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Radical Left in post-war Finland - phenomenon of neo-Stalinism in a non-Soviet bloc country

The dissertation aims to explore the phenomenon of a radical pro-Soviet movement – “taistolaiset” – which at the turn of the 60s and 70s for a short period of time dominated the student and cultural circles in Finland. The dissertation strives to shed light on the reasons for the uprise of the – in European context unique – pro-Soviet, Marxist-Leninist and “anti-anti-establishment” youth movement, and on its influence on home and foreign policy of Finland in terms of so-called Finlandization. The work also puts the movement into the Czechoslovakian context, mainly in relation to the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion.

The following theses have been explored: the movement was inevitably interconnected and nurtured by the specific form of foreign policy which Finland conducted during the presidential period of Urho Kaleva Kekkonen - Finlandization; the movement was a historically determined generation rebellion responding to an unfinished trauma of Civil and Continuation War; paradoxically, the movement was strengthened by a non-existent tradition of Finnish Left intelligentsia;  the movement embraced a specific Marxist-Leninist language which served as a group reference and a reinforcement of a collective identity; the ideological production of the movement members served as a tool of undirect Soviet political pressure on the parliamentary as well as non-parliamentary level.

Unlike most of the literature previously dealing with the taistolaiset phenomenon, the dissertation also discusses the theoretical anticapitalistic background of the movement and compares it to the theoretical background and political practice of coeval New Left movements in Europe and the USA.

The experience of the members of the movement has been elaborated in the oral history part based on personal interviews. The oral history chapter aims to offer an explanation and a broader perspective of the taistolaiset phenomenon presented by direct witnesses and participants of the movement.