

Steven Duncan Huxley

CONSTITUTIONALIST
INSURGENCY IN FINLAND

Societas Historica Finlandiae
Suomen Historiallinen Seura
Finnish Historical Society

Studia Historica 38

Steven Duncan Huxley

CONSTITUTIONALIST
INSURGENCY
IN FINLAND:
Finnish “Passive Resistance”
against Russification
as a Case of Nonmilitary Struggle
in the European Resistance Tradition

SHS/Helsinki/1990

Cover design by Juha Mustanoja.

The Finnish Historical Society has published this study with the permission, granted on 22 May 1990, of Helsinki University, Faculty of Arts.

ISSN 0081-6493
ISBN 951-8915-40-7

Raamattutalo
Pieksämäki 1990

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Preface

In the early years of the twentieth century the Russian Empire was in revolutionary turmoil. In Russia itself groups such as the Socialist Revolutionaries, the Social Democrats and the constitutionalist Union of Liberation, on the background of continual diverse and intense popular unrest, accelerated their struggle for the transformation and overthrow of the tsarist regime. Throughout the Empire as well, from Poland and the Baltic provinces to Asia, sundry minority, nationalist and socialist opposition and revolutionary movements helped undermine imperial power and create the conditions for the Revolution of 1905. On the western border of the Empire, in the Grand Duchy of Finland, the regime's efforts to defend and bolster imperial integrity through the destruction of local autonomy and constitutionalist assertion was met with a distinct and sophisticated form of primarily nonmilitary struggle and warfare.

To call the Finnish Constitutionalists' struggle against the imperial Russian regime a type of warfare may seem unusual, or even exaggerated. Yet "warfare," when used to designate a form of action functionally differing from conventional warfare, is an appropriately inclusive term for designating the scope of the Finnish fight ranging from the constitutionalist mobilization and so-called Legal Battle, which accelerated in the later half of the nineteenth century, to the insurgent noncooperation movement and the schemes for violent rebellion within the context of the Russian Revolution in the period leading up to 1905. Besides, Finnish resistance thinkers themselves explicitly came to understand their struggle as having escalated into a type of war, with both sides employing special means for waging nonmilitary warfare. There exist, moreover, within the body of post-Clausewitzian conflict research a whole variety of ways of distinguishing a spectrum of non-routine conflict or warfare between conventional warfare and peaceful politics. For one apt example, in 1985 the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff defined low-intensity warfare as

limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic, or psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic and psycho-social pressures through terrorism and insurgency. Low-intensity conflict is generally confined to a geographic area and is often characterized by constraints on the weaponry, tactics, and the level of violence.¹

The Finns' particular way of low-intensity, constitutionalist and deliberately violence-avoiding conflict was called "passive resistance." This study is the result of reciprocally examining passive resistance as a unique form of struggle, at a given place and limited time in Finland, and as a case of a more general type of European conflict. Thus it was interest in nonmilitary struggle in general which led to the study of the Finnish case. In turn, familiarity with the Finnish case gave rise to new questions concerning passive resistance and constitutionalist insurgency in general in western history. Accordingly, focus on passive resistance provides a vehicle for contributing to the critical conceptual and historical examination of ideologies and methodologies of violence-avoiding contention and warfare. Likewise, it provides a tool for understanding Finnish Constitutionalists within the political culture of which it was an expression.

In Finland passive resistance was part of a deeply rooted repertoire or tradition of means of relating to Russia ranging from nonconfrontational national development and constitutionalist assertion with the intention of creating an inviolable society to radical disobedience and violent struggle. Only as part of this tradition can passive resistance be satisfactorily understood. Likewise, only through a comprehension of this cultural context can more general concepts of nonmilitary struggle be applied to Finland without distortion. Moreover, this approach will aid those seeking to grasp the historical conditions of Finnish national defense in general.

The study begins by introducing the Finnish concept of passive resistance, the movement of which it was a part and the circumstances which spawned it in 1899. Then through the description and constructive criticism of the influential Finnish national (historiographical and political) and "nonviolent action" perspectives on the subject the work's conceptual framework is established and its scope and limits are clearly defined. This perspective is elaborated in the final section of chapter I, outlining a more comprehensive historical model of resistance and contention. This is done by examining certain central principles of Finnish political culture of relevance to this study (as

¹ Quoted in Klare 1988, p. 53.

articulated in the nineteenth century by Finland's most influential political philosopher and active statesman, leader of the Finnish national movement, J.V. Snellman) in relation to general European thinking on violence and sociopolitical change. In particular William Godwin and Snellman are used to represent two distinct approaches to social power and mass action within the vast field of conflict types which can be distinguished as making (from the actor's viewpoint) no use of direct physical violence or the materials and organization involved with its use. This section also seeks to emphasize the intricate reciprocal relation between justice and injustice in European (including Finnish) constitutionalism and that disproportionate focus on emancipatory "nonviolent" action may tend to underrate, among other things, the extent of collective or class domination involved in nonmilitary struggles.

The purpose of chapter II. is to historically define European passive resistance and to determine just how unique it is as a distinct form of struggle requiring the deliberate avoidance of violence. By so doing, moreover, the culture of constitutionalist resistance to which the Finns were heir is portrayed. In section 1. this is done through the comparison and contrast of passive resistance and civil disobedience and by dispelling some of the influential popular misconceptions of passive resistance perpetuated by the later M.K. Gandhi and his followers while determining what insights the earlier Gandhi had into the nature and history of it. In the second section it is claimed that many defining statements on passive resistance have failed to account for the actual history of the term itself and consequently arbitrarily postulate relations between it and forms of action with which it was not actually associated.

Therefore an effort is made to sketch the history of "passive resistance," leading to the conclusion that what Europeans signified by it was a secular way of struggle, the principles and techniques of which became widely known at the time of the Revolution of 1848; and it is certainly not to be identified with Christian "resist not evil," or pacifist types of opposition. From 1848 to World War One passive resistance was employed in constitutionalist, anti-absolutist and other types of disobedience struggles against authorities. In Finland passive resistance was the weapon of a highly organized assertive and insurgent elite-led Constitutionalist movement.

Thus strictly speaking passive resistance does not predate the nineteenth century. It is, however, an expression of a culture of resistance and rebellion having roots in the early modern era of European history. The Finns were clearly heirs to this constitutionalist tradition and to the contradictions and ambiguity of resistance and obedience in

Protestant culture. Although the constitutionalist ideology of just struggle took shape in the early modern period, apparently resisters from the era of the first revolutionary Protestants until the nineteenth century had no significant articulated concept of a form of effective struggle between violent resistance and passive obedience to be used as an alternative to violence against military warfare.

Chapters III. and IV. form the core of the book. In the former the task, as introduced in the beginning of the study, of explaining the origin and development of Finnish passive resistance is carried out. Following the Finno-Russian constitutional conflict of 1861 a tradition of associating passive resistance with unnationalistic liberal extremism was initiated. In various forms this tradition has given rise to misconceptions about Finnish resistance which are presently still perpetuated. In contrast to these views it is shown here that in the course of the latter half of the nineteenth century conditions made for the fertile unification of nationalist, or "Fennomaniac," cultural defense and assertive constitutionalism. Finnish nationalism could never be guided solely according to the ideals of the most vocal conservative Fennomaniacs, and it was the Finnish national mobilization in general (including the workers' movement) which provided the strong foundation for the ideology and organization of resistance after 1898.

Although the study focuses on nonmilitary cultural defense and passive resistance, it is the aim of a subsection in the last part of chapter III. to provide an insight into the role of armed force in Finnish society. One of the central tenets of Finnish national thought was that armed force is not necessary for national survival. Nevertheless, paradoxically enough, Finnish political leaders agreed that Finland should have its own autonomous army. Moreover, the military question played an important role in triggering the Finno-Russian crisis beginning in 1899.

Another special feature of chapter III. is the section dealing with the Hungarian passive resistance movement. This is an aspect of the Finnish resistance heritage which has been altogether neglected by researchers, in spite of the fact that it was the most prominent channel for the diffusion of resistance culture into Finland and represented for Finns an outstanding historical model for their own struggle. Moreover, contrary to the claims of those who see the Hungarian model as perpetuated by extremist Constitutionalists, it was, beginning in the 1860s, prominent figures in the Fennomaniac movement who propagated knowledge of the Hungarian struggle and its relevance for the Finns.

The aim of chapter IV. is to define the inextricably interlinked ideology and methodology of passive resistance following 1898, ex-

aming the central issues which it involved in practice. The first task is to describe the Russification program and the initial mobilization and organization of resistance. Generally speaking, as the Russian administrators well recognized, Finnish society provided the resisters with highly favorable circumstances, with certain serious drawbacks, for disobedience. Moreover, the initiation of resistance involved what was seen as a unique mass activation of learned European opinion.

At this time the Finnish resistance tradition was redefined and radicalized. Passive resistance came to include a sophisticated variety of strikingly effective means for a "new way of waging warfare," based on systematic non-cooperation. The Constitutionalism which fueled the mass movement beginning in 1899 was above all geared for action, providing its adherents with a common creed while giving each one leeway concerning personal motives. Finnish resistance leaders had internalized modern constitutionalism and the current European political morality of the struggle for Justice and the duty of rebellion. Nevertheless, the dilemma involved in the question of resistance or submission, which gave rise to extreme controversy, was in its profundity impossible to deal with entirely on a secular level. The religious aspect of the struggle was very prominent, and the resisters had to invoke an early-modern form of religiopolitical discourse in the effort to overcome Finns' Lutheran obedience to authority and the harnessing of God to the "realistic" arguments of the compliants. The Finns' predicament also inspired the creation of a distinct Tolstoyan-Christian type of passive resistance which involved the rejection of fundamental constitutionalist principles.

Another outstanding dilemma faced by the Constitutionlists, who represented the upper strata of society, lay in their relation to what they called the rank and file of the nation. In the effort to mobilize a mass following, in spite of brief and significant successes, they were forced to acknowledge their illusions concerning the masses and recognize the lack of national consciousness and unity in Finland. Through the analysis of this dilemma passive resistance can be seen not only as a way of struggle against Russia, but also as a bid for national power during the death throes of the old status society. Nevertheless, in regard to insurgence against the long-established Russian regime, the propagation of the untoward spirit of disobedience throughout the nation and association with disaffected elements in Russia, the Constitutionlist front was certainly the most radical agent in Finnish society prior to the Great Strike. Section 6. of this chapter seeks to determine the scope and limits of Constitutionlist insurgency and its relation to armed force and Empire-wide revolution. The fourth

chapter concludes with a detailed evaluation of the accomplishments, failures and outcome of Finnish Constitutionalist insurgency.

Chapter V. brings the work to an end by examining what an understanding of the Finnish case might have to offer to the study of nonmilitary struggle in general.

This study got under way with the aid of grants by the Finnish Cultural Fund, the Tampere Peace Research Institute and the Finnish Metal Workers' Fund. The main research was accomplished under a Fellowship granted by the Einstein Institution of Cambridge, Massachusetts, an organization which supports work on the strategic uses of nonviolent sanctions in relation to problems of political violence. The final stages of the work were supported by my own financial endeavors and by a grant from Helsinki University.

I would like to thank Risto Alapuro, Yrjö Blomstedt, Rolf Büchi, Dudley Duncan, Antti Kujala, Tuomo Polvinen, Charles Tilly, and Anthony F. Upton, for commenting on the manuscript. Their criticism led to important alterations in the text, including the further clarification of central points. I was not, however, able to act upon all of their valuable comments. Moreover, there are several points over which I remain in certain degrees of disagreement with some of them. Therefore it is only appropriate to stress that none of these reviewers bear responsibility for the work as it stands.

I am very grateful to the people at the various archives, libraries and other institutions who facilitated this study. In particular I would like to thank the staff of the Helsinki University Library whose kind and decisive help made it a memorable pleasure to deal with them. Special thanks are also due to all those at the History Department of Helsinki University, the Finnish State Archives and the Finnish Literature Society Archives who provided me with assistance and advice.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Finnish Historical Society, and especially to Rauno Endén, for bringing this work into its final published form.

I. Perspectives on Resistance

1. Studying the Finnish Resistance Tradition

The redefinition of key terms can be a fundamental act of insurgency.¹ When, in August of 1900, a Finn by the name of Arvid Verner Neovius published a fresh definition of a controversial term within the Finnish political vocabulary the tsarist authorities found it so dangerous as to order its confiscation throughout Finland.² In this tract Neovius observes that there are certain concepts and words which are borne upon the tongue with such frequency that their meaning seems entirely obvious to everyone. However, with the intervention of events which make it necessary to put them into action such concepts, apparently once so clear, become like a clanging bell with everyone interpreting them according to their own inclination.³ Passive resistance (*passivt motstånd*), one of the central topics in the storm of current Finnish debate, was just such a concept, subject, according to Neovius, to much use, abuse and misunderstanding. He felt compelled to undertake the clarification of “the word and concept passive resistance.”⁴

Neovius was no mere layman in matters of defense and military strategy. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1861 he received a military

¹ “Insurgency” throughout this study signifies a condition of revolt against a long-established government that is less than organized revolution and that is not recognized as conventional warfare.

² Neovius 1900a. I came upon the notification of the confiscation of Neovius’ work in the K.F. Ignatius Collection, Finnish State Archives. Someone pasted the notification on the inside front cover of the copy of *Lösa blad* contained therein; see *Lösa blad*. *Lösa blad* was one of the few domestic works to be included on the list of forbidden printed matter issued by the Russian regime’s Board of Censors in Finland; see *Uppgift ... förbjudna icke periodiska tryckalster, 1891–1901*.

³ Neovius 1900a, pp. 10–11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11. “Passive resistance” will never be used in this study as a trans-historical term, but only in reference to situations in which it was actually employed by the actors involved. All translations throughout this book are my own unless otherwise indicated.

education under the direct guidance of his lieutenant-general Finnish nationalist father, who was an instructor at the St. Petersburg Military Academy and later director of Finland's Cadet Academy. In addition to completing a doctorate in natural science, Neovius served as an officer in the Finnish Guard and was one of the chief editors of the *Finsk Militär Tidskrift* (Finnish Military Journal) in the 1880s.⁵ It was not as a militarily naive pacifist that Neovius was to be one of Finland's most articulate and persistent advocates of passive resistance.

Neovius explained that when a superior power violates the rights of a weaker then passive resistance is legally and morally the fully justified defensive weapon (*försvarsvapen*) of the wronged party.⁶ However, if the defender is to wield this weapon effectively it is essential to have a thorough knowledge of it:

If you cannot stretch the bow it is not yours. Only he, who knows his weapon precisely, can make use thereof with success. This weapon is not what everyone will have it. It has its own definite essence.⁷

He insisted that passive resistance was no mere general term which could be subject to arbitrary interpretations.⁸

Neovius sought to correct the "misconception" put forth by some that passive resistance is something which can be "practiced with the tongue"; it cannot be entirely equated with mere "verbal protest," he emphasized. Verbal protest is an important basic element of the concept of passive resistance, but does not compose the whole content of it.⁹ According to Neovius' view, passive resistance is not action as ordinarily conceived, rather it is systematic "*refusal to act*," refusal to submit to, or cooperate in any manner with, violence (*våld*; for Neovius and his contemporaries the concept of violence was not confined to direct damage or harm caused to persons or things, but emphatically included injustice as well): To merely protest against injustice while at the same time submitting to the aggressor's will is not, Neovius held, passive resistance; it is at best compliancy and, not rarely, treachery.

Raw aggression by a predominant violent power, Neovius empha-

⁵ Neovius is a forgotten figure in Finnish history. The only biography of him is a short article by Tekla Hultin who was one of his fellow resisters and perhaps the foremost pioneer at the time of women's participation in academic and political life. She was convinced that one day his role in the events of "the years of oppression" following 1898 would prove to be much greater than appears in contemporary accounts; Hultin 1923.

⁶ Neovius 1900a, p. 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

sized, can be overcome by the defender's persistent withdrawal of all cooperation, through passive resistance, which he described as a powerful weapon drawing strength from the unity, solidarity and staying power of the violated society.¹⁰

Neovius' essay is an expression of the attempt by Finnish resistance thinkers to meet the challenge of the deepening crisis in Finno-Russian relations.¹¹ In 1898 the extreme Russian nationalist N.I. Bobrikov was appointed governor-general of the Grand Duchy of Finland. Bobrikov brought with him to his new post a detailed program for the administrative and, to a lesser extent, cultural Russification of Finland. The dramatic commencement of this program came with the manifesto on imperial legislation of February 1899 – experienced by many Finns as the initiation of a political coup d'état – in which Tsar Nicholas II made it clear that Finnish constitutional law was not to interfere with the policies of imperial integration or with any other matters affecting the interests of the Russian Empire as a whole.

With the promulgation of the February Manifesto and the further oppressive measures of the Bobrikov administration almost all politically aware Finns agreed that some form of cultural and political resistance was necessary. Disagreement, however, concerning resistance methods coupled with internal political and social discord made for a very intense and multifaceted debate on how such defense should be carried out. The Finnish party, and the national "Fennomania" movement as a whole, was seriously split on the issue.¹² The Young

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 11–14; a couple of years later Neovius was able to reassert, now on the basis of experience, that "passive resistance, as based on the principle of unity, is a mighty weapon in the hands of the weak against material predominance"; see Neovius 1902.

¹¹ At the beginning of his tract Neovius rhetorically complained in the romantic style of his times of how unnatural it was to bridle his thoughts and engage in such serious philosophizing. Neovius' complaint is incomprehensible unless it is seen as symbolically referring to a task which was unnatural for the whole upper or educated strata of Finnish society. Neovius' "Summer Thoughts" (as the work was titled) are symbolic of the end of the upper strata's "summer"; according to his metaphors, its eagle was forced to ground and its sun was obscured. Neovius' philosophizing represents a new radical moment in Finnish political culture. The romantic terms of the discourse of the time should not allow the significance of its content to be obscured.

¹² Before mid-nineteenth century advocacy of Finnish nationalism came to be called "Fennomania." In English an adherent of Fennomania has usually been called a "Fennoman," with the plural as "Fennomans" or "Fennomen." This may be a convenient solution, but it loses the original reference to mania. I have chosen therefore to translate the term as "Fennomanian." To speak of "Fennomaniacs," although some might think it most appropriate (and even closer to the original), is perhaps too extreme. Later Fennomanians and Svecomanians also came to be designated by the more neutral terms "Finnish-minded" and "Swedish-minded."

Finns, along with many members of the Fennomanian old guard, formed a Constitutionalist block with the liberal and Swedish-minded parties. This alliance, which was joined by certain workers' groups, advocated passive resistance while a wing of the Old Finn party (including many of the most prominent Fennomanian patriarchs) argued for various degrees of compliancy. Organized passive resistance was put into action right away and was to take a wide variety of forms. On the ideological level Neovius' work was followed by a profusion of others elaborating, evaluating and criticizing the concept and practice of passive resistance.

As part of a small polity faced by a predominant power (which, to be sure, was its legitimate ruler) the Finnish resisters were forced by circumstances to resort to, and develop, nonmilitary means of defense. Nevertheless, such immediate material and political conditions by no means automatically lead to the exclusion of military, or other violent, types of struggle, as countless historical examples demonstrate. To more fully explain the choice of means of contention one must study political culture.

From a National Point of View

The aim of this study is to examine Finnish passive resistance against Russification as a case of European constitutionalist insurgency and nonmilitary struggle. Before laying out framework for this task it is important for the reader to gain an idea as to how the anti-Russification struggle has come to be interpreted in Finnish political culture, including historiography, today.

In general the main era of the passive resistance movement, 1899–1905, remains obscure to most Finns, strongly overshadowed as it is by popular national focus on the more traumatic crises of the World War One period resulting in revolution and civil war and by the all out military confrontations with the Soviet Union during the Second World War. It is not commonly recognized how radical the passive resistance movement really was. It was hitherto the most militant movement, and the closest thing to a rebellion, in the history of Russian rule over Finland. In spite of the profound effect it had on Finnish life, passive resistance has been the subject of relatively little major scholarly research.¹³ Perhaps this is because fresh approaches to the

¹³ I qualify this statement below.

subject have been lacking. This lack, in turn, can be partially explained by the changes in Finnish politics which began around the time of the 1905 “Great Strike” in Finland and Russia. With these changes passive resistance gradually disappeared from Finnish political culture. Furthermore, no historian has hitherto ventured to look beyond the Finnish national framework for a deeper understanding of passive resistance in its European cultural context.

On 31 December 1917 Finnish independence was officially recognized by the Bolshevik government in Petrograd. This act finally terminated Finland’s one hundred and eight year old history as an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire. The Civil War of 1918 – which resulted in the victory of the German-supported “White” or “bourgeois” forces – left Finnish society deeply wounded, making the foundation for internal political cooperation and national unity extremely unstable. Finland’s search during the following two decades for security and a practical foreign policy can be characterized as a process of groping which bore little fruit. An irradicable sentiment of mutual mistrust and hostility was to prevail on the background of Finno-Soviet relations during the coming years.

Following the Civil War the memory of the Constitutionalist passive resistance movement was romantically preserved in certain quarters, but usually in subordination to the “liberation” struggle of 1918; it became part of the folklore of independence. Nevertheless, Finland of the inter-war years was not a conducive place for the innovative cultivation of the passive resistance tradition or, with very few exceptions, for the critical scholarly study of it. On the one hand, in the prevailing militaristic spirit of the time it obviously could not have been widely considered as a stance in relation to Russia; it was not developed into a kind of nonmilitary defense system. On the other hand, the passive resistance tradition of radical civilian action or civil disobedience against authority in the name of justice was not cultivated as a living part of domestic politics.

During this period the Finnish government explored a variety of security policy alternatives, such as possible alliances with the Baltic states and Poland (all sharing fear of Russia), dependence upon League of Nations security and disarmament solutions and military alliance with Sweden and the Northern countries. All these efforts ended in failure. The two wars with Russia – from November 1939 to the peace treaty of March 1940, and from the alliance in the German offensive of June 1941 to final defeat and the armistice agreement of September 1944 – inspired a new extensive national solidarity. The price of unity, however, was severe. The armistice agreement and the Paris Peace

Treaty of 1947 burdened Finland with a variety of penalties, reparations and stringent requirements and restrictions.

What is of relevance here for the present study is that at that time the overwhelming force of circumstance demanded a profound shift in Finnish politics, which in turn affected ways of writing history and interpreting political tradition. Now the passive resistance movement, in a manipulated and caricatured form, became a convenient scapegoat for the new politics.

In his famous Independence Day speech of 1944 Finland's new post-war prime minister, Juho Kusti Paasikivi, called upon the Finns to face the facts: The primary political problem for Finland, upon which its survival depends, was the Soviet Union. Policies of containment and confrontation as the primary means of foreign policy had gone bankrupt. As Urho K. Kekkonen (later president of Finland from 1956–1981) put it at the time, "Finland's national interests do not permit a commitment to an anti-Russian policy nor the seeking of such a policy."¹⁴ Nowadays on the surface of Finnish political life there exists a broad consensus concerning the appropriateness of what has come to be called the "Paasikivi-Kekkonen line" which is founded on neutrality and the primacy of active foreign policy and peace politics for the attainment of the aims of national security.

