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Zhdanov in Finland

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## Introduction

As the Soviet archives begin grudgingly to yield their secrets, it becomes possible to reconsider the origins of the Cold War from new perspectives.<sup>1</sup> Up to this point most books on the subject have been written out of Western source materials. Even the best of the very few attempts to put Moscow at the center of things have had to rely heavily on published or indirect evidence culled from western diplomatic and intelligence reports in order to fathom Soviet intentions.<sup>2</sup>

As new opportunities for research open up, the over-all picture of Soviet foreign policy remains patchy. Historians seeking to take advantage of greater access to archives are obliged to confront political sensitivities, budgetary considerations and other bureaucratic constraints that slow the pace of declassification. This creates a high level of frustration for Russian as well as Western scholars. In dealing with a large but fragmentary body of evidence of uneven quality the researcher faces a second methodological problem: where should a reconsideration of the origins of the Cold War begin? There is no general agreement, nor is there ever likely to be one, on the one or two critical episodes that launched the Cold War. Indeed, the question has never been resolved as to whether or not the wartime coalition was doomed from the outset to crumble under the burden of its internal contradictions. In seeking to give weight to both these considerations—the availability of evidence and the appropriate test case—this essay proposes a point of departure that may appear to be, at first glance, perverse. Finland was not a Cold War battlefield. However, a key figure in forming and implementing Soviet policy toward Finland was Andrei Aleksandrovich Zhdanov, a member of the politburo and the chairman of the Allied Control Commission for Finland. Access to his archive provides insights into the activities of a powerful if still obscure figure in the Kremlin's corridors of power who is often associated with the most belligerent foreign policy line toward the West in the postwar years.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Finland can serve as an experimental control in the analysis of Communist takeovers in Eastern Europe. It shared with other East European states similar social and political problems but not their ultimate fate.

Finland has always occupied an anomalous position in the great set piece of the Cold War. From the early postwar years until the disintegration of the Soviet Union, conventional wisdom assigned it a special niche in the post-Yalta division of Europe. Finland was the exception that presumably proved the rule. Yet the odds for its survival as a sovereign, independent state were not favorable when it emerged from World War II defeated by the Red Army for the second time in four years. A civil war had attended its birth as a nation-state in 1918 and left a legacy of sharp class antagonism. As a co-belligerent with Nazi Germany in World War II, Finland was forced to accept the burden of Soviet dictated armistice terms including heavy reparations, strategic territorial losses and massive population displacement in border regions along a common frontier with its colossal neighbor. For the first time in its history a large Communist Party participated in a ruling coalition that faced persistent Soviet demands for a "friendly government" in foreign relations. Yet, Finland did not become a Soviet satellite. As the Cold War split Europe down the middle, Finland avoided becoming a full fledged member of either camp; it was "neutral" in a non-belligerent war. But the outcome was not by any means certain at any time between 1944 and 1948.

From the Soviet perspective, Finland's international ledger was heavily freighted on the debit side. The Finns had joined in the German attack on the Soviet Union, calling it the Continuation War, to indicate their intention of reversing the defeat inflicted on them in the 1939-1940 Winter War, when they had been forced to fight alone and heavily outnumbered. That Finland had been a co-belligerent rather than an ally of Hitler's Germany might have impressed international lawyers, but could not be expected to cut much ice in Moscow. Its armies had participated, however half-heartedly, in the siege of Leningrad. Strategically its territory commanded the land and sea approaches to the city and in the far north overlooked the sea lanes to the ice-free port of Murmansk. In confronting Soviet power, the Finns could not count, as they had during the Winter War, on the strong support of Great Britain. The United States though sympathetic was on the diplomatic sidelines. It had not been in a state of war with Finland and had no voice in either negotiating

or supervising the armistice terms. Unlike the situation in Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary, in Finland there was no U.S. representative on the Allied Control Commission. Within the country, the Soviet Union had a powerful ally. The Finnish Communist Party was one of the largest in Europe having won a quarter of the vote in the first postwar elections. Finally, as a sign of the importance which the Soviet leaders assigned to Finland, Stalin appointed Zhdanov as his representative on the Allied Control Commission. A full member of the Politburo, Zhdanov had enjoyed in the past moments of high favor with Stalin. Whatever the ups and downs of his career within the Soviet hierarchy, his official position and international reputation endowed his mission with enormous prestige. On the basis of these factors alone, there appeared to be little doubt that Finland would follow the path of Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary. To explain why this did not happen in Finland helps shed light on the opposite outcome in the rest of Eastern Europe.

In the early postwar years, Finland overcame the obstacles to political independence and survived as the sole example, unless one includes Austria after 1955, of what might have been an alternative to the Sovietization of Eastern Europe. In Finland the genuine coalition of parties that included the communists and their left wing allies never became what Hugh Seton-Watson first called "a bogus coalition," and Finland was not transformed into a Popular Democracy. It maintained correct, if not cordial, relations with the Soviet Union. The last real political showdown between the Communist Party and its coalition partners in 1948 did not lead, as it had in Prague, to a Communist seizure of power. By this time the pattern for Finland's postwar relations with the Soviet Union were set. Finland was exceptionable. But the reasons for its having achieved this state, so enviable to many in Eastern Europe, remained unclear. The conventional explanations that the Finns were gallant and Stalin did not wish to offend the United States are not without some foundation. But other gallant peoples did not fare so well; and Stalin was not so careful as to avoid offending the U.S. elsewhere in Europe or in the world for that matter. Exploring the causes of the Finnish exceptionalism must, of necessity, have a comparative dimension. A fresh look at Soviet-Finnish relations in the early

postwar years will, then, also cast light on the larger dimensions of Soviet foreign policy and the origins of the Cold War.

Recent access to Soviet archives makes possible an analysis of the question of Finland's exceptionalism along three lines. From the particular to the general they are: first, the activity of Zhdanov in Finland that re-examines his place in Soviet international politics; second, the contours of Soviet policy in Finland which centered on what may be called the policy of "limited intervention;" and third, the broader implications of Soviet foreign policy for all of Eastern Europe that suggests that Stalin's treatment of Finland was exceptional only its outcome and not in its intent.

### **Zhdanov and Soviet Politics, 1937-1944**

Andrei Zhdanov was no stranger to the Finns when, in the fall of 1944, he arrived in Helsinki as chairman of the Allied Control Commission entrusted with carrying out the armistice agreement that ended the second Soviet-Finnish war. Kirov's successor as party boss in Leningrad, he had taken a proprietary interest in the city's external security. The pre-1939 border with Finland was a mere 32 kilometers from the city limits. Although Finland itself was not a military threat to the powerful Soviet Union—its population barely exceeded that of Leningrad—it could serve as staging ground for attacks on two strategic water routes to the West: at Leningrad guarding the narrow Soviet access to the Baltic; and at Murmansk on the White Sea, the country's only ice-free northern port. As long as Maksim Litvinov was managing foreign policy, Zhdanov had few opportunities to make known his own views which, as it turned out, were unsympathetic to the notions of collective security. But he had prepared himself to take a more prominent role by assuming the position of chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Supreme Soviet. This gave him a forum from which to make statements on foreign policy that attracted attention abroad. Zhdanov was still a novice in the field; he had no

experience in either diplomacy or the murkier world of Comintern politics. But in the late 1930s, he sensed that the days of collective security and its chief exponent, Litvinov, were numbered. Even before the Munich Agreement, Zhdanov began in public to criticize French policy. Later, during the abortive negotiations between the Soviet Union, France and Britain in the summer of 1939, he openly expressed doubts that the Western powers were sincere in their desire for a treaty to restrain German aggression. He denounced their delaying tactics and complained that their failure to accept "a tripartite guarantee of immediate assistance to Latvia, Estonia and Finland" constituted an artificially invented stumbling bloc to the negotiations...."<sup>4</sup> For him, Western formulas of collective security were too abstract. Zhdanov favored a more narrow territorial approach to foreign policy that reflected his specific concerns over the defense of Leningrad.

Zhdanov was one of the very few Soviet leaders to take an active interest in the development of the Soviet fleet, especially its Baltic command. In the late thirties, he assumed responsibility in the Central Committee for naval affairs and got himself appointed to the Main Naval Council. He cultivated naval men, especially the newly designated commissar of Naval Affairs, Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov, whose memoirs reveal Zhdanov's involvement in planning for the coastal defense of the Gulf of Finland and the securing of naval bases in southern Finland and the Baltic states on the eve of World War II.<sup>5</sup>

Following the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, Zhdanov became one of the chief proponents and agents of constructing a defensive glacis along the western frontiers of the Soviet Union. His chosen instrument for carrying out this stage in Soviet foreign policy was the Communist Party apparatus as distinct from the state apparatus—the foreign commissariat, army and secret police—where he had no influence or even the Comintern which was in a state of complete disarray. In his eyes a more reliable method was to employ the services of Estonian or Finnish emigres who were long time residents of the Soviet Union, had become citizens and members of the CPSU. His inclination to rely on the party apparatus in conducting foreign policy was a natural outgrowth of the role he had adopted in Soviet

bureaucratic politics. It was still an early stage in the jockeying for power among Stalin's new lieutenants who had survived the purges. Zhdanov had built his reputation on his record as a provincial party secretary, first in Nizhnyi Novgorod and then in Leningrad, the country's second most powerful regional base and heir to the revolutionary tradition. In Soviet politics, it was risky for anyone but Stalin to extend his grasp beyond the boundaries of a single department in the power structure. There is no evidence that Zhdanov ever tried. To the end of his career he remained consistently attached to the general idea of the party apparatus as the major instrument of domestic policy with the Leningrad organization in particular as his power base. This was true, for example, in his ideological and cultural work both before and after the war. He carried this belief into the area of foreign policy as well.

To those familiar with Zhdanov's reputation and record, it may seem perverse to portray him as a defender of the party's integrity. His name will forever be associated with Stalin's as co-author of the notorious letter to the Central Committee in 1937 that rebuked the security organs for lagging four years behind schedule in carrying out the purges. Nor did Zhdanov spare his own Leningrad party organization from the ordeal of a radical purge. Yet in the midst of the carnage in which he wielded a sharp hatchet, he wrapped himself in the mantle of intra-party democracy. In early 1937, he claimed that the new constitution and the elections to the Supreme Soviet would require the party to end its cliquish aloofness from the masses and expose its performance to their stern but fair judgement. In light of what was about to happen to the party, Zhdanov's speeches appear to be steeped in hypocrisy and cynicism. His appeals to openness and responsiveness to the masses might just as easily have been interpreted as an invitation to denunciation and false accusations.<sup>6</sup> But, if only for careerist reasons, Zhdanov was also committed to the idea that the party, or to be more precise its leading cadres, should remain the central organ of power in the Soviet system. Zhdanov was not, of course, deviating from Stalin in taking this stand and he was always careful to buttress his views with a suitable quotation from the master. But he took pains to



emphasize that aspect of the dictator's convoluted policy that offered some hope of renewing and revitalizing the party apparatus, employing the most brutal means if necessary, rather than simply terrorizing and destroying it. Zhdanov appeared to be more aware than some of his colleagues and rivals, like Beria and Malenkov, of the danger that the party apparatus might be so demoralized and crippled by indiscriminate terror as to make it worthless as an instrument of rule.

One documented example of Zhdanov's attempt to defend party cadres came during the massive purges of the Belorussian Party organization in a region of political importance to him because of its proximity to Leningrad. The NKVD uncovered an alleged conspiracy of party members in touch with Polish intelligence. When the local leadership protested the absurdity of these charges, they were accused of "bourgeois nationalism" and decimated by arrests. At the same time, police zealots were destroying the Western Belorussian Party located on Polish territory. Communist veterans freed from Polish prisons through an exchange were no sooner delivered into Soviet custody than they were condemned for the same crime of "bourgeois nationalism" and executed. By 1938, the Communist Party of Western Belorussia tottered on the brink of dissolution. Zhdanov attempted to check the wave of indiscriminate arrests that was crippling the party apparatus in the western borderlands, but was overruled by powerful rivals. Georgi Malenkov returned from a flying visit to Belorussia fully supporting the police version of an anti-Soviet underground that was then given widespread publicity at Bukharin's trial.<sup>7</sup> Rehearsing the same act in Armenia, Malenkov was forging his alliance with the new head of the NKVD, Lavrentyi Beria. It is from this date that he emerges as the rival and life long nemesis of Zhdanov. In the latter stages of the Second World War, Zhdanov again crossed swords with Malenkov when he sought to restore the prestige and influence that the party apparatus had lost as a consequence of the purges and the wartime concentration of power in the administrative organs of the state.<sup>8</sup>

Across the Soviet frontiers, Zhdanov also favored using local party cadres as the most reliable means of incorporating territories assigned by the Nazi-Soviet Pact to the Soviet sphere of influence. As the designated Soviet plenipotentiary, he

descended on Estonia in the summer of 1940 to help install a Communist dominated left-wing government. He was closely associated with plans to demand territorial concessions from Finland on the northwest approaches to Leningrad and then to attack Finland when the demands were refused. Throughout the planning stages, he clearly counted on a revolutionary response within Finland that would turn the military campaign into a proverbial cake walk. He strongly endorsed the formation of the ill-fated Finnish Democratic Republic, known also as the Terijoki government, headed by the veteran Finnish communist and Comintern apparatchik, Otto Kuusinen, who had been living in the Soviet Union since the defeat of the Reds in the Finnish Civil War. Misled by the enthusiasm of the Finnish communists in exile who had lost touch with developments at home, the Soviet leaders assumed that the creation of a left-wing government on the borders of Finland would touch off a massive response by the Finnish workers, a collapse of the Helsinki government and the establishment of a regime similar to those in the Baltic states though possibly retaining nominal independence.

Zhdanov advocated taking an uncompromising line in negotiating with the Finns over bases and frontier rectifications. Soviet sources have hinted for some time that Zhdanov saw a war with Finland as an opportunity to expand his political influence. Recent evidence has further clarified his policy of strengthening military installations on the northwest land frontier in preparation for an attack. Following the Munich accords, Zhdanov and the newly appointed commander of the Leningrad Military District, General (later Marshal) K. A. Meretskov, pressed Stalin to undertake large scale construction of roads and strong points in the Karelian territories. They also agitated successfully for improving the fortifications in the Pskov district facing the Baltic States. According to Meretskov's memoirs, Zhdanov was responsible for mobilizing the party, economic organizations and Soviets of the northwest to speed the work in the spring of 1939.<sup>9</sup> At the same time Stalin summoned Meretskov to Moscow to discuss plans for preparing a "counter-thrust" in case of a Finnish provocation, and to keep Zhdanov informed. But Stalin and Voroshilov insisted upon a "short and swift" campaign which Meretskov found

unrealistic. They also solicited other proposals from separate groups of specialists including Marshal B. M. Shaposhnikov who warned that the fighting would be prolonged and bitter. But Stalin, presumably at Voroshilov's urging, opted for the "short and swift" campaign relying heavily on the forces of the Leningrad Military District.<sup>10</sup>

The "short swift" campaign proved embarrassingly long and costly. Yet, neither Zhdanov nor Meretskov were implicated in the military debacle. On the contrary, subsequent allegations of Zhdanov's disgrace must be discounted in light of Stalin's decision to entrust him with chairing a special three-man commission to investigate the causes of the Red Army's poor showing in the Winter War. The other members were N. A. Voznesenskii, one of Zhdanov's most loyal and trustworthy aides in the Leningrad organization, and Malenkov, presumably appointed by Stalin to serve as a political counterweight. The absence of a military representative on the commission was Stalin's way of nominating a scapegoat. Zhdanov and his colleagues were only too happy to provide confirmation. Their report was a scathing indictment of every aspect of the military campaign from mobilization and weapons technology to tactics.<sup>11</sup> In a rage, Stalin berated Voroshilov for the defeat. But his old comrade in arms was not afraid to fight back. He accused Stalin of being at fault: "you are the one who annihilated the Old Guard of the Army," he shot back. A violent scene followed and as a result Voroshilov was dismissed as Minister of Defense.<sup>12</sup>

Zhdanov also managed to avoid sharing the blame for the abortive Terijoki experiment and to distance himself from Otto Kuusinen, the president of the republic and Comintern veteran who took most of the heat. Kuusinen had been an implacable foe of Finland ever since his personal involvement in the defeat of the Reds in the Finnish civil war. Lenin called him "the Finland swallower," a sobriquet of which he was proud. His enthusiasm for the war and his vocal support for the establishment of a National Democratic Government in Helsinki with himself as president made him the natural scapegoat on the party side of things.<sup>13</sup> Standing clear of the wreckage, Zhdanov was at the same time successful in maintaining control

over the party apparatus in the Karelo-Finnish Republic where his appointees, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Karelian Republic Party, G. N. Kupriianov, and his deputy, I. I. Suikiianen, remained firmly entrenched throughout World War II.

Zhdanov also managed to keep his balance in another obscure episode in the fierce political in-fighting that characterized the party apparatus. In March 1944, Lt. General T. F. Shtykov of the Military Council of the Karelian Front, and one of the long term members of the Zhdanov-Meretskov group, launched a campaign of vilification against the Karelo-Finns, accusing them of disloyalty during the war and proposing in a memo to Stalin their mass deportation. In this case he may have been acting on his own, as Kupriianov suspected, anticipating personal gain by exploiting Stalin's suspicions of border peoples that had led to the deportations of the North Caucasus tribes and Crimean Tatars. Zhdanov and Meretskov approved the memo, possibly unwilling to expose themselves to the intrigues of powerful rivals by defending a lost cause. If Shtykov was acting alone, Malenkov was quick to seize the opportunity to embarrass his chief rival by associating Zhdanov with the disloyalty of a people under the administration of his subordinates. Caution prevailed over courage. Zhdanov left it up to Kupriianov to take the brunt of defending the Karelo-Finns. Kupriianov refuted Shtykov's accusations with great daring and persuaded Stalin to declare in August that "there was no parallel with the Crimean Tatars."<sup>14</sup> In reviewing the case, the Secretariat merely recommended, by way of a mild compromise, the correction of certain errors in the political work of the Karelian party. Kupriianov was able to place the blame for these minor shortcomings on a young party official, Iuri Andropov, a protege of Kuusinen, who later, of course, became secretary of the central committee of the CPSU. A few months later, Malenkov in what can only be regarded as an act of petty revenge against his chief rival refused Kupriianov's request to decorate the heroes of the Karelian partisan movement. Major revenge had to wait until Zhdanov's death. Kupriianov was arrested during the Leningrad Affair, organized by Malenkov and Beria to destroy Zhdanov's cadres in the party apparatus.<sup>15</sup>

Zhdanov had proved himself remarkably adept at avoiding the military and political consequences of the Winter War. He was able to shift both the blame for errors and the responsibility for defending dangerous ground to others. To call him unscrupulous and unprincipled is merely to acknowledge the cost of survival at the top of the Stalinist system.

