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## The Soviet Union, Finland and the Cold War



*Aappo Kähönen*

# The Soviet Union, Finland and the Cold War

The Finnish Card in Soviet Foreign Policy,  
1956–1959

SUOMALAISEN KIRJALLISUUDEN SEURA  
HELSINKI

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# PREFACE

On my part, interest in history could be traced back to dramatic turns of plot in historical novels and movies. The collapse of the Soviet Union then motivated me to learn some Russian, in order to gain some understanding on what was going on there. This base enabled, first my thesis on new the revolutionary regime's view on Finland and the Baltic Provinces after the Russian Revolution; and now this dissertation on Soviet Cold War policy towards Finland. The "process" may not seem entirely systematic but, then again, how often is the past, or what we know of it before it is analyzed and interpreted and even constructed, chosen by the researcher from a point of view.

In learning the skills necessary for a researcher, professor Seppo Hentilä's project "Cold War as Social Science History –The Finnish Case" offered a secure start. Also his practical advice, as the scientific supervisor of this study, helped in grasping the complexities of the Cold War, especially in the realm of foreign policy. In understanding the Cold War also as a confrontation between ideologies and societies, the insight of professor Pauli Kettunen has been decisive. On the preliminary inspection of this study I want to thank professors Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Timo Soikkanen, whose accurate and useful comments on the manuscript gave me the possibility to review and clarify my emphases. The proof reading of the manuscript by Godfrey Weldham turned it to readable English.

The following foundations and organizations have made the continuation of this research possible with their grants after the funding of professor Hentilä's project by the Finnish Academy of Science had ended: University of Arhus (Denmark), The Finnish Cultural Foundation, University of Helsinki, and the Alfred Kordelin Foundation. Regarding the archival part of the research process, I should like to thank specifically the professional attitude of the personnel in New Party Archive (RGANI) in the Old Square of Moscow, and the splendid facilities offered by the dedicated personnel of the Urho Kekkonen's Archive in Orimattila.

More generally, I am indebted to the whole Department of Social Science History, and my colleagues, who have created a sympathetic and supportive atmosphere there. In particular, I should like to thank those, who by reading the text or parts of it, have helped to develop it further with their insight: Tauno Saarela and Juhana Aunesluoma, and those who by discussions and intellectual sparring, either at work or at leisure, have done the same: Joni Krekola managed this even during common archival research in Moscow, Kimmo Rentola and Mikko Majander instead mostly in Finland.

Last but not the least, I should like to express my gratitude to my parents, Maria and Risto, who have both in different but invaluable ways contributed to this research process, already by shaping the basis of my thinking and perception of the surrounding world.

However, despite the advice and support I have been grateful to receive, the responsibility on what my thinking has done, on the following pages as elsewhere in life, remains mine.

*Aappo Kähkönen,*  
Helsinki  
March 2006

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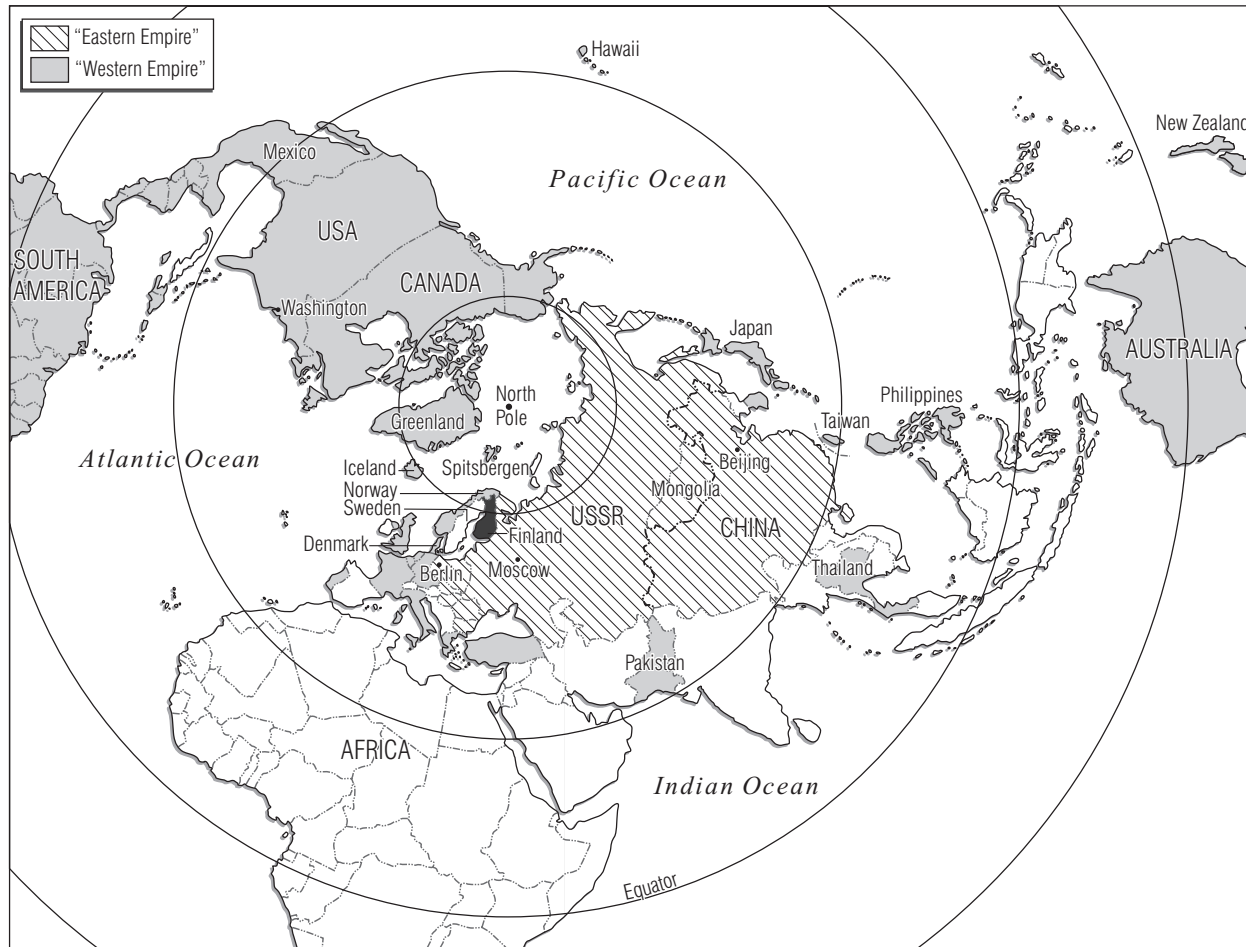
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# ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Allied Control Commission
AVP RF	Archive for Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Rossikoi Federatsii)
CC	Central Committee
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, (Soviet Ekonomitseskoi Vzaimopomoshci)
COCOM	Coordinating Committee of Multilateral Export Controls
COMISCO	Committee of the International Socialist Conferences
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPF	Communist Party of Finland (Suomen kommunistinen puolue, SKP)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Kommunistitseskaia Partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza)
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Communities
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
FCMA	Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance treaty
FPDL	Finnish People's Democratic League
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GARF	State Archive of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiskoi Federatsii)
IBRD	International Bank for Rebuilding and Development
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
ICFTU	International Congress for Free Trade Unions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KGB	Soviet Committee of State Security, (Komitet Gosdarstvennoi Bezopasnosti), successor of the MGB
MGB	Soviet Ministry of State Security (Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti)
MFN	Most Favoured Nation status
MID	Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del)
MSZMP	Communist Party of Hungary (Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NSC	National Security Council
OCB	Operations Coordination Board
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Cooperation
OSS	Scandinavian Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry (Otdelenie Skandinavskii Stran)
PZPR	Communist Party of Poland (Polska Zjednocna Partia Robotnica)

RGANI	Russian State Archive for Contemporary History (Rossiikoi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveisheii Istorii)
RGASPI	Russian State Archive for Social and Political History (Rossiikoi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotisialno-polititseskoi Istorii)
SAK	Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions (Suomen ammattiliit-tojen keskusjärjestö)
SDP	Social Democratic Party of Finland (Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue)
SDU	Scandinavian Defense Union
SED	Communist Party of East Germany (Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands)
SPP	Swedish People's Party
SUPO	Finnish Security Police (Suojelupoliisi)
UM	Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Ulkoasianministeriö)
UD	Norwegian Foreign Ministry (Utriksdepartement)
WTO	Warsaw Treaty Organization, Warsaw Pact
WTUC	World Trade Union Congress

## 1. World map from polar perspective

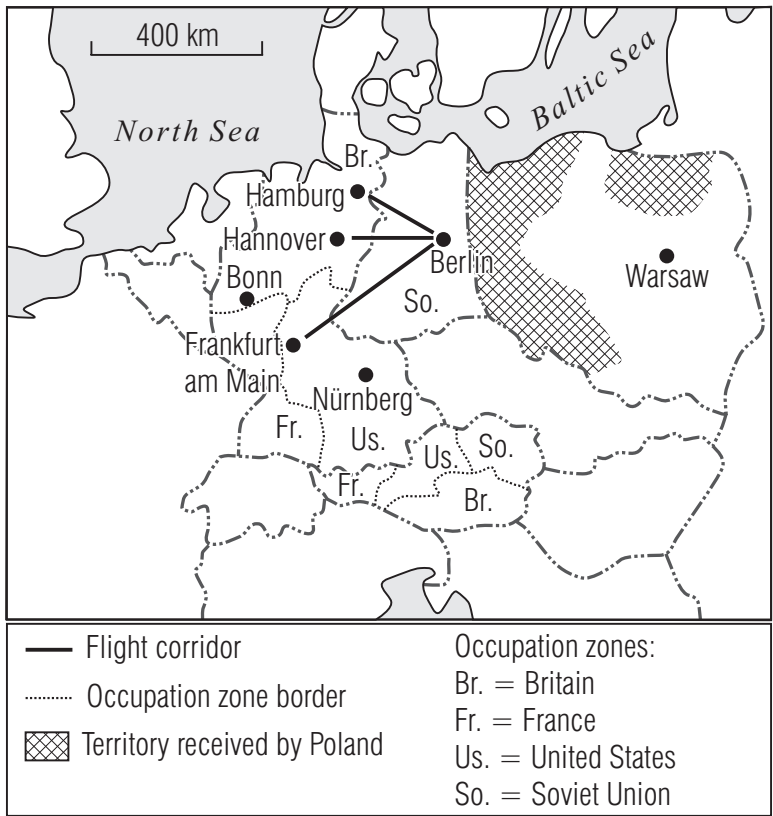


Global Cold War “empires”, the two superpowers and their allies, from the viewpoint of polar strategy in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The shortest route from one superpower to the other for strategic bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles with nuclear capacity went over polar areas.

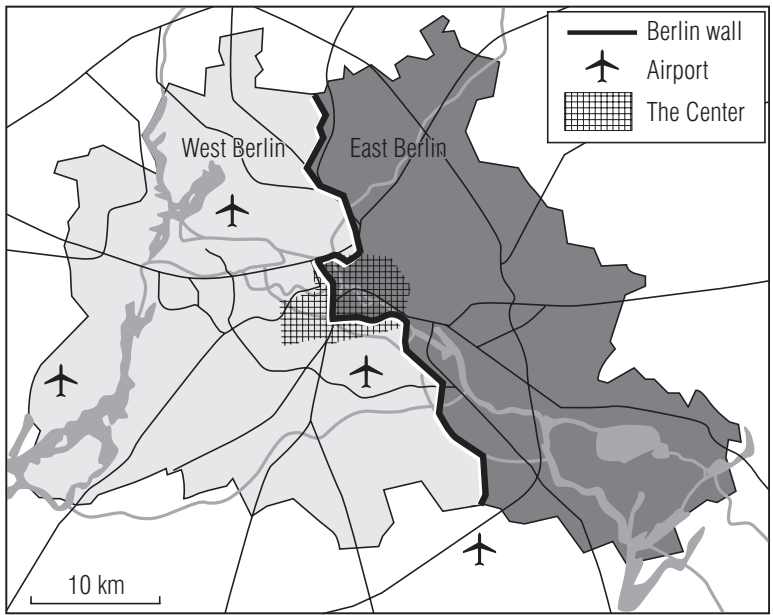
## 2. Europe after the Second World War and during the Cold War.



3. Division of Germany after the Second World War.



4. Occupation zones in Berlin.





# INTRODUCTION

## PERIOD AND THEME

The Cold War as an era shaped the second half of the twentieth century, just as the two World Wars and the Great Depression had formed its first half. If the centrality of ideologies or “isms” is taken as typical for the previous twentieth century, characterizations in the spirit of “Century of Lenin and Wilson”<sup>1</sup> do not seem far off the mark. This characterization also comes close if one thinks in terms of Eric Hobsbawm’s “Short Twentieth Century” (1914–1991), which sees the Soviet Union as the necessary challenger, saviour and reformer of capitalism.<sup>2</sup> In treating the Cold War as a distinct period of international relations, bipolarity, as such, should not be regarded as characteristic to its international system. Bipolarity also characterized earlier international conflicts, and had already been visioned, for example, between the United States and Russia by de Tocqueville during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Instead, the distinctiveness and long duration of the Cold War is best understood as a confrontation between different societies motivated by universalistic and mutually exclusive ideologies. This social and ideological dimension was combined simultaneously with the threat of total annihilation on a global scale by nuclear weapons, and evolved in to a balance of terror with periodic bargaining between the opposing sides. In this sense, the Cold War can be understood as a long term inter-systemic conflict, and as a consequence of the heterogeneity of the international system. The final goal was not peace or compromise, but the prevailing of one system over the other.<sup>4</sup> From this viewpoint, the actual Cold War conflict can be located between the end of World War II in 1945 and the end of the Soviet Union in 1991.

On the other hand, though a distinct period in itself, the Cold War can be seen as forming part of the larger continuum of the twentieth century. Both World Wars created vacuums in Europe, but of a different nature and with different consequences. At the end of the First World War a vacuum of legitimacy emerged in Europe, as multinational monarchies collapsed. Even the people on the victorious side were exhausted by war. In 1917–1918 Lenin’s proletarian internationalism, which aimed at

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- 1 John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking the Cold War*, New York 1997. On the significance of Woodrow Wilson vs. Vladimir Lenin for twentieth-century history, see pp. 5–6.
  - 2 Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short History of the Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*, London 1994, for the role of the Soviet Union see pp. 7–9, the limitations and significance of the Cold War for the 20th Century, comparing it to the Crusades or the religious wars of sixteenth century Europe, p. 34 on the conflict of Wilson and Lenin at the end of the First World War, p. 226 generally characterizing the Cold War.
  - 3 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, New York 1988, pp. 412–413.
  - 4 Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations*, London 1994, pp. 170–171, 174–177.



World Revolution, and Wilson's 14 articles, based on national sovereignty and the idea of making the world safe for democracy, both offered universal solutions for the construction of a new world order, internationally as well as socially. The rise of a third alternative to Europe's crisis of legitimacy, namely fascism in Italy and Germany, paved the way to the Second World War. A power vacuum in Europe was created in 1945 after Germany's total defeat in World War II. It was this result to the war initiated by Hitler, which allowed the emergence of a direct conflict for political power and a competition for influence between the Soviet Union and the United States, their armies having reached Central Europe. However, the character of this conflict was based on an ideological confrontation, that had existed since the end of the First World War.<sup>5</sup>

As a period in international relations, the Cold War formed a continuum of tensions and compromises. Its numerous crises, ranging from Europe to the Middle-East, and from the Caribbean to the Far East, as well as its occasional moments of *détents*, were global in their dimension. This is the general framework for the theme of this study, the changing Finnish international position from the Soviet viewpoint, during a transition from compromise to crisis in the late 1950s. The year 1956 saw a change in Finland's political leadership, as Urho Kekkonen succeeded J. K. Paasikivi as president. In 1958–1959 a significant crisis developed in Soviet-Finnish relations. This "Night Frost Crisis" was not the first or last crisis in these relations, but it had far-reaching consequences for Finland's international position, for both the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, during 1959, serious problems appeared in connection with developments in European integration. These problems were indicative of new a new phase in trade policy, for which solutions had to be found throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Internationally, de-Stalinization, with its unexpected results began in the Soviet Union in 1956, and in the turn of 1958–1959 the superpowers were, momentarily, on the verge of war because of the second Berlin Crisis, before relations experienced a brief *détente* in the summer of 1959.

## RELATION OF THE STUDY TO PRESENT

Research on Finland's position in Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War, as research on any historical topic, is unavoidably influenced by the present day, in many ways. The ending of the Cold War era in 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 easily seem to fall in the category of "losers' history," to be explained away, or condemned. On the other hand, as all historical research is based on hindsight, recognizing the result of a historical process does not automatically commit one to "winners history," which justifies that, and only that, result.<sup>6</sup>

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5 Gaddis 1997, on the ideological background and context of the Cold War. pp. 1–25.

6 Jorma Kalela, *Historiantutkimus ja historia*, Tampere 2000, pp. 112–116, for a critique of determinism and teleology in historical research.

The ending, in 1991, of what had been a Soviet influenced position in international affairs for Finland and the creation of a new international position, as a result of EU membership in 1995, based on integration with the “West”, would alone have created new needs and pressures for a reevaluation of Finland’s policies. This task is all the more complicated, because the external changes are in great part related to internal ones, which tie the research on foreign relations to a larger debate on Finnish political culture and contemporary history. This becomes especially problematic when developments in both foreign relations and domestic politics are largely connected to one and same person, the long time president Urho Kaleva Kekkonen (1900–1986), who stayed in office for 25 years (1956–1981), after being prime minister for five years (1950–1953, 1954–1956). Consequently, evaluations of Finland’s relationship with the USSR during the Cold War tend to be taken as evaluations of Kekkonen, and evaluations on Kekkonen are often observed mainly against the background of Finland’s relations with the USSR. This was already the case during the 1950’s; the period of this study. Consequently, the combination of both domestic and foreign policy, given Kekkonen’s dominant role in both is, to a certain extent, inevitable, when studying Finnish post World War II history<sup>7</sup>. However, today’s research environment with greater access to different source groups, and not just personal archives, offers many opportunities to reevaluate the biographical interpretations.

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH AS THE BASIS OF THIS STUDY

The Soviet view of the evolution of Finland’s position in international affairs during the Cold War has largely remained outside the focus of research. Foreigners have rarely been interested in it, and for the Finns it was not possible to research this topic before the 1990s. Until 1991 this restricted, “Finnocentric” view could be defended by referring to the lack of appropriate Soviet archival sources. The relevant international Cold War research will be presented in connection with the conceptual basis of this study.

Unlike much of previous Finnish research on this theme, the aim of this study is to locate the changes Finland’s position on the international scene in the 1950s, its room to manoeuvre, within a comparative Cold War context. The evolution of Finland’s position in international affairs, especially in so far as this was defined by Finland’s relationship to the Soviet Union, has already been the object of numerous studies. The approach, however, has often been one sided, concentrating only on the significance of these bilateral relations for Finland. The superpower character of the other participant of this relationship has usually been neglected. For the Soviet

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7 On the significance of Kekkonen’s role for research on Finnish political history, see Mikko Majander, “Post-Cold War Historiography in Finland” in *The Cold War and the Nordic Countries. Historiography at Crossroads*, ed. Thorsten B. Olesen, University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004, pp. 53–56.

Union, having global strategic and ideological interests, Finland could hardly be more than a minor, though not insignificant, object of its foreign policy.

Juhani Suomi's massive Kekkonen biography of eight volumes, offering the first authoritative interpretation of Finland's position during the Cold War and the crisis of the late 1950s onwards, manifests many of these problems. The detailed biography provides a much-needed resource, for comparison with other Kekkonen literature, especially in relation to the so-called Night Frost and Note Crisis between the Soviet Union and Finland, which strongly affected on Finland's position internationally.<sup>8</sup> Suomi's Kekkonen-monument has significant value as the viewpoint of a president, who held office for almost four terms, 25 years, the longest period in Finnish history. There also lies its significant limitations. Not only are developments in Finnish foreign and domestic politics openly Kekkonen-centred, but the biographer has also, even in his conclusions, to great extent, identified himself with the contemporary views and values of Kekkonen, who saw himself as the only capable savior of Finland. Even though foreign relations, and specifically the relations with the USSR are among its central themes, the biography is of rather limited value when trying to relate Finland's position to larger the international background, or evaluate alternatives to Kekkonen's policies. These problems are underlined by the lack of Soviet sources, except newspapers, for this as well as for later parts of the biography. This is the more problematic, as Kekkonen's Soviet policies and his interaction with Soviet representatives were central for the formation of Finland's position in international affairs during the period. It should also be noted that the Soviet sources started to become available at the time.

However, even the availability of materials from the other partner to this relationship is not guarantee against "Finnocentrism," when studying the country's international position. This holds true for the works of Jukka Seppinen, and even more so for those of Hannu Rautkallio, who have been able to take advantage of the opening of Soviet archives. Seppinen's dissertation is useful in underlining the significance of economic and trade policies for Soviet foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> It is also easy to overestimate these factors, especially when the interpretation of statistics is not unambiguous. Regardless of the use of rather interesting Western and Soviet sources, the study's conclusions on the significance of Finnish trade policy for the Soviet Union and on Kekkonen's role vis-a-vis the Soviets and the West remain contradictory.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, despite the potentially promising combination of Soviet and Western sources, the contradictions and imbalances regarding Finland's position are disturbingly large in Rautkallio's works, which have a preset agenda to prove that Kekkonen was an agent of the Soviet Union. This supposed, camouflaged role of Kekkonen together with claims that Finland was a kind of laboratory, where

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8 Juhani Suomi, *Urho Kekkonen 1956–1962, Kriisien aika*, Keuruu 1992.

9 Jukka Seppinen, *Suomen EFTA -ratkaisu yöpakkasten ja noottikriisin välissä*, Saarijärvi 1997.

10 Trade policies are taken as a central factor in explaining Soviet reactions towards Finland in 1958–1959. However, despite declining exports to the Soviet Union after 1957, it is interesting to note from the statistics presented that Finnish imports from the Soviet Union actually increased during 1956–1959, Seppinen 1997, pp. 56–57.

the Soviets could test their strategies against the West, more than borders on conspiracy theories.<sup>11</sup>

Precisely because of their either extremely positive or extremely negative view of Kekkonen as an individual, or rather their personification of Finnish policies to Kekkonen, all the above-mentioned studies tend to over emphasize Finland's significance for Soviet policies. A much more balanced and diversified view of the development of the Finland's position internationally will be obtained, when it is consciously located within an international context and evaluated as an object in policy of other actors. Examples for this approach can be seen in the works of Osmo Jussila and Tuomo Polvinen. Jussila has managed to re-evaluate deeply the views on construction of Finnish statehood as an autonomous part of the Russian empire during the nineteenth century, by observing Finnish developments from the Russian viewpoint, relating the goals of Finnish nationalists to the actual policies of the imperial government.<sup>12</sup> A similar approach to Finland's position during the Cold War should prove fruitful. Tuomo Polvinen's works on Finland's independence during the Russian Revolution and Civil War, and changes in Finland's position during World War II are thoroughly located in an international context. His biography of Juho Kusti Paasikivi (1870–1956), prime minister 1944–1946 and president 1946–1956, the “founding father” of Finland's foreign political reorientation after World War II, is more useful than Suomi's biography on Kekkonen, because it is also based on Soviet material.<sup>13</sup> The Russian/Soviet public's perceptions of Finland during the formative phase of Soviet-Finnish relations, 1918–1920, are discussed in Timo Vihavainen's dissertation.<sup>14</sup> Raimo Väyrynen's report for the Finnish Institute for Foreign Policy on the Soviet-Finnish crisis of 1958–1959 must be mentioned as an interesting early predecessor in the use of a conceptual framework. The larger Cold War international context is taken into consideration, and the domestic political situation in the Soviet Union is also seen as an important component.<sup>15</sup>

The most recent studies on Finland's position during the Cold War have not limited their concern to just Finnish-Soviet relations. Finland's position in international affairs during the period is now related also to the viewpoint of the Western superpower, the United States, as well to the central Cold War context of “the German Question” and to the regional context of Scandinavia. Interesting examples of these emphases can be found in the works of Jussi M. Hanhimäki, Seppo Hentilä and Mikko Majander. Hanhimäki successfully reveals, how America's Finnish-policy, conscious of its limitations, evolved gradually towards greater

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11 Hannu Rautkallio, e.g. *Laboratorio Suomi. Kekkonen ja KGB 1944–1962*, Helsinki 1996, and *Agenda Suomi. Kekkonen, SDP ja NKP 1956–1966*, Helsinki 1999.

12 Osmo Jussila, *Nationalismi ja vallankumous venäläis-suomalaisissa suhteissa 1899–1914*, Forssa 1979. *Suomen suuriruhtinaskunta 1809–1917*, Helsinki 2004.

13 Tuomo Polvinen, *J. K. Paasikivi: Valtiomiehen elämäntyö* (5 vol.), Juva 1989–2003. On Finland's position internationally, see e.g., *Venäjän vallankumous ja Suomi 1917–1920*, vol. 1–2, Porvoo 1967, 1971. *Suomi kansainvälisessä politiikassa I, 1941–1943: Barbarossasta Teheraniin*, Porvoo 1979.

14 Timo Vihavainen, *Suomi Neuvostolehdistössä 1918–1920*, Vammala 1988.

15 Raimo Väyrynen, “Yöpakkaset v. 1958–1959 Neuvostoliiton ulkopoliittisen käyttäytymisen kuvastajana”, UPI Info 19/1970.

toleration of Finnish policy of neutrality, and how this tendency fit, or did not fit, to the general development of U.S. Cold War policies. However, the lack of Soviet sources sometimes hinders evaluations made on the Soviet policy. This, in turn, has at times influence in the analyses of US policy towards Finland.<sup>16</sup> Hentilä's works have clarified the significance and implications of Germany's status for Finnish foreign policy and for Finland's international position, as the Soviet-Finnish defence pact, the Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance treaty (FCMA), explicitly defined Germany and countries allied with it as primary aggressors. Finland's foreign policy thus had direct links to any changes or crisis connected to Germany's position, which was of crucial importance for the policies of both superpowers, especially for the Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup> Majander's dissertation is a valuable addition to the study of Finland's position during the Cold War, since it sheds light on the importance of the Scandinavian countries to Finland not only as a foreign political, but also as a domestic political reference group, which had great significance in the decisive domestic political Cold War confrontation between the social democrats and the communists.<sup>18</sup>

The most interesting and detailed studies of the development of Finnish-Soviet relations during the Cold War have been made by Jukka Nevakivi and Kimmo Rentola, who both had the opportunity to use relevant Soviet sources during the relatively liberal Russian archival policy before the mid 1990s. Nevakivi was among the first to approach Finland's position during the Cold War from a regional and international perspective from the viewpoint of foreign policy since the 1970s. His works cover the development of Finland's position in international affairs from the mid 1940s to the early 1970s. Nevakivi's rather polemic brief presentation on the connection of Kekkonen's rise to power with Soviet policies, especially on those parts where it is directly based on Soviet sources, has been quite fruitful for the formation of questions for this study.<sup>19</sup> Rentola has combined in an innovative way the Finnish domestic and foreign political practises with the formation of the USSR's Finnish policy. His evaluations of the motives and tools of the Soviet Union's Finnish policy and his explanations for Soviet reactions during the Night Frost Crisis have been important for the basis of this study.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the prevailing liveliness in the study of Finland's position during the Cold War, there is room for a new study. The latest research has acknowledged the significance of the international and regional context for Finland's position internationally during the Cold War, and has now been able, in the best cases, to use the materials of the main actor, the Soviet Union, in a highly interesting way. The

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16 Jussi M. Hanhimäki, e. g. *Containing Co-existence: America, Russia and the Finnish Solution, 1945–1956*, Kent, Ohio 1997 and *Scandinavia and the United States: An Insecure Friendship*, New York 1997.

17 Seppo Hentilä, e. g. *Kaksi Saksaa ja Suomi*, Helsinki 2003, *Harppisaksan haarukassa*, Helsinki 2004.

18 Mikko Majander, *Pohjoismaa vai kansandemokratia? Sosiaalidemokraatit, kommunistit ja Suomen kansainvälinen asema 1944–1951*, Helsinki 2004.

19 Jukka Nevakivi, *Miten Kekkonen pääsi valtaan ja Suomi suomettui*, Keuruu 1996.

20 Kimmo Rentola, e. g. *Kenen joukossa seisot: Suomalainen kommunismi ja sota 1937–1945*, Juva 1994 and *Niin kylmää että poltaa: Kekkonen, kommunistit ja Kreml 1947–1956*, Keuruu 1997.

inclusion of the social and ideological aspects to the conflict has made the strict separation of foreign relations and domestic politics artificial. However, even in the latest studies of Finland's position on the international scene the viewpoint has remained mostly on the Finnish side, and the studies have not for the most part taken advantage of any kind of conceptual approach, which would be helpful for locating Finland internationally into a more general, comparative Cold War context. The emphases of this study, then, are not in the use of previously unknown sources, Soviet or otherwise, or a larger source base. In this respect recent research has already been more successful. The justification for this study comes mainly from the decision to take a different, Soviet based, viewpoint to what is already a quite well-known phenomena, namely the changes in Finland's room to manoeuvre during the 1950s, and observe it through certain general concepts.

The objectives of this study can be covered by relating the USSR's policy towards Finland to Soviet goals regionally in Scandinavia, as well as to general Soviet Cold War aims. These Soviet policies in turn are compared with Western, mostly U.S. aims, regionally in Scandinavia and in Eastern Europe, as well as generally during the Cold War. This approach also allows for the critical re-evaluation of the tendency to portray the formation of Finland's position in international affairs during the Cold War in terms of an overt popular/nationalistic success story. This tendency is most obvious in claims that Finland "dealt with" or "managed" one superpower, the Soviet Union, bilaterally on exceptionally advantageous terms. A central part of this argumentation is that these bilateral relations were somehow set apart from, or independent of the development of international relations<sup>21</sup>.

Criticizing this view does not mean defining Finnish foreign policy during the Cold War as a failure, nor denying the fact that Finland's position in the Cold War, its room to manoeuvre, differed in many significant ways from that of the East European peoples' democracies vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. However, instead of focusing on the bilateral and exceptional, the emphases of this study are more in multilateral (and) characteristics, which are general in relations between a great power, and a superpower at that, and a small state. The topic of this study, namely the emerging crisis in and redefinition of Soviet-Finnish relations in 1956–1959, together with Finland's problematic and evolving relationship to European integration, can be thought of as a "case study," shedding light on this point of view.

## THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In the study of political history, as well as history in general, the formulation of own theory has been left at a rather modest level, at least in relation to the complexity of the issues. From the viewpoint of the Cold War's international system or, more specifically, from that of Soviet-Finnish relations it is not irrelevant, what kind of model or paradigm of international relations has been chosen as a foundation. It is, therefore, useful to examine briefly the history of the study of international relations

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21 Suomi 1992, see p. 65, 74 as examples of this kind of rhetoric from second half of 1950s.

as an academic discipline so as to better understand the basics of the paradigms used, as well as my own choice of paradigms.

The study of international relations in universities began after the First World War. The goal was to avoid the repetition of those developments that had lead to “the Great War.” Traditional liberalism, also referred to as idealism, became the prevailing paradigm, underlining the norms of international law and the importance of international organisations. The next crisis in the international system brought about the first change of paradigm. Just before and after the Second World War idealistic liberalism was heavily criticized, and realism became the prevailing paradigm. Realism sees the international arena, in the absence of an international authority as chaotic, and underlines the importance of force and “national interest” in relations between states.<sup>22</sup>

Genuine challengers, on ontological and methodological grounds, to realism and its reformed form, neorealism, emerged only from the 1970s onwards, in the form of liberal constructivist and structuralist paradigms. The emergence of these challengers led to an inter-paradigm debate, which still continues. Unlike earlier forms of realist interpretation, neorealism is based on adapting systems theory to international politics. The character of international politics is defined through the distribution of power in an anarchic system, which is composed of states as the basic units. The states are the only significant actors on the level of the system and, in the circumstances of anarchy, their basic aim is to maximize their own gains, from mere survival to expansion, which constitute their objective national interest. In this sense all the units of the system, that is the states, are alike. The clarity of the neorealist model is achieved by giving primacy to the system level, and regarding the subunit level (internal affairs, the domestic politics of states) as irrelevant as an explanatory factor.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike the realist tradition, the liberal constructivist theories of international politics and relations are based not on the separation, but on the interaction of the system level and subunit level. The interests of governments and states are formed just as much by domestic as by international structures. Despite the lack of universal authority, the international system is characterized by persistent and connected sets of rules, both formal and informal, which create prerequisites for state action in a similar way as the distribution of power. The central actors of the international system are not states, but individuals in a social context formed by governments, domestic structures, and international institutions. This approach allows one to observe the influence of both domestic and transnational pressure groups in the formation of state interests. In connection to this significance of norms, shared values and value communities, ideas and ideologies as parts of social construction of international relations are underlined.<sup>24</sup>

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22 Michael J. Banks, “The Inter-Paradigm Debate”, in *International Relations*, edited by Michael J. Banks and Margot Light, Boulder Colorado 1985, pp. 10–12.

23 Kenneth N. Waltz, “Political Structures”, in *Neorealism and its Critics*, edited by Robert O. Keohane, New York 1986, pp. 87–96.

24 Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation Among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy*, Princeton, New Jersey 1995, pp. 24–26.



Structuralism in the study of international relations gives even heavier emphasis to social structure and economy as the foundations of dynamics, thus basing international relations in a centre-periphery relationship. As a paradigm one can connect it to academic Marxism in the West and Marxism-Leninism in the East.<sup>25</sup>

Both the liberal constructivist and structuralist paradigms emerged as reactions to the limitations of realism, even in its reformed versions, as an interpretation of the international system. These limitations have been most evident when explaining the causes to changes, both in the positions of states, which is based on the international distribution of power, and in the objectives of states. This difficulty is mainly due to the exclusion of domestic level as an explanatory factor. The practical scope of neorealism remains limited mainly to acute power struggles and security issues in anarchic, warlike conditions. It has difficulties in explaining cooperation between states, alliances, and international organizations.

What liberal theory wins with its larger scope and versatility of explanation, it clearly loses in clarity and parsimoniousness of the model.<sup>26</sup> The central, fruitful connection between international relations and domestic structures has remained a challenge to present in practical terms. However, in this respect the concept of a “two-level game” connecting diplomacy and domestic politics should prove useful. The core of the concept is based on the insight that solutions on the international level, or “agreements,” have to be acceptable simultaneously to both the foreign partner to the agreement and to domestic pressure groups, or the “constituency,” of the negotiator. The expectations of the diverse domestic field together with the demands of the foreign partner, based on its constituency, form the limits of the respective “win-sets” of each side. If these overlap, an agreement can be reached. Thus, a move on one board, the international level (level I), is also a move on the other board, the national level (level II). Some differences in the rhetoric between the two levels are acceptable for the negotiators, but in the end oil prices, for example, as a consequence of an agreement, rise or they don’t.

This kind of model of interaction underlines the role of the negotiator as a mediator between international and domestic demands and is particularly interesting for foreign policy issues, when related to negotiations between heads of states and other political leaders. It helps to understand, on the one hand, how domestic pressures constrain the negotiator, when trying to reach and implement an international agreement. On the other hand, it points out, how the negotiator may be able to use the results achieved on the international level to restructure the relations of domestic pressure groups at home to his advantage. In these kinds of “linkage” processes both the negotiator and the pressure groups may receive allies from the opposing side in the form of “transnational coalitions.” Shared values and economic interdependence make these processes more probable.<sup>27</sup>

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25 Banks 1985, pp. 12–13.

26 Robert O. Keohane, “Realism, Neorealism and the Study of World Politics”, in Keohane (ed.) 1986, pp. 17–25.

27 In detail, Robert D. Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: the logic of two-level games”, *International Organization* 42, 3/1988, pp. 427–460.



Attempts to adapt this type of model to analyses of the Cold War have been made, for example in relation to the Berlin Crises. However, the opportunities for such a linkage process and especially for the formation of transnational coalitions supporting the process remains quite limited for states with only a few economic contacts or with different social systems, especially on issues connected to security or territorial questions. It seems more useful to refer to “partial equilibrium,” where pressures from on level, for example domestic politics or alliance maintenance, may drive an attempt to exploit one’s room for manoeuvre on the other, interblock level.<sup>28</sup>

I have chosen the liberal constructivist paradigm as the heuristic frame for this study. I will be satisfied to present the arguments for my choice through a formulation of questions and from the viewpoint of my own discipline, political history. The advantage of liberal constructivism over a realist paradigm is its larger view about the actors of the international system in general and about the foundations of a state’s actions in particular. The emphasis on interdependence, which creates norms that guide state relations and creates institutions, makes the use of force less important, in that it is only one of the measures used by states. Unlike realism, liberalism enables the observation of the state in a social context, as it points out the interdependence between domestic and foreign policies, since the most important pressure groups often have influence over both. This breaks the image of a state as a monolithic actor. Furthermore, liberal theory enables the observation of a political system or “regime” and its legitimacy and historical change, as factors influencing foreign policy.

## COLD WAR CONCEPTS

The question repeatedly arises, as to how to perceive the “lost world” of the Cold War, which was characterised by dualistic division. As the Cold War conflict was a conflict not only between states, but also between societies, ideology had an important part in the preservation of unity within the alliances for both the Soviet Union and the United States. The propaganda supporting ideologies should not be thought as of something excluded from politics, but rather as an integral part of Cold War strategy, which aimed at winning peoples’ minds, as much as conquering new territories or achieving economic superiority.<sup>29</sup> This base makes the argumentation of both main participants of the conflict strongly ideological, and therefore underlines the need to differentiate between the concepts of the researcher and the contemporary concepts of the actors. The general concepts, through which the Cold War conflict is observed in this research, are described first. After the general concepts, the specific concepts of the leading actors, those of the Soviet Union and the United States, will be presented.

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28 Jack Snyder, “East-West Bargaining over Germany: The Search for Synergy in a Two-Level Game”, in *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International bargaining and Domestic Politics*, eds. Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson and Robert D. Putnam, Berkeley 1993, pp. 104–124.

29 Gary D. Rawnsley, Introduction, *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. Gary D. Rawnsley, New York 1999, pp. 1–2.

As the significance of one's ideological viewpoint for the interpretation of the Cold War has already been underlined, it is necessary to begin with a meaningful definition of this much-debated concept. The large and elusive concept of ideology is used on the basis of Douglas J. Macdonald's article, where it is observed in connection with the Cold War. As a point of departure, ideology and so-called "national interest" as motives of foreign policy are not seen as mutually exclusive, but instead as components complementing each other. The interaction of these components can be observed in the foreign policies of both the Soviet Union and the United States, despite differences in the nature of their political system.

On the general level, ideology is defined as number of arguments, which are meant to describe, explain, or justify organized social action. From a political perspective, the moral definition of legitimate authority is central. This definition of ideology is independent from any objectives. In other words, it is irrelevant whether the action is meant to preserve, amend, destroy or rebuild any given political order. Thus the Cold War could be observed as an ideological (political) struggle, complemented by military and economic factors, over visions concerning universal world order. As ideological concepts emphasize action, aimed at the legitimization of political authority, this leads to two kinds of consequences. Firstly, tensions between long-term goals and short-term survival are typical. Secondly, because of this tension, ideological theorizing is not static, but dynamic. Ideologists in power have to adapt. The actors need not systematically follow an ideological angle, but it is important, even decisive, that it is repeatedly taken into consideration both when defining a situation and planning an action.<sup>30</sup> In relation to Soviet foreign policy, the basic interpretation for overcoming the dichotomy between "realist" geopolitics and ideology has been presented by Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov in the form of a "revolutionary-imperial paradigm." For the study at hand, the aspects of imperial expansionism and ideological proselytism in Soviet behaviour are not that central. Instead, the observed combination of traditional Russian messianism and Marxist-Leninist ideology as basis of the Soviet world view since the 1920s proved fruitful for this study's questions.<sup>31</sup>

The concept of cold war "empires," created by Geir Lundestad and also used by John L. Gaddis, offers an interesting viewpoint for the general observation of the Cold War conflict. According to this concept both major participants together with their alliance systems and their respective spheres of influences formed hierarchical multinational "empires." The main difference between them was that the United States' presence in Western Europe was more an "empire" by invitation and integration, whereas the Soviet Union's presence in Eastern Europe was more a result of conquest and force. This interpretation is based on the observation that the internal, domestic structures of both superpowers also influenced to the nature of their external "empires." Paradoxically, these new "empires" emerged and flowered

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30 Douglas J. Macdonald, "Formal Ideologies in the Cold War: Towards a Framework for Empirical Analyses", in *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations and Theory*, edit. Odd Arne Westad, London 2000, pp. 180–184, 190–194.

31 Zubok, Vladislav and Pleshakov, Constantine, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1996, pp. 2–6.

just as the traditional colonial empires began to disintegrate after World War II. These “empires,” formed at the beginning of the Cold War in 1947–1949, created and maintained their spheres of influence, as priority areas for their security and political influence. Territorial enlargement together with maintenance of unity became central part of policies of the Eastern and the Western “empires”.<sup>32</sup>

In practice, the differences and similarities between these Cold War “empires” can be recognized by comparing the Soviet Union’s East European and the United States’ Latin American spheres of influence. This can be based on the relationship of dominant powers and subordinate states.<sup>33</sup> The foundation for this kind of observation is formed by varying interdependence, which creates regularities in state relations. Because of this it is useful to define briefly the central concepts, which are also used in this study: namely dominance vs. hegemony, a sphere of influence vs. buffer zone<sup>34</sup> and dominant-subordinate relationship.

Dominance can be defined as a great power’s habitual use of force against a lesser state in its “back yard.” This is combined with a disregard toward universal norms of interstate behavior, which include the right to sovereignty and equality. Hegemony, on the other hand, can be defined as a relationship, where the use of force is possible, though not habitual and uninhibited, but occasional and reluctant. The hegemonic power prefers to avoid the use of force and the threat of it. If it does so, it is conscious that in doing so it has to pay a political price. It acknowledges the norms of interstate behavior and justifies their violation in terms of some specific overriding principles.

There are several definitions of for the sphere of influence. Initially, the term became publicly known around the 1880s, when the European great powers were preparing for the division of the African continent. At that time it referred to an area to which a certain great power had expressed a claim, but had not actually taken under its control. Later a sphere of influence came to mean more an area already under the influence of a great power. The idea of mutual legitimacy, that is recognition of each other’s interests, was connected to the concept. In its own sphere of influence the great power could be relatively sure as to what it could do without getting in conflict with the other great powers. Similarly, the competing great powers knew, what a great power would tolerate in its sphere of influence. A buffer zone can be understood as an area between the great powers, occupied by a lesser, often neutral state or states. It is in vital interest of the competing great powers to keep others from controlling this territory. A buffer zone may, however, turn into a sphere of influence. The term “Nordic balance”<sup>35</sup>, describing the foreign political

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32 Gaddis 1997, pp. 26–27, 51–53, Lundestad on also his earlier use of the term in *Empire by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945–1997*, New York 1998, pp. 1–3, also the footnotes.

33 David B. Abernethy, *Dominant-Subordinate Relationships, Dominant Powers and Subordinate States*, edited by Jan F. Triska, 1986 Durham, p. 105.

34 The definitions are based on Paul Keal, *On Influence and Spheres of Influence*, 1986, in *Dominant Powers and Subordinate States*, pp. 126–128, 140–141.

35 For a brief definition of the Nordic balance, see Magnus Petersson, *Bördräfolkens väl: Svenska-norska säkerhetspolitiska relationerna 1949–1969*, Köpenhamn 2003, pp. 128–129.

position of the different Scandinavian countries during the Cold War, can be seen as a regional adaptation of the general buffer zone concept. This is especially so, if “Nordic balance” is understood on the basis of interdependence. Any change in the level of political commitments or military presence of superpowers in one Scandinavian country could affect the position of others, potentially divide that low presence area between the spheres of influences.

When observing the relations between the leading cold war superpowers and the rest of their “empire”, their allies and sphere of influence, the dominant-subordinate relationship becomes useful for generalisations. It identifies the characteristics common to the United States’ Latin American and the Soviet Union’s East European spheres of influences, and enables their comparative observation. In the relationship between the dominant power and the subordinate state the following six characteristics are central.<sup>36</sup> Firstly, the interaction has to have enough historical and functional depth to be notable. A decade, at least, is regarded as necessary for the emergence of noticeable patterns and regularities. Secondly, the consequences of the interaction between the dominant and subordinate state are more important to the subordinate state. Specifically, the interaction is more important for the domestic and foreign policies of the subordinate state than those of the dominant state. The consequences may be noticeable for the dominant state as well, but this need not be the case. The consequences can be, and often are, negative for the subordinate state, but this is not inevitable.

Thirdly, the dominant state has considerably more mutually acknowledged and valued power resources than the other. This difference is recognized by the leadership of both countries. Fourthly, the dominant state is not only capable of forcing compliance from the subordinate state, but it has, at least on some occasion, demonstrated its ability to do so. Fifthly, the mere existence of the dominant state noticeably constrains the subordinate states’ capability for autonomous action. This means, that the leadership of the subordinate state must regularly and seriously take into consideration the reactions of the dominant state to possible changes in its domestic and foreign policies. Lastly, the representatives of the institutions of the dominant state penetrate the territory of the subordinate state and participate quite directly and visibly in its domestic affairs.

Because of its political system, the United States exercised control in its sphere of influence more through economic means and private corporations, than political and military means, which were more important in the Soviet sphere. The status of Western Europe, despite alliance relationship with the United States, differs from both the American and Soviet spheres of influence. Whilst encouraging and, at least tolerating West European integration, the United States acted there more as a hegemonic than dominant actor.

The above-mentioned characteristics also reflect to a remarkable extent the general nature of Soviet-Finnish relations. With regard to these characteristics it can be observed, that Soviet-Finnish relations had already been conducted on the basis of new, post World War II conditions for twelve years, that is, since 1944, well before

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36 The following three paragraphs are based on Abernethy 1986, pp. 105–123.

the period covered in this study, namely, 1956–1959, and, in that time, new practices had also been developed. The second and third points are somewhat self-evident in the view of such difference in volume of power resources and size that existed between the Soviet Union and Finland. The third point was repeatedly acknowledged by the Finnish political decision makers, as can be noticed, for example, in diaries of the presidents Juho Kusti Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen.<sup>37</sup> As for the last three points, processes connected to them form much of the actual substance of this study. Lastly, the observation of the Soviet-Finnish relations through the prism of dominant-subordinate relationship is not meant to be a determinist formula, denying the autonomy of political decision makers in, for example Finland. Rather it is meant to be a reference tool for examining those circumstances under which the actors of this study exercised their autonomy according to their own contemporary self-understanding.<sup>38</sup>

### SOVIET DECISION-MAKING AND SOVIET CONCEPTS

Together with the presentation of central Soviet foreign policy concepts, a brief characterization of Soviet decision-making will help to contextualize foreign policy decisions made during the 1950s. Without going deeper into a discussion on the different interpretations of the Soviet political system provided by the totalitarian and revisionist schools, it is possible to understand, in this case with a concept of oligarchic party-state, how different interest groups gradually increased pluralism within the limits of the one party -system. The following rough outline of interest groups is useful for an analysis of political power in the Soviet Union: 1) the party administration (central and local), 2) the security organizations, 3) the military-industrial complex (army and heavy industry) 4) consumers (light industry, general population).<sup>39</sup>

Despite the CPSU's image of an efficient hierarchy exerting total control, practical decision-making was based on a contradiction between "a personalist principle" and organizational structures. The basis for decision-making was formed during the era of Josif Stalin, in the 1920s and 1930s. Formally, the highest party decision-making organ was the Central Committee, with a membership of less than one hundred. In practice the Politburo, created in 1919 (known as the Presidium between 1952–1964), with a membership between twelve and twenty, became the ultimate executive organ. The local level of party administration was caught between the demands of the center and the population, which could, at times, be quite hostile (for example, during collectivization). At the local level this led to development of "family groups,"

37 *J.K. Paasikiven päiväkirjat 1944–1956*, edit. Yrjö Blomsted and Matti Klinge, vol. I–II, Juva 1985, 1986, and *Urho Kekkonen päiväkirjat 1958–1981*, edit. Juhani Suomi, vol. I–IV, Keuruu 2001–2004.

38 Kalela, 2000, pp. 106–108, on a fair reconstruction of the past and on reaching a self-understanding of its actors.

39 For a rough outline of Soviet interest groups during the Cold War, see e. g. V.P. Naumov, introduction, in Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovitch 1957. Dokumenty, eds. Aleksander Iakolev and others, Moskva 1998 (MMK), pp. 18–19, and Snyder 1993, pp. 111–112.

or alliances of protection between regional functionaries and, within the hierarchy, to “patron-client” relations. An impasse between the personalist and organizational principles was avoided during the Stalin era for three reasons. Firstly, there was partial legitimacy, in the form of genuine enthusiasm (for example, industrialization, construction projects) for “revolution from above.” Secondly, there was an “extra-bureaucratic threat” to the administrative system. The terror both strengthened the position of the security organization in relation to other administrative branches, and left a fear of its repetition in the collective memory of the population as a whole. Lastly, Stalin’s personal dominance and personality cult offered a fixed point of authority until his death in 1953.<sup>40</sup>

During the post-Stalinist phase there were opportunities for strengthening organizational norms, within the concept of collective leadership in 1953, de-Stalinization and the denunciation of the personality cult in 1956. However, these opportunities could not develop after Nikita Khrushchev’s rise to power. Firstly, he lacked interest in the cohesion of political institutions, when they did not agree with his improvising and impulsive style. This became clear, for example, in the decentralization reforms of economic planning (rus. *Sovnarkhozy*) in 1957, as well as in the division of the party administration in economic and political components in 1962 to increase efficiency. On the level of local administration, he replaced physical coercion, as a means of control, with an energetic personnel policy. In the event of failures, local party functionaries could be en masse suddenly shuffled regionally or downgraded within the hierarchy. Plans for increased popular participation in the administration, initially related to ideological reforms, were also used as means of exerting pressure. This did not reduce the need for protective “family groups” at the local level. For these reasons, the primacy of the personalist principle in running the country was maintained.<sup>41</sup>

The downfall of Khrushchev in 1964 also becomes understandable, when the consequences of his policies are evaluated from the viewpoint of the main interest groups. At best, the results were contradictory for the largest and most diverse group, namely, the consumers of the general population. Though the standard of living had risen, mostly in the towns, this was in spite of rather than because of economic reforms. Agriculture in particular remained chronically problematic. The ambitious but momentary détente in foreign policy had not allowed the regime to increase significantly the resources devoted to civilian production, as had been hoped. For the other interest groups, the results were more negative. The security organizations and the conservative party leadership were threatened by de-Stalinization, as it led to exposure of crimes committed during the Stalin era. The sudden administrative reorganizations and reforms also concerned the party central

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40 Graeme Gill, “The Soviet Mechanisms of Power and the Fall of the Soviet Union”, in *Mechanisms of Power in the Soviet Union*, eds. Niels Erik Rosenfeldt, Bent Jensen and Eriki Kulavig, Basingstoke, Hampshire 2000, pp.4–12. See also on the general formation of Soviet power mechanisms in the 1920s and 1930s, and the relationship of Stalin and society on the basis of center-periphery conflict Markku Kangaspuro, *Neuvosto-Karjalan taistelu itsehallinnosta: nationalismi ja suomalaiset punaiset Neuvostoliiton vallankäytössä 1920–1939*, Helsinki 2001, pp. 19–26.

41 Gill 2000, pp. 12–15.

administration. At the lower level, the aggressive use of personnel policy and the promise of larger popular participation threatened the stability of the regional functionaries' position. Lastly, the planned and partly implemented, one-sided defence cuts in 1955–1962, together with the sharp change from conventional defence to missile forces created opponents in the military-industrial complex. Regarding foreign policy, the numerous crises, which threatened to bring the USSR to the brink of war with the West were seen as sign of dangerous instability. Especially the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 was seen to have ended in humiliating defeat. Thus, when the troika of Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgornyi took the initiative in removing Khrushchev two years later, he had for the most part lost the support of major interest groups.<sup>42</sup>

To understand the consequences of the events that shook the legitimacy of both the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence in 1956, it is also necessary to observe how international relations were seen from the perspective of Marxist-Leninist ideology. As Marxism-Leninism regards itself as a theory concerning social change, its views on international relations are structured through this prism. Generally, Marxism-Leninism portrays international relations as a struggle between capitalism and socialism and regards imperialism as inherently aggressive. The central concepts needed to follow its argumentation are proletarian and socialist internationalism, peaceful coexistence, and neutrality and neutralism. In international relations, applying theory to practice was left to Lenin. Practical solutions then and later were to be based mainly on his views of proletarian internationalism and the uneven development of imperialism.<sup>43</sup> The administrative divisions of Soviet foreign policy will be presented together with a description of the sources.

## PROLETARIAN AND SOCIALIST INTERNATIONALISM

From the viewpoint of the revolution, policies concerned with solving of the “nationality question”, that is relations between different nationalities, especially within a multinational empire, were originally the relevant context of ‘international’ relations. The unification of a multinational population, primarily in the Russian Empire, behind one revolutionary organization was approached from two angles. First, proletarian internationalism, that is solidarity based on social position and overcoming ethnic division, was underlined. Only through it was it possible “to

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42 On the careful avoidance of Khrushchev's mistakes in administration by his successors, see Gill 2000, pp. 15–19. On the general resentment of interest groups towards Khrushchev's policies, see Naumov 1998, and on the role of foreign policy and armament policies, see e. g. Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up to the Wall: Soviet-East German relations, 1953–1961*, Princeton, New Jersey 2003, pp. 231–232, Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, pp. 272–274 and Jennifer G. Mathers, *The Russian Nuclear Shield from Stalin to Yeltsin*, Basingstoke, Hampshire 2000, pp. 20–25.

43 Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations*, Brighton 1988, pp. 148, 209–210. Margot Light's book forms the basis for the following definitions, since research has usually neglected studying Marxist-Leninist concepts from the viewpoint of international relations, concentrating more on their domestic use.



unify the class struggle of the oppressing and oppressed nationality” so as to conquer the political power of the state. Second, national separatism was to be neutralized by recognizing the right to national self-determination.<sup>44</sup> However, even before the revolution it was clear to Lenin, that “Regarding the question of self determination most interesting is first and foremost the self-determination of the proletariat.”<sup>45</sup> The priority of proletarian internationalism in the policy of the Soviet state was proved in practice for the first time during the Russian civil war of 1918–1922.

The need for the concept of socialist internationalism emerged only after World War II, with the appearance of a group of socialist countries. The death of Stalin and especially the beginning of the de-Stalinization campaign in 1956 created a need for new ways to secure the unity of the “empire.” Originally these new aspects were included in the concept of proletarian internationalism but, after a couple of years this new interstate dimension was called socialist internationalism. The February 1956 XX Party Congress of the CPSU was used as a platform for announcing that relations between the socialist countries were of a new kind and were qualitatively different from relations between capitalist countries or between capitalist and socialist countries. Khrushchev thought it would be possible to replace the previous somewhat forced unity between socialist countries with voluntary solidarity. Socialist internationalism was now to be defined, not only through proletarian internationalism, but also through interstate relations based on norms of international justice, such as respect for national independence, cooperation, and mutual aid.<sup>46</sup>

## PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

When Khrushchev announced peaceful coexistence at the XX Party Congress as the official doctrine of Soviet foreign policy concerning relations between capitalist and socialist countries, the question was not of a new term as such.<sup>47</sup> As a concept it was based on Lenin’s theory created during World War I, on the uneven development of imperialism. Since capitalism, and imperialism as its highest form, had developed unevenly on a global scale, there would also be differences in the advances of revolution, as well. This meant that, for a certain short transition period, two social formations, socialism and capitalism, would exist simultaneously.

The end of the civil war and foreign intervention in Russia created the practical need for coexistence, as world revolution had not occurred. According to Lenin, the basis of this “cohabitation” would be “businesslike relations”, since economic profits, albeit limited, offered by the Soviet Union would prevent the capitalists from attacking the country during the period that was needed, primarily, for the economic reconstruction of the state. That the question for Lenin was only about a tactical

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44 Antti Kujala, *Vallankumous ja kansallinen itsemääräämisoikeus*, Jyväskylä 1989, pp. 20, 90.

45 V.I. Lenin, *Kansakuntien itsemääräämisoikeus*, Petroskoi 1946, pp. 5, 18–19, 31.

46 Light 1988, pp. 169–172.

47 The next two paragraphs are based on Light, pp. 25–31, 64–65. See Timo Vihavainen, *Suomi Neuvostolehdissä 1918–1920*, Vammala 1988, p. 182, about Trotsky’s interpretation of the term.



breathing space, is made clear by the fact, that he saw war between socialism and capitalism as inevitable. Peaceful coexistence was used during the Stalinist period mostly as an argument for building “socialism in one country,” though the inevitability of a final battle between socialism and capitalism did not disappear. The concept remained in the vocabulary of Soviet foreign policy after the beginning of the cold war in the late 1940s. However, the motive for peaceful coexistence had clearly changed. Instead of the prospect of economic profits, it was now the growth of the Soviet Union’s power, especially that of its armed forces, that forced capitalist countries to coexist peacefully with the USSR.

The way Khrushchev underlined peaceful coexistence in 1956 was significant because of the new interpretations he gave it at a time of considerable political change, and consequences of these interpretations for Soviet foreign policy. The question was no longer about “businesslike relations.” Peaceful coexistence was now interpreted to mean more than just a tactical pause before war. Now the concept would include cooperation between socialism and capitalism, together with respect for sovereignty as well as economic competition and ideological struggle, military means excluded. This enlargement of the concept, however, made it internally contradictory from the viewpoint of Marxist-Leninist theory. If the sovereignty of states were to be taken seriously, it would restrict support for international revolutionary movements, based on class solidarity. However, from the Soviet viewpoint the question was not about a contradiction between ideology and the state’s interest, but between revolution and coexistence, which formed the basic dimension of Soviet foreign policy<sup>48</sup>.

## NEUTRALITY AND NEUTRALISM

The attitude of Soviet foreign policy towards neutrality remained ambivalent.<sup>49</sup> The dualistic world view left little room for dealing with a phenomenon such as neutrality. For Lenin, neutrality represented only the desire of petty bourgeois and small states to take advantage of their relatively monopolistic position. On the other hand the research on international politics conducted in the Soviet Union already during the 1920s and 1930s recognized the relevance of permanent neutrality. However, the definition of neutrality was very limited, and membership of international organizations, for example, of customs unions, was interpreted as incompatible with the status of permanent neutrality. In practice it was after World War II, at the outbreak of the Cold War, that the Soviet Union had to define its attitude towards neutrality. According to the “Two Camps” doctrine presented by Zhdanov in 1947 national liberation movements could be included in the “Camp of Peace and Democracy”. Neutrality, on the other hand, was just an imperialist device. Staying on the sidelines was interpreted as active support for the imperialists. Khrushchev was the first Soviet leader to achieve practical results through the use of neutrality as

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48 A useful characterization of this relationship is presented by Geoffrey Roberts, *The Soviet Union in World Politics*, London 1999, pp. 4–8, 11–12.

49 Next three paragraphs are based on Light 1988, pp. 299–234.

a concept, for example, in case of Austria in 1955, though cautious references could already be observed in the speeches of the XIX Party Congress in 1952.

