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## **The Role of Finnish Leftists in Soviet-Finnish Artistic Exchanges during the Late Socialist Period**

### **Abstract**

The article examines artistic exchanges between the USSR and Finland from the viewpoint of the Finnish left. After WWII, Finland was in a difficult geopolitical position; although not occupied by the USSR, it received little support from the West and so remained an independent capitalist democracy, with little foreign leverage. The Soviet influence was felt in many areas, and throughout the Cold War, Finland received many more world-class Soviet artists than any other Western country. This was in part a consequence of Finland's proximity to the USSR, but the Finnish Communist Party, a major domestic political force, also played a role. Immediately after the war, organizations associated with the Finnish Communist Party enjoyed a virtual monopoly over such exchanges, but this began to change in the mid-1950s. Around that time, the USSR began to allow Finnish artists to train and perform at its world-class arenas, and many of those Finnish students had links with the political left. Based on interviews and supported by archival material from Finland and Russia, the article explores the role of the Finnish left in these artistic exchanges.

**Keywords:** Soviet Union, history, Cold War

The Cold War was a difficult period in Finland's relationship with the Soviet Union. Although Finland remained independent after the Second World War (WWII), the neighbouring superpower exerted a strong influence, both politically and in other areas. In the case of artistic exchange, that influence was more positive, as Finland received world-class Soviet artists who might have been expected to travel to more culturally central countries in Europe. As a result of the Cold War, however, it was Finland that first and more frequently welcomed major troupes such as the Bolshoi and Mariinsky theatres and famed musicians such as the pianist Svyatoslav Richter and the violinist David Oistrakh. While proximity to key areas of the Soviet Union clearly played a role, so too did the Finnish Communist Party, which was a major force in domestic politics. The Soviet Union helped the Finnish left by sending top-class performers and troupes on extensive tours—not only to Helsinki but across Finland. The Soviet Union also welcomed Finnish artists, helping them to advance their careers and offering professional prospects that would otherwise be unattainable.

This article examines Finnish-Soviet artistic exchanges from the perspective of the Finnish political left, especially communists and communist sympathizers. While the political dimension of Finnish-Soviet interaction during the Cold War has been extensively scrutinized, fewer studies have looked at cultural relations,<sup>1</sup> even though the Finnish left hoped for more cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> The present study focuses on the Late Soviet period, primarily from 1955 (when Soviet foreign policy underwent significant changes following Stalin's death in 1953) to the mid-1980s. The aim is to understand the change in dynamics when this new generation of Soviet sympathizers began their ascent to prominent positions in the media and in cultural and educational institutions.

The article is based primarily on interviews conducted by the author in Finland, supported by archival material documenting Finnish-Soviet artistic exchanges. The interviews explore personal motivations and perspectives on such exchanges at that time. All of the interviewed artists were left-oriented but not necessarily communists.<sup>3</sup>

A number of significant changes in the 1960s strengthened links between the Soviet Union and Finland. As higher education expanded, the new generation of Finns was generally more leftist than its predecessors, and over the following decades, this impacted on several professions, including those related to the arts. As a result, many right-leaning Finnish politicians were alarmed by the rise of communism in Finland, especially during the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> However, there was no obvious corresponding increase in Soviet influence on Finnish artistic life. Indeed, while Finnish artists turned towards the left, the overall Soviet influence on Finnish culture seems to have declined. By the 1980s, American popular culture and European trends predominated in Finland, and Soviet values were marginalised. For present purposes, a number of individuals and one key organization were selected to explain the role of the left in Finnish-Soviet artistic interaction, the possible flow of influences and individual motives for participating in such exchanges.

Although these artistic links extended beyond the political realm, the Soviet state's motivation was primarily political, as Finland was a potential (if involuntary) ally in Soviet foreign affairs. Proximity was also a factor; the second largest Soviet city was only a matter of hours from the Finnish border. From the Finnish perspective, however, politics had a complex role. Finnish artists saw a country with a rich heritage and high levels of artistic achievement that provided extensive support for the arts, making the prospect of exchanges attractive beyond the political left. The Finnish government, in turn, did not see – or want to see – the political meaning of this activity. Nevertheless, ideology was also a factor, and this is a key issue in the present context, as the rise of Finland's new left in the late 1960s meant that pro-Communist artists and organizations hoped to use culture to drive social and political change.

### **East-West artistic interaction**

Finnish-Soviet cultural exchange during the Cold War era was a curious phenomenon in many ways. Having lost a war to the Soviet Union, but avoiding occupation by the Red Army, Finland became a peculiar case in post-war Europe: a capitalist country under Soviet political influence.

Combining features of its interactions with both socialist and capitalist countries, the level of Soviet cultural exchange with Finland was greater than with any other capitalist country. In the first decade after the war, this influence was less visible, and the Soviet Union remained distant and largely alien to the great majority of Finns. In those early post-war years, the Soviet Union was constantly in the news, but little concrete information reached Finland other than propaganda that trickled through Finnish communist media outlets, with travel limited to occasional (often communist) delegations and diplomats.

After WWII, the Soviet Union resumed its policy of strict borders. This policy was relaxed slightly in relation to socialist countries, but Finland was not included on this list. Cultural exchanges were very limited, and this only changed significantly after Stalin's death in 1953. (Even then, Stalin's secretive and xenophobic policies influenced Finns' attitudes to the Soviet Union until its ultimate collapse.) Around the mid-1950s, the Soviet Union overhauled its approach to cultural diplomacy, and activities previously directed exclusively to socialist countries were now extended to capitalist and developing countries. Cultural exchange agreements with major capitalist countries saw Soviet artists and groups embarking on extensive tours of the West.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the Soviet Union opened its doors to foreign tourism and to groups of professionals from the West. Finland was an early beneficiary of this new Soviet policy and in turn received increasing numbers of Soviet train and bus parties from the mid-1950s on.

Soviet artistic interactions with capitalist countries involved a complex range of activities that included touring works of art, visiting art professionals, exchanges of practice, and the flow of artistic influences and trends across national borders. As one interviewee noted, 'cultural exchanges between governments were one thing, artistic interaction and flow of influences another'.<sup>6</sup> Perspective substantially determines how artistic interactions between the Soviet Union and Finland are perceived. Recent scholarship regarding what is often called the 'cultural Cold War' emphasizes

a governmental point of view. While this approach has attracted increasing interest over the last few decades, the concept itself has eluded clear definition, in part because of the obvious internal discrepancy. As a concept, the Cold War embodies the confrontation of two rival ideologies and economic and political models, hostilities between nations, and competition in fields ranging from the military to technology.<sup>7</sup> The emphasis is on travel limitation, restriction of the flow of ideas, and bans on the movement of goods between East and West. In turn, the cultural Cold War refers to the use of culture to influence the perceived 'enemy', as well as potential allies, and even civilian populations in the other bloc. This approach primarily produces knowledge about state-to-state relations, cultural diplomacy, and the ways in which governments use culture to gain influence.

