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Détente, Finlandization, and Resistance – Finnish Churches and the Helsinki Process in Transnational Perspective

Markku Ruotsila

The leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church took a measure of pride in the so-called Helsinki Process since the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) happened to be held in their country and the Helsinki Final Act was signed there in August, 1975. Not only that, but the President of Finland, Urho Kekkonen, the man who appointed their church's bishops, had both made the initiative for such a conference and presided over it.¹ Never mind that the original idea was offered by the Soviet Union in 1954, then repeatedly by the Warsaw Pact, and involved so many problematic Cold War connotations that for decades the political and religious Right on both sides of the Atlantic vehemently disapproved.² For the Finnish bishops, none of this mattered, and they emerged as vocal celebrators of the new European order that the Final Act had created – of détente and the easement of tensions, noninvolvement in domestic affairs, confidence building and dialogue, and respect for human rights. In the following decades, the Finnish Lutheran church did its part in advocating for such goals, both in its own right and through the non-governmental work of the ecumenical movement at the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (OSCE).³

These Finnish Lutheran leaders' stances mirrored those of other similarly placed Protestant establishment figures in the rest of Western Europe and in North America.⁴ Unique, however, to their geographic, geostrategic and political circumstances was the fact that throughout the Cold War theirs was a professedly

¹ Jorma Kallenautio, *Suomi kylmän rauhan maailmassa*, Helsinki 2005, 225–236, 354–355.

² Richard Davy, *Defrosting the Cold War and Beyond. An Introduction to the Helsinki Process, 1954–2022*, London 2023, chapters 1–2; Andreas Wenger/Christian Nünlist/Vojtech Mastny (eds.), *Origins of the European Security System. The Helsinki Process Revisited, 1965–75*, London 2008, chapters 7, 10.

³ See the archival materials: National Church Council of Finland, Helsinki, KUO, Heg 1–2.

⁴ Katharina Kunter, *Die Kirchen im KSZE-Prozess 1968–1978*, Stuttgart 2000; Bastiaan Bouwman, *Between Dialogue and Denunciation. The World Council of Churches, Religious*

neutral country next to the Soviet Union, with a 1,300-kilometre shared border that the Soviets had breached in nearly five years of bitter warfare just decades earlier. Also, since 1948 the Finns had had to abide with a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (FCMA) that the Soviets imposed on the country in lieu of military occupation. The ever-present fear of another Soviet military attack (or some other form of interference and imposition) powerfully impacted the Finnish churches, too, and made them parties to the pervasive culture of accommodation, self-censorship and silence, leavened with an elaborate public liturgy full of euphemisms in matters regarding the Soviets, which is commonly known as Finlandization, *«Finnlandisierung»*.⁵ These factors severely circumscribed the Finns' room for manoeuvre. They also meant that the utility of formal statements such as the bishops' was limited in unearthing what most Finns (even in the churches) actually, sincerely, thought about the issues involved and what their true aspirations might have been.

By boring deeper and investigating on a broader scale, however, including in contemporary private correspondence and institutional archives, in the unofficial religious press and in oral history sources, it is possible to reconstruct the full range of Finnish church opinion and recover the activities behind the ubiquitous public rhetoric about neutrality and *détente*. What such an exploration shows is that alongside the celebratory official discourse on the Helsinki Process, the CSCE/OSCE in fact occasioned vigorous and protracted contestation throughout Finnish civil society, including in the churches. When placed in a transnational context, it becomes abundantly clear that the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was as deeply divided as were the rest of the Western churches over the CSCE/OSCE regimen of *détente*, dialogue and confidence building, and over the nature of the human rights to be protected under Basket III of the Helsinki Final Act.

The following reconstruction of the Finnish church's stances on the Helsinki Process utilises the conceptual tools recently devised by scholars in attempts to rethink European and North American churches' Cold War encounters. As James D. Strasburg has argued, these are best understood in terms of a division between the rival visions of *«Christian globalism»* and *«Christian nationalism»*. Andrew Preston has referenced essentially the same, albeit in a slightly different U.S. context, with his concepts of *«apostles of progress»* and *«apostles of liberty»*. The latter vision was put forth generally speaking by evangelicals and fundamentalists who were politically conservative, anti-communist and interested above all in evangelism, religious freedom, and the defence of the *«Christian West»* against Soviet totalitarianism, atheism and external aggression. Ultimately, they aspired to the

Freedom, and Human Rights During the Cold War, in: *Contemporary European History*, 31 (2022), 19–30.

⁵ Timo Vihavainen, *Kansakunta rähmällään: Suomettumisen lyhyt historia*, Helsinki 1991.

rollback of Soviet power from Eastern Europe and to its destruction in its own Russian heartland. The ecumenical movement's *«apostles of progress»*, on the other hand, emerged as advocates of a *«Third Way»* between the two economic systems, and they sought above all an alleviation of tensions between the super-powers through disarmament and dialogue. The destruction of the Soviet Union was no goal of theirs; instead, they aspired to a degree of convergence between the systems by way of structural social reform that was increasingly radical from the late 1960s onwards.⁶

These two frameworks found transnational institutional expressions in two rival communities of Protestants, both of which claimed to be the *«true»* ecumenists and both of which included Finns. One grouping gathered in the *World Council of Churches* (WCC) and the *Lutheran World Federation* (LWF), the other in and around the International *Council of Christian Churches* (ICCC) and smaller groups such as the conservative Lutheran Peter Beyerhaus' *Konferenz bekennender Gemeinschaften in den evangelischen Kirchen Europas*.⁷ These two groupings' disagreement, it will be argued in what follows, over the Helsinki Process – its end-goals and the likely effectiveness of its mechanisms, as well as its desirability to begin with – constituted in fact but one facet in a deeper contestation over the very nature of human rights themselves, a clash between a *«conservative human rights revolution»* stressing the immutability of natural law (with religious freedom at its core) and a left-progressive (or *«Third Way»*) emphasis on newly envisioned social and economic rights.⁸ It was this fundamental theological clash that played out during the Helsinki Process, including in the Finnish churches.

Champions of Détente, Apostles of Progress

A significant and growing body of scholarship maintains that the Helsinki Process in fact facilitated, perhaps significantly, the demise of the Soviet Union and its repressive regime of control over most of Eastern Europe. This was not how the process was narrated at the time of the conference in Helsinki or in its immediate wake,

⁶ James D. Strasburg, *God's Marshall Plan: American Protestants and the Struggle for the Soul of Europe*, New York 2021, 4–21; Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith. Religion in American War and Diplomacy*, New York 2012, 465–496.