Once again Khrushchev produced a remarkable theoretical reinterpretation at the XX Party Congress, when he announced that among the two known camps of the world there also existed a third, a “zone of peace”, and praised the policies of the neutral countries of Europe and Asia. As part of the detail, surprisingly, though not by accident, Finland was mentioned as a neutral state, comparable to Sweden and Austria<sup>50</sup>. The Soviet-Finnish relations were often defined after that as an example of peaceful coexistence. The participants of the Bandung Conference in 1955, many of whom had only recently gained independence, were understandably anti colonialist and were seen as promising ground for the extension of the Soviet Union’s influence in the Third World. On the other hand, underlining neutrality also supported attempts to regain Yugoslavia back into the socialist camp, as it had reached an influential position in the movement of non-aligned countries.

Soviet researchers soon argued that the existence of the socialist camp was a prerequisite for non-alignment and active neutrality. Active neutrality or neutralism was seen to have emerged after World War II, as the threat of nuclear war had grown. Neutralism differed from traditional permanent neutrality in three ways: 1) it was based on peaceful coexistence, 2) it was anti-imperialist, active, and based on broad popular interests 3) the countries adopting this position would refuse to own nuclear weapons. Like traditional neutral countries, they would prohibit foreign military bases and the use of their territory by foreign aircraft. Generally Soviet foreign policy interpreted the obligations of European countries more strictly than those of the Third World. Even though international organizations such as the UN had become acceptable during the mid 1950s, membership of West European economic organisations was seen as incompatible with the status of neutrality. This was reflected in Soviet policies towards Austria as well as Finland during the 1960s and 1970s.

## U.S. CONCEPTS

Together with “just” or “new” world order, containment and roll back became central concepts of U. S. foreign policy early in the Cold War.

In the Western camp, and especially for the Americans, ideology as a concept basically had a negative meaning, as during World War II it had been connected to political systems of the totalitarian opponents, Germany and Italy. Against this background, the United States itself wanted to avoid the negative impression of ideology, which could easily be transferred in the Cold War conflict to a new opponent, the Soviet Union. However, the creation of a universal, new world order, was also a significant argument in the foreign policy of the United States. The democratic ideals of the Declaration of Independence, together with an emphasis on

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50 Rentola 1997, p. 406 on Khrushchev’s inclusion of Finland in the group of neutral countries on 14.2.1956, the eve of the Finnish presidential elections.

isolation upheld in the Monroe-doctrine, made it very difficult to mobilize the United States for a global competition on spheres of influence, unless it was seen to lead to a new, better world. This tendency can be best seen at the end of World War I (1917–1919), with Woodrow Wilson's doctrine on national sovereignty and the idea of making the world safe for democracy (14 articles) and in the creation of the League of Nations, as well as at the end of World War II (1944–1945), with the creation of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods international economic order. In this way, truth, democracy, and freedom (free trade), as universal ideals, defined by the United States, became essential terms in American Cold War propaganda.<sup>51</sup> As this interpretation identified positive values with American or wider Western objectives, it did not originally leave much room for neutrality, defining such a policy as, at least, amoral.

The change in the United States attitude towards the Soviet Union during the Truman administration from 1946 onwards culminated in the concept of containment, formulated by a senior diplomat, George F. Kennan. It was based on a recognition of the influence of domestic politics and Russian history to the Soviet foreign policy, mainly excluding ideology, which was seen only as legitimizing dictatorship. As the legitimacy of the regime was still seen to be low, this would be compensated by an expansive foreign policy. This expansion into the "Free World" could be stopped by a resolute counter force, namely a containment policy. After the expansion of Soviet power had been halted, it would, sooner or later, collapse due to its own inherent contradictions. According to Kennan, war between the United States and the Soviet Union was not inevitable, and containment would be achieved mainly by psychological, economic, and diplomatic means rather than military options. However, in Kennan's own public presentations this was less clear. Also, the U. S. political decision-makers rarely made such distinctions in their use of Kennan's theory of containment.<sup>52</sup>

Forcing the Soviet Union to retreat, especially in Eastern Europe, rose up the United States' foreign policy agenda from 1953 onwards, during the Eisenhower administration. For the U. S. Secretary of State, John F. Dulles containment had begun to mean just maintaining the post World War II status quo, while the Soviet Union could represent itself as the champion of progress and freedom. The initiative would be regained by the threat of nuclear weapons, reflected in the doctrine of massive retaliation to any Soviet military attack. The room to manoeuvre thus gained would allow The U. S. to achieve the ideologic initiative, by appealing through the political, social, and economic ideals of the American Revolution, specifically to the peoples of Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union would then be forced to react to the emerging instability, which would force it on the defensive much more effectively than military pressure alone could do.<sup>53</sup> However, at an early stage, by the time the crushing of the Hungarian uprising in 1956 the latest, the Americans were forced to

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51 Rawnsley 1999, p. 7.

52 Wilson D. Miscamble, *George F. Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947–1950*, Princeton 1992, pp. 25–33.

53 Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy*, Wilmington 1999, pp. 30–41.

give up the active emphasis of roll back, and concentrate more on its implementation through peaceful means.

The difference between the “passive” containment policy of the Truman administration and the “active” roll back policy of the Eisenhower administration becomes somewhat fluid in principle, if the ultimate result of the so-called psychological warfare, included in containment, was the collapse of the Soviet system. On the other hand, it is not difficult to notice similarities between the moderate versions of containment and peaceful coexistence. Both stressed the primacy of non-military means in the competition with one’s opponent, and both included expectations about the collapse of the opposing social system in the near future.<sup>54</sup>

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The theme of this study are the changes in Finland’s room to manoeuvre within the Soviet sphere of influence, based on the viewpoint of Soviet foreign policy. The central question in this respect is, how Finland, as a country exemplifying the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence, became unreliable in foreign policy terms from the Soviet viewpoint towards the end of the 1950’s.

The questions considered here are divided to the following three categories on the basis of the interaction between domestic and foreign policy:

### I) Domestic politics and ideology (argumentation)

The first category of questions is based on the significance of domestic political instability both in the Soviet Union and in Finland during the years 1957–1958. What was the significance of the criticism of détente connected to the failed attempt to remove Khrushchev in 1957? How did this failed attempt influence to the formulation of Soviet foreign policy, and what role did the advantage achieved in missile technology, the so-called “Sputnik bonus”, play in this? Finally, how important was the result of the Finnish parliamentary elections in the summer 1958 from the Soviet viewpoint, given that it strengthened both the Communists and the opponents of Kekkonen?

In western studies of Soviet politics, the relationship between ideology and state interest has been much discussed. The Communist party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), wishing to prevent any negative consequences of de-Stalinization, began an Anti-Revisionist campaign in early 1957. Still, at the same time, Popular Front tactics, namely, cooperation amongst the left, were encouraged as a method of securing a peaceful transition to socialism. How was Soviet foreign policy influenced by increasing problems in maintaining the unity of the communist movement and the East European sphere of influence? In this respect, the actions of the United States, in ensuring the unity of its own “empire,” offer a point of reference.

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54 Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: Americas Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947–1956*, New York 2000, p. 34. See Light 1988 on similarities between containment and the concept of peaceful coexistence.

## II) International relations

The second category of questions concerns a comparison between the Soviet Unions' policies towards Finland and Scandinavia. How could the Soviet Union rely on the president, but not on government, of Finland during the international crisis of 1958? Kekkonen's contacts with the Soviet Union took place on an almost weekly basis. Was the Soviet Union ready to sacrifice Finland as an example of peaceful coexistence? Was it necessary to overthrow Fagerholm's cabinet, led by the social democrats, if the goal was only to keep Finland in the Soviet sphere of influence? If, on the other hand, the participation of the Communist Party of Finland (CPF) in the government was not necessary, why was it supported so strongly?

Why, and in what ways did the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the social democratic governments of Scandinavia differ from its attitude to Finland? What kind of example did the Soviet Union wish Finland to represent for, on the one hand, for Denmark and Norway who were both members of NATO, and on the other hand, for Sweden, which was neutral? What was the importance of the Finnish example for the Soviet Union's Scandinavian policies, and how were the contradictions in the concept of peaceful coexistence connected to this? What was the Soviet attitude generally towards the initiatives of the United States and the NATO-integration of West Germany during 1956–1959, particularly towards their potential effects in deployment of missiles in Scandinavia?

## III) Trade politics

The third category of questions concerns the political significance of trade relations in the Cold War, and rivalry over spheres of influence for them. Were there any changes in the negative Soviet attitude towards European integration during the 1950s? How did the Soviet attitude towards the OEEC and EFTA membership of Finland and the Scandinavian countries differ from each other? Was the Soviet Union surprised by the Finnish pursuit of EFTA membership?

# THE SOURCE BASE

As the intention of this study is to locate the development of relations between the Soviet Union and Finland within an international context, with an emphasis on the Soviet view, this is reflected in the source base, as well. Because of the centralized one-party system or "regime" of the country, party administration and archives are essential, in fact roughly doubling all state administration. The primary sources on the consequences of this Soviet-Finnish relationship's development to Finland's position internationally are materials from the institutions in charge of Soviet foreign policy and administrative apparatus (Rus. *apparat*). The archives of Russian foreign ministry (MID), the AVP RF (the Archive for Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation), and the two CPSU archives, the RGASPI (Russian State Archive for Social-Political History) and the RGANI (Russian State Archive for Contemporary History), have been used for this study. Despite their names, the RGASPI and RGANI mainly include documents produced within or for various CPSU departments, between the years 1917–1952 and 1953–1991, respectively. Of these archives, the AVP

RF and the RGANI form the major source of material for the chosen period of the study, while the RGASPI has been used only occasionally. The archives of the Russian foreign trade ministry have at times been unreachable for foreign researchers because of poor organization, but the economic aspect of Soviet policies can be observed in part through trade political analyses of the foreign ministry, as well as budgetary materials located to the CPSU archives. Because the emphasis of this study is on foreign policy, the Russian State Archives (GARF) and military archives have not been considered necessary. Regarding the transliteration of the Cyrillic alphabets, an American model has been used, with the exclusion of diacritical signs.<sup>55</sup>

As was the case with the Soviet system in general, responsibility for foreign policy was divided between the state and the party. Basically this meant that the foreign ministry (MID) was one of the ministries under the Council of Ministers, and presented the official line of Soviet foreign policy abroad. The State Security Committee (KGB), and its branches working abroad, political intelligence and counter intelligence, were directly under the Council of Ministers since 1953. On the side of the CPSU, the international department of the Central Committee was responsible for relations with foreign communist parties, except for financial support, which was delivered by the KGB. These organizations did not implement their own independent policies as such, though there was, naturally, an element of competition at times between these bodies, and differences in the level of information available to them regarding policy at any particular time. All of them had representatives in the Soviet embassy in Helsinki. However, in practice all of these organizations reported to the CPSU's highest executive organ, the Politburo,<sup>56</sup> the membership of which overlapped with the Council of Ministers.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s Soviet foreign policy lacked discussion and debate. The extreme centralization of the apparatus led to a lack of information processing, as many routine decisions had to be accepted at the highest level. Despite the flow of proposals and memorandums, there was little if any horizontal communication below the Kremlin, the "cabinet" level. The inner circle of the Politburo, of between six and nine individuals, was informed on significant foreign policy initiatives prepared by Stalin and Molotov, but there is no evidence they had any input in the questions discussed. In 1949, for example, the inner circle included Molotov, Malenkov, Beria, Mikoian, Kaganovitch, Bulganin and Khrushchev. Despite increasing flexibility, the centralized decision making culture did not disappear after Stalin's death in 1953. As Khrushchev consolidated his position, and certainly by 1957, he became the unquestioned foreign policy leader, often viewing the foreign policy of other countries through the personality of their leaders.<sup>57</sup> Because of "the personalist principle", heightened role of personality, in general,

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55 Veikko Tammilahti, *Suomalais-venäläinen tekniikan sanakirja*, Helsinki 1983.

56 Rentola 1997, pp. 641–643.

57 Kathryn Weathersby, "Making foreign policy under Stalin: The Case of Korea", in eds. Rosenfeldt and others 2000, pp. 225–229, and Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, on Khrushchev's foreign political decision-making, e.g. pp. 172–173, 180–184, 193–194.

conflicts in the Politburo, mainly for or against the general secretary's line, were common during the Khrushchev era.

Through the materials of the foreign ministry, especially the materials of its Scandinavian department (OSS),<sup>58</sup> one can observe the implementation of the Soviet policies towards Finland and Scandinavia. Through the memorandums of the analytical organ of the ministry, the (small) information committee, addressed to the Central Committee and the executive leadership of the party, the Politburo, one can follow what kind of information the highest decision makers received. These materials analyse the general line of Soviet foreign policy as well, such as attitudes towards the NATO or European integration. The materials of the international department of CPSU are interesting, in two senses. Firstly, they offer information about the CPSU's relations and policies with different communist parties, for example, with Finnish and Scandinavian parties. Secondly, the international department also received information from different sources, including the Soviet foreign ministry. Recently published collections of Russian documents on Politburo sessions, Soviet-Norwegian, and Soviet-Hungarian relations have been very useful as complementary and comparative material. These sources allow one to evaluate, not only what was the Soviet approach to Finland or Scandinavia, but also the way in which foreign policy decision-making functioned in the socialist superpower.

Primary sources for the Finnish dimension come mainly from the archive of the Finnish ministry for foreign affairs (UM) together with the archive of president Urho Kekkonen (UKK Archive). Both archives provide interesting material on how Finland's interests in relation to the Soviet Union were defined, and what were the differences between these definitions, both on viewpoints and on the basis of information. Previous research has had a central role in evaluating the influence and significance of the Soviet Union's policy towards Finland for the Finnish domestic politics. This is especially so, when considering the roles of specific organizations, such as the Communist Party of Finland (CPF), or Finnish, Soviet, and Western intelligence services.

The Western view of the development of Finnish position internationally is of secondary importance, compared to the Soviet view. Consequently, the Western view has been observed mostly through recent Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian research, and documentary publications, such as the FRUS, published by the U.S. State Department. In a comparative and regional sense, the archives of the Norwegian foreign ministry (UD) present useful material for the view of a Scandinavian country, which was also a member of NATO, bordering Finland.

The quantitative assessment of the source materials needs to be combined with a qualitative assessment, so as to evaluate its merits and limitations. Though the Soviet material was, in principle, available for the period chosen, there were a number of practical limitations. Firstly, usually only documents connected to the preparation of a decision were available, not documents on the actual decisions that

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58 In the MID after Second World War the Scandinavian countries and Finland came under the 5th European Department, which in 1953 became the 3rd department. After 1955 it was named the Department of Scandinavian Countries (Otdelenie Skandinavskikh Stran, OSS), still including Finland.



were made. However, when trying to understand the reasons and motivation for a certain decision, this was not necessarily a major obstacle. The argumentation is usually made perfectly clear during the preparation phase, whereas the results of a decision often became public at the time, and were, therefore, known. Secondly, the general change in Russian archival policy towards more controls after the mid 1990s was a restricting factor, despite the professional attitude of the personnel, especially in the CPSU's archives. Documents that had been available to researchers during the first half of the 1990s, some of which had already been published, for example in Finland, have become classified again. However, materials of the CPSU's international department were partly declassified during the late 1990s, mostly concerning the 1950s and the early 1960s, and have been helpful for this study.

When evaluating the reliability of a source, it is important to know, from what event or process the source is taken as evidence. This definition differs from its history of origin, which may be, for example, in the case of this study, a personal note in a diary, or a memorandum produced by a bureaucracy. On the final stages, what the sources "tell," depends on the formulation of relevant research questions.<sup>59</sup> The Soviet sources are not basically in any different position in comparison to Finnish or Western materials, when being observed from the viewpoint of Soviet foreign policy or Finland's position internationally. Despite their different history of origin and formulations, due to the nature of the Soviet one-party regime and the more overt role of ideology that society, these sources are simply the material produced for the needs of foreign political and other administrative decision-making. As such, they need to be observed through the prism of general evaluation criteria, taking into consideration the organizational policies, rivalries and personal interests of their representatives. This might cause them to over-emphasize the influence of their own initiatives and belittle the significance of those of their counterparts and competitors, or provide their competitors with unreliable information for the furtherance of their own objectives. The main bias in the Soviet foreign policy material of the 1950s, if an example is needed, is not of country promoting World Revolution against capitalism, but of a great power (Rus. *derzhava*) in its mentality towards small countries, which is a rather common phenomenon with all great powers.

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59 Kalela 2000, p. 92–93, 95–97 on the role of sources in historical research.



# THE “NEW WORLD ORDER” AND THE NORDIC COUNTRIES, 1945–1955

As this research is concerned with Finland's place in Soviet foreign policy and changes therein, in the second half of the 1950s, a central question regarding the overall context of this issue is to establish the basic parameters of Soviet society and foreign policy in the years immediately prior to the period under review here. What were the problems in Soviet society and foreign policy that de-Stalinization and peaceful coexistence sought to address in 1953–1958? How, and as reactions to what, from the Soviet point of view, had these problems emerged during the previous phase of the Cold War, in 1947–1953?

It is through this context that one can evaluate the significance of the political and ideological transition, which took place in the Soviet Union during the years 1953–1958. The influence of this transition was closely felt in Soviet-Finnish relations, which were related not only to general Soviet objectives, for example, those in Germany, but were also very closely linked to regional Soviet objectives in Scandinavia. In observing the position of Finland in Soviet foreign policy, it is essential to understand, the influence of the intensifying domestic political struggle in Finland.

With regard to the evolving Soviet view towards Scandinavia and Finland during the early stage of Cold War, two central conflicts seem to arise. The first is the apparent incompatibility of the traditional Western view of Scandinavian developments in 1945–1949 with Soviet threat perceptions of the time. However, on the basis of recent research one can now re-evaluate developments in Scandinavia, which, in turn, offers more material for better interpretation of Soviet foreign policy. Soviet threat perceptions also seem to be incompatible with the traditional Finnish view of the development of Soviet-Finnish relations, especially after 1948 and the FCMA treaty. In explaining this conflict, it is important to underline, from the Soviet viewpoint, the connection of the Finnish domestic political struggle with the ideological confrontation of the Cold War in general.

## A REEVALUATION OF SCANDINAVIAN DEVELOPMENTS: NEUTRALITY, NON-ALLIANCE, OR ALLIANCE

When observing developments in Scandinavia after World War II, during the early Cold War, a clear contradiction exists between Scandinavian and Western views, on the one hand, and the Soviet view of the period, on the other hand. Explaining this

contradiction will provide a better understanding on the basic principles of Soviet policy towards Finland and Scandinavia. In order to do this, a brief outline will be provided of the traditional view of developments in Scandinavia and of Soviet-Finnish relations and contemporary Soviet concerns regarding both of these issues.

## CONTRADICTING IMAGES

Traditionally, the development of the Cold War in Scandinavia has been seen to unfold in five phases. Firstly, the positions of the Scandinavian countries differed somewhat after the end of the war. Norway and Denmark, though occupied by the Germans, now belonged to the winning side, whereas Sweden had remained outside the war through a policy of neutrality and limited concessions to both the Germans and the Allies. Iceland was a unique case in that it was occupied by the (Allied) Anglo-Saxon powers during the Second World War, and simultaneously gained independence from Denmark. Secondly, the Scandinavian countries returned, after 1945, to the policy of non-alliance they had followed during the prewar period. This was combined with active support for the United Nations and the collective security it was hoped it would offer, together with what was called a "bridge-building policy" in relation to the great powers.

Thirdly, these circumstances would only change after the latent tensions of Cold War finally appeared in 1947–48. The positions of the Scandinavian countries were influenced by the consolidation of Western defence co-operation after the British Bevin speech in January 1948 and the communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February 1948; the reconstruction of a Soviet security system with the conclusion of a FCMA treaty with Finland in April 1948; and the Berlin blockade begun by the Soviets in the summer of 1948. Fourthly, as a reaction to all these developments, and to an increasing Norwegian readiness to give up its bridge-building policy, Sweden proposed negotiations on a Scandinavian defence union (SDU) between the Scandinavian countries in late March 1948. The central idea of the Swedish initiative was, or so it was understood, to keep the conflicting great powers out of Scandinavia by organizing its own defence on a regional basis. However, the Scandinavian countries' ties with the Western countries emerged as a major problem in the SDU negotiations, with Norway preferring more open ties and Sweden wishing to avoid such ties altogether. Fifthly, as Norwegian concerns about Soviet demands grew, Norway and Denmark opted for NATO membership, albeit with certain limitations, in April 1949, while Sweden continued its traditional policy of neutrality.<sup>1</sup> Iceland became, in practice, a member of the Western alliance through the U. S. air base in Keflavik, though the agreement was initially on a temporary and

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1 On the views of previous research, see, for example, Magnus Pettersson, "*Brödrafolkens väl*": *Svensk-norska säkerhetspolitiska relationer 1949–1969*, Köpenhamn 2003, pp. 30–37, Thorsten Borring Olesen, "Bröderfolk, men inte väbenbrödre –diskussionerne om et skandinavisk forsvarsforbund 1948–49", *Den jyske historiker*, nr. 69–70/1994, pp. 152–153, Wilhelm Agrell, *Den stora lögnen: Ett säkerhetspolitiskt dubbelspel i alltför många akter*, Södertälje 1991, pp. 62–63.

limited basis, as the newly independent country with a noticeable communist party, was reluctant to accept the continuing presence of foreign troops.<sup>2</sup>

Finland's position was clearly different from that of the Scandinavian countries, as it was on the defeated side in World War II, especially so in relation to the Soviet Union. Also, the chronology of Finnish developments in the early Cold War period differs somewhat from developments in Scandinavia. The traditional point of departure for evaluating of post-war Soviet-Finnish relations has been the armistice of 1944, after Finland's defeat by the Soviet Union, and Finland's need to adapt to USSR's strengthening position, especially in the Baltic Sea region. From the Finnish point of view, from the armistice treaty in 1944 to the signing and ratification of the Paris peace treaty in 1947, Finland's policy can be characterized as one of survival. Up to 1947 Finnish sovereignty was officially restricted by the Soviet dominated Allied Control Commission, whose orders were more or less willingly implemented by the government. Though the Commission left the country in 1947, the Porkkala naval base close to Helsinki remained under Soviet control.

The second phase in Soviet-Finnish relations, in 1948–1950, began, when the Soviet Union, after restructuring its security perimeter in East Europe, demanded the conclusion of a defence pact with Finland, based on the example of Hungary and Romania. After some stalling, and after careful negotiations, controlled, on the Finnish side, by president, J. K. Paasikivi, a limited defence pact, the Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance treaty (FCMA) was concluded in Moscow in early April 1948. This recognition, by Finland, of Soviet security interests has been seen as a turning point in bilateral relations. This second phase is seen as marking the stabilization of Finland's position internationally, especially in relation to the Soviet Union, despite open domestic political tensions in 1948–1949, and initial Western doubts about Finland's sovereignty. The FCMA treaty has also been taken to signify Soviet approval, or tolerance, of, Finland's neutrality policy. During the third period in 1950–1953, in spite of escalating Cold War tensions, Finland's international status was further strengthened by increasingly active foreign policy which underlined its neutrality and by growing trade relations. This period witnessed the conclusion of the first five-year trade treaty between the Soviet Union and a capitalist country, Finland, in the summer 1950; prime minister Kekkonen's initiative for Nordic neutrality in early 1952; and the completion of Finnish war reparations to the Soviet Union that same autumn in 1952, together with the conclusion of a supplementary trade treaty with the Soviet Union in early 1953.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of this interpretation it can be argued that, in spite of intermittent Soviet criticism of Finnish successive governments the tensions in Soviet-Finnish relations during 1948–1953 were not relevant, for two reasons. Firstly, Soviet confidence in Finnish foreign policy was

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2 Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *Scandinavia and the United States: An Insecure Friendship*, New York 1997 (Hanhimäki 1997a), p.19–20.

3 Jussi Hanhimäki, *Containing Co-existence: America, Scandinavia and the "Finnish Solution" 1945–1956*, Kent, Ohio 1997, (Hanhimäki 1997b). On the significance of the FCMA treaty in 1948, see p. 79. On the conclusion of the Soviet-Finnish trade treaty in 1950, see pp. 96–99 and on Kekkonen's neutrality initiative in 1952 and activation of Finnish foreign policy, see pp. 120–125.

rising during Paasikivi’s presidency and was also due to the increasingly strong position of Urho Kekkonen, despite the conflicts in Finnish domestic politics; and secondly, Soviet pressure on Finland was repeatedly overestimated by the West. When pressure from the Soviet direction is acknowledged, it is often claimed that Soviet rhetoric merely followed the example set by the Communist Party of Finland (CPF).<sup>4</sup>

The Soviet Union could have been expected to find early Cold War developments regarding Scandinavia and Finland, if not agreeable, at least tolerable. Finland was quite openly included in the Soviet sphere by the West, and Sweden continued its traditional policy of neutrality. Even Norway and Denmark’s limited NATO membership should not have been completely unexpected, as these countries had already developed close relations with the Great Britain During the Second World War. This, however, was not the case. A clear contradiction exists between the described development and the Soviet contemporary view and threat perceptions.

The Soviet view of Scandinavian co-operation was, in fact, largely negative during the early stages of the Cold War. From the very beginning it was regarded as defence or military co-operation. Even when organized on a regional basis, it was deemed harmful from the Soviet point of view. However, as was the case often before the war, this kind of regional co-operation was soon linked to the interests of rivalling great powers, changing it into a security threat.<sup>5</sup> Immediately after the end of World War II, in the summer of 1945, such co-operation was already seen as contrary to the imperial Russian interests, which the USSR seemed to have inherited. Swedish planning for a “military-defensive alliance” was observed to have already taken place in the prewar period. Such an alliance would be “primarily directed against the USSR”.<sup>6</sup> The creation of a “Nordic Block “ was seen to take place in the beginning of 1946. The numerous meetings of Nordic political, social and economic organizations were taken as proof that a “Block of Nordic Countries has been, in fact, created.” The Soviets were suspicious not only of military co-operation between the Scandinavian countries, but also of their military co-operation with Anglo-Saxon countries. Now, it was clear that “the point of this co-operation is undoubtedly directed against the Soviet Union.” Soviet representatives in Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland were criticized for not focusing sufficient attention to the activity of Nordic governments “in composing a block”.<sup>7</sup>

As ideological confrontation of the Cold War deepened during the summer and autumn of 1947 with the establishment of the Marshall Plan and the Cominform, “reactionary *Scandinavian* circles”, with the support of the United States and Great

4 Juhani Suomi, *Vonkamies: Urho Kekkonen 1944–1950*, Keuruu 1988, pp. 385–480 on Soviet reactions to the Finnish governments composition in 1948–1950.

5 Sven G. Holtsmark, “Enemy springboard or benevolent buffer? Soviet attitudes to Nordic cooperation, 1920–1955”, *Forvarsstudier* 6/1992, pp. 64–64.

6 Mihail Vetrov and Ivan Sysoev of the fifth European department of the NKID (MID) to deputy foreign commissar Andrei Ia. Vyshinskii and Solomon A. Lozovskii, 2.7.1945, *Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnozhenie (SNO), 1917–1955*, edit. Olav Riste and A. O. Tsubarian, Moskva 1997, document (doc.) 275. After March 1946 the People’s Commissariats (Narodnykh Komissariat) were renamed ministries.

7 Aleksander N. Abramov, chief of the fifth European department of the NKID to Kirill V. Novikov, member of the NKID Collegium, 11.1.1946, SNO, doc. 290.

Britain, were seen to increase their activity in building “a block of *Nordic* countries and connecting it to the Western Block”. Once again Soviet representatives, in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland were criticized for insufficient coverage of both the “hostile activities of reactionary Scandinavian circles,” and the meetings of “democratic [communist] organizations of society.”<sup>8</sup> Throughout the planning of the Western military alliance at the beginning of 1949, though before the actual creation of NATO, Norway was already characterized as the “forward bridgehead of the USA and Great Britain on the Northern border of the USSR.” Norwegian claims on not allowing foreign military bases on their territory during peace time, “cannot, of course, be taken seriously.”<sup>9</sup>

From the Soviet point of view, developments in Scandinavia were moving from bad to worse. Regional efforts at co-operation on the part of Scandinavian governments, which were already regarded with suspicion by the USSR, were linked to the USSR’s ongoing rivalry with Britain and America for influence in the region, and to the formation of the hostile Western military alliance. Interestingly, Finland was not excluded from Soviet concerns relating to Scandinavian or Nordic defence co-operation in 1946–1947. Nor did the conclusion of the FCMA treaty end public Soviet accusations about Finnish participation in a Scandinavian military alliance, connected to the West, as will be seen later.

## STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SCANDINAVIA TO GREAT POWERS

An evaluation of the different views of Scandinavian developments during the early stages of Cold War requires a comparison of the conflicting objectives of the great powers in the region, during that period. As a rough generalization it can be argued, that, after World War II, in 1945–1947, the West followed a preventive policy in Scandinavia, which later changed to a more active alliance building policy, in 1947–1949. In contrast to this, Soviet policy was more active and ambitious immediately after the war, the emphasis changing gradually to a preventive during the later phase, especially after the creation of NATO.<sup>10</sup>

From the Western, and especially from the British, point of view, Scandinavia was initially regarded mainly as a buffer zone, which was to be prevented from falling under enemy control. During World War II, Norway had been used as a German base area for air and naval attacks against Great Britain and its Atlantic communications lines. As the Soviet Union became increasingly perceived as a threat to the West in the winter 1945/1946, the Western objective was to prevent the USSR

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8 Iakov. Malik, deputy foreign minister, to Soviet ambassadors in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, 27.10.1947, SNO, doc. 310.

9 A. N. Abramov, Chief of the fifth European department of the MID, to Viacheslav M. Molotov, foreign minister, 6.1.1949, SNO, doc. 322.

10 On respective U.S. and Soviet Scandinavian objectives in the early Cold War, see, for example, Geir Lundestad, *America, Scandinavia, and the Cold War*, New York 1980, p. 339, and Sven Holtsmark, “The limits of Soviet Influence: The Soviet strategic interests in Norway and Denmark 1944–47,” *Institut for forvarsstudier*, No. 7/1994, pp. 18–19.

from receiving similar advantages in Northern Europe, particularly in Norway. On the other hand, the use of Scandinavian air space also offered an offensive potential in the context of U. S. polar strategy, as it shortened flight routes to the Russian heartland and to new Soviet naval bases in the polar area.<sup>11</sup> The American interest in the area was limited, firstly, to securing naval communication lines by maintaining the Atlantic bases that had been established during wartime, the so-called “stepping stones,” in Greenland and Iceland, and secondly, if possible, the Soviet Union was to be prevented from receiving bases on the arctic Spitsbergen Islands, ruled jointly by Norway and the Soviet Union. Despite the interest expressed by the U. S. Air Force in having military bases in continental Scandinavia in addition to Keflavik base in Iceland, there was a serious drawback in that, if such bases were opened, they would only encourage the Soviet Union to make similar demands.<sup>12</sup> However, the British had already been informed on plans for defence co-operation between Sweden, Norway and Denmark in late 1945, and were ready to give them qualified support from summer the 1946 onwards.<sup>13</sup>

During the next phase of open confrontation and alliance building, in 1947–1949, Norway and Denmark were seen to be necessary members for the Western military alliance, and Swedish participation was deemed desirable. In reaching these conclusions, the American and the British policies had exhibited a somewhat different emphasis. However, even during the formation of NATO, peacetime military bases in the Scandinavian peninsula were not thought necessary, as they could be used to motivate a Soviet invasion.<sup>14</sup> This view only changed during the last phase, in 1950–1953, with the escalation of the Cold War in the shape of the Korean War (1950–1953). The American pressure for peace time air bases in Norway and Denmark increased in the early 1950s, but instead of bases, these countries eventually consented only to the creation of supply depots for the construction of bases in wartime.<sup>15</sup>

From the viewpoint of Soviet foreign policy planning during World War II, Scandinavia was regarded either as an area to be divided to spheres of influences between the great powers, or as a limited buffer zone. Norway and Denmark could either be part of a buffer zone or in the Western, that is British sphere of influence. In either of cases Finland was included in the Soviet sphere of influence, and Sweden was mainly expected to remain in between the competing power groups.<sup>16</sup> However, immediately after the war, during the summer of 1945, planning in the Soviet foreign ministry took a clearly more ambitious turn. During preparations for the Potsdam

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11 Hanhimäki 1997a, see pp. 20–22 on the emergence of U.S. polar strategy in 1945–1947.

12 Lundestad 1980, pp. 339–341, Jukka Nevakivi, *Maanalaista diplomatiaa*, Helsinki 1983, pp. 52–53, Agrell 1991, pp. 110–111, Petersson 2003, p. 41.

13 Juhana Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War, 1945–54: Understanding Neutrality*, Houndmills 2003, pp. 13–14, 16–17.

14 Lundestad 1980, pp. 343, 345–350.

15 Bent Jensen, *Bjørnen og Haren: Sovjetunionen og Danmark 1945–1965*, Odense 1999, pp. 422, 460–461.

16 Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, p. 30, Mikko Majander, “Ennen kuin Pohjola asettui tasapainoon: Pohjoismaat suurvaltaintressien raja-alueena kylmän sodan syntyvaiheessa”, pp. 76–77, *Ajankohta. Poliittisen historian vuosikirja* 1995, edit. Timo Soikkanen and Mikko Majander, Helsinki 1995.

conference, new estimations were based on the increasingly strong position of the Soviet Union in Europe generally as a consequence of the total collapse of Germany. Now the maximum Soviet objectives, or “Dream Plan”, included not only the securing of political influence in Finland, but also a greater military and political influence in the Northern European region through the establishment of military bases on the territory of Scandinavian countries.

The threat to the Soviet Union’s new western borders and sphere of influence in the Baltic Sea region was seen to lie mainly in the direction of the Anglo-Saxon sea powers in co-operation with a small Baltic Sea state, such as Denmark. Consequently, the new Soviet objectives now were to control the Baltic Sea Straits and prevent foreign navies from using them, and to establish air and naval bases on Danish territory, for instance on the island of Bornholm, which had been cleared of Germans by the Red Army. The plans for possible Soviet bases in Denmark in July 1945 were motivated by the desire to secure not only Soviet military interests, but also securing Soviet influence over Danish foreign policy. A Soviet-Danish friendship pact was briefly considered as well.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, the need to secure routes to the Atlantic from new naval bases in the arctic Kola peninsula increased the Soviet Union’s interest in Northern Norway, which had been liberated by the Soviets. This might mean border corrections on the Soviet Union’s advantage and bases on Norwegian territory, not just on the Spitsbergen Islands and Bear Island, but also on the mainland. The plans included naval and air bases at, for example, Kirkenäs, Vardö, and Tromsø in the name of joint Soviet-Norwegian defence. Obtaining the Varanger peninsula, or, at least, a long term rental of it, was also deemed desirable by the Soviet military.<sup>18</sup>

Though the most active phase in the formulation of Soviet interests concerning Scandinavia was over towards the end of 1945, the interest of the Soviet military in Spitsbergen continued also in 1946 and 1947.<sup>19</sup> However, in contrast to Denmark, which was already, in early 1946 seen to have fallen under strong British influence and become a Western bridgehead,<sup>20</sup> Soviet expectations about increasing their influence in the Scandinavian peninsula continued to be more positive throughout the summer of 1946, despite concerns about growing British influence. The different status of Norway and Denmark in Soviet foreign policy was further reflected in a number of initiatives directed at Norway about changing the status of Spitsbergen, and continuing plans for a common defence and a Soviet-Norwegian pact. These optimistic Soviet expectations were based on the following factors: a) the emergence of a common Soviet-Norwegian border after the Soviet Union had received territory from Finland, and the positive role of the Red Army in the liberation of Norway, b)

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17 Jensen 1999, pp. 158–161.

18 M. Vetrov and Tataiana Zhdanova of the fifth European department of the NKID to comrades A. Ia. Vyshinskii and S. A. Lozovskii, 3.7.1945, doc. 276, and a memo of general-lieutenant Nikolai V. Slavin, aide to the Red Army’s Chief of Staff, 14.7.1945, SNO, doc 277.

19 Marshall Aleksander M. Vasilevskii, Chief of the Soviet General Staff, to Vladimir G. Dekanozov, deputy foreign minister, on the possible creation of military bases on Spitsbergen, 12.10.1946, and to Molotov in April 1947, SNO, doc. 295.

20 Jensen 1999, pp. 165–167.



the strongly weakened position of Sweden in Scandinavia after co-operating with the Germans, c) the gradual change of Finland from hostile to friendly country, and d) the disappearance of Germany's influence. However, with regards to Scandinavian co-operation, Sweden's position was regarded in an interesting way. It was still acknowledged to have a "decisive role" in co-ordinating the foreign and domestic policies of the region's countries. It was also argued that a "friendly attitude of Norway towards the USSR would be a huge obstacle for Sweden in its complete orientation towards England." Soviet interest in "an alliance and friendship pact" with Norway appeared for the first time in the summer of 1946, well before the open confrontation of the Cold War in 1947. It would seem, that the objectives of the planned pact were related not only to USSR's policy towards Norway, but also to larger objectives of its Scandinavian policy, the prevention of what was regarded as a growing Swedish orientation towards Great Britain.<sup>21</sup>

An increased emphasis on prevention in the USSR's policy in Scandinavia became clearer during 1947–1949. Despite a gradual moderation of its objectives, a change in the status of Spitsbergen and interest in a Soviet-Norwegian defence pact still remained on the Soviet agenda. Molotov observed at the beginning of 1947 that Norway was now stalling on the opening of negotiations on Spitsbergen, and would not make any commitments that would allow it to be compared with "the states, which have joined the Eastern Block." The Soviet ambassador in Norway was reminded by the foreign ministry that during the negotiations an "initiative on the [Soviet-Norwegian] alliance might be taken as [Soviet] pressure over Spitsbergen."<sup>22</sup> Though an increasingly Western orientation had been observed in Norwegian foreign policy during 1947, which was reflected in its participation in the Marshall Plan and behaviour in the UN, the country was not yet classified as a completely lost case in early 1948. In addition to superpower relations, the ongoing Soviet-Finnish negotiations on the FCMA treaty were also acknowledged to have had an influence on Norwegian attitudes towards the USSR. Severe warnings given to "the country bordering the Soviet Union" were believed to have discouraged Norwegian willingness to join the emerging Western Alliance.<sup>23</sup> However, during 1949, the Soviets had to admit that these warnings had been "insufficient in order to restrict Norway from joining the Atlantic Alliance." After Norway joined NATO in April 1949, the main support for this decision was seen to have come from right-wing socialists and the trade unions. In contrast to earlier remarks, the Norwegian's self-imposed restrictions on foreign military bases were now found useful, as a means of limiting the consequences of the country's NATO membership.<sup>24</sup>

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21 Memos of Nikolai D. Kuznetsov, Soviet ambassador to Norway, 6.6.1946, doc. 293, and Abramov, M. Vetrov and I. Maevskij of the fifth European department of the MID to Molotov, 2.7.1946, doc. 294, SNO.

22 Molotov to Stalin, 29.1.1947, doc. 300, and comments by K. V. Novikov on Kuznetsov's memo on a Soviet-Norwegian pact against a German attack, 11.3.1947, doc. 305, SNO.

23 Sergei A. Afanas'ev, Soviet ambassador to Norway, to Molotov, 23.2.1948, doc. 315, SNO.

24 Abramov and Afanas'ev to Molotov, 6.1.1949, doc. 322, and Afanas'ev to A. Ia. Vyshinskii, foreign minister, 12.2.1950, doc. 332, SNO.



## SWEDISH POSITION REDEFINED

After settling out the objectives of the USSR and the emerging Western Alliance in Scandinavia, the next component in any interpretation of the Soviet policy towards the region and towards Finland is the development of Sweden's position there. The summer of 1945 was used by Sweden, as it had been used by the USSR, as a suitable moment for analysing the country's security policy options. Not surprisingly, the Swedish military identified the same kind of change taking place in the Baltic region as the Soviets. However, their conclusions were rather different.

The evaluation of the Swedish military leadership was based on the observation that the country's strategic position had fundamentally changed. This had been caused by the disappearance of the old European power structures and by the loss of the prewar buffer zone in relation to the Soviet Union. In practice this reflected the collapse of Germany, and the consequent rise of the Soviet Union to a position where it was now the leading great power in the Baltic Sea and Scandinavian region. This change reflected in the incorporation of the Baltic States to the Soviet Union in 1940, and the inclusion, more or less, of Finland in the Soviet sphere of influence after the armistice in the autumn 1944. Both before and during World War II the Swedish threat perceptions and military planning had been connected to the two leading great powers in the region, namely, the Soviet Union and Germany. Now, only the Soviets were left.

Unlike during the prewar period, Finland could no longer be thought of as an active buffer, but rather as a passive early warning zone. A Soviet attack only against Sweden, without larger objectives on the Scandinavian Atlantic coast or in the Baltic Sea straits, was not considered likely. Consequently, the Scandinavian peninsula was defined as one defensive unit. Norway especially was deemed essential for any lasting defense of Sweden and its supply lines to the West, based on the experience of the German occupation of Denmark and Norway. During the Second World War there had been a War Plan 1 in case of a German attack from South and West and a War Plan 2 in case of Soviet attack mainly from East. Different variations of the second plan survived throughout the Cold War, but there were no preparations for a third possibility, namely, an attack from, or through, Norway.<sup>25</sup> On this basis the characteristics common to Swedish and Western threat perceptions are obvious. In contrast to their previous German sympathies, the Swedish armed forces, especially the air force and navy were keen to reorient themselves towards the West after the end of the war.

The initiatives on Scandinavian defence co-operation in 1948–1949 must be seen against this background. As recent research has shown, the negotiations leading to the SDU plan had begun well before March 1948, and probably soon after the end of the war in 1945. Swedish support for the rearming of the Norwegian and Danish armies and these armies' co-operation with Swedish forces was motivated not just by the desire to restore the Norwegian and Danish sovereignty, but primarily by the

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25 Agrell 1991, pp. 56–59.

need to strengthen Sweden's position security politically in relation to the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, on the foreign policy level the objective was to increase Soviet confidence in Swedish neutrality.

On the practical level, defense co-operation meant the standardisation of military material, and communication systems and joint purchases by Scandinavian countries. Weapons would have to be purchased from the West, as their intended target was in the East. Together with ongoing plans for Scandinavian defence co-operation, informal ties were developing between the Swedish and British armed forces, as the British had identified such co-operation as being useful from the summer of 1946 on. Despite remarkable support for the neutrality policy in Sweden, on both a public and governmental level, the military in Sweden did act with the knowledge and approval of the cabinet's key figures, such as Prime Minister Tage Erlander and the defence ministers Allan Vougt and Torsten Nilsson. Östen Undén, the foreign minister, and the strongest champion of neutrality policy, was probably not always completely briefed on the extent of the Western connection, and was, at times, bypassed in the formation of Swedish security policy.<sup>26</sup>

However, despite having common threat perceptions, a conflict of interest emerged between the West and Sweden during 1947–1949, with the active formation of the Western alliance and the beginning of open Cold War ideological confrontation. The common U. S. and British objective was to ensure Swedish military support for Western military positions in Scandinavia, as it was already clear that Sweden would not be on the Soviet side in a possible war. Their means in achieving this result differed, though. The United States now demanded a clear ideological and military commitment to the side of the "Free World," while the British emphasised the development of informal contacts and regional co-operation. The Swedish objective, on the other hand, was to ensure Western material support during peacetime and military support in the event of a Soviet attack, without being automatically tied to any armed conflict between East and West. This objective was not in the West's interest.

From the viewpoint of alliance building and cohesion the American reaction is not surprising, as the Swedish objective would mean receiving the benefits of an alliance without its commitments. This problem was also directly connected to the SDU initiative in its Swedish form. It was characterized as an attempt to create an independent military alliance, which would, nevertheless, have the status of an ally when it came to arms purchases from the West. The United States was able to apply pressure against Sweden, because of the country's dependency on both Western arms technology and access to Western markets, in an attempt to combat "isolationism with isolation".<sup>27</sup> The greater British tolerance of, and readiness to support Swedish rearmament, which did cause some friction with the Americans, was not only based on a more pluralistic world view, but also on the importance of Swedish markets for the British arms industry.<sup>28</sup> Against this background, the failure

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26 Ibid. pp. 60, 62, 79. Also on the political support of the Swedish armed forces, Petersson 2003, p. 234.

27 Agrell, pp. 62–66, Lundestad 1980.

28 Aunesluoma 2003, pp. 96–97, Lundestad 1980, p. 350.

of the SDU plan in the spring of 1949 is not surprising, especially as the securing of Western material and military support was of decisive importance to the Norwegians.

A solution, or a practical *modus vivendi*, to the dilemma caused by the difference in Western and Swedish needs was worked out during 1949–1952. Firstly, the negotiations between the general staffs of Sweden, Norway and Denmark during the autumn of 1948 and the beginning of 1949 had produced tangible results in terms of the co-operation of different branches of the armed forces. On this basis the military co-operation planned between Sweden and Norway, was put into practice during 1949, despite the fact that Norway and Denmark had become members of NATO, whereas Sweden had not. Secondly, despite U.S. hostility towards the “Swedish policy of neutrality,” co-operation with the British was further increased in the area of weapons systems, the exchange of intelligence, and even defence plans, which the Swedish defence minister Vougst sent to London in March 1951. Somewhat later, a moderation could be observed in the United States attitude towards Swedish neutrality, at the same time as Sweden its expressed readiness to agree with the COCOM embargo lists in December 1951, which limited trade with the Soviet Union. Lastly, during the visit of the Swedish prime minister Tage Erlander to America in April 1952 an agreement was reached, which gave Sweden the same status as NATO countries in arms purchases from the USA. After the mid 1950s, the Swedish military began to emphasise more direct contacts with the U. S. forces in Europe, as regional co-operation in Scandinavia was seen to have lost some of its effectiveness after the creation of NATO’s central command. At least from the 1960s the United States was prepared to react militarily, if Sweden were attacked by the Soviet Union. However, this was not known for sure by the Swedes, at the time.<sup>29</sup>

As a result of the developments described, from roughly the mid 1940s to the mid 1950s, Sweden had become partially integrated into Western military structures. There are interesting parallels between Sweden’s position in the Cold War, and Finland’s position during World War II, in 1940–1941. In both cases informal military co-operation with a great power(s) paved the way for a latent reformulation of security and foreign policy, with the acceptance and agreement of only the inner circle of the political leadership. When war between Germany and the Soviet Union began in the summer of 1941, it led to Finnish participation in the war, on the German side. As the Cold War did not lead to actual warfare, the practical significance of Sweden’s co-operation with the West was never tested in the same way. Despite similar threat perceptions and actual preparations for tactical wartime cooperation, there were no binding Western guarantees to support Sweden, or Swedish commitments automatically to participate in an East-West armed conflict.<sup>30</sup> It would, however, seem that, during the process, the famous formulation of Swedish foreign policy, that is, “Non-alliance during peace changes to neutrality in a war” had in practice been reformed to “Non-alliance during peace changes to (Western) alliance in a war.”

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29 Agrell 1991, pp. 81–82, 103–105, Petersson 2003, pp. 232–234. On the Vougst memorandum and the critical British evaluation of Swedish defense capacity in detail, see Aunesluoma 2003, pp. 107–111.

30 Aunesluoma 2003, pp. 150, 157, Petersson, pp. 226–227.

## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE COLD WAR AND FINNISH DOMESTIC POLITICS IN THE SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS FINLAND, 1944–1955

In contrast to some earlier mentioned interpretations of the development of Soviet-Finnish relations, here the connections between internal Finnish conflicts and external pressures are taken as a central point of departure. If this perspective is ignored, it becomes very difficult to understand, why the State Treaties, ratified by Finland between 1944 and 1948, defining Finland’s position in relation to the Soviet Union, were not accepted by the Soviets as providing sufficient guarantees to warrant Soviet “confidence” in Finnish foreign policy during the Cold War. In fact, Soviet distrust towards Finland reached its highest point during the “dark ages” of “Late Stalinism”, in the late 1940s and the early 1950s. However, this characterisation happens to fit in well with the general intensification and escalation of the Cold War, particularly in the form of the Korean War.<sup>31</sup> Explaining the contradiction between the concessions already extracted from Finland and continuing Soviet dissatisfaction with Finnish policy, can be based on two major factors. It is necessary, firstly, to locate this Soviet attitude within the general ideological context of the Cold War, and secondly, to observe how this ideological conflict, especially from the Soviet point of view, materialized in Finnish domestic politics. Thus, the factors influencing the formation of the Soviet policy towards Finland can be observed on three levels: namely, at the universal ideological level of the Cold War conflict, at the regional foreign policy level of Soviet and Western objectives in Scandinavia and in Finland, and at the local level of Finnish domestic politics.

### THE SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS FINLAND AND FINNISH DOMESTIC POLITICAL STRUGGLES

With regard to the objectives and substance of the Soviet policy towards Finland, the period can be divided into the following three phases: 1) a narrow approach between 1944 and 1948, 2) hostility and set backs between 1948 and 1953, and 3) reevaluation and broader integration between 1953–1955. The basic divisions of contemporary Finnish domestic politics will be briefly sketched out, as they had significance for the formulation of Soviet policy towards Finland, and especially for interpretations of the materialization of the Cold War ideological confrontation in Finland.

The three largest Finnish parties of the period were the Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP), the Communist Party of Finland or the Finnish People’s

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31 Kimmo Rentola, *Niin kylmää että polttaa: Kekkonen, kommunistit ja Kreml 1947–1958*, Keuruu 1997, pp. 149–174, on the terms, and connection between the Soviet alarmed attitude during the Korean War (1950–1953) to its policy towards Finland, and on the general difficulty in charting Soviet foreign policy during these years.

Democratic League (CPF/FPDL)<sup>32</sup> and the Agrarian Union, which from the late 1940s competed on the first place with the Social Democrats. These parties enjoyed considerable influence within the Finnish society and in the national economy; the working class parties through their positions in the trade unions, and the Agrarians as the party of agricultural producers. This was especially so, as rationing and wage control continued until the mid 1950s. Many of the purely domestic political conflicts between these parties were in fact connected to the downgrading of these economic control mechanisms and the consequences of this downgrading for their supporters and for state finances. All of these parties, including the recently legalized CPF, had effective national organizations and active supporters. The Agrarian Union received support mainly from the peasants in rural areas, but neither the SDP nor the CPF were parties purely of urban workers as a majority of the population still lived in the countryside. After 1944 there was, on the one hand, a clear conflict between the newly established CPF and the SDP, and, on the other hand, a growing rivalry between the SDP and the Agrarian Union, which had formed governments together since the 1930s. In addition to these two main conflicts, there were also a couple of rather unholy alliances, for example, between the right wing social democrats and the Coalition, which was a party of the employers and conservative bourgeoisie, on the basis of wartime co-operation (“Comrades-in-Arms-Axis”). There was also co-operation between the CPF, which officially supported socialization and land reform, and the radical wing of the Agrarian Union (the future “K-Line”), a party of peasant land owners. Consequently, Finnish domestic politics saw divisions, not only between the various parties, but also within individual parties.

The first phase in the Soviet policy towards Finland is characterized as a “Narrow approach,” because the Soviet policy was exercised with regard to the Finnish government either under the formal restrictions of the armistice treaty, or with regard to Finnish society mainly through the CPF. In 1944–1945, the military and political stability of Finland can be seen as the Soviet Union’s main objective. The Soviet priority, then, was to ensure that no threat either politically or to its security would emerge from Finland’s direction, either in the form of German counter measures or in terms of domestic right-wing activity. The terms of the armistice, in September 1944, had left Finland unoccupied, and the Soviet main forces were tied down in Eastern and Central Europe on their way to the final battle for Germany. Consequently, occupation would not be a practical solution to any of the security problems between the Soviet Union and Finland. This was clearly recognized by the head of the Allied Control Commission (ACC) in Finland, Andrei Zhdanov, a member of the politburo, and a specialist in party organization and ideology. It was also clear to him that the mere threat of an occupation could be a resource for Soviet policy in Finland, for example, in the event of war reparations. However, as Finland was just about to begin the payment of war reparations, and thus be of

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32 In connection to the re-founding of CPF in 1944, it was decided the party would not participate to future elections with its own lists, but as member organization of a larger based leftist organization, the Finnish People’s Democratic League (FPDL). During the period of this study the FPDL’s foreign political views in the parliament were similar with the CPF, and will be referred to further in the text as views of the CPF or the communists.

direct profit to the Soviet Union, pressure on the government and establishment that had agreed to such co-operation should remain on a measured level. The Soviet long-term economic objective was to form, through the payment of war reparations, structures that would create a lasting Finnish interest in Soviet markets, or as Zhdanov more crudely remarked, "make the Finnish economy an addition of the Soviet national economy." This Soviet line was also reflected in a discouraging attitude, in early 1945, towards strike movements in Finland, which Finnish communists had been prone to support.<sup>33</sup>

The other main Soviet objective in Finland, however, increasingly so after the spring of 1945, was connected to the ideological level with Soviet support for the reorganization of the newly legalized Communist Party of Finland, and the strengthening of its influence in the country. The Soviet policy reflected developments in East and Central Europe, which seemed to follow a Komintern approved process whereby large communist parties led widely-based National-Democratic fronts in countries recently liberated from fascism. As these "fronts" were expected to include not only communists and social democrats, but also bourgeoisie from the center of political field, they could be seen as new versions of the Popular Fronts of the 1930's.<sup>34</sup> As the Communist party had been forbidden in Finland for fourteen years, with its members under state surveillance, there was significant support for a party to left of the SDP, which had participated in the wartime governments.

From the Soviet viewpoint the results of the March 1945 parliamentary elections opened a promising new phase in the development of the Finnish political system, connecting it more closely to the same process that had already begun in Eastern Europe. The CPF became one of the three largest parties in the country, with only one seat behind the largest party, the SDP, and equal in size to the Agrarians. These parties formed a coalition, known in Finland as "Government of the Big Three", which issued general declarations about reforming the postwar politics and society. Up to this point, developments seem to have followed "Popular Front" tactics, with communist parties taking a leading role, crushing the conservatives, and assimilating the social democrats into their party. Although the Soviet Union had official relations with the state leadership, and had also begun to establish contacts in late 1944 with non-Communists, these had been limited mainly to the left social democrats and the radical Agrarians. As a consequence of the elections, and the positions the CPF had achieved in the state administration, including the ministry of interior and the reorganization of the security police, Zhdanov saw Finland moving from a "Popular Front" towards a "People's Democracy." Soviet representatives expected the CPF both to strengthen its position at the governmental level and to increase its support among the voters, so that in the 1948 elections the party would have about half of the seats in parliament.<sup>35</sup> After March–May 1945 the Soviet

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33 Kimmo Rentola, *Kenen joukossa seisot? Suomalainen kommunismi ja sota 1937–1945*, Juva 1994, p. 469, 484, 511, 522, and Tatiana Androsova on war reparations and Zhdanov's remark, "Kauppapolitiikka Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton suhteissa vuoden 1944 jälkeen", *Historiallinen aikakauskirja* (HAIK) 2/2002, pp. 155–156.

34 Rentola 1994, pp. 483–486, 496.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 497–500, 517, 523–527, and Rentola 1997, p. 40 on FCP objectives in the 1948 parliamentary elections.

foreign policy towards both Finland and Scandinavia had changed from a policy of necessity to a policy of possibilities. In case of Finland, this more ambitious policy seemed to have continued somewhat longer than was the case with Scandinavia, right up to 1948–1949.

The third main Soviet objective during this phase was to regulate the role of Finland in terms of security policy within the Soviet sphere of influence with the onset of the Cold War in 1947, and the signing of the Paris Peace treaty in September 1947, which ended the control of the Soviet dominated ACC in Finland. As the Soviet Union was, in October 1947, preparing to conclude defence treaties with “the small East European countries (Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland),” the foreign ministry observed that, after the realization of this objective, similar treaties should be concluded with other countries, “with which the Soviet Union does not yet have that kind of agreement.”<sup>36</sup> Already in September 1947, the Soviets had expressed their interest in a defence treaty with Finland, attempting, however, to get the Finns to take the initiative in opening negotiations. As this did not succeed, an official invitation from Stalin to begin negotiations was sent to Finland in February 1948. After some probing, the Soviet Union accepted a defence treaty that was limited to Finnish territory, without any automatic military procedures, as long as political consultations between the two parties began in the event that a threat emerged; that is, before an actual attack was launched. After these compromises, the Finnish president, J. K. Paasikivi deemed it possible to defend the Treaty in parliament, where majority, excluding the CPF, had earlier opposed it. The treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid (FCMA) was concluded in early April 1948, and it was to last, initially, for ten years.<sup>37</sup>

When viewing the results of the Soviet policy during 1944–1948, it is clear that a degree of success had been achieved in meeting Soviet security concerns. Moreover, new structures in the Finnish economy and in foreign trade were beginning to emerge as a consequence of war reparations favoring Soviet trade, which became soon known in Finland as “East Trade”. This was underlined in the Soviet refusal to allow Finnish participation to the US organized Marshall Plan. Nevertheless, Finland had, in early 1948, become a member of international, Western dominated economic organizations such as the IMF and the IBRD.

However, developments in Finnish domestic politics and Finland’s political system towards the end of this phase were to prove anything but satisfactory from the Soviet point of view, despite a promising start. For the most part, this was connected to disadvantageous developments in the CPF’s position in its confrontation with its opponents, especially the SDP. Instead of increasing its influence, the CPF had lost positions to the SDP, first at the trade union and municipal level in 1947,

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36 G. P. Murashko, A. F. Noskova, T. V. Volokitina, “Sozhdanie sotslageria”, in *Sovetskoe obshchestvo: vozniknovenie, razvitie, istoritsheskii final*, edit. Juri Afanas’ev, Moskva 1997, p. 25.

37 For detailed accounts on the Soviet-Finnish FCMA-negotiations, see e. g. Tuomo Polvinen, *J. K. Paasikivi, Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 4, 1944–1948* (Biography), Juva 1999, pp. 418–421, 463–517 and Juhani Suomi, *Vonkamies: Urho Kekkonen 1944–1950* (Biography), Keuruu 1988, pp. 305–358.



and then even more starkly in the July 1948 parliamentary elections. These developments were interpreted as a serious limitation on the successes achieved by the Soviet Union’s policy towards Finland. As Soviet foreign policy could not have accepted failure in the FCMA negotiations in the context of the Cold War, it had been preparing an alternative line of action during the spring of 1948 in the event of a negative Finnish response. The role of the CPF in Soviet policy in this case in particular as well as the SDP’s role more generally in Western policy will be treated in more detail at the end of the chapter.

The characterization of the second phase of 1948–1953 as “Hostility and Setbacks”, is related to the escalation of the Cold War globally, and to Soviet disappointment with the results of their policy in relation to the Finnish political system. The first Soviet priority in Finland during the dangerous escalation of the Cold War continued to be to secure the FCMA treaty, which had, perhaps, become the most tangible result of their postwar policy towards Finland. As the Finnish government was responsible for the implementation of the treaty, this created a lasting Soviet interest in the composition of the government coalitions in Finland. Consequently, as the SDP had already been defined as the key ideological opponent, it now became necessary, in terms of Soviet security policy, to “contain” the SDP, by, at least, limiting its participation in government and, if possible, by excluding it altogether. In this sense, the July 1948 parliamentary elections, which resulted in an SDP minority government led by Karl August Fagerholm, which stayed in office throughout 1948–1950 with the support of bourgeois parties and the president, changed the situation from bad to worse, from the Soviet viewpoint. This attitude was made evident by strong Soviet and CPF accusations, that Finland was orienting itself towards the West in general, and towards NATO in particular. Finnish interest in Scandinavian co-operation was also labelled as Western orientation, not least because of Norwegian and Danish membership of NATO.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, despite these setbacks, the long term integration of Finnish trade with the Soviet economy became the second most important Soviet objective, during this phase. Along with the need to regulate the orientation of Finland’s security policy after the termination of the ACC and the conclusion of the Paris Peace Treaty, maintaining the economic structures created by the war reparations through new trade political agreements became a necessity of Soviet policy towards Finland. This interest was increasingly underlined towards the end of the phase, in 1953, as payments of Finnish war reparations would end in that year. Against this background the Soviet decision to conclude a one-year trade treaty in December 1948, despite the disagreeable nature of the SDP government, becomes more understandable.<sup>39</sup> Even more remarkable was the decision to sign a preliminary trade agreement for five years in the summer of 1950, when the SDP government had been replaced by a centrist, Agrarian-based government.