However, the studies focusing on cultural diplomacy commonly fail to address several important aspects of activities during the Cold War era. While close study of government policy at this time can reveal motives and actions, it tells us little about long-term impacts and consequences. More importantly, those involved in such actions often remain in the shadows. The cultural Cold War was essentially 'a battle for hearts and minds',<sup>8</sup> and to understand it properly, we must look beyond the level of diplomats and politicians to the organization and to people themselves. Certainly, artists experienced the Cold War very differently than their governments;<sup>9</sup> this is especially true of Finnish leftists, who viewed the Finnish government and artistic establishment as right-leaning and anti-Soviet, shunning connections with the Soviet Union in favour of other capitalist countries.

While traditional diplomacy and foreign politics can be examined through the actions of government officials and diplomats, the number of actors and organizations involved in cultural diplomacy is typically much more extensive. For instance, leftists had only partial control over Finnish cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union; the Finnish Communist Party was kept out of the government for almost 20 years after 1948, and even after that, it was never the dominant government party. Nevertheless, Finnish-Soviet artistic exchanges would probably have remained

limited without the insistence of the Finnish left, who were able to influence such matters through various organizations as well as at an individual level. This underlines the importance of differentiating between official cultural diplomacy and lower-level connections that may have resulted from official exchange activities but were in fact quite distinct.

### **Organizations involved in Finnish-Soviet artistic cooperation**

Research on Finnish communists has pointed to close political ties between the Soviet Communist Party and its Finnish counterpart, which received a significant proportion of its funding from the Soviet Union.<sup>10</sup> As one of the largest political parties in Finland, with between 14 and 24 percent of parliamentary seats<sup>11</sup> throughout the Cold War, it seems safe to say that Communists and the far left were key players in Finnish-Soviet artistic exchanges. However, the situation was less straightforward than one might expect, and quite often the influence of Finnish communists on cultural exchanges was indirect. In this respect, the key organization was the Finnish-Soviet Society; although autonomous, it had strong links to the Finnish Communist Party, and its members included many outside the communist sphere—increasingly so after the mid-1950s.

The Finnish-Soviet Society was established immediately after the peace treaty between the two countries was signed in 1944 to change Finnish attitudes towards Russia through cultural exchange.<sup>12</sup> Initially, the organization resembled many other such societies established across Europe in the postwar era. Dominated by the far left, which was associated mainly with the Finnish Communist Party, many believed that the Society served Soviet foreign policy objectives. However, the Finnish-Soviet Society became more than that, growing quickly to become one of Finnish civil

society's largest and most visible organizations. With chapters in most towns and villages, the Society arranged various entertainments and film shows and was open to everyone. Along with Soviet support, the sheer size of the Finnish Communist Party made the Society at once more influential and more complex than its counterparts in other capitalist countries. Both officially and informally, the organization became an important element in Finnish-Soviet relations. During its first decade, however, prior to more organised cultural exchange, it acted mainly as a surrogate of the Finnish and Soviet Communist parties.<sup>13</sup>

The Society's purpose was to facilitate cultural exchange in order to ease tensions and develop mutual understanding between the Finnish and Soviet peoples, but opportunities were limited at first. Finland's political arena was already turbulent because of the war, and this intensified with the legalization of the Finnish Communist Party. Major artistic institutions were averse to communism and hesitated to cooperate with a political organization, and as Stalin's Soviet Union closed its borders after the war, the Society was unable to initiate cultural exchanges on the intended scale. Finland remained a capitalist country, and despite being a major force, the Communist Party was unable to seize power.<sup>14</sup>

Soviet influence did not wane, however, and instead pursued new channels. A major shift in cultural relations occurred in the mid-1950s<sup>15</sup> when Soviet foreign policy changed, lending new means and impetus to the work of the Finnish-Soviet Society. Over the next few years, the outright political role it had been forced to assume gave way to a cultural emphasis. Exchanges of people, goods and processes increased and intensified, and tourist travel was permitted to and from the Soviet Union, increasing yearly from 1955 onwards.<sup>16</sup> Ties with Leningrad were especially close, as well as with Petrozavodsk, where there was still a large Finnish-speaking community, and with Tallinn in Soviet Estonia. While Soviet exchanges with other capitalist countries were also increasing at this time, the scale of exchanges with Finland was exceptional among capitalist countries.



Inevitably, the Soviet Union continued to control travel even after border controls were relaxed, but security arrangements with Finland were less stringent, for several reasons. In addition to the Communist Party's influence, an agreement required Finnish authorities to repatriate asylum-seekers to the Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup> For that reason, sending artists to Finland was safer and required much less surveillance than in the case of other capitalist countries. Links between the two countries grew from the mid-1950s into the 1960s, becoming commonplace and peaking in the 1970s, when the new Finnish left was at its strongest.

### **Dual role of the Finnish-Soviet society**

Prior to the mid-1950s, in the absence of two-way exchange, the Finnish-Soviet Society's cultural actions mainly involved disseminating information about the Soviet Union and looking after Soviet interests in Finland—for example, by correcting anything seen as false information in the media. Even beyond the mid-1950s, some Finns viewed the Society as nothing more than a communist tool for spreading Soviet information. Nevertheless, the Society gradually became a mediator between Finnish civil society and various Soviet organizations. This activity was not selective but served almost any Finnish individual or organization seeking to exchange with their Soviet counterparts.<sup>18</sup>

The Society's role as mediator involved identifying the relevant institutions and individuals within the Soviet system and negotiating and communicating with them. This was likely to be an overwhelming task for any Finnish professional organization unused to the Soviet bureaucratic culture. The Society also offered the necessary translation services often required for communication between Soviet and Finnish organizations.<sup>19</sup> The former were rarely prepared to deal in any language other than Russian, which was not widely spoken in Finland. Some Finnish professionals reported having to liaise with their Soviet counterparts in German or English, but this

seems quite rare and was confined mainly to music and dance.<sup>20</sup> Mediation of the kind provided by the Finnish-Soviet Society helped to manage these rapidly increasing connections, not least because few organizations or individuals had any experience of such work. As the Finnish government lacked the necessary resources to manage these links, it assigned the role to the Society and funded its activities.<sup>21</sup>

The rapidly increasing interaction between the capitalist and socialist blocs after the mid-1950s involved many people who had no prior experience of foreign politics and, more importantly, did not share the views and aims of their respective governments. In the case of Finland, the artists involved in artistic exchanges from the mid-1950s to 1960s were not typically leftists; instead, their motives for engaging with their Soviet colleagues were personal and professional. This began to change only later in the 1960s, with a younger generation of artists who were more politically active and leaned more obviously to the left. This trend was especially evident in theatre and literature but could also be seen in other areas of the arts.