It has been observed that the architects of present day Finnish foreign policy, such as Paasikivi and Kekkonen, did not develop a wholly new policy, but returned to a political tradition of over one hundred years old¹⁵. Regardless of whether they actually returned to an old policy or not, the writings of both men do indeed display a significant concern for historical understanding. Both cultivate their arguments with careful reference to the nineteenth and early twentieth century Finnish doctrines of accommodation and compliance in Finno-Russian relations. Paasikivi and Kekkonen (along with the political scholars behind them), like Neovius earlier, were innovating ideologists who drew upon and manipulated Finnish political culture in order to legitimize new, untoward, political behavior.¹⁶

Of particular importance in the ideological struggle for the reevaluation of the Finnish political heritage were the "memoirs" of the eminent conservative statesman, financier and gifted diplomat Paasikivi from the "years of oppression" (1899–1915), published in

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 260; Kekkonen 1982, pp. 42–43; Jansson 1986, p. 30.

¹⁵ Apunen 1984, pp. 19–30; Jansson 1986, pp. 25–34.

¹⁶ On ideological innovation see Skinner 1974, pp. 277–303.

Finnish and Swedish in 1957.¹⁷ The young doctor of law Paasikivi was initiated into political life in the early years of the century through intimate cooperation with the leading Old Finn figures of the time. It is thus no mere coincidence that in portraying the historical foundation for the development of his own politics (the “Paasikivi line”) Paasikivi devoted considerable attention to analyzing and criticizing passive resistance; his own doctrine takes shape on the background of this criticism.¹⁸

A common view among the patriarchs of today’s Finnish historiography is, in the words of Eino Jutikkala, that “the Constitutional outlook on the events of the Russification period dominated the Finnish interpretation of history with unchallenged authority between the two world wars.”¹⁹ It is held that just as Paasikivi’s presidency (1946–1956) marked a sharp break with the past – he was the first non-Constitutionalist and former member of the compliance faction to hold that office – so his memoirs marked the end of the predominance of the Constitutionalist resistance interpretation of Finno-Russian relations in Finnish historiography.

For some this signified the possibility for scholars to liberate history from what they saw as the domination of the pro-passive resistance viewpoint.²⁰ They maintain that the establishment of the Paasikivi line has been one of the main factors making for the more objective study of Finno-Russian relations.²¹ In other quarters this has been seen as the beginning of a period of the prevalence of the “neo-compliance” perspective in Finnish historical writing.²² On the one hand it meant a beneficial break with the more narrow-minded forms of Finnish romantic nationalist historiography and the triumph of Finnish neo-political realism accompanied by new vitally important research into the “Russian point of view” in Finnish history. On the other hand, however, perhaps what might be called the “Paasikivi paradigm” has been too influential in determining how certain periods – in particular the era of passive resistance – are conceived of, or ignored, at present.

Paasikivi, it should be added, was no mere amateur historian. In addition to law he studied history at Helsinki University and his

¹⁷ The historian and political columnist Jukka Tarkka writes that the publication of Paasikivi’s memoirs represents a major transformation in Finnish political thought; Tarkka 1990, p. 111.

¹⁸ Paasikivi 1957a, pp. 1–84.

¹⁹ Jutikkala 1984, p. 208; Polvinen 1989, p. 536; Tommila 1989, p. 241. Jutikkala, to be sure, displays a certain sympathy for the “Constitutional outlook.”

²⁰ Rommi 1964, p. 15.

²¹ Tommila 1989, p. 241.

²² Klami 1981, pp. 70–71.

doctoral dissertation and other research from the time were on legal history; moreover, he was a close disciple and associate of Finland's most prominent Fennomanian historians.²³ Given Paasikivi's passion for history, which he maintained throughout his life, it is no wonder that post-war political historians have found his interpretations attractive, allowing them to inform their own viewpoints. The prominent historian and long-time Helsinki University professor Yrjö Blomstedt even holds that Paasikivi's memoirs, "especially the parts dealing with the years of oppression," are actually historical studies in the strict sense of being grounded on a professional and scientifically critical examination of sources and that they are manifestations of Paasikivi's "scientific exactitude."²⁴

It must be realized that Paasikivi's memoirs from the "era of oppression" were adroitly tailored for the post-World War Two period. They can be seen as a political act in which the master diplomat carves out his own line in distinct contrast to what he persuasively, with the deadly empathy of Realpolitik paternalism, depicts as the ruins of idealistic and unpragmatic Constitutionalist resistance politics.²⁵ Having said this, however, it should be emphasized that Paasikivi's memoirs, when used critically, are indeed a very valuable source – as are the works of the Constitutionalist school – on the ideas and controversies of "the era of oppression."

In Finnish historiography the resistance and accommodation traditions are often placed in sharp contrast to one another. Is there a way to approach the study of these traditions without committing oneself to the biases of the extremes of either side? Paasikivi's own reflections seem to provide a clue as to how this might be done. Discussing the development of his political thought he wrote:

even a small nation may be forced into a situation in which it can do nothing but say: we can go no further. There exists a border which cannot be crossed, although there can emerge ... disagreements concerning where this border must be. But before a step is taken towards the final battle an extreme effort must be made to achieve reconciliation; one must go as far as possible in this effort. Only if agreement is not attained is it necessary to say, like Luther: "Here I stand, I cannot budge. God help me." This was the viewpoint of the Old Finns and it has been my program later as well.²⁶

²³ Blomstedt 1970, pp. 133–136.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 136–137.

²⁵ Tuomo Polvinen writes that the main purpose of Paasikivi's memoirs from the "years of oppression" was to vindicate the Old Finn line; Polvinen 1989, p. 536.

²⁶ Paasikivi 1957a, p. 2.

As Paasikivi's comments indicate, it is very difficult to objectively determine the border where all possibilities for negotiated agreement break off and negative coercion – be it nonmilitary, military, or both – must be resorted to. Likewise, it is a perplexing task to decide how, and to what extent, confrontation should be planned for in advance. This expresses one of the basic recurrent dilemmas in the history of Finno-Russian and Finno-Soviet relations. At the turn of the century this dilemma was particularly intense; for the Constitutionalist resisters at the time it was clear that Paasikivi's border had been crossed and that the compliants, failing to invoke Luther's words, had fallen into disastrous submission.²⁷ For many others there existed a grave ambivalence concerning the appropriate approach. For them both resistance and accommodation were necessary. Paasikivi himself chose to defend the compliant side for posterity, but he does admit that another view exists. He observed that already in 1902 the prominent historian, Helsinki University professor and statesman Ernst Gustav Palmén expressed the view that in the defense of Finland both resistance and conciliation were necessary. He then noted that in the 1950s Professor of General History (Helsinki) Arvi Korhonen had come to the same conclusion.²⁸

More recently there are signs that this view is consciously being revived, as seen for example in the work of the latest successor to Korhonen's office Tuomo Polvinen.²⁹ Polvinen was one of the main contributors to a short book, published in 1960, which can be seen as one of the fledgling expressions of this point of view, sketching the framework for a more comprehensive understanding of the so-called "era of Russian oppression."³⁰ In particular Lauri Hyvämäki's brief article therein on what he calls Finnish "Constitutionalist ideology," outlining some of the central problems involved in the analysis of Finnish resistance thought, can in certain very limited respects be seen as a predecessor of the present study.³¹

Polvinen's view, as expressed in the most advanced study of the Bobrikov regime, is that Finnish conciliation counter-balanced radical disobedience and thus prevented a hopeless confrontation with the

²⁷ A famous Constitutionalist tract by the statesman Lennart Gripenberg from 1903, entitled *Stand or Yield? (Seistako vai väistyä?)*, concluded with the very words of Luther quoted above by Paasikivi.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 67.

²⁹ Polvinen 1984, p. 345.

³⁰ *Venäläinen sortokausi suomessa* 1960.

³¹ Hyvämäki 1960, *passim*.

Russian regime.³² Ultimately, Polvinen claims, it was thanks to the flexibility of the compliant Finnish ministerial-level officials that Finnish political institutions were successfully preserved. He concludes that both resistance and compliance proved necessary in the defense of Finland's autonomy.³³

Polvinen's view as here stated is an authoritative re-statement of the classical mainstream compliant Old Finn interpretation of the Finno-Russian conflict. It no doubt represents the predominant interpretation of that conflict today. According to the mainstream compliant line, as formulated in 1901–1902, resistance was indeed held to be necessary, but only in a restricted sense and in practice only for a short period of time.³⁴ Looking back upon that time in 1907 Johan R. Danielson-Kalmari (the prominent politician-historian and Helsinki University history professor who had formulated the program around which the compliants rallied) said that he and his confederates became convinced then that the resistance being carried out by the Constitutionalist front, which he acknowledged as including a significant amount of the country's officials and private citizens, would lead to the thorough devastation of Finland's political and social order.³⁵

It is not among the tasks of this study to challenge the validity of the Paasikivian view concerning the ultimate consequences of resistance, but only point out that it is problematic. After all, to issue such a challenge would be to engage in Finnish politics, because the compliant interpretation is based on counter-factual speculation about what might have been and cannot be confirmed through reference to facts. This is not to say that such speculation is useless, unnecessary or even unconvincing, but that the task at hand requires non-commitment to competing political interpretations. Consequently, the basic widely internalized and often tacit postulate that the Paasikivian lineage represents realism while the Constitutionalist view, however right or acceptable in principle, represents unpragmatic extremism in need of modification by Old Finn-style "wisdom" should not be allowed here to bias research.

³² As a statement of alleged fact this view is highly problematic; see below, chapter IV., section 9.

³³ Polvinen 1984, p. 345.

³⁴ Torvinen 1965, pp. 268–307.

³⁵ Danielson-Kalmari 1907, p. 17; Danielson-Kalmari was Paasikivi's most significant mentor. In an anti-passive resistance article of 1878 Agathon Meurman, Danielson-Kalmari's close associate and another important mentor of Paasikivi, claimed that the grand old man of the Fennomanian movement, Johan Vilhelm Snellman, had earlier asserted that the use of passive resistance would mean national suicide for the Finns; see below chapter III., sections 1. and 4.

It goes without saying that one of the fundamental constituting factors of Finnish national existence has been its relationship to imperial Russia, and later to the Soviet Union. This relationship, however, has been continuously complex, impossible to describe merely in terms of antagonism and contrast; Finland as an independent nation has arisen and developed its identity largely through an intricate on-going dialectical process of conflict and resistance and cooperation and accommodation with its mighty neighbor. The Finno-Russian (and Finno-Soviet) relationship when viewed from a broad historical perspective, appears in some ways as a continuous paradox, as exemplified by the ambiguity of the above mentioned Paasikivian border. This insight spurs the idea that for research purposes it is more fruitful to see resistance and compliance in a continuum relation, in which their differences can be contrasted – and by no means played down – on the background of a common political heritage, rather than seizing on either one as the extreme of a rigid dichotomy, as has often been done.

My earlier statement that there has been little scholarly research concerning the passive resistance movement requires explanation. In terms of contention, sociopolitical mobilization and change Finno-Russian relations during the years 1899–1905 form an outstandingly eventful period in Finnish history. This period in general is dealt with in a vast body of works consisting of memoirs, biographies, general histories and specific monographs. Yet, although many of these works touch upon the passive resistance movement in one way or another, only Julio N. Reuter's two volume study of the organization of passive resistance deals with it as a subject in itself in scholarly detail.³⁶

A new up-to-date book of the type which Reuter's represents, but more encompassing and critical, would of necessity have to be a broad work of historical synthesis. The time is ripe for such a work in English, because there is a great dearth of publications making for a deeper understanding of the era in which passive resistance took place in languages other than Swedish and Finnish.³⁷

The aim of the present project, however, is much more restrictive and specific: The endeavor here is simply to explain how the Finns

³⁶ Reuter 1928; Reuter 1930; cf. Parmanen 1936–1941. Noteworthy studies dealing with passive resistance in a subordinate manner are Blomstedt 1969, Copeland 1973 and Murtorinne 1964. The subject of passive resistance has been touched upon, for example, in works dealing with the lives of famous individuals or dealing with the relation of Finns to Russian opposition and revolutionary activity.

³⁷ For a noteworthy Finnish effort to achieve a balanced synthesis on the time see Apunen, et al. 1988.

conceived of and practiced the way of nonmilitary struggle which they called passive resistance and to explore the place of this “weapon” within the Finnish and European culture of resistance and contention. This approach provides an effective way to make known hitherto insufficiently explored and altogether unknown aspects of European passive resistance and Finnish resistance culture within the framework of a selective historical synthesis, many of the details of which will be new to those who read no Finnish or Swedish.³⁸ Given these deliberately strict limitations many doubtlessly noteworthy aspects of the Finno-Russian struggle cannot be dealt with in detail here. Thus this study does not claim to be exhaustive, but only to be a fresh contribution to a field many facets of which still await critical examination.

Following this approach the Finno-Russian conflict will not be dealt with here as a rational legal debate; the intention is not to determine or elaborate upon the objective *de jure* status of Finland within the Russian Empire.³⁹ Instead this conflict is studied as a political power struggle between increasingly incompatible interests: on the one hand there was Finnish state-building, beset by internal strife, with its continual effort for greater cultural and constitutional autonomy; on the other there was Russian autocracy struggling to defend and extend itself in relation to the revolutionary onslaught besetting it from many sides. Finnish passive resistance is thus seen as a unique and distinct part of an Empire-wide process of radical change and revolution.

Naturally the most important sources for the study of resistance and contention in Finnish political culture are the original primary, unpublished and published, literary remains left by the actors involved in the period under consideration 1861–1918, and especially from 1899 to 1905.⁴⁰ Moreover, the nationalist Constitutionalists, especially the more dynamic participants in the passive resistance movement, must be credited with leaving behind a wealth of well organized primary

³⁸ Therefore the present study only minimally touches upon the main matters dealt with in Copeland 1973, Kujala 1989, and Polvinen 1984, using them to bolster primary research on passive resistance; these and related works can thus be seen as defining this study's borders. Moreover, this work might be seen as a new contribution to the subject of “state and revolution in Finland” as explored in Alapuro 1989.

³⁹ On this problem see Jussila 1969, 1987, 1989; Schweitzer 1978.

⁴⁰ The problems confronting the user of the memoirs and commentaries on these times by contemporary actors, notorious for their Finnish nationalist self-centeredness, are now widely recognized among Finnish historians; see Jussila 1979, pp. 15–16, 256–264.

source materials consisting of books, newspapers, memoirs and underground booklets, pamphlets and periodicals from the time.⁴¹

A Conflict Research Approach

In the late 1960s and early 1970s reflection on the Finnish passive resistance tradition briefly became relevant among certain groups of Finns. This was a period of intense debate concerning the foreign policy, security and defense of Finland. The Czechoslovakian resistance to the Soviet invasion of 1968 provided a particular catalyst among Finnish political and military experts and peace activists for initiating investigations into the nature and potential of what has variously been called social defense, civilian-based defense, nonviolent defense, nonmilitary resistance, and so forth.⁴² The discussion culminated in the reports of two consecutive expert sub-committees of the presidentially supervised Finnish Psychological Defense Planning Commission (renamed in 1975 as the Commission for Defense Information).⁴³

The Finnish resistance to Russification 1898–1905 was one of the many historical cases examined in these reports, and in other contemporary analyses, in the search for empirical data for the evaluation of the aforesaid types of defense. These considerations of the Finnish case, however, remained relatively superficial, dependent as they were solely on a few secondary sources. As will be seen in the next section, these were not the first works in which the Finnish movement of 1898–1905 was classified as a special type of resistance action and warfare, comparable to other cases of the same type, and considered in its relevance to the problems of resistance and defense in general.

It was from a similar point of departure that this study got underway.

⁴¹ These materials are mainly housed in the national collections of the Helsinki University Library and the Finnish State Archives. For a bibliography, accompanied by useful annotations, of most of the “political literature from the era of oppression” see Estlander 1945. With some important exceptions, this study makes relatively little use of private letters. This is because initial exploration of letter collections revealed little material of direct bearing on the problems at hand.

⁴² One of the first works to which the Finns turned in their exploration of this field was the pioneer study Roberts et al. 1967.

⁴³ For an overview of the debate on nonmilitary civilian-based defense and Finnish security, see Joenniemi 1982; the two reports (which I have translated into English, but not published) referred to are: *Aseeton vastarinta* [Weaponless Resistance] 1971 and; *Aseeton vastarinta ja sen toteuttamisedellytykset Suomessa* [Weaponless Resistance and the Conditions for its Implementation in Finland] 1975.

It was conceived of as part of an effort to explore the ideologies and methods of various types of resistance, defense and contention paying particular attention to those not involving armed military or paramilitary action. Although the focus here is on resistance, it is recognized that resistance cannot be understood except in relation to contention in general. Resistance (always understood here in the sense of social or collective resistance) is rarely pure defense. The basic condition of resistance is the prior mobilization of ideological and material resources. Such mobilization, whether intended to be aggressive or not, may automatically lead to strategic competition and confrontation, as it did in the Finnish case here studied. Thus calling a type of conflict action "resistance" usually involves a subjective element. It is a matter of how values are interpreted.

My inquiry concerning Finnish resistance thought and action gave rise to the hypothesis that the terms "*passivt motstånd*" and "*passiivinen vastarinta*" (the Swedish and Finnish equivalents of "passive resistance" used by the Finns), as well as the ideas and methods associated with them, have their origin outside of Finland, probably elsewhere in Europe. As is demonstrated by the works of Neovius and his fellow resisters "passive resistance" was not merely used as a vague generic term but also referred to a definable doctrine, tradition and range of means of action. It is obvious that such a sophisticated concept of struggle cannot entirely be the invention of one man, or group, over a short period of time.

In principle a group wishing to mobilize for resistance can choose from a vast variety of means ranging from numberless forms of action not employing direct physical violence to direct physical violence and material destruction as employed, for example, in guerilla and conventional warfare. In practice, however, in spite of the wide range of resistance action conceivably available, access to such means is limited; the concepts and means of resistance available to, and developed by, a group is directly based upon, and defined by, its geopolitical and sociocultural circumstances. In their broad detailed studies of large scale structural change in Western countries, particularly as regards statemaking and the development of capitalism, and the related changes in forms of conflict and collective action, Charles Tilly and his colleagues have observed that the development and transformation of repertoires of means of contention are conditioned by:

1. the standards of rights and justice prevailing in the population;
2. the daily routines of the people;

3. the population's internal organization;
4. its accumulated experience with prior collective action;
5. the pattern of repression in the world in which the population belongs.⁴⁴

Recognizing that the choice of forms of resistance and assertion are historically and culturally conditioned the explanation for the wide distribution and acceptance of the idea and methods of violence-avoiding passive resistance at the turn of the century is to be found in the development of the Finnish resistance tradition and the conditions for resistance in Finland. However, even though passive resistance, as it was adapted to specific Finnish circumstances, was to a large extent a domestic development, the Finns did additionally have access to a general European resistance heritage.

Passive resistance was one of the new concepts and means of contention, of assertion and resistance, which became prevalent throughout Europe with the political and social struggles accompanying the broad structural changes of nation-building and industrial capitalism. The participants in the Finnish resistance movement beginning in 1899 were not very concerned with writing the history of passive resistance, involved as they were in their immediate conflict. An exploration, however, of their references to similar struggles elsewhere reveals that by 1861 passive resistance was defined in Finland as a modern European form of contention.

Passive resistance is largely a historically forgotten and unresearched nineteenth century European form of struggle. Moreover, within the branches of social science dealing with collective action, peace and conflict the concept of passive resistance has been problematic, misconceived and has not been adequately analyzed. The etymological study of "passive resistance" serves as an excellent heuristic tool for the study of the Finnish resistance tradition. This approach is grounded on the assumption that in studying general phenomena such as nonmilitary struggle the task is not only to establish the trans-cultural identity of types of social action, but rather to emphasize, as Max Weber put it, the "*changes (Verschiebungen)* that emerge in spite of all parallels," using the "similarities only to distinguish the *distinctiveness*" of them.⁴⁵ It has become increasingly clear that one of the key ways for determining such distinctiveness is the careful analysis of the ideas, values, specific problems and modes of discourse of the

⁴⁴ Tilly 1978, pp. 143–171; Tilly, 1981, pp. xi, 46, and for the broader historical background; Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975.

⁴⁵ Roth 1978, pp. xxxvi–xxxix, Weber quote, p. xxxvii.

historical agents. Only thus can abstract social theoretical constructions and concepts – like “nonviolent action” – be used without gross anachronism.

Thus when the Finnish resistance thinker Neovius claimed that passive resistance had a “definite essence” he was referring to history and not, or not merely, to a universal form of action whose definition could be derived from the analytical examination of terms. In defining passive resistance Neovius was engaged in the political act of selecting, and developing, those features of a historical form of action which he and his colleagues considered most suitable for the current circumstances.

2. The “Nonviolent Action” Perspective: A Critique

The Finnish resistance movement of 1899–1905 has long been one of the standard “cases” on lists, or one might say in the canon, of examples of “nonviolent” struggle. For instance in 1934 Barthélemy de Ligt listed the Finnish resistance as one of the “lessons” which history offers concerning “nonviolent struggle,” writing that in 1902

Finland refused to submit to the conscription imposed on her by the Tsar, and that august Power, Caesar and Pope in one, found himself forced to bow to the popular will.⁴⁶

In his work *Ends and Means*, first published in 1937, the famous English thinker Aldous Huxley invites his readers to consider “a few examples of non-violent revolution.” His exposition is a classic example of what I have come to designate as the “Gandhian paradigm” approach: Of the historical cases of “nonviolent revolution” movements, says Aldous Huxley,

best known to English-speaking readers are those organized by Gandhi in South Africa and later in India. The South African movement may be described as completely successful... Among other non-violent movements crowned by partial or complete success we may mention the following. From 1901 to 1905 the Finns conducted a campaign of non-violent resistance to Russian oppression; this was completely successful and in 1905 the law imposing conscription on the Finns was repealed. The long campaign of non-violent resistance conducted by

⁴⁶ Ligt 1937, p. 141; for the original French edition of this work see Ligt 1934.

the Hungarians under Deák was crowned with complete success in 1867.... In Germany two campaigns of non-violent resistance were successfully carried out against Bismarck – the Kulturkampf by the Catholics, and the working-class campaign, after 1871, for the recognition of the Social-Democratic Party.⁴⁷

The Gandhian Paradigm

This way of examining different resistance movements in relation to Gandhian struggles is wide spread and is exemplified in literally hundreds of writings in a wide variety of languages throughout the world. The two preceding quotes indicate an already well established way of classifying the Finnish resistance in relation to Gandhian “nonviolence.” Another earlier example is that of the veteran Finnish resister, author and Tolstoyan, Arvid Järnefelt, who in the 1920s explicitly compared the Finnish resistance to Mohandas K. Gandhi’s campaigns in India.⁴⁸ A. Huxley and de Ligt do not tell what their sources are on the Finnish resistance. It is, however, clear that the very effective propaganda or intensive international image-building carried on for many decades by the Finnish Constitutionalists, which took root in Europe, lends itself very well to this type of view and is no doubt at least indirectly the source of their information.