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38 Rentola 1997, p. 61–66, Suomi 1988, 358–387, on Soviet reactions and concerns.

39 Rentola 1997, p. 79–80. Compare with Suomi 1988, p. 394, 420, who does not mention the reaching of trade agreement in late 1948, while describing the state of Soviet-Finnish relations at the time.



Lastly, the third objective of Soviet policy towards Finland could be seen in the albeit temporary tendency to widen contacts with the Finnish political parties during 1948–1950. This largely sprang from the Soviet interest in overthrowing the SDP minority government and in preventing the reelection of president J. K. Paasikivi in February 1950, as he had not only nominated, but had also clearly supported the government. Since the autumn of 1948 the Soviet representatives had been looking for support from bourgeois parties, from the Agrarians to the liberals and even the conservatives, for the overthrow of the SDP government. These efforts elicited a partial response not only from the Agrarian Union's radical wing, led by Urho Kekkonen, but also from the Swedish People's Party (SPP) and from the small liberal parties. However, they were not successful in bringing about a toppling the Finnish government. Nevertheless, during the presidential campaign of 1949, the candidacy of Kekkonen was clearly in the interest of the Soviet Union. Despite open Soviet criticism of the president and the CPF's latent support to Kekkonen, Paasikivi was reelected. The first Kekkonen government was appointed only after the SDP government of Fagerholm had resigned in February 1950, after the presidential elections. During the preparations for a long term outline agreement on trade with Finland in the spring of 1950, the Soviet leadership agreed to Kekkonen's suggestion to come to Moscow for the signing ceremonies. This was seen as a way to increase his prestige in the domestic Finnish politics, and the entire trade treaty was in a political sense defined as a way to increase competition between the Agrarian Union and the Social Democrats. Soviet foreign policy now appeared to have found a most suitable bourgeois alternative in Finland, especially as Kekkonen formed the following three governments up to late 1953.<sup>40</sup>

The results of Soviet policy towards Finland in 1948–1953 appear to have been quite limited, if not meagre. Indeed, contemporary Soviet analyses were highly critical about Finnish developments. Despite the intensification of the Cold War the Soviet Union was unable to obtain desired guarantees, that is, sufficient influence to Finnish government formation so as to ensure the implementation of the FCMA treaty. In fact, developments had gone mostly in the opposite direction, as Soviet policy had completely failed to "contain" the Social Democrats in 1948–1950. Under the Social Democratic government the security police, which had, for a short time, been dominated by the Communists, was once again reorganized. Even during the following four Kekkonen governments in 1950–1953, the SDP managed to ensure its participation in all but the first, while the CPF was kept strictly in opposition. Soviet attempts to widen contacts with bourgeois parties had also largely failed, with the exception of the radical Agrarians, and even there the results were mixed. These defeats, together with an alarmist Soviet view on the global situation in the context of the ongoing Korean War, led to an extremely dualistic view of domestic Finnish politics. The SDP was seen not only as a "US spying agency", but even as paving the way for fascism in Finland. All contacts were now limited to "friends" only, that is, to the CPF, which was reorganized as a crisis organization, capable of surviving an

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40 Rentola 1997, p. 67, 74, 109, 137–144. Compare with the surprisingly accurate contemporary American and British evaluations of Soviet motives connected to the 1950 trade agreement, Hanhimäki 1997b, pp.98–99.

armed conflict, if one broke out close to Finland. In the spring of 1951 there was a real war scare in the Soviet evaluations. Only in trade matters had Soviet policy had achieved a clear success, as the USSR became Finland's largest trading partner in 1952–1953, thus momentarily surpassing Great Britain. Though generally Finland had now changed in Soviet foreign policy from being regarded as a land of possibilities to being a potential enemy despite the FCMA treaty, political and economic influence there was not to be lost prematurely, or in vain.<sup>41</sup>

The last phase, between 1953 and 1955, has been characterized as a phase of "broader integration" in Soviet policy towards Finland, as there seems to have been a change, or reevaluation in both the substance and the means of the USSR's policy. On the global level this development is directly connected to the change of political leadership and a general modification of the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy, together with emergence of a first period of Détente in the Cold War. During this phase, the first Soviet objective was to ensure continuity in the Finnish political leadership at the highest level, as presidential elections were due in early 1956, and Paasikivi had already reached an advanced age. This meant securing Finland's present foreign policy orientation, which was now regarded as being, at least, tolerable. This included, naturally, in the final analysis, the validity of the FCMA treaty. Interestingly, the general reevaluation in Soviet foreign policy at the time was also directly reflected in its policy towards Finland. During the previous phase, in 1948–1953, Paasikivi had been characterized as a hostile individual, supporting a pro-Western, and clearly anti-Soviet, foreign policy. Even Kekkonen, despite his more co-operative attitude, had not managed to avoid Soviet dissatisfaction in foreign policy evaluations. However, after the summer of 1953, the "Paasikivi-Kekkonen Line" was defined as the line of the moderate bourgeoisie, which was, at least, interested in qualified co-operation with the Soviet Union.

The second Soviet objective was to continue attempts at widening contacts in the domestic Finnish politics, beyond the CPF. This also reflected growing Soviet frustration in trying to achieve a decisive influence in Finnish society through the CPF alone. Now Soviet policy was much more flexible than in the late 1940s, and fear of an imported Soviet-type revolution through the CPF had begun to diminish among Finnish bourgeois circles, the more so, as trade with the Soviets had proved quite profitable. Positive responses were obtained not only from the "old hands," the radical Agrarians, but also from the Coalition, the liberals and the SPP, when these parties entered government. In 1953–1954, Soviets even dared, in the context of a general détente, to approach the Social Democrats, especially the dominant right wing of the party. Despite some promising signs of an "armistice," the results proved to be short-lived.<sup>42</sup> The third major Soviet objective in this phase was the

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41 The term "friends" was commonly used in the Soviet foreign policy reports on all fraternal communist parties in foreign countries. Rentola 1997, pp. 153–160, 168–169. The Soviet war scare of the spring of 1951 was probably connected to changing fortunes in the Korean War, where a US counter-offensive was now feared after the halting of Chinese advance after the winter 1950/1951, A. V. Torkunov, *Zagadotshnaia voina: Koreiskii konflikt 1950–1953 godov*, Moskva 2000, pp. 135–160.

42 Rentola 1997, see pp. 302–304 on Soviet reevaluations, 312–314 on widening Soviet contacts in general, pp. 327–335 on Soviet contacts with the SDP.

continuation of Finland's economic integration in the Eastern Block, where prospects on the basis of previous developments, looked quite promising. This line was evident, for example, in the noticeable Soviet interest in Finnish ship building, and in scientific and military exchanges, during Mikojan's visit to Finland in late 1954.<sup>43</sup>

With the presidential campaign in Finland in 1955, the Soviets were in a rather comfortable position, as initially they had two potential solutions to their problem of maintaining political continuity in Finland. In the short term, that is a couple of years, Paasikivi could still be reelected, if he agreed to become an official or unofficial candidate. This alternative was favored by the Soviet foreign ministry, the MID, which hinted about it to the president. On the other hand, the problem could be solved on long-term basis with the election of the prominent Agrarian, Kekkonen, who had already demonstrated his greater ability at co-operation. However, his election was much more risky, since unlike the more generally respected Paasikivi, Kekkonen clearly divided opinion in Finland. As Kekkonen's Soviet contacts had been built up mainly through the Soviet intelligence service, the KGB was inclined to support him. This general position meant, firstly, that the Soviets would pursue such a policy, which could be portrayed and understood as supporting, as far as possible, either of their favored candidates, thus leaving their options open to the end. Secondly, this position naturally meant acting against the election of other possible candidates, especially from the SDP, the more so, as "detente" with the party had not been a success. Together with the global needs of Soviet foreign policy, and the need to ensure the continuation of the FCMA treaty, which was originally supposed to end in 1958, the necessity of influencing the presidential elections was a major motive for the Soviet decision to return the Porkkala military base to Finland prematurely in the beginning of year 1956. In a situation where Paasikivi had become the unofficial candidate of some bourgeois parties, and Kekkonen was actively campaigning, the rising Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev decided to follow the KGB variant. As Soviet intelligence finally lent its support to Kekkonen, this guaranteed him the communist vote in the electoral college. Consequently, Paasikivi did not reach the last round, where Kekkonen defeated the SDP candidate, Fagerholm, by the narrowest of margins.<sup>44</sup>

The results of the Soviet policy towards Finland during 1953–1955 clearly differed from those of the previous periods, which can be explained simply by partially redefining goals and means. After accepting the "Paasikivi-Kekkonen Line" as a tolerable basis for the future development of Soviet-Finnish relations, and having given up short term expectations of radical change in the Finnish political system, Soviet policy naturally had more options available in Finland. However,

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43 Tuomo Polvinen, *J. K. Paasikivi, Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 5, 1948–1956*, Juva 2003, pp. 212–213.

44 Rentola 1997, pp. 354–374, 396–411 in detail on Soviet motives and the end game in the Finnish presidential campaign of 1956 and on the Finnish presidential campaign in general e.g. Polvinen 2003, pp. 222–256, Juhani Suomi, *Kuningastie, Urho Kekkonen 1950–1956*, Keuruu 1990, pp. 440–501. As Kekkonen beat Fagerholm on the last round by only one vote, the voting process has been a much discussed topic in Finnish political history.

this did not mean an end to the Soviet interests in trying to regulate Finland's security policy, and, in connection to this, influencing its political leadership and government coalitions. If these are accepted as the more long lasting Soviet interests in Finland, it must be admitted that the Soviets were making advances, if not breakthroughs, in all three of their earlier mentioned objectives for this period. The election of Kekkonen as president of Finland undoubtedly had a positive long-term significance for the development of Soviet-Finnish relations, from the Soviet viewpoint. The Soviets also succeeded permanently in widening their contacts with the bourgeois side of domestic Finnish politics. Lastly, Soviet-Finnish trade, also known as the East trade in Finland, now became established on a more institutionalized basis with five-year treaties, and offered promising future prospects.

## THE POTENTIAL AND LIMITS OF SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS FINLAND, 1944–1955

The basic structures and prospects of Soviet policy towards Finland have been observed in the context of the onset of Cold War between the former allies of World War II. Both the foreign policy and ideological objectives of the Soviet Union's policy towards Scandinavia and Finland should be seen as answers to the problems this confrontation had created.

Globally, this confrontation between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-Saxon great powers had begun to materialize first in the Middle East in 1945–1946,<sup>45</sup> and more basically in Germany in 1947. In relation to this, preparations were also made in Northern Europe. Soviet plans for Scandinavia should be seen as parts of a more ambitious general trend in Soviet foreign policy, probing advantageous possibilities presented by the ending of the war. At the same time that the Soviet Union presented ultimatums to Turkey and continued its wartime occupation of Northern Iran between the summer of 1945 and the autumn of 1946, the Soviet foreign ministry prepared plans for establishing military bases in Scandinavia and became interested in the idea of friendship and alliance treaties with Denmark and Norway. Moreover, when Soviet foreign policy adopted more moderate means in the Middle East in the winter of 1946/1947, Soviet policy towards Scandinavia changed to more preventive emphasis as well.

Regarding the regional objectives of the great powers, the main question was, would the Scandinavian countries be buffers or allies. The formation of alliances during 1947–1949 seemed to answer this question as Norway and Denmark joined the NATO, after the failure of the Scandinavian Defence Union (SDU). This left Finland's association with the USSR through the Soviet-Finnish FCMA treaty, with Sweden formally unattached to either. Through the rigid opposition of the SDU,

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45 Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, pp. 92–93 on Soviet action in the Turkish Crisis of 1945–1946, and its significance for US threat perceptions, leading to plans for strategic nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union. Molotov later admitted, that Stalin had overplayed his hand, as his policy "could have led to a combined [Anglo-Saxon] aggression against us", Feliks Tshuev, *Polyderzhnyi vlastelin*, Moskva 2000, pp. 147–150.

Soviet foreign policy had clearly lost Norway and Denmark to the West, and could only try to limit the consequences. This materialized in the positive Soviet view towards a Nordic neutrality alliance in the winter of 1951/1952. The Soviet initiative was closely related to the idea of solving the problem posed by German unification by making Germany neutral, after the Soviet policy in Korea had resulted in an alarming escalation of the Cold War globally, which was counterproductive to Soviet interests.

Together with the overall foreign policy context, the Soviet Union evaluated its Finnish-policy through the ideological framework of its own political system. In aiming to increase its influence in domestic Finnish politics, it was clear, that contacts with some of the major Finnish parties were going to be needed. On the basis of Soviet Marxist-Leninist ideology, the CPF and the SDP had universally antagonistic roles. The CPF was defined as the true party of the Finnish working class and the bearer of the socialist revolution, which the Soviet leadership expected to appear in large areas of postwar Europe, including Western Europe. Consequently the Communists in Finland, as elsewhere in Europe, were understood as the “friends,” and natural allies of (any) Soviet policy. From the viewpoint of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, the decisive factor in the defining the role of the Social Democrats was not that they were Anti-Soviet, but that they were traitors, an international renegade branch of socialism.

The general line of achieving power through communist led “Popular Fronts” alone required, quite regardless of the specific “bilateral hostility” between the Soviet Union and the Finnish SDP on wartime basis, the splitting of Social Democratic parties, and the defining of their right wing as the main enemy. This policy made it more difficult for Communist parties to find common ground to compromise with Social Democrats, than with their outright enemies, that is, the liberal bourgeoisie or capitalists.<sup>46</sup> The Agrarian Union, on the other hand, was ideologically excluded from this internal working-class controversy. As a party of mainly small and medium scale land owners, it was a “kulak” party, with more national and local concerns, but without the Social Democrats interest to organized international contacts and co-operation. Furthermore, among the bourgeois parties, the Agrarians could be regarded as less hostile towards the Soviet Union, especially as the radical wing of the party had made clear its interest in good relations with the Soviet Union under postwar circumstances.<sup>47</sup> Last but not least, in the East European People’s Democracies, the peasant parties had been defined as acceptable partners in communist led blocs.

The potential this kind of analysis of Finnish party-structure offered Soviet foreign policy was twofold. Firstly, when the Soviet Union believed in the possibility of a general advance for socialism and for radical changes in the Finnish political

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46 Mikko Majander, The Soviet view on Social Democracy. From Lenin to the End of the Stalin Era, in *Communism. National and International*, eds. Tauno Saarela and Kimmo Rentola, SHS 1998, pp. 90–99, 103–104.

47 Majander, Norden som dilemma. De finska kommunisterna mellan Sovjetunionen och Skandinavien 1944–1951, p. 65, in Mikko Majander, *Pohjoismaa vai kansandemokratia? Sosiaalidemokratit, kommunistit ja Suomen kansainvälinen asema 1944–1951*, Helsinki 2004.

system, as in 1944–1948(49), the CPF was seen as the most useful means for furthering Soviet policy. This can be seen clearly by the Soviet interest in, and advice concerning, the organizing the CPF and the defining of its objectives at both local and governmental level. The most obvious example of the CPF acting as a tool of Soviet policy towards Finland is in the spring of 1948, when Soviet foreign policy was preparing for a negative result in the FCMA negotiations. It seems that in the event of a negative Finnish response to the Soviet invitation, the CPF had been prepared to use force, mainly in the form of arrests by the communist controlled security police, against the social democratic and conservative opponents of the treaty, who were accused of being Western spies. The objective was to guarantee the acceptance of the FCMA treaty, and decisively strengthen the CPF's position in the government immediately prior to the July parliamentary elections. The first priority was, however, to win the elections, if by strong manipulation, not to cancel them altogether. The fact that these preparations remained an alternative option for Soviet policy, a "Plan B", is hinted by the fact that the Soviets indirectly "leaked" their concern about a conservative conspiracy against the FCMA to Finnish officials. The Finnish political leadership was thus given the alternatives from which to choose.

The second Soviet attempt to advance their policy towards Finland was connected to the Kemi strikes and to the CPF's plans of a general strike in August–September 1949. The Soviet ambassador Savonenkov advised the CPF to prolong the strike as a way to overthrow the social democratic government, or force it to accept FPDL(CPF) participation in the government, despite an agreement the strike movement had almost achieved locally. As two people were killed in the confrontation between the strikers and the police in Kemi, the conflict became the subject of bitter political division. However, this attempt had not been authorized by the top Soviet leadership, which withdrew its support for using strikes as a tool in its policy in Finland in late September.<sup>48</sup>

Secondly, when Soviet objectives in Finland were more modest, and concerned with security policy and influence within the Finnish political system, instead of changing it, the Agrarian Union was seen as a promising alternative on the bourgeois side. The significance of this link, or "channel" was underlined on those occasions when the effectiveness of the CPF was restricted, such as when it was excluded from the government or when it had lost positions to the SDP. The Agrarian Union could not be used to further Soviet policy as directly as the CPF, because of differences in ideology and because it did not have the same organizational structure that existed between the CPSU and foreign communist parties at the time. Still, the Soviet policy towards Finland did share common interests with the radical Agrarians in the attempts to overthrow the SDP minority-government in autumn 1948, Kekkonen's candidacy against Paasikivi in 1949, and in widening the division between the Agrarians and the Social Democrats with the trade treaty of 1950. In the terms of their foreign policy objectives, the Soviets scored, when they during the temporary support of Nordic neutrality in 1951–1952 managed to get Kekkonen's speech as a prime minister on the topic in early 1952.

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48 Rentola 1997, on the contacts between the Soviet Union and the CPF in the spring of 1948, pp. 35–40, 46–49, and on the Kemi strikes in the autumn of 1949, pp. 92–98.



The dual role of the CPF as a party of Finnish communists and as an instrument of Soviet policy in Finland had negative consequences in terms of the credibility of and support for the party in postwar Finnish society at large, where there was potential for a new, larger leftist movement. Initially, Soviet support for the communists had been cautious. However, when the party was reestablished in October 1944, Zhdanov, as the expert on doctrine and organization, argued for a distinct communist party instead of a large new leftist party. The FPDL had failed to become a broad based unifying “Popular Front” for leftist and centrist forces. In addition to this tactical decision even more remarkable was the fact that unlike other big communist parties, the CPF had no resistance movement tradition to build on, as Finland had not been occupied either by the Germans, since it fought on their side, or by the Soviets, after the armistice had been signed. This meant that the communists in Finland lacked the prerequisites and means for organizing mass support, which were available both to communists parties in Eastern and Western Europe.<sup>49</sup> The CPF’s position in Finland was not made any easier by Soviet demands to rigidly follow Soviet policies. Preparing for extra parliamentary action and then suddenly cancelling it in the spring of 1948, or avoiding strikes in 1944–45, when there would have been support for them, but continuing them in 1949, when an agreement was at hand, did not help the CPF in its rivalry with the SDP on workers’ votes. Because of this, the CPF could be more or less isolated as a political movement. Matters were not helped by the fact that the lack of foreign occupation meant that the existing political establishment had not been crushed, even though it was forced to adapt to changing circumstances.<sup>50</sup>

The consequences of the Cold War divisions at the regional, Scandinavian level, also placed limits on the Soviet policy in Finland. These limits also interestingly connect the role of the SDP to Western objectives in Scandinavia and Finland, as well as the role of the party in the Soviet policy. Regarding the co-operation of the Scandinavian countries with the West and the consequent NATO membership of Norway and Denmark, Soviet evaluations had underlined the role of social democratic governments, and trade unions controlled by them, in supporting these decisions. This was the regional Cold War context in which Soviet foreign policy evaluated the role of the SDP in Finland, and its interest in Scandinavian and global contacts. Both the planned Swedish cooperation with the West and the realization of possible Western contacts in Finland’s foreign and domestic policies are key factors when setting out the framework of Soviet policy towards Finland.

In the case of the Finnish SDP, its political contacts with the West began develop during the first postwar years with the British Labour Party, which led to membership in the COMISCO, a cooperative organization of social democratic parties, in late 1947. Regarding the international trade union relations, when the West left the World Trade Union Congress (WTUC) in 1949, also the central Finnish organization (SAK) left it eventually in 1951, despite Soviet advice not to do so. However, the Finnish organisation did not join the Western controlled International

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49 Rentola 1994, 496–497, 524.

50 Majander 2004, Miksi Suomesta ei tullut kansandemokratiaa, p. 81–82.

Congress of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Economic contacts with the Americans were only established after the CIA had characterized Soviet policy in Finland a failure as a result of the CPF defeat in the Kemi strikes in 1949. Since the SDP had proved its domestic resilience in resisting the communists, financial support was received in the early 1950s from American trade unions, which acted as CIA cover organizations.<sup>51</sup> At about the same time, the SDP information department, the so-called T-section, set about exchanging information with Norwegian military intelligence, which was controlled by the Norwegian Social Democrats. The Norwegian intelligence also enlisted some Finns for operations in the Soviet Union.<sup>52</sup> It is most likely that the Soviets were aware of Anglo-Saxon connections with Scandinavian efforts at defence co-operation from at least 1946 on. The contacts of the Finnish SDP, first with the British Labour Party after 1946, and then with the Americans, were also quite well monitored.<sup>53</sup>

A comparison of the roles of the CPF and the SDP in the foreign policies of the rival Cold War superpowers reveals clear similarities and differences. Both were significant political movements, enjoying genuine support in Finnish society. The hostility between them had preceded the Cold War, and with its onset each party oriented itself towards one of the opposing blocs, thus establishing the Cold War frontline in domestic Finnish politics. Although members of the CPF were rarely enlisted as Soviet agents, the party leadership regularly reported on domestic Finnish political affairs to the CPSU in Moscow, and gathered material about rival parties, first and foremost the SDP. However, despite growing internal divisions and certain high level departures from the party, the SDP enjoyed greater support in elections and managed to control the majority of the trade unions. U. S. support for the SDP seems to have been only one-sixth of the amount received by the CPF from the Soviet Union at the same time. The limitations of the Soviet Finnish-policy were based much in the same components as its potential, in part due to its ideological context. Soviet calculations about the chances of directly influencing Finland, either through diplomacy, trade or intelligence were basically quite realistic. However, it would seem that they constantly overestimated the potential of the CPF in Finnish society, especially from the late 1940s onwards, and underestimated the capacity of its opponents, the bourgeois parties and the SDP.

It is now possible to evaluate more thoroughly the contrasting images of Scandinavian developments during the early Cold War, and the relevance of contemporary Soviet threat perceptions. The contrast between Western and Eastern interpretations can largely be explained by taking into consideration the active role of Sweden in plans for a Scandinavian alliance and in efforts at co-operation with

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51 Majander 2004, "Britain's Dual Approach: Labor and Finnish Social Democracy 1944–1951", pp. 18–20, and "SAK ja kylmä sota 1945–1951", pp. 224, 236–244, 249–251.

52 Rentola 1997, pp. 169–174 on the SDP's connections with the Norwegians and Soviet concerns about it.

53 Nevakivi 1983, pp. 62–63, and Bo Petersson, *Med Moskva's ögon: Bedömningar av svensk utrikspolitik under Stalin och Chrusjtjov*, Smedjbacken 1994, pp. 52–56 on probable Soviet knowledge of Sweden's Western contacts and Majander 2004, in the above mentioned articles on Soviet knowledge of the SDP's Western contacts.



the West together with the simultaneous development of the Finnish SDP's relations with the West. The Soviet arguments that Scandinavia was a Western bridgehead even before the creation of NATO and that the SDP was a representative, even an agent, of its Cold War opponent and its ideology in Finland then become more comprehensible. Regarding Soviet policy towards Finland, the Soviet view that the FCMA treaty could not be seen as a sufficient guarantee for "confidence", that is, as a means for regulating country's foreign policy stance also becomes more understandable. To address these insecurities the Soviets felt necessary to influence over Finnish governmental coalitions via Finnish domestic politics, and the isolation of Finland from Scandinavia, or at least restriction of its ties with Scandinavia. On the other hand, it was probably understood that exerting excessive pressure against Finland could push Sweden even closer to NATO, and might even result in Swedish membership of NATO.

Although Soviet threat perceptions have thus become more comprehensible, their accuracy is another matter. The British did offer limited support to Scandinavian efforts at defence co-operation from the summer of 1946, and during 1947–1949 Sweden was expected to join the Western alliance. Military planning between Sweden and the NATO countries became closer during the early 1950s. Despite the initial shock of the FCMA treaty, the West did not consider Finland as a completely lost case, as it had not been turned to a peoples' democracy. Instead Finland was regarded by the West as a limited buffer zone, at least in relation to Sweden, which itself was considered to be an active Western-minded buffer zone in relation to Norway and Denmark. However, direct Western military interest in the region remained rather low during these years, contrary to Soviet claims. The establishment of military bases was consciously avoided before 1950, as this was expected to lead to Soviet countermeasures. Finland was basically seen as belonging to the Soviet sphere of influence, and thus on an area where challenging the Soviet Union militarily or in terms of security should be avoided, as this could be counter productive since Finland was not regarded as a country worth going to war over.<sup>54</sup> As early as 1948–1949 the probable Soviet counter reaction towards Finland, and the consequent weakening of Sweden's position had been a major Swedish argument with the United States for not joining NATO.<sup>55</sup> The prerequisites for the concept of "the Nordic balance" were now beginning to emerge, with the superpowers also ready to admit the mutual dependence of the region's countries. Any change in the level of political commitments or military presence in one country could affect the position of others.<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, it would seem to be the Finnish position in connection to Sweden, or the Swedish position in connection to Finland, that gained significance as a means of defining the extent of superpower influence in the Nordic region.

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54 Hanhimäki 1997b, p. 95, 101–102 on the restraints in U.S. policy to Finland in 1950.

55 Olof Kronvall, *Den Bräckliga Barriären: Finland i svensk säkerhetspolitik 1948–1968*, Stockholm 2002, pp. 37–45, on the discussion of the "Finlands argument" in Swedish foreign policy and research.

56 Petersson 2003, pp. 128–129.

When observing the potential and limitations of Soviet policy towards Finland, in a global context, it should be emphasized that 1953 was a year of change for both superpowers. In the United States, the republican administration of Eisenhower and Dulles replaced the Truman administration, and turned their “New Look” of Roll Back policy toward the communist East. The death of Stalin had the most far-reaching consequences, politically, socially, and ideologically. Paradoxically, as the emerging new Soviet leadership was moderating its position in the Cold War, the Americans were toughening theirs, preparing to push back the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.<sup>57</sup>

As long as the new collective Soviet leadership was unable obtain legitimacy by practical results from the Soviet population, their power base was not secure. Since the people’s standard of living could not be improved quickly, due, in particular, to military costs, success in foreign relations was an attractive alternative. Because a decisive victory over capitalism had not been secured, an honorable accommodation became the goal. Acute confrontation and terror were no longer needed to ensure the loyalty of the USSR’s Eastern European sphere of influence. On the other hand, continuing with a policy of brinkmanship could lead to all-out war, as has already happened in Korea.<sup>58</sup> Now, it was repeatedly stressed that peaceful coexistence was the basis of the new Soviet foreign policy, although officially it only became the doctrine of Soviet foreign policy in early 1956, together with de-Stalinization, which signified a reevaluation of domestic politics. The Soviet Union demonstrated a new readiness to end the Korean War and the division of Austria, and a capability to come forward with new initiatives, with regard to, for example, the Nordic Countries. The longer the West, especially the Americans, delayed in reacting to Soviet initiatives, the more useful the slogan of peaceful coexistence became as a symbol for a new era of Détente, and possibly even the end of Cold War in international relations.

As the concept of peaceful coexistence described relations between the communist and capitalist countries, the relations between the Soviet Union and its small capitalist neighbor, Finland, began to gain universal value, as a practical example of the new line. At the same time, during 1953–1955, Soviet policy towards Finland had achieved several major successes.<sup>59</sup> In early 1956, the political leadership in Finland changed in a satisfactory way from the Soviet viewpoint. The new Finnish president, Urho Kekkonen, believed that the new orientation of Soviet foreign policy could be used both to support Finland’s more active international role, and to obtain concrete advantages from the Soviet Union in return for not only good, but cordial and confidential relations with the Soviet Union. In contrast to his predecessor, he thought that direct contacts with the Soviet intelligence service were vital in reaching out to the Soviet leadership. Consequently, in the beginning of 1956, both parties to the Soviet-Finnish relationship had their reasons for expecting strongly positive developments from their bilateral relations.

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57 Mitrovich, 2000, pp. 114–132, on U.S. plans for psychological warfare made during 1951–1952 to undermine support for the Soviet and East European governments, and especially to take advantage of the confusion and power struggle following the death of Stalin.

58 Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, p. 154–156.

59 Hanhimäki 1997b, p. 169–171, 191–193.

# THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING IN SOVIET-FINNISH RELATIONS, 1956–1958

Traditionally, the study of Soviet foreign policy has debated whether that policy was based on “power politics” and could be therefore analyzed using the concepts of the so-called realistic school of international relations, or whether it was based on ideology. From the viewpoint of this study, these interpretations are not seen as contradicting with each other. The tension between ideology and pragmatism, revolution and coexistence, is seen as the basic dimension of the Soviet Union’s foreign policy precisely because of its political system.<sup>1</sup>

The political system of the Soviet Union changed after the death of Stalin roughly from a totalitarian to a more pluralistic model, run by different bureaucratic interest groups within the party-state. Different levels of party bureaucracy, different 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>2</sup> When discussing foreign policy, in this study, 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 language limited the observation of problems and the solutions for them,<sup>3</sup> thus setting “the limits of the possible.”

The single most important process that affected the legitimacy of the Soviet system was de-Stalinization, announced by general the secretary of the CPSU Nikita Khrushchev at the XX Party Congress in February 1956. It can best be understood as an attempt to deal with Stalin’s legacy, mostly in relation to the party, as well as a

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1 Geoffrey Roberts, *The Soviet Union in World Politics*, London 1999, pp. 4–9, 11–12.

2 V.P. Naumov, introduction, *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovitch 1957. Dokumenty*, Moskva 1998 (MMK), p. 9.

3 Christer Pursiainen, *Beyond Sovietology: International Relations Theory and the Study of Soviet/Russian Foreign and Security Policy*, Helsinki 1998, pp. 80–83. My interpretation of the role of ideology is based on view of Joseph Schull and Robert G. Herman, as presented by Pursiainen.

weapon in the internal power-struggle between his successors. However, in a one party-state it proved difficult to limit the 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>4</sup> This fundamental ideological shift had profound consequences not only for the Soviet society, but also for international relations. As the aura of ideological infallibility had been lost, 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 XX PARTY CONGRESS SETS AN EXAMPLE IN THE SOVIET SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

The obvious change in Soviet foreign policy after the death of Stalin was also felt in the country’s policy towards Finland. However, Finland could become an example of a country, whose relationship with the USSR was based on peaceful coexistence only after the new doctrine had been officially announced as the basis of the Soviet foreign policy at the XX Party Congress in early 1956. At the same Congress Khrushchev also introduced de-Stalinization, which first and foremost applied to the domestic political arena. Towards the end of the year, at the latest, it had become evident that the concept had important foreign policy implications as well.

### THE FACADE OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

It is probably true to say that in August 1956 the public image of the Soviet leadership, in Finland, was at its best. Similar levels of public approval were not reached until the period of *détente* in the 1970s and again at the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The chairman of the Soviet Union’s Supreme Council, the Presidium, Kliment Voroshilov visited Finland on 21–28 August 1956 as head of the state. It is notable that such characterizations, as “highly respected guest” and the “thousands and tens of thousands” that greeted him, were used by the whole party-press.<sup>5</sup> Both communist and the Swedish People’s Party’s (SPP) left wing newspapers could in perfect unison describe the head of state’s “youthful and free” behavior and “benevolently free attitude towards protocol”, and the exceptionally warm reaction this created in the Finnish audience.<sup>6</sup> As the SPP’s right wing paper noted after the visit, “President Voroshilov proved that he perfectly understood, and was capable of, conquering the sympathies, and one must do

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4 MMK 1998, pp. 9–11.

5 See, e.g. Suomen Sosialidemokraatti (Ssd) 26.8.1956, Maakansa (Mk) 26.8.1956. All examples of press reaction are from the press review given to Kliment Voroshilov by the the Soviet Helsinki embassy, 74/1/134 (Voroshilov’s file), Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arhiv sotsialno-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI).

6 Työkansan Sanomat (Tks) 26.8.1956, Nya Pressen (NP) 27.8.1956.

justice to him and recognize that he did it *con amore* in such a way, which proved that the mission, evidently, corresponded to his personal wishes and character.”<sup>7</sup> At the very least, it was a “remarkable media event.”

Differences in the political field were more clearly visible when observing the background of the Soviet Union’s policy towards Finland, and on the border-issue and regarding the political importance of the visit. The Communists underlined more the continuity in the Soviet Union’s policy towards Finland. The Soviet Union was seen to have constantly followed the principles of national self-determination and peaceful coexistence.<sup>8</sup> The social democratic and bourgeois press, on the other hand, underlined the mutual change in relations after World War II. The bourgeois press also gave attention to the concept of peaceful coexistence, and connected it especially to Finland’s neutrality.<sup>9</sup>

The importance of the border-issue in Soviet-Finnish relations was well illustrated by differences that could be seen in its public formulation. The Communists hinted only indirectly at “the untrue speculations” preceding the visit, without mentioning the reasons behind this speculation.<sup>10</sup> The bourgeois press made it clear that the Soviet return of Porkkala the previous year had increased expectations about “returning parts of Karelia”. The different status of these two territories was, however, usually recognized. It was also clear that the publicly expressed negative attitude of the USSR to border revisions, and the composition of the visiting entourage had preempted earlier Finnish, and, even foreign, expectations connected to the visit.<sup>11</sup> Veiled allusions to the border-issue burst open only after a speech given by president Urho Kekkonen during the visit. In his speech he stated that “two neighbouring countries always have common themes to discuss.” The Agrarian Party’s own press, in particular, was agitated by this remark. This is not surprising in itself, when the remarkable role given to Karelia in Kekkonen’s presidential campaign is taken into consideration. The Karelia League had raised the border-issue before the visit, and had already contacted Kekkonen in May 1956. Although Kekkonen wanted to silence public discussion of the topic, privately he gave promises about doing all that was possible.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the press expressed hopes “that there will be later an opportunity to deal in practice with questions interesting both countries, the solving of which will serve good neighbourly relations in the future.” Near the end of the visit, it was yet again stressed that Voroshilov’s name was connected to recent events that had been advantageous to Finland, “of which, here, one need only mention the return of Porkkala to Finland.”<sup>13</sup>

From the viewpoint of Finland’s international position, it is interesting, to see the way it was characterized through the use of Soviet terms. The description of the FCMA treaty as “good, and one based on the facts and corresponding with Finnish

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7 Appel 7.9.1956

8 Vapaa Sana (VS) 21.8.1956.

9 NP 21.8.1956, Ssd 21.8.1956.

10 TKS 21.8.1956.

11 Vasabladet 21.8.1956, Helsingin Sanomat 21.8.1956, Uusi Suomi 21.8.1956.

12 Juhani Suomi, Urho Kekkonen 1956–1962, Keuruu 1992, 54–55.

13 Mk 23.8.1956 (1. quot.), Ssd 26.8.1956, Mk 26.8.1956 (2. quot.), Kytäjä 16/1956.

national interests” may be mostly based on an appraisal of achievements of the previous president, J.K Paasikivi. The bourgeois newspapers were generally ready to underline these achievements. According to president Kekkonen, the FCMA treaty safeguarded the “policy of understanding between two independent and free countries.”<sup>14</sup>

What was new, was citing the resolutions of the CPSU in public. According to both Finnish and Soviet press Kekkonen had stated that it was quite natural that he in this connection underlines “Finland’s desire to remain outside of great power conflicts, which desire was correctly stated in the XX Party Congress in Moscow”. But when he observed that “the statement given at the XX Party Congress of the Soviet Union’s Communist Party about Finland’s neutrality is in a close relation to the friendship treaty of 1948” Kekkonen tried to unite two concepts.<sup>15</sup> The two rather contradictory concepts were firstly, Finland’s obligations under the FCMA treaty and secondly her neutrality both of which were central to Finnish foreign policy. However, Kekkonen had already begun as Prime Minister in early 1952, to reinterpret the introduction of the FCMA treaty, which mentioned Finland’s desire to remain outside of the great power conflicts, as a justification for, and a guarantee of, at least, a “certain kind of neutrality.” The actual substance of this so-called “pyjama pocket speech” dealt with separating Denmark and Norway from NATO through a Nordic neutrality alliance. Despite Finland’s participation in this neutrality alliance, it would still be bound by its FCMA treaty obligations towards the Soviet Union. The speech for most part supported the objectives of Soviet policy in Scandinavia, and it was formulated at the same time with the Soviet Helsinki ambassador, Viktor Lebedev, and president Paasikivi. The procedure was an interesting one,<sup>16</sup> even in a country aspiring only towards a “certain kind of neutrality”, but in no ways exceptional for a country in a great power’s sphere of influence.

As Khrushchev dealt with international relations at the Party Congress in February 1956, he also happened to include Finland in the group of neutral countries, along with Sweden and Austria; this incidentally just before Kekkonen had been elected as president of Finland. It is well known that the Soviet Union, and especially the KGB, were inclined to support Kekkonen as the most suitable candidate in those elections.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, the time was right both in terms of the favorable public image of Soviet foreign policy and Kekkonen’s role as defender of Finland’s room to manoeuvre to tie together the FCMA treaty and the issue of neutrality. Already in March 1956 Kekkonen had privately stated that “our own success depends on the fact that we are able to safeguard our position as a display window of the peaceful coexistence”<sup>18</sup> This was supported by Voroshilov’s statements during his visit, when he underlined the importance of peaceful

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14 Pravda 22.8.1956.

15 NP 22.8.1956, Pravda 22.8.1956.

16 Jukka Nevakivi, *Miten Kekkonen pääsi valtaan ja Suomi suomettui*, Keuruu 1996, pp. 68–70.

The name of the speech is due to prime minister Kekkonen being ill at the time of the speech, 23.1.1952.

17 Rentola, 1997, pp. 405–409.

18 Suomi 1992, p. 53.

coexistence as the foundation of Soviet foreign policy, and the exemplary nature of Soviet-Finnish relations. Larger Soviet foreign policy objectives were reflected in the expected consequences of détente. It was seen to strengthen the position of the neutral countries, and “strengthened the aspirations of many countries to leave aggressive military alliances,” which clearly referred to the Scandinavian countries.<sup>19</sup>

Thus Finland had become, at quite official level, the showcase of peaceful coexistence for the Soviet Union. To understand the changes for future Soviet foreign policy, it is also useful to observe how the resolutions of the XX Party Congress were used as arguments in the internal power struggle in Hungary, and to see the results of this process for the Soviet Union.

## THE BACKYARD OF DE-STALINIZATION

During the summer of 1956, however, the expectations of change regarding the Soviet Union were much higher in Hungary than in Finland. Already early in 1956 Hungary differed from the other socialist countries in the Soviet sphere of influence. Although there was social discontent in many of the peoples’ democracies, as was witnessed in the east Berlin riots in 1953, the situation in Hungary was particularly tense. This resulted from the fact that in Hungary there had already been a short “thaw” in 1953–1955, after the Soviet Union had become concerned about the economic, and, indeed, the social situation in the country.

Regarding the leadership of the country, an increase in the representation of local Hungarians, vis-a-vis Moscow trained cadres was also demanded by the reformers in the ruling Communist Party of Hungary (MSZMP). However, the “thaw” was followed by a conservative counter reaction in early 1955, as the conservatives had been able to regain the support of the Soviet leadership. Prime Minister Imre Nagy, representing the reform wing of the MSZMP, then lost a power struggle to the long time Stalinist leader of the party, Matias Rakosi. Because of all this, the political and ideological changes in the Soviet Union had become remarkable for the domestic political argumentation in Hungary even before 1956. As a consequence of the already tense domestic political situation in Hungary the impact of the XX Party Congress’ resolutions was strengthened. The consequences had a direct influence, first, on the legitimacy of the party leadership, and then on the legitimacy of the whole political system, and became a threatening example for all socialist countries,<sup>20</sup> but especially for the Soviet Union.

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19 US 23.8.1956, Mk 30.8.1956, Pravda 23.8.1956 (quot.).

20 On the rise and fall of the Hungarian “thaw”, as well as the significance of the 20<sup>th</sup> party congress for Hungarian developments, Laszlo Borhi, *Hungary in the Cold War, 1945–1956: Between the United States and the Soviet Union*, Budapest 2004, pp. 229–239 and A.S. Stykalin, introduction of the 1. part, *Sovetskii Soiuz i Vengerskii krisis 1956 goda, Dokumenty (SSVK)*, edited by E.D. Orekhova, B.T. Sereda, A.S. Stykalin, Moskva 1998, pp. 27–29. On Soviet concerns regarding the economic difficulties of Hungary, and doubts on Western involvement in this, see Ivan Serov, deputy of the KGB to CPSU Central Committee, 12.8.1955, 5/30/113, pp. 56–59, RGANI.



Rakosi's discussion with the Soviet ambassador Juri Andropov in late March clarified the significance of the XX Party Congress of the CPSU for Hungary. Rakosi, unlike Kekkonen in his private discussions at the same time, was less enthusiastic about his country's support for the resolutions of the Soviet Party Congress. Whereas for Kekkonen such support offered both domestic and foreign policy advantages, the situation for Rakosi was altogether different. Rakosi emphasized that the "denouncing of the personality cult," begun at the congress, also had its "shadowy sides." According to him "hostile propaganda tries to use the uncovering of the cult of personality for their own ends, so that the communist party and movement are discredited."<sup>21</sup>

The shadows had become darker by late April, when Andropov reported to the Soviet foreign ministry about the MSZMP's measures related to the application of the resolutions of the XX Party Congress of the CPSU to Hungarian circumstances. After a somewhat optimistic introduction the Hungarian leadership had to observe that "right opportunists" and "hostile elements" had been able "to create such an impression on some of the workers that the leadership of the MSZMP under the present composition cannot, in the long run, guarantee the implementation of the resolutions of the XX Party Congress of the CPSU, since some of the [Moscow-trained] old members of the Politburo allegedly oppose these resolutions, and the younger [Hungarian-trained] comrades cannot lead the work because of their inexperience. The above-mentioned impression greatly injures the authority of the party amongst the workers."<sup>22</sup> It is hardly possible for a political elite to describe much more clearly its internal divisions and the emergence of a crisis of legitimacy in the society. It is also openly admitted that distrust had partly spread to the workers, who were thought to be the strongest supporters of the system.

In reaction to the growing crisis the Stalinist leader of the Hungarian party Rakosi was ready to begin the rehabilitation of people, who had been "unjustly repressed" by the state security organs. Soviet-Hungarian relations became part of the argument surrounding this issue. Rakosi argued that the Hungarian leadership had to take responsibility for the mistakes that had been made, because "hostile elements" are trying to place the responsibility about the purges on the CPSU and its leadership. Consequently, the opponents of the conservative leadership, namely, the supporters of de-Stalinization and reforms, were presented as an anti-Soviet group.<sup>23</sup>

The tensions created by the XX Party Congress were also beginning to be felt in the relations between the socialist countries during the summer of 1956. The economic organization of the socialist countries, the CMEA (SEV), held its seventh congress in 18–25.5.1956 in East Berlin. According to the Hungarian representative, Ernő Gerő, two countries deviated from the constructive spirit created by the Soviet delegation. These were "Czechoslovakia and especially Poland. The position taken by them made a negative impact on the other participants of the meeting." The other participants "were disturbed by the lack of communist concern about the interests

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21 Matias Rakosi to Juri Andropov, Soviet ambassador in Hungary, 25.3 1956, SSVK, document (doc.) 1.

22 Andropov to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, 29.4.1956, SSVK, doc. 6.

23 Ibid.



of economic development of the whole socialist camp in the presentations of the Polish comrades.” However, Gerö was ready to admit that when the Poles spoke about the disadvantageous state of their trade balance or about the shortage of bread, “it was clear to all that their difficulties were not small.” But, when the Polish delegation explained the difficulties faced in coal production and exports by the fact that the Silesian coal mines had been received in a bad condition after the departure of the Soviet troops, the Hungarian already smelt the “breath of nationalism.” A recent article of the Polish United Worker’s Party’s organ was presented as further proof of Polish anti-Russian nationalism. The article had stated that most of the leading cadres of the Polish Communist Party had been destroyed in Stalin’s purges during their time in Soviet emigration.<sup>24</sup> The more social tensions grew in Hungary, the more threatening the compromises related to de-Stalinization in other socialist countries were for the country’s conservative leadership.

Regarding this Gerö again explained developments in the domestic political situation in Hungary to Andropov. “In a large sense”, he claimed, the situation was not that bad. However, there were still some tensions in the political life of the country, “which are connected to opposition-minded members of MSZMP, and to the action of hostile elements”. These hostile elements, supported by the Western propaganda were seen as using the decisions of the MSZMP’s Central Committee in such a way, “that the dictatorship of the proletariat could be weakened, and the leading role of the MSZMP could be lowered.” In relation to this “the former right-wing social democrats” were observed to be particularly active, as they used the liberation of their leaders from prisons to create discontent among members of the MSZMP. About 200,000 of them were mentioned as being former Social Democrats. On the basis of information from the “the agentur”, or the state security organs, it was claimed that the activities of the Peasant Party had increased. Some of the activists of that party, which had been dispersed in 1948, had begun to talk among themselves about “the possibility of forming in Hungary a coalition government, to which the communists would take part, although in the most successful outcome, [it would be possible to form it] without them.”<sup>25</sup> Although Gerö played down the seriousness of the situation, the political situation in Hungary was becoming alarming from the viewpoint of the ruling party. Social democratic and even bourgeois forces were emerging on to the political scene, and they were ready to question the leading position of the MSZMP in society.

Yet in the same month Janos Kadar used precisely the decisions made at the XX Party Congress as arguments in his criticism of the Stalinist party leadership and in his attempt to find ways to defuse the legitimacy crisis. According to Kadar the significance of the decisions made at the CPSU Party Congress for the MSZMP was “difficult to overestimate.” In a Party speech he asked, if the working class and the peasantry could afford to increase the number of their enemies. Although answering in the negative, he argued that “in Hungary and other [people’s] democratic countries such measures were taken” when building the socialist system, especially in

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24 Ernő Gerö to Andropov, 4.6.1956, SSVK, doc. 12.

25 Ibid.

relation to small-scale farmers and the old intelligentsia. The significance of the XX Party Congress was, "that it shows a clear path for the correction of these mistakes". The decisions of the CPSU, however, had only been implemented weakly in Hungary, which had had a negative impact on the opinion of the population.<sup>26</sup>

Though there were few similarities between the Finnish and the Hungarian situations, some are interesting on the general level. Finland was by no means the only country that tried to gain greater room for manoeuvre by applying the principles of the XX Soviet Party Congress. This was typical in the Soviet sphere of influence. Especially in the Hungarian political leadership, both conservatives and reformers used the decisions made at the XX Party Congress, mostly those concerning de-Stalinization, and peaceful coexistence in their arguments already in the summer of 1956. The exploitation of Soviet relations in domestic struggles was by no means atypical for Finland either, as will be seen later. However, the argumentation was usually less ideological.

A catastrophe resulted in Hungary, mostly because the conservative Stalinist leadership of the MSZMP was incapable of reform, and because it took far too long for the Soviets to accept an alternative leadership for the Hungarian party. In July 1956 Rakosi, who was already quickly losing support in the MSZMP, was only replaced with Ernő Gerő, another Stalinist. When the Soviets finally accepted Nagy's return to the post of prime minister in 23.10.1956, it was probably too late for the socialist system to regain control. In the Soviet decision-making process, use of force was included as a possible solution about the same time. Generally speaking Nikita Khrushchev and Anastas Mikoian advocated moderation in relation to the use of force in the Soviet Politburo. Opposition to a peaceful approach was usually associated with Molotov, Bulganin and Kaganovitch. Interestingly, this division was to be repeated in the inter-party struggle in the summer of 1957, which was connected to the results of de-Stalinization and the Hungarian events.

As late as 30 October 1956, the general tone of the CPSU was surprisingly moderate, even conciliatory. A declaration was made, which admitted that the Soviet Union had made mistakes in its relations with East European countries, and argued that troop deployments should be based on mutual consent. The main arguments for the decision to intervene on 2 November 1956 seem to have been the fear that the socialist systems would totally collapse, and more immediately that it threatened the unity of the Socialist Bloc. Gomulka, who had risen to leadership of the Polish party despite Soviet opposition in the summer of 1956, and as a consequence of almost simultaneous social agitation in Poland, had been careful to stress solidarity to the Warsaw Pact. In responding to Soviet troop movements, Nagy instead declared Hungary neutral, and withdrew from the Warsaw Pact. The beginning of the Suez Crisis with a combined British, French, and Israeli invasion of Egypt in 31 October 1956 caused the events in Hungary to be interpreted in the context of a more or less general Western offensive, aimed at weakening the Socialist Bloc and its friends.<sup>27</sup>

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26 Janos Kadar to S. Satutshin, 1. secretary of the Soviet embassy, 24.6.1956, SSVK, documents 17. and 18.

27 Borhi 2004, pp. 243–251. For some reason the Soviets did not pay attention to the U.S. negative attitude on the Suez intervention, nor to their assurances of non-intervention on Hungary.

The internal power struggle in the Hungarian party elite during 1956 clearly exacerbated the ongoing crisis of legitimacy. The situation was reminiscent of Lenin's classic definition of a revolutionary situation, namely "when the lower classes could not, and the upper classes would not live any more as they used to." In the beginning of November this crisis of legitimacy resulted in open rebellion, which was effectively crushed by 17 Soviet divisions in an operation with the code name "Vihir" (Rus. whirlwind).<sup>28</sup> As the Soviet Union had to impose its policies in its sphere of influence with the support of almost 6000 tanks, something had gone fundamentally wrong with de-Stalinization, as well as with peaceful coexistence.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEORETICAL RESHAPING

When such an all-embracing theory as Marxism-Leninism is reinterpreted on the basis of the Soviet Union's foreign policy needs, it is not surprising that problems emerge. The basic contradiction between class relations and nationalism or national interests had existed even before the revolution, but it was the larger interpretation of old concepts in changed circumstances that made the problems more pronounced. In the case of both socialist internationalism and peaceful coexistence the problem was that interstate relations were included in both, and these were partly defined through the norms of international justice, including sovereignty. This made the concepts contradict class relations based on proletarian internationalism, which was a prerequisite for the support of revolutionary movements internationally. The distinction between the Soviet Union's interests and those of the world revolution became more noticeable. The content of socialist internationalism changed during the 1950s. Between 1953 and 1956 it had simply meant a wider room for manoeuvre, but from 1957 onwards it meant recognizing Soviet leadership within the socialist world.<sup>29</sup> As the Soviet Union had lost its aura of ideological infallibility after de-Stalinization, its definition of socialist interests was no longer undisputed. The Chinese were prone to point out theoretical contradictions, especially in connection to peaceful coexistence. When countering Chinese accusations about betraying the revolution, the Soviets began to emphasize peaceful coexistence as a certain form of class struggle supporting revolutionary movements. This meant in the long run loss of credibility in the West, where it was interpreted to mean safeguarding of status quo in own camp, and changing it elsewhere, especially in the third world<sup>30</sup>.

Even though neutral countries were no longer seen as harmful "free passengers" or hidden allies of the enemy, the ambiguous Soviet attitude towards neutrality did not disappear. Soviet policy and research on international politics had declared that a change from the "Atlantic Status" to one of neutrality would strengthen peace and security, but neutrality did not affect everyone the same way. In relation to the

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28 Stykalin, introduction of the 4. part, SSVK, pp. 557–558.

29 Light 1988, p. 172.

30 Ibid. pp. 45–46, 65.

Hungarian crisis of 1956 it was argued that “for a socialist country neutrality would be a step backwards towards American imperialism and its sphere of influence,” which ultimately had to be stopped by intervention. Though a European collective security organization guaranteeing the status quo had been one of the main objectives of Soviet foreign policy, also the idea that certain countries might be encouraged to become neutrals was often seen as an important objective for Soviet foreign policy.<sup>31</sup> For example, Germany and Austria, and in Scandinavia the NATO members Denmark, Norway and Iceland were regarded as such countries. Swedish neutrality, at least as an alternative to NATO membership, was worth supporting.

The basic idea for Soviet foreign policy was that these reinterpretations of the theory were meant to strengthen the cohesion of the Soviet led socialist bloc. At the same time as these revisions of theory were meant to support attempts to return Yugoslavia in the socialist camp, the uncompromising disputes with the Chinese were being formulated through doctrinal questions, related originally to de-Stalinization and peaceful coexistence. In these debates the Chinese regarded themselves as the standard bearers of the orthodox position, thus, challenging the Soviet leadership. In defending their hegemony in the socialist world from early the 1960s onwards, the Soviets defined the Chinese as dogmatists or as a left deviation, strictly following the theory to the letter. On the other hand, those who interpreted the theory too freely or in an overtly nationalistic way, Social Democrats or Yugoslavs, for example, were labelled as revisionists, or as a right deviation. After the Hungarian events the watchword was the struggle against revisionism, and the main effort to regain unity was made between November 1956 and November 1957.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, the Soviet reshaping of theory both in domestic politics, with the denunciation of the “cult of personality”, and in foreign policy, with peaceful coexistence, was very much born out of necessity.

## THE SOVIET UNION AND FINLAND: COUNTER REACTIONS AND POWER STRUGGLES

### DIVISIONS IN THE PARTY AND ITS ELITE

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-Stalinization as a call for creative liberty. In addition to non-party members of 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 “Pravda,” called to “struggle against demagogues and rotten elements, who try to use the cover

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31 Ibid. p. 234.

32 Ibid. pp. 229–234.

of criticizing the personality cult to criticize the Party line.” These kinds of seeds of 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 of hundred persons, both party and non-party members, were sentenced because of “lies concerning Soviet reality” and “revisionism.”<sup>33</sup>

A few examples of the letters from the “rank and file” of the party to the members of the Central Committee and the Politburo 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 destalinization. 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>34</sup>

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 were chosen, which were used at the XX Party Congress and later. 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>35</sup> The opinions expressed in the letter of three officers criticizing a lecture held in Leningrad are even harder.

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33 V.P. Naumov, Introduction, MMK, pp. 11–12.

34 Petrosgin’s letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU, 25.1.1957, 5/30/19, Rossiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii (RGANI).

35 Antonina Peterson’s letter to member of the Central Committee Ivan Shepilov, 11.4.1957, 5/30/191, RGANI

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>36</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.

According to the majority of the Politburo's (Presidium 1952–1964) eleven members, the threats to the political system were created by the course chosen at the XX Party Congress. Consequently, they thought that a radical correction to the course chosen would solve the problems that had emerged. Khrushchev was well aware that his position had become tied to the decisions taken at the XX Party Congress. Compromising on them publicly, or even allowing them to be criticized would mean the end of his political life. During the spring of 1957, tensions rose in the Politburo, and on 16 June 1957 Khrushchev was accused of 1) creating his own personality cult, 2) making serious mistakes regarding agricultural policy, and 3) dangerous zigzagging in the foreign policy. In the voting that took place in the Politburo meeting Khrushchev lost his post by seven votes to four, with the following members voting against: Chairman of the Council of Ministers Nikolai Bulganin, Chairman of the Supreme Council's Presidium Kliment Voroshilov, Minister of State Control Viatcheslav Molotov, Minister of Construction Materials Lazar Kaganovitch, Minister of Machine Construction Mikhail Pervukhin, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Maksim Saburov and Minister of Electric Plants Georgi Malenkov, and four voting for; namely, First Secretary Khrushchev himself, Secretary of the Central Committee Aleksei Kirichenko, Minister of Foreign Trade Anastas Mikoian and Secretary of the Central Committee Mikhail Suslov. However, the director of the KGB Ivan Serov with Khrushchev's permission quickly gathered, using Army aircraft, a number of Khrushchev's supporters in the Central Committee, who demanded that a full meeting of the Central Committee must decide the matter. Unlike in the Politburo, in the Central Committee, the second Party organ with a membership of about one hundred, Khrushchev's supporters had a majority.

In the Central Committee meetings that followed in late June, Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovitch were dismissed from their posts. They were also accused of bearing personal responsibility for mass terror, but these accusations were not made public, as everyone in the Politburo clearly had their fair share of signing death sentences during the Stalin period. Khrushchev attempted to limit the damage caused by the internal party struggle to the already shaken legitimacy of the

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36 Letter of Slomanskii, Makarov and Fazimiamekhtov to member of the Central Committee of the CPSU Mikhail Suslov, 15.4.1957, 5/30/191, RGANI.

party by postponing the dismissing of Bulganin, Pervukhin and Saburov. The part of the Central Committee resolution concerning them was not published, and Voroshilov was not mentioned at all in the resolution.

However, the Stalinist heritage of the party did not disappear with the removal of the hardline Stalinists. The slogan at the meeting was “the unity of the party,” which was interpreted to mean, as earlier, complete agreement with the opinions of the first secretary. On the other hand, the events connected to the defeat of “the anti-party group” did change the structure of the political elite. As the men educated by Stalin had mainly been on the losing side, a new generation of Soviet leaders now advanced to higher posts in the party hierarchy. The party elite was no longer confined to the top of the apparatus alone, as the leaders of lower territorial divisions ( Rus. *oblast* and *krai*) of the party, who were also members of the Central Committee, were now included in it as well. Most of the local leaders had been elected after the XX Party Congress and they interpreted de-Stalinization as a guarantee of their own security against purges of any kind. Their strengthened position was reflected in the limited growth of local autonomy, as a reward. Khrushchev had openly built on the support of the local leaders, as did Stalin in the beginning of his reign. Consequently, in the structural sense, the victory achieved in the power struggle was more theirs, than Khrushchev’s.<sup>37</sup>

## THE BASIS OF SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS FINLAND

The argument between Molotov and Khrushchev provides the general context for tracing the development of Soviet foreign policy after the summer of 1957. Molotov’s main argument was that the new foreign policy “did not follow the international Leninist politics, approved in the XX Party Congress”. As a result, the internal contradictions between the capitalist countries were not being effectively exploited. As Molotov was prepared to draw upon quotations from Lenin on the question, a voice briefly interrupted from the Central Committee; “No need [for that].” The overestimation of the significance of the Soviet-US relations was also a grave error, according to Molotov. Such a policy meant that the USSR’s relations with socialist countries, and made it more difficult to split the front of capitalist countries. On ideological questions, Molotov stressed even more the need for orthodoxy, as he agreed completely with the criticism expressed by the Chinese towards Yugoslavia. According to Mao Tse Tung the Yugoslavs acted like British Labourites, and Molotov was troubled by the fact “why the Chinese understood this but not us?” His last accusation was more personal. He saw Khrushchev’s behavior as endangering the international prestige of the Soviet Union. While Khrushchev’s crude behavior and gambler’s attitude could really damage Soviet prestige, Molotov seemed particularly concerned by the fact that Khrushchev and the Finnish president had had a sauna together in 1957, naturally without clothes.<sup>38</sup>

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37 Naumov 1998 (MMK), pp. 12–19.