Despite his service as Stalin's hatchet man, Zhdanov did not emerge entirely unscathed from the errors of Soviet policy during period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. But this had more to do with a whole range of international problems than simply with the outcome of the Winter War.<sup>16</sup> The unexpectedly prolonged fighting raised the specter of British and French military intervention on the side of Finland. The episode deepened Zhdanov's distrust of the western democracies. As a participant in the March 1940 peace negotiations with Finland, Zhdanov argued that the British and French intended to use Finland as a springboard for an invasion of the Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the "Phoney War," Soviet and Comintern propaganda condemned both sides as imperialist. But Zhdanov insisted that the April 1940 Comintern theoretical pronouncement on the nature of the war be more specific in stigmatizing the British and French as "the instigators of war," and in singling out the social democrats as "evil and insane enemies of the working class."<sup>18</sup> Spurred by ambition, Zhdanov sought to become the spokesman for a radical shift in Soviet foreign policy.

On the eve of World War II, Zhdanov became associated with a revival in party circles of the idea of "Red intervention" or the doctrine of offensive war. Zhdanov gathered around him a group of like-minded military and political officers of the Leningrad Military District; among them were: General Meretskov; Lev Mekhlis, the notorious chief of the Main Administration of Political Propaganda for the Red Army and a member of the Military Council; and commissar of the of first rank, A. I. Zaporozhets. Following up his attack on the Anglo-French imperialists and his denunciation of the Red Army leadership, Zhdanov carried his campaign for military preparation into the enlarged General Military Council of the USSR. His involvement in military matters became all-consuming.<sup>19</sup> In April, the Central

Committee and Commissariat of Defense appointed a special commission headed by Zhdanov and Voznesenskii which pressed that commissariat's departments to hasten their preparations for war.<sup>20</sup>

Along with Zhdanov's penetration of the defense establishment, his allies launched an ideological assault on the embattled military command. In May 1940, Mekhlis embellished the Zhdanov Commission's indictment of the Red Army by insisting that its leadership harbored "an incorrect interpretation of its international tasks"; the army failed to understand that the political slogans of the Winter War, inciting the Finnish people to destroy the Mannerheim group, were directed as much at them as at the Finnish troops.<sup>21</sup> A year later, Zaporozhets submitted a project to Zhdanov which accused Red commanders of holding the "incorrect view" that "every offensive war was an unjust war," and hence "led to their denying the possibility of the Red Army's initiating military activity." In a letter to Zhdanov and Shcherbatov, Zaporozhets went further, endorsing the idea that the policy of neutrality was not "fixed or permanent" but rather "a temporary policy which accepts the need to accumulate sufficient strength against capitalist encirclement. Now we have accumulated sufficient strength and are entering a new period of a forward foreign policy...." These various threads were gathered together in a major proposal entitled "On Questions of Political Propaganda in the Red Army in the Near Future," prepared by the Main Administration of Political Propaganda on the eve of the German invasion. It recommended that a major propaganda effort be launched to

imbue the entire staff of the Red Army with the knowledge that the growing political, economic and military strength of the Soviet Union permits us to achieve an offensive (*nastupitel'naia*) foreign policy in order to liquidate once and for all the breeding grounds of war on its frontiers by increasing its territory. The forward policy has taken shape in the liberation of West Ukraine and West Belorussia, the Baltic states, Bessarabia and West Bukovina and in the destruction of the White Finnish adventurists.

During discussions of the project in the Supreme Military Council, Zhdanov set his seal on the new doctrine: "We have become stronger, we can set ourselves more active tasks. War with Poland and Finland were not defensive wars. We have already launched ourselves on the path of a forward policy."<sup>22</sup> Zhdanov had ventured far out on the limb of "Red intervention." There is no evidence that he ever again took such a militant expansionist position on foreign policy for which he was about to pay a high political price.

Operation Barbarossa was a stunning blow to Zhdanov's leadership. Not only did he not expect the German attack but he had been among those who preached that Germany would never again fight a two front war.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the invasion caught him on vacation in the Crimea, exposing for all to see—and his rivals to exploit—his failure to anticipate events of the gravest magnitude. When Britain and the U.S. offered aid and moral support to the Soviet Union, Zhdanov's views suddenly went out of fashion and made his presence in the central wartime administration and foreign policy a liability. Throughout the war, Zhdanov was assigned the dangerous, unenviable, though vital task of organizing the defense of Leningrad. He was not appointed to the State Defense Committee (GOKO) that was the nerve center of the war effort. With his small band of supporters, he assumed the double burden of protecting the city against the enemy's attacks and his domestic rivals' machinations. Malenkov and Beria criticized the defensive policies of Zhdanov's and Meretskov's policies to defend Leningrad and advocated that the city be abandoned in order to concentrate all available forces for the defense of Moscow. Never a popular figure in Leningrad, unlike his predecessor Kirov, Zhdanov's determination to save the city (and his own political reputation) won him the grudging respect of the Leningraders.<sup>24</sup>

The defense of Leningrad was heroic but also ruthless. Zhdanov did not spare himself nor his closest collaborators; but his policy of defending the city at all costs doomed tens of thousands of its inhabitants to death by freezing and starvation. Stalin was impressed. Attending a meeting of members of the Politburo and army command at Stalin's dacha in early 1944, Zhdanov appealed eloquently for an

increase in the city's daily rations. Stalin gave the order. An ecstatic Zhdanov broke into song and reeled off a series of amusing anecdotes until Stalin brought the festivities to a conclusion.<sup>25</sup> As soon as the siege was lifted in January 1944, Zhdanov and the local party leaders submitted a plan to reconstruct the city and its economy. Yet he had to wait until mid-1944 before he was summoned to Moscow, where he rejoined the Central Committee Secretariat.<sup>26</sup> Thus, it was a chastened Zhdanov who in October 1944 assumed his duties as chairman of the Allied Control Commission (ACC) in Finland. The doctrine of Red intervention was an embarrassment which he was eager to forget.

### **The Limits of Zhdanov's Authority**

Zhdanov arrived in Finland determined to efface the impression of him as a hard, ruthless, uncompromising, ideological fanatic. He greeted the Finnish honor guard in their native language, and sought to charm the local inhabitants and the foreign colony. With the American political representative, he was cordial and expansive, and paid tribute to Lend Lease. He was eager to learn about the Finns, and even admitted that he "sometimes had difficulty in judging developments in Finland correctly."<sup>27</sup> But from the outset he did not confuse social pleasantries with policy matters. He proved unnecessarily rigid and uncompromising, for example, in interpreting the armistice to limit the rights of British naval vessels to call at Finnish ports.<sup>28</sup> In dealing with representatives of the Finnish government and the Finnish Communist Party, his language was occasionally intemperate, as much as he tried to appear reasonable. He was never able to free himself of the Stalinist rhetoric and mentality that portrayed opposition and resistance by ideological opponents or party comrades as "fascist" or "traitorous" respectively. But Zhdanov was no wild-eyed revolutionary in Finland. He had learned his lesson on that score.



In domestic politics, Zhdanov maintained his reputation as a seasoned and ruthless political fighter. Once he had regained Stalin's favor and returned to the central organs of power, Finland did not obsess him as exclusively as before the war. He exerted his major efforts in the physical reconstruction of Leningrad, strengthening his control over ideological matters and promoting his wartime comrades to positions of importance in the central apparatus where his struggle with Malenkov continued in the postwar period.<sup>29</sup> As Stalin's alleged second-in-command, he was grooming himself for supreme power. If Finland occupied a special place in his regular dealings with foreign communist parties, it was only because he felt a certain responsibility and obligation to advance the interests of the Finnish communists whose mentor he had become during his tenure as chief of the Allied Control Commission.

The Allied Control Commission was potentially a powerful instrument for influencing the political evolution of former enemy countries which had signed armistice agreements or accepted the terms of unconditional surrender. Each of the Control Commissions had its own distinctive character and composition. Stalin's attitude toward the commissions appears to have been guided by two general considerations. First, he appointed leaders with high status and international reputations to represent the USSR in Italy (Vyshinskii), Finland (Zhdanov), Hungary (Voroshilov) and Germany (Zhukov), while he left the commissions in Rumania and Bulgaria in the hands of secondary figures. The distinction suggests that Stalin, always sensitive to matters of prestige, wished to have major political figures serving in countries where he expected relations with his western allies to rest on a more or less equal footing and where the domestic political situation required a tactful and diplomatically correct Soviet stance. Second, in defining the activities of Soviet representatives on the Control Commissions, Stalin also took into consideration the disposition of Allied occupation forces. The Soviet posture was modest and correct in Italy and Japan where the Anglo-Americans monopolized the occupation. It was competitive and flexible in Germany and Austria where there was joint occupation. It was firm and uncompromising in Rumania and Bulgaria where the Red Army

possessed a monopoly of force and Stalin had been assured, at least by Churchill, that Soviet influence would be preponderant. The situation in Finland was unique.

Alone of all the Axis belligerents Finland remained free of any occupation army once it had driven out the Germans. The political significance of this was twofold. First, the Red Army did not play any direct role in internal Finnish politics, contrary to the situation in Rumania, Bulgaria or Hungary. It had no opportunity to elevate the political stature of the Finnish communists who had been living in exile in the Soviet Union since the civil war of 1918. The "homecoming" of the three hundred Comintern veterans after the war was scarcely noticed and had no appreciable effect on internal politics. The Soviet government never attempted to revive the defunct Finnish Democratic Republic, and despite appeals from the Finnish Communists, the veteran Comintern leader and founder of the Finnish Communist Party, Otto Kuusinen, was not permitted to return to Finland as the standard bearer of the party. Second, the anti-Communist forces in Finland, unlike those in Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary, felt no need to appeal for the dispatch of token Western military units as a political counterweight to the Red Army. Nor did they seek to involve Western embassies in the domestic struggle for power. Consequently, domestic conflicts in Finnish politics were neither "internationalized" nor were they transformed into a test of prestige and power among the Big Three as elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The Finnish political parties had to rely almost exclusively on their own resources in the struggle for power in the postwar period.

The unique position of the Soviet representative on the ACC in Finland offered the local communists a great potential advantage over their domestic rivals. Zhdanov's authority within the ACC was virtually unchallenged. There was no American representative on the ACC for Finland because the two countries had never been at war with one another. The British had managed to soften the Soviet position on a few points during the armistice negotiations but their political representative on the ACC, whose previous post had been consul general in the Belgian Congo, could hardly have been expected to take on Andrei Zhdanov. He adopted a passive role and followed the Soviet lead in almost all matters.<sup>30</sup> The British had also raised

objections over the size of the reparations figure, claiming that they had not had sufficient time to examine the Soviet proposals carefully. This lame excuse came too late, and Molotov dismissed it with his characteristic brusqueness.<sup>31</sup> The dictation and the interpretation of the armistice terms were, therefore, a Soviet monopoly. But it would be a mistake to assume that Zhdanov was able to operate in Finland with a completely free hand. There were three limitations that circumscribed his activities: first, the armistice terms themselves were moderate, well-defined and not easily open to political manipulation; second, Stalin and Molotov held a tight rein on his initiatives and kept Finland firmly situated in a global context; third and most decisive, the Finnish communists were unable to exploit their initial advantage and failed in the long run to measure up to the tasks that Zhdanov assigned them.

The armistice terms of September 1944 were harsh but not unreasonable. In fact, Stalin and Molotov had softened the demands contained in the initial draft prepared by their advisers. An Armistice Commission, headed by Voroshilov and created in September 1943 to draft proposals for the capitulation of Hitler's satellites, recorded their first discussion of the instrument of surrender for Finland during the breakthrough of the Red Army on the northern front in June 1944. The most punitive terms were proposed by the former chief of staff of the army, Marshal Shaposhnikov, and not by the party representatives or the Soviet diplomats. Shaposhnikov thought it only "just" that the eighteenth century Russian-Finnish border serve as "the model" for the territorial settlement with Finland and that the entire Finnish army be declared prisoners of war and placed under Soviet command to drive the Germans out of the rest of Finland. Voroshilov, the president of the commission, considered Shaposhnikov's views to be too narrowly based on military considerations. It was a matter of taking into account what was "real and possible," he declared. Otherwise there would be a repetition of the armistice fiasco in Italy, where the conditions of surrender signed by Bagdoglio were "comprehensive" (*ischerpyvaiushchie*), but it was not possible to carry them out.

The commission agreed to moderate Shaposhnikov's recommendations. They unanimously agreed that part of Finland should be occupied including all the major

industrial centers—Helsinki, Abo, Tammerfors and other towns. Voroshilov argued that the Finns would then join the Red Army to fight the Germans in order to avoid "a war between the Soviet and German armies on their soil." In his eyes, this would be the only way to get the Finns to join them; under the tsarist regime "the Finns hated the Russians most of all and they still hate the Russians most of all." Subsequently, they added a section on war criminals. They insisted that those on a list drawn up by Soviet authorities be arrested and turned over to the Soviet High Command. In their final letter to Molotov of July 21, 1944, they reiterated the need to occupy the main strategic points but modified their stand on the population centers leaving to the military command the choice of taking control of the main cities and the Aaland Islands.<sup>32</sup>

But these carefully worked out proposals did not meet with Stalin's and Molotov's approval. For reasons that the archives do not make clear, they decided to abandon altogether the idea of occupying any Finnish territory that was not to be annexed by the Soviet Union. Most likely they saw no good strategic reason for doing so, especially in light of the distinct possibility that the Finns would resist an occupation thus prolonging the war in the northwest.

Consequently, the terms handed to the Finnish representatives in September were more lenient than those proposed by the Armistice Commission. They required Finland to accept the frontiers of 1940, to surrender Petsamo with its valuable nickel mines and access to the Arctic Ocean, and to grant a long-term lease on Porkkala-Ud, a bay lying twenty kilometers from Helsinki which the Soviet Union intended to convert into a naval base. The Finns accepted a strict deadline for disarming and expelling all German troops in Finland. They agreed to disband all fascist organizations, arrest and punish war criminals, demobilize the army, free political prisoners and permit the creation of democratic organizations, that is to legalize the Communist Party among others. In contrast to the Commission's recommendations, the Finns themselves were put charge of carrying out these obligations. Reparations were set at \$300 million. This was half the amount that the Soviet Union had demanded during the abortive armistice negotiations of March when the Finns had

rejected more moderate Soviet territorial demands. But in setting prices, the ACC was guided by Anastas Mikoian's proposal to adopt 1938 prices as the baseline which meant that in the long run Finland ended up delivering goods worth almost \$600 million in postwar prices. Stalin told Zhdanov that the Finns were to be given no opportunity to slip out of their obligations by exempting private property from the claims. "We can find out in the course of our economic investigations," he stated, "what they can produce for us. Honey, nickel, cobalt, we can include all of them in our list of demands (*nomenklatura*)." The Finnish delegation did not give in readily. But Molotov brusquely dismissed their arguments, reminding them that the Soviet Union was strong enough to demand anything and that they owed their independence to its magnanimity.<sup>33</sup> He was right. As the American political representative in Helsinki noted, the armistice terms for Finland did not, in contrast to those for Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria, impose controls by the ACC over the public distribution of literature, the theater, films and communications. Nor were there any restrictions on the use of telephone, cable and radio except for contacts with the Germans.<sup>34</sup>

Why were the Soviet armistice demands relatively moderate? As is so often the case in divining Stalin's motivations, there is little direct evidence to support an analysis. But there are a number of political and strategic considerations that carried weight in the Kremlin. They were summarized in a general fashion by Marshal Meretskov, who in 1944 had been reassigned to his former command of the Karelian Front after a brilliant war record. He was made aware of the political as well as the military questions in his sector: the need to balance the views of the Western allies and Scandinavia, where the treatment of Finland would have a special effect, against the need of the Soviet Union to have a friendly country on its frontiers.<sup>35</sup> The major difference between Finland and other enemy belligerents like Hungary, Rumania and even Bulgaria was the secondary importance of its strategic location in the final stages of the war. Finland did not lay on the major invasion routes leading to the heart of Germany. As soon as the Finns agreed in the armistice negotiations to withdraw to the 1940 frontier and to expel the German forces on their soil, the Soviet

command lost its interest in Finland. Following the Red Army's June 1944 offensive, which had broken through Finland's defense lines and forced it to sue for peace, the bulk of the Soviet forces engaged on the Karelian front were rapidly transferred to the main theater of operations in preparation for the thrust into Central Europe. Another difference was the kind of war the Finns had fought against the Soviet Union in contrast to Hitler's other allies and satellites. As early as November 1941, the Finnish parliament passed a bill declaring that Finland sought only the restoration of territory lost to the Soviet Union in the Treaty of Moscow in 1940. From December 6, 1941 until the Soviet offensive in June 1944, there was a stalemate on the Finnish-Soviet front that reflected the reluctance of the Finns to go much beyond their historical frontiers.<sup>36</sup> Although the Finns participated in the blockade of Leningrad, they did so reluctantly and half-heartedly. The Finnish army never committed any atrocities on Soviet soil and the Soviet authorities never accused them of any crimes against civilians, another striking contrast with the behavior of German, Hungarian and Rumanian occupation forces on Soviet territory.

