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THE MYTH OF 'FINLANDISATION'

Fred Singleton *

THE term 'Finlandisation' first gained currency amongst writers on international affairs in the late 1950s and early 1960s, at a time when Russo-Finnish relations were undergoing a period of strain, partly because of the internal political situation in Finland, but more significantly because of a worsening in Soviet relations with the West. One of the first academics to use the term was Professor Richard Loewenthal, of the Free University of Berlin, in an article in *Encounter* in December 1962.¹ It soon became part of the conventional wisdom of right-wing Western journalists and politicians. It was taken up enthusiastically by leaders of the German Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU), notably Franz-Josef Strauss, as a stick to beat about the head of Willy Brandt, because of his *Ostpolitik*. Recent examples of its use in Britain occur regularly in the leading articles of the *Sunday Telegraph*, whose deputy-editor, Mr Peregrine Worsthorpe, seems almost to have an obsession that, if Mr Tony Benn ever became Prime Minister, Britain would rapidly be 'Finlandised'. One of his nightmares is,

of a Left wing Labour government coming to power that would be prepared actually to cooperate with the Kremlin's plans for European 'Finlandisation'. Tony Wedgwood Benn in Downing Street, and Teddy Kennedy—his equal in fatuity—in the White House; from the Russian point of view that would represent a triumph of all the elements of Western intellectual and moral weaknesses.²

'Finlandisation' as defined by one author implies that,

a country undertakes to follow neutrality as a neighbour of a Great Power which represents a different social order and uses arrogant political methods. This means that the country's authority to decide its foreign policy is limited, but that its internal authority is almost complete.³

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1. 'After Cuba, Berlin?', *Encounter*, Dec. 1962.

2. See, for example, 'When the New Soviet Men Take Over', *Sunday Telegraph*, Oct. 21 1979.

3. V. I. Punasalo, *The Reality of 'Finlandisation': Living Under the Soviet Shadow* (London: Institute of Conflict Studies, 1978), Conflict Studies, No. 93, p. 1. (Punasalo is probably a pseudonym. The English style of the pamphlet suggests an East European emigré.)

It also implies a subservience 'in all political as well as economic activity . . . in cultural life . . . the theatre, literature and so forth'. Other statements, like those of the Norwegian writer, Nils Ørvik, suggest that through a combination of blindness, naïvety and fear, the Finnish President, Dr Urho Kekkonen, is acting as the errand boy of the Kremlin, and is conniving at the slow Sovietisation of his country.⁴

These attitudes cause great resentment in Finland, where they are seen to be based on ignorance of Finland's position *vis à vis* the Soviet Union, and are usually used in contexts which bear no relationship to Finnish reality. As the Centre Party journal *Suomenmaa* put it (November 20, 1968):

People in Finland have once again been amazed at the fact that it is from the Federal Republic of Germany more than any other place whence statements denigrating Finnish Foreign Policy most often originate. Such statements cannot but lead to the conclusion that Finland's efforts to conduct an independent foreign policy are not respected in West Germany, that her position is ignored in favour of an unscrupulous drive to exploit any situation to achieve one's own ends.

In order to understand Finland's present position, it is necessary briefly to survey the history of Russo-Finnish relations during the present century. This happens, symbolically, to span the lifetime of President Urho Kekkonen, born in 1900, whose own political development has reflected the changes in the attitudes of the Finnish people towards their eastern neighbour. As a young man he entered politics as a member of the prewar Agrarian Party, and was a minister in 1939 when the Winter War with the Soviet Union broke out. At this time he was a strong nationalist and anti-Communist. At the end of the Winter War he could not bring himself to vote for the Peace of Moscow, March 1940. For the next few years he devoted himself to the problems of resettling the 300,000 refugees who fled from the territories in Karelia which were ceded to the Soviet Union. In 1945, at a meeting in Stockholm, he first publicly voiced the feelings of the more far-seeing of his compatriots, that Finland's future lay in adopting a policy of good neighbourliness towards the hereditary enemy. As President since 1956 he has successfully promoted this policy. In 1960, in a speech to an all-party group of Finnish MPs, he gave them this slogan: 'Whoever is for Kekkonen is for friendship with the Soviet Union, and whoever is against Kekkonen is against friendship with the Soviet Union.'⁵

Throughout Finland's history, relations with its giant eastern neighbour have inevitably been a major preoccupation. In 1809, after seven centuries of association with the Swedish crown, Finland became a Grand Duchy within

4. See, *Sicherheit auf Finnische* (Stuttgart, 1972). A summary of Ørvik's views and those of other Western writers on 'Finlandisation' is given in G. Maude, *The Finnish Dilemma* (London: Oxford University Press for the RIIA, 1976), pp. 45-49.