In this climate, governments may have had their own ideas about the goals of cultural exchange, but it was often individuals and non-governmental organizations that played a pivotal role. After some years of ill-defined activity, forwarding exchange projects for professional and commercial organizations while keeping some for itself, the Finnish-Soviet Society began to support Finnish professional organizations in their dealings with Soviet counterparts in the latter part of the 1950s. To fulfil that role, expertise and guidance were needed; the Society recruited staff with proficiencies in specific areas of the arts, and to expedite Finnish-Soviet contacts, discrete sections were established for each art form.<sup>22</sup> In its role as mediator, the Society facilitated the expansion of artistic links but could not control those connections as effectively as before.

Politically, the Society's membership—and especially its leaders—leaned to the left, and often either belonged to the Finnish Communist Party or were its supporters. This ethos was reflected in the Society's activities, which were pro-Soviet and often mirrored Soviet interests. However, most inquiries and requests for the Society's help seem to have come from individuals and organizations with no clear political affiliation. Arts-related institutions were typically interested in high-end Soviet art—for example, Finnish festival or concert organizers sought to bring top Soviet musicians to tour in Finland, and the Finnish-Soviet Society's connections were often indispensable. When asked to help in establishing contact with Soviet counterparts, the Society would typically write introductory letters; because of its status in the Soviet Union, those letters rarely went unanswered.<sup>23</sup>

### **Professional exchanges in the Finnish-Soviet context**

From a government perspective, the expansion of cultural exchange programs following Stalin's death was politically motivated, forming part of the superpowers' Cold War strategy. Governments saw artists primarily as cultural ambassadors whose role was to further government political and ideological aims.<sup>24</sup> However, the artists saw these exchanges in a very different light, and in practice, they had quite a lot of room to manoeuvre. In particular, it seems that official exchanges allowed artists to establish useful foreign contacts in pursuit of their own individual and professional aims.

When Finnish-Soviet artistic exchanges first began to intensify in the mid-1950s, the Finnish Communist Party was in the parliamentary opposition and could not directly influence funding or the government approach to such exchanges. Stressing their importance, the Finnish-Soviet Society looked constantly to the government for funding,<sup>25</sup> and the financial situation improved with the Finnish-Soviet agreement in 1960, before which there had been no official mechanism for cultural exchanges.<sup>26</sup> In 1966, the Finnish Communist Party joined the government and participated in most

governments until 1983 (other than in the early 1970s). During that time, other Finnish political parties also pursued better relations with the Soviet Union, resulting in increased resources for cultural exchanges.

Additionally, the development of exchanges between Finland and the Soviet Union were unique in one crucial regard; reciprocity, a defining feature of Soviet cultural exchanges with other capitalist countries, was absent in the Finnish case. While Soviet agreements with other countries typically involved named groups and specified funding, the agreement with Finland was very general, making exchange activities volatile. According to almost all of my Finnish interviewees, Finland received more artists than it sent, and this is confirmed by the available statistics. While many Finnish artists visited the Soviet Union, they often went as tourists or individuals rather than as part of any official exchange.

Both professional and student exchanges had already begun with the signing of the Agreement on Finnish-Soviet Scientific and Technical Cooperation in 1955.<sup>27</sup> Although student exchanges became more common over time, there were only individual cases in the late 1950s. Student exchange was all the more important because those who studied in the Soviet Union later used their contacts to facilitate subsequent exchanges, either by inviting Soviet colleagues to Finland or by promoting Soviet art in Finland. Four notable Finnish artists who studied in the Soviet Union for more than a year had connections to the Finnish left: the painter Reidar Särestöniemi (1925–1981), who studied at the Ilya Repin Institute in Leningrad from 1956 to 1959; conductor Onni Kelo (1930–2015), who attended the famed conductor class at Leningrad's Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory from 1959 to 1961; cellist Seppo Laamanen (1928–2016), the first Finn to study at the Moscow Conservatory, from 1955 to 1956; and Finland's foremost film director Mikko Niskanen (1929–1990), who studied at the Moscow Film School (better known at the time as VGIK, the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography) between 1958 and 1961. Neither Kelo nor Niskanen were members of the Communist Party, but both had been active in the Finnish-Soviet Society, which assisted them

when applying to study in the Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, Laamanen and Särestöniemi were members of the Finnish Communist Party. As a party member, Laamanen qualified to apply for a stipend from the party receiving the rare opportunity of studying in the Soviet Union.<sup>29</sup> Särestöniemi had attended courses at the Finnish Communist college (Sirola) for nine months in 1954–55 and sought help from the party in applying to study in the Soviet Union.<sup>30</sup> As well as the obvious professional motives, ideological influences are likely to have played some part in all of these cases.

Later in his career, Kelo would introduce a host of Soviet and Russian compositions to the repertoires of orchestras that he led in Finland. He was also behind the many influential visits to Finland of Soviet musical luminaries such as the violin pedagogue Tatiana Pogozeva, who was a key figure in the transformation of Finnish violin pedagogy, and Tikhon Khrennikov, general secretary of the Composers' Union. Khrennikov's visit attracted a lot of media attention at the time, as he held the reins of the Soviet musical world.

Niskanen directed films with a strong social message, often featuring notable Finnish leftist actors and artists—some of them openly communist. In 1967, he directed Maxim Gorky's famous play *The Lower Depths*, the epitome of Russian social realism, for Finnish television. Although Niskanen seems aligned with the political left, he never openly expressed such sympathies. Kelo also kept his political preferences to himself but nevertheless lost his position as the chief conductor of Jyväskylä's City Orchestra because of his alleged communist sympathies.<sup>31</sup> In many areas of the arts, political opinions were concealed, as these were considered harmful to one's career prospects. The exceptions were literature and theatre, where leftist sympathies were much more openly expressed.

