

The Communist Defeat in the 1948 Finnish Election: Notes on the Impact of Organization

Pertti Laulajainen, Research Institute of Eastern Finland

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Introduction

In the parliamentary elections held in Finland March 17 and 18, 1945 and July 1 and 2, 1948 the breakdown of votes was as follows:

	1945	%	1948	%
SKDL (Communists)	398,600	23.5	375,800	20.0
SDP (Social Democrats)	425,900	25.1	494,700	26.3
Non-socialist parties	873,800	51.4	1,009,400	53.7

In terms of votes cast, the electoral defeat of the Communists in 1948 does not seem very great. It becomes serious only when the decline of their seats in parliament is analyzed in detail. The decline was eleven seats, from 49 to 38. The number of parliamentary seats held by Social Democrats increased from 50 to 54 in the 200-member Finnish Parliament.

In this article, the impact of party and other organizations on the Communist electoral defeat in 1948 will be analyzed and discussed. To some extent other factors and variables are taken into account as well, so that it is perhaps

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justified to introduce some kind of pre-theory or auxiliary theory designed to explain the main features of the electoral defeat.

Many observers in Western Europe and America have been puzzled by the steady support for Communism in Finland after the Second World War. The support did not show signs of decline until the end of the 1960's. This decline was mostly caused by inner conflicts in the Communist movement (Hodgson 1967, 225). These observers tend to overlook the fact that in Finland there has been a strong tradition of Communism ever since the 1920's. In the 1929 parliamentary election the political movement equivalent to the present Popular Democratic Movement (i.e. the Finnish People's Democratic League — SKDL) gained 13.5 per cent of the votes, in other words only 10 per cent units less than SKDL gained in the 1945 Parliamentary election. From 1930 to 1944, the Communist movement in Finland was illegal and many thousands of communists were sentenced to prison for political reasons.

The regions having strong traditional Communist support held their positions in the 1948 election, too. This trend can be seen clearly from the following commune-based correlations of the support for the Communists in the elections held in 1929, 1945 and 1948:

	Communist support 1945	Communist support 1948
Communist support 1929	.56	.76

The regional basis of Communist support changed distinctly between the years 1945 and 1948 and took the direction which it had in the 1920's. The importance of both the bloody civil war (1918) and the political tradition in general for the present Communist movement should be kept in mind.

In 1944 the *Finnish People's Democratic League (SKDL)* was founded. It was a special kind of political union in that it included a whole political party, viz. the Finnish Communist Party (SKP). The total number of members in SKDL was about 20,000 at the time of the 1945 election and about 75,000 during the 1948 election. About one hundred local organizations of the Social Democratic Party split with SDP and joined SKDL in 1944-48. I have at my disposal data gathered from the People's Archives (Kansan Arkisto) of SKDL's membership numbers in the communes from the years 1945, 1948 and 1951.

The *Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP)* was in the period 1930-1944 the only legal socialist party in Finland and gained 39.8 per cent of the votes and even 85 members of parliament in the 1939 parliamentary election. Party conferences in 1944 and 1946 were quite quarrelsome, but party leader-

ship remained in the hands of the so-called “brothers-in-arms socialists” who were situated rather far to the right on the political map and clearly opposed the Communists. Many of those holding leading posts in SDP during the postwar years had held central positions also in the Finnish League of Brothers-in-Arms which was active 1941-45. SDP had at the time of the 1945 election about 30,000 members and at the time of the 1948 election about 70,000 members. I have data on SDP’s membership in the Finnish communes for the years 1945, 1948 and 1951. These data were gathered from the various publications of SDP and from the Archives of Labour (Työväen Arkisto).