5. Quoted by Max Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality* (London: Evelyn, 1968), p. 77.

the Tsarist Empire. Alexander I guaranteed the rights and privileges of the Estates General, and promised to respect Finland's autonomy. For most of the nineteenth century Russian rule was comparatively benevolent, and the Finns were able to establish institutions which confirmed and strengthened the autonomy. This was led by the Russian Governor-General, N. I. Bobrikov, who was banking system, and a Finnish army. The old legal system inherited from Sweden remained in force, and the old Swedish-speaking establishment continued to dominate social, political and economic life. As the century progressed, however, Finnish nationalism, deriving strength from the rediscovery of the oral folk traditions of the Finnish speaking peasantry, began to challenge the Swedish hegemony of public life. The Finnish language was given equal status with Swedish, and a rising Finnish middle class began to share in the control of the developing industries. Finnish nationalism came into conflict towards the end of the century with the wave of Russian nationalism which emerged during the reign of Nicholas II. The attack on Finnish autonomy was led by the Russian Governor-General, N. I. Bobrikov, who was appointed in 1898. His order to disband the Finnish army and to conscript young Finns into the Russian army was met with passive resistance, which Bobrikov answered with a series of repressive measures. In 1904 the Governor-General was murdered in Helsinki. The ferment in Finland coincided with a groundswell of unrest in Russia, which culminated in 'Bloody Sunday' in St Petersburg, and the Tsar's panic concessions to liberal opinion. In Finland, the old Estates General were replaced by a single chamber diet, the *Eduskunta*, elected by universal suffrage under a system of proportional representation. This has remained the form of parliamentary democracy which is still practised today. It was one of the most liberal constitutions of its day, and included a provision at that time unique in Europe—equal voting rights for men and women.

However, Nicholas II still regarded himself as an absolute ruler, who had granted the constitution as an act of grace, and felt free to override the *Eduskunta* if it suited the imperial will. He soon embarked on a second phase of Russification. The Finns were divided as to how they should meet the new threat. In 1916, the Social Democrats, founded in 1899,⁶ gained a majority of seats in the *Eduskunta* and became the first Marxist party in the world to win a parliamentary election. A revolutionary wing, known as the Finnish Active Resistance Party, of whom Konni Zilliacus⁷ was a prominent figure, did not advocate separation from Russia, but a Sovietised Finland within a socialist Russian federation. The non-socialists were split between the Old Finns who 'stressed the importance of maintaining good relations with the Russian Empire, even if that meant bargaining away Finland's rights'⁸ and the liberal

6. The party was originally called the Finnish Labour Party (*Suomen työväen Puolue*) but took the name Social Democrat (*Sosialidemokaattinen*) in 1903. See, Juhani Paasivirta, *Suomen poliittisen työväenliikkeen kehitys* (Helsinki-Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1949), pp. 11-15.

7. His son became a left-wing MP in Britain.

8. Urho Toivola. *The Finland Year Book, 1947* (Helsinki: Mercatorin, 1947), p. 41. This harsh judgment

Young Finns, who represented the nationalists of the rising middle classes. J. K. Paasikivi, a conservative banker, and a leader of the Old Finns, wanted to reach an accommodation with the Tsarist empire, hoping by compromise to blunt the edge of the Russification drive, and to preserve the essentials of Finnish life and culture. He maintained this view throughout his life, apart from a brief pro-German period immediately after the Civil War of 1918. To Paasikivi it was just as important in 1944 to reach a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet regime as it was thirty years earlier to come to an understanding with Tsarism. Finland could not, and still cannot, ignore the facts of political geography. It was necessary at times to give way on non-essentials, provided always that there was a sticking point when the bedrock of Finnish national identity was reached. Paasikivi's realism eventually preserved Finnish independence and way of life, but it took three decades of hostility, including three episodes of armed conflict and a bitter civil war, before Finns shed their romantic illusions about their role as defenders of civilisation against the barbarians to the east, and abandoned their dreams of a Greater Finland, embracing Soviet-held Karelia.

The Finnish situation was transformed in 1917 by the Russian revolution. There was almost unanimous acceptance of the necessity for Finnish independence, which was declared on December 6, 1917. The Soviet government was the first to recognise the new state.⁹ There was less agreement, however, about the form of government to be adopted, and in January 1918 a civil war broke out when a Revolutionary Committee attempted to arrest the Cabinet, headed by the conservative P. E. Svinhufvud. Oskari Tokoi, one of the Social Democrat leaders, later wrote: 'The Revolution in Finland did not get off to an auspicious start, its course was never smooth, and its end came as its leaders themselves feared it would—in bitter defeat.'¹⁰ The victory of the Whites, under the former Tsarist officer, General Mannerheim, was hastened by the arrival of a German-led expeditionary force, which included many Finns who had been training in Germany. Kotka, the last Red stronghold, fell on May 2, and the leaders, Manner, Tokoi and Kuusinen, fled to Petrograd, where they formed a refugee committee in the hope of saving what they could from the wreckage.¹¹

As always in civil wars, barbarities were committed on both sides. The victorious Whites were in a position to exact a terrible vengeance on the Red prisoners and their families. Many were imprisoned in the island fortress of Suomenlinna (Sveåborg), in Helsinki harbour, where today the sad mementoes of their fate are displayed as a grim reminder of the tragic circumstances which accompanied the birth of independent Finland.

on the Old Finns, or Compliers, is surprising in an official publication written at a time when Paasikivi, a former Compliant, was President.