⁷ Markku Ruotsila, *Ecumenism and Separatism*, in: Andrew Atherstone/David Ceri Jones (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christian Fundamentalism*, Oxford 2023, 287–304.

⁸ Sarah Shortall/Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins (eds.), *Christianity and Human Rights Reconsidered*, Cambridge 2020; Katharina Kunter, *Christentum, Menschenrechte und Sozialethische Neuorientierungen*, in: Jens Holger Schjørring/Norman Hjelm/Kevin Ward (eds.), *Geschichte des globalen Christentums. Teil 3: 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 2018, 223–235; Bouwman, *Between Dialogue and Denunciation* (see note 4), 19–30; Allen D. Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children. The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*, Lanham (Maryland) 2004.

but according to a number of scholars this was the result, whether intended or unintended.⁹ Regarding the bishops and the theological elites of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, however, it is abundantly clear that not only were such goals never articulated but that they weren't even envisaged nor sought after, not from the CSCE/OSCE, nor from any other institution. Something quite different was involved in their championship of the Helsinki Process. While this had some features unique to the Finnish situation, in many cases it was principally about the *«Christian globalist»* pursuit of radical socio-economic change as the way to peace.

Starting at the very beginning of the process, during the first preparatory meetings in Helsinki in 1973, the Finnish bishops ordered prayers to be read in each congregation to the end that «European peace and security would be strengthened, suspicions between peoples everywhere lessened, and that the world could take a step towards a just peace» through these meetings.¹⁰ As this framing suggests, these Finnish church leaders preferred to narrate the Helsinki Process above all as a security and confidence-building process. They were principally interested in it as a tool in enhancing their own country's security, reasoning that the Soviets had less cause to interfere in Finnish affairs if they were subjected to less pressure from the outside and that détente between the superpowers constituted the most promising means to this end.¹¹ But many among them, including the powerful archbishop Martti Simojoki (in office in 1964–1978), were also dedicated *«apostles of progress»* wedded to radical social reformism as the essence of the Christian witness, and from the beginning of the process they intended to use the CSCE and its follow-up meetings also to push this agenda forward. This was indicated by the bishops' call's telling phrase «just peace», full of socially progressive connotations that would be explicated repeatedly in the years following.¹²

Under Simojoki, a Special Study Group on the CSCE was set up. Members of this group insisted that talk about «human rights» had become «the West's very

⁹ Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect. International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism*, Princeton (New Jersey) 2001; Nicolas Badalassi/Sarah Snyder, *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War. Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights*, New York 2019; Michael Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act. The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War*, Princeton (New Jersey) 2018.

¹⁰ Esirukous ETYK:n puolesta, *Kotimaa*, 29 June, 1973, 1.

¹¹ KUO, Heg 1, Eero Bäckman, «Euroopan turvallisuus- ja yhteistyökonferenssin taustaa», n.d. [1976], and Anneli Janhonen, «Kirkot ja Etyk», 10 October 1977.

¹² «Kirkkojen tuki Etykille» and «Euroopan rauhan käsitettävä kaikki yhteiskunnan tasot», *Kotimaa*, 14 January 1975, 1, 4; «Etykin jälkeen», *Kotimaa*, 12 August 1975, 5; «Vastuu Euroopasta», *Kotimaa*, 3 July 1973, 3; Ville Jalovaara, Kirkko, Kekkonen ja poliitikka 1962–1982, Helsinki 2011, 271–277; Tapani Tamminen, *Helsingin hengestä toiseen kylmään sotaan? Nämäkyiset liennytykset Suomessa 1970–1980*, University of Helsinki MA thesis 2019, 24–33, 59, 63–64.

own propaganda tool with which to hit the Eastern camp».¹³ This, they felt, was «dangerous» talk that undermined trust and peaceful coexistence, grounded in a «one-sided» view of human rights and propagated by «fundamentalist anticommunist groups» and others with an unhelpful, «starkly negative view of Marxism.»¹⁴ The Study Group felt that the churches should instead be primarily concerned with the «structural injustices» and «unequal distribution of social goods» inherent to the capitalist system.¹⁵ The Helsinki Process should be utilised for the «realization of a more humane social system»¹⁶ that integrated Christian as well as «extremely important» Marxian perspectives, especially those that could be found in Latin American liberation theology.¹⁷ Regarding this last-mentioned, Simojoki himself was reticent, yet he did feel that even the use of physical violence was allowable for a Christian who chose to engage in revolutionary activity. The peaceful ways of the CSCE/OSCE were far preferable, however, and on this basis, he deemed the conference and ensuing organisation a «beacon of light in the global sea».¹⁸

Throughout, Archbishop Simojoki kept in contact with Russian and Eastern European church leaders (many of them KGB agents, as was subsequently confirmed), and he frequently visited the Soviet bloc to participate in Soviet-sponsored so-called peace conferences. Both at such events and at home, he opted to celebrate Soviet-controlled churches' embrace of socialism, criticised the free market system and issued denunciations of U.S. «imperialism». In addition, he initiated a series of dialogues with the Finnish Communist Party.¹⁹ Missing entirely from his or other Finnish bishops' public speech were direct references to Soviet violations of the human rights and religious freedom principles of the Final Act's Basket III, i.e. its stipulations about each signatory's responsibility to show

¹³ KUO, Heg 1, Jaakko Elenius, ««Ihmisoikeudet ja detente Euroopassa», 19 May 1977. See also KUO, Heg 1, Anneli Janhonen, «Kirkot ja Etyk», 10 October 1977.

¹⁴ KUO, Heg 1, Martti Lindquist, «Kirkon ulkomaanasiain toimikunnalle/Kirkon tutkimuslaitoksen johtokunnalle», 18 August 1976.

¹⁵ KUO, Heg 1, «Kirkon Ety-seurantaa koskeva vastaus KMN:n CCIA:lle», 24 May 1977. See also KUO, Heg 1, «The CSCE and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Finland: Report of the Special Study Group on the CSCE», n.d. [1977].

¹⁶ KUO, Heg 1, «The CSCE and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Finland: Report of the Special Study Group on the CSCE», n.d. [1977].

¹⁷ KUO, Heg 1, Martti Lindquist, «Kirkon ulkomaanasiain toimikunnalle/Kirkon tutkimuslaitoksen johtokunnalle», 18 August 1976.

¹⁸ Juha Seppo, *Arkkipiispan aika. Martti Simojoki II*, Helsinki 2015, 240, 244–5, 254–5.