Since the 1920s the Finnish resistance has continued to be classified according to Gandhio-centric schemes of viewing history.⁴⁹ This approach can be characterized as seeing Gandhi as “the outstanding person in modern times” who developed “the theory of nonviolent resistance.”⁵⁰ It divides history into the “pre-Gandhian,” Gandhian, and post-Gandhian history of a trans-historical something called the “technique of nonviolent action” with Gandhi being the one “who made the most significant personal contribution in the history of” this “technique.”⁵¹ Thus in regard to both research and popular action Gandhian “nonviolence” has been *paradigmatized* or set forth and

⁴⁷ Huxley 1938, pp. 146–147. Around the same time as A. Huxley one of M.K. Gandhi’s more well known followers also dealt with the Finnish resistance as a “case” of “non-violent direct action” along with the Hungarian, and other, “examples”; see Shridharani 1939, pp. 113–114.

⁴⁸ Järnefelt 1976, p. 497.

⁴⁹ For an influential example see “Finland” in the Index of Sharp 1973. Gandhio-centrism has also informed the approach of many official studies in Europe and elsewhere, see for example the two Finnish reports cited above.

⁵⁰ Gregg 1966, p. 42.

⁵¹ Sharp 1973, pp. 75–78, 82.

both explicitly and implicitly assumed as a model through which similarly perceived events are classified and examined.⁵²

One may well question the validity of analyzing the Finnish resistance using the obviously anachronistic and foreign concept of “nonviolent action.” After all, from an etymological perspective the term “nonviolence” is a twentieth century invention which emerged well after 1906 and before 1920 during the early Gandhian struggles in South Africa. The violence/“nonviolence” dichotomy, the conception of “nonviolence” as an antonym of violence, in these terms, is a new development in the history of modern thought and is by no means universally recognized. The significance of the etymology and historical context of the term “nonviolence” and its derivatives is ignored by those who seek to use it as a trans-historical notion. It may also be deemed arbitrary and misleading to compare other so-called “cases” of “nonviolent” struggle to one another. Doubtlessly such comparisons may lead to an erroneous, or over-simplistic, association of historical events.

Clearly it would be a breach of the rules of precise historical scholarship to impose a term which carries the weight of its own historical context on the thought and action of actors from other times. “Nonviolence” and related terms cannot serve to replace the terminology of the past. Yet, the concept of “nonviolent” struggle has provided a new and thought provoking perspective through which to analyze political conflict and social contention in general. It focuses attention on phenomena which have been neglected by historians concentrating on violent events. By drawing attention to the relation of certain methods of struggle and concepts of political power it provides tools for grouping these phenomena in a way which is by no means entirely arbitrary. However, the approach to analyzing resistance and contention in general in terms of a violent/“nonviolent” action dichotomy represents only one, highly problematic, perspective for studying conflict.⁵³ As such the concept of “nonviolent” struggle

⁵² It is very common to divide those working within what I call the “Gandhian paradigm” into two general groups. On the one hand there is the “tough” or “pragmatic” school holding that the superiority of “nonviolent” defense can be argued on “technical grounds alone.” On the other hand is “idealistic” or “ethical” “nonviolence.” This division, although justified in certain respects, can be highly misleading (a parallel division into “Western” and “Eastern” “nonviolence” is entirely unfounded). I emphatically deny that the latter is any more “characterized by strong ethical, religious and/or ideological tendencies” than the former. A more appropriate division is obtained when one asks more explicitly “pragmatic for what?” References for this note: Boserup, Mack 1974, pp. 8–13, 21; Schmid 1985, p. 14.

⁵³ Cf. Galtung 1976, pp. 350–351.

is surely in need of refinement when used for the purposes of historical research.

This examination of the concept of “nonviolence” is not necessary for methodological reasons only. In the early years of the twentieth century the conceptualization of “nonviolent” action had a strong influence on the way people came to think about the history of passive resistance. In fact one can say that the “nonviolent action” perspective became the major historical interpretation of passive resistance. It is an interpretation which is flawed.

An Equivocal Concept

“Nonviolent action” as distinguished by Gene Sharp, is an umbrella concept covering a broad range of active means of struggle. Its power is based on the capacity of actors’ refusal to cooperate or submit, withdrawal of obedience and consent and open defiance without violence to cut off the opponent’s control of essential resources or to destroy his access to sources of power.⁵⁴ The scope of the means of “nonviolent action,” as understood according to the preceding definition, is extensive and can be categorized into the following three broad groups, which can be further divided and subdivided into a multitude of specific methods: 1. nonviolent protest and persuasion, 2. economic, social and political noncooperation and 3. nonviolent intervention.⁵⁵

Thus, analytically picking out the essentials of Sharp’s argument, “nonviolent action” is understood to be identifiable by 1. a technique or repertoire of a range of means of struggle which excludes the use of physical violence against persons and things; 2. a distinctive type of social (including political and economic) power which is allegedly incompatible with violence; 3. group or mass action.

Upon closer scrutiny the type of action distinguished by the criteria in the last two paragraphs turns out to be much broader than that actually described in Sharp’s works and the other main works in the

⁵⁴ Sharp 1973, pp. 63–64. Johan Galtung comments that Sharp’s study is “by far the most comprehensive and analytically useful work in the field”; Galtung 1976, p. 362. Sharp’s book is widely known among researchers and, in particular, among activists in “nonviolent” movements in Europe, the USA and elsewhere as well. It has been very influential in determining how people conceive of the “theory” and past of “nonviolent action,” as the Australian writer Brian Martin emphasizes; see Martin 1989, p. 213, 219.

⁵⁵ Sharp 1973, p. 69 and Part Two, “The Methods of Nonviolent Action.”

Gandhian paradigm. “Nonviolent action” turns out to be only a small part of the range of human action in conflicts which can be distinguished by the preceding criteria. Of course within the Gandhian paradigm itself there exist a range of conceptions of “nonviolence” which differ according to the scope of the concept of violence upon which they are based.⁵⁶

Thus in its most positive form “nonviolence” excludes all kinds of harm, injury, repressive coercion, injustice and related phenomena. Positive “nonviolence” places strict limitations on the types of instruments and sanctions which can be used in the struggle for freedom and justice. One way to characterize it is by stressing persuasion and conversion of the opponent over injurious coercion. The compulsion and coercion used would be required not to violate the social ideals being defended or fought for. Negative “nonviolence” is distinguished as a way of resistance aimed at imposing defeat on an enemy within a strategic contest using a range means of force and coercion which can be differentiated from violent means of resistance and revolution only in that they stop short of direct physical violence.

The ambiguity and inclusiveness of the concept of “nonviolence” increase with the narrowness of the notion of violence upon which it is based. If “nonviolent action” is defined only in terms of technique, or of instruments which may somehow be objectively distinguished from the instruments of violence, then it will include all types of political and social contention short of violence in a narrow sense.

All notions of “nonviolence” within the Gandhian paradigm clearly come under the concepts of just struggle, resistance and defense, as do forms of violent resistance when taken up for liberation against oppression or violation. In spite of his assertions to the contrary Sharp’s work, like that of others working in the Gandhian paradigm, remains a study of “good” “nonviolence,” in which only cases of struggle against oppression and injustice are examined. The Finnish “case” is an excellent example: The original Russian nationalist “attack” on the assertive Finnish nationalist mobilization can, from the Russian point of view, be seen as a kind of resistance to Finnish threats to imperial security. In spite of the fact that for many years this “resistance” included no physical violence those working in the Gandhian paradigm would never dream of calling it “nonviolent action.”

The concept of “nonviolent action” cannot be divorced from its relation to the basic social and political ideals of western society. It is

⁵⁶ For a typology of concepts of violence and “nonviolence” ranging from narrow and medium to broad and total, see Galtung 1976, pp. 350–353.

to be understood as an integral part of the field of discourse on justice, just struggle, resistance, rebellion, sovereignty and law in modern politics.

Violence Misconceived

Fundamental to the overall Gandhian paradigm is a rigid and simplistic power/violence dichotomy. Accordingly the users of political violence are accused of adhering to a fallacious “monolithic theory” of power which “assumes that the power of government is ... a strong independent, durable (if not indestructible), self-reinforcing, and self-perpetuating force.”⁵⁷ Those who employ violence to control political power are likened to someone who seeks to use a lid to suppress steam from a boiling caldron while the fire below continues uncontrolled.⁵⁸ Although correct in the extreme, this analogy breaks down as a blatant half-truth, since violence, along with a host of other related types of action, can also play a significant role in controlling the blaze.

This is not to underestimate the profusion and sway of ideas of power which have their roots in absolutist notions. Indeed there seems to no end of cases in modern history of the extreme identification of violence with power. However, to focus on extreme violent action in dichotomized relation to “nonviolent” action is to ignore the historically most significant forms of violence and conflict in general. For example, successful “power politics” (as in the case of the Russian domination of Finland) has never depended entirely either on extreme violence or on consensual “nonviolent” power. As Friedrich Meinecke observes, using “power” in the sense of “domination”:

unregulated rule of power in real life is a very exceptional occurrence. Power which gushes out blindly will end by destroying itself; it must follow certain purposive rules and standards, in order to preserve itself and grow. Cunning and force must therefore unite in the exercise of power. Thus is formed that utilitarian middle ground in the essence of *raison d'état*.⁵⁹

One of the gross mistakes of those who claim special insight into consensual power and that such power is incompatible with violence is to misjudge the skill of those who have operated within the influential

⁵⁷ Sharp 1973, pp. 8–9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Meinecke 1962, p. 10.

tradition of western political thought which Niccolò Machiavelli gave expression to. In this tradition, which clearly includes the recognition of the significance of fundamental consensual power, violence is an essential, but always subordinate (and very rarely the only) instrument in the exercise of political power; violence is useful only if backed by significant, well ordered, social forces. Using Machiavelli's own analogy, the ferocious, yet stupid, raw violence of the lion must be combined with the craft of the fox.⁶⁰

Within the Gandhian paradigm the potential of people power or the belief that power depends on the consent of the ruled who, by withdrawing that consent, can control and even destroy the power of their opponent, is very strongly emphasized. Students of "nonviolent action" maintain that this type of power is somehow incompatible with the type of power employed by the users of violence. Thus when a group which has mobilized finds itself in a situation of critical confrontation with another group and is forced to turn to negative means of force and coercion its action can be classified as "nonviolent" not merely on the basis of instruments used but also according to the distinctive type of power employed.

This is clearly a highly disputable, fallacious, claim – one which rests on an excessively simplistic view of the relation of political violence and power. Human *cooperation*, including its negative form of *refusal* to cooperate, is indeed the foundation of sociopolitical power. This is true for both *power-to*, or the capacity for collective action, and *power-over*, or the collective capacity to control people and resources. While power-over as based on power-to cannot be created by violence it certainly can be used with, strengthened, manipulated and destroyed by violence.

Hannah Arendt's insights here present a challenging implication for those working in the Gandhian paradigm with their emphasis on the power of consent: the effectiveness of "nonviolent" contention is based on the degree of mutual dependence between antagonists. As the distance separating them increases, in conjunction with the destructive effectiveness of the weapons of violence, the capacity of communicative power combined with the instruments of "nonviolent action" to prevail decreases.⁶¹ Expressed in Machiavellian terms, to rule successfully one requires the cooperation, and friendship, of the people; continual recourse to violence destroys one's base of power, the essential

⁶⁰ Machiavelli 1961, p. 90; Machiavelli 1970, p. 215.

⁶¹ Arendt 1969, pp. 52–56.

relationship of interdependence between prince and people. However, if this interdependence, or social power, is not needed, then a city, a population, or a key group of influential citizens can be dealt with simply by “doing away with them” through destruction.⁶²

An interrelated problem also arises here, one which is perhaps less obvious but of more immediate relevance: Is all collective struggle which adheres to a concept of power excluding physical violence “nonviolent action”? The answer is “no,” unless one would like, again, to increase the ambiguity of the concept by broadening its scope. Within the Gandhian paradigm collective action is both implicitly and explicitly made to be understood in terms of popular civilian, more or less democratic, action. A correlation to this seems to be that the action in which “nonviolent” power is employed is somehow automatically democratic. However, collective action based on physical violence-excluding power includes much more than this.

Roughly one can distinguish between popular mobilization and struggle on the part of self-motivated individuals and elite controlled collective action. The latter might be called “elite guided nonviolent action,” but that would be rather dubious. The point here is that the concept of “nonviolent action” is loaded with connotations of popular action by “the people.” It may well be that this ideological burden makes this concept a rather insensitive tool for studying the finer aspects of social and political conflict. It may be, moreover, that a lot of what has been called “nonviolent action” is really something else. This is one reason why the “nonviolent action” paradigm is insufficient by itself as an approach to the study of resistance and contention.

3. The Authoritarian Organization or Liberation of Opinion?

At the turn of the century the members of the Finnish Constitutionalist front practiced a type of struggle which seems to lend itself to analysis under the Gandhian paradigm. Their domestic opponents, however, also practiced what might be conceived of as a kind of “nonviolent” contention or defense. Both of these approaches drew to a great extent (and with important differences, as explained further on) upon a common heritage of Finnish political culture. The principles of this

⁶² Machiavelli 1961, pp. 48, 66; Machiavelli 1970, p. 156.

political culture of relevance here were perhaps most fluently articulated earlier in the century in the works of Finland's most influential political philosopher and active statesman, leader of the Finnish national movement, Johan Vilhelm Snellman (1806–1881). An important point to be made here is that Finnish passive resistance cannot be thoroughly understood through the “nonviolent action” paradigm, but must also be studied within the broader framework of nonmilitary struggle for national survival in Finnish political culture.

Snellman on Violence and Change

Snellman spoke out vehemently against both violent revolution and reaction as thought of as viable ways of taking political control, initiating reform and establishing lasting political power and justice. While harboring no illusions concerning the significance of violent coercion and war in history, Snellman asserted that only the thoughtless could identify political power with violence.⁶³ No thinking person could believe that power is the ruler or possession of the ruler, or that a few generals and their army could control the people of the nation solely through violent coercion. Indeed, Snellman did realize that the machinery of state could be taken over through violence, but unless it had other sources of power – the power of the nation – behind it, it would be forced to greater degrees of violence and continual oppression and finally fall.⁶⁴ Snellman realized that social power is diffused throughout civil society and that mere coup d'état could not in itself summon up the power to control society or overcome the deep rooted loci of power standing behind the state in society.

Snellman's argument in itself, it may be observed, does not suffice for refuting the efficacy of revolutionary action. As Hanna Arendt has pointed out, in principle Karl Marx's view of revolution clearly relegates violence to a secondary role and cannot be identified with “power grows out of the barrel of a gun” concepts of revolution.⁶⁵ As with his contemporary Marx, Snellman's political philosophy and action arose out of a creative critical study of G.W.F. Hegel, classical liberal economics and European thought in general. Both men clearly held that it is not violence but the contradictions inherent in the old society,

⁶³ Snellman 1894a, pp. 590–591.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 590–591.

⁶⁵ Arendt 1969, p. 11.

the necessity or force of history, which gives rise to the transformation of society.⁶⁶

Revolutionary tradition, however, from the French Revolution through its most sophisticated formulations in Marx's writings well into the twentieth century has emphasized the essential role of violence in "the conquest of political power." Accordingly revolutionary ends were understood as achievable "only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions" and, as Friedrich Engels put it, the victorious revolutionary party "must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries."⁶⁷ Snellman arrived at a very different position.

According to Snellman's political thinking the advocates of revolution had lost sight of the essential conditions for social change. Whereas Engels accused the anarchists (not entirely accurately) of demanding "that the political state be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations that gave birth to it have been destroyed," Snellman in effect accused all revolutionaries of seeking through violence to force change on social relations which are in reality highly impervious to violence.⁶⁸ In other words he rejected the idea that revolutionary violence could be timed to coincide with the essential ripe conditions for social change. In 1861 he asserted that even the restored European state powers, based firmly as they were on a traditional foundation, could more easily carry out reform than the revolutionaries since they grant only what is "necessary" in each historical moment.⁶⁹

With the emphatic rejection of political violence and revolution what type of political struggle does Snellman then advocate – "nonviolent" struggle or revolution perhaps? At first glance Snellman's concepts of power and defense may seem to correspond exactly to those assumed in the paradigm of "nonviolent" contention. It would not be hard to portray Snellman as a theoretician and leader of "nonviolent action"; that is, if certain things were overlooked.

Snellman held, as expressed in many of his writings, that state power is fundamentally derived from the people of the nation, from the *folk*, as expressed in his native Swedish. He believed in a kind of ultimate popular sovereignty as the basis for state sovereignty. One can find here and there in his works assertions that state power is rooted in

⁶⁶ For example see Snellman 1894a, pp. 589–597 and; Marx 1977, pp. 180–184.

⁶⁷ Marx, Engels 1975; Engels' quote from, Lenin 1975, p. 61.

⁶⁸ Engels quoted in Lenin 1975, p. 60.

⁶⁹ Snellman 1894a, pp. 591–592.

public opinion, in the recognition, confidence and consent of the people.⁷⁰ From his concept of political power and rejection of political violence Snellman conceived of a concept of national defense or survival and domestic sociopolitical change holding that the capacity of a nation to withstand foreign aggression or undergo transformation is not dependent on its military strength or on revolutionary violence but on its degree of cultural power, development and unity.

Varieties of Revolution

Similar ideas elsewhere in Europe had already begun to give rise to various explicit concepts of violence-excluding change, resistance and revolution. For example, as early as 1793, at the very beginning of what Snellman described in 1861 as “the era of Revolution, as it is called, in which we still live,”⁷¹ the then famous writer William Godwin rejected violent revolution as an effective means of overthrowing oppression and instituting justice, deploring it as counter-productive, crude, and premature. He asserted that the revolutionaries “propose to give us something for which we are not prepared, and which we cannot effectively use ... however amiable may be the source of their error, the error itself is probably fraught with consequences pernicious to mankind.”⁷²

Godwin was one of the first European thinkers of the revolutionary era to attempt an articulation of an alternative to violent revolution and military defense without submission to conservatism or reactionism. Government, Godwin held (following David Hume), is founded on opinion. Both revolution and oppressive reactionary government “fetter” what he called “the unrestrained communication of opinions.”⁷³ A people, however, when enlightened concerning political power need have no recourse to violence, since through withdrawal of obedience oppressive institutions, rulers or foreign military forces cannot stand: “Destroy” the obedience upon which unjust government, encroachment on freedom and subjection are founded and “the fabric which it is built upon falls to the ground.”⁷⁴ Godwin’s work can be

⁷⁰ Teljo 1934, pp. 71–72.

⁷¹ Snellman 1894a, p. 591.

⁷² Godwin 1793, pp. 198–205.

⁷³ Godwin 1971, pp. 77, 130–131, 136.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 130–131, 136.

seen as the example par excellence of this strain of Enlightenment thought.

As thus far presented the ideas of Snellman, also born from the Enlightenment, coincide remarkably with Godwin's. Both men believed that cultural progress or civilization could make a nation highly inviolable or unsubjectable. When the comparison is taken a bit further, however, significant contrasts emerge.

Godwin's view suggests that people can take positive action without violence to overthrow oppression, that a revolution without violence would lead to the "euthanasia of pernicious government."⁷⁵ Godwin's political philosophy was initially widely acclaimed and influential, especially among English liberals. With post-revolutionary developments in France, however, and the growth of reactionary sentiment Godwin's apparently all too radical ideas were denounced by both conservatives and radicals alike.⁷⁶

Sixty-two years after Godwin put forth his alternative to violent revolution Snellman denounced similar principles, now known by the internationally recognized name of "passive resistance," on the same grounds as his rejection of revolution. Whereas revolutionaries branded any approach to struggle excluding violence as non-revolutionary and ineffective Snellman criticized it for leading to the same pernicious consequences as revolution. Godwin wanted to mobilize popular sovereignty to undermine repressive government, to enlighten the people as to how, without violence, to liberate themselves from their own ignorance and false confidence in government which allowed their "opinion" or their thinking to be controlled and constrained through the ideological and coercive hegemony of their rulers.

In contrast, Snellman's politics might be characterized as "non-violent" Realpolitik which, with *raison d'état* as the guiding principle, can be described as an entirely "nonviolently" coercive way of national individuation, defense and survival demanding the complete subordination of the individual to the "spirit of the nation" and forbidding all direct confrontation with the opponent. Jussi Teljo has shown that Snellman did not really accept the ideas of popular sovereignty and power as such. He twisted them for his own purposes and they were actually in manifest contradiction to his philosophical and practical political views.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 125.

⁷⁶ Carter 1971, pp. xi-xii.

⁷⁷ Teljo 1934, pp. 71-72.

The Spirit: Authority of Passive Revolution

Snellman's "spirit of the nation" – related to Rousseau's "general will" – when divested of its metaphysical garb meant in practice the subjection of the people to the patriarchal guidance of those in dominant social, economic and political positions. This is clearly revealed when Snellman calls the intellectuals or literati the spokesmen of the national spirit, who are to have the "freedom to define what the national spirit is and what it requires."⁷⁸ According to this approach conflict resolution is to be achieved through reciprocal concessions and peaceful reform, i.e., through non-confrontation with Russia and the negatively peaceful prevention of class struggle domestically.⁷⁹

Snellman did indeed believe that power is ultimately derived from the people, but he certainly understood that power is highly malleable and controllable. His task was not like Godwin's, to liberate opinion, mobilize individuals and destroy confidence in rulers, but rather, without violence, to channel popular sovereignty, to organize, cultivate, guide and civilize opinion and confidence from above. Snellman, in fact, is one of the finest examples of a cultural and political intellectual leader and practical organizer of "revolution without revolution" or "passive revolution," just as nineteenth century Finland is perhaps Europe's purest instance of the process designated by these terms.

It is no coincidence that the concept of passive revolution is, like Godwin's ideas, a product of the initial stage of the era of revolution. Antonio Gramsci found the idea of passive revolution articulated in the influential conservative thinker Vincenzo Cuoco's (1770–1823) essay of 1801 on the Neapolitan Republic of 1799. Following Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre in their condemnation of revolution, Cuoco argued in favor of passive revolution through preventative, counteractive, reform, under the leadership of the enlightened bourgeoisie. He rejected popular mobilization in general, and in particular the radical French Jacobin model of revolution.⁸⁰

Gramsci developed the concept of passive revolution for understanding the Italian *Risorgimento* and the process of bourgeois revolution elsewhere. In the case of Finland it must be understood in a strict sense, excluding all of what Marx termed "critical revolutionary

⁷⁸ Snellman as quoted in Teljo 1934, p. 75.

⁷⁹ Snellman 1894a, p. 591; for Snellman's thoughts on class and class struggle, see Teljo 1934, pp. 115, 139.

⁸⁰ Gramsci 1977, pp. 99, 125f; see also editors' note in Gramsci 1971, p. 59, note 11.

activity” which, as Jürgen Habermas has pointed out, is the type of praxis characteristic of forms of struggle which have been termed “nonviolent action” as well as of violent types of revolutionary struggle.⁸¹ The leaders of the Finnish nationalist movement succeeded in an extraordinary degree in establishing hegemonic sway first over what was then called the “educated class” and finally over broader sections of the population without recourse to direct repressive force or violent coercion. By the end of the century, however, the weakness of this “nonviolent” hegemony among the Finnish people became apparent and as the traditional structure of law and order broke down violent confrontation and civil war emerged.

The Gramscian concept of class hegemony can indeed be understood, in the words of Alain Joxe, as

a nonviolent class power that was diffused throughout the whole of civil society and based on the acceptance by the dominated classes of their own domination. It was therefore the objective manifestation of certain common interests of the exploiters and the exploited within a framework determined by the dominant.⁸²

From the point of view of the Gandhian paradigm, however, what Joxe calls “nonviolent class power” might more appropriately be described as anti-“nonviolence.”