9. Britain and the United States did not do so until May 1919.

10. Oskari Tokoi, *Sisu* (New York: Speller, 1957), p. 155.

11. Tokoi, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-69.

For a time some of the new rulers were inclined to look to Germany to safeguard their new state, and even Paasikivi for a time favoured a monarchy under a German king. The defeat of Germany in November 1918, and the growing realisation that the Soviet Union was there to stay, induced a change in attitude. A new republican constitution¹² was decided upon in 1919, and Mannerheim, who was Regent (December 1918–July 1919), was defeated in favour of the Progressive Party leader, K. J. Ståhlberg, who was elected for six years by vote of the *Eduskunta*.¹³

Relations with the Soviet Union were still strained, especially over Finnish claims to East Karelia, and units of Finnish volunteers were formed to support the interventionist forces on Soviet soil. Mannerheim, still influential, even urged Ståhlberg to mount an attack on Petrograd.¹⁴ These territorial disputes were settled by the Peace of Tartu (October 14, 1920), at which Paasikivi and Tanner were the chief Finnish negotiators—although as late as the 1940s there were some Finnish nationalists who dreamed of a Greater Finland, incorporating the homeland of their Karelian ancestors. By the Peace of Tartu, Finland accepted the adherence to the Soviet Union of an autonomous East Karelian region, which in 1923 became an all-union republic, but in return they obtained the Arctic port of Petsamo.¹⁵

The republican constitution of 1919 incorporated the single chamber *Eduskunta*, first established in 1906, with its system of proportional representation. This system has made it impossible for any one party to have an absolute majority of the 200 members. Most Finnish governments have been coalitions, although there have been short-lived minority governments and occasional non-party caretaker administrations. Since the Second World War Centre-Left coalitions have been the most common. Despite the fact that the average life of a Finnish government since independence has been only thirteen months,¹⁶ there has been a great deal more political stability than these figures would suggest. Throughout all the internal strains and external threats, independent Finland has survived, with its constitution and its way of life intact, and despite two disastrous defeats in wars with the Soviet Union, it has never borne the weight of foreign occupation. That is a record unique amongst the succession states created out of the ruins of the great multinational European empires which foundered during the First World War. It is partly a tribute to the sense of civic responsibility and social cohesion

12. The text of the constitution in English is given in *The Finland Year Book*, *op. cit.*, appendix 1.

13. This was an exceptional procedure, as there had not been time to establish the electoral college, chosen by popular vote, which normally elects the President. The *Eduskunta* acts in exceptional circumstances, the last occasion being in 1973, when it voted to extend Kekkonen's term for 4 years beyond its expiry date of 1974.

14. L. A. Puntilla, *The Political History of Finland, 1809-1966* (Helsinki: Otava, 1974), p. 126. Molotov obviously had this in mind in his often repeated remark to Paasikivi during the abortive negotiations of March 1944, that Finland has gone to war with the Soviet Union three times in 25 years.

15. See D. G. Kirby, *Finland in the Twentieth Century* (London: C. Hurst, 1979), pp. 60-63; and the text of the Treaty of Peace between Finland and the Russian Soviet Republic (Helsingfors, 1921).

16. Since Paasikivi formed his first cabinet in November 1944, there have been 32 administrations, of which 19 have been Centre-Left coalitions and 7 non-party caretakers.

which has sustained the Finns in times of crisis, although it must also include a streak of good luck.

During the two decades between the founding of the republic and the outbreak of the Winter War with the Soviet Union in November 1939, Finland tended to turn its back on its neighbour, looking westward to Scandinavia, Britain, Germany and the United States for its economic, political and cultural contacts. In the 1930s Britain was its principal trading partner, taking about 45 per cent of Finland's exports and supplying over 20 per cent of imports. Germany came second, receiving about 12 per cent of exports and supplying over 20 per cent of imports. Sweden and United States were next in order. The amount of trade with the Soviet Union was almost nil after 1935, and never surpassed that with Belgium through the whole of the interwar period. Considering that before independence Tsarist Russia was Finland's major trading partner, accounting for 30 per cent of imports and 27 per cent of exports, the figures indicate a major reorientation induced as much by political as by economic factors.

Many Finns regarded the Soviet Union with fear and hatred, not unmixed with feelings of cultural and even racial superiority. The 'hereditary enemy' (*perivihollinen*) was seen as a representative of Asiatic barbarism and Finland as the bulwark of Western Christian values against the godless *Venäläiset*.

The Social Democrats who had taken refuge in Petrograd in 1918 formed the nucleus of an emigré Communist Party, led by O. W. Kuusinen, who later became Secretary of the Comintern. Those who remained in Finland were anxious to prove that the Social Democrat Party was a patriotic, anti-revolutionary, reformist party—akin to those of their Scandinavian neighbours. In spite of the deep divisions engendered by the Civil War, the Party made a remarkable political recovery under its able right-wing leader, Väinö Tanner, who in 1926—as leader of the largest party—formed a minority government. Between 1922 and 1929 far-left groups with Communist sympathies usually managed to capture over twenty seats, but the supremacy of Tanner's Social Democrats over the working-class vote was never seriously threatened. Tanner and his associates were the targets of bitter invective from Kuusinen's followers in the Soviet Union.¹⁷

In 1930, under pressure from an anti-Communist crusade led by the militant right-wing *Lapua*¹⁸ movement, the government outlawed all pro-Communist organisations, banning the left-wing press and expelling twenty-two members of the *Eduskunta*. The excesses of the *Lapua* movement resulted in its suppression in 1932, but its successor, the Peoples Patriotic League (IKL) won fourteen seats in the election of 1933, and participated in the

17. See Kuusinen's pamphlets, *Right wing Social Democrats To-day* (New York, Universal Distributors, 1948); and *Finland Unmasked* (London: Russia Today Society 1944). Also his speech to the XIII Plenum of the Comintern, 'Theses and Decisions' (London, 1934).