Although Reidar Särestöniemi came from a Marxist background and believed in the ideals of communism, his experiences in the Soviet Union were mixed. Although satisfied with his studies in Leningrad, he resigned his membership of the Finnish Communist Party on returning in 1959, though he did not give up socialism.<sup>32</sup> Seppo Laamanen did the same.<sup>33</sup> In Särestöniemi's final

assessment from his Soviet alma mater, he was described as ‘a positive formalist’. Only five years earlier, it would have been inconceivable that someone characterized as a formalist would be accepted as an art student. While Särestöniemi’s style was influenced by Russian art, he was also critical about modern art-making in the Soviet Union. Although enthusiastic about the art of the early twentieth century, as well as the old Russian masters, Särestöniemi was critical of contemporary Soviet art, which he described as ‘socialist grey’ on his return to Finland.<sup>34</sup> In an interview for a television documentary in summer 1972, he went on to say that the art-making process in the Soviet Union had been corrupted by local politicians, and had in his opinion become a ‘shit brown’ process dominated by ‘banal dramatism’.<sup>35</sup> Although Marxist by orientation, Särestöniemi did not publicly tout his opinions, other than on art. He travelled extensively, but mostly stayed at his remote estate in Lapland, which could not be accessed by road.

The generation that followed was more outspoken about their political opinions and support for the Soviet Union. During the 1960s, Finnish artists who visited the Soviet Union were increasingly leftist. While several of those interviewed for this study denied that they were communists—saying that they did not belong to any party—others were openly sympathetic to the left, and some were openly pro-communist. In general, pro-Soviet attitudes and political leftism were rare in the areas of music and dance, but open support for communism was much more common in literature and theatre.

### **Finnish Theatre and the new Finnish Marxists**

From the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, a wave of socialism swept through Finnish society. Positive attitudes to the Soviet Union, communism and Marxist ideas in general were much more common among university students and the new generation of professionals than in previous generations.<sup>36</sup> This affected a number of organizations formerly averse to the Soviet Union, and

leftist sympathies increased noticeably among the cultural and academic elite, including journalists. In the theatre, the new generation questioned the established order and conventions and pursued new ways of doing things. This frequently led to ideological opposition to those regarded as bourgeois elites, who controlled most areas of public life. When Finnish society turned to the left in the mid-60s, Finnish theatre was at the forefront, and the Student Theatre (YT) in Helsinki became pivotal in that context.

In relation to artistic exchanges, one problem for theatre was the central role of spoken language. Plays could always be translated, but it was more difficult to exchange productions and processes than in music and dance, which are by nature universal. Individual actors were rarely exchanged, but directors and whole productions sometimes were, with simultaneous translation provided where necessary. The first Finnish-Soviet exchange of theatre groups was in 1961, when a group from a drama school in Moscow was hosted by YT.<sup>37</sup> This was followed by a rare reciprocal visit in the following year, when YT went to Moscow, and also performed in Leningrad and Tallinn.<sup>38</sup> At the time of these visits, YT was scarcely a leftist organization; instead, it was representative of what communists called the ‘bourgeois orientation’ of the student corpus at that time. Already looking for new directions, the YT found resonances in the European avant-garde. During the 1960s, however, the YT—like many other student organizations—began to become more clearly leftist. , However, there were no further exchanges with Soviet organizations, and the YT became more involved in Finnish domestic politics than in Finnish-Soviet exchanges. Nevertheless, the YT was a hotbed of pro-communist radical youth, and this was reflected in its plays from the mid-1960s onwards. Among these, the iconic *Lapualaisooppera*, authored by the leftist intellectuals Kalle Holmberg, Kaj Chydenius and Arvo Salo, addressed the threat of a rightist coup in Finland at the turn of the 1930s.

This new orientation in Finnish theatre did not go unnoticed by the Finnish-Soviet Society. When established in 1944, the Society instituted separate sections for music, literature, theatre, films and

fine arts, offering specialized professional advice on artistic exchanges. However, in the absence of genuine exchanges, all but the film section were defunct by the 1950s. When the individual sections were re-established, the first of these was the theatre section (in 1968).<sup>39</sup> A delegation to Moscow (December 7–18, 1970) to investigate Soviet theatre included Eini Nenonen, head of the left-leaning Workers' Theatres Union, and Jouko Turkka, director of Joensuu City Theatre. Nenonen represented a leftist organization, and Turkka's views were clearly leftist in orientation.

Turkka authored a lengthy report about their visit to Moscow. The purpose of the trip was to comprehend Soviet theatre, visiting different institutions each day and attending plays each evening. In Turkka's view, academicism was a defining feature of what they saw; the institutions and plays were Western rather than Soviet, with socialism kept carefully at arm's length. He believed they had been treated as capitalist guests, and that the Soviet authorities wished to show they were no different. Turkka felt he had seen no play of any significance, even though such must exist in the Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, Turkka also wrote a much longer personal report about theatre in the Soviet Union, but this was never distributed. In that report, despite some criticisms, Turkka praised the Soviet system. He also accused the Finnish authorities of failing to understand Soviet culture and of doing nothing to promote it in Finland beyond the polite exchange of delegations.<sup>41</sup> This is likely to have been understood by the Finnish-Soviet Society as a criticism of their failure to disseminate Soviet drama in Finland. The Society did not generally welcome criticism of its own activities and typically shifted the blame to others. However, Turkka summed up the changing atmosphere quite well; although he witnessed the conservatism of the Soviet art world with his own eyes he chose not to believe it.

Meanwhile, in the Finnish theatre world, the search continued for a more social and radical art. On leaving YT, many left-wing artists established a more permanent home by founding new professional organizations. Among these, perhaps the most radical social programme was associated with KOM Theatre, whose name signalled its ties with communism. All of KOM



Theatre's founding members had been involved in YT and were pro-communist in orientation. Officially established in 1971, the theatre became a travelling group, performing around Finland, as well as annually abroad. KOM Theatre's key figures were Kaj Chydenius (1939–), Kaisa Korhonen (1941–) and Pekka Milonoff (1947–). Chydenius in particular was an outspoken and controversial public figure, often representing the young radical left in the media. When KOM Theatre was established, its founders had little experience of the Soviet Union, but in Finland's divisive political atmosphere at that time, they were seen as decidedly pro-Soviet.