The *Finnish Confederation of Trade Unions (SAK)* was rather weak during the whole of the 1930’s and the wars (1939-44), but from 1944 to 1947 its total number of members increased from about 100,000 to about 340,000. The decline in the number of members in this case was to a great extent due to the power struggle between the Communists and Social Democrats and reflects the inactivity of the general working population. In the 1946 election Communists succeeded in gaining small majority in the SAK’s highest decision-making body, but surprisingly easily they conceded to demands for a new election by Social Democrats because of the alleged irregularities in the election. When it turned out that SKDL did not reflect a wider union of “democratic” forces as its name suggested, Communists regarded it as very important to preserve the unity of the trade union movement. In the 1946 trade union elections it is plausible that some representatives elected as Communists were in fact Social Democrats and thus as a matter of fact the latter had a majority. This has been observed by Arvo Hautala, who adds that the Trade Union of Rural Workers which had a Communist majority elected a Social Democrat Eero Antikainen to be its chairman because it regarded him as a Communist (Hautala 1977, 40). During two or three postwar years the situation in the SAK was still confused, and movement from one party to another was so common that the manipulation as described above was possible.

Unfortunately, there are no data concerning the number of members in the SAK and in its several subunions in the communes. The collection of this kind of data is for many reasons very difficult — if not altogether impossible.

The *Finnish League of Brothers in Arms (AVL)* was to a large extent a consensus organization whose membership was already in 1940 about 80,000 (it was founded 1940-41 during the time between the Winter War and the Continuation War). The League was brought to an end by the recommendation of the Supervisory Commission at the end of January 1945. At that time its membership had grown to nearly 250,000. The central forms of activities in the AVL were voluntary help, social work and the promotion of patriotic ideals. The latter kind of activity was carried out by a secret organization,

financed by the Ministry of Defence called the Labour Organization of Finnish Brothers-in-Arms. Already during the time between the Winter War and the Continuation War this organization had altogether about 5,000 informants in different parts of the country (Hentilä 1982, 490-493). As the Continuation War began in the summer of 1941 the Labour organization of Finnish Brothers-in-Arms was organized under the supervision of the State Information Agency.

I have very recently managed to find the data about the membership of Finnish League of Brothers in Arms by communes in the War Archives. These figures most probably illustrate the situation at the end of 1941, because the total number of members in the whole country is about 120,000 members, in other words nearly half of the peak amount of members in 1945. It seems almost certain that data about the numbers of members of AVL by communes are not available at any other point of time than in 1941. Because of this state of affairs, it is reasonable to utilize the data of 1941 in this study.

The variable of the year 1941 was not, however, in the data processed for this article but was replaced by the official list of discontinued local organizations of AVL (“Virallinen Lehti”, The Official Newspaper 8 February 1945). Because the variable in question is dichotomous by nature, it is obviously not as good a variable for the purposes of this study as the one which can be obtained by relating the number of members in AVL in each commune to the number of voters in the same commune in 1945.

After the AVL was dissolved, the SDP founded its “organization of party agents” which naturally was unofficial and was supposed to be secret. Let the official report on the activities of the SDP speak for itself:

“When the organization of party agents was founded, many difficulties emerged. The greatest of them seemed constantly to be the fact that, especially among older members, it was obviously difficult to realize the real purpose of the organization. There was a slight fear that the organization of party agents would aim at forming ‘a state inside the state’, i.e. a parallel organization beside the actual party machinery. As a whole however it should be said that as this organization — combat machinery — matured, it gained more and more sympathy.” (The Report on the Activities of the SDP’s Party Executive Committee in 1946, Helsinki 1949, p. 24)

How then did Communists perceive the “combat organization” in question? One of the Communists, Arvo Hautala, writes in his memoirs as follows:

“In working places where there was a majority of workers organized by the People’s Democrats (Communists) or their impact was great, the employer hired, on the SDP’s recommendation, a person whose task was to organize ideological activity against Communists, but especially his task was to prohibit strike movements. The person having this special task got in addition to his regular wage a reward of 5,000 old marks per month. He also had permission to move freely in the working place and was also allowed to leave it.” (Hautala 1977, 87)

An Unexpected Explaining Variable Behind the Election Decline: Rapid Industrial Development in 1944-48

During the postwar years Finland was industrialized in a very swift manner. In 1940 the share of industrial population was 21 per cent and in 1950 it was 29 per cent of the whole population. The share remained approximately at the latter level until the present day. It was easy for "the organization of party agents" to operate in regions where social change due to industrialization was diminishing social control and creating a certain kind of anonymity.