18. *Lapua* is a town in Ostrobothnia where a right-wing mob broke up an allegedly Communist Youth rally in 1929.

coalition government of J. W. Rangell between 1941 and 1943, before it too was disbanded as part of the peace settlement of 1944.

In Finland, the existence of this pro-fascist group, with strong German sympathies, seemed less of a threat to Finnish democracy than it appeared to outsiders. The Soviet leaders, probably misinformed as to the true state of affairs by Kuusinen, could hardly be expected to remain indifferent to this anti-Soviet, pro-German activity on their doorstep. They may have exaggerated the importance of the *Lapua* movement, but to them it represented the tip of an iceberg. They saw little to choose in the matter of anti-Soviet sentiments between these overt fascists, the Finnish conservatives, and the right-wing Social Democrats led by Tanner.

When they attempted to buy time by signing the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939, the Russians received into their sphere of influence Finland and the three small Baltic republics to the south, which, like Finland, had once formed part of the Tsarist empire. In the autumn of 1939 all four received Soviet requests for bases, treaties of friendship and, in Finland's case, for the cession of territory. Only Finland failed to comply. Tanner went to Moscow with Paasikivi to negotiate with Stalin on his demands. These included frontier adjustments in the Karelian isthmus and the Arctic, the surrender of islands in the approaches to Leningrad and a thirty-year lease on the Hanko peninsula, which controls the northern approaches to the Gulf of Finland. All of these demands could be justified on security grounds, if the Russians could have admitted that they feared the use of Finland as a potential springboard for a German attack. Having themselves recently become allies of Germany, they could hardly use this excuse.¹⁹ Instead, where the Finnish negotiators stood firm on Hanko, and offered unsatisfactory compromises on other issues, Stalin had to invent the myth that the 3.8 million Finns were about to launch an attack on the Soviet Union's 193 millions. Events then moved swiftly. On November 30, after accusing the Finnish forces at Mainila of firing into Soviet territory and killing four Soviet soldiers, an undeclared war was launched on Finland. On December 3 Soviet radio announced that they had been invited to liberate the Finnish workers from the puppets in Helsinki by the Finnish Democratic government, led by O. W. Kuusinen. This 'government' was installed in Terijoki, the first Finnish town captured by the Red Army. Its first act was to sign a treaty with V. I. Molotov, accepting the frontier changes which Tanner and Paasikivi had rejected two weeks earlier. Its only other activity appears to have been the issuing of a Karelian-Finnish version in Cyrillic of Stalin's *Shorter History of the CPSU*.²⁰ When peace negotiations

19. A pamphlet published by the British Communist Party in January 1940 did, however, state in mitigation that the puppet government in Helsinki was being used by British, American and German(!) imperialists 'as the jumping off ground for their attack on Leningrad'. Emile Burns, *The Soviet Union and Finland* (London: Communist Party: War Library No. 3, 1940), p. 14.

20. The author possesses a copy of this rare curiosity, given to him by a Finnish NCO who was captured on the Mannerheim Line.

began in Stockholm six weeks later—under Alexandra Kollontai's benevolent eye—Kuusinen's Democratic government was not mentioned.

The heroic resistance of the Finns roused the admiration of the world, inspiring Churchill to one of his more colourful utterances:

Only Finland, superb, nay sublime in the jaws of peril, Finland shows what free men can do. The service rendered by Finland to mankind is magnificent. They have exposed, for all the world to see, the military incapacity of the Red Army . . . Everyone can see how communism rots the soul of a nation, how it makes it abject and hungry in peace and proves it base and abominable in war.²¹

Nevertheless, as Mannerheim told visiting British trade unionists on January 28, the Finns were 'out-gunned and outranged' by the Red Army's heavy artillery, and they were forced to sue for peace.²² On the day before the Winter War ended, March 11, Britain and France were urging the Finns to go on fighting, even promising that they would 'notify Oslo and Stockholm, and proceed to march through'²³ with an expeditionary force. The Second World War might have had a different outcome if the Finns had accepted this offer, and if the Allies, having violated Scandinavian neutrality, had found themselves simultaneously at war with Germany and the Soviet Union. Instead, Premier Ryti and his minister without portfolio, Paasikivi, journeyed to Moscow to sign a dictated peace. Kekkonen, then Minister of the Interior, stated in the ratification debate: 'My position has been that a peace dictated by Moscow should not be suffered, but that the fight for independence should go on. Nothing has happened in these days to change my stand . . . And yet one cannot recommend rejection of this treaty.'²⁴

Under the Moscow Treaty Finland ceded to the Soviet Union 3.3 million hectares of territory in Karelia and the Arctic, and granted a thirty-year lease on Hanko, to which the Soviet Union had transit rights. Under Article 3, both parties agreed 'to make no alliance and to participate in no coalition' directed against the other. Finland retained its access to the Arctic at the ice-free port of Liinahamari, near Petsamo, but lost the Karelian port of Viipuri. During the five months of fighting 25,000 men were killed and 10,000 permanently disabled. Some 436,000 Finns fled from the Soviet occupied areas, of whom 200,000 were from farming families. The burden of resettling 12 per cent of the population was achieved with remarkable efficiency under a programme directed by Urho Kekkonen.