None of the interviewees from KOM Theatre had particularly fond memories of their visits to the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s. Kaj Chydenius, who still regards himself as a communist, said that during these trips they 'rarely talked with anyone. It was as if we were on the giving side, very rarely receiving anything'.<sup>42</sup> Chydenius had previously studied for a year in the Soviet Union at the Moscow Conservatory. His mentor, Alexandra Pakhmutova (b. 1929), was a celebrated figure and was much favoured by Brezhnev. Although Chydenius appreciated Pakhmutova's guidance, he did not feel that it influenced him directly. In general, Chydenius opposed the conservative approach to the classics and the traditional ways of doing things that prevailed in many socialist countries.<sup>43</sup>

KOM Theatre's first visit to the Soviet Union was to Petrozavodsk in 1972. They subsequently went to Minsk in 1973 and returned to Petrozavodsk in 1974, as well as visiting Leningrad, Kondopoga and other locales in Soviet Karelia. In 1977, KOM Theatre returned again to Petrozavodsk, and over the following five years, they visited Tallinn, Kalinin (now Tver), Leningrad and Kostamuksha. Almost all of the plays KOM Theatre took to the Soviet Union were contemporary Finnish.<sup>44</sup> While the visits to the Soviet Union may seem numerous, they also went to other countries. As Milonoff and Chydenius pointed out, KOM Theatre was exceptionally international in orientation when compared to other Finnish theatres of the time. Between 1971 and 1984, KOM Theatre performed abroad on 272 occasions; of these, 160 were in European countries

that would be considered capitalist, with 97 in socialist Europe (half in the Soviet Union) and 15 in Latin America. Although the majority of these visits were to capitalist countries, they were often hosted by student organizations, labour unions and other pro-communist organizations. Yet although few professional artistic establishments were as openly pro-Soviet as KOM Theatre, their visits to the Soviet Union seem to have been surprisingly uninfluential there. KOM Theatre's members felt that their visits to East Germany, especially Berlin, were more influential. As well as their greater artistic influence there, they also found it easier to interact with people in East Germany.<sup>45</sup>

There was a curious background to KOM Theatre's first visit to the Soviet Union in 1972, beginning with an unexpected visit from the retired General Secretary of the Finnish Communist Party, Ville Pessi (1902–1983). Even after ceasing to be head of the Party in 1969, Pessi remained a key figure in Soviet-Finnish communist relations. For example, he continued to channel money from the Soviet Union to the Finnish Communist Party, indicating the Soviet Communist Party's trust in him.<sup>46</sup> He may have been unhappy with the meagre number of pro-communist artists participating in Finnish-Soviet exchanges, but at his suggestion, KOM Theatre embarked on their visit to Petrozavodsk in Russian Karelia, which had a Finnish Drama Theatre. Some members of the KOM Theatre made some lifelong friends during this trip, but they attended few productions, and little of what they saw proved artistically influential. Both Milonoff and Chydenius lamented the lack of opportunities to see Soviet productions during their trips.<sup>47</sup>

According to Chydenius, official artistic exchanges with the Soviet Union rarely resulted in any creative output; instead, any perceptions or insights he gained from Soviet art or ways of making art came mostly from private trips that often followed the official visits. Those official trips to Petrozavodsk, Leningrad and Tallinn, which were typical destinations for Finnish visits, received little attention.<sup>48</sup> While their interviews suggest that the National Theatre of Finland (Kansallisteatteri) single-handedly dominated such visits, KOM Theatre was well represented in the

theatre section of the Finnish-Soviet Society. From 1972 onwards, Kaisa Korhonen and Pekka Milonoff were among its 14 board members for several years. Kaj Chydenius also represented Finland in the International Theatre Institution (ITI), as well as in the Finnish-Soviet Society.<sup>49</sup>

Many other Finnish organizations shared KOM Theatre's experience that it was easier to cooperate with Estonian colleagues (and those from Petrozavodsk) than with those in other parts of the Soviet Union. Chydenius noted that Estonian artists were frequently invited to Finland, not for the quality of their work but because the exchange provided resources for other foreign travel.<sup>50</sup> Korhonen said the same in relation to Finnish-speaking colleagues from Petrozavodsk,<sup>51</sup> confirming that it was more about personal favours than professional goals. Soviet participants often described their visits to Finland in terms of gaining access to Western goods or intellectual trends, allowing them some escape from everyday Soviet realities. The Finns had no such motives for their Soviet trips, but for leftists, their initial interest in such exchanges was ideologically motivated.

Outspoken leftism did not however guarantee access to Soviet cultural exchanges. For example, Milonoff recalls that Finland's then Minister of Culture, Marjatta Väänänen (a centrist also known as 'the only man in the government'), was suspicious about KOM Theatre's participation in such exchanges.<sup>52</sup> This aligned with her open resistance to leftists, which was uncommon in Finland at the time. The problem for the Finnish government was that in many areas of academia and the arts, it was difficult to find exchange candidates who were not politically left-leaning.

Personal connections generally played a significant role in Finnish-Soviet artistic exchanges. KOM Theatre's links with the Soviet Union owed largely to Kaj Chydenius and his connections at ITI. For example, the influential Soviet Estonian theatre organizer Arne Mikk was a fellow board member, and this led to both official and unofficial exchanges.<sup>53</sup> Mikk, in turn, was instrumental in organizing several Soviet-Estonian visits to Finland, as well as receiving Finnish visitors to Estonia.<sup>54</sup>

During the 1970s, the Finnish Theatre School (predecessor of the Theatre Academy of Finland) was also moving to the left and seeking to establish links with the Soviet Union. In spring 1977, Raija-Sinikka Rantala, head of the department of directing and dramaturgy, approached then head of the Finnish-Soviet Society, Christina Porkkala, to ask for help in securing an exchange with the Finnish Theatre in Petrozavodsk.<sup>55</sup> The proposed exchange was mainstream rather than radical. For the Finnish Theatre in Petrozavodsk, links with Finnish colleagues were very important; for the Soviet authorities, such connections could be justified on ideological grounds—increasing Soviet influence in capitalist Finland while also assisting leftist forces. Because many Estonians and Finns in Petrozavodsk shared a common language, it could also be argued that such initiatives would be more influential.<sup>56</sup>

Some cultural collisions had little to do with socialism but rather with what was deemed acceptable in Finland and in the Soviet Union. In the mid-1980s, KOM Theatre was in Kazan, where they performed Joni Skifstevik's *Buried Upright*. The play's realist style caused a stir among the audience because, although the script was gloomy, two of the actors appeared naked in the sauna scene. Mothers ran screaming from the hall, carrying their children, and men covered their wives' eyes. By the time the local militia arrived, however, the sauna scene was over, and the show was allowed to continue.<sup>57</sup> KOM Theatre considered itself part of the counter-culture; certainly, it was part of the European avant-gardist theatre movement of the time. KOM Theatre's declared purpose was to break borders and make people think. In the Soviet Union, however, as the official theatre scene was conservative, the reception was sometimes mixed despite shared ideological beliefs.