¹⁹ Pekka Niiranen, Martti Simojoki. Kirkon ääni, Helsinki 2008, 186–199, 280–282, 321–325, 386–397; Seppo, *Arkkipiispan aika* (see note 18), esp. 248–324, 331–370. On the Soviet and East European clerics' KGB linkages, see Keith Armes, Chekists in Cassocks. The Orthodox Church and the KGB, in: *Demokratizatsiya*, 1/4 (1993), 72–83; Nadezhda A. Beljakova, Anti-Communism and Soviet Evangelicals, in: *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte*, 115 (2021), 57–79.

«respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms», including the «freedom of the individual to profess and practise religion»²⁰, to evangelise and distribute religious literature, and to allow the free flow of religious ideas, people and information across borders.²¹ Although Simojoki was well aware, as he put it privately, of the «horrid reality of the life of the churches»²² in the Soviet bloc, he would offer them only hopefully empowering behind-the-scenes fellowship, and, if the authorities allowed, supplies of religious literature. Publicly he would offer no word of condemnation, and at conferences of his fellow-Nordic bishops, he would even undertake to defeat plans for public denunciations of Soviet religious repression. Only once, in 1974, it seems, did the Finnish bishops even provide their own government with a confidential report showing that religious freedom was indeed being trampled upon – and even in this single intervention they specified only one country, Czechoslovakia.²³

In all this, top Finnish church leaders were illustrative of the broader ecumenical community's approach. The WCC itself decided not even to deal with Basket III matters but to delegate follow-up work to its affiliated *Council of European Churches*. For this body, it took four years before a sketch of an agenda was formulated and a commission to pursue the agenda formed. The rather cumbrously named Churches' Human Rights Programme for the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act was advertised as a «dynamic interpretation»²⁴ of the treaty's provisions, and it was cohered by notions of the indivisibility of human rights, yet with an emphasis squarely on economic rights (unsurprisingly, given that the commission was set up in East Berlin and was led by a pastor from the East German *Bund der Evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR*). For some years, the commission engaged in consultations in which it tried to ascertain these concepts' full import and to «explore how the distinctive or divergent human rights concepts can move closer together.»²⁵ It was decided to never pronounce on violations of religious freedom in member countries without the «perspectives» of that country's clergy being considered first. The guiding principle was to «act with diplomacy, avoiding confrontation»²⁶, and «with

²⁰ Conference on Security and Co-Operation in Europe Final Act, Helsinki 1975, 6.

²¹ Jalovaara, Kirkko (see note 12), 184–186, 204–205.

²² As cited in Juha Seppo, *Arkkipiispan aika* (see note 18), 304.

²³ Seppo, *Arkkipiispan aika* (see note 18), 249, 255, 266, 268, 304, 313–314, 410.

²⁴ As cited in Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect* (see note 9), 101.

²⁵ KUO, Heg 2, «Statement Concerning the CSCE Expert Meeting on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Ottawa, Canada (beginning 7 May, 1983)».

²⁶ As cited in David S. Russell, *Implementing Human Rights. The Churches' Programme*, in: *Religion in Communist Lands*, 15/1 (1987), 86–87.

sensitivity»²⁷, almost always behind closed doors.²⁸ Most of the top leaders of the Finnish Lutheran Church fit right in with this approach.

At the WCC's General Assembly following the Helsinki Final Act, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in December of 1975, the ecumenists had an opportunity to act on their previous statements, going back all the way to their organisation's founding, on the importance of religious freedom, yet they failed to do so. Two delegates proposed a resolution saying that the «WCC is concerned about the infringement of religious freedom, especially in the Soviet Union»²⁹ and calling on the Soviets to honour their commitments newly made at Helsinki. This generated intense debate and was not adopted. As heated was the debate over an anodyne alternative formulation offered the next day about «alleged non-observance of religious freedom in the USSR.»³⁰ By contrast (as an astonished African evangelical observer noted), of those discussed «almost every paper dealt with capitalism and the Western world and how much they have sinned.»³¹ Afterwards, the WCC's general secretary reminded all churches to heed «the inter-dependence of the human rights [sic] – social, economic, cultural, civil and political»³² – and never to «isolate religious freedom from other rights, or to seek to apply criteria from one social system to another without seriously considering the very different contexts.»³³ It had been much the same at the previous WCC General Assembly, in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1968, where, as Bastiaan Bouwman has put it, the WCC had firmly «oriented itself towards the left» and opted to «reformulate human rights in wide-ranging terms of social justice, inflected by neo-Marxism.»³⁴

The case was not essentially different with the other major international ecclesiastical body to which the Finnish Lutheran church was affiliated – the *Lutheran World Federation* (LWF). In its first statement, it noted the Final Act's signing «with great interest and satisfaction» – and then swiftly pivoted to demanding the

²⁷ As cited in Bouwman, Between Dialogue and Denunciation (see note 4), 27.

²⁸ KUO, Heg 2, «Statement Concerning the CSCE Expert Meeting on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Ottawa, Canada (beginning 7 May, 1983)»; David S. Russell, Implementing Human Rights. The Churches' Programme, in: Religion in Communist Lands, 15/1 (1987), 85–87; Bouwman, Between Dialogue and Denunciation (see note 4), 21, 24–26–28; Kunter, Christentum, in: Schjørring/Hjelm/Ward (eds.), Geschichte des globalen Christentums (see note 8), 223–235.

²⁹ As cited in Gerhard Linn, The World Council of Churches and the Churches in Eastern Europe, in: Religion, State & Society, 25/1 (1997), 69–70.

³⁰ As cited in Linn, The World Council of Churches and the Churches in Eastern Europe (see note 29), 69–70.

³¹ Byang Kato, An African Looks at the WCC, in: The Presbyterian Journal, 35 (1976), 7–9.

³² KUO, Heg 1, Philip Potter to Member Churches in States Signatories to the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 19 March 1976.

³³ KUO, Heg 1, Philip Potter to Member Churches in States Signatories to the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 19 March 1976.