The final and possibly decisive factor in the moderation of the Finnish armistice terms was that the Finnish decision to withdraw from the war was taken by its wartime leadership without the pressure of foreign occupation or an internal coup, in contrast to events in Rumania and Bulgaria. In Finland, the legitimate government was left in place. As Zhdanov explained to the Finnish Communists: "The question of war crimes in Finland differs from that in Rumania and Bulgaria. There the fascist faction did not surrender and had to be crushed with the help of the Red Army. In Finland the fascist faction surrendered and settled on peace. The ACC has no basis for demanding the resignation of (President) Mannerheim because he surrendered. It was the same thing with Bagdoglio in Italy."<sup>37</sup> Although Stalin did not enjoy a reputation for generosity, he recognized the value of acknowledging services rendered. On instructions from Stalin and Molotov, Zhdanov was authorized to inform Field Marshal Mannerheim in early 1946 that if he retired as president he could be certain that "Russia (sic!) would not permit anyone to consider arresting Mannerheim, since Mannerheim concluded the Armistice Agreement of

Finland with the USSR and in this way insured himself against any misfortune (*sluchainosti*).<sup>38</sup>

The willingness of the Finnish wartime leaders to negotiate a surrender was critical in preserving government stability during the unstable post-armistice period. Although they admitted a communist to the cabinet in December 1944, they remained in charge of implementing the armistice terms and organizing the free elections in March 1945. By winning 23.5% of the vote, the Finnish Communist Party emerged as one of the largest communist parties in Eastern Europe behind the Czechoslovak and the Yugoslav. But their two major competitors, the Social Democrats and the Agrarian Party gained roughly an equal share of seats in the parliament (*Eduskunta*). The formation of a new government proceeded along parliamentary lines by means of free and open political bargaining among the three parties. The coalition that they formed was genuine, in contrast to the bogus coalitions in Rumania and Bulgaria, and it was tripartite in contrast to the situation in Hungary or Czechoslovakia. In terms of balance and stability, it resembled the governments in France and Italy rather than those of Eastern Europe despite the communist control of several key ministries like Interior.

The second major constraint on Zhdanov was set by his own government. The making of Soviet foreign policy was the work of Stalin and Molotov. The two leaders carefully controlled and monitored Zhdanov's activities as head of the ACC. Although he was a full member of the Politburo and had emerged from the siege of Leningrad with enhanced prestige, at times he had to suffer sharp rebukes for exceeding instructions. For example, in exploring with Mannerheim the question of joint defenses, Zhdanov offered to make specific proposals that might draw on the pacts with France and Czechoslovakia as models. Molotov shot back a nasty reply accusing Zhdanov of "getting all steamed up and putting the cart before the horse." As the result of trying to resolve all the questions in one conversation, "it turned out that it was not Mannerheim who asked us for cooperation but we who asked him and opened things up too much." Zhdanov had committed the elementary error of forgetting that "we could not conclude a pact with Finland like that with

Czechoslovakia or France since the Finnish government is not recognized by either us or our allies." Such a pact represents "the music of the future" (the phrase stuck in Zhdanov's mind). Molotov instructed Zhdanov to confine himself to concrete issues for cooperation in shore defenses. "Be guided by the fact that your main task at this stage amounts to illuminating the position of Mannerheim and not frightening him with radical proposals."<sup>39</sup> After this, Zhdanov scrupulously sought advice from the center on most minor as well as major questions to the point where, on one occasion, an exasperated Molotov reproached Zhdanov for not having supplied enough information to make a judgement and then added: "Besides you know the situation in Finland better than we do. What is your advice?"<sup>40</sup> Within the Stalinist system even a seasoned politician like Zhdanov could not always be certain how much responsibility he dared to take with impunity.

In assuming his duties, Zhdanov received specific, detailed written instructions from the Soviet Foreign Ministry that set the guidelines for carrying out the armistice terms. The document contained no hidden political agenda. It adhered to the language of the armistice agreement with fine legal nicety.<sup>41</sup> Upon arriving in Helsinki, Zhdanov gave oral instructions to his staff that the ACC's mission was to avoid any impression of exceeding their formal instructions. He stressed that Soviet policy stood for "a strict legal point of view." He warned his colleagues not to get mixed up in internal Finnish affairs, not to bring pressure or even give advice. The Finns were to be given a free hand in carrying out the terms especially the articles dealing with the dissolution of fascist organizations and the punishment of war criminals. "We do not have two policies," he concluded, "but only one policy, a strictly official policy based on the armistice agreements." He admitted that this restraint was due in part to the Finnish government's shrewd policy of seizing the initiative in "leading the peace movement."<sup>42</sup>



## Zhdanov and The Finnish Communists

Zhdanov was slightly disingenuous in advising his staff to play by the rules. He was not above bringing pressure on the Finnish government when he considered it in violation of the armistice agreement, and he was free with advice to the Finnish Communists. But there was no question of his giving them orders. Such were the unspoken parameters of limited intervention. At no time during his two year tenure as chairman of the ACC, did Zhdanov dictate to the Finnish Communists either on his own behalf or on instructions from Moscow, although his recommendations were at times infused with a sense of urgency. Zhdanov was the first to recognize that his advice was only as good as the party's willingness and ability to carry it out. The Soviet strategy of transforming Finnish politics depended in the final analysis upon the resourcefulness of the leadership and the discipline of the local cadres. From the outset, Zhdanov had his doubts about both.

It took Zhdanov only a few weeks in Helsinki to become disillusioned with the behavior of the Finnish Communists. At the first meeting of the Soviet representatives on the ACC, he complained that he had expected more support from them in implementing the armistice agreement. "If the Communists were not cowardly they could render us considerable assistance in this matter. Unfortunately, up to now the Communists have been acting very timidly. Instead of registering as an independent organization, as the Communist Party, they run to the ACC and ask whether they can be legalized. The most revolutionary force is the Armistice agreement. If the Communists adopt that as their program they could become very strong."<sup>43</sup> It subsequently became clear that what Zhdanov meant by characterizing the Armistice agreement as "the most revolutionary force" was not that it could serve as the basis for a violent overthrow of the government. Instead, it could serve, if properly exploited, as a powerful lever to crack open the tough envelope of Finnish society and open the way for a radical if gradual social transformation.

In their first meeting with Zhdanov, the leaders of the Finnish communists gave the impression of being both naive and defensive. Zhdanov warned them not

to count too heavily on Soviet aid. Beyond carrying out the armistice agreement, he assured them "the ACC will not interfere in domestic affairs." But the Finnish Communists were already discouraged by the state of public opinion; the people heard and read nothing but propaganda hostile to the Russian people. Zhdanov sought to persuade them that the Finns were, nonetheless, curious about the Russians and this offered an opportunity that cried out for vigorous action. He proposed that the Finland-USSR society be used to help build the party and was enthusiastic about the prospects of a broad cultural exchange. But the Finnish communists doubted whether the peasants would take any interest in such an organization. They were worried about the strength of the reactionary forces that were organizing against them. The party was already having trouble finding space to hold meetings and to instal a press.<sup>44</sup> After a month of struggling to get on their feet, the Communists still lacked confidence. There was grumbling in the party that "it was a mistake for the Soviet tanks not to go all the way to Helsinki." Zhdanov snapped back: "The Soviet Union rejects the idea of achieving success 'by riding through a foreign country.' Every country must win its own victory by its own forces. Every step (forward) of an independent Communist movement is worth more than hundreds of tanks."<sup>45</sup> Whether Zhdanov took the old Russian proverb literally or not, Soviet policy in Finland sought to avoid primary responsibility for the fate of the communists. Zhdanov's mission, which appeared to match his convictions, was to inspire the communists to determine that for themselves. He was convinced that their position was a strong one: the idea of breaking with Hitler and joining the freedom-loving peoples of the world was extremely popular; if the Finnish communists were to lead this movement "you will have everything in your hands."<sup>46</sup> His optimism was misplaced; his inner reservations confirmed. Despite their strong position, the assistance of the ACC, substantial electoral support and an important share of cabinet posts including the Minister of Interior in the early postwar governments, the Finnish communists let the reins of power slip from their hands. At two crucial junctures—during the first year after the armistice and again in 1948—they failed to take power. They ended up following the path of the communists in France and Italy

rather than those in Rumania and Bulgaria or Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Their failure tells us as much about Soviet foreign policy as about Finnish domestic politics.

Zhdanov was forced to deal with a communist party that was in the throes of a radical transformation. Like most of the Communist parties in Eastern Europe, it emerged at the end of the war from a long period of illegality. The Finnish party had been banned in 1930; in 1944, it was born again as twins. Like the Czechoslovak and Hungarian parties, it displayed a dual character of traditional and emerging radicalism. The traditional sources of the communist movement in Finland originated in the older, industrial centers, located mainly in the south and west, that had voted for the Social Democratic Party before 1917. In comparison to the Social Democrats both before and after the war, Communist voters tended to come from a socially stable environment. They had fewer unemployed and fewer migrants in their ranks than did the Social Democrats. They inhabited the larger urban environments where economic inequality was more visible and they tended to belong to voluntary associations which isolated them from the national social life. In other words, they represented the hard core of the industrial working class which enjoyed a long history of radicalism going back to the revolution of 1905 and the bloody civil war of 1917-18 which resulted in the imprisonment of tens of thousands of "reds" who were deprived of the right to vote in the first postwar elections.<sup>47</sup> As was the case among Hungarian Communists after 1919, there existed a certain amount of tension between the Finnish Communists who had fled to the Soviet Union after the civil war and those who remained behind. In Finland the party struggled on the edge of legality throughout the 1920s never surrendering its militancy but running candidates for election under various transparent guises until 1930, when it was outlawed for revolutionary activity. In the 1920s their voting strength never exceeded fifteen per cent. The more active members continued their political work by infiltrating the Social Democratic Party or going underground to engage in espionage that was the occasion for several big trials and the creation of political martyrs. Although most of the communists supported the defense of the country against the Soviet Union

during the Winter War, they reverted to a pro-Russian attitude after the Treaty of Moscow. The Social Democratic leadership, fearing their influence within the party, drove out the crypto-communists and then, after June 1941, arrested and imprisoned them.<sup>48</sup>

The second face of postwar Finnish Communism has been called "Backwoods Communism." In the first postwar elections, the Communist picked up new voting strength in the sparsely populated North and East, an area that was beginning to undergo rapid social and economic change. Their supporters were drawn mainly from a rural working class, small farmers who also engaged in temporary lumbering and were often victimized by unemployment. Living in insecure conditions, they were also relatively isolated from the main stream of national life and lacked, in contrast to their urban comrades, the networks of well-established voluntary associations and long-standing attachment to revolutionary symbols and ceremonies. There are to be sure local variations in the overall pattern. In some districts, the old traditions of the civil war survived. But the surge of radicalism in the postwar period was tied in large measure to the disruptive effects of the unpopular Continuation War (1941-1944) which imposed heavy financial and human losses upon the rural population. The communist vote, however, expressed more a form of protest than a belief in socialism.<sup>49</sup> Aside from this, the emerging radicals' only common link with their traditional communist comrades appeared to be their low level of religious activity. As the Finnish Communist leaders ruefully admitted on repeated occasions, it was difficult to organize these people in their remote backwoods, let alone mobilize them for mass action despite their strong feelings of alienation.<sup>50</sup> Their ballots boosted the Communist vote in the postwar period to close to a quarter of the total, but their indifference to mass action tended to blunt the party's traditional militancy and strengthen a tendency toward "parliamentarianism."

Another striking difference between the Finnish and other East European Communist Parties (except for the East German) was its ethnic homogeneity. The absence of oppressed national minorities in Finland deprived the party of a potential source of recruits. But perhaps even more important, it diminished the cultural

distance between the Communists and their domestic political rivals. There was none of the bitter ethnic antagonism that poisoned attitudes of the nationalist elements toward the communists in Poland, Hungary and Rumania, for example. The Swedish speaking minority did not suffer from economic or cultural discrimination. On the contrary the Swedish speakers ranked themselves among Finland's cultural and political elite. They were strongly anti-Bolshevik during the civil war; virtually all the commanders of the White forces were Swedish speakers.<sup>51</sup> There was a slow but unmistakable trend toward assimilation marked by a decline in the Swedish speaking population and the representation in parliament of the Swedish People's Party. The party was represented in the wartime coalitions, but it also included active members of the peace opposition. In the postwar period, its greatest concerns were easily set to rest. The resettlement of the Karelian population which threatened to disrupt the proportions between the two languages in the Swedish speaking districts was successfully managed and the number of Swedish speaking professors at Helsinki University were increased from fifteen to twenty. The Swedish Party supported good relations with the Soviet Union but not at the expense of traditional ties with Sweden.<sup>52</sup> They were willing to support the left on such issues as a vigorous prosecution of war criminals, but the Communists recognized that the Swedish speakers could not be counted on to join in disruptive street tactics in order to bring pressure on the government.<sup>53</sup> It was another weapon missing from the Finnish Communist arsenal.

The Soviet representatives were not unaware of the relatively benign state of class relations in Finland. At Zhdanov's first briefing in Helsinki, Pavel D. Orlov, the last Soviet minister to Finland before the Continuation War and the head of the political section of the ACC, soberly informed him that, while the government's position was unstable, there was no basis for the radicalization of the masses. The peasants had benefitted from the wartime pricing policy to pay off the heaviest of their debts and free themselves from economic dependence. The workers expressed dissatisfaction with this same pricing policy but not in acute form. Even the Communists were behaving themselves, in contrast, he might have added, to

those in other East European countries. At meetings of recently freed political prisoners there had been no anti-government outbursts, everyone had acted correctly, and there were "no grounds for hostile acts" against them.<sup>54</sup> Orlov, a specialist in Finnish affairs, had earned the reputation of being a reasonable man in dealing with the Finns.<sup>55</sup> He was more sensitive to the historical and social peculiarities of the Finnish nation than Zhdanov ever was. Too often Zhdanov turned a blind eye to the intensity of Finnish national feeling despite his instructive experiences in confronting it during the Winter War and the Continuation War.

Finland's evolution in the nineteenth century as an autonomous political unit enabled it to deviate from the experience of "the normal successor state" after 1918.<sup>56</sup> Among the formative factors in Finland's peculiar development were: first, the existence of an autonomous bureaucracy in the Grand Duchy after 1809; second, the absence of feudal landholding; third, the rise of a stable capitalist economy based on forest resources which strengthened the class of independent farmers; fourth, the rural basis of industry which linked the workers in the countryside and the towns in a single socialist party; and finally, the peaceful resolution of the Swedish-Finnish ethnic conflict. To be sure, the national liberation movement in 1919 was accompanied by a fierce civil war. But the defeated Social Democrats accepted the new republic, and the Right found it difficult to repress them, particularly after the banning of the Communist Party in 1930. Despite residual class differences, there was a national consensus tempered by the Winter War and only partially destabilized by the unpopularity of the Continuation War. Zhdanov had his work cut out for him.

In his relations with the Finnish communists Zhdanov rapidly assumed the role of a stern and occasionally impatient mentor. For Moscow, he served mainly as a conduit for information about the internal operations of the Finnish government that he obtained from the Communists. From October 1944 to February 1945, he made frequent trips to Helsinki, but his visits became more irregular throughout 1945 as Stalin drew him back into the central party apparatus, and he left the routine work of the ACC in the hands of his deputy, General Grigori Savonenkov.<sup>57</sup> After the signing of the peace treaty in 1947, Zhdanov continued to give the party advice, but

by this time he was performing similar functions in dealing with other East European communist parties. His last important contact with the Finnish communists came during the government crisis of 1948.

During his first year on the ACC, he met almost weekly with a small number of the Communist leaders, normally two or three. His most frequent visitors were Ville Pessi, the party secretary, Hertta Kuusinen the daughter of the Comintern veteran, and Yrjö Leino, her husband, who rose to become Minister of the Interior before nervous tension and alcohol wrecked his career and turned him into "a traitor" in Zhdanov's eyes. In their weekly meetings, Zhdanov instructed them on the critical political issues of the postwar period. He concentrated on eight basic issues: the implementation of the armistice agreement, particularly article 13 on the punishment of war criminals; unity of the left; electoral bloc tactics; the politics of coalition government; agrarian reform; nationalization of industry; control over the forces of order, the army and police; and last but not least, external relations with the Soviet Union. If the Finnish Communist Party had endorsed and vigorously pursued these issues as they were defined by Zhdanov, they would have moved the country well along the road toward the establishment of a Popular Democracy in Finland. The remainder of this essay takes up each issue in sequence in order to explore how in each case the party's achievements fell short of Zhdanov's expectations.

## **Implementing The Armistice**

For Zhdanov, the key to the political success of the Finnish Communists was a strict and prompt implementation of the armistice agreement; this was the means by which to realign Finnish politics along a new axis. "In the particular situation in which the world now finds itself," he lectured them, the basic division "is not along party lines but between two camps: the supporters of war and the supporters of

peace." He reminded them that there were bourgeois elements in Finland who belonged to the camp of peace," who had signed the armistice and with whom the communists would have to work.<sup>58</sup>

Seven months after the end of hostilities, Zhdanov had to admit that the ACC still faced an uphill battle in getting the Finnish government to fulfill major provisions of the armistice agreement. "As the result of an absence of sincere desire on the part of the Finnish Command," the army had begun to disarm German troops belatedly and with an insufficient number of troops, allowing the enemy to withdraw the major part of his forces to the northwest where pursuit was difficult. There were difficulties in repatriating the ten thousand former Soviet citizens who refused to return to the USSR. On the crucial issue of prosecuting war criminals, which turned into a major political contest between the communists backed by the ACC and the non-communist forces, the government had arrested only 37 of the 61 individuals from the list submitted by the ACC. In addition, 176 men had been detained and interrogated for brutal treatment of Soviet POWs; but 62 of them had already been released. The ACC considered that the Committee of Surveillance established by the government to investigate war criminals was biased, ineffective and lenient in handing down sentences, and demanded that it be disbanded. The ACC was forced to deal with "open and secret resistance" of the Finnish authorities in carrying out the dissolution of fascist organizations except for the most egregious cases. Under pressure, the Finns had banned over 70 groups but the ACC suspected that constant vigilance would be required to prevent their reappearance under a new guise.<sup>59</sup>

At times Zhdanov despaired that "in Finland it would be impossible to liquidate Hitlerism" which he, like his colleagues in Moscow, equated with anti-Soviet attitudes.<sup>60</sup> But he was equally convinced that it was necessary to mount a massive assault against it in all its forms. For him the most dangerous fascist organization was the Volunteer Defense Corps (Schutzkorps), which had been the backbone of Mannerheim's army in the civil war against the Reds. Together with its women's auxiliary, the Lotta-Svard organization, it retained its para-military character throughout the inter-war period and was much feared by the Social



Democrats as Mannerheim's "private class army." After the Winter War, it was converted to a permanent army reserve but it remained a bulwark of anti-Communism in the country. Although Zhdanov demanded that the government disband it, he had a healthy respect for its deep roots in Finnish society and urged the Communists to avoid clashes with it that might initiate an attempted coup.<sup>61</sup>

In contrast to Zhdanov, Stalin was reassured by the general attitude of the Finnish leaders. At the Potsdam Conference, Stalin acknowledged grudgingly to U.S. Secretary of State Byrnes that Finland's "behavior had been all right," and it deserved to have its situation eased. What counted most for Stalin was not the fact that Rumania and Bulgaria had furnished more troops than Finland in the final offensives against Germany,<sup>62</sup> but rather the difference between Finland and Rumania, in particular, in carrying out the armistice agreements. In Rumania, the ACC had sharply objected to a massive evasion of the armistice terms which amounted to "the existence of sabotage on the part of the Rumanian authorities and inaction on the part of the Rumanian government."<sup>63</sup> Zhdanov never resorted to using that kind of language in his dealings with the Finnish government. The simple fact of the matter is that he did not have to, even though he encountered some difficulties of his own.

