peace Council.

report, the seminar included lively debates that were more than just polite. The interpretations of Lenin's role naturally differed between the Finns and the Soviets, but bringing together the most prominent researchers was valuable as such.<sup>24</sup>

The great Lenin year 1970 produced an idea of a state financed history project, *Lenin and Finland*. It was inaugurated by the Ministry of Education in 1977. The initiative was taken by the Finnish–Soviet Friendship Society, obviously again in order to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Finnish independence / the October Revolution.<sup>25</sup> The goal was similar to the project of the communist party ten years earlier, but the historians chosen for the project were young professionals with academic degrees. It was obvious that the subject chosen would not harm friendly relations with the USSR. In the forefront of the experienced historians was Professor Tuomo Polvinen, whose highly respected research could not be passed by. In order to balance the interpretations, two Finnish writers who had done their doctoral degrees in Moscow were hired.<sup>26</sup> The Soviets themselves were not cooperative; the visiting Finnish scholar was very restricted in the use of the archives in Moscow and Leningrad.<sup>27</sup> A state financed history project indicates that at least Lenin's role in the history of Finland was worth a detailed examination.

The working group of *Lenin and Finland* was led by Permanent Under-Secretary of State Jaakko Numminen. Its members represented different political opinions. The guidelines for the research were planned by Professor Osmo Apunen.<sup>28</sup> Preliminary studies were made by Antti Kujala, whose contribution to the final book was the biggest; roughly a fifth of the 1,045 pages. The other contributors were hired as writers

24 O. Jussila, 'Seminaari Moskovassa', *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* (1969: 4), 302–308. See also the seminar papers: *ibid*, appendixes, 3–71.

25 Archive of the Ministry of Education (AME), Helsinki, 1977–1991 Lenin ja Suomi -teoksen valmistelutyöryhmä, kansio 1, ryhmä 1. Suomi–Neuvostoliitto-seuran johtokunta opetusministeriölle 3 Mar. 1977.

26 Timo Karvonen who has worked in the Finnish–Soviet Friendship Society since the 1970s withdrew from the project in 1982. Aimo Minkkinen has worked at the Lenin Museum in Tampere since 1982.

27 Interview with Antti Kujala, 15 Jun. 2007.

28 The working group: Numminen, Apunen, Professor Sune Jungar, Professor Toivo J. Paloposki, Secretary General Christina von Gerich-Porkkala.

that got paid for the manuscripts.<sup>29</sup> The drafts were evaluated by senior researchers who were the most prominent historians of the time.<sup>30</sup> Their comments forced a couple of contributors to rewrite their drafts. Some writers had difficulties with qualifying a scientific historical text for a wider audience, some with the style of their text.<sup>31</sup> After the final corrections, only one of the manuscripts was dropped by the working group.<sup>32</sup>

What was the outcome of the project? The first volume of *Lenin and Finland* came out opportunely to highlight the important anniversaries of 1987. In the foreword, Jaakko Numminen justified the project, which the press had been sceptical about, by presenting historical facts about Lenin and his contribution to the friendly relations that developed later. However, mutual gratitude had to be expressed: the Finns were grateful for Lenin's view on Finnish independence and the Soviets, for their part, acknowledged the Finns that had helped Lenin in preparations for the Russian Revolution.<sup>33</sup> Lenin's footprints in Finland were painstakingly documented in the first two volumes covering the period from the turn of the century to the death of the protagonist. Fortunately, the third volume was published in 1990 before the final collapse of the Soviet block.

Professor Osmo Jussila titled his sarcastic but appreciative review of the project: 'A gift to Uncle Lenin'. Jussila suggested that the three

29 The final contributors: Jyrki Iivonen, Eino Ketola, Aimo Klemetilä, Antti Kujala, Aimo Minkkinen, Juhani Piilonen, Tuomo Polvinen, Osmo Rinta-Tassi, Timo Vihavainen.

30 Professors Jaakko Paavolainen, Hannu Soikkanen, Osmo Jussila, Osmo Apunen, Toivo J. Paloposki, Ohto Manninen, Pekka Suvanto.

31 'In too detailed presentations there might be a danger of a slight comical side-effect or even a shade of personal cult that would have been sharply disapproved by Lenin himself.' AME, 1977–1991 *Lenin ja Suomi* -teoksen valmistelutyöryhmä, kansio 1, ryhmä 1, Osmo Jussila's expert opinion on Eino Ketola's manuscript, 23 Aug. 1982.

32 The reason was not the scientific quality of the chapter, but it was considered too theoretical and difficult for a wider audience. It was not in line with the other manuscripts. AME, 1977–1991 *Lenin ja Suomi* -teoksen valmistelutyöryhmä, kansio 1, ryhmä 2. *Lenin ja Suomi* valmistelutyöryhmän pöytäkirja 2 Jun. 1986. Resolution of publishing the manuscript by Jorma Kalela and Jussi Turtola.

33 J. Numminen, 'Lenin ja Suomi' (foreword), in *Lenin ja Suomi*. Vol. I. Helsinki: Opetusministeriö 1987, 10–11.

volumes should be translated into Russian and published in the Soviet Union (still roughly half a year of lifetime left) – as an example of critical historical study. He admitted that a full picture of Lenin’s cruelty could not be drawn. There was no chapter on Lenin and terror, and even some descriptions of him by certain Finnish politicians were not put as bluntly as the originals were: cynical, fanatical. However, Jussila concluded that *Lenin and Finland* made one thing clear: ‘... the original intention was that Finland, too, should eventually join the great Soviet family.’<sup>34</sup> According to Jussila’s latest view, the Lenin myth in Finland was finally dissolved with *Lenin and Finland*.

The third volume of *Lenin and Finland* was perhaps the most interesting since it included three unrelated articles from different viewpoints. Professor Polvinen expanded on his previous studies in *Lenin and the national question. About Lenin’s views on foreign policy* by Aimo Minkkinen presented a theoretical analysis solely based on the hero’s own texts. The third main article, *The Finns’ evaluations of Lenin* by Timo Vihavainen, deserves closer attention. It described the image of Lenin in Finnish newspapers, school books, and other public representations as of 1917. The ultimate self-reflective comments were from the late 1980s when the first volume of *Lenin and Finland* had already been put out: ‘The first volume, published in late 1987, was considered successful practically everywhere.’<sup>35</sup>

Vihavainen described the most embarrassing Lenin-happenings of the Kekkonen era, as well as the famous Finno-Soviet cooperation film *The Confidence* (1976).<sup>36</sup> The subject was challenging since Vihavainen had to find a balance between criticism and the traditional friendship liturgy during an era of accelerating change in the socialist block. The solution in approach was political objectivity; the author gave room for different Lenin images without commenting on them too harshly. The evaluators of the original manuscript had considered the Lenin representations in

34 O. Jussila, ‘Suomen lahja Leninille’. *Helsingin Sanomat (HS)* 6 Apr. 1991. English translation: ‘A gift to Uncle Lenin’. *Books of Finland* (1991: 4), 228–230.

35 T. Vihavainen, ‘Suomalaisten arvioita Leninistä’, 69.

36 It reconstructed the historical events of late 1917 and managed to end the film with a scene of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which took place in Helsinki in 1975.

the era of 'White Finland' too crude and they had suggested a more 'discreet' style.<sup>37</sup> The colourful early Lenin descriptions have been left in the published version. However, as later comments reveal, the Lenin image of the Kekkonen era was characterized too uncritically, without Vihavainen's typical sarcastic comments.<sup>38</sup>

Vihavainen's most famous book, however, is *Kansakunta rähmällään* (*Nation on its knees. The short history of Finlandization*, 1991), a critical release of the repressed shame felt in regard to Finnish–Soviet relations. The style of the text and timing of the publication was perfect. There was only one obvious weakness; the author did not comment on the project *Lenin and Finland* and his recent participation in it. Nor did he reflect on it later in his confessional article *When I was Finlandicized*. In the same collection of popular essays (2001) Professor Seppo Hentilä asked whether Finnish history writing was Finlandicized. When hypothetically accused, Finnish historians would, according to him, muddle through. The historians used to explain that there was no reason for studying Russian or Soviet history as long as the Moscow archives remained closed. Since most of them belonged to the quiet ones that kept silent in order to avoid problems, the 'crimes' of Finlandization were at most minor. On the other hand, Hentilä admits that the theme remains unstudied.<sup>39</sup>

Finnish professional historians shared the burden of maintaining friendly relations with the Soviets during the later Cold War era. This was in line with the earlier favours that the historians had done for the Finnish state. What strikes the eye, however, is what was not explored. In Finland, neither Russia nor the Soviet Union had been studied academically after Finnish independence. There was not a single professorship in Russian / Soviet history. In the mid-1960s, a small research group started to concentrate on Soviet studies at the Finnish Institute of Foreign Affairs.

37 AME, 1977–1991 Lenin ja Suomi -teoksen valmistelutyöryhmä, kansio 1, ryhmä 1, Osmo Apunen's expert opinion on Timo Vihavainen's manuscript 12 Dec. 1983.

38 O. Jussila, 'Timo Vihavainen – vaitelias filosofi', in K. Kalleinen (ed.), *Venäjä ja Suomi: Juhlakirja professori Timo Vihavaiselle 9.5.2007*. Helsinki: Aleksanteri Series 1:2007, 15.

39 S. Hentilä, 'Kun historiankirjoitus kohtaa suomettumisen' and T. Vihavainen, 'Silloin kun minä suometuin', in J. Bäckman (ed.), *Entäs kun tulee se yhdes-toista? Suomettumisen uusi historia*. Helsinki: WSOY 2001, 57–70, 649–659.

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Despite the academic aspirations of the group, its work was politicized and labelled anti-Soviet, especially after 1968. Very few individual researchers dared take the risk of engaging Soviet studies in the 1970s. Little by little, this low point was passed in the 1980s with increasing Scandinavian research contacts.<sup>40</sup> The Finns might have known something about their Eastern neighbour and the Soviet mentality because of their practical cooperation with the Russians in trade relations and tourism. During the Cold War era, however, Finnish knowledge on history of the Soviet Union was not based on scientific research.

#### THE LENIN MUSEUM AND STATUES

The egocentric Finnish culture doesn't include empathy for other nationalities by turning over the statues. Why to bother, if the statue is expensive and it remains in good condition.<sup>41</sup>

The Lenin museum in Tampere, the first of the Lenin museums established outside the USSR, was opened in January 1946. Originally, it collected and preserved Finnish *Leniniana*, memories and items that were connected to Lenin. The museum was maintained by the Finnish–Soviet Friendship Society with a representative from the city of Tampere. Despite 'modest' financial support and exhibition materials from the Soviet Union, the first ten years of the museum were burdened with financial problems. For the majority of the Finns, Lenin's legacy raised suspicions, and the Lenin museum was considered a propaganda institution.<sup>42</sup> Until 1956, Lenin's legacy in the museum was accompanied by his successor, Stalin, even so much that a joint statue of the heroes was planned. Despite the failure of the daring enterprise, the Central Lenin museum in Moscow tried for

40 V. Perna, *Tehtävänä Neuvostoliitto: Opetusministeriön Neuvostoliittoinstituutin roolit suomalaisessa politiikassa*. Helsinki: Venäjän ja Itä-Euroopan instituutti 2002, 150–152, 304–326.

41 E. Heino, 'Eurooppalaisia Lenin-museoita', *Suomi* (1991: 4–5), 23.

42 For the general history of the museum, see <http://www.lenin.fi/uusi/uk/index.htm>

years to donate a huge Lenin statue to be located in front of the Tampere museum. It never happened.<sup>43</sup>

The first Soviet tourists reached the official place of pilgrimage in 1955. Until the 1960s, however, the Lenin museum kept a low profile. The Soviet visitors were from the top: Brezhnev, Podgorny, Kosygin (with Kekkonen) and cosmonaut Gagarin. During and after the Great Lenin Year of 1970, the museum became more popular among the leftist youth. Simultaneously, financial support from Moscow diminished and the exhibitions could be organized more independently. The Finnish Ministry of Education started to finance the museum, whose prosperity reached its peak during the 1980s. The state's financial support indicated that Lenin's ambiguous legacy was officially accepted in Finland during the 1970s. Protests against the Lenin museum were few. In 1977 there was a failed attempt by an extreme right wing organisation to blow up the Tampere museum building.

The tourist attractions for the Soviets were complemented by the Lenin museum room in Helsinki (1976–1995). In the autumn of 1917, Lenin had hid in a flat that belonged to Helsinki's chief of police, Kustaa Rovio. Near the museum room was the headquarters of the Finnish–Soviet Friendship Society, which used to open the doors of the museum room for high-ranking Soviet guests. Everything changed in the early 1990s; the Russian guests of the Finnish-Russian Friendship Society, whose headquarters was moved further away, could not have cared less of the room. The prevailing pressure against Finland's Lenin museums was relieved by closing down the museum room in 1995. According to the head of the Tampere museum it was the price to be paid for preserving the main museum.<sup>44</sup>

The decline of the Tampere Lenin museum was caused by the collapse of the Soviet block and the subsequent deep economic recession in Finland. The Russian tourists that had formed the majority of annual visitors disappeared. When the network of Lenin museums in Russia and abroad quickly diminished, a public debate started on whether it was acceptable to maintain the Finnish Lenin museum. On the eve of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Lenin museum of Tampere

43 K. Kinnunen, *Suomi–Neuvostoliitto-Seuran historia 1944–1974*. Helsinki: Suomi–Venäjä-seura 1998, 279–281.

44 Interview with the head of the museum Aimo Minkkinen 9 July 2007.

received international publicity because of rumours that Lenin's embalmed body was planned to be transferred to Tampere.<sup>45</sup> The news was too good to be true.

However, the Lenin museum in Tampere survived and remained the only one kept open regularly through the transition years. A change in the museum's strategy was a necessity for its survival. The exhibitions could now treat subjects that had been taboo during the Soviet years. A museum shop that commercialized the formerly sacred Lenin tradition was opened in 1993, a crisis year for the museum. The updating of the museum's image was skilfully done in cooperation with artists and journalists that understood its uniqueness. The political antagonists of the museum, both local and national, were too few to seriously threaten its future.<sup>46</sup>

What actually happened on a more general level? The Finnish Lenin museum did not deny its history as the leading advocate of a positive Lenin image in Finland. Instead it started to produce exhibitions that could be critical towards the consequences of Lenin's achievements in the USSR. Moreover, a mixture of irony and nostalgia in approach kept the most tragic years of Soviet history at arm's length. The museum invested in digitalisation and history products such as the CD-rom *Soviet Dada – the Rise and fall of the Lenin Cult* (1999). It was marketed as edutainment that was supposed to enlighten the younger generations about the absurd Soviet years. In the Lenin museum shop, visitors could buy reprints of the socialist cult figures and Soviet posters. The museum has become trendy for the leftist youth, who process history as retro by recycling the revolutionary symbols.<sup>47</sup>

The survival strategy of the Finnish Lenin museum has been successful. Today demands for closing it are not often heard (except in

45 In total, the number of all professionally managed Lenin museums had been about 50. In 1991 the Lenin museums of Prague, Leipzig, Warsaw, Krakow, and Riga had been closed down. Of the former ten European museums, only one Lenin-room in Paris was then partly open for special guests. Heino, 'Eurooppalaisia Lenin-museoita', 22–26.

46 There was an anti-museum demonstration that did not interest people. The Lenin relief was stolen and maltreated. Interview with the head of the museum Aimo Minkkinen 9 Jul. 2007.

47 O. Pajamäki, 'Vasemmistoretro on vapauttavaa', *HS* 28 Feb. 2007.

some internet discussions). The resources for maintaining the museum are scarce, but it can manage. The cultural and historical value of its collections grows the more the items of the former Soviet culture abroad are rejected and destroyed. Its current role was rather accurately foreseen in 1991 by a journalist who suggested consulting tasks for the museum in the future when mourning for communism would have proceeded towards a more ruminative phase.<sup>48</sup>

The same can be said of the Finnish statues and memorials that are connected to the Soviet period. The most impressive of the statues of socialist realism, *World Peace* in Helsinki, was a present from the city of Moscow. When it was unveiled in January 1990, the lord mayor of Helsinki still described it with liturgical expressions. Later he has claimed that actually getting of *World Peace* was a relief, since the Soviets had first offered a Lenin statue. Except for one single incident, the monument has rested in peace since then. A group of students covered the grotesque statue with tar and feathers in October 1991.<sup>49</sup>

In 1992 there were attempts to change the names of Lenin Park in Helsinki (to apolitical *Vesilinnanpuisto*) and *Leningradinkatu* in Turku (to *Pietarinkatu*, St. Petersburg Street), and to move the Lenin statue in Turku into the art museum. The local city governments decided to resist these suggestions. The conservative decisions had a predecessor; after the first decade of Finnish independence, there was a gradual reform of Helsinki's street names that indicated the Russian past, and over 100 years as a Grand Duchy. Despite obvious national romanticism in the new street names of the era, many old street names with a Russian flavour, like *Aleksanterinkatu*, were preserved.<sup>50</sup>

48 Heino, 'Eurooppalaisia Lenin-museoita', 23.

49 H. Kaarto, Helsingissäkin ollut patsaskiistoja. *HS* 20 May 2007. As an ironic initiation to the subject, the new students of political history wash *World Peace* once a year at the beginning of the first term.

50 A committee of Helsinki city had already decided, with a one-vote majority, to remove Lenin from the city map. In 1928, streets for Nikolai, Andreas, Wladimir, Galitz and Kulneff were dedicated to nation builders like J. V. Snellman and E. Lönnrot, to the national epic Kalevala, writer J. Aho and J. Z. Duncker, a character of the national poet J.L. Runeberg. K. Palonen, 'Reading street names politically', in K. Palonen and T. Parvikko (eds), *Reading the Political. Exploring the Margins of Politics*. Helsinki: The Finnish Political Science Association 1993, 116–118.

Lenin Park in Helsinki became international news in the turn of 1999–2000 when a local city activist suggested that the park without a memorial should be honoured with a Lenin statue. Although the city of Tartu in Estonia kindly offered four Lenin statues for free, the initiative failed. Debate over this project, both serious and malicious in nature, has continued ever since, but without results.<sup>51</sup> In late 2007 the suggestion was renewed by a group of leftist artists, trade union leaders and a couple of university professors. The timing of the initiative coincides with the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Finland. Laura Kolbe, a professor of European history, explained that with her support she wanted to activate a dialog between different stratifications of the past in Helsinki. The arguments of the scholars that acknowledge the diversity of historical experiences were ridiculed by the press to whom Lenin simply symbolizes the dark history of communism. It was claimed that the raising of a new Lenin statue would insult the casualties of the communist system, for example in the Baltic States.<sup>52</sup> A liberal newspaper, published only on the internet, was even ready to censure its own columnist for his pro-statue opinions.<sup>53</sup>

Generally, dispute over statues in Finland is still concentrated on the historical monuments that symbolize the trauma of the 1918 Civil War. There are no memorials in Finland such as the Estonian Bronze Soldier, which arouse strong and polarising national sentiments.<sup>54</sup> Compared with these controversies, few Finns feel strongly about the statues of socialist realism and other symbols of the Soviet empire abroad. They can rest in peace as relics and curiosities that symbolize, more than Soviet power, the years of friendship liturgy and the Finlandization of Finnish politicians.

It is very doubtful that the plan for a Lenin monument will ever be carried out in the future. The history conscious arguments of the statue activists may be accepted when the existing Lenin trappings in Finland

51 Kolbe, *Unelmien Helsinki*, 148–149. *HS* 20 May 2007.

52 *Ilta-Sanomat* 28 and 30 Nov. 2007; L. Kolbe, 'Lenin ansaitsee patsaansa', *Iltalehti* 1 Dec. 2007; S. Snellman, 'Opi perusasiat', *HS* 4 Dec. 2007.

53 'Uusisuomi.fi sensuroi Venäjä-kirjoittajansa', *Kansan Uutiset Viikkolehti* 5 Dec. 2007. Pentti Stranius' column 'Lenin-patsas paikallaan' was published in *Tiedonantaja* 26 Nov. 2007.

54 M. Lappalainen, 'Maailmanrauha ja valkoinen kenraali', *HS* 26 Jun. 2007. U. Peltonen, *Muistin paikat. Vuoden 1918 sisällissodan muistamisesta ja unohtamisesta*. Helsinki: SKS 2003, 187–243.

are defended. Much stronger statements, however, are needed in order to convince people of the necessity for the raising of a new Lenin.<sup>55</sup> Finns can afford to preserve the historical stratification of the street names and the statues, as well as of the Russian tsars<sup>56</sup> and the products of socialist realism. Statues are not overturned nor names changed although interpretations of their meanings alter both temporally and locally. It may be a sense of history, an understanding of the value of different historical epochs, but the prerequisite for tolerance has been Finland's good fortune in the cruel game of the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

55 S. Snellman, 'Opi perusasiat', *HS* 4 Dec. 2007.

56 In the middle of the Senate Square, the most central place in Helsinki, stands an impressive statue of Tsar Alexander the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Grand Duke of Finland (1855–1881).

## II

# History in the Cold War

# ‘Loser’s History’: Legitimacy, History Politics and Ideological reforms in the Soviet Union

AAPPO KÄHÖNEN

As research of any historical topic, research on the Soviet society and, even more so, the political system, is unavoidably influenced by the present day in many ways. The ending of Cold War Era with the defeat of the Soviet Union has unavoidably changed the perspective on that period. All the decisions made by, or on behalf of, the Soviet side are easily seen as falling in the category of ‘loser’s history’, to be explained away or condemned. On the other hand, as all historical research is based on hindsight, recognising the result of a historical process does not automatically commit one to the ‘winner’s history’, which justifies the actual outcome of the process, and only that.

On a most general level the theme of this article is based on the relation between policy making and ideology. On a second, more practical level, this article examines the role of ideology and history in legitimating the political system of the Soviet Union, which was characterised by one-party rule, and the open role of ideology. Here it becomes essential to keep in mind the old dual meaning of ‘history’ both as the events and the processes of the past, and as a discipline offering representations of those past events.

In trying to understand the interdependence between political system, ideology and history in the Soviet Union the following questions serve as a starting point: Which new conditions did de-Stalinisation set for

legitimizing the Soviet political system and Soviet history? Which historical and ideological arguments were used for legitimating the radical social and political reform programme, the perestroika? Did the practises used during these reform periods differ from the earlier use of ideology and history as a means of legitimating the existing order?

Soviet domestic and foreign policy from the 1930s to the 1980s offers cases through which to clarify the connection of historical interpretations and ideology with policy formation and the legitimating of the political system. First, it is informative to observe how history had been used to justify the emergence and stabilization of the new political system.

#### STABILIZATION OF THE REGIME: THE SHORT COURSE TO POWER

For the ‘Bible’ of the Soviet history, *The History of the CPSU (b): Short Study Course* (1949, orig. 1938), some of the central tools of argumentation were, perhaps surprisingly, omission and labelling. The direct personality cult of Stalin was somewhat less obvious, unless the words ‘party’, ‘central committee’ and ‘party organs’, especially after the death of Lenin, are understood to equate with ‘Stalin’.<sup>1</sup> These collective institutions of power seemed to reflect his views remarkably well in the textbook, specifically when it came to intra-party opposition. This is no wonder, since in practise Stalin was the real editor and partly even writer of the book, despite the pseudonym ‘the editorial board set by the CPSU’, mentioned in the front leaf.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, descriptions related to the preparation and implementation of collectivization in agriculture during 1928–1930, *Neuvostoliiton kommunistisen puolueen (bolshevikkien) historia: Lyhyt oppikurssi*, toim. Neuvostoliiton kommunistisen puolueen keskuskomitean asettama toimituskunta. [*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Study Course*, editorial board set by the Central Committee of CPSU, no individual names given]. Petroskoi: Karjalais-suomalaisen SNT:n valtion kustannusliike 1949, 326–334, 339–349. However, ‘comrade Stalin’ could be mentioned four times on a page, when his role needed to be underlined, for example, in relation to industrialization policy, 322.

<sup>2</sup> R. Tucker on the creation and context of the ‘Short Study Course’ in *Stalin in Power: Revolution from Above, 1928–1941*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company 1992, 530–550.

Though omission and outright slander is used repeatedly in relation to the political opponents, the most important case of omission is connected to the Bolshevik party's rise to power in 1917. When the emperor had been forced to abdicate as a consequence of the February Revolution and the provisional government had assumed power, the political climate became remarkably more liberal, despite the continuing First World War. The Bolshevik party, together with many other revolutionary groups, was allowed to emerge from underground and to organise openly. However, initially the Bolshevik party had no clear policy to follow under the new circumstances. The party was divided over the question of the revolution's prospects: should Russia first develop into a bourgeois democracy under the new provisional government, or should it proceed immediately towards a socialist revolution. According to the Short Study Course:

Kamenev, and some other members of [the party's] Moscow organisation, i. e. Rykov, Bubnov and Nogin, had a semi-menshevik stance, supporting conditionally the provisional government and policy of 'defending fatherland'. [However], '...Stalin, Molotov and others together with the majority of the party defended policy of distrust towards the provisional government...

This division existed, but actually Stalin's views published in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* in the spring of 1917 were clearly moderate and supported a defensive war against Germany, whereas young Molotov supported a more radical line. Here the exclusion of Stalin from the first group, and inclusion in the second means that as a tool omission is combined with outright misrepresentation of the facts.<sup>3</sup>

The arrival of the party's leader, Lenin, in Russia solved that conflict, as he favoured the fast approach. This is the information the Short Study Course offers to the student:

The absence of the party's leader – Lenin – was felt. On April 3 (16) 1917, after a long lasting exile, Lenin returned to Russia.

<sup>3</sup> *Lyhyt oppikurssi [Short Study Course]*, 204–205. Compare to T. Polvinen, *Venäjän Vallankumous ja Suomi*, vol. 1. Porvoo: WSOY 1967 40–41, on the basis of *Pravda* 5/18 Mar. 1917, 14/27.1917, 21 Mar. /4. Apr.1917. The double dates show the difference (13 days) between the Julian calendar, used in pre-revolutionary Russia, and the more generally used Gregorian calendar.

Lenin's return had immense significance for the party and the revolution. In Switzerland, immediately after receiving the first information on the revolution, Lenin wrote to the party and the Russian working class in 'Letters from afar': ...Lenin arrived to Petrograd on the night of 3 April.<sup>4</sup>

This is all that is ever told about Lenin's return to Russia from Switzerland. On the basis of geographical conditions alone some questions arise. What route did Lenin take in returning to Russia? Why is this deemed completely irrelevant, as though he would have been 'beamed up' directly from the Swiss Alps to the Petrograd railway station? However, the omission of even a brief description is far from accidental, and has remarkable significance from the viewpoint of legitimacy for the regime, which was established later in early November 1917.

The answer to this problem is not self-evident, as neutral Switzerland was surrounded by the countries taking part in the First World War, some of which were fighting on the same side as Russia, while others were fighting against it. The shortest and most rational route to Russia went through Germany, against which Russia was at war. Even if crossing the front line was out of the question, the crossing of German territory was required to reach neutral Sweden, from where it would be possible to cross the Russian border. Lenin's supporters were able to arrange such a route, with the acceptance of German officials, in a sealed train compartment, and he made the trip with other emigrant Russian revolutionaries, mainly Mensheviks. This much Lenin himself had been ready to publish at the time, simultaneously in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* on 18 April 1917, though he readily gave credit for the idea to the Mensheviks. Even this version, public at the time, is completely omitted from the Short study course.<sup>5</sup>

This becomes more understandable when it is taken into account that the Bolshevik connection to Germany was not merely geographical, but also fiscal, though in an indirect way, and some doubts connected to this surfaced before the Bolshevik rise to power. The point is not so much how truthful or accurate the doubts were, but how the Bolsheviks reacted to them, first immediately, and later through historical presentations, and why.

4 *Lyhyt oppikurssi [Short Study Course]*, 204–205.

5 D. Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and legacy*. Glasgow: HarperCollins 1995, 120. Compare to the *Short Study Course*, 204–205.

The case of the 'German connection' regarding the Bolshevik party can be briefly explored through two individuals, A. L. Helphand, also known as Parvus, and Y. A. Fürstenberg, also known as Ganetsky. Both these men, but especially Parvus, were important middlemen in the indirect relation between the Bolsheviks and imperial German officials, specifically after 1915. Parvus had met Lenin and a number of other revolutionary emigrants, as well as German socialists, including Plekhanov, Axelrod, and Kautsky in Western Europe before the 1905 Russian revolution. He, like Trotsky, also had significant role in the field, organising the revolutionary action of 1905, which after Russian defeats in the war against Japan shook the foundations of the autocratic monarchy. However, after 1905 Parvus became more prominent in writing successful theatre plays and in business enterprises. In January 1915 he had established contacts with German officials through the German embassy in Constantinople, Turkey, and during the same year the German Foreign Ministry prepared to increase considerably, by several million marks, the financing of revolutionary propaganda in Russia. Since the beginning of hostilities between Russia and Germany in 1914, German war aims had included the weakening of Russia by supporting national separatism in the multinational empire, as well as by supporting a revolution in Russia, and thus ruining its fighting capabilities. On the basis of his Constantinople contact, Parvus was able to sell the Germans the idea of helping the return of Russian revolutionaries to Russia after the 1917 February revolution. The idea was also introduced to, and accepted by, the German High Command and the emperor.

The second interesting step in this indirect relation is that after the February revolution in 1917 the Bolshevik publications had been greatly increased, so that in July 1917 the Bolsheviks ran 41 newspapers. The seven biggest had a total circulation of 320 000, of which *Pravda* alone included 90 000 daily copies. The party could also afford to buy printing machines and pay, though not on a continuous basis, salaries to its permanent functionaries. It would be surprising if membership fees, even in a growing party, would have been enough for all that.<sup>6</sup>

The third step is formed by the investigations of the Bolsheviks' opponents, the provisional government, after July 1917, when the party had been momentarily defeated in street demonstrations in the capitol,

<sup>6</sup> Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and legacy*, 110–113, 118, 123.

St. Petersburg. The provisional government, and later Kerensky as its former head, can be regarded partly as witnesses in their own case, when they charged the Bolsheviks of treason on basis of wartime co-operation with the Germans. However, the legal investigation, which was never finished, brought up interesting reactions to these charges, as well as some facts. The investigation, on the one hand, had been able to prove that Parvus' and Ganetsky's business enterprises were a front, through which money had been directed from German banks to Bolshevik supporters in St. Petersburg who, however, were not members of the party. As early as the spring and summer 1917 the money transferred was believed to amount to 2 million German marks.

Lenin, though hiding from the provisional government, reacted through the Bolshevik papers with a vehement and uncompromising denial of the charges presented. As the money transfers apparently could not be denied, he claimed that Parvus and Ganetsky were not Bolsheviks at all, and that he had no contact with them whatsoever. Regarding Parvus, this was formally true, as he was member of the nationalist-minded Polish socialist party, but Ganetsky had been a party member almost from the beginning, as it later came out, when he was interrogated and executed during Stalin's purges 20 years later. At present, as Lenin's correspondence after collapse of the Soviet Union has become available for researchers, a link between him and Parvus can be easily established. Their correspondence did deal with financial themes, though it did not directly mention German money. In spring 1917, the volume of this correspondence surpassed that of Lenin and Inessa Armand, Lenin's mistress, so Parvus was not a complete stranger to Lenin. As a last step in the case of 'the German connection', promptly organised Bolshevik secret police VtchK ('*tcheka*') destroyed the material produced by the provisional government's investigation on 16 November 1917, very soon after the Bolshevik rise to power.<sup>7</sup>

This description needs to be located in the context formed by the Short Study Course. The point here is not, as provisional government would have wanted, to prove that Lenin and the Bolsheviks were agents bought by German money, but instead the denial of the whole 'German connection', first actively by Lenin, and then passively, through omission, by Stalin in the canonised history interpretation. The Bolsheviks were

<sup>7</sup> Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and legacy*, 116–122.

genuinely a very internationalist, or world revolutionary party. On this basis they could argue, coherently, that their only common interest with Imperial Germany was in the collapse of the Russian Empire, and in such a case, there was no reason not to accept German support, even fiscal, towards that end in 1915–1917. However, here the ideological and legitimating aspects of historical interpretations come into play. Lenin's responses show, that the Bolshevik party felt vulnerable to accusations based on deceiving the nation. When the new regime had consolidated its foundations and was canonising its past in the mid 1930s, it could admit even less the acceptance of finances from the enemy of the 'Motherland' (Rus. *Rodina*). This clearly points to the growing significance of nationalist legitimacy, despite the officially claimed internationalism in Marxist-Leninist ideology.

#### REFORMING IDEOLOGY AND WEAKENING LEGITIMACY:

##### DIVISIONS IN THE PARTY AND ITS ELITE

The political system of the Soviet Union changed after the death of Stalin in 1953 roughly from a totalitarian to a more pluralistic model, run by different bureaucratic interest groups within the party-state. Different levels of party bureaucracy, various branches of state administration, the army and the security apparatus have all been identified as examples of such interest groups. Despite the changes that took place it was crucial that the basis of the one-party system was never questioned.<sup>8</sup> When discussing policy-making in this article the Marxist-Leninist ideology is mostly understood as a structure of political communication offering a common vocabulary, arguments, and shared values. Even though political decisions were formulated and justified by the ideology, the political elite was not free to speak or act in whatever way it liked. Regardless of whether the only official ideology was believed in or not, its canonised

8 V. P. Naumov, 'Vvedenie' [Introduction], in N. V. Kovaleva, A. V. Korotkov, S. A. Meltshin, Ju. V. Sigathev, A. S. Stepanov (eds), *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovitch 1957. Dokumenty*. Moskva: Mezhdunarodnyi fond 'Demokratija', 1998, 9.

language limited the observation of problems and the solutions to them,<sup>9</sup> thus setting ‘the limits of the possible.’

The single most important process that affected the legitimacy of the Soviet system was de-Stalinisation, announced by the general secretary of the CPSU, Nikita Khrushchev, at the XX Party Congress in February 1956. The actual speech held in the congress by Khrushchev remained secret in the USSR, but was soon leaked abroad. De-Stalinisation can best be understood as an attempt to deal with Stalin’s legacy, mostly in relation to the party, as well as a weapon in the internal power struggle between his successors. However, in a one-party state it proved difficult to limit criticism to the ‘cult of personality,’ to the former leader, without at least implicitly questioning the legitimacy of the political system which had allowed him to rise to and consolidate his power.<sup>10</sup> This fundamental ideological shift had profound consequences not only for the Soviet society, but also for international relations. With the loss of the aura of ideological infallibility, the USSR’s leadership in the socialist world could be questioned in a totally different manner than before. This questioning came from both within and beyond the bloc of socialist countries.

#### THE SOVIET OPINION

The Soviet political elite, including the top as well as the local party leadership, soon noticed the dangerous and unexpected consequences of the XX Party Congress. The intelligentsia increasingly went beyond the criticism of Stalin, interpreting de-Stalinisation as a call for creative liberty. In addition to non-party members of the intelligentsia, even members of the party demanded, at the local party meetings in March 1956, that those responsible for mass terror should be punished. Only about a month later, in early April, the CPSU Central Committee sent a letter to members of the party warning about ‘unhealthy criticism.’ The letter, published in

9 C. Pursiainen, *Beyond Sovietology: International Relations Theory and the Study of Soviet/Russian Foreign and Security Policy*. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute for International Affairs 1998, 80–83 on the basis of Joseph Schull and Robert G. Herman.

10 Naumov, ‘Vvedenie’ [Introduction], 9–11

*Pravda*, called for a 'struggle against demagogues and rotten elements, who try to use the cover of criticizing the personality cult to criticize the Party line.' These kinds of seeds of a civil society seemed to continue troubling the leadership during the summer, as a similar letter had to be sent in July. Limited action was also taken against the troublemakers.

The real turning point, however, in the position of the Central Committee emerged in November-December, in the form of 'the Hungarian Syndrome'. The crisis in Hungary brought the Party's fear of losing power into the open, which, it was thought, might happen if the Party's total control over the political sphere was even slightly eased. The letter sent to local party organizations by the Central Committee now spoke about the dictatorship of the proletariat, which 'in relation to anti-Soviet elements should be used without pity.' The letter was followed by a wave of arrests and very severe court sentences. As early as the first months of 1957 a couple hundred persons, both party members and non-party, were sentenced because of 'lies concerning Soviet reality' and 'revisionism.'<sup>11</sup>

A few examples of the letters from the 'rank and file' of the Central Committee and the Politburo members illustrate the changing mood. Reactions towards de-Stalinization, and the denunciation of the cult of personality are divided, but a majority of the writers seem to think that the adversary, the West, had gained new weapons.

Petrosgin, an engineer, in his letter of 25 January 1957 still criticized Khrushchev for making too weak a commitment concerning de-Stalinization. Specifically he was troubled by inconsistencies in the statements made by the First Secretary when he visited the Chinese embassy in Moscow. He began to think, 'that there are two N. S. Khrushchevs, the first fighting with all the Leninist commitment and directness against Stalin's cult of personality,' the other in the embassy 'defending those criminal actions committed by Stalin, made against the people during his 20-year personal dictatorship.' In conclusion Petrosgin observes that the presentations of Khrushchev have created 'misgivings and doubts about the fact that Stalin's cult of personality will be eliminated from our country.'<sup>12</sup>

11 Naumov, 'Vvedenie' [Introduction], 11–12

12 Rossiskii gosudarstvennyi arhiv noveishei istorii (RGANI), Petrosgin's letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU, 25 Jan. 1957, 5/30/19.

The letters arriving in mid April have another, altogether different tone. Antonina Mikhailova Peterson, a member of the party since 1914, proposed the rehabilitation of Stalin for the fortieth anniversary of the party. Peterson also thought it necessary to refer to the Chinese views, ‘What did the Chinese comrades say to us after the XX Party Congress: One must not allow the services of Stalin to be forgotten. ‘As an example of party discipline, Peterson does not oppose the criticism of Stalin as such, ‘But the disaster is that such forms used at the XX Party Congress and later were chosen. With this kind of criticism we handed weapons into the hands of our enemies around the world, we gave them an opportunity to mock our country, our party, [and] Stalin (as the Yugoslavian renegades did).’<sup>13</sup> The opinions expressed in the letter of three officers criticizing a lecture held in Leningrad are even harsher. The mocking of Stalin’s name was seen to have reflected badly on the position of the whole party and to have served only the objectives of the imperialists. ‘And it must be said that the imperialist troubadours have managed to gain some success in this dirty business, to get themselves some moral capital, and to cause defeats to our general cause, the cause of communism.’<sup>14</sup>

One factor to these letters of the enlightened ‘rank and file’ have in common is that the international context is included in their evaluations of de-Stalinization. From the point of view of the legitimacy of the political system, it is interesting that the first letter criticizes Stalin’s personal dictatorship, not the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the other hand, it criticizes Stalin’s crimes against the people, not just against the party.

#### THE GERMAN QUESTIONS

The conservatives in the CPSU leadership had been quite justified in their concern during the spring of 1956 that the criticism of ‘the personality cult’ could extend outside the boundaries of the existing political system. Though related only to a minor Western communist party, the report to

13 RGANI, Antonina Peterson’s letter to member of the Central Committee Shepilov, 11 Apr. 1957, 5/30/191.

14 RGANI, letter of Slomanskii, Makarov and Fazimiamekhtov to member of the Central Committee of the CPSU Mikhail Suslov, 1 Apr. 1957, 5/30/191.

Shepilov, member of the CPSU Central Committee, from *Pravda's* Bonn correspondent should offer some clues to these concerns.<sup>15</sup>

To begin with, the West German Communist Party (GCP) was reported to have had problems since 1954. The authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany had banned the party, and its leadership had fled to East Berlin, losing touch with the party organisation. It was underlined that 'This kind of atmosphere of dissatisfaction prevailed towards the party leadership and towards communism before the reactions to the events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress.' The GCP newspapers had avoided dealing with the difficult themes of de-Stalinization, 'especially questions on the personality cult', whereas the bourgeois German papers had taken advantage of the situation.

This was, however only an introduction to the main substance of the report. A sharp discussion had begun in the GCP after GDR leader Walter Ulbricht's article, which announced that Stalin should not be regarded as one of the classics of Marxism-Leninism. The presentation of GCP chairman, Max Reiman, did not help the situation either, as it had led to a 'hostile and stormy reaction among the party masses.' According to *Neues Deutschland's* Bonn correspondence, Dengler, the party activists were astonished at the fact 'that Ulbricht and Reiman spoke of Stalin's mistakes in such a manner as if though they themselves had not taken part in the personality cult.' The person reading the report, apparently Shepilov, had deemed this sentence worth underlining. Both Ulbricht and Reiman were, according to the report, still seen to 'act like gods', which the GCP officials could not accept 'after what had been said about the personality cult in the 20<sup>th</sup> party congress of CPSU.' However, Dengler claimed that according to his impression 'CPSU's and USSR's authority had not been shaken' among the West German communists.

The last part of the report is based on an inside view of GCP by Emil Karlbach from the international department of the GCP organ, *Freies Volk*. His following characterisation of the atmosphere in the GCP underlines again the significance of de-Stalinization:

<sup>15</sup> The following presentation on German Communist Party is based on a report: RGANI, P. Naumov to Dmitri Shepilov, member of the Central Committee and editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, copy to Soviet ambassador in Bonn, Valentin Zorin, 25 Apr. 1956, 5/30/174-178.

Nowadays the personality cult and its consequences are at the centre of party life. The party leadership has attempted to direct the party organisation's attention to other, more important questions, which were dealt with at the CPSU XX party congress, but in so far it has not succeeded [underlined up to this]. While exchanging opinions and during discussions, communists usually think like this: all that has been said at the CPSU party congress on the present international situation is good and right; many things had been clear to us earlier; but regarding the question of the personality cult there yet remains much [that is] unclear to us.

Karlbach also repeated the distrust of the party 'masses' towards the leadership. According to the 'masses' the GCP party leadership should have been able to show through deeds, not through directives, their ability to lead. Since the 'masses' had also expressed interest in participating in the making and shaping of decisions. Together with these structural problems, the GCP chairman Reiman had also committed a grave tactical mistake. He had admitted that the toppling of 'the Adenauer regime' through revolutionary methods would be unlikely in the near future. This is commented on the following way: 'With one sentence Reiman destroyed all that the party had been trained for many years, and he does not consider it necessary to clarify how to mend this dramatic mistake and its consequences.'

The prevailing mood in the GCP is summed up in very clear terms. Despite the claim that the prestige of the USSR is seen to have strengthened, as a consequence of 20<sup>th</sup> party congress:

West German communists want answers to two questions:

- 1) Why did the leaders of the CPSU not react against Stalin's personality cult at the time, and thus prevent many mistakes?
- 2) Where are the guarantees that the Soviet comrades will not err again, and bring their new mistakes to the fraternal parties?

From the viewpoint of the party-state's legitimacy, these questions would continuously prove to be difficult ones to solve.

PRECEDENTS FOR PERESTROIKA:  
FROM REFORM TO DEFENCE OF LEGITIMACY

The Perestroika policy offers an intriguing example of an attempt to revitalise a regime, while simultaneously deconstructing and rebuilding it. It is already well known how this attempt ended. However, it may be interesting to review some of the arguments that were supposed to support this endeavour in the beginning.

Generally, Mikhail Gorbachov's reform policy can be divided into two phases. First, during 1985–1987 he aimed at reform within the limits of the existing political system, mainly by improving its efficiency. This could be based on the example of the previous general secretary, Juri Andropov. As this proved increasingly insufficient, after 1988 the perestroika policy came to mean defending the legitimacy of the Soviet regime, while restructuring it at the same time.<sup>16</sup>

The more open attitude to media and historical research, glasnost, had become also part of the reform policy; this led to the resurfacing of Stalinist 'excesses in building socialism'. This meant that Stalin and his methods could no longer be thought of as the only possible ones leading to the present modern stage of the Soviet society. During 1986 Gorbachov had still accepted Stalinist means to justify the achieved results. However, after Stalinist methods began to be seen as intolerable, the Soviet political system could be defended only by excluding Stalin from the regime. This meant that the perestroika policy needed to be founded on Lenin, the creator of the revolution and the regime following it. In this situation Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), a mixed economy, which followed the revolution and civil war in 1921, became the centre of attention in the late 1987. It presented an example of a former reform period aimed at correcting economic and systemic failures in the regime.<sup>17</sup>

The NEP of 1920s was the example for reform in the Soviet Union for another reason as well. Even though Gorbachov was aware of, and appreciated, more recent Eastern European reform attempts from the 1950s and 1960s, it would not have been possible to publicly borrow from their experience. Firstly, this was because from the ideological point

16 O. J. Bandelin, *Return to the NEP: The False Promise of Leninism and the Failure of Perestroika*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers 2002, 63–64.

17 Bandelin, *Return to the NEP*, 101.

of view their socialism was established later than the Soviet one and thus less mature. Secondly, and even more importantly, their attempts to reform socialism had been crushed by the military force of Soviet Union in 1956 and 1968, because these reforms had been seen as threats to the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Thus NEP became a promising example for perestroika, especially in economic terms. Politically, however, it included considerable risks, as it was connected to Lenin's late, but growing concerns over the failures of the political system he had created.<sup>18</sup>

To better understand the potential and the pitfalls NEP presented as an argument for perestroika in the 1980s, it is useful to see how the official interpretation of Soviet history had characterised it. According to the Short Study Course, NEP and the mixed economy it created was a necessary and successful solution initiated by Lenin to address the problems created by the civil war. Although it ideologically meant a temporary setback since private enterprise and land ownership were allowed on a limited basis, it would eventually pave the way to socialism by creating the wealth needed for the transformation of society. Within the party opposition to this policy was claimed to rise from its left and right wings. The left wing ('trotskyites') opposed the policy in the beginning, arguing that it was a retreat from socialism. The right wing ('bukharinities'), on the other hand, opposed the end of the policy, siding with the peasants, especially when collectivisation of agriculture was put into effect in the late 1920s.<sup>19</sup>

As one of the most condemning accusations the Short Study Course claimed that the opposition, including in this case both the left and the right wing 'did not believe in the possibility of socialist development in our country.'<sup>20</sup> Also, in relation to the industrialisation programme it was observed that 'Zinovjev and Kamenev already once dared declare that the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union is impossible because

18 Bandelin, *Return to the NEP*, 82, 92.

19 *Lyhyt oppikurssi [Short Study Course]*, 287–289. The Short Study Course is not completely logical in the division between the 'left-wing' and 'right-wing' opposition in the Party regarding the NEP. On page 287 'Trotskyites' are included in the left-wing, but on the page 289 Trotsky is connected to the right-wing. Apparently Trotsky and his supporters could be conveniently included in every possible deviation from the Party main line.

20 *Lyhyt oppikurssi [Short Study Course]*, 289.

of the country's economic backwardness, ...' The arguments of the 'zinovjevite' opposition, firstly that Soviet state-owned industry was not socialist industry, and secondly, that the so-called mid peasant could not be an ally of the working class in building socialism, were specifically labelled as 'anti-leninist'.<sup>21</sup> This characterisation was meant to define the arguments as absurdities, and not deserving an answer. However, when compared to what Lenin actually wrote during his last active period after the beginning of the NEP at the turn of 1922–1923, it is obvious that this is not the case at all.

#### ANTI-LENINIST VIEWS OF LENIN

Several serious doubts concerning the Soviet political system had arisen in Lenin's mind after initiating the NEP, and before he was completely incapacitated by strokes in the spring of 1923. The basis for these concerns had then been carefully hidden in the USSR. Lenin's doubts, which he had earlier (c. 1905–1920) actively denied but then begun to reconsider, were connected to critical views of Karl Marx and Georgi Plekhanov, the founder of Marxism in Russia and former mentor of Lenin. At the heart of the matter was the question of the prerequisites for a socialist revolution in Russia, and about specific features which possibly differentiated Russia from Western Europe.

When writing about the prospects of Russia, Marx had referred to a term called 'Asiatic mode of production', in which the term 'Asian' does not refer to race, but more generally to the geographic location. The term, already in use, was meant to describe mostly agrarian societies, where economic and political power depended on one key feature, for instance, a raw material or resource such as an irrigation network<sup>22</sup>. Because of this, later the concept has also been known later as 'hydraulic despotism'. These conditions would demand a strongly centralised

21 *Lyhyt oppikurssi [Short Study Course]*, 308–310.

22 On the historical background of the concept from Enlightenment to Marx and Engels, see Anne M. Bailey and Joseph R. Llobera, '*The AMP: Sources and Formation of the Concept*', in Anne M. Bailey and Joseph R. Llobera (eds.), *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Science and Politics*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1981, 18–36.

bureaucracy, and would give the ruler a disproportionately strong, despotic position. Examples mentioned are the ancient civilizations of the Nile and Mesopotamia; later, China and India are seen to mainly fall into this category. To Marx the Russian autocracy had some common traits with these societies. The main problem from the viewpoint of revolution was that according to Marx these societies were extremely difficult to change or reform, except through external defeat. This is because they had a large, passive peasantry, a small and weak middle class and scarcely any proletariat as counter weights to the autocracy.<sup>23</sup>

Russian Marxists, including the Mensheviks and Socialist revolutionaries (SR), generally thought that before a socialist revolution, Russia needed to go through not only a bourgeois revolution but also the development of a bourgeois society. Plekhanov warned in 1906 and again in the autumn of 1917 that a premature attempt to carry out a revolution and construction of socialism in Russia would lead to ‘Asiatic restoration’, a resurfacing of the old, autocratic power structures under new names. Lenin and the Bolsheviks denied this possibility passionately claiming that the phase of bourgeois society was possible to bypass in Russia and move directly to the construction of socialism. Regardless of the accuracy of the concept of ‘Asiatic mode of production’ / ‘hydraulic despotism’, or its applicability specifically in the case of Russia, the significant thing is, that criticism based on it was taken seriously among the Russian revolutionaries, and eventually by Lenin as well.<sup>24</sup>

After having begun the NEP Lenin began to seriously question whether a socialist economy and society had emerged in Russia, as had been claimed after the revolution. He now, in March 1923, observed that it would be a lengthy process, and ‘It would be most harmful to trust that we already know something, or that we even in some respect have enough material to create a really new machinery, which would really deserve to be called socialist, Soviet etc.’<sup>25</sup> In any case, he considered it

23 Bandelin, *Return to the NEP*, 36–37, on the basis of K. Wittfogels, *Oriental Despotism*, 1957. On similar emphases in Russian pre-revolutionary society, based on the concept of ‘Patrimonialism’, see R. Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*. Norwich: Harmondsworth 1979, 249.

24 Bandelin, *Return to the NEP*, 37 – 38, see also Bailey and Llobera, ‘Editors Introduction’ in part 2, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Science and Politics*, 49–51.