In urban areas SKDL lost in the years 1945-48 about 8,000-9,000 votes and in rural areas about 14,000-15,000 votes. SDP, in contrast, increased its support in urban areas by about 31,000 votes and in rural areas by ca. 38,000 votes. When the number of eligible voters increased by ca. 100,000 in urban areas and by ca. 35,000 voters in rural areas, it can easily be noticed that in the industrial areas SDP increased its support more than SKDL. This state of affairs is particularly clear from the following correlations:

	Share of the population employed in industry in 1950	Share of the population employed in agriculture in 1950
Change of SDP's support in 1945-48	.43	— .36
Change of SKDL's support in 1945-48	.17	— .10

As can be noticed from the above figures, the development of the SDP was clearly moving away from agriculture and towards industrialization as compared to SKDL. When those 28 communes in which SKDL lost more than 10 per cent of votes are analyzed, such kinds of factors like changes in organizational capacity of the leftist parties and changes in voting activity do not seem to explain the defeat of the Communist movement. But it seems clear that an increase of industrial population has some impact on the defeat.

The communes in which the Communists suffered greatest losses can be divided into two groups. In one group (21 communes) the share of the industrial population increased on an average by about 10 percentage units, from about 4-7 per cent to about 14-17 per cent in the period 1945-50. In the other group (7 communes) there was already in 1940 a considerable industrial population and its share significantly increased or the pressure towards conformity was weak (Riihinen 1965).

“Organization of Party Agents” within the Game

In those communes where the amount of industrial population increased by about ten percentage units from only a few per cent, the pressure towards conformity and social control decreased significantly. Of great importance is the fact that when starting the operation of a new industrial factory or expanding the activities of the old one, it was quite easy to allocate persons belonging to the “organization of party agents” to these working places.

When also other workers in the new factory were new in their jobs — or in an expanding factory at any rate part of the workers were new — unofficial norms had not yet become established. In this situation a skillful member of the “organization of party agents” could draw listeners to his speeches aimed at decreasing support for Communism.

The activity of “the organization of party agents” and the political climate on the eve of the 1948 election were such that together they created a negative climate for the support of Communism and caused “cross” pressures; in this way support for Communism decreased, since a large number of those vacillating between Social Democracy and Communism were converted into Social Democrats or alternatively into passivists who did not vote at all.

But in the factories where the turnout of workers was small and where Communists right after the war had a clear hegemony, the chances of “the organization of party agents” succeeding were meagre.

The observation that easily can be made from Table 1 is that the local organizations of AVL have had a great significance “as the basis of organization of party agents”. Table 1 contains only those communal units which are

Table 1. Organizational Strength of AVL and Change in the Electoral Support of SKDL in 1945-48 in Highly Industrialized Communes (N = 170).

Organizational strength of AVL in 1941	Change in the electoral support of the SKDL in 1945-48				
	Decreased over 10% per cent	Decreased 5-9.9%	Decreased 2-4.9%	No change	Increased no less than 2%
No less than					
10%	4	15	8	7	1
8-9%	5	10	6	2	—
7%	2	7	7	2	—
6%	1	9	4	5	—
5%	1	11	6	—	—
4%	1	15	4	3	1
3%	—	2	5	3	1
1-2%	—	—	5	5	—
0%	—	—	2	7	3
Total	14	69	47	34	6

selected according to two criteria and in which the impact of organization of party agents can be expected to be seen most clearly. The criteria mentioned above are: (1) the commune should be highly industrialized up to the end of the Second World War (the share of industrial population not less than 20% in 1940) or conversely the share of the industrial population in the commune should have increased significantly after the wars in a short period of time (at least by 10 percentage units in 1940-50) and (2) the share of electoral support given to the left (Communists and Social Democrats) in the commune should be at least 40 per cent in 1945. As AVL can be considered to be mainly the organization of bourgeois population in not highly bourgeois communes, the usefulness of AVL for Social Democrats and its disadvantage for Communists cannot be shown statistically even when AVL in fact has exerted influence. The variable measuring the organizational strength of AVL in each of the communes is operationalized only in quantity (the share of AVL of the voters in 1945) and, as is very well known, a few active members can do much more than a great mass of passive members.