The trial of Finnish war criminals proved to be the greatest stumbling block to carrying out the armistice agreement. Zhdanov's displeasure with the government's attitude stemmed from the efforts of the new prime minister, J.K. Paasikivi, to exploit the issue for his own political interests by playing the left against the right. In the field of domestic Finnish politics, Zhdanov came to regard Paasikivi as his *bête noire*. But in Finnish foreign relations, Paasikivi had won Stalin's grudging respect. A fixture in Finnish politics since the days when Finland was part of the tsarist empire and a banker by profession, Paasikivi, had belonged to the Old Finn Party before the revolution. He had complete mastery of the Russian language to match his long experience in dealing with Russian leaders. By the time of the Winter War, he was in his seventies and enjoyed a reputation for understanding Soviet security needs, although there were times in his career, as late as 1940-41,

when he thought Germany would be the dominant power in the Baltic. Over his long and distinguished career he had acquired more experience negotiating with the Soviet leaders than any other statesman. He was a delegate in the peace talks of 1920 that had led to the Soviet recognition of Finnish independence in the Treaty of Dorpat. In 1939, he represented Finland in the talks preceding the Winter War and advocated making concessions to Soviet demands. He signed the Moscow Peace Treaty ending the war and stayed on as Minister in Moscow to 1941. By that time he was on friendly terms with Stalin. Despite Paasikivi's constant disputes with Molotov, Stalin took the unprecedented step of personally bidding him farewell when he retired from his post. Quick to assess the changing balance of power, Paasikivi was an early advocate of a separate peace with the Soviet Union. As head of the Finnish negotiating team in Moscow in March 1944, he was willing to make great sacrifices in order to take Finland out of the war.<sup>64</sup> In domestic policy, he displayed the same tough realism that characterized his foreign policy.

In Paasikivi's dealings with Zhdanov, he defended the narrow as opposed to Zhdanov's broad interpretation of the armistice agreements. He was flexible in his resistance to pressure from the ACC, but he would not retreat easily. He constantly probed the limits of Soviet intervention. The dispute over the trial of the war criminals was the first real test of strength between the two protagonists. Responding to pressure from a group of extreme left-wing deputies known as "the Six," Paasikivi proposed to divide the responsibility for the war into two categories: juridical and political. He argued that there was no basis in Finnish law or in common sense for indicting the president, ministers and the parliamentary deputies as war criminals. But on pragmatic grounds these people should be excluded from political activity in order to establish good relations with the Soviet Union. The only concession won by the left-wing ministers, Leino and Johan Helo, a member of the Six, was that the motive for prosecution should include a condemnation of the wartime leadership as having been harmful to the interests of Finland as well as those of the Soviet Union. Leino explained to Zhdanov that he was reluctant to support the more extreme demands of the Six for fear of precipitating a government crisis

that would produce an even more conservative government. Paasikivi had already threatened the right-wing ministers with his resignation if they did not accept his proposals. He told Zhdanov that his policy was designed to avoid a hostile vote in the parliament and to bring the right into line. The main thing, he concluded, was that the Soviet Union was satisfied with the result.<sup>65</sup> It was a brilliant stroke. Paasikivi made it clear to all, the right, left and ACC that he was their best hope for avoiding a much less desirable alternative.

Zhdanov was not taken in by Paasikivi's protestations of friendship for the Soviet Union and kept exerting pressure on the Finnish government to bring the major war criminals to trial. By August 1945, his patience had worn thin. He also had a new mandate: the Big Three powers at Potsdam had demanded the rapid trial of all war criminals. The Soviet leaders were quick to seize upon every legalistic device in order to promote their doctrine of limited intervention. Zhdanov authorized his deputy to express his annoyance to Paasikivi that "Finland was lagging behind Rumania and Bulgaria." The Soviet Union preferred to let Finland itself handle the matter, but if the Finnish government was incapable of following through then the matter would have to be taken out of their hands. The result "will probably be a much longer list and the punishment will be more severe." But caution was still the watchword. There could be no question yet of delivering an official ultimatum but only of giving advice, although Paasikivi was to be left with the impression that the Soviet Union "did not intend to tolerate further delay."<sup>66</sup>

Zhdanov was still counting on the Finnish Communists to push through a law on war criminals and to press hard for its strict application. He made it clear to them precisely what was at stake. "It is important not only to smash the bourgeoisie," he told Leino and Kuusinen, "but it is necessary to know how to force them to serve us. Therefore, in Finland it is very important that the war criminals be punished by the bourgeoisie itself." To Zhdanov, this meant that the Communists had to hold together the tripartite ruling bloc while steering the law on war criminals through the parliament. He was convinced that Paasikivi and Mannerheim hoped for the collapse of the bloc. The prime minister was playing his own game which "relied heavily on

blackmail,"in other words his threat to resign. In addition, "Paasikivi was irritated because he understands that he is being forced to judge his friends." The Communists did not trust him, but they had to decide whether the time was ripe for his departure or whether he "can be used to the end." Zhdanov advised that "if matters come to a head then let it be a crisis in which good relations with the USSR are understood to be at stake."<sup>67</sup> He was simply reminding the Communists that they had their own weapons of blackmail to counter Paasikivi's.

On the issue of war criminals as well as others, Paasikivi proved more adroit than his rival in the risky game of political blackmail. Zhdanov sought to bolster the Communist position by informing Paasikivi that the trial of war criminals must not be "either a farce or a comedy. The future of Finland depended on this." The wily Old Finn then used Zhdanov's message to bludgeon the right into supporting his draft of the law on war criminals. He also informed his cabinet that "on this issue the U.S. and Great Britain will not lift a finger to help Finland....everything depends on what the USSR wants on this question." Zhdanov had advised the Finnish Communists not to submit their own draft law for fear of splitting the parliament, but rather to lead the fight for separate amendments.<sup>68</sup> This too played into Paasikivi's hands, allowing him to balance left against right, threats of his own resignation, and threats of Soviet displeasure to get the law he wanted.<sup>69</sup>

Following the passage of the law on war criminals, prosecution proceeded much too slowly for Zhdanov's taste. The commission to investigate and indict decided to prosecute at least five individuals—Risto Ryti, Väinö Tanner, Edwin Linkomies, J. W. Rangell and T. M. Kivimäki. Although this seemed satisfactory to Zhdanov, "the great danger," he wrote to Stalin and Molotov in October 1945, was that the investigation and trial would flag and the whole process would lose momentum. In the face of Paasikivi's threats, the Communist pressure to move things forward had already weakened. The Finnish comrades pleaded for help and this time Zhdanov responded by bringing pressure to bear on the chairman of the investigation committee and Minister of Justice U. Kekkonen. But Zhdanov wanted to go further. Was it not time, he asked Stalin and Molotov, "to end this farce and

to take the entire judicial procedure under the control of the ACC and to bring in (*komandirovat*) a powerful public prosecutor or group of them?"<sup>70</sup> Moscow was not yet prepared to go so far. Nonetheless Stalin and Molotov ordered the screws to be tightened another notch. The important Finnish leaders, Mannerheim, Paasikivi and Kekkonen were subjected to veiled threats. Zhdanov's letter to Mannerheim explicitly laid out the Soviet concerns. Any further delay in bringing the war criminals to trial could only create political confusion in the country, serve as a signal to "adventurist and fascist elements to increase their hostile activities against the USSR," and suggest that Finland was incapable of fulfilling the terms of article 13. At the same time, the ACC sent an official memo giving the government less than a week to draw up a list of war criminals or face the consequences: "we will be forced to issue an official rebuke on the conduct of the government on this question which we wish to avoid in order to spare the prestige of the present government of Finland."<sup>71</sup> The Finnish government had no choice but to accede.

But a web of legal maneuvers dissipated Zhdanov's pressure. The commission on war criminals decided to arrest and accuse eight defendants, but the constitutional court decided to try only four and released the others. Although the commission announced that it would try the four individuals immediately in the interests "of getting things going," Zhdanov was irritated: "an immediate but incomplete decision is worse than a completed decision even at the expense of the passage of a little time."<sup>72</sup> In the final analysis, the court agreed to indict eight defendants but then freed four of them on their own recognizance. For Zhdanov the signs were ominous.

The trial proved to be something of a nightmare for Zhdanov. He found himself entangled in a legal and political web that he could only break by removing the velvet glove from the iron fist, and altering the policy of limited intervention. Soviet leaders were reluctant to do this without assurances that the Finnish Communists and their allies could back them up with massive support. Yet they had good reason to doubt the outcome of a test of strength in Finnish domestic politics.

On the other hand, there was a danger that the trial would turn against the Soviet Union with embarrassing and damaging consequences for its international position.

The first problem Zhdanov faced was the position taken by the Finnish government, in particular Paasikivi, that the constitutional court was independent and could not be subjected to political pressure. Zhdanov's argument that the armistice agreement committed the state to play an active role in prosecuting the war criminals failed to convince. The leaders of major non-Communist parties told him that any interference of the ACC in the court proceedings would create serious problems for the government and lead to a political crisis. The second problem for Zhdanov was the "strange and incomprehensible" attitude of the Communists who were lax in mobilizing public opinion. They too pleaded the particularism of Finnish politics. Street tactics and demonstrations were "not to the taste" of their political allies in other parties like the Agrarians and the Swedish Party. In Finland such demonstrations could backfire and stiffen the resolve of the conservative members of the court. There was even wavering in the Communist camp. Their most influential minister, Leino, had fallen victim to "ministerialism" and had persuaded the more militant Kuusinen to retreat from her strong advocacy of mass demonstrations. The Communists were beginning to talk about less radical measures, something more like the Russian liberals' zemstvo banquet campaign of 1904! The third problem arose at the trial itself when the defendants, especially the former president of Finland, Risto Ryti, attempted to turn their case against the Soviet Union and to put it on trial for aggression. "This cannot be tolerated," Zhdanov exclaimed. "He can say anything he wants, can even accuse Stalin of being responsible for the war and then what? The whole structure of Finnish-Soviet relations will collapse."<sup>73</sup>

Confronted with the prospect of a political disaster Zhdanov was prepared to exert maximum pressure on the government and the Finnish Communists. Events had confirmed his earlier suspicions about Paasikivi, who posed in public as "an eternal friend of the USSR" while inside the government he took "an unfriendly attitude toward the USSR on the question of punishing war criminals with whom he is in sympathy." Zhdanov was convinced that as long as Paasikivi was prime minister

there would be "a constant struggle between him and the ACC" and that "our success will be achieved only by systematic and relentless pressure from outside." He was determined to exercise that pressure to the limit of his authority. In a meeting with government leaders on November 30, 1945, he came as close as he ever did to threatening them with catastrophic consequences: "If Finland does not carry out the spirit of article 13 of the armistice agreement, then it will lose the confidence of the Soviet Union and world democracy; if that is lost then everything is lost." Yet he kept insisting that the Soviet Union had no intention of undermining the independence of Finland.<sup>74</sup>

At the same time, Zhdanov complained that the Finnish Communists agreed to expand dramatically their modestly conceived campaign against the defendants "only as a result of my sharp criticism." Even then they did not accept all of his recommendations.<sup>75</sup> Yet here too he strove to avoid giving the impression that he was ordering the Finnish communists to launch a decisive political action. He let them know that it was up to them to choose: either his suspicions were correct and the intrigues surrounding the trial constituted "a challenge" to the ACC, a provocation to prove that "we lack the internal strength to guarantee a trial" or else "there is no provocation and we should act differently." Zhdanov insisted that, if the Communists agreed that his suspicions were well founded, then they should contemplate a different yet unspecified set of tactics: "I will act differently...I shall squeeze with all my strength, send notes and make demands, then I will swear like a trooper, which I have never done in my relations with the Finnish government." He concluded: "if you believe that this is a real provocation and a challenge then you should act first."<sup>76</sup> His position remained consistent and corresponded to Soviet policy throughout Eastern Europe. If the local Communists took the initiative in demanding a complete fulfillment of the armistice agreements and then met internal resistance, the Soviet authorities would strongly support them. But the initiative, however inspired, had to come from below. It serves as another illustrative case of the Soviet doctrine of "limited intervention" masquerading as non-intervention.

On the matter of the trial once again Zhdanov was prepared to intervene more brusquely than Stalin and Molotov thought desirable. They agreed that it was absolutely necessary to mobilize mass public pressure in favor of a speedy trial with a favorable outcome and to prevent efforts by the Finnish government and Paasikivi to deny responsibility for the organization and conduct of the trial by hiding behind constitutional procedures. They urged Zhdanov to meet not only with the representatives of the ruling tripartite coalition but with the leaders of all parties. But they opposed Zhdanov's direct interference in the activities of the court. In a November 20, 1945 letter to him they warned: "This would produce a bad impression on the public and give an excuse to accuse us of violating the principles of the independence of the court."<sup>77</sup> Stalin could not be persuaded to adopt Zhdanov's critical view of Paasikivi. Following their instructions, Zhdanov skillfully orchestrated mass demonstrations organized by the Finnish communists, brought pressure to bear on the political leaders to meet their responsibilities toward the Soviet Union, and demanded that the government re-arrest the four freed defendants.

The trial limped to an inglorious conclusion. Ryti continued to attack the Soviet Union from the dock but his remarks were no longer published in the press. The defendants were found guilty by the narrow vote of eight to seven and sentenced to short prison terms which were increased after Zhdanov expressed his outrage.<sup>78</sup> Zhdanov's hopes that the whole affair would discredit the bourgeoisie faded. None of the prisoners served their full terms, and with the exception of Ryti all were back in public life within the decade. Nor did the trial enable the left wing of the Agrarian and Social Democrat parties either to take control of their parties or to break away over the issue of the trial. It was one of the two issues which helped to dispel whatever illusions Zhdanov might have held about Paasikivi. The other one was the rattling of an old skeleton in Zhdanov's political closet—the Karelian affair.

For the Soviet leaders, the one issue in the Armistice agreement over which there could be no discussion or compromise concerned the new frontiers. Molotov made the Soviet position clear during the armistice negotiations. "It would be absurd," he snapped at Paasikivi, "if Finland, on the strength of the war, could force



the Soviet Union to modify its frontiers....The Soviet Union's frontier cannot be made the object of a business transaction."<sup>79</sup> Consequently, they were surprised and angered by the Finns' unexpected attempt to revive the frontier question and were particularly galled by the form it took. In the fall of 1945, the Karelian representatives to the parliament submitted a petition requesting the government and the ACC to re-examine the possibility of rectifications and exchanges of territory on the Finnish-Soviet frontier. But there was more to it than that. The petition revived aspects of a nationalities problem with which the Soviet leaders had been struggling since the formation of the Soviet Union. Karelia was similar to other frontier zones along the western periphery of the Soviet Union between the wars. The post-World War I Finnish-Soviet boundary cut through the heart of the territory inhabited by an ethnically mixed population of Karelians (who spoke a dialect of Finnish), Finns and Russians. On both sides of the frontier, irredentist claims were kept alive. In 1923, the Soviet government created an Autonomous Karelian People's Republic, and Stalin himself supported the introduction of Finnish language schools throughout the region. With growing emphasis on Russian nationalism in the mid-thirties, the Leningrad organization of the Communist Party launched an campaign against Finnish nationalists that followed a convoluted path strewn with casualties.

Kirov had been a supporter of the Karelian experiment, but Zhdanov took a different view. His first step in 1935 was to support the development of a written Karelian language to outflank the Finnish-speaking communists who were purged. Then, in 1937, a purge of the purgers, also supervised by Zhdanov, led to a denunciation of Karelian as a screen for Finlandization. At the end of this cycle, in 1939, several thousands including the old guard of the Finnish Communist Party in the Soviet Union lost their lives.<sup>80</sup> It was hardly surprising then that the attempt to create a Finnish Democratic Republic at Terijoki across the frontier in Finnish Karelia was a dismal failure. The Treaty of Moscow incorporated most of Finnish Karelia into the Soviet Union, but not its population which, in a remarkable display of solidarity, fled their homes *en masse* and settled in Finland. Following the advance of the Finns and German forces in 1941, they returned *en masse* to reoccupy

their lands and then, in a third great migration, retreated again after the Armistice of 1944 once more ceded the region to the USSR.

When the Karelian Finns sought to reopen the border question in September 1945, Zhdanov was adamant. It had been settled by the war and the armistice; there was no possibility of reopening it. Any attempt to do so by allowing the Karelians to go public would be "dangerous and harmful." The incident led Zhdanov to conclude that Paasikivi seemed to be shifting his position away from friendship with the Soviet Union. He was also concerned that on this issue the Communists' allies among the dissident Social Democrats had shown signs of wavering. It was important "to strike hard" against these tendencies, he wrote to Stalin and Molotov, and bring the leftists back into line.<sup>81</sup>

Zhdanov's concern over the Karelian issue was justified. Paasikivi attempted to persuade the cabinet to raise the Karelian question at the peace conference. This would have placed the Soviet Union in an embarrassing position because the official justification of post-war annexations in West Belorussia, West Ukraine, Subcarpatho-Ukraine and Bessarabia was based on the principle of national self-determination. The Karelian population had voted with its feet against Soviet acquisition of their lands. There was no way to disguise the naked power play in the region and the Soviet leaders understandably had no desire to be obliged to do so. Fortunately for them, the left influence in the cabinet and the fear of complications with the Soviet Union persuaded a bare majority to turn down Paasikivi's proposal and to bury the issue.<sup>82</sup> Together with the war crimes dispute, the Karelian issue confirmed Zhdanov's early suspicions about Paasikivi. He reported to Moscow that the Finnish leader had "never been a reliable friend of the Soviet Union," but he "has become worse in the past few months."<sup>83</sup> But Stalin resisted all Zhdanov's efforts to discredit Paasikivi. In his eyes the Old Finn was a known quantity who had a realistic appreciation of Soviet power and did not attempt to play West against East.