25 V. I. Lenin, *Teokset*, osa 31. [*Complete Works of Lenin*, vol. 31]. ‘Mielummin

necessary to allow the return of limited private enterprise to revitalise the economy. He also took great pains to argue, on what bases the alliance between the industrial proletariat and the mid peasants could be made to work. Regarding the general aspects of everyday life, Lenin stated 'We have destroyed capitalist industry, we have *tried* [emphasis added] to destroy medieval institutions of manorialism down to its foundations....' As a consequence of this, a small and split landowning peasantry had emerged, which it was claimed, followed the proletariat on the basis of the trust it felt towards the results of the revolution. This vital trust, however, could not be easily maintained.<sup>26</sup>

Together with the improvement of economic efficiency, the NEP was meant to improve the quality of administration. State administration, by and large, was characterised as having 'some new colour on the surface, but otherwise it was a most typical reminder of our old state machinery.'<sup>27</sup> The criticism of 'bureaucratism' regarding the party was brought up, meaning the strongly developed position of the party organisation. Lenin's chief concern was now that especially the party administration was distancing itself from its members, and as such, its uncontrolled, autocratic, power could potentially be turned against even the 'good communists'. However, Lenin's solution to 'bureaucratism' was to create new administrative organs, such as the Central Control Committee and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection Committee. They were allowed special prerogatives. Careful selection of the personnel to these new organs was to guarantee their functioning.<sup>28</sup>

In regard to pre-revolutionary Marxist criticism concerning a premature revolution and its consequences in Russia, Lenin comes perhaps closest to admitting its relevancy when he characterises relations between workers and peasants, and evaluates, once again, the state administration.

vähemmän mutta parempaa' ['Rather less, but better']. Moskova: Vieraskielisen kirjallisuuden kustannusliike 1962, 478.

26 Lenin, 'Mielummin vähemmän mutta parempaa' ['Rather less, but better'], 488.

27 Lenin, 'Miten meidän olisi uudelleen järjestettävä työläis- ja talonpoikaisinspektio' [How we should rearrange worker and peasant inspection] in *Teokset*, osa 31, [*Complete Works of Lenin*, vol. 31], 471.

28 Lenin, 'Miten meidän olisi uudelleen järjestettävä työläis- ja talonpoikaisinspektio' [How we should rearrange worker and peasant inspection], 474–475.

*Aappo Kähönen*

While the workers need to maintain their leading position, and the trust of the peasants, they, 'following the greatest of thrift, have to expel from their social relations all the traits of excesses.' The theme of 'economising' in social relations continued, with the admonition that:

We have to reach the greatest of thrift in our state machinery. We need to expel from it all the traits of excesses, of which so many have remained from Tsarist Russia, its bureaucratic and capitalist machinery.<sup>29</sup>

As the two articles cited were among the last Lenin wrote and published in the early spring of 1923, it becomes clear that NEP had not solved the post-revolutionary problems regarding the economy and the party-state, political system of the Soviet Union. According to Lenin's final evaluation, it was a compromise, unfinished at its best. It would seem, at the very least, that in Lenin's mind something akin to 'Asiatic restoration' needed to be fought against in Soviet Russia, even if he avoided using the term.

#### EASTERN EUROPEAN COMMENTS

As these views became better known in the Soviet Union as a consequence of *glasnost*, the NEP as an argument for Gorbachov's *perestroika* policy, and indeed as defence for the legitimacy of the Soviet regime, would become increasingly questionable. The East European criticism of the Soviet system had a similar influence.

During the 1960s the Czechoslovakian reform movement, culminating in the Prague spring, had underlined the importance of the rule of law and civil rights if a truly democratic and functional socialist society was to be achieved. The very foundation of the party-state, the arbitrary position of the Communist party based on its claimed representation of the working class, was strongly criticised. These views were presented in Zdenek Mlynar's book *State and Man*, as early as 1964. This in fact questioned the dictatorship of the proletariat, though in Mlynar's mind, the party's duty would be to uphold the rule of law and genuine constitutionalism.

<sup>29</sup> Lenin, 'Mielummin vähemmän mutta parempaa' ['Rather less, but better'], 491.

Generally, Czechoslovak intellectuals characterised the Soviet-type command economy as 'Asian', and a 'return to Europe' was seen as necessary if socialism was to prove viable in Czechoslovakia.

In Poland, the 'bureaucratic' nature of Soviet socialism was openly criticised by Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski in 1965 in their 'Open Letter to the Party Members'. They named the Poznan worker uprising of 1956 as the 'first anti-bureaucratic revolution' in Poland. Though the USSR would be an opponent in this struggle, the Russian and Ukrainian working classes were recognised as allies. After 1956 the stifling effects of Soviet socialism were seen to have increased, and a continuous struggle against it was called for.<sup>30</sup> Polish intellectual criticism of the socialist system increased in March 1968, but it lacked worker support. In December 1970, on the other hand, the workers went on strike in Poland as response to rising prices, but did not receive support from the intellectuals. The two groups finally cooperated in March 1976, and the KOR (Committee for the Defence of Workers) was formed. The KOR was the basis from which a better known independent and non-communist labour union, Solidarity, would rise in 1980,<sup>31</sup> and shake Poland and the whole Socialist camp by actually challenging the ruling position of the Communist party in the society.

This kind of development eventually could not be allowed to go on in the Soviet Union, even in the framework of perestroika and glasnost. Despite Gorbachov's sincere interest in reforms and democratisation of Soviet society, he aimed to revitalise socialism, and this included the political monopoly of the Communist party. Thus, history political decision to use the NEP as an argument to support perestroika changed from potential to risk from the viewpoint of the legitimacy of the party-state. Lenin's concerns related to it became well known, to the public, and the growing East European protest movements had adopted these same doubts as the foundation for their struggle.

30 Bandelin, *Return to the NEP*, 88–89.

31 Bandelin, *Return to the NEP*, 87–88.

IN THE DEFENCE OF SOVIET LEGITIMACY

The interdependence between political system, ideology and historical research in the Soviet Union is not extraordinary as such. The one-party system merely gave these relationships their unique features. However, it might also be interesting to examine the relationship of historical research and politics in present day Russia. The resurgence of the country seems to be based on an energy related raw material cycle resembling some aspects of hydraulic despotism, and the re-emergence of state sponsored youth organisations, carrying president Putin's face on their shirts.

An examination of the three history political cases: Bolshevik rise to power, the comments of Communist party members on de-Stalinisation, and the NEP-policy as a precedent for Perestroika, makes it possible to outline some practical aspects in this relationship. These cases, especially the first and the third, allow for the observation of Marxist-Leninism's consistency, or lack of it, as an ideology aiming to achieve power and maintain it, on the basis of its own values. The Bolshevik reactions to the 'German connection' proved their vulnerability to accusations of betraying the nation, both when aiming at power in 1917 and when consolidating their position in the late 1930s. This would mean that even an internationalist party could not risk being regarded as openly acting against the nation, however defined, in whose name it claimed to assume state power and establish a new society. On this basis nationalism was a much stronger, though latent, component of Bolshevik and, later, Soviet legitimacy than would seem on the basis of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

When evaluating the significance of NEP policy in the 1920s as a precedent or an argument for Perestroika, Lenin's late doubts over the political system he had created can also be examined from the viewpoint of the values of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Lenin's concern at the turn of 1922–1923 about the emergence of new powerful party bureaucracy and old, imperial administrative methods fits the context of Marxist discussion on 'Asiatic mode of production', which in Russia specifically was connected to the prerequisites of socialist revolution. Within this discussion 'Asiatic restoration' was the term which described the resurfacing of old power structures. This could take place if a socialist revolution was begun before the development of a proper bourgeois society.

Lenin's implicit agreement that something like 'Asiatic restoration' needed to be resisted in Soviet Russia opened two themes for reconsideration: Firstly, should a revolution aiming at socialism in Russia have been realized the way it was, and secondly, once done, could the revolutionary regime succeed in creating a socialist society.

These themes could be quite unsettling from the viewpoint of the new regime, and the Soviet mainstream history did not favour interpretations based on an Asiatic mode of production even during 1920s<sup>32</sup>. These mainstream interpretations were but one example in, which Lenin also was canonized for the needs of Soviet legitimacy. However, from the viewpoint of present day historiography, the questions also offer a way to avoid teleology based on the collapse of the Soviet Union and to see alternative paths of historical change. If the regime created in Russia after the 1917 revolution was not socialist by Marxist definition, then it is possible to think that a socialist society would have been different from the Soviet party-state experience. Also, consequently, collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 can be differentiated from collapse or survival of socialism as an ideology.

In terms of the questions presented at the beginning concerning history political relations, it is clear that a major shift had occurred between the presentation of the Bolshevik rise to power in the Short Study Course, originally in 1938, and the first effects of de-Stalinization. Such canonised interpretations as presented in the Stalinist Short Study Course, would simply not be credible after Khrushchev's 'secret speech' in early 1956. The admission of and aim to correct one's own mistakes was thought as a resource for increasing the legitimacy of the Soviet regime both among its own citizens and abroad. However, as a consequence, the CPSU had irreversibly lost the status of infallibility, which meant that the party's leading position both in the Soviet society and in the international communist movement could be challenged from now on.

Mihail Gorbachov's reform policy from the mid 1980s onwards meant the next qualitative change had taken place. After expansion of the reform programme from economic efficiency to thorough reform of the political system, exclusion of Stalin from the regime was required, as was focusing on Lenin and his policies, especially the NEP, as the foundation

32 On Soviet history debates during 1920's and 1930's, Bailey and Llobera, 'Editors Introduction', 51–52.

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of the regime. In fact, the first step on the road to this direction was taken when Stalin's crimes were exposed in 1956 by Khrushchev. Now it became clear that Lenin had decisively influenced the formation of coercive policies and organisations of the party. When he finally doubted their expediency, but did not find any practical solutions, this meant the beginning of the end from the viewpoint of legitimacy. Though Stalin had come to the leadership of the party after Lenin, his policies could not be excluded from Lenin's principles. When this kind of interpretation of history began to spread and became popular in the Soviet Union, there was little left on which to build the legitimacy of the Soviet regime. For without Lenin, there would probably not have been an October-type revolution in Russia, and without it, no Soviet Union to defend.

## Otto Ville Kuusinen Commemorated

TAUNO SAARELA

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 published<sup>1</sup>, 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.

<sup>1</sup> T. Saarela, *Suomalaisen kommunismin synty 1918–1923*. Tampere: KSL 1996, 9–10.

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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 65<sup>th</sup> birthday of Otto Ville Kuusinen in October 1946 indicated a change as *Työkansan Sanomat*, the organ of the SKP, published several articles on him.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> The celebration had assumed vast proportions especially in 1949, when the whole Soviet Union and the entire international communist movement celebrated Stalin's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.<sup>4</sup> The leader cult was also adopted in the people's democracies and western communist parties.<sup>5</sup> Thus the SKP wanted to teach its members to pay proper respect

2 'O.V. Kuusinen 65-vuotias'; M. Ryömä, 'Puolueemme ansioitunut johtaja'; 'Tervehdyksenämme'; 'Ystävät kertovat Kuusisesta'; 'Selvä järki ja tasainen luonne ominaista O.V. Kuusiselle', *Työkansan Sanomat* (TS) 4 Oct. 1946.

3 N. Tamarin, *Lenin lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*. Enlarged edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press 1997.

4 E.g. J. Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2000, 66, 219–223.

5 *The leader cult in communist dictatorships. Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*. Edited by Balázs Apor, Jan C. Behrends, Polly Jones and E. A. Rees. New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2004; Claude Pannetier et Bernard Pudal, 'Stalinisme, culte ouvrier et culte des dirigeants', in *Le siècle des communismes*. Sous la direction de Michel

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 70<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> The festive meetings in other towns were not as bombastic, and epithets attached to Kuusinen not as conspicuous.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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

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Dreyfus, Bruno Groppo, Claudio Ingerflom, Roland Lew, Claude Penmetier, Bernard Pudal, Serge Wolikow. Éditions de l'Atelier/Éditions Ouvrières 2004 (2000).

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 'Työväenliikkeen kunniakkaat perinteet', TS 5 Oct. 1951.

8 E.g. 'Suurenmoinen taistelujuhla', *Kansan Tahto* (KT) 3 Oct. 1951; 'O.W. Kuusisen 70-vuotis- ja SKP:n 33 vuotisjuhla, KT 5 Oct. 1951; "'O.W. Kuusinen on tuonut marxismi-leninismiin aatteet Suomeen"', *Keski-Suomen Työ* (KST) 11 Oct. 1951.

9 TS 4 Oct. 1951.

eight.<sup>10</sup> Kuusinen's own speeches and articles from 1918 to 1949 were published in a book *Kansainvälisiä kysymyksiä* (International issues), which was regarded as an important means to convey Kuusinen's lessons to Finland.<sup>11</sup>

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.<sup>12</sup> 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*.<sup>13</sup> 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 Laukaa, Kuusinen's home village, should be changed to Otto Ville Kuusinen's street.<sup>14</sup>

Five years later, in October 1956, Kuusinen's 75<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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

10 KST 4 Oct. 1951; KT 4 Oct. 1951; *Vapaa Sana* (VS) 4 Oct. 1951.

11 A. Äikiä, 'Lukijalle', in O. W. Kuusinen, *Kansainvälisiä kysymyksiä*. Lahti: Kansankulttuuri 1951, 5.

12 KA, the archive of the SKP, instruction letters 1951, Educational department to educational secretaries of the districts 15 Sept. 1951.

13 'Lahjojen ja tervehdysten tulva jatkuu', TS 2 Oct. 1951; 'SKP:n lähetystö matkusti tervehtimään O. W. Kuusista', TS 3 Oct. 1951.

14 'O. W. Kuusisen katu Jyväskylään!', KST 4 Oct. 1951.

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.<sup>15</sup>

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.<sup>16</sup> After his death in May 1964, the SKP arranged memorial occasions in Helsinki and printed articles about Kuusinen’s career.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

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.<sup>19</sup>

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

15 M. R(yömä), ‘O. W. Kuusinen 75 vuotta’, TS 4 Oct. 1956.

16 ‘Suomen työväenliike onnittelee 80 vuotta täyttävää O. W. Kuusista’; ‘O. W. Kuusinen 80 vuotta’; ‘SKPn tervehdys O.W. Kuusiselle’, *Kansan Uutiset* (KU) 4 Oct. 1961; ‘Hän oli poliitikko’”, KU 5 Oct. 1961.

17 ‘O.W. Kuusinen kuollut’; ‘Hänen työnsä jälki pysyy’, KU 19 May 1964.

18 ‘Surunvalitteluja virtaa Moskovaan’, KU 19 May 1964; ‘O.W. Kuusinen sai viimeisen leposijansa Kremlin muurissa’, KU 20 May 1964; ‘O.W. Kuusisen elämä ja työ’, KU 22 May 1964.

19 KA, the archive of the SKP, the secretariat of the SKP, minutes, 8 June and 5 Oct. 1964.

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communists and Kuusinen's Soviet co-workers Georgi Arbatov and Fjodor Burlatsky presented their views on Kuusinen.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> Kuusinen's celebrations were also carried on with the publication of books. In 1971 the book *Otto Wille Kuusinen – suomalainen internationalisti* was published, in which foreign and Finnish communists remembered Kuusinen, and in 1981 *Asian periaatteellinen puoli* consisted of Kuusinen's articles in 1903–1918. A book, however, was not considered enough for the 100<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

#### '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

20 'Skp:n keskuskomitean avoin juhlaistunto', KU 3 Oct. 1971; 'Otto Wille Kuusinen marxilais-leniniläisenä tutkijana, teoretikkona ja soveltajana', KU 18 Nov. 1978; 'Seminaari pohti O.W. Kuusista tiedemiehenä ja poliitikkona', KU 4 Oct. 1981; 'O.W. Kuusinen – työväenliikkeen johtaja ja luova ihminen', KU 5 Oct. 1981.

21 Reijo Kalmakurki, '70 vuotta sosialistista opiskelijaliikettä Suomen työväenluokan rinnalla – Eteenpäin O.W. Kuusisen viitoittamaa tietä', *Soihdu* 1 (1975), 4–20.

22 KA, Typy Tapiovaara's archive, objects.

Lenin and Stalin'.<sup>23</sup> 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'.<sup>24</sup>

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'.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

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.<sup>27</sup> 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'.<sup>28</sup>

23 'Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen'; Suuren isänmaanystävän ja rauhantaistelijan merkkipäivä', TS 4 Oct. 1951; 'Marxin-Engelsin-Lenin ja Stalinin aatteiden suurin suomalainen lipunkantaja', TS 5 Oct. 1951.

24 V. Pessi, 'Otto Wille Kuusinen 70-vuotias', in *Demokraattisen kansan kaleri 1951*. Helsinki: SKDL 1950, 68; I. Lehtinen, 'Työväenluokan voiton johtaja', in *SKP Taistelujen tiellä 1952. Vuosikirja VIII*. Helsinki: SKP 1952, 84–85; A. Äikiä, 'Lukijalle', in Kuusinen, *Kansainvälisiä*, 12

25 'SKPn tervehdys O.W. Kuusiselle'; 'Suomen työväenliike onnittelee 80 vuotta täyttävää O.W. Kuusista', KU 4 Oct. 1961.

26 J. Renkama, *Ideology and Challenges of Political Liberalisation in the USSR, 1957–1961. Otto Kuusinen's "Reform Platform", the State Concept, and the Path to the 3<sup>rd</sup> CPSU Programme*. Helsinki. SKS 2006, 145–154.

27 Pessi, 'Otto Wille Kuusinen', 68.

28 'O.W. Kuusinen kuollut'; 'Hänen työnsä jälki pysyy', KU 19 May 1964.

‘THE IRON HELMSMAN’

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.<sup>29</sup>

Kuusinen’s merits in politics were often found in the fight against war and fascism and in the defence of democracy.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> It was even more common to say that Kuusinen was one of the founders of the SKP<sup>32</sup> or, stressing Kuusinen’s role, to say that the SKP, ‘the party of a new type’, was founded ‘on the initiative of Kuusinen’.<sup>33</sup> Regarding their later relation it was common to argue that the party had worked under his guidance in the 1920s and 1930s<sup>34</sup> or to say more modestly that Kuusinen helped the party on various occasions.<sup>35</sup>

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

29 Pannetier et Pudel, ‘Stalinisme’, 559–562.

30 TS 5 Oct. 1951; ‘O.W. Kuusinen kuollut’; A. Äikiä, ‘Sosialistisen työväenliik-  
keemme suuri kunnia veteraani Otto Wille Kuusinen’, in *SKP Taistelujen tiellä*  
1948. *Vuosikirja IV*. Helsinki: SKP 1948, 122

31 ‘Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen 70-vuotias’, 468; Pessi 1951, 62; ‘Hänen työnsä  
jälki pysyy’.

32 ‘Marxin-Engelsin-Lenin ja Stalinin’, TS 5 Oct. 1951; ‘Suomen työväenliike  
onnittelee’, KU 4 Oct. 1961; ‘O.W. Kuusinen kuollut’, KU 19 May 1964.

33 Äikiä, ‘Sosialistisen työväenliikkeen’, 120; Pessi, ‘Otto Wille Kuusinen  
70-vuotias’, 62–63.

34 Lehtinen, ‘Työväenluokan voiton johtaja’, 86; ‘Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen  
70-vuotias’, 471; ‘Hänen työnsä jälki pysyy’.

35 S. Suvanto, ‘O.V. Kuusisen kirjallisen tuotannon esittelyä’, *Kommunisti* 9  
(1956), 456–466.

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.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> 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'.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup>

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.<sup>40</sup>

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.

36 'Toveri Otto Ville Kuusinen', TS 4 Oct. 1951; 'Marxin-Engelsin-Lenin ja Stalinin aatteiden suurin suomalainen lipunkantaja', TS 5 Oct. 1951; T. Lehen, 'Otto Wille Kuusisen taistelu oikeistososialidemokratiaa vastaan', *Kommunisti* 9 (1951), 483–489.

37 'Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen 70-vuotias', *Kommunisti* 9 (1951), 465–474; E. Parkkari, 'Otto Wille Kuusinen – SKP:n rautainen perämies', in *SKP Taistelujen tiellä 1945. Vuosikirja I*. Oulu: SKP 1945, 28–33; Suvanto, 'O.V. Kuusisen kirjallisen', 462.

38 Pennanen, 'O.V. Kuusinen'.

39 'Suomen työväenliike onnittelee'

40 'Hänen työnsä jälki pysyy'.

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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.<sup>41</sup>

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.<sup>42</sup> He did not, however, include Kuusinen as the main representatives of the labour movement in the fight for universal suffrage.<sup>43</sup>

41 Saarela, *Suomalaisen*, 9–10.

42 'Ystävät kertovat Kuusisesta'; 'Selvä järki ja tasainen luonne ominaista O.V. Kuusiselle', TS 4 Oct. 1946; "'Rajaton huumorintaju ja niin teoreettinen mielenlaatu..."; "'Alusta alkaen valtiomiehen puheita"; 'Kuusinen perusteellinen niin lehti- kuin eduskuntatyössäkin'; "'Siinä poistui pakkovallan uhrina Suomen mies..."; "'Niitä musiikki- ja kirjallisuushetkiä en koskaan unohda"; Raoul Palmgren, 'O.V.K', VS 4 Oct. 1951.

43 R. Palmgren, *Suuri linja. Arwidssonista vallankumouksellisiin sosialisteihin. Kansallisia tutkimuksia*. Helsinki: Kansankulttuuri 1976 (1948), 184–204.

‘PATRIOT AND INTERNATIONALIST’

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.<sup>44</sup>

From this perspective Kuusinen was portrayed as a great patriot and fighter for the brotherhood of nations.<sup>45</sup> Thus he had fought for the independence of Finland from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup>

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.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup> The assessment was

44 ’Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen’, TS 4 Oct. 1951.

45 E.g. ’Suuren isänmaanystävän ja rauhantaistelijan merkkipäivä’; O.W. Kuusinen – suuri isänmaanystävä ja kansojen veljeyden esitaistelija’, TS 4 Oct. 1951.

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.

47 ’Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen’, TS 4 Oct. 1951; see also Äikiä, ’Sosialistisen työväenliikkeemme’, 131–132; Ryömä, ’Otto Wille Kuusinen Suomen’, 478.

48 R. P(almgren), ’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.

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repeated on some later occasions<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup>

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,<sup>51</sup> 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.<sup>52</sup> The international significance of Kuusinen was also referred to in the connection with the messages of congratulations received from the world in 1951<sup>53</sup> and by the awards granted to Kuusinen in the Soviet

49 E.g. J. Pennanen, 'O.V. Kuusinen 75 vuotta', VS 4 Oct. 1956; 'Hänen työnsä jälki pysyy', KU 19 May 1964.

50 'Tervehdyksemme'; M. Ryömä, 'Puolueemme ansioitunut johtaja', TS 4 Oct. 1946.

51 Liukas Luikku (A. Äikiä), 'Tervetuloa isänmaalliseen rintamaan', TS 4 Oct. 1951; Kärkevä (M. Nikkilä), 'Herjat hurjistuvat', KT 7 Oct. 1951.

52 E.g. 'O.W. Kuusinen luettava suurmiesten joukkoon', VS 11 Oct. 1951; Pennanen, 'O.V. Kuusinen 75 vuotta'; 'Suomen työväenliike onnittelee 80 vuotta täyttävää O.W. Kuusista'; 'O.W. Kuusinen kuollut'.

53 'Miljoonat ihmiset maailmassa tuntevat O.W. Kuusisen', TS 30 Sept. 1951; 'Tervehdyksiä yli maapallon', TS 4 Oct. 1951.

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

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.<sup>55</sup> 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'.<sup>56</sup> The negative attitude to Kuusinen was also evident during the 40<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup>

#### '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

54 'Leninin kunniamerkki O.W. Kuusiselle', TS 5 Oct. 1951; 'O.W. Kuusiselle NL:n korkein ansiomerkki, KU 4 Oct. 1961.

55 Jyvä, 'Omituinen ehto Kuusisen-katuasiassa', KST 11 Oct. 1951.

56 K. Rentola, *Niin kylmää että polttaa. Kommunistit, Kekkonen ja Kreml 1947–1958*. Keuruu: Otava 1997, 273. Tiutinen is a district in Kotka which was bombed heavily during the Winter War.

57 J. Suomi, *Kriisien aika. Urho Kekkonen 1956–1962*. Keuruu: Otava 1992, 154–155; J. Nevakivi, *Miten Kekkonen pääsi valtaan ja Suomi suomettui*. Keuruu: Otava 1996, 141–145.

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

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.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> 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.<sup>61</sup>

Salomaa was also willing to take advantage of the studies carried out on Kuusinen in the late 1960s and early 1970s<sup>62</sup> and to give a sense of proportion to Kuusinen’s role in the People’s Deputation in 1918.<sup>63</sup> 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.

59 E. Salomaa, *Suuri Raha & Isänmaa Co.* Kuopio: Kansankulttuuri 1961; E. Salomaa, *Tavoitteena kansanvalta. Suomen työväenliikkeen vaiheita vuosina 1944–1960.* Kuopio: Kansankulttuuri 1964.

60 E. Salomaa, *Yrjö Sirola – sosialistinen humanisti.* Kuopio: Kansankulttuuri 1966.

61 E. Salomaa, ‘Usko Sotamies – O.W. Kuusinen’, in *Tiennäyttäjät 3. Suomen työväenliikkeen merkkimiehiä Ursinista Tanneriin.* Edited by H. Soikkanen. Rauma: Tammi 1968, 358–359; see also T. Lehén, *Marxilaisuuden alkukylvöä Suomessa. O.W. Kuusinen ja Sosialistinen Aikakauslehti 1906–1908.* Pori: Kansankulttuuri 1971.

62 *Nuori Otto Ville Kuusinen 1881–1920.* Edited by V. Salminen. Jyväskylä: K.J. Gummerus Oy 1970; T. Henrikson, *Romantik och marxism. Estetik och politik hos Otto Ville Kuusinen och Diktonius till och med 1921.* Helsingfors: Söderström & C:o 1971.

63 E. Salomaa, ‘Vallankumouhallituksen jäsen’, in *Otto Wille Kuusinen – suomalainen internationalisti*, 94–105.

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’.<sup>64</sup>

#### 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.<sup>65</sup>

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 inter-war years and also produced some new information on Kuusinen in the Communist International.<sup>66</sup> 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

64 E. Salomaa, ‘Usko Sotamies – O.W. Kuusinen’, in *Tiennäyttäjät* 3, 376, 378–379.

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.

66 A. Hyvönen, *Suomen Kommunistinen Puolue 1918–1924*. Tampere: Kansankulttuuri 1968; A. Hyvönen, *SKP:n maanalaisuuden vuodet. Suomen työväenliikkeen historiaa 1920–1930-luvuilla*. Kuopio: Kansankulttuuri 1971; L. Linsiö, *Komintern ja Kuusinen*. Helsinki: Kirjapaino Kursiivi Oy, 1978.

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,<sup>67</sup> 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 100<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>68</sup> 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<sup>69</sup> – thus forgetting Kuusinen's own writings stating that one did not become a leninist immediately. Everyone, however, remembered Lenin'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 work 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.<sup>70</sup> 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

67 J. Hodgson, *Communism in Finland. A History and Interpretation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1967; I. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue ja sen vaikutus poliittiseen ja ammatilliseen työväenliikkeeseen 1918–1928*. Porvoo: WSOY 1968; A. Upton, *Kommunismi Suomessa*. Rauma: Kirjayhtymä 1970.

68 'Otto Wille Kuusinen', *Kommunisti* 9 (1971), 417.

69 S. Toiviainen – J. Krasin, 'Kansainvälisen työväenliikkeen merkkihenkilö', *Kommunisti* 10 (1981), 737.

70 V. Pessi, 'O.W. Kuusinen ja Suomen kommunistinen puolue'; *Kommunisti* 9 (1971), 418; S. Toiviainen, 'O.W. Kuusisen merkitys SKP:n synnylle, kehitykselle ja toiminnalle', *Kommunisti* 1 (1979), 4–7.

student and associate. Sometimes Kuusinen's contribution to the fight against 'deviations' represented by Lev Trotsky, Grigori Zinovjev and Nikolai Bukharin was mentioned, but no-one remembered Stalin.<sup>71</sup>

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.<sup>72</sup>

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,<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> 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

71 Linsiö, 'O.W. Kuusinen Kominternin työssä'; Toiviainen–Krasin, 'Kansainvälisen', 734; Toiviainen, 'O.W. Kuusisen merkitys', 5–6.

72 'Kuusisen perintö velvoittaa luomaan puolueyhtenäisyyden', KU 4 Oct. 1971.

73 'Kuusisen perintö velvoittaa', KU 4 Oct. 1971; 'Otto Wille Kuusinen', *Kommunisti* 9 (1971), 417–418; T. Karvonen, 'Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton ystävyyden esitaistelija', in M.-L. Mikkola (ed.), *Otto Wille Kuusinen – suomalainen internationalisti*. Helsinki: Kansankulttuuri 1971, 132–139.

74 'O.W.K 90 vuotta', TA 30 Sept. 1971.

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the real patriotism of the Finnish people.<sup>75</sup> 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.’<sup>76</sup>

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.<sup>77</sup> Some Finns addressed the same questions in order to legitimise the SKP’s prevailing line.<sup>78</sup>

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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.<sup>79</sup> 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.

75 Toiviainen–Krasin, ‘Kansainvälisen’, 735–737.

76 E. Kauppila, ‘SKPh historian suuruus ja sen tutkimisen ongelmat’, KU 29 Aug. 1978.

77 G. Arbatov, ‘Etevä tiedemies ja marxismin teoreetikko’, in Mikkola (ed.), *Otto Wille*, 12–23; F. Burlatski, ‘Otto Wille Kuusinen – marxilais-leniniläinen tutkija, teoreetikko ja poliitikko’, *Kommunisti* 12 (1978), 967–976.

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.

79 E. A. Rees, ‘Leader Cults: Varieties, Preconditions and Functions’, in *The Leader Cult*, 21–22.

# German Historians and the German Question in the Cold War

WILFRIED LOTH

How did historians participate in the debate over the German question? How relevant their contributions were? Did they offer explanations or provide orientation or did they give impetus to false interpretations? These questions are addressed predominantly to German historians since it was they who, for obvious reasons, primarily concerned themselves with the developments and the policy options on Germany during the Cold War and thus had the opportunity to contribute to the national discourse on identity and political orientation. They will continue to do so as well. That is why a dispassionate analysis of their achievements and biases regarding historical findings in the era of the Cold War (and beyond) can be beneficial.

## ANXIETIES AND SWEEPING JUDGMENTS

My review begins with the observation – or lament – that in dealing with the German question, historians have allowed themselves to be influenced all too much by emotions, anxieties, and fears linked to the Cold War. That is basically no surprise given that they themselves were contemporaries of the Cold War and that it was to a great extent perceived as an existential conflict. Yet it does remain surprising how long many authors clung to their obsessions even after the most intense phases of the Cold War had long since passed and, furthermore, after a significant expansion of source materials allowed for a more differentiated and sober picture.

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From the beginning, there has been no lack of such differentiated accounts. Hans-Peter Schwarz, for example, surprised his colleagues in the field as early as 1966 with his habilitation *Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik*, in which he asserted that Soviet policy on Germany in the immediate postwar period had not necessarily been oriented toward the Sovietization of all of Germany within a Soviet Europe. Instead, there were contradictions to be found in Soviet policy; along with the view in favor of Sovietization, three other possible concepts and goals could be distinguished: the alternative of a “Carthaginian” peace in alliance with the Western powers completely subjugating the Germans, the possibility of an understanding with Germany, and, lastly, the option for a division of Germany with the Sovietization of the USSR’s own occupation zone as a consequence.<sup>1</sup>

Yet even for such an astute analyst as Schwarz, whose observations were to a great extent precise, the Sovietization of all Germany essentially remained a possibility in Soviet policy and at a certain juncture, namely that of the Berlin Blockade, was even the most likely policy.<sup>2</sup> He did not, however, pose the question as to the discrepancy between what may have been desired and what could actually have been accomplished given the presence of Western troops on German soil. Moreover, Schwarz praised Konrad Adenauer’s analysis of the division in the autumn of 1945 as exceptionally insightful. Conversely, he dismissively treated such politicians as Jakob Kaiser und Martin Niemöller who in opposition to Adenauer focused on variants two and three in Schwarz’s typology; he regarded such figures as having suffered from illusions.<sup>3</sup> All this meant that his overall picture of developments implicitly privileged variant one, the Sovietization of all Germany.

In the eyes of the bulk of Western and West German authors who expressed views on the goals of Soviet policy on Germany, the expansionistic quality of this policy remained an unquestioned and unshakable certainty. At the beginning of the 1980s, one could still read

<sup>1</sup> Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik. Deutschland im Widerstreit der außenpolitischen Konzeptionen in den Jahren der Besatzungsherrschaft 1945–1949*. Neuwied and Berlin: Luchterhand 1966, second edition Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt 1980, 201–269.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 251, 254.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 343, 425 ff., 478 ff., 643, 695.

in the works of such authors as Vojtech Mastny and Walrab von Buttlar that the goal had indeed been the Sovietization of all Germany. Evidence regarded as sufficient for this thesis was reference to Stalin's turn away from dismemberment plans in the spring of 1945, the possibility of an American troop withdrawal from Europe, the strength of the communist parties in Western Europe, and also of course Soviet propaganda, according to which everything the USSR did was in the service of "socialism." In other words: The anxieties which initially plagued a few individual contemporaries such as Winston Churchill and Konrad Adenauer became seemingly objective certainties about the intentions of Soviet policy thanks to these authors. Little attention was paid to the actual power differential between the US and the Soviet Union or to the many statements by Stalin as to his respect for the global economic might of the US with its monopoly on nuclear weapons; Soviet protestations that the transition to socialism was not on the agenda were dismissed as "salami tactics," that is, a divide-and-conquer strategy. Nor was any impression made by the demonstrable fact that neither the French nor the Italian Communist Party was pursuing a revolutionary course but, quite the contrary, had adopted policies aimed at system stabilization.<sup>4</sup> Just the opposite: Authors who called attention to the discrepancy between Western expectations and Soviet praxis sometimes had to hear themselves be accused of "ambitious falsification" with "totalitarian intentions," as Kurt Marko said in a review of my book *Teilung der Welt*.<sup>5</sup>

The flawed nature of the source base upon which the Sovietization thesis rested can be seen, for example, in Karel Kaplan's study of the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia, *Der kurze Marsch*, which appeared in 1981.<sup>6</sup> Alexander Fischer, who shortly before this had taken

4 Cf. W. Loth, 'Frankreichs Kommunisten und der Beginn des Kalten Krieges' in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 26 (1978), 7–65; on the context, W. Loth, *Die Teilung der Welt. Geschichte des Kalten Krieges 1941–1955*. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag 1980, enlarged edition 2000.

5 K. Marko, 'Die Teilung der Welt – mit schiefem Blick,' *Österreichische Osthefte* 24 (1982), 92–103; K. Marko, 'Die Teilung der Welt – ein kurzer Lehrgang in Demagogie' in *Zeitschrift für Politik* 29 (1982), 429–435. On this, cf. my reply: W. Loth, 'Kalter Krieg gegen die historische Forschung?' in *Zeitschrift für Politik* 30 (1983), 193–201.

6 K. Kaplan, *Der kurze Marsch. Kommunistische Machtübernahme in der Tschechoslowakei 1945–1948*. München and Wien: Oldenbourg 1981.

as his starting point the position “that Soviet policy on Germany at the end of the war was directed neither toward a division of Germany nor toward subjugation and Sovietization,” and who had identified only cautious “steps” meant to “influence developments in Germany in a way beneficial to themselves,”<sup>7</sup> reported at the 1982 *Historikertag* in Münster that Kaplan’s study, based on internal sources from the Czechoslovakian Communist Party, had now “established” that by war’s end, Stalin was hoping to be able to expand Soviet influence across the entire European continent step by step.<sup>8</sup> That was actually to be found in Kaplan.<sup>9</sup> Upon closer investigation, the numerous sources supposedly proving this thesis boiled down to one – and that single source actually proved something completely different: In August of 1946, Stalin told a delegation of the British Labour Party, British socialists, and Soviet communists that they could “work together and contribute to the realization of socialism in all of Europe”; he acknowledged, however, that in contrast to the process in the Soviet Union, it was possible “to achieve Socialism with democratic-socialist methods.”<sup>10</sup> This allegedly so revelatory source was thus nothing more than a goodwill declaration to the governing party of the leading Western European power, a source which moreover made it clear that Stalin was quite flexible as to his definition of “socialism!”<sup>11</sup>

7 Thesis presentation at the Colloquium of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 23 November 1979: *Der Weg nach Pankow. Zur Gründungsgeschichte der DDR*. München and Wien: Oldenbourg 1980, 15.

8 A. Fischer, ‘Handlungsspielräume der UdSSR in der Entstehung des Ost-West-Gegensatzes 1945 bis 1950’ in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B 25/83, 25 June 1983, 13–18, here 16; cf. also A. Fischer, ‘Die Sowjetunion und die “deutsche Frage“ 1945–1949’ in *Die Deutschlandfrage und die Anfänge des Ost-West-Konflikts 1945–1949*. Berlin: Dunckler & Humblodt 1984, 41–57, here 44 ff.

9 Kaplan, *Der kurze Marsch*, 90 ff.

10 Harold Laski’s report from the stenographic copy in the personal papers of Klement Gottwald in German translation quoted in Kaplan, *ibid.*

11 In the British version (which Kaplan does not know), the inoffensive character of the source is even clearer: ‘Mr. Stalin said that he was gratified to know that two great countries were traveling in the Socialist direction. In Russia they were travelling to Socialism in the Russian way, whereas Britain was going in a roundabout British way’, *Report of the 46th annual Conference of the Labour Party* (1947), 218.

The development of a realistic picture of Soviet policy on Germany has not only been hindered by the persistence of subliminal anxieties over Soviet expansion and Bolshevik revolution, however. The anti-American emphasis of the “New Left,” conditioned above all by the traumatic experience of the Vietnam War, also contributed – if only inadvertently – to a situation in which unrealistic conceptions of decision-making processes on German policy could predominate for so long. The “revisionists” combined their criticism of exaggerated conceptions of a Soviet threat with severe attacks against alleged American imperialism, which they exclusively blamed for the division of Germany and of Europe, and then also systematically played down the repressive aspects of Soviet policy. All this made it easy for the colleagues they were attacking as “traditionalists” to reject their viewpoint lock, stock, and barrel without having to deal substantively with the criticism of the Sovietization thesis by these “revisionists.”<sup>12</sup>

Historical writing in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) functioned in a similarly counterproductive manner right up to the end: On the one hand, it claimed that only the Soviet Union had remained steadfast in adhering to the Potsdam Agreement for the joint democratization of Germany by the victorious powers. On the other hand, East German historians insisted that “true securing of peace” was possible “only in class struggle and with the hegemony of the working class,” naturally embodied in the Communist Party or the Socialist Unity Party (SED).<sup>13</sup> The latent contradiction between these two assertions could only be resolved if one presupposed that the transformation realized on the soil of the Soviet Occupation Zone was initially intended for all of Germany. This did fit with the democratic-antifascist claims of the GDR but also amounted to a shining justification for the policy of founding the Federal Republic as well as its integration into the West.

Thus, the attacks of the “revisionists” developed into a situation in which the two sides were talking past one another and in which ideological and political factors pushed their way into the foreground

12 Cf. the now classic presentation, which has many follow-ups but has not been further expanded, J. and G. Kolko, *The Limits of Power. The World and United States Policy 1945–1954*. New York: Harper and Row 1972.

13 Most recently R. Badstübner, *Friedenssicherung und deutsche Frage. Vom Untergang des “Reiches“ bis zur deutschen Zweistaatlichkeit (1943 bis 1949)*. Berlin: Dietz 1990, 111.

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even as historical argumentation fell by the wayside. Given that such a dialog leads only to frustration, it was soon broken off; the antagonists retreated into the assertion of their respective positions. In the vacuum they left behind, a superficially intermediary view quickly gained popularity: the thesis of the irreconcilability of the two systems which met at the River Elbe. “Each side introduces its own system as far as its army can advance.” This quote from Stalin, reported by Milovan Djilas,<sup>14</sup> became the starting point for a whole series of works in which the development of two German states and their integration into antagonistic bloc systems seemed a necessary consequence of the arrangement between two powers as dissimilar as the US and the USSR to fight on until the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich. “The US and the Soviet Union were two dynamic systems and authentic ideology-states,” as Ernst Nolte formulated this viewpoint in his second major work, *Germany and the Cold War*, “indeed different in their age and militancy but exactly because of that they have an essential if not absolute enmity toward one another, and therefore with their meeting on German soil, the Cold War and the division of Germany became as unavoidable as any historical event was unavoidable.”<sup>15</sup>

This position was an intermediate one in that the question of “guilt” for the division of Germany, which had been clearly but controversially answered by the protagonists in the revisionism debate, was substantially relativized. Also, it was left somewhat vague as to whether and how intensively the two main victors of the Second World War thought of trying to work beyond the demarcation lines of 1945. This viewpoint was above all popular because it fit with the experiences of contemporaries after the solidification of the status quo in Europe and simultaneously served the demands of the détente era in multiple political respects: It allowed both East and West essentially to justify the decisions of the past and hence justify the societal systems themselves, yet by pushing aside the question of guilt, it also allowed for a continual dialog at least on a minimal level.

14 M. Djilas, *Gespräche mit Stalin*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer 1962, 146.

15 E. Nolte, *Deutschland und der Kalte Krieg*. München and Zürich: Piper 1974, 599. For discussion of Nolte’s work, cf. W. Loth, ‘Der “Kalte Krieg“ in deutscher Sicht’ in *Deutschland-Archiv* 9 (1976), 204–213.

The flaw in the thesis of necessary system opposition consisted in the fact that it could not bear closer historical scrutiny either.<sup>16</sup> First of all, the actors guiding the destiny of the victorious powers in 1945 initially *wanted* to administer the defeated Germany jointly. This can be demonstrated for President Harry Truman and US Secretary of State James Byrnes, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin in the first months, and for Stalin as well. Both sides in the later East-West conflict had a lasting interest in avoiding disputes among themselves; both viewed the democratization of Germany as an existential problem; and both were indeed convinced that this was a problem shared by the victorious powers (although that can be demonstrated with certainty only for the Western side). Secondly, the victorious powers *could* in principle have continued their alliance beyond 8 May 1945. In pursuit of their oppositional security interests, they did not existentially threaten one another – the US could certainly have lived with a communist controlled Soviet hegemonial sphere in Eastern Europe; with its immense need for reconstruction, the Soviet Union had far more urgent issues to attend to than challenging the liberal order in the major European countries. In economic terms, the American interest in new markets and the Soviet interest in assistance with reconstruction were even complementary.

Of course, the leadership groups of both powers held long-term conceptions of the future which excluded the other. A lack of experience with one another and the starkest imaginable contrasts in political culture – the idealistic insouciance of the new world on one side and a pathological distrust of the capitalist world on the other – served to make an understanding even more difficult. That much of the thesis of system opposition remains – a joint administration of the defeated Germany would have demanded much greater effort than a division, and so such a joint administration was less likely from the beginning. Yet, that did not make it an impossibility, and it remains the task of historians to ascertain why the original intent of the victorious powers was frustrated – on the basis of which agenda-setting, which developments, and which specific decisions.

16 On the following in more detail: W. Loth, 'Alternativen zum Kalten Krieg? Rückblick auf den Beginn des Ost-West-Konfliktes nach dessen Ende' in *Leviathan* 18 (1990), 65–79.

NARROWED PERSPECTIVES

Additionally, the concentration on the East-West conflict as the determinant of policy on Germany allowed the more comprehensive historical dimension of the German question to slip into the background for a long time. The debate about responsibility for the division and the significance of the conflict between the systems went so far that it seemed possessed by the subliminal idea that the Reich would have continued to exist were it not for the break in the alliance of the victorious powers. The extent of the defeat in 1945 remained as underemphasized as the Germans' responsibility for this defeat and the relevance that the German Problem would have had for the victorious powers and Germany's European neighbors independent of any East-West conflict. This did fit with the course of the public debate in the postwar period and the widespread unwillingness or inability to deal with the burdens of the past; it also implied a significant narrowing of vision. With their view to larger contexts, historians could have served a corrective function here. That they failed to do so or at least failed to do enough has decisively contributed to a situation in which the Germans to the present day have difficulties understanding themselves and their role in world politics.

It is the case that Andreas Hillgruber repeatedly called attention to the problematic of the German state in the center of Europe: The latent hegemonic potential of a German nation-state, whose founding was made possible only in the exceptional situation of the constellation of the Crimean War; the precariously half-hegemonic position of the Reich founded in 1871; the large measure of foreign policy continuity from the Wilhelmine period to Hitler, climaxing in the two flights forward into full hegemony over the European continent. Hillgruber consequently interpreted the events of 1945 as the self-inflicted "demise of the German Reich."<sup>17</sup> Additionally, Michael Stürmer and Hagen Schulze emphasized the European dimension of the German question in numerous essays during the 1980s.<sup>18</sup>

17 A. Hillgruber, *Kontinuität und Diskontinuität in der deutschen Außenpolitik von Bismarck bis Hitler*. Düsseldorf: Droste 1969; *idem.*, *Die gescheiterte Großmacht. Eine Skizze des Deutschen Reiches 1871–1945*. Düsseldorf: Droste 1980.

18 M. Stürmer, 'Kein Eigentum der Deutschen: die deutsche Frage' in W. Weidenfeld (ed.), *Die Identität der Deutschen*. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung

Yet, Stürmer and Schulze combined their discussion of the geopolitical problematic with a difficult-to-understand new version of the thesis of the primacy of foreign policy, (arguing that Germany's position in the middle of Europe was the primary reason for the strength of authoritarian structures in German history). Furthermore, this discussion usually omitted developments after 1945 as well as the meaning of the "German catastrophe" for those developments. In his oft-cited 1969 inaugural lecture in Freiburg, Hillgruber did once characterize Adenauer's policy of driving the Soviet Union out of Central Europe as an illusionary "sequel to German great-power politics,"<sup>19</sup> but this reference to lines of continuity beyond the caesura of 1945 did not draw much attention. Nor did Hillgruber incorporate the experience of German great-power politics into his explanation for the policies of the victorious powers.

With few exceptions,<sup>20</sup> there remained a curious division of labor among German historians: One group analyzed the way to the "German Catastrophe" without concerning itself in detail with developments in the postwar period, while the other group did yeoman work in analyzing the most recent sources for the contemporary period without considering the long prehistory. Even Ernst Nolte, who indeed took on the task of determining the historical location of the German Problem in the era of the Cold War and to do so developed far-reaching constructions stretching back into the Middle Ages, did nothing to overcome this specific boundary between epochs; the problem of the hegemonial potential of a German nation-state does not appear in his work.

There was a successive analysis of the government records of the Western Allies during the 1980s. Without any claim to completeness or assessment of individual contributions, the list of scholars engaged in

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1983, 83–101; W. Weidenfeld, *Dissonanzen des Fortschritts*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt 1986; H. Schulze, 'Die "Deutsche Katastrophe" erklären', in D. Diner (ed.), *Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte?* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch-Verlag 1987, 89–101.

19 Quoted in A. Hillgruber, *Großmachtspolitik und Militarismus im 20. Jahrhundert*. Düsseldorf: Droste 1974, 36.

20 For example, W. Loth, 'Die deutsche Frage als europäisches Problem', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B 51–52/82, 25 December 1982, 3–13; *idem.*, 'Träume vom Deutschen Reich' in *idem.*, *Ost-West-Konflikt und deutsche Frage. Historische Ortsbestimmungen*. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag 1989, 11–25.

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this task included Rolf Steininger, Josef Foschepoth, Albrecht Tyrell, Hermann-Josef Rupieper, as well as the group at the Freiburg Military History Research Office and a series of foreign colleagues.<sup>21</sup> This work has at least allowed the weight of the German Problem for the Allies to become clear in its full scope. We now know that the wartime plans made for the division of Germany were not transitory expressions of anti-German emotions but rather continued to be pursued by the leaders of all the victorious powers, despite criticism from experts, in the well founded awareness that this time there needed to be more effective measures taken against a renewed German threat than had been taken in 1919. We have learned that the first initiative for developing division plans came not from Stalin but from Churchill<sup>22</sup> and that his cabinet was still prepared to accept such a solution in March of 1945 (although much reluctance had in the meantime developed about it).<sup>23</sup> A power-political basis for such a division was first undermined with Stalin's public declaration of 9 May 1945; even after that, however, such figures as Ernest Bevin sympathized until early 1946 with French plans for a separation of the Rhineland and Ruhr area from the rest of Germany.<sup>24</sup>

21 R. Steininger, *Deutsche Geschichte 1945–1961. Darstellung und Dokumente in zwei Bänden*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch-Verlag 1983, enlarged edition 2002; J. Foschepoth (ed.), *Kalter Krieg und Deutsche Frage. Deutschland im Widersreit der Mächte 1945–1952*. Göttingen and Zürich: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1985; J. Foschepoth (ed.), *Adenauer und die Deutsche Frage*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1988, second edition 1990; A. Tyrell, *Großbritannien und die Deutschlandplanung der Alliierten 1941–1945*. Frankfurt am Main: Alfred Metzner 1987; H. J. Rupieper, *Der besetzte Verbündete. Die amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik 1949–1955*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag 1991; *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik 1945–1956*, 4 vols. München: Oldenbourg 1982–1990; B. Thoss and H.E. Volkmann (eds.), *Zwischen Kaltem Krieg und Entspannung. Sicherheits- und Deutschlandpolitik der Bundesrepublik im Mächtensystem der Jahre 1953–1956*. Boppard: Boldt 1988.

22 *Svetsko-anglijskie odnosenija vo vremena Velikoj otecest vennoj vojny 1941–1945*, vol. 1. Moscow 1983, 182.

23 R. Steininger (ed.), *Die Ruhrfrage 1945/46 und die Entstehung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. Britische, französische und amerikanische Akten*. Düsseldorf: Droste 1988, 37 ff.

24 *Ibid.*, 60–62, 76 ff., 102–106.

Lines of continuity from early dismemberment plans to the actual division of Germany into two states will need to be more fully incorporated into historians' accounts than has been usual up till now. It is well known that the French veto was the first and for the moment decisive cause of the failure of the Potsdam Agreement for establishing a central administration. As Elisabeth Krause has shown in a very enlightening dissertation on the question of the central administration of occupied Germany, Bevin backed up French policy so that American attempts to save the unified administration of the four occupation zones failed.<sup>25</sup> The victorious powers' mutual fears of one another then came into play and caused the gulf separating them on Germany policy to become ever wider; however, this occurred first of all within the context of this torpedoing of a unified four-zone Germany.