38 Third meeting of the Central Committee (CC), 24.6.1957 (evening), MMK, 122–131.



Answering these accusations Khrushchev claimed that the foreign policy he had set out at the XX Party Congress was aimed at relaxing international tensions, whereas Molotov's only served to increase tension. Khrushchev also attacked the colonial nature of Soviet-East European and Soviet-Chinese relations, during the time Molotov had been in charge of foreign policy. In his own, less sophisticated way the First Secretary also referred to Lenin, in his attack on these relations; "It is the Devil knows what, but not Leninist policy or Soviet policy." As examples of Molotov's policies he mentioned the Turkish crisis early in the Cold War, and wars fought against Finland and (South) Korea. The latter, according to Khrushchev, had "strained to the utmost the relations of the USSR with [other] countries." The ending of Austria's occupation in 1955, "which had, unnecessarily worsened the international atmosphere" together with normalisation of relations with Yugoslavia were presented as fruits of Khrushchev's policy. Generally, the main fault of Molotov's foreign policy was inflexibility. Structurally, it is interesting that Khrushchev underlined the appointment of members and candidate members of the Central Committee to the foreign ministry, something which Molotov had opposed. As Khrushchev observed that foreign policy must "not be left in the hands of bureaucrats", the importance of its ideological aspects was again underlined. When it came to the suspect effects of a Finnish sauna to Soviet prestige, these were literally washed away. Mikhail Suslov, referring to the Finnish sauna experiences of another Central Committee member, Frol Kozlov, said that his only mistake was that "he swam in a bourgeois lake".<sup>39</sup>

## THE SOVIET VIEW TO FINLAND

The changes in Soviet policy towards Finland will be observed through the emergence of the so-called counter reaction and through the status of the Social Democratic Party in Finland (SDP). After Kekkonen had been elected president of Finland in February 1956, the Soviets had carefully analysed the new situation. It was argued that, as Kekkonen had won with only the closest of margins, his freedom of action as well as his chances of reelection depended on how much support he would be able to gain outside his own party, the Agrarian League.<sup>40</sup> This being the case, one might expect that the Soviet embassy in Helsinki would follow the developments among Kekkonen's main adversaries in the socialist and bourgeois camps with keen interest. As well as opposing Kekkonen in domestic politics at least since the late 1940s, these groups had a different, more Scandinavian and even Western, emphasis in foreign policy. In the reports of the Soviet embassy from Helsinki these adversaries were usually described as "unfriendly", "rightist" or at times just as "certain circles". Consequently, the so-called counter reaction in Finland was a representation of the domestic political struggle in Finland between,

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39 Fifth meeting of the CC 25.6.1957 (evening), MMK, p. 201, and the protocol of the fourth plenum of the CC on 22–29.6.1957, pp. 532–536.

40 Nevakivi 1996, p. 157.



but also increasingly, within the main parties. The foreign policy aspects of this struggle, however, were only able to come into open after Finland's position internationally had been strengthened in 1956 with the return of Porkkala and membership in both the UN and the Nordic Council. This development coincided with Kekkonen's election.

In this context, it is interesting that the activities of the "unfriendly circles" received relatively little attention from the Soviets during the years 1956–1957. Naturally, these circles were seen to be particularly active over the border-issue before Voroshilov's visit, or at the time of the Hungarian crisis. Just before the visit, the representatives of the Communist Party of Finland (CPF) complained to the Soviets about the exploitation of the border issue, which they themselves, of course, could not use, arguing that, "As it is well known that the Agrarian League shamelessly used, and with effect the returning of the Porkkala-territory during the presidential elections, but the Soc. Dem. party, the other cabinet party, also tried to gain political advantage from it."<sup>41</sup> During the Hungarian crisis, the Soviet ambassador Lebedev in discussions with the CPF commented on the activity of "rightist circles" in the newspapers and among the students. However, it was noticed that, "The number participating in the movement is not very great (for example, among the students), as the participants are only from the most nationalistic and revanchist elements." As the situation was difficult for the communists, they were advised to "avoid provocations, which would give the bourgeois parties cause to attack the communists and accuse them again of being unpatriotic".<sup>42</sup> Finnish patriotism was seen here, if not acceptable, then at least tolerable and not as a threat. The rather relaxed Soviet view of the influence of "the Hungarian events" in Finland may be connected to president Kekkonen's agreement on the necessity of the tough Soviet line in Hungary with ambassador Lebedev, despite difficulties in the UN. The president had also given the impression that Finnish officials would end the protests of student organizations over Hungary.<sup>43</sup>

As 1957 began, the tone of Soviet evaluations became somewhat more concerned, without being worried. The increased activity of "Finnish rightist circles" was no longer connected only to events in Hungary, but to the general strengthening of Finland's international position and to the reduction of international tensions, which according to "rightist circles," "was the beginning of a new political situation." This was seen as leading to increasingly open activity on the part of these "circles", as well as to growing demands for a more pro-western foreign policy. On the other hand, these evaluations were also located within the domestic political context. Defeats on the domestic front were seen to have motivated the group. The election of Kekkonen was characterized as "one of the greatest defeats of the Finnish Reaction." The circles

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41 NKP ja Suomi 1953–1962 (NKPSa), editors Hannu Rautkallio, Mikhail Prozhumenschikov, Natalia G. Tomilina, Vammala 2001, Letter of Ville Pessi to the Central Committee of the CPSU 19.6.1956, doc. 22.

42 Hertta Kuusinen and Aimo Aaltonen to Viktor Lebedev, the Soviet ambassador in Finland, 19.11.1956, NKPS, doc 28.

43 Discussions between the Soviet ambassador Lebedev and president Kekkonen, 12.11.1956, p. 215, 5/28/434, RGANI.

“resisting the present Finnish foreign policy course, which corresponds to its national interests” were now being openly defined. The first part of it included the Finnish monopolistic bourgeoisie, which consisted of forestry industrialists, large-scale landowners, high civil servants, and officers. The second part included the right wing Social Democrats. Though these “rightist circles” had some influence on student associations and trade unions, this was not regarded as threatening development.

In connection to the Hungarian events, it was even noticed that the anti-Soviet campaign of the Finnish press was “less active than in other West European countries.” The activity of “the rightist circles” in late 1956 had “not substantially changed the country’s domestic political situation, nor relation between the Soviet Union and Finland.” On the contrary, “the positive presentations of the Finnish press” of the Social Democratic Prime Minister Fagerholm’s visit to the Soviet Union was seen as supportive “the continuous development” of good neighbourhood relations.<sup>44</sup> Generally, the influence of Western countries, especially that of the USA, in Finland at the time was seen to be limited.<sup>45</sup>

Along with these general observations of the Finnish domestic political situation, the Soviets gave special attention to developments concerning the SDP. This was due to its position in Finland as the other wing of the anti-Kekkonen front and because it was ideologically the main adversary of the communists.<sup>46</sup> The latter aspect was underlined by the heightened anti-revisionist campaign begun in the Soviet Union as a response to the unexpected consequences of de-Stalinization. The SDP, however, also had “a personal problem” in its relationship with the USSR, as the veteran states man of the party, Väinö Tanner, had been sentenced in war-guilt process in 1944, the trial of those responsible for the war against the USSR<sup>47</sup>. The problem both for the SDP and the Soviet Union was that though Tanner was *persona non grata* for the Soviet Union he was popular at home; these two things not being entirely disconnected. The struggle between what finally became the left and right wings of the party was personified respectively to Emil Skog and Väinö Leskinen, the ally of Tanner.

It is not difficult to understand what advantages the Soviet Union might gain from this situation, nor to see where its ideological sympathies lay. The growing internal disputes in the SDP, which led to its disintegration had begun earlier. They were, however, not only exploited by Soviet policy as means, but were also actively encouraged as an end in itself during 1957–59. It is interesting that the Soviet embassy did not need to make contact with Skog, as he, as chairman of the party at the moment, took the initiative himself in early 1956. After receiving Soviet “advice,” he ceased to speak about border corrections in Karelia on Finland’s behalf, despite

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44 Memos of the Scandinavian Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, 22.1.1957 and 28.1.1957, NKPS, doc. 33, 34.

45 Information Committee of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, 16.1.1957, NKPSa, doc. 30.

46 Nevakivi 1996, p. 161.

47 After the Soviet Union had defeated Finland in the autumn of 1944, it demanded the prosecution and sentencing of those who had been responsible for Finland’s participation in the war against the USSR. Tanner had been a central member of the wartime cabinet.

the popularity of the theme. During the autumn, he underlined his willingness to cooperate with the Agrarian League, unlike Leskinen's wing, which was looking forward to cooperate with the Coalition Party. Thus, support for Skog would stabilise Kekkonen's position.

As early as September 1956 Skog made it clear to the Soviets that his wing of the Social Democratic party needed the political support of the agrarians in order to survive. In November the Soviets were informed that the support would also have to be fiscal, as Leskinen's wing already had more money, since it had "material support" from Western social democratic parties, which was indeed the case. The Soviet ambassador first denied Skog's allusions on promised fiscal support through the agrarians. The ambassador claimed, he had attempted to get only political support from the agrarians to Skog's fraction. According to Skog, "a leading member of the Agrarian Union, minister Virolainen" was to blame for the negative answer. However, in his report Lebedev made it very clear that actually Skog was expecting fiscal support from the Soviet Union. It is significant that the Soviet ambassador Lebedev turned once more to the agrarians with these worries. The money was arranged through a foundation that had supported Kekkonen's presidential campaign. Direct Soviet involvement in the internal struggle of the social democratic party could finally be implemented by the active participation of the president's party.<sup>48</sup>

In the spring of 1957 there was a turning point both in developments in the SDP and in the counter reaction at large. In April a special Congress of the SDP was to be held with the aim of stopping the disintegration by electing a new chairman. The possible victory of Leskinen's group was regarded by the Soviets as a "threat that a reactionary cabinet with participation of the Coalition party would be formed in Finland, which could have unfavourable influence on the Soviet-Finnish relations."<sup>49</sup> The election of Tanner as chairman was clearly a blow to the Soviet interests, but the situation was not deemed to be alarming. According to the Soviet Foreign Ministry's evaluation in late May 1957 Leskinen had been victorious only in "certain respects." It was thought that he did not have a decisive superiority, nor the courage to try to form a reactionary government before the visit of Khrushchev and Bulganin in near future.<sup>50</sup>

However, a decisive turning point in Soviet policy towards Finland emerged during the autumn of 1957. The tougher ideological line taken by Soviet foreign policy was reflected in the attitudes of the Finnish Communists. Interest and expectations concerning participation of the CPF to the government had grown, and more remarkably they felt they could rely on Soviet support at the matter. In this they were encouraged by certain high-level Soviet statements. Khrushchev had declared after the Hungarian crisis that the conquests of socialism were irreversible and would be safeguarded by armed force if necessary. At a meeting of communist

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48 Memos on discussions between the Soviet ambassador Lebedev and president Kekkonen, 12.11.1956, pp. 214–215, and Lebedev's discussions with Skog, 13.11.1956, pp. 235–237, 5/28/434, RGANI. See also Nevakivi 1996, pp. 162–166.

49 Information Committee of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, 16.1.1957, NKPSa, doc. 32

50 Nevakivi 1996, p. 171.

parties in Moscow in February 1957 it was stated this principle could be applied to Finland as well, although this depended on the communists coming to power first. This interpretation was set out by Frol Kozlov, who had risen to being the main candidate of Khrushchev's successor after the defeat of the anti-party group. As hints about the "Kozlov Doctrine" leaked, it would have to be taken seriously in Finland, at least after the parliamentary elections of 1958, when the communists received a remarkable victory.<sup>51</sup>

A break through took place in Finland after the mid 1950s: a counter reaction lost to the K-line, a special relationship with the Soviet Union was developed. The struggle between the two orientations was fought over, however, as much within the parties as between them. The Night Frost crisis in late 1958 was to signify a structural change in Soviet-Finnish relations. If finlandization is understood to mean that Soviet relations are used to achieve domestic political objectives, then the Night Frost crisis was to be decisive in the birth of the phenomenon. As a consequence of the crisis "reliability in foreign politics" became a generally accepted criterion in Finland, not only concerning the formation of the government, but also in lower level political decisions.

## DIFFERENCES IN THE SOVIET POLICIES TOWARDS FINLAND AND SCANDINAVIA

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NORDIC NEUTRALITY

The first period of detente emerged after the death of Stalin in 1953, with a period of transition taking place in Soviet domestic and foreign policies. The Soviet Union soon began to use the concept of peaceful coexistence to describe its relations with the west, though officially this became Soviet foreign policy doctrine only in February 1956. In Scandinavia, promoting neutrality instead of NATO membership became the Soviet policy. The previous Soviet policy towards Scandinavia was found to be unsatisfactory, as a Soviet foreign ministry report in autumn 1953 observed that "our attitude towards these countries must be raised from the state of stagnation." The main Soviet objective was still to eliminate Scandinavia as a military bridgehead for use against the USSR. But now it was thought that the best way to achieve this was to steer Scandinavia towards a position of neutrality.

The report noted the participation of Denmark and Norway in the Western bloc, and also connected interestingly Finland's and Sweden's position in evaluating the motives for Swedish neutrality. Swedish postwar non-alignment was not just connected to the fact that Sweden was less dependent militarily and otherwise on the West. It was stated that "in solving this question [participation in NATO] the Swedish fear of our possible counter measures towards Finland, which we, according to the Swedes, could implement in the event of Swedish participation in

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51 Rentola 1997, pp. 451–459, 461.

the Atlantic bloc, did not play an unimportant role.”<sup>52</sup> As the Swedish position of neutrality is evaluated vis-a-vis Finland’s position towards the eastern superpower, the Soviet evaluation is clearly located within the context of a Nordic Balance.

The new Soviet approach concerning international relations and neutrality was also noticed in Finland during the summer of 1953. The central theme of the first large evaluation by Eero A. Wuori, Chief of the Foreign Ministry’s Political Department, was that if the international situation had changed so much, then that should be taken into consideration in the Finnish foreign policy. Despite the lessening of tensions between the superpowers no change was seen, “that would suggest that we should try to make substantial changes in our relations with the Soviet Union.” Opportunities were seen, however, “for developing our policy towards the West and giving it, in certain respects, a more positive tone.” Though priorities were not forgotten, room for new initiatives was found.<sup>53</sup> These initiatives materialized in the form of contacts of the Finnish representatives with the US State Department. Although these discussions about increased trade and American purchases did continue during 1954, they did not leave to concrete results.<sup>54</sup> When considering Wuori’s evaluations, it has to be taken into account that he had had contacts with Soviet intelligence service, then known as the MGB since the late 1940s.<sup>55</sup> As a source for Soviet policy towards Finland, this does not necessarily undermine his credibility. In fact, it makes his views more representative as he was often well-briefed, although a certain pro-Soviet bias can be expected.

The nature of the neutrality which the Soviet Union was ready to support in Scandinavia was carefully defined. A clear distinction was also made between the manoeuvring space of Finland and that of other Scandinavian countries. As Norway and Denmark were seen as “the weak links” of NATO, support for their neutrality was desirable. It was not, however, in the Soviet Union’s interest to support the formation of a Scandinavian neutrality bloc resembling that envisaged by earlier Scandinavian Defensive Union (SDU) plans, even as an alternative to NATO membership. Only a few years before Soviet diplomats in Scandinavia had made statements that were interpreted as support for view. This had also been the regional context of Kekkonen’s “pyjama pocket speech” in early 1952, which had been approved beforehand by the Soviets<sup>56</sup>. Now, in the autumn of 1953, it was noted that, “it is perfectly clear that neither we, nor our friends [the Scandinavian communist parties] can, or should propagate the idea of a Scandinavian Bloc, as it would be difficult to expect real neutrality from such a bloc. Also the supporters of a neutral bloc propose that Finland would have to participate in it, which is not

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52 Andrei I. Plakhin, Chief of the Third European Department, memo “Otnosheniia SSSR k ideo skandinavskogo neutraliteta” 12.10.1953, Sovetsko-norvezhskie otnosheniia 1917–1955 (SNO), Moskva 1997, document no. 362.

53 Eero A. Wuori’s memo Ulkopoliittikkamme arviointia, 22.7.1953, L12, UM.

54 For example, ambassador Johan Nykopp from Washington to Wuori on 20.5.1953 and to Prime Minister Sakari Tuomioja on 18.12.1953, L–12, UM.

55 Rentola 1997, p. 29.

56 Maksim Korobotchkin, Vizit E. Gerhardtsena v Moskvu. Iz istorii sovetsko-norvezhskikh otnoshenii v pervoi polovine 50-kh godov (pp. 97–107), in *Stalinskoe desiatiletie holodnoi voyny: Fakty i gipotezy*, eds. I. V. Gaiduk and others, Moskva 1999, p. 100.

acceptable to us.” As a positive alternative had to be offered, the Soviet foreign ministry proposed international guarantees for the neutrality of Scandinavian countries.<sup>57</sup> Finland’s status differed in important ways even from that of Sweden as the FCMA treaty made it part of the Soviet security sphere, thus, ruling out its neutrality in case of war between the Cold War blocs. So, from the Soviet viewpoint, neutrality elsewhere in Scandinavia was worth supporting, but without any kind of regional alliances, as these were expected to be too western oriented.

Soviet-Finnish relations were portrayed as an example of neutrality and peaceful relations, especially for the Nordic Countries, but also in larger respect. This tendency was clearly understood by the Norwegians, as they evaluated Soviet policy towards them in 1955. As an immediate consequence, the Soviets could easily use the returning of Porkkala base to Finland as an argument for termination of NATO material depots in Norway. The norwegians thought that the long term objective of Soviet policy was to influence the Norwegian public opinion and politicians so that during a relaxation of the international tensions Norway would end its active cooperation with NATO. It was argued that, “The results of the Soviet-Finnish negotiations in Moscow, and other Soviet initiatives in the North, it is expected, will be used by the Soviet Union as encouragement for a similar line of action in Norway.”<sup>58</sup> This tendency became clear during the Moscow visit of the Norwegian Social Democratic premier, Einar Gerhardsen, in November 1955. Despite the rather moderate line of the Soviet foreign ministry, Khrushchev himself made far-reaching initiatives in the areas of trade and party relations. Though these initiatives did not lead to any tangible Soviet gains, they did ease the acute tensions that existed between the countries.<sup>59</sup>

The longer the West, especially the Americans, delayed reactions to the Soviet foreign policy initiatives in general, the more useful the slogan of peaceful coexistence became. The public hard line of American foreign policy worried the Finns too. It was feared that an active United States foreign policy (Roll Back) could lead in Northern Europe to a situation, where the Soviet Union would openly declare Finland as part of its sphere of influence.<sup>60</sup>

However, the American attitude towards neutrality began to change in the mid 1950s. The Swedes, who had been pressed earlier by the Americans to abandon their neutrality, acknowledged to the Finns that there were some signs of a change in the US attitude towards their position in 1953.<sup>61</sup> The Americans began to see that neutrality could offer benefits as well as disadvantages, in the hot propaganda battle of Cold War. This was proved by discussions between John Foster Dulles, the U.S. Secretary of State, and Nikolai Bulganin, the Soviet premier in the Geneva summit in 1955. When Dulles offered Finland as a model to Bulganin for Soviet relations with

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57 A. I. Plakhin, “Otnoshenii SSSR k idee skandinavskogo neutraliteta” 12.10.1953, SNO, document no. 362.

58 Sigurd T. Ekland, First Secretary of Norwegian embassy in Moscow, Soviet Policy Towards Norway, 8.11.1955, SNO, doc. 372.

59 Korobochkin 1999, pp. 103–105.

60 Eero A. Wuori’s memo Tilannearviointia uuteen hallitukseen siirryttäessä, 6.11.1953, L12, UM.

61 Eero A. Wuori’s discussion with cabinet secretary of Swedish Foreign Ministry Lundberg, 6.12.1953, L12, UM

the East European countries,<sup>62</sup> this was just as unpleasant to the Soviets as the Soviet campaign of promoting neutrality in Scandinavia as was to the Americans. As neutrality was deemed useful by the superpowers, Finland's status became an example for their purposes.

## FINLAND AS AN EXAMPLE OF COLD WAR

In the autumn of 1958, the global arena was again marked by growing superpower confrontation, as the Soviets were heading towards a conflict over Berlin and the Americans were placing tactical nuclear missiles in West Germany. The threat of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan also added to the international tension. This affected Scandinavia and Finland as well. Consequently, also NATO cooperation between West Germany, Great Britain, Denmark and Norway was consolidated.

Developments in the Baltic Sea had begun to concern the Soviets after West Germany had become a member of NATO in 1955. As early as 1957 the USSR had explored the idea of Finnish support for its policy of opposing naval cooperation between West Germany, Denmark and Great Britain. Finnish Foreign Ministry thinking on this issue illustrates well the problematic position of Finland in trying to remain somewhere in between the Cold War blocs. Defining Finland's national interest on this issue, the Ministry noted that "all developments, which are inclined to lessen the Soviet Union's fears and doubts, are in our interest." This, however, held true only if Soviet proposals, for example, the neutralisation of the Baltic Sea, could be implemented in practice. If the Soviet proposals created controversy between the parties concerned, then support for the Soviets would endanger "other, even more important interests: Nordic cooperation and the confidence felt by other [Western] countries, especially the Nordic countries, towards us." From a Finnish point of view, the rise in international tensions led to a conflict between the country's Soviet and Scandinavian policies. Yet at the time the Ministry thought that it might be possible to avoid this kind of confrontation on the basis of the FCMA treaty, as the introduction to the treaty mentioned Finland's desire to remain outside of great power conflicts.<sup>63</sup>

During the second half of the 1950's, Finnish domestic politics and Finland's trade policy had become increasingly uncertain. The consolidation of the EEC without Great Britain led to negotiations about a EFTA. As both the main customers of Finnish products and the main rival suppliers would belong to EFTA, Finnish trade interests made some kind of arrangement necessary towards the end of the 1950s.<sup>64</sup> In late August 1958, a majority government led by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Coalition party, with the participation of the Agrarian party, was nominated. This caused the so-called "Night Frost" crisis in

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62 T. Michael Ruddy, 'The Road to Nowhere': Finland's Place in the U.S. Cold War Policy, Charting an Independent Course, Edit. Ruddy, Claremont, California 1998, p. 193.

63 Author unknown, Itämeren kysymyksestä 31.8.1957, memo classified as top secret, L12, UM.

64 Jukka Seppinen, Suomen EFTA-ratkaisu yöpakkasten ja noottikriisin välissä, Saarijärvi 1997, pp. 47–52.



Soviet-Finnish relations, as the USSR regarded this government as unreliable in foreign policy terms. After severe Soviet political and economic pressure, the government resigned in early December 1958.

To understand the Soviet reaction, it has to be related, not only to the general Cold War background, but also to changes in Soviet domestic politics. The Soviet Union quickly noticed that the consequences of these changes were being exploited by American propaganda. The Soviets noticed that U.S. propaganda had traditionally used the concept of “national communism” as a means “to break up the socialist camp, and specifically, to isolate the people’s democracies from the Soviet Union.” Now accusations about the Stalinism of the party leadership had become the new leading argument for creating divisions amongst the communist parties. In effect, the Soviets argued that “American propaganda in a number of cases argues that it is not against the communist structure in this or that country, but that it is only against Stalinism.” According to Radio Free Europe, “Socialism is not a threat now, the threat is Stalinism.”<sup>65</sup> Disturbances in the Soviet sphere of influence in 1956 in Poland and especially in Hungary were the unexpected consequences of the revelations of the XX Party Congress, about de-Stalinization. Both were also mentioned as causes for the strengthening of anti-Soviet propaganda, in arguments for the creation of a new organ for counter propaganda.<sup>66</sup>

That the unity of the “empire” concerned the USSR, is also clear from the report of the Soviet delegation to the CPF congress in Finland in June 1957. Party delegations from other people’s democracies emphasized proletarian internationalism, the struggle against revisionism and the leading position of the CPSU, as did the CPF. But the Polish representative spoke about reforms in society and the democratisation of political life, underlining the sovereignty of Poland. According to the Soviets the presentation totally ignored the concept of proletarian internationalism,<sup>67</sup> which had been a central concept in explaining the Soviet invasion of Hungary.

The criticism of détente in connection with the attempted removal of Khrushchev in 1957 created a need for the existing Soviet leadership for a significant foreign policy breakthrough, for example, in Berlin. The lead the Soviets had gained in missile technology, proved by the launch of Sputnik late 1957, created the preconditions for such a breakthrough.<sup>68</sup> The Sputnik simultaneously symbolized a global strike capability and that the socialist system was the “Wave of the Future”. The Soviets saw the international system changing in a way that would prove the superiority of the socialist camp.<sup>69</sup> Khrushchev’s ultimatum about Berlin and his two speeches about it in November 1958 brought the crisis to a head.

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65 Ivan Tugarinov, Chief of Foreign Ministry’s Committee of Information, 30.1.1957 to the CPSU Central Committee, with an introduction by foreign minister Andrei Gromyko to Mikhail Suslov, 5/30/193, RGANI,

66 Iu. Zhukov and A. Kuznetsov to the CPSU Central Committee, 16.7.1957, 5/30/193, RGANI.

67 Frol Kozlov, Ivan Käbin and V. Pereshkin to the CPSU Central Committee, 24.6.1957, 5/30/223, RGANI.

68 Vladislav Zubok and Konstantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, Cambridge 1996, pp. 187–188.

69 William Zimmerman, *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations 1956–1967*, Princeton 1969, pp. 170–180.



Though it can be argued that the main Soviet interest in Finland was one of security, in practice the definition also included Finland's trade and domestic policy. This was clearly spelt out in a number of Soviet evaluations concerning the political situation in Finland. In early 1957, it was observed, on the one hand, the economic problems in Finland were "creating objective conditions for a further sharpening of class contradictions, especially in the form of strike movements." On the other hand, it was feared that if the deterioration of the economy in Finland continued, it might lead to a cabinet crisis, which would enable the conservative parties to participate in the government in the name of "concentrating forces". It was underlined, however that the question of economic and trade policy, around which much of the political conflict was centered, "hide other, yet much more important questions - questions about the future foreign policy of the country."<sup>70</sup> Interestingly here a conflict can be observed between an ideologically positive development, the sharpening of class contradictions, and its negative possible political consequences. It seems that even if the communists were expected to gain under the above mentioned circumstances, they were not believed to have that strong an influence on Finnish foreign policy.

During the Korean War the USSR had found that the FCMA treaty was insufficient in terms of security, and therefore additional guarantees were needed. At the economic level problems in Soviet-Finnish relations seemed to be connected to Finland's growing economic ties with the West. The Soviet Union had regarded western economic organizations as a security threat since the Marshall Plan. This attitude remained practically unchanged, even during détente. Two years after the death of Stalin the official Soviet position defined "the revival of West Germany's military potential and the preparation for a new war in Europe" as one of the main goals of European economic integration, represented, at the time, by the European Coal and Steel Community. At the same time, the OEEC was seen as an American tool, whose influence was not confined to the Western Bloc alone. One of its functions was "to lure 'neutral' countries to support the USA's and West Europe's military economic base."<sup>71</sup> In this the Soviets were not completely mistaken, if one considers the American proposals to the Finns in late 1953, even though these were made directly, and not through OEEC, and did not lead to any concrete results.<sup>72</sup> During crises, ties with these organisations were seen to have direct political and military connections.

In Finnish domestic politics, the main Soviet interest was to ensure continuity. Concerns related to this were present in the evaluations of Soviet policy towards

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70 I. Tugarinov, Chief of Foreign Ministry's Committee of Information to the CPSU Central Committee, with an introduction by foreign minister Andrei Gromyko to Mikhail Suslov, 16.1.1957, 5/28/495, 31, RGANI.

71 I. Tugarinov, Chief of Foreign Ministry's Committee of Information to the CPSU Central Committee, with an introduction by foreign minister Andrei Gromyko to Nikita Khrushchev 18.1.1955 and to Mikhail Suslov 5.2.1955, RGANI, 5/30/114, p. 5, 115.

72 According to the Finnish ambassador in Washington, Hayden Raynor from the U. S. State Department had enquired, whether Finland could make for the Americans such "fishing boats that could be transformed to mine-sweepers," Nykopp to prime minister Tuomioja, 18.12.1953, L-12, UM.

Finland in the spring of 1958. The policy of “good neighbourly relations” had been based on a large coalition, in which the main partners had been the Agrarian Party and the SDP with the help of the Swedish People’s Party and the Finnish People’s Democratic Union (CPF/FPDL). Now the Soviets blamed the return of the right-wing socialists in 1957 on the leadership of the SDP for causing the break up of the government coalition. According to the Soviets, this encouraged conservative Finnish circles, which were now trying to create a government based on the bourgeois parties and the right-wing socialists. On the basis of Soviet Foreign Ministry analysis, “these circles aim to bring Finland closer to the Western countries, and finally are preparing to abandon the policy of cooperation with the USSR.” It was noted that, as parliamentary elections were due in the summer of 1958, the plan of “the rightist circles” was to “weaken the Agrarian Party and undermine the authority of president Kekkonen,” among other things.<sup>73</sup>

A month later the Soviet embassy in Helsinki evaluated political developments with somewhat sharper tone. “The rightist circles”, in particular, had begun to make unfriendly statements. Their point was that the postwar base of Soviet-Finnish relations had become outdated. As Finland’s status had been strengthened<sup>74</sup> “it should lead a much more ‘independent’ foreign and domestic policy in relation to the USSR.” This, it was felt would lead to Finland breaking with the FCMA treaty and to closer political and economic ties with the West. A sharp increase in anti-Soviet propaganda was also noticed. The spring of 1957 was seen as a turning point regarding the propaganda situation.<sup>75</sup> Even though Finland was now openly accused of intending to break with the FCMA treaty, there was, as yet, no sense that this represented a military threat. The ultimate horror scenario was that Finland would be lost to the West, at least economically and politically, if not militarily.

The Soviet Union had deemed it necessary to intervene in the 1956 Finnish presidential elections to ensure the election of the most suitable candidate, namely, Kekkonen, as a guarantee of “confidential relations.”<sup>76</sup> The Soviet embassy observed, immediately, after the elections that Kekkonen’s position in the future would depend on the fact, how well he would be able to gain support beyond his own party. As a majority government was formed by Kekkonen’s opponents after the parliamentary elections of the summer 1958, this seemed to threaten not only his position, but also Soviet political investments, in the context of rising international confrontation. Interestingly, the Soviet argument of continuity was already contemplated by Wuori in late 1953 in a memo connected to a change of cabinet. At the time Kekkonen’s fourth cabinet had fallen, and Sakari Tuomioja’s cabinet was to be appointed. Wuori was considering the probability of a cabinet without Kekkonen and he was worried

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73 I.Tugarinov, Chief of Foreign Ministry’s Committee of Information to the CPSU Central Committee, with an introduction by foreign minister Andrei Gromyko to Anastas Mikoian 11.3. 1958, 5/30/271, 29–32, RGANI

74 In 1956 Porkkala had been returned to Finland and the country had joined the United Nations and the Nordic Council.

75 Vadim Andrejev to the Foreign Ministry’s Scandinavian Department, 24.4.1958, 135/39/12, Arhiv vneshnej politiki rossiskoi federatsii (AVP RF).

76 Nevakivi 1996, pp. 94–97.

about possible Soviet countermeasures. The absence of Kekkonen might be taken by the Soviets as signifying a change in Finnish foreign policy, since "the confidence Dr. Kekkonen enjoys in the Soviet Union as a guarantee of good relations has been stated so clearly by the Soviets that it has become a certain factor in considering the situation." After this he sketched a list of possible Soviet economic and political measures, and in many ways foresaw the actual development of the "Night Frost" crisis in 1958.<sup>77</sup> However, the Soviet pressure expected by Wuori did not materialize. No major international crisis emerged in late 1953, in comparison to late 1958, as even in Korea an armistice had been reached.

After the summer of 1957 both the significance of the ideological viewpoint and a growing need for action were combined in Soviet foreign policy. Finland, though still an exception in the Soviet sphere of influence because of its political system was quickly becoming a formidable example of Cold War confrontation.

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<sup>77</sup> Eero A. Wuori's memo *Tilannearviointia uuteen hallitukseen siirryttäessä*, 6.11.1953, L12, UM.

# EMPIRES AND THEIR METHODS OF ENSURING UNITY

## THE BALANCE OF TERROR AND PROBLEMS OF UNITY

Even though the international system could be characterized as clearly bipolar during the early period of Cold War, the unity of alliances, or “empires,” was not self-evident. In the context of the Cold War the unity of one’s own camp was understood as an essential precondition for the enlargement of own one’s sphere of influence and for the shattering of that of one’s opponent. Problems connected to this principle were by no means limited only to the Eastern “empire,” on the contrary, they were easily observable within the Western “empire” as well.

The background for the changes in the Cold War structures was illustrated literally by the flash of new thermonuclear weapons technology in the early 1950s. As the United States tested the first hydrogen bomb in November 1952 and the USSR followed quickly with its own test in August 1953, the potential destruction of nuclear war rose to a completely new level. Both sides soon recognized that, the use of hydrogen bombs, unlike “common” nuclear weapons, would mean the practical end of civilization. Recognition of this fact paved the way to a moderation in the means and also partly in the objectives of the Cold War for both sides. It increased the willingness of the post-Stalinist collective leadership to moderate existing Cold War conflicts and, in effect, led to the practical, though not rhetorical, rejection of the Eisenhower administration’s plan to “Roll Back” Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup> Avoiding the risk of an all-out nuclear war now became an argument in itself, thus, creating the basis for “the Balance of Terror.” This would have an influence on the cohesion of both camps.

Together with developments in arms technology, the stabilization of the Cold War was influenced by the institutionalization of its divisions in Europe towards the mid 1950s. After the 1953 revolt in the GDR, the Soviet Union ceased its planning for German unification, and the Warsaw Pact, including the GDR, was formed in 1955. The Pact seems to have been formed, as far as the Soviets were concerned, initially more as a means to control the new GDR army, and as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the West, rather than as an actual military organization. The consolidation of Cold War “empires” underlined the importance of alliance

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1 For example, see Mitrovich 2000, pp. 122, 155–160 and Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, pp. 152–153, 165–167.

maintenance for both sides, which under the new circumstances of a balance of terror, encouraged attempts at “offensive détente.” The strategy, on both sides, would be based on the domestically useful argument that the collapse of the opposing camp could be reached at low cost and low risk. This meant attempts to realize one-sided, though ultimately peaceful, revisions to the status quo under slogans such as “Roll Back” and “Peaceful Coexistence.”<sup>2</sup>

From the viewpoint of alliance maintenance, both the position and resources of West Germany were central to American Cold War policy, which required the support of a unified and strong Western Europe against the Soviet Union. Support for European integration was seen as an indirect way of including West Germany, the former enemy, in the Western alliance, and of overcoming the old French-German antagonism. If West Germany was not integrated in this way, the Americans feared it would turn neutral or even, after possible Soviet concessions in relation to German unification, pro-Soviet. The French decision in 1954 to reject the European Defence Community (EDC), which would have included West German troops, was seen as a grave threat to Western unity by John F. Dulles, the U.S. Secretary of State. This threat was avoided the following year by admitting West Germany into NATO.<sup>3</sup> Divisions surrounding the process of European integration also presented a potential threat to Western unity. As the EEC was consolidated in 1957 without Great Britain, it was feared that the formation of the EFTA around Britain in 1959–1960 would create two competing trade blocs in Western Europe.

Though Scandinavia was of marginal importance to the United States policy in Europe, it did form the northern flank of NATO. In this sense, the limited participation of Denmark and Norway in NATO since 1949 and Sweden’s decision to remain neutral presented a challenge to the American objective to unify Western Europe behind the U. S. . The Korean war caused the Americans to increase pressure for greater co-operation with the U. S. , demanding peacetime air bases in Norway and Denmark, and they also negotiated a defence treaty with Iceland about the Keflavik base. The British-Icelandic conflict over fishing territory in the 1950s, which resulted to the British boycott of Icelandic fish products, caused a threat to the continuation of the base, and to an extent, to unity of the NATO. The Soviet “peace offensive” after Stalin’s death and its support to neutrality in Scandinavia was seen as a way to undermine the unity of the Western camp. In the case of Iceland the Soviets were indeed quick to seize the moment. As the British had closed their market to the Icelandic fish, the Soviets suddenly began in the spring of 1953 to import Icelandic fish on a large scale. By 1956 the level of Iceland’s exports to the Soviet Union had risen to 20 percent, a level comparable to that of Finland. The continuation of the United States base of Keflavik had come under serious threat, but the Soviet decision to invade Hungary guaranteed its continuation.<sup>4</sup>

The unexpected consequences of de-Stalinization in 1956 had endangered the unity of the Soviet, “empire,” as they had weakened Soviet ideological leadership

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2 Snyder 1993, p. 110, and Voitech Mastny, “The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Warsaw Pact in 1955”, in eds. Rosenfeldt and others, 2000, pp. 241–260 on Warsaw Treaty.

3 Lundestad 1998, pp. 22–26.

4 Hanhimäki 1997a, pp. 81–82.

within the communist movement and its political hegemony in the Socialist Camp. The Soviet Union was, therefore, momentarily on the defensive ideologically and in its foreign policy, aiming to restore its hegemony and influence, first among its allies, then globally. On the other hand, there were grounds, from the Soviet point of view, to believe that the world, and especially the international system, was beginning to change to its advantage. The decolonisation process, which had begun slowly after the Second World War, was beginning to gain momentum towards the end of the 1950s, and the advances in the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) technology was seen to have dramatically increased Soviet bargaining power with the western capitalists.<sup>5</sup>

After the crushing of the anti-party group in June 1957 by Khrushchev, the Soviet Union was engaged in reformulating its ideological line as well as its foreign policy position, in the aftermath of de-Stalinization and domestic political struggles. The basic tension between ideology and pragmatism continued to characterise Soviet politics in this new phase. As plans for important theoretical revisions, involving a new party programme, were made, Soviet foreign policy simultaneously hardened.

The ideological reforms proposed by Otto Wille Kuusinen would in part redefine the theoretical basis of the Soviet state. The de-Stalinization process launched by Khrushchev offered members of the political elite, and reformers within the system, the opportunity to move beyond denunciations of the cult of personality and offer some positive substance to the political system. For Finnish born Kuusinen, who had become a member of the politburo in 1957 after the defeat of the anti-party group, it was essential, not only to criticize Stalin's personal mistakes, but also to leave behind Stalinist concepts of society and state. Instead of the withering away of the state, Stalin's interpretations had led to the strengthening of the state and its structures of organized violence. Kuusinen's answer to the changed circumstances of the 1950s was the creation of an "all-national state," which would enable as much social participation of the population as possible. Though the role of social organisations, such as trade unions, was to be increased, the party was still to maintain "a leading position" in society, though for Kuusinen this apparently meant something different from the dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>6</sup> The intensification of the class struggle or even the dictatorship of the proletariat were no longer seen as necessary, as the exploiting classes had been liquidated long ago.<sup>7</sup> Within the Cold War conflict, the significance of these fundamental ideological revisions, enabled by Khrushchev and still further developed by Kuusinen, was probably the strongest on the alliance level, but they were also important in relations with the capitalist states of the Western Bloc and with neutral states. These differences in social and ideological developments would have an especially important role to play in relation to China.

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5 Zimmerman 1969, pp. 178–179.

6 Aleksander Pyzhikov, *Hrushtshevskaja "ottepl' " 1953–1964*, Moskva 2002, pp. 118–119, 149–151. For more details on ideological reforms and Kuusinen's part in them, see Jukka Renkama, "Kuusinen ja neuvostovaltion käsitteen uudistaminen vuosina 1957–1961," in O. W. Kuusinen ja Neuvostoliiton ideologinen kriisi vuosina 1957–64, ed. Timo Vihavainen, Helsinki 2003, pp. 107–192.

7 Otto Ville Kuusinen's letter to N. S. Khrushchev 20.6.1957, 5/30/191, RGANI.

When comparing the two superpowers and their “empires,” it can be observed that despite similar problems regarding the unity of their empires their methods in maintaining unity differed. That the Soviet Union faced more serious problems is reflected in the fact that the Soviet Union had to use armed force in 1953 in the GDR and 1956 in Hungary, and it had come close to doing so in Poland during the same year. On the other hand, even though the French rejection of the EDC in 1954 hindered directly American objectives in Europe, it was also clear to the Americans that West Germany could not be armed without French consent.<sup>8</sup>

In relation to their allies in Europe the Soviet Union acted more like a dominant power, the United States more like a hegemonic power. On the level of international relations, the practical developments of European integration and the emergence of the Sino-Soviet conflict in the late 1950s, early 1960s together with the decolonisation process were the seeds that began to shatter strict bipolarity. This trend was also supported by the changed attitude of the two superpowers towards neutrality. At the beginning of the Cold War, the concept had a clearly negative meaning to both, but the Soviets were quicker to use neutrality for the needs of their foreign policy. The Americans followed their example a couple of years later, and from the mid 1950s neutrality became a means for loosening the unity of one’s opponents “empire.” In this way Finland’s position had also become an example for the purposes of the superpowers, and this formed the general context for changes in its room to manoeuvre.

## THE SOVIET POSITION REDEFINED IN 1958

To evaluate the dramatic shifts in Soviet foreign policy concerning Germany in the second half of 1958, it is necessary to observe more closely how Khrushchev’s agenda for “offensive détente” could have been constructed in general.

The combination of nuclear weapons’ development, especially regarding ICBMs, and the activation of ideological aspects in foreign relations was now expected to sober up, or moderate, the imperialists, and compel them to make compromises advantageous for the Soviet Union, for instance, in the arms race or on Germany. This combination, together with Soviet peace diplomacy, unilateral troop reductions and arms control proposals, would all encourage “progressive forces” within the imperialist camp. As a result, Soviet security would be increased, which would then allow it to switch resources from defence spending to the needs of domestic consumption. Relations within the Socialist Camp would also become more relaxed for the same reasons. This agenda and its results would win Khrushchev the support of major Soviet interest groups such as the party administrative and ideological leadership, the military-industrial complex, the security organizations and the light industry based on the general consumers.

If this kind of scenario is taken as the basis of Khrushchev’s foreign policy vision, it would mean that serious domestic problems might arise if the West, especially the

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<sup>8</sup> Lundestad 1998, p. 26.

Americans, refused to sober up. Despite the supposedly advantageous effect of the ICBMs on the “correlation of forces,”<sup>9</sup> the West took more or less opposite views to those expected on arms control and the status of Germany. This meant that the promises made to the divergent domestic interest groups would become very difficult to keep. Khrushchev’s attempts to continue unilateral defence cuts after the launch of Sputnik in 1957 met opposition from the military-industrial complex and party conservatives, represented by Frol Kozlov and Mikhail Suslov in the politburo, as the imperialists had not become more conciliatory. As a result, resources for economic reforms would remain limited. Simultaneously, pressure increased from the more radical allies, China and the GDR, to test in practice the claimed advantage in the new correlation of forces, respectively in the Taiwanese Straits and West Berlin.<sup>10</sup>

The acute social and political agitation that had shaken the basis of the Soviet Union’s sphere of influence in Eastern Europe during 1956 had now passed, but the stability of the Socialist Camp again became problematic during 1958. This continuing lack of cohesion had an effect on Soviet foreign policy in general, and can also be observed in relation to country’s policy towards Finland. The main problems took place, firstly, between the Soviet “frontline ally” GDR and the other “problem child,” Poland. Secondly, in the second half of the year, problems began to emerge in relation to one of the USSR’s most trusted allies so far, the Peoples’ Republic of China. Crises would emerge at both ends of the Soviet “empire,” moving from Polish-GDR tensions in Central Europe to the Taiwan Crisis in the Far East and then back again to Central Europe towards the end of the year, as the second Berlin Crisis became acute. The development and timing of Soviet-Chinese relations are essentially interesting for the development of the Soviet position towards Finland in the second half of 1958.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF BORDER ISSUES: GDR-POLISH CONTROVERSY

Though the GDR and Poland had been members of the same bloc more than ten years, GDR-Polish relations were no without problems on the second half of the 1950s. The reality of these relations was quite far from what might have been expected from relations between fraternal countries based on socialist internationalism or in relations based on the principle of peaceful coexistence, like those of the Soviet Union and Finland. The fundamental object of disagreement between the GDR and Poland, which constantly resurfaced in their relations, was as surprising as it was significant: Poland’s western border on the Oder-Neisse line, which was one of the landmarks of post World War II Europe. This border was very difficult to accept for the majority

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9 See Zimmerman 1969, pp. 158–164, on the Soviet interpretations on “balance of power” in the 1950s and 1960s, which is not understood as a stabile balance, but a changing relationship in the distribution of power, or “correlation of forces of power” (Rus. *sootnoshenie sil*).

10 Snyder 1993, pp. 111–112.



of East Germans and for the SED, the ruling Communist party of the GDR.<sup>11</sup> This Central European border question is also of special interest from viewpoint of the Soviet-Finnish relations, as one of the essential, though publicly hidden themes in these relations was the issue of border revision.

The background to this problem went back to 1945–1948, when the East German communists had clearly supported border revisions in the East in all-German elections in 1947. This was not just a question of election tactics in order to compete with the social democrats and the bourgeois parties, but also reflected the majority opinion of the party's membership. The use of ideological arguments is also of interest. It was noted that Germany "must gain the trust of other nations by eliminating aggressive forces and through democratic [socialist] consolidation. Then the Allied powers will have an understanding of the vital needs of our people when it comes to the final determination of our border." The official line of the SED began to change only during the spring of 1948, after Eastern Europe had been sovietized and the division between the Soviet and Western occupation zones in Germany had become more permanent. Now, the Soviets also begun to press the SED to abandon the nationalist emphasis, as there would be no new multiparty elections. However, officially Poland had become deeply concerned, and had been expecting the SED leaders to recognize the Oder-Neisse border since 1946. This led to constant Polish doubts about East German "revisionism."<sup>12</sup> In late 1956, after the Poznan revolts had brought Wladislaw Gomulka to power in Poland, the border problem surfaced again. The political instability in Poland and discussions about the idea of Poland regaining the Polish territories in the East from the Soviet Union caused a high-level party reaction in the GDR. A member of the SED politburo, Karl Schirdewan, reminded the Poles in November 1956 not to forget their Western border, when speaking about revisions in the East. This, together with the accusation that the Polish and the Hungarian revolutions had been based on "bourgeois ideologies and collaborators," led to strong protests from the PZPR, the ruling Communist party of Poland. An East German diplomat in Warsaw also claimed that Poland should return to its 1937 borders. Against this background, it does not come as a surprise that Polish diplomats in the GDR had already, in January 1956, observed that "we will still have to contend with the symptoms of aggressive [East German] revisionism."<sup>13</sup>

The GDR had several reasons for being dissatisfied with its socialist neighbor in the mid 1950s, apart from the border question. Poland's ideological views and its trade relations were seen to have a negative impact on the GDR. As Gomulka had been dismissed and imprisoned in 1948 as a nationalist and Titoist, his return to power renewed the SED's ideological concerns. According to the Polish Embassy in Berlin in late 1956, the SED believed that Gomulka would continue with his earlier nationalist programme and that he had an understanding on this with Tito. The relative freedom of the Polish press was also a nuisance from the East German point

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11 Sheldon Andersson, *A Cold War in the Soviet Bloc: Polish-East German Relations 1945–1962*, Boulder, Colorado 2001, pp. 32–33.

12 Ibid. pp. 35–37, 43.

13 Ibid. pp. 121, 147.

of view. Their ambassador in Prague even suggested that Poland's economic problems were the "direct result of the PZPR's lack of press censorship." The open press reports of taboo subjects concerning the Soviet Union, like the Katyn massacre, caused one East German official to remark, "How can you speak of an ally here when they make openly such anti-Soviet statements?"

In the area of foreign trade, friction was based on the increase in Polish trade with West Germany. The Polish objective was to modernize their industry with Western, mostly West German, machines and technology. These were often paid for with coal and steel, or on credit. Consequently, Poland's trade with the capitalist countries rose during 1956–1958 from 37 per cent to 42 per cent. On the other hand, coal exports to the GDR fell during 1955–1956 from 46 per cent to 25 per cent. This kind of pattern was very damaging from the GDR point of view. As the GDR was defined as "the showcase of the Socialist Camp to the West," especially in relation to West Germany, this was used by the country's leadership as an argument for repeated demands for increased economic support. However, the other socialist countries, especially Poland, were not very sympathetic to these claims, as the GDR's standard of living was already the highest in the Socialist camp.<sup>14</sup>

These developments did not go unnoticed by the Soviet Union. After the Hungarian events in particular, it had every reason to look out for any signs of discontent and to support the wavering social and economic basis of the GDR. The East German arguments used against Poland, especially over trade relations and their political consequences, and in relation to the importance of publicity is surprisingly similar to the arguments used by the Soviet Union against Finland after the summer of 1958.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF NUCLEAR STRATEGY: SINO-SOVIET FRICTION

Relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China had been presented from the late 1940s to the late 1950s as unproblematic in public, and as such were of decisive importance to both the ideological and the political unity of the Socialist Camp. In fact, during the Stalin period the Chinese had been treated as "junior brothers." However, after the death of Stalin, relations between the countries entered a "honeymoon" phase, as the rising Soviet leader Khrushchev, was willing after 1954 to invest in them heavily, not only ideologically, but also in the form of economic and military aid. Sino-Soviet relations continued to develop in the areas of security policy, foreign and trade policy and bloc unity and were characterized by close co-operation up to the summer of 1958.

The high point in party relations was probably reached at the Moscow conference of Communist parties in November 1957. In the spring of 1958 the Chinese readily criticized, with the Soviets, the new Yugoslav party program about revisionism. During the years following the foundation of the Warsaw Treaty

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14 Ibid pp. 134–136, 166, 215.

Organization, the Soviets even proposed including China (and Cuba), but this was not supported by the East European countries. The special nature of Sino-Soviet relations, however, which set them apart from the relations between any other socialist countries, was most evident in the area of nuclear technology. In October 1957 the Soviet Union agreed in principle to assist China in developing nuclear technology, and in June 1958 Soviet experts arrived in China "to show [them] how to make nuclear weapons."<sup>15</sup>

Though the level of co-operation was, perhaps, highest in the military sector, this would also form the context for the emerging conflict. The two proposals, which acted as a fuse for the Sino-Soviet conflict, were both closely related to changes in Soviet global nuclear strategy. In late 1957 the Soviet Union had launched not only the first Sputnik as a prototype of the ICBM, but also the first of its nuclear-powered submarines, which were capable of a global reach. Until the ICBMs were available in large numbers, the submarines offered a mobile platform from where medium range missiles could reach the United States. Later they would be essential in ensuring a second strike capability in the event of a surprise enemy attack. However, at this time, it was technically difficult to construct a powerful enough radio station in Soviet territory that could communicate with the submarine fleet around the world. Therefore, in January 1958, the Soviet Union proposed to China the construction of a long-wave radio station in Southern China for the needs of the Soviet Far Eastern Navy and that of the Chinese, as the Chinese military had earlier expressed interest in modernizing their navy. The second Soviet proposal in June 1958 was more direct, as it spoke about the possibility of the creation of "a combined (submarine) fleet."

Chinese dissatisfaction with the Soviet Union was based more on the unequal relationship between the countries during the Stalin era, than on disagreements over aid and co-operation as such. Though the general nature of their relations had changed during Khrushchev, field co-operation in the military was still conducted on unequal terms, so that Chinese obligations were usually greater than those of the Soviets. From early 1958 Mao Tse Tung and others in the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC) decided to ask for guarantees that no Soviet bases would be placed on Chinese territory and that they would be the sole owners of any installations. Regarding the radio station and the combined navy project, the Soviets had repeatedly ignored this Chinese request. On the 21–22 July Mao accused the Soviet Union of not trusting China and of Soviet intentions of controlling China, setting preconditions to Soviet aid with demands for Chinese "co-operation." The Soviet ambassador tried unsuccessfully to explain that this was a misinterpretation, and ten days later Khrushchev arrived in Beijing to settle matter personally, but was unable to secure lasting results.<sup>16</sup> The Soviet leadership, and especially Khrushchev,

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15 Shen Zhiua, "Khrushchev, Mao and the unrealized Sino-Soviet Military Co-operation," 2002, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/research> 1–6, 8, and Vladislav Zubok, preface to protocols of Khrushchev-Mao talks 31.7.–3.8 and 2.–5.9.1959, <http://www.cwhip.si.edu/files/zubok-mao.htm>, 2001, pp. 2–3.

16 Zhiua 2002, pp. 13–17, 20–21.

was completely surprised by this sharp change in the Chinese attitude from the high point of November 1957 to the accusations in July-August 1958.

The confrontation between China and the Soviet Union, although set off by problems over cooperation, was, however, based on fundamental differences in domestic political and ideological developments. In China, where the communists had come to power only in 1949, the results of the revolution were still to be consolidated in the 1950s and 1960s, unlike in the Soviet Union. Therefore, the concepts underlined by Stalin such as the dictatorship of the proletariat and the intensification of the class struggle were central to the Chinese leadership. The larger, essentially nationalistic, objective was to strengthen, not only socialism in China, but also China through socialism after decades of chaos and civil war. The line of de-Stalinization begun by the CPSU in the XX party congress in 1956 could not but lead to an ideological confrontation with the Chinese.<sup>17</sup>

The criticism Khrushchev directed against Stalin, and, even more, Kuusinen's proposal to substitute the dictatorship of the proletariat with an all-national state horrified the Chinese. The ruling party elite in China, from its point of view, could not afford to compromise regarding the position of the party.

The Taiwan Crisis during August–October 1958 can also be understood in terms of the domestic and foreign policy context. It was not meant to lead to the conquest of Taiwan, even less to a general world war. The crisis was used partly to gain international prestige, even more as a means to mobilize people for “the Big Leap Forward,” Mao's ambitious program of industrializing China within a couple of years, which eventually resulted in a colossal famine.<sup>18</sup> Its domestic political significance, however, was not understood by the Soviet leadership at the time.

The change in the Chinese position on co-operation and following subsequent events in the Taiwan Straits shattered the firm basis of Soviet-Chinese relations. This increased the general uncertainty of the Soviet Union's global position by weakening the unity of the Socialist Camp and hindering the most efficient use of Soviet nuclear capabilities during the autumn of 1958 as the country headed towards a crisis with the West over the German question. The problems the Soviet policy towards China during the summer and autumn of 1958 are also relevant from the viewpoint of Soviet-Finnish relations, as they happened to coincide with Soviet reactions to Finnish domestic political developments.

## THE CONTEXT OF SOVIET OBJECTIVES IN EUROPE

Early in 1957 the United States had begun to plan stationing of medium-range missiles to European NATO countries, including, for example, West Germany, Norway and Denmark. In December 1957, after the launch of Sputnik, the United States proposed the building of stores for nuclear weapons, which were to be

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17 Boris Kulik, *Sovetsko-kitaiskii raskol: Pritchiny i posledstviia*, Moskva 2000, pp. 165–166.

18 Zubok 2001, p. 8.

stationed under NATO command.<sup>19</sup> This policy would also have implications for the Scandinavian countries, as Norway and Denmark were members of NATO. As Finland had a common border with both the Soviet Union and Norway, the consequences of this deployment would have a noticeable impact on Finland's position as well. However, the main connection between Soviet Union's general interests in Europe and its Finnish policy would rest on the FCMA treaty, which defined Germany and its allies as aggressors. According to the treaty, cooperative measures could be undertaken providing they had been agreed on, in Soviet-Finnish consultations. The West German NATO membership in 1955 offered new arguments for the Soviet Union regarding the possible consultations.<sup>20</sup>

In Soviet evaluations of European developments the concept of a West German threat, firstly, to the military security of the Soviet Union and secondly, to the unity of the Soviet "empire" in Eastern Europe was increasingly underlined after 1957. The military threat was seen to follow not just from German membership of NATO in 1955, but more from the possibility that West Germany's army would have even limited access to nuclear weapons. The threat to the unity of "empire" was seen to lie on the growing power of the West German economy, which, it was feared, would attract a number of neighbor countries from the Socialist Camp to the West by reorienting their trade. This aspect of the West German threat is probably more relevant in any foreign political consideration of Moscow's later views on Finland. However, how serious the Soviet concern over possible West German nuclear capabilities was remains somewhat ambiguous. According to the memoirs of one of Khrushchev's aides, the Soviet leader was sure, at least during 1957 that the West "would not give him [West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer] nuclear weapons." Doubts about the sincerity of Khrushchev's concern over the West German threat in the spring of 1958, especially compared to Polish concerns, have also been expressed.<sup>21</sup>

The possibility of West Germany acquiring nuclear weapons had emerged in discussions between the Soviet ambassador and Konrad Adenauer as early as April 1957. As the West Germans, answering in a provocative tone, did not deny the possibility, the Soviets cancelled confidential contacts for a year. The following contact did not prove to be more fruitful either. In the spring of 1958, Anastas Mikoian brought Khrushchev's demands to Adenauer. If the West German parliament accepted the possibility to receive nuclear armaments, then all discussions on German unification would end. However, after Mikoian left Bonn, the German parliament did pass such a resolution.<sup>22</sup> The problem became more acute towards the end of 1958, when stores for NATO's nuclear weapons in West

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19 Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: Making of the European Settlement 1945–1963*, Princeton, New Jersey 1999, pp. 146–240. See also, René Nyberg, *Pohjolan turvallisuus ja Suomi: Ydinaseiden vähenemä merkitys*, Jyväskylä 1983, pp. 26–27.

20 Hentilä 2003, pp. 47.

21 Vladislav Zubok, "Case of Divided Germany, 1953–1964," in *Nikita Khrushchev*, edit. William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, Abott Gleason, Chelsea, Michigan, 2000, p. 288 and Vojtech Mastny, "Second Meeting: 24 May, Moscow," Editorial Note, Parallel History Project (PHP) on Nato and the Warsaw Pact, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/>, 2002, 3.

22 Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, pp. 195–196.

Germany were built, and a unit of the German Air Force began training for their possible use.<sup>23</sup>

The influence of West German economic power on the unity of the East Bloc had begun to concern the Soviet Union at least since late 1956. After the Hungarian revolt, Polish loyalty under the Gomulka regime was also in doubt not only in East Germany, but also, partly, in the Soviet Union. A threatening scenario of a Polish-West German settlement about Poland's borders behind the back of the Soviet Union was thought to be a real possibility. This in turn could endanger the position of Soviet troops in East Germany. The growing economic relations of Poland with West Germany were also seen "as a kind of obstacle" for both military and economic communications between the Soviet Union and East Germany. At the Ulbricht-Gomulka meeting in the summer of 1957, the SED had assumed that Western credits to Poland were linked to political concessions. The East Germans also claimed that these Western economic relations were dangerous for Poland and were endangering the unity of the Warsaw Pact. In the spring of 1958 Khrushchev was again presented with information that the West German leadership was trying to win time for rearming by offering negotiations and use its "economic miracle" to pull the GDR, Poland and Czechoslovakia out of the Soviet orbit.<sup>24</sup>

For the Soviet Union, concerns were not limited just to the West German threat, but included trying to guarantee a status quo that favored its interests in Central and Eastern Europe. For the latter "the German question" needed to be solved, one way or another. This could be done through a German peace treaty, either by creating a loose, more or less neutral German federation from both Germanies, or by finally recognizing the division of the country, and, consequently, the new state of East Germany. The West had either accepted the Soviet conditions for uniting the country, nor recognized East Germany, but instead supported West Germany, which wanted unification on different terms. In fact, the problem, from the Soviet point of view, was probably more about the weakness of the GDR than the strength of West Germany. Disappointment in the Soviet leadership with the results of a Soviet foreign policy that had been based on unilateral concessions in the spirit of peaceful coexistence had been growing in 1957–1958. Now, it was felt that the country had more resources than before and that it should prepare to take the initiative in the Cold War. To cut the Gordian knot, the West had to be compelled to change its mind.<sup>25</sup>

The meeting of CMEA (Comecon), and the Warsaw Pact in 20–25.5.1958 in Moscow presented opportunities for seizing the diplomatic initiative. Both meetings could also be useful for increasing the unity of the "empire." Although, in most

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23 Trachtenberg 1999, p. 253.