## Unity of the Left

In his role as mentor to the Finnish Communists, Zhdanov's second major political objective was to bring about organizational unity of the left. This would end the isolation of the Communist Party in Finnish politics, place on a permanent footing the temporary alliance to implement the armistice terms and force the reactionary elements in Finnish society on the defensive. Everywhere in Eastern Europe at the end of the war, the small, underground Communist parties reappeared under different names and sought cooperation with left-wing allies in various forms of national fronts. The Finnish party was no exception. They took the initiative in forming a Finnish People's Democratic League that aspired to draw in a broad segment of the left in Finnish politics, but its achievements fell far short of their expectations. The only non-communist representatives of the left that joined were the small but influential "group of Six" also known by the name of their newspaper, *Vapaa Sana*. They belonged to that minority fraction of East European Socialists who found the Social Democrats too revisionist and the Communists too monolithic. They were denounced by their Social Democratic colleagues as "marionettes in the hands of the Comintern and Russian imperialists," expelled from the Social Democratic Party in the summer of 1940, and arrested soon after the outbreak of the Continuation War.<sup>84</sup> Because of their reputation as men of honor, it was useful for the Communists to have one of their number as president of the Democratic League. But the endorsement by the Six of a pure socialist program proved embarrassing at a time when the Communists sought to appear under the guise of democrats and patriots rather than socialist internationalists.

Soon after his arrival in Helsinki in November 1944, Zhdanov warned the Communists that the radical slogans of the Six were "out of touch with the masses." On the issue of socialization of agriculture, for instance, Zhdanov pointed out to the Finnish Communists that it had taken eleven years to introduce collectivization in the Soviet Union where the communal forms of cultivation still existed unlike Finland where the prevailing form of landholding was the individual farmstead. It was also

vital, Zhdanov advised, to be patriots and "not to be cosmopolitans." He recommended that the Finnish Communists "knock the bourgeoisie off its favorite hobby horse and break the bourgeois monopoly over love for one's country." On the global scale, Zhdanov stated, the world proletarian movement does not move on a straight line. The present choice, he concluded, was not between socialism and fascism. As an illustration he pointed to Bulgaria where, he claimed, "there was no socialism but it was not a fascist country."

Zhdanov was also concerned about the dangers of leaning too far to the right in striving for unity of the left. The Finnish Communists were eager to win over the Social Democratic Opposition, that is the left wing of the party that had opposed the wartime policies of the party leader Väinö Tanner, and supported early peace negotiations with the Soviet Union. But Zhdanov was skeptical. From the very beginning of his sojourn in Finland, Zhdanov considered the Social Democrats the most reactionary elements in Finland and he never changed his mind about them. Tanner had long been Stalin's *bête noire* as well. Tanner sealed his fate when, during negotiations in 1939, he blurted out to Stalin, "I am a Menshevik."<sup>65</sup> Zhdanov also had little respect for the Social Democratic opposition, who he frequently referred to as "flabby" and "toothless." A minority in the party that had accepted Tanner's platform, they needed stiffening so that they could break the grip of the right-wing leadership. Until then, he warned the Communists not to get too closely involved with them. It would be a mistake for the opposition to start a "civil war" inside the Social Democratic Party for then the Tannerites would simply repress them and they would cease to become a force in Finnish politics. Nor was there any advantage in inducing a split in the party unless they could carry with them a mass base. There seemed to be little chance of that happening. Zhdanov showed interest in one of their number, Eerp Wuori, as "the sort of person one could work with and consider reliable." Wuori had broken with Tanner and, in November 1944, helped bring down the government that resulted in Paasikivi's coming to power. To Zhdanov this had been a progressive step at the time. But now he counselled

drawing Wuori farther to the left while leaving it up to him to take the crucial step of denouncing the "rotten program of the Social Democrats."<sup>86</sup>

Zhdanov, apprenticed in the Stalin school of politics, took a cautious approach to the various schemes for unity of the left that crossed his desk. Sensitivity to timing and the mood of the masses were essential to success. Zhdanov was alert to the danger that infiltration could be turned into cooptation. He warned representatives of "the Six" that their notion of returning to the Social Democratic Party in order to take it over from within could just as easily lead to their becoming prisoners of the right-wing leadership. If the Social Democrats were serious about cooperation with the Communists, then they would propose a single workers' party on the basis of the Democratic League platform. Anything less than this would be fraught with peril: "Such combinations of the top leadership are highly suspect. History does not forgive those who make such combinations." Zhdanov was not opposed to the creation of a single workers party in Finland. But this could only come about in one way—the Social Democratic Opposition would have to transform the party from within. It was also unwise to think of creating an intermediate party between the Communists and Socialists because it would be doomed to isolation. On the other hand, Zhdanov advised one of the Six who had been invited to join the Communists that "sometimes it is better not to join but to work on its behalf." This too was a question of timing.<sup>87</sup> By early 1945, Zhdanov came to the conclusion that unity of the left was a long-term prospect. For the time being, the left could only come together when dealing with certain specific questions.<sup>88</sup> One of these was preparing for the first postwar parliamentary elections.

## **Electoral Tactics and Coalition Politics**

Zhdanov confronted many of the same problems in advising the Finnish Communists on questions of electoral tactics and coalition politics—his third and

fourth political aims—as he had on the unity of the left. In addition to the inexperience of the Communists and their opponents' resilience, there was an unusual degree of socio-psychological stability in Finnish society. According to Pavel Orlov, a moderate and experienced specialist in Finnish affairs, the bulk of the population welcomed the end of the war; "there is no fighting, no danger, Helsinki has not been bombed and the masses seem to have no thoughts of the future."<sup>89</sup> Still, Zhdanov believed that the Finnish Communists could employ some of the same tactics as other East European Communists. At times his cynicism betrayed him. He doubted whether the Democratic Front could win an outright majority in the first elections. But it was important to count on "the fellow travellers who love to trail behind the strong and can follow along if not directly, then, in the same direction." This was one way of avoiding a "unified, strong reaction pre-selected entirely from the blackest colors" and "to have some number of pink or even gray (*svetlo-chernykh*)" get elected. The point was for the Democratic League to put up enough candidates who were not Communists or "the group of Six" so that the League could claim to represent all the progressive elements in society.

During the pre-election campaign in early 1945, Zhdanov proposed to deal ruthlessly with the opposition: "Smear the bourgeois candidates with filth, find examples of bribery, corruption and save up something for unexpected attacks, as the military put it, to strike the opponent from the rear...." Paasikivi was not to be trusted; his domestic policy departed radically from his foreign policy. "I must tell you," Zhdanov confided, "that without exercising some pressure in domestic politics you will get nowhere. This is a man who is conservative to the marrow of his bones."<sup>90</sup> Zhdanov urged the Finnish communists to get out the vote, to show the electors that their ballot counted. None of it seemed very different from an electoral pep talk by a party hack in any liberal democratic country until Zhdanov got to the end. Then he cited the example of the Soviet elections as the model: "The party that reminds the electors of their duty is always met with sympathy."<sup>91</sup> Perhaps the unconscious irony was lost on the Finnish comrades.

The election returns gave the Democratic League 23.5% of the votes and forty-eight seats in parliament, forty-one of which, Zhdanov was assured, were communists. But Zhdanov questioned the results: was there not some cheating in the election commission? The Communists were unwilling to take the hint. They also confessed lamely that the prime minister traditionally had the right to select his cabinet on a personal basis irrespective of the will of the parties. Zhdanov was outraged. The Democratic League could not allow this and should refuse to serve in the government unless permitted to select their own cabinet representatives. Moreover, they should demand the ministries of Interior, Defense and Foreign Affairs.<sup>92</sup> The Communists listened politely, but lacked the will to fight and accepted what Paasikivi offered. Leino became the Minister of the Interior but the other two appointments were secondary cabinet posts. Paasikivi, Zhdanov mournfully reported to Stalin, has "led our friends by the nose."<sup>93</sup>

Zhdanov had not been able to steer the Finnish Communists between the shoals of left and right deviation. Intoxicated by their electoral success after years of hiding in the underground and fearful of repeating the disastrous leftist excesses of the past, they excitedly hastened down the parliamentary path to socialism. They followed Zhdanov's advice in creating a parliamentary bloc with the Social Democrats and Agrarians,<sup>94</sup> but they did not make of it what he expected. Following the elections they concluded a tripartite pact with the Social Democrats and Agrarians based on a loose interpretation of their own program, so loose that it was easy for the other two partners to pay it lip service without exerting themselves to carry it out.<sup>95</sup> Zhdanov made every effort to instruct the Finnish Communists on the tactics of coalition politics. If the right-wing elements of their coalition partners refused to support the program of the bloc, then the "left elements within the party factions must be activated in order to combat them. The point is," Zhdanov emphasized in May 1945, "to avoid a struggle between the Communist party as such and the other parties."<sup>96</sup> The advice was sound. But it required a tough, skilled and determined cadre to put it into effect, something the Finnish Communists themselves admitted they lacked.

Tripartism survived until the communists left the government in 1948, but by then he had long since lost any political meaning. In fact, it had become a trap for the Communists. By mid-1947, they were complaining to Stalin that there was no unity among the three parties on domestic policy. The Agrarians and Social Democrats attacked the government and the Communists alone defended it. Zhdanov was puzzled by their obtuseness. How could they allow the other parties to monopolize criticism of the government? The party had conducted too moderate a policy, one that suited the bourgeoisie but not the workers. It had failed to carry out the program of April 1945. It had not nationalized heavy industry or banks; it had not passed an agrarian reform bill nor purged the state apparatus of fascist and reactionary elements. From Zhdanov's perspective, the Finnish comrades had little to offer but excuses. They complained that the workers and peasants were mainly interested in raising their material standard of living by raising wages and reducing the tax burden. But any improvement in the condition of one social group could only be purchased at the expense of the other. The Agrarians and Social Democrats exploited the situation to keep the status quo. Zhdanov impatiently brushed aside this evidence of non-Marxist economic thinking. The point was "to unmask the lying maneuvers" of the bourgeois parties and focus on the issue of surplus profits. "By not doing this the Communist Party is missing a great opportunity." Reflecting on the general decline of the party's position, Zhdanov blamed it for bearing "much of the responsibility for the situation in the bloc." He accused them of having abstained from an open struggle with the right-wing elements in the bloc. He held up the examples of Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania where the communists had joined with the left-wing elements in the coalition parties in order to achieve success in the struggle. But in Finland the coalition partners had played upon the patience of the party to sabotage the bloc's program. It was obvious to everyone that the right-wing of the Social Democrats was closely tied to the war criminals, their "brothers in arms." But the Communists had not tarred them with the brush of fascism in order "to expose and crush them" so they continued to run the Social Democratic Party, set the tone and prevent the left Opposition from taking over the party. The same



blunders were made with respect to the Agrarians. Looking back in 1947, Zhdanov wearily concluded: "Such were the errors of the Finnish Communists, but this was pointed out to them many times before."<sup>97</sup>

## **Agrarian Reform**

The fifth prominent issue that Zhdanov believed the Communists failed to exploit properly was agrarian reform. Land redistribution was a crucial factor in the success of other East European communist parties. It won thousands of new recruits among the agricultural laborers and poor peasants, weakened the principle of property rights, and shook the confidence of the large owners who formed the backbone of anti-communist sentiment in the countryside. The absence of a big land reform campaign in Finland was the most blatant case of the Finnish Communists ignoring or evading the strong recommendations coming from the very highest authorities in Moscow. Zhdanov reminded the Finnish Communists of its importance in January 1945 before the parliamentary elections. Rejecting the radical agrarian proposals of the extreme left—the group of Six—Zhdanov favored "leaning to the side of the small farmers." If the Communists could "open the way to the soul of the peasantry"(sic!), then they might be able to forge a winning combination of workers and peasants. That was essential for their success and had been "the key to the Bulgarian revolution." It was idle to talk about collectivization until industry was in the hands of a workers' government.<sup>98</sup> Leino protested that the Finns "move slowly and do not act as quickly as, for example, the Balkan people." Zhdanov flared up: "in the name of the Finnish people I protest against this characterization." But Leino kept piling on more excuses: the Finnish communists had just emerged from the underground; there had been no communist deputies in the old parliament; after December 1944, they had only one representative—Leino—in the government that

passed a moderate agrarian reform and he admitted "I had no influence on drafting its provisions." But the law was a start and the Finnish communists believed that they had no choice but to see it through.<sup>99</sup>

For Zhdanov the main obstacle to Communist penetration of the countryside was the party's ambivalent attitude toward the peasantry. He shamelessly embraced the philosophy of the free market. He was indignant that the state deliveries of agricultural surplus deprived the peasantry of any incentive to produce. His position was doubly hypocritical because the high levels of state deliveries were set in order to meet the reparations payments to the Soviet Union. But politics, in his view, took precedence over economics. By contrast, the leadership of the Finnish Communist Party, drawn from the traditional urban centers of working class strength, were reluctant to part with their Marxist assumptions. According to Leino, the Central Committee had come out flat against giving the peasants the right to sell their surplus on the open market.<sup>100</sup>

At Zhdanov's insistence the Finnish Communists had drafted a more extensive agrarian reform in the fall of 1945, but were hesitant to push for its adoption. Moreover, the Soviet experts who examined it, including the Section on Foreign Relations of the Central Committee of the KPSS and Otto Kuusinen, found serious flaws in its design. The Finnish Communists found it difficult to understand the mentality of their own peasantry. They proposed to expropriate not only the landed properties of the big landowners, stock companies and banks but also land owned by peasants beyond a certain limit. The Soviet critics considered this a mistake because it would risk pushing the middle peasant into the camp of the enemies of reform and bolster the influence of the Agrarians. The draft also proposed to expropriate the lands held by the village priests and pastors in their professional capacity. Soviet officials feared that this proposal would arouse the opposition of the Lutheran clergy, which had a strong influence among the peasants. Even the procedure for redistribution came in for criticism; it was too cumbersome, time-consuming, and centralized. Zhdanov agreed and recommended to Stalin that the reform not touch the middle peasant or kulak; that the priests and pastors retain

their lands as long as they did not exceed the maximum norms for the peasantry; and that the local land commissions be given authority to resolve questions of norms, distribution of agricultural equipment, etc. With Stalin's approval in hand, Zhdanov politely, almost diffidently, informed the Finnish Communists of the Soviet reaction. Careful to avoid the appearance of dictation, he reassured them that these comments were offered as observations for "it is clearer to you on the ground how it is necessary to resolve these questions."<sup>101</sup>

In April 1946, Zhdanov returned to the attack, condemning the Communists' attitude toward the moderate agrarian reform. In Zhdanov's opinion, the law "was no agrarian reform" at all. It aimed at redistributing state and communal lands together with a small category of capitalist holdings among soldiers, veterans, war victims, agricultural workers and the population evacuated from the territories incorporated into the Soviet Union. But, Zhdanov complained, even this palliative was being applied too slowly; after a year only 19,000 peasant households had been effected. The land commissions were dominated by the big landowners and state officials; the poor peasantry was not represented at all. He urged the Finnish Communists to draft their own reform. It would not be any easier in two or three years. "The question was one of transforming the political situation in the countryside." If the Communists were worried about the landlords' resistance, he concluded, they would end up having to worry even more about the peasants' feelings of betrayal.<sup>102</sup> But, to Zhdanov's dismay, the Finnish Communists declared that they were still "not ready for a big agrarian reform."<sup>103</sup> When they finally introduced an agrarian bill on the floor of parliament in the summer of 1947, it contained most of the provisions that the Soviet critics, endorsed by Zhdanov, had insisted were incorrect. Zhdanov went over the lesson again; the Finnish Communists were embarrassed. Their Central Committee had debated the question many times but, they concluded pathetically, "the serious shortcomings still remain. They must be corrected."<sup>104</sup>

## **Nationalization of Industry**

Zhdanov's sixth political aim, nationalization of industry, did not occupy a large place in his lesson plan for the Finnish Communists. Unlike the situation in other states allied with Hitler, like Hungary, Rumania and even Bulgaria, there were no opportunities to confiscate factories in the hands of the Germans or war criminals. The Germans had had no direct control over the Finnish economy. There were serious difficulties in identifying factories owned by fascists or war profiteers because the entire Finnish economy had been mobilized for the war effort by a popular government. Nor did the Soviet armistice terms identify any Finnish industrialists as war criminals. The Finnish trade unions were more interested in increasing wages than in demanding nationalization. Zhdanov raised the question with the Finnish communists for the first time in April 1946, well over a year after he had prodded them on agrarian reform. His suggestions came at the end of a long conversation on the delay in carrying out the land reform of 1945. He pointed out that as long as the party relied on its electoral strength and left economic power in the hands of the bourgeoisie, its position would be shaky. He suggested the modest step of organizing production committees and then moving on to nationalize the big industry. The process would be facilitated by the high degree of concentration in the timber and wood working industry. He urged them to prepare a plan based on the Czech and Polish models.<sup>105</sup> Once again the Communists had their excuses ready. Along with the socialists they supported nationalization of banks and insurance. But the problem in the rest of the economy was that the workers were better paid in the private than in the public sector, hardly a spur to nationalization.<sup>106</sup>

The Finnish Communists did their best, they claimed, to arouse some interest for nationalization among the workers. But a year later, they reported disappointing findings to an exasperated Zhdanov. The workers were most concerned about raising their standard of living, but the socialists and agrarians, warning of inflation, blocked an increase in wages. As long as the government supported a price freeze, the Communists felt their hands were tied. As a government party, they could not call

for strikes without appearing to be irresponsible. In the meantime, nationalization had been lost in the shuffle. The socialists did not openly oppose it but resorted to delaying tactics, pleading the need to study the question.<sup>107</sup>