Likewise, it has become clear that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was intended by its founders to function as much as a means of containing the German danger as of containing Soviet aggression. Only after the US Senate's "Vandenberg Resolution" of 11 June 1948 opened the way for American participation in an Atlantic alliance was the French government prepared to present London's recommendations for the founding of a western German state to the French parliament.<sup>26</sup> It was only after the actual signing of the Atlantic Pact on 4 April 1949 that the French consented to the establishment of the so-called Trizonia and the Occupation Statute. Furthermore, only after the British and Americans had made a declaration guaranteeing that they would station troops in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) did France sign the General Treaty and the European Defense Community (EDC) Treaty.<sup>27</sup> The first European institutions also had the

25 E. Kraus, *Ministerien für ganz Deutschland? Der Alliierte Kontrollrat und die Frage gesamtdeutscher Zentralverwaltungen*. München: Oldenbourg 1990, 102–113.

26 W. Loth, 'Die deutsche Frage in französischer Perspektive' in L. Herbst (ed.), *Westdeutschland 1945–1955. Unterwerfung, Kontrolle, Integration*. München: Oldenbourg 1986, 37–49; once again in Loth, *Ost-West-Konflikt* 46–64, here 60 ff.

27 K. A. Maier, 'Die internationalen Auseinandersetzungen um die Westintegration der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und um ihre Bewaffnung im Rahmen der Europäischen Verteidigungsgemeinschaft' in *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik*, vol. 2, 1–234, here 124.

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same containment function vis-à-vis the Federal Republic: This is seen in the prehistory of the Council of Europe, in the decision-making process leading to the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), as well as in the negotiations on the Treaties of Rome.<sup>28</sup>

It has also become surprisingly clear that the project of integrating the Federal Republic into the West was repeatedly called into question by the Western Allies right up to the end, that is, up to the signing of the Treaties of Paris – this was due in part to the uncertainty as to whether the FRG could actually be kept in the Western camp for the long term and in part because Western leaders shied away from the cost entailed in such an integration: A military buildup by the two blocs and the indefinite military presence of the US in Europe. This was a broad phenomenon from George Kennan's plan for neutralizing Germany in reaction to the Berlin Blockade to the détente initiatives of Churchill after Stalin's death. Thus, Reinhard Neebe could demonstrate that the Political Planning Staff of the US State Department was contemplating neutralization even after Stalin's démarche of 10 March 1952: This group recommended the acceptance of Stalin's proposal for elections under Four-Power control (that is, not under the supervision of the United Nations) and contemplated setting a date in December of 1952.<sup>29</sup>

That the Soviet side was also aiming for the unified-Germany alternative until 1955 has been repeatedly contested, admittedly with limited success. Linked with the public disputes of the spring of 1958 in the Federal Republic, this debate concerns above all the Stalin Notes of 1952, in which the Soviet government officially offered the establishment of a German state with the condition that all occupation forces be withdrawn. No other issue affected German historians in such an existential way as did the question of whether the proper response had been made to these notes; at no other point has the debate been carried on so vehemently and in such a confused manner, with specious argumentation and twisted logic.

The existential nature of this debate can perhaps best be seen in the reaction of Eugen Gerstenmaier at a conference in the Bundeskanzler-

28 Summarizing this, W. Loth, *Der Weg nach Europa. Geschichte der europäischen Integration 1939–1957*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1990, 69–133.

29 R. Neebe, 'Wahlen als Test: Eine gescheiterte Initiative des Politischen Planungsstabs im State Department zur Stalin-Note vom 10. März 1952' *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 1/1989, 139–162.

Adenauer-Haus in March of 1981 when Hermann Graml termed the “missed opportunity” a “legend.” Gerstenmaier said that for many years, he had been “at odds with myself” as to “whether we had acted correctly,” and he had repeatedly “tormented” himself with this question; he was thus thankful to Mr. Graml for having “liberated” him from “conflicting feelings.”<sup>30</sup> At bottom, Graml had not disproven the thesis of the missed opportunity at all. He had only demonstrated that in 1952 Stalin had not simply offered the release of the GDR into the West; Graml then quoted two statements by Soviet diplomats from April and May of 1952 assuring their interlocutors that the Soviet Union was not contemplating doing away with the GDR.<sup>31</sup> The limited explanatory value of these sources did not prevent Graml’s message from being eagerly believed and quickly incorporated into more general works.<sup>32</sup>

All the greater was the commotion four years later when Rolf Steininger sought with elaborate documentation to provide proof that Stalin’s offer had been in earnest and that Adenauer had missed a historic opportunity.<sup>33</sup> This thesis too lacked a sufficient source base: Steininger’s central piece of evidence, Stalin’s assurance to the Italian socialist leader Pietro Nenni in July of 1952 that at the beginning of the note exchange he had been “actually prepared to make sacrifices,”<sup>34</sup> was not compelling proof for the seriousness of the Soviet initiative. Yet, instead of revisiting the issue of Soviet intentions, the criticism of Steininger focused on the

30 Contributions to the discussion in H.P. Schwarz (ed.), *Die Legende von der verpassten Gelegenheit. Die Stalin-Note vom 10. März 1952*. Stuttgart and Zürich: Belsar 1982, 52–55.

31 H. Graml, ‘Die sowjetische Notenkampagne von 1952’, in *ibid*, 16–31.; H. Graml, ‘Die Legende von der verpassten Gelegenheit’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 29 (1981), 307–341.

32 For example in W. Benz, ‘Bundesrepublik Deutschland’, in *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert II. Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (= Fischer Weltgeschichte Bd. 35). Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag 1983, 124–148, here 144.

33 R. Steininger, *Eine Chance zur Wiedervereinigung? Darstellung und Dokumentation auf der Grundlage unveröffentlichter britischer und amerikanischer Akten*. Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft 1985, second edition 1986; R. Steininger, *Eine vertane Chance. Die Stalin-Note vom 10. März 1952 und die Wiedervereinigung*. Berlin and Bonn: Dietz 1985, second edition 1986.

34 Made known for the first time by Steininger, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 410 ff.

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assertion that Adenauer had had no choice in the matter at all due to the attitude of the Western Allies. That was a hopeless proposition from the start; the more documents that were brought into this debate, the more clear it became – often against the intentions and statements of the authors – that the decision about the Soviet offer lay primarily with the Germans themselves. It could not have been otherwise given the self-understanding of the Western democracies.<sup>35</sup>

The insight into the weight of the German question even after 1945 led many historians to warn against rash zeal for reunification. Karl Dietrich Erdmann differentiated between the history of a people and its nation-state period. He regarded the latter as having come to an end in the case of Germany; in contrast, he viewed the Federal Republic, the GDR, and Austria as unified as a the cultural nation, and for the two German states oriented upon one another, he spoke of a “dialectical unity” of the nation.<sup>36</sup> In an article in *Die Zeit* in August of 1989, Heinrich August Winkler pointed out that “the nation-state founded by Bismarck had destroyed itself,” and with reference to the interest of the victorious powers in stabilization through division and the predominant position of a unified Germany, he urged the democratization of the GDR: “Because it is like that, we should no longer speak of the reunification of Germany but rather do something for the freedom of the Germans in the GDR.”<sup>37</sup> At the beginning of 1990, I myself argued for allowing the Germans of the GDR to make the decision as to the time for the political reunification and also for working to increase the integration of the Germans in a European order.<sup>38</sup>

35 Cf. the collection of reactions to Steininger’s publication R. Steininger, ‘Freie, gesamtdeutsche Wahlen am 16. November 1952?’, in J. Weber (ed.), *Die Republik der fünfziger Jahre. Adenauers Deutschlandpolitik auf dem Prüfstand*. München: Olzog 1989, 88–111.

36 K. D. Erdmann, *Die Spur Österreichs in der deutschen Geschichte. Drei Staaten – zwei Nationen – ein Volk?* Zürich: Manesse 1989.

37 H. A. Winkler, ‘Die Mauer wegdenken,’ *Die Zeit*, 11 August 1989, 5.

38 W. Loth, ‘Welche Einheit soll es sein?’ *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 35 (1990), 301–309.

DISPUTED EXPANSION

After the decision for a rapid entry of the GDR into the Federal Republic had been made, historians were among those who did not want to see in that event a return to a presumed “normality” in German history and instead supported further development of the new orientation which the Germans had embarked upon after the collapse of the Reich. Jürgen Kocka, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Eberhard Jäckel, and others forcefully advocated holding fast to the Western orientation of the Federal Republic, integrating the East German populace into the Western democracy, and transferring “as much sovereignty as possible to European and international institutions.”<sup>39</sup> Along with advocating solidarity among all Germans, Heinrich August Winkler argued that there was an obligation to support the states of East Central Europe: Their entry into the European Union should not be delayed until such time as they are perfectly organized.<sup>40</sup>

In any event, many historians could not resist the temptation to utilize the surprising reunification within the framework of the Western Alliance for a one-sided glorification of the policies of Konrad Adenauer. Klaus Gotto, who had soberly determined in 1974 that Adenauer’s Germany policy had “not achieved its goals,”<sup>41</sup> presented the Federal Republic’s first chancellor in the spring of 1990 as a “visionary,” whose “fundamental assumptions” as to the interests of the Soviets and the paths to German unity had received a “clear confirmation.”<sup>42</sup> In the epilogue to the second volume of his groundbreaking biography of Adenauer published in 1991, Hans-Peter Schwarz declared that “history” has obviated the necessity of providing a final assessment of Adenauer’s reunification policy: The reunification of Germany as a part of the Western community of

39 J. Kocka, ‘Nur keinen neuen Sonderweg’, *Die Zeit*, 19 October 1990, 11–12; E. Jäckel, ‘Furcht vor der eigenen Stärke?’, *Die Zeit*, 2 November 1990, 10 (the quote above is from this last article); H. U. Wehler, ‘Wider die falschen Apostel’, *Die Zeit*, 9 November 1990, 54–56.

40 H. A. Winkler, ‘Für den Westen – ohne Vorbehalt’, *Die Zeit*, 19 November 1993, 10.

41 K. Gotto, ‘Adenauers Deutschland- und Ostpolitik 1945–1963’, in *idem. et al. (eds.) Konrad Adenauer. Seine Deutschland und Außenpolitik 1945–1963*. Mainz: Grünewald 1974, 285.

42 K. Gotto, ‘Der Realist als Visionär’, *Die politische Meinung* No. 249 (March–April 1990), 6–13.

nations had been made possible “in a constellation of Western unity and strength but also Soviet weakness and reasonable reevaluation of their own interests under the auspices of East-West détente.” In his view, this had been exactly Adenauer’s long-term calculus from 1952 onward.<sup>43</sup> Schwarz did not regard it as worthwhile to give any thought to the possibility that a more significant consideration of Soviet security needs as well as efforts to incorporate the communist rulers into a dialog might possibly have made the second German dictatorship obsolete earlier.

Whereas some German historians had in the meantime assumed that in the postwar period “the establishment of the unity of Germany was in the realm of the possible for the price of long-term demilitarization and long-term low living standards for all Germans” (as Wolfgang J. Mommsen wrote in 1994<sup>44</sup>), others reacted allergically when in an initial investigation of internal GDR sources, I was able to work out more clearly the whole-German orientation of Soviet policy than had been discernable before. As I believed I was able to show, Stalin aimed for the establishment of an anti-fascist democratic Germany in association with the Western Allies; the GDR was the unwanted result of Stalinist occupation practice, the revolutionary zeal of German communists, and Western walling-off.<sup>45</sup> Winkler found that completely unbelievable: “Stalin would no longer have been himself if he had given up the strategic goal of a revolutionary transformation of Germany in the sense of ‘Socialism.’”<sup>46</sup> Henning Köhler, another biographer of Adenauer, argued that Soviet occupation practice gives Soviet expressions of goals the lie.<sup>47</sup> The idea that the West Germans with their choice for the West

43 H. P. Schwarz, *Adenauer. Der Staatsmann: 1952-1967*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt 1991, 991.

44 W. J. Mommsen, ‘Der Ort der DDR in der deutschen Geschichte’, in J. Kocka and M. Sabrow (eds.), *Die DDR als Geschichte. Fragen – Hypothesen – Perspektiven*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1994, 28.

45 W. Loth, *Stalins ungeliebtes Kind. Warum Moskau die DDR nicht wollte*. Berlin: Rowohlt Berlin 1994; also in English translation: *Stalin’s Unwanted Child. The Soviet Union, the German Question and the Founding of the GDR*. London and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin’s Press 1998.

46 H. A. Winkler, ‘Im Zickzackkurs zum Sozialismus’, *Die Zeit*, 17 June 1994, 40.

47 H. Köhler, ‘Stalin ein deutscher Demokrat’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 2 August 1994, 8.

bore any share of responsibility for the division of Germany fell by the wayside in the argumentation of the one as well as the other.<sup>48</sup>

Conversely, Gerhard Wettig was well received when he made use of the first source materials from the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation in order to assert that for Stalin, the note initiative of the spring of 1952 was about neither a success in negotiations nor a mere propaganda action, but rather it was a matter of “war by other than military means.”<sup>49</sup> In 2002, I published evidence of thorough preparations for new negotiations with the Western Allies.<sup>50</sup> Hermann Graml reacted to this by attempting to issue a new edition of his propaganda thesis.<sup>51</sup> Even if the justification provided by source materials for the one case as for the other was very thin,<sup>52</sup> the impression was able to take hold in the public that we know little of Stalin’s actual intentions even now. In the spring of 2007, an editor at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* was still formulating it this way: “There can still be splendid disputes as to whether there was a chance of reunification in 1952–53.”<sup>53</sup> The most recent contribution on the Stalin note debate by Peter Ruggenthaler, arguing without the

48 For further criticisms of my book, see W. Loth, ‘Stalin, die deutsche Frage und die DDR. Eine Antwort an meine Kritiker’, *Deutschland-Archiv* 28 (1995), 290–298.

49 G. Wettig, ‘Die Deutschland-Note vom 10. März 1952 auf der Basis der diplomatischen Akten des russischen Außenministeriums’, *Deutschland-Archiv* 26 (1993), 786–805, here 803; taken up again in G. Wettig, *Bereitschaft zu Einheit in Freiheit? Die sowjetische Deutschlandpolitik 1945–1955*. München: Olzog 1999, 200–206.

50 W. Loth, ‘Die Entstehung der „Stalin-Note“’. Dokumente aus Moskauer Archiven’, in J. Zarusky (ed.), *Die Stalin-Note vom 10. März 1952. Neue Quellen und Analysen*. München: Oldenbourg 2002, 19–115.

51 H. Graml, ‘Eine wichtige Quelle – aber missverstanden’, in Zarusky, *Stalin-Note*, 117–137.

52 For criticism of Wettig, cf. W. Loth, ‘Spaltung wider Willen. Die sowjetische Deutschlandpolitik nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg’, *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 24 (1995), 290–298; for criticism of Graml, W. Loth, ‘Das Ende der Legende. Hermann Graml und die Stalin-Note. Eine Entgegnung’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 50 (2002), 653–664.

53 R. Steininger, ‘Stalin und die Deutschen’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 May 2007.

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slightest evidence that the initiative aimed at the stabilization of the GDR, certainly will even strengthen this impression.<sup>54</sup>

#### SPECIFICATIONS AND BLOCKADES

We must wait to see the extent to which the work of historians will in the future be hindered by contemporary biases. In general, it seems to me that the experience of the collapse of communism is a good occasion for definitively leaving behind the biases of the Cold War. That can make historians more sensitive to avoiding an overestimation of the possibilities open to the Soviet Union in the past as well, encourage them to make the necessary differentiations within the communist world, and observe more precisely the transformations within that world, which certainly did not begin in 1985. After the experiences of the upheaval of 1989–1991, justifications of the communist understanding of politics are no longer possible; at the same time, the ahistorical extreme form of the totalitarianism theory, which always posited the monolithically closed nature and immutability of the Soviet system, has also been disproven. Likewise, the continuance of the debate about the role of the Germans beyond the end of the East-West conflict can sharpen our view that this debate did not start after 1945 and that during the Cold War, it was possessed of a highly independent dynamic beyond that of the East-West conflict. In general, the far-reaching experience of upheaval can promote historical thinking, free up the view of the relative openness of decision-making situations, without denying the weight of the burden of the specific past in question. In other words: Schematizing simplifiers – of whatever provenance – will not have it so easy in the future.

On the other side, the current situation offers an invitation to Western triumphalism and to total revisions of those who up till now have clung to the Eastern system in one form or another. The public debate about the most recent history is not completely free of either tendency; that could indeed lead to the introduction of new distortions and emergence of new legends in historical work. In the same way, the temptation is too great to “paint” German history once again as “Reich German,”

54 P. Ruggenthaler (ed.), *Stalins großer Bluff. Die Geschichte der Stalin-Note in Dokumenten der sowjetischen Führung*. München: Oldenbourg 2007.

altering a phrase from Jakob Burckhardt,<sup>55</sup> that is, to allow the period between 1945 and 1990 to appear as only a parenthesis in the history of the German nation-state and thereby also once again underestimate the significance of the defeat in 1945 as well as the subsequent relevance of the German question. More than ever, it will depend on historians, firstly, to argue precisely and in so doing, free themselves as much as possible from political partialities and, secondly, to bring their insights into the public discussion.

We should not expect all too much from the opening of Eastern archives – in any event, no completely new insights. Information from the Soviet sphere has been available to us for some time, albeit certainly not in the volume on hand for the Western side; the oft-heard argument that one cannot say anything as to Soviet intentions as long as the archives are closed has quite a self-serving air to it. Due to the state of the materials, the investigation of new sources from the Soviet sphere will prove to be an arduous business, which unfortunately will not bring results any too quickly. Above all, however, one must not assume that all the decisive processes and considerations were documented because Stalinist rule was not given to such record keeping.

This means that the professional qualities of the historian will in the future be all the more important: Diligence in dealing with material and the most comprehensive possible orientation in working through it. To those ends, it would certainly not hurt to take a critical look back at the historiography of the Germany question.

<sup>55</sup> Burckhardt had foreseen in 1872 that all accounts of recent history would in the future be 'oriented around 1870–71' such that 'all of world history from Adam onward would be painted with German victory', J. Burckhardt, in M. Burckhardt (ed) *Briefe*, vol. 5, Basel: Schwabe & Co 1963, 182 ff.

# On the Constitution of the Science of History in the GDR During the Cold War years: Developments in Greifswald

MANFRED MENDER

In 1994 Seppo Hentilä published his monograph 'Jaettu Saksa, jaettu historia', a treatise on the 'Cold History War' waged between the two German states between 1945 and 1990.<sup>1</sup> In some respects the book was a surprise: the author, a historian from a country which, at that time, was still often categorized as being 'on the periphery of Europe', demonstrated an astonishingly detailed knowledge of the historiography, the history debates and history propaganda in *both* German states. His book provided the most concise survey of the 'German-German history battle' to be published at that time. Hentilä was also one of the first researchers to base his study on the unpublished records of the SED leadership concerning the planning, steering and control of historiography in the GDR, and which became accessible at the Bundesarchiv (German federal archives) at the beginning of 1993. It should also be acknowledged, that Seppo Hentilä did not join the ranks of those western historians who cultivated contacts with universities in East Germany prior to the fall of Communism, after which they either no longer wished to accept the facts or wanted things to be seen differently, and distanced themselves from their East German colleagues.

1 S. Hentilä, *Jaettu Saksa, jaettu historia: Kylmä historiasota 1945–1990*. Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura 1994.

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Hentilä devoted a major part of his book to reflections on the deficits, omissions and politically motivated misrepresentations in GDR historiography. But he always endeavoured to be fair and avoided generalized verdicts. Instead he exercised a high level of objective criticism devoid of pseudo-moralistic value judgements. Meanwhile, his very succinct concept of the 'Cold History War' between East and West Germany has been noted in the publications of German researchers.<sup>2</sup> However, it can hardly be said, that any German historians have suitably acknowledged his achievement or engaged in a knowledgeable discussion of the main arguments in his book. In view of the language barrier this is not at all surprising. But it is surprising that the editors of 'Historiallinen Aikakauskirja' gave Hentilä's work to a reviewer who, although qualified on the subject matter, was not really in a position to actually read the book (with the exception of the German-language summary and the annotations).<sup>3</sup> Whatever the case, this review remained at a very superficial level.

The debates about the GDR science of history, which intensified at the beginning of the nineties, are still alive today, and they continue to affect the public discussion about how to assess the East German past. Although they are of scientific concern, they are also coloured by political considerations, standpoints and designs. To a certain degree the observation appears justified, that the victors of the 'Cold History War' are carrying on with the old battle, even though their opponent has disappeared. The GDR science of history, which has long since been dissolved at both the institutional and the personal level, was often assessed solely under the aspect of its political objectives and utilization, as an ideologically instrumentalized and deformed 'legitimizing science'. Thanks to the good condition of the records, the precise directives, demands and wishes 'from above', the direct intervention of the SED leadership in academic life and work, and the more or less obedient responses of the historians to these wishes can be reconstructed in detail, and they have meanwhile been documented and presented in numerous publications.

2 see. B. Faulenbach, 'Die deutsche Geschichtsschreibung nach der Diktatur Hitlers', in G. Corni, M. Sabrow (ed.), *Die Mauern der Geschichte*. Leipzig: AVA 1996, 38.

3 *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 2 (1995), 182–183.

Of course it is necessary and legitimate to expose the commissioning and instrumentalization of science, and to reveal the relationships between history, ideology and politics, between historians and the exclusive ruling party. However, it is devious to maintain that there was hardly anything in the field of historical research and teaching in the east that earned the name of science in the true sense of the word, and that instead scholars in the east pursued a pseudo-science which served solely political ends and whose institutions acted merely as offshoots of the party and state leadership. In contrast to the dominant tendency to track down all indications and evidence of the political functionalization of historiography, the concrete analysis of the most important results of work by GDR historians and the critical discussion of their works has so far received relatively little attention. Objective criticism of the concrete work, a skilled analysis of developments in the science, a truly detailed assessment of the achievements and shortcomings of research into specific fields and the works of individual historians are still notable exceptions. It is obvious that the main interest lies in unearthing the fallacies of GDR historiography, rather than acknowledging its achievements. In addition to this, it would appear that the history of this historiography is of greater interest than the actual results it produced.

In the meantime, there are at least a few more refined professional opinions being expressed. Significantly, it was foreign historians rather than those immediately involved in the 'querelles allemandes' who, like Georg Iggers, pleaded at a very early stage for a deeper understanding of the inconsistencies in East Germany's science of history, as opposed to the usual sweeping condemnations. They called for the application of 'discipline-related criteria' rather than morally biased judgements, 'critical scientific approaches' rather than 'simplistic polarization'<sup>4</sup>. Signs are in fact increasing that the phase of unilateral judgment and condemnation of the science of history in the GDR is coming to an end. Following the wave of disassociation and disapprobation, a general objectivization of the debates and their impartial assessment within German and international contemporary history research would be of great benefit to the discipline. Time will also show whether and to what

4 See. K. H. Jaraus, M. Middel, M. Sabrow, 'Störfall DDR-Geschichtswissenschaft. Problemfelder einer kritischen Historisierung', *Historische Zeitschrift, Beihefte. Neue Folge*, vol. 27 (1997), 1–50.

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extent the 'old cadre' of GDR historiographers, who were excluded from academic life, can still make a constructive contribution in this process. So far, attempts to pursue a self-critical discussion on the history of their subject and their own positions have generally proved fairly ineffective. Such attempts made by these historians were usually suspected of, or denounced as, self-justification. Despite this, the following contribution will endeavour to give a preliminary synopsis of certain aspects of developments in the GDR science of history up to 1961/62, seen from the perspective of a 'party historian' – a label currently in popular use. Essential decisions were made during this period. From the standpoint of GDR historiography it was the period devoted to constituting a 'socialist German science of history', the period of overcoming an initially still dominant 'bourgeois historiography' and the period of establishing Marxism-Leninism as the prevailing theoretical foundation of historical research and teaching.<sup>5</sup> To avoid simply repeating what is already known, I shall focus on a 'case study' of several developments at the Institute of History (until 1951 the History Seminar) at the University of Greifswald. It was, in fact, a fairly small study area, and attracted less attention from the central party apparatus than the institutes in Berlin or Leipzig. But basically, the same processes and developments occurred everywhere.

#### THE STARTING POSITION

Every science of history is bound up within the living context, within its state's need for tradition and orientation and within its national public. After the catastrophic experiences of both world wars and the generally accepted necessity of a new orientation, it went without saying that after 1945 there was an emphatic call for a revision of the traditional view of history throughout the whole of Germany. It was, however, clearly foreseeable that this revision within the Soviet occupying power's sphere of influence would lead to particularly far-reaching changes in historiography and the fraternity of historians. Nevertheless, there were no initial efforts to politicize historical research. Convinced National Socialists, such as Johannes Paul in Greifswald, were suspended from

<sup>5</sup> W. Schmidt, *Zur Konstituierung der DDR-Geschichtswissenschaft in den fünfziger Jahren*. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag 1984, 6–7.

office, a few Marxists returning from exile (such as Jürgen Kuczynski or Alfred Meusel) received university chairs, but during the forties academic teaching and research were clearly dominated by representatives of traditional German historiography who continued their existing research and behaved mainly, or at least relatively, loyal to the new authority.

This group of scholars included Adolf Hofmeister (1883–1956), professor of medieval and modern history at Greifswald University, a highly respected scholar of medieval times who had studied under Dietrich Schäfer. He became director of the history institute in 1921 and remained in this position after 1945. Even after reaching pensionable age (1949), his period of office was extended several times. And even after his official retirement in 1954 he was appointed provisional head of the institute until, a few months later, the vice-chancellor had to announce: ‘Due to the advanced effects of age, he is no longer capable of carrying out the position.’<sup>6</sup>

Basically, Hofmeister represented precisely the type of ‘apolitical middle-class historian’ who, in the long-run, was definitely not desired in the GDR, but who was still required for a transitional phase. An assessment of 1950, signed by the vice-chancellor, stated: ‘As a historian Prof. Hofmeister considers himself an apolitical scholar, whose aim in life is to analyse the genealogies of the counts and princes of the Middle Ages. His attitude towards progressive ideas is very cautious and conservative, and he often expresses misgivings; but he is by no means a born fighter and submits to the majority in decisive questions. As a teacher, students consider him to be politically reactionary.’<sup>7</sup> If history was to be taught at all to new scholars at universities, the only option at first was to leave the task to historians such as Hofmeister. Officially sought-after and honoured, but internally criticized as a remnant of a past epoch, Hofmeister again taught students from 1946 onwards and supervised numerous Ph.D. students, including representatives of the ‘new science of history’, at the University of Greifswald. Until 1950 teaching was carried out primarily by Hofmeister himself and one part-time lecturer. Apart from a thorough foundation course in the auxiliary

6 Universitätsarchiv Greifswald (UAG), PA 221 (Hofmeister), Rektor G. Katsch an den Staatsekretär für Hochschulwesen, 15 Feb. 1955.

7 *ibid.*, Politische Charakteristik Prof. Hofmeisters, unterzeichnet von Rektor Hans Beyer, 1 August 1950.

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sciences they restricted the content almost exclusively to the history of the Middle Ages, and initially research was also confined to the traditional framework.

#### NEW DIRECTIONS

At the beginning of the fifties a radical change took place in the science of history in the newly founded GDR. As already often recounted, the change was initiated in 1950/51, above all by the SED leadership, and enforced during the following decade through massive interventions in academic life, the creation of new structures, ideological campaigns and disciplinary measures.

The general aim was to programme historical research and teaching to meet the political and ideological objectives of the SED and to harness them in the interest of securing and stabilizing the new state. This required a newly oriented representation of history in terms of both concepts and methods. Traditional historiography was to be replaced by the establishment of a centrally planned and steered Marxist-Leninist science of history dedicated to socialism. These ideas were combined with concrete targets surrounding the 'new view' of history. These included such requirements as focussing research and the depiction of history on the role of the masses and progressive and revolutionary traditions, especially the history of the working-class movement, and exposing the 'subversive policies of the ruling classes'. Historians were to direct their polemic primarily against the 'imperialist class enemies' and their ideologies. A clear 'friend-foe image' was desired and fostered. This also implied an orientation towards the experiences, dogmas and taboos of the Soviet science of history on the one hand, and disassociation from real or supposedly problematical developments in West German historiography on the other. The value of historical accounts was also to be decisively judged according to the degree their results could be used for the necessary combating of bourgeois ideologies in general, and particularly for the political-ideological disputes between the GDR and the Federal Republic.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Hentilä, *Jaettu Saksa*, 113–153; H. Haun, *Der Geschichtsbeschuß der SED 1955. Programmdokument für die 'volle Durchsetzung des Marxismus-*

These prescribed historical-political directives and their gradual, though never unqualified, acceptance by almost all East German historians, should be seen within the context of the prevailing domestic and foreign-political constellations: the proclaimed goal and the internal willingness to create a new society, the confrontation with a superior western neighbour who questioned the existence of the GDR, the close ties with the Soviet Union and the pressures of the Cold War. The East-West contrast gained prime significance in GDR historiography. From the beginning and throughout the decades the dualism of the political blocks and systems strictly determined the radius of the historical experience of Marxist-Leninist historical ideology and historiography.<sup>9</sup> Their political behaviour and basic ideological mind-sets were extensively shaped by the 'necessary requirements' of the Cold War and subjection to the power-political and ideological dominance of the USSR. But of course, taking sides in the conflict between systems and in the Cold War became a dominant trend in historical thought not only in the East. It was not long before the East-West differences began influencing the approaches to the years of Nazi dictatorship. On both sides there was a tendency to utilize the interpretation of National Socialist dictatorship and direct it against the particular system of the other side. Since the opening of the Wall this procedure has often been taken to its extreme by indiscriminately equating the GDR with Hitler's Germany.

Some of the first measures taken in order to bring into effect the above mentioned political directives included not only the formation of an authors' collective for the first major project in the GDR's science of history programme, a multi-volume textbook on German history and the establishment of a Museum of German History (1951), but also changes to structures in the academic world based on the Soviet model. The most important innovation, which was finally founded in 1955 after long discussions, was the establishment of a highly competent, Marxist-based Institute of History at the Academy of Sciences. The institute with its

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*Leninismus' in der DDR-Geschichtswissenschaft.* Dresden: Hannah-Arendt-Institut für Totalitarismusforschung 1996.

9 W. Küttler, Die marxistisch-leninistische Geschichtswissenschaft und das Systemdenken im Ost-West-Konflikt, in Wolfgang Küttler, Jörn Rüsen, Ernst Schulz (eds.), *Geschichtsdiskurs, vol. 5, Globale Konflikte, Erinnerungsarbeit und Neuorientierungen seit 1945.* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag 1999, 75–79.

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large number of personnel was designed to contribute decisively towards the successful breakthrough of the 'new science of history'. Meanwhile, the gradual 'conquest' of the history institutes at the six eastern German universities had been on the agenda following the second university reform of 1951.<sup>10</sup>

#### THE RADICAL CHANGE: FROM HOFMEISTER TO SCHILDHAUER

Things move slowly in Pomerania, nevertheless they move steadily and without much ado. According to the current information status it seems that the process of achieving the position desired by the SED ran without any spectacular confrontations between the few 'bourgeois' and the rapidly increasing majority of Marxist forces in Greifswald. It may seem paradoxical, but it is nevertheless true, that the fiercest battles were fought among the various Marxist groups rather than between the 'opposing camps'. We will return to this later.

In both general and specific terms, substantial preconditions and elements of the new direction in the teaching and research of history were also created at the University of Greifswald.

First: numerous new posts were created, and the whole of the staff was renewed within a few years.

Following the first appointment of new personnel in 1951, the staff at the end of the year included Professor Hofmeister, his long-standing colleague Dr Ursula Scheil and three additional post-doctoral assistants, so the institute had five members on its academic staff. Ten years later, in the autumn semester 1961/62, the institute staff had increased to 17 members. There were no 'old' members of the university's science of history faculty at the institute any more. While the services of Adolf Hofmeister, who died in 1956, were essential during the first post-war decade for the continuity of teaching and research at the university's institute of history, his students fared less well. They were in fact faced with the alternative of opting for the Marxist-Leninist approach to history or leaving the university. Although in individual cases very personal motives may have been involved, this was doubtless the crucial consideration behind a massive change: without exception, all of the

<sup>10</sup> Schmidt, 9.

assistants working at the institute in 1951 moved to the West during the fifties. They were not suspended, but left of their own accord under the mounting pressure.

Despite this exodus, there were still seven former Hofmeister students among the 17 'new' staff working at the institute in 1961, and they included the new director, Johannes Schildhauer, who had held this position since 1957. He completed his doctorate in 1949 under Hofmeister's supervision and was appointed as lecturer at the institute in 1952 with the very clear assignment of asserting Marxist positions. Four other members of staff had also studied at Greifswald, after the Hofmeister era, and the six remaining staff members came from other universities and colleges. The qualification of the 'newcomers', their relationship to scientific work and their specialist competence varied greatly. However, their one unifying factor was their willingness to fulfil the demands of a Marxist science of history, and to make allowances for political realities. With the exception of two people, all the members of the institute were now members of the SED. Nevertheless, there was by no means total conformity in the understanding of the essence and the responsibilities of the science of history. In fact, as always and everywhere, the people at the institute still had different characters and ideas. It was a bonus for Greifswald that for decades the institute was headed by personalities such as Johannes Schildhauer and Konrad Fritze, who were competent scholars in their fields and decent human beings. Both of them were among Hofmeisters 'best students', and both became convinced Marxists and paid their tribute to the pressures of political expectations. But at the same time they succeeded in their efforts at the institute to combat the crude politicizing style which strongly prevailed up to the beginning of the sixties and was so damaging to the fraternity of historians.

Second: since the beginning of the fifties fundamental changes were made in the contents and the organization of history studies at the history institutes in the GDR.

In September 1951 obligatory, uniform syllabuses were introduced for all institutes. Teaching had to cover all periods of history, including contemporary history. The restrictive syllabus regulations, which strictly prescribed the course contents of the fixed eight-semester study period, were designed specifically to produce graduates schooled in Marxism-Leninism. The introduction of an obligatory foundation course in social

sciences for all students, and equally obligatory Russian lessons, pointed in the same direction.

The institute, which had not only several diploma students (1946: 14; 1950:16) but also a rapidly increasing number of prospective history teachers (1955: 155; 1963: 250) encountered considerable difficulties, which were duly registered by the party apparatus. In 1952 and 1954 the central committee of the SED contemplated a complete close-down in education of history students in Greifswald and Jena for several years, because the faculty was understaffed and there was a complete lack of 'comrade professors'.<sup>11</sup> However, these plans were never put into practice. On the contrary, a number of outside staff, including a Soviet guest professor, were successfully appointed to provide temporary support. But the numerous new staff appointments were more significant. The outstanding status of the science of history in the SED's ideological concept had not only problematical consequences; it also had a promoting effect in this academic field. At any rate, more finances were made available for the development and expansion of history teaching and research in the GDR context than ever before. As a result Greifswald benefitted from this development as the generous granting of new staff positions indicates. However, the opposite side of the coin meant that since the beginning of the fifties new appointments, special advancement (e.g. the granting of research leave) and the allocation of teaching assignments depended not only on the applicant's academic qualifications but also on their political correctness. 'Objectivistic "pure scientists" with insufficient social consciousnesses'<sup>12</sup> had virtually no chance whatsoever as a historian.

In time, and after a great deal of effort, the majority of specifications prescribed by the often modified, centrally issued syllabuses were put into effect, although in many areas without the appropriate textbooks, and sometimes without sufficient staff knowledge of how to implement a Marxist interpretation of history. Most of the students greeted the more career-oriented courses with their embracing spectrum of all historical periods. It was only in later years that criticism grew in the wake of the

11 see I.-S. Kowalczyk, *Legitimation eines neuen Staates. Parteiarbeiter an der historischen Front. Geschichtswissenschaft in der SBZ/DDR 1945 bis 1961*. Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag 1997, 172, 230.

12 see UAG, PA 785, details on W. Bröske and P. Wackwitz.

tendency to neglect older periods in history in favour of contemporary times.

Third: new research institutions were formed by the beginning of the sixties which complied with central directives. These were not imposed, but chosen and implemented on the institutions' own responsibility.

A research group was first formed in keeping with the tradition of Greifswald's history institute. Its self-set task was to examine the history of the Hansa, the most important league of cities in German and European history, on the basis of historical materialism. This entailed overcoming a substantial amount of opposition. Established bourgeois research into the Hansa remained very sceptical about the new key in Greifswald. Despite this, the initial opposition was much coarser within like-minded ranks and at the institute itself. Some people viewed any attempt to address subjects in the history of earlier centuries as escapism and a refusal to take a stand on contemporary issues. Despite this, the new approach to the history of the Hansa developed successfully in the long run. Even today the achievements in this area are almost unanimously recognized.

The Hansa historians at Greifswald were able to improve the political conditions surrounding their own work within the GDR as well as at their own institute after the formation of the parallel working group and research agency 'Baltic relations to the present day' in 1960, which acted more or less as an extension of their own research on the Baltic area in the Middle Ages and early modern times.<sup>13</sup> This did justice, at least pro forma, to the central demand for more topical historical research, the examination of the politics of German imperialism and NATO, the representation of GDR peace politics in the Baltic area, the struggle of the working class in the Nordic countries etc. But, de facto, the new group's research concentrated above all on inquiries into German North European policies up to 1945. In this tactically judicious way it was possible to avoid dealing with issues surrounding post-war times, the aims of which tended to be propagandistic rather than scientific. It is true however, that research and publications on the topic of Germany and the Nordic countries during the war and the pre-war years entailed concessions to political demands. These were particularly critical in all issues which

<sup>13</sup> For more details see: F. Petrick, 'Forschungen zur Zeitgeschichte Nordeuropas in Greifswald 1970-1990', in R. Bohn, J. Elvert, K. Ch. Lammers (eds.), *Deutsch-skandinavische Beziehungen nach 1945*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2000, 184-201.

touched on the politics of the Soviet Union in German-Nordic relations, and especially German-Finnish relations and the history of Finland. Evaluations which did not correspond with Soviet interpretations were deemed unfit to publish, and in some cases they represented a real threat to the author's existence (e.g. Talvisota – the Winter War).

In addition to 'Baltic history' and several topics which were handled by individual scholars, a further focus of research was established: 'anti-fascist youth resistance'. This topic, and especially its methods of treatment, fitted into the concept of a politically instrumentalized representation of history, and it was duly welcomed with strong support and recognition by the authorities in Berlin. This occasionally had adverse effects on the institute's working atmosphere. The other research areas soon found themselves accused of simply finding fault with the anti-fascist resistance section's work, instead of striving to emulate its 'progressive impulses'.<sup>14</sup>

Fourth: political disciplining definitely featured in the process of constituting the 'new science of history'.

During the fifties fierce political-ideological clashes occurred regularly and with varying consequences at all of the history institutes. The victims were mainly renowned Marxist historians who were disinclined to subject themselves unquestioningly to the intentions of the political authorities. But there were certainly numerous others, including several 'loyal comrades', who had virtually no idea why they were attacked by the critics.<sup>15</sup> The centrally directed campaigns against actual, or supposed, 'deviationists' reached their climax in 1958/59. In this respect the institute at Greifswald was no exception, as outlined below.

The conflicts in Greifswald took place in two phases: 1956–1958 and following the construction of the Berlin Wall, 1961–1962. During the first phase the conflicts and debates occurred in a relatively moderate form. This evidently prompted the 'chief ideologist' Kurt Hager to remark at the Third University Conference of the SED (1958), that the historians

14 Private archive M. Menger (PAM), Akten der SED-Parteioorganisation Historiker 1960–1963, numerous records.

15 Meanwhile the events have often been described, but until now only a few indications can be found on the situation in Greifswald. See J. Peters, 'Unterwegs zwischen Wirtschafts- und Mentalitätsgeschichte', in *Historische Zeitschrift, Beihefte. Neue Folge*, vol. 27 (1997), 330–332; Kowalczuk, 329–330.

in Greifswald had so far remained silent on the subject of revisionism.<sup>16</sup> In the second phase things became much tougher, and there was a fierce inner-party debate. Basically, the initiators wanted to completely align historical research and teaching with the political directives and discipline the all of the institute staff accordingly. The main opponents were, on the one hand, a 'core of comrades' who were supported by the party apparatus and who dominated the institute via the party leadership, but who so far had achieved little in academic terms, and on the other hand the 'state leadership', that is the director and his deputy (J. Schildhauer, K. Fritze), and a few other party members who almost without exception were among the most productive scholars at the institute (including, for instance Jan Peters, Wolfgang Wilhelmus).

The conflicts took place within the party organization, as 'party disciplinary measures', in the style and sometimes with the jargon of the Cold War. It was directed against fellow comrades, against superiors and work colleagues who were by no means uncommitted, but sincerely saw the GDR as a real, defensible alternative to the malformations of the German past as well as those of the Federal Republic. However, they opposed the more or less superficial politicization of science and sometimes expressed doubts about the correctness of current political decisions. Their critics, who were supported by a 'brigade' of the university's party leadership and a Central Committee instructor, had no scruples whatsoever about trimming historical research entirely to suit political needs and demands. At best they acted on their convictions, but there were definitely people who were motivated by career prospects or even personal animosities and rivalries, which they concealed beneath the guise of ideology.

The catalogue of transgressions allegedly committed by the 'deviationists' was long, and can only be briefly noted here. They were accused in varying degrees of serious political deviations, questioning party policies, a lack of belief in the triumph of socialism in Germany, shrinking away from the massive pressure of the class enemy, neglecting the students' political education, underestimating the significance of contemporary history, bias towards older periods in history, revisionist tendencies and the separation of science from politics.<sup>17</sup> In the summary

<sup>16</sup> Kowalczyk, 304.

<sup>17</sup> PAM, Akten der SED-Parteioorganisation Historiker 1960–1963, numerous records.

of a party activists' meeting it stated: 'The comrades were not primarily Communists and then historians. Instead, they isolated their research from the lively political discussion.'<sup>18</sup>

This was a very blunt way of raising the demand for a presentation of history aligned to party aims and accepted party decisions as incontestable scientific truths. A warning example was made in order to underline this demand: W. Wilhelmus had presented a thesis about the 'People's Congress Movement for Unity and a just Peace' from 1947 to 1949 which had been assessed as very good by the experts, including the institute director J. Schildhauer. It contained ideas which no longer corresponded with the SED's new party line of 1958 on policies concerning Germany. Instead of presenting the defeat and liquidation of 'German imperialism and militarism' as the main aspect of the national question, in keeping with Ulbricht's express demand of December 1958 during a consultation with 'leading historians', Wilhelmus quite correctly, but no longer desirably, depicted the prevention of the division of Germany as the main objective of the people's movement. In so doing he had, according to the interpretation of his critics, 'placed himself in the position of the right-wing SPD leaders and the reactionary West German science of history',<sup>19</sup> and had ignored the directive of 'Germany's most important historian', in other words Ulbricht. The council of the philosophical faculty had already accepted the thesis, but then the supposedly 'revisionist, and consequently unscientific work, which was detrimental to the party',<sup>20</sup> had to be withdrawn and fundamentally revised.

Although this was certainly an extreme case, it was nevertheless indicative of the agitated atmosphere after the construction of the Berlin Wall. The 'clarification process', or the settling of accounts with the comrades who were 'afflicted with strong remnants of bourgeois ideology', proceeded according to the usual ritual of criticism and self-criticism, which was also described by S. Hentilä.<sup>21</sup> In the nerve-racking discussions everyone was forced to take a position, whether they wanted to or not. The method of playing people off against each other was

18 *ibid.*, Referat Parteiaktivtagung, 10 Jan. 1962.

19 *ibid.*, Begründung des Parteiverfahrens gegen W. Wilhelmus, 12 Jan. 1962.

20 *ibid.*, Referat Parteiaktivtagung, 10 Jan. 1962.

21 Hentilä, *Jaettu Saksa, jaettu historia*, 121–127.

particularly despicable. After months of questioning, accusations and exorcisms, all of those affected were self-critically prepared to admit to their 'mistakes'. This ritual of self-criticism, which was invariably more or less a self-indictment, included the obligatory assurance that one had learned from the discussions and would make every effort in the future to satisfy the demands of the party. The 'party disciplinary measures' resulted in a warning to J. Schildhauer, J. Peters and K. Spading, a reprimand for W. Wilhelmus and a strict reprimand for K. Fritze. Because of his 'overemphasis of medieval history'(!), the medieval scholar Fritze was additionally forced to hold a series of lectures on the Second World War. Despite the fierce accusations the punishment was relatively bearable for those concerned. Nobody's professional development was seriously impaired.

It is doubtful whether the conflicts led to greater political homogeneity among the historians at Greifswald. But they had defined the bounds of scientific independence, namely that it was problematical to try to be 'cleverer than the party'.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the proceedings did inflict wounds that never quite healed. The institute members affected by the disciplinary campaign remained basically the same in terms of character and their understanding of history. No real consensus was reached with the political fanatics, in fact in the long run they either left the institute or adapted to the attitude of the majority of the teaching staff.

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By the beginning of the sixties the constituting phase of the 'new science of history' had been completed at Greifswald, around the same time as at the other history institutes. The basic directions in education and research were established. Scientific understanding and behavioural norms remained fairly constant in the following years. The situation stabilized following the period of incessant changes in content and personnel, and ideological battles. The result of the innovations was an efficient staff whose representatives endeavoured to fulfil the maxims of science whilst doing justice to political demands. But, apart from conviction and the conscious departure from the ideal of a seemingly apolitical view

<sup>22</sup> PAM, Begründung des Parteiverfahrens gegen J. Peters, 12 Jan. 1962.

of history, personal adaptation and compliance was undoubtedly at play as well. The prescribed limitations of freedom in research and teaching were well-known and more or less internalized. Despite this, the scientific understanding of the university historians cannot simply be deduced from the intentions of the representatives of the governing apparatus. In the attempt to reconcile the dual demands of scientific inquiry and political directives it often proved better to avoid very delicate political topics completely. That was, and remained, a distinct form of behaviour among most of the historians at Greifswald. Even the professor for the history of the GDR, who was appointed in the eighties, concentrated his research mainly on German-Swedish relations in World War II. In general, research and teaching on topics immediately related to politics were, unfairly but commonly, delegated to assistants.

Over the years the gradual transition to more subtle methods power implementation in the GDR, the more relaxed in the international situation and finally the end of the Cold War, opened up an increasingly broad spectrum for science. The scope of external influence was already limited as far as the thematic orientation of research was concerned. At any rate it can be noted in the case of the institute at Greifswald, that despite centrally planned research, we worked on *the* themes which we considered right and important. It was simply a matter of duly emphasizing the political relevance of these themes. But we were experts at this, just as we knew how to report on the institute as a politically trouble-free area.

In the attempt to counteract an understanding of science in which political views played a dominant role, the historians at Greifswald cultivated contacts with North European universities. These important contacts, although never lost completely, increased considerably from the end of the sixties. Following the experiences of the Cold War new opportunities and aspects of mutual exchange opened up, particularly with Finland and Sweden, and connections were probably stronger than those between the historians of the GDR and the Federal Republic. Finland in particular displayed a relaxed attitude towards the second German science of history far earlier than several other countries. This was one of the main reasons why it was possible to stage the seminars with Finnish historians held regularly since 1973.<sup>23</sup> These meetings

23 see: J. Kalela, 'Die Finnenseminare': Die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Historikern Finnlands und der DDR. – Rückblick eines Beteiligten', in: E. Hösch, J. Kalela, H. Beyer-Thoma (eds.) *Deutschland und Finnland im 20. Jahrhundert*.

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helped us immensely, and not simply in the academic sense. They were also crucially instrumental in easing ideological inflexibility and fostering a sensible relationship in human terms. Seppo Hentilä contributed a great deal towards the development and success of this cooperation. For this we sincerely thank and celebrate the latest 'birthday boy' among the Finnish historians.

Translation from German, Ann Robertson, Berlin

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Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 1999, 31–43.

# Commemorating Two Political Anniversaries in Cold War Finland: Independence and the Beginning of the Winter War

HEINO NYSSÖNEN

The purpose of this article is to compare two political anniversaries, one an official public holiday and the other a historical anniversary. There are a few statements and starting points, which have inspired this study in Finland. The first refers to the point that having a public holiday is a selective political process. In the 1990s Seppo Hentilä wrote in the textbook *Suomen poliittinen historia* that although 6 December is Finland's Independence Day, 15 November or 4 December could have been chosen as well.<sup>1</sup> The second deals with the Winter and Continuation Wars. Max Jakobson has noted that the idea of a defeat influenced Finns' visions of the future after the war. Jakobson, a veteran himself, had already in the 1950s made an effort to elucidate on the past in his classic *Diplomaattien talvisota*. In the new preface of the 1989 edition he argued that expediency in foreign policy had turned into a historical truth in the minds of many young people; current self-evident facts of the older generations did not

1 S. Hentilä, 'Itsenäisyydestä jatkosotaan', in O. Jussila, S. Hentilä, J. Nevakivi, *Suomen poliittinen historia 1809–1995*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus 1996, 96.

transmit from one generation to another.<sup>2</sup> For Jakobson the whole case was a victory in defeat – concepts of ‘the second republic’ and ‘loosing the war’ were after 1944 aimed to prove that Finland had rejected its past and chosen another political path.<sup>3</sup>

All these statements raise questions regarding the discursive power of historical events and how they are remembered in the present. However, our task is to focus on these large topics only with regards to political anniversaries. How were the beginning of the Winter War, 30 November, and Independence Day, 6 December, celebrated and commemorated in the ‘second republic’, thus during the Cold War? For practical reasons I have chosen only these two anniversaries and their surrounding publicity, as only a couple of days separate them. What was discussed, how, and how did views of the older and younger generations emerge in the present? There is a hypothesis that these two anniversaries offered a frame for national minded speech and questions of nationhood during the Cold War. However, from a point of conceptual history concepts like nation, independence, people or fatherland are not eternal or pure entities; they change and absorb new meanings when used in various political and historical contexts. At the same time new meanings and contents are contested and they are attempted to be controlled in times of political struggle as well. How did political actors construct the vocabulary and locate themselves and their opponents in the historical political debate?

Although nationalism and patriotism are frequently studied topics, national days and anniversaries are not. My method is based on a number of earlier studies implicitly concerning national holidays and their publicity – and not in the first place on academic contributions later inspired by these debates.<sup>4</sup> The main source is *Suomen Kuvalehti* (the Finnish

2 M. Jakobson, *Diplomaattien talvisota*, 6 ed. Helsinki: WSOY 1989, iv.

3 M. Jakobson, *Väkivallan vuodet, 20. vuosisadan tilinpäätös I*. 2 ed. Helsinki: Otava 1999, 222; M. Jakobson, *Vallanvaihto. Havaintoja ja muistiiinpanoja vuosilta 1974–92*. 2 ed. Helsinki: Otava 1992, 36.