³⁴ Bouwman, Between Dialogue and Denunciation (see note 4), 26–27.

creation of an entirely «new international economic and social order.»³⁵ For some time, the LWF had been calling also for religious freedom in Soviet-controlled lands, and it did begin to offer small-scale assistance to some of the oppressed churches in 1978. But it was only in 1990 that it drafted a plan for following up on the Final Act – and this too was centred on pursuing détente and on «the alleviation of human need, promotion of peace and human rights, *social and economic justice* [emphasis added], care of creation and sharing of resources.»³⁶ Not entirely coincidentally, the LWF's president in the crucial years 1970–1977 was the Finnish Mikko Juva (archbishop in 1978–1982), formerly of the notably radical *World Student Christian Federation* (WSCF). For some years this group had been defining its public witness in terms of the «proletarian struggle against capitalism» that sought for «radical democratic socialism or communism» and «a new socialist society.»³⁷ Leading the LWF department of interchurch cooperation in 1978–1987 was yet another Finn, Risto Lehtonen, Juva's «trusted man» (as Juva put it), who until 1973 had served as general secretary of the selfsame radical student federation.³⁸

Juva and Lehtonen were not among the most radical of the WSCF, but their positions did align them more nearly with the distinctly leftist «apostles of progress» side of the debates. Juva's priorities were evident already in a 1965 book that he co-authored with Simojoki: full of praise of the student radicals, the book insisted that Communists were devoted to «the advancement of humanity» and animated by «deeply ethical» promptings of «solidarity» for the «oppressed and underprivileged». Christians should be inspired by all this, Juva felt, and they should become Christians *and socialists*, rather than remain wedded to «outdated understanding of the social order.»³⁹ As long as «exploitation by the industrial economic system»⁴⁰ continued, he insisted, peoples would inevitably take up arms «to defeat the holders of power, riches and welfare»⁴¹, so the only road to a just and durable peace lay in uprooting this system. It could be done, Juva felt, in mutually trusting cooperation with the Soviets and their state-controlled churches.

³⁵ KUO, Heg 1, «Statement on the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe», n.d.

³⁶ Risto Lehtonen, *Church in a Divided World. The Encounter of the Lutheran World Federation and the Cold War*, Joensuu 2020, 104–105, 178–179. Quotes from pages 178–179.

³⁷ As cited in Risto Lehtonen, *Story of a Storm. The Ecumenical Student Movement in the Trumoil of Revolution*, Grand Rapids 1998, 275, 75, 107, respectively.

³⁸ Lehtonen, *Church in a Divided World* (see note 36), 177–178; Risto Lehtonen, *Story of a Storm* (see note 37), 268–299, 302–319; Mikko Juva, *Seurasin nuoruuteni näkyä*, Helsinki 1994, 227–243 (quote taken from page 237).

³⁹ Mikko Juva/Martti Simojoki, *Tästä on kysymys*, Porvoo 1965, 11–12, 59, 65–70.

⁴⁰ Mikko Juva, *Seitsemän puhetta isänmaasta*, Helsinki 1981, 14–15.

⁴¹ Mikko Juva, *Aika ajatella, aika uskoo*, Helsinki 1985, 192–196.

According to his memoirs, he stubbornly refused to believe that his clerical collaborators could be KGB agents operating with ulterior motives.⁴²

The conclusion from all this seems fairly evident although it has been rarely explicitly stated: large sections of the major ecumenical organisations' top decision-making strata had essentially been Finlandized. They would not publicly criticise the Soviets for violations of religious freedom because they were more interested in other things (in détente and coexistence, and in «social justice») and because attention to such violations jeopardised these other, more important things. It was relatively easy for successive Finnish archbishops to align with these organisations' agendas for the Helsinki Process since they too had already embraced a vision in which security and coexistence were primary and never to be jeopardised by destabilising public criticism of the lack of democracy and of religious persecution in Soviet-controlled lands. It was easy, moreover, for both these Finnish bishops and for the WCC and the LWF to make this prioritisation because on the whole they were also already agreed with the church leaders in the Soviet bloc that economic rights and social justice, understood in ever more explicitly Marxian terms, ought to be primary. It was altogether better to remain quiet in public about the rest of it – which is the very essence of Finlandization, howsoever defined.

Champions of Roll-Back, Apostles of Liberty

The story of Finnish Lutheran conservatives during the Helsinki Process furnishes a very different picture. Members of the same established Lutheran church as the bishops, their attitude towards the whole process could not have been more different. Products of five distinct waves of revival inside their church that went back to the 1700s (the latest of which, often called neo-Pietism, was directly influenced by U.S. and British evangelicalism), these conservatives formed the bulk of their country's active churchgoers, but they operated through their own independent missions societies that formed «ecclesia in ecclesia», de facto churches inside the church.⁴³ They were biblical literalists, fervent anti-communists, evangelistic and often premillennialist, and certain that they alone represented true Lutheranism. They were also part of a transnational community of evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants, an alternative ecumenism; their allegiance was to *this* community's biblically literalist understandings of the Gospel, not to their own church's

⁴² Juva, Seurasin nuorutteni näkyä (see note 38), 222–247, 312–314; Juva, Aika ajatella, aika uskoa (see note 41), 241–242, 312–314.

⁴³ Mikkel Vigilius, Kirke i Kirken: Luthersk vaekkelses-kristendom, Hillerød 2005; Aila Lauha, Finnish Christianity since 1940, in: Björn Ryman/Aila Lauha/Gunnar Heiene/Peter Lodberg (eds.), Nordic Folk Churches: A Contemporary History, Grand Rapids 2005, 27–40.

theologically liberal and politically left-of-centre episcopate.⁴⁴ Eventually most of them accepted the moniker ‘evangelical’, embraced the Billy Graham model of evangelisation and joined the *World Evangelical Alliance*.⁴⁵

These conservative revivalist Lutherans took no pride of ownership in the Helsinki Process, nor did they ever champion détente, and least of all did they approve of the ‘Third Way’ agendas that were sketched by the ecumenists for the CSCE. On the whole, they regarded both the WCC and the LWF as apostate and, at least after the Uppsala Assembly, as de facto Soviet instruments in the pursuit of a world Communist revolution that should be steered away from by all Bible-believers.⁴⁶ The CSCE never interested or inspired them, nor were they ever involved with it – except that eventually they did come to perceive in it, and specifically in Basket III, one promising venue for the furtherance of their own pre-existing agenda and projects. These projects were profoundly at odds with the liberal ecumenists’ ones – that is, their projects of evangelism and Bible smuggling, their support for the persecuted churches, their disseminating of Russian dissident ‘samizdat’ materials, and their practises of unapologetically anti-communist public speech about Soviet totalitarianism and the threat it posed.

