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The Finnish Communist Party

Interest in Finnish communism has been high in recent years and seems to be, at least in part, a reflection of two facts. First, the Finnish party, like the Communist parties of Italy and France, has been able to poll at least 20 percent of the popular vote in parliamentary elections. Second, the father of Finnish communism, Otto Kuusinen, was from 1957 until his death in 1964 a member of the Secretariat and Presidium (Politburo) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The reader should, however, keep in mind that Finnish communism has a long and dramatic history dating back to the formation of the party in 1918. This history falls logically into three periods: 1918–30, when the party was in theory legal but in practice illegal; 1930–44, when the party was formally proscribed; and 1944 to the present, a period during which the party has been able to act in the open as a registered, legal organization.

In April 1918 it became apparent to Finnish Socialists that they would not be the victors in Finland's three-month civil war.¹ Fearing the wrath of the bourgeoisie and the military might of the twelve thousand German troops in Finland, many Finnish Reds sought refuge in Soviet Russia. Embittered by military defeat and inspired by Lenin, Otto Kuusinen and other prominent Finnish Socialists urged the formation of a Communist Party. On August 29, 1918, a convention of Finnish Socialists in Moscow proclaimed the formation of a Finnish Communist Party.

The first program of the Finnish Communists called for an iron dictatorship of the proletariat, and there was little doubt among Central Committee members that their efforts would soon be crowned with success. Finnish Communists, like Russian Communists, with whom there was close cooperation in the formation of the Communist International, were convinced that European revolution was imminent. To bolster local party leadership and to hasten the inevitable revolution, Kuusinen was sent to Finland in the spring of 1919 as a member and secret emissary of the Central Committee. This action proved,

1. Further information on the civil war and the early years of the Finnish Communist Party can be found in John H. Hodgson, *Communism in Finland: A History and Interpretation* (Princeton, 1967), pp. 53–120.

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however, to be the beginning of a rift within the Central Committee which led to the formation of two factions within the party.

While on his revolutionary mission, Kuusinen discovered that to advocate left-wing communism in Finland was to flirt with disaster. He consequently shifted tactics in the fall of 1919, well in advance of the Comintern's acceptance of the united front and a number of months before the appearance of Lenin's pamphlet on left-wing communism. Kuusinen now urged that Finnish Communists join Social Democratic organizations in an attempt to gain control over them. The results were striking. The Social Democratic Party lost its dominant position in the Trade Union Organization, the Youth League, the Social Democratic League of Women, the Workers' Temperance League, and the Workers' Athletic Union. Only the Social Democratic Party itself remained impregnable, with the result that in May 1920 Communists and left-wing Socialists joined hands to form a party in legal opposition to the Social Democratic Party—the Socialist Workers' Party of Finland (SSTP).

A month later Kuusinen moved to Stockholm, where he was soon joined by other members of the Central Committee of the Finnish Communist Party. Together they organized a three-week series of courses for some twenty functionaries of the SSTP. The purpose of the courses was to develop a core of trained cadres for the newly formed legal party in Finland and to ensure that control over the SSTP would be in Communist hands. From Soviet Russia, however, a majority of the Finnish Central Committee charged that Kuusinen and his followers in Stockholm were subverting, rather than supporting, the Communist Party.

The chairman of the Central Committee, Kullervo Manner, backed by the head of the Comintern, Grigorii Zinoviev, continued to pursue a policy of left-extremism. They, unlike Kuusinen, persisted in the belief that world revolution was imminent. Only the personal intervention of Lenin, in the winter of 1920–21, with thoughts directed toward the third congress of the Comintern, brought Kuusinen back to Soviet Russia. In July 1921, at the fourth congress of the Finnish Communist Party, held in Petrograd, the breach within the Finnish party was healed.

The fourth congress condemned left-extremism, as had the third congress of the Comintern several weeks earlier, and the Kuusinen fraction, too, was reprimanded on the grounds that it had broken party discipline and had weakened the Central Committee. Clearly, however, the party congress was a not unexpected victory for Kuusinen. Only recently he had prepared at Lenin's behest the Comintern organizational theses on the necessity of both a legal and illegal party apparatus, and he had been rewarded with selection to the Comintern's three-member secretariat.

Central to the thinking of Kuusinen and his supporters in Stockholm had been not only the notion that Finnish Communists should participate in

Parliament and the trade union movement but also that there should be a reorganization of Communist Party activity. In particular, they felt that Finland should become the center of party leadership and party work. The inability of the Finnish Central Committee to prevent bloodshed within its own ranks in Soviet Russia during the summer of 1920 reinforced the Stockholm group's conviction that the headquarters of the Finnish Communist Party should be moved from Soviet Russia to Finland. At the fourth party congress a compromise solution was reached.

The fourth congress established a special organ, called the Finnish Bureau (*Suomen Byroo*), which was to work in Finland with a network of subordinate units and was to be directly responsible to the Central Committee of the party in Moscow.² Its inner core appears to have consisted of five to seven men, including one or two Central Committee members who remained illegally in Finland for short periods of time as advisers to the Finnish Bureau.³ Foremost among the original members of the Finnish Bureau was the secretary of the SSTP, Arvo Tuominen, who in 1920 had attended the Stockholm courses and who had proposed at the fourth party congress that the Central Committee be moved to Finland.⁴ Shortly thereafter Tuominen became a member of the Central Committee of the Finnish party and later, after his flight to Soviet Russia in 1933, a candidate member of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.⁵

Primary among the duties of the Finnish Bureau was the supervision of the legal party of the radical left in Finland. More specifically, this meant a close association with the SSTP. Formed in May 1920 by Communists, left-wing Socialists, and nonparty workers—representing a youthful segment of Finnish society—the SSTP lived a short and turbulent life. In January 1922 the members of its executive committee were arrested, and in August of the following year several hundred members of the party, including party functionaries and members of Parliament, were taken into custody. In 1925 the

2. Ilkka Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue ja sen vaikutus poliittiseen ja ammatilliseen työväenliikkeeseen, 1918–1928* (Porvoo, 1966), pp. 19, 25. In 1930 the Finnish Bureau was replaced by a Politburo (*KK:n poliittinen toimikunta*), which had more authority than its predecessor and was larger in size. Ville Pessi to author, Aug. 31, 1967.

3. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, p. 25; Arvo Tuominen to author, Oct. 2, 1962; Toivo Hjalmar Långström to author, Sept. 13, 1962; Jaakko Kivi to author, Apr. 26, 1962. The core of the Finnish Bureau was its political section, which, according to Kivi, served as a coordinating link between other sections (trade union, youth, athletic, and cooperative *jaostot*).

4. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, p. 26; Arvo Tuominen, *Sirpin ja vasaran tie* (Helsinki, 1957), p. 306.

5. Tuominen asserts that he was elected to the Central Committee of the Finnish Communist Party in 1921. Tuominen, *Sirpin ja vasaran tie*, p. 306; idem, *Kremlin kellot* (Helsinki, 1957), p. 268. But Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, p. 23, indicates that it was not until 1925, at the fifth party congress, that Tuominen became a member of the Central Committee.

party, which in May 1923 had been renamed the Finnish Workers' Party (STP), was declared illegal. Those under arrest were then convicted of plotting and assisting treason against the state (*valtiopetos*).⁶

The SSTP reportedly had some twenty-five thousand members shortly after its formation, and the circulation of its chief newspaper, *Suomen Työmies*, was in the neighborhood of sixteen thousand.⁷ Comparable figures for Communist Party membership, estimated to be less than two thousand during the 1920s, and for circulation of the leading illegal Communist organ, *Proletaari*, estimated at from one to three thousand copies during its fourteen-year existence, indicate that Communists were a small minority in Finland's radical left movement.⁸ But they were not without power.

At the fourth congress of the Finnish Communist Party, the SSTP was seen as a recruit school for Finnish Communists.⁹ Finnish police reports state that half of the SSTP executive committee belonged to the Communist Party, although only 5 to 10 percent of the party as a whole, according to a Communist district secretary of the SSTP, were Communists.¹⁰ A study based on the police reports notes that no more than five of the twenty-seven SSTP representatives elected to Parliament in 1922 were without doubt members of the Communist Party.¹¹ But it should be observed that the chairman of the SSTP parliamentary group, Hjalmar Långström, belonged to both parties. He was, in fact, close to (*mukana*) the Finnish Bureau and as chairman of the parliamentary group received instructions on occasion from a member of the Central Committee.¹² When the SSTP was renamed the Finnish Workers'

6. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, pp. 184–87. Of interest in terms of the composition of the radical left in Finland in the 1920s is the fact that 59.4 percent of the people convicted of treason (*valtiopetos* and *maanpetos*) from 1921 through 1928 were under thirty years of age. *Ibid.*, p. 141. The youthful nature of the radical left is also brought out in Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 105, 105–6n.; Marvin Rintala, "The Problem of Generations in Finnish Communism," *American Slavic and East European Review*, 17, no. 2 (April 1958): 195–96; Martti Noponen, *Kansanedustajien sosiaalinen tausta Suomessa* (Porvoo, 1964), p. 166.

7. Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 100–101; T. Hj. Långström, in *Vapaa Sana*, June 26, 1949, p. 3; Antti Hyvönen, "Sosialistisen työväen puolueen perustaminen," *Kommunisti*, 1967, no. 8, p. 265; Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, pp. 137–38. See also Hertta Kuusinen, in *Vapaa Sana*, June 27, 1949, p. 3.

8. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, pp. 137, 139, 168; Antti Hyvönen, "SKPn maanalainen lehdistö, I," in *Kansan Uutiset*, Apr. 25, 1961, p. 4; Kyösti Sepänen, "SKPn illegaalinen lehdistö 1918–44, II," *Kommunisti*, 1966, no. 1, p. 19; M. Kheimo and A. Tivel, eds., *10 let Kominternu v resheniiaakh i tsifrakh* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1929), p. 360.

9. *Suomen kommunistinen puolue: Puoluekokousten, konferenssien ja keskuskomitean plenumien päätöksiä*, 1 (Leningrad, 1935): 50.

10. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, p. 167; Antti Ojala to author, Sept. 20, 1962.

11. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, pp. 174, 174–75n. The Finnish Parliament is composed of two hundred representatives, and the seats won by the SSTP in the 1922 election reflected 14.8 percent of the total popular vote.

12. Långström to author, Sept. 13, 1962.

Party, Långström assumed the additional post of chairman of the STP executive committee.

To fill the political void created by the destruction of the SSTP/STP in 1923, the Finnish Bureau of the Communist Party in conjunction with left-wing Socialists proceeded to establish a new legal organization. In January 1924, in anticipation of the parliamentary election of that year, the Socialist Workers' and Small Farmers' Election Organization (*Sosialistisen Työväen ja Pienviljelijäin Vaalijärjestö*) was created. Following the 1924 election, in which the radical left in spite of obvious restraints received 10.4 percent of the popular vote and eighteen seats,¹³ the electoral machine—with a central committee (*keskusvaalikomitea*) at the top and a network of election committees below—continued its existence as a partial replacement for the defunct SSTP/STP.¹⁴ In the elections of 1927 and 1929 the radical left maintained, and increased slightly, its percentage of the popular vote and representation in Parliament: 12.1 percent and twenty seats in 1927, 13.5 percent and twenty-three seats in 1929.