24 Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, pp. 195–196, and Anderson 2001, p. 196.

25 Oleg Troianovskii, "The Making of Soviet Foreign Policy" eds. William Taubman etc. 2000, pp. 215–216. On the influence and significance of the GDR in the formulation of Soviet policy towards Germany, in contrast to Trachtenberg's interpretation based on potential West German nuclear armament, see Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953–1961*, Princeton, New Jersey 2003, based primarily on Soviet and East German sources.

cases, the Soviet lead was followed, neither the cohesion of the Socialist Camp, nor the authority of the Soviet Union went unchallenged, as some substantial differences emerged during the CMEA meeting. The East Germans presented demands for increased economic support from other socialist countries, as they portrayed their state as “a show case of socialism,” especially in relation to West Germany. In April 1958, the SED had set itself the goal of matching the West German economy by 1965, and in June this was brought forward to 1961. Other socialist countries, however, refused to even discuss the idea of raising the living standards in the GDR. Only the Soviet Union was willing to offer credit for raw materials, machines, and consumer goods. In addition, despite the fact that Soviet troops were to be pulled out of Romania as part of a troop reduction initiative, Romania did not agree being given the role of a producer of raw materials, as this was seen as hindering its industrialization.

The meeting of the Political Committee of the Warsaw Pact, in particular offered a platform for opening a propaganda offensive by proposing a Warsaw Pact-NATO non-aggression pact, troop reductions, a nuclear free zone in Central Europe, according to the Polish Rapacki plan, and a summit meeting with the West. However, Khrushchev admitted to his allies that he was not expecting a summit to take place soon. In presenting so many difficult issues, and using such strong propagandist language, is doubtful, whether the proposals were expected to be considered seriously by Western leaders.<sup>26</sup>

Soviet foreign policy over the German issue was in any case now gaining momentum, as Khrushchev had decided to compel the West to come to an agreement. In this, he had the general support of the Soviet leadership. According to recent research, it seems possible that the decision to do this, by challenging the Western position in West Berlin, emerged somewhat later, perhaps during or after his summer vacation.<sup>27</sup> But, before taking his vacation, partly at the same time with the Comecon and Warsaw Pact meetings, there was one more summit for Khrushchev to be dealt with. He needed to meet the president of Finland, a country that had been portrayed as the example of peaceful coexistence.

## THE SOVIET-FINNISH SUMMIT OF 1958

### FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE

Though the “Wave of Good Will” that had characterised Soviet-Finnish relations in August 1956 had passed, the relations were, according to public image, normal, if not good, when president Kekkonen was about to visit the Soviet Union in late May 1958. Preparations for the visit had begun on both sides early the same year and the

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26 Anderson 2001, pp. 213–214, Vojtech Mastny, “Second Meeting: 24 May, Moscow,” Editorial Note, Parallel History Project (PHP) on Nato and the Warsaw Pact, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/documents/>, 2002, pp. 1–2.

27 Vladislav Zubok, “The Case of Divided Germany, 1953–1964,” eds. Taubman etc. 2000, p. 292.



visit was due to take place on 22–30 May 1958. The agenda for the discussions between Khrushchev and Kekkonen on 23 May 1958, though differing in some respects from the public communiqué, was indeed impressive. Topics included the revision of the border to Finland's advantage, changes to the military clauses of the peace treaty, the security situation in Northern Europe, the attitude of the Finnish media towards the Soviet Union, and trade relations between two countries. The communiqué stressed the importance of Soviet-Finnish relations, the continuing development of trade relations and plans for a new 5-year trade treaty. It also dealt with Soviet initiatives concerning the international situation, as well as Northern Europe. The communiqué did not mention about changes in the military clauses, and reference to the most interesting issue of border revisions was limited to the use of the Saimaa canal. However, both participants were willing to declare the meeting a success after the visit was over.<sup>28</sup>

In fact, the Soviet Union had become more and more concerned about domestic political developments in Finland after the spring 1957, as they were seen to have consequences for foreign policy. The increasingly hardline of the USSR's policy towards Finland was reflected in changes in the Soviet evaluation of the leader of the right-wing social democrats, their ideological and political opponents. Though the election of Väinö Tanner as the chairman of the Finnish Social Democratic Party (SDP) was seen as a blow to Soviet interests in the summer of 1957, it had not been seen as too alarming. But a decisive change in this assessment emerged in October 1957, when Otto Wille Kuusinen, who had just become a member of the politburo, advised the CPF on future government strategy. According to Kuusinen, the Leskinen and Tanner "clique" were not suitable even as temporary allies, as they were "Coalition-Fascists in disguise," and they would be crushed.<sup>29</sup> In January 1958 the Soviet embassy also thought a stronger tone was necessary. An article in a Finnish newspaper based on documents from "Bonn's foreign ministry" had revealed Tanner's part in freeing Einar Gerhardsen, the Norwegian social democratic leader, who was now the prime minister, from a German concentration camp. As Tanner had been able to influence the leaders of Nazi Germany, the Soviet embassy interpreted the whole affair as evidence that he was "an agent of Fascistic Germany in Finland." The publication of this West German material, was intended, according to the Soviets, to create mistrust towards current Soviet policy in Northern Europe and in Finland. A critical assessment of the documents in a Soviet journal dealing with international affairs was thought necessary, "specifically to underline Tanner's role as an agent of German imperialism."<sup>30</sup>

The preparations for the Moscow meeting continued at full speed during January and February. They were not disturbed either by the concerns of the Soviet

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28 Juhani Suomi, *Kriisien aika, Urho Kekkonen 1956–1962* (Biography), Keuruu 1992, pp. 122–124 and unsigned sketch for the communiqué, 21.5.1958, 135/13/110, Arhiv vneshnei politiki rossiiskoi federatsii (AVP RF). Unfortunately, when dealing with Finnish-Soviet relations, the biography completely lacks Soviet sources, except newspapers.

29 Rentola 1997, p. 452.

30 Sergei Nikolskii, 1. secretary, to the Scandinavian Department 14.1.1958 on the basis of an article in *Hufudstadsbaldet* 9.1.1958, 135/40/110, AVP RF.



embassy, or by the so-called counter reaction, that is critical comments about the Soviet Union and Finland's foreign policy in the Finnish press. The Soviet Foreign Ministry contacted the President of Finland, Urho Kekkonen, for formal details connected with the visit. The "unofficial contacts," that is, representatives of the Soviet intelligence service KGB, clearly encouraged the Finnish president in his hopes of a break through on the border issue. This was of decisive domestic political importance as the return of Finnish territory that had been ceded to the Soviet Union, or at least a part of it, had been a central, though hidden theme in Kekkonen's presidential campaign. The tone of this "special channel" was not completely positive, though, as he was unfavorably compared to his predecessor, Juho Kusti Paasikivi, in relation to the development of the East trade, that is, trade with USSR, and on the attitude of the Finnish press towards the Soviet Union. Still, even Finnish membership of the OEEC, a Western economic organization, was not thought to be a problem at this time. It would lead only to formal criticism in the Soviet press. However, Finland was warned against allowing its possible commitments to "leave the direction of its foreign policy to be decided from outside."<sup>31</sup>

A decision regarding the Soviet policy towards Finland, or, at least, its most sensitive part, the border issue, was made on 20 February 1958 at a meeting of the CPSU Central Committee. A stand against border revisions in principle was taken, a position, which as events turned out did not change in the future. The USSR would not even rent territory along the Saimaa canal, agreeing only to transit rights.<sup>32</sup> The Finnish president was informed of this by Soviet intelligence contact, Vladimir Zhenikhov, on 3 March 1958. The decision came as an unpleasant surprise to Kekkonen. He now had to consider the negative domestic political consequences of this change in the agenda, especially in relation to the forthcoming parliamentary elections, but also in relation to the next presidential elections. The president even briefly contemplated postponing his Moscow visit to after the parliamentary elections. Still, he refused to give up hope completely that a border revision could be realized through the Saimaa canal issue.<sup>33</sup>

In early March 1958 one of the concerns of Soviet policy towards Finland was, indeed the July elections to the Finnish parliament, as the results were seen as forming the basis for several important trade and domestic policy decisions. The Soviet deputy foreign minister, A. V. Zakharov, was informed that "rightist circles" in Finland had clearly become active in connection to the July elections. The increasing internal battle within the labor union movement and the Social Democratic Party were seen as a result of the influence of these circles. The "hostile attitude" of some bourgeois newspapers towards the Soviet Union was also

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31 *Urho Kekkosen päiväkirjat 1958–1962* (UKP I), (Urho Kekkonen's Diary 1958–1962), edit. Juhani Suomi, Keuruu 2001, 19.1.1958, 26.2.1958 (contacts with the Soviet Foreign Ministry) 2.1.1958, 7.2.1958, 18.2.1958, 22.2.1958 (contacts with the KGB). The quotations from president Kekkonen's diary are seldom complete sentences, as he kept the diary mainly as support to his memory, not intending to publish it.

32 Gromyko to Mikoian, International Department of the CPSU Central Committee on Soviet policy towards Finland, 11.3.1958 NKPSa, document 45.

33 UKP, 3–5.3.1958, 25.3.1958.

observed within this context. A press campaign was proposed, as a means to influence the election campaign in Finland. "Rightist circles", in particular had used the recent quietness of the Soviet press in relation to Finland to their advantage. It had allowed them to claim that "the Soviet Union was not interested about the [domestic political] situation in Finland."<sup>34</sup> The subsequent change in the public Soviet stance made clear that this was not the case, but no foreign threats to Soviet interests in Finland were observed at the moment. However, the Soviet attitude towards possible Finnish membership in the OEEC changed and become rather hostile by mid March.<sup>35</sup>

The forthcoming parliamentary elections also continued to trouble the Soviet embassy later in the spring. The probable composition of the government coalition was constantly discussed, as was its influence on the foreign policy and trade policy of Finland. Expectations were largely pessimistic, from the Soviet point of view. The Soviets realized that many Finnish parties were not prepared to co-operate with pro-Soviet forces in Finnish politics. It was these forces the Soviet leadership had been planing to support with Kekkonen's visit.<sup>36</sup> The Soviets thought the Coalition party was intended to weaken political, economic, and cultural relations with the USSR and was willing to "openly orient Finnish foreign policy towards the United States and Great Britain." In this sense, the attitude of the Swedish People's Party's (SPP) right wing was somewhat more sophisticated. They had a "much more careful attitude towards the USSR, as they are planning to go to the West through the Norden [Scandinavia], by orienting towards Sweden." The SPP was expected to enter a government coalition of five parties, that would include the Coalition, but exclude the Finnish People's Democratic League (FPDL), which was a front organization of the Finnish Communist party (CPF).<sup>37</sup>

A more negative view on the SPP can be found in a later observation, made during the president's visit. The party was seen to be "in a position for creating such a government, which will certainly not follow friendly policy towards us." This was based on two observations. Firstly, the SPP had agreed with Tanner's declaration about the need for a government of all parties, with the exception of the communists. The Soviets concluded from this, that the SPP was ending its co-operation with center parties and changing it to a policy of co-operation with the Coalition party and the right-wing social democrats. Secondly, attitude towards Tanner had become a basis for categorization. The SPP's refusal to condemn Tanner for foreign policy reasons, as the agrarians had done, was "in itself a clear characterization of their unfriendly actions in relation to the Soviet Union." The official declarations of the SPP about following the "Paasikivi-line" were regarded as masking its real intentions, as the party was observed to have an "energetic interest

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34 Konstantin Rodionov, director of the MID's Scandinavian department to Aleksei V. Zakharov, deputy foreign minister, 7.3.1958, 135/40/110, AVP RF.

35 Memo by foreign minister Paavo Hynninen, 12.3.1958, L-12 UM.

36 Gromyko to Mikoian 11.3.1958, International Department of the CPSU Central Committee on Soviet Policy towards Finland, NKPSa, document 45.

37 Vladimir Kotljarskiy to the Scandinavian Department 10.5.1958, "Vneshnepoliticheskaia pozitsiia shvedskoi narodnoi partii i ee perspektivy ha predstavshikh vyborakh," 135/40/720, AVPRF.

in joining Finland not only to the Nordic Custom's Union, but to the Western zone of free trade."<sup>38</sup>

Immediately before the Moscow summit, in mid May, the president of Finland was once again briefed by the Soviet intelligence on the final Soviet position concerning the substance of the talks. No change in negative Soviet position regarding territorial concessions was to be expected, and the proposals about revising the military clauses of the peace treaty were also to be stalled. As Kekkonen noted that he would have to mention the territorial issue in any case, Vladimir Zhenikhov, the KGB representative, acknowledged that he understood that this was due to domestic political pressures. Positive results would be reached only on matters concerning trade and financial relations, and there would be a nominal concession on the Saimaa Canal issue in the form of transit rights.<sup>39</sup>

### THE SCANDINAVIAN MISSILE FACTOR IN SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS FINLAND

Developments leading up to "the Khrushchev-Kekkonen summit" in late May 1958, and the results of that summit are of interest from the viewpoint of Soviet objectives in Finland, Scandinavia and Europe in general. A change in the USSR's policy towards Finland seemed to take place in February–March 1958. First, in late February, the Central Committee of the CPSU made a decisive decision on policy towards Finland, as it rejected the possibility of making territorial concessions to Finland, even in the form of renting back territory to Finland, in connection to the Saimaa canal issue. Second, from March onwards the negative Soviet attitude towards the counter reaction strengthened, and this, unlike in the beginning of the year, became a real problem in discussions between the president and Soviet representatives. Third, the Soviet attitude towards possible Finnish OEEC membership became openly discouraging, which was in contrast to some earlier remarks.

To understand the motives of Soviet policy towards Finland, it is useful to consider them together with Soviet objectives in both Scandinavia and Europe. The central objective of Soviet policy towards Scandinavia from the spring of 1957 to early 1958 was to ensure that, despite the U.S. proposal to NATO countries, no medium-range missiles, with or without nuclear warheads, would be stationed in Norway or Denmark. In support of its objectives, the Soviet Union applied pressure and issued strong threats against Norway and Denmark, even though their self-imposed limitations regarding conventional basis were recognized. A personal exchange of letters between Bulganin, the Soviet head of state, and Gerhardsen, the Norwegian prime minister, was used as the first means to deliver this Soviet

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38 S. Nikolskii to the Scandinavian Department of MID, 26.5.1958, "52-oi S'ezd shvedskoi narodnoi partii" 135/40/720, AVP RF.

39 UKP I, Vladimir Zenikhov to Kekkonen 16.5.1958 and Viktor Vladimirov to Kustaa Vilkkuna 17.5.1958.

message.<sup>40</sup> A note was sent late in 1957, to the governments of these countries, which accused NATO of increasing the risk of nuclear war, and demanded co-operation in “avoiding war and improving relations between states.”<sup>41</sup> Social Democrats, who were the main party in both the Norwegian and Danish governments, had, already taken a negative view on the U.S. missile proposal in May 1957, and both governments confirmed their position at a meeting of NATO’s council in December 1957. The Danish government, in particular expressed a readiness to understand the Soviet view. However, the Soviet proposal of a Nordic nuclear free zone, that had been made by Bulganin in January 1958 was stalled, as the Danes also wanted to include Soviet Northern territories to such a zone.<sup>42</sup>

When considering possible Soviet motives for territorial concessions to Finland, this situation needs to be taken to account. In discussions between the KGB and the president of Finland, or his representatives, a connection between territorial concessions to Finland’s benefit (Karelia, Saimaa canal) and Soviet policy towards Scandinavia was established at least in early January 1958. Though the connection was made, according to Kekkonen’s diary, by the Finnish representatives, the Soviet party not only expressed interest in the topic, but before and after January 1958 repeatedly brought up its interest in influencing the policies of Scandinavian countries and in improving the Soviet Union’s relations with them. Invitation of Khrushchev to Scandinavia was mentioned by the Soviets in this context.

Already in the spring of 1957 the Soviets had proposed to Kekkonen that “some Finnish statesman” should make a public proposal that the great powers refrain from actions that complicated the situation in Northern Europe, recognize the neutral status of the region’s states, and promote peaceful co-operation. Kekkonen did not make a public appeal, but during “the Nordic Missile Crisis” in the autumn of 1957 the president of Finland privately expressed his willingness to support the Soviet objectives in Scandinavia. He contacted Oslo and proposed that Norway leave NATO, and sign a bilateral defence pact with the United States, as “it could appease the Soviet Union,” as such a pact would apparently lack connection to West Germany.<sup>43</sup> Such a result could have also lessened the possibility of consultations between Finland and the Soviet Union based on the FCMA treaty, where West Germany, and its allies were defined as the aggressor. Against the background of “the Nordic Missile Crisis”, it seems possible that some Soviet foreign policy decision-makers were considering the possibility of using territorial concessions to Finland as a way of neutralizing Norway and Denmark as members of NATO. The

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40 On the rather tedious exchange of letters about the Norwegian policies on military bases and about Soviet nuclear capabilities in relation to them, see, e.g. Nikolai Bulganin to Einar Gerhardsen 19.3.1957, and Gerhardsen to Bulganin 11.4.1957, 116/41/12, AVP RF.

41 Suomi 1992, p. 87.

42 Nyberg 1983, pp. 26–28.

43 Suomi 1992, pp. 84–85. Suomi claims that in June 1958 Kekkonen argued against NATO membership also to the Danish Prime Minister Hans Christian Hansen. According to Kekkonen’s diary the discussion was about high defense spending, not about membership in the alliance as such (UKP I, 13.6.1958).

concessions to Finland would underline the benefits of a “friendship or neutrality policy” in relation to the Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup>

The plausibility of this scheme is supported by the fact that Kekkonen keenly followed developments in the security policies of the Scandinavian countries in January–February 1958. In mid January, the Soviet Union was still not sure of the position of Norway and Denmark, as Khrushchev publicly repeated Soviet warnings about the establishment of NATO missile bases on their territory.<sup>45</sup>

Soviet policy towards Finland was probably assessed in late February. By then, the Soviet Union could see that the renewal of self-imposed limitations by the Scandinavian NATO countries had neutralized them, for the moment, as missile bases, in a satisfactory way. As the Soviet objective had already been secured, territorial concessions to Finland would no longer be needed as a lever. Even after the openly negative Soviet response concerning border revisions had reached the president of Finland in early March, he tried to realize “the Scandinavian option” of Soviet policy towards Finland in March–April. This was done by attempting to enlist Sweden’s support for Soviet-Finnish negotiations. Kekkonen planned to offer the bait of a Swedish invitation of Khrushchev to the Soviets, if a positive result was reached regarding the border revision issue. The Swedes, however, were not enthusiastic about promoting Soviet prestige in Scandinavia, or connecting themselves to revisions of the Finland’s Eastern border, especially in the middle of a government crisis.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, the effect of a border revision on Finnish domestic politics would be ambiguous, at best. Naturally, it would be an asset to Kekkonen, whom the Soviets had decided to support to a certain extent, but his opponents could also easily turn it to their advantage. Kekkonen was not yet in control of the domestic political situation and the counter reaction was becoming more disturbing as the voice of his opponents when the parliamentary elections were closing in, so there was no reason for the Soviets to hurry. The border issue, however, would not have outlived its usefulness, from the Soviet point of view. As the border issue was of great domestic political significance to the president of Finland, it could be used to control him in both domestic and foreign policy matters, for example on public attitudes towards the Soviet Union and OEEC membership.

Soviet foreign policy in Europe provided the larger context for Soviet policy objectives towards Finland. Peaceful coexistence and neutrality, of which Finland had earlier been portrayed as an example, became less important to the USSR as it was preparing to confront the West during the spring and summer of 1958. Even if there had been a readiness in the Soviet leadership to offer Finland concessions, the Soviet room for manoeuvre had become increasingly limited.

This was made explicit by Khrushchev in his discussions with Kekkonen. Soviet policy in Germany lay behind the Soviet rejection of the Finnish initiative for revising the military clauses of the peace treaty. In principle, the Soviet Union was not against

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44 UKP I 6.3.1958 on discussion with Ralph Enckell, Chief of Political Department of Finnish Foreign ministry.

45 UKP I, 1.1.1958, 12.1.1958, 14.1.1958 (on Khrushchev’s interview), 26.1.1958, 6–7.2.1958.

46 UKP I, 31.3.1958, 22–23.4.1958, 30.4.1958, 3.5.1958.

this idea, but it would contradict the Soviet policy of opposing West German rearmament. The West Germans could accuse the Soviet Union of double standards, one for NATO countries, and another for countries with which the Soviet Union had friendly relations. Regarding the general correlation of forces, according to which Finland, on the basis of the FCMA treaty, was apparently included on the Soviet side, Khrushchev thought the revision of the military clauses unimportant. The Soviet leader did not regard neutral Sweden, or Norway, even though the latter was a member of NATO, as a threat to Finland, nor to the Soviet Union. This argument is also connected to the border issue, as it would seem to reflect Soviet satisfaction with the present status quo in Scandinavia.

Regarding the territorial concessions, Khrushchev repeated that the Soviet Union, in principle, could not accept a revision of the border, as this would create a dangerous precedent for the Soviet Union. Since the West Germans, the Japanese, and even the Poles had territorial claims on the Soviet Union, concessions to Finland would, according to Khrushchev, complicate relations with other countries too much. According to Khrushchev, "it would be difficult to slurp such porridge."<sup>47</sup> However, "the porridge" of foreign relations was also getting hot on the table of Soviet-Finnish relations. The Soviets were not the ones who, after the July elections and the formation of the new cabinet, were to burn their mouth in that "porridge."

## FINLAND BECOMING UNRELIABLE

### COMPLICATED, BUT NOT TROUBLESOME

Tensions in Finnish domestic politics increased as the parliamentary elections of 6–7 July 1958 approached. The Coalition party and the Social Democratic party had already stood against Kekkonen in the presidential elections of 1956. The Coalition party was now campaigning against the Agrarian Union, the president's party, hoping to outflank it on the right. In the Social Democratic party, the influence of the right wing grew after Tanner had been elected as its leader. Kekkonen's intervention in the internal quarrel in the party, by bringing members of the left-wing opposition into the government in 1957, was not very helpful for future relations either. Earlier governments had been based on cooperation between the Agrarians and the Social Democrats. Now Finland was to be governed through minority governments.<sup>48</sup>

The results of the summer elections did nothing to clarify the situation, as both extremes of the political field, the FPD and the conservative Coalition party, made some gains, whilst the Agrarian Union lost some ground. The SDP was able to defend its position, but its left wing opposition (Skog's faction) was also relatively successful, and soon formed their own parliamentary group. In fact, partly because

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47 Author unknown, 26.5.1958, *Peregovorov mezhdru pravitelstvennyi delegatsii Soiuz SSR i Finliandii*, 23.5.1958, 135/40/13, AVP RF, see also UKP I, 23.5.1958.

48 Nevakivi 1996, p. 138, generally on the parliamentary elections. The main merit of Nevakivi's book is that it is largely based on such archival material of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, which has now, once again, been classified.

of election mathematics, the CPF (FPDL) became the largest party in parliament. As the SDP was more prepared to cooperate with the Coalition than the Agrarians, this aim having been clearly established during the spring, the results did not help stabilize president Kekkonen's position, which had already been mentioned as an objective of the Soviet policy towards Finland already in March 1958. The Soviets had noticed already after the presidential elections of 1956, the narrowness of the president's support outside his own party.

Against this domestic political background, the immediate Soviet reaction to the election results in July was surprisingly calm. In spite of the previous worried reports of the embassy concerning the possibility of a SDP-Coalition-based government, the situation was apparently thought to be under control. Probably the most important reasons for this impression were the discussions held between Ahti Karjalainen, president Urho Kekkonen's secretary, and the KGB representative Viktor Vladimirov before and after the president's Moscow visit in May 1958. Already in late April, in preparing for the president's Moscow visit, a Soviet gold loan and the Saimaa canal had been put on the agenda as interesting topics, and both were directly connected to the formation of the Finnish government after the July elections. Interestingly, when mentioning the Saimaa canal, Vladimirov claimed that the Soviet Union would be ready to discuss "in principle, on a renting agreement in eternal basis." This would have been in clear contradiction with the earlier established negative Soviet line on this issue, though, according to Karjalainen's report, it remained unclear if the question was on transit rights only. Part of Karjalainen's report to the president is quoted here because it provides a very clear description of the contemporary state of the Soviet-Finnish relations:

"I [Karjalainen]: ... It might not be harmful, if an agreement on the Saimaa canal, or the loan-business, would be achieved in principle only, and the negotiations on the details would be left for the new government to be formed after the elections.

VI [Vladimirov]: This would be one viewpoint which could be used after the elections in trying to achieve a [Finnish] government following the right line?"

I: Yes. Exactly so."<sup>49</sup>

A month before the elections, on 5 June 1958, Karjalainen expressed his confidence in a letter to the president that the new government would not "be under the influence of Leskinen-Junnila," that is, based on the cooperation of right-wing social democrats and the Coalition. When visiting Moscow himself, about a week before the elections, for the signing of a trade treaty, the satisfaction of the Soviet leadership with this trend was made evident. Anastas Mikoian had set out his views on the state

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49 Urho Kekkonen arkisto (Urho Kekkonen's Archive) (UKA), Ahti Karjalainen's non-arranged letters to Urho Kekkonen 1952–1965, Karjalainen to Kekkonen, 23.4.1958. The source is also mentioned, though not quoted, in Timo Soikkanen, *Presidentin ministeriö 1956–1969: Ulkoasianhallinto ja ulkopoliittikan hoito Kekkonen kaudella*, Hämeenlinna 2003.



of Soviet-Finnish relations to Karjalainen saying “there is friendship, there is confidence.”<sup>50</sup>

The day after the elections, the Finnish president, according to the Soviet ambassador Viktor Lebedev, claimed that “there was no reason to worry about the fate of future Finnish governmental policies,” even though “the results of the elections would to some extent complicate his duties as president.” The Soviets must have been further encouraged by the observations of the Agrarian Union’s party secretary Arvo Korsimo, a couple of days later. First, he was looking forward to governmental participation of the CPF (FPDL). Second, he noted, his party would continue its policy of “weakening, isolating and dividing” the Tanner-Leskinen party, the SDP.<sup>51</sup> The Soviet observers did not miss the possible effect of a government coalition on the re-election of Kekkonen either. The KGB representative Viktor Vladimirov openly referred to this a week later in talks with the president’s intelligence expert, Kustaa Vilkuna. Vladimirov also happened to have a list of a preferred government coalition, saying; “could it be: somebody from the FPDL, the Agrarians, the skogs, somebody from the Coalition, somebody from the SPP [Swedish Peoples’ Party] or Peoples party [liberals]. Leskinen’s followers are enemies of the Soviet Union.”<sup>52</sup> Unlike the SDP, the Coalition was not completely excluded by the Soviets, and later, when the crisis erupted, the exclusion of the Coalition was not an absolute demand. Even two weeks after the elections, the president’s secretary, Karjalainen, had a confident feeling about the formation of government. Vladimirov, though being “of course very curious about the government-business,” had both the time and interest to propose the coordination of Finland’s policy towards the UN with the Soviet Union, as “was practised with other friendly countries” as well. However, in this instance Karjalainen remained somewhat doubtful.<sup>53</sup>

This rather relaxed Soviet attitude, however, began to change in the middle of August. This was connected to the fact that the Agrarian Union’s right wing was gaining the upper hand in the party, particularly concerning negotiations about a possible government coalition. The right wing agrarians had begun to consider cooperating with the Coalition and the SDP, instead of the left parties. The Soviet embassy reacted quickly to his unexpected development. Ambassador Lebedev contacted the president on 11 August 1958, and asked what was going on. The Agrarians were accused first of “conjuncture politics” in relation to the Soviet Union, and then about betraying the skogs, the social democratic left opposition. The ambassador declared that “the political right speaks about the Paasikivi-line, but it is known that they do not want to follow it.” After this he inquired, “does the new

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50 Karjalainen to Kekkonen, 5.6.1958 and 30.6.1958, UKA.

51 Nevakivi 1996, pp. 139–140, based on reports of the Soviet ambassador Viktor Lebedev, 8.7.1958 with the president, and 11.7.1958 with Vieno Sukselainen, Johannes Virolainen and Arvo Korsimo, 42/3/035/220, pp. 31–35, AVP RF. In his diary Kekkonen mentions only that he met Lebedev on 8.7.1958 to receive surgical equipment, a gift of the Soviet government to Finnish hospitals, UKP I, 8.7.1958.

52 UKP I, 14.7.1958.

53 Karjalainen to Kekkonen 22.7.1958, UKA.



position of the Agrarians mean taking the same road." According to the ambassador, the president confirmed that the Agrarian Union had changed its attitude in the complicated negotiations concerning the government coalition. The president had no idea where this new attitude had come from, but he tried to deny that there had been a change in the foreign policy line, especially in the foreign policy stance of the Agrarians.<sup>54</sup>

The Soviet embassy quickly attempted to rectify the situation. The Agrarian leaders, Johannes Virolainen, Arvo Korsimo and Martti Miettunen among others, were invited to have breakfast with the Soviet ambassador two days later, at which the ambassador warned the Agrarian leaders not to change the foreign policy of the country. He was supported by Korsimo, but opposed by Virolainen, who, contrary to his earlier views, had now begun to support the right wing of the party. The discussion became so heated that the ambassador had to ask Virolainen to "take it easy" a couple of times. A couple of days later Virolainen claimed that he had only opposed Lebedev, and that "a solid" or "tough" line needed to be taken in relation to the Soviet Union. The fact that the discussion was so agitated may be partly explained by the fact that this was the second time the Soviet representatives had brought up presidential elections. Ambassador Lebedev had argued that the new line of the Agrarians in regard to the Skog opposition and to foreign policy would cost them the next presidential elections. In a meeting of Agrarian MPs several days later, Virolainen had accused Lebedev about "meddling in our affairs."<sup>55</sup>

The obvious change in the Soviet position can be explained by the changes that took place in the Agrarian Union. The "betraying" of the Skog's faction alerted Soviet representatives in Finland, since they had already invested political capital in the left-wing Social Democrats, who now had a group of their own in parliament. They were seen as a means to stabilize Kekkonen's position, as they had been ready to co-operate with the Agrarians unlike the official SDP. Now, with the K-line, a faction supporting president Kekkonen, momentarily defeated in the party leadership, the whole structure seemed to be under threat. Three of the four main Finnish political parties, instead of two, the SDP and the Coalition party as before, could now be defined as hostile to the Soviet Union.

## RED ALERT IN THE KREMLIN?

From the viewpoint of both the Soviet embassy and president Kekkonen the period from late August to late September begun problematically. The negotiations for forming the government had lasted over a month. On 26 August 1958 the president finally appointed a social democratic politician, Karl August Fagerholm, to explore the possibility of forming an all-party government. This was based on the need to make difficult decisions regarding the national economy, and especially the state finances.

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54 UKP I, 11.8.1958, Nevakivi 1996, p. 140, based on the report of the Soviet ambassador Lebedev, 10.8.1958, 42/3/035/220, p. 58–60, AVP RF.

55 UKP I, 13.8.1958, 17.8.1958, 19–20.8.1958, Nevakivi 1996, pp. 140–141, based on the report of the Soviet ambassador Lebedev, 13.8.1958, 42/3/035/220, p. 62, AVP RF.

A couple of days later Fagerholm was able to inform the president that a large coalition could be formed, though not one with all the parties. The Agrarian Union had compromised on some of its previous conditions for co-operation with the SDP. The left social democrats decided to stay outside the government, as no compromise on the unification of the SDP had been reached, and the CPF (FPDL), despite its victory in the elections, had been excluded from the beginning. Nevertheless, the government would have a two thirds majority in parliament, and some smaller bourgeois parties had been included. As the president appointed the government 29 August 1958, he publicly called his speech the worst one he had ever made.<sup>56</sup>

At about the same time as the government was formed on 25–27 August 1958, there was a strange incident over a visa. The CPF was preparing for its fortieth anniversary and Otto Wille Kuusinen, a famous Finnish communist theoretician living in the USSR and a member of the CPSU politburo, was included in the Soviet delegation. He was, however, a man with a past in Finland. Kuusinen had not only been one the leaders of the Red side in the Finnish Civil War in 1918, but had also been one of the founders of the CPF in Moscow immediately after it. He had also been nominated as the head of the Soviet puppet government of Finland during the Winter War of 1939–1940, which had finally made him *persona non grata* in Finland. Even the president agreed that his presence in Finland would cause such a negative reaction in various circles that it would not support the atmosphere of “friendship and good will,” that had been created between the Soviet Union and Finland. After quickly contacting Moscow through the Foreign Ministry, this time, the visa application was cancelled, though not without some later complications. Though this took place just before the appointment of the new government, the Soviet press readily blamed the new government for the decision.<sup>57</sup>

Four days after the appointment of the government, the Soviet ambassador asked for an explanation about the formation of the government. The president denied having any responsibility for this, and admitted that he had not been able to control the situation. He then criticized the leadership of the Agrarian Union in great detail, and Virolainen in particular, for compromising their preconditions, and thereby betraying him. The phrases and characterizations of ambassador Lebedev’s report correspond closely with those found in president Kekkonen’s diary. In light of future Soviet policy toward Finland, the president had, according to Lebedev, commented on the situation in a most interesting way. Despite the developments had not been under his control, the president noted that the situation in Finland does not give reason for concern. This was because, “the newly appointed government will stay in office only so long for it to prove its own untenability.” According to his diary, the president hoped that the Soviet Union would remain calm and avoid coming to unfortunate and hasty conclusions.<sup>58</sup>

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56 UKP I 26–29.8.1958, and generally on the elections, Nevakivi 1996, p. 138, 145.

57 UKP I, 25–27.8.1958, 31.8.1958, Nevakivi 1996, pp. 141–145, based on the report of deputy foreign minister Valerian A. Zorin, 28.8.1958, p. 4, and A. V. Zakharov’s report, 30.8.1958, p. 6, 42/2/030/220 AVP RF.

58 Nevakivi 1996 pp. 146–147, based on the report of the Soviet ambassador Lebedev, 3.9.1958, 42/2/035/220, p. 80, AVPRF.Compare to UKP I 2.9.

Despite this seemingly unexpected development, the Soviet reaction to, and policy regarding, the domestic political situation was not slow in coming. Within a week of the meeting of the president and the ambassador, the Soviet Union had established a clear response, which, in its final form, was confirmed in mid September. President Kekkonen was informed of all this directly, or through trusted men, by the KGB. As early as the first meeting on 3.9.1958, the Soviet contact, Vladimir Zhenikhov, mentioned the key points of the Soviet line. Firstly, the new government was accused of intending to change Finnish foreign policy in an anti-Soviet direction, though no evidence for this was presented. The Soviet Union could not understand these developments after what it had regarded as a successful presidential visit. The Agrarian Party's decision to change its policy in particular was impossible to understand. Secondly, the Soviet Union regarded this government as responsible for making the first attempt to break the postwar policy of co-operation, and thought that, if successful, the next such government would go even further. Zhenikhov repeated his evaluation a week later, and now the element passive resistance was added to it. This strategy would be adopted especially when considering future trade negotiations and future diplomatic relations. As long as the present government stayed in office, "nothing moves on."<sup>59</sup>

A day before president Kekkonen received final confirmation on the Soviet policy, the CPF was briefed about the new Soviet policy by the embassy. The "friends" had "approved completely" the chosen line and had been in contact with the social democratic opposition (skogs). Both had agreed that a policy of "slowing down" was the best, especially when in relation to trade. The Communists also agreed with tactics in general. The government should not be made to fall immediately. According to the Communists government had not had time to reveal its reactionary nature, and, under the circumstances, the people could interpret the Communists' hostility towards the government as principal resistance. "It seems that this kind of government cannot be overthrown through parliament, as it may endure the budget procedure." The Soviet support was openly welcomed by the Communists, "because of this they underlined, that intolerable circumstances and difficulties must be created for the government, so that when the inevitable unemployment and dissatisfaction of the people appeared, given that, proper relations with the Soviet Union are nonexistent, it [the government] would collapse after being driven to a dead end."<sup>60</sup> The Soviet strategy was not only approved, it was also perfectly understood by at least one party in the country.

The strategy and its political consequences were clarified 18 September 1958 by Vladimirov to one of Kekkonen's most trusted aides, Ahti Karjalainen. The attitude of the Soviet government will be "negative, consistent and final." The emphasis would be on passive resistance, "except on some concrete issues, where a negative approach may be actively pursued." Vladimirov's next remark is very interesting from the viewpoint of the Soviet-Finnish relations. Vladimirov notes that "it is

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59 UKP I, 3.9.1958, 9.9.1958.

60 Charge d'affaires Ivan Filippov 22.9.1958, discussion with comrade Pessi and comrade Kuusinen on 16.9.1958, NKPSa, doc. 51.

understood in Moscow that as things have come this far, the change cannot take place quickly, it might in fact be unwise to try to overthrow the government before its time. Those, who want to continue good relations with the Soviet Union, must take advantage, every advantage, from this situation.” However, according to Karjalainen’s memoirs, the president would have omitted some significant remarks from his diary. First, as Karjalainen had inquired about the finality of Soviet policy, he had continued the question so that “only on this condition can the president openly put his prestige in the game,” that is, support the Soviet aim of overthrowing a Finnish majority government. Second, Karjalainen claimed that Vladimirov had defined the exploitation of the political situation much more directly, by noting that “hopefully the government solution that has taken place will in some ways profit the president.”

Regarding the composition of the government coalition, Vladimirov mentioned that “it is Finland’s internal affair, if the FPD or the Coalition Party is in the government, but it would best if it were based on center groups.” Lastly, he compared this government to the previous time, in 1953, when Finland had a SDP-Coalition-based government, which had been led by Sakari Tuomioja. He argued that the situation was different then, “it was not known [to us], who was who, but now it is.”<sup>61</sup> President Kekkonen’s unease was not exactly helped by the information Zenikhov offered him the next day, on 19 September 1958. He told the president that events in Finland had created such shock in the Kremlin that Khrushchev had had to interrupt his summer vacation in the Crimea. He also said that the Taiwan Crisis initiated by the Chinese a couple of weeks earlier, had not been the cause of this interruption. Regardless as to whether this was the case or not, the explanation Zenikhov had given was an effective way of underlining the seriousness of the situation to the president and putting him under pressure. For the rest, Zenikhov simply repeated the previous policy stance. Now, the larger Cold War context was included in the argumentation as well, as Zenikhov said that, “the people and the government [of Finland] will not be openly attacked, and there will not be an open conflict, as only the West would profit from it.”<sup>62</sup> The Soviet Union did not want to endanger its sphere of influence, its “empire” in the largest sense, by pushing Finland intentionally to the West.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FINLAND FOR THE SOVIET UNION IN THE SUMMER OF 1958 OR WHO SPOILED KHRUSHCHEV’S VACATION?

Despite these clearly unexpected developments with regard to the formation of the Finnish government during the summer of 1958, the Soviet representatives were able to compose a coherent policy remarkably quickly. This would indicate that although the events ultimately took unsatisfactory turn from the Soviet viewpoint, they did

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61 UKP I, 18.9.1958, compare with Ahti Karjalainen, Jukka Tarkka, *Presidentin ministeri*, Keuruu 1989, p. 69.

62 UKP I 19.9.1958.

not come as a complete surprise. The Soviet embassy had been concerned about the basis of Finnish government coalitions since at least 1957, and had sent warnings about parliamentary elections from the early spring of 1958 onwards. The Soviet Foreign ministry had also focused attention on these elections. This means that there had been plenty of time to consider what kind of line the Soviet Union should adopt, if it thought that its influence in Finland was, or would come under threat. Some kind of preplanned strategy had probably been prepared for a situation, which saw Finland moving towards the West. It seems clear that the Fagerholm government was regarded as kind of icebreaker, that is, a dangerous precedent, after which it would be easier to further reduce Soviet influence in Finland.

Given this kind of situation, it would be surprising if the Soviet Union had not been investing in alternative, or complementary, solutions so as to ensure its influence in Finland. Here, the ideological component of Soviet foreign policy is significant, mainly in the form of the connections of the International Department of the CPSU with Finnish Communists. The determination of the Finnish Communists to participate in a future government had been growing steadily since late 1957, and in this they were encouraged by the Soviet leadership, in the form of "the Kozlov Doctrine," and even criticized about missing earlier postwar opportunities. Rather detailed plans for "a government program" were made, including plans for the ministries of traffic, defence and interior. Once in government, the CPF (FPDL) program was to be supported by a general strike. Finland was seen, by and large, as an example of peaceful transition towards socialism. In April 1958, about a month before president Kekkonen's Moscow visit, a CPF delegation visited Moscow and was received by higher than usual party representatives, namely, Anastas Mikoian and Mikhail Suslov. Amongst other things, they enquired about the delegations wishes regarding to the forthcoming visit of president Kekkonen.<sup>63</sup> Both the Soviets and the CPF must have been very disappointed with the idea, based on the results of the negotiations over the composition of the new government, that Soviet influence over Finland was falling.

In relation to trade policy, it is interesting to compare Finland's status with that of neutral Austria, from the Soviet point of view, in the question of possible OEEC membership in July 1958. When the Austrian head of state, Chancellor Julius Raab visited Moscow, the Austrians were advised to get "as good a position in relation to the Soviet Union as Finland has." However, Raab left Moscow to attend to the Paris OEEC meeting. Participation to Western economic cooperation did not seem to be a problem with Austria from the Soviet viewpoint, as it was with Finland, the example of good relations.<sup>64</sup>

The Soviet Union was not, however, completely satisfied with the achievements of its representatives in Finland during the summer. The KGB criticized the Soviet

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63 Rentola 1997, pp. 452–457 on the basis of the reports made by the Finnish Security Police (SUPO). The SUPO had been able to infiltrate the CPF leadership in the late 1950s, and in early 1958 it informed the highest state leadership about this together with the substance of these reports. So Kekkonen was aware of the aims expressed by the CPF and about Soviet qualified support for them before the parliamentary elections.

64 Osmo Orkomies, memo on discussions between the Finnish Foreign Minister Hynninen and the Austrian Foreign Minister Leopold Figel at Helsinki airport, 26.7.1958, L-12, UM.

ambassador about his clumsy and heavy-handed efforts, in trying to influence the attitude of the Agrarian Union towards the government coalition. His overly strong attitude was said to have put the K-line in a difficult position in relation to the right wing. It was also necessary to find somebody to blame for the difficult situation, and the ambassador, who was soon to retire from Finland, was an obvious candidate. However, the other main KGB contact, Zhenikhov, was also worried about his future, "because he had given the wrong information."<sup>65</sup> This remark is quite understandable, when related to the positive, but untrue expectations created by the earlier Vladimirov -Karjalainen talks on the formation of a government "following the right line." Though the Soviets in general were very well informed about developments in Finland, it is interesting to ask what made the Soviets associate Kuusinen's visit to Finland with the final phase of the negotiations about a government. Apparently, the intention was to give an ideological boost to the CPF/FPDL after its success in elections and put pressure on the president, and it did not matter that the visit would be very unpopular amongst patriotically minded Finns and therefore strengthen the position of the bourgeois parties.

The relationship between Soviet representatives in Finland and president Kekkonen is difficult to ascertain. In general, it seems that both partners in this relationship had an interest in using the other to a certain extent, but only on certain conditions. This extent of this cooperation was defined by the changing circumstances of domestic and foreign policy. It is clear that the collapse of the "anti-soviet" forces of the Fagerholm government, which was the objective of Soviet policy at the time, was politically advantage for Kekkonen, as these forces would be his major opponents in the next presidential elections. However, this Soviet course of action did not mean unconditional support for Kekkonen. It was also an open reminder that he had not been in control of the domestic political situation. The partly veiled, partly open Soviet inquires about his part in the process of forming the government would support this view. The Soviets were, in a way, questioning both Kekkonen's reliability and abilities, but on the other hand, they did not have an alternative figure comparable to Kekkonen. Accordingly, Kekkonen's bitterness about the power struggle in the Agrarian Union, and the "betrayal" of the right wing, especially that of Virolainen, was genuine<sup>66</sup>.

Despite the fact that the Soviet Union had chosen to act in Finland, it seems that developments in Finland during the summer of 1958 were of some what limited significance from the viewpoint of a global superpower. Events off the Chinese coast from August to October, and especially during September 1958, demanded the attention of the highest Soviet leadership, as they had the potential to threaten world peace.

Khrushchev thought he had defused the tensions between China and the Soviet Union in his talks with Mao in late July, early August (31.7–3.8.1958). However, only three weeks after these talks the Chinese shelled the coastal islands controlled by the Taiwanese, without informing the USSR beforehand, thus, setting off the Taiwan

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65 UKP I, 11.9.1958, 17.9.1958.

66 Contrary to Nevakivi 1996, pp. 146–147.

Crisis. As the United States was involved in the defence of Taiwan and the Soviet Union had an alliance treaty with China, these events could lead to a world war. Khrushchev told Eisenhower on 7 September 1958, after a hard line taken by the U.S. Secretary of State John F. Dulles that the use of nuclear weapons against China would be regarded as an attack against the Soviet Union. However, the previous day the Soviets had sent foreign minister Andrei Gromyko to Beijing to find out what the Chinese were up to. The response of the Chinese foreign minister Zhou Enlai a couple of days later did not exactly clarify the situation. He noted that China had “taken into consideration the possibility of the outbreak in this region of a local war,” and said that the Soviets should stay out of war, even if the Americans used tactical nuclear weapons against China. The Chinese told, they expected a Soviet counterstrike only if the Americans used strategic nuclear weapons and would try to escalate the war. This caused Khrushchev and the Soviet leadership to wonder, whether the Chinese were simply testing their loyalty or really trying to drag them into a nuclear conflict with the United States without even informing them beforehand. Over the next three weeks the Soviet leadership delayed their answer to Zhou’s statement and, after considering the likelihood of a nuclear war, and thanking China for its “noble attitude,” they finally, on 27 September 1958, confirmed that an attack against China would be considered as a declaration of war against the Socialist camp.<sup>67</sup>

During September 1958, the Soviet leadership probably spent a lot of time thinking about the value and objectives of their greatest ally, China, whom they had just promised to give the A-bomb, and about estimating the capacity of their own nuclear arsenal versus the American. Just in case. As for guessing who spoilt Khrushchev’s summer holidays in late September, the “great chairman of China” might be a lot safer bet than the president of a small country like Finland, and its government coalitions, in spite of the information given by “the usually reliable sources.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, pp. 225–226.

<sup>68</sup> Compare with Suomi 1992, pp. 157–158, who relies, on this issue, solely on the view expressed by Vladimir Zhenikhov, resident (chief representative) of the Soviet intelligence service, the KGB in Finland. Briefly, on Soviet foreign intelligence and its residents in Finland from the 1940’s to the 1970’s, Rentola 1997, p. 623.



# ADDITIONAL GUARANTEES IN THE EUROPEAN CRISIS OF 1958–1959

The second half of 1958 was a period of increasing confrontation that brought the world frightfully close to a nuclear war between the multinational alliances, or “empires,” of the Cold War. However, the centers of these international crises in the Taiwanese Straits and Berlin were not in the immediate vicinity of Finland. As there have been different interpretations regarding the importance of domestic and foreign factors in this crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations, both among contemporaries and in Finnish historical studies, it may be interesting to note how some key actors characterized the crisis.

In late 1958, the Fagerholm cabinet, after successful Soviet pressure, resigned, and president Kekkonen argued in public that Finnish national interests demanded the reestablishment of “confidence” in Finnish-Soviet relations, “as power fields charged by the threat of war” had been moving closer to the Finnish borders.<sup>1</sup> On the Soviet side, Ivan Spiridanov, the party secretary of Leningrad, the Soviet metropolis close to Finland, had already, in early September, outlined his concerns more directly, arguing that, “The international situation has become more tense recently, and we need to be certain that Finland, with its long land border, will not become a stepping stone for an attack against the Soviet Union by the Atlantic alliance.”<sup>2</sup> During the “unofficial” Khrushchev-Kekkonen summit in Leningrad in January 1959, in the aftermath of the Night Frost Crisis, Khrushchev claimed, according to Kekkonen, that, “Our understanding was that our border had not been secured in the same way during the Fagerholm government as it was before.”<sup>3</sup>

Even though security concerns were not the only, perhaps not even the most important factors as such behind this crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations, the argumentation based on these concerns should not be underestimated or ignored. Scandinavia, though not a main theatre of international relations, was well connected to general European developments through Norway and Denmark’s membership of NATO and through Finland’s limited defence pact with the Soviet Union, the FCMA treaty. These countries limited participation in antagonistic security structures, together with the neutrality of Sweden, created the basis for their mutual interdependence, which is often referred to as the Nordic balance. Central

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1 Suomi 1992, pp. 188–189.

2 UKP I, 13.10.1958. The substance of this speech, held on the fortieth anniversary of the CPF in early September, was given to Kekkonen in October by the Finnish Security Police (SUPO), Rentola 1997, p. 490.

3 Suomi 1992, p. 209.



aspects of the Soviet Union's policy towards Finland can only be understood if they are seen in the wider context of Soviet policy in Scandinavia, indeed, in the general context of Soviet objectives in Europe. Whether Soviet objections to the Fagerholm government were based on genuine security concerns or not, in order to understand Soviet objectives it is necessary to see them in terms of the general international situation at the time and the Marxist-Leninist ideology of the Soviet political elite.

## EMPIRES IN CONFLICT OVER GERMANY

Approaching numerous Cold War crises over Berlin from the viewpoint of the unity of "empires" offers some helpful insights into these conflicts. As Berlin was both divided capital of, and a capitalist Western (German) enclave in the GDR, it naturally held huge symbolic value as a propagandist "show case" for both sides. Any change in the status of either West Berlin or the GDR's capital, East Berlin, would have major consequences. If the U.S. could not guarantee the security of, and political system in, West Berlin, how could it be relied to do so in the rest of "the Free World", in West Germany, Great Britain or France? Similarly, if the USSR could not guarantee socialism in the GDR, how could "the Socialist World System" survive in other parts of the globe?<sup>4</sup> It was the very essence of these superpower-led multinational alliances, "empires" that was at stake.

By October 1958, when the second Berlin Crisis erupted, Nikita Khrushchev was already the unchallenged leader of the Soviet Union and its foreign policy, a fact which becomes very clear during the development of the crisis. Soviet policy in Germany, which had priority at this time, differed fundamentally from Western policy to Germany since 1955, as the Soviets had recognized West Germany, hoping thereby to weaken its links to the West. However, West Germany was becoming stronger economically through its "economic miracle" and militarily through its membership in NATO. The USSR had to deal with two German states, unlike the West, which had not recognized the DDR.<sup>5</sup> This alone made German unification a more urgent and concrete to the Soviets.

The Soviet fear of West Germany's growing potential, which it thought would to make the country more independent of the United States, was clearly increased by the weakness and fragility observed within its own alliance since 1956. The position of the GDR was of decisive importance in this respect. The Soviets thought that if the Soviet Union failed to guarantee the development or simply the stability and continued existence of socialist system in the GDR, its other European allies might start to deal directly with the West, especially with West Germany. So West Germany's economic success and its possible success in obtaining nuclear weapons was seen, if not as a direct military threat, at least as a growing geopolitical challenge. Up to now the Soviet political leadership and its foreign policy apparatus had agreed

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4 William Taubman, *Khrushchev, The Man and His Era* (Biography), New York 2003, p. 396–400 on U.S. and Soviet views. On the general Soviet views regarding the ideological and propaganda significance of the GDR, see Harrison 2003, e.g. p. 99, 227.

5 Zubok 2000, pp. 72–73 and Zubok 2002, p. 2.

on the German question. Gromyko's proposal for a German peace settlement in September 1958, brought to public by the GDR, belongs to this general context and did not presage any crisis. It was Khrushchev who decided during the autumn that instead of containing this geopolitical challenge by traditional diplomatic initiatives it should be dealt with by more direct means.<sup>6</sup>

So, on 10 November 1958 he gave a speech, announcing that unless the West recognized the GDR, the USSR would give its control of access routes to West Berlin to the GDR, and terminate unilaterally the access rights of the Western great powers to West Berlin established in the Potsdam agreement. If the West would tried to forcibly prevent East Germany from carrying out its new duties, the Soviet Union was prepared to support it with armed force. Two weeks later, on 27 November 1958, Khrushchev gave the Western alliance a six month's deadline to agree with the Soviet ultimatum.<sup>7</sup>

To understand the reasons behind Khrushchev's dramatic announcement, it is helpful to look at the ideological element in his decision. For Khrushchev the significance of the GDR as a socialist state went beyond its strategic role within the Eastern "empire." A socialist German state was regarded as a reward for the colossal losses the Soviet Union had suffered in the struggle against Nazi-Germany. This is also the very reason why the leader of the SED, the GDR ruling party, Walter Ulbricht acquired such a leverage over Khrushchev. Unlike his less ideologically-minded comrades, Beria and Malenkov, Khrushchev had not even considered giving up the GDR in July 1953 during the East Berlin revolt, and he was even less prepared to consider this idea now. Ulbricht was allowed to remain leader of the GDR, provided he would ease the forced methods of Sovietization, which had brought the GDR to the brink of collapse. But, after a few years, Ulbricht continued with "construction of socialism" in the GDR in ways that further weakened the economy of the country, caused the flight of skilled workers and professionals to the West, and made it more dependent on Soviet subsidies. The collectivization of agriculture and the liquidation of the private sector was, however, the essence of Marxist-Leninist economic practice. As the SED leader justified his policy by resorting to Marxist concepts, Khrushchev thought that he was acting in an ideologically correct way, and therefore deserved support. As Ulbricht had been completely loyal to the USSR on the "crazy year" of 1956, from that point on he was able to exaggerate Soviet fears of losing the GDR, which had been so apparent during the 1953 revolt. For these reasons the Soviet leadership felt compelled to back Ulbricht's style of governing the GDR, with both political and economical support. Ulbricht had managed to make himself, against the odds, indispensable to the Soviets. This gave him remarkable influence over the formulation of the Soviet policy in Germany, especially regarding West Berlin.<sup>8</sup>

The USSR's policy towards China, which had a very important place in the USSR's foreign policy agenda, the more so since Khrushchev viewed Sino-Soviet

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6 Zubok 2002, p. 3–4.

7 Taubman 2003, pp. 396–397. Harrison 2003 on the criticism of unilateralist views inside the Soviet leadership by Anastas Mikoian, pp. 107–108.

8 Harrison 2003, pp. 88–95, Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, pp. 197–198.

relations as the biggest achievement of his personal style of diplomacy, also contained a substantial ideological element. Signs of conflict in their relations with China had required high level Soviet attention from July to October 1958. As the Soviets had felt forced to restrain the Chinese during the Taiwan Crises in September, so now it was equally important for Khrushchev to show that he was capable of a resolute stance against the West as well. Much the same way influenced Molotov's 1957 critique of Khrushchev's foreign policy, which was based on ideological orthodoxy and was close to the Chinese view.<sup>9</sup>

However, Khrushchev's decision to meet the situation in such a dramatic way as to threaten nuclear war and by issuing an ultimatum did not go completely unquestioned in the Soviet foreign policy apparatus or in the top leadership. The director of the foreign policy Information Committee of the CPSU's Central Committee Georgii Pushkin, a former Soviet ambassador to the GDR, warned Khrushchev of the risks of his Berlin policy. Khrushchev totally ignored Pushkin's warning, arguing that it was "nonsense", and that the U.S. would not "be idiotic enough to start fighting over Berlin", even if they were kicked out of West Berlin by force. Khrushchev was so annoyed by Pushkin's critique, that the whole analytical department was quickly abolished. Khrushchev had not cleared his November 10 speech beforehand with the politburo, according to Anastas Mikoian.<sup>10</sup> Mikoian had been dubious in an earlier politburo session, and had criticized Khrushchev's approach, since "they [the West] will say that Khrushchev spoke about the status quo" and now "they [the West] will accuse us of increasing tensions." However, Andrei Gromyko, the foreign minister, sided with the majority including Suslov, Kozlov, Brezhnev and Kirichenko, to support Khrushchev's Berlin policy.<sup>11</sup> After the strengthening of the ultimatum on November 27, Khrushchev's foreign policy advisor Oleg Troianovskii, also questioned in what ways the "gensec" (the general secretary) intended resolve the crisis. Khrushchev's own son, Sergei, may have got closest to the heart of the matter in wondering if the Americans would yield, and if not, what would then happen. He recorded that, "Father gave me no clear answer. He intended to act according to the situation."<sup>12</sup> On the basis of the recent research it is likely that Khrushchev's ultimatum was 90 per cent improvisation.<sup>13</sup> No alternative or complementary plans had been prepared in the event that the Soviet ultimatum did not work.

Despite the public show of unity by the Western powers during the second Berlin Crisis, there were clear divisions within NATO over how to react to the Soviet ultimatum. The Americans, and despite de Gaulle's later anti-American policy, the French, were more or less ready to fight over West Berlin, while the British government clearly thought Berlin was not a worth war. West Germany was, in principle, against compromising over recognizing the GDR and, indeed, over détente

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9 Zubok 2002, pp. 4–5.

10 Taubman 2003, pp. 398–399.

11 *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954–1964*, Tom 1, edit. A. A. Fursenko and others (document publication), Moskva 2003, Protokol no 190a, 6.11.1958, Soobrazheniia po Germanii, pp. 338–339.

12 Taubman 2003, pp. 398–399.

with the East as a whole, as it regarded both the GDR and the Eastern bloc as the main hindrances to German unification. However, Adenauer was not prepared to allow the use nuclear weapons for the sake of West Berlin.