Godwin and Snellman were chosen to represent two distinct approaches to social power and mass action within the vast field of conflict types which can be distinguished as making (from the actor’s viewpoint) no use of direct physical violence or the materials and organization involved with its use. Godwin’s approach represents an extreme within that field with its emphasis on the ideal of minimization of domination through withdrawal of consent and dependence on the mobilizing power of unfettered communication. Snellman does not represent an extreme. He exemplifies par excellence the philosopher and politician of the rising national state with its elaborate institutions for channeling consensus and wielding power.

⁸¹ Habermas, 1986, p. 81; Habermas does not use the term “nonviolent action” here but the type of action he cites coincides with that studied in the Gandhian paradigm.

⁸² Joxe 1981, p. 19.

The Spectrum of Contention

Godwin divided the world of social and political action into the realms of “action” or “force” and “speech,” i.e., into strategic action and communicative action.⁸³ Between the purest forms of communicative action and the extremely violent and destructive forms of strategic action there exist a vast range of types of sociopolitical conflict.⁸⁴ Because the world of conflict is highly amorphous, concepts, models and typologies of it cannot encompass the whole, but must be geared to focus attention on certain aspects of action. Godwin focused upon emancipatory action. Max Weber divided conflict into that which is physically violent and that which is “peaceful.” “Peaceful conflict” can be interpreted as referring to the range of conflict action which is simply distinguishable from physical violence. It thus employs an entirely negative concept of “peace.” “Peaceful conflict” is a vast realm of action which includes formally peaceful regulated routine competition for control as well as nonroutine contention.⁸⁵ The “means” of “peaceful conflict” which Weber refers to are by no means identical or coextensive to those of “nonviolent action.” The “technique of nonviolent action” comprises only a subgroup within the field of nonroutine “peaceful conflict.” In his studies of “peaceful conflict” Weber tended to focus broadly on domination whereas the “nonviolent action” perspective focuses primarily on acute emancipatory conflicts.⁸⁶

Those working within the Gandhian paradigm see modern European history as a very significant time of development of “the technique of nonviolent action.”⁸⁷ What is really referred to (with the term “nonviolent action” perhaps making only for ambiguity) is the basic mechanisms of collective action in the processes of modern nation building. Furthermore, it is most misleading and one-sided to see this increase in “nonviolent action” solely in terms of consensual power and emancipatory mass action through noncooperation against injustice and tyranny.

⁸³ Godwin 1793, p. 193, Godwin 1946, p. 299.

⁸⁴ For an elaboration of the concepts of communicative action and strategic action see Habermas 1984, pp. 85–86, 273–337; Habermas subdivides strategic action into openly and latently strategic action, with the latter including manipulation and systematically distorted communication. For Godwin violence was a very broad concept ranging from the distortion of communication and the manipulation of mens’ minds to direct physical violence.

⁸⁵ Weber holds that the “conceptual separation of peaceful (from violent) conflict is justified by the quality of the means normal to it and the peculiar sociological consequences of its occurrence;” Weber 1978, vol. 2, p. 38.

⁸⁶ Weber 1978, vol. 2, pp. 941, 946.

⁸⁷ Sharp 1973, pp. 76–78.

One cannot without distortion ignore the development of that other kind of “nonviolence” which was mentioned earlier in connection with Gramsci and Snellman and which has been explored in various ways by scholars such as Weber and Michel Foucault.⁸⁸ Gramsci held that disproportionate fixation on the violent or military aspect of struggle and conflict in western society, is the “mark of a fool.”⁸⁹ In contrast, however, to those who concentrate on the history of emancipatory action Gramsci observed that with the French Revolution a new strategy for gaining political power emerged, called by Cuoco “passive revolution.” Passive revolution, however, can be seen as merely one aspect of a broader strategy of domination and struggle in society which Gramsci began to explore under the concept of hegemony.

From the time of the inception and conceptualization of the modern state in the sixteenth century, and especially the consolidation of the modern nation-state in the nineteenth century, physical, especially military, violence has only been one aspect of power struggles. Physical violence to be sure is a very prominent aspect of modern conflict. Yet it is this very prominence which makes for a certain insensitivity to the broad range of other means (Weber’s “peaceful” means).

Very rarely, it seems, have theorists or activists endeavoured to clearly articulate a vocabulary for the comprehensive exploration of the realm of action which Weber called “peaceful conflict” (especially in its nonroutine forms) either as such or in relationship to violent conflict. This, however, should not mislead one into thinking that just because something has not been articulated it has not been understood. Another stumbling block here is that various concepts and applications of power, sociopolitical action, and techniques or means – ranging from the most peaceful to the most violent – have been described in vocabularies which are often mutually incomprehensible.

Throughout modern European history there have been countless approaches to social change and struggle (both for liberation and domination or simultaneously both) in which physical violence assumes a subordinate, although often essential, role. After the American, and

⁸⁸ Foucault’s work can be seen as the antithesis to the Gandhian paradigm and other related efforts to focus on emancipatory power in history. Foucault finds a new strategy of domination taking shape in the eighteenth century. For Foucault the kind of power which stands in opposition to emancipatory types of power is not based on violence. On the contrary it is a type of power for which violence is explicitly relegated to a secondary role to be “superseded by a subtle, calculated technology of subjection.” Foucault 1980, pp. 9596; Foucault 1979, pp. 23, 26, 81–82, 183, 218–223.

⁸⁹ Gramsci 1971, p. 232.

especially after the French, Revolutions social and political groups of all persuasions adopted strategies in which physical violence was only one constituent, often to be purposely avoided for a variety of reasons. This holds true for the whole range of socialists, communists, anarchists, liberals, conservatives, and reactionaries, as well as for nationalists of all persuasions. This was a period of the triumph of the modern national state. The main lines of conflict centered around power struggles in relation (but not necessarily directly) to the state. All these groups, to be sure, contained violent extremists but this should not blind one to the fact that they all developed elaborate ways of waging conflict without physical violence.

Through the careful study of thousands of violent events in western Europe since 1800 Charles Tilly and his colleagues have found that almost none of the varieties of ways in which people act collectively to wage conflict are essentially violent: most collective action arises from a broader base of collective action without physical violence.⁹⁰ The study of violence is an important endeavour in being an effective means for locating and achieving a deeper understanding of collective contention in general; violent, and otherwise acute, conflicts serve as indicators, or “tracers,” of much broader forms of collective action and political confrontation.⁹¹ Tilly’s work poses a serious challenge to any conceptualization of conflict in terms of a violent/“nonviolent” action dichotomy. Violent action is very rarely a separate form of action, but rather an epiphenomenon of forms of conflict which may or may not lead to violence. Critical nonroutine confrontations of whatever degree of violence are, from this point of view, only the tip of the iceberg of sociopolitical conflict and struggle.

The structure of acute conflicts, which are often highly polarized, is conditioned by the broader constitution of society. Routine and nonroutine conflict therefore form a continuum; to understand the latter one must understand the former.

For example, to focus research narrowly on the Finnish struggle against Russification, 1899–1905, as a case of “nonviolent” action tends to reinforce the custom of seeing this case from the perspective of popular emancipation. As indicated earlier, although the formal definition of “nonviolent” action aims to avoid subjective classification, the cases of struggle actually studied within the Gandhian paradigm are clearly classifiable within the historical category of just resistance

⁹⁰ Tilly, Tilly, Tilly 1975, pp. 13, 242, 282; Tilly 1978, pp. 176–177.

⁹¹ Tilly, Tilly & Tilly 1975, pp. 248, 287, 290; Tilly 1978, p. 188.

against oppression.⁹² Whether a form of struggle can successfully be called “resistance” in this sense depends on whether the actors are able to invoke the basic principles of secular Christian society associated with liberty and justice to their side. Thus the description of resistance cannot be reduced to an account of the technical means of wielding power, but always fundamentally involves moral or ideological struggle as well. Passive resistance and “nonviolent” resistance are specific historical subtypes of just resistance. Their uniqueness cannot be specified merely in terms of the use of social power and techniques of noncooperation, since almost all forms of resistance and conflict, including many violent forms, do so in various ways. Their uniqueness or specific character is determined by the special way the actors involved combine methods of struggle and sociopolitical ideas and values.

Focus on emancipatory struggles often involves the emphasis of the principle of voluntary servitude. This principle has figured centrally in certain Enlightenment streams of European thought from the sixteenth century to the present. Accordingly, the first step in liberation is understood to be the realization that servitude and subjection are essentially voluntary or in the realization of subjects that power-over them is derived from them and that through withdrawal of consent and noncooperation can reclaim and mobilize the power which inherently depends on them.⁹³ In this tradition, to put it simply, people power is emphasized. In contrast, from perspectives which focus on domination as a key element of social action the withdrawal of consent as a way of wielding power is seen as highly restricted.⁹⁴ Accordingly, the famous phrase “all government is based on consent” is only a half-truth; under many conditions the freedom of social actors is highly controllable. Obedience may often be essentially voluntary, but it need not be more than *minimally* so.

In studying the Finnish case it is important to understand that the historical development of the values upon which just resistance is based is closely connected with the development of constitutionalism, revolutionary natural law and principles such as those of justice and

⁹² Just struggle is a subjective category, and the means which fall under it are legitimized through the prevailing concept of justice.

⁹³ Boétie 1975, passim; Geuss 1981, pp. 58, 60; for the Gandhian/Sharpian conception of voluntary servitude, see Sharp 1979, pp. 43–59. As will be discussed below, the Finnish Constitutionalist invoked the idea of voluntary servitude in their struggle.

⁹⁴ See for example Weber 1978, vol. 1, pp. 212–215, vol. 2. 941, 942, 943, 946, 1407.

liberty.⁹⁵ According to constitutionalist tradition self-interest is ultimately the motive for the establishment of justice. Government, according to David Hume, is the human invention for securing justice, for the pursuit of mutual advantage and security.⁹⁶ It is upon this notion that the doctrine of resistance, rebellion and revolution against injustice, developed by Hume's constitutionalist and social contract theorist predecessors, is based: When government ceases to serve the mutual interests of those involved, when it is undermined by the "irregularity of human nature," by injustice, wickedness, violence and "excesses of cruelty and ambition," then the bonds of allegiance and duty to obey are dissolved.⁹⁷

The moment, however, of resistance and rebellion to injustice is reserved for the most extreme situations only, when injustice becomes intolerable. Hume's account gives one to understand that normally people adhere to the principles of justice only in so far as necessary and that justice and injustice exist in a rather ambiguous relationship of interdependence. Like many constitutionalists, Hume was not concerned with examining the internal ideological and class-oriented aspects of justice.⁹⁸ Men carry justice into practice only in so far as is necessary to secure the desired amount of "peace and order."⁹⁹

It follows from Hume's exposition, although it may not be what he was seeking to convey, that "politicians," "Princes," "nations" and certain social groups or classes which are contending for power have an interest in attaining only a certain minimal degree of justice. Such groups may adhere to the ideal of consensus as comprised of the consent of free individuals who are enlightened concerning their own self-interests to act together for the achievement of commonly agreed upon goals. But historically, as Gramsci observed, in practice consent or consensus has been something to be organized. Consequently, there is a basic ambiguity between force and consent; they form a dialectical unity incapable of polar isolation.¹⁰⁰ The organization of consent does

⁹⁵ Weber writes that natural law has been "the specific form of legitimacy of a revolutionary order. The invocation of natural law has repeatedly been the method by which classes in revolt against the existing order have legitimized their aspirations, in so far as they did not, or could not, base their claims upon positive religious norms or revelations"; Weber 1978, vol. 2, p. 867. This should be kept in mind in the consideration of Finnish Constitutionalist insurgency.

⁹⁶ Hume 1969, pp. 551, 602, 614.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 602-604.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 620.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 620.

¹⁰⁰ For an example of how the relationship between force and consent is conceptualized in the intellectual context referred to, see Croce 1945, pp. 1-31.

not necessarily occur through the self-organization of individuals, but through leadership. Accordingly Gramsci sees the basic element of collective action, and of politics in particular, the existence of rulers and ruled, leaders and led. The first stage of politics is thus the formation of effective rulers and the determination of the most systematic or "rational" means for securing the obedience of the ruled.¹⁰¹

From the point of view of the abstract liberal theories or ideals of consent (uncoerced, voluntary agreement), liberty and communicative action the Gramscian model of hegemony will indeed appear totalitarian. This would certainly be a correct interpretation. It would be a mistake, however, to confine the concept of authoritarianism or totalitarianism here solely to the now paradigmatic fascist and communist types. There are some very significant common elements shared by Gramsci's Jacobin-Machiavelli model of political action and the varying types of passive revolution in the thought and action of, for example, Cuoco or Snellman. Both see "the people," in Machiavelli's manner, as "material" to be shaped and organized by leaders.¹⁰² Moreover, in much traditional liberal or constitutionalist practice too the emancipatory democratic outlook is highly restricted. The point of departure is rather the "natural" elite or leadership which struggles for the liberty of a certain group or groups in the name of universal principles.

Therefore withdrawal of consent (noncooperation) as a fundamental way of struggle, and the defense of consent as the basis of government is most often the prerogative of those who really control significant sources of power in society and have usually controlled them for a decisive period before nonroutine or acute conflict breaks out.¹⁰³ The capacity for resistance and struggle for liberation in nonroutine conflicts depends upon prior mobilization in routine conflicts and normal economic and social life. That is, a group or configuration of groups

¹⁰¹ Gramsci 1971., p. 144.

¹⁰² Throughout *The Discourses* Machiavelli speaks from the point of view of the leader. The "masses," "the people," the "multitude," the "populace" etc. are "material" to be governed and managed and made good by the leader. They are to be deluded through appearances, pacified through security or repressed through violence depending on the circumstances. All this in spite of the fact that he claims that "government by the populace is better than government by princes"; Machiavelli 1970, pp. 115, 159, 251, 256 and throughout.

¹⁰³ As James C. Scott puts it, "most subordinate classes throughout most of history have rarely been afforded the luxury of open, organized, political activity." His work is a study of the "everyday forms of peasant resistance," most forms of which "stop well short of outright collective defiance"; Scott 1985, pp. xv-xvi.

can undertake a resistance movement only if it already has significant control over human and material resources. In modern Europe the defense of consent or the demand for the liberty to choose, without being coerced, one's own economic and sociopolitical relationships and the right to say no to and fight coercion have above all been the prerogative of the various groups which have led the processes in modern Europe known as bourgeois revolution and emancipation. It is they who have developed the vocabulary and ideology of just resistance and struggle for liberty. As Hume's work makes clear, these increasingly powerful middle groups were willing to go far in toleration of tyranny and general injustice for the sake of maintaining social order. Only when injustice decisively impaired their endeavors were they ready to undertake just resistance in the name of the "people."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Finnish Constitutionalist insurgency is a case in point.

II. Passive Resistance in the European Resistance Tradition

1. Civil Disobedience and Passive Resistance

As it has come to be understood nowadays in dictionaries, passive resistance signifies a special type of *refusal* to obey unacceptable or illegitimate demands or legal requirements imposed by governments or other authorities.¹ Often such refusal is justified through appeal to shared extra-legal values or a common sense of justice. But it can also be motivated by the conflict between differing legal systems or conceptions of justice. Passive resistance connotes the deliberate exclusion of violence. As thus defined, passive resistance approaches synonymity with civil disobedience.² Clearly the two concepts are historically interrelated and are grounded in a common resistance heritage. They can be understood as members of a family of forms of conscientious disobedience and resistance which is, in turn, a sub-group of the repertoire of interrelated forms of resistance in European culture.

It must be kept in mind that in conceptually distinguishing between forms of resistance and contention one necessarily encounters points where the borders between them are fuzzy or porous. Such porosity is inevitable. This is one reason why it is fruitful to study resistance from a broad perspective without insisting upon a precision of demarcation between forms of resistance which is impossible to attain. There are, after all, no eternal, unchanging, criteria by which forms of resistance can be demarcated and identified. It ultimately depends upon how the background field of values is interpreted, upon the intentions of the actors and upon the perspective of the researcher.

Two antagonists, even when facing each other on a common background of values, may never be able to come to agreement concerning

¹ See "Passive Resistance" 1986, p. 1651; "Passive Resistance" 1989, pp. 313-314.

² See "Civil Disobedience" 1985, pp. 337-338.

what, for example, an act of civil disobedience *really is*. What one calls conscientious disobedience in harmony with the highest moral laws the other may call hooliganism and violent immoral criminality. Nevertheless, given the common background of European values and the resistance heritage one can, with little difficulty, almost always intuitively differentiate between hooliganism, vandalism, criminal violence, conscientious forms of violence, intentionally violence avoiding forms of conflict and so forth.

A wide variety of attempts have been made to define and clarify the concept of civil disobedience including challenges to the notion that “nonviolence” or the deliberate avoidance of violence is a necessary defining condition of it. One of the purposes of abstract analyses and definitions of concepts of social action is to concisely state the “essentials” of the social phenomenon referred to as well as to draw attention to those aspects of the phenomenon which the author, for one reason or another, wishes the reader to focus on. The “essentials,” of course, can only be determined through historical research, not merely through the logical analysis of ideas or the criticism of the theorizations of other thinkers. For example, to define concepts of resistance, to state what civil disobedience or passive resistance are, one must know their history and the history of the resistance tradition of which they are a part. The explanatory power and accuracy of such definitions depends upon the thoroughness of the historical knowledge upon which they are based. Likewise, an “intuitive” understanding of a concept, although not based on explicit historical research, must be ultimately grounded on historical knowledge if it is to be accurate.³

Using Hugo A. Bedea’s definition as a point of departure, John Rawls defines civil disobedience in a relatively narrow manner.⁴ His definition has several drawbacks but its specific focus is useful for conceptually introducing the subject of passive resistance. Rawls seeks to distinguish civil disobedience from related forms of action such as other types of protest, “conscientious refusal” (“noncompliance with a more or less direct legal injunction or administrative order”) and

³ Brian Smart has attempted to provide a definition of civil disobedience which “has the double advantage of being broadly congruent with our intuitions and of supplying a theoretical underpinning for what it includes and excludes.” In his final definition Smart concludes that civil disobedience can include certain types of violence. This is in sharp contradiction to the actual historical tradition of civil disobedience and related forms of resistance. One wonders what his “our intuition” refers to. Perhaps to some kind of a priori and ahistorical criteria by which a *real* “act of civil disobedience” can be identified? See Smart 1978, pp. 249, 255, 267.

⁴ Rawls 1971, pp. 363–371.

more intensive forms of resistance and militant action.⁵ According to Rawls civil disobedience is an intentional “nonviolent” violation of law. It is communicative action done openly in public, with fair notice given, and is addressed to the sense of justice of the majority of the community. The agents of civil disobedience are aware of, and willing to accept, the legal consequences of their action.⁶

Rawls is well aware that his definition of civil disobedience is more restrictive than other commonly cited ones. He also notes that in actual practice civil disobedience and conscientious refusal often cannot be distinguished from one another.⁷ Historically, however, one can distinguish many cases of agents intentionally carrying out the type of action which Rawls calls civil disobedience. This in itself proves the usefulness and validity of the distinction of civil disobedience and conscientious refusal. The criteria according to which civil disobedience must be addressed to the majority’s sense of justice is perhaps too restrictive, although it is no doubt a common characteristic of many cases. It would be more accurate to say that the civil disobedient actors appeal to and invoke principles from a field of values, of which justice is a central component, which they share with their opponents through a common cultural heritage.

To assert that civil disobedience can include intended violence is to make a radical break with tradition and to destroy the utility of the concept. The type of action which has historically been called civil disobedience, as well as related forms of action, have been inextricably associated with the deliberate avoidance of violence. Rather than include communicative and conscientious types of violence under the concept of civil disobedience it would be more reasonable to designate them through other concepts. After all, all the forms of disobedience and resistance which were classified in chapter I. under the concept of just resistance are conscientious, even the most violent. These forms are more or less distinguishable from one another. Civil disobedience is one of those rare concepts through which people have endeavoured to articulate a type of struggle which intentionally avoids violence. Intuitively it is quite unacceptable to confuse civil disobedience with intentional violence.

Having said this, however, it must be emphasized that the problem of the relationship between deliberately violence-avoiding forms of action and violence still remains. Rawls sees civil disobedience as one

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 367, 368.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 364, 366, 367.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 368, 371.

of the last resorts on a scale of ways of achieving redress against injustice. As he distinguishes it, it does not, because of its communicative relationship to the community's sense of justice, involve threat, force or violence. If civil disobedience is ineffective, Rawls holds, then the use of more militant means, including violence, may be entertained.⁸ Civil disobedience, according to this interpretation, is practically separate from, but does not involve a principled rejection of, conscientious violence when used when all else has failed. This interpretation clearly corresponds to one prominent stream within the European resistance tradition.

According to another stream, however, civil disobedience is not to be part of a hierarchy of types of action which may culminate in violence. This is the case with Gandhian civil disobedience. It must be emphasized that it was Gandhi who brought the word "civil disobedience" into popular usage (*not* Henry David Thoreau).⁹ Gandhian action has been paradigmatic in structuring civil disobedience in the twentieth century, both in thought and practice. Within the overall framework of Gandhian "nonviolent action" (*Satyagraha*), civil disobedience can be a very radical means which in practice may be closely associated with ultimatums, threats and coercion. As Gandhi's student Krishnalal Shridharani put it, in Gandhi's hands civil disobedience became "a revolutionary weapon for destroying an undesirable political order."¹⁰

Obviously there is a need to distinguish between different types of civil disobedience, as Gandhi himself did. Following Gandhi, Sharp marks out, among others, reformatory, defensive and revolutionary types of civil disobedience which may in practice be closely interrelated.¹¹ Rawls' definition can be seen as an example of the reformatory type which is conceived of as relevant in the hypothetical construct of a nearly perfect democracy. One may point out, as was indeed done earlier in the discussion of "nonviolence," that the more radical type of civil disobedience borders so closely on violence in the employment of threats and coercion that a logical distinction between the two cannot be maintained, in spite of the declared intentions of the agents. This observation offers the only path open to those who would argue on logical grounds for the inclusion of more direct forms of violence under the concept of civil disobedience. The only counter-argument here is to reiterate that to do so would be to weaken the analytic capacity to

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 366, 373.

⁹ Stern 1970, p. 452.

¹⁰ Shridharani 1939, p. 33.

¹¹ Sharp 1973, pp. 315.

distinguish between various types of resistance and to ignore the fact of an old tradition of social and political struggle which purposely excludes violence.

An abstract definition of the concept of civil disobedience is to a great extent also one of passive resistance, at least in one of the specific senses in which the later concept has traditionally been used. Of course, as words, "civil disobedience" and "passive resistance" have their own histories, but these histories overlap, and they often both refer to the same type of action. For example, the important resistance campaign in which Gandhi was involved in 1906 was known at the time as "passive resistance." Later, when Gandhi and his followers sought to forget the term "passive resistance," that event became known as a case of "civil disobedience."¹²

In Finnish political culture during the period from 1861 to 1918, passive resistance was clearly understood in the specific sense in which it became known later as civil disobedience. It was, however, also understood in a much broader and generic way as a whole repertoire of means of disobedience and resistance. It is not surprising then to find that this was also true for the first Gandhian campaigns: what was once known as passive resistance later came to be called "nonviolent resistance."