Communist influence over the Socialist Workers' and Small Farmers' parliamentary group is indicated by the fact that its chairman, Mauritz Rosenberg, was a member of the Communist Party. One of the secretaries for the Socialist Workers' and Small Farmers' parliamentary group intimates even closer cooperation with the Finnish Communist Party on certain issues. He recalls that in 1929 the Central Committee, through a member of the Finnish Bureau who, like himself, had been a participant in the Stockholm courses of 1920, instructed a wavering parliamentary group to vote against a much debated health insurance bill.¹⁵ It seemed clear to both the extreme left and the extreme right that a majority of the Socialist Workers' and Small Farmers' parliamentary group were members of the Communist Party,¹⁶ a fact which, in 1930, helped lead to a legal ban on the Communist Party.

In November 1929 several thousand residents of the village of Lapua, in central western Finland, broke up a series of meetings held by Communist youths and stripped the participants of their red shirts. Thus began a move-

13. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, pp. 197–98. The results of Finnish parliamentary elections from 1907 through 1966 can be found conveniently in Jaakko Nousiainen, *The Finnish Political System*, trans. John H. Hodgson (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), tables 8 and 16.

14. Jalmari Kuusela to author, Mar. 31, 1962; Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, pp. 187–90.

15. Kuusela to author, Mar. 31, 1962. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, p. 26, indicates that the Central Committee representative, Jaakko Kivi, became a member of the Finnish Bureau in 1925. Kivi, however, states that from 1921 to 1928 he served on the Finnish Bureau and for the last five of those seven years acted as its secretary. Kivi to author, Apr. 26, 1962.

16. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, pp. 184, 197; *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, p. 297; *International Press Correspondence*, 9, no. 34 (July 19, 1929): 726.

ment whose professed goal was the extermination of Finnish communism but whose actual aim was the destruction of parliamentary government and all parties. The Lapua movement, in admiration of Italian fascism, struck at both democrats—including the first president of the Finnish Republic, who was kidnapped in a conspiracy engineered by the chief of staff of the Finnish Army—and Communists.¹⁷

In December 1929 Parliament passed the first of a number of bills depriving Finnish Communists of rights enjoyed by other political groups. Further anti-Communist legislation was approved the following summer, after which the minister of the interior ordered the arrest of all Communists and left-wing Socialists sitting in Parliament. By November 1930, with the passage of other major bills, all legal action by Finnish Communists was impossible. But the ultimate goal of the Lapua movement, best expressed in the 1932 revolt at Mäntsälä, remained only a dream and a legacy for advocates of a Greater Finland.¹⁸ Even the Lapua triumph over communism was a shallow, disputed victory.

In 1925 a campaign had been launched to double the number of Communist Party members and party cells, but by 1927, according to the first chairman of the party, Yrjö Sirola, there had been only a 4 percent increase in party cells and an 8 percent increase in active party members.¹⁹ In 1929, moreover, the ranks of Finnish Communists were rent asunder by the revolutionary directives adopted the previous year at the sixth congress of the Communist International. Many trusted Communists who contested the new hard line were described in Moscow as never having really been in sympathy with communism, and their efforts to form a new party free from the control of Finnish emigrants were assailed. But judging from an article in *Työväenjärjestöjen Tiedonantaja*—the leading organ of the Socialist Workers' and Small Farmers' parliamentary group, with a circulation of from eighteen to twenty thousand²⁰—Moscow seems to have been more concerned with the indifference of Finnish workers than with the activities of the "opportunist leaders."²¹

The minister of the interior informed Parliament during the debates on

17. The most extensive and best documented analysis of the Lapua movement is Marvin Rintala, *Three Generations: The Extreme Right Wing in Finnish Politics* (Bloomington, 1962).

18. The Greater Finland concept is examined by Rintala, *ibid.*, pp. 71–121; *idem*, "Finland," in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, eds., *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), pp. 408–42; *idem*, "Äärioikeisto Suomen poliittisessa elämässä 1917–1939," *Politiikka*, 1963, no. 3, pp. 87–112.

19. Yrjö Sirola, in *Työmies* (Superior, Wis.), Sept. 5, 1928, p. 3. Sirola's position in the party is noted in Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, p. 84; Erkki Salomaa, *Yrjö Sirola: Sosialistinen Humanisti* (Helsinki, 1966), pp. 283, 285.

20. August Niemistö to author, Aug. 2, 1967. Niemistö, who joined the Communist Party in 1923, was editor in chief of the newspaper.

21. *Työväenjärjestöjen Tiedonantaja*, Mar. 10, 1930, p. 2.

anti-Communist legislation that the party did not represent an immediate threat to Finnish society. Other members of Parliament agreed, and three representatives, all Social Democrats, argued that the bills under consideration would make communism in Finland more, rather than less, dangerous.²² Of interest in this regard is the disclosure at a meeting of the Central Committee in the summer of 1932 that 80 percent of the party's members had joined "after the Fascist upheaval."²³ In light of data for party membership in September 1929, when the rift within Communist ranks was just getting under way in full public view, one can perhaps conclude that in 1932 the Communist Party had close to two thousand members.²⁴ This figure draws some support from a party publication; and a former Communist who was not, it should be noted, a member of the party's inner circle has written that in 1936 party membership—excluding adherents in prison—totaled approximately two thousand one hundred fifty.²⁵ An editor for one of the illegal Communist publications which appeared in the mid-1930s has stated that in all probability the number of Communist Party members was around two thousand toward the end of the decade, although a member of the Central Committee elected at the sixth party congress in 1935 estimates that membership had risen to somewhat over five thousand.²⁶ Soon, however, disaster struck the Communist Party.