The United States adopted a very tough stance and was prepared to risk a nuclear war, if conventional forces could not reach West Berlin. This did not mean that the Americans thought that the city was important in a military sense, or that they were not prepared to negotiate over Berlin, which was clearly a troubled spot in the East-West relations. But, the Eisenhower administration was categorically against accepting a Soviet ultimatum as a basis for negotiations, as it saw this as a direct challenge to the unity and credibility of the Western alliance system, “empire.” The French, in principle, had the same general view as the Americans, but were more willing, ultimately, to avoid war, even if the Soviets did not back down. However, as a negotiation tactic, it was reasonable, in the French view, to play tough, especially as de Gaulle reckoned that Khrushchev was bluffing. The French, also needed to ensure West German support for French plans about European integration within the EEC by offering West Germany support during this crisis. This does not mean that the French, the British, or even the Americans, were in any kind of hurry to see, or even facilitate, German unification; the very thing that seemed to horrify the Soviets. The Macmillan government in Great Britain was the most pessimistic in assessing the situation. It took the Soviet threats as genuine and was not willing to go to war on the side of its former enemy, West Germany. The British thought it better to negotiate, even on Soviet terms, before West Berlin was completely lost. Macmillan’s views put a great strain on the traditional “special relationship” between Britain and the United States. At one point Macmillan, who was arguing for an emergency summit of top leaders, claimed that World War I could have been avoided if such a summit had been convened. Eisenhower, in turn “countered that prior to World War II Neville Chamberlain had gone to such a meeting [to negotiate with Hitler in Munich in 1938]...”<sup>14</sup>

From the viewpoint of the interaction of domestic and foreign policy, the ultimatum policy in relation to West Berlin could be interpreted as a way to solve Khrushchev’s overcommitted political agenda. Achieving a Soviet-U.S. summit on the issue, and achieving some progress there, for example, in relation to the recognition of the GDR, would then allow him to switch resources from defence spending to domestic consumption. The more Khrushchev’s foreign policy line failed, the more he was prepared to gamble in order to maintain both the coalition of major domestic interest groups that constituted his power base, and the unity of the Socialist Camp, “empire.” This was like squaring the circle, especially since Khrushchev needed an agreement more than his opponents, as the pressure to engage in alliance maintenance was generally lower in the Western “empire.”<sup>15</sup>

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13 Zubok 2002, p. 6.

14 Western policies in detail, see Trachtenberg, 1999, pp. 256–282. On the aim to avoid nuclear war by both sides, in principle, see Wilfred Loth, *Overcoming the Cold War: A History of Détente, 1950–1991*, Chippenham, Wiltshire 2002, pp. 47–52.

15 Snyder 1993, pp. 112–113.

As the West was able to keep up the show of unity, at least, in public and was, therefore, able to meet the Soviet challenge on the same level the threat of nuclear war rose throughout November–December 1958. Concessions over Berlin or worse a defeat would seem unilateral, would on the international level question the credibility of the protection the respective superpower was offering its allies, and this, in turn, had the potential to destroy the unity and *raison d'être* of each superpower's alliance systems. This, it was understood, meant isolation and ultimately defeat in the Cold War. From the Soviet point of view, its action in the second Berlin crisis was based on the need to defend its own "empire." This forms the background for its "Northern Dimension", that is, for developments in Scandinavia at the time, which entailed a structural change in the Finnish position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

## THE SOVIET-FINNISH CRISIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNITY OF "EMPIRES"

Developments in Finland in the late autumn of 1958 needs to be related, not only to the aims of Soviet policy in Scandinavia, but also to the wider problem of the unity of multinational alliances and their spheres of influences. Both superpowers were constantly trying to undermine the cohesion of their opponents alliance and sphere of influence. Central themes in this were peaceful coexistence, the substance and role of which has already been dealt with in Chapter 1, together with neutrality and the idea of national roads to communism. The first turning point in this development was reached in 1956. Before 1956, the USSR had been more successful and flexible in promoting neutrality and peaceful coexistence, especially in Scandinavia. After de-Stalinization and the Hungarian revolt the United States, although cautious in its approach, was more successful in promoting national communism and neutrality in Eastern Europe. In order to understand Soviet policy and argumentation regarding Finland and Scandinavia it is essential to compare Soviet assessments of Austrian neutrality with U.S. Policy towards Eastern Europe in 1957–1958.

### THE CHANGING VALUE OF NEUTRALITY AND NATIONAL COMMUNISM, 1957–1958

Neutrality as a means for breaking or weakening the unity of their opponent's alliance was both an opportunity for and a threat to both superpowers. While both prepared to promote neutrality in their opponent's camp, they were just as willing to prevent it in their own. For example, Soviet policy in Scandinavia included encouraging Norway, Denmark, and Iceland, to adopt a policy of neutrality, and the Soviets repeatedly used Finland as an example of the benefits of such a policy. This was especially the case after the return of the Porkkala base and the inclusion of Finland among neutral states, such as Sweden and Austria, in a declaration of the XX Party Congress of the CPSU in early 1956. It was a change in the Soviet position that had allowed the ending of Austria's occupation by four powers in 1955 and the

creation of the State Treaty, which connected Austria to neutrality status.<sup>16</sup> Important parallels with Soviet policy in Scandinavia can be found by examining changes in Soviet attitude towards Austria, another country, the Soviets had actively encouraged to become neutral. In early 1957, the aftermath of the Hungarian revolt, the Soviet Union was in the process of reevaluating the role of Austrian neutrality.

The Soviet assessment of Austria's position began, perhaps not surprisingly, with the observation that, the country's foreign policy had become more western-oriented especially after the "Hungarian events". The Soviets concluded that this corresponded with, "the plans of the Western great powers and the Vatican to use Austria to break the peoples' democracies of Eastern Europe away from the socialist camp." Austria was seen as particularly suitable for this role because of its history and geographical position. The Soviets knew, however, that Austria's neutrality was undergoing certain changes, observing that "it is characteristic in connection with this that the influence of political circles in Austria, which recognize only a narrow understanding of neutrality in times of war, but which in political terms represent the strengthening of cooperation between Austria and the West are continuously growing." The Austrian Social Democrats as well as the right wing of the People's party were seen as representing this kind of line. As an example of these developments, it was noted that, under pressure from his right wing the chairman of the People's Party, chancellor Raab, "who formerly represented a much more cautious foreign policy," was beginning to support this line.<sup>17</sup>

This reinterpretation of Austrian neutrality on the part of certain political circles was clearly unwelcome from the Soviet viewpoint. Moreover, "rightist circles" had increased their "propaganda about Austrian neutrality acting as a model for the future for the East European countries, especially Hungary." The spread of an Austrian type of neutrality was seen as providing support for the idea of creating a "neutral belt" in Europe, "which is presently being propagated by the English Labourites and other Social Democrats and bourgeois actors in Western European countries." The Austrian chancellor Raab was also regarded as having given indirect support to this idea. He had observed, in a radio speech, in late January 1957, that tensions in Europe would be eased by "the creation of neutral states of some kind on both sides of the ideological demarcation line." The potential consequences of this Austrian statement was clearly of grave concerns to Soviets, as "The hostile tendency" of Austrian foreign policy was estimated to have had a "certain influence on unstable elements in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, and [that tendency] could be a factor which would encourage the activities of underground counter-revolutionaries in these countries."<sup>18</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that the Soviets were worried that Austria might act as a model for the other East European countries. Austria's policy was seen as a threat to the USSR's sphere of influence and, as such, of great significance to the West. This

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16 Hanhimäki 1997b, pp. 170–171.

17 Deputy Director of the MID's Committee of Information I. Tugarinov to Boris N.

Ponomarev, 27.2.1957, "Nekatorye novye momenty vo vnesheii politike Avstrii", circulated also to Suslov and Shepilov, 5/28/494, pp. 20–23, RGANI.

18 Ibid.

was a mirror image of the Western view of Finland, which was seen as a threat to NATO's Scandinavian members and thus of benefit to the East. The Soviet evaluations concerning Austria, just as the Western view of Finland, were also partly grounded. The Americans did see Austria having some value for their policy towards Eastern Europe at the time.

As for cultural exchanges, which were a valuable tool in the propaganda war, the U.S. embassy in Vienna was "inclined to favor these exchanges" especially between Austria and the Eastern European socialist countries. The U.S. thought that historic background of the Austrians made them particularly qualified in evaluations of the East European countries, in comparison to the Soviet Union. In connection to this division, made between the Soviet Union and the East European people's democracies, it was also vaguely observed: "Moreover, it is believed there is a role Austria could play."<sup>19</sup> The Hungarian Revolt and its consequences increased the propaganda value of neutrality for the U.S. policy in Eastern Europe, as by now the limits of the "Roll Back" doctrine had been made clear. For the Soviets, neutrality was changing from being an opportunity more to a threat, especially in relation to its own alliance, the fragility of which had been so openly demonstrated, not only by Hungarian, but also by Polish developments during the autumn of 1956.

The United States policy towards Eastern Europe, however, offers even more obvious parallels Soviet policy in Scandinavia. The two most important countries, though in slightly different ways, for American policy were Yugoslavia and Poland.<sup>20</sup> As the U.S. general objective in the Cold War was to break or weaken "the internal cohesiveness of the Soviet bloc," Yugoslavia, after the 1948 Tito-Stalin break, had offered the first real opportunity to try out this policy. For this reason alone it was in the U.S. interest to support Yugoslavia's continued existence outside the Soviet alliance and the country's capability of withstanding Soviet political and economic pressure. This was not, however, an end in itself. Yugoslavia was supported, because it constituted an alternative mode on display to the other countries in the Soviet sphere of influence and was "a constant reminder to the dominated regimes and serves as a pressure point both on the leaders of those regimes and on the leaders of the USSR." As Yugoslavia was still a communist state, the Americans were anxious to avoid actions which could be understood either as unreserved acceptance of "the Tito regime," or U.S. encouragement "for overthrowing the regime by violence."

The Americans were prepared to invest heavily in this policy. It is estimated that between 1948–1958 the United States economic aid to Yugoslavia "totalled \$783 million, of which approximately \$695 million has been expended." The period of detente in Yugoslav-Soviet relations, after the death of Stalin, had not been seen as a serious threat to the Yugoslav role in American policy in Eastern Europe, especially

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19 Western European Chiefs of Missions Conference: Summary Conclusions and Recommendations, 8.5.1957, Foreign Relation of the United States (FRUS) 1955–57, Vol. IV, edit. William Z. Slany etc., Washington 1986, doc. 251.

20 On the special role of these countries in U.S. Policy towards Eastern Europe, see National Intelligence Estimate (NIE 12–58), Outlook for Stability in the Eastern European Satellites, 4.2.1958, doc.2, FRUS 1958–1960, Vol. X, part 2, edit Ronald D. Landa etc., Washington 1993.



as these relations had cooled first after the Hungarian Revolt and again from the end of year 1957.<sup>21</sup>

In comparison to Yugoslavia, Poland's significance in the United States policy towards Eastern Europe had only begun to grow since 1956 on. As one of the unexpected consequences of de-Stalinization, which had already led to a revolt in Hungary, Poland witnessed considerable popular unrest, which eventually brought a moderate communist, Wladyslaw Gomulka, to power in Poland in October 1956. Gomulka's election as the first secretary of the Polish ruling party, the PZPR, had been a highly unwelcome development from the Soviet point of view. Only a day before the election, on 19 October 1956, Nikita Khrushchev had arrived uninvited in the Polish capital to prevent the election of Gomulka, and Soviet troops in the country were on alert as the Soviet Baltic Fleet made a show of force off the coast. Gomulka, however, refused to negotiate with "a revolver on the table," and the PZPR Central Committee did not even allow Khrushchev to participate in their plenary sessions. The Soviets finally accepted Gomulka's election after he reassured them by promising to keep the country in the Warsaw Treaty. This was motivated by Poland's need for Soviet support on its Western border, the Oder-Neisse line. Although this argument mainly concerned West Germany, it is now known that the GDR's unwillingness to openly recognize the finality of the Oder-Neisse line was also a considerable problem for the Poles. As large scale violence had been avoided, unlike in Hungary, these developments in Poland had set a dangerous precedent in the eyes of conservative Stalinist leaders in Eastern Europe, for example in the GDR.<sup>22</sup>

United States policy in Eastern Europe was more than willing to capitalize on these developments in Poland and, indeed, the potential for similar events unfolding elsewhere in the opponents camp. Though "the Gomulka regime" remained communist and was still a member of the Warsaw Pact, the Americans found the regime useful as it weakened "the monolithic character of the Soviet Bloc," challenged "the alleged universality of certain aspects of Soviet Communism," contributed "to ferment in Eastern Europe" and also offered "new opportunities to project Western influences in Poland." Because of the "semi-independence," and larger room for manoeuvre that Poland had won herself vis-a vis the Soviet Union, Poland was seen as a "key factor" in influencing future developments in the other East European countries in the Soviet camp.

However, American policy, probably as a result of the mistakes the Americans had made over Hungary, was well aware of the limits of its influence in Poland. Even though a "greater orientation of Poland toward the West, and diminution of Soviet influence" was one of the U.S. main objectives, this was not to be pursued at any price. On the contrary, any situation that "might lead to retrogression in Poland, harsher Soviet policies in the other Satellites or serious risk of general war" were to be avoided.

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21 Operations Coordinating Board Report (OCB), Operations Plan for Yugoslavia, 6.8.1958, FRUS 1958–1960, vol. X, part 2, doc. 133, and National Security Committee Report, NSC 5805, Draft Statement for US Policy towards Yugoslavia, 28.2.1958, doc. 120.

22 Anderson 2001, p. 122.

At the moment, in the autumn of 1958, American interests were best furthered by Polish “semi-independence” and its potential to develop into “full independence by gradual means not jeopardizing the gains already made.” The Americans were also aware of the limits set by Poland’s domestic political situation, as they noted that recently “the regime has made clear it will not tolerate activity ultimately threatening to itself.” As was the case with Yugoslavia, the Americans understood that the Poles even more than the Yugoslavs, would, in certain circumstances, have to take positions, which would not be in America’s interests, because of Poland’s political system, and the need to maintain credibility in its relations within the Eastern camp, and especially with the Soviet Union. In fact, from the beginning of 1958 there was a growing tendency within the Eastern bloc to adopt more orthodox positions and this was reflected in Polish domestic and foreign policies. Despite these obvious limitations, the Americans were ready to invest considerably in Poland’s new role in the form of economic aid so that between October 1956 and September 1958 \$55 million had been provided as loans, and \$138 million as agricultural surplus.<sup>23</sup>

Although both Yugoslavia and Poland were central to U.S. policy in Eastern Europe as examples of “national communism,” their roles were somewhat different in emphasis. Whereas Yugoslavia was a communist state outside the Soviet camp, Poland instead had experienced a reduction of Soviet influence within that camp. As the catastrophic consequences of the Hungarian revolt had seriously questioned the practicality of the earlier US “Roll Back” doctrine, Poland a country within the Soviet camp, seemed to have, for the moment, more potential for weakening the cohesion of the Soviet alliance from within, than Yugoslavia, which remained outside the socialist bloc.

Some of this reasoning also seems to have been understood in the Eastern camp, especially by the Soviet Union and its “front-line” ally, the GDR. Both were concerned about the consequences of the changes in Poland’s position and its growing relations with the West, in particular with West Germany. Generally the GDR was more worried about its domestic political situation, as it was fearful of “contamination” of Polish reforms, whilst the Soviet Union was more worried about the wider security implications. The GDR’s embassy in Warsaw had, already, noted on the same day Gomulka had been elected, in October 1956, that the new Polish leadership would make the Soviet Bloc’s foreign policy “significantly more complicated.” In September 1958, when the Poles had refused to support the GDR’s idea of a German Confederation to solve the problem of German unification, this was, according to the East Germans, “because they [the Poles] did not trust the GDR as a guarantor of the Oder-Neisse line.” Furthermore, in December 1958 the GDR’s embassy reported that “reactionary elements [in Poland] ask whether it wouldn’t be better to ally with the Americans, the English and the West Germans in order to solve these [border] problems with them.”<sup>24</sup>

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23 National Security Council Report, NSC 5808/1, US Policy towards Poland, 16.4.1958, doc. 46, National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), 16.9.1958, FRUS 1958–1960, vol. X, part 2, doc. 54 and on Yugoslavian statements, doc. 133 (OCB report 6.8.1958).

24 Anderson 2001 on GDR and Polish views, p.122, 208, 212, 232.

Soviet worries regarding Poland were not limited to West Germany alone. They were also visible in the memorandum on the nature of Austrian neutrality, mentioned earlier. Bruno Kreisky, “a visible social democrat,” and a secretary general of the Austrian foreign ministry, was reported to have proposed to the Poles in early 1957 that the Austrian social democratic party could act as an intermediary on Poland’s behalf in the “Council of Western great power’s for economic support [OEEC or IMF]” for receiving credits. Also, it was observed that “In connection to this, Kreisky argued that Poland could get rid of its supposed ‘dependence on the Soviet Union’ and offered political support for Gomulka’s new course.” In addition, it was claimed by the Soviet foreign ministry’s report that Austria and other Western countries expected Poland to condemn Kadar’s government and support “the creation of a large-based government in Hungary, which would also include Imre Nagy.”<sup>25</sup> Whether these claims were completely true or not, they well reflect the Soviet concern for the stability of its own alliance and on the growing Western influence there. Against this background, Soviet accusations about Finnish right-wing social democrats orienting Finland to the West, can be placed within the context of Soviet concern for the cohesion of its alliance system.

The Soviets had had these kinds of doubts since late 1956. In the spring of 1958 they had been seriously concerned that the West German economy was pulling, not only Poland, but also the GDR and Czechoslovakia out of the Soviet camp. However, although the Polish leadership had opposed the GDR communiqués about “an imminent threat of a West German attack” in December 1958, during Ulbricht’s visit to Poland, and even though Gomulka had been personally shocked by Khrushchev’s Berlin ultimatum, in public the Poles remained loyal to the Soviet alliance’s foreign policy during the Berlin Crisis.<sup>26</sup>

## THE CULMINATION OF THE SOVIET-FINNISH CRISIS IN AUTUMN 1958

As the crisis around Berlin intensified and threatened of war between the Cold War “empires” towards the end of 1958, the crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations also reached a high point, and the Finnish government resigned in the first week of December. However, the fall of this Finnish government had been predestined since its appointment in late August, the latest after mid September. After that overthrowing this government had been a major Soviet objective in Finland, and the president of Finland had agreed to support this. In this sense, the fate of the government did not depend on its policies or what it actually did, though they could make its position more complicated. For this study, the foreign policy aspects of these developments are more important than the domestic political process as such.

In Finland politics under that autumn were in a somewhat feverish state, both domestically and in the country’s relations with the Soviet Union. The Fagerholm

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25 Tugarinov to Ponomarev, 27.2.1957, 5/28/494, p. 21, RGANI.

26 Zubok 2002, p. 3.

government, regarded as “anti-Soviet”, had a two thirds majority in parliament, and the alliance between the SDP and the Coalition, in particular was considered strong. Thus, the struggle within the Agrarian Union, the third major party of the coalition, was to be decisive. The importance of this factor had already been identified by the Soviets during the formation of the government. Only by regaining control in the party and defeating its right wing could the president manage to break up the government from within. Kekkonen had begun his attempts to engineer the collapse of the government soon after it had been appointed, but because of the strength of the opposition, had only begun to secure some success in October. The Soviet pressure also increased during October, over both trade relations and security policy.

In early October, for the first time since mid September, when Soviet policy had been set out, the KGB informed the president, through his intelligence expert, Kustaa Vilkuna, about forthcoming events. It was confirmed that the Soviet ambassador Viktor Lebedev, who had left the country without formal ceremonies, would not be returning. Furthermore, growing diplomatic pressure was to be applied through Soviet visa policy. Though the present state of relations between the countries could, it was argued, be mended, it would take time, especially as it was explained, “the stance in Moscow was sharper than here.” Despite the general tightening of visa policy, exceptions were made, as the Soviet holiday of Ahti Karjalainen, the president’s secretary, 3 October 1958 shows. He was not, however, willing to enter into discussions on trade issues with the Soviets, despite requests by the Fagerholm government and Finnish foreign ministry, and with the support of the president, he managed to avoid this task.

The most interesting part of the Soviet message to Vilkuna, however, dealt with the limited Soviet-Finnish defence pact, the FCMA treaty. The KGB contact, Viktor Vladimirov, claimed that “W[est] Germany and Denmark are planning military co-operation in the Baltic Sea. If the Danes agree with that, then the Soviet Union will present demands that ‘Finland offers certainty’ in the spirit of the pact of 1948 [FCMA].”<sup>27</sup>

This demand of guarantees from Finland in the form of military consultations between Finland and the Soviet Union was repeated a week later, in mid October, when it was agreed verbally that if reassuring information was received from the Danes, the Soviets would not present their demands officially. On the same occasion it was announced that the Soviet Union would not begin trade negotiations with Finland in October–November, something which would have serious consequences for the Finnish economy and for employment. For the first time, the KGB representatives began to press for the overthrowing of the government, arguing that “Too much time should not be spent on dealing with the government question in Finland. Slowness is disadvantageous. Because of reasons related to overall political circumstances.” Now a deadline was given. The problem should be solved before the end of the year. In addition, it was mentioned that Finland might lose her markets in the Soviet Union to the other Western countries. However, the participation of the

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27 UKP I, 9.10.1958, on Karjalainen’s visit, 3.10.1958.

Communists (FPDL) to the new government was not, at this time, thought necessary.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time the struggle within the Agrarian Union continued to intensify. The K-line, the president's line, had still not been accepted by the party. On the contrary, it was claimed that the president and the party-secretary Arvo Korsimo were left isolated, as "the leading forces of the party, with Virolainen in the front" were against them. There were suggestions in the party that they were preparing to fight the next presidential elections, with an other candidate, instead of Kekkonen. A Soviet intelligence contact told one of the president's supporters that the Soviets thought that Virolainen, now foreign minister in the Fagerholm government, had changed his opinion even before the July elections, and that the Soviets had lost all "confidence" in him.<sup>29</sup>

Interestingly, there seems to have been some discontinuity in Soviet pressure over trade policy in late October and early November. In late October the Fagerholm government, which was also very interested in Finland's trade policy, had made enquires of its own, first to representatives of the Soviet embassy in Finland, and then to the Soviet ambassador in Paris. In both cases the Soviets had spoken positively about reaching a trade agreement with the government. This information must have been rather unwelcome to the president, whose domestic policy, especially the counter attack on the Agrarian Union, was based on the continuation and intensification of Soviet pressure against the government. The Communists indeed told to the Soviet embassy that "the Agrarians opposing the government [the K-line] think that, it is necessary to nullify trade relations between Finland and the Soviet Union and after that overthrow the government."<sup>30</sup> If the government did, in fact, reach a trade agreement with the Soviet Union, this kind of scenario would be endangered. The KGB kept contradicting these claims, and on the 9 November 1958 they finally confirmed to Vilku the Soviet line, as agreed in mid September, remained in force. Specifically referring to this, the president noted in his diary that, "[They] will not change their present course without informing me in good time through this channel."<sup>31</sup>

At the end of October, the Soviets, in turn, asked the Finnish ambassador in Moscow about Finnish trade policy. The Soviet Union was interested about Finland's position in relation to the (European) Free Trade Area. This could include all the NATO countries and neutrals, which had been left outside the EEC of the "six", and finally merge these two together. Tellingly the Finnish ambassador in Moscow reported that the Soviets hoped that relations between countries would improve, "but that depends mostly on you Finns."<sup>32</sup>

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28 UKP I 16.10.1958. On verbal agreement, Suomi 1992, p. 168, and Nevakivi 1996, p. 149.

29 UKP I 15.10.1958.

30 Charge d'affaires Filippov 1.11.1958, discussion with comrades V. Pessi and H. Kuusinen on 24.10.1958, NKPSa, doc. 53.

31 UKP I, e.g. 23–24.10.1958, 28.10.1958, 7.11.1958, 9.11.1958 on discussion held 8.11.1958 (quot.).

32 Eero A. Wuori, the Finnish ambassador in Moscow, 29.10.1958 to the Foreign Ministry, memo "The Nordic Horizon: Finland", discussion with Soviet first deputy foreign minister V. V. Kuznetsov, L-12, UM.

The Soviets increased pressure on Finland from mid September to early November in three different areas. Firstly, the threat of real economic pressure had been added to that of passive diplomatic sanctions, though this threat was not made public at the time. Secondly, security issues, in the form of consultations connected to the FCMA treaty, were brought up for the first time. The Soviet approach was now characterized more by concern at receiving guarantees that Finland would stand by the obligations set out in the treaty rather than fears that Finland intended to renege its treaty obligations, which had sparked the Soviet accusations directed at the Fagerholm government. Thirdly, Soviet intelligence contacts had begun to press for change of government, by referring to “overall political circumstances.”

### SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS SCANDINAVIA IN AUTUMN 1958

The general objective of Soviet policy towards the Norway and Denmark, both of which were members of NATO, was to prevent these countries hosting military bases for use against the Soviet union or its allies. This was to be reached either through the promotion of neutrality for these countries, or by open threats as was the case, for example, with the letters of Soviet premier, Nikolai Bulganin 1957 to the prime ministers’ of these countries. In 1958 the Soviets analysed the success of their pressure on Norway and Denmark in the second half of 1957. It was seen to have had a positive impact, especially in terms of the negative view of these countries towards the stationing of nuclear weapons on their territory. According to the Soviet embassy in Oslo in August 1958, a turning point had been reached in both Norwegian and Danish foreign policy.<sup>33</sup>

This clearly very optimistic view in the autumn is remarkable since Soviet initiatives concerning Scandinavia had not been particularly successful during the spring and summer of 1958. The “Baltic Sea –Sea of Peace” campaign in February–May, as well as Khrushchev’s proposal of “party co-operation” between the Danish Social Democrats and the CPSU against a preceived West German threat in April, had not been received well in Danish government circles. More interestingly, the Soviet leadership had stalled on proposals from both the Danish left and the Soviet embassy in Copenhagen, aimed at increasing the credibility of the Nordic Nuclear Free Zone campaign. The Danish communists proposed, in early 1958, that some Soviet territory, such as the Soviet Baltic republics, should be included in the nuclear free zone, since the lack of Soviet territory in the proposed zone had been the main reason for the Danish government’s decision to turn it down. The Soviet ambassador proposed only a limited Soviet declaration, in which the Soviet Union would agree not to use nuclear weapons against Denmark, if Danish territory remained free of American nuclear weapons and missiles.

However, officially the Soviets argued that Soviet nuclear missiles in Northern Europe, for example, in the Kola peninsula, were not aimed at Denmark, but against

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33 Jensen 1999, p. 520, on the basis of the document of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, 11.8.1958, 85/42/162/6, p. 51–61, AVP RF.

the United States and Great Britain, and should not, therefore, be included to a Nordic Nuclear Free Zone. The peaceful intentions of Denmark were not in doubt, but the intentions of the United States and West Germany were cause for Soviet concern. They could drag the country into a war without its consent. The logic of this argumentation presupposed, firstly that Denmark would not be loyal to its allies, or that this loyalty could be weakened. Secondly, the Soviets assumed that Denmark, as a member of NATO, had lost its freedom to manoeuvre, if not its sovereignty.<sup>34</sup> In down-playing Denmark's sovereignty, the Soviet attitude was very similar to that of the West's view of the sovereignty of the East European countries vis-a-vis the USSR. Both superpowers had a tendency to regard their opponent's camp as a tightly led bloc rather than a heterogeneous alliance.

The Soviet leadership might have thought that compromise on its part was unnecessary, as its objectives might be reached by other means. During the summer of 1958, the Soviet Union was also already preparing to take the initiative in its policy towards Germany.

In October 1958, that is, at about the same time that the USSR was increasing pressure on Finland, the Soviet Foreign Ministry was preparing a significant diplomatic campaign in Denmark. The objective was to support more "independent minded" forces that were critical of NATO in Denmark. The Danish prime minister Hans Christian Hansen's qualified support for nuclear free zones in Europe and a nuclear test ban at a NATO meeting in May 1958 were considered by the Soviets proof of the strength of these forces. The Soviet Foreign Ministry was planning to intensify unofficial exchange of opinions with members of government and the leaders of political parties together with neutralist and pacifist circles. In a "cautious way" the Danes were to be encouraged not to support NATO's policy given current international tensions. The campaign would not be on the responsibility of the Soviet embassy in Copenhagen alone, as the Soviet representative in the UN, the Soviet foreign minister and deputy foreign ministers as well as the leaders of Soviet social organisations were all to be mobilized in support of these objectives.<sup>35</sup> Nor was this mobilization limited only to Soviet officials.

In October the Soviet intelligence service had twice brought up the question of Soviet-Finnish military consultations on the basis of the FCMA treaty with president Kekkonen's representatives. This interest was, of course, motivated by the second article of the FCMA treaty, which defined Germany and its allies as the aggressor. President Kekkonen informed the Danish prime minister Hansen in a letter on 28.10.1958 about informal Soviet allusions to military consultations, "What has been the significance of these allusions that is impossible to know, but I have an understanding that the Soviets were aware that they would be brought to my ears." The message the president sent to the Danish prime minister can certainly be regarded as an understatement. On the basis of his diaries, there is little doubt that the discussions referred to were the ones held between his intelligence expert Kustaa

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34 Jensen 1999, pp. 522–523.

35 Jensen 1999, p. 524, on the basis of a document of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, addressed to the Central Committee of the CPSU in October 1958, AVP RF 85/42/162/6, pp. 90–92.



Vilkuna and the KGB contact Viktor Vladimirov on 9 October 1958 and 16 October 1958. Also, when comparing the substance of Vladimirov's replies to Vilkuna during the later meeting, the formulations and phrases in Kekkonen's letter about Danish-West German co-operation correlate closely with these discussions. So these allusions did not reach Kekkonen's ears in some ill-defined way, but he probably received them in quite a clear form, after which he passed them on to the Danish prime minister. The main purpose of the letter was to inform the Danes about the Soviet view of their NATO policy, and to warn them about the negative consequences that their cooperation with NATO allies might have for Finland.

Formally, the letter ended with an enquiry as to the Danish understanding of the Soviet attitude towards Finland. Kekkonen asked whether the Soviets had connected Finland in any way to "the Baltic Sea problem."<sup>36</sup> An interesting question as such, given that enquires made by Soviet intelligence had, indeed, been the main reason for the letter. The Danish reaction to Kekkonen's letter was rather formal, if not cool, as it was interpreted as putting pressure on Denmark. According to Hansen, Danish-Soviet relations had been well-founded since World War II, and Denmark had tried to form its NATO policy in such a way that it would not be interpreted by the USSR as a provocation. Hansen also mentioned discussions the previous year with Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko concerning the NATO Baltic Sea Command. The issue of a joined command post had not yet been decided, but according to the Danish prime minister the Soviets had not involved Finland in this issue.<sup>37</sup> It seems that at the same time that the Soviet Foreign Ministry was preparing a large campaign in Denmark, Soviet intelligence found the Finnish president useful for the promotion of the USSR's policy towards Scandinavia.

The Soviet Union was preparing to increase its influence over Danish foreign policy, and it seems to have believed that it had good reasons for doing so. In December 1958, with international tension over Berlin increasing dangerously, the Soviet embassy in Copenhagen was surprisingly well informed about central views concerning Danish security policy. The Soviets received, through "an unofficial source," information about some of the topics discussed at the NATO meeting in early December, in Paris, and specifically about plans concerning military co-operation between West Germany and Denmark. According to the Danish foreign minister, Jens O. Krag, the West Germans were strongly pressing the Danes to establish a (joint) Baltic Sea Command. The Danish minister of defence, Poul Hansen, was also informed about NATO-headquarter's wish to have the armies of both countries under the same command, something which the Danish government did not support at that time.<sup>38</sup>

The Soviets also received more detailed information. The agenda for a meeting between NATO's Northern command and the highest officers of both the Danish and Norwegian armies included 1) the further development of communication and

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36 Kekkonen to Poul Hansen 28.10.1958, Vuosikirjat (Year books) 1958, UKA.

37 On Hansen's answer to Kekkonen, see Jensen 1999, pp. 560–561 and UKP I, 15.11.1958, and Suomi 1992, p. 169.

38 Jensen 1999, p. 527, on the basis of a document of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Mikhailov to Zakharov, 21.12.1958 85/42/162/23, AVP RF.

warning systems in the Northern theatre, 2) of future military co-operation between Denmark, Norway, and West Germany, and 3) the question about tactical missiles and nuclear weapons. The Danish armed forces thought that the military co-operation with West Germany was necessary as this was considered “a natural defence for Denmark against the only possible opponent -the Soviet Union.” And in the event that tactical missiles were provided, the Danish army was strongly in favor of them being equipped with nuclear warheads, otherwise it would be better not to have them. On the whole, the army still thought that the stationing of strategic or medium range missiles in Denmark was inappropriate. It would endanger the population to destruction without making any significant difference to the war as a whole.<sup>39</sup> However, pressure from the United States as well as from Danish bourgeois parties for the stationing of nuclear missiles in Denmark increased during the winter of 1958/1959. In January 1959, the Danish social democratic government was prepared to reconsider its previous policy, partly because of this pressure, partly as consequence of the Soviet Union’s ultimatum over Berlin, which had in fact contributed the pressure.<sup>40</sup>

## THE SOLUTION OF THE CRISIS IN LATE 1958: FINLAND AS AN EXAMPLE OF COLD WAR

In November, if not earlier, the overthrow of the Fagerholm government had become a necessity for the Soviet Union, for security reasons. The Soviet’s open confrontation with the West over Berlin since 10 November 1958 on had increased the need for stability, and the solving of problems in its own sphere of influence. The continuing crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations become more than simply a matter of prestige. It was now beginning to endanger the unity of the Soviet sphere of influence, as it offered the Americans, a possibility to challenge it.

Even though the formation of the Fagerholm government had already been taken as a positive development in the United States, and as a “strengthening of Finnish democratic forces,” American interest in Finland had only begun to grow quickly since mid October onwards, when Soviet pressure was seen to have increased. The Finnish government had already expressed interest in raising loans in order to overcome Finland’s economic difficulties. Indeed, as a delegation from the Bank of Finland had mentioned the idea of a \$ 30 million loan in early September. This request was not given high priority in Washington until after Soviet pressure intensified.<sup>41</sup> On the second half of October, the issue of economic support began to acquire political significance, and the Finnish loan request was reviewed by the

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39 Jensen 1999, p. 527, on the basis of an undated and unsigned document of Soviet Foreign Ministry, 85/42/162/8, AVP RF.

40 Jensen 1999, p. 528

41 U.S. embassy in Helsinki on Soviet pressure ,13.10.1958, doc. 190,e.g. US Embassy on Fagerholm Government, 2.9.1958, doc. 184, memo about the visit of the Bank of Finland’s delegation to Washington, 4.9.1958, FRUS 1958–1960, Volume X, Part 2. doc. 185, CIA on Finland’s economic difficulties to State Department, 15.9.1958, doc. 188.

agencies that formulated US foreign policy. The CIA, the propaganda oriented United States Information Agency (USIA) and the State Department all recommended economic support for Finland “as fully and as promptly as practicable.” The International Cooperation Administration (ICA), the Treasury, and the Defence Department (Pentagon), however, were not inclined to support a quick response. Soon after this, however, on 23 October 1958 there was a change in attitude as the Americans decided that “The situation presents a good test case of Western ability to concert efforts in assisting a free nation to withstand Soviet political and economical pressures.”<sup>42</sup> The Soviet-Finnish crisis had now become located within the conceptual context of the United States’ overall Cold War policy.

On the day of the Berlin ultimatum, the Soviet intelligence contact Viktor Vladimirov outlined Finland’s position in the Soviet sphere of influence to Ahti Karjalainen, the president’s secretary and closest aide. He confirmed once again that the Soviet position remained unchanged. This was probably a response to the fact that the foreign minister of the Fagerholm government, Virolainen, had, only couple of days earlier, expressed his hopes of opposing Soviet pressure by referring to Yugoslavia’s policy since 1948. Knowing the significance of Yugoslavia for United States policy in Eastern Europe, this must have sounded somewhat alarming to the representative of the Soviet intelligence. Now Vladimirov admitted that USSR “had made many mistakes in relation to Yugoslavia. No sooner had friendship been declared than relations were bad again. In relation to Finland these mistakes will not be made.” The Soviet Union considered Finnish potential membership in the “Northern [Scandinavian] Market” as an open challenge to its sphere of influence, since it was claimed that we have “a statement from a highly ranking Norwegian that it [the Market] was a means to drag Finland more to the West.” Finally, the whole concept of internal affairs was questioned for the first time, and an indirect military threat was made. According to the Soviet representative, Vladimirov, “it is said in Finland that the USSR is meddling in Finland’s internal affairs. Where do internal affairs begin. If the USSR organizes military manoeuvres in East Karelia [next to the Finnish border] that is [the] Soviet [Union’s] internal affairs.” Prime minister Fagerholm was accused of unsuccessfully attempting to enlist Swedish support for his government. Four days after the Soviet ultimatum on Berlin, Soviet intelligence repeated for the second time that the deadline for changing the government was no later than the end of December.<sup>43</sup>

The Soviets had good reason for wanting a speedy resolution of this problem, as the Americans were now taking a more active interest in the Soviet-Finnish crisis. However, despite the increasing concern of the U.S. embassy in Helsinki it was not until mid November that Finland was deemed important enough to warrant receiving more U.S. economic support. As the crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations had emerged towards the end of the fiscal year, funds for supporting the Fagerholm

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42 OCB Special Report on the Current Situation in Finland (NSC 5403), 17.10.1958, doc.191 (attachment), Assistant Secretary of State for Policy Planning, Gerard C. Smith, to Acting Secretary of State, Christian A. Herter, 23.10.1958, FRUS 1958–1960, Vol. X, Part 2, doc.193.

43 UKP I, 10.11.1958, 11.11.1958, 14.11.1958. Virolainen on the Yugoslavian example, UKP I, 6–7.11.1958.

government, before the end of the year, could only be received by redirecting some of the funds already allocated to Poland. Fifteen million dollars out of the \$20 million allocated to Poland were to be “transferred for use of Finland.” Support for the Gomulka regime had been used as a means of weakening the cohesion of the opponent’s bloc, even though Poland was not expected to leave it. Gomulka’s recent statements supporting Soviet foreign policy, especially those during his visit to the Soviet Union on the eve of the Soviet ultimatum over Berlin, had, to some extent reduced Poland’s value in the eyes of U.S. foreign policy decision-makers.<sup>44</sup>

The activation of the U.S. position was underlined after the emergence of the Berlin crisis in November, and, on 21 November 1958, a CIA-contact, Frank Friberg, from the U.S. embassy asked Vilkkuna if a U.S. loan to Finland would be useful. After mid November the Americans seemed to be willing to test the firmness of Soviet influence in Finland through economic means.<sup>45</sup> However, these initiatives came too late, from the U.S. viewpoint, to have significant influence. While the Americans had been reconsidering their attitude, domestic political circumstances in Finland had changed.

The president’s wing, the K-line, had made a break through in the Agrarian Union in the first half of November. Johannes Virolainen, whose change of sides had originally been a significant factor in assisting the formation of the Fagerholm government, was again a key figure. Despite a number of earlier expressed doubts, he had been rather confident up to the first week of November, but he then made a complete about turn in mid November. This change of mind, which began in 10 November 1958 at the Nordic Foreign Ministers Conference in Oslo, due to the fact that he had learnt about the Soviet demands for consultations about the FCMA treaty even though president Kekkonen denied that his aides had informed Virolainen about them. The foreign minister’s alarmed state of mind was probably due to the heightening of international tension after the Soviet ultimatum over Berlin, the selected information he had received from the president on Soviet-Finnish relations, the continuing struggle within the Agrarian Union and his fears about his own political marginalization. Only a week later, on 17 November 1958, he agreed to resign from the government having discussed this with Kekkonen. The president, like earlier the Communists and the Skog’s fraction, left social democrats, then recommended that government would not be broken to a foreign policy issue, but instead to domestic political issues. Virolainen, however, announced his forthcoming resignation at a meeting of the government’s council for foreign affairs on 25 November 1958. In any case this resulted in the break up of the government from within. In mid November, the Coalition party also began to reconsider its commitment to the government coalition, with some of its representatives exploring contacts with the president and with the representatives of Soviet intelligence.<sup>46</sup>

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44 U.S. embassy in Helsinki to the State Department, 6.11.1958, doc. 194, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Douglas C. Dillon, to Secretary of State, John F. Dulles, 18.11.1958, FRUS 1958–1960, Vol. X, Part 2, doc. 195.

45 UKP I, 21.11.1958.

46 UKP I, for example, Virolainen’s change of opinion, 10.11.1958, 17.11.1958, 25.11.1958, on enquires of the Coalition to the president, 21.11.1958, and on the discussion between Lauri Aho, a Coalition MP, and the resident of Soviet intelligence, Zhenikhov, 28.11.1958.

On the following day, the 26 November, the KGB informed Kekkonen in confident mood that “the Kremlin is waiting calmly, this only a temporary misfortune.” Together with a reconfirmation of continuity in Soviet policy, various future benefits were also underlined as well, “Immediately after new government [has been] formed, [there will be a] new ambassador and trade [will be back] on tracks!” As some positive developments had, finally, been secured by toppling the government, the resident of Soviet intelligence, Vladimir Zenikhov, now welcomed the president’s suggestion about “a private visit” to Leningrad promising to relay this idea to Moscow. In Leningrad, Kekkonen was willing to meet “one of the leading politicians of the Soviet Union,” with whom “the trade etc. business would be agreed on.” Now, the Soviets publicly applied their economic pressure, announcing that they would cease to buy Finnish products, since Finland had not full filled its trade quota in buying Soviet goods. On the same day, just as the backbone of the Fagerholm government had been broken, the United States made an official offer of economic support, aimed at preventing the downfall of the government.<sup>47</sup>

However, the U.S. ambassador in Helsinki, John Hickerson, had been reminded the previous day by the secretary of state John F. Dulles, that, after “careful consideration” of his proposals “we do not wish any US offer [of] assistance to create situation in which US and USSR would appear engaged in economic battle over Finland. That would not be in the best interest [of] US or Finland.” This was to be kept in mind and openly stated in offering limited economic support to the Finnish government to counter the Soviet pressure. According to the embassy a \$5 million dollar loan was mentioned in discussions with representatives of the Bank of Finland.<sup>48</sup>

In practice, it still took about a week for what amounted to the overthrowing of the Fagerholm government, which was the basic Soviet prerequisite for a normalization of relations, to unfold. Khrushchev increased the pressure on Berlin by setting 27 November 1958 a deadline to his ultimatum, and the Soviets were probably also aware of the recent American initiatives concerning Finland, all of which seems to have increased the impatience of Soviet representatives with the slowness of the governments demise. Though Kekkonen was now winning the battle within the Agrarian Union, the party was still far from being under his complete control. Virolainen’s announcement of his resignation had been strongly criticized within the party, and the social democratic prime minister, Fagerholm, resisted the break-up of his government to the end. Furthermore, the tactical position of the Agrarian Union as the party actively pursuing the break-up of the government coalition was anything but good. As December began the president had to admit that the evaluation of the situation within the K-line had been too positive in late November. In particular it was now feared that, “a knife in the back myth” would be used against the party, or as Karjalainen said, expressing the concern felt about the reaction of the public, “The voice of reason has not been heard among the people.”

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47 UKP I, 26.11.1958.

48 Department of State to the Embassy in Finland, 25.11.1958, doc. 196, Embassy to the State Department, 26.11.1958, FRUS, 1958–1960, Vol. X, part 2, doc. 197 on the amount of the loan (in footnote 2). UKP I, 26.11.1958, also on US economic support.

The president and his inner circle even contemplated that the Agrarians, though demanding a change of government, would not make its ministers resign immediately, except Virolainen. The party secretary Korsimo was clearly worried about the unity of the Agrarian Union, as he feared that the participation of the Communists in the next government, which was a possibility, would break the party.<sup>49</sup>

Given these circumstances, the Soviet representatives clarified their demands regarding the forthcoming government coalition and began decisive effort to push a change of government through. Thus, it was repeatedly stated that the Social Democrats and the Coalition party could not be in the same government. When comparing these two parties, the coalition was often found as a somewhat lesser evil, probably on the basis of its earlier readiness to leave the government, though the attitude towards it tended to become more critical. When Vladimir Zhenikhov set out the basis for the forthcoming government in four points to Arvo Korsimo, on 2 December 1958, it was also the first time that the KGB suggested including the CPF in a government. Moreover, if the relations with the Soviet Union were to be healed, there should be no official Social Democrats, and no official Coalition members, though a couple of them could be included as specialists. Zhenikhov continued: "As counter weights two unknown communists. Don't they come? You may discuss [with them]. They are realists." And lastly, there were to be no former ministers of the Fagerholm government. The impatience of the Soviet leadership was made very clear, and the president was urged to take responsibility for the quick formation of a new government. The threatening international situation was strongly emphasized, with the Soviets claiming that World War would start within 3–5 years because, by "then West Germany will be rearmed, and nothing will be able hold it down." Zhenikhov also argued that if West Berlin "in accordance with the Soviet proposal, is not freed from occupation, a very serious situation is will rise."

Finally, on the same day, representatives of the Soviet intelligence service made a coordinated effort to push through the change of government with arguments on security policy. Zenikhov and Vladimirov connected the Soviet interest in possible FCMA consultations with Finland to NATO's plans regarding the Baltic Sea or to the present government coalition in Finland. Speaking with representative of a small liberal party, Vladimirov underlined the importance of Soviet security interests and belittled the significance of Finnish trade to the Soviet Union. However, in the end he saw fit to remark that the strictness of Moscow in relation to Finland had been a surprise to "us in the embassy," and that they were of other opinion.<sup>50</sup> Two days later, on 4 December 1958, Virolainen and the other agrarians left the government, which then resigned. The new level of Soviet-Finnish relations was stated for the first time four days later, in a meeting between president Kekkonen and Zenikhov. First,

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49 UKP I, 28–29.11, 1.12.1958.

50 UKP I, 2.12.1958. Compare with Juhani Suomi's claims in his Kekkonen Biography (1992), p. 182, about the "independent initiatives" of both Soviet intelligence representatives when the FCMA treaty was referred to. It would seem somewhat unlikely that the KGB, or any other intelligence organization, would not coordinate the actions and arguments of its representatives over the course of one day.

the foundation of the old government would be totally out of question, despite changes in the balance of power or among persons. Second, "if again all [ the parties], except the FPDL, are in the government, the USSR will think as [it has] since 1944 that it is [illegal] discrimination denied by the peace treaty and that it cannot be accepted." As the president commented in his diary in brackets, "The notes are clear." On the other hand, as a necessary precondition for the normalization of relations had now been met, the resident of Soviet intelligence was able to confirm that a Leningrad meeting could be arranged as soon as a new government was appointed. The meeting was to take place with Nikita Khrushchev in mid January and was to be made public only after both had met in the city.<sup>51</sup>

## THE CONTEXT OF SOVIET BEHAVIOR

In interpreting the development of and motives behind Soviet policy and behavior towards Finland after September 1958, the context of maintaining the cohesion of its alliance is striking, especially as the Soviets had already decided the fate of the Fagerholm government in mid September the latest. Firstly, Soviet foreign policy decision-makers had been informed that not only had their pressure on NATO's Scandinavian member countries been successful, in certain respects, but that it had produced a turning point in Danish and Norwegian foreign policy. It seemed to the Soviet leadership that it had managed to increase its influence over these members of the Western alliance. On the two occasions, in October, that the KGB referred to the FCMA consultations, it was designed mainly to put pressure on president Kekkonen to strengthen the Soviet campaigns, taking place at the same time in Denmark.

Secondly, the parallels between Soviet policy towards Scandinavia and the U.S. policy in Eastern Europe had not gone unnoticed by the Soviet leadership. For example, as the Soviets had reacted in a negative way to Austrian attempts at reinterpreting their neutrality, and were concerned, together with the East Germans, over the extent of Poland's loyalty to the Socialist camp. But, just as the Soviets believed that they had made progress to their opponent's territory in Scandinavia, they were also concerned about the U.S. challenge to their authority within their own alliance and sphere of influence. In the case of Finland the Soviets feared that the country might turn into another Austria or Poland. This would either lead to a decline of Soviet influence over Finland's particular form of neutrality, "neutrality of a certain kind" and over Finnish foreign policy in general, or Finland becoming a domestically troubled spot within the Soviet sphere. As for the U.S., despite the plan to support the Fagerholm government, Finland remained a peripheral concern amongst U.S. wider interests, which is reflected in the amount of economic support envisaged for Finland compared to that actually given to Yugoslavia or Poland.

Threatening scenarios such as these served to reduce the Soviet leadership's willingness to accept deviations or anything that could be seen as "foreign influence" in their own sphere of influence, which included Finland. If such scenarios,

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51 UKP I, 4.12.1958, 8.12.1958.



threatening to reduce Soviet influence, were observed, success of pressure politics on foreign territory, like in Scandinavia, would encourage solving problems in Finland with same methods.

Despite continuous public Soviet accusations, security policy actually played a small part in the crisis, at least, until the international confrontation over Berlin flared up in early November. Any disloyalty on the part of Fagerholm government vis-a-vis Soviet security interests was not, on the basis of the president's diary, an issue in any discussions with Soviet intelligence. Neither did the government know about Soviet enquires related to the FCMA treaty. In fact, the president admitted to the Danish prime minister that he had decided not to inform the government about this.<sup>52</sup> The crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations did indeed intensify in October–November, but events in the Finnish media, as such the publication of the scandalous memoirs of a former communist minister of interior, or certain “anti-Soviet” caricatures in the country's largest newspaper, in October, were hardly the main reasons for this.<sup>53</sup> However, the crisis made public the domestic lack of confidence in the president's foreign policy in parliament, and amongst some high-ranking ministry officials.<sup>54</sup>

Thirdly, from an ideological point of view, the Soviet attitude towards the Social Democrats and revisionism formed a unifying factor between Soviet domestic political concerns and foreign policy interests regarding the Soviet sphere of influence. The anti-revisionist campaign began after the unexpected results of de-Stalinization, especially after the Hungarian Revolt, and identified and portrayed social democrats as revisionists with views harmful to Soviet interests. The image of, for example, the Austrian social democrats in relation to the neutrality of their country and of other Western Social Democrats in relation to promoting neutrality in general in Europe made them once again, not only ideological, but also foreign policy opponents of the Soviet Union. In Finland, the Soviet Union had begun to harden its line towards the Social Democrats from October 1957 the latest, as the position of the party's right wing had strengthened.

Fourthly, these aspects of maintaining cohesion of the alliance system in Soviet policy towards Scandinavia, together with the growing American interest in Finland, which itself had been prompted by Soviet pressure on Finland, especially after the second Berlin Crises had erupted, finally connected, what might otherwise have been local conflict within the Soviet sphere of influence to the general Cold War confrontation.

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52 UKP I, 10.10.1958, 16.10.1958, Kekkonen to Hansen 28.10.1958, UKA.

53 Compare with Suomi 1992, p. 163–164.

54 UKP I, 7.12.1958 on the opinions of foreign ministry official Osmo Orkomies.

# THE CHANGING STATUS OF FINLAND IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

The meeting between Khrushchev and Kekkonen in Leningrad between the 22 and 25 January 1959, just before the XXI Congress of the CPSU, took place in an atmosphere that was in stark contrast to the warmth of Voroshilov's visit to Finland in August 1956 and the good relations that prevailed during the president Kekkonen's visit to Moscow in May 1958. The president of Finland left for "a private cultural visit" to Leningrad after an exceptional crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations.

Officially the president had been invited by the chairman of Leningrad city council's executive committee, N. I. Smirnov, who had already raised the idea of Kekkonen visiting the city during Kekkonen's state visit to the USSR in 1958. It had taken somewhat over a month and difficult negotiations for Kekkonen to compose a new government, as the parties of the toppled Fagerholm government, including the right wing of the Agrarian Union, were less than willing to cooperate. Finally, on 13 January 1959, an Agrarian Union minority government, headed by Vieno J. Sukselainen, was appointed. "The private visit," however, turned out to be a full scale summit between the respective heads of states, Nikita Khrushchev and Urho Kekkonen. Some members of the government had been informed about the visit just days before, but the foreign minister had been excluded from the delegation ostensibly because it was an "unofficial" visit. The talks between the two leaders seemed to have successfully resolved the crisis, which Khrushchev in his speech publicly dubbed "the Night Frost", and "good weather" returned to the two countries diplomatic and trade relations.<sup>1</sup>

## THE OFFICIAL FINNISH AND SOVIET POSITIONS: THE CREDIBILITY OF FOREIGN POLICY

The official Finnish position on the immediate consequences of the crisis is best portrayed in two of president Kekkonen's speeches, the first given well before the Leningrad summit, in early December 1958, and the second in late January 1959 after it. Given the course of developments during the autumn of 1958 the speeches are interesting not so much for what they contained, but what they omitted. As public definitions of Finland's position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, they had international relevance.

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1 Suomi 1992, a detailed account of the formation of the new government and preparation to Leningrad summit, pp. 185–187, 194–207, 211–212.

The main theme of the first speech, given on 10 December 1958, was the confrontation between what Kekkonen defined as “realism” and the concept of “abstract justice” in foreign relations. Kekkonen began defining Finland’s position vis-a-vis the USSR by referring to Paasikivi, the widely respected former president, who had reshaped Finnish foreign policy after World War II. The president used two arguments to explain the Soviet reaction: 1) The adverse and public criticism that followed after the return of the Porkkala base in 1956 by the USSR; the so-called counter reaction, and 2) the belittling of the results of his Moscow visit in May 1958. The combined impact of these two factors had begun to erode Soviet confidence in Finland, and therefore the fact that the Fagerholm government had not actually tried to change Finnish foreign policy was irrelevant. Foreign advice and aid were rejected on the basis of the strained international situation, and the lasting military interest of the Soviet Union towards Finland was underlined. Lastly, Kekkonen denied that there was a conflict between having confidential relations with the USSR and the country’s sovereignty and democracy. Finland’s room to manoeuvre in Scandinavia, for example, would depend on the quality of its relations with the USSR. Though the president acknowledged that Finnish-Soviet relations could be conducted on a different basis, he thought that the consequences of changing, what he had defined as the fundamental principles of these relations, would be unacceptable.

The second significant official Finnish evaluation of the “Night Crisis” was given in president Kekkonen’s speech immediately after the Leningrad summit, on 25 January 1959. Now the president emphasized that the crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations had been more serious than had been thought in Finland. As a repetition of the crisis could not be allowed, it was the Finn’s responsibility to avoid giving cause for Soviet concern and distrust. According to Kekkonen this did not require any important national or ideological sacrifices. This was also seen apply to foreign policy. Finland’s “neutral foreign policy” and “good Western and Nordic relations” received special mention. However, it was now acknowledged, under the concept of “realism” that the Soviet Union did have a political interest in Finland. Firstly, the USSR wanted “a friendly-disposed government, which would guarantee honoring in full of the Finnish state treaties”, that is the 1947 Peace Treaty and the FCMA treaty of 1948. Secondly, the Soviets were concerned to see a reduction in the amount of criticism on the part of the Finnish press with regard to the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviets were clearly interested in the reactions of the Finnish press and political circles to Kekkonen’s meeting with Khrushchev in Leningrad. Generally, the Soviets thought that Finnish political circles and the press had reacted positively to the visit, and had underlined the fact that it had come as a result of the formation of the new government, which had enabled better relations between the two countries. The Soviet embassy in Helsinki noted first that the large amount of attention given to the visit in Finland meant “that it had left a deep imprint on the political life of the country.” The embassy thought that president Kekkonen’s visit to Leningrad had

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2 Suomi 1992, on Kekkonen’s speech on 10.12.1958, pp. 188–191, and on Kekkonen’s speech on 25.1.1959, p. 214.

been portrayed in the media “as a period of transition towards the full normalization of Soviet-Finnish relations, and their further development on the basis of friendship and good neighborliness.” However, it also noted that rightist circles, “using certain formal points connected to the organization of the president’s Leningrad visit” criticized the role of president Kekkonen. A “large campaign” was seen to have been implemented with “the active support of Western reactionary circles.”<sup>3</sup>

Regarding Finland’s position internationally, the part of Khrushchev’s speech in Leningrad where “Soviet-Finnish relations were defined as an example of peaceful coexistence between socialist and capitalist countries” was specifically emphasized by the Finnish newspapers. The largest bourgeois newspaper, Helsingin Sanomat, had commented positively on that part of the speech where it was stated that no limitations had been set on Finland’s relations with the West or with the Nordic Countries, but the paper had continued, “It would be very good, continued further the Helsingin Sanomat, if we could say the same about our right to maintain our internal autonomy.” Amongst the comments by the press on president Kekkonen’s radio speech on 25 January 1959 following the visit, the organ of the Agrarian Union, Maakansa, thought it had been an advantage that the president had managed to time his visit to coincide with the eve of the XXI CPSU Party Congress. According to the Soviet embassy in Helsinki, the criticism of rightist circles found an outlet in foreign, mostly Swedish newspaper articles. The accusations and reproaches of the Swedish newspapers about the organization of the president’s visit, its “lack of responsibility,” and for “endangering Finnish interests,” were then quoted by rightist newspapers, “mainly by Helsingin Sanomat.” This kind of recycling of news from Sweden had been a standard tactic of Finnish newspapers in trying to avoid censorship during World War II.<sup>4</sup>

The harshest and most concentrated attack on the results of the Leningrad meeting came in a declaration of the SDP leadership on 29 January 1959. It accused the president of unconstitutional behavior because of the secretive preparations for the visit, and underlined the exclusion of the foreign minister. According to the SDP, the president had missed “an opportunity to point out that the Fagerholm government, the Finnish parliament and the whole of the Finnish people were behind the implementation of Finnish State Treaties [the Peace Treaty and the FCMA].” The Soviet embassy also noted that as a reaction to Khrushchev’s public critique against the Finnish press, the Finnish bourgeois newspapers, “which had specialized in hostile presentations against the USSR,” had begun a large discussion about the freedom of the press.<sup>5</sup>

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3 The press review of the Soviet embassy in Helsinki to the Scandinavian Department of the MID, 25.2.1959, “K poezdke prezidenta U. Kekkonena v Leningrade”, o. 41, d. 142-Fi, p.85, p. 2–11, AVP RF.

4 See, Kustaa Vilkkunen, *Sensuuri: Sanan valvontaa 1939–44*, Keuruu 1962, p. 122, on the problems of Finnish war-time (1939–1940, 1941–1944) censorship regarding publishing of quotations from Swedish press.

5 Ibid.

The Finnish public's view, reflecting different party-political positions, was not far off the mark, when it came to identifying the main Soviet concerns raised at the meeting between Khrushchev and Kekkonen, which included the repetition of 1) accusations against the Fagerholm government over security issues, 2) accusations about the anti-Soviet tone of the Finnish press and 3) demands for guarantees that the FPDL/CPF would not be the only party left outside the government.

The Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, who, unlike his Finnish counterpart, had been included in his country's delegation at the summit, specifically mentioned not only Tanner, but also Leskinen, from the SDP, as opponents of good relations with the Soviet Union, who had to be kept outside the government. However, the only specific criticism made of Leskinen, and, indeed, of the whole Fagerholm government, by the Soviet delegation being contrary to the Soviet interests, was Leskinen's visit to West Germany. On his visit Leskinen had, among other things, been looking for plans and finances for the development of the Otanmäki plant. According to the KGB, he was also said to have given statements, in Bonn, about "turning things against the Russkies in Finland" with the help of the SDP and the Coalition party.<sup>6</sup> However, the visit had taken place in late autumn 1958 when the Soviets had already, as part of their policy of putting pressure on Finland, withdrawn from financing the Otanmäki plant. In fact, president Kekkonen had brought up his concern about this Soviet move and the public support it had received in the CPF organ in discussions with a Soviet foreign ministry representative. This was because "it in fact supports the view of the Leskinen-wing," as it strengthened their argument about open Soviet pressure.<sup>7</sup>

Soviet accusations about the "unfriendliness" of the Finnish press were not new either; the Soviets had already complained about this during Kekkonen's Moscow visit in May 1958. Now, Khrushchev publicly accused the Finnish media of being paid by the West to criticize the Soviet Union. Generally, and especially publicly, president Kekkonen had no objections to these Soviet arguments, and he mostly repeated them in his radio speech on 25 January 1959.<sup>8</sup>

6 Suomi 1992, pp. 209–211, UKP I, 28.11.1958, KGB contact Vladimirov quoting Väinö Leskinen's statement, "Russkies" being a pejorative term for Russians, used by the Finns, especially, during the war, 23.1.1959.