## **Controlling the Forces of Order**

Zhdanov had no greater success in getting the Finnish communists to neutralize the police and army, although their prospects appeared at first to be brighter. After all, they had one of their men, Leino, installed as Minister of Interior for a period of almost three years. The army proved to be the most difficult to reform even though the Minister of Defense, Mauno Pekkala, a dissident Social Democrat, was sympathetic to doing so. In mid-1945, the Communists admitted to Zhdanov that they had no plans to democratize the army. He was not prepared to accept this verdict and offered them two options. There was no chance of democratizing the army from below, he declared, unless the party was able to place some of its people in command positions. If reliable military men could not be found to serve as replacements, then the party should press for the introduction of a political apparatus in the army, that is a system of political commissars, and at the same time prepare a new democratic cadre of officers by opening the doors of military schools to workers, peasants and intelligentsia.<sup>108</sup> Leino advocated a different approach, perhaps because Mannerheim's grip on the armed forces appeared unshakable. He was investigating a small group of middle rank military conspirators who, at the time of demobilization, had organized a widespread network of underground arms dumps in order to forestall a Communist takeover. The ACC saw no future in Leino's scheme. The officers had not strictly speaking violated the law although they had concealed their plans from the government and Mannerheim in order to shield them in the event of an investigation. But when Leino learned of the arms dump conspiracy he saw an opportunity to compromise the army. Mannerheim

acted correctly, got the officers to confess to him and then conscientiously turned the affair over to the Minister of Interior. Leino denounced the conspiracy in parliament, launched an extensive and clumsy police operation, and arrested 564 people including several generals. The legal proceedings dragged on for two years and most of the generals were acquitted. The army command was untouched.<sup>109</sup>

The Communists gave every assurance that there would be no such problems in controlling the security police. In the spring of 1945, with Zhdanov's encouragement, the party organized an all-out assault on an institution that had few supporters in Finnish society. The public rallied behind them and the government felt obliged to set up an investigative commission which included two communists. As soon as Leino became Minister of Interior, he appointed a dissident Social Democrat, K. O. Brusin, who had worked closely with the Communists on the commission, as the head of the security police, and Aimo Aaltonen, the chairman of the Finnish Communist Party, as his deputy. But there were legal obstacles to be overcome. A new law was required to allow the Communists to purge the old police cadres. In May 1945, Leino sketched out for Zhdanov his alternative plan for creating an entirely new organ with a new name. Then he could dismiss many security police and bring in reliable people. In the meantime, he proposed appointing some Communists as temporary agents without the knowledge of the government so that once the new organ had come into being he could claim that they were already on the payroll. Zhdanov poured cold water on the idea. He foresaw a mass of difficulties connected with such a reorganization and advised Leino to draw the coalition partners into the creation and staffing of the new organ. Leino quickly backed down. Zhdanov was also worried that the old apparatus, learning of the planned reorganization, would send the police agents into the Surveillance Bureau of the General Staff, but Leino promised to forestall them by liquidating that organization.<sup>110</sup>

The reorganization of the security police did not go well. Leino began to show signs of the errant behavior which was to have such disastrous consequences for the party in 1948. An agronomist whose reputation rested mainly on his deeds

of daring in the underground during the war, he was the only leading Finnish Communist who had never undergone training in the Soviet Union. No doubt this is why Paasikivi shrewdly had chosen him as the first Communist minister in his cabinet and later entrusted him with the Ministry of Interior. Leino found it difficult both to find suitable men to staff the new organ and to get along with his own appointees.<sup>111</sup> Zhdanov rapidly became disenchanted with him. By-mid 1946, he was already denouncing his behavior as "cowardly and unworthy of a Communist." He claimed that Leino had not purged the police of undesirable elements but allowed it to remain "a den of fascists." Under his command the police, could not even control anti-Soviet demonstrations such as the one that had broken out on May 1, 1946. If he refused to alter his course, Zhdanov threatened, "he will give the fascists an opportunity to broaden their campaign and do irreparable harm to Finnish-Soviet relations."<sup>112</sup> Yet even after Zhdanov's extraordinary censure, Leino was allowed by his comrades to continue at his post. In 1948, Zhdanov's prediction came true.

Reviewing the seven major domestic planks in Zhdanov's domestic platform for Finnish Communism—the punishment of war criminals, unity of the left, electoral bloc tactics, a stable coalition government, agrarian reform, nationalization of industry, and control over the security services—it is clear that, even before the Potsdam Conference in August 1945, Zhdanov had laid down the main lines for progress toward the establishment of a popular democracy. This was consistent with Soviet policy in the rest of Eastern Europe and in Western Europe as well. But the means to that end, the pace and instrumentalities of movement toward that goal were radically different in every country. Local conditions determined the outcome. In Rumania where the Soviet representatives genuinely feared the outbreak of a civil war, they intervened forcefully only a few months after the armistice in order to bring to power a National Front government.<sup>113</sup> In Hungary, by contrast, where there was no danger of civil war, the Soviet Union and the Hungarian Communists were willing to prolong the period of political transformation from ten to fifteen years.<sup>114</sup> In Finland, all the signs pointed to a Hungarian schedule.

Until Potsdam, or else the fatal month of March 1946, or even right up to the announcement of the Marshall Plan, there was still a chance that in certain East European countries popular democracy might be created by parliamentary or at least non-violent means and that its establishment might not mean sovietization.<sup>115</sup> But the chances diminished as the tensions between East and West over each successive international crisis raised the geopolitical stakes. For Finland, by 1948, only a civil war could have moved the country into the camp of popular democracy and Soviet leaders clearly opposed that course of action because it did not suit their political or military interests.

## **Finnish-Soviet Relations**

Zhdanov's efforts to improve formal relations between Finland and the USSR following the fulfillment of the armistice terms centered on economic and security issues. By the time of the 1946 Paris Peace Conference, it was clear that the left had been unable to exploit the implementation of the armistice agreement in order to prepare the ground for carrying out basic structural reforms in Finnish society. Unlike the rest of Eastern Europe and to a more limited extent even France and Italy, Finland had not nationalized heavy industry, redistributed the land, "democratized" the army, and purged the civil service. More like Hungary than the rest of Eastern Europe, Finnish patriotism was not associated with a national liberation movement but rather with a stubborn loyalty to the old regime. Only a minority within the Finnish Communist Party was genuinely pro-Soviet. If there was no sense of gratitude for having been liberated from Hitler, there was resentment over the loss of undeniably Finnish territory and the imposition of heavy reparations. At the Peace Conference, the Finnish Foreign Minister had publicly reopened the questions of revising the frontiers and reducing reparations payments. His speech had won support throughout the Finnish press including the Communist papers. The Soviet



reaction was sharp and the Communists felt obliged to switch positions.<sup>116</sup> But by this time, the accumulated weight of evidence spelled out a clear message. The Soviet leaders would intervene to prevent Finland from joining a western economic or security system, but they would stop short of demanding Finland's integration into their own. Such were the limits they had set for themselves on interfering in Finnish domestic affairs.

Ironically, a major international factor in shaping the moderate contours of Soviet policy toward Finland was the absence of a strong Western counterforce. Curiously enough, Western diplomats acknowledged this as a truism in Finland but were unwilling to apply their insight to the rest of Eastern Europe. Up until the Marshall Plan invitations went out, the U.S. consciously avoided giving significant signs of interest in Finnish domestic or foreign policies. Conversely and just as importantly, no group of Finnish politicians made any attempt to involve the Western powers in whatever differences that they had with Zhdanov. A small incident at the outset of Zhdanov's tenure on the ACC illustrates the problem. When in November 1944 the U.S. attempted to restore normal relations with Finland (having earlier withdrawn its ambassador), it ran into trouble with Zhdanov. The State Department committed a tactical error by drawing a parallel between sending political representatives to Finland, on the one hand, and to Rumania and Bulgaria on the other. Zhdanov was immediately on guard. What did the Americans mean by referring to Rumania and Bulgaria in the same breath as Finland? They had never been at war with Finland and their political rights there were limited. Ambassador Averell Harriman was able to rectify the situation and Soviet permission to send a diplomatic representative to Helsinki followed with the stated assumption that this did not mean the restoration of normal diplomatic relations.<sup>117</sup> This set the tone for American diplomacy in Finland.

At every critical juncture in Soviet-Finnish relations over the next three years, the Americans and the British took pains to avoid involvement and especially to discourage any Finnish hopes to use the U.S. in order to offset Russian pressure.<sup>118</sup> The Western powers asserted that they could defer to Soviet interests because there

had been free elections in Finland; the Soviet Union declared that they could be lenient because the Finns were behaving correctly and made no appeals to the West to bail them out whereas the Rumanians and Bulgarians were behaving badly and constantly called in the Western diplomats and journalists to challenge Moscow. Who was right?

The Americans were puzzled by the special relationship between Finland and the Soviet Union. Learning of the arms dump conspiracy in April 1945, Harriman acknowledged that he could not understand the moderate Soviet reaction. If the plot had been uncovered anywhere else in Eastern Europe, he concluded, "a lot of blood would certainly have flowed."<sup>119</sup> But in Eastern Europe, such a plot would most certainly have been aimed at overthrowing the government and would probably have counted upon Western sympathy or support. However, as Soviet-American relations elsewhere in the world deteriorated, the U.S. was no longer willing to remain uninvolved in Finland, and the Soviet Union felt obliged to redraw the boundaries of limited intervention. The Marshall Plan triggered the crisis.

Although the Peace Treaty with Finland was signed in February 1947, the Soviet Union withheld ratification until Finland declined to participate in the discussions to reorganize the European economic system under the auspices of the Marshall Plan. Even before the invitation went out to Finland to attend the Paris Conference, Zhdanov warned the Finnish Communists that the U.S. was trading on Finnish sovereignty by demanding specific guarantees from the Finns against socialist experiments like nationalization. He urged them to unmask the plots of the Finnish bourgeoisie and the American capitalists. The Finnish Communists, true to their reputation for timidity, replied that they lacked evidence to present a case to the public. Zhdanov reproached them for their excessive scruples. "In history there were cases when communists did not notice that their country was being sold."<sup>120</sup> The Communists finally bestirred themselves to take to the streets. Paasikivi's decision to turn down the invitation to participate in the Marshall Plan was the result of one of the rare cases of the government giving in to joint pressure from the ACC and Communist organized mass demonstrations. This was a case where limited

intervention was stretched to its outer reaches: at stake was the entire orientation of Finnish foreign policy. In September, the Soviet Union ratified the Peace Treaty.

In early 1948, Zhdanov was still not entirely satisfied with the orientation of Finnish foreign policy. He wanted to know whether Finland had not already taken steps to sacrifice its sovereignty. The Finnish Communists admitted that after the war the government had accepted credits of 65 million dollars from the Americans. More recently, they added, Finland's application for IMF membership and the establishment of an American airline link from Stockholm to Helsinki had increased the country's economic dependence. They insisted, however, that Finland's refusal to participate in the Marshall Plan had radically changed the situation. They reported to Zhdanov that the Americans refused to extend additional credits or even "a single gram of bread." But the Right was accusing the Communists of depriving Finland of much needed foreign assistance. There were strong sympathies in the government and business circles for closer association with the Anglo-American bloc. Paasikivi, they complained, had made it known that without U.S. aid Finland's standard of living would decline. Zhdanov countered by urging the nationalization of industry and suggesting a trade treaty with the USSR. On the first point, the Communists complained they lacked support except for the extreme left of the workers; on the second, they admitted that outside the ranks of the Democratic League there was no enthusiasm for the project.<sup>121</sup>

By this time the Communists felt increasingly embattled. The Right had taken advantage of the growing economic crisis and the country's international isolation to demand a dissolution of the government. Communists were fearful of their own political isolation and exclusion from the coalition and called on the Soviet Union for assistance. For some time they had been agitating for a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, but found it difficult to persuade even their domestic allies to support it. Could the Soviet authorities put diplomatic pressure on the government to reach an agreement by raising once again the issue of the arms caches and the coddling of fascist elements in the country? Zhdanov appeared to ignore their plea and chose instead to reiterate the need for the Finnish Communists

to pull their own weight. It was their fault they had no allies and faced a united front of the opposition. They would suffer even greater losses if they did not set limits to their concessions.<sup>122</sup>

Stalin could not take a chance that Finland might slide into the Anglo-American camp. In February 1948, he deviated from his own rule of waiting for the initiative to come from Helsinki and proposed a mutual assistance pact in a personal letter to Paasikivi. The Finnish leader carefully prepared a draft treaty, after consulting with all the political parties and insisting on a representative delegation including Leino, who was rapidly becoming an albatross around the party's neck. During the informal sessions, Stalin and Molotov were uncommonly cordial to the Finns; during the negotiations themselves, Molotov raised no serious objections to the Finnish draft. The treaty provided for mutual aid only in case of an attack by Germany or countries using Germany as a base of operations. The Finns were obliged to defend their territory but had no obligations outside their own boundaries. The Soviet Union had no automatic rights of intervention on Finnish soil and any assistance that they rendered to the Finns would be the subject of a separate mutual agreement.<sup>123</sup> In this way, Stalin put his seal of approval on what might be called a strict interpretation of the policy of limited intervention. By allowing the Finns to set the terms of the treaty Stalin acknowledged that Finland belonged in a separate category from the rest of Eastern Europe. This, at least, was the conclusion drawn by the Finnish Social Democrats and Agrarians who boasted that the conclusion of the treaty would enable the Finns to go their own way in foreign policy without constantly looking over their shoulder for Soviet approval.<sup>124</sup>

The treaty of mutual aid with the USSR did not check the deterioration of the Finnish Communists' domestic political position. On the contrary, their coalition partners stepped up their attacks on the party. The Communists admitted to Zhdanov that they did not possess sufficient strength to organize the masses in order to check the rising tide of reaction. The trial of those accused of hiding arms had ended badly. The court handed down no prison sentences, only reprimands. The Communists claimed that the conspirators had shifted their activities to the police and

army. The Politburo of the Finnish Communist Party discussed the possibility of arresting the leading culprits, but their plans were wrecked by Paasikivi, who used rumors about preparations for a coup by the left to place the security forces on a military alert. There is no evidence of a Communist conspiracy to seize power,<sup>125</sup> but that fact provided little consolation to the Communists who were unable to rally enough mass support to demand a revision of the trial verdicts. They appealed to the Soviet Union once again to exercise maximum pressure on the Finnish government to restrain the Right.

At the same time, the Communists had virtually lost control of the Ministry of Interior. Leino's personal and political behavior had become increasingly erratic. In January 1948 at Zhdanov's urging, the Central Committee of the KPSS sent an official communication to its Finnish counterpart recommending the removal of Leino from his ministerial post. But the Finnish Communists stalled, giving as their excuse an impending government crisis. The Minister of Justice, Eino Pekkala, a member of the Democratic League, had announced his retirement and the removal of Leino would have forced a reconstruction of the cabinet at a time when negotiations for the mutual aid treaty with the Soviet Union were at a delicate stage. Later, another complication arose. The Right launched an attack on Leino for a 1945 incident when, on the orders of the ACC, he had arrested and turned over to the Soviet authorities twenty purported war criminals, including Russian and Finnish citizens, without consulting the government. If the Finnish Communists moved to replace him, it would look like a capitulation to the Right. Moreover, Ville Pessi explained to Zhdanov, Paasikivi would do everything possible to prevent Leino's replacement by another Communist. For these reasons, the party's Central Committee opposed any changes until after the elections. Zhdanov was not impressed by these arguments. The situation would not be any different after the elections, he declared. Then more menacingly he added: "Perhaps the Central Committee of the Finnish Communist Party does not wish or cannot carry out the recommendations of the TsK VKP (b), but does not wish to state this plainly, that is in a comradesly, in a Bolshevik manner, without resorting to diplomacy?"<sup>126</sup> In the end, the parliament

took matters into its own hands and passed a vote of no confidence in Leino. His dismissal ended the Communists' long but feeble control over the Ministry of Interior. The elections completed the Communists' debacle—they lost eleven seats to their erstwhile coalition partners. For the first time since 1944, they were excluded from the government; for the next eighteen years, they remained in political limbo.

Zhdanov's requiem for the Finnish Communists as a ruling party was harsh and unforgiving. Even before the elections he noted that "the collapse of the bloc does not especially alarm the [Finnish] Communists." His general impression of them was "unfavorable," a term used in his correspondence to indicate extreme disapproval. "As in the past," he concluded, "the Central Committee of the Finnish Communist Party adopts an uncertain, defensive position on all questions, underestimating the strength of the party and the mass democratic movement, exaggerating the strength of the reaction, failing to exploit the real internal crisis and relying far too much on external assistance from the USSR."<sup>127</sup>

## Conclusion

Zhdanov in Finland stood in the western vanguard of Soviet foreign policy. His assignment was not only to enhance Soviet influence but also to serve as midwife for Finland's social and political transformation. The gestation period proved to be longer and more painful, and the offspring less robust than he would have wished. He inherited a situation—the local correlation of forces if you will—that was sufficiently different from those prevailing anywhere else in Eastern or Western Europe to make Finland a unique case. But this did not alter the Soviet leadership's short-term aims, which were largely the same in both Eastern and Western Europe. There were only differences in emphasis: to cripple or destroy the traditional ruling elites, and to "democratize" the social and economic life of the country through

nationalization of heavy industry and redistribution of landed property in order to bring the mass of the working class and peasant-farmer population into the political mainstream—in a word, to mobilize them under the banner of a broadly based left-wing coalition. Zhdanov no less than other Soviet leaders perceived that the process would proceed in different countries at different rates. They had no master plan, but rather a prospectus of opportunities. The transformation of postwar Finland never reached the point where either Zhdanov or his Finnish comrades felt justified in applying the terms "new" or "popular" democracy to describe the changes despite the fact that all their efforts sought to move the country in that direction. It frequently has been argued that the Soviet leaders decided to treat Finland differently because it was unique. The record of Zhdanov in Finland demonstrates the contrary. It was Finland's uniqueness that forced them to abandon their hopes for a popular democracy and settle for a neutral neighbor.