On November 30, 1939, the Soviet Union began its attack on Finland. The Winter War of 1939–40 had commenced. On December 1 a Finnish government headed by Otto Kuusinen, as prime minister and foreign minister, was established by Soviet authorities on the Karelian Isthmus at Terijoki. Members of the Terijoki government felt that Finnish workers would rally around the new government, and Stalin mistakenly believed that the Winter War would be of short duration.²⁷ Early in 1957, replying to a question posed at a session in the party school, a former member of the Finnish Politbüro reported that there had been an erroneous appraisal of the situation in Finland

22. *Valtiopäivät 1930 pöytäkirjat* (Helsinki, 1930), pp. 454, 497, 945, 959, 1027, 1045. See also Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 136–37n.

23. *Kommunisti*, Oct. 15, 1932, no. 19 (103), p. 885; *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, p. 386.

24. Hakalehto, *Suomen kommunistinen puolue*, pp. 139–40; *Savon Työ*, Sept. 14, 1929, p. 3; Hugo M. Ahokanta to author, Apr. 27, 1962. Ahokanta, who joined the Communist Party in its infancy, was one of the most important figures opposed to the 1928 Comintern resolutions.

25. *Kansan Uutiset*, Apr. 26, 1961, p. 4; S. Hj. Rantanen, *Kuljin SKP:n tietä* (Helsinki, 1958), p. 154.

26. Inkeri Lehtinen to author, Aug. 3, 1967; Toivo Karvonen to author, Aug. 9, 1967. The figure cited by Karvonen is much too high according to one of the most prominent Finnish Communists. Pessi to author, Aug. 31, 1967.

27. *Päivän Sanomat*, Mar. 15, 1960, p. 3; J. K. Paasikivi, *Toimintani Moskovassa ja Suomessa, 1939–41*, 1 (Porvoo, 1958): 112, 123 (this belief in the workers was also the gist of a conversation between the author and the Terijoki minister of the interior; Tuure Lehén to author, Jan. 11, 1963). *History of the Great Patriotic War*, referred to in *Uusi Suomi*, Sept. 22, 1966, pp. 9, 24.

in 1939 and that the information supplied by the Finnish Communist Party was a factor contributing to the outbreak of armed conflict between Finland and the Soviet Union.²⁸ The Terijoki minister of the interior later admitted that some members of the Communist Party thought that an attempt was under way to turn Finland into a Soviet state.²⁹ For the first time since the civil war, Finland was a unified nation with a common purpose. This unity began to crumble, however, after the March peace treaty.

In May 1940 Communists and left-wing Socialists formed a society whose stated objective was an improvement in relations between Finland and the Soviet Union. The chairman of the Finnish–Soviet Society of Peace and Friendship, Mauri Ryömä, was more specific as to the means by which this goal would be achieved. He urged Finnish workers to demand from the leaders of the Social Democratic Party an accounting for their role in the outbreak and prolongation of the Winter War, for their hostile attitude toward the Soviet Union, and for their betrayal of the program and principles of the working class.³⁰ Ryömä, a radical Socialist who had been expelled from the Social Democratic Party in 1937, was supported by many rank-and-file Socialists, as well as by Finnish Communists. Five of the eleven people who participated in the founding of the society were members of the Communist Party. The vice-chairman of the society had joined the party in 1930, and the editor in chief of the society's newspaper, *Kansan Sanomat*, had become a party member in 1932.³¹

Finnish authorities drew no distinction between the Socialist and Communist members of the society, some thirty-five to forty thousand strong, and, more surprising, the leaders of the Social Democratic Party also failed to see a difference. Väinö Tanner, the major figure in the Social Democratic Party, proclaimed that the society was a fifth column working for the destruction of Finnish independence.³² The organizational secretary of the party, Kalle Lehmus, went even further in his efforts to discredit members of the society. He enlisted the polemic talent of Arvo Tuominen, who had abandoned the Communist Party in 1939 with the formation of the Terijoki government, and Lehmus personally distributed one of the most irresponsible attacks on Ryömä and his supporters.³³

28. *Helsingin Sanomat*, June 13, 1958, p. 6.

29. *Kipinästä tuli syttyä* (Helsinki, 1958), p. 207; *Iz istorii kommunisticheskoi partii Finliandii* (Moscow, 1960), p. 118.

30. Sakari Karttunen, *Ystävyys vastatulessa: Suomen-Neuvostoliiton rauhan ja ystävyyden seuran myrskyinen taival vuonna 1940* (Helsinki, 1966), p. 67. There was, in fact, some truth to the charges made by Ryömä against the Social Democratic leaders. See Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 175–78, 175n., 198n.

31. Karttunen, *Ystävyys vastatulessa*, pp. 37–38, 60.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 53, 96, 116.

33. Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 191–93, 191n., 192n. See also Karttunen, *Ystävyys vastatulessa*, pp. 119, 129.

In December 1940 a Finnish court (*Helsingin HO*) ordered the dissolution of the Finnish–Soviet Society of Peace and Friendship. Six months later, shortly before Germany’s attack on the Soviet Union, several hundred members of the society were imprisoned. The “fifth column” had been suppressed. But it is probable, as one Finnish author suggests, that the oppression of 1940–41 and the role played by the leaders of the Social Democratic Party in the attacks on the Finnish–Soviet Society helped to swell the ranks of Finnish Communists once the party had become, in 1944, a legal organization.³⁴

A second group which also suffered from police and Social Democratic oppression during this period was of even more importance for establishing communism as a potent force in postwar Finland. This group, known popularly as the “Six” (*kuutoset*), was led by K. H. Wiik—for decades a member of the Social Democratic Party executive committee and at one time the party secretary—and included six Social Democratic members of Parliament as well as the Social Democratic city manager of Helsinki. The group was formed following the March peace treaty, and its members urged that the past, namely the Winter War, be discussed in order to be better prepared for the future. The Finnish prime minister, supported by Väinö Tanner, who had been foreign minister during the Winter War, declared that the time was not yet ripe for a discussion of wartime events.