The data of Table 1 cover all the biggest cities and industrial centres; on the basis of this fact, it can well be said that ingredients for the great election defeat of SKDL in 1948 were mainly accumulated from these 170 communes, and that AVL played a crucial role in the election defeat of SKDL, although AVL was discontinued as early as three and a half years before the 1948 parliamentary elections.

The trend is fairly clear, although there are some exceptions to it. The greater the organizational strength of AVL was during the wars, the greater were the election losses of SKDL generally.

The most obvious exceptions to the pattern are found in the present provinces of Lapland, Oulu and Kuopio, in which organizational activities of Communists in some places gained strength considerably after the 1948 elections. Also the number of Communists exceeded those of AVL in many communes of northern Finland.

When a commune lacked the organization of AVL there were no means of manipulation at all which could have been used against Communists. This claim gets additional support and relevance also from the point that in those 12 communes included in the data of Table 1 in which there was no local organizations of AVL, only in two cases did the support of SKDL decrease slightly, in seven cases support remained about the same as in 1945, and in no less than three cases the support of SKDL increased.

Although the numbers mentioned above are small, they have, however, great significance, especially when due account is taken of the fact that the Table contains no more than six such communes in which the support given to SKDL increased over 2 per cent units.

Rumours of Revolution

The Communist Hertta Kuusinen made a speech at the end of March 1948 in which she uttered more or less that “the way of Czechoslovakia will be the way of Finland, too”. About one month earlier the Communist revolution had taken place in Czechoslovakia and rumours spread all over Finland that the Finnish Communists would also aim for a revolution at the end of April. So in the campaign of the parliamentary election held in the beginning of July 1948, the rumours of revolution played a central role.

However, scholars are increasingly of the opinion that the Finnish Communists did not after all have revolution as their real goal. The rumours of revolution were used deliberately as a means to manipulate public opinion against the Communists.

By order of President J.K. Paasikivi, the arms of the traffic police led by Communists were seized, a brigade of soldiers was transferred nearer to Helsinki and two war ships were brought from Turku to Helsinki. After these measures it was told that the President ironically remarked to some of the leaders in the Finnish Communist Party that a revolution was near but fortunately “my wife heard about it in advance at her hairdresser”.

Those who did not originally believe in the rumours of revolution, in many cases began to believe them after having heard or having read of the security measures taken by the President.

An Opinion Poll Gives Support to the Interpretation

The above interpretation of the main reasons causing the defeat of the Communist Movement in Finland 1948 may not entirely convince interested readers. More evidence is needed, and it is possible to gain it from a set of opinion poll data which has kindly been given to me by Onni Rantala.

According to the data, among those who did not vote in 1948 there were many Communists. Exact figures from the research report are impossible to get, but the claim that all Communists will always vote is not valid. So the unstable supporters of Communism to a great extent failed to vote or voted for Social Democrats instead of Communists. According to the opinion poll performed a few months after the election, about 16 per cent of the Communists were ready to support the SDP.

The impact of the revolutionary rumours was probably greater on women than on men among other things because of the fact that the attachment of women to organizations and the political expertise of women were weaker than among men. Only 17 per cent of women but about 24 per cent of men voted Communist. Only 42 per cent of women, but 51 per cent of men supported the left. Hence the non-socialist majority in the parliament (108-92) was in the hands of women. In the political debate going on at places of work,

women did not participate as intensively as men. This claim gets support from the fact that according to the 1950 census data only 55 per cent of all the women of working age were employed (and of them quite a large number worked on farms owned by their families). On the other hand 93 per cent of the men were employed. In light of this, women more than men became objects of the contradictory election campaigning and information. What should, for instance, a housewife do if her Communist husband urges her to vote according to his political views, but she receives information from the neighbour's wife and from the majority of newspapers that casting a vote for the Communists will cause many kinds of disturbances?