### **The Year of Soviet Drama in Finland**

While linguistic obstacles generally imposed understandable limits on theatre and performance exchanges, this was not really an issue for KOM Theatre, as music played an important role in many of their productions, helping to convey meaning and feeling and so making reception easier. Exchanges organized by the Finnish-Soviet Society rarely extended to the area of repertoire. This is

somewhat surprising, as the Soviet Union actively supported literature and plays. However, few Soviet plays had been translated into Finnish, and the Finnish left noted that they were rarely performed in Finland. During the 1970s, there were several attempts to rectify this situation. For example, in the winter of 1975, KOM Theatre performed Vsevolod Vyshnevsky's *Optimistic Tragedy* (1933) in Helsinki's biggest available hall, the Peacock Theatre. Kaisa Korhonen had seen the production in East Germany in the 1960s and revisited the idea of producing it in Finland following a Finnish-Soviet theatre seminar in 1973.<sup>58</sup> Even in the mid-1970s, Soviet socialist realism rarely featured in Finnish theatre productions or in Finnish art museums or concert halls. , Along with leftist theatre professionals, the Finnish-Soviet Society pushed for change in this regard, and after a major effort, the Society designated the 1977/78 theatre season as the Year of Soviet Drama in Finland.

Planned over several years, the idea for this initiative originated in the 1973 Finnish-Soviet theatre seminar. Preparations included the translation of new works and contact with a number of professional theatres to secure any Soviet plays in their repertoire. A prestigious Finnish delegation was led by the literary scholar Aarne Laurila (who was not a communist but a social democrat), and Matti Kekkonen, the son of president Urho Kekkonen. The 1977/78 season commenced with an opening festival at Finlandia House on 26 September 1977, followed by a Finnish-Soviet theatre symposium at the Soviet Center for Culture and Science in Helsinki over the following two days. The Soviet Union brought a delegation of 30 theatre professionals to Helsinki, led by Sergei Mihalkov, who wrote the lyrics of the Soviet national anthem.<sup>59</sup> The Finnish-Soviet Society actively promoted the event, urging members throughout Finland to support related events throughout the season.<sup>60</sup>

Altogether, 17 theatres around the country added a Soviet play to their repertoire for the season. While most were traditional professional theatres, KOM Theatre and other smaller theatres were also included. Six classical plays by Gorky and Chekhov were also included as part of the festive

year. Because some theatres featured two Soviet plays during the season, the overall count (including pre-revolutionary classics) was 27.<sup>61</sup> Rather than the perspective of the Finnish radical left, the Finnish-Soviet theatre symposium emphasized the long continuum of Finnish-Soviet cultural relations, and the event could not have been further removed from political radicalism. The same was true of the Soviet plays staged in Finland, and although audience reaction was reportedly positive, the plays represented what the Finnish left had found most disappointing about Soviet mainstream theatre: light comedy and easy drama, with little or no ideological or political relevance.<sup>62</sup>

As far as the Finnish-Soviet Society and the Soviet Union were concerned, this was a move in the right direction; they were not interested in radical Marxism but only in disseminating Soviet culture across Finland. A Finnish-Soviet Society report from 1979 noted that Finnish theatre had indeed moved in this direction. While the number of Soviet visits to Finland was considered generally satisfactory, reciprocal visits by Finns to the Soviet Union were rarer. Petrozavodsk and Tallinn were both the most frequent visitors and the most frequent hosts. The Society also organized frequent theatre trips to Moscow and Leningrad, both for professionals and for a broader audience, to acquaint them with recent developments in Soviet theatre. These visits were said to be effective in gaining access to the best plays and directors, sometimes leading to exchange visits to Finland. On one typical trip (31 May–6 June 1978), 30 theatre professionals attended seven performances at different Moscow theatres.<sup>63</sup>

Twin-city activities between the two countries were also mentioned as a potential means of increasing the number of theatre visits.<sup>64</sup> For both the Finnish-Soviet Society and the Soviet authorities, quantity was the key factor, and the more radical Finnish left's concerns about quality and ideology were not taken seriously. In terms of content, artistic exchanges generally seemed to favour mainstream productions, and counter-culture as embodied by KOM Theatre was poorly

represented. Both Milonoff and Chydenius preferred to work with East Germany, where there were fewer collisions and conflicts.<sup>65</sup>

The accounts provided by all the interviewees here align with other sources in suggesting that interaction with the Soviet Union became easier during *perestroika*. In those years, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, many of the existing limitations disappeared, and non-establishment institutions were allowed to make contact with foreign artists. As a result, more lasting contacts began to emerge with Russian, Estonian and Karelian colleagues. Even though governmental agreements made artistic exchange possible in the first place, it seems that government-imposed limitations had been a serious obstacle to interaction. The paradox was that while funds were available for international cultural exchange, official provisions also ensured government-led selection of participants, and government objectives were imposed on the participating artists.

## **Conclusions**

During the early period (from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s), Finnish-Soviet artistic exchanges were mostly formal and official in nature. Communist artists were included in some official delegations, but they were political tokens and had little to do with artistic exchange. Most of those who participated in these early exchanges were established artists and were rarely ideologically motivated. Participating Finnish artists tended to come from the professional elite, which at the time was typically non-leftist. Notable exceptions included those artists who went to study in the Soviet Union on longer exchanges, who were ideologically inclined towards the Soviet Union, even if they did not openly express this political stance. In the cases I have been able to trace, either the Finnish Communist Party or the Finnish-Soviet Society played an important role in making the exchange possible.

It proved difficult to find many examples of long-lasting exchanges and interactions that resulted in anything more than polite reciprocal visits and individual performances. Others have suggested that the most enduring relationships were between professional organizations, involving the Fazer

Concert Office—the biggest and most internationally-oriented Finnish concert organizer—or the Finnish National Opera. Both succeeded in building working links with *Goskontsert*, the Soviet organization responsible for touring Soviet musicians, dancers and troupes, both in the Soviet Union and abroad. While Fazer brought many soloists to Finland—many of them repeatedly, over decades—the Finnish National Opera brought notable opera and ballet performers for month-long visits, as well as ballet choreographers and trainers. Classical music and dance were the key elements of Soviet cultural diplomacy, often spearheading exchanges with chosen countries.<sup>66</sup> In these areas, however, there was little visible ideology, and these art forms were generally dismissed by the new generation of the Finnish left as bourgeois and elitist, with little to offer to society. Nevertheless, these forged the most enduring artistic links between Finland and the Soviet Union.

With the rise of the new left in Finland in the latter part of the 1960s, a new generation of Finnish artists was driving a generational change, characterized by more pro-Soviet attitudes than in previous decades. As the establishment was largely anti-communist, this led to disagreement about how the international connections of different organizations should be managed. The issues included the balancing of Finnish-Soviet artistic exchanges and whether Finland should engage in more such exchanges with the Soviet Union. While young leftists participated in exchanges, left-leaning Finnish artists were often disappointed by their Soviet colleagues' perceived lack of interest in politics and their conservatism in relation to the arts.