The program of the “Six,” as expressed in the first issue of their newspaper *Vapaa Sana*, with a circulation which eventually surpassed that of the leading Social Democratic organ, was precise: Socialism, Internationalism, and Peace. For Wiik national socialism was a greater threat to peace and Finnish independence than was bolshevism, whereas for Finland’s political leaders, including the leaders of the Social Democratic Party, the Soviet Union represented the greatest danger. In September 1940, at the exhortation of a pro-German association within the Social Democratic Party—headed by Kalle Lehmus—Wiik and his colleagues were expelled from the party. Lehmus incorrectly equated Wiik’s group (*wiikiläisyys*) with Ryömä’s group (*ryömäläisyys*); and in July 1941 Tanner, who had accused the “Six” of desiring a Soviet conquest of Finland, stated that the “Six” would have to be crushed. In August they were arrested, and the following year they were convicted of treason against the state.

Further opposition within the Social Democratic Party arose after Finland joined Germany in Operation Barbarossa. Unlike the Winter War, Finland’s Continuation War with the Soviet Union did not engender national unity. The Soviet air attacks of June 25 did not force a reluctant Finland into cobelligerency with Germany. Finland had already agreed to support Ger-

34. Karttunen, *Ystävyyys vastatulessa*, pp. 52, 146–47. From 1945 until his death in 1958 Ryömä was a member of the Central Committee and the Politburo of the Finnish Communist Party.

many's northern operations and then, on July 10, to launch a major offensive.³⁵ Most Finns, including Väinö Tanner and Kalle Lehmus, were convinced that Germany would quickly defeat the Soviet Union and guarantee Finnish independence.³⁶ But two members of the Social Democratic Party executive committee, Mauno Pekkala and J. W. Keto, disagreed. They were skeptical about German victory, and they urged a speedy peace with the Soviet Union. It was not until the summer of 1944, however, that the Finnish Cabinet, within which Tanner exercised an influential voice on foreign policy matters, resolved to make peace with the Soviet Union. On September 19, 1944, an armistice agreement was signed. Implicit in this agreement was the legalization of the Finnish Communist Party.

Early in October 1944 thirty Finnish Communists gathered in Helsinki for a nationwide conference representing the somewhat less than two thousand party members who had been released from prison or had otherwise come into the open after years of underground activity.³⁷ Aimo Aaltonen, a party member since 1927 and in 1933–34 a Central Committee secretary in charge of organizational matters, was elected chairman of the party, and Ville Pessi, a party member since 1924,³⁸ secretary. A number of Finnish Communists felt that an immediate seizure of power with the aid of the Red Army was the most pressing item of business, but by the spring of 1945 the extreme left had been isolated and condemned as the main danger in the party.³⁹ Radical steps had been rejected in favor of Cabinet participation.⁴⁰ On November 17, 1944, Yrjö Leino became the first Communist in Finnish history to enter a Cabinet.

35. Anthony F. Upton, *Finland in Crisis, 1940–1941: A Study in Small-Power Politics* (Ithaca, 1965), pp. 266–67, 269, 275, 285, 292–93. See also Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 194–96.

36. Martti V. Terä, in *Uusi Suomi*, May 18, 1967, p. 2, argues that it was Kalle Lehmus who exercised the greatest influence on Finland's top political leaders (*korkein valtionjohto*) during the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the Continuation War.

37. Erkki Salomaa, *Tavoitteena kansanvalta: Suomen työväenliikkeen vaiheita vuosina 1944–1960* (Helsinki, 1964), pp. 37–38; Martti Malmberg, in *Kommunisti*, Nov. 6, 1945, no. 44–45 (51–52), p. 21; I. Rozdorozhnyi, "40 let Kompartii Finliandii," *Agitator*, 1958, no. 17 (September), p. 36; Hertta Kuusinen, in *SKP:n vuosikirja*, 11 (Helsinki, 1955): 8.

38. E. M. Zhukov, ed., *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, 1 (Moscow, 1961): 25; *Kansan Uutiset*, Feb. 2, 1966, p. 1. In 1969 Pessi was replaced by Arvo Aalto as general secretary of the party. Aalto, a party member since 1951, had been secretary of the Lapland district organization.

39. Yrjö Leino, *Kommunisti sisäministerinä* (Helsinki, 1958), pp. 33–34, 192; Hertta Kuusinen, "Vääriä virtauksia työväenliikkeen sisällä," *Kommunisti*, Apr. 10, 1945, no. 14–15 (21–22), pp. 10–11; Kauko Heikkilä, "'Vasemmistolaisista' syrjäpyrkimyksistä SKP:ssä," *ibid.*, Apr. 17, 1945, no. 16 (23), pp. 3–4; Hertta Kuusinen, in *Kipinästä*, p. 242; *Suomen Sosiaalidemokraatti*, Sept. 26, 1948, p. 1.

40. Iu. E. Miettinen, "Bor'ba kommunisticheskoi partii Finliandii za demokratizatsiiu strany v 1944–1948 godakh," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1964, no. 3, p. 10. From 1948

Table 1. *Membership in the Finnish Communist Party (SKP)*

Date	Congress	Membership
October 19–22, 1945	Seventh	19,000
August 30–September 3, 1948	Eighth	53,000
November 1–5, 1951	Ninth	45,000
October 2–5, 1954	Tenth	46,000
May 29–June 2, 1957	Eleventh	48,000
April 15–18, 1960	Twelfth	44,000
April 12–15, 1963	Thirteenth	53,000
January 29–February 1, 1966	Fourteenth	47,000
April 3–6, 1969	Fifteenth	47,000

Sources: The figures for party membership are only approximate and have been derived from Ville Pessi, in *Työkansan Sanomat*, Sept. 3, 1948, p. 3; *Katsaus Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen toimintaan VII ja VIII puoluekokouksen välisenä aikana* (Helsinki, 1948), pp. 7–8; Salomaa, *Tavoitteena*, p. 175; *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen XI edustajakokous* (Kotka, 1957), pp. 399–400; Ville Pessi, in *Kansan Uutiset*, Apr. 14, 1963, p. 11; *Kertomus Suomen kommunistisen puolueen toiminnasta 14. ja 15. edustajakokousten väliseltä ajalta* (Helsinki, 1969), p. 56.

