



FINLANDIZATION – HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

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MEANING OF FINLANDIZATION



ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPT

The term was first used by journalists and academics in West Germany (FRG) in the 1960s: *Finnlandisierung*.

- Discussion of effects of a possible withdrawal of US forces => increase of Soviet influence in the FRG.

Conservative politician **Franz Josef Strauss** used the example of Finland to warn of the consequences of *Ostpolitik* (1972).

- Criticism of Willy Brandt's policy of normalization of relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

Frans Josef Strauss, CSU-
Parteitag 1972 in München



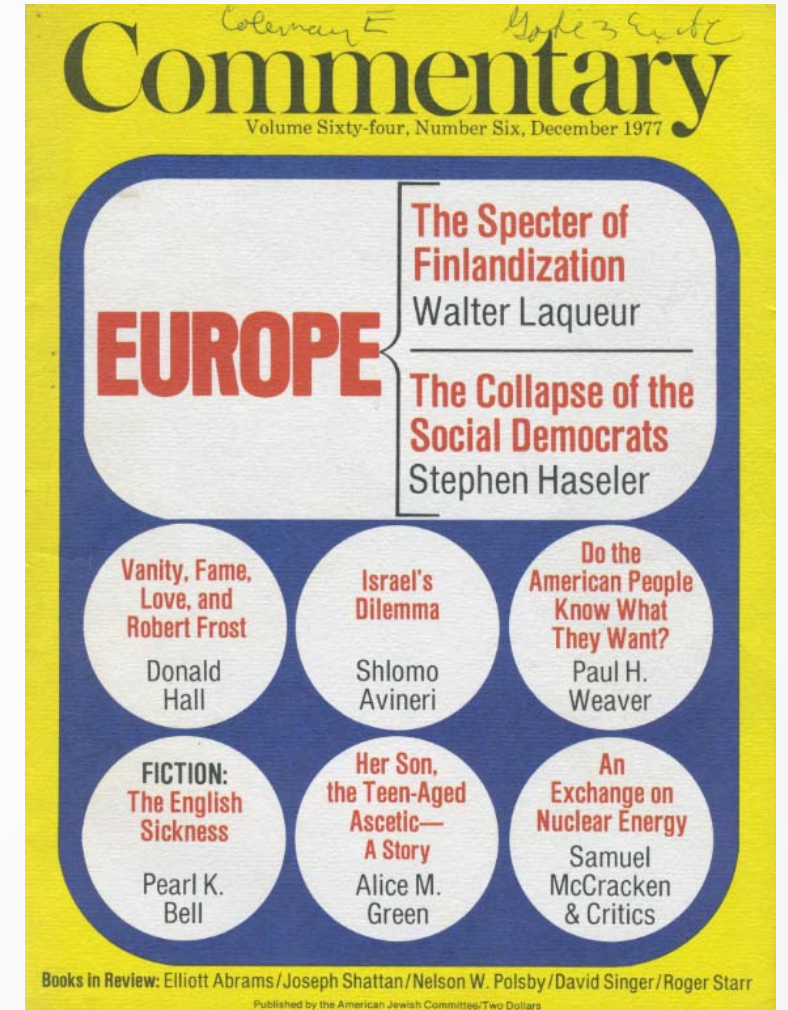
FROM FINNLANDISIERUNG TO FINLANDIZATION

Western commentators adopted the idea and translated it as *Finlandization* in the 1970s.

- Walter Laqueur: a critical magazine article "The Specter of Finlandization" in *Commentary* (1977).
- BBC television documentary *The Bear Next Door* (1979).

Critical view of Finland

- Finland went too far in its "internal adjustment" to counter the Soviet threat.
- Self-imposed and unnecessary limits of political freedom.



USES OF FINLANDIZATION



TWO SIDES OF FINLANDIZATION: POLITICS AND POLICY

- 1) Internal: domestic adjustment (politics)
- 2) External: foreign policy strategy of adaptation and appeasement (policy)



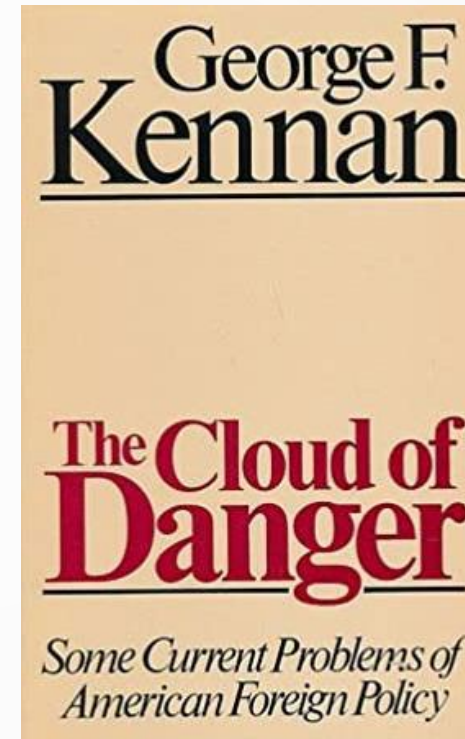
FINLANDIZATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY

Western diplomats saw positive aspects of Finlandization as a policy in the 1970s

- A useful strategy for a weaker country
- George Kennan (1977): Finland was successfully maximising its security in the Soviet sphere

Why not try a similar approach to the Soviet satellites: "Finlandization in Reverse"?