On this basis, the Finnish evangelicals aligned with the alternative transnational ecumenical community that cohered around U.S.-led organisations such as the *World Evangelical Fellowship* and the ICCC, and, by the mid-1970s, also around Peter Beyerhaus’ *Konferenz bekennender Gemeinschaften in den evangelischen Kirchen Europas*.⁴⁷ At the time of the Helsinki Conference, the most important one for these evangelical Finns was also the most stridently anti-communist: the ICCC, a 55-million-member creation of the U.S. fundamentalist pastor and broadcaster Carl McIntire. It was so radically rollback in its anticomunism that only a decade before the Helsinki Final Act it had still been calling

⁴⁴ See, by Markku Ruotsila, Ecumenism, in: Atherstone/Jones (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christian Fundamentalism* (see note 7), 287–304; and Importing Fundamentalism. The Scandinavian Evangelical Council, in: Arne Bugge Amundsen (ed.), *Vekkelsens rom*, Lund 2020, 175–190.

⁴⁵ Today, each of the major Finnish Lutheran revivalist and missions organisations are members of the World Evangelical Alliance: <https://www.suomenevankelinallianssi.fi/keitaolemme/#yhteisojasenet> (30. Oct. 2023).

⁴⁶ ‘Kirkkojen maailmanneuvosto – reformaatiota vai revoluutiota’, *Uusi Tie*, 17 January 1965, 3; Finnish Lutheran Mission Archives [FLMA], Ryttylä, Fah 1973–1982 J-O, Per-Olof Malk, ‘Uppsalan kokous ja me’, n.d.; FLMA, Cd I 1967–72, minutes of the Finnish Lutheran Mission’s work committee, 23 October 1970; ‘Ei käännettä Nairobiissa’, *Uusi Tie*, 11 February 1976, 2.

⁴⁷ See, by Markku Ruotsila, Uuspietismin unohdettu ulottuvuus: suomalaiset David Heden-gårdin herätykristillisessä verkostossa, in: *Teologinen aikakauskirja*, 119/5–6 (2015), 45–59; and Suomi fundamentalistien lähetyskentänä, 1947–1964, in: *Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja*, 101 (2011), 84–107; and for the Beyerhaus connection, FLMA, Faf-Fai 1976–77, Martti Kola, Matkaraportti, 18 October 1976.

for the pre-emptive first use of nuclear weapons to destroy the Soviet Union and China.⁴⁸ This organisation, felt leading Finnish neo-Pietists, was far preferable to the *World Evangelical Fellowship*, more doctrinally correct and more fully anti-ecumenical, if a bit too political and culturally American.⁴⁹ On the whole, such neo-Pietists shared its perspectives on détente, coexistence and religious freedom, and on the «conservative human rights revolution». By the mid-1970s, they were also bold enough to articulate a strong public critique that mirrored the ICCC's, not only of the Soviets but also of their own church, of the WCC and the LWF, and of the Helsinki Process.

In the immediate wake of the 1975 CSCE conference, the ICCC's American leadership started issuing very strongly worded denunciations of détente, insisting that there was «no greater delusion»⁵⁰ presently afflicting the peoples of the West than the supposition that détente and confidence building could yield any desirable results. «Détente is morally wrong, spiritually impossible and politically disastrous»⁵¹, they insisted, «a worldwide no-win policy.»⁵² «Weakness, compromise, irresolution in pursuit of détente has given aid and comfort to the enemy, while millions have been enslaved.»⁵³ The line was essentially the same in the polemics by the evangelicals who were just beginning to create the modern U.S. Christian Right. Thus, we find the Moral Majority's Tim LaHaye thundering against mainline churches and their «secular humanist» allies who, according to him, were more interested in socialism than in their own country's interests and who had made the U.S. into a «neutralized state» through détente and mere containment.⁵⁴ Similarly, the New Christian Right pioneer D. James Kennedy kept bemoaning (well into the 1980s) how «our government continues to seek ways of placating and appeasing a Marxist government that every day for all the years of its existence has labored to crush our brothers and sisters in Christ under the heel of atheistic militarism.»⁵⁵

⁴⁸ See Markku Ruotsila, Fighting Fundamentalist. Carl McIntire and the Politicization of American Fundamentalism, New York 2016, 3, 85–112, 212–236.

⁴⁹ Princeton Theological Seminary, Special Collections, Princeton, NJ, Carl McIntire Manuscript Collection [CMMC], box 35, Juhani Lindgren to Carl McIntire, 21 November 1967; Stig-Olof Fernström, interview by the author, 22 January 2014; FMLA, Fdl 1 1967-73, Juhani Lindgren to C. Stacey Woods, 9 December 1968.

⁵⁰ CMMC, box 145, American Christian Action Council, «Statement of Détente», 22 April 1976.

⁵¹ CMMC, box 145, American Christian Action Council, «Statement of Détente», 22 April 1976.

⁵² «Save America Rally», Christian Beacon, 29 April 1976, 1.

⁵³ CMMC, box 145, American Christian Action Council, «Statement of Détente», 22 April 1976.

⁵⁴ Tim LaHaye, The Battle for the Bible, Old Tappan (New Jersey) 1980, 72–78.

⁵⁵ D. James Kennedy/T. M. Moore, Chain Reaction! Changing the World from Where You Are, Waco (Texas) 1985, 20–21.

The Finnish neo-Pietists' leading periodical, *Uusi Tie*, basically echoed all this. Early on in the Helsinki Process, it did follow their church's episcopate in suggesting that prayers for the success of the CSCE should be offered.⁵⁶ But this was as far as the like-mindedness ever went – and even this was tempered by the insistence that no international conferences could ever bring about peace. The Helsinki Final Act too would in all likelihood turn out to be «empty and meaningless»⁵⁷. Peace, *Uusi Tie* held, was achievable only through «spreading the Gospel, through faith, missionary work, and the Second Coming of our Lord».⁵⁸ The paper was just as sure that Communism posed «an immense antichristian threat»⁵⁹, since it «sought the complete destruction of Christianity, with singlemindedness, ruthlessly and cruelly.»⁶⁰ To *Uusi Tie*, it seemed folly to suppose that «dialogue» and «accommodation» could change any of this, for «peaceful coexistence» was for the Communists but «one tool and means of attack [...] a passing phase in the Communist pursuit of total victory.»⁶¹ The kind of dialogue that did exist across the Iron Curtain in the ecclesiastical field, however, certainly facilitated the Soviets' export of their teachings into the Western churches and so undermined the West from within.⁶²

The proper way to wage the Cold War, *Uusi Tie* insisted on the eve of the Helsinki conference, to the only conclusion that was acceptable – to a victorious conclusion for the West that included the freeing of local churches and the demise of the Soviet totalitarian system – was by distributing Bibles and by converting people to the saving faith in Christ. Not only was the Bible the means of conveying the Good News and the spiritual food desperately needed by Russian and Eastern European Christians amidst their persecution, but it was also «politically dangerous»⁶³ because subversive of Communist totalitarianism. That was why the Soviets would, in most blatant violation of Basket III, not allow its distribution and also why Christians urgently had to keep distributing it. Only by thus interfering in other countries' internal affairs – what the Final Act expressly forbade – could the suffering peoples in the Communist world be helped, and only by converting these peoples into Christians could the power of sin (and Communism) be eradicated from their hearts and they be made into «peace-loving and security-creating peoples.»⁶⁴ The only way,

⁵⁶ «Etyk alkaa», *Uusi Tie*, 4 July 1973, 8; «Huippukonferenssi», *Uusi Tie*, 3 July 1974, 8.