Why were Gandhi and his followers so concerned to do away with the term "passive resistance"? One obvious answer is that the Gandhians sought to disengage their way of action from any association with passivity. Another answer is that Gandhi sought to initiate a deliberate divorce from the old tradition with which "passive resistance" was associated. Gandhi and the continuers of the Gandhian paradigm created a rich new *folklore* of "nonviolence," and in doing so came to underemphasize some of the basic factual historical constituting factors of passive resistance and thus of "nonviolent" resistance at its inception.¹³ This enticing and exotic folklore can also be a cause of misconception.

To ignore the existence of passive resistance as a historical principle, associated with definite means of action, with all its various connota-

¹² Without mentioning the term "passive resistance" Shridharani writes of the participants in the 1906 campaign that: "They did not know it at the time, but their course of action later came to be known as civil disobedience." Shridharani 1939, p. 76.

¹³ The sixth chapter of Shridharani 1939, is entitled "The Folklore of Non-Violence." Shridharani uses the word "folklore" in an innocent and unwittingly revealing manner. The chapter begins (p. 165): "The primeval rudiments of Gandhi's *Satyagraha* or nonviolent direct action were latent in the Indo-Aryan's ancient practice of sacrifice." A great deal of anachronism and folklore are associated with Gandhi.

tions, is to leave a hole in the history of resistance thought and action. The term “passive resistance” predates the term “nonviolence” in European languages by at least a century. Although “nonviolent action” (in the very broad sense of contention involving no physical violence) is as old as human action itself the term “nonviolence” is an entirely twentieth century invention. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the term “passive resistance” was, and frequently nowadays still is, used as a general term signifying a wide range of violence-excluding forms of action in addition to its specific meaning as civil disobedience.

Passive resistance must not be seen as a contradiction of “nonviolent action,” but rather as a forerunner, as well as contemporary, of it. For the Europeans who first developed it, as well as for those who adopted it later in colonial liberation, and other, struggles elsewhere, passive resistance did not signify inaction. It was their way of saying “nonviolent action.” As Arvid Neovius and his fellow Finns emphasized, it was not compatible with compliance, submission, or inaction.

Gandhian Folklore

What comes to mind when passive resistance is mentioned? “Gandhi,” is inevitably the most frequent answer heard when this question is put to a group of people today. In one sense this is pungently ironic and highly misleading; it is an excellent example, moreover, of how one person, or a limited group of people, can have a significant effect on the way history is conceived. In another sense, however, the answer “Gandhi” displays a certain accuracy of historical intuition on the part of those giving it.

This answer is ironic considering that Gandhi, his followers and the writers working within the Gandhian paradigm have made considerable effort to purge the word “passive resistance” from the vocabulary of collective action. This answer is misleading in the sense that it indicates a very narrow knowledge of the history of passive resistance and the whole resistance heritage of which it is a part. A glance through the encyclopedias and dictionaries of various European languages reveals how Gandhi’s name dominates treatments of the history of passive resistance. This answer is accurate, however, in that Gandhi’s thought and action can be understood within the European tradition of passive resistance.

Gandhi played a central role in the shift from “passive resistance”

to “nonviolent resistance” and related terms. His early concept of resistance developed over a period of many years, beginning in the early 1890s, during the struggle of the Indian population of South Africa against the injustices of first the Boers and then the English.¹⁴

In his book *Satyagraha in South Africa*, published many years after the events, in 1928, Gandhi himself became one of the active creators of Gandhian folklore.¹⁵ It would perhaps be going too far to accuse Gandhi of deliberate falsification, but his later self-centered account is certainly a distortion of what occurred in South Africa. In his book Gandhi relates that at the beginning of the Indian struggle the resisters were at a loss as to what to name their movement. He claims that he then applied the term “passive resistance.” “As the struggle advanced,” he writes, “the phrase ‘passive resistance’ gave rise to confusion and it appeared shameful to permit this great struggle to be known only by an English name.”¹⁶

Gandhi states that he did not know when the phrase “passive resistance” was first used in English, but because it had always, to his knowledge, been associated with movements which either held an ambivalent view toward violence or had accepted the use of violence in some circumstances, he found it to be a misleading name for the completely “nonviolent” movement which he was leading.¹⁷ In many of his writings from the early 1920s onward Gandhi strongly criticized passive resistance and sought to disassociate his action from it. Passive resistance was often considered the way of the weak and seen as the preparation for the use of force, claims Gandhi; he declares that his version of “nonviolent” resistance could not be classified in that way. Gandhi emphasizes that passive resistance is as different from it as the North Pole from the South Pole, and that passive resistance is a misnomer for “nonviolent resistance.” He asserts that *he* coined the term “*Satyagraha*” in “order to distinguish it from the movement then going on in the United Kingdom and South Africa under the name of Passive Resistance.”¹⁸

All this was written in hindsight, no doubt in response to new ideological requirements.

When one goes beyond Gandhi’s later commentaries and explores

¹⁴ Gandhi 1950, pp. 28, 29, 43, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52.

¹⁵ The same holds true for his autobiography, first published in two volumes in 1927 and 1929; see Gandhi 1959.

¹⁶ Gandhi 1950, p. 109.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–115.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–115; Gandhi 1942, p. 138; Gandhi 1963, pp. 87–88; Gandhi 1974, pp. 3, 6, 34–35.

his writings from the first decade of the twentieth century it becomes clear that “passive resistance” was the common way to refer to the type of resistance which the Indians were carrying out at that time.¹⁹ The use of the concept of passive resistance was so deeply rooted that it continued to be used in spite of the efforts of Gandhi and his followers to do away with it. The Gandhian folklore which began to take shape and spread throughout the world in the 1920s has tended to make people blind to the fact that many of the basic ideas and practical methods of “nonviolent resistance” came to Gandhi and his contemporaries through the concept of passive resistance and the resistance heritage of which it was a part. Christ’s Sermon on the Mount and the works of John Ruskin, Count Leo Tolstoy, Henry David Thoreau as well as his immersion in the European constitutionalist tradition through his work as a British trained lawyer, gave Gandhi the background necessary to articulate and develop the western resistance tradition.²⁰ Gandhi translated this tradition into Indian culture through languages such as Gujarati and Hindi. Special concepts from India’s rich civilization were given new meaning in the Gandhian struggles and “nonviolent resistance” began to take on an oriental color in the eyes of the world. Gandhi and his coworkers certainly enriched the European resistance heritage and helped make it part of the modern world civilization; but the uniqueness of the Gandhian contribution should not be exaggerated. The exotic words in the vocabulary of Gandhian action, like *Ahimsa* (noninjury, love) and *Satyagraha* have clear counterparts in European languages. Moreover, Gandhian *Satyagraha* does not provide any more of a solution to basic social and political dilemmas than its counterparts in the European tradition do. Gandhian *Satyagraha* is subject to the same limitations in practice, the same ambivalence in its environment and the same problematic relationship to violence as its corresponding types of resistance, and modern collective action in general, elsewhere.

There seems to have been universal agreement among the resisters, their opponents and contemporary newspaper reporters to call the organized action undertaken by the Indians in 1906 “passive resist-

¹⁹ In one of his most penetrating essays, Gene Sharp points out the discrepancy between Gandhi’s early and later writings. Sharp successfully challenges old misconceptions concerning Gandhi’s uniqueness. He shows that the type of resistance initiated in 1906 was in no way new to the Indian minority in South Africa. Sharp, however, never mentions “passive resistance,” and therefore misses one very important avenue for exploring the resistance tradition which Gandhi was drawing upon; see Sharp 1979, pp. 24–26.

²⁰ Concerning this intellectual background see Gandhi 1959, pp. 48–49, 99, 220–221; Gandhi 1947, pp. 79, 225.

ance,” and a “passive resistance movement.”²¹ In a letter to the *Rand Daily Mail* of 6 July 1907 Gandhi sought to refute the notion that passive resistance was a new way to his fellow countrymen; he explained that it just had not been used on a large scale for a long time. It is apparent from the context that Gandhi used “passive resistance” here as a generic term for what was later to be called “nonviolent action.” He then discussed some of the specific means which fall under it such as picketing and social ostracism.²² Elsewhere he called passive resistance a “policy of communal suffering,” meaning the persistent refusal by the Indians to submit to the degradations of the government.²³ This is a thought provoking idea since one of the connotations of the word “passive” as derived from Latin and found in various European languages is the capacity for suffering.

The “policy of passive resistance” was initially described by the chairman of the British Indian Association, Abdool Gani, as “simply a resolve on the part of my countrymen to decline to submit to conditions that are quite unbearable.”²⁴ In one his early comments on the subject in *Indian Opinion* (6 April 1907) Gandhi saw passive resistance as a recognized method for a loyal and law-abiding community to procure justice (note how close this comes to Rawls’ definition of civil disobedience).²⁵ Six months later (9 September), writing “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,” he elaborated on this idea as follows:

... passive resistance is one of the most approved methods of securing redress in given circumstance, and it is the only course law-abiding and peaceful men can adopt without doing violence to their conscience. Indeed, it would appear that it is a method they must adopt if they have a conscience, and it revolts against particular legislation.... It is possible to carry the doctrine of passive resistance too far, but it is equally so with reference to the doctrine of obedience to law.²⁶

It was here that Gandhi first drew the link between what he knew to be a valid and widely accepted form of European contention called passive resistance and the concept of civil disobedience as expressed by Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862).²⁷ In a later discussion

²¹ See “passive resistance” in the indexes of Gandhi 1958–1970, especially vols. 5–9.

²² *Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp. 86–87.

²³ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, “Letter to the *Rand Daily Mail*,” 1 July 1907, p. 67.

²⁴ Gani, “Letter to the Star,” in Gandhi 1958–1970, vol. 5, p. 430.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, pp. 391–392.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp. 211–212.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp. 211–212. Thoreau’s essay “Resistance to Civil Government” was first published in 1859. It was later, after Thoreau’s death, renamed “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience.” It did not receive wide attention until Leo Tolstoy and Gandhi rediscovered it.

concerning the acceptability of passive resistance, Gandhi states that in connection with the so-called passive resistance movement in England in 1902 against the Education Bill passed by the House of Commons, Winston Churchill affirmed that passive resistance is constitutionally an entirely valid means of action under British law. He adds that General Jan Smuts also made a similar pronouncement regarding the passive resistance of the Indians in South Africa.²⁸

All this serves to show how wide-spread and well understood the concept of passive resistance was in both its specific and general connotations. As Gandhi put it in a speech entitled "The Ethics of Passive Resistance" (7 June 1909), which he delivered after recognizing what he considered to be the contradiction within the term: "But the expression had been accepted as it was popular and had been for a long time used by those who carried out in practice the idea denoted by the term."²⁹

At the end of 1907, by the latest, Gandhi and his coworkers came to realize that there were *no* corresponding terms for "passive resistance" and "civil disobedience" in Gujarati and other Indian languages. Out of patriotic respect for their own language they initiated a contest, calling on the Indian community to come up with Gujarati, Sanskrit or Urdu *equivalents* for these terms.³⁰ Needless to say, this event cannot be seen as mere verbal transfer; it is a clear example of how the European resistance tradition was translated and transferred into another culture. The Indians were forced to develop a whole new vocabulary for it. In an article entitled "Passive resistance" (January 1908) Gandhi made a very innocent and revealing comment on the results of the contest: He said that *Satyagraha* ("firmness in a good cause") is not a satisfactory equivalent for "passive resistance," since it does not fully capture the connotations of the original English term. This is in strong contrast to what he later had to say about passive resistance and *Satyagraha*.³¹

At that time Gandhi displayed remarkable intuitive insight into the meaning of "passive resistance" and the tradition of which it was a part. In a later commentary on the contest Gandhi emphasizes that the word "passive" in passive resistance does not mean that the resister remains passive to all that occurs and that to claim so is to betray

²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 13, pp. 531–532; the 1902 passive resistance in England took the form of nonpayment of taxes and was led by the liberal politician and nonconformist minister John Clifford (1836–1923). Gandhi first met Churchill in 1906 during a deputation to England.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 243.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 455.

³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 22–23; my italicization of the English words.

ignorance.³² Gandhi explicitly states that he understands passive resistance to be a clearly defined type of resistance, requiring the deliberate exclusion of “physical force” and the employment of “inner force” and “soul force” in the steadfast struggle for what is right and true. He adds that the word “civil” in “civil disobedience” includes the meaning of “passive,” ie. the deliberate exclusion of violence and the adherence to what is right.³³

As will be seen Gandhi’s concept of passive resistance at this early period of his career corresponds with remarkable exactitude to the European concept of passive resistance. The word “nonviolence” came into use only later, in the early 1920s; for the time being “*Satyagraha*” had to suffice as an equivalent for the well established “passive resistance.”

2. Towards a History of Passive Resistance

In this section the history of passive resistance will be approached through the study of the history of “passive resistance.” The danger of this etymological approach lies in becoming too concerned with a mere verbal expression at the expense of a more extensive understanding of the phenomena it is a label for. Keeping this problem in mind, however, the etymological approach proves to be an excellent heuristic device for tracing the history of an idea and a way of action. It provides firm guidelines for initial study, keeping the researcher from straying into arbitrary hypotheses. It furnishes a basis for stepping out of the narrow confines of etymology into a broader study of resistance action.

Gandhi’s later rejection of the “passive” part of “passive resistance” would not be so problematic if it had been merely a linguistic move retaining an understanding of the origin of *Satyagraha* and an appreciation for the historical meaning of “passive resistance.” Instead Gandhi created a kind of a phobia toward “passive resistance” which left his followers with an unwillingness to make inquiries about it. Gandhian folklore prevailed, but not ubiquitously.

The first western social scientist to publish a study of passive resistance under the influence of the early Gandhian paradigm was the American, Clarence Marsh Case. Already before World War One

³² Ibid., vol. 8, p. 131, (under title, “Gujarati Equivalents for Passive Resistance, etc.”).

³³ Ibid., vol. 8, p. 131, vol. 9, p. 243.

Case wrote a graduate thesis entitled “The Social Psychology of Passive Resistance.”³⁴ His main work, *Non-violent Coercion: A Study in Methods of Social Pressure* (1923), has in many ways remained unsurpassed in insight into the theory and practice of “nonviolent resistance” and has clearly, although with rather minimal acknowledgment, served as a model for many later studies. Unlike others working in the Gandhian paradigm, Case clearly recognized the synonymy of “passive resistance” and “nonviolent resistance,” using them explicitly and purposely throughout his work as interchangeable terms.³⁵ Case knew that passive/“nonviolent” resistance was a principle of social action having deep roots in European civilization. One of his most remarkable insights, later entirely ignored by scholars and Gandhians is that passive resistance is an entirely modern type of action:

The distinguishing feature of this modernism is its close connection with the state and with the surging forces of social and political revolution. Its modernity lies in its *public* character. Henceforth we shall see less of the monastic, ascetic, and life-denying tendency so characteristic of the Oriental, Stoic, and Christian anchorite philosophy, and more of an effort to translate negative non-resistance into a positive message of peace, and even of social reconstruction.³⁶

This is a promising hypothesis, yet Case failed to explore all its implications regarding the history of passive resistance within the European resistance tradition. Instead he focuses rather one-sidedly on the history of Christian peace sects. He neglected an etymological study of “passive resistance” and thus missed many of the key characteristics of the phenomenon in European history.

Case believed that the developers of passive resistance throughout modern history were “attempting to solve the most difficult problem of conduct to be met in human experience ... it involves what we may call a antinomy of practical judgement...”³⁷ This is a very complex endeavour and for those who wish to act in this world the relationship between passive resistance and violence in social and political action remains necessarily problematic. Perhaps Gandhi and his followers did not want to admit this. This could be one reason they wanted so badly to disassociate themselves from passive resistance. They wanted to

³⁴ Case 1923, p. i.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62. Case identified the beginning of modern passive resistance with the thought and action of John Wycliff and John Huss in the in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. This will be discussed below, in the next section.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

convince people that they had solved the dilemma of violence in politics and taken *Satyagraha* far beyond passive resistance.

The Dutch anarchist Barthélemy de Ligt is another important writer who was influenced by Gandhi, yet attained an unusual insight into the history of passive resistance. Ligt's book *The Conquest of Violence: An Essay on War and Revolution* (English version, 1937) – “that extraordinary manual of passive resistance” – was highly influential among pacifists in the 1930s.³⁸ As Aldous Huxley observed in his praising introduction, Ligt's book was not meant to be a work of historical scholarship. Ligt did not weave his many excellent insights into a comprehensive or explicit theory of the history passive resistance. As with Case, Ligt did not employ the etymological method. They both employed “passive resistance” as a universal generic term. During the period when both men wrote the pacifist war-resister conception of passive resistance was quite prevalent. This no doubt limited the scope of their own conceptions, but did not always dominate them.

Many of the scholars working within the Gandhian paradigm show a remarkable ignorance regarding passive resistance. For example, Shridharani is entirely under the sway of the later Gandhi and shows no knowledge of Gandhi's earlier insight into passive resistance. Shridharani identifies passive resistance with pacifism and with passive refusal to do things. He asserts that passive resistance lacks a technique of direct action: “William Penn, William Lloyd Garrison and, to a great extent, Count Leo Tolstoy,” writes Shridharani, “sought in their own characteristic ways to mitigate this shortcoming by evolving a social practice of *passive resistance* out of the old theological doctrine of *non-resistance*.”³⁹

He claims that these men failed in this effort, and that Gandhi was the first to solve the problem. Elsewhere in his book, ironically enough, Shridharani admits that there have been a “few” cases of “non-violent direct action” in the West “as well” (ie., “as well” as the action of the great Saint Gandhi in the East). Shridharani simply fails to mention that at least four of the cases he cites, all of which occurred in Europe between 1849 and 1923, were called “passive resistance” both by the participants and by international observers.⁴⁰ In each case there existed a manifest repertoire of methods of direct action which was clearly understood by the people involved.

³⁸ The quote is from Woodcock 1986, p. 368.

³⁹ Shridharani 1939, pp. 264–266, 281. Shridharani's italics.

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 113–114. The cases referred to here are the Hungarian resistance 1849–1867, the Finnish “nonviolent campaign from 1901 to 1905,” the *Kapp Putsch* in 1920 and the *Ruhrkampf* of 1923.

In the late 1920s the well-known Finnish Tolstoyan Arvid Järnefelt wrote that the Finnish passive resistance struggle during the years 1899–1905 was very similar to the liberation movement taking place in India against English domination under the leadership of M.K. Gandhi.⁴¹ Järnefelt himself had been an activist during the years of the Finnish resistance, and had even more direct personal contact with Tolstoy than Gandhi did. Järnefelt claimed that Gandhi himself had noticed the similarity between the Finnish and Indian movements, that Gandhi considered Finland to be a forerunner of his own work and that he truly admired those Finns who had bravely joined the passive resistance.⁴²

Thus far there is no direct proof that Gandhi really thought this way, but it is not at all implausible. Among those working in the Gandhian paradigm two of the most frequently repeated “cases of pre-Gandhian nonviolent resistance” are the Hungarian struggle of 1849–1867 and the Finnish resistance of 1899–1905. These Gandhian scholars had a habit of uncritically repeating Gandhi. Gandhi did cite the Hungarian resistance, and it is very possible that he also became familiar with the Finnish case at the same time through several sources. As Gandhi repeatedly cited these movements they gradually became incorporated into the canon of “cases of nonviolent resistance” by Gandhi’s followers.

Järnefelt’s comments are a clear indication that one should not look merely to Gandhi’s own psychological or spiritual development as portrayed in his self-centered autobiographical works to explain the origin of *Satyagraha*. Under the sway of Gandhian folklore many have thought Gandhi the inventor of modern mass “nonviolent action.” Sharp’s essay on the origins of Gandhi’s use of “nonviolent resistance” makes the first steps in deconstructing this myth. Sharp points out that Gandhi’s early writings abound in references to contemporary more or less “nonviolent” struggles, such as those in China, India, Russia and South Africa, where systematic noncooperation and many other methods were employed.⁴³ Another of the movements for national independence which Gandhi followed was that of the Irish.

In an article in *Indian Opinion* in 1907, entitled “Benefits of Passive Resistance: Notable Instance,” Gandhi described the current struggle of the Irish people for their rights against English domination. He noted that the *Sinn Fein* (Irish for “ourselves alone”) movement and

⁴¹ Järnefelt 1976, p. 497.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 497.

⁴³ Sharp 1979, pp. 23–41.

the Indian *Swadeshi* (*Swadeshi* refers to the principle of using goods produced locally or in one's own country) movement shared very similar goals: "In their struggle" he wrote, "passive resistance is one of their main weapons."⁴⁴ Gandhi told how through economic and cultural self-sufficiency and the withdrawal of cooperation with the British in key areas *Sinn Fein* sought, without violent struggle, to force the British to grant home rule or independence. Gandhi knew that the *Sinn Fein* movement had been inspired by the Hungarian passive resistance movement against Austrian absolutism and listed some of the methods used by the Hungarians in their struggle. He concluded that: "These instances deserve to be emulated by the Transvaal Indians. They clearly prove that what is known to have happened earlier in history must also happen in the case of the Indians in the Transvaal."⁴⁵

In 1904 the prominent Irish nationalist Arthur Griffith published a work which was to become very influential called *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland*. It was both a detailed study of mass passive resistance, i.e., of the culture and politics of violence-excluding national liberation and the proclamation of a policy of action for Ireland. Griffith was one of the main founders of the *Sinn Fein* party in 1905, the political program of which had already been formulated some years earlier. In all probability Griffith's book was Gandhi's main source of knowledge, whether directly or indirectly, on *Sinn Fein* and the Hungarian resistance. In the third edition of his work (1918) Griffith placed the national struggle of Finland alongside that of Hungary as an example for the Irish.⁴⁶ One can surmise that probably many years before this the parallel between Finland and Hungary had been recognized by Europeans like Griffith.

For their part, resistance thinkers and nationalist leaders in Finland had ever since the 1860s been deepening their knowledge of Hungary as a parallel for their own national development and defense. This aspect of Finnish history has been entirely neglected by scholars.

Political activists such as M.K. Gandhi, Arthur Griffith, the Finn Arvid Neovius and their associates were not the only ones interested in the history, philosophical implications and the practical applications of passive resistance during the first years of the twentieth century.

⁴⁴ Gandhi 1958–1970, vol. 7, pp. 213–214.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 213–214.

⁴⁶ Griffith 1918, pp. xii, 141, 163.

The Origin and Use of “Passive Resistance”

In searching through the old dictionaries of various European countries for “passive resistance” I found that in Germany there had been a scholarly discussion among etymologists concerning the origin of passive resistance. This debate probably reflected a more general public interest in the subject. In 1906 Otto Ladendorf included “*passiver Widerstand*” in his *Historisches Schlagwörterbuch*. This was followed by an attempt on the part of the linguist Albert Gombert to trace the terms “*passiver Widerstand*” and “passive resistance” back still further in time than Ladendorf had.⁴⁷ The work of these experts was later ignored in discussions of passive resistance.