Zhdanov in Finland was both the instrument and the interpreter of a Soviet policy of "limited intervention." As the instrument, he carried out the instructions of Stalin and Molotov; as the interpreter, he supplied information and made recommendations to Moscow, gave advice to the Finnish Communists and coordinated whenever possible the activities of the ACC and the Finnish Communist Party. The intervention was limited by a combination of external and internal factors. In Finland as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the Soviet leaders invoked the agreements among the Big Three and the armistice terms as the guidelines for their policy. Western diplomats and later historians accused the Soviet leaders of violating both. But the Soviet leaders operated within an interpretive framework that, while it was not identical with that of the West, had its own fairly well-defined parameters. Stalin and Molotov in particular were obsessed, as Paasikivi shrewdly noted, with the idea of legalism in international politics. When Zhdanov instructed his staff or informed the Finnish Communists that the Soviet Union would not interfere in the domestic life of Finland, what he meant was that it would not intervene in matters outside the authority of the ACC to implement the armistice terms. He believed that the armistice terms gave the Finnish Communists abundant opportunities to radicalize

Finnish politics. The Rumanian and Bulgarian Communists proved especially adept at doing this with stunning political effect. But their success was due as much to the obtuseness of the Right in challenging Soviet preponderance as to their own tactical skills. Zhdanov insisted that the Finnish Communists would have to shoulder the major responsibility for taking action. The Soviet Union could only intervene directly if the Finnish Communists met resistance in carrying out the armistice. Even then as the case of the trial of the war criminals demonstrated, the Soviet leaders were unwilling to exercise direct pressure on the court, to say nothing of dictating the verdict or the sentencing. The strict interpretation of limited intervention was not confined to Finland. On other occasions, Zhdanov warned the Austrian and Greek Communists that they could not count on direct assistance from Moscow in order to promote their aims.<sup>128</sup>

If the Soviet leaders were averse to an open display of political pressure, they were even more firmly opposed to the use of military force in Finland. This was clear from the armistice negotiations when Stalin rejected the recommendations of the Voroshilov commission to occupy parts of Finland. Indeed throughout Eastern Europe and all along its southern frontiers, the Soviet leaders avoided taking any action that resembled the British intervention in Greece in December 1944. Zhdanov explained to the Austrian Communists in 1948 why the presence of Soviet troops outside its frontiers had to be carefully regulated by international agreements: "The Soviet Union withdrew its troops from Iran, Manchuria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, etc. in order to eliminate the possibility of our opponents maintaining their troops in other countries. No one can accuse the Soviet Union of maintaining its troops in any country with which it does not have a written agreement...."<sup>129</sup> Zhdanov understood only too well the benefits that could accrue to Soviet foreign policy from having vigorous and bold communist parties operating in countries on its periphery. It could advance Soviet aims without the appearance of external intervention in ways that the Western powers found difficult to match. From time to time, to be sure, Zhdanov issued veiled threats to the Finnish leaders, as when he warned them against the dire consequences of jeopardizing good relations between Finland and the Soviet Union.



But it was never clear what lay behind these threats, and he was never challenged to show his hand. The most he ever admitted was that in the event that the mishandling of the war criminal trial was a provocation and challenge by anti-Communists, then the Finnish Communists should contemplate a "tactic to break up the game." His response would be to "squeeze (*zhat*) them with all my strength, to send notes and demands, and then I will swear like a trooper which I have never done in my relations with the Finnish government."<sup>130</sup>

To the degree that Zhdanov intervened in Finnish politics, he recommended tactics to the Finnish Communists that did not differ in any significant way from those employed by the communist parties of both Western and Eastern Europe. There was to be no talk of socialism and the party was urged to discipline its members or allies who violated this rule. The first aim was to take the offensive against the traditional Right: to discredit, isolate and undermine it by saddling it with responsibility for initiating an aggressive war in alliance with Hitler. The attack was to be expanded by depriving the bourgeoisie of its main economic base through a dual policy of nationalization of heavy industry and redistribution of landed property. The state's coercive institutions were to be taken out of the bourgeoisie's hands; the army and police were to be purged of "fascists," which could be interpreted to mean any anti-Soviet elements, and staffed with politically acceptable, though not necessarily Communist, recruits. What might follow after these aims had been achieved remained in the realm of speculation.

At the same time the Communist Party had to avoid, at all costs, becoming politically isolated. Zhdanov approved the creation of the Finnish Democratic League that would attract other left-wing elements, like the "Group of Six." He advocated a governing coalition that would bring the three main parties under the umbrella of the Democratic League's socio-economic program. Zhdanov repeatedly advised the Communists to help strengthen the left-wing factions in the other major parties, especially the Social Democrats and Agrarians. His objective was to take over these parties from within or split them on condition that the radicals could carry a mass base along with them. By neutralizing the right-wing Social Democrats, the

Communists would clear the last obstacle to the formation of a united workers party that would then dominate Finnish political life. But the Finnish Communists never even got close. They could not even take control of the unified trade union. The best they could do, ironically, was to help further the democratization of Finnish society. They were unable to capitalize on their achievements to become the dominant political force in Finland or even a permanent fixture in its ruling coalition.

Zhdanov's record in Finland does not support either of the competing theories concerning his role in international politics. To describe him as a radical or a moderate misses the point.<sup>131</sup> Soviet leaders cannot be fitted into the conventional categories of hard and soft, intransigent and accommodating. Any attempt to do so, at least in Zhdanov's case, runs into a mass of contradictions. As the spokesman in Finland for the policy of limited intervention, he advocated neither a revolutionary seizure of power nor a strictly parliamentary road to socialism. He urged the Communists to use the armistice as a springboard to power without shrinking from the use of quasi-legal means to destroy their rivals' party organizations and to secure control of the security apparatus. Although he was at times more impatient and interventionist than Stalin and Molotov, for the most part their differences were matters of emphasis and perspective. The main issue separating them was their attitude toward Paasikivi. While Zhdanov regarded him as the major obstacle to a pro-Soviet Finland, Stalin and Molotov considered him the best hedge against an anti-Soviet Finland. This in turn reflected Zhdanov's long term attachment to the party apparatus as the most reliable instrument of advancing Soviet influence beyond its borders, while Stalin and Molotov were always prepared to come to terms with non-communist government leaders so long as the result was beneficial to Soviet state power.

As proconsul in Finland, Zhdanov did not display any overt hostility toward the West nor was he conciliatory. In public appearances and most private talks with Finnish politicians, he made an effort to appear "cordial, charming and expansive" unlike Molotov or on occasion Vyshinskii.<sup>132</sup> His views of Western leaders had evolved from the prewar years. He no longer risked moving too far in advance of

Stalin. On his arrival in Finland, he informed the Finnish Communists that they were out of touch with developments in international politics and promised to send them copies of Stalin's writing on the dissolution of the Comintern and wartime cooperation with the West. "In this particular world situation in which we find ourselves the division is not along party lines but it is still between two parts: the supporters of war and the supporters of peace. Churchill is a conservative and Tanner a Social Democrat, but Churchill is to be found in the camp of the United Nations and Tanner in the fascist camp." There were bourgeois elements in Finland who also belong in "the camp of peace" as in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland and France where Communists led the partisan movement that unified all enemies of Hitler. It was no time to speak of a choice between socialism or fascism. Zhdanov concluded that Churchill and Roosevelt were "far sighted people who understood that after the war anything is possible. Therefore they take into consideration the progressive elements in their countries. They see beyond the short noses of the bourgeoisie."<sup>133</sup>

Nor is there any archival evidence that Zhdanov approved of Tito's ultra-revolutionary position and risky baiting of the Western powers. On the contrary, Zhdanov was critical of Tito's view on several occasions. For example, he dismissed as "radically incorrect advice" the Yugoslav suggestion to the Austrian Communists that a prolonged division of Austria was favorable to their interests because they could then count on direct Soviet support.<sup>134</sup> He took a neutral position on Tito's dispute with the Albanian Communists. But he opposed the movement of a Yugoslav division into Albania in early 1948 on the grounds that the Anglo-Americans could interpret it as an infringement on the independence of Albania thereby justifying their military intervention in the Balkans.<sup>135</sup> This too was consistent with the Soviet position on the use of military forces across national frontiers. For the time being, the doctrine of Red interventionism was in abeyance.

By 1947, Zhdanov's views had evolved along the same lines as Stalin's. The death of Roosevelt signalled for both the beginning of the deterioration of Soviet-American relations.<sup>136</sup> The Marshall Plan was the final blow. In Finland, Zhdanov

accused the U.S. of wishing to subjugate the country economically and politically.<sup>137</sup> At the founding conference of the Cominform, he orchestrated the attacks on the parliamentarianism of the Communist Parties of France and Italy.<sup>138</sup> He was also the leading spokesman for the CPSU in attacking the Yugoslav Communists for a combination of leftist and nationalist errors, including concessions to the imperialist powers of Britain and the U.S.<sup>139</sup> Thus, in dealing with the international communist movement, Zhdanov adhered to the same line as in Finland, navigating between an excessive reliance on parliamentary tactics and activities that might involve international complications, and always sensitive to nationalist deviations. His role in creating and disciplining the Cominform had more to do with controlling and regulating the activities of the Communist parties than with organizing a revolutionary front. According to Duclos' summary of Zhdanov's speech: "the Kremlin (sic!) was indifferent as to whether communists were in the government or not but the parties should conduct an all-out struggle against aid for the U.S."<sup>140</sup> This was precisely Zhdanov's position in Finland.

The isolation of the Finnish Communist Party by 1948 was largely the result of its internal weakness and the resilience of its opponents rather than the exigencies of international politics or the political errors of Soviet foreign policy. From the birth of the party to the opening salvos of the Winter War, it flaunted a militancy inherited from the old socialist-national liberation movement that was a match for any in Europe. But the upsurge of nationalism following the Soviet attack in 1939 diluted its radicalism. Even though there was a lack of enthusiasm among the working class for the Continuation War, there was no substantial indigenous resistance movement.<sup>141</sup> The working class was split between the Social Democrats and the Communists, but the division was not along socio-economic lines. It appeared to reflect nothing more than political preferences. The Communists were never able to dominate the trade union movement. Outside certain districts in the north the peasantry was not alienated from the body politic; their economic position improved throughout the prewar period and there was no class of noble landlords to represent the old feudal order.

In Finland, class antagonism was muted outside a small minority of radical workers. Rural laborers voted communist but there was none of the open hatred of the ruling class and disillusionment with the agrarian party that existed throughout the rest of Eastern Europe. There were few intellectuals in the party. Finland had a national minority in the Swedes; but there was no ethnic antagonism, no persecuted minority seeking an opportunity for revenge. In other words, unlike the rest of Eastern Europe there were no grounds for a civil war in Finland during or after the Second World War. Beyond this the party lacked inspired leadership. There were no resistance heroes like Tito, no desperate adventurers like Pauker, Luca and Bodnareş in Rumania or Rakosi in Hungary; no skillful politicians like Gomulka in Poland or Gottwald in Czechoslovakia. And the Finns had Paasikivi, who was no Beneš. Zhdanov had a good game plan but he had to compromise on the rules, and in the long run the condition of the field defeated him. The supreme irony of Zhdanov in Finland was that the Soviet leader who became the spokesman for the division of the world into two camps presided over the evolution of Finland into a no-man's land between them.

## Notes

1. Support for research and writing was provided by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) and the Alfred L. Cass Term Professorship of the University of Pennsylvania. I am grateful to archivists at the *Rossiiskii tseñtr khraneniia i izucheniia dokumentov noveishei istorii* and *Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Russkoi Federatsii* for their assistance, and to the two anonymous referees of *The Carl Beck Papers* for useful comments.

2. Vojtech Mastny, *Russia's Road to the Cold War*, (New York, 1979) and William O. McCagg, Jr. *Stalin Embattled, 1943-1948*, (Detroit 1978) are examples of the attempt to analyze the origins of the Cold War by focusing on Soviet policy.

3. The main source for this essay is the Zhdanov collection (*fond 77, opis' 3*) of the former Archive of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union known as *Rossiiskii tseñtr khraneniia i izucheniia dokumentov noveishei istorii* (henceforth RTsKhIDNI). The collection consists of 153 reels of microfilm, the bulk of which deals with Soviet-Finnish relations. It contains stenographic records of Zhdanov's conversations with Finnish Communists and government leaders, selected correspondence with Stalin and Molotov and some reports of the Allied Control Commission. Unfortunately for the written record, Zhdanov did not reside permanently in Helsinki during his tenure as chairman of the ACC. From October 1944 to December 1945, he was frequently absent, having more important matters to attend to in Moscow. From December 1945 to February 1947, he did not visit the Finnish capital at all. His trip in February 1947 was on the occasion of the celebration of the signing of the peace treaty. As a result, it must be assumed, many of his communications with Stalin and Molotov were either oral in nature or are located in the main Stalin collection in the Presidential Archive. Most of the material in the Zhdanov collection is in the form of typewritten copies, but there are some handwritten drafts of letters and reports and a few notes of conversations. It is clear from internal evidence that the collection is incomplete. It lacks some of Zhdanov's correspondence with Stalin and Molotov and virtually all of their correspondence with him which has been removed and stored in the Presidential Archive in the Kremlin. That archive is not open. Because the materials at RTsKhIDNI are on microfilm and not always in chronological order, it is not possible to determine which is missing or what has been removed. For those seeking great revelations, the Zhdanov collection will be disappointing. But it is far richer than other document collections of Soviet leaders that have been declassified in RTsKhIDNI, such as the Voroshilov and Kuusinen collections which contain virtually nothing of interest on international relations.

Additional material has been drawn from the *fond 17 Otdel mezhdunarodnoi informatsii TsK VKP (b)* which contains over 1200 files of which only about fifteen percent have been

declassified, and various holdings of the *Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii MID* (henceforth AVP).

4. Max Beloff, *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia*, (London, 1950), II, 113, 255-256. Zhdanov was also critical of Litvinov's attempt to reduce Soviet-Japanese tensions in the Far East in early 1938.
5. Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov, *Nakanune*, (Moscow, 1966), pp. 189, 220-229, 242, *passim*.
6. See for example, "Podgotovka partiinykh organizatsii k vyboram v verkhovnyi sovet SSSR po novoi izbiratel'noi sisteme i sootvetstvuiushchaia perestroika partiino-politicheskoi raboty. Doklad Tov. Zhdanova na plenum TsK VKP (b) 26 fevralia 1937g." *Bol'shevik*, Nos, 5-6, (March 15, 1937), especially pp. 8-17.
7. *Ocherki istorii kommunisticheskoi partii Belorussii*, (Minsk, 1967), pp. 231-232, 240-241; "Za pravil'noe osveshchenie istorii kompartii zapadnoi Belorussii," *Kommunist*, No. 8, (1964), pp. 76-78. See also Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror*, (New York, 1973), pp. 247-248.
8. See Jonathan Harris, "The Origins of the Zhdanov-Malenkov Rivalry", *Slavic Review*, (June 1973): for the "party revival," see McCagg, *Stalin Embattled*, pp. 8-9, 116-146; for postwar policies clashes with Malenkov, see Blair Ruble, Leningrad, *The Shaping of a Soviet City*, (Berkeley, 1990).
9. K.A. Meretskov, *Na sluzhbe narodu*, 4th revised edition, (Moscow, 1984), pp. 100-103.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 105; "Akt o prieme narkomata oborony Soiuzsa SSR tov. Timoshenko, S.K. ot tov. Voroshilova, K.E. 8 maia 1940g." and "Kommentaria" by General M. Moiseev, the First Deputy Minister of Defense and Chief of the General Staff, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 1, (January 1990), pp. 210-212.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 193-200, 214.
12. *Khrushchev Remembers*, (Boston, 1970), p. 154.
13. Meretskov, *Na sluzhbe*, pp. 177-179; Aino Kuusinen, *The Rings of Destiny. Inside Soviet Russia from Lenin to Brezhnev*, (New York, 1974), pp. 117-118, 231. Kuusinen later became a strong supporter of Khrushchev's anti-Stalin campaign and a foe of dogmatism in

the party. But even with close associates he refused to discuss the Terijoki debacle presumably out of deep embarrassment for a rejected past. Georgi Arbatov, *The System. An Insider's Life in Soviet Politics*, (New York, 1992), pp. 63-69, 102.

14. S.T. Verigin, "O planakh likvidatsii Karelo-Finskoi SSR v avguste 1944 g," in *RAN, Institut etnologii i antropologii. Materialy k serii narody i kultury. Vypusk XVI. Karely, Finny. Problemy etnicheskoi istorii*, (Moscow 1992), pp. 18-22, 28.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 28; *Ocherki istorii Karel'skoi organizatsii KPSS* (Petrozavodsk, 1979), pp. 363-365, 577. Kupriianov also played a role in attempting to resettle deported Ingermanland Finns in his republic after the war, a plan aborted by his arrest in 1949. His successors, Kuusinen and Andropov, did not pursue the issue. S.G. Verigin and L. V. Suni, "Pereselenie ingermandtsev v Kareliiu v kontse 1940-x godov," in *Karely, Finny*, pp. 210, 216. Kuusinen continued to patronize Andropov in the post-Stalin period. Arbatov, *The System*, p. 255.

16. See Anthony Upton, *Finland, 1939-1940*, (London, 1974), pp. 44-45, 108. At the same time Zhdanov lost an important battle in his long contest with Malenkov over who was to control the management of industry, the party apparatus, as Zhdanov wished or the state economic specialists, as Malenkov favored. Harris, "The Origins of the Conflict," p.300.

17. Juho Kusti Paasikivi, *Mein Moskauer Mission, 1939-1941*, (Hamburg, 1966) pp. 202-203.

18. F.I. Firsov, "Arkhivy Kominterna i vneshniaia politika SSSR v 1939-1941 gg.," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, No. 6, (December 1992), p. 29.

19. Kuznetsov, *Nakanune*, (1966), pp. 220-229.

20. They summed up their findings in the sweeping order "On the Military and Political Preparedness of Troops in the Summer Period of 1940." G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia v trekh tomakh*, (Moscow 1992), II, p. 301.

21. Iu. Ia. Kirshin, "Kontseptsii mirovoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii i sovetskaia voennaia doktrina," *Soviet Union/Union Sovietique*, special issue, Operation Barbarossa, vol. 18, (1991), Nos. 1-3, p. 146. In his typically irresponsible fashion, Mekhlis also lashed out at the navy for its errors in the Winter War. Admiral Kuznetsov stood up to him, but Zhdanov was again reluctant to defend an embattled colleague in front of Stalin. Kuznetsov, *Nakanune*, pp. 316-317.