4 H. Nyysönen, *The Presence of the Past in Politics. ‘1956’ After 1956 in Hungary*. Jyväskylä: SoPhi 1999, 11–20; H. Nyysönen, ‘Contested traditions? The usage of three national holidays in contemporary Hungary’, in A. Wöhl and H. Wydra (eds.), *Democracy and Myth in Russia and Eastern Europe*. New York and London: Routledge 2007, 221–243; C. Amalvi, ‘Bastille Day: From Dies Irae to Holiday’, in P. Nora (ed.) *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, Vol. 3, New York: Columbia University Press; M. Ozouf, *La*

Pictorial Magazine), frequently and thoroughly studied for numerous purposes. My reading focuses on a few issues of the magazine published each year in November-December, from 1944 to the early 1990s. In spite of the richness of this material I am fully aware of the limitations of the magazine as a source. However, this traditionally conservative magazine systematically published a report from the president's reception in the palace, *Linna*, as many other stories around 6 December. In the early 1990s reporting from the reception came to an end, due to boulevard papers but plausibly also because its own opinion poll showed that 40 per cent of the population was ready to cancel the whole reception.<sup>5</sup> Since then the reporting has become occasional, thus shifting the focus from the state centred independence to a more general commemoration of the wars.

#### THE ROLE OF AN ANNIVERSARY AND A NATIONAL HOLIDAY

Political anniversaries are TimeSpaces as they connect chronological time and space in the same unit.<sup>6</sup> TimeSpaces repeat annually, highlight a memory of certain historical events, and leave others in their shadow. In history politics the days offer a repetitive room for speech-acts to remember and forget as other interpretations and symbolic usages of the past. Although the 'original' moment is already closed, the experience continues and is open for new contexts and interpretations. On the one hand, we separate politics of commemoration, which in the form of cult and rituals could take place in the frame of the anniversary. On the other hand there is a larger concept, politics of memory, concerning the meanings of the anniversary itself. Attempts to deal with the past take always place in the present context, either to maintain or to get rid of the past, either to identify or to differentiate from it. Even if the

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*Fête révolutionnaire*. Paris: Gallimard 1976; G.Gyarmati, *Március Hatalma – A Hatalom Márciusa*. Fejezetek Március 15. ünneplésének történetéből. Budapest: Paginarium 1998; J. Black, *Using History*. Oxford: Hodder Arnold 2005.

<sup>5</sup> *Suomen Kuvalehti (SK)* 46–52/1944–2005; *SK* 49/1991.

<sup>6</sup> J. Boyarin, 'Space, Time and the Politics of Memory', in J. Boyarin (ed.) *Remapping Memory. The Politics of TimeSpace*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press 1994, 5–26.

political emphasis is not always conscious, also forensic rhetoric could aspire to changes in the future – ‘right’ choices in the past create political credibility in the present.

An independence day is the main national holiday in ca. every second country of the world. Some states celebrate the gaining of the (national) independence, whilst others commemorate declarations or even the beginning of an independence movement. The days are usually connected to national sentiment and rhetoric of freedom, but rarely to the form of government. Although there was an attempt to establish a Day of Democracy in Finland, its celebration soon vanished in the 1990s. Instead, Finns have several other anniversaries, which are not particular public holidays but commemorate certain events and great persons, such as the Kalevala day and the Day of Swedishness; still as late as 1950 historical figures such as J. L. Runeberg, J. V. Snellman and Aleksis Kivi gained their official dates in the calendar. Political emphasis of certain dates becomes even clearer as in the ‘first republic’ the military had a flag day on 16 May, which since 1920 commemorated a parade of the victorious white army in Helsinki after the civil war in 1918. Particularly for the whites the day represented de facto consolidation of the independence after the civil war. After the Winter War a broader consensus emerged to establish a more appropriate denominator. At first they dedicated a particular new day to fallen soldiers, and another day, Marshal C. G. E. Mannerheim’s birthday, became the new flag day of the army on his 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1942.<sup>7</sup>

In November 1919 the council of state gave a decree which established 6 December as an anniversary of independence. In a law from 1929 it received a status of a free holiday, a vacation with pay. One purpose of this proposal, launched by Väinö Tanner’s social democratic government two years earlier, was to cement the December day against current claims to stress the parade day of May 1918. According to the first paragraph of the law, updated in 1937, the day would be ‘annually celebrated as a public feast and a holiday to commemorate the independence declaration of the republic of Finland’.<sup>8</sup> The ceremony culture, as the structure of the

7 Nyysönen ‘Contested traditions?’, 221–230; S. Feiring, ‘Runeberg kyllä, Sibelius ei - merkkihenkilöt kalenterissamme, *Ajastaika* 2 (2003).

8 138/1919, Suomen asetuskokoelma vuodelta 1919. Helsinki: Valtioneuvoston kirjapaino 1920: H. Nyysönen, ‘Itsenäisyysvapaasta oli aikanaan kova vääntö,

day itself, is serious, traditional and state-centred: A service takes place in the Helsinki cathedral in presence of the president of the republic, who also promotes soldiers in the rank but usually does not address to the nation. A national military parade takes place, students march with torches, people lay wreaths on war memorials etc. A custom of putting two candles in the window still exists although its purpose has become obscure: some say that the custom already commemorated Runeberg's birthday whilst others refer to the illegal jaeger movement during the First World War to signify a safe house on their way out of the country.

The evening reception in the president's palace is the most well-known ceremony.<sup>9</sup> Nowadays this spectacle and politics of appearance belong to one of those rare collective experiences on the national level: more than two million people have watched the event on TV at its peak during the last few years. Preparing for the reception is a thing in itself, and one of the most interesting descriptions originates from the ethnographer and writer Sakari Pälsi. In the late 1950s Pälsi had to admit that a shadow of the past had at first disturbed him at the entrance. Soon he, however, noted that the frightening and hateful Russki splendour did not exist but the palace represented Engel's composed new classic 'mostly human style'. No doubt the golden helmets and silver armour of Bismark's cuirassiers as well as the French uniforms and the guards at St Stephen's crown in Buda were more spectacular than the uniforms of the Finnish cadets. Nevertheless, Pälsi turned this 'necessity' to a virtue: lack of artificial decorations gave an impression of morale and troops committed to fight. Pälsi also advised his wife how to behave at the welcoming ceremony: dropping a curtsy could be understood by somebody as an anachronistic relic of the monarchist adventure in 1918. 'Down with curtsies! You have to bend fluently in a democratic way, smile charmingly and to be moderately shy.'<sup>10</sup>

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*Turun Sanomat* (TS), 3 Dec 2007; 388/1937, Suomen asetuskokoelma vuodelta 1937. Helsinki: 1938.

9 T. Halonen. 'Linnan juhlat' in T. Halonen, L. Aho (eds.), *Suomalaisten symbolit*. Jyväskylä: Atena 2005, 200; H. Hirvikorpi, *Linnan juhlat kautta aikojen*. Helsinki: Teos 2006.

10 SK 49/1958.

Heino Nyysönen

#### POLICY LINE, INDEPENDENCE AND WARS

The anniversaries of the independence and the Winter War offered not only a context to deal with historical topics but history as identity, too. On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary it is striking how the editor of *Suomen Kuvalehti* referred to Finland's history, and in a conservative way. According to the editorial '6. XII. 1947' a safe haven was found in history and tradition as no other shelter was available:

...The people draw the winning power from their own past and history, which could pass through even the greatest difficulties. The legacy of our fathers is the resource of our independence, when no other support is there to be seen.... Good times are bad times in a sense that they lulled us into a nice life, which obscures the face of the fatherland. The most important reality, the entity of people, and its fate will become alien... The best safeguard is found in Finnish history.'

Particularly the use of history takes place in times of crisis, as above, when they understood the legacy of fathers as a power resource. Nevertheless, the editorial did not mention the political point of view, i.e. what kind of history was in case. By the war the old Runebergian romantic vision had collapsed and new challenges emerged for the policy towards the Soviet Union after 1944. One of the first and most well-known attempts to explore the 'foundations' of the new policy originated from post-war premier and president J. K. Paasikivi himself, who legitimized his actions on the basis of earlier moderate attitudes of Fennomans i.e. Finnish nationalists in the nineteenth century. Another constructor of the 'line', Raoul Palmgren, in the left of the political spectrum, published his *Suuri linja* (The Great Line) in 1948. There he promoted the progressive legacy of the 'great [nineteenth] century' against 'the deceit of the first republic'. Revolutionary socialists were adopted in the patriotic narrative, a contested past, which had tinged Palmgren's own activity. On the cover of the 1976 edition President Urho Kekkonen, the greatest of current domestic arbiters of taste, praised that Palmgren had found the 'Snellman line, the great line' a long time before others.<sup>11</sup>

11 H. Immonen, 'Paasikivi ja historia', in T. Polvinen – H. Immonen J.K. Paasikivi Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 5 1948-1956. Helsinki: WSOY 2003, 269–

Contrary to Palmgren's sympathies for the nineteenth century it is striking how much the recent history, i.e. the twentieth century, was stressed in Cold War Finland. For example, the years 1904–1975 were at stake in Paavo Haavikko's *Kansakunnan linja* (The Line of the Nation), released in the frame of the 60th anniversary. According to *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 'the war did not break the line of the nation'. For Haavikko the line of the nation had meant political realism in current circumstances and an effort to elaborate on these circumstances in a positive direction. In 1990 Haavikko published an extended edition and specified the 'line' as an attempt for permanent neutrality. In the new edition he added one more chapter characterising the years 1975–1990 as an era of national opportunism. Already in the first edition he had gone beyond Paasikivi and Kekkonen to find a broader 'Finland's line' based on foreign policy and economic interests. According to Haavikko, Väinö Tanner's republic was transferred to an old men's realm between 1939 and 1956, then to a one man's country, and finally to the era of national opportunism.<sup>12</sup>

In 1948 Kekkonen, then chairman of the parliament, had revealed something about his political philosophy in his greeting on the occasion of the independence anniversary. He argued that the most difficult question in society was how to adjust the interest of the whole (entire nation) with particular interests. 'The state system which allows the struggle of different interests, and is even based on that struggle, is firm only with a condition that all sides are content with the true priority of the whole and convinced that promoting his own good does not divide but instead constructs a common good.'

No doubt numerous partisan interests existed but one of the deepest division lines dealt with the civil war of 1918 and how to deal with its legacy in various political contexts – at that time in 1948 Tanner had actualised the topic by publishing his memoirs. As a current pseudonym *Veljenpoika* reminded in a story 'Tolerant independence', it was typical in the first republic to publish a picture of the 'independence senate', which caused grumbling from the left as they too had fought for the independence (in fact *Suomen Kuvalehti* released this icon again on the

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273; R. Palmgren, *Suuri linja Arwidssonista valankumouksellisiin sosialisteihin*, 2 ed., Helsinki: Kansankulttuuri 1976, 213.

12 *SK* 47/1976; *SK* 46/1977; P. Haavikko, *Kansakunnan linja*. Helsinki: Art House 1990, 335; P. Haavikko, *Kansakunnan linja*. Helsinki: Otava 1977.

40th anniversary). According to *Veljenpoika* the left had full reason to be acknowledged as independence had been a result of the First World War the Russian revolution, and domestic development. *Veljenpoika* reminded of current moderate forces in 1918 and then referred to the present: even the opponents of the current social democratic government considered it to be the best guarantee of legality.<sup>13</sup>

The independence declaration in the parliament in 1917 had been quite a puritan act. On the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary *Suomen Kuvalehti* quoted the conservative politician K. G. Idman's memoirs to remind its readers how the chairman had only briefly replied to the declaration. 'Not even that moment allowed the ponderous Finnish character to forget the current discordance in the country. Maybe a glimpse of forthcoming difficult times created a shadow and hindered all visible outbursts of joy'. From the context of 1957 *Suomen Kuvalehti* argued that a deep domestic division was still the most difficult and the toughest enemy in Finland – in 1918 it still had required a bloody war of independence to secure the independence.<sup>14</sup>

In the memory of 1918 there were elements for both those, who wanted to remember and for those, who preferred to forget, in as much as for consensus and confrontation oriented interpretations. In the aftermath of Väinö Linna's epic trilogy *Täällä Pohjantähden alla* (Under the North Star, 1959–1962) two interesting articles were published in *Suomen Kuvalehti*: In the first of them Matti Kurjensaari introduced the battle of Syrjäntaka, thus how 'a crofter Jussi Koskela and Emperor Vilhelm II met in Tuulos in 1918'. Kurjensaari mixed facts and fiction in a sense that Akseli Koskela represented those anonymous soldiers, who on their retreat to Russia clashed with the advancing German troops. In another story Kurjensaari witnessed a reburial of German soldiers in Hämeenlinna in 1962. As a five-year-old child he had seen their burial – some of them fallen at Syrjäntaka – and now participated in their exhumation. According to *Suomen Kuvalehti* Kurjensaari focused on the events from an open-minded national point of view.

Nevertheless, the magazine had released one attempt to deal with these delicate years even before Linna's trilogy. In 1958 the novelist Mika Waltari published a fictive national minded story 'On 6 December,

13 SK 49/1948.

14 SK 49/1957.

1918–1958’, a story about an execution. There a man named Toivo Raatikainen (his first name means ‘hope’) asked his executor, a German-trained jaeger to shoot him as a commander, Finn and a red but not as a Russian. Before the execution Raatikainen prayed that his small son could be educated better than his father had been. This event had a link to the Winter War, as Voitto Kirkas Raatikainen (name means ‘Victory Bright’) grew-up to be a sober and moderate young man, who fell for his country near Northern Ladoga in 1940. Waltari asked to pray for the fallen sons, both white and red, as for those, who were responsible for the present policy in the 1950s.<sup>15</sup>

In Finland’s relations with the Soviet Union, history politics helped to promote peaceful co-existence. President Kekkonen used Lenin a couple of times since he unveiled a plaque to commemorate Lenin’s recognition of Finnish independence in 1959. With regards to our focus the debate re-emerged in 1976 as a consequence of two books and the gigantic Finnish-Soviet co-operation film *Luottamus* (The Trust). Thus, at first Arvo Poika Tuominen, a former first secretary of the illegal Finnish Communist Party, published a book, which then was criticized by the historian Tuomo Polvinen: it insulted President Paasikivi and his earlier political career. Tuominen replied that Paasikivi had made the Finnish defence more difficult by classifying Lenin, Stalin, and Ivan the Terrible into the same category, as tyrants. Alternatively, it would have been wiser to argue that Lenin had given the independence, and that Stalin had tried to steal it away. According to Tuominen Lenin had given the independence to Finland whereas Paasikivi would have turned the country into a German vassal, still believing in German victory in March 1942. Tuominen was convinced that Lenin would not have attacked Finland in 1939. In a sense this is absurd – Lenin had died in 1924 – and pure speculation, but also an interesting predecessor for the speculative what if-histories to appear later. In 1976, however, Tuominen’s view caused a sharp reply from a conservative columnist, chancellor Tauno Nurmela, who cited a letter, in which Kekkonen had only wondered if Lenin had lived, what could have been his role in world politics and would he have attacked Finland. Kekkonen had addressed the letter to Tuominen in April 1970 and published it six years later in a new sample of letters *Kirjeitä Myllystäni*.

15 SK 48/1962; SK 49/1958.

Nurmela considered Tuominen's views as a myth and forecasted 'a war of belief' to be the result.

In the same article Nurmela commented on another brand new production, the film *Luottamus*. For him the purpose was to find a common base for a joint Lenin myth for the great public in the Soviet Union and Finland. However, the third participant in the debate, Tuomo Polvinen, considered the film fairly good concerning the acts of Lenin's nationality policy: the question of nationalities was subdued for a more sublime aim, i.e. carrying out socialism. Polvinen noted how the manuscript stressed several times Lenin's purpose to strengthen the Finns' own revolution, a paradox, which was later used by Stalin.<sup>16</sup> In the first place Lenin, the 'founding father' of the Soviet Union, was not a 'Finn-eater' but a voluntarist. For the public opinion, however, Lenin appeared as an 'Uncle' and a friend, who knew Finland and appreciated Finns. Nevertheless, even this view of national states' secondary role in history caused a political headache concerning the 'course of history' – in theory co-existence was only a preliminary solution.

The official slogan on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary stressed unity: 'Independent Finland, our common goal'. According to *Suomen Kuvalehti* the country was reaching its anniversary economically crippled, mentally tired and quarrelsome. Current editorials linked party struggles even to the decline of independence and 1918: 'at some point political struggles have to end or we will lose our independency' (1976). 'If we cannot heal the trauma of the civil war we cannot get rid of emotional explanations for the reasons and consequences of the Winter and Continuation Wars, not even during the next two generations'. (1977)<sup>17</sup>

Although the Winter War had forced former enemies into a united front, the memory of 1918 had left a long shadow over politics. My argument is that the historical dichotomy ended only in 1982, when the first social democrat was elected the leader of the country. This view will become more evident, when we compare the 1977 anniversary to 1987. For example a journalist Arvo Ahlroos argued in his program *Kansalaiset* (Citizens), dedicated to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, that emotions were sealed already in the sense that the twentieth century history could

16 SK 47/1976, SK 49/1976; U. Kekkonen, *Kirjeitä myllystäni*, Maarit Tyrkkö & Keijo Korhonen (eds.). Helsinki: Otava 1976, 161–163.

17 SK 49/1976; SK 48/1977.

be represented in a more racy and generous way. Another landmark was reached also in 1987, when invalids of the white freedom fighters celebrated closing festivities of their association. Nevertheless, a lively debate has continued despite the end of the Cold War. For example, an academic project was launched in 1998 to clarify all casualties between 1914 and 1922, and to ‘finally get rid of the national trauma of the civil war’<sup>18</sup>.

#### ANNIVERSARIES OF THE WINTER WAR

Although 30 November is not an official anniversary, it has been commemorated in several ways and particularly in a magazine like *Suomen Kuvalehti*. Every 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary the magazine commemorated the event systematically. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary was the first time that the war was recalled: at that time the main focus was on the level of repeating the most important events. On the level of mourning and the memory itself on both occasions the magazine called for permanent memorials in the cemeteries for fallen war heroes.

Ten years later in 1959 the focus was still on the military and not the political level – the home front and human suffering appeared later on the agenda. In the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising, the editorial referred to glimpses of forgetting and had ‘an eternal question of small nations’ in mind. ‘Not everybody likes to recall it... Like there would be something shameful, secret or something to be apologised for... The principle of a super power is based on the politics of a wolf.’ The editorial wondered divine dispensation and the meaning of history as small nations were left to the mercy of the great powers. However, these pessimistic tones disappeared considerably in the editorials before the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary: after coping with two wars Finland had reached a status which was not bad at all. Finland was like ‘a man in his best age - 47’ and belonged to those few countries which had maintained their independence for such a long time. Domestic politics had stabilised, relations with the Soviet Union were on a firm basis, and even the mental wounds of the war had started to heal.

18 <http://www.tyovaenperinne.fi/tyovaentutkimus/tt2005/nettiversio/tk3/htm.>, visited 10 Dec 2007.

However, something new was in the air as, according to the magazine, a proper controversy was found between generations.<sup>19</sup> No direct reference was made in the editorial, but on the basis of the context it is clear that the remark also had to do with the wars. The idea appeared again in 1979, when the magazine was ready to conclude that in despite of emotional views, the unity of the Winter War was highly valued. A growing interest towards the recent past revealed a change in attitudes as conservative views, and honour of tradition was rising. On the basis of an opinion poll, the magazine concluded that the adaptation of new values had slowed down.<sup>20</sup> At that time Max Jakobson, then Managing Director of the Finnish Business and Policy Forum (Elinkeinoelämän valtuuskunta, EVA) published the fifth edition of his *Diplomaattien talvisota*. In the preface Jakobson surmised that ‘the era of self-flagellation seemed to be over’. For him the new generation missed elements, which supported continuity in the life of the nation. According to Jakobson, post-war foreign policy had decisively influenced notions and interpretations of the Winter War. Jakobson considered that history writing had spontaneously started from its own premises to interpret the Winter War from the Paasikivian perspective.<sup>21</sup> On that anniversary Jakobson participated in Pekka Holopainen’s and Antero Kekkonen’s TV-program *Talvisodasta kuultuna* (Interviewed on the Winter War) with other prominent guests Wolf Halsti, K. A. Fagerholm, Ville Pessi, Arvo Poika Tuominen, Raoul Palmgren, A. F. Airo, and L. A. Puntila. When Jakobson wrote a new preface for his book in 1989, he was annoyed about the former program. He needed to remind that a reporter had asked him who could be blamed for starting the Winter War... on the Finnish side.<sup>22</sup>

Despite a present cliché of the atmosphere of the 1970s, there indeed were TV-programs dealing with the wars, such as a long TV-serial called *Sodan ja Rauhan miehet* (The Men of War and Peace). Nevertheless, compared to post-1989 production there were far fewer programs and other representations of this kind. One peak was reached in 1989, when *Suomen Kuvalehti* released a 64 page appendix of the Winter War. The magazine concentrated ‘on the struggle of survival. The question was

19. SK 49/1959; SK 48/1964.

20. SK 48/1979.

21. M. Jakobson. *Diplomaattien talvisota*, 5 ed. Helsinki: WSOY 1979 ii–iv.

22. Jakobson, *Diplomaattien talvisota*, 6 ed, i.

about maintaining Finland as an independent and free nation. Researchers have favoured speculations about shots in Mainila, government in Terijoki or reasons why the war broke out, but they remain in the background<sup>23</sup>. In the light of the liberation of the East European nations, there was room for ‘more authentic interpretations’ as a new form of history politics – to remember in a more respectfully way – in Finland as well. Since then *Suomen Kuvalehti* has published many re-remembering stories as particular Pictorial Magazines of Wars, although they do not belong to our frame in the first place.

Films belong also to these representations, and they have linked wars to independence and to the anniversaries. Pekka Parikka’s massive *Talvisota* (Winter War) was timed for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with its premier on 6 December 1989, and a TV-series, based on the film, was in the forthcoming years shown in November-December. Whereas Linna’s *Under the North Star* was never shown on television on that day, Edwin Laine’s version of Linna’s *Tuntematon Sotilas* (Unknown Soldier) has become a spectacle in shifting the focus from 1917 to 1939–1944 during recent years – at the same time relating independence with war in the twenty-first century. In fact both versions of the film had their premier on 6 December, Laine’s in 1955 and Rauni Mollberg’s in 1985. In *Suomen Kuvalehti* new recruits analysed the latter film, usually more as an artistic representation than a faithful dramatisation of the book. A representative of an older generation, editor in chief Allan Lihala, took another, sharp stand, when he simply commented ‘Mollberg’s film is not Väinö Linna’s Unknown [Soldier]’ in his column in the newspaper *Hämeen Sanomat*. At that time Linna himself had become a national icon, if compared to the late 1960s. In a story timed for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Winter War Linna was repentant as he had destroyed all outrageous messages he had received after publishing the book. In the 1950s radicals of the 1930s, mostly right-wingers, criticised him, but in the 1960s current criticism came from the left.<sup>24</sup>

During the Cold War the Continuation War 1941–1944 was not often put under focus with a special article, at least not in the time of year

23 SK 46/1989.

24 M. Pöyhönen, Huomautuksia Mollbergin Tuntemattomasta, in A. Arnkil, O. Sinivaara (eds), *Kirjoituksia Väinö Linnasta*. Helsinki: Teos 2006, 492–493; *Hämeen Sanomat* 6 Dec 1985; SK 48/1969.

that has been studied for this article. Still a number of times the end of the war was present. For example in 1954 the editorial '6.XII' referred to Paasikivi's pessimistic tones in his Messuhalli-speech in 1944. Ten years later, 1954, there were moments of wonder and happiness, as 'Finns had survived, they had avoided the dangers of communism on the loose, relocated Karelians, compensated their property, and had paid the heaviest reconstructions in the world'. Despite these signs, the magazine warned again that inner contradictions could endanger 'our destiny for a more prosperous future'.<sup>25</sup>

In 1974 two political incidents took place around the anniversary. At first Eino Uusitalo, the parliamentary chief whip of the Centre Party, caused a scandal by suggesting that 19 September, the day of the interim peace agreement of 1944, could be chosen 'beside 6 December as a second national red-letter day, as the independence day of the second republic'<sup>26</sup>. Uusitalo presented his proposal in front of his own party in the presence of a visiting Soviet delegation, at a time, which later is known as an opening of political relations on the party level. Secondly, Kustaa Vilkuna, the wartime head of state censorship and now president Kekkonen's close associate, started to sink the driftwood hypothesis theory of Finland's entry into the war alongside Germany in 1941. Vilkuna had promised to reveal 'how Finland was taken into the Continuation War' but retreated, when he was not allowed to use general Paavo Talvela's notes, as the publishing house *Kirjayhtymä* had the copyright for them. Therefore, details referring to Talvela's papers were removed from the article, and there was a public scandal at hand. The case was linked to the *Stella Polaris* affair, when reconnaissance material had been smuggled to Sweden after the war, and henceforth burned. Now Vilkuna asked in public who ordered it and to protect whom.

On the one hand, the article and the whole history political debate revealed something about populist rhetorical styles in debates of history. Neither the topic, nor Vilkuna himself, were what mattered, as it seemed that it was the publicity in itself that made the case. The 'beef' was less clear, as Vilkuna had to admit that scholars already agreed with his argument that the driftwood-theory no longer held water. Nevertheless, the issue of *Suomen Kuvalehti* was sold out because of this gripping

25 SK 49/1954.

26 *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS) 12 Nov 1974.

story full of secrets, myths, and censorship.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, even the political parties had different interpretations of the recent past. The fascist nazi-Germany was ‘the worst of all enemies’, and now Vilkuna was claiming that small Finland had consciously sided with it to start a new war. Moreover, the whole scandal took place in the aftermath of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the FCMA-treaty (1973) and precisely on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the provisional peace treaty. The current marching order revealed these views’ delicate nature in relation to the present policy ‘line’, as according to Vilkuna, general Talvela had said that it was President Kekkonen, who decided what could be used. Whether the Soviet Union had in the end had real intentions to attack was a question to be studied in the future, Vilkuna argued.

Finally there is one more public debate, in which the history of the ‘first republic’ culminated. In 1986 Helsinki city board rejected with a majority of one vote a proposal, which would have granted a location for a statue for the civil guard *Suojeluskuntalainen*. A national student union also followed suit and opposed the idea in a declaration. *Suomen Kuvalehti* took a firm stand in its editorial titled ‘Independence’, surmising that Finland’s recent history had become obscure. Independence meant power over history, too: ‘Independence means also that nobody should order, which parts of national history should be forgotten’. According to the writer only the extreme left had not learned anything from history although three generations has passed from 1918. A slight ultimatum was added in the end: if Helsinki did not accept the statue there would be other cities to receive it, when the republic would turn 71 years in 1988.<sup>28</sup>

At the time of the Vilkuna scandal the editor in chief and a veteran himself, Mikko Pohtola had welcomed a publication of a sample from *Minun isänmaani* (My Fatherland) contributed by current politicians and other public persons. According to him there had not been any discussion about the fatherland in three decades, and if there had been, nobody had listened. Therefore a concept could be put on the shelf for a generation, then redecorated and reused. Pohtola was not satisfied with the present interpretation of the concept; walls so far apart that they could not be seen, and no roof at all. For him Finns were a spoiled nation in the threshold of

27 SK 46–47/1974.

28 SK 49/1986.

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zero-growth. Independence was an unbroken chain, which could not be cut into pieces by a 'second independence day'.<sup>29</sup>

In the end the statue of *Suojeluskuntalainen* was unveiled in Seinäjoki in 1988. Less known is that during the same summer two other constructions, *Suojeluskuntalainen* and another for the women's organisation *Lotta*, were erected in Suonenjoki. Both of them were donated by an old farmer, who then continued his activities to establish voluntary defense organisations in the 1990s. Figures for the boys' organisation *Sotilaspoika* and girls' *Lottatyttö* were finally unveiled in 1998. Memorials and commemoration, thus, finally received the green light but not the reawakening of the organisations itself. On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the suppression of the guard in 1994, former and present activists gathered at the *Finlandia* house in Helsinki to demand the guard to be re-established. According to the sources of *Suomen Kuvalehti* the state leadership and the top of the army had already rejected the idea. The new Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Gustav Hägglund elaborated his view that there were 'mental obstacles' against the idea.<sup>30</sup>

#### REPRESENTATIONS OF GROWING UP

On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the independence, in 1947, *Suomen Kuvalehti* presented the achievements of the young nation with such an enthusiasm and rhetoric, which was not far from that used by the DDR in the late 1960s. In the report Finland's harvest already in 1937 had been doubled compared to 1917, 400 000 hectares of new fields were cleared, education and social welfare had improved. Moreover, Finland was frequently compared to a living organism, like the Maiden of Finland or to a body growing older. In the midst of domestic political fragmentation in 1957 the magazine presented the country as 'independent and stubborn' (*itsenäinen ja itsepäinen*). As a nation Finland had reached 'the middle-point of a human being of the present time'. In despite of all the domestic contradictions, a certain optimism, based on the idea of forgetting, prevailed: 'Finnish democracy has shown its vitality... Let's interpret

29 SK 46–47/1974; SK 49/1974.

30 *Sisä-Savon Sanomat* (SSS) 26 May 1998; SSS 23 Mar 1999; HS 8 Nov 1994; SK 12/1995.

this national holiday as a day of reconciliation, not to remember the past anymore, but grasp firmly our common task for a better future.<sup>31</sup>

According to the editorial, being young was finally a myth in 1967. Finns had lived here for over 2000 years, the coat of arms originated from the sixteenth century and even in the United Nations they belong to the group of middle-aged states. The time had come for a matured independent life, to speak less about things already past, but instead about those in the future.<sup>32</sup> In 1977 Finland was once again embodied as a human being, this time as a child with a white knitted cap on the cover of *Suomen Kuvalehti*. Finland also personified every-day heroes, like a 60 year old man and a woman, or Leo Matveinen, who would be 47 in 2017, one of those for whom present politicians ‘have to revive and stabilise the country’.<sup>33</sup>

All living organisms are mortal and this mode of speech declined towards the dawn of the ‘third republic’. Instead, new ideas and slogans of opening and going global emerged – maintaining independence meant also international competitiveness. In 1987 Mauno Koivisto’s loyal opponent Prime Minister Harri Holkeri campaigned for office in the presidential election, in which he presented arguments like ‘being international is an advantage for the fatherland’, ‘nationality does not hinder being international’ and ‘our peculiarity is an intellectual way of thinking independently, in a Finnish way’. There was a clear difference compared to Holkeri’s previous 1981 campaign, in which he used also the context of 6 December in *Suomen Kuvalehti*. At that time he frequently stressed continuity; deeply rooted in the Paasikivian thought, Holkeri promised ‘to secure the line of the nation’.<sup>34</sup>

In 1988 Raimo Lehtonen, the chairman of AKAVA, a trade union of academically educated professionals and other experts, made a more challenging point: independence is finally more about the future than about the past, although history provides a view of its legitimate basis. Lehtonen pointed that independence had to be maintained in a constantly turbulent environment, in which the main factor was international competitiveness. In the article ‘We have to be able to do more than

31 SK 49/1949; SK 50/1957.

32 SK 50/1967.

33 SK 48/1977.

34 SK 51–52/1987; SK 49/1981.

the others' Lehtonen in fact equated independence with international competitiveness. This view could be contrasted with the 1970s, when Pekka Kuusi, one of the architects of the forthcoming consensus, tried to answer the question 'what is it to be a Finn'. Kuusi forecasted the end of the era of rapid economic growth, which had continued since the Second World War. The case was how to adjust with the cycles of a global economy, in which ca. 2 per cent of annual growth left enough room for political development. Kuusi challenged the slogan of the Finnish way of life, which finally did not depend on consuming but free-time, sauna, ski tracks, and summer cottages.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, questions of 'national identity' – a stereotype as such when defined – were repeated in *Suomen Kuvalehti* during our study. In fact the magazine seemed to belong to forces actively propagating ideas of national identity during the Cold War. For example, in 1965 over 40 persons pondered their relation to the question 'What is good in Finland'. Many of them were public persons, whose positions and political views varied on the political palette, like, not only, the businesspeople Juuso Walden and Raakel Wihuri, bishop Martti Simojoki, but also the Centre Party leader Johannes Virolainen and novelist Pentti Saarikoski. One of the most interesting comments originated from feuilletonist Jouni Lompola. According to him, lack of national traditions, a commitment to 'only a few pillars (nationalism, Winter War)' helped to adopt international perspectives. A short period of civilisation and traditions in fact increased freedom. In the field of non-manual work there was room for reforms and rebellion; architects and composers could finally get a non-figurative statue. Lompola also noted the difference between generations, and because of the wars, the gap remained clear. As an example he mentioned his teacher, who had been disappointed because none of the pupils had particularly mentioned the fatherland in an exam. Lompola criticised the rhetorics of their fathers, which still existed in the 1960s. 'We should have had loved to live here because this is our fatherland redeemed with blood'. For Lompola the geographical status of the country taught us to learn flexibility and relativism. The next crisis will 'follow when (or if) the standard of living in the Soviet Union becomes higher than in Finland'.<sup>36</sup>

35 SK 50/1988; SK 50/1976.

36 SK48–52/1965.

Moreover, towards the 1960s, also tentative romantic views of the 'people' emerged to contrast the 'sublime' and party of 'the elite'. Until then pictures of the celebrating elite had been repeatedly displayed in the magazine. In 1963 Juha Tanttú wrote that 'A Finn knows full well that 6 December is an occasion for the great society, and that they [the people, the others] travel from Tornio to Haaparanta to buy Swedish goods'. Furthermore, in 1966 the novelist Arto Paasilinna visited Paltamo, where 'nothing happened on Kalle Heikura's independence day'. Finally, in 1967 a group of young radicals known as *Marraskuun liike*, organised an alternative party for the homeless – to contrast the elite summoned to the president's castle – known as *Kurjat* (The Miserables) as reported by *Suomen Kuvalehti*.

In the 1960s 'Finnishness' was not due to fate anymore, as the editor in chief of the leading daily *Helsingin Sanomat* Yrjö Niiniluoto had written in the late 1950s. In 1967 the idea was criticised by a pseudonym *Liimatainen* in one of his first columns in *Suomen Kuvalehti*. Finnishness as a fate had no value with a premise that Finns would be a certain chosen people and therefore had to suffer more. According to *Liimatainen* 'you can never escape Finnish-ness, not even as a world citizen'. For him being a Finn in 1967 meant 'more understanding of the past, learning from its mistakes and working for better circumstances based on this analysis'.<sup>37</sup>

37 SK 48/1967.

# A Perspective on Finnish-Soviet-German Relations, 1945–1955

RAIMO VÄYRYNEN

## *STUNDE NULL* IN THE STUDY OF FINNISH-GERMAN RELATIONS

Until very recently, the German issue was an under researched and under discussed area of politics in Finland. This may sound paradoxical as the German question was, as a result of the outcome of the Second World War, a pivotal political problem for Finland. However, when one peruses various semi-political tracts on Finnish foreign policy in the 1960s and the 1970s – published by the Paasikivi Society, the Finnish Political Science Association, and other organizations – the German factor is hardly mentioned.

The reason for this silence is obvious; the role of Germany (East and West) in the Finnish foreign policy was a highly sensitive issue as it had direct implications for Finland's bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. In a centralized foreign policy culture, prevailing in Finland until the 1990s, such sensitive questions had to be left to the president and his closest advisers. It was risky – not only for an individual scholar but potentially for the entire nation – to discuss with any degree of freedom and precision the German question and its implications for the Finnish-Soviet relations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The existence of different views on the German issue and related things among the politicians and diplomats is testified in, for instance, Y. Väänänen, *Finlandia Bonn*. Juva: WSOY 1991 and P. Gustafsson, *Ritarikadun renki*. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä 1999.

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There are always some exceptions to the rule. In this case the name of the first exception is Osmo Apunen who published in the 1970s one of the first analytical studies on the Finnish foreign policy. Apunen does not offer radically new interpretations on the German question, but he traces the evolving position of the two German states in the European context and offers the first systematic analysis of the 'German package' in which Finland proposed in 1971 the parallel recognition of the divided state.<sup>2</sup> In a later book, Apunen explores *en passant* also the German package and sees it primarily as a tactical move by which President Kekkonen and the top bureaucrats in the Foreign Ministry, sometimes in disagreement with each other, aimed to strengthen their conception of the Finnish neutrality and position the country in the emerging new political order in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Obviously, the limited access to diplomatic archives has hindered detailed historical studies on how Finland's relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) have been directed from the end of the Second World War to the present era and what has been the role of the Soviet Union in these relations. Now we finally have the second exception, Seppo Hentilä and his thorough academic studies and memoirs on the twists and turns in Finland's relations with the two German states, especially the GDR, and policies pursued by each of the three governments, as well as the great powers. The story of Finnish-German relations is not always very consistent and no one really emerges as the unqualified winner, but it is informative and sheds light on the realities of Cold War policies.<sup>4</sup>

#### HOW TO STUDY FOREIGN POLICY

The account of the foreign policy of a small country depends, among other things, on the level of activity and influence accorded to its political apparatus in relation to the domestic society on the one hand and the

2 O. Apunen, *Paasikiven-Kekkonen linja*. Helsinki: Tammi 1977.

3 O. Apunen, *Tilinteko Kekkonen aikaan*. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä 1984.

4 S. Hentilä, *Kaksi Saksaa ja Suomi. Saksan-kysymys Suomen puolueettomuuspolitiikan haasteena*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 2003; S. Hentilä, *Harppi-Saksan haarukassa. DDR:n poliittinen vaikutus Suomessa*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 2004. In addition, Hentilä has published numerous articles and chapters on these issues.

external environment on the other. One may start from the premise that the external relations of any country are always politically constructed. Some material aspects of the international environment are naturally given; they are 'brute' facts such as the geopolitical configuration and the level of armaments. On the other hand, many external conditions are 'social' facts and their influence depends on what we believe about them and how we act on them. Facts are made 'social' by the political agencies in a nation whose interpretations and actions help to constitute the structures. Thus structures and agencies are mutually constitutive.

In social constructivism, norms and ideas play an important role; in other words, the calculation of 'brute' facts, such as material power relations, is only one element of foreign policy and their influence depends on the ideational framing through which the policy makers view the external conditions.<sup>5</sup> In earlier constructivist literature, it was stressed that the responses of actors are shaped by the ways they are socialized into the existing structures and their continuities. In more recent research, the emphasis has returned more to the behaviour of the agents and the way they frame the choices made. Social construction of politics can deal also with wars and crises as constitutive events that frame politics. It has been noted that the framing of major historical events may be based on the necessity of change that results in 'politics of persuasion' among the advocates of various courses of action.<sup>6</sup> This way of thinking should not be too difficult to apply to the post-Second World War conditions in Finnish foreign policy.

In every country, there is a social cognitive structure that establishes the boundaries of meanings and actions, and frames political decisions. To be effective politically, the agent must be either able persuade other significant players about the rightness of its call for change or communicate in conformity with the prevailing social cognitive structure and its structural constraints. In the latter case, the agent should follow the logic of intelligibility and avoid too sharp deviations from the mainstream (which may have been constructed by an agent of change).

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., D. P. Houghton, 'Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Toward a Constructivist Approach', *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3 (2007), 24–45.

<sup>6</sup> W. W. Widmaier, M. Blyth and L. Seabrooke, 'Exogenous Shocks or Endogenous Constructions? The Meanings of Wars and Crises', *International Studies Quarterly* 51(2007), 747–760.

Due to this innate pressure at conformity, decision makers tend to choose political practices reflecting the conventions of national identities that, in turn, shape their understandings of other states.<sup>7</sup>

In the study of Finnish foreign policy, the emphasis on political agency has prevailed and the cognitive structures have correspondingly received little attention or its influence has been kept implicit. In most accounts, the key players have been either sovereign governments (e.g. Washington and Stockholm), governmental institutions (e.g. foreign ministries and intelligence agencies), political parties, or individuals (e.g. Nikita Khrushchev and Urho Kekkonen). Such a perspective is not wrong, of course, as the tapestry of foreign policy is woven by various kinds of political actors and their mutual positive and negative interactions. A problem with this approach is its inability to provide a comprehensive account of the potential redirections in foreign policy or they appear to result from changes in the motives and objectives of the actors alone. The risk is that foreign policy is seen as a game in which the actors pursue primarily short- and medium-term gains, sometimes even in a conspiratorial manner.<sup>8</sup> In foreign policy, the role of collective or individual veto players tends to be important as the decision power is often vested with the individual political leader and the group of close advisers.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of structure has in the study of foreign policy two connotations; it refers either to the social cognitive structure within a nation or the structure of the international environment. The cognitive structure is akin to the concept of political culture and provides a discursive framework for political action. The external structural view on foreign policies qualifies the operative nature of the cognitive structure; for instance when the international structure is bipolar and the relations between the great powers are tense, small states have only limited

7 This line of analysis is developed and applied by T. Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics. Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2002, 14–15, 37–38.

8 External imperatives of one kind in Finnish foreign policy have been stressed, for example, by H. Rautkallio, *Neuvostovallan asialla. NKP:n vaikutus Suomessa 1960-luvulla*. Helsinki: Tammi 1993.

9 G. Tsebelis, *Veto Players. How Political Institutions Work*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2002.

possibilities to construct themselves the internal and external ‘social’ facts.

Their only meaningful strategy is to adapt themselves to the existing international situation as best as they can. The need to adjust is particularly pronounced if the situation is shaped by a major event such as a victory or a loss in a war. The adaptation to the existing political situation does not only hint to involuntary compliance with the harsh international reality, but it may also be used as an opportunity to collect political capital for domestic purposes. ‘Finlandization’ and the way it was pursued, especially in the 1960s and the 1970s, by key political actors, shows how adaptation to external conditions can also be made to serve the advancement of political careers. In the extreme case, the social construction of foreign policy can serve private aims but potentially harm the collective interests of the nation.

The focus on the dictates of the international structure has dominated both the traditional realism, informed by history and geography, and a more recent structuralist perspective. The latter mode of analysis may divide the external conditions in, for instance, the integration, strategic, and conflict environments and explore their impact on a small-country policies. The integration environment refers, in addition to the institutional build-up, to the expansion and deepening of international market relations, while the strategic environment is created by the development of weapons technologies and the way the major states make them to serve national policies. The conflict environment refers to the mix of confrontation and cooperation between the states and their security agencies. Deterrence in the strategic environment may contain conflicts but often these two environments fuel each other, while the integration process tends to promote, despite the economic rivalries, political peace.

Structure does not, of course, alone determine policy, but the social cognitive structure and domestic responses to the pressures and opportunities emanating from the international environment do also matter. Thus, in the interaction between systemic structure and political agency operating within a national cognitive structure, the need to adjust to external dictates remains crucial.<sup>10</sup> To repeat my earlier point in

10 R. Väyrynen, ‘Adaptation of a Small Power to International Tensions: The Case of Finland’, in B. Sundelius, *The Neutral Democracies and the New Cold War*. Boulder, CO: Westview 1987, 33–56. A weakness in strong structuralism (as well as in neorealism) is that it tends to privilege internal and external stability

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different words, the need to adjust to the external strategic and conflict environments may be deliberately used by the political leaders to shape the national cognitive structure in which the persuasive making of foreign policy operates. In such a situation, the boundaries between the external and internal systems become blurred and the autonomy of policy making at home is sacrificed.

#### THE ADJUSTMENT OF FINNISH FOREIGN POLICY

In the case of Finland, the postwar settlement in the late 1940s was the second main turning point in the country's history of foreign policy, the first one being the gaining of independence in 1917. Germany's utter defeat and the Soviet victory in the Second World War forced to redefine not only the external relations of Finland, but also the political cognitive structure in the country. Until 1942, or even 1943, the 'official' Finland largely believed in the German victory; not so much because decision makers identified closely with Germany, but because the Soviet Union was construed, for credible reasons, as the 'evil empire' which was out to destroy an independent Finland. There was a widespread belief, in effect wishful thinking, that German arms would emerge victorious, expand Finnish geopolitical influence in the East or, at a minimum, to save Finland from Soviet occupation. However, should Germany win, there was also a common concern on how a small country like Finland could retain its sovereignty and security in the postwar system dominated by one continental power.<sup>11</sup>

The Finnish-Russian war ended in 1944 in the uncontested Soviet victory that turned things upside down. Finnish politics had to be reconstructed both internally and externally to adjust the country to new

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and hence underestimate the possibility of abrupt changes in structure and the redirection in foreign policy by the government; see R. Väyrynen, 'Institutional and Political Stability in Finnish Foreign Policy', in M. Wiberg (ed.), *The Political Life of Institutions*. Scripta in honorem Jaakko Nousiainen. Helsinki: The Finnish Political Science Association 1991, 226–44.

<sup>11</sup> For one perspective on the Finnish political construction of German victory in 1941–42, see T. Polvinen, *J. K. Paasikivi, Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 3, 1939–1944*. Porvoo: WSOY, 294–314.

international power relations in which the Soviet Union loomed large. The challenge was to redirect the foreign policy to the Soviet satisfaction without sacrificing the legacy of national identity that had been constructed in the crucible of war. The main challenge to the Finnish identity was that the wartime unity was now, in the conditions of peace, divided between the supporters of liberal-conservative nationalism and those promoting a closer association with the Soviet model. The main protagonists were the alliance of social democrats and liberal bourgeoisie forces on the one hand and the forces gathered around the communists and people's democrats with whom some leading politicians from the Agrarian Union, including Urho Kekkonen, cooperated actively.

A problem with cognitive structuralism is that it has difficulties to accord independent explanatory capacity to various 'objective' factors. Yet, it is difficult to reduce the postwar geopolitical division of Europe – what Stöver calls *die Sicherung von Räumen* – the overwhelming American presence, and the Russian military prowess to mere social facts and perceptions.<sup>12</sup> By necessity, these 'objective' factors entered into the calculations of the Finnish policy makers and had particular impact on relations with the Soviet Union. The dominant view was Paasikivi's historical and geopolitical realism in which the Soviet Union had only defensive interests in Finland. It should by all reasonable means avoid the impression that its territory could be used as a springboard of attack against St. Petersburg. In situations like this, constructivism may stress too much the contingent nature of foreign policy decisions as there may be little freedom of choice.

Yet, in Finland the 'objective' factors were in the late 1940s operationalized differently by the key political parties. The conservatives (*Kokoomus*) were largely isolated and devoid of any significant international connections. The Agrarian Union (*Maalaisliitto*) was also a very national party, but had some relations with other peasant parties in Nordic countries. The main aim of the party's majority was to establish a close working relationship with the Soviet leadership and gain in that way ability to handle that relationship without any critical help from the communists. This special relationship was intended to provide the Agrarian Union with uncontested and pivotal position in the postwar

12 B. Stöver, *Der kalte Krieg. Geschichte eines radikalen Zeitalters 1947–1991*. München: C.H. Beck 2007, 48–57.

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Finnish domestic policy. Most of the communists were blindly obedient to Moscow which supported them financially but provided only limited political support in critical situations. The social democrats realized early on the need to adjust to the new political situation, but also started to revitalize old relations with the fellow Nordic parties, the British Labour Party, and even some unsavory forces across the Atlantic.<sup>13</sup>

It can be argued that in Finland there was a strong pressure from 1944 to 1991 to create new identities on Soviet Union as a 'friend' and Finland as a 'peaceloving nation', that was gradually crystallized into political conventions, habits, and practices. The glue holding these new identities together was 'trust' which embodied Finland's commitment to stay on course in 'friendship policy' vis-à-vis Moscow and not let any third parties to interfere in Finnish-Soviet relations. Finnish foreign policy was radically reframed in the new conditions of international politics. Underlying this conceptual game was, of course, the Soviet desire keep Finland firmly in its geopolitical orbit and eliminate any risk of Finland aligning with the West.

#### GERMANY IN FINLAND'S FOREIGN POLICY

The aim of this paper is to explore the validity of various explanations on the Finnish positions vis-à-vis the German question, focusing in particular on the Soviet factor in the matter. The emphasis on the international structural explanation leads to think that in the late 1940s the Soviet victory in the Second World War and disagreements among the Allies on the future position of Germany locks Finland in a political space in which it has only a very limited freedom of movement. The division of Germany in 1949 into two coherent, but only semi-sovereign states and the absence of an institutional postwar settlement in Europe, mean that Finland can hardly take independent political initiatives as long as tensions continue and it wants to retain even an appearance of

13 For more detailed analyses of the foreign policies of main Finnish political parties, see K. Hokkanen, *Kekkosen maalaisliitto 1950–1962. Maalaisliitto-Keskustan historia 4*. Helsinki: Otava 2002, 9–20; M. Majander, *Pohjoismaa vai kansandemokratia. Sosiaalidemokraatit, kommunistit ja Suomen kansainvälinen asema 1944–1951*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 2004.

neutrality in its foreign policy. The international *Spielraum* of Finnish foreign policy was very restricted indeed and contingency had little role in making decisions.

The structural position of Finland was also influenced by the evolving Western policy on postwar Germany on whose future position especially Britain and France had different views. The bone of contention concerned the conditions under which German economy and society should be rebuilt and integrated in the Atlantic system. This integration was needed as Central Europe could not be reconstructed without the economic revival of Germany, where Stalin has expected a worsening economic situation and political revolt. Defeated and destroyed Germany became the pivot of Europe's future.<sup>14</sup>

As is well known, the ultimate result of the political game in Central Europe was the incorporation of the three Western zones of occupation into the Federal Republic and the extension through NATO formal security guarantees to its European members, including since 1955 also the FRG. Thus, the choice made by the Western powers was to consolidate their zones of occupation into a single political entity, establish a military alliance involving security assurances, and accept the division of Europe with the resulting risk of Soviet counter-reactions. However, neither side wanted a new war and the division of Germany; in fact, Stalin probably never wanted, in the first place, a sovereign GDR. Therefore the mutual 'acknowledgement of a stalemate was preferable to a continued escalation of demands that could lead to war'.<sup>15</sup> The underlying interests in Soviet policy vis-à-vis Germany were revealed the proposals by Stalin in 1952 and Beria in 1953 seeking potential solutions to the German problem with the Western powers.<sup>16</sup>

In the West, the grand bargain on the future role of Germany was made primarily by the United States, Great Britain, and France. In the West, there was a need to satisfy the French concerns that Germany will never again turn against it. Such an assurance could only be given by the United States which was, however, reluctant to become re-engaged in Europe in

14 J. L. Gaddis, *We Now Know. Rethinking Cold War History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1997, 118–21.

15 R. B. Woods & H. Jones, *Dawning of the Cold War. The United States' Quest for Order*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press 1991, 225–26.