The figure for 1951 is a conclusion drawn from the fact that the 300 fully empowered (*täysivaltaisia*) delegates at the ninth congress were elected by district organizations on the basis of one delegate for each 150 members. *Työkansan Sanomat*, Sept. 4, 1948, p. 5. The figure for 1966 is an average of the totals for 1965 and 1967. *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen toiminnasta XIII ja XIV edustajakokousten välisenä aikana* (Helsinki, 1965), p. 54; Inkeri Lehtinen to author, Aug. 3, 1967. Ville Pessi, general secretary of the party for twenty-five years, considers the figure for 1960 substantially in error. Ville Pessi to author, Aug. 31, 1967.

By April of the following year party membership had risen to approximately seven thousand. This growth was not, however, rapid enough for the party leadership. At the spring plenum of the Central Committee a decision was reached to relax the requirements for membership.⁴¹ A serious attempt was launched to create a mass party. The results can be seen in table 1.

Within five months the number of party members had almost tripled, and by 1948 the figure had risen to approximately fifty-three thousand. Between the seventh and eighth congresses the number of primary party organizations (*osastoja*), which have been organized primarily on a community basis (*asuma-alueittain*) rather than at the place of work or by trades, had increased by some five hundred. A network of regional committees (*aluekomiteoita*) was established, and, later, several city committees were formed. Coordinating the activities of these organizations, and directly responsible to the Central Committee, were the district committees (*piirikomiteoita*).⁴²

until 1966 Communists were excluded from the Finnish Cabinet. See Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 205, 230–31; idem, "The Finnish Communist Party and Neutrality," *Government and Opposition*, 2, no. 2 (January–April 1967): 285–87.

41. *Kommunisti*, Nov. 6, 1945, no. 44–45 (51–52), p. 21, and May 22, 1945, no. 21 (28), p. 8.

42. *Katsaus Suomen Kommunistisen*, pp. 6–7, 10; *Kommunisti*, 1954, no. 12, pp. 722–

As is apparent from table 1, party membership since 1948 has fluctuated between forty-four and fifty-three thousand. The substantial decline in membership after the eighth, eleventh, and thirteenth congresses presumably can be explained by the fact that in 1950, 1958, and 1964 extensive party purges were carried out.⁴³ Since the 1964 purge the number of party members has risen appreciably, although some party figures, including Aimo Aaltonen, who was replaced as chairman of the party in 1966 by Aarne Saarinen (a party member since 1944), have urged that the party be cleansed of revisionists and that it be concerned more with quality than with quantity.⁴⁴

In terms of social composition, there has been no major transformation within the party during its fifty-year existence. In 1928 Yrjö Sirola reported that 86 percent of the members were workers; in the postwar period this figure has varied from 80 to 87 percent. Small farmers (*talonpoikia*) have accounted for only 6 to 10 percent of the party's membership, although close to half of the primary organizations are located in the countryside. Also striking, particularly when compared with statistics for the French and Italian parties, is the fact that the Finnish party has been unable to attract many intellectuals to its banners. Over a twenty-year period less than 2 percent of the party's members have been part of the intelligentsia.⁴⁵

Of even more concern to the leadership, however, is the aging of party members. The party in the prewar period was unquestionably a party for young radicals, whereas on the basis of a study made just prior to the ninth congress it would appear that the average age of party members in district organizations is over forty and that there is no easy solution to this problem.⁴⁶ As one American scholar has remarked, the unifying image of the civil war and the months immediately following—without which there would have been no strong Communist movement in Finland—has little meaning for the younger generation.⁴⁷

23; *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen toiminnasta*, pp. 54–55; *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen XIV edustajakokous* (Kuopio, 1966), pp. 60–61.

43. *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen XII edustajakokous* (Helsinki, 1960), p. 65; *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen toiminnasta*, p. 54.

44. *Uusi Päivä*, Apr. 26, 1966, p. 2, Apr. 29, 1966, p. 3, and May 1, 1966, p. 4. The Finnish party has had three chairmen in the postwar period: Aaltonen, 1944–45 and 1948–66; Aaro Uusitalo, 1945–48; and Saarinen.

45. *Työmies*, Sept. 5, 1928, p. 3; *Kommunisti*, Nov. 6, 1945, no. 44–45 (51–52), pp. 21–22, 1963, no. 4, p. 133, and 1951, no. 11–12, p. 656; Salomaa, *Tavoitteena*, p. 119; *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen toiminnasta*, p. 55; *Katsaus Suomen Kommunistisen*, pp. 8–10; *Työkansan Sanomat*, Sept. 3, 1948, p. 3; *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen XI*, p. 63; *Kansan Uutiset*, Apr. 16, 1963, p. 6. In one district organization, Helsinki-Uusimaa, the intelligentsia percentage appears to be slightly higher. See *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen XI*, p. 370.

46. Aimo Aaltonen, in *Kommunisti*, 1951, no. 11–12, p. 656. See also *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen XI*, p. 67; *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen XIV*, p. 116.