22. *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 149.
23. Kuznetsov, *Nakanune*, pp. 295-296
24. Harrison E. Salisbury, *The 900 Days*, (New York, 1969), especially chapters 14 and 26.
25. Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia*, III, 97.
26. Werner G. Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics*. (Ithaca, 1982), pp. 26-27.
27. U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the U.S. (henceforth FRUS), 1945, IV, 607, 629.
28. Tuomo Polvinen, *Between East and West. Finland in International Politics, 1944-1947*, (Minneapolis, 1986), pp. 132-133.
29. Amy Knight, *Beria. Stalin's First Lieutenant*. (Princeton, 1993), pp. 143-150.
30. Polvinen, *Between East and West*, chaps. 1, 2 and pp. 57-62.
31. AVP, f. *sekretariata zamnarodkoma Vyshinskogo*, op. 5, d.100 RU, ll. 56-57, *Protokol No. 1* (Negotiations over the Rumanian Armistice), September 4, 1944; l. 95. *Prilozhenie 2, protokol 3*, September 8, 1944.
32. *Ibid.*, f. *Molotova*, op. 6, d. 150, p. 15, ll. 159-161, 171, 223, 260-266.
33. Thede Palm, *The Finnish-Soviet Armistice Negotiations*, (Stockholm, 1971), p.60 remains the fullest and most reliable account of the negotiations. The full text of the armistice may be found in Anatole Mazour, *Finland Between East and West*, (Princeton, 1956), Appendix XI, pp. 260-279. For the Soviet definition of reparations, RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 39, ll. 39-40. Meeting of the ACC, October 9, 1944.
34. FRUS, 1945, IV, 613.
35. Meretskov, *Na sluzhbe*, pp. 287-288.
36. L.A. Puntila, *The Political History of Finland, 1809-1966*, (Helsinki, 1975), p. 177. Only a small minority of the Finnish leaders sought to enlarge the frontiers in order to create

a "Greater Finland", although they had a group of noisy supporters in the Academic Karelia Society. C. Leonard Lundin, *Finland in the Second World War*, (Bloomington, 1957), pp. 125-144.

37. RTsKhIDNI, f.77, d. 63, l. 11, Conversation of Zhdanov with Leino, Kuusinen and Pessi, March 28, 1945.

38. *Ibid.*, d. 73, l. 35. Zhdanov to Molotov, January 29, 1946.

39. *Ibid.*, d. 53, ll.3-5. Molotov to Zhdanov, January 20, 1945.

40. *Ibid.*, d. 56, ll. 101-02, Molotov to Zhdanov, October 16, 1945. Zhdanov was told that his request to visit Moscow would be reviewed pending receipt of further information.

41. *Ibid.*, d. 37, ll. 11-14.

42. *Ibid.*, d. 39, l. 19, 21, 22.

43. *Ibid.*, d. 39, l. 21.

44. *Ibid.*, d. 48, ll. 2-3. Conversation with Pessi, Leino and Kuusinen, November 2, 1944

45. *Ibid.*, l. 44.

46. *Ibid.*, l. 9.

47. Erik Allardt, "Social Sources of Finnish Communism: Traditional and Emerging Radicalism," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, V:1 (March 1964), pp. 49-64.

48. Puntila, *The Political History*, pp. 201, 203, and John H. Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, (Princeton, 1967), pp. 182-190.

49. Allardt, "Social Sources," pp. 57-61. For a useful corrective to oversimplifications in this model see A.F. Upton, *The Communist Parties of Scandinavia and Finland*, (London 1973), pp. 342-344 and Sten Berglund, "The Ecology of Finnish Communism: A Study on Postwar Data (1945-83)," in Jan Sundberg and Sten Berglund, *Finnish Democracy*, (Jyvaskyla, Finland, 1990). pp. 73-75 which nonetheless confirm Allardt's main conclusions. On the role of the independent farmer and the links between urban and rural workers that

provided a stable base for social democracy in Finland before 1930 see Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland*, (Berkeley, 1988).

50. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 88, ll.6-7. Conversation with Pessi and Kuusinen, June 30, 1947.

51. Pekha Kalevi Hamalainen, *In Time of Storm. Revolution, Civil War and the Ethnolinguistic Issue in Finland*, (Albany, 1979), pp. 108-110, 119, passim.

52. Puntila, *The Political History*, pp. 193-194.

53. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 78, l.28. Letter Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, November 20, 1945.

54. *Ibid.*, d. 39, ll. 22-24.

55. H. Peter Krosby, *Finland, Germany and the Soviet Union, 1940-1941. The Petsamo Dispute*, (Madison, 1968), p. 162.

56. Alapuro, *State and Revolution*, passim.

57. There is no material in the Zhdanov collection regarding the conversations which Zhdanov may have held with Stalin and Molotov in Moscow during this period.

58. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 48, ll. 12-13. This was the basic assumption underlying the United Front tactic during the war and continued to be pursued vigorously throughout Eastern Europe in the early postwar period. See, for example, T.V. Volokitina, *Programma revoliutsii. U istokov narodnoi demokratii v Bolgarii, 1944-1946*, (Moscow, 1990), pp.10-13, passim.

59. AVP, f. *Referentura po Finlandii*, Report of ACC to Dekanozov, April 1, 1945, op. 30, d. 204, p. 161, ll. 5-7, 16, 20, 31-36.

60. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 53, l. 13, Conversation with Pessi, Aaltonen and Kuusinen, January 23, 1945.

61. *Ibid.*, d. 39, ll. 20-21 Meeting of the ACC, October 5, 1944; d. 48, l.2, Conversation with Leino and Kuusinen, November 2, 1944.

62. FRUS (Potsdam), II, 169. On the issue of Finland at Potsdam, see Polvinen, *Between East and West*, chapter 6.
63. AVP, f. *sekretariata Vyshinskogo*, op. 5, par. 136, inv. 453, l. 47, d. 110 (Rumyniia), undated memo (October ? 1944) of the ACC to General Sanatescu.
64. For a general assessment, see Marvin Rintala, *Four Finns*, (Berkeley, 1969), chapter 4. On his early career, see the astute analysis in George Maude, *The Finnish Dilemma. Neutrality in the Shadow of Power*, (London, 1976), pp. 6, 9-10. For his role in the armistice negotiations, see Palm, *The Finnish-Soviet Armistice Negotiations*, pp. 35-36. Paasikivi's brilliant analysis of Stalin and Molotov as negotiators based on fifty conferences with them can be found in FRUS, 1941, I, 30.
65. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 56, ll. 6-9, Zhdanov to Stalin, Molotov and Dekanozov, January 30, 1945.
66. *Ibid.*, d. 56, l. 21, Zhdanov to Savonenkov, August 1945; Paasikivi insisted he was working on passage of a new law on political war crimes but that there was no chance of getting it placed on a juridical basis for that required a five-sixths vote in parliament. *Ibid.*, l. 28, Savonenkov to Zhdanov, August 8, 1945.
67. *Ibid.*, d. 70, ll. 3-4, Conversation with Leino and Kuusinen, August 21, 1945.
68. *Ibid.*, ll. 6-7. Conversation with Leino and Kuusinen, undated.
69. *Ibid.*, ll. 39-43, Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, undated.
70. *Ibid.*, d. 56, ll. 60-61, Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, October 9, 1945.
71. *Ibid.*, ll. 94-96, Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, undated (October 1945); l. 112 Memo of ACC to Finnish Government, undated (October 1945); ll. 127-128, Letter Zhdanov to Mannerheim, undated (October 1945).
72. *Ibid.*, d. 73, ll. 24-25, Conversation with Kekkonen, October 19, 1945.
73. *Ibid.*, d. 78, ll. 26-31, Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, November 20, 1945; ll. 135-36, Conversation with Leino and Kuusinen, December 11, 1945.

74. *Ibid.*, ll. 60-5; 82-83, Conversation with leaders of the tripartite bloc, December 18, 1945; 135-145 Conversation with Leino and Kuusinen, December 11, 1945.
75. *Ibid.*, ll. 28-29. Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, November 20, 1945.
76. *Ibid.*, ll. 149-150. Conversation with Leino and Kuusinen, December 11, 1945.
77. *Ibid.*, ll. 48-49. Molotov to Zhdanov, November 24, 1945.
78. Polvinen, *Between East and West*, pp. 178-182.
79. Palm, *The Finnish-Soviet Armistice Negotiations*, pp. 87, 88.
80. Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 155-156, 167-169, 172-173; Upton, *The Communist Parties*, pp. 210-215; Michael Gelb, "'Karelian Fever': The Finnish Immigrant Community during Stalin's Purges," *EUROPE-ASIA STUDIES*, vol. 45 (1993), No. 6, pp. 1100-1102.
81. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 56, l. 62. Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, October 9, 1945; d. 72, ll. 9-10, 32-33. Conversations with Enckell, September 17, 1945 and with Paasikivi and Enckell, September 22, 1945; d. 73, ll. 1-3, Conversation with Leino, September 29, 1945.
82. *Ibid.*, d. 73, l. 3, Conversation with Leino, September 29, 1945.
83. *Ibid.*, d. 78, ll. 8-11. Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, undated (November-December 1945); ll. 156-158. Conversation with Leino and Kuusinen, December 21, 1945.
84. Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, pp. 182-190. The original members were Karl Wiik, Johan Helo, Yrjö Raisanen, Mikko Ampuja, Cay Sundström and K.-M. Rydberg.
85. Rintala, *Four Finns*, p. 62.
86. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 48, ll. 13-17 and 27-35. Conversations with Pessi, Leino and Kuusinen, November 2, 1944, and with Pessi, Aaltonen and Kuusinen, December 1, 1944. Regarding Wuori, it was the Finnish Communists' turn to be skeptical. They regarded him, rightly, as an opportunist who sought to advance his own career by using them.

87. *Ibid.*, d. 61, ll. 1-5. Conversation with C. Sundström, March 26, 1945.
88. *Ibid.*, d. 63, ll. 4-5. Conversation with Pessi, Leino and Kuusinen, March 28, 1945.
89. *Ibid.*, d.37, ll. 23-24. Meeting of the ACC, October 5, 1944.
90. *Ibid.*, d. 53, ll. 10-11, Conversation with Pessi, Aaltonen and Kuusinen, January 23, 1945.
91. *Ibid.*, l. 15.
92. *Ibid.*, d. 53, l. 35-36. Conversation with Pessi and Kuusinen, March 21, 1945.
93. *Ibid.*, d. 61, l. 9. Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, undated (March 1945).
94. *Ibid.*, d. 63, l. 2. His main concern was to prevent the Communists from being isolated.
95. Upton, *The Communist Parties*, pp. 249-250.
96. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3. d. 63, l. 44. Conversation with Pessi, Leino and Kuusinen, May 28, 1945.
97. *Ibid.*, d. 88, ll. 3-9. Conversation with Pessi and Kuusinen, June 30, 1947.
98. *Ibid.*, d. 53, ll. 14-15. Conversation with Pessi, Aaltonen and Kuusinen, January 23, 1945.
99. *Ibid.*, d. 63, l. 46. Conversation with Leino, Kuusinen and Pessi, May 28, 1945. Zhdanov proceeded to give his own advice on how to draft an agrarian reform but the record of the conversation provides no details.
100. *Ibid.*, d. 64, l. 62. Conversation with Pessi, Leino and Kuusinen, June 1, 1945.
101. *Ibid.*, d. 74, ll. 1-2. Zhdanov to Stalin, undated (September-October 1945); l. 3-4. Zhdanov to Pessi, undated (September-October 1945).
102. *Ibid.*, d. 82, ll. 72-73, 75-76. Conversation with Pessi, Kuusinen and Makinen, April 4, 1946.

103. *Ibid.*, d. 82, l. 74. Conversation with Pessi, Kuusinen and Makinen, April 6, 1946.
104. *Ibid.*, d. 88, l. 8. Conversation with Pessi and Kuusinen, June 30, 1947.
105. *Ibid.*, d. 82, ll. 35-36. Conversation with Pessi, Kuusinen and Makinen, April 6, 1946.
106. *Ibid.*, d. 82-83, ll. 80-81. This is another version of the same conversation. I have conflated the fuller accounts from each of Zhdanov's comments and the Finnish Communist responses.
107. *Ibid.*, d. 88, ll. 2-4. Conversation with Pessi and Kuusinen, June 30, 1947.
108. *Ibid.*, d. 64, l. 61. Conversation with Pessi, Leino and Kuusinen, June 1, 1945.
109. Stig Jagerskiold, *Mannerheim. Marshal of Finland*, (London, 1986), pp. 190-191; Upton, *The Communist Parties*, pp. 259-260.
110. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 63, ll. 24-25, 51-52. Conversations with Pessi, Leino and Kuusinen, May 10 and 30, 1945.
111. Upton, *The Communist Parties*, pp. 172, 217, 231, 258-259 based on Leino's memoirs written after he broke with the party.
112. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 77, 188, Zhdanov to Stalin and Molotov, undated (no earlier than May 2, 1946). It appears that the first part of this document is missing from the microfilm copy.
113. AVP, f. 453, op. 1, p. 82, d. 1870, ll.15-18.
114. Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Block*, (Durham, 1986), pp. 20-21, especially footnote 11.
115. T.V. Volokitina, G.P. Murashko and A.F. Noskova, *Narodnaia demokratiia. Mif ili real'nost'?*, (Moscow, 1993).
116. Upton, *The Communist Parties*, pp. 270-274.
117. The exchange of messages can be followed in FRUS, 1944, III, 626-633. See also the discussion in Polvinen, *Between East and West*, chapter 5.

118. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 184, quoting the Gripenberg diary for August 18, 1945.

120. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d.88, ll. 10-11. Conversation with Pessi and Kuusinen, June 30, 1947. For U.S.-Finnish economic relations see Hannu Heikkila, "Credits of the Export-Import Bank to Finland, 1945-1948", *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, XXX:3 (1982) and *idem*. "The U.S. and the Question of Export Licenses to Finland, 1947-1948," *Scandinavian Journal of History*, VIII:4 (1983).

121. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 88, ll. 3-4. Conversation with Kuusinen and Leino, January 2, 1948.

122. *Ibid.*, op. 3, d. 88, ll. 3-4, 7. Conversation with Kuusinen and Leino.

123. John P. Vloyantes, *Silk Glove Hegemony: Finnish-Soviet Relations, 1944-1974*, (Kent State, 1975), especially pp. 53-55; Max Jakobsen, *Finnish Neutrality. A Study of Finnish Foreign Policy Since World War II*, (New York, 1969).

124. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, l. 53, Zhdanov to Stalin, undated (April, 1948). For a subtle analysis of the ambivalent character of the treaty and its implications for Finland's unique status as a neutral see Maude, *The Finnish Dilemma*, pp. 12-14, 65-70 and *passim*.

125. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, ll. 49-50, Zhdanov to Stalin, undated (April 1948) See also Kevin Devlin, "Finland in 1948: The Lesson of a Crisis," in Thomas T. Hammond, *The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers*, (New Haven, 1975), pp. 438-443; David G. Kirby, *Finland in the Twentieth Century*, (Minneapolis, 1979), pp. 165-170 and the most complete account in Upton, *The Communist Parties*, pp. 289-293. cf. James Billington, "Finland," in C.E. Black and T.P. Thornton, *Communism and Revolution*, (Princeton, 1964), p. 129 and Hodgson, *Communism in Finland*, p. 205.

126. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, op. 3, d. 53, l. 52. Zhdanov to Stalin, undated (April 1948).

127. *Ibid.*, l. 53.

128. *Ibid.*, d. 100, ll. 11-12. Conversations with Kopenik and Finberg, February 13, 1948, and f. 17 (*Otdel mezhdunarodnoi informatsii TsK VKP (b)*), op. 103, d. 705, ll. 32-33. Conversation with Zachariades, May 1947.



129. *Ibid.*, d. 100, l. 5.

130. Unlike Vyshinskii in Bucharest, he might have added. *Ibid.*, d. 78, ll. 149-150. Conversation with Leino and Kuusinen, December 11, 1945.

131. The main exponent of Zhdanov as an ultra-revolutionary and crypto-Titoist who conducted a "rebellion against Stalin" is Franz Borkenau, *European Communism*, (New York, 1953), pp. 520-524. The position that Zhdanov was in actuality a relative moderate in domestic and foreign policy is developed by McCagg, *Stalin Embattled*, esp. pp. 164-165, 175, 257; and Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics*, especially pp. 20-25, 98-101 and 122-129.

132. FRUS, 1945, IV, 607, 617, 629.

133. RTsKhIDNI, f. 77, d. 48, ll. 13, 42-43. Conversations with Pessi, Leino and Kuusinen, November 7, 1944; with Pessi, Aaltonen and Kuusinen, December 1, 1944.

134. *Ibid.*, d. 100, l. 15.

135. *Ibid.*, d. 105, l. 66. Report of Zhdanov, "On the Situation in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia," undated (June? 1948).

136. Zhdanov wrote that following the death of Roosevelt, American policy changed in an anti-Soviet direction. *Ibid.*, d. 93, l. 32. Rough draft of notes by Zhdanov made at the time of the meeting of the Communist Parties in Poland, September 1947. Zhdanov eliminated his reference to Roosevelt in his final draft. When the Finnish Prime Minister M. Pekkala visited Moscow in November 1947, Stalin made a point of comparing Churchill ("always a died in the wool conservative who....recognizes only the system of domination and submission"), with Roosevelt who was "an even-tempered, calm far sighted statesman." *Ibid.*, d. 82, ll. 9, 16. Memo of Conversation of Pekkala with Stalin, undated (November 1947).

137. *Ibid.*, d.88, l. 11. Conversation with Pessi and Kuusinen, June 30, 1947.

138. *Ibid.*, d. 98, ll. 1-2. Memo of Zhdanov to Stalin on information concerning the meeting of the Politburo of the French Communist Party on the conference in Poland, (October 1947). Duclos bitterly reported to his comrades that "Zhdanov was authoritarian (vlastnyi) and pressured us with a real diktat." The French Communists noted that Zhdanov and Malenkov saw eye to eye on "the new situation."

139. *Ibid.*, d. 105, ll. 54-60, 71. Report of Zhdanov "On the Situation in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia," undated (June? 1948). Translated from the Serbian. The document appears to have been obtained by Yugoslav intelligence from several French Communists and passed on to the Soviet Union.

140. *Ibid.*, d. 98, l. 1. Memo of Zhdanov to Stalin on information of the meeting of the Politburo of the French Communist Party, October 1947.

141. Kirby, *Finland in the Twentieth Century*, p. 152.