16 Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 125–31.

military terms. Indeed, after the demobilization in the immediate postwar years the military role of NATO in Europe remained on the ground weak. Before the outbreak of the Korean War, the promised US assistance to its allies was mainly political and aimed not only at the Soviet Union but also to allay the European fears concerning Germany.<sup>17</sup>

From the Finnish point of view, the developments in Europe had a dual meaning. On the one hand the Soviet Union received from the West an assurance that the German threat cannot rise on its own, outside the US control. On the other hand the exacerbation of political and military tensions of the Cold War meant that the FRG was increasingly perceived in Moscow as a part of the Western military planning and war economy. However, throughout the Eisenhower administration, the United States did not exclude entirely the German reunification from the political calculus. As we can see from the initiatives by Stalin and Beria, even the Soviets were toying with the idea of reunification should the new Germany become a neutral and disarmed state on which they could exercise influence. In the FRG, especially among the Christian Democrats, the neutralization of Germany, even if it would become unified, was considered a genuinely bad idea and the preference was clearly to become firmly rooted in European economic and security institutions.<sup>18</sup>

The Soviet Union consolidated its sphere of influence in Europe by bilateral security arrangements that Finland concluded in its own way in April 1948 in the form of Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance (FCMA). Finland was granted in the treaty the right to remain outside the conflicts of great powers; i.e., it could claim the right to neutrality, at least in the peacetime, but in reality the concept of neutrality remained politically contested. Until its abrogation by Finland in 1991, the treaty remained the ultimate guarantee for Moscow of Finland's

17 See T. P. Ireland, *Creating an Entangling Alliance. The Origins of North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press 1981, 80–118, G. J. Ikenberry, *After Victory. Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 2001, 191–99, and especially M. Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace. The Making of the European Settlement 1945–1963*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1999, 66–91.

18 M. Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1991, 173–80. See also Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace*, 101–14.

acquiescence in the postwar geopolitical imperatives and an operational tool for its political influence on Finnish foreign and occasionally also domestic policy.

The FCMA Treaty defined as the joint enemies of Finland and the Soviet Union ‘Germany and the states allied with it’, primarily of course the United States. As a result of this, the Soviet views on the German threat, whether real or perceived, mattered a lot for Finland in particular after 1955 when German rearmament as a NATO member was permitted. Likewise, the Soviet interpretation of the character of the relationship between Germany and the United States, and their military policies in Northern Europe, had pivotal influences on Finland’s position as well. While the Soviet Union, as a military great power, was able to construe its own view on the strategic environment and act subsequently on it, Finland had only very limited opportunities to do so. As a result, a kind of political-military duality developed in Finland: behind the curtains of official policy, military planning tried to prepare also for contingencies that the foreign policy could not express publicly.

In reality, Helsinki was bound for a long time to manage the political sphere of the Finnish-Soviet relations on a bilateral basis. Any effort to multilateralize these relations was perceived by Moscow with suspicion. If there were any moves to embed Finland more firmly in international multilateral cooperation, Helsinki had to assure Moscow that they did not undermine the priority of bilateral Finnish-Soviet relations. There was the need to persuade the Soviet Union to accept Finland’s desire to join the Nordic Council and even the United Nations in 1955, not to speak of integration agreements with the EFTA and the EEC in the 1960s and the 1970s.

Max Jakobson has suggested that Paasikivi was in that regard different; that because of his historical memory and experience he considered more carefully than other policy-makers the impact of the changing external environment on the bilateral relations between Finland and the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup> May be so, but this observation should not be taken too far, however. Especially during his premiership and first presidency in 1944–1950, Paasikivi was continuously worried about any adverse effects of closer relations with the Western powers, and even Nordic countries,

19 M. Jakobson, *Pelon ja toivon aika. 20.vuosisadan tilinpäätös II*. Helsinki: Otava 2001, 48–49.

that would give Moscow reasons to interfere in Finland's internal affairs which he wanted to avoid by any means. In Paasikivi's construction of politics, it was important to separate external limits on action imposed by the Soviet Union from its pressures on the domestic system in which democracy and the rule of law should prevail. For Paasikivi, these were the tenets of the Finnish political system that could be sacrificed to the altar of Finnish-Soviet relations.

It is striking that there are in Paasikivi's diaries in 1944–1956 practically no references to Germany. This can be interpreted in at least two different ways; either the German issue was so sensitive that it could not be even mentioned or the defeated Germany in the early postwar years was largely a non-issue for Finland. The latter interpretation gains some credence from the remark on 1 March 1948 by General Oscar Enckell, whom Paasikivi quotes approvingly, that the reference to Germany in the FCMA treaty was at that time no particular problem because as there was neither Germany as a sovereign state nor states allied with Germany. In the same vein, it has been said that the treaty was a mere formality as long as Germany remained weak and divided, but the situation might change, of course, in the future if the country became stronger.<sup>20</sup>

Stalin was obviously looking carefully to the future power relations in Europe. In that regard, the FCMA treaty was for Moscow a precautionary measure to deal with any future eventualities that subsequently started to materialize in the middle of the 1950s. Aappo Kähönen puts this well by saying that 'unlike during the prewar period, Finland could no longer be thought of as an active buffer but rather as a passive early warning zone' (although for the West some of the buffer role remained).<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, during the Cold War, Finland remained a zone of geopolitical abstention as after the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947 no external power deployed any troops or arms on the Finnish territory (with the exception of Porkkala until 1956).

It is also symptomatic that in his diaries Paasikivi pays practically no attention to the admission of Germany into NATO and the beginning of its rearmament. It was well known, of course, that the Soviet Union was

20 J. Hanhimäki, *Rinnaisloa patoamassa. Yhdysvallat ja Paasikiven linja 1948–1956*. Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura 1996, 39–40

21 A. Kähönen, *The Soviet Union, Finland and the Cold War. The Finnish Card in the Soviet Foreign Policy, 1956–1959*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, *Bibliotheca Historica* 103 2006, 46, 62.

adamantly opposed to these decisions – as Paasikivi notes on 10 June 1955 – but they were not regarded as a direct threat to Finland’s security probably because of the low perceived risk of a German attack at that time.<sup>22</sup>

The reality was somewhat different as Moscow coupled in 1954 political demands with the conclusion of the annual bilateral trade agreement. Finland was pressured to sign a communique that criticized heavily the efforts at German rearmament. For Finland, it was important to avoid being placed in the same position with the Soviet allies in openly criticizing Germany’s new position in Europe. In the end, Helsinki succeeded in redrafting the joint communiqué from the conclusion of trade talks in the manner that no reference was made to Germany. The Finns were also able to delete a negative reference to Germany in the communiqué issued on the occasion of the visit by Soviet Minister of Trade, Anastas Mikoyan, to Finland in early December 1954.

As a general countermeasure to the German integration and rearmament in NATO, Moscow wanted to organize an all-European security conference. Finland was naturally one of the recipients of the Soviet note in November 1954 as it was sent to all states in Europe and North America. However, on both of these issues Finland was able, after complicated political maneuvers, to find a compromise that watered down the Soviet demands. The Finnish government did not send a delegate, not even an observer, to the Moscow conference that ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Warsaw Pact.

All this mitigated some of the US fears about the increase of Soviet influence in Finland. More significant for the understanding is that the German membership in NATO does not seem to have been the main motivation for Moscow’s moves vis-à-vis Finland.<sup>23</sup>

The Soviet preference for multilateral operations in 1954–55 may be traced to the ‘Geneva spirit’ that prevailed at that time in the great-power relations. Yet, this did not prevent Moscow from waging a heavy

22 See *J. K. Paasikiven päiväkirjat 1944–1956. Ensimmäinen osa 28.6.1944–24.4.1949*. Edited by Yrjö Blomsted and Matti Klinge. Helsinki: WSOY 1985 and *J. K. Paasikiven päiväkirjat 1944–1956. Toinen osa 25.4.1949–10.4.1956*. Helsinki: WSOY 1986.

23 T. Polvinen, *J. K. Paasikivi. Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 5, 1948–1956*. Helsinki: WSOY 2003, 193–204. See also Hokkanen, *Kekkosen maalaisliitto*, 306–307 and J. Hanhimäki, *Rinnakkaiseloä patoamassa*, 137–39.

propaganda war against the NATO membership and rearmament of the FRG. The campaign was obviously motivated by the rise of more vocal national political demands in the FRG on righting the 'wrongs' of the Second World War. Moscow became also worried in a more concrete manner about the changing strategic calculus in the Baltic Sea. In about 1957 it started to follow closely the evolving patterns of military cooperation between FRG and other NATO members. It became clear that the appeal to make the Baltic a 'sea of peace' – that in reality meant Soviet *mare nostrum* – did not produce any tangible results. Political and military tensions in the Baltic Sea started to rise.<sup>24</sup> In the late 1950s and the early 1960s the Soviet Union had genuine reasons for concern, because of the Multilateral Force (MLF) nuclear-weapon plans that would have integrated the FRG in NATO's nuclear command system.

It can be concluded that in 1954–55 Finland was able act in a limited way as a political agency and the Soviet Union accepted the political reluctance of Finns to support its political initiatives. Of course, the ability of Finland to shape even its immediate international environment during the Cold War was constrained not only by the Soviet Union but also by the West. The Western influence was more indirect; Finnish key decision-makers dared to oppose some Soviet initiatives because they feared Western economic and political counter reactions. The negative Western response would have also undermined the emerging effort to define Finland as a genuinely neutral country.<sup>25</sup>

The political agency of Finland was increasingly connected with the person of Urho Kekkonen who served, in addition to being several times prime minister, briefly as the foreign minister during the 1954 episode. It has been amply documented that for Kekkonen the German threat to peace and stability in Europe loomed large. He expressed repeatedly concerns about the negative impact of Germany's economic and political revival on Nordic and Finnish security. Kekkonen had an animus, obtained originally perhaps during his year of study in Germany in the 1930s, against the FRG which had in his mind still in the 1960s and the 1970s embryonic neonazist tendencies. Even Willy Brandt was regarded

24 Hentilä, *Kaksi Saksaa ja Suomi*, 46–48 and Kähönen, *The Soviet Union, Finland and the Cold War*, 84–86.

25 J. Suomi, *Kuningastie. Urho Kekkonen 1950–56*. Helsinki: Otava 1990, 318–30 and T. Polvinen, *J. K. Paasikivi 5*, 210–14. See also Hanhimäki, *Rinnakkaiseloja patoamassa*, 137–39, 145–47.

by Kekkonen as a person who ‘speaks like a SS man’ which shows how strong his prejudices were in this area. True, Kekkonen twisted his arms with the GDR as well but his real worry was the FRG because it influenced in a more critical manner the Soviet policies in Europe.<sup>26</sup>

This particular feature of Kekkonen’s mind can be explained, in addition to his personality traits, by international structural factors. West Germany was gaining in economic power and political influence which tilted the balance of power in favour of NATO. This development gave, in turn, to the Soviet Union grounds to be concerned and rectify the emerging imbalance in Europe. As we know from the history of the MLF, the Soviet Union was especially worried about the German finger on the button of a nuclear weapon to be launched from a submarine roving the Baltic Sea. In Finland, we may have underestimated the seriousness of threat perceptions that were fuelled in Moscow by the combination *Wirtschaftswunder* and the US plans to give to the FRG access to nuclear weapons (however indirect and collective this access might have been).

Right after the Second World War, there was obviously a difference between Finland and the Soviet Union in the perception of the German threat. The Soviets were actively engaged in working on a political settlement in Central Europe to their own advantage, while the Finns were less concerned about the revival of the German military power and preferred to stay in the sidelines. This is evidenced by Mannerheim’s proposal in January 1945 on the conclusion of a defensive military treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union and the subsequent political process. The draft prepared by Mannerheim about the limited joint defense arrangement between Finland and the Soviet Union spoke about the military aggression only in general terms and did not specifically mention Germany, or any other state, as the source of an attack.<sup>27</sup>

By 1948, the situation had changed as the German issue had now assumed a central place on the European political agenda. The Soviet Union had already concluded mutual defense pacts with Hungary and Romania in which Germany had been identified as the source of aggression. As we remember, these two treaties were portrayed in Stalin’s

26 Hentilä *Kaksi Saksaa ja Suomi*, 64–71.

27 Mannerheim’s draft has been published in *J. K. Paasikiven päiväkirjat*, 90–93. See also T. Polvinen, *J. K. Paasikivi. Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 4, 1944–1948*. Helsinki: WSOY 1999, 35–40, 116–20.

letter to Paasikivi as the model for the agreement with Finland as well. In Finland, there was a strong resistance towards this type of agreement, but the criticism was based on the two-way defense commitment and not to the reference to Germany as the potential source of aggression. This reference was considered politically obvious and unavoidable. After all, Germany had started the Second World War and the task was now to prepare an arrangement to prevent such the repetition of such a risk, whether likely or not. The Finnish-Soviet negotiations were about the conditions of military cooperation if the German attack or the threat of it should materialize.<sup>28</sup>

As we now know, the substance of the treaty bargaining concerned the definition of procedures in Finnish-Soviet relations to be followed in the case a new war would break out and the implications of this definition for Finland's search of neutrality in peacetime. For the Soviet Union, the FCMA Treaty had to bind Finland legally to its sphere of influence. It also served a preventive function as it could be used as an instrument to curtail Finland's freedom of movement in the West, including ties with Germany.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from the international conditions and domestic security issues, the construction of Finland's external relations vis-à-vis Germany was dictated primarily by two factors. First, the return of Finland's sovereignty after the Paris Peace Treaty permitted Helsinki to start concluding relations with the defeated powers, though in some cases this happened short of full diplomatic relations. Second, the rapid growth of the German economy from the late 1940s on, created material incentives to expand trade, especially the import of investment goods to support Finland's own economic reconstruction. The implementation of the economic and monetary union in the FRG and the investment in industrial production opened up for it opportunities to become a pacesetter in the economy recovery of Europe.<sup>30</sup> Though there were continuing efforts to depoliticize

28 This conclusion is supported by the detailed analyses of the FMCA Treaty negotiations seen from the perspective of the key players, see J. Suomi, *Vonkamies. Urho Kekkonen 1944–1950*. Helsinki: Otava and T. Polvinen, *J. K. Paasikivi. Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 4*.

29 B. Petterson, *Sovjetunionen och neutraliteten i Europa*. Stockholm: Utrikespolitiska institutet 1989, 132–33.

30 B. Eichengreen, *The European Economy since 1945. Coordinated Capitalism and Beyond*. Princeton NJ.: Princeton University Press 2007, 70–73, 93–97.

the Finnish-German trade relations, the old business contacts from the interwar years obviously helped to pave way for the rapid expansion of trade.

After the conclusion of first trade agreements in 1947–48, Finland's representation in Germany was established through the equal deployment of trade representatives in East and West (Berlin and Cologne, and after 1952 in Bonn). The onset of the Cold War made it impossible to realize Finland's original intention to establish one unified trade representation for the entire Germany. From the very start, it became clear that the trade with the FRG was much more important in economic terms; by the 1950s, it accounted for over 10 per cent of all Finnish imports, while imports from the GDR varied between 1–2 per cent. Because of the asymmetry in the economic size of the countries and the composition of trade, Finland suffered from a deficit in its trade with the FRG.<sup>31</sup> This deficit benefited Finland in several ways, as it supported its own drive of industrialization.

The formal division of Germany in 1949 meant that the management of trade relations necessarily obtained political undertones. This became visible in the efforts of the GDR to put pressure on Finland to recognize its full sovereignty. There were even efforts to make its diplomatic recognition a precondition for the ratification of trade agreements and there were also threats to impose economic sanctions on Finland should it not consent. The issue of GDR's diplomatic recognition seems to have come up for the first time in May 1950 in the discussion between Paasikivi and Foreign Minister Åke Gartz. They agreed that, fearing critical reaction from the West, Finland should sign the trade agreement with GDR, but not go politically any further than that.<sup>32</sup> This remained, of course, Finland's official policy until the early 1970s.

The reason for the GDR's demands for diplomatic recognition was clearly that Finland, being under Soviet influence, was expected to behave differently from other Western countries. These countries had, in support of the Hallstein doctrine by the FRG, taken a strong stance against the recognition of the GDR. However, an interesting thing is

31 For statistics on Finnish-(West)German trade in 1856–1990, see Pekka Visuri & Tuomas Forsberg, *Saksa ja Suomi. Pohjoismainen näkökulma Saksan kysymykseen*. Helsinki: WSOY 1992, 327–330.

32 *Paasikiven päiväkirjat 2*, 113–114.

that Moscow lent to East Berlin very little support in its political efforts to gain recognition, perhaps because of the concern that Berlin would gain too much international legitimacy and influence of its own. In the end, the GDR had to agree in 1953 with the establishment of a trade representation in Helsinki on an equal basis with the FRG. Even this can be considered for East Berlin a political victory, albeit a bitter one, as it did not have an equal political status with the FRG in any other non-socialist country.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, it should be kept in mind that the twin policies of *Nichtanerkennung* and *Gleichbehandlung*, that were institutionalized in 1953–54, also involved the end of the state of war between Finland and the German states.<sup>34</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Usually, the evolution of the Finnish foreign policy in the aftermath of the Second World War has been explained solely by the outcome of the war that changed significantly the interstate power relations and the geopolitical constellation in Europe. The *Realpolitik* perspective on the Finnish policy interprets its course as the inevitable adjustment to the ‘new realities’ that shrank the policy space and restricted policy options available. Indeed, *Realpolitik* has much in its favor and the Finnish foreign policy in the immediate postwar years is difficult to understand without its insights

Yet, this interpretation neglects much of the political construction of the Finnish-Soviet relations. It has been shown, for instance, beyond any doubt that the external constraints were utilized in Finnish domestic policy to denounce the political opponents in Moscow and collect thus points in one’s own political account. The first two postwar decades in Finland provide ample evidence on how in the domestic political fights between the mainstream social democrats on the one hand and the

33 D. Putensen, *Im Konfliktfeld zwischen Ost und West. Finnland, der kalte Krieg und die deutsche Frage 1947–1973*. Berlin; Arno Spitz GmbH 2000, 47–60; Hentilä, *Kaksi Saksaa ja Suomi*, 24–35; Hentilä, *Harppi-Saksan haarukassa*, 29–34. See also Väänänen, *Finlandia Bonn*, 15–22 and P. Visuri and T. Forsberg, *Saksa ja Suomi*, 231–235.

34 Putensen, *Im Konfliktfeld zwischen Ost und West*, 60–66.

communists and the Kekkonen line in the Agrarian Union foreign policy was actively used to gain a relative advantage.<sup>35</sup> However, even the domestic perspective has certain flaws; in particular it leads easily to the excessive instrumentalization of politics. In addition to instruments, there are also cognitive structures and political claims whose consideration helps in the reconstruction of Finnish-Soviet relations.

Finnish research on the role of Germany in the foreign policy of the country has made in recent years significant progress. It is based on serious archival work and has probably been able to disclose most of the central political issues. One might say, of course, that the issue of Finland's diplomatic recognition of the GDR, and its demands for *Anerkennung*, have perhaps become in some works a bit of an obsession that masks other relevant issues. No doubt, other aspects of Finnish-German relations have been also covered by various scholars; including the impact of Berlin crises on Finnish security position and the politics of so-called German package by which Finland initiated the recognition of the two German states.

The German package provides a paramount example of the instrumental uses of diplomatic moves as it was closely associated with both the Finnish initiative to organize a Cooperation and Security Conference in Europe (CSCE) and promote Finland's own interpretation of neutrality.<sup>36</sup> We have available memoirs by several diplomats who provide interesting insights in the bureaucratic politics of the Finnish foreign policy and the bargaining behavior of both German states.<sup>37</sup> Leaving aside the Finnish-Soviet crises of 1958 and 1961, it seems that the events associated in the German membership in NATO and Soviet initiatives to convene a European conference on collective security in Europe show that even during the Cold War Finland could operate as a partially free agent, and even with considerable success.

35 For more detailed accounts, see Hokkanen, *Kekkosen Maalaisliitto* and Majander, *Pohjoismaa vai kansademokratia?*.

36 Apunen, *Paasikiven-Kekkosen linja*; Hentilä, *Kaksi Saksaa ja Suomi*, 107–197; T. Soikkanen. *Presidentin ministeriö. Ulkoasiainhallinto ja ulkopolitiikan hoito Kekkosen kaudella*. Hämeenlinna: Karisto 2003, 253–57 and R. Hyvärinen, *Virkamiehiä, viekkautta ja vakoilua*. Helsinki: Otava 2000, 103–122.

37 Väänänen, *Finlandia Bonn*; Gustafsson, *Ritarikadun renki* and R. Hyvärinen, *Virkamiehiä, viekkautta ja vakoilua*. Helsinki: Otava 2000.

Yet, it seems that there is something lacking in the study of Germany's direct and indirect role in Finland's external relations. For instance, there may be more to be learned on the role of Finland during the Cold War in the military plans of NATO, including the United States and especially its key member states in Europe. The cognitive political structures in relation to the Soviet Union have been studied somewhat under the rubric of Finlandization but even on that issue there are practically no systematic and theoretically informed studies. There are even fewer studies on the political cognitive structures, and hence identities in Finnish-German relations. Seppo Hentilä's work maps very effectively the political culture of the relations by various Finnish constituencies towards the two German states and especially the GDR. This genre of research would probably benefit from the application of social science perspectives to this subject matter.

In focusing on political cognitive structures both collective and individual perspectives matter. It would be interesting to know more on the political cognitions of the key Finnish political leaders about Germany in its own right and in the European context. It is striking how little Paasikivi, who was a German-oriented monarchist during the Finnish independence process, says about Germany in his diaries and other published material in the post-Second World War years. It seems as if he is deliberately suppressing his thoughts, even private ones, in the new geopolitical situation.

We know from diverse sources that Kekkonen was obsessed with Germany, especially the FRG, which he considered the most serious threat to European security. Obviously Kekkonen was worried about the way in which German foreign and alliance policy would be perceived in Moscow and impacted on Finland. He seems to have been concerned about the GDR only if its policies received significant backing from Moscow. This made sense as East Berlin made ever since the early 1950s and more actively again after the late 1960s repeated efforts to effect a change in Finland's policy on the recognition issue. Kekkonen's critical views on the FRG and its individual politicians – including Franz-Josef Strauss and even Willy Brandt – can be somehow accounted by rational arguments. Yet, one cannot avoid the impression that Kekkonen's own personal experiences in Germany and in Finnish politics in the 1930s had created a cognitive map that influenced his political views long

after.<sup>38</sup> These cognitive perspectives motivated, in the context of Soviet-dominated postwar years, claims and arguments that were used to adjust to new international power relations and obtain domestic political gains.

38 Hentilä, *Kaksi Saksaa ja Suomi*, 64–71 and I. Hägglöf, *Kauppatorin päiväkirja*. Helsinki: Otava 1990, 39, 185–86, 260.

# Finnish History Textbooks in the Cold War

SIRKKA AHONEN

## SCHOOLBOOKS AS PUBLIC HISTORY

History in school is not just a spin-off of academic history. History textbooks are not popularized residuals of research work, but a part of the public culture of history. People identify with the past of their community through encounters with cultural products like memorials, commemorative events and different artistic reenactments of history. School history and cultural representations compete in people's minds. School history tends to be more uniform and assertive than cultural representations and academic history.

A society is concerned about how the past is mediated to young people. In textbooks, the society mediates the commonly acceptable representation of history. The more conformist the society is, the more manipulative the history textbooks are. In totalitarian societies history education has a hegemonic status in the school curriculum, as a common story can justify a totalitarian regime. Democratic societies are less concerned about the mediation of a uniform story, but still expect history education to assure the people of its unity.

Countries with a difficult past differ from each other in their way to deal with their historical guilt or credit. Ian Buruma in his *Wages of Guilt* (2002) offers the contrasting history cultures of Germany and Japan as an example. While the Germans, after a decade of denial and silence, made a massive attempt to face up to their Nazi past, the Japanese have kept defensively silent of the atrocities they are accused of having committed during the Second World War. A lack of openness and dialogue is very

likely to result in bitter history wars. Such a war was fought between Japan and China at the turn of the millennium. The school textbooks were the focus of the controversy. The Japanese authors were accused of hiding war crimes from young people because of the right of a nation to portray the past to the youth in her own way.<sup>1</sup>

A loyal, biased treatment of national politics is often regarded as more acceptable for a small nation than for a big power, as a small nation is more often a victim than a perpetrator. The public, both at home and internationally, tends to allow a small nation to be defensive even about her dubious past. Thus, in Finland the political choices during the wartime in the early 1940s and in the Cold War were long presented as purely national self-defense, despite critical interpretations by researchers.

In the Cold War the loyalties of a small state constituted a moral problem. The Cold War was not always cold. The big powers, fighting for hegemony, committed oppressive and aggressive acts against some small states. Should other small states have spoken up and condemned such acts? In the case of Finland, did the official policy of neutrality really not allow expressions of loyalty to countries in distress? Moreover, how far could a small country compromise its independence in regard to the wishes of a big neighbour?

Such moral issues were faced by Finnish textbook authors during the Cold War. They had to decide what to write about the big powers, the US and the USSR, especially about the difficult parts of their past. In the case of the USSR, the authors had to consider the ways Soviet historians interpreted the Russo-Finnish conflicts. The choices of the textbook authors led to accusations of an opportune finlandisation of history education. The question of finlandisation is the key issue in the discussion of the Cold War on history textbooks.

The textbook authors were not left on their own. Throughout the Cold War, up to 1989, schoolbooks were submitted for an official revision by the National Board of Education. The practice of revision had been started during Russian rule at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly to secure the quality and economic viability of school book production. After the political turmoil of the early 20th century political control was also practiced in the context of the revision. In the post-war situation in 1945,

1 I. Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memoirs of War in Germany and Japan*. London: Phoenix 2002, passim.

a requirement of political correctness was imposed on schoolbooks. The tradition of political control can be suggested as a partial explanation for the finlandisation of history textbooks in the 1970s.

In the context of this article the Cold War period in Finland is regarded to have lasted from the signing of the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union in 1948 up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The agreement of 1948, together with the Peace Treaty of the previous year, finally ended the precarious position of the provisional peace settlement of 1944. During 1944–47 Finns' actions were motivated by the fear of Soviet occupation. Since 1948 the choices of Finnish politicians may be seen to stem from actual Cold War speculations.

This article focuses on two sensitive topics which serve as indicators of the influence of the Cold War on Finnish textbooks. First, on the contemporary politics of the rivaling big powers, the US and the USSR, and second, on the politics of Finland in the Second World War.

#### PREVAILING NATIONAL ETHOS IN THE SCHOOL BOOKS OF THE 1950S

Writing a history textbook is a political act, as it means practicing public history and eventually contributing to the collective political consciousness. Finland from the mid-50s had declared herself officially neutral. However, in the practice of politics she had to decide from time to time where her loyalties lay. In the bi-polar Cold War, a textbook author had the options of being either western or eastern oriented or of resorting to an opportune neutrality through refraining from political standpoints.

The tradition from the pre-war period was pro-West. Apart from being nationalistic and portraying the history of Finland as a long line of development towards an independent nation-state, the textbooks rejected any loyalty to the Soviet Union. The authors emphasized the position of Finland as a defense of the West. Russia, especially the Soviet Union, was portrayed as a barbaric society.<sup>2</sup>

2 See quotations in: S. Ahonen and J. Rantala, *'History Education in "The Second Republic" c. 1944-1950'*, in *Koulu ja menneisyys XXVIII*, Suomen kouluhistoriallisen Seuran vuosikirja 1990, Helsinki 1990, 13. For a broader reflection, see P. Rouhiainen, *Taistelu historian kouluopetuksen sisällöstä Suo-*

After Finland's defeat in the Continuation War a political cleansing of school books took place in 1945, as commanded by the Soviet-dominated Allied Control Commission. The rhetoric of the textbooks was revised through removing anti-Russian and anti-Soviet expressions. The Russian October Revolution was no longer portrayed as a calamity. The Soviet policy towards Finland in 1940–41 was no longer called ruthless repression and paralleled to the acts of Genghis Khan.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the prohibition of nine history textbooks and the change of rhetoric, the 1945 revision of textbooks was more cosmetic than substantive. The nationalistic view of Finland as a historically predetermined nation-state was maintained. A true revision of the contents of the textbooks was left dependent on developments in the actual Cold War situation.

Around 1950, a paradigm shift took place in the field of academic history. The mainstream of historiography before the war had been nationalistic. Historians had bolstered the tenets of the young nation state through creating a story of a primordial national entity. The conflicts between the Finns and Russian had been dealt with partially, in favour of the Finns. In the new political situation of the lost war such an approach was not possible. Neither was it consistent with the current theories of history. The new approach was 'objectivist'. Objectivity was strongly advocated by the historian Pentti Renvall in his study of historical methodology in 1947.<sup>4</sup> The book was eventually expanded into a standard textbook, used by students and scholars throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

The theory of historical objectivity was realized in the historiography of the 1950s and early 1960s, greatly prompted by international research. While the monumental wartime Handbook of Finnish history from 1949, written by leading Finnish historians, still presented Finland as a justified creditor of the past<sup>5</sup>, in 1957 an American historian, C. Leonard

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*men sortovuosista vuoden 1945 oppikirjauudistukseen.* Unpublished licenciate thesis in political history, University of Helsinki 1979.

3 J. Rantala, *Sopimaton lasten kasvattajaksi. Opettajiin kohdistuneet poliittiset puhdistuspyrkimykset Suomessa 1944–1948.* Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, *Bibliotheca Historica* 26 1997, 65.

4 P. Renvall, *Historiantutkimuksen työmenetelmät, Teoriaa käytäntöä, tavoitteita suomalaiseseen ainekseen sovellettuina.* Porvoo: WSOY 1947.

5 A. Korhonen (ed.), *Suomen historian käsikirja, Jälkimmäinen osa.* Helsinki:

Lundin, suggested that Finland was an aggressor in the Second World War in 1941.<sup>6</sup> In the subsequent debate the patriotic Finnish historian Arvi Korhonen constructed the theory of Finland as driftwood that was driven into the war by the force of big power politics.<sup>7</sup> In any case, the old monoperspectival view of the historical truth was blurred.

Prior to the historians, the novelist Väinö Linna conveyed the new critical sense of history to the larger public through his novel *Unknown Soldier* (1954). Linna's Finns fought the Continuation War with divided minds. Not everybody felt they were fulfilling a national mission. The saga of a brave, united national war effort was substituted by a realistic view of history as alternative choices.

In history education, a historian and school headmaster, Martti Ruutu, appealed in the 1940s to history teachers for an objective and critical way of teaching. He rejected history as an advocate of enemy images and straightforward nationalistic education.<sup>8</sup> His own textbook from 1951, *The History of Finland*, pursued impartiality in regard to the civil war of 1918 but was more patriotic than revisionist concerning the wars 1939–1945.

The majority of history textbooks kept to the basically nationalistic interpretation of history throughout the 1950s. The rhetoric had changed towards politically neutral expressions, but the disposition of the books was built on the idea of a primordial Finnish nationhood. The persistence of the tradition was partly due to stagnation in the textbook market. The old textbooks from 'the first republic' of the 1920s and 1930s, above all, the book by Oskari Mantere and Gunnar Sarva, came out year after year as new editions. Even though Mantere and Sarva were politically liberal civil servants, and their books had gone through the political revision of 1945, the basic ethos and disposition of the books reflected the traditional view of Finland as a historically justified nation. For example,

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WSOY 1949, passim.

6 C. L. Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957.

7 A. Korhonen, *Barbarossa-suunnitelma ja Suomen jatkosodan synty*. Helsinki: WSOY 1961.

8 M. Ruutu, 'Historianopetus ja reaalikoe', *Kasvatusopillinen Aikakauskirja* 1947, passim.

the Continuation War, one of the sensitive topics of political history, was portrayed as pure Russian aggression.<sup>9</sup>

Thus the conclusion can be drawn that the political caution, imposed on Finland in 1948 by the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union, did not as such lead to the self-censorship of finlandisation. The first full decade of the Cold War still paid credit to the nationalistic tradition of history. Even if actual enemy images were no longer fostered, no truly new perspectives were opened to the crucial episodes and sensitive topics. Despite the rewriting of history by Lundin and Linna, the use of school history in the education of young people was considered justified for maintaining the spirit of national dignity.

#### TEXTBOOK INVOLVEMENT IN THE COLD WAR

The Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance imposed an obligation to build mutual trust between the Russians and the Finns. President J. K. Paasikivi repeatedly urged all Finns to adopt the right attitude of building trust. He and his successor Urho Kekkonen made 'trust' into an obligation. Trust was a prerequisite of confidence building. Moreover, Kekkonen became famous for his public reinterpretations of history, especially of the Second World War. In his official speeches to the Finnish people in the 1960s and 1970s he asked the Finns to acknowledge the Russian point of view on the recent past, especially regarding the events leading to the independence of Finland in 1917. The content of school books became the focus of politicians and administrators by the end of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s.

Changes in textbook interpretations did not go unnoticed. In 1981 the journal *Kanava* published an article by an American educationist, Larry Shaw, who asserted that Finnish history textbooks were 'finlandised'. The term meant that the content of textbooks had been written to avoid offending the Soviet authorities and therefore adhered to the Soviet interpretation of history. Shaw presented the textbook authors as examples of Finnish self-censorship. The authors exercised caution because of the

9 O. Mantere and G. Sarva, *Keskikoulun Suomen historia*. Helsinki: WSOY, 411–418, 420–422.

fear of critical response from Moscow. Shaw was especially interested in how the textbooks presented the two rivaling powers of the Cold War, the US and the USSR.<sup>10</sup> The debate about the pro-Soviet bias of the textbooks mounted into a parliamentary inquiry.<sup>11</sup>

The accusation of finlandisation will be looked at here in the light of the textbooks of the 1970s. In the 1960s, despite the prevailing Cold War, only a few actually new textbooks were written, so any new approach to history education is not easy to discern. The texts of the 1960s pursued impartiality and neutral expressions but did not challenge the traditional view of national history.<sup>12</sup>

The introduction of a new school form, the comprehensive school, in the early 1970s was accompanied by a boom in textbook publishing. A totally new generation of textbooks emerged, mostly written by new authors. This article concentrates on the comprehensive school books of this decade. As schoolbooks are not spin-offs of academic research but rather representations of what a society, represented ultimately by the National Board of Education, wants to convey to the younger generation, the schoolbooks of the 1970s may be expected to reflect the new political aspirations of the decade.

In the 1970s, after the American failure in Vietnam, the Soviet Union gained comparative credibility among many people, also in Finland. On the initiative of Soviet ideologues, a project of Finnish-Soviet school book revision was launched in 1973. The project commission convened on a regular basis and exchanged views on the sensitive topics of history. In

10 L. J. Shaw, 'USA ja Neuvostoliitto suomalaisissa oppikirjoissa', *Kanava* 3/1981. The article was based on Shaw's empirical study 'A Finnish view of American and Soviet History: A Textbook Analysis', in *Deutschland und der Norden in Schulbuch und Unterricht, Studien zur Internationalen Schulbuchforschung*. Schriftenreihe des Georg-Eckert-Instituts, Braunschweig 1980, Bd. 29, 71–106.

11 An official inquiry by a member of Parliament, Juhani J. Kortessalmi, on the contents of history textbooks, presented to the Parliament 19 May 1981. The Diet of 1981, Documents, Written Inquiry No. 307.

12 See e.g.: T. Vierros, J. Paasivirta, and R. Riikonen, *Maailma ennen ja nyt*. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä 1968. The book is critical about the position of the satellites states like Poland and Czechoslovakia under the command of Moscow, but equally critical of the US presence in Vietnam and the domestic race problem. S. Vehvilä and M. J. Castrén, *Suomen historia*. Helsinki: WSOY 1967. The books deny any political alliance between Finland and Germany in 1941.

1975, the Soviet party suggested a revision of the origins of the Finnish-Soviet Winter War of 1939–1940 by removing the Secret Protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 from the textbooks. According to the Soviet argument the document was not acknowledged in Soviet historiography. The Finnish party, supported by the National Board of Education, refused such a concession. By means of archival testimony the Finns proved the existence of the document.<sup>13</sup> The incident shows that the Finns were not too servile in their quest for harmonious relations with the big brother.

Apart from direct Soviet interference, a domestic Finnish initiative towards sovietisation developed in the 1970s. A Soviet-friendly student movement had spread to the upper secondary schools by 1970, and culminated in interference with the school curriculum by the national School Student Union. The Union monitored history classes in schools and reported the findings in its journal. School-based radical study groups were established to advocate a positive interpretation of the Soviet Union and a respectively critical interpretation of recent American history in history teaching. On the other side, the anti-communist, pro-West organization Suomalaisen Yhteiskunnan Tuki (The Buttress of the Finnish Society) organized study courses for young people in order to counteract the leftist manipulation of minds.<sup>14</sup>

The response by the textbook authors differed from one author group to another. The reviews received by the National Board of Education indicate that textbook authors quite often had adopted a politely pro-Soviet approach, even if in some cases the opposite was also observed. The National Board adhered to the obligations of the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.<sup>15</sup>

The most infamous example of Soviet influence on Finnish history schoolbooks is by the Pirkkala project. In the municipality of Pirkkala, under the auspices of the University of Tampere and The National

13 J. Holmén, *Den politiska läroboken: bilden av USA och Sovjetunionen i norska, svenska och finländska läroböcker under Kalla kriget*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis 2006, 80.

14 J. Vesikansa, "Kommunismi uhkaa maatamme". *Kommunisminvastainen poerverillinen aktivismi ja järjestötoiminta Suomessa 1950–1968*. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino 2004, 288–90, 297–99.

15 Idem, 77–79

Board of Education, a draft for a history textbook for lower secondary school was produced with the purpose of providing a Marxist–Leninist interpretation of history from prehistory to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The text was basically a translation of a Soviet textbook. In regard to the sensitive topics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the Finnish Civil War and the wars of 1939–1944 the book offered a communist and pro-Soviet view.<sup>16</sup>

After a lively media discussion and a parliamentary inquiry<sup>17</sup> the Pirkkala project was discontinued. However, it managed to raise critical popular interest in history education. The textbooks were no longer left to become finlandised in peace. Instead, both Left and Right were alert observers of what was written about the big powers and the sensitive topics of Finnish history. The National Board of Education rushed to give guidelines for political activity in schools. According to the Board, a student had the right to express her or his political opinion in the classroom, but a teacher did not have the right to political activity in school. The guideline was applicable to teaching materials.<sup>18</sup>

Janne Holmén, in his study of the textbooks of the Cold War period, uses the following sensitive topics as indicators of a bias: people and society in the USSR, Soviet economy, prominent persons, democracy and dictatorship, Soviet aggression and the Cold War. On the basis of a textual analysis he draws the conclusion that the accusation of finlandisation was valid.<sup>19</sup>

Holmén also rejects some of the arguments used by Finnish textbook authors to defend themselves against Larry Shaw's critique of anti-Americanism and pro-Sovietism in 1981. When the authors Matti Castrén and Sirkka Ahonen referred to the information the Soviet and American publications respectively provided of the recent developments in their countries, Holmén rightly asks whether the authors should

16 Idem, 81–83.

17 An official inquiry by Kullervo Rainio and 36 other members of Parliament to the Secretary of Education 4 April 1975 about political agitation in history education in the comprehensive school. The Diet of 1975, Documents, Letter No. 110; The Diet of 1975, The Protocol of the Plenary Session 13 May 1975, 1363.

18 KH kirje n: 955/20.2.73; Ylitarkastaja Reino Laine KH:n tiedotuslehdessä 3/74. Quoted in K. R. Lehtonen and V. Huttunen, *Opettajain kirja, Peruskoulun historia 3*. Helsinki: WSOY 1979, 4.

19 Holmén, *Den politiska läroboken*, 194.

have used historical criticism instead of polite acceptance of biased information. Why agree with the self-criticism of American authors and the self-eulogies of the Soviet publications, when a source critique would have been necessary? On the other hand, Holmén himself based his overall judgment mainly on the reviews ordered by the National Board of Education, without asking from which political standpoints they were written. Nor did he ask whether the textbook authors were more interested in combating the traditional Russophobic attitudes of a major part of the Finnish population than in being servile guardians of political correctness.<sup>20</sup>

At the time, The National Board of Education was obliged to support the official foreign politics of Finland and be polite towards the Soviet Union. President Kekkonen kept a close watch on what was written about the Soviet Union in the media.<sup>21</sup> Therefore both the National Board of Education and publishers expected a consistent political correctness in the textbooks. Moreover, in the process of textbook publishing the authors were restricted by the necessities of the market. An unquestioning acceptance of the recommendations by the Board speeded up publishing and bolstered competitive advantages in the schoolbook market. In order to balance the political constellation of an author team, the publishing company Werner Söderström invited a well-known radically leftist journalist to be a member of one author team.

The two main topics through which the writer of this article has chosen to study the influence of the Cold War on Finnish textbooks are: attitudes toward the two big powers, and interpretations of Finnish-Soviet relations. Two textbooks have been chosen on the basis of the local knowledge of this writer, with the purpose of discovering various approaches to the topics mentioned. The author group of Ahonen et. al. included an active social democrat, and the author group of Lehtonen et. al. had an active member of the conservative National coalition. The rest of the group members were politically non-aligned.

20 S. Ahonen and M. J. Castrén, 'Pedagogista tykkivenepolitiikkaa', *Kanava* 4/1981. Also: S. Ahonen and M. J. Castrén, 'A Study in Bias. Internationale Schulbuchforschung', *Zeitschrift des Georg-Eckert-Instituts für internationale Schulbuchforschung* 1981/1, Heft 3, 239–243.

21 E. Salminen, *Vaikeneva valtiomahti. Neuvostoliitto/Venäjä Suomen lehdistössä 1968–1991*. Helsinki: Edita 1996, 37–38.

In regard to the first aspect, namely attitudes toward the USSR and the US, Ahonen et al. recognise the impressive technological achievements of the Soviet Union. The problems of the kolkhozes are not dealt with; the book is neutrally descriptive about the issue of the use of political power and silent about civil rights in the country.<sup>22</sup> Lehtonen et al. are even more positive about the technological and economic advances in the USSR, but point out in a critical tone Stalin's ruthless oppression of the political opposition.<sup>23</sup>

As to the United States, both books bring up successes in the conquest of space but point out the numerous social problems, above all the conflicts between races. Lehtonen et al. are more critical in their choice of items, presenting, for instance, the McCarthyism of the 1950s.<sup>24</sup> In regard to the role of the two superpowers in the Cold War, Ahonen et al. stress the failure of the US in the Vietnam War and show pictures of anti-war demonstrations, but fail to account for USSR's problems in the satellite states. For their part, Lehtonen et al. are critical about the US containment policy against the USSR in Europe.<sup>25</sup>

The relative similarity of the books in their approaches is likely to have resulted from self-censorship and the revision by the National Board of Education. Official foreign policy was thus conveyed to the school classes through the official revision system.

In regard to the sensitive topics of the origins of the Winter War and the Continuation War, both Ahonen et al. and Lehtonen et al. approach the topics in multiperspectival terms. The security needs of the Soviet Union in 1939 are recognised, and the driftwood theory of the Continuation war is rejected. Finland is portrayed as an active seeker of Germany's support.<sup>26</sup> The schoolbooks fall into line with President Kekkonen's history lessons. In his speeches in 1973 and 1974 he had

22 S. Ahonen, O. Kaakinen, Olavi, O. Lappalainen and S. Tiainen, *Historian maailma* 8. Helsinki: Otava 1979 91–99.

23 K. R. Lehtonen, V. Huttunen and O. Laine, *Peruskoulun historia* 4. Helsinki, WSOY 1974, 53–56.

24 Ahonen et al. *Historian maailma*, 103–109; Lehtonen et al., 59–70.

25 *ibid.*

26 Ahonen et al., 57–59, 64–69. Lehtonen et al., 34, 39.

pondered whether Finnish politicians contributed to the outbreak of the Winter War and, moreover, rejected the driftwood theory.<sup>27</sup>

As to the upper secondary school, the textbooks were as a rule inherited from the 1960s. Even if they were re-edited, they were not as influenced by the Cold War as the comprehensive schoolbooks. In addition to traditional meanings attributed to the sensitive topics, the upper secondary textbooks on the history of Finland maintained the traditional disposition of a grand national narrative. Their turn to change was to come in the 1980s.

#### POST-KEKKONEN ERA IN THE TEXTBOOKS

Throughout the 25 years of his presidency, Urho Kekkonen had been a guardian of Finnish-Russian mutual trust and confidence. He had interpreted sensitive topics of Finnish history in his public speeches in a manner that was antagonistic to traditional patriotic views but often supported by contemporary research. Kekkonen's successor, Mauno Koivisto, took some steps back in the revision of history. After the glasnost in the Soviet Union, he chose to affirm the Finnish self-image of a young righteous David battling against a ruthless Goliath in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Finnish-Russian conflicts.

A liberation of minds after Kekkonen's departure in 1982 was noticeable in the reviews of new textbooks of the 1980s. The revision of textbooks by the National Board of Education was still obligatory. The expert teachers and historians invited by the Board to revise were more often than before critical towards the finlandised interpretations of both the civil war and the 1939–1945 wars. However, there were still some among the reviewers who emphasized the requirements of the old political correctness.<sup>28</sup>

Public discussion about the finlandisation of schoolbooks gained new momentum. The neutrality of history teaching had already been debated in 1974 in the context of the Pirkkala episode, and again in 1975, when the Finnish-Soviet textbook commission had dealt with the conflicting accounts of the outbreak of the Winter War, and once again when Larry

27 E. Salminen, *Vaikeneva valtiomahti*, 120.

28 Holmén, *Den politiska läroboken*, 83–91.

Shaw published his claim of finlandisation. The reviews of textbooks written by historians and expert teachers for the National Board of Education indicate that the criticism of finlandisation grew in the course of the 1980s.

The Finnish upper secondary school curriculum was structurally changed through a curricular reform in the early 1980s. In the new curriculum, the history syllabus was broken into modules that would be studied as courses. The change prompted a wave of new textbooks for the upper secondary school. The new books reflected the end of Kekkonen's era in history education. The requirement of political correctness in regard to the Soviet Union was relaxed. Patriotic tones reappeared. The Soviet Union was again attributed an aggressive role in both the outbreak of the Winter War and developments towards the Continuation War. More explicitly than before, the books recognized the 'Terijoki government', an abortive attempt by the Soviet Union to defy the existence of the Finnish state in 1939, as well as the offences of the Soviet Union against the integrity of Finland after the Winter War in 1940–41.<sup>29</sup>

However, the inclusion of Soviet views was not altogether rejected. The security needs of the Soviet Union in 1939, as well as the alignment of Finland with Germany in 1941, were presented in the books as historical facts.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the authors did not shun a description of the dictatorial traits of Soviet rule. Hannula et al. discussed without any hesitation Stalin's purges and personality cult.<sup>31</sup> On the whole, the authors' minds were divided between the old political correctness and a post-Kekkonen relaxation.

Despite an obvious tendency, prompted by Larry Shaw in the early 1980s, to rid Finnish history textbooks of finlandisation, no open discussion about the theme appeared in the history teachers' journal *Kleio* or at teachers' conferences in the course of the 1980s. The reason for the absence of a truly cathartic discussion might have been a residual self-

29 S. Ahonen, A. Heikkinen, T. Lindlöf, S. Rytönen, and S. Tiainen, *Lukion historia, kurssi 6*. Helsinki: Kunnallispaino 1984, 114; S. Hannula, A. Mäkelä, and R. Peltovuori, *Muuttuva maailma. Nykyajan maailma. Lukion kurssi 5*. Kuopio: Kustannuskiila Oy 1988.

30 *ibid.*; cf M. J. Castrén and V. Huttunen, *Uuden lukion historia 3a, Kurssi 6. Nyky-Suomen perusta*. Helsinki: WSOY 1983, 101–2, 215

31 Hannula et al. 121–2.

*Sirkka Ahonen*

ensorship carried over from the 1970s, or a pragmatic desire to avoid embarrassment by not making professional problems public.

#### TEXTBOOKS AFTER THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION

The Cold War was ended through a mutual agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States in 1990. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the tenets of the Cold War constellation ceased to exist. For Finland the change meant a cancellation of the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the related obligations of maintaining the rhetoric of mutual trust. Political correctness in regard to the history of Finnish-Russian relations was no longer a strict requirement.

In Finland, national self-confidence had already been bolstered by the rehabilitation of the Winter War in the context of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war in 1989. Two powerful war films attracted masses of young people, and President Koivisto through a key speech authorised the view of the War as a heroic national act. Finns were no more expected to align with the Soviet view of the history of the Winter War and the Continuation War.

Historians eventually tackled the phenomenon of the finlandisation. Timo Vihavainen sorted out the different levels and forms of self-censorship, Hannu Rautkallio and Jukka Tarkka discredited the political leadership of the 1970s and Esko Salminen questioned the integrity of the media. Salminen included history education in his critique.<sup>32</sup>

The Finnish school system was in a dynamic state of change. The key idea was deregulation. The official revision of textbooks was abolished in 1989, whereafter the market forces alone controlled textbook publishing. The new constraints to the authors were constituted by the tastes of teachers, parents and the public. In 1994 the National Board of Education launched new framework curricula for the comprehensive and the upper secondary schools. The frame was broad and open. The schools were free to develop their individual syllabi and the pupils were free to make choices about their study programme.

<sup>32</sup> Salminen, *Vaikeneva valtiomahti*, 164–5.

In the new situation textbook authors could re-interpret history and present alternative views according to their knowledge and understanding. The boundaries were dictated by the tolerance of their clients. Would the teachers, parents and the general public accept deviations from the standard grand stories of the past, or from the rhetoric that had been established as politically correct in the previous decades?

The new wave of textbooks that resulted from the curriculum reform of 1994 was free of the 'mutual trust and friendship' rhetoric of the 1970s. On the other hand, there was no drastic change of direction as was seen in e.g. Estonian history education after the country's independence in 1991. While the Estonians changed 'liberation' to 'occupation' and rejected any Soviet perspective on the years 1944–1991<sup>33</sup>, Finnish authors wrote of the Finnish-Soviet wars of 1939–1944 in terms of relative multiperspectivity. The rhetoric was no longer derived from the 'mutual trust and friendship' tautology, but the accounts of the actual events were far from being nationally biased. The origins of the Continuation War were treated even more critically than before in regard to Finnish politics, thanks to fresh new research results. The military alliance with Germany was now attributed to an active Finnish initiative.<sup>34</sup>

However, in two issues the tone and interpretation changed. The interception victories by the Finns in the Winter War were presented proudly in detail. The other issue was the impeachment of Finland's political leaders of 1941–44, urged by the Soviets in 1945. In post-1991 history books the Finnish authors could forthrightly declare them not guilty and instead portray them as national heroes.<sup>35</sup>

In regard to the history of the US and the USSR in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the new textbooks were equally critically of the Vietnam War and the ordeal of the satellite states in Eastern Europe. Despite their attempt to pursue a balanced presentation the authors of the 1970s ended up in being

33 S. Ahonen, *Clio Sans Uniform, The Post-Marxist Transformation of History Curricula in East Germany and Estonia, 1986–1991*. Suomalaisen tiedeakatemia toimituksia B:264. Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia 1992.