Although some attempts were made to normalise relations with the Soviet Union—for example, by a trade agreement in June 1940 which accounted for 9 per cent of Finnish foreign trade—the mood of the Finns was defiantly anti-

21. BBC Broadcast, January 20, 1940.

22. Sir Walter Citrine, *My Finnish Diary* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1940), p. 106.

23. Väinö Tanner, *The Winter War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1950), p. 245.

24. Quoted by Tanner, *op. cit.*, p. 259. The vote was secret, but it is widely accepted that Kekkonen was one of the 3 who voted no.

Russian. Mannerheim spoke of their 'historic mission . . . the protection of western civilization' from the threat posed by the Russians—'a strange race, with a different world outlook, and different moral values'.

The incorporation of their Baltic neighbours into the Soviet Union during 1940 was a reminder to the Finns of the fate which might have befallen them had they not resisted. The temptation to look to Germany as the only possible protector against further Soviet pressure was too strong. Gradually, via trade agreements, the granting of transit rights to German troops in Norway, joint military talks and political consultations, the Finns slipped into a *de facto* alliance with the Germans. When Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union came, on June 22, 1941 he was able to announce: 'In alliance with their Finnish comrades, the victors of Narvik stand on the shores of the Arctic Ocean.'²⁵ Mannerheim spoke of a 'holy war against the enemies of our society', and President Ryti believed that at last the Finns could destroy 'the centuries old threat from the east'. Paasikivi, until then Minister in Moscow, did not share these illusions, and quietly withdrew from public life, to emerge again in 1944 as the indispensable intermediary with Moscow, and one of the architects of Finland's salvation.

As the tide of war turned against Germany and its allies, many Finns began to look for a way out of their entanglement. The first public expression of the need for Finland to abandon its romantic dreams of a Greater Finland—defending Christian values against the eastern barbarians—came in a speech in Stockholm by Urho Kekkonen, on December 7, 1943. He advocated a policy of 'good neighbourliness' with the Soviet Union as the only basis for the preservation of the freedom and independence of a neutral Finland.²⁶ The first attempt at peace negotiations, led by Paasikivi in March 1944, failed and President Ryti then promised Ribbentrop that Finland would not make a separate peace. In August Mannerheim replaced Ryti, and a new government signed an armistice in September. Under its terms, later endorsed by the Allies at Paris in 1947, Finland lost Petsamo on the Arctic. Hanko was exchanged for a lease on Porkkala, thirty kilometres west of Helsinki. Otherwise the territorial losses of 1940 were confirmed. In addition Finland agreed to drive out or imprison the 200,000 German troops in Lapland, and to pay reparations worth \$300 million over six years. Limitations were put on the size of the Finnish armed forces, which are still valid today.²⁷

In fulfilling their obligations to remove the Germans from Lapland, the Finns lost a further 1,000 dead, bringing the total casualties since 1939 to 85,000, with 50,000 permanently disabled.²⁸ In addition, the Finns once

25. See A. F. Upton, *Finland in Crisis* (London: Faber, 1964), p. 282.

26. 'Good Neighbourliness with the Hereditary Enemy'. English text in Urho Kekkonen, *Neutrality, the Finnish Position* (London, 1943), pp. 18–31.

27. Part III of the Paris Treaty stipulates a land army of 34,400, a navy of 4,500 and an airforce of 3,000 personnel.

28. See, S. Alenius, *Finland between the Armistice and the Peace* (Helsinki-Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1949), p. 34. Kuusinen, in *Finland Unmasked op. cit.*, p. 29, claims that 10,000 Finns fought in the Caucasus and only 300 came home in 1943.

again had to take up the wearisome task of resettling hundreds of thousands of Karelians, many of them fleeing from their homes for the second time in four years. With remarkable energy and determination they shouldered the burdens of reparations, resettlement and of the rehabilitation of the areas of Lapland devastated by the scorched earth tactics of the retreating Germans.

In the first year, reparations deliveries accounted for 6.4 per cent of the net national product²⁹ and 80 per cent of total exports. Payment was made in ships, machinery and metal goods, as well as in Finland's traditional forest products. In some cases new industries had to be started to provide the required products, but when free exports could be resumed in 1952, Finland had a range of new industries which have made an important contribution to its subsequent prosperity.

The postwar political situation

Paasikivi became Prime Minister after the signing of the armistice, and in 1946 he replaced Mannerheim as President. Until his retirement in 1956 he guided Finland along new paths in both domestic and foreign policy, and laid the foundations for the nation's recovery. He won the confidence and respect of the Soviet leaders, without in any way surrendering the essential basis of Finnish independence and sovereignty. For most of the period 1955-56 his Prime Minister was Urho Kekkonen, who succeeded him as President in 1956.