47. Rintala, "The Problem of Generations," pp. 192–93, 200. One should, however, bear in mind a point made by another political scientist, V. O. Key, Jr., in *Politics*,

Table 2. Membership in the Finnish People's Democratic League (SKDL)

Date	Congress	Membership (own organization)
March 23–25, 1946	First	54,041
June 28–July 1, 1949	Second	67,219
May 31–June 3, 1952	Third	62,800
June 11–13, 1955	Fourth	62,218
April 4–7, 1958	Fifth	55,496
March 31–April 3, 1961	Sixth	61,139
May 15–18, 1964	Seventh	70,433
May 13–15, 1967	Eighth	63,000

Sources: K. L. Kulo, in *Vapaa Sana*, June 29, 1949, p. 3; *Katsaus SKDL:n toimintaan I ja II liittokokouksen välisenä aikana 23.3.1946–28.6.1949* (Helsinki, 1949), p. 9; Salomaa, *Tavoitteena*, pp. 188, 290; *SKDL:n toimintakertomus III ja IV liittokokouksen väliseltä ajalta 31.5.1952–11.6.1955* (Helsinki, 1955), p. 15; *SKDL:n toimintakertomus IV ja V liittokokouksen väliseltä ajalta 11.6.1955–3.4.1958* (Helsinki, 1958), p. 14; *SKDL:n toimintakertomus V ja VI liittokokouksen väliseltä ajalta 6.4.1958–31.3.1961* (Tampere, 1961), p. 18; *SKDL:n toimintakertomus VI ja VII liittokokouksen väliseltä ajalta 3.4.1961–15.5.1964* (Tampere, 1964), p. 29; *Suomen kansan demokraattinen liitto 7. liittokokous 15.–18.5.1964* (Tampere, 1964), p. 12; *Kansan Uutiset*, May 13, 1967, p. 2.

Aware of the party's weaknesses, leading Finnish Communists sought at an early date the formation of an organization that would enjoy broad national support. On October 29, 1944, one week after it had become clear that there was no room in the Social Democratic Party for left-wing Socialists, Karl Wiik and the other members of the wartime group known as the "Six" joined forces with the Communists to establish the Finnish People's Democratic League (SKDL).⁴⁸ Within two months the SKDL had ninety-three ground organizations (*perusjärjestöjä*), distinct from the Communist primary party organizations, with approximately eight thousand five hundred members. By early 1945 these figures had tripled, and in mid-summer there were close to a thousand ground organizations with some fifty thousand members.⁴⁹ Further growth can be seen in table 2.

The figures in table 2 do not include the membership of other organizations which at various periods in the history of the SKDL have been member units (*yhteisöjäseniä*): the Finnish Communist Party (SKP), the Finnish Women's Democratic League (SNDL), the Socialist Unity Party (SYP), the

Parties, and Pressure Groups, 4th ed. (New York, 1958), p. 186: "The political scars of war project themselves powerfully, through the generations, into peacetime antipathies toward old enemies and loyalties to old comrades in arms."

48. A history of the SKDL from a Communist point of view has been written by Irena Wilhelmus, "Dvadtsat' let demokraticeskogo soiuza naroda Finliandii," in *Skandinavskii sbornik*, 10 (Tallinn, 1965): 111–34.

49. Salomaa, *Tavoitteena*, pp. 51, 53, 115; Yrjö Enne, in *Vapaa Sana*, Mar. 19, 1946, p. 3; J. W. Keto, *ibid.*, Mar. 24, 1946, p. 7.

League of Associations of Former Soldiers (ESTL), the League of Finnish Comradely Associations (STL), the Academic Socialist Society (ASS), the League of Socialist Students (SOL), and, since 1967, the Finnish League of Democratic Youth (SDNL). Nor do the figures include the membership of such groups as the Finnish Democratic League of Pioneers (SDPL), which, in common usage, are part of the people's democratic movement. The figures cited in table 2 refer only to membership in the ground organizations of the SKDL, which, as is apparent, is somewhat greater than membership in the Finnish Communist Party. During the decade of the 1950s membership in both the SKDL and the SKP decreased, but the social composition of the SKDL, like that of the Finnish Communist Party, remained unchanged. The SKDL continued to be less restricted to a single class (75 percent workers) and to have slightly more appeal among small farmers (19 percent) and intellectuals (6 percent).⁵⁰

As the second largest member unit in the SKDL—topped only by the membership of the SKDL's own ground organizations—the Communist Party has clearly exerted a powerful role within the Finnish People's Democratic League. There are, moreover, other indications revealing in a more precise manner the extent of Communist influence. Hertta Kuusinen, a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party since 1944 and from 1945 to 1966 chairman of the SKDL parliamentary group, has written that in the early 1950s the ground organizations of the SKDL were often merely weak replicas of the Communist primary party organizations and that in many communities both were run by the same people.⁵¹ According to Ville Pessi, general secretary of the party from 1944 until 1969, this is particularly true in the countryside (*maaseudulla*), where over three quarters of the SKDL's ground organizations and two-thirds of its membership are located.⁵² Furthermore, 10 to 15 percent of those belonging to the two thousand ground organizations of the SKDL are members of the Communist Party.⁵³ The Communist percentage of the some fourteen thousand people sitting on the executive committees (*johtokuntia*) of the SKDL ground organizations is in the neighborhood of 20 to 30 percent, and a recent random survey indicates that approximately 40

50. Mauno Tamminen, "Krepit' edinstvo deistvii trudiashchikhsia—nasha per-vocherednaia zadacha," *Partiinaia zhizn'*, 1959, no. 19, p. 70; Salomaa, *Tavoitteena*, pp. 124, 290.

51. *Vapaa Sana*, June 3, 1952, p. 3.