34 P. Arola, L. Hongisto and P. West, *Kronos 4, Suomen historian murroskausia*. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä 1995, 85–9; E. Heikkonen, M. Ojakoski, and J. Väisänen, *Muutosten maailma, Suomen historian käännekohtia*. Helsinki: WSOY 2005, 129, 137, 151.

35 Ibidem.

cautious about the satellite states. Now they discussed both Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia with a pro-small- state ethos.<sup>36</sup>

Another expected change was a shift towards more pro-West attitudes. However, the anti-Americanism observed by Larry Shaw did not vanish. From the perspective of the 1990sm the Vietnam War seemed as big a failure as it had before. Instead of pro-Americanism, Finnish authors invested in substantial information about the European Union. Finland joined the European Union in 1995, and the new curriculum for the upper secondary school from the same year incorporated a special course entitled 'The Europeans'. The background and nature of the Union was also extensively explained in the books written for the 'International Relations' course. The tone of the texts was positive, stressing the future opportunities of integration. In comparison, texts about post-1991 Russia were not silent about the economic, social and political problems of the country.<sup>37</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

History is a politically sensitive school subject. Finnish authors were not alone in tackling the problem of the choices of loyalty prompted by the Cold War. Frances FitzGerald, in her classical study 'America Revised' (1980), shows that American authors were far from free to interpret history on purely scholarly premises. Janne Holmén, in his comparative study of Nordic textbooks (2006), found that Norwegian and Swedish authors did not resort to an opportune impartiality in their dealings with the sensitive topics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In Finland, the end of the Cold War in 1990, together with the end of state control, led to changes in the history textbooks. The old rhetoric of Finnish-Soviet friendship gave way to the rhetoric of European integration. History was reinterpreted from a Finnish national point of view, highlighting the conclusion that the books published before 1990 had been constrained by the pressures of the Cold War.

36 Arola et. al., *Kronos* 3, 99, 109; A. Kohi, H. Palo, K. Päivärinta and V. Vihervä, *Forum, Kansainväliset suhteet*. Helsinki. Otava 2006, 109–110, 111.

37 Kohi et al. *Forum*, 179; K. Laitinen, J. Rinne and P. Suominen, *Suomen tie Eurooppaan*. Helsinki: WSOY, passim.

The Cold War imposed a culture of self-censorship on the Finns. In history textbooks signs of opportune neutrality could be observed. When the options were Eastern orientation, Western orientation and an opportune neutrality, Finnish authors chose neutrality. The authors were cautious of being anti-Soviet. In order to nevertheless be impartial, they were relatively polite about the other big power, the United States, too. The sterile tone of the books tended to hinder a critical problem-orientation in history education.

The main constraints of textbook writing were imposed by the official control of the National Board of Education and the political sensitivity of history as a school subject. Politicians and even the public tended to react to a political bias in the textbooks. The alertness of people to biased lessons protected history education from becoming excessively manipulative even when the authorities might have wished partial political correctness. In the big debates about school history in the 1970s, at the peak of the Cold War, the public rejected a Marxist-Leninist interpretation of history in the Pirkkala project and the attempt by the Finnish-Soviet Commission to harmonise Finnish and Soviet history books in regard to the origins of the Winter War.

The public debates about history education taught the textbook authors and publishers to resist the temptation to swing with the political trends. Unlike their Baltic colleagues, Finnish authors after the end of the Cold War refrained from a complete reversal in position. Instead they pursued multiperspectivity in their approach to history. The post-1991 textbooks generally did not resort to a one-sided, Finnish national point of view regarding the sensitive topics of 20<sup>th</sup> century history. Neither did they forget to look critically at the new trend of Westernisation, and the inclusion of Finland in the European Union. The world of politics might turn upside down, but a textbook writer is obliged to hold a steady course in order to view the past from a sufficiently broad perspective.

# III

## Lessons of History?

# President Urho Kekkonen of Finland and the KGB

KIMMO RENTOLA

A major post-Cold War history debate in Finland has been over the role of President Urho Kekkonen and his relations with the Soviet Union, in particular with the Soviet foreign intelligence. No surprise to anybody, variance of interpretations has been wide, fuelled by scarcity of sources on the most sensitive aspects, by the unavoidable ambiguity of an issue like the intelligence, and even by political leanings.<sup>1</sup> As things stand now, even a preliminary assessment of available evidence – viewed from a distance – might prove useful.

The Soviet Union regularly tried to build back-channel contacts and confidential informal links with the Western powers. On the Soviet side, these contacts were usually conducted by intelligence officers, as were those to Robert Kennedy on the eve of the Cuban missile crisis,<sup>2</sup> and to Chancellor Willy Brandt during his new German *Ostpolitik*.<sup>3</sup> By far the

1 A good introduction to Finnish studies on Kekkonen in J. Lavery, 'All of the President's Historians: The Debate over Urho Kekkonen', *Scandinavian Studies* 75 (2003: 3). See also his *The History of Finland*. Westport: Greenwood Press 2006, and the analysis of D. Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland*. Cambridge University Press 2006.

2 An account by G. Bolshakov, 'The Hot Line', in *New Times* (Moscow), 1989, nos. 4-6; C. Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and American Presidency from Washington to Bush*. London: HarperCollins 1995, 278–80. The best known exception is the back channel to Kissinger, which was not conducted by an intelligence officer, but by Ambassador Dobrynin.

3 W. Keworkow, *Der geheime Kanal*. Berlin: Rowohlt 1995.

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longest relationship of this kind was established with Kekkonen, whose contacts were keenly cultivated by both sides from 1944 right up to his resignation in 1981.

On Kekkonen's relationship with the KGB there is only a thin sample of Soviet documents, complemented by memoirs, the most informative of which are by the long-time Helsinki *resident* Viktor Vladimirov, published only in Finnish.<sup>4</sup> The Finnish documentation is more extensive now after President Kekkonen's diaries were published in four volumes.<sup>5</sup> Kekkonen recorded his hundreds of conversations with KGB representatives; at first shyly, calling his interlocutors a "Mr. X" or a "Mr. Zh.", but then unblushingly by their real names. The diaries were not written for later publication, but for working purposes, to remember who said what and when. Thus the main defect of the entries is brevity, abridgment to barest essentials. During his numerous visits to the Soviet Union, Kekkonen did not produce any entries; he was not so stupid as to take a diary along.<sup>6</sup>

#### FINLAND AS A TARGET

According to a Soviet intelligence officer, Finland was a kind of great power as far as intelligence was concerned.<sup>7</sup> Finland became a major intelligence target for the Soviets right after the Winter War (1939–40), because Stalin's decision to attack Finland as well as the one to

4 V. Vladimirov, *Näin se oli...* Helsinki: Otava 1993. Memoirs by other high KGB officers (A. Akulov, F. Karasev, E. Sinitsyn) are much more tight-lipped and their quality is lower. Only the posthumous (and confused) memoirs of Sinitsyn have also been published in Russian.

5 *Urho Kekkosen päiväkirjat*, ed. by J. Suomi, vols. 1–4. Helsinki: Otava 2001–04. The diaries cover the period from 1958 to 1981. The Finnish security police archives are a first-rate source for other politicians' contacts with the KGB. However, the security police considered it prudent not to produce written reports on the President's contacts, despite the fact that they were noticed.

6 On some short trips, there are entries, probably written after returning home.

7 This was said to the author by Albert Akulov, who was a prominent KGB political line officer in Helsinki. Of course, it is an exaggeration, but not totally baseless.

make peace had been based on fatally faulty intelligence,<sup>8</sup> and he was determined never again to repeat the catastrophe. By mid-1940, the number of Soviet intelligence officers in Finland was second only to that in the United States; even Germany hosted fewer.<sup>9</sup> By May 1941, NKGB resident Elisei Sinitsyn was able to procure first-rate information from government sources, including the fact of the imminent German attack and the Finnish participation in it.<sup>10</sup>

As soon as peace was again in sight, the Soviets focused on high-level political contacts. In February 1944 in Stockholm, Soviet intelligence established contact with Eero A. Wuori, the head of the Finnish trade unions, who described the basic anti-Nazi stance of Marshal Mannerheim to a charming female journalist, who happened to be working for Soviet intelligence.<sup>11</sup> After the armistice in September 1944, this effort was revived in Helsinki by Sinitsyn, who again showed up, now as a political counsellor in the Soviet Control Commission. Among the first to call was Urho Kekkonen, 44, a fast rising Agrarian politician.<sup>12</sup>

8 K. Rentola, "Sovjetisk etterretning og Stalins beslutning om krig og fred med Finland, 1939-1940", in *Motstrøms: Olav Riste og norsk internasjonal historieskrivning*, ed. by S. Holtmark, H. Pharo & R. Tamnes. Oslo: Cappelen 2003, 188–17. The article is based on NKVD foreign intelligence documents. For Stalin admitting the failure in the April 1940 post mortem session, see A. O. Chubaryan & H. Shukman (eds.), *Stalin and the Soviet-Finnish War 1939–1940*. London: Cass 2002, 196.

9 Introduction by O. I. Nazhestkin in *Ocherki istorii rossiiskoi vneshnei razvedki*, vol. 3 (1933–1941), ed. by E. M. Primakov et al. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya 1997, 17–8, quoting a report by the head of foreign intelligence P. M. Fitin. In the US, there were 18 officers, in Finland 17, in Germany 13.

10 NKGB reports from Helsinki, 4 Jun 1941; 10 Jun 1941; 13 Jun 1941, in *Sekrety Gitlera na stole u Stalina: Razvedka i kontrrazvedka o podgotovke germanskoi aggressii protiv SSSR. Mart-ijun' 1941 g. Dokumenty iz Tsentralnogo arkhiva FSB Rossii*, ed. by V. K. Vinogradov et al. Moscow 1995, 140, 151–3, 157.

11 Venona decrypts, Razin to Fitin, Feb 1944. Wuori was mentioned as 'Tsilindr' in these telegrams. On the female agent 'Klara' (Gusti Stridsberg), see W. Agrell, *Venona: Spåren från ett underrättelsekrig*. Stockholm: Historiska Media 2003, 302–28.

12 In 1943–44, Kekkonen developed a contact with the American intelligence in Stockholm (Vilho Tikander of OSS), but he does not seem to have had contacts with the Soviets (or the British) before the armistice.

Since Finland avoided occupation, instead of directly imposing their will, the Soviets had to find ways of influencing those in power in Helsinki. As for the Finns, they remained in the Soviet sphere of interests, a fact acknowledged by the Western allies, and the leaders of the country had to adapt to this. As usual in rapidly changing situations, first something is done, and the theory justifying the action would be formulated only afterwards. As for the Agrarian contacts with the Soviet intelligence, Kaarlo Hillilä (Minister of the Interior, 1944 to 1945) wrote later that it was vital to prevent the strong Finnish Communist Party from having exclusive access to the Soviets. It was necessary to deal directly with the Soviets on as high a level as possible, so the Communists could not 'fake out Russian support even when that did not exist at the moment, and so obtain positions otherwise out of reach for them.'<sup>13</sup>

Stalin never believed what was said to him above the table; he wanted to know what the other side was really up to. The Finns adapted to this. Even old President Paasikivi understood the necessity of confidential contacts, but would not deal personally with intelligence officers, not wanting to touch 'an ugly fish', as he said.<sup>14</sup> Instead, he relied on middlemen and messengers, various left wing social democratic politicians,<sup>15</sup> and Kekkonen.

Kekkonen was qualified for this. In the 1920s, he had served as an officer in the Finnish security police, and then prepared his doctor of law dissertation on *agent provocateur*, a police agent inside revolutionary ranks. On his study trips to Vienna and to Berlin he discovered that the learned doctors in the security police of these countries 'did not even know as much as I know', as he complained to his wife.<sup>16</sup> He saw Moscow for the first time as a counter intelligence officer, checking out

13 National Archives of Finland (KA), Paasikivi papers V: 35, Memorandum by Kaarlo Hillilä, 31 Oct. 1950, attached in Kekkonen to Paasikivi, 11 Dec 1950.

14 Paasikivi's diary, 15 Jun. 1946, *J.K. Paasikiven päiväkirjat 1945–1956*, vols. 1–2, ed. by Y. Blomstedt & M. Klinge. Helsinki: WSOY 1985–86.

15 The most important ones were Mauno Pekkala (prime minister, 1946–48), Reinhold Svento (2<sup>nd</sup> Foreign Minister) and Eero A. Wuori (chairman of the trade unions, then minister, in 1945 ambassador to London). In Sinitsyn's memoirs, they are mentioned under code names, and can be identified on the basis of Paasikivi's diary entries on their discussions with the Soviets.

16 Kekkonen to his wife Sylvi, 25 Jun. 1928. Kekkonen dropped this theme and wrote his dissertation on local elections law.

listening devices and security lapses in the Finnish mission. Although his second visit in 1945 was in a friendship delegation, even then the attendant Soviet lady watcher suspected that the Finnish Minister of Justice, Mr. Kekkonen, was a spy. He was so curious, always asking pertinent questions and very sensitive ones at that; at the *kolkhoz* he wanted to know which of the men had fought on the Finnish front and how many had fallen, and then he wanted to see the house of the poorest *kolkhoznik*. On top of it all, he was capable of assessing the exact amount of spectators in a football match in Moscow.<sup>17</sup>

Despite his background, Kekkonen did not immediately grasp every peculiarity of his new friends, as can be seen from the letter in which he described to his wife how Sinitsyn in June 1945 transferred him to his successor, V. F. Razin.

Elisei is leaving for good; last Friday the Finnish-Soviet Friendship Society threw a farewell dinner for him. There, he asked me to dinner on Sunday. I believed a good many people would attend, but there were only him, the newly arrived Razin, and me. When the restaurant ran short of brandy, we came to our home, where I invited [Kustaa Vilkuna], and he brought along [a female artist] and we had a cozy night. Razin speaks good German. I think that through Razin I can take care of my business.<sup>18</sup>

This was a routine transfer meeting of a Soviet intelligence contact, a pattern Kekkonen did not fully understand at that time. But the full nature of these new contacts was not easy to grasp for Razin either. A seasoned intelligence officer, he tried to run agents according to official rules, and (if we can believe Sinitsyn's memoirs) at his first meeting with Kustaa Vilkuna, he thrust him a brown envelope stuffed with money. Sinitsyn had to go to great pains to explain the 'misunderstanding' to an offended Vilkuna, who was an academic scholar and a personal intelligence hand for Kekkonen. And when Kekkonen put out serious political feelers as if joking, as he always did with the Russians ('I'll probably take over the

17 Russian Foreign Policy Archives (AVP RF), fond 012, opis 6, papka 85, delo 273, ll. 11-13v, Report by T.Yu. Solovieva, official of the Soviet society for cultural contacts (VOKS), 12 Oct. 1945. Kekkonen was a sports union leader, so the number of spectators was routine for him.

18 Kekkonen to his wife Sylvi, 19 Jun. 1945.

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Ministry of Interior in the next government'), Razin was not at all on the same wave length, but responded according to the official line only: 'The man there should enjoy the trust of the working class' etc.<sup>19</sup>

During Razin's tenure, 1945 to 1947, Moscow hoped that Finland would also follow the path to a people's democracy. Accordingly, their intelligence activities concentrated on the communist control of the security police (Valpo). When it turned out that Finland had a path of its own, the significance of confidential contacts with non-communist politicians rose again, and a pure national force like Kekkonen's party, the Agrarians, was much less suspected by the Soviets than the social democrats, who were connected to an international movement.

#### THE NATURE OF THE BACK CHANNEL

Some characteristics of this relationship became evident early on.

First, the backdoor channel was useful in vital issues, as the Mutual Assistance Treaty of 1948. Before and during the negotiations, Kekkonen was in touch with Mikhail Kotov and others, explaining the utter limit the Finns could accept, and painting in dark colours the threat of anti-Soviet forces coming into power in Helsinki if these reasonable needs would not be met by the Soviets. This and the information obtained from other sources (in particular, the Finnish generals' opinion that in a possible world war Finland would need to take the Soviet side<sup>20</sup>) made it possible for Stalin to accept a lesser treaty than the Hungarian and Rumanian ones he first set as models. From the Finnish point of view, the most important feature of the channel was where it led to: right to the top in the Kremlin, and with reasonable speed. This function was underlined by the fact that

19 Paasikivi's diary, 14 Feb. 1947.

20 The information on generals' opinions was delivered by the Minister of Interior Yrjö Leino (a communist) or by Finland's ambassador to Moscow, Cay Sundström. Kekkonen was careful not to divulge military secrets. In 1954, when the KGB needed to know what the Finns would do in case of a Soviet attack on northern Norway in a major war, Kekkonen did not say anything himself, but his close female friend said to the KGB that Finland would not put up any resistance in such case. AVP RF, fond 0135, opis 38 (papka 204), d. 6, pp. 177-8, Memo of a conversation between Anne-Marie Snellman and Yu. V. Bakey, on 6 and 7 May 1954.

discussions between state leaders were usually interpreted by the KGB Helsinki resident and not by professional interpreters.

The 1948 pattern was to repeat itself in every major treaty concerning the position of Finland. In particular, when Finland negotiated its Western economic integration treaties, first with the EFTA and later with the EEC, the Soviet 'yes' was obtained through patient background discussions with the KGB representatives. In issues like these, the KGB tended to ignore other Soviet interests not vital from their particular point of view, so that an ambassador complained in his memoirs how the foreign ministry often prepared complicated negotiation strategies only to find out that the Finns had already agreed the main issue secretly through the KGB, thereby getting benefits they would never have been able to pull from diplomatic or foreign trade bureaucracies.<sup>21</sup>

Second, the back channel tended to reduce communist influence in Finnish political life. The Communist Party, with a fifth of the popular vote, was a formidable force, and one of Kekkonen's main preoccupations in his dealings with the Soviets was to use the contact to domesticate the communists.<sup>22</sup> In 1954, for instance, the Soviets compelled Finnish communists to drop their resistance to military appropriations in the Finnish budget.<sup>23</sup>

Third, it is not simple to establish, which side dominated. The Soviet Union was a superpower, Finland a small neighbour, and the KGB officers were trained to see their contacts as agents and as objects or instruments in their operations. But there was more to it than that. In 1944, Kekkonen and Vilkuna were in their mid-40s, 10 to 15 years older than Sinitsyn and Kotov, and with experience in counter-intelligence, government, and academic life. Finland was their home turf and the contact language was Finnish. According to Sinitsyn's memoirs, his meetings with Vilkuna always commenced with alternating *Kalevala* verses: the folklore professor tortured a Smolensk country boy. Every

21 J. Derjabin, *Omalla nimellä*. Helsinki: Otava 1997.

22 This was noted and complained by the Foreign Ministry in Moscow: 'Kekkonen often uses his contacts with Soviet representatives for various political manoeuvres.' AVP RF, f. 0135, op. 38 (papka 204), d. 8, pp. 16-27, 'K obstanovke v Finlyandii', 24 Jun. 1954, a memo prepared by A. Aleksandrov and I. Marchuk, signed by section chief G. F. Pushkin.

23 Details in K. Rentola, *Niin kylmää että polttaa: Kommunistit, Kekkonen ja Kremlin 1947-1958*. Helsinki: Otava 1997.

issue at hand always received full attention from the Finns, who knew all details, but the Soviet leaders in Moscow could devote only a fraction of their attention to Finland, and they mainly wanted to hear that everything was proceeding as it should. In case of conflicts, the KGB in Helsinki sometimes had incentives to smooth out *chukhna* peculiarities<sup>24</sup>, because in case of escalation, they would have to answer to embarrassing questions about their earlier reports. Of course, there were limits to this. With time passing and experience accumulating, the roles were reversed, not with Kekkonen so much as with the next generation, such as when Kotov in the 1970s dealt with ambitious politicians thirty years his junior, like Paavo Väyrynen.

Finally, the perennial question: what is in it for me? In addition to high-level issues, the KGB always tried to collect small commissions, their pounds of flesh, loose change, as it was described by Kissinger. Even from Khomeini in 1979, the Moscow headquarters wanted something specific, a gesture.<sup>25</sup> An introduction, a juicy piece of news, prevention of something to be published (or leak of another item), and most desired of all, a person wanted by Soviet security.<sup>26</sup> In April 1950, when Kekkonen was appointed prime minister for the first time, his government decided to hand over two Estonian anti-Soviet guerrillas, who eight months earlier had succeeded in escaping to Finland. One was actually delivered.<sup>27</sup> Probably with this in mind, the following summer Kekkonen told the Agrarian party congress: 'I am affected neither by

24 'Chukhna' is a pejorative Russian word for a Finn, in particular in the St. Petersburg area. Mikoyan had a fine collection of chukhna jokes he said he first heard from Sergei Kirov.

25 V. Kuzichkin, *Inside the KGB: Myth and Reality*. London: André Deutsch 1990, 271.

26 'Whatever is given to the KGB must be done secretly, deeply, and with very strong precautions', explained 'General Marov' to writer Norman Mailer; see his *Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery*. New York: Random House 1995, 405.

27 This man, Artur Lööke, was condemned to death in Tallinn, as can be seen in the Estonian KGB archives. The other one, Herman Treial, was too sick to transfer; an unsuccessful escape attempt made him an international celebrity and drew e.g. Eleanor Roosevelt's appeal, but soon after he died in a Helsinki hospital. The documents in the case file (12 L Treial & Lööke) in the Foreign Ministry Archives and personal file no. 11461 in the Security Police Archives.

hate nor by love, when what is at stake is political action for the best of the country.<sup>28</sup> In February 1956, five days before the electoral council was to vote on the next President of the Republic, the Kekkonen camp and the KGB busy making deals, an illegal Soviet intelligence officer who had sat in a Finnish prison almost two years was suddenly pardoned and ejected over the eastern border.<sup>29</sup> Of course, there is no conclusive proof of a connection between this pardon and the presidential deals.

Kekkonen's special slice was career promotion. The main prize was reaped in the 1956 presidential elections. To stop any anti-Soviet candidate, the Soviets first wanted President J. K. Paasikivi to continue, despite his advanced age (85 years); this was the official Soviet line as late as five days before the crucial electors' meeting.<sup>30</sup> Then, however, Kekkonen and Vilkuna sold their KGB contacts (Kotov and Vladimirov) the idea that Kekkonen could also obtain a majority if the communists were given detailed orders on how to use their votes and if some additional measures were taken. Khrushchev, who liked risky ventures, gave his nod on a dramatic day, when he delivered his secret speech to the 20<sup>th</sup> CPSU Congress. So, the Soviets abandoned Paasikivi, the communists were given orders (the party leaders needed to be shown the actual Moscow cipher telegram to turn their heads), and Kekkonen was elected by the closest margin possible.<sup>31</sup> Had it failed, the two KGB officers would

28 That remained his credo: 'I do not feel any feelings in this office.' Kekkonen's diary 19 Dec 1963.

29 His name was K. A. F. Holmström, by birth a Swede; he had been watching northern Norwegian defence facilities. The pardon was signed by the Police Superintendent (an Agrarian close to Kekkonen) during a leave of the social democratic Minister of Interior. The decision came as a surprise to the security police, who were planning to let the man slip into Sweden. Documents in his personal file no. 11524, Archives of the Security Police of Finland.

30 A memorandum for the Moscow top leadership on the presidential elections in Finland, 10 Feb. 1956, by Ivan Tugarinov, deputy chief, KI pri MID, AVP RF, f. 0135, op. 40, papka 215, d. 34, ll. 6-13. The 'small KI', a rump from the intelligence conglomerate KI, remained in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an analytical centre. See V. Zubok, 'Soviet Intelligence and the Cold War: The "Small" Committee of Information, 1952-53', *Diplomatic History*, vol. 19 (1995: 3).

31 A synthesis by T. Polvinen in his *J.K. Paasikivi: Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 5, 1948-1956*. Helsinki: WSOY 2003.

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have found themselves far away, but as winners they were fast on their way towards the rank of general. In 1957, at 41, Kotov was promoted to deputy chief of foreign intelligence in charge of western Europe.<sup>32</sup>

#### PRESIDENT AND REZIDENT

A contradictory situation developed after 1956. On one hand, Kekkonen was a pro-Soviet politician with close contacts to the KGB, and these were continued. In 1958, he recorded eleven private discussions with the KGB rezident, and in addition there were phone calls, meetings with others present, and the rezident's private meetings with Kekkonen's closest allies. On the other hand, he was now the head of a state which had agencies that practised counter intelligence operations against the very same KGB. Tracking a high KGB officer, Finnish security police officials sometimes saw that the Finn the *chekist* was going to meet was the President of the Republic himself.<sup>33</sup>

The KGB tried to find ways to use this to their advantage. Immediately after the 1956 elections, Vilkuna travelled to Moscow to meet a senior Soviet foreign intelligence official. 'The guy' wanted something in return for KGB support: the Finnish Ministry of Interior should be taken over by the Agrarian party, 'to secure the security police and its surroundings keep appropriately to the right line instead of the present bias. Otherwise not possible to sleep in peace. [This is] no interference in Finnish internal affairs, but the actions of the other side [the West] must also be under decent control.'<sup>34</sup>

'The guy' asked for a lot. Kekkonen was able to deliver only after the further shock of the 'Night frost' crisis of 1958.<sup>35</sup> After that, the

32 Reports signed by him in the appendix in *Ocherki istorii rossiiskoi vneshnei razvedki, vol. 5, 1945–1965*. Moskva: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya 2003, 690–97.

33 To avoid attention, Kekkonen sometimes met the KGB resident in the house of his son or elsewhere.

34 Kekkonen Archives, 1/25, Vilkuna to Kekkonen, 25 Feb. 1956. 'The guy' was higher than the KGB men in Finland, possibly A. M. Sakharovski, who was responsible for Scandinavia and was promoted foreign intelligence chief in May 1956.

35 Preparing for that crisis, the KGB (Vladimirov) made a harsh attack against

Ministry of the Interior was headed by Agrarians for eight years<sup>36</sup>, and the security police controlled by the president. But this did not mean cessation of Finnish counter-intelligence activities. The change consisted of the fact that from that point on, everything was done quietly, in the dark. Emphasis was put on preventive action; espionage cases<sup>37</sup> were usually not brought to court, double agents were no longer used to trap or provoke the KGB,<sup>38</sup> no KGB diplomat was declared *persona non grata*. Many were quietly asked to leave, sometimes by the president himself, when he was seeing his good friend, the local KGB chief. When the president met the resident, between smiles and assertions of trust, crude raw truths were said, as if joking, and somewhere in the shadows their subordinates quietly clashed, and both knew that this was the case. The most famous *non grata* case was that of a high-level political line officer, Albert Akulov, who was asked to leave in 1973, when he not only tried to recruit Finns, but also spied on the Japanese embassy. Reportedly, Kekkonen said that this man would not be seen in Finland as long as he was the President of the Republic. The Soviets took this literally.

Kekkonen knew which agency his Soviet friends served; he *wanted* the guys sitting as close to the Devil's right hand as possible. But he was kept in the dark about the full extent of the activities of his friends. He did not ask, not liking being lied to.<sup>39</sup> His best contact Mikhail Kotov, who

the Finnish security police, wanting Kekkonen take action to set a limit to their activities. Kekkonen Archives, Karjalainen file, Ahti Karjalainen to Kekkonen, 13 Jun. and 24 Jun. 1958.

36 In 1966, when the Agrarians finally had to give the Ministry of Interior to the Social Democrats, police issues were transferred to the minister of defence, who was an Agrarian.

37 In some trials since 1953, even Russian intelligence officers caught on illegal reconnaissance missions in Finland had been condemned to prison.

38 In 1958, the Finnish security police was, after four years of action, preparing to reap the benefits of a complicated double agent operation, which was planned to lead into expulsions of first-rate KGB diplomats (e.g. Zhenikhov and Vladimirov). The plan was quietly dropped. Supo Archives, personal file no. 11572; the file on Soviet espionage, no. XXIII E 1 – 26.

39 Immediately after the occupation of Czechoslovakia, Kekkonen was most upset and offended by the fact that the Soviets had blatantly lied to an old customer like himself right to his face. Kekkonen's diary, 22 and 23 Aug. 1968.

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used to show up in Helsinki to explain some unexcepted turns of events,<sup>40</sup> was not available after the occupation of Czechoslovakia. He was busy in Prague as the chief KGB foreign intelligence representative there. Back in Helsinki in 1971, he did not mention this *komandirovka* to Kekkonen. Nor did V. M. Vladimirov say, showing up again in 1970, where had he been meanwhile. This British style gentleman had been the head of the KGB department responsible for sabotage, assassinations and the like. Probably he told Kekkonen as much as he wrote in his memoirs: in the meantime, he had been involved in ‘some issues in Soviet-Chinese and Soviet-Czechoslovak relations.’

Most of the prominent Helsinki KGB hands worked almost their whole career in Finnish affairs. Many were involved with Finland for more than thirty years. The language effectively chained an officer to Helsinki. Foreign intelligence insiders believed that members of their ‘Finnish mafia’ looked like Finns, dressed like Finns, behaved like Finns. They were reticent, phlegmatic, and slow, liked the sauna, skiing, hard drinking and even weather ‘almost as their own.’<sup>41</sup> On some occasions it is plausible that KGB officers could see where the situation would lead to sooner and better than their superiors in the Kremlin. When Finland’s free trade agreement with the EEC was negotiated, Kotov said to Kekkonen that he ‘disagrees with the Soviet leadership’ and thinks that the official (strictly negative) Soviet line was faulty. He said he believed that in the end Moscow would allow the Finns to sign up with Brussels.<sup>42</sup>

#### WESTERN ATTITUDES

Western intelligence knew about the close relations between Kekkonen and the KGB. The most critical moment came after 15 December 1961, when KGB major Anatoli Golitsyn (in Finland Klimov) defected from Helsinki to the CIA. The Soviets told Kekkonen that Golitsyn was ‘a very

40 E.g. the defection of Golitsyn, the assassination of Kennedy, the dismissal of Khrushchev, the foreign political turn of the SDP right wing leader Leskinen.

41 As described by Gordievsky in O. Gordievsky and I. Rogatchi, *Sokea peili: Ihmisiä vallan ja vakoilun puristuksessa*. Helsinki: WSOY 1997, 166.

42 Kekkonen’s diary, 3 Jan. 1973.

low-level official and knew almost nothing',<sup>43</sup> having served in Helsinki only for a short period and against the main enemy, not in Finnish affairs. But it turned out that he had picked up more than gossip about KGB political operations. He told the Americans about the prevalence of the political field in the Helsinki KGB operations, and gave several names and code names for Soviet 'agents of influence' in Finnish political life, and even a list of restaurants used for meetings.<sup>44</sup>

Americans discussed the revelations with Kekkonen himself. The president 'received the information calmly, and with keen interest, and did not contest it'. He 'also mentioned that some people, because of the positions held by them, were required to be in regular contacts with the Soviets and might give an impression they were being used.' Thanking the Americans for the information, the president said that he would now be able to warn the next prime minister to be careful when appointing new Cabinet ministers.<sup>45</sup>

Despite this last rather comical remark and his outward calm, Kekkonen was nervous. As a cautionary measure, for two years he did not meet directly with the new KGB resident, Yuri Voronin.<sup>46</sup> It seems,

43 Kekkonen's diary, 13 Jul. 1963. The information had been given at some point earlier, but Kekkonen recalled it here in connection with the West German Felfe case.

44 According to the list received by Finnish military intelligence, Eero A. Wuori was 'Moses', the splinter social democratic leader Aarre Simonen was 'Sika' (Swine), but Kustaa Vilkuna was under a neutral name 'Ville'. P. Salminen, *Puolueettomuuden nimeen*. Helsinki: Suomen mies 1995, 146, 189. In the Supo Archives, file amp XV U 1 b, there is a list of 28 KGB and GRU officers, written down by and by the Finnish security police chief Armas Alhava, no title, no signature, no date, but late 1962.

45 A memo from the US Government to the Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander, given on 20 Jan 1962, published as an appendix in J. Widén, *Notkrisen och dess efterspel: USA:s relationer med Sverige under en av kalla krigets höjdpunkter, oktober 1961-mars 1962*. Stockholm: Forskningsprogrammet Sverige under kalla kriget 2004.

46 In Kekkonen's diaries, no private meetings with Voronin are recorded, except one, on 5 Apr. 1964. Of course, there could have been meetings not recorded by him, but this seems improbable, because he eagerly recorded (and directed) meetings with Voronin by others close to him, as Ahti Karjalainen or Arvo Korsimo (19 Jan. 1963, 19 Mar. 1963, 8 Nov. 1963 and several others). During this period, Kotov frequently visited Helsinki to consult Kekkonen in case of important

however, that the main Western conclusion drawn from Golitsyn's revelations was that the West must take a more positive and constructive attitude to Kekkonen to avoid pushing him completely to the Soviet side. The Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander was urged by the US to pay more attention (in a positive sense) to Kekkonen. This he did.

In August 1963, Rex Bosley of the British intelligence showed up in Helsinki to talk with Kekkonen about the revelations. He said that on Golitsyn's list of top Finns 'in Soviet service' were the two leaders of the splinter social democratic party (Emil Skog and Aarre Simonen), the commander of the Helsinki City Police (Erik Gabrielsson), and last but not least, Urho Kekkonen himself. 'Was there really "in Soviet service"?' Kekkonen asked. 'That's what he said', Bosley responded, but then explained that the West considered the president as a mysterious political figure, close to Khrushchev, but not 'in service'. Kekkonen was relieved. In his diary he pondered the proper way to get it known in Moscow that he was considered mysterious, 'even suspected' by the West. This information 'would strengthen my position in the Soviet Union.'<sup>47</sup>

Here, Kekkonen reaped the fruit of sharing of his assessments of Soviet leaders with Western intelligence circles. His most important Western contact was Reginald 'Rex' Bosley, whom he for an unknown reason called 'Art Dealer' (Taulukauppia).<sup>48</sup> Bosley, who had served in Finland in the 1940s, showed up in 1957 to say that there was a group in the British government willing to keep up unofficial contacts with the Finnish president.<sup>49</sup> By the mid-60s, Bosley had visited Kekkonen

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developments. Voronin's predecessor V. V. Zhenikhov, whom Kekkonen met frequently, lost his job because of the defection of his subordinate.

<sup>47</sup> Kekkonen's diary, 29 Aug. 1963. Bosley also told about the case of Penkovsky, 'the biggest spy that can be imagined'. Due to him, the West saw that the Soviet Union is not as strong as it was trying to make others believe. The damage he did to the Soviets was irreparable. Years later, Bosley said that Golitsyn had claimed that Kekkonen was 'a spy hired by them', but the SIS had rejected the accusation 'by saying that UKK [Kekkonen] is their spy.' Kekkonen's diary, 5 Nov. 1975.

<sup>48</sup> Information about the nickname given to the author by Gen. Urpo Levo, who was the president's aide-de-camp and organized many of his clandestine meetings.

<sup>49</sup> J. Suomi, *Kriisien aika: Urho Kekkonen 1956–1962*. Helsinki: Otava 1992, 108.

more than 20 times.<sup>50</sup> In the US archives there is a memo on a frank and detailed discussion between Kekkonen and ‘a British friend’ at the height of the Note Crisis in 1961.<sup>51</sup>

If we can infer from topics discussed, the Swedish industrialist Marcus Wallenberg might have served as Kekkonen’s intelligence channel to some circles in the West.<sup>52</sup>

#### THE BREZHNEV PERIOD

Three weeks after Khrushchev’s fall, the new Soviet leadership restored the direct KGB contact with Kekkonen. The new resident in Helsinki, V. S. Stepanov, was of Karelian (or Finnish) origin and had a perfect command of language. Immediately on arrival he wanted to meet in the presidential sauna, to declare that he, unlike the ambassador, had direct contact with Brezhnev. ‘Has he?’ Kekkonen pondered, and had his close ally ask Albert Akulov of the KGB political line if this was really the case. Envious of his new boss, Akulov declared that it was *he* who had the direct link to Brezhnev and *not* Stepanov, ‘at least not yet’.<sup>53</sup> This incident shows a new feature: the Soviets, including KGB officers, slandered each other and even criticized their top leaders. Early on, after the Cuban missile crisis, Kotov had said that ‘some people in the USSR, he among them, had considered Khrushchev’s policy towards the US too soft. But the decision had to be made quickly and the other line would probably have led to the occupation of Cuba [by the US].’<sup>54</sup> When Brezhnev came

50 Kekkonen’s diary, 9 Jul. 1965. On this visit, Bosley said that Shelepin would take over the Soviet leadership.

51 National Archives (US), Record Group 84, Box 7, folder 320, Finland-USSR 1959–1961, Memo on a discussion between Kekkonen and a friend on 6 Nov. 1961, 8 Nov. 1961, published by J. Aunesluoma in Finnish in *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, vol. 100 (2002: 2). Nothing has so far turned up in the British archives.

52 When the KGB Helsinki resident gave Kekkonen a rather extensive account of Soviet leaders’ thinking on the war in Vietnam, the next day Kekkonen told Wallenberg about it. Kekkonen’s diary, 27 and 28 Mar. 1965.

53 Kekkonen’s diary, 7 and 10 Nov. 1964.

54 Kekkonen’s diary, 9 Jan. 1963.

to power, the KGB channel produced a frank assessment about the new leader: 'That's a stupid guy.'<sup>55</sup> Kekkonen probably agreed.<sup>56</sup>

Through the new *resident*, Kekkonen first tried to promote ideas developed during the Khrushchev era, such as the exchange of Finnish recognition of the German Democratic Republic for the return of the city of Vyborg (in Finnish, Viipuri) with surroundings, lost in the Second World War.<sup>57</sup> Initially, the KGB man was eager, but the new ideological climate in Moscow did not turn out to be favourable. After the occupation of Czechoslovakia, Kekkonen dropped the idea.

KGB efforts to influence Finnish political life were facilitated by the fact that, hoping for entrance into the government, traditional anti-Soviet parties were changing their line and beginning to strive for Soviet contacts, the Social Democrats from the mid-60s and then also the Conservatives. Kekkonen thus lost the argument that if the Russians did not deal with him, worse forces would take over in Finland. On the other hand, Soviet positions were weakened by electoral losses suffered by the traditional customer parties, the Agrarians and the Communists, and by currents inside these two parties which favoured distancing themselves from the Soviets. On the surface, all relevant forces took their oaths of loyalty to friendship and the 'Paasikivi-Kekkonen line', but deeper and hidden forces were fiercely competing with each other, and on both sides.

Around 1970, the Soviets were even afraid of 'losing' Finland. A silent crisis developed, when the CPSU International Department – backed by Suslov and, to an extent, Brezhnev – were trying to introduce a more distinct left-wing domination in Finnish political life after Kekkonen, who was believed to be retiring. Deputy head of the international department,

55 Kekkonen's diary, 17 Oct. 1964. Which one of the Soviets said this is not written down. The entry was written on the basis of the discussions Kekkonen's close ally Korsimo had in Moscow with the former Helsinki resident Zhenikhov about the reasons for Khrushchev's dismissal.

56 When British Prime Minister Harold Wilson suggested that Brezhnev would do as a secretary general for the Transport Workers' Union, whereas Kosygin could be an excellent chairman for the Imperial Chemical Industries, Kekkonen agreed, but did not offer further criticism of Brezhnev. Instead, he gave his thoughts on how this kind of a man had been able to come to power. The National Archives (UK), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) 33/724, Record of conversation between Wilson and Kekkonen, 17 Jul. 1969.

57 Kekkonen's diary 19 Oct. and 16 Nov. 1965.

Aleksei Belyakov, was appointed ambassador to promote these ideas. The KGB, however, wanted to continue business as usual with Kekkonen and after him with his more docile pupil, Ahti Karjalainen.<sup>58</sup> Kekkonen and the KGB prevailed, the ambassador was pulled out after seven months in office.

During this crisis Kekkonen showed an additional feature in his dealings. Aware of the fact that the KGB would not trust his word only, Kekkonen wrote memorandums about what the president was believed to be thinking, and these were then given to the KGB by his personal intelligence chief, Professor Kustaa Vilkuna, who was a long-time regular agent in the KGB books.<sup>59</sup> So, the KGB obtained both the president's direct views and secret agent information about these, both of which had been carefully prepared by Kekkonen himself. In the agent reports, the Soviets were sometimes criticized rather sharply for their insufficient support for the president in his difficult task. The president was described to be very depressed because of the Soviets having let him down, 'completely alone (...) without the slightest help from any of yours.'<sup>60</sup> The brightest KGB chiefs in Helsinki possibly guessed that also this agent information originated from Kekkonen, but they could not afford to destroy a pattern certainly appreciated by the Centre. Of course, the KGB probably had also real (but weaker) agent sources around Kekkonen.

KGB purists accused the Helsinki political line of becoming a branch of diplomacy. Where were actual agents, meeting in secret, taking orders, doing as they were told to and getting paid for it?<sup>61</sup> The Helsinki hands responded by inflating numbers and by recording contacts as agents,<sup>62</sup> and

58 A detailed description and assessment of this crisis in K. Rentola, *Vallankumouksen aave: Vasemmisto, Kekkonen ja Beljakov 1970*. Helsinki: Otava 2005, part of which published as 'Der Vorschlag einer europäischen Konferenz für Sicherheit und die stille Krise zwischen Finnland und der Sowjetunion', in *Neutralität – Chance oder Chimäre? Konzepte des dritten Weges für Deutschland und die Welt 1945–1990*, Hrsg. D. Geppert u. U. Wengst. München: Institut für Zeitgeschichte 2005, 177–202

59 This kind of ploy is mentioned in Kekkonen's diary on 7 Dec. 1970.

60 Kekkonen Archives, Yearbook for 1971, P.M. on 1 Apr. 1971, no signature, Kekkonen's note: 'Vilkuna to Vladimirov'.

61 O. Kalugin, *Proshchai, Lubyanka!* Moskva: Olimp 1995, 225.

62 According to Gordievsky (1997, 124–6) the KGB political line in Helsinki in the 1970s had 33 actual agents, 33 confidential contacts, and 25 targets under

by trying to prove that operative conditions in Finland were extremely complicated and very difficult.<sup>63</sup> Operatives with experience of big powers ridiculed this: how come a tiny security police with a hundred officers could create difficult conditions? But the Helsinki hands did not bow down. On the contrary, V. M. Vladimirov proved 'scientifically' in his dissertation in the KGB Academy that in specific (and difficult) operative conditions it was necessary to shift emphasis from traditional agent operations to modern contact network, through which all necessary information could be obtained.<sup>64</sup>

By the 1970s, the Brezhnev stagnation began to take its toll on KGB operations in Finland. Discipline was slackening, there were instances of corruption and various side efforts. In 1973, the former KGB resident to Helsinki, V. S. Stepanov, asked Kekkonen to propose to Brezhnev and Podgornyi that he, Stepanov, be appointed as Soviet ambassador to Helsinki.<sup>65</sup> After some hesitation, Kekkonen agreed, fearing that the arrogant Karelian might get his appointment even *without* his support. Kekkonen might have been tempted to play various Soviet interests and bureaucracies against each other in order to gain more latitude; he was aware of intense rivalry between Soviet actors, but that was a dangerous game and uncertainties were huge. In any case, Stepanov was appointed, but forced to resign from the KGB.<sup>66</sup> In Helsinki, his arrival made a mess of the KGB high level network and in particular of relations with Kekkonen. As ambassador and 'Vice President of Finland', as he liked to present himself, Stepanov was in charge of official relations, but he also

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development. The total figure corresponds with the records of the Finnish security police, where the KGB political line officers in Helsinki in 1970 had 101 recorded contacts persons who were met more or less regularly. However, it seems absurd that 33 of these could have been agents in any meaningful sense.

63 Estonian State Archives (ERAF) library, KGB collection, Memo by Capt. A.P. Akulov, 'Agenturno-operativnoe obstanovki v Finlyandii: Obshchii obzor' (KGB copy, secret, no. 55), 1968.

64 Kalugin (1995, 225) says that Vladimirov's conclusion was strongly supported by Kryuchkov, new head of foreign intelligence from 1971.

65 V. Stepanov to Kekkonen, dated 20.9. but should be 20.11.1973, published in *Kirjeitä mylläriille 1956–1981*, ed. by P. Lähteenkorva & J. Pekkarinen. Helsinki: Otava 2000, 369.

66 Kalugin, *Proshchai, Lubyanka!*, 224. The English translation does not include passages on Kekkonen.

wanted to control his old area of confidential contacts, despite the fact that the KGB was represented by a very senior officer, Mikhail Kotov. 'Kotov mildly criticized Stepanov', Kekkonen noted.<sup>67</sup> The two Soviets 'seem to be on bad terms. K. of course is jealous of S.'<sup>68</sup>

After Kotov, the Helsinki residency was taken over for two years by a son-in-law to somebody high up, a completely incapable know-nothing, not even able to speak Finnish, Swedish or German, the three languages Kekkonen knew. The president did not even get his name right. 'Kotov's successor', he noted in his diaries.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Some preliminary conclusions can be drawn.

First, the information currents. By 1970, there could not be any significant political secrets in Finland for the Soviets. Discussing the fate of the presidency and the successor problem with Kotov, Kekkonen noted that the KGB resident 'knew everything, even things I did not know.'<sup>69</sup> In political terms, Finland was transparent to the Soviets and their network enabled them to influence matters heavily. Kekkonen for his part received every kind of Moscow rumour and unique information on Soviet leaders, their way of thinking, even hidden motives,<sup>70</sup> and their pecking order, although even he was often surprised and disappointed by their actions.

Second, it is possible that Soviet intelligence operations in other areas, such as traditional military intelligence, were a bit neglected in Finland.

67 Kekkonen's diary, 15 Jul. 1975.

68 Kekkonen's diary, 25 Nov. 1975.

69 Kekkonen's diary, 23 Oct. 1972. Earlier, Kotov had a more traditional boast that 'we know better than you, what the people of Finland are thinking and talking about in railway carriages, restaurants, officers' clubs....' Kekkonen's diary, 25 Nov. 1963.

70 On the Soviet leaders' concerns inside the Socialist camp, Stepanov said that the situation in Poland was becoming better and Gomulka's position was strengthening, whereas in Czechoslovakia the new leadership was losing control. 'In both countries, the Zionists are guilty.' Kekkonen's diary, 6 Apr. 1968.

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Not that there was much to hide, but this was quite a difficult terrain to penetrate into, as were some other ‘hard’ branches of the Finnish state.

Third, for political reasons and to boost their network, the KGB regularly helped Kekkonen and Finnish industries to get huge profitable deals, which they in purely economic terms would probably not have got. What was even more important, through his contacts Kekkonen was able to obtain Soviet approval for Finnish participation in Western economic integration. Thus, KGB contacts strengthened capitalism in Finland.

#### CODA

Kekkonen was as skillful an operator as anybody connected with the KGB, but his last days in office were unavoidably melancholic. In June 1981, Brezhnev informed the CPSU politburo that because of his worsening health, Kekkonen is thinking of withdrawing from office rather soon. (In fact, he had two months to go.) As for the successor, he no longer repeated his earlier negative views of his former protégé Ahti Karjalainen, but the latter had meanwhile acquired a notorious reputation, drinking too much and getting involved in scandalous situations. Kekkonen had said to the KGB resident – now again a competent officer, V. M. Vladimirov – that his most suitable successor would be Jaakko Pajula, director of the National Pension Fund.

This was an ‘utterly unexpected turn’ for the KGB. Pajula was not generally known, and lacked a strong political base. The KGB was astray, in this decisive moment they could not offer any advice at all to the Kremlin, nor were they able to assess how the situation would develop in the nearest future.<sup>71</sup>

Kekkonen did not record anything of this in his diary; possibly he did not remember the details afterwards. It is difficult to believe that such a renowned tactician could produce such a silly and unrealistic idea. As loyal supporters of Kekkonen, Pajula and his friend Olavi J. Mattila (whose name was mentioned in an earlier KGB-inspired successor plan) had been promoted to high positions in state-controlled parts of economic life, but they did not carry any political weight of their own.

<sup>71</sup> Russian State Archives for Contemporary History (RGANI), f. 89, per. 42, d. 44, str. 5, Zasedaniya politburo TsK KPSS, Rabochaya zapis’, 18 Jun 1981.

*President Urho Kekkonen of Finland and the KGB*

In the last instance, both Kekkonen himself and the KGB lost control of the most important lever of Finnish-Soviet relations, that of the Finnish presidency. The limits of the KGB influence were shown by the fact that Kekkonen's successor, social democrat Mauno Koivisto, was elected without clear Soviet support, even against their wishes.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Koivisto preserved the KGB contact inherited from Kekkonen and took care of many vital issues through that channel. Only at the collapse of the Soviet Union, he informed the last KGB resident Feliks Karasev that this system was now over and henceforth issues between the states would proceed through regular diplomatic channels.

## The FCMA Treaty: Who Fathered It?

TIMO SOIKKANEN

The 1948 FCMA treaty is undoubtedly one of the most important and controversial treaties in Finnish history. It became – surprisingly early – a focal point of research. The first serious study was that of Veikko Veilahti, who, in 1953, wrote a licentiate thesis for the School of Social Sciences in Helsinki, entitled *Yhteistoiminta- ja avunantosopimus Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton poliittisten suhteiden perustana* (The Treaty of Cooperation and Mutual Assistance as the Cornerstone of Finnish – Soviet Relations). A lot could be said about the fate of this work. Two of the three examiners rejected it. In doing so, they accused the researcher of tendentiousness and maintained that the problem of the treaty was too close in time to permit of scholarly study. A vehement press polemic sprang up around Veilahti's text.

Threatening letters were written.<sup>1</sup> To this day, the licentiate thesis has remained unaccepted. These events of the early days of the treaty strikingly reveal the political element that has, from the very beginning, clung to research about the FCMA treaty. Due to the lack of sources, research around the treaty has for decades been compelled to adopt a comparative approach: the natural parallels have been the treaties of a similar kind made between the Soviet Union and other states.<sup>2</sup>

1 The reader will find references to these letters in D. Anckar, *Sven Lindman och Yrjö Ruutu. Anteckningar kring en episod*. Meddelanden från ekonomisk-statsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid Åbo Akademi. Statsvetenskapliga institutionen. Ser. A.201. Åbo 1984.

2 A good example of this type of approach is contained in Keijo Korhonen's article 'Suomen valtiosopimukset', in I. Hakalehto (ed.), *Suomi kansainvälisen jännityksen maailmassa*. Porvoo: WSOY 1969.

However, the history of the mutual relations between Finland and the Soviet Union later opened up another interpretative perspective when President Urho Kekkonen, in the early 1970s, gave a semi-official analysis of Yartsev's pre-Second World War approaches, seeing them from both a comparative standpoint *and as initiatory* for the history of such an agreement between Finland and Soviet Union. The negotiations undertaken in Moscow prior to the outbreak of the Winter War formed a part of Kekkonen's interpretation.

A third and distinct point of comparison – one that has been politically highly sensitive – is the drawing of a parallel with the agreement made between the Soviet Union and the Kuusinen government in the beginning of the Winter War. An analogy here might be made with the agreement drawn up in March 1918 by the *Kansanvaltuuskunta* (the Finnish People's Deputation) for a *Sopimus ystävyiden ja veljeyden lujittamisesta* (an Agreement for the Strengthening of Friendship and Fraternity).