In 1944 the Communists returned to open political life. They formed an electoral alliance with groups of left-wing socialists, under the title Finnish People's Democratic League (known by its Finnish initials—SKDL), which captured 49 seats in the election of 1945. The other two major parties, Kekkonen's Agrarian League (known as the Centre Party after 1965) and the Social Democrats, had respectively 49 and 50 seats each. These proportions remained roughly the same until the mid-1960s, when both the SKDL and the Centre Party began to lose seats. At present they have respectively 35 and 36 members in the *Eduskunta* elected in 1979.

In 1946, in accordance with the Peace Treaty, a group of politicians who were held to be 'war responsables' were tried and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. Former President Ryti received ten years and the veteran Social Democrat leader, Väinö Tanner, five years. Until the political crisis of 1948, which severely tested Paasikivi's nerve, the Finnish Cabinets were coalitions in which the SKDL participated along with the Agrarians and the Social Democrats. Between 1946 and 1948 the Prime Minister was Maano Pekkala—a left-socialist member of SKDL.

The first test came in February, when a Soviet note was received, suggesting a treaty of mutual assistance, with military clauses, similar to those which the Soviet Union had recently concluded with Romania and Hungary. Bearing in

29. Jaako Auer, *Suomen Sotakorvaustoimitukset Neuvostoliitolle* (Helsinki-Porvoo: Werner Söderstrom, 1956), p. 339.

mind that the Prague coup had just taken place, it is not surprising that many people echoed the sentiments of one Finnish official who said 'I cannot see how Russian ambition and desire for absolute security can be satisfied with anything less than a Communist Russian regime here too.'³⁰

Paasikivi remained calm and, resisting right-wing pressure, he accepted the Soviet invitation to talks. The outcome in April was a treaty very different from those with Romania and Hungary. Known by its Finnish initials, YYA, this treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance—initially in force for ten years, but since renewed until 1990—forms the basis of all subsequent Russo-Finnish relations.

A second test came in the spring of 1948, when the Communist Minister of the Interior, Yrjö Leino, husband of the party leader, Hertta Kuusinen—was accused of illegally returning alleged war criminals of Finnish origin to the Soviet Union, and of packing the security police, *Valpo*, with party sympathisers. After Leino had been censured by the *Eduskunta*, Paasikivi dismissed him and rode out of the storm of protest from the Communists, which included a wave of strikes in industries working for reparations. In July he called a general election, which resulted in a loss of eleven seats by SKDL. A minority Social Democrat government was formed under K. A. Fagerholm, and the SKDL did not again share in government until 1966. The 'proto-Finlandisers' of 1948, including the American President, Harry Truman, expected that—under cover of the pretext that reparations deliveries were being disrupted—the Soviet Union would intervene. No such development occurred.

The YYA Treaty 1948

As this treaty has often been misunderstood or misrepresented by the 'Finlandisers', it is appropriate here to examine its very brief and explicit terms. The preamble records Finland's desire to 'remain outside the conflicting interests of the Great Powers'. Then follows the most often quoted Articles I and II (emphasis added). The first pledges that should either Finland or the Soviet Union be attacked *through Finnish territory* by Germany or a German ally, 'Finland will, true to its obligations as an independent state, fight to repel the attack . . . *within the frontiers of Finland* . . . and if necessary with the assistance of, or jointly with, the Soviet Union'. Such assistance, however, is only given '*subject to mutual agreement*'. Article II requires the parties to 'confer with each other' if there appears to be the threat of an attack. The remaining six articles require that neither party will join an alliance directed against the other; that they will not interfere in each others' internal affairs; that they will respect each others sovereignty; work for 'the consolidation of economic and cultural relations' between them; and support the principles of

30. J. O. Söderhjelm, quoted in Kirby, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

the United Nations. Finland, therefore, is not required to do more than defend her own territory, and Soviet forces can only be called in by mutual agreement.

In the thirty-three years since the Treaty was signed there has only been one occasion, in 1961, when an attempt was made by the Soviet Union to hold consultations under Article II, because of a supposed threat from Germany. President Kekkonen persuaded Khrushchev that such consultation was unnecessary. There have been periods of strain in Russo-Finnish relations—usually related to world issues between the major powers, rather than to specifically Finnish matters—but none has arisen during the last decade. There has been a tendency, therefore, to concentrate on the positive aspects of economic and cultural co-operation.

An early sign of Soviet goodwill came at the end of Paasikivi's second term, when the base at Porkkala was handed back to Finland. During his second term (1950–56) Paasikivi had to deal with a difficult political situation. The Social Democratic leader, Väinö Tanner, was released from prison, and soon re-entered political life. Kekkonen was almost continuously Prime Minister during this time, and managed for two years to include the Social Democrats in his Cabinet, but in 1953 Tanner and the right-wing party secretary, Leskinen, forced a withdrawal. There was considerable labour unrest at this time, and a constant struggle for power in the unions between the Communists and Social Democrats. Although Tanner and Leskinen were seen in Moscow as public enemies, it was SKDL and not the Social Democrats who were kept out of the Cabinet by Kekkonen.