Gombert asserts that the English catchword “passive resistance” was the predecessor of the German *schlagwort* “*passiver Widerstand*.” Moreover, he claims that it was a product of the American struggle for independence. Gombert, nevertheless, provides no proof for the American origin of this term. The word may have been used by the Americans of that time, but it seems clear that it was not a standard part of the vocabulary of resistance and contention in the English colonies in America.⁴⁸ What Gombert does prove is that the word was used in both English and German at the latest by 1819. In December of that year the newspaper *Morgenblatt* reported a resistance campaign by the Radical-Reformers against the English government. Their method was described as “passive resistance” and was contrasted to “passive submission.”⁴⁹ Gombert concludes that the term “*passiver Widerstand*” was not yet commonplace in Germany, since the author of this article felt it necessary to explain it. Next Gombert identified what he thought was a more mature use of “*passiver Widerstand*” in the *Evang. Kirchenzeitung* (28 July 1838) describing the resistance of French religious officials to the July government.⁵⁰

The above random pieces of evidence provided Gombert with the background for the most significant find in the research of his

⁴⁷ Ladendorf 1968 (originally published in 1906), pp. 236–237; Gombert 1906, pp. 226–229. In general only among German scholars has the etymology of “passive resistance” been traced in detail; see for example, “Widerstand” 1906, pp. 1268–1269.

⁴⁸ For the way Americans articulated their ideas of resistance see Maier 1972 and Conser 1986.

⁴⁹ *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* 1819, p. 1195. The conscious contrast of passive submission and passive resistance is probably no mere isolated notion, and thus may prove to be one key for a better understanding of passive resistance.

⁵⁰ Gombert 1906, pp. 226–229.

etymologist colleagues: The modern concept of passive resistance emerged and caught on among Europeans at large, as expressed in the popular political catchword "*passiver Widerstand*," during the revolutionary turmoil of 1848. The German Revolution of 1848 was largely a liberal-bourgeois confrontation, temporarily supported by the masses, with the system of absolutism. At this time the liberals became the spokesmen for a broad range of Germans, despite the vagueness of their constitutionalist political program.⁵¹ Throughout Germany, as well as elsewhere in Europe, liberal governments were formed. In May the German Constitutional National Assembly met in Frankfurt and the Prussian National Assembly convened in Berlin. Neither, however, had the power to withstand the reaction which soon set in. Gombert's fellow linguist, Otto Ladendorf, had claimed that it was in this situation that the President of the Prussian National Assembly, Hans Victor von Unruh, had coined the catchword "*passiver Widerstand*."

When the new prime minister of Prussia proclaimed its dissolution, the Assembly sought means of opposition. In a speech before the Prussian Assembly on 10 November, Unruh stated that he was absolutely of the opinion that the situation could be met only with "*passiver Widerstand*," that against the violent measures of the crown only passive resistance was permissible.⁵² Although von Unruh was not the first person to use the term "passive resistance," both Gombert and Ladendorf are correct in stressing the significance of the public proclamation of what they considered as the constitutionalists' new form of struggle.

There is no doubt that by 1848 passive resistance and related concepts of struggle for justice and freedom were well known among those – including socialists and liberals of all kinds – opposing absolutism each in their own way. For example, in a broad analysis of European politics completed in 1844 the radical republican socialist Karl Heinzen had a chapter on legitimate resistance ("*über erlaubten Widerstand*") including an exceptionally detailed analysis of the concept of passive resistance.⁵³ As will be seen in the next section Heinzen was only one among many Europeans who were seeking to articulate ways of struggle excluding the use of violence.

The work of the German etymologists indicates that the passive resistance of the years of revolution and reaction 1848–1849 was discussed and criticized by a wide variety of well-known figures. For

⁵¹ Holborn 1969, pp. 17–18, 35, 39.

⁵² Ladendorf 1968, pp. 236–237; "*Widerstand*" 1960, pp. 1268–1269.

⁵³ Heinzen 1845, pp. 143–172.

example, on the right, in a letter to his brother on 11 November 1848 Otto von Bismarck commented that passive resistance was proving more and more to be the cloak of the weak.⁵⁴ On the left, in an article in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on 16 December 1848 Karl Marx, employing his notorious talent for sarcastically turning concepts upside down, described passive resistance as a means used by the bourgeoisie against the revolution.⁵⁵ “*Passiver Widerstand!?!*”, exclaimed Theodor Mögling, “what kind of expressions will they still invent to cover their cowardice with the dirty coat of legality.”⁵⁶

Ladendorf writes that nobody spoke out more eagerly, and with more flaming rhetoric, against passive resistance than the German socialist and disciple of Marx, Ferdinand Lassalle. In his famous Düsseldorf speech of 3 May 1849, written for the occasion of his trial on charges of revolutionary incitement, Lassalle furiously asserted that the passive resistance of the National Assembly was betrayal, and one of the most absurd inventions to see the light of day. He claimed that passive resistance was a contradiction, resistance which is no resistance, and is the product of the bourgeoisie’s recognition that resistance is necessary coupled with its fear to act accordingly.⁵⁷

In their *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 Marx and Engels wrote that the modern bourgeois society, instead of doing away with class antagonisms, had established “new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.”⁵⁸ Accordingly, passive resistance must be seen as one part of the modern “bourgeois” repertoire of contention. Marx was familiar with the ideas of those socialists and liberals who were aiming at revolution without violence, and even had close personal contact with some of them. Even among the communists themselves there developed an on-going struggle between those advocating revolution without violence and the Marxists. In 1847 the name of the communist “League of the Just,” with its slogan “All Men are Brothers,” was changed to “The Communist League” with the new slogan, “Proletarians of all Countries – Unite.”⁵⁹ The Swiss journalist and writer on passive resistance Heinzen had been a contributor to Marx’s newspaper the *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842, and in 1845 the two men spent much time in each other’s company.⁶⁰ Heinzen criticized

⁵⁴ Ladendorf 1968, pp. 236–237; Bismarck 1900, p. 70.

⁵⁵ “Widerstand” 1960, p. 1269.

⁵⁶ As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 1269.

⁵⁷ Ladendorf 1968, pp. 236–237.

⁵⁸ Marx, Engels 1975, p. 9.

⁵⁹ McLellan 1976, pp. 167–172.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

the Marxian communists for their propagation of class struggle, emphasizing instead the principle of united humanity. Marx responded with a refutation of Heinzen written in 1845.⁶¹

Marx of course could not accept Heinzen's principle of humanity, because as he saw it people find themselves in relationships of mutual class antagonism which are based on economic conditions independent of their will.⁶² This basic conflict could not be resolved through "humanity," but only through the conquest of power from the bourgeoisie. Marx points out that to neglect class struggle is to play into the hands of the bourgeoisie who even go so far, as in the July Revolution in France, to make "the incitement of class against class", probably also out of 'humanity', a criminal offence, to which imprisonment and fines were attached."⁶³ Marx sees Heinzen as a propagator of "middle-class illusions."⁶⁴ And Marx had no patience for the hypocritical idea – or illusion – of passive resistance as the weapon of "humanity." For Marx the Revolution of 1848 was a great disappointment. The German bourgeoisie failed to live up to the great model set by their predecessors in Marx's favorite model, the French Revolution. They finally set aside any pretense of solidarity with the people and compromised with the old regime. It is in these circumstances that Marx interpreted passive resistance as counter-revolutionary and anti-proletarian.⁶⁵

A revealing and exceptionally explicit statement of the type of constitutionalist, or liberal bourgeois, concept of passive resistance which Marx mocked with such vigor is found in a private letter from the well known economist, organizer of working mens' societies and liberal deputy of the Prussian Assembly Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch to his parents on 8 November 1848. He wrote that on the following day he and his fellow resisters would fight a decisive battle, with the firm resolution to solely employ parliamentary means and avoid the dangerous possibility of street fighting. Their aim, he continued, was to tenaciously resist the violent measures of the crown, avoid violent confrontation and keep the masses tranquil. On the next day Schulze-Delitzsch stated that the liberal center had succeeded in keeping the left within the limits of moderation.⁶⁶ A further insight into the nature

⁶¹ Marx 1977a, p. 216.

⁶² Ibid. p. 216.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 216, 217.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 218.

⁶⁵ See Marx's articles on the bourgeoisie and the counterrevolution in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* during December 1848 in Marx 1977b, pp. 154–181.

⁶⁶ *Deutsche Geschichte* 1965, p. 311.

of bourgeois passive resistance, and the related concepts of “peaceful resistance,” “resistance within the limits of the law,” “parliamentary resistance” and resistance on a “legal basis” – phrases all of which became commonplace at that time – is given by the reaction of the Frankfurt Assembly members in January 1849. These representatives of property and law and order called for the use of “moral means” of resistance and avoided association with revolutionary activity threatening their own status.⁶⁷

The passive resistance of 1848 serves as a classic Marxian example of what high humanitarian bourgeois ideals prove to be in actual practice. Marx wrote with emphatic scorn for passive resistance and resistance on a “legal basis.” Raving on, Marx accused the propagators of these ideas of having

so often lost and recovered, punctured and mended that “legal basis,” tossed it from Berlin to Frankfurt and from Frankfurt to Berlin, narrowed and widened it, turned the simple basis into an inlaid floor and the inlaid floor into a false bottom (which, as we know, is a principle device of performing conjurers), and the false bottom into a bottomless trapdoor... The “legal basis” meant that the legal title of the people, *revolution*, did not exist in the *contrat social* between the Government and the bourgeoisie. *The bourgeoisie deduced its claims from the old Prussian legislation, in order that the people should not deduce any claims from the new Prussian revolution.*⁶⁸

Of course the scope of Marx’s thesis here goes beyond the specific circumstances of 1848; it represents a point of view which must be seriously considered when studying resistance and contention throughout “modern bourgeois society” from its inception at the end of the middle ages, and especially from the sixteenth century onward. Moreover, it is a point of view which is of direct relevance in analyzing passive resistance in Finland, which drew heavily on legalist ideology and claims about the ancient constitution while trying to mobilize the masses for its cause.

In an article analyzing European affairs in the beginning of 1861 the Finnish philosopher and statesman J.V. Snellman wrote that passive resistance had become an internationally well known approach to the struggle for liberty, and that anyone who kept up to date on current events would know exactly how it is used in practice.⁶⁹ After 1848 in Germany passive resistance developed into a tradition of progressive

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 311; Holborn 1969, p. 87.

⁶⁸ Marx 1977b, pp. 154, 166, 167. Marx’s italics.

⁶⁹ See below, chapter III, section 4.

liberal political struggle, including all kinds of constitutionalist resistance to old regime policies, political and cultural mobilization, the writing of solidarity addresses, popular meetings, big demonstrative political celebrations and so forth.⁷⁰ In Hungary, after the defeat of their violent liberation struggle in 1849, the Magyars and their allies gradually mobilized what they called a passive resistance movement against Austrian absolutism. The Hungarian resistance is dealt with in more detail below, in the discussion of the origins of the Finnish passive resistance tradition.

The concept of passive resistance was also further developed in anarchist and socialist circles. This is not surprising considering the strong emphasis on enlightenment, self help and positive mobilization found in many of the main nineteenth century anarchist and “utopian” and “true” socialist doctrines. For example, the leading American individualist anarchist during the last decades of the century, Benjamin Tucker and his associates, considered passive resistance to be the most effective means for the people at large to struggle against violence and injustice. Tucker was an influential anarchist writer both in the USA and in Europe. He explicitly disassociated himself from the anarchist cult of violence.⁷¹

Tucker’s writings show that passive resistance was known to him as a widely recognized European form of struggle against arbitrary and invasive policies. Furthermore, he wrote that, “passive resistance and boycotting are now prominent features of every great national movement.”⁷² In a letter written in 1888 Tucker wrote that the “champions” of passive resistance do not see this policy of struggle as a universal principle excluding the use of violence in all circumstances: “Believers in passive resistance consider it as generally more effective than active resistance, but think that there are certain cases in which the opposite is true.”⁷³ It should be emphasized that “effective” here means effective for the achievement of Liberty. Furthermore, at that time “active resistance” still meant violent resistance and “passive resistance” did not mean nonactive or pacifist resistance, but rather resistance which does not use physical force.

One of the main concrete models for Tucker’s conception of passive resistance was the movement of the Irish Land League for Home Rule and Irish Catholic peasants against English landlords beginning in 1879.

⁷⁰ For German liberal passive resistance, see Parent 1982.

⁷¹ Woodcock 1986, pp. 374, 392, 393.

⁷² Tucker 1926, p. 80.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

The methods which they used were the nonpayment of taxes and rents, refusal to cooperate with British government authorities and the boycott of those complying with the opponent. Even the repression by the authorities was met with passive resistance, with the resisters showing a willingness to go to prison en masse. Tucker believed there was much to be learned from the Irish resistance, although he felt that the movement was finally ruined by the politics of C.S. Parnell.⁷⁴ Tucker sought to refute Lassalle's 1849 Düsseldorf condemnation of passive resistance as "the resistance which does not resist":

Never was there a greater mistake. It is the only resistance which in these days of military discipline resists with any result. There is not a tyrant in the civilized world to-day who would not rather do anything in his power to precipitate a bloody revolution rather than see himself confronted by a large fraction of his subjects determined not to obey.... Neither the ballot nor the bayonet is to play any great part in the coming struggle; passive resistance is the instrument by which the revolutionary force is destined to secure in the last great conflict of the people's rights forever.⁷⁵

The passive resistance of the Irish Home Rule and noncooperation movement cited by Tucker was succeeded by the passive resistance program of Arthur Griffith and his associates which was mentioned earlier. Ireland has long been notorious for its political violence; but, as has been observed, violent events often gain attention at the expense of an awareness of broader currents of collective action. Tucker's example was by no means the only example of passive resistance in Ireland: passive resistance was a well established part of the Irish repertoire of contention and had already been articulated as a doctrine in the early 1800s.⁷⁶

Griffith had grown up within the orthodox so-called "physical force" Irish republican tradition and was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the predecessor of the IRA. He came to place the highest value on national self-reliance and cultural development, and became convinced that the best means to achieve independence was passive resistance. In his early articles in the *United Irishman* in 1902 Griffith took up the example of Hungary, strongly criticized parliamentarianism and cultivated the idea of a bloodless independence struggle through passive resistance. Many of Griffith's colleagues in the IRB acknowledged the importance of passive resistance, but were not willing to

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 244–247.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 78–79.

⁷⁶ On the background of the Irish passive resistance tradition see Davis 1974, pp. 95–97.

adopt its use totally to the exclusion of “physical-force.” Griffith himself was not against violence in principle. During the intensive years of the Irish struggle against Great Britain, Griffith became home minister, as well as acting president, of Ireland in 1919. He did not, however, wield the authority to restrain the violence of the IRA and other militant nationalist groups.⁷⁷

Throughout Europe in the nineteenth century passive resistance developed into an articulated doctrine and concrete practice of struggle for various groups and classes. For the rising bourgeoisie it was a suitable approach to the defense and achievement of their interests against both the old regime and the masses. For “the masses” it was a mode of struggle against oppression. For nationalists it was a weapon highly compatible with economic development and cultural self assertion; in other words, it was a way to independence. For socialists and anarchists it was the means of contention most in harmony with their ideals, as well as being the most suitable weapon for their struggle.

The European tradition of passive resistance was usually developed and employed in circumstances of long term interrelation and various degrees of mutual dependence between antagonists, i.e., after relationships of domination and obedience had been well established. Apparently the idea of passive resistance as an approach to national defense to be implemented by the civilian population against an immediate military invasion was first conceived of during the First World War. It is a clear logical derivative from the passive resistance tradition. In an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* in August of 1915 the famous philosopher and political activist Bertrand Russell suggested that

Passive resistance, if it were adopted deliberately by the whole nation, with the same measure of courage and discipline which is now displayed, might achieve a far more perfect protection for what is good in national life than armies and navies can ever achieve, without demanding the carnage and waste and welter of brutality involved in modern war.⁷⁸

Russell offered an elaborate scenario of how a German invasion could be met by social defense. Since that time the thesis which Russell gave expression to has been explored and debated in a wide variety of academic studies and political programs by military personnel, government officials, independent research institutes and within all

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. ix, xiv, xv, xix, 18, 32, 91.

⁷⁸ Russell 1975, p.56. For the context of Russell’s thought at this time, see Clark 1976, pp. 236–271.

kinds of popular organizations and movements. Generally, the term “passive resistance” has been abandoned, being replaced by a variety of others, such as “social defense,” “nonviolent defense,” “nonmilitary defense,” “civilian-based defense,” “weaponless defense” and so forth.⁷⁹ That these, and related concepts and forms of action, have almost exclusively been studied in Europe and North America (or directly derived from them) is testimony to the fact that they have deep roots in the western culture of social action.

Russell’s writings serve as an excellent example of the continuation, development and change in resistance tradition. Russell grew up steeped in western liberal culture with a keen sense of social responsibility and devotion to the ideals of liberty and justice which led him to adopt a critical socialist position during the First World War. At that time he was an anti-war activist, but emphatically not a pacifist. He rejected the pacifists’ idea of “non-resistance,” and criticized them for seeking to stifle peoples’ natural impulses rather than to channel them creatively. His concept of passive resistance had nothing to do with passivity, and it is clear that he understood the pacifists as representing only one stream within resistance tradition. To understand Russell’s conception of passive resistance it is necessary to look to the culture which he was such a noteworthy, even notorious, manifestation of.

At the age of twenty-four, in 1896, Russell published his first book. Its subject was German Social Democracy and was written from the point of view of an orthodox liberal. He dealt with both the intellectual (Marxist and liberal) background and the practical politics and struggles of German socialism from the revolutionary period of 1848 onward. Russell showed a particular understanding of the passive resistance struggle of the Social Democrats for their survival during the period when they were outlawed and repressed in Germany from 1878 until 1890.⁸⁰ Their approach was to avoid violent confrontation with the State while at the same time carrying out all kinds of positive mobilization.

The Social Democrats did not, of course, reject the use of violence for their cause in principle. Their leaders (such as Lassalle and Karl Liebknecht), however, did draw a careful distinction between “power” (*Macht*) and “force” or “violence” (*Gewalt*). To use force, for example through terrorism or military action, without decisive social power was

⁷⁹ For current thinking and bibliographical references on these concepts of defense. see Schmid 1985, and; Sharp 1985.

⁸⁰ Russell 1965, pp. 92–115.

to their minds sheer folly, which would end in defeat. For them might was right, but only when might is power, not merely force or violence. A central component of Social Democratic doctrine dating from this period is that social revolution can be achieved solely through legal means and through a kind of struggle which excludes violence.⁸¹

Russell always held that some wars are justified. With the coming of World War Two he did not advocate passive resistance, but supported open military struggle. He did not, however, abandon the idea that passive resistance could be effective on a national scale in certain circumstances. In the 1950s and 1960s Russell concentrated on cultivating the tradition of passive resistance in internal struggles within England and other countries as a pioneer and central leader of the peace movement. Russell also changed terminology (probably in the 1950s, as evinced in his *Autobiography*) replacing “passive resistance” with “nonviolent resistance” and “nonviolent civil disobedience.”⁸²

3. Passive Resistance and European Constitutionalist Resistance

The preceding historical sketch, without any claim to be exhaustive, suffices for determining the basic features and views of passive resistance which were to appear again and again in various forms. From 1848 to World War One passive resistance was employed throughout Europe in constitutionalist, anti-absolutist, and other types of disobedience struggles against allegedly unjust authorities. Many words, of course, change meaning over time and at any given time may have multiple meanings. An event A called “passive resistance” at a certain time and place may have very little in common, ideologically or methodologically, with an event B called “passive resistance” at another. Moreover, an event C which is called by some other name

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 99, 102, 102–107, 111, 113.

⁸² In addition to the works cited above, my interpretation of Russell and passive resistance draws upon the following works: Vellacott 1980; Russell 1920. In the latter work (first published in 1916), on p. 95, Russell relates that his criticism of pacifism is partly indebted to the well-known American philosopher William James’ speech of 1898 called “The Moral Equivalent of War.” Perhaps James’ speech also helped Russell to articulate the difference between passive resistance and pacifist non-resistance. For Russell’s later resistance vocabulary and practice, see Russell 1985, especially Chapters 16 and 17.

may have more in common with A than either C or A have in common with B. In his comments on the historiography of the famous historian of ideas A.O. Lovejoy, Maurice Mandelbaum suggests a distinction between “continuing ideas” and “recurrent ideas.”⁸³ In nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe passive resistance was for the most part a continuing idea: It was historically connected in its various forms through a common European culture of resistance. This idea, moreover, belongs to an interconnected family of ideas and methods of resistance in secular European Christian society.

One must, nevertheless, consider the possibility that some ideas may be “recurrent,” i.e., that they may recur through independent invention and not through diffusion. For example, the circumstances of defense in different places and times may give rise to parallel but disconnected concepts of struggle. While it cannot be held that the Finnish concept and method of passive resistance is wholly recurrent in this sense, it might be observed that it contained recurrent aspects, meaning that some of the Finnish solutions, though perhaps similar to those used elsewhere, were devised independently. But that is to say nothing more than that in Finland the European resistance heritage, and passive resistance in particular, was employed in a unique way.

Passive resistance (like its descendant “nonviolent action”) is historically unique. But how unique is it? Is there any evidence that before the nineteenth century “era of revolution” people consciously developed types and doctrines of secular sociopolitical resistance and contention which required the conscious deliberate exclusion of what they understood as violence? Such evidence is scarce indeed, a fact which indicates that the conception of violent and not-violent forms of resistance in dichotomous relationship was rare.

Clarence Marsh Case traces passive resistance back to the ideas of John Wycliff and John Huss and the collective resistance which they helped to inspire in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.⁸⁴ Strictly speaking, Case is incorrect here, but there is an important point of relevance to be found in his observations. Neither Wycliff nor Huss used the term “passive resistance” or any comparable expression. While both men apparently abhorred the idea of violent rebellion and were outspoken opponents of Papal absolutism, their followers, the Lollards and the Hussites respectively, carried out violent resistance and rebellion in addition to a range of other forms of struggle. These

⁸³ Mandelbaum 1983, p. 202.

⁸⁴ Case 1923, pp. 62–67.

movements survived until, and became part of, the Protestant Reformation.⁸⁵ After many years of violent struggle in the beginning of the fifteenth century an important group of Hussites, the Bohemian Brethren, withdrew to form a peaceful community. Although they passively had to face persecution, they formulated no doctrine of passive resistance in the nineteenth century sense of direct confrontation without violence. In fact they explicitly adhered to the famous Pauline doctrine of passive obedience to rulers.⁸⁶

Case was, intuitively on the right track in pinpointing the era of Wycliff and Huss as a significant background for his work. Both men adhered to and developed popular doctrines of opposition to Papal secular dominion and absolutism. Moreover, the ideas they held helped legitimize and inspire popular rebellion and, in general, refusal to cooperate with tyrannical Church power. Perhaps what Case was also trying to convey is that at the time of Wycliff and Huss the older type of simple turn-the-other-cheek Christian disobedience began to be combined with the newly emerging radical constitutional principle of resistance.

It was, however, only in the sixteenth century that the late medieval streams of radical legal, conciliarist and Thomist political thought were developed in conjunction with the sociopolitical confrontations of the time to form the culture of resistance and contention which passive resistance was to be a later expression of. The Protestant Reformation was a key event in the formation of the political culture of resistance. Paradoxically the Reformation created ideological basis for both forceful condemnation and justification of resistance and rebellion.