In the beginning of the 1980s, researchers found a new line of development when sources relating to the origin of the treaty began to open up. In the middle of the decade, for example, J. K. Paasikivi's diaries were published. On the other hand, Soviet material was still to remain for several years outside the reach of researchers.

As noted, the question of who took the initiative for the FCMA treaty was raising political passions as soon as the treaty was in being. Was it Mannerheim, Paasikivi, Zhdanov, Molotov, or Stalin? The initiative-taker obviously played a considerable role and even became a weapon in the struggle for the acceptance of the treaty itself. In consequence, he had meaning for the historian, too. In what follows, various interpretations about the initiator of the FCMA treaty will be looked at, showing how the conclusions drawn, including analyses of the prime motivation, have changed over time. The question is therefore one both of the tumult of political battle as well as one of the assessments of the argumentation used in the writing of history. The arguments involved will not be laid out in chronological presentation but only when they have come into publicity. That is to say, progress occurs in the manner demanded by historiography. An onion is being peeled.

A PART OF POLITICS

When the key discussions that led to the treaty began in November 1947, Stalin and Molotov pointed out on different occasions the previous initiative taken by the Finns. The Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Molotov, in receiving in that month the Finnish government delegation led by Prime Minister Mauno Pekkala, started, a discussion about a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance. He did so by reminding the Finns to their surprise that Marshal Mannerheim had put forward the idea of a treaty of this kind when talking to Zhdanov after the armistice following the Continuation War. In this connection, Molotov also recalled that Prime Minister Paasikivi had suggested such a treaty in May 1945.

Prime Minister Pekkala was delighted to hear that the roles of Mannerheim and Paasikivi had now come out as instigators of a mutual assistance treaty, for Pekkala hardly wished to have such an unpopular measure attributed to him.<sup>3</sup>

In March 1948, the Communist press, headed by *Vapaa Pohjola*, told its readers that Finland had taken steps to enter into a defence treaty with the Soviet Union. According to *Vapaa Pohjola*, immediately after the ending of the Continuation War, there prevailed – and even among the Right – a general opinion that Finland should never again become entangled in war with the Soviet Union and that all necessary measures should be undertaken to avoid that eventuality:

To this end our general staff, which of old can hardly be accused of excessive Soviet partiality, drew up a memorandum in which a military agreement with the Soviet Union was proposed.<sup>4</sup>

A few days later *Suomen Tietotoimisto* (STT – the Finnish news agency) rushed to deny these assertions – most probably at the behest of Paasikivi.<sup>5</sup>

3 T. Heikkilä, *Paasikivi peräsimmä. Pääministerin sihteerin muistelmat 1944–48*. Keuruu: Otava 1965, 300–301.

4 'Oikeistomme suhtautuminen avunantosopimukseen. Onko se muodostunut kielteisemmäksi?'. *Vapaa Pohjola* 11 Mar. 1948.

5 T. Suontausta, 'Paasikiven sopimus – Eduskunnan sopimus', in K. Kare (ed.), *J. K. Paasikivi. Itsenäisyys – rauha – valtiollinen sivistys*. Hämeenlinna: Karisto 1960, 103; T. Karvonen, *Neljännensuosisata YVA-sopimusta*. Pori: Kansankulttuuri 1973, 22–23. Karvonen has attributed the wrong year to the

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What was occurring was a form of shadow boxing, something that was far from clear to the general public.

The motives of the Soviet leadership in referring to what might be termed the paternity of the treaty were naturally enough connected in the first place with starting up negotiations for the treaty. The basic question in Finnish domestic comment was of how to present the treaty.

#### REJECTED PATERNITY

By keeping quiet about the whole issue in publishing his memoirs in the beginning of the 1950s, Mannerheim expressed everything. He did not want to acknowledge paternity though it was on offer. Again, his confidant, General Erik Heinrichs, was silent about this matter in the biography of Mannerheim which he published in the beginning of the 1960s. Heinrichs can be considered as knowing exceptionally well the events of the year 1945, for as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces he was a key figure in drawing up with Mannerheim in the beginning of the year the draft of an agreement intended for Zhdanov.

The legal expert Tauno Suontausta, who in 1948 was a member of the consultative committee which handled the FCMA treaty, wrote in the beginning of the 1960s that Zhdanov took up the issue first with Mannerheim, but discussed it later with Paasikivi, too. In 1961, in *Suomalainen Suomi*, the historian Lauri Hyvämäki reviewed Suontausta's explanation of the origin of the FCMA treaty. Hyvämäki emphasized that Paasikivi himself, when speaking to the consultative committee, had explained 'in some detail' the early stages. It seems evident that Hyvämäki had personally discussed these matters with Suontausta. According to Hyvämäki, Suontausta's account confirmed that the initiative had not come from Finland but from the Control Commission.<sup>6</sup>

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the FCMA treaty, the long-serving Secretary of the Finnish-Soviet Friendship Society, Toivo Karvonen, drew attention to the 'considerable confusion' surrounding the origins of the treaty. He felt that the information about the defence treaty having

information got from Suontausta.

<sup>6</sup> Suontausta, 'Paasikiven sopimus', 102–103; L. Hyvämäki, 'Ulkopolitiikkamme kertosaë', *Suomalainen Suomi* 3/1961.

originated from the Finnish side, while Moscow and Zhdanov in Helsinki had rejected the proposal, was 'unimaginable'.<sup>7</sup>

#### A REVIVED PATERNITY

That the treaty was a child of Mannerheim was an explanation that did not become rooted in opinion until the beginning of the 1980s. Two books, in particular, were responsible for this development. The first was the final volume of Stig Jägerskiöld's Mannerheim biographical series and the second was, likewise, the final volume in Tuomo Polvinen's wide-ranging series on the international relations of Finland, the one entitled *Jaltasta Pariisin rauhaan* (From Yalta to the Peace of Paris).

The new interpretation rested on the fact that Mannerheim had become uneasy on account of the demands of the Soviet Union for the dismantling of Finnish coastal artillery. On 20 December 1944, Mannerheim wrote to Zhdanov, the chairman of the Control Commission, and asked, in the light of the continuing danger from the Germans, that Finland should be allowed to keep this artillery in place. On 6 January 1945, Zhdanov replied in the negative. Nonetheless, Mannerheim kept up his correspondence and appealed, *inter alia*, to the joint defence concerns of Finland and the Soviet Union.

According to what Jägerskiöld wrote, this correspondence of Mannerheim was no longer a great step to discussions about a defence agreement.<sup>8</sup> Polvinen, for his part, drew the following conclusion:

Mannerheim's letters show that his thoughts were moving from the technical details of marine defence into much wider spheres. The question was no more a question simply of gun-barrels and submarines but of a comprehensive system for the relations between Finland and the Soviet Union.

Polvinen continues by describing how in a conversation with Zhdanov on 22 December 1944:

<sup>7</sup> Karvonen, *Neljännensvuosisata YYA-sopimusta*, 22–23.

<sup>8</sup> S. Jägerskiöld, *Viimeiset vuodet. Mannerheim 1944–1951*. Keuruu: Otava 1982, 122–124.

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Mannerheim himself grasped the pen and clearly drafted, even if in a slightly wavering old man's handwriting, a first sketch for an agreement between Finland and the Soviet Union. The Marshal wrote an outline in Russian of three articles in all.<sup>9</sup>

Jägerskiöld's and Polvinen's interpretations are well written. Both their works appeared in 1981, at the time when Kekkonen's quarter-of-a century long term of office was ending. With the popularization of the ideas in Jägerskiöld's and Polvinen's texts, they created for post-Kekkonen Finland a swiftly-established basis for the alleged initiative and paternity of Marshal Mannerheim.

I remember myself an occasion in the 1980s when, in connection with an evaluation task, I was listening to school history lessons. I made a conscious effort to go to classes in which the post-Continuation War 'dangerous years' were being dealt with. Two-thirds of the teachers gave their class to understand that Mannerheim had both invented and planned the FCMA treaty. And, when Finland celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an independent state, Jukka Tarkka wrote in a *Festschrift* about 'Mannerheim's bold initiative' which had 'radically improved the situation of Finland'.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, as late as the 1980s, *Marski* (as Mannerheim was familiarly known to the Finns), received *gratis*, another feather in his cap. The new interpretation fit in well with Mannerheim's stress on the importance of the Yartsev negotiations as well as on the role he played before the outbreak of the Winter War in recommending a certain concessionary policy. The historical writing of the 1980s had found a bridge into the period before the Winter War. It looked as if the problem of the security of Finland had now found its solution by means of a synthesis: *Marski's* way of thinking and Yartsev's proposals combined would solve the eternal problem of Finnish security. Standpoints, it seemed that one of the Paasikivi line's pillars had crumbled and fallen: this was his conviction that the FCMA treaty had been a Soviet idea. On the other hand, it did appear as if the FCMA treaty was now a safe, domestic product.

The Paasikivi diaries do not bear out the above-mentioned interpretation

9 T. Polvinen, *Jaltasta Pariisin rauhaan*. Juva: WSOY 1981, 58–59.

10 J. Tarkka, 'Mannerheimin aloite', in J. Tarkka and A. Tiitta *Seitsemän vuosikymmentä kansakunnan elämästä*. Keuruu: Otava 1987.

The diaries of President Paasikivi appeared in 1985 for the years 1944–1956. They do not provide credence to the semi-official status of the interpretations mentioned above. In no part of his texts does Paasikivi mention either Mannerheim or himself as initiators of the treaty – on the contrary, in fact. From his entries of 19 January and 22 January 1945, the picture emerges that Zhdanov, having received from Mannerheim a letter expressing the wish that Finland retain the disputed coastal artillery, decided to seize his chance and thus indicated the possibility of a treaty. After this, Mannerheim had drawn up a treaty ‘about which Zhdanov had spoken’.

In fact, the description of events in the Paasikivi diaries for 1945 faithfully matches that given by Mannerheim from his sickbed in 1948 to Ambassador G. A. Gripenberg. Gripenberg wrote down in his diary Mannerheim’s account as follows:

Schdanoff (sic) on account of this letter had later gone to Mannerheim and said, among other things, that a Finnish-Russian defence pact might be envisaged. Mannerheim had thereupon answered that he had not for the moment thought of anything else than a coastal defence arrangement, but that it was of course possible to discuss the idea put forward by Schdanoff.

This later account of Mannerheim can, naturally enough, be easily challenged on grounds of source-criticism by averring that Mannerheim was at that time – in the early part of 1948 – trying to pass the buck solely on to Zhdanov as the new initiative for a treaty had been felt by the Finns to be embarrassing.<sup>11</sup>

In his diary, Paasikivi later returned in different connections to the matter. When, in November 1947, Molotov had received in his study the Finnish delegation and had told the delegation that the original idea had come from Mannerheim and Paasikivi, the vexed Paasikivi had told his diary:

<sup>11</sup> G. A. Gripenberg’s diary 19 Jan. 1948. Jägerskiöld, *Viimeiset vuodet*, 126–127. See also Polvinen’s later research: T. Polvinen, ‘Zdanov, Mannerheim ja YYA-sopimuksen esivaihe 1944–1945’, in Jorma Selovuori (ed.), *...vaikka voissa paistaisi? Venäjän rooli Suomessa (Festschrift for Osmo Jussila)*. Porvoo: WSOY 1998, 362.

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It is maintained that the proposal was made by Mannerheim and myself. This is a mistake, we have not made the proposition. It was Zhdanov.<sup>12</sup>

The indignant Paasikivi demonstrated with the aid of his notes the true state of affairs to those who came visiting, such as K. A. Fagerholm and Cay Sundström, the Finnish minister in Moscow. Paasikivi also drew up a memorandum for the on-going negotiations. In this, he explicitly avowed that it was Zhdanov in 1945 who was the first to take the matter up.<sup>13</sup>

It is worth noting that Paasikivi did not, for example, deny the outlines of an agreement drawn up by Mannerheim nor did he contest Mannerheim's and his own activities in the year 1945. What he continued to deny, however, was that the initiative for a defence pact came from the pair of them. It was Zhdanov who had brought up a defence pact and Mannerheim's and Paasikivi's activities constituted only a continuation and consequence.

Paasikivi's diary entries have not influenced Finnish interpretations. The vision of Mannerheim's initiative continues its triumphal march and more and more historians seem to be joining it.

#### THE SOVIET MYTHOLOGY

In the Soviet writing of history and in the FCMA mythology, Mannerheim was not generally given the same kind of initiator's role which he received from the Finnish side; this, notwithstanding the fact that in 1947 Soviet negotiators mentioned the role of a previous Finnish initiative to the Finnish delegation. This was exceptional. For example, in the 1980s V. V. Pohlebkin kept quiet about Mannerheim's role as an initiator of the treaty.

It is, however, true that in 1988 an interesting discussion began about the FCMA treaty and in it Vladimir Smirnov, referring to Finnish interpretations, posed the question of Mannerheim's motives. According

12 J. K. Paasikivi's diary 15 Nov. 1947. See also Sundström's account, *ibid.*, 31 Dec. 1948; T. Soikkanen 1991, 374–375.

13 J. K. Paasikivi's diary 17 Nov. 1947, 31 Dec. 1947 and 17 Jan. 1948.

to Smirnov, Mannerheim had not been considered a supporter of friendship with the Soviet Union. That was why other motives had to be sought for his presumed initiative. But Smirnov was unable to say what these other motives were. It was clear that Smirnov did not really want to give Mannerheim the honour of fathering the FCMA treaty. In short, instead of Mannerheim, Smirnov offered the long line of the Finnish working-class movement, singling out the agreement made in 1918 between Soviet Russia and the People's Deputation.<sup>14</sup>

It is interesting to note that Mannerheim himself and Smirnov took basically the same stance on *Marski's* potential paternity; Mannerheim did not want the honour and Smirnov did not want to give it.

#### THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE 1990S

In the beginning of the 1990s, I drew attention, in certain newspaper articles and in my biography of Yrjö Ruutu, to the possibility that Zhdanov had been a solo player in this question and that he had not had the approval of the Kremlin. In any case, it does seem as if the Kremlin had reacted negatively to Zhdanov's activities and initiative. Should this be so, it may be possible to reconcile the earlier information and the extracts from Paasikivi's diary.

In the light of the latter's diaries, Mannerheim and Paasikivi seemed to have assumed throughout that Moscow was fully behind Zhdanov. In his diary Paasikivi added, in brackets after Zhdanov's name, the word 'Kremlin'. This miscalculation is a reflection of the fact that Paasikivi did not understand the course of development but was repeatedly surprised by it. When Paasikivi, on the evening of 22 January 1945, rushed to Mannerheim to hear Zhdanov's and Stalin's answer to Mannerheim's and Paasikivi's way of thinking, Zhdanov did not react in the expected way. Paasikivi's diary entries reveal that Zhdanov had now found that an agreement would simply serve as a beacon towards which one could be drawn. Zhdanov had just wanted – surprise, surprise – to speak about

14 VI. Smirnov, 'Tie kohti majakkaa. Todellako Mannerheim?', *Maailman ja Me* 1/1988; H. Viitala, 'Majakka ennakkoluulojen yössä. Mannerheim sopimuksen ensimmäinen luonnostelija', *ibid* 1/1998.

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‘that limited question’ which Mannerheim had originally raised in his letter. In astonishment, Paasikivi told his diary on 22 January 1945:

The great issue thus remains unattended. Whatever the reason was behind Zhdanov’s change in stand, we cannot fathom it. Something seems to have come in between.

On this was based my conclusion<sup>15</sup> that the initiative was originally Zhdanov’s and that the Kremlin had, without further ado, turned it down. At the same time, Mannerheim and Paasikivi had begun, at Zhdanov’s request, to develop his proposal.

#### RUSSIAN SOURCE-MATERIAL

In the year 1994, Maxim Korobochkin threw light on the course of events by utilizing the hitherto closed Soviet archives. In investigating the origins of the treaty, he linked up the Soviet proposals of 1939 for both the Baltic States and Finland. The Baltic lands entered into agreements in the spirit of submitting to coercion, while the Finns rejected such an agreement from the very start of the negotiations. According to Korobochkin, ‘the next Soviet initiative of this kind emerged in 1945’. He believed that Zhdanov, in discussing with President Mannerheim on 18 January 1945 the letter *Marski* had written to him, had affirmed that he had ‘nothing against’ military cooperation with Finland on land and sea. Korobochkin continues:

It is not clear whether this proposal was a personal initiative of the ACC Chairman, or whether he had received some general briefing this subject in Moscow.<sup>16</sup>

In so far as Zhdanov had received instructions, Korobochkin believes that this ambitious member of the Politbureau had got his timing wrong.

15 T. Soikkanen 1991, 373–377; T. Soikkanen, ‘YYA-sopimus. Turha sulka marskin hatussa’, *Turun Sanomat* 6 Jan. 1992; cf. *Turun Sanomat* 6 Mar 1995.

16 M. Korobochkin, ‘The USSR and the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with Finland’, in J. Nevakivi (ed.), *Finnish-Soviet Relations 1944–1948*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki 1994, 171.

For two days later, Zhdanov received from the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Molotov, stiffly-worded complaints in which he was accused of 'hot-headedness', of a desire 'to go forward before it was time' and of endeavouring 'to resolve all issues in the course of one discussion'.

The Commissar for Foreign Affairs explained to his over-active subordinate that the initiative 'for closer cooperation' should come from the Finns and not from the Soviet side. In any case, Molotov went on, this kind of agreement was 'music of the future', which would be possible only after full diplomatic relations had been restored, in other words, after the peace treaty.<sup>17</sup>

The phrase 'wider cooperation' used by Molotov in his litany of complaints, was a request which had to come from the Finns. It indicated a vista of opportunity, but in this light Molotov regarded Mannerheim's initiative a narrow one, and evidently only concerning coastal artillery.

Molotov recalled once more Zhdanov's mistake. The Soviet Union was in no direct need of an agreement of this kind. The armistice had fulfilled the Soviet Union's territorial demands. A one-sided approach might on the contrary make alliance relations difficult. Nevertheless, in principle, the envisioning of a treaty was desirable.

In May 1945, the dogged Zhdanov took the matter up again with Molotov. Zhdanov's initiative was, according to Korobochkin, this time 'probably' attributable to Paasikivi.<sup>18</sup> But according to the Paasikivi diaries, the move was made by Zhdanov and Paasikivi himself only returned to the matter. According to the diary entry of 26 May 1945, Paasikivi had affirmed to Zhdanov that 'last time' (12 May) he (Zhdanov) had taken up the question of an agreement and now Paasikivi was continuing this discussion. However, though Paasikivi in 1945 thought that an agreement of this sort would be a good means of strengthening position of Finland, enabling even extra advantages to be obtained, he held fast to the idea that the initiative was to come from Russia.

Among themselves, the protagonists accorded the honour of first mover to the other.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 171–172.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 172.

POLVINEN'S NEW INTERPRETATION

In the year 1998, in the *Festschrift* to Osmo Jussila, Tuomo Polvinen returned to the theme of the origin of the FCMA treaty. His starting-point this time was the use made of the new Russian source-material. Hence, where Korobochkin had viewed matters somewhat narrowly from the perspective of Soviet material, Polvinen was now able to bind together the earlier accounts and the information derived from the new Russian sources.

Polvinen saw Mannerheim in 1944–45 as attempting to realize the ideas for a treaty sketched out by Yrjö Ruutu and Erik Castren. The Control Commission noticed at once the significance of Mannerheim's initiative and despatched it at once to Moscow, where Zhdanov was then residing.

In discussing the matter with Stalin, Zhdanov was instructed to tell Mannerheim that the Soviet Union was willing to cooperate in the maritime areas and wanted to know how Mannerheim had envisaged the extent of this cooperation.

On his return to Helsinki, Zhdanov, on 18 January 1945, immediately sought out Mannerheim at Tamminiemi. Zhdanov began the discussion by saying that he wanted to make an 'important announcement' about Finnish maritime defence and navy. He was interrupted by Mannerheim, who emphasized that his starting-point was that after the two-hundred and fifty – year long hostility between Finland and Russia there had come a time for fundamental change. Mannerheim then spoke about the common interests Finland and the Soviet Union had in protecting the bridgehead formed by Finland.

After Zhdanov had again got a chance to speak, he informed Mannerheim that the Soviet Union agreed that the Mannerheim's perceptions of the common Finnish and Soviet interests in defence of Finnish territory were correct. What next followed in their talk together must be looked at word for word, as Zhdanov said it:

On this basis, we cannot oppose military cooperation between us not merely on the sea but also on the land. Hence, it would be desirable to know how Finland understands the range of this cooperation.<sup>19</sup>

19 Polvinen, 'Zdanov, Mannerheim ja YYA-sopimuksen esivaihe', 355–357. See

Polvinen maintains that Zhdanov had advanced his position ‘so swiftly’ that according to his report Mannerheim looked scared.

But there is, however, another and more natural explanation. It was not the speed of the conversation that upset him, but the fact that the conversation seemed to be going towards a wider interpretation than he had envisaged!

That is why Mannerheim did indeed observe that this military cooperation on land might mean the entry of Soviet forces into the territory of the Republic of Finland, a matter that would be objectionable to a nation that did not want foreign forces on its soil. According to Mannerheim, this form of military cooperation would also raise the question of the infringement of the sovereignty and neutrality of Finland.

As the conversation proceeded, Mannerheim wanted to have the issue restricted to coastal defence. Zhdanov, for his part, saw that the experiences of war had shown that the Finnish forces alone were insufficient to repel an invader and ensure the continuity of the security of Finland. As Polvinen quotes it, Zhdanov then went on to say:

Unless the parties accept a (military) cooperation between Finland and the USSR in a wider and more concrete form than that indicated in Mannerheim’s cautious statement, then he, Zhdanov, was, for his own part, ready to abandon his proposal, which was of the kind that could only be put forward once.<sup>20</sup>

Thus the clearly-offended Zhdanov spoke of his own proposal nor did he try to appeal to any suggestion that Mannerheim might have originally fathered the scheme.

#### AN ATTEMPTED INTERPRETATION

It may be of interest to note the variations in argumentation and the motives behind it all. The leadership of the Finnish state – President Mannerheim and Prime Minister Paasikivi – seem from the very beginning to have kept, whether with others or in their private observations, strictly to the

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also Suomen Kuvalehti 18/1981.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 357–358.

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line that the impulse to make a wider agreement out of the question of preserving the coastal artillery came from the Soviet Union. Although Mannerheim and Paasikivi were prepared in the spring of 1945 to work on a defence agreement, they wanted right from the beginning as well as in all stages of discussion to hold fast to the view that the impulse had to come expressly from the Soviet Union.

Correspondingly, Molotov, with Stalin in the background, impressed repeatedly on Zhdanov in 1945 that the proposal for wider cooperation had specifically to come from the Finns. An acceptance in principle and the initiative had to be got from the Finns, but the agreement itself could wait.

At the turn of 1947–48, the Soviet leadership stuck doggedly to the view that the suggestion of a wider defence agreement had to come from the Finns. In an atmosphere of this kind, of conflicting pressures of interest and of the attempt to foist the initiative on the other party, was the FCMA treaty born.

Of what kind then was the disputed initiative?

A key factor was the new letter Mannerheim sent to Zhdanov about the keeping in place of Finnish coastal artillery once the latter had given his initial refusal. Zhdanov's negative reaction to Mannerheim's first letter got Mannerheim to accept – fortunately for the writing of history – a new letter on 8 January 1945 from the government's foreign affairs committee. Heinrichs read the text of the letter aloud. Paasikivi accepted it, because he regarded it as modest in tone. Reinhold Svento, Pekkala, and Johan Helo agreed with Paasikivi. Enckell said nothing, but according to Paasikivi's diary was of the same opinion as he was. Paasikivi described Mannerheim's letter as 'sensible' – 'not bad at all'.<sup>21</sup>

No Finn would ever have imagined that such a text contained a proposal for a defence pact. It was unthinkable. Nevertheless, it was just this letter that the Control Commission had, according to Polvinen, straightaway regarded as significant (from the standpoint of the idea of a treaty) and had sent it to Moscow for Zhdanov's perusal. Polvinen's interpretation has indeed received a new shade of meaning if compared with his original interpretation of 1981. In a way, Polvinen is now referring to a disagreement between, on the one hand, Paasikivi and his

21 J. K. Paasikivi's diary 8 Jan. 1945.

government, and on the other, Mannerheim.<sup>22</sup> In other words, in this letter Mannerheim had consciously aimed at the creation of a wider agreement.

And the Control Commission had understood this. Polvinen does not say this explicitly, but only such a line of thought would permit of an interpretation of Mannerheim's initiative. Yet why should Mannerheim have acted like this? Why should he have spoken, in seeking to keep the artillery, of a wider defence pact? Did he deliberately wish to avoid the imputation of parenthood in the face of a subsequent judgement of history? Without further evidence, it would be futile to speculate on his motives.

In any case, where Paasikivi and his colleagues in government felt that the reference in Mannerheim's letter 'to the common defence interests of Finland and the Soviet Union' constituted an effective argument for keeping the coastal artillery in place, the cock-a-hoop Control Commission, for whom the artillery question was an insignificant detail, interpreted it, however, as a starting-point for a joint defence pact.

Thus was born the initiative for an FCMA agreement, but no one knew who the real father was. Thereafter both parties were to emphasize the pro-geniture of the other.

#### THE TIME FACTOR

It is surely of vital interest to note the later oscillations in interpretation. When the FCMA treaty finally emerged in 1948, both the Kremlin and the Finnish communists emphasized that Finland and Mannerheim had taken the initiative, while Paasikivi and Mannerheim repeatedly rejected this imputation.

In course of time and as the value of the FCMA treaty grew, the roles switched. Then, Soviet commentators and Finnish Communists denied Mannerheim's role and motives, or at any rate disparaged them, while among the writers of Finnish history the attempt began to be made to emphasize Mannerheim's sense of initiative.

Polvinen, in the fourth volume of his biography of Paasikivi, which appeared at the turn of the century, held fast to Mannerheim's initiative.

<sup>22</sup> Polvinen, 'Zdanov, Mannerheim ja YYA-sopimuksen esivaihe', 356.

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He did maintain that both Mannerheim's and Paasikivi's comments in 1948 were affected by the wish to place the uncomfortably-felt treaty's initiative on the shoulders of Zhdanov. But these 1948 comments were a consequence, according to Polvinen, 'of the change in the general situation'.<sup>23</sup>

What Polvinen ignored was that Paasikivi expressed his sentiments in his diary as early as January 1945, that is to say, contemporary comments years before 'the change in the general situation'.

Even the textbooks of Finnish history have preserved this old picture. In them, Mannerheim rides unflinchingly on, and, surprisingly, with a feather in his cap. And myths live on – eternally.

23 T. Polvinen, *J.K. Paasikivi. Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 4. 1944–1948*. Porvoo: WSOY 1999, 33–40; cf. T. Soikkanen, 'Tarjottu ja torjuttu isyys', in Unto Vesa (ed.), *YYA: aika ja sopimus*. Tampere. Tampereen yliopisto 1998.

# The Marshall Plan and Finland

DÖRTE PUTENSEN

Having emerged from the Second World War as the only major power with an intact economy and an infrastructure hardly affected by the war, the United States of America sensed the necessity to provide both military and financial aid to economically devastated Europe. The original hope, that reconstruction would be achieved without a great deal of external assistance, and that Great Britain and France would rapidly rebuild their economies via their colonies, proved unfounded. Little progress had been made by 1947, and the unusually severe winter of 1946–47 had only made the situation worse. At that time the economies of the European countries were still struggling below the efficiency levels of the pre-war years. Agriculture and coal production were stagnating at low levels. This was aggravated by high unemployment and a scarcity of food which led to strikes and unrest in several countries and a generally tense political situation.

From America's point of view any political instability resulting from economic deprivation represented a destabilising factor that could benefit the expansion of Soviet influence in western European countries and thus be a potential threat to the US. American aid was thus designed to prevent this. Recovery in Germany played a key role in the scheme, since the US envisaged it with a type of outpost function to counter Soviet intrusions. From America's political viewpoint Germany's economy was so closely interwoven with the European economy, that reconstruction in Germany was the sole key to Europe's way out of its economic crisis. Consequently, economic reconstruction in Germany was a priority for the US.

A third reason for American aid to Europe was the creation of a market for American surplus production. During the Second World War the US had experienced a completely unprecedented pace of economic growth, since the country was producing military supplies not only for itself, but also for its allies and at first for its future enemies as well. At the end of the war US industries quickly adapted to the production of consumer and investment goods, and the shortages of the war years were replaced by a boom in consumer goods supplies. But in the long run the economy could only be kept in full swing by permanently securing correspondingly high export levels. In this respect the American economy urgently required a favourable market in Europe for its products.

This was the constellation of background factors when the US Secretary of State George C. Marshall announced the European reconstruction program in early 1947. In June Marshall stated that the US would provide the necessary support, if Europe were prepared to launch a mutual long-term reconstruction program. During a speech at Harvard University on 5 June 1947 he said: 'Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist. Any government that is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full co-operation, I am sure, on the part of the United States government.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus Marshall's offer was officially directed to all of the European states. It put Finland in an extremely complicated position and its government was faced with difficult questions. The route that Finland eventually chose has been frequently discussed in contemporary history research, and interpreted in a variety of ways. Did Finland's final decision to refuse aid mean the country's sovereignty was restricted, and that it had shied away as a result of the Soviet warnings and demands? Or did Finland's decision actually manage to secure a maximum room of manoeuvre for its future decisions and its action radius? Seen from the immediate perspective of the years 1947–48, Finland's behaviour must certainly have given the impression that the country was shying away from the program because of its big eastern neighbour. But now, with the benefit of hindsight, Finland's decision not to participate secured the

<sup>1</sup> W. Cornides (ed.), *Europa-Archiv*. Frankfurt/Main 1947, 821 f.

country's chance to pursue a policy of neutrality which may not have existed had the President Juho Kusti Paasikivi decided otherwise in 1947. This will now be illuminated on the basis of the historical facts.<sup>2</sup>

Marshall's speech found no immediate resonance within Finland. It was only after the British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin expressed a positive attitude towards the Marshall plan a week later that the nature and the possible consequences of the offer for Finland and the whole of Europe were discussed in Finnish newspapers.<sup>3</sup> In view of Finland's difficult economic situation and the heavy reparation payments which had to be met, the positive reactions were in a clear majority, although there was apprehension about a growing rift between West and East as a result of the plan. Obviously, such a development could hardly be in Finland's foreign political interests. Clear opposition was expressed solely by the Finnish People's Democratic League SKDL whose strongest member organisation was the Communist Party of Finland.

The final decision on the matter lay in the hands of the country's president Juho Kusti Paasikivi who subsequently held intense discussions with leading members of government and his country's foreign policy experts. In a confidential letter to Foreign Minister Carl Enckell dated 19 June 1947, President Paasikivi expressed a definitely positive attitude towards Marshall's offer. He certainly deemed it necessary for the foreign ministry to critically examine all the details and the international complexities of the project, but pleaded for Finland's participation in it, should the country satisfy the necessary conditions and be included in the recovery program.

During the following days Paasikivi received the assessments of several Finnish diplomats who saw the Paris conference of the 'big three' foreign ministers as the last chance for a united Europe and predicted a

2 For the debate surrounding the Finnish Marshall plan decision see, for instance, J. Nevakivi, *Zdanov Suomessa: miksi meiltä ei neuvostoliittolaistettu?* Helsinki: Otava 1995; J. Aunesluoma, 'Länsiblokin Suomi. Suomi mukaan Marshallin suunnitelmaan 1947', in M. K. Niemi & V. Perna (eds.), *Entäs jos... Vaihtoehtoinen Suomen historia*. Jyväskylä: Ajatus Kustannus 2005, 161 ff; M. Majander, *Pohjoismaa vai kansandemokratia? Sosiaalidemokraatit, kommunistit ja Suomen kansainvälinen asema 1945–1951*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 2004.

3 M. Thomas, *Finnland zwischen Frieden und Kaltem Krieg. Die Außenpolitik des Präsidenten Paasikivi 1947–1955*. Hamburg: Verlag Kovač 2005, 33 ff.

division of Europe should the meeting fail.<sup>4</sup> Their apprehensions seemed to be confirmed when Molotov rejected the Franco-British proposals on 2 July 1947 and abruptly left the conference.

On 4 July the French and British foreign ministers Georges Bidault and Bevin sent an invitation to 22 states to participate in discussions on the overall European implementation of the Marshall plan on 12 July 1947. This put the Finnish government in a difficult position. Whilst deliberating whether or not Finland should take part in such a conference Paasikivi had to keep in mind that, although Finland had signed the Paris Peace Treaty on 10 February 1947 and subsequently ratified it on 18 April 1947, the actual enactment by the major powers still had to take place. The French and British ambassadors immediately presented the invitation to Finland's foreign minister Enckell on 4 July. Several Finnish diplomats then urgently advised non-participation in the conference for political reasons. They were convinced that the western states would appreciate this decision, and that such a step would have no negative effects on future loans or the continuity of trade relations with these states, particularly with the US.

On 4 July, when Enckell informed Paasikivi about the state of current developments, Paasikivi presented his foreign minister the initial draft of a letter in which he tended towards accepting the invitation. Paasikivi's strategy aimed to enable Finland to benefit from the economic aid whilst avoiding the country becoming institutionally involved in the program. Finland wanted to reap the economic benefits without binding itself politically, in order to avoid provoking any possible conflicts with its eastern neighbour and major power, the Soviet Union. With this in mind, Paasikivi developed a number of possible variations which included such proposals as the conference participation of a Finnish exploratory delegation with politicians from all of the governing parties, or a Soviet guarantee of long-term economic aid should Finland opt out from the program.<sup>5</sup>

The following days were full of hectic behind-the-scenes activities; there were talks, meetings, discussions and information exchanges on

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, *Finnland zwischen Frieden und Kaltem Krieg*, 35.

<sup>5</sup> J. K. Paasikivi's diary, 4 July 1947, in Y. Blomstedt & M. Klinge (eds), *J. K. Paasikiven päiväkirjat 1*. Helsinki-Porvoo-Juva: WSOY 1985, 466, col. 893/894.

various levels and with a great diversity of participants. The government had referred the problem to the parliamentary committee for foreign affairs which voted 10 to 6 in favour of Finnish participation at the conference.<sup>6</sup> The foreign ministry made contacts with the Soviet embassy and the Finnish embassies abroad, the government committee for foreign affairs met several times, the president held consultations with leading figures from the political and economic spheres, the parliamentary committee for foreign affairs was convened, etc.

On 5 July confidential talks were held between the Finnish Foreign Minister Enckell and the Soviet ambassador in Helsinki, Alexandr Abramov, during which Enckell explained Finland's intention to send observers to the Marshall plan conference. In turn Ambassador Abramov handed Enckell an aide-memoire, in which the Soviet Union frankly stated that the Marshall plan represented an attack on the sovereignty of the European countries, and that for this reason participation in the conference should be rejected.<sup>7</sup>

The reactions of the other European states were carefully monitored, particularly those of the neutral states and the neighbouring Scandinavian countries who expressed certain reservations about realizing the Marshall aid plan outside the framework of the United Nations. They wanted as far as possible to depoliticise the controversy surrounding American economic aid for Europe, but irrespective of this and in the final instance they tended towards participation in the Marshall plan.

In contrast to this, the views of Finland's foreign policy leadership still remained torn between different options. At a meeting of the government's foreign policy committee on 7 July the differences of opinion became openly apparent. Prime Minister Mauno Pekkala was the one who argued most decisively against participation for political reasons, to avoid giving any impression for the Soviet Union that Finland was joining a western alliance directed against it. Enckell still considered it right to send a delegation of observers to the Paris conference, while his colleague Reinhold Svento (deputy foreign minister) was in favour of Finnish participation for economic reasons. The positions were so

<sup>6</sup> H. Seppälä, *Itsenäisen Suomen puolustuspolitiikka ja strategia*. Helsinki: WSOY 1974, 308.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas, *Finnland zwischen Frieden und Kaltem Krieg*, 38.

divergent that a viable consensus proved impossible, and President Paasikivi had to postpone the decision. When discussions continued on the following day, Paasikivi proposed sending Finnish representatives to the conference, since in the final instance Finland maintained the sole right to decide whether or not it would participate in the Marshall plan.

Following the meeting a piece of information from Prime Minister Pekkala obviously revived Paasikivi's misgivings. Pekkala reported on a conversation with the deputy chairman of the Control Commission Grigory Savonenkov, who had made it clear to Pekkala that Finland should not despatch a delegation, because the Finns had undertaken in the ceasefire agreement not to participate in any groupings directed against the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the aide-memoire from Abramov, Savonenkov had created a link between Finnish participation in the conference and the peace treaty which still had to be ratified. Paasikivi reacted with great anger and indignation. Finnish non-participation at the bidding of the Soviet Union could result in a loss of prestige for Finland. Despite this, he became very aware of Finland's uncertain position, so that he decided to reconsider his position once more. Under the influence of the Soviet threat other politicians started to rethink their positions too. In contrast to his earlier argumentation, Svento now saw the danger of a drastic deterioration in Fenno-Soviet relations and henceforth rejected any Finnish participation in the conference.<sup>9</sup>

Although Paasikivi was still convinced that Finland would suffer an international loss of face by rejecting Marshall aid as a result of Soviet pressure, he nevertheless presented the members of government with his formulation for a rejection of participation in the Paris conference. He justified Finland's non-participation with reference to the ceasefire agreement and emphasised Finland's endeavour to stay outside of international political disputes. Although Foreign Minister Enckell shared the misgivings about Finland's possible loss of prestige, he supported Paasikivi's position by pointing out that the main aim of Finnish foreign policy had to be the avoidance of conflict with the Soviet Union. In addition to this he did not think that economic reasons made it absolutely essential to participate. Participation could result in restrictions from the

8 J. Tarkka, 'Paasikiven aika', in Y. Blomstedt (ed), *Suomen historia, Vol. 8*. Espoo: Weilin+Göös 1988, 77.

9 Thomas, *Finnland zwischen Frieden und Kaltem Krieg*, 42.

Soviet side, ranging from grain import embargos to the non-ratification of the peace treaty.

Finland was in a hard predicament and had to consider its approach extremely carefully in order to keep any negative effects to a minimum. In an effort to gain greater clarity about the Soviet Union's position further talks were held between Finland's foreign policy leadership and Soviet diplomats. Since the Soviet side feared that the acceptance of economic aid would result in an adverse political influence on itself, and eventually in the division of Europe, they felt obliged to strongly recommend Finland to abstain both from participating in the conference and in the aid program itself.<sup>10</sup>

As a result of all the exploratory talks, discussions and recommendations the government issued a majority statement on 10 July 1947 in favour of not accepting the invitation to Paris, but it refrained from passing a corresponding resolution. Consequently, in the afternoon, the government's foreign affairs committee had to convene again in the presence of President Paasikivi. After this the committee finally managed to reach agreement on the rejection of the invitation, and the whole of the government then immediately confirmed the rejection of participation in the conference. All that remained to be done was for the president to endorse the decision.

Despite this, the parliamentary committee for foreign affairs was convened that same evening. It met in the presence of the prime minister and the two foreign ministers with the task of 'giving its blessing' to the decision of the president and the government. However, the government representatives were unable to convince the majority of the parliamentary committee members with their arguments, and in the end the committee voted 10 to 5 in favour of participation in the conference. Although this parliamentary opinion did not affect the final government decision, it did in fact illustrate the thinness of the ice that Paasikivi and his government were treading, and it proved that they could not necessarily rely on a parliamentary majority.

On 11 July President Paasikivi endorsed the previous day's agreed reply stating that Finland would not be accepting the invitation to participate in the Marshall plan conference in Paris.<sup>11</sup> In its reply the

<sup>10</sup> Thomas, *Finnland zwischen Frieden und Kaltem Krieg*, 44.

<sup>11</sup> J. K. Paasikivi's diary 11–12 July, 472, col. 906.

Finnish government regretted not being able to participate in the Paris conference, even though Finland was also in need of aid for economic recovery.<sup>12</sup> The reasoning behind the decision stated that: ‘Since Finland’s position as a state has not yet been guaranteed by a permanent peace treaty, and since the Marshall plan has become a subject of fiercely differing opinions between the major powers, Finland, which wishes to remain outside of international disputes, unfortunately has no possibility of participating in the aforementioned conference.’<sup>13</sup>

In the end Finland’s political leadership had declined the invitation for political reasons. Their consideration of the Soviet Union seemed more important to them than the possibility of economic aid from the west. Nevertheless, this behaviour on the part of Finland should not be seen as a deferential bow by Paasikivi to the demands of the eastern neighbour. Rather than indicating compliance, Paasikivi’s main aim was to avoid giving the Soviet Union any cause to interfere even more directly in Finnish affairs.<sup>14</sup> Paasikivi was far more interested in strengthening the image of his policies in the eyes of the Soviet leaders, and in this he succeeded.<sup>15</sup> The Finnish diplomat and journalist Max Jakobson later assessed the Finnish decision as: ‘The most agonizing act of self-denial in a decision taken by Finland after the end of the last war.’<sup>16</sup>

At the beginning of the debates surrounding the Marshall plan and the question of Finland’s participation in the aid program, Finland’s political leadership, and particularly President Paasikivi, had placed the attitude of the Soviet Union at the centre of their deliberations. What emerged in the end was a foreign political priority designed to avoid becoming involved in any conflicts with the eastern neighbour. Finland’s behaviour prompted the following poignant comment from Jakobson: ‘The Marshall Plan endeavoured to save Europe from Communism, but Finland probably

12 J. K. Paasikivi’s diary 11–12 July, 468, col. 898.

13 Quoted from T. Heikkilä, *Paasikivi peräsimmä: Pääministerin sihteerin muistelmät 1994–1948*. Helsinki: Otava 1965, 296.

14 D. Putensen, *Im Konfliktfeld zwischen Ost und West. Finnland, der Kalte Krieg und die deutsche Frage, 1947–1973*. Berlin: Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz 2000, 38.

15 M. Jakobson, *Finnland im neuen Europa*. Berlin: Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz 1999, 55.

16 M. Jakobson, *Finnlands Neutralitätspolitik zwischen Ost und West*. Wien-Düsseldorf: Econ 1969, 115 f.

saved itself from Communism by saying no to the Marshall Plan.<sup>17</sup> At the same time the debates surrounding the plan and Finland's final decision had also shown that the foreign political understanding with the Soviet Union effectively restricted Finland's room to manoeuvre in subsequent western political relations.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to this, the leading Finnish politicians had obviously recognised during the course of the debate that the Marshall plan would definitely lead to an economic division of Europe, and that Finland's position could become complicated as a result of this. Such a division would inevitably lead to further controversy between the major powers. In the event of such constellation, it was Finland's task to develop a political course which avoided the country becoming a pawn in the game of any of the major powers. It was against this background and with their focus on the decision to decline the conference invitation that Paasikivi and the Finnish government first publicly formulated their aim of wishing to remain outside international disputes between the major powers.

Initially, the public reacted with mixed feelings towards the decision taken by the president and the government. Disappointment was expressed, but eventually the opinion prevailed that Finland's political leadership had nevertheless made the right decision. International reactions to the decision were also interesting. The Soviet Union was very content with the Finnish decision, and understanding was signalled in most cases in the west. Several countries, such as the US, Great Britain and Sweden gave assurances that Finland should not suffer economic disadvantages because of this political decision, and that trade relations would continue unrestricted. Loan facilities were also offered. This was of great importance to Finland, since the country faced huge economic pressure as a result of the high reparations payments due to the Soviet Union. Within six years Finland was obliged to pay reparations to the Soviet Union to the value of 300 million dollars based on 1938 world market prices. One of the major challenges was not merely the level of the reparations payments, but the fact that the Soviet Union wanted a large proportion of the reparations to be made in the shape of machinery, equipment and metal industrial products. However, Finland was still mainly agricultural and had a highly developed and extensive timber and

17 Jakobson, *Finnland im neuen Europa*, 55.

18 Thomas, *Finnland zwischen Frieden und Kaltem Krieg*, 51.

paper industry, but its metal processing industry, which had grown in the 1920s and the 1930s, was in the early stages of development.<sup>19</sup> This meant that the country was compelled to develop and extend its metal industry, and for this it depended on supplies from the west, particularly in the initial phase. Consequently, any restrictions in trade and economic relations with western countries resulting from non-participation in the Marshall plan would have had particularly negative consequences for Finland. After all, the country wanted to do its utmost to pay of the reparations within the set framework of time and in the required form and volume, in an effort to reduce its dependence on the Soviet Union to a minimum.<sup>20</sup>

The development and extension of a metalworking industry proved extremely problematic at the beginning, but turned out eventually to be of great benefit. The country was compelled to add a 'metal leg' to its already existing 'wooden leg', in other words to diversify its economic structure, a change which proved its worth over the following decades. During the first years of the industry's development the turnover was secure, because of the deliveries to the Soviet Union. Later Finland was able to sell the products from this industrial sector to the international markets as well.

In September 1947 the Soviet Union finally ratified the Paris Peace Treaty. Research assesses this step in a variety of ways. On the one hand it has been interpreted as 'a reward' for Finland's non-participation in the Marshall plan, and on the other hand this connection has been drawn into doubt or rejected altogether.<sup>21</sup> In this respect Juhana Aunesluoma's argumentation is interesting: he inquired into what would have happened if Finland had accepted the Marshall plan. He assumes that even then the peace treaty may have been ratified, since the Soviet Union's room for manoeuvre was restricted in 1947.<sup>22</sup>

19 R. Hjerppe & P. Vartia, 'Talouden kasvu ja rakennemuutos 1860–2000', in H. Loikkanen, J. Pekkarinen and P. Vartia (eds), *Kansantaloutemme rakenteet ja muutos*. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino 2002, 9 ff.

20 R. Büttner, *Sowjetisierung oder Selbständigkeit? Die sowjetische Finnlandpolitik 1943–1948*. Hamburg: Verlag Kovač 2001, 262 ff.

21 See for example Nevakivi, *Zdanov Suomessa*, 205 ff.

22 Aunesluoma, 'Länsiblokin Suomi', 170.

In retrospect, Finland's Marshall plan decision proved itself not only right, it also signified a turning point in Finland's post-war foreign policy. The division of Europe into two political blocks began with the Marshall plan and was intensified by the subsequent steps of the two disputing sides. All essential areas of politics and public life were influenced by these developments. The East-West conflict, or the Cold War, was destined to influence the international political climate for over forty years. Against this background Paasikivi's guiding idea, that Finland should remain outside the disputes of the major powers, became a vital elixir of Finnish politics. From then on it formed the bedrock of the neutrality policy to which Finland committed itself in the mid-1950s.

The Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance was concluded on 6 April 1948 between the Soviet Union and Finland, and acted as a kind of Magna Carta for Finnish foreign policy throughout the Cold War. The treaty was the first official document to contain the formulation that Finland wished to remain outside of any conflicting interests between the major powers. During the negotiations on the treaty Finland's representatives had insisted that this formulation be included in the preamble. Irrespective of the restrictions contained in the details, this formulation secured not only a certain level of independence for Finland from the major western powers; it also unmistakably defined the country's independence in relation its big eastern neighbour.

In 1955, after the Soviet Union had prematurely returned the Porkkala military base to Finland and ended the fifty-year lease, Finland took steps to create a second foreign policy cornerstone to complement the Treaty of Friendship: it started declaring itself a neutral country whilst laying particular emphasis on the preamble to the Treaty of Friendship.

In the field of foreign policy the country found itself in a permanent tension zone between the Treaty of Friendship and the declared policy of neutrality. Whilst the Treaty of Friendship represented the decisive mainstay of Finnish policy towards the east, Finland endeavoured to underline its neutrality towards the west. However, this position of neutrality met with only qualified acceptance from the other states, including the neutral ones. This was understandable since, in the event of a specific and likely conflict, Finland's position could possibly have been pre-programmed by the Treaty of Friendship depending on the Soviet Union's interpretation. The Soviet government's extensive interpretation of the military clauses had been demonstrated in the so called note crisis

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of 1961: as a result of the tensions in the Baltic area, and without Finland's agreement, the Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev wanted to unilaterally implement the mechanism of military consultations according to article 2 of the Treaty of Friendship against Finland's will. This was fortunately prevented at the last minute through mutual talks between Khrushchev and President Kekkonen. From that point onwards one of Finland's utmost priorities in its foreign relations was to champion constellations between east and west which would exclude the implementation of the military clauses of the Treaty of Friendship.

It was only in the early 1990s that Finland was able to free itself from this predicament when, in the wake of the political changes in eastern and central Europe, the Treaty of Friendship unceremoniously disappeared into oblivion. Until then the treaty had been regarded as the shrine of Fenno-Soviet relations, but now Finland suddenly gained a new level of foreign political freedom, far greater than anything the country had experienced since the end of the Second World War. This presented Finland with the possibility of creating closer ties with the west without having to constantly keep its eye on reactions in the east. Finland's accession to the European Union in 1995 opened up completely new perspectives for the country, and although this also included new political constraints, they bore no resemblance to those endured during the Cold War era.

# The Ambiguous Henry Kissinger: Professor, Policymaker, Historian<sup>1</sup>

JUSSI M. HANHIMÄKI

The announcement in November 1968 was a surprise. A 45-year old Harvard professor who had arrived in the United States as a refugee from Nazi Germany some thirty years earlier and risen to a highly coveted position within the American academia seemed, to many, not the most logical choice as Richard Nixon's National Security Advisor. The president-elect was, after all, best known for his partisanship rather than his breadth of vision. If anything, this selection seemed to indicate a suspiciously broad mind on Nixon's part. After all, Kissinger was a representative of an Ivy League the new president-elect had grown to hate since he exploded on to the American political arena in the aftermath of the Second World War. Moreover, few could have expected that the appointment would have as far reaching consequences as it did: Kissinger and Nixon would soon be running foreign policy as their private reserve, they would launch initiatives that, in some ways, revolutionized post-war US foreign policy, and Kissinger himself would – in five years time – hold *two* key posts as the mantle of the Secretary of State was added to his NSC position. Fewer yet could have anticipated that it would be Kissinger, rather than Nixon, that would stay in Washington for the next eight years.