Examination of Some Factors

In Table 2, I have gathered a large number of correlations between various variables and the changes in the support given to both Social Democrats and

Table 2. Correlations between the 22 Variables and the Changes in the Support of both SDP and SKDL in the period of 1945-48 by the Communes (N = 446)-

Variables:	Change in the support of SKDL in 1945-48	Change in the support of SDP in 1945-48
SDP's share of the votes in 1907	.61	.35
The reds dead in the Civil War in 1918	.44	.11
The communist organizations in 1922 (dichotomic)	-.19	.39
SDP's share of the votes in 1929	-.82	-.04
Communists' share of the votes in 1929	-.09	-.74
In the years 1922-34 abolished organizations (dichotomic)	.11	.44
The migration gain or loss in 1921-1939	.12	.12
Industrial population in 1940	.35	.16
Agricultural population in 1940	-.31	-.11
Change in the support of the Left in 1939-45	-.75	-.43
The from SDP to SKDL removed organizations in 1944-48 (dichotomic)	.06	.31
The organizations of Finnish League of Brothers-in-Arm in 1945 (dichotomic)	.25	.16
Change in the support of SKDL in 1945-48	-.09	1.00
Change in the support of SDP in 1945-48	1.00	-.09
Change in the organizational strength of SKDL in 1945-48	.06	.50
Change in the organizational strength of SDP in 1945-48	.56	-.12
Change of the voting activity in 1945-48	-.24	.11
Change of the share of the industrial population in 1940-50	.23	.05
Forest- and floating workers in 1950	.12	.20
Low income population in 1950	-.20	.03
Share of the Swedish population	-.36	-.30
Share of densely living population in 1950	.33	.10

Communists in the time period of 1945-48. It can immediately be observed from the correlations that *party organization is a significant explanatory factor*. The support for both SKDL and SDP has changed to a large extent along with the changes in organizational capacity and strength in the parties mentioned above. The correlation in the case of Social Democrats is a little higher than in the case of Communists (.56 and .50). This observation shows the "sharpening" impact of SDP's "organization of party agents". Some support for the above interpretation can be gained from the impact of the "organization of party agents" on the variation of voting activity which correlates $-.24$ with the change in the SDP's support. In other words the SDP's support increased partly with the help of the rumour campaign and partly at the expense of the unstable supporters which either became passive or failed to vote at all.

Political tradition and culture has also its own significance as an explaining variable. This conclusion can be easily drawn on the basis of the operationalized variables: electoral support and political organization. The impact of variables other than industrialization has been surprisingly minor when the socio-economic factors are focused upon.

There are unfortunately no data available on the circulation of the newspapers by commune, but I have analyzed the changes in the support of both SKDL and SDP and the changes in circulation of newspapers by district organizations in 1948-51. The choice of time period depends on the fact that just before the 1945 election in Finland there came out only a couple of Communist newspapers, but in 1948-51 both Socialist parties had already more than ten newspapers, so in this way some kind of regional analysis can be carried out. The result is particularly clear: the circulation of the Socialist press is not as clearly connected to the support of a party as it is connected to the party membership. If the membership in some district organization increased, so did the circulation of that party's press in the same district organization. Similarly decline in the membership was followed by decrease in the circulation of party press. It is not possible to postulate a direct influence between the press and the support of the Socialist parties, but the opinion leaders certainly received ideas for discussion and in this way the press had indirect influence on political life. Subscription to a newspaper was generally in Left and Socialist circles connected with the party membership. Party workers were under a considerable social pressure to become subscribers of the party newspaper as well.

Organization, Political Tradition and Socio-economic Factors

In his article on the Norwegian Communist Party in 1945-50, Per Selle makes a few remarks on the research results of the present author, especially as far as the results on the significance of party organization and political tradition are concerned (Selle 1982, 191).