When Kekkonen became President in succession to Paasikivi in 1956 he called on Fagerholm to form a coalition government, containing Agrarians and others, in alliance with Social Democrats. When this government fell in 1957 he offered the premiership to Tanner, who failed to form a government, but who replaced Fagerholm as party chairman. Fagerholm eventually formed a broad coalition containing Social Democrats, Conservatives and Agrarians, but it was obvious that the Soviet Union looked with disfavour on the growing influence of Tanner in the councils of the Social Democrat Party. They saw Fagerholm as a front man for Tanner, and refused to co-operate with his government. During this period, which the Finns called the 'night-frosts' crisis, the appointment of a new Soviet ambassador was delayed, and trade talks were suspended. Khrushchev complained to Kekkonen, during his visit to Moscow in 1959, of the anti-Soviet tone of Finnish publications, and of the malign influence of Tanner. It may be that Kekkonen gave Khrushchev reassurances on these points, but in fact the Fagerholm government fell on a domestic issue, when their Agrarian partners withdrew. The 'night frosts' crisis was over, shortly to be followed by a more serious issue, which involved the possibility of invoking the YYA Treaty.

The 'note crisis' of 1961

This arose from matters which were initially no direct concern of the Finns,

but were related to big-power tensions over the Berlin Wall, and the involvement of Germany in NATO activities in the Baltic. Whilst Kekkonen was resting in Hawaii after an official tour to Britain, Canada and the United States, a Soviet note appeared, on October 30, proposing Finnish-Soviet consultations under the YYA Treaty concerning an alleged threat from Germany. Kekkonen did not consider Soviet fears justified, and when he flew to Novosibirsk on November 24 he was able to persuade Khrushchev to drop the matter. Khrushchev hinted that he would have no fears about Finland's neutrality if Kekkonen remained President, but elections were due in 1962, and an anti-Kekkonen coalition, with strong Social Democratic support, was promoting the candidature of Olavi Honka. With some justification, Khrushchev saw the hand of Tanner in this manoeuvre. Kekkonen was not diffident about using this information to discredit the 'Honka Front', which broke up shortly after his return from Moscow. When the election came, he easily secured his second term against a divided opposition.

Since the 'note crisis' Finnish-Soviet relations have steadily improved. Tanner was replaced as leader of the Social Democrats by Rafael Paasio, who transformed the party's image and broke with the Tannerite past. When he took over from Tanner the party was at its lowest postwar ebb, with only thirty-eight seats. In 1966 it reached its highest postwar peak, with fifty-five seats. Paasio not only led his party back into government, but also opened the door for SKDL to return to office after eighteen years in the wilderness. For ten of the past fifteen years both left-wing parties have participated in coalitions with the Centre Party and others.

Since 1966 the Social Democrats have been consistent supporters of Kekkonen's foreign policy, and have campaigned for his re-election. In the 1978 presidential election all six major parties, from SKDL to Conservatives, supported him for his fifth term. The assurance that he is regarded as virtually indispensable has encouraged Kekkonen to develop a more active foreign policy than that pursued by the cautious Paasikivi. The Paasikivi-Kekkonen line, firmly based on the YYA Treaty, has become so deeply embedded in the political consciousness of the Finns that it is now likely that his eventual departure from the scene will cause no serious change of direction. Since his narrow victory in the 1956 election he can point to many successes. In the field of foreign trade Finland has been able to secure treaties with Efta, the EEC and Comecon which have safeguarded its many-sided trading relations. The present export-led boom is obviously made easier because, as a result of these agreements, there are few barriers to the entry of Finnish goods into the major world markets. The bilateral trading relations with the Soviet Union, Finland's chief supplier of oil products, mean that when the world price of oil rises, the Soviet Union increases the value of its imports from Finland to maintain the balance of payments between them. A particular success has been in the field of 'project exports' to the Soviet Union and the Third World. It is impossible to quantify the economic benefits of neutrality, but the growth in Finland's

prosperity must have been assisted by the low rate of military expenditure and the ability to trade in all parts of the world without political obstacles.³¹

Kekkonen's initiatives

The Finnish constitution gives wide powers to the President, especially in foreign policy, so that it is appropriate that the title 'Paasikivi-Kekkonen line' should be used to describe Finland's postwar policy. The core of that policy is the abandonment of the prewar attitude of fear, hostility and mistrust of the Soviet Union. An essential concomitant is that Finland remains neutral and outside the sphere of big-power conflicts. Kekkonen's declaration of 'Good neighbourliness to the hereditary enemy', during a speech in Stockholm in 1943, was the first public expression of this view. Paasikivi had always taken this line, and had worked for it throughout his public life. When the pressure of military events forced Mannerheim to accept it in 1944, the process of re-education of the people to their new role could be advanced. The ability of a nation to shed cherished illusions and to adjust its collective consciousness to a new role is not an easy one, but Finland under Kekkonen has managed to do this. Whilst Paasikivi tended to regard neutrality as a passive state, Kekkonen has shown that neutral nations can play an active role in world affairs.

There are three main areas in which Finland has been active during the last twenty years. These are in the promotion of detente through such activities as the European Security conference; the advocacy of the establishment of nuclear free Zones; and support for United Nations peace-keeping operations. The Helsinki Conference of 1975 was not the work of one man, but Kekkonen did have a crucial part to play. By insisting, as leader of the host country, that in addition to all the states in Europe, invitations should be sent to all members of NATO, he helped to secure the attendance of the United States and Canada. Without their presence the conference would have been of little relevance. Since the passing of the Final Act, Finnish diplomacy has been active at the Belgrade and Madrid conferences, in working amongst the group of European neutral and non-aligned nations (the N plus N group) to create an atmosphere in which tensions between the major powers can be relaxed.