52. Ville Pessi, *Eräistä SKP:n sisäisen työn kysymyksistä* (Helsinki, 1966), p. 6; *SKDL:n toimintakertomus V ja VI*, p. 17; *SKDL:n toimintakertomus VI ja VII*, pp. 28–29.

53. Jaakko Nousiainen, *Suomen poliittinen järjestelmä*, rev. ed. (Porvoo, 1967), pp. 73–74; *SKDL:n toimintakertomus VI ja VII*, p. 29. See also *Kansan Uutiset*, May 13, 1967, p. 2, and Sept. 1, 1966, p. 5; Ele Alenius, "SKDL yhteiskunnassamme," in Keijo Immonen, ed., *Puolueiden puheenvuoro* (Helsinki, 1965), p. 13.

percent of the five hundred district executive committee members belong to the Communist Party.⁵⁴

Although the five chairmen of the SKDL (Karl Wiik, Cay Sundström, J. W. Keto, K. L. Kulo, and Ele Alenius) have been left-wing Socialists rather than Communists, the six general secretaries of the SKDL (Tyyne Tuominen, Yrjö Enne, Hertta Kuusinen, Mauno Tamminen, Ele Alenius, and Aimo Haapanen) have been—with the exception of Alenius, elected secretary in 1965 and chairman in 1967—members of the Communist Party. But the present secretary, Haapanen, unlike his Communist predecessors, is not a Central Committee member and appears to represent a “revisionist” wing within the party. It may be, as Alenius recently stated, that there have been important changes within the league since 1964–65 and that what is really significant is not the line between the Communist Party and the SKDL but rather the line between “Stalinists” on one hand and SKDL members and reform-minded Communists, like Haapanen, on the other hand.⁵⁵

Close Communist control over the SKDL has been particularly evident in the seven postwar parliamentary elections, and it is perhaps fair to say that it was with the 1945 election in mind that the Communists sought the formation of an organization which would draw together Communists and non-Communists. From the outset it was certain that the “Six” would be on SKDL election lists, and by the end of January 1945 it became clear that Mauno Pekkala, J. W. Keto, and other leading Social Democrats, dissatisfied with the conservative nature of their party, would also be on SKDL lists. The outcome of the March election was a triumph for the Communists and a setback for the Social Democratic Party. The SKDL received 23.5 percent of the popular vote and forty-nine of the two hundred seats in Parliament. The Social Democratic Party remained the largest party with 25.1 percent of the vote, but it had lost thirty-five of its eighty-five seats. Many voters switched from the Social Democratic Party to the SKDL, and the chairman of the Social Democratic Party stated soon after the election that six to eight seats had been lost owing to the defection of the Pekkala-Keto group. Together with the “Six,” they appear to have polled some 130,000 of the 398,618 votes cast for the SKDL. Communist candidates, moreover, often rode in on the coat-tails of their Socialist partners.⁵⁶

54. Hertta Kuusinen, quoted in *Suomen Kommunistisen Puolueen XI*, p. 245; *SKDL 5. liittokokous 4.-7.4.1958* (Kotka, 1958), p. 52; *SKDL:n toimintakertomus V ja VI*, p. 18; *SKDL:n toimintakertomus VI ja VII*, pp. 25, 30; Jorma Hentilä to author, Aug. 30, 1967. Hentilä, a young member of the Communist Party, holds one of the three most important positions in the SKDL.

55. Ele Alenius to author, Aug. 11, 1967. See also Alenius, “Uusi SKDL nykypäivän Suomessa,” in *Kansan Uutiset*, May 14, 1967, pp. 4, 10.

56. Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 211–13.

Table 3. *Postwar Parliamentary Elections*

Date	Percentage of Popular Vote	Seats (out of 200)
March 17–18, 1945	23.5	49
July 1–2, 1948	20.0	38
July 2–3, 1951	21.6	43
March 7–8, 1954	21.6	43
July 6–7, 1958	23.2	50
February 4–5, 1962	22.0	47
March 20–21, 1966	21.2	41

Indicative of the party's skill and control over the SKDL is the fact that of the forty-nine SKDL representatives elected to Parliament in 1945 only nine were not members of the Communist Party. A pattern had been set from which there would be slight deviations but no major changes. The SKDL has consistently received at least 20 percent of the popular vote (see table 3), and of the one hundred twenty-one SKDL representatives who have sat in Parliament during the postwar period only eighteen did not belong to the Communist Party when first elected to Parliament.⁵⁷

The elections since 1945 seem to confirm a hypothesis advanced in a number of American and Finnish studies of voting behavior. In all probability an individual will be consistent in his voting pattern once party identification has been established. Of concern to SKP and SKDL functionaries, however, is the lack of support among young voters. The appeal of the SKDL, particularly when compared with the appeal of its chief competitor, the Social Democratic Party, is weakest among voters under thirty years of age. And it is within this age group that there appears to be a pronounced struggle between personal and inherited family preferences.⁵⁸ Future elections will determine whether the attempts to rejuvenate the SKDL and the SKP bear fruit or whether they are insufficient steps in the face of increasing economic prosperity and receding memories of Finland's turbulent past.

57. The eighteen were K. H. Wiik, Y. Räisänen, J. Helo, C. Sundström, K.-M. Rydberg, M. Pekkala, R. Svento, Y. Manninen, V. Lehtonen, S.-K. Kilpi, E. Kilpi, K. Kilpi, Atos Wirtanen, Irma Rosnell, Martti Linna, T. Salin, E. Alenius, and L. Männistö. Rydberg and Rosnell later joined the Communist Party.

58. Gallup polls, referred to in *Helsingin Sanomat*, Mar. 1, 1966, p. 13, Dec. 9, 1966, p. 16, and Jan. 6, 1967, p. 10. See also *Kansan Uutiset*, Mar. 16, 1966, p. 5.