- Use of Western economic and soft power to pull the socialist countries away from the Soviet Union





FINLANDIZATION IN REVERSE

Within the Soviet Union 'the emergence of a middle class' with higher expectations circumscribed 'the range of political options for the Soviet leadership.

'Expectations can be deferred and belts tightened in a dictatorship, but not with complete immunity as can be seen by the events in a number of satellite countries. ... There is a case to be made that growing Soviet dependence on western technology and on Western products to meet the rising expectations of the Soviet people is in itself a kind of Finlandisation in reverse.'

UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office planning paper, November 1975

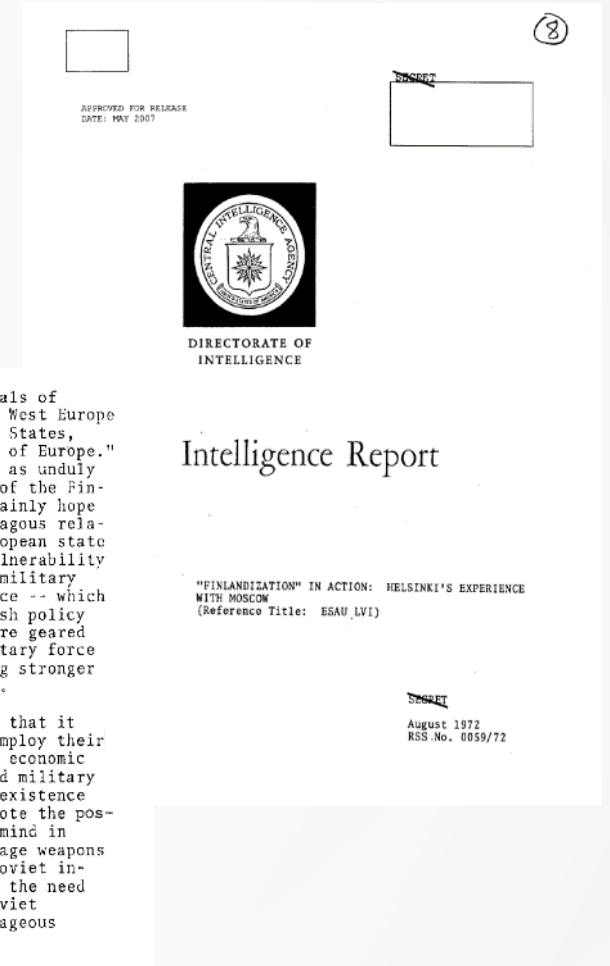


A HARD BALANCING ACT

CIA analysis (1972): Finlandization in action

- Was Finlandization a threat or an opportunity?
- Was Finland a special case?

'No other Western European state shares the conspicuous aspects of Finland's vulnerability to Soviet pressure – i.e. virtually complete military helplessness and a degree of economic dependence – which underlie the Soviet ability to influence Finnish policy and politics.'



The Soviet peace offensive, with its goals of presenting the USSR as a cooperative friend of West Europe and weakening West European ties to the United States, has created the spectre of the "Finlandization of Europe." Although the Soviets would doubtless regard it as unduly optimistic to expect to duplicate all aspects of the Finnish model elsewhere in West Europe, they certainly hope to contribute to the gradual extension of analagous relationships to other nations. No other West European state shares the conspicuous aspects of Finland's vulnerability to Soviet pressure -- i.e. virtually complete military helplessness and a degree of economic dependence -- which underlie the Soviet ability to influence Finnish policy and politics. But Soviet policies in Europe are geared to encouraging the erosion of a balancing military force in Western Europe and, secondarily, to creating stronger economic ties between the USSR and West Europe.

The Finnish experience has demonstrated that it is not necessary for the Soviets to actually employ their tools of leverage in order to gain advantages; economic pressure has been applied only occasionally and military force not at all since the war. But the very existence of these points of purchase, no matter how remote the possibility of their use, has created a state of mind in Finland which is now as important as the leverage weapons themselves: the Finns tolerate considerable Soviet influence over their national destiny, accepting the need to do so as a fact of life. Surely a major Soviet objective seems to be to foster similar advantageous situations in Western Europe.



FINLANDIZATION IN ACTION

‘The Finnish experience has demonstrated that it is not necessary for the Soviets to actually employ their tools of leverage in order to gain advantages; economic pressure has been applied only occasionally and military force not at all since the war.’



President Urho Kekkonen and Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin at the opening of the Loviisa nuclear power plant in March 1977



Ministers Nikolai Patolitshev and Ahti Karjalainen in Helsinki,
June 1967

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RETURN OF FINLANDIZATION

In the 2010s Finlandization has been proposed

- A foreign policy strategy for Taiwan towards China
 - A strategy for Ukraine to accommodate Russian demands and adopt self-imposed limits to its Western integration
- ⇒ Emphasis on the external dimension of Finlandization

In Finland an ongoing domestic debate about its Cold War experience: the record of Finlandization as Finnish *vergangenheitsbewältigung*

- No uniform interpretations what Finlandization meant.
- What should be called Finlandization and what not? Is Finlandization over?

THANK YOU