⁵⁷ «Rauhantekijät», *Uusi Tie*, 6 August 1975, 2.

⁵⁸ «Etyk alkaa», *Uusi Tie*, 4 July 1973, 8; See also «Rauhasta ja rauhan vierestä», *Uusi Tie*, 18 July 1973; «Rauha on – Rauhaa ei», *Uusi Tie*, 31 January 1973, 2.

⁵⁹ Martti E. Miettinen, «Politiikan ja kristillisyyden sekoittaminen», *Uusi Tie*, 13 March 1968, 2.

⁶⁰ Martti E. Miettinen, «Politiikan ja kristillisyyden sekoittaminen», *Uusi Tie*, 13 March 1968, 2.

⁶¹ «Susi ja karitsa», *Uusi Tie*, 10 July 1974, 2.

⁶² Martti E. Miettinen, «Politiikan ja kristillisyyden sekoittaminen», *Uusi Tie*, 13 March 1968, 2, and «Kristittyjen ja kommunistien «dialogi»», *Uusi Tie*, 4 September 1968, 2; «Susi ja karitsa», *Uusi Tie*, 10 July 1974, 2; «Etyk-rauha ja psykopolitiikka», *Uusi Tie*, 30 July 1975, 2.

⁶³ «Poliittisesti vaarallinen Raamattu», *Uusi Tie*, 13 March 1974, 2.

⁶⁴ «Rauhantekijät», *Uusi Tie*, 8 August 1975, 2.

Uusi Tie concluded, to make the Helsinki Final Act not «empty and meaningless» was for Christians to ignore its non-interference dicta and to seize upon and forge ahead on their own under Basket III provisions.⁶⁵

Given these sentiments, it is hardly surprising that the Finnish evangelicals would have joined the transnational network of missions agencies and other interdenominational associations that were founded, long before the Helsinki Process, by fundamentalists and evangelicals in support of the persecuted churches and to publicise their plight. It was through these agencies that religious freedom and conservative human rights discourse was globalised and gradually inserted into the centre of the OSCE's activities, from the grassroots up, by means of what Giles Scott-Smith has called «informal and citizen diplomacy.»⁶⁶ Along with the dissidents from the Soviet bloc with whom they had worked closely from an early stage, these evangelicals were the ones whose agency transformed the Helsinki Process from a mere confidence-building and stabilising détente mechanism into a powerful tool of resistance to Soviet totalitarianism and for the advancement of human rights, religious freedom rights first of all.⁶⁷ From the beginning, evangelical Lutheran Finns were part of it all.

Finnish evangelical Lutherans worked mostly through their most recently formed missions society, the neo-Pietists' *Finnish Lutheran Mission* (Kansanlähetys), created in 1967 with the ICCC's assistance. Its Slavic Department smuggled Bibles into the Soviet bloc and was one of the very first to also smuggle out underground churches' petitions for the redress of their grievances through the OSCE and the UN. These were swiftly turned over for worldwide distribution to these Finns' closest collaborators in the Swedish *Slaviska Mission*.⁶⁸ They worked both directly and indirectly through the ICCC with other similar groups too, including the Norwegian *Misjon bak Jernteppet*, the *Dansk Europamission*, and the West German and Swiss groups *Kein Anderes Evangelium* and *Licht im*

⁶⁵ «Poliittisesti vaarallinen Raamattu», *Uusi Tie*, 13 March 1974, 2; «Rauhantekijät», *Uusi Tie*, 8 August 1975, 2; Paul Hakli, «Etykin jälkimietteitä», *Uusi Tie*, 20 August 1975, 2; Per-Olof Malk interview by the author, 15 May 2015.

⁶⁶ Giles Scott-Smith, *Opening Up Political Space. Informal Diplomacy, East-West Exchanges, and the Helsinki Process*, in: Simo Mikkonen/Pia Koivunen (eds.), *Beyond the Divide. Entangled Histories of Cold War Europe*, New York 2015, 23–43.

⁶⁷ Giles Scott-Smith, *Opening Up Political Space. Informal Diplomacy, East-West Exchanges, and the Helsinki Process*, in: Simo Mikkonen/Pia Koivunen (eds.), *Beyond the Divide. Entangled Histories of Cold War Europe*, New York 2015, 23–43; Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children* (see note 8), 91–101, 115–122; Lauren F. Turek, *To Bring the Good News to All Nations. Evangelical Influence on Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Relations*, Ithaca (New York) 2020, ch. 4–6.

⁶⁸ Malk interview, 15 May 2015; Norwegian Lutheran Mission Archives, Oslo, box Dba 0026, folder Mf-Mi, *Misjon bak Jernteppet*, «Til De norske delegater ved Kirkenes Verdenråds konferanse i Uppsala, sommeren 1968»; Pia Latvala, *Valoa itään? Kansanlähetys ja Neuvostoliitto 1967–1973*, Helsinki 2008.