Proposals for a Nordic nuclear-free zone were first taken up by President Kekkonen in 1963, and have undergone some modification since then. He first thought in terms of a regional agreement amongst the countries of the Nordic Council, but later saw the problem in a wider context. In 1972 Finland's ambassador to the United Nations, Aarno Karhilo, argued that

to envisage any disarmament and arms control aspects of the Nordic countries separately from developments in Europe as a whole is just as

31. In 1980 (Jan.-Sept.) Finland's foreign trade was distributed as follows, no single trading group dominating:

	<i>Imports (%)</i>	<i>Exports (%)</i>
Efta	17	24
EEC	34	40
Comecon	26	18

inconceivable as it would be to deal with problems of European disarmament divorced from the disarmament process in a global sense.

Finland's proposals were not at first well-received in the Nordic countries. None of them in fact have nuclear weapons, but they were not prepared to sign away their right to do so in any future circumstances. Some also suspected that Kekkonen was flying a kite for the Soviet Union. Both Khrushchev in 1963 and Podgorny in 1973 had expressed Soviet support for the idea. When the Swedes suggested that, if such a Zone were formed, the Soviet Union should remove its shorter-range missiles from the adjacent Arctic areas, it was made clear that no part of Soviet territory could be included in a 'so-called "security belt" adjacent to a nuclear free zone'.³²

Although Finland continued to press for nuclear-free zones within United Nations machinery little further progress was made on this proposal until, in his 1981 New Year message to the Norwegian people Mr. Nordli, took up the idea again, and promised to place it on the agenda of the ruling Labour Party's annual conference in April. However, his successor as Prime Minister is less enthusiastic about the idea, and now that Mr Nordli has left office his chances of persuading conference to adopt the scheme as party policy must have diminished considerably.

Kekkonen has also promoted the idea of joint co-operation between Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Soviet Union in the development of the resources of their Arctic territories and the adjoining seas. The Finns see an interconnection between three issues in this area: the neutralisation of the Soviet-Norwegian border; the nuclear free zone; and the 'Nord Cap' scheme for economic co-operation. Their neighbours, however, fear that the involvement of the Soviet Union might upset the delicate 'Nordic Balance', and prefer to separate these matters.

Since entering the United Nations in 1955 Finland has been an active supporter of international peacekeeping operations, sending men to Suez and Cyprus and supplying military advisers, United Nations commanders and mediators in these areas. The attempt in 1973 to promote Max Jakobson as Finnish nominee to succeed U Thant failed because of Soviet opposition. The incident seems to have left no lasting scars, except perhaps on Mr Jakobson. Finnish representatives at the United Nations have tended to concentrate on such issues as detente, peacekeeping activities, and the development of the Third World. They do not become embroiled in the set-piece debates in which Warsaw Pact and NATO members confront each other on global political and moral issues.

This prudent reticence in international forums does not mean that political life inside Finland is stifled. The debate within the Left, for example, is vigorous and hard hitting. SKDL contains two wings of the Communist Party and a

32. Yuri Komissarov, 'The Future of a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Northern Europe', in *Yearbook of Finnish Foreign Policy* (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 1978), p. 30.

group of left-socialists, held together in uneasy alliance. The pro-Soviet wing, led by Taisto Sinisalo, is constantly attacking the majority leader, Saarinen, who is suspected of Eurocommunist leanings. The former leader of SKDL, Ele Alenius, a non-Communist, has been the victim of abuse in *Pravda* ever since SKDL condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968,³³ and more recently over his support for the Polish '*Solidarnosc*' unions. For its part, the Finnish government also called for the withdrawal of troops from Czechoslovakia, in 1968 and from Afghanistan in 1980, but stopped short of directly attacking the Soviet Union. Finland remains a lively, multi-party democracy, with a market economy. There is no sign of the 'Sovietisation' feared by the 'Finlandiser'—in fact, at the 1979 general election there was a large swing to the Conservatives.

Although there are disagreements in detail, the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line, to which the YYA Treaty gives formal underpinning, is accepted by the Finns as the basis for the peace and prosperity which they have enjoyed for a longer period than ever before in their recent history. Finnish foreign policy, like that of all countries, is an expression of the nation's view of its own self-interest. The experiences which Finland endured during the first thirty years since independence have convinced the Finns that their interest lies in neutrality, detente and co-operation. It happens that Finland's interest coincides with that of many other countries. In the face of the increasing militarisation of international politics, it is not an ignoble aim for small countries to plead for sanity and realism in international relations. It is grossly unfair to Finland that its name has been used by some commentators as a verbal weapon in the cold war. A study of recent Finnish history suggests that the term 'Finlandisation' should be removed from the vocabulary of international politics, and be placed where it belongs in the annals of contemporary mythology.

33. Seminar paper by E. Alenius, 'International Detente and the Objective of Socialism in Western Europe', p. 9, given at University of Bradford, Oct. 29, 1980.