Evangelical Lutheran Finland of the era of passive resistance is a remarkably clear heir to the contradictions and ambiguity of resistance and obedience in Protestant culture.

Lutheranism provided the many already long existing diverse religious and lay groups which united in the Protestant movement a highly effective ideology for defiance to Papal authority and Catholic domination. The fierce resistance and assault by the early Lutheran thinkers against authority and tyranny were, before the 1530s, strictly confined to the religious sphere. In fact they insisted on stringent compliance with the admonition of the Christian apostle Paul to:

⁸⁵ Skinner 1978, vol. 2, pp. 34, 35, 50.

⁸⁶ Case 1923, pp. 66-67.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.⁸⁷

Lutheranism, and the doctrine of passive obedience, became a pillar of the emerging secular absolutist monarchical governments in northern Europe. Nevertheless, early Lutherans did not preach absolutely unconditional obedience to tyrannical and ungodly rulers. They had a rather obscure concept of a kind of disobedience which excludes all active resistance. That is, subjects must refuse, when commanded by rulers, to do evil or comply with tyranny, but they must passively suffer and endure the consequences rather than fight. To resist actively is to resist the will of God, it is sin.⁸⁸ Although obviously ideologically highly suitable for rulership and the maintenance of social order over subjects, the doctrine of strict nonresistance and passive obedience landed the Protestants in a dilemma. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Reformation politics and religion were subject to fierce opposition, including military and exterminationist action, on a diversity of fronts. The Protestants, including Luther himself, were forced from the 1530s onward to revise their ideology to accommodate for active resistance and defense against extremely hostile powers. Skinner's insight here is apt:

this more subversive strand of Lutheranism – though never dominant – subsequently came to exercise a powerful influence: it helped to inspire the radical theories of the later Calvinists, and in this way made a crucial contribution to the formation of the revolutionary political ideologies which emerged in the latter half of the sixteenth century.⁸⁹

The subversive Protestants' main solution to their ideological dilemma was the development of the constitutionalist theory of resistance declaring, according to a famous statement of 1550, that

whenever a superior magistrate persecutes his subjects, then, by the law of nature, by divine law and by the true religion and worship of God, the inferior magistrate ought by God's mandate to resist him.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Quoted from the King James Bible, Romans, 13:1–2; Skinner writes that: "Luther's influence helped to make this the most cited of all texts on the foundations of political life throughout the age of the Reformation..." Skinner 1978, vol.2, p. 15. The Pauline/Lutheran doctrine of submissive obedience was directly invoked over and over again in one of the main lines of attack against Constitutionalist passive resistance in Finland.

⁸⁸ Skinner 1978, vol. 2, pp. 16–18, 67–70.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁹⁰ Quoted by Skinner, *ibid.*, p. 208.

It must be emphasized that this is no doctrine of popular or democratic resistance and rebellion. It is the ideology of resistance of those privileged leading groups in society – authorities, inferior magistrates, nobles and so forth – who on the basis of de facto power claim to be operating by the ordinance of God against the intolerable injustice of superior magistrates and their allies. For the Protestant leading groups resistance to what they perceived as injustice, tyranny and ungodliness became an absolute duty and compliance the road to damnation.

As is well known, in the course of coming confrontations (the Huguenot Revolution, the revolt of the Netherlands and the English Revolution) the early Protestant theory of constitutional resistance, including the religious duty to resist, became transformed, in Skinner's words, into a "fully *political* theory of revolution, founded on a recognizably modern, secularized thesis about natural rights and original sovereignty of the people."⁹¹

It is pertinent to note here that the radical constitutionalist passive resisters of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Lutheran Finland bear striking ideological affinity to the early Protestant resistance thinkers. For these Finns, deified Justice and Law replaced God, and staunch resistance to all violation of them was an absolute duty. Compliance and submission were claimed to be the way to moral degeneration and individual and collective damnation. Moreover, constitutionalist passive resistance was the ideology of the radical Finnish elite. Of course there are many differences in the ideologies and methodologies of resistance of these two periods. One relevant difference is that the first revolutionary Protestants, as well as their contemporaries, had no significant concept of a form of effective active struggle between violent resistance and passive obedience.

Some groups in those times did, however, possess the concept of individual and collective refusal to act and withdrawal of obedience as a way of indirectly, without confrontation, avoiding submission to iniquity. This was the way of the Christian peace sects such as the Bohemian Brethren, some strands of the Anabaptists and, later, the Quakers. This indirect way of resisting injustice is no doubt a relative of passive resistance in the family of types of conscientious and just resistance in European political culture.

There are indications that the withdrawal of obedience without recourse to violence was at least conceived of as a potentially effective way of directly wielding power in sociopolitical struggles. For example in *The Prince* (published in 1514) Machiavelli discusses problems

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 240, 338.

involved in managing the power of the people, the nobles and the magistrates (Machiavelli was an expert on the subject of control and manipulation of collective power):

The worst that can happen to a prince when the people are hostile is for him to be deserted; but from the nobles, if hostile, he has to fear not only desertion but even active opposition.⁹²

This passage shows that Machiavelli was well aware that collective “desertion” on the part of those upon whom power is established is a conceivable technique of struggle distinguishable from “active opposition.” Nevertheless, he gives no examples of this type of struggle as deliberately carried out by “the people.” On the contrary, as mentioned earlier, he views people power as highly controllable. Machiavelli does mention one special situation in which collective disobedience on the part of magistrates may be particularly effective. This is when the transition is being made from a constitutional form of government based on “limited power” to “absolutism.” Machiavelli sees this move as particularly dangerous when the prince aspiring to absolute rule must cooperate with magistrates already established in power. In such cases princes

rely entirely on the will of those citizens who have been put in office; and these, especially in times of adversity, can very easily depose them either by *positive action* against them or by *not obeying* them. And when danger comes, the prince has no time to seize absolute authority, because the citizens and subjects, accustomed to taking orders from the magistrates, will not take them from him in a crisis.⁹³

The texts of early modern political thinkers like Machiavelli and the Lutherans shows that there existed a conceptual distinction between “active,” “positive,” “forcible” and “violent” action and resistance on the one hand and simple disobedience like refusal to act or refusal to do evil and withdrawal of obedience as indirect resistance without “positive” action on the other hand. In fact for these latter forms of action the term “resistance” does not seem to have been applied. “Resistance” always meant violent resistance, whereas “disobedience”

⁹² Machiavelli 1961, p. 68, my italics.

⁹³ Ibid., p.70; my italics. Coincidentally, Machiavelli’s abstract case described in this quote comes very close to being a blueprint of the constellation of power at the time of the Finnish passive resistance movement. The prince is the tsar, grand duke of Finland, who is moving from constitutional monarchy to absolutism. The magistrates are Finnish officialdom systematically refusing to carry out the tsar’s commands.

might be reduced to the pure act of refusal to act according to unjust commands.

In the 1930s B. de Ligt and later Gene Sharp, both prominent Gandhian paradigm researchers, sought to draw special attention to the work of the early sixteenth century writer, Estienne de la Boétie (1530–1563), on “voluntary servitude.”⁹⁴ Boétie has been understood as having, in an apparently exceptional manner, articulated the idea that through mass withdrawal of obedience tyranny may conceivably be overthrown without recourse to violence. As quoted by Sharp, Boétie’s idea is that if tyrants

are given nothing, if they are not obeyed, without fighting, without striking a blow, they remain naked and undone, and do nothing further, just as the root, having no soil or food, the branch withers and dies.... Only be resolute not to be servile and there you are free. I don’t want you to push him or shake him, but just don’t support him, and you will see him like a great colossus whose base has been stolen, of his own weight sink to the ground and shatter.⁹⁵

Both Sharp and de Ligt fail to mention anything about the contemporary context of Boétie’s *Discours de la Servitude Voluntaire*.⁹⁶ They fail to mention that the work is surrounded by obscurity and has through the centuries been subject to a multitude of uses and interpretations, of which theirs is only one – a superficial one at that. Apparently Boétie himself never considered publishing it; in fact he never completed the work, since it has no conclusion. Within the body of Boétie’s mature oeuvres and in the context of his work as a statesman the *Discours* cannot but appear as a disregarded product of a talented youth.⁹⁷

Boétie’s argument for the principle of voluntary servitude, put forth in the first part of his tract, is highly simplistic. It is based on a rigid One/Many or Ruler/People dichotomy: “He who domineers over you has only two eyes, only two hands, no more than is possessed by the least man ... you can deliver yourself if you try ... merely by willing to be free.”⁹⁸ Contrastingly, in the final section of his book Boétie provides a more complex description of the social relations of domination. The argument here clearly contradicts the simple volunteerist concept of

⁹⁴ Ligt 1937, pp. 104–105; Sharp 1980, p. 213; Sharp 1973, p. 34.

⁹⁵ Sharp 1980, p. 213.

⁹⁶ In fact it is typical of those working in the Gandhian paradigm to cite events and thought out of context.

⁹⁷ See Bonnefon 1892, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii.

⁹⁸ Boétie 1975, p. 52.

liberation of the first part. Boétie finally offers no more effective remedy than exhorting the reader to “learn to do good,” reassuring him that God despises tyranny and has reserved “in a separate spot in Hell, some very special punishment for tyrants and their accomplices.”⁹⁹ Obviously Boétie’s conviction would not be of much use for someone engaged in concrete struggle. However, the strengths and weaknesses of Boétie’s argument are not what are of primary importance here. Rather it must be asked what kind of influence did his tract have.

It seems clear that Boétie’s youthful *Discours* was never interpreted in the sense of “nonviolent action” until much later. It was first published in 1574 in plagiarized, incomplete, mutilated and mangled form in *Le Réveille-matin des Francois* with no mention of its origin.¹⁰⁰ It was assimilated into the general European resistance heritage, invoked in the name of liberty and equality and employed as part of the ideological justification of resistance to tyranny; a resistance in which no fine distinctions were made between “nonviolence” and violence.

Ligt and Sharp survey Boétie solely through the narrow perspective offered by Gandhian paradigm eyeglasses without regard for the meaning of Boétie’s work for his own time. Ligt notes that Leo Tolstoy was very impressed by Boétie; the “great Russian’s” famous “Letter to a Hindu,” highly influenced by Boétie, “was so to influence Gandhi and prepare the direct non-violent action of his countrymen in India.”¹⁰¹ Ligt also comments that Henry David Thoreau, another adored favorite in the Gandhian paradigm, was influenced by Boétie.¹⁰²

Ligt’s observations have a special relevance for this study, however narrowly framed they may be. The Finnish resistance ideologists employed the idea of voluntary servitude in a variety of ways. One of these ways was through direct quotation of, and significant personal contact with, Tolstoy. Moreover, Boétie’s work was at least known in Finland at that time; an edition of *Discours de la Servitude Voluntaire* was entered into the university collection in Helsinki in 1899, which shows that the book was at least known and available for use in the ideological mobilization in the following few years. The ideas of Boétie and Tolstoy formed one aspect of the European culture of resistance to which the Finns were heir, and which they adapted, even manipu-

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. xi., and editor’s preface; Salmon, pp. 19, 162.

¹⁰¹ Ligt 1937, pp., 105–106.

¹⁰² Ibid. p. 104.

lated, for their own specific circumstances. When speaking of direct influences, however, the idea of voluntary servitude was much more accessible to the Finns through the words of the Hungarian Ferenc Deák than through Boétie, as will be seen.

What was the significance of Boétie's thought in his own time? Is there any evidence that he was giving expression to a widely understood principle of resistance? It is most likely that Boétie's work was a relatively isolated flight of abstract logical speculation based on the then increasingly discussed concept of the de facto sociological origin of power in "the people." Speculation concerning both the de jure and de facto implications of popular sovereignty took a variety of forms. Apparently, however, there was as yet no widely held concept of active resistance based on withdrawal of support or disobedience combined with the deliberate strategic choice to refrain from "striking a blow" or "fighting" in Boétie's sense meaning organized violence.

If there had existed at that time a significant collectively recognized and articulated principle of active resistance without violence, differing from simple Christian disobedience, it surely would have found expression in the multitude of writings on constitutional resistance which then abounded. To find out whether such a principle did exist I have examined some of the most representative original constitutionalist resistance texts. Two of these texts will be cited here. They are Theodore Beza's *Right of Magistrates* (published in 1573) and Philippe du Plessis Mornay's *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* (A Defence of Liberty against Tyrants, published in 1579) as translated and edited by Julian H. Franklin. Franklin calls these works "landmarks in the history of political thought because they constitute a clear and definite transition from medieval to modern constitutionalist ideas," with Beza's work being "the first major statement of Huguenot resistance doctrine ...," and Mornay's "an exhortation to rebel."¹⁰³ Beza was spiritual leader of the French Protestants and the successor of Calvin at Geneva. Mornay was a learned nobleman.

In examining these two texts I not only seek information on ways of conceiving resistance, but would also like to point out that it was during the time of Beza and Mornay that the vocabulary or discursive framework of constitutional resistance was created. Perhaps it is of much greater importance that the ideological vocabulary or basic political culture of resistance of this time is that inherited by the Finnish resisters than that there may have existed a technique similar to that of nineteenth century passive resistance.

¹⁰³ Franklin 1969, pp. 11. 30.

It should also be pointed out that from the sixteenth century onward one of the fundamental weapons in the repertoire of constitutionalist means of struggle was the written word. Ideologically the constitutionalists went beyond sectarian pleading and began to express their aims in terms of universal principles, values and reason. Therefore reasoned argumentation, persuasion and propaganda through leaflets, pamphlets and books became central to their efforts.

The works of both Beza and Mornay proceed through the examination of what were for them – on the background of fierce ideological conflict and bloody confrontation – basic political questions:

Are subjects bound to obey princes if their orders contradict the Law of God? To what extent should a subject assume the justice of commands? Is it permissible to resist a prince who violates God's Law ...? How far should disobedience extend? Who may resist, in what manner, and to what extent? ... by what principle of law? May a part of the Kingdom resist? May private persons resist by force of arms? Is resistance to a superior magistrate always illicit and seditious? Do subjects have any remedy against a legitimate sovereign who has become a notorious tyrant? May force be used in the cause of religion?¹⁰⁴

Beza begins by emphasizing that subjects should not be too keen on inquiring into the doings of their rulers. But if their consciences are significantly troubled they must begin enquiry "by modest and pacific means." If commanded to iniquity and injustice subjects must first simply "refuse to act." Whether one is justified in taking up more active forms of resistance depends on one's station, public or private, in society. In general all people are "bound to disobey" unjust commands and take up the range of active "lawful remedies," including "resort to arms," against "illegal" and "unlawful violence."¹⁰⁵ Mornay states the imperative of resistance to tyranny with fervor: "if we do not resist, we are traitors to our country, deserters of human society, and contemners of the law."¹⁰⁶

Although all subjects have a duty to disobey injustice and never let themselves be made "the instrument of tyranny," a "private person," writes Beza, "may not, on his own initiative, answer force with force

¹⁰⁴ These questions are taken from the tables of contents of the two texts, *ibid.*, pp. viii, ix. Words like "God" and "religion" were later often to be replaced by terms such as "Law," "Justice" and "Nation." The resemblance between the existential political questions posed by the Finns in their struggle against Russian absolutism and those of their constitutionalist insurgent ancestors is striking.

¹⁰⁵ Beza 1969, pp. 101–107.

¹⁰⁶ Mornay 1969, p. 188.

but must either go into exile or bear the yoke ...” or turn to “penitence and patience joined with prayers”; in order to act against tyranny a private person must be “authorized” by the lesser magistrates or by the “more sober part of the Estates....”¹⁰⁷ From the very outset Protestant resistance culture required the strict subordination of the private law justification of individual self-defense to the magisterial theory of defense and resistance being under the control of legitimate public leaders; it is the leaders who have the “ordinance of God,” not private people. It is not difficult to understand why Beza’s work is called “Right of Magistrates.”

Basically Mornay follows the same line of argumentation as Beza. He does, however, seem to place more emphasis on the notion that *de facto*, as he expresses it, “a king is powerless if the people do not support him.” It follows from this *de facto* situation, proved by countless historical examples which he and his colleagues cite, that *de jure* a king can rule “the people” only conditionally. If he violates these conditions then “the people are released, the compact voided ... the king is perjured if he rules unjustly.”¹⁰⁸ But who are “the people”? With remarkable straightforwardness Mornay writes:

When we speak of the people collectively, we mean those who receive authority from the people, that is, the magistrates below the king who have been elected by the people or *established in some other way*. *These take the place of the people....* And we also mean the assembly of the Estates.¹⁰⁹

What are then the “remedies,” “manners,” “methods” and “means” of resistance put forth by Beza and Mornay? Beza distinguishes between two basic categories of resistance, “spiritual resistance” and “worldly methods of resistance.” “Spiritual resistance” is based on the paradigm of “Jesus Christ himself, who, although all authority, force and power belonged to Him, abstained from force completely, as did the ancient martyrs afterwards....”¹¹⁰ He divides “worldly resistance” into two methods, “appeals to courts” using “the weapon of the law” and “resort to arms” through the “military arm” of the Church or society.¹¹¹ Beza seeks to emphasize, no doubt against many common views at the time, that these two categories of resistance are not

¹⁰⁷ Beza 1969, p.108, 129.

¹⁰⁸ Mornay 1969, pp. 161, 191.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149, my italics; on the same page Mornay calls the people or the “multitude” a “manyheaded monster” and the “mob.”

¹¹⁰ Beza 1969, p. 133.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

mutually exclusive. This means that a Christian magistrate is allowed to “employ all the means that God has given him” for just resistance.¹¹²

Neither Beza nor Mornay discuss any type of active or worldly resistance which involves the deliberate exclusion of physical violence except for legal and verbal resistance. It is clear that when the weapons of words and law are not sufficient then the “force” employed signifies violence, the recruiting of armies and the use of “force,” “stratagems,” “strategy,” and “all the engines of warfare,” to defeat the enemy in militarily organized “open warfare” if necessary.¹¹³ This, to be sure, is not to claim that these authors and their contemporaries had no knowledge of kinds of “stratagems,” which might not necessitate the use of physical violence, between “open warfare” on the one hand and “spiritual resistance” and legal procedures on the other. Beza emphasizes that just because defense against tyranny by “force of arms” is legitimate it is not always the most “*expedient*” approach.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, the extreme violent destruction and genocide which the pre-Protestants and Protestants faced from the times of Wycliff to the St. Bartholomew’s massacre in 1572 made it impossible for constitutionalist political culture to develop without the requirement for the organization of violent force for defense and survival. Beza’s whole endeavour might be characterized as an effort to ideologically legitimize, in his words, “what is expedient” by broadening the scope of “what is permitted.”¹¹⁵ It seems that martyrdom or flight from the world was the only alternative to the acceptance of organized violence as an essential part of the repertoire of means of just resistance.

It would, of course, be naive to interpret the constitutionalist justification of violence as simply motivated by the imperative of defense. The Protestants and the secular powers which adopted their ideology were clearly on the offensive as well, and were not going to renounce the tool of organized violence. This, however, does not nullify the fact that basic to the constitutionalist world view was that violence is necessary for the defense of freedom and justice. The constitutionalists did not arrive at this view through speculation, but through the bitter experience of Christian civilization.

Writing somewhat over a hundred years after Beza and Mornay John Locke, in the most famous of constitutionalist tracts, rejected, with mockery and derision, the idea that resistance should exclude

¹¹² Ibid., p. 133.

¹¹³ Mornay 1969, pp. 149, 191.

¹¹⁴ Beza 1969, p. 135.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 130.

violence. As is well known, Locke saw the state of reason, liberty, cooperation and equality between people outside of organized political society as being extremely fragile and susceptible to violation.¹¹⁶ Violation, or what Locke calls “war,” begins with any intention or attempt to limit or take away the freedom of a person without his consent.¹¹⁷ One of the main functions of political society is thus security through the more effective collective defense of consent or freedom against any acts of “war.” Defense means that when the body politic is threatened or attacked with unauthorized internal or external constraint, compulsion, force or violence (in Locke these form a continuum of ways of limiting freedom) these same means are collectively employed against the aggressor. The right and capacity for resistance and rebellion are the guarantees of freedom from injustice and oppression. Thus for Locke the power or strength or force of a community lies not only in its capacity for positive consensual action, but also in a fundamental and essential way in its capacity for collective violence. Locke speaks out against resistance as conceived without physical violence:

How to *resist Force without striking again*, or how to *strike with Reverence*, will need some Skill to make intelligible. He that shall oppose an Assault only with a Shield to receive the Blows, or in any more Respectful Posture, without a sword in his hand, to abate the Confidence and Force of the Assailant, will quickly be at an end of his *Resistance*, and will find such a defence serve only to draw on himself the worse usage. This is as ridiculous.... This will always be the event of such an imaginary *Resistance*, where Men may not strike again. He therefore *who may resist, must be allowed to strike.*¹¹⁸

It follows logically from Locke’s work that organized collective violence is the most essential of the means expedient for the defense of liberty. This idea is at the core of mainstream constitutionalist thought. It by no means signifies that organized violence is always seen as the most expedient way of struggle. Obviously Locke thought that there were many ways by which people’s rights could be defended and the bonds or contract between people and their rulers dissolved.

Constitutionalists have almost always maintained that in the majority of conflict situations collective violence is not the most expedient approach. In Beza, Locke and in the constitutionalist tradition in general, military violence was the last resort and the ultimate guarantee of other expedients. This is probably a reason why mainstream

¹¹⁶ Locke 1967, p. 368.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 296–297.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 439. Locke’s italics.

constitutionalism does not emphasize a conceptual dichotomy between violent and “nonviolent” types of active resistance. Although the suitability of methods has always been recognized as relative to specific circumstances, it has not been generally deemed necessary to conceptually distinguish a special “nonviolent” category of resistance action and argue about its ultimate expediency in relation to violent resistance. The motive of those people in European history which have in various ways conceptually placed violent struggle in dichotomous relationship to some other form of action has been to question the ultimate expediency of violence.

For some unknown reason, as discussed above, the German etymologist Albert Gombert thought that the word “passive resistance” had its origin in the struggle of the American colonists against British domination. Etymologically speaking this is false: the concept of passive resistance, in these terms, was not known to the colonists in any significant way, and probably not at all. It is likely that the term “passive resistance” entered the American vocabulary of contention after the mid-nineteenth century. Yet, when one looks back to the decade of struggle preceding the war which broke out in 1775, it is not difficult to understand the reasoning behind an association of the concept of passive resistance with American colonial resistance.