Osten, as well as with the U.S. *Slavic Gospel Mission* and with Brother Andrew's *Open Doors* in the Netherlands. Others in the network included the exiled Romanian Lutheran pastor (and ICCC vice-president) Richard Wurmbrand's *Jesus to the Communist World* and *Hilfsaktion Märtyrerkirche*, the *Keston Institute* in Britain, and the Bulgarian Pentecostal Haralan Popov's *Evangelism to Communist Lands*.⁶⁹ When the Finnish bishops had accepted *Kansanlähetys* as an affiliated missions agency in 1972, they had specified that its operations behind the Iron Curtain were *not* accepted.⁷⁰

Importantly, it was one of these collaborators, the Bible smuggler Hans Christian Neerskov's *Dansk Europamission*, which became an early guiding light behind the first-ever substantial assembly of transnational NGO actors engaged in monitoring human rights violations in the Soviet sphere and in publicising the underground church's plight and the evangelical religious freedom agenda. Most crucially for the context here, it was among the first to start pressurising the OSCE into making this agenda a key part of the Helsinki Process. The assembly in question was the International Sakharov Hearings of 1975, of which Neerskov acted as general secretary and eventually came to lead outright (it held four additional hearings in the late 1970s and early 1980s). Both evangelical Finns and the ICCC had been in touch with some of the organisers for some time prior.⁷¹

Just how subversive to the Finnish church leaders' and government's preferred détente and coexistence vision of the Helsinki Process all this was deemed to be can be highlighted by several examples from the latter 1970s. One example: Finnish neo-Pietist youth groups would patrol outside one of the major churches in central Helsinki often visited by Russian tourists, and they would there pass on Bibles and other religious materials – only to be promptly forbidden by their bishops once found out. This was due to «the sensitive situation in Finland», the bishops said, and to the «hostile nature» of such distribution. The intelligence services

⁶⁹ FLMA, Fah 1968-75, Haralan Popov to Matti Väisänen, 3 November 1975; Anita Deyneka to Markku Ruotsila, 25 November 2013 (in author's posession); CMMC, box 35, Sven Findeisen to Carl McIntire, n.d.; CMMC, box 365, J.C. Maris to Michael Bourdeaux, 27 November 1969; CMMC, box 35, Kurt Salwski to Carl McIntire, 17 September 1980; CMMC, box 197, Carl McIntire to J.C. Maris, 6 February 1978; CMMC, box 671, folder 6, «Program and General Information, Fourteenth World Congress International Council of Christian Churches», June 1993.

⁷⁰ Seppo, *Arkkipiispan aika* (see note 18), 327.

⁷¹ See, by Bent Boel, The International Sakharov Hearings and Transnational Human Rights Activism, 1975–1985, in: *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 23/3 (2001), 81–137; Go East! Danish Contacts with Soviet Bloc Dissidents during the Cold War, in: Ann-Marie Ekengren/ Rasmus Mariager/Poul Villaume (eds.), *Northern Europe in the Cold War. East-West Interactions of Security, Culture, and Technology*, Turku 2016, 158–185; and *Dansk Europamission, Bibelsmugling og Menneskerettigheder under den Kolde Krieg*, in: *Fund og Forskring*, 52 (2013), 381–401; and CMMC, box 35, Konrad Nordeval to «Newspapers, Missions and Individuals», 27 September 1975; Latvala, *Valoa itään?* (see note 68), 102–103.

too would interrogate them and tell them to stop.⁷² Another example comes from the very year of the Helsinki Conference, when *Uusi Tie* invited Richard Wurmbrand to tour their country. They had been publishing translations of his works since 1969, and for this too the semi-official *Kotimaa* had denounced them for «intolerance»⁷³ and «hatred»⁷⁴, and for illicit «mixing politics and religion»⁷⁵. But now in 1975, with détente to be nurtured above all, the bishops issued a blanket ban on Wurmbrand events in the churches. This ban, it was disclosed later, had been requested from the office of the Finnish president.⁷⁶ Tellingly, too, the organisers deemed it necessary to change the name of Wurmbrand's organisation in their country, a branch of which they founded; in Finland only it would be known as the *Stefanus Mission* (also eliminated from its mission statement were all references to «communism» and to the «East»).⁷⁷

These tribulations too, and not just those of Russian and East European believers, were used by Western evangelicals and fundamentalists to highlight Soviet violations of the Helsinki Final Act's religious freedom stipulations, as well as the ecumenical movement's silence and complicity. This is what «atheist freedom of worship really is»⁷⁸, noted, for example, the ICCC's *Getrouw* once notified of the bans. «More than in other free Western countries the breath of the Soviet aggressor can be felt in Finland, and its freedoms exist only as long as the Soviets are willing to allow them.»⁷⁹ Yet all too many church leaders still continued to «dance to the Soviet tune in the vain hope that they can thereby secure their freedom's continuance.»⁸⁰

Regardless, the evangelical Finns persisted. Their outspokenness continued and they kept up with their secretive activities behind the Iron Curtain (and at the central Helsinki church mentioned), no matter all the bans and reprisals. They did not issue communiqües or draft programs of action or hold seminars or «consultations», nor yet, given Finlandization, did they pressurise the OSCE or their own government directly and openly. Instead, they persisted in on-the-ground human rights work

⁷² Malk interview, 15 May 2015; CMMC, box 189, Ray Martin to «Dear Friend of FEBS», September 1977.

⁷³ As cited in Martti E. Miettinen, «Politiikan ja kristillisyyden sekoittaminen», *Uusi Tie*, 13 March 1968, 2.

⁷⁴ As cited in Martti E. Miettinen, «Politiikan ja kristillisyyden sekoittaminen», *Uusi Tie*, 13 March 1968, 2.

⁷⁵ As cited in Martti E. Miettinen, «Politiikan ja kristillisyyden sekoittaminen», *Uusi Tie*, 13 March 1968, 2.

⁷⁶ Jalovaara, *Kirkko* (see note 12), 179–187; Niiranen, Martti Simojoki (see note 19), 428–435; Seppo, *Arkkipiispan aika* (see note 18); Martti Vuollo, Martti E. Miettinen. *Periaatteen mies*, Helsinki 2003, 104–110.

⁷⁷ Hannu Väliaho interview by the author, 22 April 2016.

⁷⁸ «Kerk in verdrukking», *Getrouw* 28 (July 1975), 106.

⁷⁹ «Kerk in verdrukking», *Getrouw* 28 (July 1975), 106.

⁸⁰ «Kerk in verdrukking», *Getrouw* 28 (July 1975), 106.

with the persecuted churches – in doing the actual implementation of Basket III principles – and in speaking out on the persecutions and the religious freedom rights that were being trampled upon. All of it arose from apolitical or pre-political inspiration, for as the Finnish Lutheran Mission’s director of the Bible smuggling and *«samizdat»* operations, Per-Olof Malk, noted nearly half-a-century later, those involved saw themselves as only following the Bible’s clear commands for missionary work, evangelisation, and the succouring of suffering fellow-Christians.⁸¹

Yet as a matter of historical fact, these evangelical Finns were part of a broader transnational community of interchange and activism that did push the Helsinki Process in their preferred direction, making it a powerful tool for the furtherance of human rights as they understood these to be, meaning freedom of religion and evangelisation above all. Both in their persistence in speaking out on their vision and in their grassroots work, these Finnish evangelical Lutherans challenged and subverted Finlandization mightily both in their own country and in the ecumenical movement. In all this, they helped to turn the OSCE from a confidence-building and dialogic forum between the superpowers into a tool for resistance to Soviet totalitarianism and for the advancement of human rights.