7 Chargé d'affaires Filippov 1.11.1958, memo on discussions with president Kekkonen on 30.10.1958, NKP ja Suomi: Keskuskomitean salaisia dokumentteja 1955–1968 (NKPSb), (document publication), edit. Hannu Rautkallio and Viktor Tshernous, Vaasa 1992, p. 63. Kekkonen does not mention this discussion in his diary, (UKP I, 30.10.1958), instead he is more interested in the political implications related to the Soviet reaction against Boris Pasternak, after he had been awarded the Nobel Prize.

8 Suomi 1992, p. 213–214, on Kekkonen's speech, and Vuosikirjat (Yearbooks) 1959, UKA, on Kekkonen's remarks on meeting with Khrushchev on 22–23.1.1959. Soviet reports on the meeting were not available in the AVP RF. Compare Suomi to UKP I 23.1.1959 on Khrushchev's remarks on the Finnish press. When Suomi mentions Khrushchev's critique of the Finnish press, Khrushchev's claims about bribes are omitted, even though Suomi also used Kekkonen's diary as a source.

SOVIET-FINNISH RELATIONS AS SEEN  
FROM THE WEST AND SCANDINAVIA

Together with their own observations as the crisis developed Western evaluations of the effects of the crisis were based on official Finnish and Soviet statements of their mutual relations. Western evaluations are used here not so much as sources for the events themselves but as insights as to how these events were presented by outsiders. By comparing the evaluations made by the great powers on the one hand, and by Finland's closest Scandinavian neighbors on the other, one can assess the credibility of the official Finnish and Soviet positions from different vantage points. From the western point of view, any inconsistencies in the Soviet approach might well be significant and useful when it came to judging the reliability and substance of future Soviet initiatives also on Scandinavia and European integration. This also held true when it came to assessing policy of neutrality Finland claimed to follow. Before discussing these western evaluations, it is useful to see how Finnish foreign policy officially reacted to them.

The significance of western evaluations of the crisis for Finland's image in foreign policy terms was well understood in Finland, even by president Kekkonen, although he gave absolute priority to the Soviet view. Although the official Finnish view was that no negative changes had taken place in the country's position vis-a-vis the USSR as a consequence of the Night Frost Crisis, the West concluded that Finland had indeed come out of the affair badly. This is also reflected in the reports of the chief of the Finnish foreign ministry's press department, Max Jakobson, as he assessed reactions to the crisis in Sweden and in the United States in February 1959.

The Swedish press and official circles were, according to Jakobson, generally ready to understand the Finnish decision to yield to Soviet pressure. However, the Swedes made some interesting remarks about the consequences of the Night Frost Crisis. Norway and Denmark, who were members of NATO, together with Sweden, who was neutral, had planned, in late January, to invite the Soviet premier, Khrushchev, to visit the Scandinavian countries in August 1959. However, the Swedish foreign ministry sources reported only a couple of weeks later that the planned visit might not take place, after all, because Scandinavian governments were becoming increasingly hesitant and even hostile to the idea. In Sweden these anxieties about the visit were the result of the fears "that public opinion would be against such a visit and fears in government that premier Khrushchev would make such political statements, which could be embarrassing to the hosts, especially if the visit happens to coincide with some international crisis situation." Even though the latter remark may be more directly related to the second Berlin Crisis, it is likely that the Night Frost Crisis had influenced public opinion in Sweden and in other Scandinavian countries.<sup>9</sup>

In the United States, the public was less inclined to understand the Finnish official position. According to Jakobson, the American press had dealt with recent events in

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9 Max Jakobson's memo "Tukholman lehtien suhtautuminen Suomen tilanteeseen", 2.2.1959, 12 L, Ulkoasianministeriön arkisto (UM). On Swedish discussions on the Finnish situation, UKP I 7.3.1959.

Finland “in a way, which cannot but weaken there confidence in Finnish independence,” as Finland had been characterized in number of articles as a “semi-satellite [of the USSR].” In order to influence American public opinion, the chief of the press department recommended that the president give an interview to *Newsweek’s* Scandinavian correspondent, Werner Wiskari. Wiskari had already indicated he would be interested in the following questions: “In which ways the recent crisis in our East [Soviet] relations influenced our relations with the West? What is our position on economic cooperation with Western Europe and the Nordic Countries? To what extent does our concern on good East [Soviet] relations restrict our domestic political freedom of choice (the position of the Soc. Dem. Party)? How can anti-communism at home be reconciled with good relations with the Soviet Union?” Although Jakobson said “of course, not all of Mr Wiskari’s questions need be answered,”<sup>10</sup> the interview was arranged. As an attempt to create a better public image in the West for on the Finnish position the interview, however, failed. The same basic division between the members of the Western alliance and neutral Sweden as there was on the level of the public reaction can also be observed in the more confidential reporting of the embassies.

A common theme in the observations of the Western superpower, the United States, and leading members of NATO, such as Great Britain and France, was Finland’s increased dependancy on the Soviet Union, and doubts about or criticisms of, president Kekkonen’s role. The nature of the Finnish policy of neutrality was also questioned, as The West now thought that Finland would increasingly further Soviet objectives in Scandinavia. As the Americans had played an active part on the Western side in the final phase of the crisis their views on its outcome were usually the most critical.<sup>11</sup>

In the first half of December 1958 the Americans acknowledged the sensitivity of the Finnish position in relation to alliance politics with the U.S. embassy in Helsinki emphasizing that there should be “no discussion [on] Finnish problem [in] NATO Council,” which meeting at the time in Paris, because of the Berlin crisis. Though the fall of the Fagerholm government was defined as a failure of US policy, it was believed that “those favoring minimum concessions to the USSR” had been strengthened after being offered U.S. economic support as an alternative to yielding to Soviet pressure, and that this would have an influence on formation of governments in Finland in the future. Indeed, president Kekkonen was aware of this and saw it as an unwelcome development. But on the U.S. side the extra influence acquired over the formation of Finland’s government by what was still believed to be a secret offer of support, was regarded very favorably. For the moment, it was not to be endangered by additional offers of support from other NATO countries, as they might well be rejected by the Finns for the fear of upsetting the Soviet Union.

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10 Max Jakobson’s memo “Yhdysvaltain lehdistön suhtautuminen Suomeen”, 25.2 1959, 12 L, UM.

11 For British and French views on the night frost crisis, see Jukka Seppinen, *Suomen EFTA -ratkaisu yöpakkasten ja noottikriisin välissä*, Saarijärvi 1997, p. 72–76. On immediate British impressions, see Hannu Rautkallio, *Kekkonen ja Moskova: Suomi lännestä nähtynä 1956–1962*, Jyväskylä 1991, p. 302–305.



The Americans still hadn't come to any clear conclusions about the role of the president Kekkonen. Despite the U.S. embassy's references to a "combined Soviet-Agrarian campaign" in overthrowing the government,<sup>12</sup> a general understanding in Finland on the limits of concessions made to the Soviet Union, including the president, was thought yet to be possible. The president's radio speech on 10 December 1958, in which he publicly rejected Western offers of support, seems to have been a turning point in this respect. The U. S. embassy in Helsinki now took an increasingly critical line on both the effects of the crisis on Finland and on president Kekkonen's role. According to the embassy Soviet-Finnish relations were now defined on a clearly unilateral basis. The main point of the report was that the Finland's position in relation to the USSR had worsened, and that the Soviets had almost received the right to determine "how far Finland must go to restore Soviet confidence and trust in Finland." The president had thought that whether the Fagerholm government had given any cause for the Soviet Union's suspicions, or not, was irrelevant. The Soviet Union, according to him, had not been interfering in Finnish internal affairs, "but had merely 'indicated its views, [a] right that cannot be denied to it.'" It seems that the embassy, or at least ambassador Hickerson, was quite at a loss to understand Kekkonen's motives, despite some interesting attempts.

The U.S. embassy's characterization of Kekkonen's recent behavior as a "shocking abnegation of Finland's position" clearly underscores the difficulty the U.S. embassy was having in understanding president Kekkonen's reasoning. On the other hand, Kekkonen's comments on the U.S. Secretary of State, Dulles, show that he also found it difficult to appreciate the views, on which the U.S. policy towards Finland were based. Nevertheless, the U.S. embassy raised two interesting points. First, despite doubts that the president was using "viewing with alarm"-technique, on the basis of both his public and private statements the embassy thought that Kekkonen might genuinely be afraid of a world war. Second, the reason for his public rejection of Western offers of aid was seen to be connected, not only to the fact that the offers had strengthened the hand of the opposition in his own party, but also to Soviet protests about an earlier Newsweek article on U.S. policy toward Finland. At this point, the final results of the Night Frost Crisis were seen to depend on how "the Soviets seek to capitalize the opportunities open to them" and on the abilities of the president's opponents. These were, however, found to be "at the present, poorly organized and virtually leaderless."<sup>13</sup>

The West's view of Soviet-Finnish relations was firmly based within the wider global context of the Cold War, which ideologically was part of the conflict between "Free World" and "Soviet Communism". By contrast, Finland's small Scandinavian neighbors perceived and interpreted the crisis between Finland and the Soviet Union mainly in bilateral terms. Politically, these countries were similar in that they were

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12 U.S. embassy in Helsinki to the Department of State, 9.12.1958, FRUS 1958–1960, Vol. X, part 2 doc. 200. Kekkonen's negative reaction to the influence the US aid offers had on government negotiations, UKP I, 5.12.1958, 10.12.1958, 13.12.1958, 20.12.1958.

13 US embassy in Helsinki to the Department of State, 11.12.1958, FRUS 1958–1960, Vol. X, part 2, doc. 202. For Kekkonen's views on Dulles, see UKP I 29.11.1958 and, especially, 5.12.1958 characterizing his advice as that of "stupid dilettante."

usually ruled by social democratic parties, which was, indeed, also the case at the time of the crisis. Despite the different foreign policy status of Norway and Sweden, the similarities and differences in their observations from early December 1958 to early February 1959 are interesting.

In Sweden, the main divisions over the country's policy of neutrality and Finland's role in, and influence on, this policy were presented by the government, the foreign ministry, the bourgeois opposition, and the army. The government and the military stood at the opposite ends of the political spectrum. For the government, Finland was not at least in public a key component of this policy of neutrality, and Sweden's policy towards Finland was to be constructed in such a way as to avoid provoking the USSR. Generally, the government had a reasonably positive attitude towards Soviet initiatives, especially if they were seen as supportive of *détente*. The military view was based more on deterrence than on *détente*. Regional developments and a balance in Scandinavia were seen as decisive, and Soviet initiatives were viewed with doubt. Changes in Finland's position, the occupation of the country by the Soviet Union, or strong increase of Soviet influence in Finland, would all have a negative effect on Sweden's security. The view of the Swedish bourgeois opposition was closer to that of the army. For Sweden's bourgeoisie, policy of neutrality should be re-evaluated, if there was a radical change in the Scandinavian circumstances. They believed that stating this more openly would moderate Soviet behavior, especially regarding Finland.<sup>14</sup> In Norway the Social Democratic government generally emphasized Norway's commitment to the NATO alliance, within certain self-imposed limitations. Serious opposition to the government's policy came mainly from own party, the Norwegian Social Democratic Party (DNA). Finland's position was seen to have relevance for the Norwegian position, and information was exchanged with the Swedes about Finland.<sup>15</sup> The Norwegians had more contacts with their NATO-partners, whereas the Swedes, especially their ambassador in Helsinki, Gösta Engzell, had good contacts with president Kekkonen.<sup>16</sup>

The first Norwegian evaluation of the significance and character of the Soviet-Finnish crises was, like the American, came with the meeting of NATO's Political Committee in Paris, only four days after the Fagerholm government had been overthrown, on 8 December 1958. Both the Norwegians and the Danes had been downplaying the West German suggestion, made by the foreign minister Hans von Bretano that Soviet pressure on Finland was designed to force Finland to recognize the East German government. At this point, the Norwegians also rejected the West German suggestion about Nordic economic support for the Fagerholm government. The question had already been considered by the Nordic Countries in November–December, but had been rejected because Finland's economic problems were seen to have more to do with the structure of Soviet trade, than with the lack of loans, and because of the lack of an official Finnish initiative. Now, as the government had

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14 For a more thorough treatment of different interpretations of Swedish security policy and Finland's position in it, see Olof Kronvall, *Den bräckliga barriären: Finland i svensk säkerhetspolitik 1948–1962*, Stockholm 2003, e.g. pp. 37–40. 272–276.

15 Petersson, 2003, pp. 73–74, 127–129.

16 Kronvall 2003, p. 269, 271.

already fallen, it was argued that the Finnish caretaker government probably wanted to avoid doing anything that “from the Soviet side could be interpreted as meddling, from outside in Soviet-Finnish relations.” This argument as such reflects Finland’s position as part of the clarified Soviet sphere of influence. The West Germans, on the other hand, saw the crisis as an opportunity for Western propaganda, as the crisis was defined as “a flagrant example of Soviet meddling in the internal affairs of other countries.” However, Finland was not put on to the official agenda of the meeting,<sup>17</sup> in the way that U.S. embassy in Helsinki had hoped.

The Norwegians initially reported on the announcement of president Kekkonen’s “cultural visit” to Leningrad through newspaper sources on the following day, 22 January 1959. However, the same day they received additional confidential information from the Finnish foreign minister, Ralf Törngren, the only non-Agrarian in the new Sukselainen government. He wanted to inform the Norwegians beforehand on the possibility of high level talks in Leningrad between the president and leading Soviet representatives, and that these “would not lead to any negotiations of a disquieting kind.” During the discussion, Törngren deemed it necessary to reinforce the message by repeating to the Norwegian ambassador, that the talks “would not lead to any stupidities.”<sup>18</sup> On the very same day the Finnish foreign minister had been excluded from the Leningrad delegation, and the president had invited Karjalainen, his trusted secretary and the present foreign trade minister instead. This had led to a conflict between the two, which the president characterized as “jealousy” on the foreign minister’s part.<sup>19</sup> Later the same day, the Norwegian embassy briefly informed by telephone, the political department of their foreign ministry on Kekkonen’s meeting with Khrushchev and Gromyko, which was assumed to have something to do with trade relations and loans. It was also noted that foreign minister Törngren had gone to Stockholm, and would continue to the Oslo meeting of the Nordic prime ministers. The Norwegian ambassador specifically noted that he had “no idea why the foreign minister had not been included in the Leningrad-delegation.”<sup>20</sup>

In late January the Norwegian embassy prepared its first, openly critical evaluation of the Leningrad meeting and president Kekkonen’s speech that had followed it on 25 January 1959. The embassy was particularly struck by the Finnish president’s lack of “even the smallest of reservations” in his speech at home to Khrushchev’s open criticism of leading Social Democrats and the Finnish press, parts of, which, according to Khrushchev were on the payroll of Western reactionaries. It is clear that the Norwegians had doubts, even before the Soviet-

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17 E. Ulstein to the Norwegian foreign ministry from Paris on 8.12.1958, “Sovjetisk press på Finnland”, pp. 1–2, Riksarkivet (RA), Utriksdepartement (UD), Förholdet Finland-Sovjet Unionen (25.7/9B). On the prospect of Nordic economic support for Finland, see, for example, Gustav Heiden, Political Department on 10.11.1958, and the Norwegian ambassador in Helsinki, Knut Lykke, 1.12.1958, RA, UD 25.7/9B.

18 Lykke to foreign ministry on 22.1.1959, “President Kekkonen besöker Leningrad”, p. 1–2, RA, UD 25.7/9B.

19 UKP 1, 22.1.1959.

20 Memo of Ole Ålgård 22.1.1959, Political Department of the Norwegian foreign ministry, p. 1, RA, UD 25.7/9B.

Finnish meeting, about Kekkonen's role during the crisis. That these doubts remained after the meeting is revealed by a foreign ministry official's comments on an article in a Finnish local paper, Åbo Underrättelser. The paper had, in commenting on Khrushchev's accusations, argued that "it would have been most appropriate with the dignity of the president's role to oppose in a friendly but decisive manner Khrushchev's gross misunderstanding." The receiver of the report in the Norwegian foreign ministry had underlined the word "dignity" three times (!) and had written in pencil in the margin of the report "Yes, but hardly with his [Kekkonen's] party-interest." In the brief summary of the actual report it was noted that the existence of the present government probably guaranteed the gradual normalization of Finnish-Soviet relations. But the report also speculated on the effect of the crisis arguing that "the political leadership, at the same time, knows that relations may become chilly again, if the country gets a government, which does not have Moscow's trust. And it is also known, which Finnish political circles will probably not be accepted"<sup>21</sup>

With regard to the Norwegian view on the results of Leningrad meeting, and the significance of president Kekkonen's speech immediately after it, information provided by the Finnish foreign minister, Törnngren, proved to be interesting again. First, he claimed that neither Nordic cooperation nor the consultations on the FCMA treaty had been on the agenda of the meeting. Then the foreign minister, according to the Norwegians, directly contradicted president Kekkonen by observing that "when the president said that the crisis had been more serious than had been believed in Finland, it was mostly a propaganda statement." This had not gone unnoticed in the Norwegian foreign ministry, as there was a mark in the margin and the word "propaganda statement" had been underlined. However, later, in its consideration of the causes and consequences of the Night Frost Crisis the same report criticized, for the first time, the Finnish SDP. The party's decision to take "battle positions" and "declare war" on president Kekkonen was seen to reflect more on "the power of Leskinen than on the tactical wisdom of the party."<sup>22</sup>

In January and February, Stockholm, the Norwegians had wide-ranging discussions with Östen Undén, the Swedish foreign minister and Sverker Åström, the head of the Swedish foreign ministry's political department, which allows one to compare their respective views on the Soviet-Finnish crisis. Undén, in early January, before the Leningrad summit, had already looked into the substance of the "Night Frost" crisis, and now believed that, despite certain rumors the Soviets had not used any other means to put pressure on Finland than those already discussed in the public domain. He also underlined the domestic political background of the crisis and the strength of political, "and not the least personal," conflicts in Finland. The Swedish foreign minister was also more prepared than the Norwegians, to criticize the Finnish SDP. He found their continuous support for Tanner as chairman "quite incomprehensible," as he could hardly be very useful for party work anymore, and "acts like a red cloth in relation to the Russians." He also suspected that the SDP

21 K. Lykke, Norwegian embassy in Helsinki to the foreign ministry, 28.1.1959, "Etter Leningradbesöket", pp. 1-3, RA, UD 25.7/9B.

22 Lykke, Norwegian Embassy in Helsinki to the foreign ministry, 29.1.1958, "Presidents samtaler med Khrustjov i Leningrad", pp. 1-2, 5, RA, UD 25.7/9B.

might be, “at least partly,” on tactical grounds, creating the impression in Sweden that there were a very dangerous situation in Finland.

Sverker Åström from the Swedish foreign ministry believed that the Swedes were well informed about Night Frost crisis, as “president Kekkonen and his subordinates had spoken very open mindedly on the question” to them. But he did not rule out, the possibility that the reports of the Finnish ambassador in Moscow, Eero A. Wuori, might have been misinterpreted.<sup>23</sup> Generally, Åström saw the Soviet-Finnish crisis as a conflict strictly limited to the Soviet sphere of influence and argued that “the Russians growl now and again to make the Finns stay on the right path. Naturally it may be that West German rearmament including that of the navy, has had some influence.” Åström argued that, “the Soviet action against Finland had been local and temporary. It did not mean that the Russians were now generally wishing to change their positions in Europe.” Rumors about the CPF/FPDL’s demands for government posts and for the full implementation of the FCMA treaty were labeled as mere speculation. However, Åström recognized significance of domestic political divisions the for foreign policy, and regretted the long duration of the Finnish government crisis. Finland was unfavorably compared to “Austria, where the big parties thought it necessary, precisely on the basis of foreign policy considerations, to maintain the [government] coalition.”<sup>24</sup>

The Norwegian and Swedish representatives held more conclusive discussions on the results of the Night Frost crisis in early February, after the Leningrad summit. According to the Norwegians, the Swedish side was more critical than before of president Kekkonen’s role in resolving the crisis. It was found “striking” that Kekkonen “had not seized the Soviet claims and corrected,” regarding the Finnish press or the Fagerholm government, although he had admitted the government had not broken against the Paasikivi Line, the foundation of Finnish post-war foreign policy. Still, the Swedes continued to be astonished by the Finnish SDP’s decision to choose Tanner as their chairman, “as they must know it was a direct provocation [against the Soviet Union].” The Norwegians’ understanding of the Swedish view on the perceived change in Finland’s position is contained in the beginning of the foreign ministry’s memorandum on the discussions. It is worth quoting the entire paragraph.

“The so-called normalization in the relations between Finland and the Soviet Union is obviously received with satisfaction by official circles in Sweden. But the fact that the last crisis, in a rather frightening way, demonstrated Finland’s dependence on its great eastern neighbor is not hidden. More clearly than before, the world has been shown that Finland cannot choose the government it wants, and that there are limits to the freedom of press in Finland. Another minus is that the foreign policy crisis was launched by an internal power struggle between the Finnish parties.”<sup>25</sup>

23 The Swedish ambassador in Helsinki, Gösta Engzell, had received this impression at the beginning of January, when discussing the matter with Wuori. During the Soviet-Finnish crisis Wuori had been asked to report directly to president Kekkonen, who had then used his reports to dramatize the crisis. Timo Soikkanen, *Presidentin ministeriö 1956–1969: Ulkoasianhallinto ja ulkopolitiikan hoito Kekkosen kaudella*, Hämeenlinna 2003, pp. 211–214.

24 Jens Schive, Norwegian ambassador in Stockholm to the foreign ministry, 9.1.1959, “Svensk syn på krisen i Finland”, pp. 1–3, RA, UD 25.7/9B.

25 Schive, to the foreign ministry, 10.2.1959, “Svenske reaktioner”, pp. 1–3, RA, UD 25.7/9B.

This confidential exchange of opinions between a neutral country and a NATO member country provides a rather clear picture of how Finland's neighbors to the west perceived Finland's position. The reference to the concept of "so-called normalization" is of specific interest, as it implies that something other than a mere return to the previous status quo was seen to have taken place in Soviet-Finnish relations. The Swedish assessment clearly differs from the neutral, rather restricted tone they used in their discussions with Finnish representatives, or when giving official statements the parliament (*riksdag*) in response to inquiries by the bourgeois opposition.<sup>26</sup>

There are, despite differences in tone some important similarities, in terms of subject matter, between the great powers and those of Finland's neighbors on this Soviet-Finnish crisis. First, both agreed that Finland's political and economic dependence on the USSR had been clearly revealed. Second, both underlined the significance of the Finnish domestic political component in the crisis, and thought that this factor had increased the effect of Soviet pressure. Lastly, both expressed doubts about the role of president Kekkonen, though neighboring countries, especially the Swedes, also specifically criticized the Finnish SDP.

## THE END GAME OF THE CRISIS

In the context of Finland's changing relationship vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, it is necessary to consider the function of the Leningrad meeting, why it was agreed on, and what was achieved. The basic Soviet condition for the "normalization" of relations, namely, the toppling of the previous government and the appointment of a more satisfying one, had already been realized. Nothing new since the "Night Frost" crisis, either in relation to the Fagerholm government, or to the international situation, was brought up during it. The meeting had been planned between late November and early December 1958, and was finally confirmed the day after the appointment of the new Sukselainen government, 14 January 1959.

It would seem likely that from the Soviet point of view the summit had served two purposes. Firstly, regarding its policy towards Finland, the Soviet Union needed to state publicly at the highest level its terms for the "normalization" of relations between the two countries,<sup>27</sup> terms which the resident of the KGB in Finland, Vladimir Zhenikhov had already told president Kekkonen in early December privately. However, the meeting was also about redefining and renewing the terms for Soviet cooperation with president Kekkonen, whose capabilities had not fully satisfied the Soviets. As the composition of the Fagerholm government had shown, he had failed to maintain domestic political control in Finland, that is, to keep "anti-Soviet" forces out of the government. The fact that he had temporarily lost control in his "own" party, the Agrarian Union, to its right wing, led by Virolainen and

26 On the tone of Swedish assessments, Suomi 1992, p. 190 and Kronvall 2003, pp. 277–280.

27 Suomi 1992, pp. 210–211, and Yearbooks 1959, UKA, Kekkonen's remarks on Khrushchev's strict approach in the summit.

supported by Sukselainen, had effectively enabled the formation of Fagerholm's "Night Frost" government. Under the new terms, the Soviets openly demanded the president was keep the SDP out of government, in particular, to prevent the FPDL/CPF from being the only party left out of it, and exercise unofficial censorship over the Finnish media in relation to the Soviet Union.

Secondly, at both the international and ideological level, a publicly hailed normalization of Soviet-Finnish relations well suited Soviet foreign policy and ideological interests connected to the Second Berlin Crisis and the XXI Party Congress of the CPSU. The meeting took place in late January 1959, just after the Soviet Union had begun to take the first steps to defuse the Berlin Crisis, as Khrushchev's unilateral ultimatum strategy seemed to have led literally to a dead end by significantly raising the threat of a nuclear war. In early January, the Soviet Deputy Premier, Anastas Mikoian, had been sent to probe the US position regarding West Berlin. As Mikoian had criticized Khrushchev's gamble in November 1958 he initially had not been too enthusiastic about this mission, remarking to Khrushchev, "You started it, so you go!" However, after the visit, international tensions began to ease slightly, as the Soviets now argued that they were not trying to undermine Western unity in Berlin. The Americans, on the other hand, were ready to discuss the German question at foreign minister level, but rejected a summit unless concrete results could be expected. Nor did they compromise on the status of West Berlin.<sup>28</sup>

In discussions on U.S.-Soviet economic relations, the Americans had mentioned Yugoslavia and Finland as unwelcome examples of the USSR's use of trade for political ends. In the XXI CPSU party congress, on 27.1–3.2.1959, the main domestic themes were the new seven year plans for the Soviet economy and the commitment to raise Soviet GNP in order to overtake the Western level by 1970. In foreign policy, peaceful coexistence, together with the increasing strength of the Socialist camp, was underlined,<sup>29</sup> which kept options open for both a compromise or a tougher position in relation to the West. Thus, Finland could again be useful as a public example of peaceful coexistence for the Soviet Union, even more so, as it now had a suitable government. This would explain why Khrushchev had found time to meet Kekkonen on the eve of the party congress, and, why the KGB had been impatiently pressing for, not only the overthrowing of the old government, but also the formation of a new one.

From president Kekkonen's point of view, the meeting, despite the rather open dictation of terms by the Soviets, was useful in two senses. First, it underlined his position as the only Finnish politician capable of being an effective middle man between Finland and the Soviet leadership. The president chose to strengthen this even more, not by what his biography prefers to call personal diplomacy, but rather by something more akin to secret diplomacy. He left the foreign minister at home,

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28 Taubman 2003, p. 409–410. Also Zubok and Pleshakov on the purpose of Mikoian's USA visit in January 1959 on the basis of Oleg Troianovskii's interview, p. 323, note 76.

29 Memo of discussion on trade between Dillon and Mikoian, 19.1.1959, doc. 65 and editorial note on the themes of the XXI Congress of the CPSU, FRUS 1958–1960, Vol. X, Part 1, doc. 68.



and he conducted the talks with the Soviets with only an interpreter, whilst the Soviet leader was joined intermittently by his foreign minister and the minister for foreign trade. Only later did Ahti Karjalainen, the newly appointed Finnish foreign trade minister, and the head of the trade policy department, Jaakko Hallama, join in the talks. Second, the fact that during these private talks, Kekkonen had tried, on the basis of domestic political complications and the divisions in Finnish society, albeit unsuccessfully, to argue against excluding the SDP from the government shows that the president understood that his political position domestically could deteriorate even further.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the fact that the Soviet leadership did not demand the participation of the CPF in the government, at this point, may be seen as an achieved compromise. This would give the president more freedom to manoeuvre in domestic Finnish politics, and in relation to his own party. There was still considerable opposition within the Agrarian Union to cooperation with the CPF, so much so that the party secretary Korsimo had been concerned about a split in the party, if indeed the CPF was included in the government.

Though the Western and Scandinavian views on the results of the Nighty Frost Crisis could be exaggerated, they were basically not mistaken. The role of the Finnish president seemed problematic to the great powers and Finland's neighbors alike, although the view of the NATO countries had been more critical and negative since his election, whereas the Swedish view had been more positive. Kekkonen's real motives were not understood as they had been kept concealed, and the nature and extent of his direct contacts with the Soviets were clearly unknown, even to the "well informed" Swedes. Contemporary western observers were unable ascertain precisely how Kekkonen had managed to combine and reconcile his definition of Finland's national interests, confidential relations with the Soviets as support of his presidency, and the border question, that is, the return of at least parts of Karelia. As a result of the Night Frost Crisis, which raised doubts on the Finnish president's secret and open collaboration with Soviet objectives, the credibility of Finland's official foreign policy, and that of its president, had been severely damaged in the West.

From the viewpoint of the Soviet "endgame," it seems likely that the purpose of the Leningrad summit was not primarily the "normalization" of Soviet-Finnish relations, that is, their restoration to some previously existing level. In fact, as a result of the summit Soviet-Finnish relations were stabilized, but on a clearly new level, whereby the Soviet Union's influence over Finnish foreign policy, domestic politics and trade policy was openly acknowledged. A comparison of Western and Nordic views of Finland's position during the crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations allows one to assess the credibility of Soviet foreign policy in general.

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30 Suomi 1992, pp. 207–209 and Vuosikirjat (Yearbooks) 1959, UKA, Kekkonen's remarks on meeting Khrushchev on 22–23.1.1959.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WEST EUROPEAN INTEGRATION FOR SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS SCANDINAVIA AND FINLAND

From the viewpoint of the “unity of empires” in the largest sense, as well as that of alliance cohesion, the development of West European integration presented a new challenge to Soviet foreign policy in 1959, especially in relation to Scandinavia and Finland. The basic Soviet attitude towards integration is clearly set out in the following two foreign ministry memorandums, dating from early 1955.

The Soviets viewed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), founded in 1951, in the context of the rearming of the Western Europe, the member countries of NATO and West Germany. The USSR saw this as an American attempt, to control the key branches of West European industry. Though they acknowledged that other motives were involved in the creation and development of the ECSC, these were considered as having secondary importance. For the Soviets, the French were interested in receiving cheap coal from Ruhr so as to modernize their steel industry and the West German’s were interested in freeing their economy from the control of the western occupying powers and increasing their influence in Western Europe.<sup>31</sup>

Integration was seen, by and large, as an instrument of an openly anti-Soviet U.S. foreign policy sought to rearm West Germany and reduce the sovereignty of the ECSC member states. West European integration was seen, not only, as a military threat, and part of the “preparation of a new war against the USSR and peoples’ democracies,” but also as an ideologically hostile process, “aiming at consolidating the forces of the West European bourgeois countries so as to strengthen their struggle against the democratic movements [communist parties] of these countries.” The Soviet’s saw that Germany was providing leadership for plans of West European integration at this time, and thought that it would lead to the “denouncing of the national sovereignty of the participating countries in all the main questions.” The British opposition to the supranational structures of integration was duly noted, but was largely explained away as the product of British-American rivalry. The basis of the Soviet argumentation against the Marshall Plan had been similar already in 1947.<sup>32</sup>

This Soviet evaluation of the objectives of West European integration in the Cold War context was not completely mistaken, though it was one sided and ideologically too simplistic. The United States’ support for integration was indeed based on the need for a strong and unified Western Europe in the confrontation with the USSR. For the United States, however, the promotion of integration was not only a means of containing the Soviet Union, it was also a means of controlling West Germany. In

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31 “Spravka o Evropeiskom Ob’edinenii ugla i stali (‘Plan Shumana’),” N. Solodovnik, deputy chief of Soviet foreign ministry’s committee of information, and P. Ershov, deputy chief of the First European department of the MID, circulated by Andrei Gromyko to N. S. Khrushchev and other politburo members, 20.1.1955, 5/30/114, pp. 4–5 RGANI.

32 “Spravka o planah “ob’edineniia Jevropy,”” N. Solodovnik, deputy chief of Soviet foreign ministry’s committee of information, and P. Ershov, deputy chief of the MID’s First European department, circulated by Andrei Gromyko to N. S. Khrushchev and other politburo members, 20.1.1955, 5/30/114, pp. 42, 45–46, 52–53 RGANI.

fact, this kind of “double containment” reflected the Western solution to the German problem, whereby integration was the preferred answer as opposed to isolation or suppression. Generally the Americans demanded that integration be located within a U.S. led Atlantic framework. Otherwise it could, in the longer run, become to a potential a real threat to U.S. interests. As the closest ally of the United States, the British, opposed supranational organizations, the Americans had no alternative but to offer the initiative to the French. This formed the basis for the creation of the ECSC in 1951 between France, West Germany, Italy, and the three Benelux countries, later known as the “six.” The organization, however, lacked a direct connection with the Atlantic structures. This was not problematic for the Americans at the time, as it did not challenge NATO, and coal and steel were not seen, contrary to Soviet beliefs, as central to the Atlantic framework. Not, in fact, did West Germany have a leading role in the integration process. The French had the leading role, first with U.S. support, and later without it, while the West Germans remained more or less junior partners to the French. At the time the lack of an Atlantic connection in the French-German integration process was not seen as a problem for U.S. interests, as the promotion of the process was seen to take place more smoothly without it.<sup>33</sup>

The ECSC led on to the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in the second half of the 1950s. Despite British opposition, in 1957 the Europeans signed in the Treaty of Rome whereby a Common Market and political integration were accepted as objectives of European integration. The first step in this process would be the establishment of a customs boundary between the “six” and the other countries in January 1959. As the British had stayed outside the process of continental integration, they now began to plan, as a counter measure, a looser, OEEC based trade area around them, which finally took shape as the European Free Trade Area (EFTA). These emerging divisions in the West European integration process ran directly against the U.S. objective of unifying western Europe. As a result EFTA, or the British policy behind it, never received real support from the United States.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the organization was recognized as a potential means of spreading Western influence.

The Nordic Countries, including Finland, had drawn up plans for limited economic cooperation in the mid 1950s under the name of the Nordic Customs Union. Now these plans had become outdated as a consequence of the present trend in the integration process. They needed to take the divisions that had been brought to the surface by the integration process in to account and the value of the planned Nordic Customs Union had to be reestimated. The Scandinavian countries which, unlike Finland, belonged to the OEEC, had no objections in principle to participating, in some form, in West European integration. For Finland this created serious contradiction between her trade policy and security policy situation vis-a-vis

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33 Lundestad 1998, pp. 22–24, 43–44. The U.S. attitude towards West European integration became more ambivalent from the 1960s and 1970s on.

34 Jeffrey Glen Giauque, *Grand Designs and Visions of Unity: The Atlantic Powers and the Reorganization of Europe, 1955–1963*, Chapel Hill 2002, pp. 56–59, 66–71. On US views on EFTA, see also Lundestad 1998, p. 89.

the Soviet Union. On the one hand, it was necessary for Finland's trading future to secure relations with the free trade area, as it would include both the main customers of the Finnish forest products, and Finland's main competitors on that market. On the other hand, based on previous experience, the Soviets could be expected to be critical of such a move.<sup>35</sup>

In October 1957 the Finnish foreign ministry officials already suspected that the Soviets would be against Finland joining the OEEC. The ministry thought that the Soviets would be aware of the general basis of the Finnish attitude to membership, but might not appreciate specific factors behind it. These had already made devaluation and the liberalization of trade necessary in September 1957. The foreign ministry was, however, interested in maintaining the East trade, trade with the USSR, at a substantial level despite the possibility of Finland's participation in the integration process. In March 1958 the Soviet ambassador in Helsinki warned Finland against OEEC membership, although he did express some understanding for Finland's need for trade with the west. The formal basis for the Soviet's concern was that the most favored nation (MFN) status, which the Soviet Union had received in successive trade treaties with Finland since 1947, might be jeopardized or even withdrawn. It would, however, be too easy to argue that these actions and fluctuations in the balance of trade constitute the sole, deciding factor behind the political crisis, which broke out in the autumn of 1958 in Soviet-Finnish relations.<sup>36</sup> President Kekkonen had expressed clear interest in the Finnish participation to the OEEC during January and February 1958. Even in late February, the KGB had not thought that Finnish membership in the organization was problematic.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time with the ongoing Second Berlin Crisis, the integration process moved forward, once again. After the French had secured the failure of a large OEEC based free trade area in November 1958, the British need for EFTA became acute. Despite Britain having the leading role in the EFTA, Sweden was the country which took the initiative in the negotiations in March–May 1959. These negotiations were conducted in secret, hidden from the public, the “six,” and other nonparticipants, including the Soviet Union and Finland.<sup>38</sup>

## SOVIET OBJECTIVES IN SCANDINAVIA IN 1959

The Soviet policy towards Scandinavia in spring and summer 1959 continued along much the same lines as before. A central factor in this was the Soviet assumption that they had reached a turning point in increasing their influence in Norway and Denmark.

Khrushchev's forthcoming official visit to the Scandinavian countries in February 1959 seemed to offer the Soviet leadership additional opportunities for further

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35 Paavonen 1998, pp. 272–273.

36 See Seppinen 1997, pp. 50–52, as an example of explanation of the Night Frost Crisis with overt trade policy emphasis.

37 UKP I, 31.1.1958, 20.2.1958, 22.2.1958.

38 Giaque 2002, p. 68, 70–71. On the Swedish role, Seppinen 1997 e.g., p. 84, 86–87.

strengthening their influence in the area. The Soviet embassy in Copenhagen proposed a number of measures for creating a better general atmosphere for the visit to Denmark, and the Soviet foreign ministry was planning a campaign in the Soviet press to built up public support. The new Soviet ambassador, Kliment D. Levytchkin, who had only recently been appointed in early 1959, was very optimistic about increasing Soviet influence in Denmark. According to Levytchkin, the Danes lacked information about Soviet society and the country's foreign policy. He also thought that Danish justifications for their membership of NATO were weak. Economic relations between the two countries were not satisfactory, however, as they were so limited they did not have any significance in achieving political influence.<sup>39</sup> In this sense Soviet policy towards Finland had been managed on an entirely different basis, as the solution of the previous Soviet-Finnish crisis had made clear.

The main Soviet objectives in relation to Denmark were set out in May 1959, in ambassador Levytchkin's reply to the instructions received from the Soviet foreign ministry in March–April, about increasing Soviet influence in the country. His starting point was Denmark's strategic significance to the Soviet Union and to the other socialist Baltic Sea states, Poland and the GDR. The country was described as “a gate from West to the Baltic Sea,” a route through which NATO forces could strike against the Soviet Union and its allies. The Soviet objective in Denmark as far as the wider conflict with the United States was concerned was “to strengthen those factors, which made Denmark the weak link in NATO, with the aim of having it leave this organization and changing it to a neutral state.”<sup>40</sup> Soviet expectations had probably been, if anything, encouraged by a declaration of the Danish prime minister, Hansen, in May, in which the Danish government had restated its refusal to receive nuclear weapons. The prime minister also confirmed to the Soviet ambassador that Khrushchev would receive a warm welcome.<sup>41</sup>

Rising Soviet expectations regarding their policies in Scandinavia were well reflected in both public and private assessments of these policies, in June 1959. Finland was also brought up as a point of comparison. The wider context was, once again, the emergence of the Western, and especially the West German military presence to the Baltic Sea. Khrushchev gave a speech in 10 June 1959 in Riga where he set out in a very straightforward manner the Soviet view of the foreign policies of the Scandinavian countries. Khrushchev described the Norway and Denmark's membership of NATO as a mistake, which could be corrected, so that these countries could live, like the Finnish people, in peace and friendship with the Soviet people.<sup>42</sup> The credibility of these claims was probably not very high amongst the foreign policy elites at the time. Using Finland in particular as a model for relations between the Soviet Union and the Scandinavian countries was probably unwise given the less than favorable Norwegian and Swedish conclusions regarding Finnish sovereignty as revealed by the Night Frost Crisis. Nor had the Danes been

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39 Jensen 1999, p. 532, on the basis of the document from Soviet foreign ministry, Levytchkin to vice foreign minister Pushkin, 21.5.1959, 085/44/165/9, pp. 9–15, AVP RF.

40 Ibid.

41 Jensen 1999, p. 531.

42 Ibid., 532.

enthusiastic about the consequences of the crisis for Soviet-Finnish relations, as the initiative of their Embassy in Helsinki about Nordic economic support for Finland during the crisis in December 1958 had shown.<sup>43</sup>

Only a week after Khrushchev's Riga speech the central committee of the CPSU ordered the international department of the party to draw up plans for Soviet propaganda for the Scandinavian countries and for Finland. The concrete objectives of this campaign were, first, to create a missile and nuclear free zone in Scandinavia, and second, to strengthen the Scandinavian countries' tendency toward neutrality. To further this aim, the advantages of a policy of neutrality to Sweden and Finland needed to be underlined, and the militaristic policy of West Germany and its aggressive plans for the Baltic Sea had to be "uncovered thoroughly." The third objective was to promote the idea of the Baltic Sea as "Sea of Peace." This was seen important to counter the Nordic (and western) interpretation of this idea, which saw it as meaning "the creation of a closed Soviet inland sea." Instead, they should emphasize how the Germans had closed the straits leading to the Baltic Sea during World War II.<sup>44</sup> On a more positive note, the Soviet Union would be prepared to declare that it would not use nuclear weapons against Denmark, if Denmark guaranteed that it would not allow nuclear weapons on its territory under any circumstances. The unified Danish-German Baltic command was seen as a threat to any positive development.

The significance of breaking Norway and Denmark away from NATO was shown by the fact that the Soviet Union was now once again ready to reconsider its earlier, negative attitude towards the Scandinavian Defense Union (SDU). Considering recent developments in Soviet-Finnish relations, Finland's position was also brought out in an interesting way. In principle, the Soviets decided that would not exclude the possibility that Finland could join such an alliance, if the Scandinavians inquired about this. However, discussions on the impact of the FCMA treaty to these SDU plans were thought to be premature, since encouraging Norway and Denmark to adopt a policy of neutrality was considered the priority.<sup>45</sup> However, when enquires had been made about the Norwegian attitude to the Scandinavian Defense Union in early 1958, the Soviets had found the Norwegians unenthusiastic. The Soviet proposal had been interpreted as an attempt to "isolate Scandinavia from the West, in the same way as the Soviets hoped to isolate West Europe from the USA."<sup>46</sup>

Reactions to Khrushchev's Riga speech, which had set out the central objectives of Soviet foreign policy in Scandinavia, were largely unenthusiastic in Denmark and

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43 Lykke, the Norwegian embassy in Helsinki to the foreign ministry, 1.12.1958, "Regjeringsforhandlingene", RA, UD 25.7/9B. On Danish initiative, see also Jensen, p. 561.

44 Jensen 1999, p. 533, on the basis of a CPSU document, the Central Committee to the international department, Karoteki Daniia 1952–1981 II (no exact date given, approximation Bent Jensen's), Protokol 31, 7 and 33, 61, Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii, (TsKhSD,) presently known as Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveisei istorii (RGANI).

45 Jensen 1999, pp. 533–534, on the basis of a document of the Soviet foreign ministry, June–July 1959, 085/44/165/9, pp. 20–29, 33–36, 39–42, 58, AVP RF. Compare the Soviet plan with Suomi 1992, pp. 237–238, on the plans for a Swedish led Nordic "armed neutrality alliance" by Kekkonen's opponents during the summer of 1959 as well.

46 Petterson 2003, p. 123.

Norway, and in late June Undén, the Swedish foreign minister, also criticized the Soviet proposals. The criticism was based on the one sidedness of the Soviet initiatives as the Soviet Union was still not ready include its own territory to such a zone; a policy that went back to 1957, when it had first proposed the creation of the Nordic nuclear free zone. The Soviet's insistence that Norwegian and Danish NATO membership was based on a mistake or misinterpretation served only to increase irritation in the ruling social democratic, and bourgeois, circles of these countries. Demands for the postponement of Khrushchev's Scandinavian visit surfaced in the press, together with "many malevolent caricatures" on the "Sea of Peace" theme.<sup>47</sup> The Riga speech also led to debate in Finland, although Finland's political field was much more divided. This was no wonder, as Khrushchev had openly referred to Finland's domestic political scene and had named the enemies of good Soviet-Finnish relations.

### DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN FINLAND IN THE SPRING OF 1959

During the spring and summer of 1959 the domestic political struggle in Finland was far from being resolved. The way president Kekkonen had resolved the crisis in Soviet-Finnish relations had increased the polarization of the party politics. The basic division was between the Agrarian Union, the leftist Skog's fraction which had split from the SDP, and the FPDL/CPF, on the one hand and the Swedish Peoples' Party, the Coalition and the SDP, on the other hand.

However, there were also noticeable divisions within some parties. For example, moderates in the SDP, the so-called III-line, were ready to consider changes in the party's leadership and compromise with the president and his Soviet policy. In the Agrarian Union the right-wing had supported participation in the "Night Frost government," and was still interested in cooperating with the other two major participants, the Coalition and the SDP. Interestingly, the main supporters of the Agrarian Union's right-wing seemed to be Johannes Virolainen,

the former foreign minister, and Sukselainen, the current prime minister. Despite the president's public appeals, a large, albeit diverse, political opposition was less than willing to cooperate. In fact, from January to May, Kekkonen's conduct of foreign and domestic policy was the target of harsh criticism, especially from the SDP, but also from the Coalition.<sup>48</sup> Soviet representatives observed the political situation in Finland closely.<sup>49</sup> The instability of party politics led to growing concerns and several attempts to correct the situation.

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47 UKP I, 25.6.1959, 29.6.1959 on Östen Undén's speech, and Jensen 1999, p. 534, on the basis of a document of the Soviet foreign ministry, the Soviet embassy in Copenhagen to the foreign ministry, 28.7.1959, 085/49/52/12, AVP RF.

48 Suomi 1992, pp. 217–223, 229.

49 V. Kotliar to the Scandinavian department of the foreign ministry, 27.1.1959, notes "the present politically strained situation in the country and the parties' struggle over the masses", when analyzing the structure of the Swedish People's Party in a memo "Folkting Shvedskoi Finliandii", 135/41/40, p. 11, AVP RF.



The Soviets were concerned about three different but interrelated issues in Finnish politics, at the time: the continuity of the present government basis, the next presidential elections and the situation in the Agrarian Union and the SDP. Of these, the state of present government and the situation in the Agrarian Union and the SDP were more acute, as the presidential elections were still two years away.

In late February 1959 the Soviet intelligence service was still satisfied with the minority agrarian government. However, in early March, the new Soviet ambassador Aleksei Vasilevich Zakharov, a former deputy foreign minister, expressed, for the first time, his doubts about the continuity of the current government policies, asking "Will Finland do so that this government deals the trade treaty with the S[oviet] U[nion], and after it follows a large based [government coalition]?" Soviet concerns about the renewal of the night frost government's basis were underlined by enquiries about the possibility of negotiations between the Agrarian Union's right wing and the SDP, which indeed took place. A week later the resident of the KGB, Zenikhov, informed the Agrarian Union's party secretary Korsimo that he was aware of such negotiations. At the end of April, president Kekkonen was thinking, regarding the trade negotiations, the often repeated Soviet fear "that after the present government fixes relations with the Soviet Union, it will be toppled." The KGB happened to repeat the message the following day, when it warned against enlarging the government, "even if the prerequisites for it do not exist." In mid May president Kekkonen's the intelligence expert, Vilkkuna, tried still to reassure the Soviet intelligence service.<sup>50</sup> A week earlier the CPF had informed the Soviet embassy about the internal struggles in the Agrarian Union. The names of Virolainen and the current prime minister Sukselainen were connected to the party's right wing, which, however, was not seen, at the moment, to be willing to come out openly.<sup>51</sup>

The theme of the next Finnish presidential elections surfaced directly only two times during the spring. In mid February the KGB contact Vladimirov had observed to Vilkkuna, when commenting on a political deal, which made Fagerholm the speaker of the parliament that there would be political turmoil in Finland right up to presidential elections. Vladimirov also thought that the rightist circles expected that the lowering of tensions between the superpower's would help them to attack the government and the president, but added that they were going to be disappointed, regarding lowering of tensions in Europe. Thus the Soviets aimed, by underlining international tensions, to lower the Finnish opposition's expectations of expanding Finland's room to manoeuvre.<sup>52</sup>

The other occasion at which the presidential elections were dealt with, was raised in late May discussions about enlarging the minority government. Then Zenikhov, resident of Soviet intelligence, informed Korsimo that "the S[oviet] U[nion] thought UK's [Urho Kekkonen] reelection as president essential." However, this statement

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50 UKP I, on discussions with the representatives of the KGB: 25.2.1959, 13.3.1959, 30.4.1959, 19.5.1959, and with the Soviet ambassador: 6.3.1959, 29.4.1958.

51 The Soviet ambassador in Helsinki, Aleksei Zakharov, to the Scandinavian department of the foreign ministry, 14.5.1959, "Memo on discussions with comrades Pessi and Kuusinen on 6.5.1959", NKPSa, doc. 55, p. 260–261.

52 UKP I, 12.2.1959.

was combined with a direct warning to the president, not to take representatives of even the moderate SDP, the so-called III-line, into the government. This would cause a new “ice age.” To make Soviet policy absolutely clear, it was observed that if Kekkonen expected to receive support from the Coalition and the right-wing SDP in the presidential elections through these moves, he was completely mistaken. Support would come from the Agrarian Union, Skog’s fraction and the CPF. This was followed by a warning, “if the president collapses this path by taking the III[-line of the SDP] into the government, all is lost, and the Agrarian Union must finally be seen to give up the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line.”<sup>53</sup>

The situation in Finland, from the Soviet point of view, could be described as somewhat unresolved and unstable at best. Two corrective measures, at the state and government level, were used to restore some stability to the situation. First, the president’s policy, the K-line, was to be strengthened by rewarding it with the reestablishment of trade relations between the countries, in the form of a trade treaty. Ahti Karjalainen, the foreign trade minister of the current minority government, negotiated a preliminary trade treaty, in Moscow, in February–March, and informed the president that the Soviet Union had, for the most part, agreed with Finnish proposals. A preliminary trade treaty was signed on 13 March 1959. However, at the end of April, the Soviet Union postponed the beginning of negotiations for a long term trade agreement several weeks. Karjalainen suspected that this was connected to the interest within the Agrarian Union in widening the composition of the government, which had, indeed, been the subject of warnings by both the Soviet foreign ministry and the Soviet intelligence service.<sup>54</sup>

The other means to stabilize the situation in Finnish domestic politics was an attempt to influence directly the attitude of the Finnish government towards the opposition. In mid March, during trade policy talks in Moscow Nikita Khrushchev had observed to Karjalainen that the Soviet Union had confidence in the current Finnish government. However, he then added that he knew that there are people within the Agrarian Union who did not accept the present line. Anastas Mikoian then gave the following advice: “When your government is under threat of being overthrown and its work is being complicated, you have to take the offensive.” The advice was not without consequences.<sup>55</sup> Karjalainen had apparently picked out as a person receptive for advices of the Soviet leadership, as he had already been informed in late February by his KGB contact Viktor Vladimirov that he would receive an audience with Khrushchev, on his arrival in Moscow. The Soviets had also expressed an interest in coordinating foreign trade by having regular meetings of the foreign trade ministers, once to three times a year.<sup>56</sup>

Over the next two weeks Karjalainen started removing members of the SDP from the boards of corporations with state majority ownership and replacing them with

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53 UKP I, 29.5.1959.

54 UKP I, 14.2.1959, 28.2.1959, 9.3.1959, 13.3.1959, 29.4.1959.

55 UKP I, 16.3.1959 (Mikoian’s council).

56 UKA, Ahti Karjalainen’s non-arranged letters to Urho Kekkonen 1952–1965, Karjalainen to Kekkonen 22.2.1959. Viktor Vladimirov is, a couple of times, referred to as “my acquaintance” (22.2.1959) or “my Eastern friend” (5.6.1958) in Karjalainen’s remarks.

the members of Skog's fraction. In the case of the Otanmäki mine, which had already surfaced in connection with the Night Frost Crisis, he had some legal basis for this, but in the other cases there was little justification for such action. In any case such moves were bound to attract considerable attention in the already strongly polarized atmosphere of Finnish party politics. As president Kekkonen commented, perhaps somewhat ironically, his closest supporter: "There is a brave lad, I probably wouldn't have dared." Karjalainen had indeed acted in too great a haste, as he soon had to admit, especially as he had failed to inform the prime minister Sukselainen, who now denied that he had given any support to these actions. The majority of Agrarian Union's MPs were also against Karjalainen, who now threatened to resign. The president, in turn, had to consider the possibility of the fall of the minority Agrarian government, if somebody else resigned in protest at Karjalainen's action.<sup>57</sup>

When the crisis was passing in mid April, Karjalainen had a discussion with the Soviet ambassador Zakharov. Karjalainen admitted that his recent line of action had been counter productive. He "now underlined that it is probable that 'cavalry attacks' strengthen the position of the social democrats and draw people to their side from other parties, even the agrarians." In the same discussion Karjalainen also noted that the Agrarian Union could not be left too long alone in government, and for that, therefore, cooperation between the agrarians and the social democrats should be reviewed. He did not mean the official SDP, but the moderates, the so-called III line. The Soviet embassy was encouraged to build contacts with them, despite their doubts.<sup>58</sup>

Khrushchev's Riga speech on 10 June 1959 attracted a lot of attention in Finland, mostly for domestic political reasons. The leadership of the SDP was openly regarded as supporters of a hostile policy towards the Soviet Union. This can be seen as restating of Khrushchev's earlier condemnation in *Izvestia* on 7 May 1959, when he had reacted to the highly critical views expressed by the SDP-leaders, in their speeches, on May day, about the Night Frost Crisis and on the Soviet Union. The political heritage of the previous president, Paasikivi, had also become the subject of a foreign policy dispute, in the autumn of 1958, when supporters of Kekkonen founded the Paasikivi-Society. On the one hand, SDP leaders had accused president Kekkonen of backing away from "the Paasikivi-Line," for example, on 1<sup>st</sup> May, whereas the Soviet leader accused the SDP of opposing "the Paasikivi-Kekkonen Line," because they opposed having friendly relations with the Soviet Union. As in his Riga speech, Khrushchev had already portrayed on 7 May 1959 Soviet-Finnish relations as an example of relations, based on the spirit of peaceful coexistence.<sup>59</sup>

This short summary of various points of conflict in Soviet-Finnish relations reveals that, despite the satisfactory solution of the night frost crisis, Soviet influence in Finnish domestic politics had not been completely secured. Instead of stabilizing

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57 UKP I, 21.3.1959 (Kekkonen's remark), 3.4.1959.

58 Soviet ambassador in Helsinki, Zakharov, to the foreign ministry, 28.4.1959, on discussions with Karjalainen, 15.4.1959, NKPSb, pp. 69–70.

59 UKP I, 8–9.5.1959, 11.6.1959 and "The answer of comrade Khrushchev to questions of Pravda's reporter", protocol of the CPSU central committee, 7.5.1959, NKPSa, doc. 56, pp. 262–264.

the government's position, Mikoian's counsel and Karjalainen's response had increased the likelihood of a government crisis. Even if president Kekkonen could be expected to collaborate with the Soviet's to certain extent, there were clear limits to his ability to control the domestic political situation at the time, especially as the right wing of the Agrarian Union remained active. Thus, the reliability of the Agrarian Union as a guarantor of acceptable foreign policy could not be very high, if Soviets feared it to abandon the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line even in May 1959. This "crisis of confidence" in Soviet-Finnish relations seemed to continue in the first half of 1959, according to Kekkonen's biography. However, the hostile attitude of the parties that constituted "Night Frost" government, especially that of the SDP, could hardly have been a surprise from the Soviet point of view. In contrast to what is argued in Kekkonen's biography, Soviet unease seemed to be due as much to the disunity and unreliability of the Agrarian Union as the attitude of the political opposition.<sup>60</sup>

## FINNISH EFTA MEMBERSHIP AS A THREAT TO THE SOVIET UNION

Considering the ambitious goals of the Soviet policy towards Scandinavia and the volatile situation in Finland, new developments in the process of West European integration, especially those to do with the formation of EFTA, were far from reassuring from the Soviet viewpoint.

In spring and summer of 1959 security and trade became closely intertwined issues in the Soviet Union's policy towards Scandinavia and Finland. July 1959 saw a reassessment of, and a turning point in, both these issues, which underlined Finland's new, more dependent position in the Soviet sphere of influence. As for the Cold War "empires," relations between superpowers were also changing, as they were moving away from a period of acute crisis and the threat of nuclear war towards détente in January–August 1959. However, this did not mean an end to the constant probing for weakness and attempts to undermine the cohesion of each other's alliance. This formed the context for Soviet policy towards Finland, which policy was related to the Soviet objectives in Scandinavia, which again was influenced by Soviet policy towards Germany. Within this context the United States policy towards Eastern Europe, and especially Poland, provides some interesting parallels.

The central objective of Soviet foreign policy remained the prevention of what was seen as increasing power and strength of West Germany. A rebuilt and powerful Germany was seen not only as a military threat, but also as an economic challenge to the cohesion of Soviet alliance. It therefore followed that in Scandinavia, the USSR felt the need to prevent West German cooperation with Denmark in the Baltic Sea, and if possible, any changes in Norway's policy over foreign military bases, especially for West German forces. Though the Norwegians still did not allow the stationing of nuclear weapons or NATO troops on their soil, they had agreed, in the

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60 Compare with Suomi 1992, pp. 218–220, to the above mentioned entries of Kekkonen's diary.

spring of 1959 to the building of military depots for NATO forces. In response to this the Soviet Union had proposed, as a minimum objective, the idea of the Nordic Nuclear Free Zone (NFZ), and, as a maximum objective, the breaking away of Norway and Denmark from NATO by encouraging them to adopt a policy of neutrality.<sup>61</sup> In Finland the main Soviet objective was the stabilization of the advantageous domestic political situation, which had been reached as a consequence of the Night Frost Crisis. Finland was also still believed to be useful for the promotion of Soviet objectives in Scandinavia. However, it was the acute change in trade policies more than security related issues, which explain onset of change and, indeed, crisis in the Soviet policy in Scandinavia. Four major factors contribute to this change in Soviet policy.

The first factor was the increasingly antagonistic approach adopted by the USSR towards Scandinavian economic cooperation. Immediately after the Leningrad summit between Khrushchev and Kekkonen in late January, the Soviet Union announced on 3 February 1959, that it was going to appoint a new ambassador, Zakharov, to Helsinki. On the same day the Soviet foreign ministry ordered the Embassy in Helsinki to report on the influence the Nordic Customs Union would have on the Soviet Union's relations with Finland and the Scandinavian countries. This was to be related to the wider process of European integration, though EFTA was not mentioned, as the Soviets were apparently unaware of its formation.