It seems that in Per Selle's view some unknown researcher from Eastern Finland cannot be almost perfectly right because a consequence of this would be that internationally well-known scientists as E. Allardt and S.M. Lipset would be mainly wrong. Imprisoned by this "psychological cage" Selle allows some kind of constrained compromise and perhaps knowing too little about the Finnish circumstances he argues among other things that Laulajainen "... rejects the importance of socio-economic structure". Still he says that the elementary lack or weakness in my approach is that I fail "... to put the existence of organization in the Finnish case into causal context." (Selle 1982, 191, 214).

Although Selle's criticism in his later study (Selle 1983) concerning my research results is in my view much milder — the reason for that being that Selle has discovered how highly important the organization and political tradition are in the explanation of the support of Communism in Norway — there nevertheless are good reasons to analyze especially organization, socio-economic factors and also political tradition, particularly because my study which deals with these problems more thoroughly is in Finnish only (Laulajainen 1979). It should in this connection be said that I do not totally reject the significance of socio-economic factors, but I regard them as secondary. One must also take into account what the research problem is in each particular case. When we explain the support of communism operationalized as a share of all the votes for Communist candidates, the socio-economic factors seem to have more importance than when we explain the

Table 3. The Social Structure of SDP's and SKDL's Electorate in the 1948 Parliamentary election (%).

	SKDL	SDP	All the socialist field
Farmer population	19	14	16
Agriculture and Forest workers	16	13	14
Factory etc. workers	62	63	63
So-called middle class	2	7	5
Leading white-collar 'workers', i.e. upper class	1	3	2
	100	100	100

share of votes to communist among the socialist parties, i.e. inside or in the context of the Left in 1922 when these factors seemed to have only a minor significance as explaining variables (Laulajainen 1979, 70-75, 132-143).

It is especially difficult for a political scientist to put very much weight on socio-economic factors in the postwar years after the Second World War. This observation can be justified by Table 3 below. This table was constructed from the data given by Onni Rantala.

The social structures of both Socialist parties were so similar that one must really doubt the importance of the socio-economic factors.

Per Selle stresses in the case of Norway — and according to my understanding also in the case of Finland — the fact that “... the organizational structure is to a great extent explained by socio-structural factors”. Perhaps it is, however, more a question of active people who keep organizations in operation and run their activities. The distribution of these active people among various communes is very difficult to foresee or correlate with other variables.

When we try to explain changes in the organizational strength of SDP and SKDL in 1945-48 by socio-economic factors and are looking for as high correlations as possible, the result is as follows:

	Change in SDP's organizational strength in 1945-1948	Change in SKDL's organizational strength in 1945-1948
Change of industrial population in 1940-50	.13	— .07
Industrial population in 1950	.21	— .13
Agricultural population in 1950	.20	.15
Migration gain- or loss during 1921-39	.08	— .18
Unemployment in average in 1948-54	— .09	.18
Low income people in 1950	— .05	.10

It is easy to notice that the organizational strengthening of both Communist and Social Democrats is fairly weakly connected with the socio-economic

factors. To a careful reader, the correlations naturally offer some interesting information, but in this connection it suffices to pay attention to the small absolute values of the correlations. As a matter of fact they “cry for” the interpretation that the changes in organizational activities are to a great extent explained by the active operation of some organizers and activists, and these changes are still fairly independent of relationships with the surrounding social context. I am still prepared to admit that in regard to this there may be differences between Finland and Norway.

Conclusions

Above I have presented a modest theory about the factors having an influence on the defeat of the Communist Movement in Finland in the 1948 parliamentary election. The defeat was considerable. Roughly, SKDL should have needed nearly 70,000 votes more in order to hold their position (i.e. the number of seats in the parliament) acquired in the 1945 election.

The essence of the defeat was hidden in the different kinds of organizations and the manipulation carried out in them. One has to take into account the political and also trade union organizations. Of especially great importance is the Finnish League of Brothers in Arms founded in 1940 and abolished at the beginning of 1945. To succeed this organization the Social Democrats established “the organization of party agents”. The means used by this “organization” were such that far from all SDP’s members accepted them. The significance of “organization of party agents” has been very great indeed, because it could be kept secret and it could gain a foothold also in other organizations. Communists were not able to develop any properly working means against the “organization of party agents” partly because of the fact that the Finnish Communist Party had to operate underground during the whole phase of its existence between 1918-1944.