Détente, Finlandization, and Resistance – Finnish Churches and the Helsinki Process in Transnational Perspective

This article reconstructs the full range of Finnish church opinion regarding the Helsinki Process from a range of contemporary private correspondence and institutional archives, the religious press and oral history sources. It shows that alongside the celebratory official discourse focused on détente and confidence building, the Helsinki Process occasioned vigorous and protracted contestation throughout Finnish civil society, including in the churches. This was the case particularly regarding the nature of the human rights to be protected under Basket III of the Helsinki Final Act. On this issue, the Finnish church’s ecumenically-minded leadership divided fundamentally from the evangelical neo-Pietists that formed the bulk of their church’s active churchgoers. With much of the rest of the ecumenical movement, the former opted for a socially progressive agenda for the CSCE/OSCE that aspired to a convergence of the two competing economic systems and de-emphasised religious freedom in favour of *«social human rights»*. The latter, on the other hand, rejected détente and confidence building and became interested in the Helsinki Process only as a means of advancing their own goals of religious freedom in Soviet-controlled lands.

Ecumenism – Evangelicalism – Fundamentalism – Human rights – Finlandization – Roll-back – Bible smuggling – OSCE – CSCE.

Entspannung, Finnlandisierung und Widerstand – Die finnischen Kirchen und der Helsinki-Prozess in transnationaler Perspektive

Dieser Artikel rekonstruiert das gesamte Meinungsspektrum der finnischen Kirchen zum Helsinki-Prozess anhand einer Reihe zeitgenössischer privater Korrespondenz und institu-

⁸¹ Malk interview, 15 May 2015.

tioneller Archive, der religiösen Presse und mündlicher Quellen. Er zeigt, dass der Helsinki-Prozess neben dem feierlichen offiziellen Diskurs, der sich auf Entspannung und Vertrauensbildung konzentrierte, in der gesamten finnischen Zivilgesellschaft, auch in den Kirchen, zu heftigen und langwierigen Auseinandersetzungen führte. Dies galt insbesondere für die Art der Menschenrechte, die nach Korb III der Schlussakte von Helsinki zu schützen sind. In dieser Frage trennte sich die ökumenisch gesinnte Führung der finnischen Kirche grundlegend von den evangelikalen Neo-Pietisten, die den Grossteil der aktiven Kirchenbesucher ausmachten. Wie ein Grossteil der übrigen ökumenischen Bewegung entschied sich die erstere für eine sozial fortschrittliche Agenda für die KSZE/OSZE, die eine Konvergenz der beiden konkurrierenden Wirtschaftssysteme anstrebte und die Religionsfreiheit zugunsten der ‹sozialen Menschenrechte› zurückstellte. Letztere wiederum lehnten Entspannung und Vertrauensbildung ab und interessierten sich für den Helsinki-Prozess nur als Mittel, um ihre eigenen Ziele der Religionsfreiheit in den von der Sowjetunion kontrollierten Ländern voranzubringen.

Ökumene – Evangelikalismus – Fundamentalismus – Menschenrechte – Finnlandisierung – Rollback – Bibelschmuggel – OSZE – KSZE.

Détente, finlandisation et résistance – Les Églises finlandaises et le processus d'Helsinki dans une perspective transnationale

Cet article reconstitue l'ensemble des opinions des Églises finlandaises concernant le processus d'Helsinki à partir d'une série de correspondances privées contemporaines et d'archives institutionnelles, de la presse religieuse et de sources d'histoire orale. Il montre que, parallèlement au discours officiel de célébration axé sur la détente et l'instauration de la confiance, le processus d'Helsinki a donné lieu à une contestation vigoureuse et prolongée dans toute la société civile finlandaise, y compris dans les Églises. Ce fut notamment le cas en ce qui concerne la nature des droits de l'homme à protéger dans le cadre du Panier III de l'Acte final d'Helsinki. Sur cette question, les dirigeants œcuméniques de l'Église finlandaise se sont fondamentalement opposés aux néo-piétistes évangéliques qui constituaient la majeure partie des fidèles actifs de leur Église. Comme une grande partie du reste du mouvement œcuménique, les premiers ont opté pour un programme socialement progressiste pour la CSCE/OSCE qui aspirait à une convergence des deux systèmes économiques concurrents et mettait de côté la liberté religieuse au profit des ‹droits sociaux de l'homme›. Ces derniers, en revanche, ont rejeté la détente ainsi que l'instauration d'un climat de confiance et ne se sont intéressés au processus d'Helsinki que comme moyen de faire progresser leurs propres objectifs de liberté religieuse dans les pays contrôlés par l'Union soviétique.

Œcuménisme – évangélisme – fondamentalisme – droits de l'homme – finlandisation – retour en arrière – contrebande de la Bible – OSCE – CSCE.

Distensione, finlandizzazione e resistenza – Le Chiese finlandesi e il processo di Helsinki in una prospettiva transnazionale

Questo articolo ricostruisce l'intera gamma di opinioni della Chiesa finlandese riguardo al processo di Helsinki a partire da una serie di carteggi privati contemporanei e di archivi istituzionali, dalla stampa religiosa e da fonti di storia orale. Mostra che, accanto al discorso ufficiale celebrativo incentrato sulla distensione e sulla costruzione della fiducia, il processo di Helsinki suscitò un'opposizione vigorosa e prolungata in tutta la società civile finlandese, comprese le Chiese. Ciò avvenne in particolare per quanto riguarda la natura dei diritti umani da proteggere ai sensi del ‹basket› III dell'Atto finale di Helsinki. Su questo tema, la direzione ad impronta ecumenica della Chiesa finlandese si divideva fonda-

mentalmente dai neo-pietisti evangelici che costituivano la maggior parte dei fedeli praticanti. Come gran parte del resto del movimento ecumenico, la prima optava per un'agenda socialmente progressista per la CSCE/OSCE, che aspirava ad una convergenza dei due sistemi economici in competizione e che metteva in secondo piano la libertà religiosa a favore dei «diritti umani sociali». I secondi, invece, rifiutavano la distensione e la costruzione della fiducia e si interessavano al processo di Helsinki solo in quanto mezzo per portare avanti i propri obiettivi di libertà religiosa nelle terre controllate dai sovietici.

Ecumenismo – evangelicalismo – fondamentalismo – diritti umani – finlandizzazione – roll back – contrabbando di Bibbie – OSCE – CSCE.

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