Finland's trade policy position was clearly of interest to the Soviet Union in March 1959, as the following statements of the Swedish prime minister Tage Erlander, quoted in the Soviet foreign ministry's report, show. He was asked in an interview, how the Swedish decisions on economic cooperation and integration would influence the Finnish position. He replied that they understood it to be easier for Finland to participate in the context of the Nordic Customs Union. Erlander also pointed out "that Sweden had good reasons for working within the Nordic Customs Union, especially if one considers Finland's rather delicate position in relation to the East trade." However, the Soviet attitude became clearly more antagonistic, the latest on 21 May 1959, as an institute connected to the Soviet foreign trade ministry dismissed the Nordic Customs Union as simply a means for NATO to bring Finland under the West's influence. On 4 June 1959, the Soviet foreign ministry finally presented a plan to the central committee of the CPSU for preventing Finnish membership in the planned Nordic Customs Union. Soviet opposition to Finland's joining the Nordic Customs Union was based on the fact that two of Union's members, Norway and Denmark, belonged to NATO. This argument, naturally, was nothing new, as the two countries had been members of the alliance since 1949. What is significant, is that the USSR still looked upon the Nordic Customs Union as an alternative to the West European integration.<sup>62</sup>

The second factor was the obvious failure of the Soviet foreign policy initiatives in Scandinavia, which were supposed to be crowned by Khrushchev's visit to

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61 Petterson 2003, p. 121, and Suomi 1992, pp. 234–235.

62 Seppinen 1997 on the basis of Soviet foreign ministry sources, p. 85, and the Soviet Embassy in Helsinki, S. Nikolskii to the Scandinavian department on Tage Erlander's interview in *Nya Pressen*, 25.3.1959, 135/40/113, p. 2, AVP RF.

Sweden, Norway, and Denmark in August. The increasingly critical attitude of the public, and the doubts of the political leadership of the Scandinavian countries, especially after Khrushchev's Riga speech on 10 June 1959, about these Soviet initiatives had begun to concern the Soviet foreign ministry. Over the spring the Norwegians had rather coldly turned down the Soviet initiative to make the Baltic Sea a zone of peace on the basis that Norway was not a Baltic Sea state. The Swedish attitude was equally discouraging. Sweden also refused to promote neutrality or looser NATO ties with Norway or Denmark during the spring of 1959, despite a couple of Soviet proposals going back to 1957.<sup>63</sup> If that was not frustrating enough, the Swedes, according to the Soviet foreign ministry, suddenly, just a week before the postponement of Khrushchev's visit, raised demands of their own. The Soviets were told that "the Swedish party is ready to reopen negotiations on economic compensations [for lost Swedish property] in the Baltic Countries [presently] belonging to the Soviet Union." The Swedish ambassador Sohlman linked these negotiations to the forthcoming visit by observing that "it would be desirable to regulate this kind of question before com. N. S. Khrushchev's visit to Sweden."<sup>64</sup>

Soviet representatives contacted the leaders of Finnish Agrarian Union several times over April–May. The Agrarians had been asked by the Soviets if they could influence Scandinavian public opinion so that "the attitude of the audience would become matter-of-fact like." Khrushchev directly asked for help in changing public opinion in such a way as to help to separate Norway and Denmark from NATO. At the end of June the Soviet ambassador Zakharov finally presented a direct appeal to president Kekkonen publicly to support Soviet policy in the area by promoting Nordic neutrality modeled on the Swedish example. When presenting his appeal, the Soviet ambassador reminded the president of his previous services on this issue during the early 1950s. This time, however, Kekkonen did not comply, though naturally he did not turn down the appeal straight away. He even, quite unlike his usual practice, brought up the Swedish and Norwegian arguments against the Soviet initiatives, though to no avail. A couple of days later, 1 July 1959, the president criticized Soviet policy towards Scandinavia directly to the resident of the KGB, Zenikhov, by arguing that "pacification of the Baltic Sea, separation [of Norway and Denmark] from NATO and atomic weapons are not practical policy." He also warned the Soviets about Scandinavian resolve to resist these Soviet initiatives, and advised the Soviets to limit the visit of Khrushchev to protocol level only. Zenikhov promised to support this view in Moscow.<sup>65</sup>

The following two developments in mid July were the immediate reasons for the Soviet emergency reaction. The third factor was the Kungälv conference, in Sweden, on 10–12 July 1959, in which the Scandinavian countries publicly accepted the need to adapt their earlier plans for a Nordic Customs Union to the formation of EFTA. In so doing, they were now explicitly linking their earlier and regionally more limited plans for mutual cooperation, which the Soviet Union had already deemed harmful

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63 Petersson 2003, pp. 122–125.

64 Deputy foreign minister Georgii M. Pushkin's official diary, 11.7.1959, "Priem posla Svetsii Sohlmana", 148/48/6, AVP RF.

65 Suomi 1992, p. 234, UKP I, 28.4.1959, 29.6.1959, 1.7.1959.

to its influence in Finland, to one of the other attempts at forging some form of West European integration. The fourth factor, making an already alarming situation worse, were the statements by the Finnish delegation and prime minister Sukselainen, which were misinterpreted in the Scandinavian and Western press to mean that Finland might participate in the Western integration process, after all. It is interesting to note that in contrast to president Kekkonen's very negative reaction to this publicity, he had only a couple of days earlier, given the impression that Finnish associate membership in EFTA was a distinct possibility.<sup>66</sup>

The Soviet embassy in Helsinki, however, in 14 July 1959, took a clearly different view to that of president Kekkonen. On the one hand, it agreed that trade with Western Europe was fundamental to Finland's standard of living. It was also clear to the Soviets that the membership of Finland's main competitors in the paper market, Sweden and Norway, in some kind of free trade area "would arise a real threat of weakening Finland's trading position in relation to its competitors, if it were left outside the zone." On the other hand, the Soviet Union was clearly opposed to the idea of Finland joining such an economic "bloc". The Nordic Customs Union was now seen by the Soviet embassy as a temporary solution before the creation of a larger European free trade area. First, it would be merged with EFTA, and then, as part of EFTA, with the EEC, when the "zone" would include all the OEEC countries, of which a majority belonged to NATO. This kind of development was unacceptable from the Soviet Union's point of view, for trade and security reasons. The Soviets doubted that despite official claims Finland would not be, even if willing, able to secure the privileges of the East trade in an OEEC based trade bloc, the Soviet most favored nation (MFN) status in particular.<sup>67</sup> On the following day the Soviets received, in written form, the Kungälv statements of prime minister Sukselainen and foreign trade minister Karjalainen considering "the issue of Nordic and seven countries' markets," a fact, which reflects their keen interest in the issue and their wish to have additional information. The report noted that the texts of the "Mentioned statements' texts have been received through informal contacts, through a civil servant of the ministry of trade and industry, [Gunnar] Korhonen, but with the approval of Sukselainen, at a meeting with an official of the Soviet embassy Vitali K. Fedorinov in the evening of 14 July 1959."<sup>68</sup>

On the following day, the contradictions between Finland's trade interests and security policy position after the Night Frost Crisis were very clearly spelled out by the Soviet observer in the embassy, the well informed Fedorinov:

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66 Suomi 1992, pp. 284–286. See also UKP I, Kekkonen to Päiviö Hetemäki, a prominent member of the Coalition party, 10.7.1958, and Kekkonen's comments on the Kungälv delegation, 13.–14.7.1959.

67 Vitali K. Fedorinov, second secretary of Soviet embassy in Helsinki, to the Scandinavian department of the foreign ministry, 14.7.1959, memo "Finlandiia i plan sozdaniia tamozhennoga soiuzu severnyikh stran", 135/41/16, pp. 36–67, AVP RF.

68 Zakharov to Rodionov, chief of the Scandinavian department of the foreign ministry, 15.7.1959, 135/40/16, p. 73, AVP RF. The memo on actual discussion between Fedorinov and Korhonen, mentioned in the report, was not available in the archive.



“[T]he creation of economic blocs like the ‘common market’ present Finland with a serious dilemma; namely, how to combine the possibility of Finland participating, e.g., to ‘free trade zone’, which holds a certain interest and [offers] an objective for Finland’s economy, with its foreign policy status as a country allied with the Soviet Union.”

This definition of Finland’s position in the aftermath of the “Night Frost” Crisis leaves little doubt about the Soviet interpretation of the FCMA treaty. It was meant to connect Finland to the Soviet sphere of influence, not guarantee its neutrality.<sup>69</sup>

The Soviets had, however, a very different kind of guarantee in mind. A week later, in the second half of July, the resident of the KGB, Vladimir Zenikhov, sent an urgent message via the Agrarian Union’s party secretary Arvo Korsimo to president Kekkonen, then on a holiday in Lapland. The Soviet government demanded explicit guarantees from Kekkonen that Finland would not join “the outer seven,” that is, the EFTA. Unless these guarantees were received the following day, “a strict note will be sent,” making the Soviet Union’s disapproval public. This would have further weakened the credibility of Finland’s sovereignty and policy of neutrality in the West, where it had already been dented as a consequence of the Night Frost Crisis. According to his diary, the president did not give the guarantees, but according to the memoirs of his closest aide, Ahti Karjalainen, he did. Regardless of the fact did he so literally or not, in his answer the president in practice agreed with the Soviet demand.<sup>70</sup> As the process of Western integration, whether in the form of the Nordic Customs Union or EFTA, had been defined as a threat to the objectives of the Soviet Union’s policy in Finland, Finland’s relationship to this process in the future could only proceed in gradual and very careful stages.

Soviet foreign policy as a whole seems to have reached a turning point in mid July 1959. The Soviets lifted the deadline of their ultimatum over Berlin on 2 March 1959, and the Americans agreed to discuss the German question.<sup>71</sup> The willingness to continue these negotiations caused the Americans to consider inviting of Khrushchev to the United States, something he had been interested in, and waiting, for a long time. The U.S., after some hesitation, finally extended the invitation on 13 July 1959, and the Soviets accepted it on 21 July 1959.<sup>72</sup> It would seem that the CPSU politburo (presidium) meeting on 17 July 1959 was decisive for these turning points in Soviet foreign policy. The postponement of Khrushchev’s Scandinavian and Finnish visits was also decided at this meeting, as well as probably the decision to demand guarantees from the Finnish president against Finland joining EFTA.<sup>73</sup> It would seem likely that these topics of lesser global importance were dealt with only after agreeing to Khrushchev’s American tour.

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69 V. K. Fedorinov to the Scandinavian department of the foreign ministry, 14.7.1959 135/41/16, p. 37, AVP RF. Even though the same memo is cited a couple of times in Seppinen 1997 (pp. 96–110), this central definition of Finland’s position is not included.

70 UKP I, 21.–23.7.1959, Compare with Suomi’s formal interpretation, 1992, pp. 288–289.

71 Deborah Welch Larson, *Anatomy of Mistrust: U.S. -Soviet Relations During the Cold War*, Ithaca, New York 1997, p. 90.

72 Taubman 2003, pp. 415–416.

## A PREEMPTIVE DIPLOMATIC STRIKE

As for the Soviet policy towards Finland the Soviet political leadership appears to have been genuinely surprised by the development of the integration process in the form of EFTA and the Finnish views on it. The ultimatum-like demand presented to the Finnish president was a panic reaction in a situation where circumstances seemed to have changed suddenly and the Soviets were more than uncertain about the likely Finnish response. This would lead to two immediate observations. First, Soviet confidence in reliability of the minority Agrarian government and president Urho Kekkonen himself over foreign policy remained rather low in spite of the results of the "Night Frost" Crisis. Second, this crisis of confidence means that, despite continuous contact with Soviet representatives the president had not informed them thoroughly on the integration issue. Nor could his untypically open criticism of the Soviet policy in Scandinavia only two weeks before the Kungälv conference have eased Soviet concerns. Consequently, the USSR feared it could lose the political results achieved in Finland by the night frost crisis through the new opportunities offered by EFTA on trade issues.

On a more general level the Soviet emergency reaction to this crisis can also be seen as part of a wider process to maintain the unity of the Cold War "empires." This can be clarified by examining parallels between Soviet policy in Scandinavia and U.S. Policy in Eastern Europe, especially U.S. policy towards Poland. After 1956 Poland had become a means in U.S. foreign policy for breaking or loosening the cohesion of the socialist camp, in much the same way as Soviet foreign policy aimed to use Finland in its Scandinavian policy. Not only had trade relations between the United States and Poland developed quickly, but the country also received considerable U.S. economic support. In October–November 1958 Poland was negotiating with the United States for associate membership of GATT, and the Americans were contemplating granting Poland MFN status in its trade with the U.S. The Poles were also interested in participating in the IMF and IBRD.<sup>74</sup>

Interestingly, during the Night Frost Crisis, in late 1958, Finland had surpassed Poland, albeit briefly, apparently as a more interesting case, in the allocation of U.S. economic support. During January–May 1959 the United States used its economic support as leverage in Poland, as it was pressing for a more favorable decision on compensation for the U.S. property lost due to the nationalization of Polish economy. The Americans effectively postponed the trade negotiations with Poland, until an agreement on a lump sum was reached.<sup>75</sup> Trade relations were used as

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73 CPSU presidium (politburo) meeting, protocol 230/1, 17.7.1959, NKPSa, doc.57.

Interestingly, though Khrushchev had signed the protocol, he was not present at this meeting. See also Zenikhov on a presidium meeting, from which, "in Khrushchev's name," demands were sent to the Finnish president, UKP I, 29.7.1959.

74 For example, memo on Polish participation in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 13.10.1958, doc. 55, Discussion on economic subjects, 6.11.1958, FRUS 1958–1960, vol. X, part 2, doc.57.

75 On U.S. policy towards Poland in the spring of 1959, OCB report on Poland (NSC 5808/1), 11.2.1959, doc.64, and on US economic pressure on Poland, FRUS 1958–1960, vol. X, part 2 editorial notes 67 and 69.

means of political pressure, though their effect on the Polish economy was much more limited than first the threat and then the application of Soviet economic pressure against Finland in late 1958. As the Soviets were probably aware of U.S. economic pressure on Poland, it must have confirmed their suspicions and those of the East Germans about the purpose of Western economic support.

Having come to a satisfactory agreement with the Poles over compensations, the Americans continued to develop their political relations with Poland. It was with this in mind that the vice president Richard Nixon visited Poland in early August 1959, immediately after his visit to the Soviet Union. The Americans were, however, well aware of the limitations of their Polish policy, which were clearly spelled out in the straightforward talks during the visit. This meant that even though Gomulka was seen as a nationalistically minded communist, willing to use the support of the population to win some room to manoeuvre, Poland was not expected to leave the socialist camp or end one party rule. In this sense, the American evaluation of the possibilities and limitations of Poland's situation, and, in particular, on Gomulka's policies, were much more pragmatic and accurate than their views on president Kekkonen's policies and motives regarding the Finnish situation.<sup>76</sup>

Against this background of Western economic integration, promoted at the time by the British in the form of EFTA, and also in the form of the American offers of direct economic support to Finland in the spring of 1959,<sup>77</sup> it is unlikely that the Soviets saw all this just as an isolated threat to Soviet influence in Finland. In fact, the Soviets would have seen this as part of a wider challenge to the unity and credibility of the Soviet Cold War "empire" as a whole.

Just as Soviet foreign policy had managed to redefine the Finland's room to manoeuvre in the midst of a major Cold War crisis over Berlin in late 1958 with the practical support of the Finnish president, a new threat emerged. In the summer of 1959 the ultimate Soviet nightmare of losing Finland politically and economically, if not militarily, was suddenly rekindled. Now, for all its internal contradictions and divisions, it was the West European integration process, and the Nordic responses to it that momentarily knocked Soviet-Finnish relations off balance. The Soviets feared that the famed "Nordic balance," the interdependence between different Scandinavian countries with their own foreign policies, was about to be resettled in a way economically and politically detrimental to the Soviet interests.

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76 On Richard Nixon's visit to Poland and the nature of his discussions, see, e.g. memorandum on a conversation between Gomulka and the American Vice President, 3.8.1959, FRUS, 1958–1960, vol. X, part 2. doc. 74 and an editorial note on Nixon's and Eisenhower's views on Gomulka, doc. 75.

77 For example, UKP I, 3.3.1959, 29.4.1959.

## A COMPARISON OF THE SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS FINLAND DURING THE MAJOR COLD WAR CRISES IN EUROPE, 1948–1962: MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL LEVELS

In attempting to place the Soviet policy towards Finland in the late 1950s within the overall context of Cold War developments at the international level, the successive crises around Berlin offer a most useful point of reference, as the FCMA treaty created a connection between Finland and the problem of Germany. The limitations and the potential of the Soviet Union's policy towards Finland changed as the character of Cold War confrontation evolved from the late 1940s to the early 1960s.

The first Berlin Crisis in 1948–1949 was part of the opening phase of the Cold War: a period characterized by the formation of alliances and treaty networks, which became the basis for the two Cold War “empires.” This was the phase during which the definition of the borders of these new “empires” took place, especially in Central Europe, Germany being the main example, but also in Northern Europe and in Scandinavia. The West's efforts at military co-operation noticeably increased from late 1947 just as the Soviet Union was beginning to consolidate its hold on Eastern Europe through sovietization and the signing of a number of bilateral defense treaties. In Germany the Western occupying powers intensified co-operation between their respective occupation zones, with the intention of creating a new West German state. In order to prevent this development, the Soviet Union began the Berlin blockade in June 1948, which lasted until March 1949. NATO was formed in the beginning of April 1949.

These circumstances set two basic requirements for the Soviet policy towards Finland. Firstly, it made necessary to integrate Finland into the emerging new Soviet security system through a treaty arrangement. Secondly, despite the USSR's obviously dominant position in relation to Finland as a consequence of World War II, there was at least some interest in downplaying this dominance by avoiding overtly assertive moves that might prove counter productive in the West in general, and regionally in Scandinavia.

Western reaction needed to be considered, as Stalin's initiative on the FCMA negotiations with Finland happened to take place in February 1948, which coincided with the communist coup in Czechoslovakia the same month. Though Finland as such had been written off by the West, concerns as to its fate might further accelerate the ongoing consolidation of Western military co-operation. Regionally it was understood that the Norwegians, for example, would take the Soviet-Finnish negotiations about a defense treaty into account, when making decisions on their own security and in relation to the Scandinavian defense co-operation. In May 1948 the Swedish openly took the initiative for calling negotiations on Scandinavian defense cooperation. Though the Soviet Union achieved its objective regarding Finland in April 1948, in the form of a defense treaty, this did not lead to an increase in its influence in Finland, even less to the sovietization of the country. In fact, the communists were excluded from the Finnish government after the summer elections, which they had lost. In spite of Soviet contrary interests, a minority social democratic government was formed, based on the support of president Paasikivi

and the bourgeois parties. Despite subsequent Soviet diplomatic pressure, this minority government not only stayed in office until the 1950 presidential elections, but was also to significantly reduce the influence of the CPF in domestic politics.<sup>78</sup>

The limitations of Soviet policy towards Finland in 1948–1950 were therefore evident in this early opening phase of the Cold War, being fluid in character at the time of alliance formation. Though the Soviets could press Finland into the FCMA negotiations, there were pragmatic reasons for accepting limited results. Growing international attention had already had a moderating influence on the negotiation process, setting the treaty apart from others the Soviet Union had ratified with Eastern European countries. When international tensions quickly rose after the beginning of the Berlin blockade in June 1948, it made sense for the Soviet Union to continue with its moderate approach toward the Finns, since its minimum security interests in what was seen as a less critical area were protected by the FCMA treaty.

However, when examining the two Berlin Crises, in the late of 1950s, early 1960s, in terms of building and maintaining of alliances, it is clear that the character of the Cold War had changed. In comparison to the late 1940s, the division of Europe was now much more stable and institutionalized: it was divided into two opposed military alliances. As the boundaries of the Cold War “empires” were now defined, the unity of one’s own empire became a priority for both superpowers in a crisis. The Soviet Union’s position as a nuclear power relative to the United States had improved.

In Europe the second and third crisis over Berlin in 1958–1959 and 1961–62 respectively, were the products of Soviet attempts to neutralize the growing political and economic challenge presented by West Germany as a member of the Western alliance and, at the same time, protect its own vulnerable front-line ally, the GDR, from collapse. For the USSR, this objective could be achieved if the West recognized the GDR, and if limits were put West German rearmament, after which détente could be reached, preferably through an all-European security organization. However, as the Soviets pursued these objectives by putting pressure on West Berlin. This was interpreted by the West as a challenge to its alliance system as a whole, thus increasing the threat of nuclear war.

This is the international context in which the Soviet reactions toward Finland’s EFTA negotiations in 1959–1961 and the presidential elections of 1962, as well, should be examined and understood. Throughout this period Finland’s attitude to the West European integration remained a problematic and complicated issue. However, having persuaded the Soviets to consent, and having allayed Western suspicions about possible Soviet influence through Finnish participation, Finland managed to ratify a treaty with the EFTA on an associate basis in the spring of 1961. This led to a measure of approval for Finland’s “the policy of neutrality” in the West, especially from de Gaulle’s France, but also from Great Britain and the United

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78 For detailed accounts on Soviet-Finnish FCMA negotiations, and on the influence of Western and Scandinavian context e. g. Tuomo Polvinen, *J. K. Paasikivi, Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 4, 1944–1948* (Biography), Juva 1999, pp. 418–421, 463–517, and Hanhimäki 1998 (“We are not Czechs”: Finland and the “Spring Crisis” of 1948 in Comparative Perspective”), pp. 96–98.

States. President Kekkonen himself had portrayed Finland as “a bridge builder between the East and the West” in a New Years speech in 1961, and was clearly willing to invest in Finland’s Western relations in turn. Britain and the United States considered it worth listening to Kekkonen as he made rather successful official visits to both countries later that year.<sup>79</sup>

However, this gradual rebuilding of Finnish credibility in the West, after the negative impression of submitting to Soviet pressure during the Night Frost crisis in 1958, suffered a major setback at the end of 1961. The context was created by the revitalized and escalating crisis between the Cold War “empires” over West Germany and the status of West Berlin in the autumn of 1961.

The Soviet Union sent a note to Finland in late October 1961 – president Kekkonen was visiting the United States at the time – stating that it was necessary to begin consultations, as provided by the FCMA treaty, because of the “threat of aggression by West Germany and its allies.” The same day the note was delivered, the Soviet Union detonated a 60 megaton nuclear device in Novaia Zemlia, as a message, and a show of force, to the West. However, the demand for military consultations with Finland was withdrawn after Kekkonen met the Soviet leader in Novosibirsk, in Siberia, in late November and promised that Finland would observe carefully developments in Scandinavia. The Soviet Union had sent a note to Denmark about its cooperation with West Germany two months before the note to Finland and sent another one a couple of weeks after the Novosibirsk summit. Although the Soviet note to Finland could be linked to the third Berlin Crisis, and although it could be argued that its main object was not Finland, but the Scandinavian countries, especially the NATO members Norway and Denmark, it did have a devastating effect on the credibility of Finland’s international image. This was because it also mentioned that “certain circles” in Finland were unfriendly towards the Soviet Union. The note had a direct influence on the ongoing Finnish presidential campaign, as it caused the withdrawal of the main opposition candidate, who had been supported by the same parties that had been in charge of the “Night Frost” government, which the Soviets had forced to resign.<sup>80</sup> This simply gave credence to those in the West who claimed that the Soviet Union could dictate both the composition of the Finnish government and election of the head of the state.

The stabilization of the boundaries of the two Cold War “empires” in the 1950s and 1960s also changed the context of the Soviet policy towards Finland, especially when there was a crisis between the two “empires”. Firstly, as Finland was integrated in the Soviet security system through the FCMA treaty, the basic objective of Soviet policy towards Finland would now be to ensure the continuation of this relationship. Secondly, Finland changed from being a country where the Soviets felt constrained for fear of producing a Western counteraction to one which was increasingly seen as an asset for Soviet policy towards Scandinavia as means to limit NATO’s presence in the region. Thirdly, Finnish domestic political conflicts had not

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79 For presentations on Finnish EFTA negotiations and the reopening of relations with the West, e. g. Suomi 1992, pp. 354–387, Soikkanen 2003, pp. 214–232.

80 For presentations on the Note Crisis, see Suomi 1992, pp. 432–542 and Soikkanen 2003, pp. 233–246.

been resolved, which from the Soviet point of view constantly endangered their security interests. The securing of "additional guarantees" regarding the implementation of the defense treaty by influencing the formation of Finnish governments would remain a major Soviet interest, as indeed it was during the Night Frost Crisis.

#### THE INTERACTION OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES IN SOVIET-FINNISH RELATIONS

In trying to examine the interaction between international and domestic political levels in Soviet-Finnish relations and the role of political leaders as the chief negotiators in these relations, the concept of a two-level game offers some tools for making useful generalizations.<sup>81</sup> These will be presented by briefly comparing the Soviet-Finnish summit in January 1959 to the negotiations connected to the FCMA treaty in March–April 1948, and, to the negotiations concerning the decision to allow Finland to participate in the EFTA in some form in 1960–1961. Because of the asymmetric character of Soviet-Finnish relations, the main emphasis in this analysis will be on the Finnish side of this relationship. As the stronger party, the Soviets had more opportunities to take advantage of the divisions among the weaker party, where the administration was also based on pluralistic, democratic political system.

The Soviet-Finnish negotiations on the FCMA treaty in 1948 offer an interesting starting point in two senses. First, the resulting defense treaty created the basis of Finland's international position during the Cold War. Secondly, it enables a comparison of the differences in both the tactics of, and the circumstances prevailing under, two successive Finnish presidents.

Paasikivi's conduct of negotiations, even though he was not physically present in Moscow, can be viewed as a tactic of "narrow domestic win-set." Having agreed, after Stalin's public initiative in February 1948, on the necessity of a defence treaty, Paasikivi could always point out that parliament, though not the communists, opposed not only the negotiations, but speak of the treaty itself. This allowed him to present himself, a Conservative, as a supporter of the agreement on an international level, and to ask for changes the various articles of the proposed defence treaty on the basis that otherwise the domestic constituency would turn it down. As head of state and a generally recognized national leader, however, Paasikivi could ultimately count on the support of majority of parties, excluding the CPF. This allowed him to claim in discussions with the Soviets that he had the "ability to deliver" what he had finally agreed. By these means he was able to limit the terms of the Soviet-Finnish defence treaty only to Finnish territory, and to ensure that its implementation was not to be automatically triggered, but had to be preceded by mutual consultations about the threat of an attack. A reminder of Finland's desire to remain outside great power conflicts was also included, though it was located in the introduction of the treaty, not the treaty itself.

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81 The terms used here are defined in the Introduction and in the text. For a detailed definition of these terms, see Putnam 1988.



However, this tactic of “narrow domestic win-set” took advantage on the instability of the early Cold War period, as it made the Soviets cautious of counter productive results. On the other hand, Paasikivi’s tactic was constrained by hints of alternative Soviet plans to obtain influence through the CPF if an agreement on the defence treaty was not reached. In this sense, the CPF can be seen as a transnational ally for the Stalin-Molotov team in the negotiations, like foreign communist parties often were for the Soviet Union in the Cold War in general. The practical interpretation of these amendments in the Soviet-Finnish defence treaty, which set it apart from the treaties the Soviet Union had ratified with various people’s democracies, remained to be tested by the various crises of the Cold War.

A central argument of this study has been that the Leningrad summit of January 1959 signified not the normalization but a stabilization of Soviet-Finnish relations on a new level. An analysis of the role of the chief negotiators on both sides at this summit should be able to clarify this process. On the international level (Putnam’s level I) both sides, Khrushchev and Kekkonen, had a mutual interest in reaching an agreement, and in the context of the second Berlin Crisis, ending Soviet diplomatic and economic pressure against Finland. For Khrushchev, Finland was, in the larger Cold War context, becoming useful again as an example of peaceful coexistence, whilst for Kekkonen, ending the crisis provided an opportunity to regain credibility in the West for Finnish sovereignty, and to develop trade relations. The concept of a two-level game should help to explain how the result of the previous crisis and this Leningrad meeting were used so successfully to redefine Finland’s status.

As a negotiator, Kekkonen’s role, unlike Paasikivi’s in 1948, was constrained by the acute divisions and conflicts amongst his domestic constituency (Putnam’s level II), whereas Khrushchev, his opposite number was not usually troubled by such worries, in his dealings with Finland. Under such circumstances the Soviet leader had reason to fear “involuntary defection.” This was genuine concern that although Kekkonen might be willing to agree with the Soviet agenda, he might not be able to implement the agreement because of domestic opposition. This naturally would lower the value of any agreement reached with him. Furthermore, under such circumstances, it might well be advantageous for the Soviet side to feign doubt as to the Finnish side’s “ability to deliver” what had been promised, such as, for example, government coalition. Because of these uncertainties, it would be easier for the Soviet side to increase “side payments”, additional concessions for guaranteeing the agreement, and redefine the basis of their relationship.

However, because of the conflicts in his domestic constituency, regarding both foreign and domestic policies, Kekkonen as a negotiator had a specific interest in linking any agreement on the international level (level I) to a strengthening of the interest groups supporting him on the domestic level (level II). In this he had a shared interest with his counter part on the international level, Khrushchev, whose own agenda the goal of “domestic restructuring” in Finland fitted well so as to increase the value of agreements reached with Kekkonen. Thus, there was a degree of “collusion” between the negotiators. The Soviets also enjoyed the support of a number of “transnational allies” in Finnish domestic political spectrum (level II). These would include not only the CPF, but also part of the Agrarians, and the Skog’s faction of left social democrats, as well as part of the financial establishment,

especially those involved in metal industry, which had profitable markets in the Soviet Union. As side payments, for supporting Kekkonen's policies, and in order to keep these allies, the Soviet side offered economic concessions in the form of advantageous credits and trade agreements in the Leningrad summit and after it.

From the viewpoint of "domestic restructuring," the agreement finally achieved on access to the EFTA in the spring of 1961 was not a success. It was in Kekkonen's interest to support Finnish participation in the EFTA, despite Soviet opposition, because of the forest industry's interest to foreign markets, and because the issue offered an opportunity to link domestic and foreign policy requirements. Access to the EFTA and Western markets could enlarge his domestic support (level II) to those interest groups, which so far had been more or less opposed to him. This kind of successful, synergistic linkage would increase Kekkonen's chances of reelection in the next presidential elections in February 1962, which was also in the Soviet Union's interest, despite its opposition to EFTA as such. Consequently, on the international level of Soviet-Finnish relations (the level I) both parties had a shared interest in finding an understanding, or an agreement, on the EFTA problem.

However, Kekkonen's domestic opponents formed, a broad-based coalition, called the Honka-alliance after their presidential candidate, Olavi Honka, in the spring of 1961, in order to prevent Kekkonen's reelection in February 1962. As long as Kekkonen remained the only major capable politician and willing to co-operate, within certain limits, with the Soviets, support for him would be basically in the interest of the Soviet Union's policy towards Finland. This support had already been evident in the form of concessions over trade policy, and in the Soviet acceptance of Finland's association with the EFTA. Now these investments seemed to be seriously threatened on the Finnish domestic field just as a major Cold War crisis over Berlin in the autumn of 1961 was rapidly escalating. Though the timing and much of the content of the Soviet note seemed geared to the international crisis, the expressed Soviet motives for sending it were related to domestic Finnish circumstances, thereby connecting Finnish domestic politics and Soviet security policy.<sup>82</sup>

Both the Soviet and Finnish side had reasons to expect support from the other. The main question in Finnish historiography in relation to the Note Crisis has been, whether Kekkonen "subscribed" to the note from Moscow or not.<sup>83</sup> From the viewpoint taken here, the answer is less relevant. As Kekkonen could hardly have "subscribed" the crisis over Berlin, the Soviet note to Finland in October 1961, "help" to Kekkonen's presidential campaign, may have come unasked. This does not exclude the possibility the Soviets could, at least, have warned Kekkonen about the note beforehand. In any case, Kekkonen took advantage of the Soviet note in the Finnish domestic politics. Due to the perceived emergency of the situation, the third Berlin Crisis, support of the superpower, the Soviet Union, might be manifested internationally in such a heavy-handed form, that even the receiver, Kekkonen, might be surprised and consider it counter productive.

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82 Soikkanen 2003, e. g. on the basis of a memo on discussions between Karjalainen and Gromyko 11.11.1961, and a memo of the Finnish ambassador in Moscow, Eero A. Wuori, on the same day, pp. 239–240, note 213.

In relation to Soviet-Finnish negotiations, there was a “side payment,” which the Soviets never actually used, despite many unofficial and indirect hints about it from the 1950s to 1970s. This was the province of Karelia, which had been ceded to Soviet Union by Finland in the peace treaty in 1947. The idea that it, or parts of it, might be returned had been a remarkable, though hidden, weapon in Kekkonen’s election campaign in 1956, in the hope of receiving more support among the electorate. Returning Karelia would have united the Finnish electorate behind Kekkonen, or any political leader for that matter. However, this might just have been the reason why the “side payment” was never used. It would have clearly increased his strength at the negotiating table with the Soviets. Moreover, after giving up this bargaining chip, which was so valued by the other side, the Soviets would have less means for controlling Finnish head of state, who ever that might be, in the future. Even in the context of bilateral negotiations it would not be useful for the Soviets to weaken their own position in the long-term. Furthermore, they couldn’t foresee the reaction internationally, or among their own constituents to a such border revision. Thus, keeping Karelia as a potential “side payment” could be more useful than realizing it in practice.

The practice of domestic restructuring in Finland was not this simple even from the Soviet point of view, as they understood the interest groups supporting Kekkonen’s foreign policy to be in competition with each other in domestic politics. Neither was it unknown to Kekkonen that the Soviets wanted to restrict, for example, through the CPF, his freedom to manoeuvre in domestic politics. However, the relationship, though asymmetrical, was not one-sided. In return, Kekkonen had information channels provided by the SUPO on the meetings of CPF leadership. Through these channels he could try, not only to monitor the Soviet leadership’s image of Finland, but also indirectly influence it, by controlling the information provided for the CPF. In this sense the relations between the Soviet Union and Finland could be characterized as “a triangle drama” between the Kremlin, Kekkonen and the Communists<sup>84</sup>.

Generally, in relation to the Soviet Union, Kekkonen clearly had to negotiate under different conditions during 1958–1962 in comparison to Paasikivi in the late 1940s. This held true for both the international and the domestic context. The stabilization of the Cold War, and the priority then given to preserving the unity of the “empire”, alliance maintenance, as well as the divisions and polarization of his own domestic constituency all initially severely constrained his room for manoeuvring in negotiations with the Soviets. Partly because of this, Kekkonen was more inclined to make advantageous links between the results obtained on the international level and the domestic level than his predecessor. Later, when his domestic constituency had become more united behind him, he also used this linkage the other way round, within the limits of his interpretation of confidential

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83 For purely international motives against the “subscription theory”, see Suomi 1992, pp. 541–543, 549–551, and for an interpretation including domestic motivation on the Finnish side, see Soikkanen 2003, pp. 232–240.

84 This characterization is based on the back leaf of Rentola 1997, but the opposite way, as the emphasis of this study are on the Soviet view.

Soviet relations. This can be observed, for example, in his defense of Finnish neutrality in the formulations of Soviet communiques and of Finnish trading interests in his threats, communicated to the Soviet Union, that he would resign, in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

# CONCLUSIONS

A central result of this study has been to explain the motives that lay behind the arguments used to further the Soviet Union's policy towards Finland, and make them more understandable. This study demonstrates that a better understanding of Soviet policies can be reached through two main vantage-points. Firstly, on the level of international relations, the bilateral relations between the USSR and Finland must be seen as an asymmetric relationship between a socialist superpower and a minor capitalist state. On this basis both exceptional and general characteristics related to the Cold War conflict arise. In taking the Night Frost Crisis of 1958–1959 as a case study of the larger process of redefinition that took place in Soviet-Finnish bilateral relations, this study emphasizes the general characteristics in them. Secondly, an explanation of the Soviet foreign policy as a whole requires the observation of the interdependence between domestic politics and the unexpected consequences of the ideological reforms of 1956, and the influence of these two processes on the formation of Soviet foreign policy objectives during 1956–1959. Since ideology played an open role in the foundation of the political system of the USSR, changes in its ideological principles would also make a redefinition of its foreign policy objectives necessary, reflecting its “national interest.”

As this study has aimed to observe the development of the Soviet-Finnish relations in 1956–1959, and changes in Finland's room to manoeuvre from the Soviet point of view, within the larger Cold War framework, its conclusions will also be related to the same context. The initial phase of the Cold War ended with the death of Stalin in 1953. Changes in the international system were beginning to emerge towards the late 1950s, which profoundly influenced the forms of this conflict for decades to come, and weakened the strict bipolarity of its earlier phase. At the level of international relations, these changes in the late 1950s early 1960s reflected three main trends: decolonization, Sino-Soviet split and process of European integration and its divisions in the West. The first period of détente in the relations between the USSR and the West was in the years 1953–1956. However, these more friendly relations were soon supplanted by phase of intensifying confrontation and crisis between 1957 and 1962.

Despite rapid changes in the international atmosphere and the emergence of structural changes in international relations, the basic character of the Cold War conflict had not been altered. It still remained a confrontation between different social systems, based on universal, mutually exclusive ideologies. As a consequence of these rapid changes and with signs of a weakening of bipolar structures both Cold War empires felt an increased need for stabilization in their own sphere of influence. The Soviet need to redefine its relations with Finland grew steadily in the late 1950s and early 1960s. How, and with what means Soviet foreign policy tackled this problem, is of considerable interest.

In seeking to answer these challenges within the heuristic framework of a liberal constructivist paradigm of international relations, the overcoming of contradictions in domestic-foreign (internal-external) theme is essential in understanding decision-making and policy formation. This applies both to the global plane, as well to the bilateral plane, even though relations between the Cold War empires were largely symmetrical in nature, whilst relations between the Soviet Union and Finland were more asymmetrical. The concept of a two-level game offers a meaningful tool to overcome the traditional dichotomy of internal and external platforms, and domestic and foreign policy motivations. Regarding the roles of individual political decision-makers, it allows one to observe the interaction of domestic and foreign politics both as potential and restriction in contacts with the other side. Thus, interaction and influence even in asymmetric relations cannot be understood as one-sided, but rather in terms of varying degrees of interdependence.

## FINLAND'S ROLE IN THE SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN 1956–1959

As the Soviet Union was a global superpower during this period with a variety of interests in Europe, Asia and even in Africa, its policy towards Finland, will not be examined, as is the usual custom, from a predominantly bilateral perspective but will instead be explained with reference first to the global, then to the regional, and only after this, to the bilateral context. Among Soviet global cold war interests, the continued division of Germany and the existence of a socialist German state had a central place.<sup>1</sup> With the exceptions of Beria and Malenkov in 1953, the Soviet leadership understood this, not only as a legitimate consequence of the Red Army's role in repelling the German invasion and crushing of the German army in the World War II, but also as a way of justifying the colossal losses suffered, whether they were caused by the enemy or by the unpreparedness of own leadership. As Western cooperative organizations, military as well as economic, were understood to represent aggressive policies, their division and dissolution became the central objective of Soviet foreign policy from early on in the Cold War. This was also the general thinking behind Soviet attitudes to the process of West European integration.

Changes of Soviet foreign policies, in relation to corresponding Western objectives and challenges, tended to have direct link to the Finnish position, when they were connected to status of German state. In this sense, the main issues and stages in the evolution of Soviet policy towards Germany were the founding of West German and East German states in 1948–1949; West German sovereignty and its membership of NATO in 1955; the Soviet diplomatic recognition of West Germany in 1955, and last but not least, the acute crises over the divided status of Berlin and, indeed of Germany in 1948–1949, 1958–1959, and 1961–1962. The influence of West

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1 Zubok and Pleshakov 1996, pp. 163–164, on the attitude of the Soviet leadership towards the GDR from the 1950s to 1980's.

German status also clearly shaped Soviet evaluations of the West European integration process during the 1950s, and even later.

The connection between Soviet policies in Germany and Finland became manifest in the Soviet-Finnish defence treaty, the FCMA treaty. In this defence treaty Germany, and countries allied with it, were defined as aggressors. A hostile act by Germany and its allies would trigger cooperative measures between the Soviet Union and Finland, if they agreed in joint consultations that the Soviet Union was threatened by an attack through Finnish territory. The treaty had been signed in 1948, the year when the cold war confrontation first erupted, and when the West German state was becoming a reality, originally for ten years. The Soviet Union's interest in ensuring the continuation of the FCMA treaty was connected to significant changes in their policies towards Germany, not only in 1948, but also in 1955, when they wanted to renew the treaty for another 20 years, three years before it would have ceased to be effective. This was also the case in 1970, now five years before the treaty ceased to be effective, when the Soviet Union was beginning to give credence to the West German *Ostpolitik*, which began in the late 1960s.<sup>2</sup>

## FINLAND'S ROLE IN SOVIET REGIONAL INTERESTS

At the regional level, Finland clearly had a role to play regarding Soviet interests in Northern Europe, and specifically in Scandinavia. In administrative terms, this is reflected in the fact that Finland was included in the same division of the Soviet foreign ministry as the countries of Scandinavia, after the Second World War. Finland was a limiting tool for Soviet policy towards Scandinavia, when the USSR reacted in a defensive way, from the Soviet point of view, to challenges created by the Cold War confrontation in general, and by the problems of German status in particular.

Soviet policy used Finland for two main purposes. Firstly, it could be a means of weakening the NATO membership of Norway and Denmark and undermining their co-operation with West Germany within the NATO alliance. Secondly, Finland could be useful in strengthening, or at least in maintaining, Sweden's non-allied status, or the "policy of neutrality," as it was called. That there had been informal, limited military co-operation between Sweden and the Western alliance since the late 1940s was no secret to the Soviets. Finland was also repeatedly used as a model for the Scandinavian countries, whether they were members of NATO or not, as to how relations with the Soviet Union could best be arranged, and what kind of benefits such a relationship would bring. This approach was certainly in evidence in the USSR's plan for a Nordic Neutrality Alliance in 1951–1952. It was also a key component of Soviet initiatives concerning Scandinavia in the spring and summer of 1959, when Khrushchev's visit to Scandinavia, the visit which was subsequently

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2 Hentilä 2003, p. 40 on the exact wording of the FCMA-treaty, p. 224 on the connection of the Soviet policies towards Germany and Finland in the FCMA treaty from the late 1940s to the early 1970s.



cancelled, was being prepared. However, given Sweden's and Norway's critical reading of the Night Frost Crisis in the winter of 1958–1959, it is clear that they were not impressed by recent developments in the Soviet-Finnish relations, and did not regard the Soviet-Finnish relationship as an attractive option.

Finland's role as a messenger or a conduit of Soviet views and Soviet backed initiatives was most in evidence in the Nordic Neutrality Alliance proposal in 1952 and Nordic Nuclear Free Zone initiatives in the 1960s. The other side of the Finnish role that of an indirect means of exerting Soviet pressure, could be seen in October 1958 just prior to the eruption of the second Berlin Crisis. At the time Soviet hints on FCMA based military consultations with Finland were transmitted with Soviet approval by the Finnish president to Denmark, as part of a Soviet attempt to prevent the Danes from increasing their military co-operation West Germany. This aspect of Finland's role was especially clear in 1961–1962, during the third Berlin Crisis, when the Soviet Union publicly demanded consultations with Finland on the basis of FCMA treaty, based on the allegedly heightened West German threat on the Baltic Sea and Scandinavian area. The exact level of mutual understanding between the Finnish and Soviet heads of states remained more questionable that time, though.

However, this kind of role of Finland in Soviet foreign policy shows that Soviet foreign policy thinking regarding the region was based on an acceptance by the USSR, at least from early 1950s, of the concept of a so-called Nordic balance.<sup>3</sup> This concept, when signifying a regional interdependence of different countries all with their own distinctive security policies, was shared not only by Sweden and Norway, but also by American foreign policy approach to the region. For both superpowers involved in the region, the minimum objective was to prevent unfavourable changes in this interdependence, which had emerged as a consequence of alliance building in 1949. The maximum objective, again for both superpowers, was to tilt "the balance" to their own advantage. In this sense, the 1950s was an active period, during which attempts to redefine "the balance" were made, especially by the Soviets towards the end of the decade.

## SOVIET BILATERAL INTERESTS IN FINNISH RELATIONS

Despite the reorientation of Finnish foreign policy after 1944, the signing of the FCMA treaty in 1948 and the subsequent public rhetoric of friendship and confidence, the Soviets were not satisfied with their achievements vis-a-vis Finland, as previous research has clearly shown.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the 1950s the Soviets were concerned about the extent and durability of their postwar influence over their neighbor on their North-Western border, especially with regards to its foreign and

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3 Holtsmark 1992 on the two main, somewhat contradictory, objectives of Soviet policy in Scandinavia, based on differences in the status of regions countries, pp. 66–67.

4 Rentola 1997, pp. 150–174 on Soviet anxieties regarding Finland during the Korean War (1950–1953).

security policies. The growing polarization of the domestic Finnish politics in the mid 1950s, and especially after 1957, led to split in the SDP, internal conflicts in the Agrarian Union, and rise of antagonistic attitudes towards the USSR amongst the bourgeoisie and the right wing Social Democrats, which was seen as a Counter Reaction. These unwelcome developments, together with a favorable change of head of state in 1956, offered both an incentive and an opportunity for Soviet foreign policy to attempt to redefine bilateral relations between the USSR and Finland.

After 1957 preventing changes in Finnish foreign and in domestic policies became the main objective of the Soviet policy towards Finland. This meant that the security policy commitments, set out in the FCMA treaty, were seen to need additional tangible guarantees, which could only be acquired through control of Finnish domestic politics. In effect, the Soviets thought, that the FCMA treaty was becoming increasingly insufficient as a basis for their relationship with Finland. In 1955 the treaty had renewed for another 20 years, but without any other changes in its terms. Consequently any new additional guarantees would have to be obtained unofficially.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SOVIET REDEFINITION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

As Finland's place and role in Soviet foreign policy and Soviet foreign policy objectives have been clarified, one can now examine the redefinition of this bilateral relationship in both the Soviet and Finnish contexts. It was not the July 1958 parliamentary elections, but the formation of a new government in late August that was seen in Moscow as a serious problem for Soviet foreign policy and as a development that threatened to undermine Soviet influence in Finland. This demanded tangible measures, through which the redefinition of the bilateral relationship could be implemented. The formation of the Fagerholm government, with a two thirds majority in parliament, based on the SDP, Coalition and, most surprisingly, the Agrarian Union, was a major setback for the Soviets on two fronts.

First, the government was defined as an icebreaker in the sense that it was feared that subsequent governments would find it easier to further reduce Soviet influence over Finland's foreign and economic relations. This was something Soviet foreign policy had tried to prevent through anticipatory moves in April, just prior to the Finnish president's, Urho Kekkonen's, visit to Moscow in May 1958. Discussions between the president's trusted secretary, Ahti Karjalainen, and a representative of the Soviet intelligence were supposed to guarantee that the forthcoming July elections would not cause any undesirable changes in the composition of the Finnish government. Soviet intelligence aimed ensure this by offering credit on advantageous terms, and by hinting that some territory ceded by Finland to the USSR around the Saimaa Canal could at least be rented back to Finland on a long term basis. This unofficial proposal was in clear contrast with the line of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet foreign ministry, adopted in March, which only mentioned transit rights. On this basis, the results of the parliamentary elections did not cause any immediate concern for the Soviet foreign policy. However, these anticipatory measures had visibly failed by August 1958, when the Fagerholm

government was formed. This was most spectacularly the case with president Kekkonen's own party, as the president's supporters, the K-line, had lost out in the Agrarian Union, and the party had decided, in contradiction to its previous line, to participate in the Fagerholm government. This would explain both the concern and the harshness of the Soviet reaction, also towards president Kekkonen, as well as the smoothly organized policy of diplomatic and economic pressure towards Finland over the autumn 1958.

It is hardly surprising that the Soviet Union had also been investing in alternative solutions for its policy towards Finland. Here the ideological component of Soviet foreign policy was significant. This was largely on the responsibility of the CPSU's International Department. The polarization of domestic Finnish politics resulted in success for the extreme poles of the political spectrum in the July elections, making the CPF(FPDL) the largest party in parliament, as well as increasing the support of the Coalition. The Finnish communists had become increasingly interested in participating the government, as they had been kept off government since 1948. They were steadily encouraged in these aspirations by the Soviet leadership from late 1957. As the CPF(FPDL) been excluded from the government in August 1958, whereas the Coalition had been included, this was seen by the Soviets as a clear ideological set back. Instead of peaceful coexistence and a peaceful transition towards socialism, Finland was increasingly seen as a country intent on reducing the influence of Soviet backed socialism.

It was on the basis of domestic Finnish political considerations alone, and well before the outbreak of the second Berlin Crisis, that Soviet foreign policy arrived at the conclusion in August–September 1958 that the defense of Soviet interests in Finland required the overthrow of the majority-backed Fagerholm government. This was not because of anything the Fagerholm government had actually done during its three months in office, such as its interest in access to Western markets and credits, but rather because the potential threat it represented. Once decided, the question was more about how and when to overthrow the government. The eruption second Berlin Crisis in November 1958 made this more urgent, and helped to increase the pressure on the Finnish government enough to lead to its resignation in early December 1958. In January 1959 Soviet-Finnish relations were quickly “normalized”, or, in fact, stabilized on a new level. However, the international crisis alone had not caused the failure of the Fagerholm government or guaranteed the success of the objectives of the USSR's policy towards Finland.

The rather swift and successful results of Soviet policy at this point were also due, to a considerable extent, to divisions in domestic Finnish politics and the support the policy received among the Finnish top political leadership. The interpretation of the president on the one hand, and the government and most of the foreign ministry on the other hand, of the definition of Finnish foreign policy line, or the “national interest”, under these circumstances differed considerably. In a manner without precedent in Finnish history, the president thought it necessary to co-operate closely with Soviet representatives in overthrowing the government of his own country. As the government was based on a parliamentary majority, it could only be broken from the inside. President Kekkonen and his closest associates systematically worked to bring an end to the Agrarian Union's participation in the

government by bringing it back under the control of the K-line, the faction that supported Kekkonen's views, and this was instrumental in the overthrow of the government.

Though the cooperation of Finland's head of state with Soviet objectives during the Night Frost Crisis was not publicly known at the time, the outcome of the crisis as such was damaging for Finland's position internationally. Finland's closest neighbors, Sweden and Norway observed that as a result of the crisis Finnish sovereignty and neutrality had suffered. Finland's dependence on her superpower neighbor had been made very clear. The problem, or surprise, was not so much Finland's dependence, the fact that Finland was in the Soviet sphere of influence, but the way this had been realized. In Western assessments Finland's subordinate position was increasingly underlined, and the volume of Finnish trade with USSR, the East trade, which had allowed the Soviet Union to apply economic pressure, was seen as a structural weakness. The crisis was interpreted as an ideal example of Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union. The Night Frost Crisis destroyed much of the credibility of Finnish claims to be following a policy of neutrality and to be a bridge builder between the East and the West. Rebuilding this credibility was a slow process over the next decade, especially as the Note Crisis in the winter of 1961–62 destroyed many of the gains that had been achieved by president Kekkonen's western visits.

The stabilization on a new level of bilateral relations as a result of the Night Frost Crisis also had significant, long-lasting consequences from the viewpoint of domestic Finnish politics. Previously nonexistent, or at least undefined, restrictions were now applied to the Finnish political system by the Soviet Union, with the support of the Finnish head of state. The acceptance of Soviet demands that the CPF (FPDL) not be left out of the government alone, together with demands that certain parties or factions be prevented from participating in the government in the interests of good neighborly relations strongly shaped Finnish political culture. As a result of this Soviet intervention, Finland was ruled, until the mid 1960s by minority governments, supported mainly by the president. In the longer term, both *polity* and *policy*<sup>5</sup> were redefined on a much more limited basis than before. The sphere of domestic political decision-making and discussion, or polity, became subordinate to a certain Soviet relation, policy.

As the basis of Finland's position in the Cold War was created during Paasikivi's presidency, it is interesting to compare his policy to that of his successor. The difference between Paasikivi and Kekkonen was not between resistance and collaboration, but in the extent of adaptation and concessions. Both Paasikivi and Kekkonen acknowledged the growth of the Soviet Union's influence, and Finland's need to adapt to this underlying fact. Both could at times include the Communists in the government, in order to tie their hands, and both were willing to limit the freedom of the press in the interest of foreign policy.

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5 The terms are used on the basis of Kari Palonen, *Politiikka*, in *Käsitteet liikkeessä: Suomen poliittisen kulttuurin käsitehistoria*, edit. Matti Hyvärinen and others, Jyväskylä 2003, pp. 470–471.

However, unlike for Kekkonen, minimizing direct Soviet influence was an end in itself for Paasikivi, the firmest guarantee of national existence. This was clearly reflected in his decision to defend and support the first Fagerholm social democratic minority government and its policies of 1948–1950, despite open Soviet pressure and a very tense international situation. For Kekkonen, national existence was not so firmly connected to formal sovereignty. This was concretized, for example, in his different attitude towards the growth of Soviet trade, acceptance of Soviet credits, and in direct contacts with Soviet intelligence. These differences can be explained partly by the different domestic political positions of the two presidents, but also by their different personalities. As an active politician Kekkonen was inclined to take initiative and seek to profit from situations where concessions had to be made to the USSR, whilst the retiring Paasikivi saw them more often as necessary evils.

For Paasikivi, international relations were firmly based on *raison d'état*, or “state interest,” and though the Soviet Union evidently had more resources with which to pursue its interests, Finnish interests as well were an openly acknowledged argument when solutions were sought. It would seem that, as the “founding father” of Finland’s foreign policy reorientation, and with vivid memories from the days of the Russian Empire, Paasikivi was more experienced in using a policy of adaptation and more aware of its limitations from a small country’s standpoint. For Paasikivi, *Realpolitik* was not without alternatives, room for deliberation of policy almost always existed, and should be used. In that sense his interpretation of foreign policy differed from the officially unchanged Paasikivi-Kekkonen line, articulated later by Kekkonen.<sup>6</sup>

## THE CHANGE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS IN A COMPARATIVE COLD WAR CONTEXT

The final aim of this study is to explain the consequences of the redefinition of Soviet-Finnish relations from a broader, comparative perspective, as part of a global conflict. The need for dramatic, domestic political and ideological reforms in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin had serious and detrimental consequences for the unity of the Soviet Cold War empire in Eastern Europe. This was seized upon by the challengers both from outside the socialist camp, the Americans, and from within, by the Chinese.

Ideological reforms connected to de-Stalinization were problematic for Soviet foreign policy within its own camp for two main reasons. Both were based on the fact that denouncing the “personality cult” of Stalin in February 1956 was interpreted as, and led to, questioning of the legitimacy of the political system that had allowed him to rise to, and abuse, power. On this basis the peoples of Eastern Europe had expectations of change, and especially Hungary and Poland revolted in 1956, expecting an end to repressive measures and a more liberal rule. Despite this

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6 Palonen 2003 on the similarities and differences in interpretations of the foreign policy by Paasikivi and Kekkonen, pp. 480–481.

common ground the outcome differed, leading to Soviet military intervention in Hungary, and the rise to power of moderate nationalist-minded communist administration in Poland. However, the factors that encouraged positive expectations in Eastern Europe, arose concern and disgust in the Far East. In China the communist party had only taken power in 1949, and the results of the revolution were still unstable in the 1950s and 1960s, unlike in the Soviet Union. The criticism directed by Khrushchev against Stalin, but even more Kuusinen's idea to substitute the dictatorship of the proletariat with an all-national state horrified the Chinese. The ruling party-elite in China, from its point of view, could not afford compromises on the position of the party.

The Sino-Soviet confrontation, which in foreign policy was fused by principles considering cooperation, began ideologically with the concept of peaceful coexistence. When peaceful coexistence became the official doctrine of the Soviet foreign policy in 1956 for interstate relations, it was defined by the norms of international justice, including sovereignty. For this reason it contradicted the idea of proletarian internationalism based on class solidarity, which enabled the USSR to support international revolutionary moments. In the 1960s the Chinese pointed out these contradictions, thus exposing the difference between the Soviet Union's interest and those of the world revolution.

In terms of the concept alliance cohesion, the parallels between the Soviet policy in Scandinavia and the United States policy in Eastern Europe are also significant, in explaining the change in Finland's position internationally. Just as the Soviet Union promoted "neutrality" for Scandinavian NATO members by pointing to the example of Finland, the United States after 1956 promoted greater "freedom to manoeuvre" for Eastern Europe by referring partly to the example of Austria, but even more to that of Poland and Yugoslavia. These countries also received substantial U.S. economic support. The superpowers were both probing and challenging the cohesion of the opponent's alliance. However, the level of alliance cohesion became interconnected with ideology. The anti-revisionist campaign, which began after the unexpected results of de-Stalinization, and especially after the Hungarian Revolt, branded social democrats as revisionists with views opposed to Soviet interests. When promoting neutrality, the Austrian Social Democrats and indeed other West European Social Democrats were now, as had been the case in the late 1940s, to be treated not only as ideological but also as foreign political opponents of the Soviet Union. In Finland the Soviet Union had begun to toughen its attitude towards the social democrats in October 1957 as the party's right wing had increased in strength then.

In the terms of economic relations, developments in Finland in the late 1950s were beginning to cause concern for the Soviet Union. Differences emerged between France and Great Britain over West European integration, which led eventually 1958–1959 to the creation of two separate economic unions; EFTA and the EEC, which in turn led to changes in European trade policy structures. From the Soviet standpoint, the Finnish interest in gaining access to these markets was a potential threat to its political influence, and indeed also threatened to damage Soviet trade. As the divisions over European integration were thought to be only a temporary problem, the Soviets thought that Finland would, if it was allowed to reach an

agreement of some kind with the EFTA, end up of being part of a large, “NATO based” trade area. This is why, in the summer of 1959 the rearrangement of Finland’s trade policy led to a panicky Soviet reaction, as the Soviets feared that these new trade arrangements would cancel out the political gains won in the Night Frost Crisis.

For the Soviets, the planes of ideology, alliance cohesion and trade policy were all seen to intersect in Finland after 1957 in a concerning way, and this development reached its culmination point in the autumn of 1958. The second Berlin Crisis only underlined the need for a quick settlement of “the Finnish problem,” at a moment when the socialist superpower’s leadership had, at the same time, its hands full, first with a rebellious socialist ally, China, and then with the capitalist archenemy, the United States. Because of this emergency situation, the different branches of the Soviet administration, the CPSU, the foreign ministry and the intelligence services were able to construct a coherent reaction in a relatively short time.

In Finland, the election of Väinö Tanner, the leader of the right-wing socialists, as chairman of the SDP in the summer of 1957, together with the liberalisation of imports and devaluation of currency in the autumn of 1957 in pursuit of OEEC membership were, in the context of bilateral Soviet-Finnish relations, far from reassuring from the Soviet point of view. As if these structural developments were not worrying enough, domestic Finnish politics proved uncontrollable after the parliamentary elections in the summer of 1958. Partly on the basis of actual substance of the political struggles, themselves, which were often fought out within the parties, but even more on ideological grounds, the Soviets tended to see these events as parts of a planned campaign. When the United States expressed positive interest in the Fagerholm government in late 1958 and offered a limited amount of economic support, compared to that already received by Poland, this finally made the Soviets believe that their influence in Finland was under serious challenge. Despite the Soviet’s success, this challenge was by no means seen to be over during summer 1959 either on the part of Finnish domestic or trade policy.

Between 1956 and 1959 the bilateral relationship between Finland, the concession-maker, and the Soviet Union, the concession-receiver, was redefined in terms of a dominant-subordinate relationship. The intersection of ideology, alliance cohesion, and trade policy in Soviet threat perceptions in 1958–1959 transformed what was a rather local conflict in the Soviet sphere of influence into part of the overall Cold War confrontation. Instead of being any longer an example of neutrality, peaceful coexistence, or an example of peaceful transition to socialism, Finland and its political system had become an example of Cold War conflict for both its major participants.



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