Other circumstances had an impact on the defeat of Communists, as well. One such factor, especially in the spring of the year 1948, were the rumours of revolution of which the campaign against Communism skillfully took advantage.

The war compensations paid to the Soviet Union indirectly added to the Communists’ defeat. Immediately after the war, for a period of about one year, the Soviet Union accepted war compensation to be paid mainly with products from the traditional branches of Finnish industry — namely the wood processing, paper and sawmill industries. But later over 70 per cent of the compensations were to be paid by products of the metal industry. In this situation, during the period between the 1945 and 1948 parliamentary elections, it became necessary to expand many old factories and to establish new ones. In 1938 the metal industry employed about 50,000 persons, whereas

the number of metal industry workers organized in trade unions already at the end of 1946 exceeded 81,000 (Waris 1952, 198). On the basis of what has been said earlier one cannot avoid the conclusion that the rapid expansion based on the war compensations created clear opportunities for the operations of the "organization of party agents", a consequence of which was again a clear decline of the support of Communism.

Particularly clear is the connection between the changes in the electoral support of Communism and Social Democracy in 1945-1948 and the changes in the organizational strength of local party organizations. When comparing the bare organizational strength of local party organizations of both Communists and Social Democrats, measured by the number of members, Communists had a slight advantage, but if the other organizations are taken into account as well, the advantage is without doubt on the side of the Social Democrats. The Finnish Confederation of Trade Unions was under Social Democratic leadership and the non-socialist parties operated a great deal for the benefit of Social Democrats in issues related to the conflict between the Communists and the Social Democrats. A particularly important role in the operation against Communism was played by the "organization of party agents" which was founded on the ruins of the abolished Finnish League of Brothers-in-Arms. The League of Brothers-in-Arms, because of its social welfare activity, won the confidence of especially low income people (Kulha 1980, 236-243).

Finnish Communism held its position most successfully in 1948 in the regions where it had a significant political tradition as early as from the 1920's. Tradition and organization were in an interesting interaction with each other: though organizational activities in some region totally ceased, the political tradition still survived and preserved during several years the support of the party, although it slowly began to decrease. The re-establishment of organizational activity in rural regions in which the party had a strong tradition was fairly easy when compared with the initiation of activity in a region where the tradition had been largely absent.

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the number of metal industry workers organized in trade unions already at the end of 1946 exceeded 81,000 (Waris 1952, 198). On the basis of what has been said earlier one cannot avoid the conclusion that the rapid expansion based on the war compensations created clear opportunities for the operations of the "organization of party agents", a consequence of which was again a clear decline of the support of Communism.

Particularly clear is the connection between the changes in the electoral support of Communism and Social Democracy in 1945-1948 and the changes in the organizational strength of local party organizations. When comparing the bare organizational strength of local party organizations of both Communists and Social Democrats, measured by the number of members, Communists had a slight advantage, but if the other organizations are taken into account as well, the advantage is without doubt on the side of the Social Democrats. The Finnish Confederation of Trade Unions was under Social Democratic leadership and the non-socialist parties operated a great deal for the benefit of Social Democrats in issues related to the conflict between the Communists and the Social Democrats. A particularly important role in the operation against Communism was played by the "organization of party agents" which was founded on the ruins of the abolished Finnish League of Brothers-in-Arms. The League of Brothers-in-Arms, because of its social welfare activity, won the confidence of especially low income people (Kulha 1980, 236-243).

Finnish Communism held its position most successfully in 1948 in the regions where it had a significant political tradition as early as from the 1920's. Tradition and organization were in an interesting interaction with each other: though organizational activities in some region totally ceased, the political tradition still survived and preserved during several years the support of the party, although it slowly began to decrease. The re-establishment of organizational activity in rural regions in which the party had a strong tradition was fairly easy when compared with the initiation of activity in a region where the tradition had been largely absent.

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