In the late 1970s, Finnish-Soviet exchanges became more commonplace in all areas of life. Fewer people viewed the Finnish-Soviet Society as an ideological or political organization, and an increasing number of Finns travelled to the Soviet Union as tourists. Despite these exchanges, however, the vast majority of Finns continued to regard the Soviet Union as suspect and alien, and as the Year of Soviet Drama project showed, the outcomes were not always satisfactory for the radical Finnish left. In short, the Finnish art scene was unable to find the answers it sought in the



Soviet Union, disappointing those who hoped for more genuine social reform in Finland as a result of exchanges with the Soviet Union. Instead, Soviet realpolitik was the ultimate winner.

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## Notes

1. There is no research in Finnish describing Finnish-Soviet cultural exchanges, although a number of studies of Finnish cultural institutions and organizations also discuss such exchanges. These include Kinnunen, *Suomi-Neuvostoliitto-Seuran historia*; Pernaa, *Tehtävänä Neuvostoliitto*. Several memoirs and studies of individual artists also refer to their role in Finnish-Soviet exchanges, but there is no overall picture, either in Finnish or other languages.
2. On Finnish Communists, see e.g. Rentola, *Niin kylmää että polttaa*; Paastela, *The Finnish Communist Party*. No existing works discuss the role of Finnish communists in matters of arts and culture or cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union.
3. The main source of archival material for this article is the very extensive collection of the Finnish-Soviet Society, held by the Finnish National Archives. I also conducted 32 interviews with musicians, dancers, actors, directors and administrators involved in managing Finnish-Soviet cultural exchanges. All of the interviews focus on Finnish-Soviet exchanges and the interviewee's role and experiences of exchange activities. For present purposes, I have selected a few relevant articles, drawing on other interviews to understand the context in which informants operated.
4. The rise of the new left in Finland in the 1960s was not tied to the Finnish Communist Party. However, in the early 1970s, some leftist youth decided to align with minority communists and their most prominent representative Taisto Sinisalo, giving rise to the "taistolaiset" movement. In reality, this movement was politically scattered, bringing together culturally active people who supported Marxism, radical equality and development aid and exhibited a pro-Soviet attitude.
5. The change in cultural relations with the Soviet Union has mostly been examined from the American point of view: Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*; Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*; Caute, *The Dancer Defects*; Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*; Rosenberg, *Soviet-American Relations*. A notable exception is Gould-Davies, 'The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy', which examines the change in Soviet cultural diplomacy through a Soviet lens.
6. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.

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7. Westad, 'The Cold War and the international history'.
  8. Mikkonen, 'Winning Hearts and Minds?'.
  9. In the United States in particular, the late 1940s and early 1950s saw a strong wave of anti-communism that impacted most areas of American society. See e.g. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*; Field, *American Cold War Culture*. However, even if anti-Communism remained influential, the Cold War was not a determining factor in people's lives. For a good overview of the impact of the Cold War on different areas of society and culture, see Shaw, 'The Politics of Cold War Culture'. It is also noteworthy that no literature directly addresses the impact of the Cold War on Soviet society and culture.
  10. Rentola, *Niin kylmää että polttaa*, 176–179.
  11. In 1944, the Finnish Communist Party had organized the Finnish People's Democratic League (SKDL) to serve in elections. The original aim was to bring another big leftist party, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), under its control, but this eventually failed. SKDL was dominated by communists but also included some other leftist parties and organizations.
  12. Kinnunen, *Suomi-Neuvostoliitto-Seuran historia*, 75; concerning the early years of the Finnish-Soviet Society, see Mikkonen, 'The Finnish-Soviet Society'.
  13. One example of communist influence over the Finnish-Soviet society was the signing of the Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual assistance (YYA) between Finland and the Soviet Union. This agreement was generally very unpopular, but the Finnish-Soviet Society was required to publicly embrace and popularize it, essentially politicizing the Society. Mikkonen, "The Finnish-Soviet Society", 117.
  14. Communists lost parliamentary seats in the elections of summer 1948, after which the threat of a communist takeover in Finland receded. See e.g., Rentola, *Niin kylmää että polttaa*.
  15. Gould-Davies, 'The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy'; Mikkonen, 'Winning Hearts and Minds'.
  16. Golubev, 'Neuvostoturismen ja läntisen kulutuskulttuurin kohtaaminen Suomessa'.
  17. The peace treaty with the Soviet Union included an article stipulating that all Soviet citizens must be repatriated. In practice, only Finnish citizens were allowed to defect to Finland from the Soviet Union. Pekkarinen and Pohjonen, *Ei armoa Suomen selkänahasta*.
  18. Letter from Uuno Laurikainen (Finnish-Soviet Society) to the Finnish Ministry of Education, 7.1.1960. Finnish National Archives (KA), SNS, File 399 – Kulttuurivaihto / Suunnitelmat ja sopimukset (1954–1993). This letter outlined the plan for cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union for 1960, drafted on 26.11.1959. The letter indicates that in addition to managing some exchanges itself, the Society also directed visits by individual artists and groups for

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organizations such as the Finnish National Opera, Fazer Concert Organization and Helsinki City Orchestra.

19. The archives of the Finnish-Soviet Society include hundreds of different queries and attempted contacts with Soviet organizations, translated and forwarded by the friendship society to the Soviet Union. For example, in 1955, Helsinki City Orchestra tried to invite several Soviet soloists to perform during the concert season. The friendship society informed Turku City Orchestra, effectively to secure a tour of Soviet soloists rather than a single visit to Helsinki. See: Letter by Ontro Virtanen (Finnish-Soviet Society) to Turku city music board, 10.5.1955. KA, SNS, file 75, Kirjeenvaihto, muut yhteisöt (1945–1970).
20. Maire Pulkkinen worked for Fazer Concert Office from the 1950s until the 1970s. She took care of visiting Soviet artists and much of the correspondence with the Soviet Concert Organization. She did not speak any Russian but, rather, used German in her work. Contrary to many other areas, Russian was not an absolutely necessary language for music cultural exchanges. See interview with Maire Pulkkinen, 25.8.2011. Interview with the author. Soviet concert organization, Goskontsert, developed intense connections abroad, also employing a lot of people speaking foreign languages.
21. Sopimus sivistyksellisestä yhteistyöstä Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton välillä [Agreement of cultural cooperation between Finland and the Soviet Union], 6th article, 27.8.1960. KA, SNS, File 399 – Kulttuurivaihto / Suunnitelmat ja sopimukset (1954-1993). Prior to this agreement, the first of its kind, the Finnish-Soviet Society had already arranged official exchange activities, through government funding. For five years, from 1963 to 1968, Finnish government had an committee tending cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union, but already during these years – and particularly after that – the Finnish-Soviet-society remained the key in cultural exchange.
22. In the 1960s, for example, the Society hired Alpo Lääperi to manage the increasing musical exchanges between Finnish and Soviet organizations. Lääperi was from Turku and had been involved in arranging musical activities in his home town before relocating to Helsinki.
23. In a typical case, a Finnish organization would ask the Finnish-Soviet Society to translate the letter and to help with contacting a Soviet organization. The Finnish-Soviet Society would then forward a query, including a letter outlining the importance of the query in ideological terms and its importance for Finnish-Soviet cultural exchange. This would typically yield an answer; in contrast, several Finnish organizations noted that letters they themselves sent had not received a reply. See for example “Publication of a regional chapter of the Finnish-Soviet Society in Central Finland, Taloudelliset suhteet”, 1966. Jyväskylä Regional Archive