Because of his unlikely rise to the pinnacles of power, and the achievements and disappointments during Kissinger's long tenure in office, his 'mind' has been examined with the vigor accorded to few other

<sup>1</sup>Much of this chapter is based on J. M. Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press 2004, 1–16

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modern statesmen. Even before he had finished his tenure in government, numerous books provided exhaustive analyses of Kissinger's thinking.<sup>2</sup> The efforts have not stopped. Most recently, Jeremi Suri has provided a bold analysis of the way in which the former secretary of state's personal background impacted his policy making. 'Kissingerology' has become a virtual academic sub-field – to which the present author has made his modest contribution – focused on the merits of Kissinger's various efforts from the SALT negotiations to the Opening to China, from his role in the Vietnam peace negotiations to his shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> What seems evident from the writings of both Kissinger himself and those who have commented upon his career is the simple fact that history – both personal and general – played a crucial role in determining Kissinger's approach to politics. To determine whether he was a brilliant analyst of international relations or a mediocre scholar but a good political animal rests in part upon an understanding of his ability to 'think outside the box'; to ignore the baggage that a Jewish-German immigrant to the United States inevitably carried with him wherever he went, whatever he did, whomever he dealt with. He may not have learned the art of *realpolitik* growing up in Nazi Germany. But Kissinger did look to history for lessons and warnings – sometimes misinterpreting them, sometimes ignoring them – throughout his remarkable career. As Kissinger himself later put it: 'The conviction that leaders have formed before reaching high office are the intellectual capital they will consume as long as they continue in office.'<sup>4</sup>

2 Some of the early works included: S. Graubard, *Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind*. New York: Norton 1974; or such negative renditions as D. Landau, *Kissinger: The Uses of Power*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1972; B. Mazlish, *Kissinger: The European Mind in American Policy*. New York: Basic Books 1976.

3 J. Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2007.

4 H. Kissinger, *White House Years*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1979, 79.

#### THE MAKING OF A SCHOLAR

Heinz Alfred Kissinger was born on May 27, 1923 in Fürth, a small town in Bavaria, Germany. The time and the place could hardly have been less fortunate for a middle-class Jewish family. This was the year of Adolf Hitler's unsuccessful 'Beer Hall Putsch' in nearby Munich after which he began the writing of *Mein Kampf* (to be published in 1925). Within a few years, the Bavarian Jews, like other German Jews, would gradually be ostracized. In August 1938 the Kissingers left Germany to the United States, settling in Manhattan. In 1945 Henry – he had anglosized his name upon arrival to the adopted country – returned to Germany as member of the US occupation force. In the fall of 1947 Kissinger entered Harvard University's Class of 1950 as a second-year undergraduate; ten years later, having completed his Ph.D., Kissinger published two books, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* and *A World Restored*.

It was, already, a remarkable story. The two books made the 34-year old scholar into a best seller and secured him an appointment at Harvard's International Affairs department. Kissinger had, by the mid-1950s, become an adept student of both diplomatic history and nuclear strategy, fields that would later make him uniquely qualified for membership in the country's foreign policy elite.

Kissinger's record at Harvard had been, in fact, nothing but remarkable. Working in the Government department, Kissinger made 'Harvard history' by writing the longest senior thesis (353 pages) to be found on the shelves of the venerable institution. Nor did he shy away from challenging topics, as the title of Kissinger's thesis was 'The Meaning of History.' In practice the senior thesis was slightly more limited in scope: it compared the thinking of Immanuel Kant with that of Arnold Toynbee and Oswald Spengler. His main goal was commendable: to argue that free will mattered, that historical determinism went too far, and that individuals were the responsible agents of history.

Indeed, 'The Meaning of History' was ultimately an optimistic work from a young man that had narrowly escaped the horrors of Nazi Germany. It was a work that stressed the significance of individual choice within a context of circumstances beyond one's control. As he wrote:

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No person can choose his age or the condition of his time. The past may rob the present of much joy and much mystery. The generation of Buchenwald and the Siberian labor-camps cannot talk with the same optimism as its fathers... But this merely describes a fact of decline and not its necessity... The experience of freedom enables us to rise beyond the suffering of the past and the frustration of history. In this spirit resides humanity's essence, the unique which each man imparts to the necessity of his life, the self-transcendence which gives peace.<sup>5</sup>

Kissinger, at 27 years of age, did not shy away from making overarching – if at times almost impenetrable, statements that would later become a trademark of his writing.

But there was another – more ‘Kissingerian’ – message in ‘The Meaning of History’. Decision-making was inherently morally ambiguous. The future secretary of state emphasized the need to acknowledge human limits and perils, but he also recognized that human agency and responsibility ultimately did make a difference. While man could not choose his age ‘the form taken by the particular period, the meaning given to life is the task of each generation.’<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Kissinger’s message was characteristically ambiguous: he was clearly not devoid of ideals but seemed to find some solace in *realpolitik*. This dichotomy – an optimism challenged by a deep pessimism – would remain with him for the remainder of his career. It was undoubtedly in part a result of his personal history; whereas Kissinger had escaped Nazi death camps, thirteen of his relatives had not. History was not a story rising towards some moral crescendo.

The tilt towards *realpolitik* was further evident in his next major project. The choice of Kissinger’s dissertation topic was, in fact, quite unusual. Whereas most of his contemporaries were working on ‘current’ topics – something to do with post-World War international relations – Kissinger wrote about the Concert of Europe in the early nineteenth century. ‘A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822’ was in a class of its own. Some less than impressed

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Graubard, *Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind*, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Suri, *Henry Kissinger*, 31.

colleagues even suggested that Kissinger might want to transfer to the History Department. Kissinger – who did display notable talent for writing diplomatic history – resisted the temptation and instead argued that his dissertation held specific relevance in the Cold War world. Much like in the early nineteenth century, when Napoleon’s France had presented a challenge to the stability of the European state system, so did the Soviet Union (and its then ally China) represent the twentieth century revolutionary menace to a stable world order. If Napoleon’s challenge had provided the great threat to stability in the Europe of the early nineteenth century, the Sino-Soviet challenge represented a similar threat to global stability in the mid twentieth century. By implication, then, if the conservative statesmen Metternich and Castlereagh had restored peace and stability through their diplomatic efforts, a similar solution could certainly be arrived at by Western statesmen a century and a half later.

Kissinger’s dissertation, which gained him a Ph.D. in May 1954, was the first obvious occasion where he molded history to fit his needs. It was, in fact, a clear-cut statement of the author’s own worldview. The primacy of geopolitics and the balance of power were key ingredients to providing international stability, and in the ability of a select number of diplomats to shape (or reshape) international relations. In fact, if anything, *A World Restored*, stresses the importance of the individual statesman. As Kissinger put it: ‘The test of a statesman is his ability to recognize the real relationship of forces and to make this knowledge serve his ends’.<sup>7</sup> It was, to a large extent, a version of the ‘great man theory’ of history. As Kissinger added:

The statesman is like one of the heroes in classical drama who has had a vision of the future but who cannot transmit it directly to his fellow-men... The statesman must therefore be an educator; he must bridge the gap between a people’s experience and his vision, between a nation’s tradition and its future.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> H. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace 1812-1822*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1957, 325.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Suri, *Kissinger*, 37.

The last point was, of course, what Kissinger and Nixon said they were doing by launching détente in the late 1960s: embarking on a new course that was not necessarily well understood at home.

Yet, there was also a sense of the limits that even such eminently skilful statesmen as Castlereagh and Metternich had been forced to accept. In fact, while the title of the dissertation leads one to suggest an overtly laudatory account of the statesmanship of two early nineteenth century Europeans, Kissinger ended his book by stressing the shortcomings rather than the achievements of the two. Neither was Kissinger's 'hero', yet both provided examples of the extent to which accident and circumstance could undermine the work of even the most eminent and skilful leaders. Or, as the historian John Lewis Gaddis puts it, Kissinger's guide to the statesmen – and presumably to himself – was that they needed to 'rescue choice from circumstance.'<sup>9</sup> While Kissinger's later conduct may not have been an example of such apparent humility, it is obvious that at least in the early 1950s the Harvard Ph.D. student had a healthy appreciation of the limits that each and every national or international leader faced.

*A World Restored*, was published three years later by the Boston-based publishing house Houghton Mifflin. In the same year, he also published another book, far more popular and 'timely.' In 1955 he had opted for a three-year position as the director of a study group analysing the impact of nuclear weapons at the high-powered Council of Foreign Relations in New York.<sup>10</sup> In the next three years Kissinger – whose appointment coincided with the publication of his first major article on US national security in the Council's prestigious journal *Foreign Affairs*<sup>11</sup> – moved closer to the corridors of power and published, in 1957, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*. Almost four months on the best-seller list, the book won critical praise from most reviewers and was discussed on the front pages of major American newspapers. It set the basis for Kissinger's future reputation as a capable synthesizer – and at times original thinker

9 J. Gaddis, 'Rescuing Choice from Circumstance: The Statecraft of Henry Kissinger', in G. Craig and F. Loewenheim (eds.), *The Diplomats, 1939–1979*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994, 564–592.

10 W. Isaacson, *Kissinger*. New York: Simon & Schuster 1992, 82–83.

11 H. Kissinger, 'Military Policy and the Defense of the Grey Areas', *Foreign Affairs*, April 1955.

– of major foreign policy issues. Indeed, if not yet a household name, Kissinger had by the age of thirty-four, earned the respect of most of his colleagues and, more significantly for him, many of the decision makers in or about to gain power.

The arguments presented in *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* were not, however, entirely unique to Kissinger. In some ways this was hardly a surprise; the book was based on the monthly discussions at the Council and, given the participants, thus often reflected dominant views about the problems and role of nuclear weapons. Above all, Kissinger was interested in the dilemma of the nuclear age, which he defined as the fact that ‘the enormity of modern weapons makes the thought of war repugnant, but the refusal to run any risks would amount to giving the Soviet rulers a blank check.’<sup>12</sup>

This was, indeed, the dilemma that the Eisenhower administration’s massive retaliation doctrine – the idea that Washington could effectively deter war by threatening to use US nuclear weapons – faced as the Soviet nuclear arsenal grew. It was largely one of credibility: massive retaliation implied the willingness to use nuclear weapons while the sheer destructive power of them raised serious doubts about the feasibility of such a proposition. ‘Maximum development of power is not enough’, Kissinger argued, because ‘with modern technology such a course must paralyze the will’. What was needed, Kissinger maintained, was a ‘strategic doctrine which gives our diplomacy the greatest freedom of action and which addresses itself to the question of whether the nuclear age presents only risks or whether it does not also offer opportunities.’<sup>13</sup>

For Kissinger the latter was more the case. Indeed, the most distinguishing (and most frequently discussed) characteristic of Kissinger’s book was his argument that while an all out nuclear war was an unlikely possibility because it would be too destructive, a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union might well evolve into a limited nuclear war. As he wrote: ‘Limited nuclear war represents our most effective strategy against nuclear powers or against a major power which

12 H. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*. New York: Doubleday 1957, 4.

13 Ibid., 14, 15.

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is capable of substituting manpower for technology.<sup>14</sup> What he meant was that unless the U.S. had the ability and will to fight by using its nuclear arsenal, the president would too easily be faced with too equally unappealing options if challenged by the USSR (or China): surrender or nuclear holocaust. Hence, he maintained, the United States needed to have the capability – and the will – to fight nuclear wars in limited settings. Indeed, the problem for Kissinger was actually not so much one of technology but of political will and psychology. Americans had for some time – and particularly due to the Second World War – considered total victory (or unconditional surrender) the only kind of victory. Since the Soviets developed their bomb in 1949, however, this will had become hampered by the fear of prompt and utter destruction by nuclear weapons. What was therefore needed in large part was a redefinition of the meaning of ‘victory’ – since there could not be an all out war, there could not be all out victory, at least not over a nation that possessed thermonuclear weapons.

Again, he was arguing for a break with history and tradition. Kissinger maintained that American diplomacy needed to develop a ‘framework within which the question of national survival is not involved in every issue. But equally, we must leave no doubt about our determination to achieve intermediary objectives and to resist by force any Soviet military move’. If that were the task for diplomacy, then the challenge for US military policy was ‘to develop a doctrine and a capability for the graduated employment of force’ that would support these diplomatic efforts. In this way, Kissinger further maintained, the dilemma of nuclear weapons and foreign policy could be successfully addressed by ‘seeking to avoid the horrors of all-out war by outlining an alternative, in developing a concept of limitation that combines firmness with moderation, diplomacy can once more establish a relationship with force, even in the nuclear age’.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of geopolitics this essentially implied that while the possession of nuclear weapons made the United States and the Soviet Union virtually immune to direct nuclear attack from each other, this should not allow the US to shrink from contemplating the possibility that

<sup>14</sup> Issacson, *Kissinger*, 166.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 167-168. See also R. Weitz, ‘Henry Kissinger’s Philosophy of International Relations’, *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 2 (1991), 111–113.

local nuclear war might well erupt. In other words, Europe and the third world were fair game for a limited nuclear war.

Of course, Kissinger did not advocate this stand purely, or even primarily, because he thought that the United States should be engaging in limited nuclear wars around the globe. His point was more nuanced: only by embracing a strategic doctrine that assumed a limited nuclear war as a realistic option, could the United States derive the necessary diplomatic leverage from its military arsenal. In other words, Kissinger's arguments were essentially meant to correct the shortcomings of the doctrine of massive retaliation with a limited nuclear war corollary.

The two books that Kissinger published in 1957 had therefore an important similarity when it came down to the making of foreign policy: both were concerned with the limits imposed upon statesmen by their domestic constituencies. Of course, the domestic constituencies facing Castlereagh and Metternich were far different from the one that the American foreign policy elite had to contend with in the 1950s. Yet, even in *A World Restored* Kissinger argued that the 'acid test of a policy is its ability to obtain domestic support'.<sup>16</sup> In both books, moreover, Kissinger maintained that the greatest threat to truly great statesmanship, statesmanship that could yield significant long-term positive consequences, came from within, from 'bureaucratic inertia'<sup>17</sup> or from the 'inherent tension between the mode of action of a bureaucracy and the pattern of statesmanship'.<sup>18</sup>

This argument, which Kissinger revisited in his next major work *Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy* (1960), was to remain the key to his foreign policy making. In the end, when looking at Kissinger's modus operandi once he was in a position of power, it is this disdain for bureaucracies, which strikes a chord. Metternich and Castlereagh may not have been his 'heroes,' but Kissinger certainly displayed a need to dissect what the prerequisites of and obstacles to great statesmanship were. Hence, bureaucracies became an obvious target of his antipathy, likely to provide the greatest obstacle for statesmen wishing to move towards new territory – towards, that is, new policies

<sup>16</sup> Kissinger, *A World Restored*, 326.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 328

<sup>18</sup> Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons*, 247.

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that were radically different from familiar traditions. For, in his eyes, true statesmen were visionaries, they were the ones who needed to act when the rest of the society still slept; they were the ones who set the course of policy without the benefit of experience as to what results that policy might yield. As he wrote in *Nuclear Weapons*:

The inclination of a bureaucracy is to deny the possibility of great conception by classifying it as ‘unsound,’ ‘risky,’ or other terms which testify to a preference for equilibrium over exceptional performance. It is no accident that most great statesmen were opposed by the ‘experts’ in their foreign offices, for the very greatness of the statesman’s conception tends to make it inaccessible to those whose primary concern is with safety and minimum risk.<sup>19</sup>

These were words that in large part explain the care that Kissinger took, once in power, to insulate himself from the influence – and at times advice – of the bureaucracy most closely involved in making American foreign policy: the State Department. Kissinger was, after all, if not modeling himself after Metternich, Castlereagh or Bismarck, obsessed with the pursuit and prerequisites of greatness. By 1968 he would find a willing accomplice in this task in the newly elected president Richard Nixon.

#### AT THE FRINGES OF POWER

In the late 1950s and 1960s, Henry Kissinger’s career took on a new mixture of theory and practice. On the one hand, he became a tenured Harvard professor who wrote about current issues in US foreign policy with particular reference to NATO. On the other, he was itching to be a policy maker and was constantly at the fringes of power during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. In the end, fortunately for him, he did not gain a major position within the inner circles of the democratic administrations, perhaps because of his close association with one of the republican hopefuls, Nelson Rockefeller. Hence, by 1968, Kissinger was in the unique position of being an academic whose reputation had not

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

been 'tarnished' by being one of the 'Best and the Brightest' who had been in charge of American foreign policy during the country's increasing involvement in the Vietnam War. If not completely apolitical, Kissinger was at least relatively non-partisan in his quest for power, and found himself ready to take advantage of the changes that rocked American politics during the last year of Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency.

Throughout the 1960s Kissinger's intellectual productivity was remarkable. He published constantly in such journals as *Foreign Affairs*, *Daedalus*, and *The Reporter*, while writing occasional pieces for the *New York Times*.<sup>20</sup> Most importantly for Kissinger's tenure though, he published, in 1960, his third book *The Necessity for Choice*. Based largely on his earlier articles, this work was, as Walter Isaacson puts it, 'packaged as a coherent approach to foreign policy – and as a job application in case the new president decided to seek some fresh thinking from Cambridge.'<sup>21</sup> Dividing the book to chapters on deterrence, limited war, the United States and Europe, negotiations, arms control, the role of emerging nations, and the relationship between the policymaker and the intellectual, Kissinger clearly, as so many of his 'class' at Harvard, wanted to be picked as one of the 'best and the brightest' in 1961.

So why did Kissinger not become, in the early 1960s, an instrumental figure among a cast of characters that included a number of Kissinger's earlier benefactors and many of his Harvard colleagues, such as McGeorge Bundy? The answer lay in part in Kissinger's own writings and personality that seemed to clash with that of such 'action intellectuals' as Bundy, Robert McNamara or Walt Rostow. His writings had, for one, displayed a strong penchant for *realpolitik* and a keen interest in diplomacy as it was traditionally practiced: through negotiations at the highest levels. Moreover, Kissinger was interested in subject matters that did not necessarily draw the attention of the Kennedy team – Kissinger had little interest in economics, he was not an adept 'number cruncher', and focused excessively on the Soviet Union and Europe. In contrast,

20 For example: Kissinger, 'Arms Control, Inspection and Surprise Attack', *Foreign Affairs*, July 1960; 'Limited War: Nuclear or Conventional? A Reappraisal', *Daedalus*, Fall 1960; 'The New Cult of Neutralism', *The Reporter* 24 November 1960.

21 Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 105.

the Kennedy foreign policy team's key members – Rostow, McNamara and Bundy himself – stressed the role of economic aid in countering communist threats (witness the Alliance for Progress for Latin America) and appeared convinced that the Third World (particularly Southeast Asia, but also the Middle East and Africa) was the main arena where the Soviet-American confrontation was to be fought in the future. In this sense, Kissinger was simply not a good fit for the Kennedy administration, and, although he acted as a consultant to Bundy's NSC staff in 1961–62, he felt frustrated in 'offering unwanted advice and inflicting on President Kennedy learned disquisitions about which he could have done nothing even in the unlikely event that they aroused his interest.' To put it another way: in the early 1960s Kissinger's reading of history and current affairs did not match with the 'can-do' mindset of the Kennedy clan.<sup>22</sup>

Following the disappointment of his year as an outside consultant to the Kennedy White House, Kissinger continued to publish. His major work focused still, though, on the Atlantic partnership and the need to rethink the American-West European relationship. In 1965, *The Troubled Partnership: A Reappraisal of the Atlantic Alliance* and an edited work *Problems of National Strategy* hit the bookstores, just in time before French President Charles de Gaulle withdrew French troops from NATO's unified military command, and expelled NATO's headquarters from Paris. Not surprisingly, Kissinger called for improving the consultative networks within NATO in order to allay some of the complaints of US unilateralism that led to de Gaulle's withdrawal and the biggest crisis for NATO's unity to date. And yet, Kissinger was characteristically skeptical about sharing 'real' power with allies. To him consultation would work best if there were a consensus over alliance goals and policy; this not being the case, consultation was unlikely to resolve the differences on other than peripheral issues. As he put it in typically Kissingerian prose: 'consultation is least effective when it is most needed: when there exist basic differences of assessment or of interest. It works in implementing a consensus rather than creating it'.<sup>23</sup> To Kissinger, the

22 H. Kissinger, *White House Years*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1979, 9.

23 Cited in G. A. Andrianopoulos, *Kissinger and Brzezinski: the NSC and the Struggle for Control of US National Security Policy*. London: Macmillan 1991, 96.

lack of consensus that became so evident when France left NATO, was a hindrance to effective and unified western policy, but it was not one that could necessarily be solved through consultation. Moreover, Kissinger stressed the need for the United States not to allow its allies to minimize Washington's freedom of action. During his years in power, Kissinger's penchant for working unilaterally to set the framework for détente with the Soviet Union surely was based in part on these beliefs in the 'poverty' of multilateral consultation and the need to retain maximum freedom of action for the United States.

Without discounting his ideas about the Atlantic alliance, the key to Kissinger's future lay not in his intellectual productivity in the 1960s. Luckily for him, Kissinger was able to remain at the fringes of power throughout the 1960s by, in effect, being connected to both sides of the political spectrum. He was clearly rather uninterested in domestic political issues that made it probably fairly easy for him to be 'available' for both democrats and republicans. Thus, throughout the 1960s, although Kissinger was unable to gain access to the inner circles of either the Kennedy or Johnson administrations, he remained connected to both. In April 1965, for example, Kissinger wrote letters to McGeorge Bundy supporting Johnson's decision to send troops to Vietnam – on this one he was likely to be, as Bundy noted in his reply, 'somewhat lonely among all our friends at Harvard'.<sup>24</sup> From October 1965 onwards, Kissinger served as a consultant to the Johnson government on its Vietnam policy, participating, among other things, in the secret 'Pennsylvania Negotiations' in Paris in 1967. While these talks eventually collapsed due to North Vietnamese insistence on a complete US bombing halt, Kissinger had had his first touch of secret diplomacy for which his appetite would later prove insatiable.

<sup>24</sup> Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 118.

#### MAKING HISTORY

While the contacts with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations kept Kissinger at the outer fringes of power throughout the 1960s, he had also secured his place as the chief foreign policy advisor to one of the richest politicians in America.

Nelson Rockefeller was, undoubtedly, Kissinger's favored choice as a future president of the United States, a man, who, Kissinger maintains in his memoirs, 'I am certain would have made a great President'.<sup>25</sup> When Rockefeller died in 1979, Kissinger dedicated the first volume of his memoirs, *White House Years*, to the memory of his former mentor. And yet, it must have been clear to Kissinger by 1968, that the governor of New York was unlikely ever to claim the highest prize. Having worked for him in the campaigns of 1964 and 1968, Kissinger had certainly come to respect the man whom he would later be able to work with, as 'Rocky' became Gerald Ford's Vice President. But there was also the realization that as a national campaigner Rockefeller was no match for his competitors, be they republican or democrat. While he had the financial resources to match any Kennedy campaign, Rockefeller was, unfortunately for him, too 'liberal' to ever gain the respect of the republican right and thus have a realistic chance to gain his party's nomination.

The man who claimed the republican nomination at the Miami Beach convention in August 1968 and went on to win the November elections, was one whom Kissinger had told held a 'dangerous misunderstanding' of foreign policy. As Kissinger told Emmett Hughes, Richard Nixon was 'of course, a disaster. Now the Republican Party is a disaster. Fortunately, he can't be elected – or the whole country would be a disaster'.<sup>26</sup>

Three months later Kissinger, for better or worse, joined Richard Nixon's team. Kissinger would now be making history and, later, shaping how that history was to be written. It is a story detailed more effectively elsewhere.<sup>27</sup> Suffice it to say here that Kissinger did put his particular 'lessons of history' into good use at the very start of the Nixon

<sup>25</sup> Kissinger, *White House Years*, 5,

<sup>26</sup> Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 128.

<sup>27</sup> Most recently, in R. Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*. New York: Harper & Collins 2007.

administration. By inauguration day it was clear that foreign policy was to be reserved for a few in the know – Kissinger and the president being the key makers of policy from the very outset. Everything was centralized to the hands of the National Security Advisor (Kissinger). What followed was a series of dramatic events – the opening to China, détente with the Soviet Union, a tortuous end to the Vietnam War – that were at least to an extent a result of the visionary impulse of a statesman, seeing ahead of his people. In a sense, Kissinger and Nixon practiced the kind of statesmanship Kissinger had described already in his Harvard years. No wonder, or so the admirers of Henry Kissinger would have it, the man was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973.

Naturally, not all agree. The annals of Kissingerology remains filled with angry recriminations of Kissinger's many failures as a policy maker. Whether he is Dr. Kissinger or Mr. Henry is a question that will probably never be solved.<sup>28</sup> And yet, it is worth asking, by way of conclusion, how Kissinger himself has shaped and continues to shape his own history.

As most policymakers he has shown no remorse for miscalculations and mistaken policies. His justification has been straightforward: a policymaker has to act, a historian is content to observe. Or, in Kissinger's own words, 'As a historian one has to be conscious of the possibility of tragedy. However, as a statesman, one has the duty to act as if one's country is immortal. I have acted on the assumption that our problems are soluble'.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps this explains some of the shortcomings of Kissinger's career as a foreign policy practitioner. He was caught by the moment, cut down by the need to 'do' something, to 'solve problems'. A historian and a policymaker are, after all, by definition two very different creatures; the former lives by the 'long view', the latter can rarely afford it.

One example may serve to illustrate the point. A historian – even an amateur one and surely someone as accomplished as Henry Kissinger – should have known that the Israeli domination in the Middle East, supported by American military aid after the 1967 Six Days War, was not a sustainable solution to the complex dynamic of hatreds that had plagued

28 J. Hanhimäki, "'Dr. Kissinger' or 'Mr. Henry': Kissingerology, Thirty Years and Counting', *Diplomatic History* 27 (2003), 637–676.

29 Cited in R. L. Beisner, 'History and Henry Kissinger', *Diplomatic History* 14 (1990), 511.

the region since the dawn of time. The Syrians and the Egyptians, in particular, were far from content to see the Sinai peninsula or the Golan Heights remain under Israeli control. To secure a stable Middle East a formula for negotiations and compromise – such as the ones pushed by the UN or the American Secretary of State William Rogers – were necessary. Instead of pushing for a negotiated solution, Kissinger and Nixon chose to wait and rely on the strong Israeli deterrent to keep peace. They were proven dramatically wrong in October 1973. At this point one might have expected a change of course, a search for a comprehensive multi-party solution to a complex problem. But Kissinger's response was different. He chose to use the opportunity to minimize Soviet influence in the region by placing the United States – through his personal shuttle diplomacy – at the center of the bilateral deals that eventually resulted in several bilateral disengagement agreements (between Israel and Egypt on the one hand, and Israel and Syria on the other). This was hardly a visionary solution based on a deep understanding of the region's complex history because it ignored dealing with the most vexing of all issues, the Palestinians. It is a shortcoming that the United States continues to grapple with today. Kissinger's legacy was, at best, a partial peace.<sup>30</sup>

This ambiguity can, in fact be applied in a broad sense to Kissinger's uneasy and multifaceted relationship with history. He, as most policymakers do, often *instrumentalized and used* history to prove a point – the Soviets could be untrustworthy peace partners in the Middle East but reliable negotiators when it came down to nuclear weapons. Kissinger – like any memoir-writer – found no fault in his doings; the *bete noire* was always the fickle Congress or the untrustworthy foreign leader. And, like so many others, Kissinger liked to paint himself as always having been at the center of the storm, a stable hand guiding America in treacherous waters. In both cases he is now, finally, being measured against the abundance of documentary evidence that is currently being digested by scholars and students keen to find out what the 'real history' of Henry Kissinger's era at the helm of American policy was like. The professor-turned-policymaker has a secure place in history. But its particular shade will continue to shift.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Suri, *Kissinger*, 249–274.

## Forced Democratization? Some Lessons from Postwar Germany

HEINRICH AUGUST WINKLER

Learning from history is rightly considered a political virtue. Yet not every attempt to base political decisions on historical experience bears scrutiny. To justify going to war against Iraq in 2003, George W. Bush and American neoconservatives repeatedly invoked the example of Germany. They told the world that the 're-education' of the Germans following the defeat and occupation of Nazi Germany in 1945 shows that the transition from dictatorship to democracy is possible by means of external military force.

As President Bush put it in his speech at the Annual Dinner of the American Enterprise Institute on February 26, 2003:

'We will remain in Iraq as long as necessary, and not a day more. America has made and kept this kind of commitment before – in the peace that followed a world war. After defeating enemies, we did not leave behind occupying armies; we left constitutions and parliaments ... In societies that once bred fascism and militarism, liberty found a permanent home. There was a time when many said that the cultures of Japan and Germany were incapable of sustaining democratic values. Well, they were wrong.'<sup>1</sup>

For historians, the alleged parallel between Germany and Iraq poses a problem. The same is true for the other parallel, that between Japan and Iraq, but this is a topic experts in Japanese history are more qualified to

1 Office of the White House Press Secretary (eds.), President Discusses the future of Iraq, press Release, February 26, 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html>.

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deal with than me. The question to which I would now like to turn is the following: Is it really correct to draw such a general conclusion from what happened in Germany after 1945 as President Bush and the American neoconservatives did? Or was it particular historical conditions that made the democratization of Germany – or, more accurately, a part of Germany – into a postwar success story?

The democratization of the part of Germany occupied in 1945 by American, British, and French troops was not the first attempt to introduce Western democracy to Germany. Nor was it the second. The first attempt was the Revolution of 1848; it failed because its objective of unity in freedom – creating a Germany that was both a nation state and a constitutional state – exceeded the capacity of liberal and democratic forces at that point in history. The second attempt was the Weimar Republic of 1918 to 1933. By the end of the First World War, Germany had been a nation state for almost half a century. During that time it had also been a constitutional state, albeit one not based on liberal principles. The empire created by Bismarck did not become a parliamentary democracy until autumn of 1918, when military defeat was certain. The coinciding of democratization and defeat was one of the heaviest psychological burdens that the Weimar Republic would have to carry; it was also one of the more deep-seated reasons why the first German Republic foundered in the storms of world economic crisis and was replaced by a dictatorship of extreme nationalism – the so-called Third Reich.

Traditionally, Germany belonged to the Western world. In the High Middle Ages Germany helped implement the most fundamental forms of power separation – the separation of spiritual and temporal power as well as the separation of princely and corporative power. These were the two premodern forms of power separation that constituted the Latin West and distinguished it from the Byzantine East. Germany also made active, formative contributions to the emancipation movements of the early modern period – to humanism, reformation and enlightenment. Unlike France and England, however, Germany did not develop into a nation state in those centuries. State-building took place at the level of the prince-controlled territorial states rather than at the level of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, which until its dissolution in 1806 wanted to be something different and something more than a nation state.

Germany did not draw the same political consequences from the Enlightenment as France, England, and the young United States of America. The forces that held power in Germany up until 1918 forcefully rejected the ideas of representative democracy. During the First World War the intellectual elite polemically contrasted the ‘ideas of 1789’ with the ‘ideas of 1914’, which held that a strong and just authoritarian state must protect Germany’s inward-looking culture, its *Kultur der Innerlichkeit*, from the materialistic civilization of the democratic West, that caused historians after 1945 to speak of a ‘German divergence from the West’ or a ‘German Sonderweg’.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Mann’s 1918 ‘Observations of a Non-political Man’ is the classic literary document of German protest against Western political culture. Mann soon distanced himself from this view, but many of his readers still clung to it, even after the end of the monarchy and the introduction of a parliamentary system.<sup>3</sup>

For all that, the Revolution of 1918 to 1919 did not spell a radical break with Germany’s pre-democratic past. The reason for this lay mostly in the partial democratization that had already taken place in Germany long before 1918. Ever since Bismarck’s creation of the Kaiserreich in 1871, Germany had known a significant aspect of democracy in the form of universal male suffrage. It guaranteed German men a right to participate in legislation, even if they couldn’t vote for their political leaders. After the Kaiserreich collapsed, there was only one way to go – toward *more* democracy: women’s suffrage, the democratization of voting rights at the state and local levels, and the consistent implementation of a parliamentary government based on majority rule.

So as we can see, German democratization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was non-simultaneous (‘ungleichzeitig’). The parliamentarization at the end of the First World War was preceded by

2 L. Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom. History of a Political Tradition*. Boston: Beacon Press 1957; B. Faulenbach, *Ideologie des deutschen Weges. Die deutsche Geschichte in der Historiographie zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus*. München: C. H. Beck 1980; H. A. Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen*, 2 volumes, München: C. H. Beck 2005–2006, particularly vol. 2, p. 640ff. English translation: *Germany, The Long Road West*, 2 volumes, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006.

3 T. Mann, ‘Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen’, in *Gesammelte Werke in dreizehn Bänden*. Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer Verlag 1990, Vol. 12, 1–589.

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the earlier introduction of universal male suffrage in the formative period of the Kaiserreich. The citizens of the first German democracy were accustomed to political participation via elections, not the accountability of their leaders to parliament. When the last majority-rule government of the Weimar Republic collapsed in the spring of 1930, Germany resorted to its 'back-up constitution', a half-authoritarian system of emergency decrees issued by the Reich President. Starting then, the Reichstag as a legislative organ had less of a say than it did during the constitutional monarchy of the Kaiserreich.

It soon became apparent that the wheel of history could not be turned back without serious consequences. The deparliamentarization galvanized antiparliamentary forces on the right and left. In the Reichstag election of July 31, 1932, National Socialists and Communists together received the majority of votes and parliamentary seats. The winner of the election was Hitler, who now led Germany's by far strongest political party. Since 1930 he had been presenting himself as a champion of the political rights of Germans, while at the same time appealing to the widespread resentment felt toward Western democracy, which was seen as the political system of the victors. In this way Hitler was the politician who benefited most from the 'Ungleichzeitigkeit' (the non-simultaneous or asynchronic character) of Germany's democratization.<sup>4</sup>

After coming to power in January 1933, Hitler was able to win the support of Germany's educated classes by cultivating the myth of a new thousand-year Reich. In previous years rightwing intellectuals from the 'conservative revolution' had resurrected the idea of a supranational – one could even say, God-ordained – German mission, whereby the Reich was to become the European *Ordnungsmacht* and lead the Old Continent in its fight against Western democracy and Eastern bolshevism. In the medieval version of the legend, the Reich's duty was to stop the rule of the Antichrist; Hitler exploited this myth just as much as its older version, where the Antichrist was a Jew. Still today, many underestimate the extent to which the Third Reich availed itself of political theology.

The situation in 1945 was almost entirely different than that in 1918. After the First World War came neither a societal nor an ethical break

4 The term "Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen" has been coined by the German art historian Wilhelm Pinder, *Das Problem der Generation in der Kunstgeschichte Europas*. Berlin: Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt 1928, 1ff.

with the past. The Kaiserreich's military leaders, high-level bureaucrats, judges, academic teachers, industrialists, and large landowners were able to carry over their influence safely into the Weimar Republic. Although the most important documents implicating the political and military leaders of the Kaiserreich had been known since 1919, a self-critical examination of the *Kriegsschuldfrage* – the war-guilt question – did not take place. On the contrary: In reaction to the Treaty of Versailles and its war-guilt clause stipulated by the Allies emerged the fanciful view that Germany did not bear any specific responsibility for the war. This *Kriegsunschuldlegende* joined forces with another legend, the notorious *Dolchstoßlegende* – the claim that, by failing to adequately support the war, unpatriotic forces at home effectively stabbed fighting troops in their backs, thus precipitating German defeat. These legends were among the most powerful weapons used by rightwing Nationalists to attack the Weimar Republic.

After Germany's unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945, such views still found an audience, but that audience represented only a small portion of the population. For the vast majority it was evident that Nazi Germany had initiated the Second World War, and it was evident that their defeat was a result of Allied military supremacy. The Second World War, unlike the First, ended with Allied occupation. Except for those areas under Polish or Soviet administration, the occupation encompassed all of pre-1938 Germany. There were no German representatives who could speak for the entire population of the four occupation zones, there were no national parties and, most important, there was no German military. The leaders of the Third Reich who had survived the *Zusammenbruch* were forced to stand trial at an Allied tribunal. All other Germans had to undergo a 'denazification' process, in which they were categorized as 'offenders', 'lesser offenders', 'fellow travelers', or 'exonerated'.

One cannot call denazification a success. For one, its implementation by the Western occupying powers was inconsistent. Though the British and the French were more generous than the Americans, even the Americans tempered their judgment during the course of the Cold War. In the end, the young Federal Republic of Germany reintegrated most of the former Nazis to avoid creating a reservoir for radical rightwing protest. Another problem was that many of the reforms introduced by the occupying powers did not endure. The liberalization of the crafts code (*Handwerksordnung*) and public service law ordered by the Americans

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and the British, for example, was either revoked or never went into effect to begin with. What is more, while important reforms failed others were prevented. The American occupying power rejected the socialization of key industries provided for by the constitution of the state of Hessen because it ran counter to the principle of free enterprise.

Of the 'old elites' only one group was eliminated completely: the aristocratic estate owners east of the Elbe, a group who after 1918 had stood in almost unanimous opposition to the first German democracy and did much to bring about its downfall. The large landholdings east of the Oder-Neisse line fell to Poland; those of northern East Prussia went to the Soviet Union. Any estates in the Soviet occupation zone were appropriated during the 1945 land 'reform', the majority of which were then transferred to expelled farmers from Polish or Soviet administered areas in the East. For its part, the Western occupation zones had nothing comparable with the Junker estates east of the Elbe. The land reform and the loss of the eastern territories created a deep caesura in Germany's social history. The powerful elite who had, for centuries, made their mark on Germany literally had the ground cut from under them.

The expulsion of the Germans from the eastern provinces of the German Reich as well as from Czechoslovakia and Hungary cannot be simply characterized as an instance of Soviet or Stalinist methods. It is true that the systematic removal of Germans was a logical consequence of Stalin's plan to annex northern East Prussia and shift the territory of Poland toward the West; but it must also be remembered that the United States and Great Britain had given their general consent to this radical solution at the Yalta Conference in February 1945. In internal talks Roosevelt and Churchill based their position on a historical precedent: the exchange of minorities between Greece and Turkey stipulated by the January 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.

In the Potsdam Agreement of August 1945 the Soviet Union, the USA, and Britain jointly agreed that the transfer of Germans to Germany should 'be effected in an orderly and humane manner'.<sup>5</sup> Yet the presence of this 'saving clause' had no mitigating effect. By August of 1945, millions of Germans had already fled, or had been forced, into the four occupation zones, and those not yet displaced were afforded no effective protection

*5 The Potsdam Agreement. Selected Documents Concerning the German Question 1943–1949.* Berlin: Staatsverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1967, 53–69.

by the Potsdam Agreement. The expulsion of Germans in 1945 and after amounted to an Allied-sanctioned form of ethnic cleansing. Its deeper cause lay of course in Germany: it was Adolf Hitler's Third Reich – its policies of exploitation and oppression, deportation and genocide – that destroyed the basis for peaceful coexistence among Germans and non-Germans in Eastern Central Europe.

The Potsdam Agreement sounded clear-cut about the political future of occupied Germany, but it wasn't. The occupation was supposed to eliminate German militarism and Nazism and 'to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis and for eventual peaceful cooperation in international life by Germany'.<sup>6</sup> Yet the problem was that the Western powers and the Soviet Union held opposing views on democracy. As the Hamburg constitutional jurist Hans-Peter Ipsen put it in 1949, 'Cuius occupatio, eius constitutio', or 'he who occupies, his constitution'.<sup>7</sup> Ipsen's formulation – a modern take on the policy of 'cuius regio, eius religio', famously proclaimed in the 1555 Peace of Augsburg – concisely captures the difference in development between Western and Soviet occupation zones. The Potsdam Agreement tried to give the impression of an Allied consensus, yet in reality such a consensus did not exist.

Liberation from Nazi dictatorship did not translate immediately into freedom. This applied to divided Europe in general and divided Germany in particular. The success of the Western Allies and the American policy of democratization in Germany had many causes. The military defeat and occupation of Germany allowed for a break in continuity more fundamental than the one in 1918. The establishment of a democracy in West Germany was also facilitated by the absence of a Junker class. The West German society had a stronger bourgeois tradition than society east of the Elbe.

At least as important in establishing democracy in West Germany was the change of consciousness among the German people. In October 1945 the temporary council of the German Protestant Church published what is now known as the Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt. One of its key sentences reads: 'By us infinite wrong was brought over many peoples

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>7</sup> H. P. Ipsen, 'Das Grundgesetz in seiner Vorläufigkeit', in *Recht, Staat, Wissenschaft* 2 (1950), 186f.

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and countries'.<sup>8</sup> German Protestantism, particularly German Lutheranism, had done much in the past to help solidify the authoritarian state. In 1945 it showed us another Lutheran tradition: the willingness to confess one's own guilt.

The Stuttgart Declaration encountered widespread resistance, from former Hitler sympathizers as well as from within the Church. The declaration, many criticized, appeared to endorse the Allied doctrine of German collective guilt. In retrospect, however, this document marked the beginning of a long and paradoxical process of rethinking. To borrow a term from the philosopher Hermann Lübbe, a 'communicative silence' dominated Germany in the 1950s.<sup>9</sup> People didn't speak about what they did during the Nazi period; and they said as little as possible about what their neighbors did. In 1960 a new generation emerged and treatment of the past became increasingly self-critical. Though it confessed German guilt, the Stuttgart Declaration did not specifically mention the extermination of the Jews. Not until after the *Historikerstreit* – the 1986 controversy about the uniqueness of the Nazi genocide – did the view of the Holocaust as the central event in twentieth-century German history become widely accepted.

The Allied attempt to democratize Germany would hardly have been successful had there not been a German attempt three decades earlier. Bonn did not become Weimar because it had the chance to learn from Weimar. The Western Allies found in Germany an important, albeit small, 'back-up army' of politicians who had experienced the Weimar Republic and learned from its mistakes. The first Federal President, Theodor Heuss, belonged to that group, as did the first Federal Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, and the first postwar leader of German social democracy, Kurt Schumacher. Joining the democrats who had remained during the war were returning emigrants likewise shaped by the first German Republic.

8 A. Boyens, 'Das Stuttgarter Schuldbekenntnis vom 19. Oktober 1945 – Entstehung und Bedeutung', in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 19 (1971), 347–397.

9 H. Lübbe, 'Der Nationalsozialismus im politischen Bewußtsein der Gegenwart', in M. Broszat (ed.), *Deutschlands Weg in die Diktatur. Internationale Konferenz zur nationalsozialistischen Machtübernahme im Reichstagsgebäude zu Berlin. Referate und Diskussionen. Ein Protokoll*. Berlin: Siedler 1983, 329–349.

When the Bonn Parliamentary Council drafted the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany in 1948 and 1949, they made sure to avoid the systematic shortcomings of the Weimar Constitution of 1919. The result was a functional representative democracy that took on its opponents with foresighted and effective constitutional parameters. Never again should a democratically-elected head of state become an ersatz-legislator who could deactivate the parliament. Never again should a parliament topple the head of government without having to elect his successor. Never again should enemies of democracy legally seize power. It required the experience of the first democracy and its downfall to inoculate the second against such crises. Had the Germans not learned from their own history, the Western Allied 'reeducation' would have failed.

While West Germany cultivated 'anti-totalitarian' principles in reaction to its recent past, the Soviet occupation zone, later to become the German Democratic Republic, had to limit itself to 'anti-fascist' tenets. The 'anti-fascist' position served to legitimate a new dictatorship mainly modeled on the Soviet Union. The GDR didn't receive democratic legitimation until much later when, as a result of the 'peaceful revolution' in the fall of 1989, it received its first and last freely-elected parliament on March 18, 1990. The People's Chamber used its newly won freedom to pass a resolution approving GDR's merger with the Federal Republic of Germany. Hence even after 1945 the process of German democratization remained non-simultaneous. The Germans who lived in the West experienced a second attempt at democracy in the municipal and state elections of 1946 and 1947. For the Germans in Soviet-controlled territory, the local elections of 1946 were the last elections with any degree of freedom. The East Germans did not enjoy a secure democracy until four and a half decades later.

It should not be forgotten that the often-invoked West-German 'success story' also owed much to the longest sustained period of economic growth in the twentieth century, a boom that began in the early 1950s and lasted until the middle of the 1960s. In ironic allusion to the Weimar Republic, the economic historian Knut Borchardt named the German 'economic wonder' the 'back-up constitution' of the second German democracy.<sup>10</sup> The high rates of growth allowed the swift integration of

<sup>10</sup> Oral contribution of Knut Borchardt to the conference "Die deutsche Staats-

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expellees from the former Eastern provinces and refugees from the GDR; they eased the balancing of social and confessional antagonisms; they were essential in reducing membership to radical parties on both sides of the political spectrum; and they contributed to the transformation of the two major democratic parties – first the Christian Democrats and later the Social Democrats – from sectional parties to people's parties.

Without the economic boom, Adenauer would have had much greater difficulty in garnering majority support for his policy of Western integration. The same can be said for the intensely debated issue of rearmament. As prosperity increased in West Germany, so did the need for security. With regard to external security, this need could only be met through close alliance with Western powers. The joint opposition to communism and the Soviet Union formed a bridge between West Germany and the Western victors. The more the West accepted the Federal Republic of Germany as a political partner, the weaker traditional German reservations about Western democracy became.

It helped the Federal Republic's military integration into the West and the consolidation of Western Europe that a conservative democrat like Adenauer was their champion; and it helped Adenauer that he didn't have to defend his foreign policy to a radical right, but to a moderate left led by the Social Democrats. The largest opposition party at the time placed more emphasis on the reunification of Germany than on the Federal Republic's integration into the West. German politics had, from the perspective of the Weimar Republic, reversed themselves. In the first German democracy the right was nationalist and the left was internationalist; in Bonn the moderate right supported supranational politics while the moderate left earned themselves a patriotic image.

The Social Democrats came to power only after they accepted the political reality of the alliance with the West. The *Ostpolitik* introduced by Willy Brandt, the first Social Democratic Federal Chancellor, supplemented, rather than neutralized, Adenauer's *Westpolitik*. The policies of the social-liberal coalition government between 1969 and 1982 aimed to expand the Federal Republic's options in the East and make the reality of a divided Germany more bearable. Reunification remained an official goal of the Federal Republic, yet it was seen as

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krise 1930–1933: Handlungsspielräume und Alternativen“, held at Historisches Kolleg, Munich, January 1991.

unobtainable by most of its citizens and politicians so long as the East-West opposition continued. Consequently, the Federal Republic no longer saw itself as something provisional. In contrast to its early years the Federal Republic's self-image was, as the historian and political scientist Karl Dietrich Bracher wrote in 1976, increasingly that of a 'post-national democracy among nation states'.<sup>11</sup>

By the 1980s Western integration had ceased to be a bone of contention between political parties in the Federal Republic. Indeed, one witnessed the emergence of something like a posthumous Adenauer left, whose intellectual spokesman was the philosopher Jürgen Habermas. During the *Historikerstreit* Habermas delivered the following verdict:

The unreserved opening of the Federal Republic to the political culture of the West is the major intellectual accomplishment of the postwar era, of which my generation in particular can be proud... The only patriotism that doesn't alienate us from the West is a constitutional patriotism. Those who want to restore a conventional form of German national identity destroy the only reliable foundation for our integration into the West.<sup>12</sup>

Four years later the event took place that no one in the 1980s thought possible: After negotiations between the Federal Republic and the GDR as well as with the four former occupying forces, Germany was reunified. The date October 3, 1990 meant nothing less than the solution to the postwar German question. In respect to territory, the Two Plus Four Treaty – the legal basis of unified Germany – determined the new Federal Republic's borders, with the Oder-Neisse line stipulated in the Potsdam Agreement being a necessary requirement for reunification. In respect to European security, the Two Plus Four Treaty sanctioned Germany's membership in NATO. Put differently: The Soviets had accepted a solution to the German question on Western terms.

11 K. D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur. Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus*, Cologne: Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch 1979, 544 (Epilogue to the 5th edition).

12 J. Habermas, 'Eine Art Schadensabwicklung', in "*Historikerstreit*". *Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung*, München: Piper 1987, 62–76.

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Yet there is a larger historical context in which October 3, 1990 must be seen. The German question of the nineteenth century concerned the relationship between unity and freedom. The reunification brought with it that which the liberals and democrats had been constantly striving toward but had reached neither with the Revolution of 1848 nor with the *Reichsgründung* of 1871: unity in freedom. On the day of German reunification, at an official ceremony in the Berlin Philharmonic Hall, the then-Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker summed up the historical significance of the reunification in one fitting sentence: 'For the first time in history the whole of Germany has found a lasting place in the company of Western democracy'.<sup>13</sup>

By way of conclusion, I would like to return to the question with which I began: Does the successful postwar democratization of Germany (or, more accurately, a part of Germany) allow us to draw the general conclusion that a country can be brought from dictatorship to democracy by means of external military force? Or should Germany's success be attributed to particular historical factors? My answer, which emerges from the material presented in this essay, is as follows:

The Germany of 1945 could only have been liberated from without. Yet West Germany was able to make the transition from liberation to freedom because it could fall back on and re-establish its own liberal, constitutional, and democratic traditions. Culturally, Germany was a country of the Old Occident, connected with Western democracies through common legal traditions based on the rule of law. Germany became a nation state later than France and England and a democracy later still, but the liberal forces of the nineteenth century did much to help the authoritarian state on its way to becoming a constitutional one. Bismarck's empire was a constitutional monarchy with all the characteristics of a constitutional state, including a parliament of democratically-elected representatives. The Weimar Republic – Germany's first political system based on majority-rule – failed not least because it was widely considered to be a form of government imposed on Germany by the victors. But the Parliamentary Council in Bonn learned its lessons from the shortcomings of the Weimar Constitution: the Basic Law it passed in 1949 laid the constitutional foundation for the Federal Republic's success.

<sup>13</sup> *Archiv der Gegenwart* 6 (1990), 34305f.

The young democracy of Weimar – whose voters ultimately elected parties calling for the abolishment of democracy – taught Germans that there is more to democracy than majoritarianism. Democracy also relies on a political culture of peaceful dialogue. Along with differences of opinion, this means, according to the political scientist Ernst Fraenkel, establishing a basic consensus on values and institutions that are held to be worth defending.<sup>14</sup> It is for this reason that the Parliamentary Council declared the essential provisions of the Basic Law inalienable.

If there is something to be learned from German democratization for the democratization of Iraq or other states then it is this: the decisive impulses must come from within. The only improvements sustainable in the long-run are those that find support in a country's own past experiences. Reforms seen as imposed entirely from without will be undone sooner or later. There is nothing that stands more in the way of an opening to the political culture of the West than nationalist or religious resentment. There is nothing more conducive to such an opening than the development of a pluralistic civil society.

Successful democratization is based on societal and cultural requirements that cannot be brought about through external force. Those who want to help other countries with democratization can at most help those countries help themselves. Those who appeal to historical analogies often exploit history so that it reflects their own wishful thinking. By invoking the German example of 1945 to justify taking out Saddam, the proponents of the war in Iraq did just that. Without further reflection, they argued that what worked for a Western country with a tradition of constitutional government and a developed parliamentary culture would also work for a non-Western country that does not know, or only barely knows, those traditions. The members of the 'warring party', the *Kriegspartei* so to speak, could pursue this line of argument only because they refused to acknowledge the historical facts that stood in the way of their undertaking.

Quod erat demonstrandum.

14 E. Fraenkel, 'Strukturdefekte der Demokratie und deren Überwindung', in: id., *Deutschland und die westlichen Demokratien*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1964, 48–68.

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