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- (JYMA). SNS:n keski-suomen piirijärjestön papereita. Dmitry Hinze, a Russian emigre, noted that bureaucracy was a bigger problem for Soviet musicians than for soloists from any other country. From 1965, the festival he represented began to use the Finnish-Soviet Society as a mediator rather than trying to operate alone.
24. Gould-Davies, 'The Logic of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy'; Mikkonen, 'Winning Hearts and Minds'.
  25. There were frequent letters to the Finnish Ministry of Education in the 1950s. In 1959, one controversy drove the Finnish-Soviet Society to publicly accuse the new Finnish government (in the newspaper of the Finnish Communist Party) of cutting funding from Finnish-Soviet exchanges; see 'Hallitus kieltää SNS:ltä valtionavun', *Kansan Uutiset*, 22 January 1959.
  26. There were two important agreements, but neither had a direct impact on artistic exchange. The first was the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance of 1948 (YYA); its main purpose was to prevent Western powers from attacking Soviet territory through Finland. The 1955 Agreement on Finnish-Soviet Scientific and Technical Cooperation was primarily scholarly in nature.
  27. Mikkonen, 'In the Shadow of Technology'.
  28. Mikko Niskanen's application went through the Finnish-Soviet Society. It underlined Niskanen's participation in the theatre activities of the Society in the 1940s and 1950s. CV of Mikko Niskanen (in Russian), 3.9.1957. KA, SNS, File 80 – Kirjeenvaihto, yksityishenkilöt (1944–1978).
  29. Issakainen, *Seppo ja sello*, 32–35.
  30. Minutes of the Central Committee of the Finnish Communist Party, 25.8.1956. People's Archive of Finland, The Finnish Communist Party, records of the Finnish Communist Party.
  31. 'Onni Keloä yritetään savustaa Jyväskylästä', *Kansan Uutiset*, 8 December 1976; Korhonen, *Jyväskylä sinfonia*, 139.
  32. Polttila, *Reidar*, 71.
  33. Issakainen, 1993, 32–35.
  34. Polttila, *Reidar*, 62,
  35. Reidar Särestöniemen haastattelu kesällä 1972, Eeli Aallon dokumentista, joka lähetettiin ensimmäisen kerran YLE:n televisiokanavalla 17.1.1973. YLE:n elävä arkisto, <http://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2009/08/18/reidarin-varilliset-aistimukset>
  36. Yet, it is important to note that pro-communist and leftist attitudes did not necessarily mean support to the leadership of the Finnish Communist Party. The Finnish Communist Party experienced an internal strife that tore the party into two groups. Internal opposition received

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vocal support from a generation of young Marxists, while the mostly older cohort held the reins of power within the party. Support from the Soviet Communist Party was the main factor keeping the Finnish Communist Party from formally splitting.

37. Lounela, 'Korkeatasoinen teatterikorkeakoulu', *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, 28 April 1961.
38. "'Silmänkääntäjä" ja "Madeia" (sic) Moskovassa Ylioppilasteatterin esittämänä', *Päivän Sanomat*, 8 March 1962.
39. 'SN-seura perusti teatterijaoston', *Kansan Uutiset*, 13 September 1968.
40. Report of visit by a theatre delegation to Moscow, 7–18.12.1970. KA, SNS, file 145. Teatterijaosto (1946–1989). Note: file contains papers for the theatre section (according to the file, it contains only papers for the music section).
41. Jouko Turkka's report on his visit to Moscow, 22.12.1970. KA, SNS, file 145. Teatterijaosto (1946–1989).
42. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
43. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
44. Ollikainen and Tanskanen, *KOM kirja*, 562–579; author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
45. Ollikainen and Tanskanen, *KOM kirja*, 261–265.
46. Rentola, *Niin kylmää että polttaa*, 176–179.
47. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
48. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
49. Membership lists of the Finnish-Soviet Society's theatre section for 1972, 1974, 1976 and 1980. KA, SNS, file 145. Teatterijaosto (1946–1989).
50. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
51. Author's interview with Kaisa Korhonen, 2.4.2019.
52. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
53. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
54. Author's interview with Arne Mikk, 16.8.2013.
55. Telegram and letter from Raija-Sinikka Rantala to Christina Porkkala, 18.5.1977. KA, SNS, file 77 – 10 Muut yhteisöt (1977–1980).
56. Author's interview with Kaisa Korhonen, 2.4.2019. Korhonen emphasizes that an important aspect of the exchanges was to help Karelian Finns and Finnish language culture in Karelia and Petrozavodsk, which was constantly under threat.
57. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
58. Ollikainen and Tanskanen, *KOM kirja*, 115.

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59. Press release on Finnish-Soviet theatre symposium, 30.8.1977. KA, SNS. file 77 – 10 Muut yhteisöt (1977-1980)
  60. Circular of the Finnish-Soviet Society, [n.d. after 28.9.1977]. KA, SNS. file 77 – 10 Muut yhteisöt (1977-1980)
  61. Circular of the Finnish-Soviet Society, [n.d. after 28.9.1977]. KA, SNS, file 77 – 10 Muut yhteisöt (1977-1980)
  62. Jänis, 'Kääntäjä välikätenä', 137–8.
  63. Letter from Eero Salmi, head of the Finnish-Soviet Society, to Nina Zakrevskaya of Inturist, 4.4.1978. KA, SNS, file 80 – 15 Yksityishenkilöt (1944–1978).
  64. Memorandum on developing theatre exchange activities between Finland and the Soviet Union, 3.11.1979. KA, SNS, file 77 – 10 Muut yhteisöt (1977–1980)
  65. Author's interview with Kaj Chydenius and Pekka Milonoff, 3.12.2015.
  66. Mikkonen and Suutari, 'Introduction to the Logic of East-West Artistic Interaction'.

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