The American colonists did not possess an articulated and universally employed general term, catchword or *schlagwort* – such as “passive resistance” as used by the Finns or “nonviolent action” as used in the Gandhian paradigm – to signify an umbrella concept covering a technique or repertoire of methods of struggle differing from or excluding those of organized armed physical violence. The colonial repertoire or culture of resistance and contention was highly multifarious. Before 1775 there were numerous uprisings against colonial governments, black rebellions, class confrontations, scores of diverse types of riots, conflict with Indians and the French and Indian War (or Seven Years’ War ending in 1763). However, in the decade prior to 1775 in both minor acts and major campaigns of resistance the colonists employed a diversity of primarily nonmilitary means of protest and coercive noncooperation. As Pauline Maier describes it, just after the Stamp Act riots of 1765 colonial radicals developed a new strategy in which they “consciously retreated from mere ad hoc violence to an ordered opposition,” and this strategy of “ordered resistance” then “shaped all subsequent colonial opposition to objectional imperial claims.”¹¹⁹ Ordered resistance, however, was by no means antithetical

¹¹⁹ Maier 1972, p. 53.

to violent or military action. It is clear that already from this period onward colonial resistance activists were ready, and convinced of the necessity, to meet British military violence with military violence.¹²⁰

The intellectual or ideological framework and vocabulary of resistance, and finally violent rebellion, was always that of the radical Protestant Whig/constitutionalist tradition. The decade was above all a time of positive collective mobilization in conscious defiance of British restrictions. Significant progress was made toward economic autonomy, and a high degree of de facto governmental independence was achieved through collective disobedience to British authority and the establishment of autonomous political institutions. As John Adams wrote to Thomas Jefferson in 1815: "The Revolution ... was effected, from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years before a drop of blood was shed at Lexington."¹²¹

In response to the open defiance expressed by the Boston Tea Party of December 1773, the British Parliament passed a series of what came to be called "Coercive Acts" against the colonists in the latter part of 1774. In effect these Acts aimed to establish martial law in Massachusetts, dissolve Colonial government, close Boston harbor and increase the British military presence. The reaction to the Coercive Acts led to the first truly trans-colonially coordinated opposition movement. In September 1774 the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia; among its aims was to find a way of bringing about the repeal of the Coercive Acts. They adopted the already familiar approach of the nonimportation, nonconsumption and nonexportation of British goods.¹²² Within months England was involved in an all-out military mobilization for warfare against the colonies, which soon proved to be economically invigorating for the domestic English economy.

There is no evidence that the colonists ever conceived of a "technique," based on their earlier political and commercial resistance, which could serve as a replacement for military struggle when faced by the actual implementation military repression. This is a crucial point since it has been claimed that scholars ignore the fact that the colonists employed

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 94–95.

¹²¹ As quoted in Bailyn 1967, p. 1.

¹²² Ammerman 1986, pp. 238, 243.

a kind of 'weapons system' that operated without force of arms or violence ... As a technique of struggle, this weapons system is commonly known as *nonviolent action*.¹²³

The otherwise useful analogy of a "weapons system" here becomes problematic when accompanied by another claim:

Based on evidence gathered in at least three areas – the development of economic autonomy, the growth of popular governmental institutions, and the development of a national consciousness – one could argue that nonviolent action was at least as effective as military warfare....¹²⁴

The evidence may show that military struggle would not have been an "effective" substitute for creative sociopolitical and cultural mobilization. It is, however, logically impossible to use this same evidence to show that the colonists' political and commercial means of resistance could have served as a more "effective" (or vice versa, less effective) "weapons system" than military force against actively implemented military force. This is a claim that cannot be tested; it can neither be verified nor falsified. The colonists manifestly never applied what has been called their "weapons system" in circumstances of military warfare as a substitute for military force. The colonists never conceived of a "technique of nonviolent action" as a "weapons system" for defeating an enemy in an extremely critical polar military confrontation. In fact they clearly adhered to the constitutionalist Whig doctrine that violence is the ultimate defensive sanction against violent tyranny.

What the colonists did do was conceive of and apply sociopolitical and commercial mobilization and resistance as an alternative to violence against sociopolitical and commercial repression and injustice. No more than this can be validly claimed. One of the fundamental mistakes committed through the "nonviolent action" perspective is to misconstrue the means of modern national mobilization and sociopolitical and commercial resistance as a functional equivalent for military war in times when they were never conceived of or used as such. As has been shown above, the first time they were so conceived was in the twentieth century.

American sociopolitical and commercial resistance was not identical to passive resistance as employed by the Finns. They were, however,

¹²³ Conser, Jr., McCarthy and Toscano 1986a, p. 4, original emphasis. This article is part of a work containing articles by nine authors, six of which conspicuously make no use of the terms "nonviolence" and "nonviolent action."

¹²⁴ Conser, Jr., McCarthy and Toscano 1986b, p. 418.

closely related in certain respects and can be understood as members of a family of resistance types. Both were expressions of the European culture of just resistance, justified in terms of Whig constitutionalist discourse and morality. Both were natural extensions from creative national mobilization expressly rejecting the employment of collective violence against nonmilitary repression and injustice. Neither was claimed to be, or actually used as, a functional equivalent of collective violence in conditions of military war. Yet just as family members share many common characteristics it must be remembered that in many respects they are radically different.

Examination of the American resistance before 1775 brings over the necessity of carefully distinguishing between two types of struggle. Firstly there is sociopolitical and commercial resistance and contention as a way of combat without violence, as a functional equivalent to war, to be employed against all-out military attack. This first type is a product of the twentieth century imagination, an anachronistic projection onto the past. I do not believe that any explicit theoretical formulations or concrete applications of this type of struggle are to be found. Moreover, apparently there are no examples of theorists or political activists who argued that collective violence is absolutely less effective than “nonviolent” forms of contention in conditions of combating and defeating effective military aggression and destruction. Even William Godwin – who insisted that communicative action and refusal to obey without violence be strictly adhered to – held that in extreme cases violent defense is an absolute necessity.

Secondly there is the vast range of sociopolitical, commercial and cultural means of resistance and contention which are the natural tools of modern nation-building and constitutionalist assertion and liberation. One might call this the foundation of the repertoire of contention of “modern bourgeois society.” As was discussed above, modern society developed a vast array of ways of positive or creative development and mobilization which for obvious pragmatic reasons at times deliberately excluded collective violence and at others included it as the most effective tool for achieving and defending its interests.

III. The Development of Finnish Resistance Thought and Action

1. Ideology and the Lineage of a Concept

Finnish historians have thus far been content to trace the idea of passive resistance, as employed after 1898, back to the constitutional crisis in Finno-Russian relations of 1890–1891. It has, however, been recognized that the ideology of constitutional resistance was based on a constitutionalist heritage going back to the first decades of the nineteenth century.¹ Nevertheless, the history of this heritage has not been explored for any explicit formulations and applications of passive resistance which it hypothetically might contain.

In contemporary commentaries on the events of the Bobrikov period one comes across hints regarding the history of passive resistance. For example, the Russian historian M.M. Borodkin (1852–1919) was interested in the history of Finnish resistance thought. Borodkin served as advisor to the Russian government on Finnish affairs. In his account of Governor-General Bobrikov's administration (1898–1904) Borodkin sought to prove that the origin of passive resistance was not to be found in the response of the Finns to Bobrikov's actions. Correspondence confiscated by the Russian authorities showed that those whom he considered to be the originators of passive resistance were developing the idea already in the beginning of the 1880s. He explained it as their reaction to the measures for imperial integration being planned at the time of Tsar Alexander III.² Having proved that Bobrikov was not the original instigator of passive resistance Borodkin no longer concerned himself with the history of that idea.

¹ Hyvämäki 1960, pp. 77–79.

² Borodkin 1905, pp. 21–22; for an elaboration in English of the pro-Russian view of passive resistance as part of "the Finnish Revolution in preparation 1889–1905," see Feodorov 1911, *passim*.

Through Malevolent Eyes

Earlier it was noted that in the development of his own very influential political line J.K. Paasikivi was particularly concerned with condemning the passive resistance heritage. His efforts can be seen as the continuation of a well established legacy of anti-resistance efforts. A close reading of the published and unpublished works of one of Paasikivi's most prominent Old Finn predecessors, Agathon Meurman (1826–1909), reveals a deep seated, fanatically inspired, long-standing hostility for the resistance tradition. Because of this long-term antipathetic, although at times equivocal, obsession Meurman's writings have turned out to be one of the best sources for tracing the genesis of the idea of passive resistance.

Meurman was a member of the landed gentry and one of the central leaders of the Finnish nationalist – or “Fennomania” – movement. He rose to a position of dominance in the Peasants' Estate, of which he was a representative from 1872 to 1900. The analysis and criticism of passive resistance was one of Meurman's main endeavors from 1899 until his death in 1909. Although his writings from that time are mainly concerned with the current conflict, they do indicate a manifest consciousness of the historical continuity of the idea of passive resistance. A study of some of his earlier works shows that he was familiar with the tradition of passive resistance long before 1899.

Meurman was a productive journalist and essayist, as well as an accomplished ideologist. In 1883 he published volume one of the first modern Finnish language encyclopedia of significant concepts and subjects for educated readers.³ In the preface to this work he states that the words included therein refer to concepts which any writer should be able to assume the Finnish public to be familiar with without further explanation.⁴ Significantly, Meurman included the term “passive resistance” (*passiivinen vastarinta*) among the concepts to be defined in his work.⁵ Meurman did not trace the etymology of “passive resistance” here, but the fact that he defined it indicates that it was current in the vocabulary of educated Finns (and Europeans) at that

³ Meurman 1883–1890.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, author's intro., no page number.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vols. 7–8, 1887, p. 630; the entry is as follows: “*Passiivinen vastarinta*: resistance which does not resort to positive [*varsinaisiin*] acts of opposition, but through its noncompliance [*taipumattomuudeltaan*] creates obstructions.” Compare this to the *Webster's* definition: “Passive resistance: resistance (as to a government or an occupying power) that does not resort to violence or active measures of opposition but depends mainly on techniques and acts of noncooperation.” See “Passive Resistance” 1986.

time. This shows that passive resistance was a meaningful concept, and therefore probably had a history in Finland. It gives strong support for the supposition that other sources dealing with passive resistance might exist.

Guided by this supposition, an exploration of Meurman's earlier writings disclosed an article written in 1878, entitled "Our Liberals," in which express details on the history of passive resistance in Finland are given.⁶ It is a polemical article, part of a debate dealing with the development and significance of liberal politics in Finland. Delving into Finnish history, Meurman claims that the Finns of the early part of the century recognized that union with Russia gave them the status of a nation among nations. Despite the immediate benefits of their new political position, he continues, fear and anxiety spread among them in regard to the potential threat posed by Russia to the survival of "our holy nation."⁷ Meurman claims that during the early years of Russian rule the Finns placed all their hope in firm "*passive resistance*" against all change which could lead to "*Russification*."⁸ Meurman quotes one of his contemporary opponents as saying that the passive resistance of those earlier times was very well suited in general to the prevailing condition of repression in Europe and in particular to the situation of the Finns.⁹

Rival Spirits at their Ideological Roots

Although Meurman expressed his understanding of the apprehension felt at that time, it is clear that his sympathy lay with the anti-resistance position which he claimed was first expressed by his predecessor, the romantic nationalist Adolf Iwar Arwidsson (1791–1858). Revealing the source of his own ideology, Meurman says that Arwidsson was ready to fully accept and build upon the foundation provided by Finland's new political status. However, Meurman attributes to J.V. Snellman the most significant role in completely rejecting the old way of passive resistance. Snellman thought, writes Meurman, that passive resistance meant death or national suicide.¹⁰ He goes on to indicate that it was

⁶ Meurman 1878.

⁷ Ibid., no. 47.

⁸ Ibid., no. 47; note that Meurman actually employs the concept of "Russification" (*venäläistyminen*); he uses it, however, in the passive form which does not specify who is doing the Russification. My italics.

⁹ Ibid., no. 47.

¹⁰ Ibid., no. 48.

among Snellman's opponents that "passive resistance was a clear principled base of action," because it was they who continued the tradition of passive resistance and it was in their midst that Finnish liberalism and assertive constitutionalism developed.¹¹ Meurman points out that there was a clash between these opposing approaches to Finnish politics in the early 1860s. His article itself is an expression of a similar clash in the late 1870s. Obviously he felt a need to go to the very roots of passive resistance in order to weed it out. He sought to associate it with an earlier approach to relations with Russia which he portrayed as outdated and pernicious.

Meurman's article must not be read as history, but rather as the ideological manipulation of history. He sought to project far into the national past what he wanted people to believe was an irreconcilable dichotomy in Finnish politics. This dichotomy itself will be discussed further on, but it should be noted that Meurman's article indicates that the two rival currents in latter nineteenth century Finnish politics were both conceived of as ways of dealing with the Russian threat or, as Meurman put it, "Russification."¹²

Knowing the history of passive resistance in Europe, Meurman's claim that this method of contention goes hand in hand with liberalism and assertive constitutionalism can be accepted.¹³ Meurman's use of the term "passive resistance" is perhaps partially anachronistic, being an effort on his part to derive ammunition from the past for his own struggle against the advocates of passive resistance in 1878. Meurman does not give any proof that the Finns of the period following annexation to Russia actually consciously applied a method of struggle specifically called "passive resistance." They may have, but in the light of etymological studies of "passive resistance" in Europe it is doubtful whether they could have done so before the 1840s. Meurman and his contemporaries were probably using the concept of passive resistance in a generic way to describe the behavior and mental attitudes of Finns before the 1840s. Their observations show that there existed favorable circumstances in Finland for this concept of resistance to catch on.

In Meurman's article Snellman's cultural and political activities in the 1840s are closely identified with the emergence of the Finnish "national spirit." It seems that the new "spirit" was concerned with

¹¹ Ibid., no. 49.

¹² In 1878 Meurman was seeking to exaggerate this dichotomy and stimulate polarity in Finnish politics in order to ward off the formation of a new political constellation.

¹³ Concerning this matter Meurman's text can be very misleading, since it was by no means just his "liberal" opponents who were interested in the European culture of resistance and contention as will be discussed further on.

doing away with the old spirit of stubborn resistance; but did Snellman actually seek to refute a concrete doctrine or policy of resistance specifically called “passive resistance”? Meurman offers no proof of this. Yet following Meurman’s lead I found that Snellman did indeed address this matter directly. He did so vigorously and aggressively. However, before examining Snellman’s views on passive resistance and the development of this concept of contention something must be said of the historical context in which they took place.

2. The Ambiguity of Nationhood

As mentioned earlier Finland as an independent nation has arisen and developed its identity largely through an intricate on-going dialectical process of conflict and resistance and cooperation and accommodation with Russia. Simply stated, this Finno-Russian dialectic began in 1808 when “Finland” was conquered by Russia and, a year later, “Finland” was created by Russia. Russia at once subjected the inhabitants of the newly defined geographical unit called “Finland” by force of arms and simultaneously granted them a new type of freedom, or *Pax Russica*, under the shelter, and strict restrictions, of which they were encouraged to develop (away from Sweden). Anyone familiar with the complexity and severity of social struggle, political confrontation and nationalist assertion throughout Europe will no doubt find the relatively low-intensity of such phenomena in Finland throughout the nineteenth century remarkable. The explanation for this low level can be found through mapping out the main lines of political contention and national development in Finland.

Existing patterns of repression in the surrounding world form one of the basic factors conditioning the types of political action adopted by contending groups. From the time of annexation onward the treatment of Finland by its Russian rulers was characterized by relative gentleness, restrained use of direct force and a will for accommodation within certain limits. Even when Finno-Russian conflicts reached their high points, Russian repression as seen from a general European perspective appears quite restrained. Originally, when Sweden-Finland refused to cease hostilities against the Napoleonic system and thus became a target for attack from Russia after the Tilsit meeting in 1807, it was not the intention of Tsar Alexander I to annex Finland. The primary motives for the occupation of Finland were not colonial or imperialistic in the economic sense, they were military.

At the 1809 convocation of the Finnish Diet, in the small town of Porvoo, Tsar Alexander I raised Finland to the status of a nation among nations, as he himself expressed it;¹⁴ but the meaning of this act, which was later cited countless times in a myriad of contexts, was by no means made clear for posterity. At a pompous ceremony designed to impress the Finns as well as outside observers, the tsar acknowledged the oath of allegiance sworn by the Finnish Estates by pledging to

confirm and ratify the religion and fundamental laws of the land as well as the rights and privileges which each Estate of the said Grand Duchy, in particular, and all the inhabitants, in general, both low and high, have hitherto enjoyed according to the constitution: We promise to maintain all those privileges and laws strongly and inviolably in full force.¹⁵

This is the single most controversial document in the history of Finno-Russian relations. It has, along with the events surrounding it, up until the present day been the subject of a multitude of volumes and pamphlets of complicated exegesis and ideological polemics. One contemporary observer who was present at the ceremony called the tsar's pledge Finland's magna charta.¹⁶ Like many of history's "magna charta's" it has been subject to much anachronistic manipulation; it was later to be invoked in the cause of modern constitutionalist assertion, an assertion which was – typical of the Whig protestant constitutionalist interpretation of history throughout Europe – wrapped in the guise of defense of ancient and well established principles and agreements.

As Osmo Jussila has shown, the form of the Russian's clever diplomatic move to integrate Finland into the Empire through the use of appeasement and the avoidance of further conflict followed the pattern of earlier Russian incorporations of territory in which the laws and rights in force under former rulers were recognized in return for an oath of allegiance. Furthermore, Russia's Napoleonic period conquests, Finland, Poland and Bessarabia, unlike the Baltic provinces, were granted special "political existence," which included preservation of their own representative institutions.¹⁷ The tsar and his advisors

¹⁴ The Finnish Diet was composed of four Estates, the Burghers, the (landed) Peasants, the Clergy and the Nobility. The Estates represented only a small fraction of the Finnish population, which was about one million in 1812. In 1870 the Estates represented only about 1.5% of the population of over 1,750,000 people.

¹⁵ *Välloflige Borgare Ståndets Protokoller vid Landtdagen i Borgå år 1809*, pp. 21–22.

¹⁶ Cited in Jussila 1987, p. 18.

¹⁷ Jussila 1969, pp. 232, 233.

saw clearly that an administratively and religiously unified Finland would serve the interests of Russian security by pulling Finland out of the sphere of Swedish influence and create a significant defensive buffer.

The specific content of the Finno-Russian agreement (to be understood more like an old-fashioned "*Herrschaftsvertrag*, or an agreement to uphold existing laws and customs," than as a state agreement) was arrived at through negotiations with Finnish politicians with the result that the Swedish fundamental laws as expressed in the 1772 Form of Government and the Act of Security were found suitable as its basis.¹⁸ Russian State Secretary M.M. Speransky, whose influence in Russian politics was at its height, played a central role in the formation of the agreement. Speransky proceeded carefully with the Finns, not wanting to jeopardize the current phase of his struggle for constitutional reforms in Russia. He realized that there were parts of the Finnish fundamental laws which were not suitable to the new incorporation with Russia, but given the circumstances he resisted the pressure by Finns for the thorough revision of them.¹⁹ According to Jussila's interpretation, the special political status given to the western provinces by Russia should not be seen as "revolutionary liberalism so much as a seeming concession of absolutism (pseudo-constitutionalism) for the purpose of resisting revolution."²⁰

Following incorporation by Russia the structure of Finland's administration took the following form: A Senate (a ministry-type body later unofficially called the "domestic government"), composed of Finnish citizens, appointed by the tsar, was created as the head of the governmental organization. A Committee for Finnish Affairs, also composed of Finns, was set up in St. Petersburg. Later only the head of this body, the influential minister secretary of state, was kept. Russian authority was embodied in the governor-general of Finland, representative of the tsar's will and commander of the Russian armed forces in Finland. All foreign affairs were to be directed by the imperial government. In 1816 Alexander promised that all his successors would be bound to honor his special agreement with the Finns and to uphold their constitutional laws.

After 1809 the force of international circumstances convinced many Finns that attempted reconquest by Sweden would only bring misfor-

¹⁸ The *Herrschaftsvertrag* comparison is elaborated in Jussila 1989 with the description here quoted on p. 90.

¹⁹ Halila 1962, pp. 478-479, 492.

²⁰ Jussila 1969, quoted from the English summary, p. 277.

tune; the Russians would no longer tolerate Swedish power to be established so close to their capital St. Petersburg. As a matter of fact, perceptive Finns had long been convinced that Finland would sooner or later fall under the power of Russia. Sweden had lost its status as a great power as a result of its failures in the Great Northern War of 1700–1721, which had exposed Finland to a very destructive period of struggle with and occupation by Russia. As early as the 1780s a separatist movement or faction began to form, mostly among Finnish officers, whose plan was, through collaboration with Russia, to extract Finland from the ultimate doom perceived in being part of Sweden.

Many Finns were not willing to go to this extreme, and it was recognized that this solution was repulsive to the mass of the Finnish people, who harbored a deep fear of Russian rule. These conditions help explain the relative ease with which Finnish officialdom and the educated classes in general transferred their allegiance to the Russian state when annexation became a reality. The army and the people at large were not so easily won over. In general, however, after the military phase of the Russian take-over, the transfer of allegiance to the tsar took place with remarkable rapidity and minimal conflict, developing deep roots within Finnish society.

The geopolitical unit created at Erfurt and the Diet of Porvoo and arising out of the international conflicts of the Napoleonic period provided the foundation for what was to be molded into the modern Finnish nation. Before 1809 Finland was not a homogeneous state and had no center in the nation-state sense of the word. As Matti Klinge conceives it, prior to the political unit established in 1809–1811 called “Finland” there were two center-periphery axes, two Finlands. One ran along the Stockholm–Finland line, the other along the St. Petersburg–Finland line with strong connections to German Baltic culture.²¹ Often the various provinces of Finland had more direct cultural-economic relations with these center-capitals than with one another. For example, the burghers and officials of, say, Vaasa or Oulu in Ostrobothnia took care of their business directly with Stockholm without having to use Turku at all as an intermediary. Furthermore, there were other significant factors making for fragmentation, such as strong differences in dialect between the various Finnish speaking groups, the tradition of relatively decentralized administration and profound cultural divergences between East and West Finland.²²

²¹ Klinge 1982, pp. 12–15.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 181–183.

A major point which I am aiming to emphasize here is that it would be misleading to employ a simple Finland/Russia dichotomy in the analysis of resistance and contention in Finnish society and politics. The notion of a Finnish nation-state developed only slowly and modern nationalism spread among the people at large only in the twentieth century. With the work of the major representative body, the Finnish Diet of four Estates, in complete abeyance from 1809 to 1861–1863, strict censorship and the undeveloped state of mediums for the formation and conveyance of public opinion, the process of political construction which began in the years following annexation was necessarily confined to a very small group of citizens such as senators, university professors and leading nobles. Even among the educated people detailed understanding of the political and legal terms of the Diet of Porvoo was rare.²³ Although political consciousness and active participation greatly increased with the economic and political reforms initiated under Alexander II in the 1860s, they were throughout the century strictly confined to, and controlled by, an elite fraction of the Finnish people. Moreover, in their internal power struggles the various contending groups of the Finnish elite often sought support against one another in Russian government circles, a tactic which came to be called “travelling the road to St. Petersburg.”²⁴

The *Pax Russica* established with the political solution of 1809 provided fertile ground for cultivation of the doctrines of nationality and nation-building which quickly spread throughout Europe stimulated by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic challenge. The initial intellectual groundwork for the Finnish “national awakening” had been laid in the later part of the eighteenth century by the scholar Henrik Gabriel Porthan and his colleagues through pioneering studies concerning Finnish history, language and folklore. Their activities gave rise to the first newspapers and the first literary society in Finland and uplifted the level of scientific research at the University, then in Turku. The idea of a separate Finnish nation, however, was foreign and undesirable to those early students of Finnish culture. As Porthan saw it, Finland was populated by two very different cultural groups, the Western or lowland coastal Finns and the Eastern or upland Finns of the interior. According to this conception the Finnish speaking groups of the interior represented a lower culture which was bound to disappear in the course of the advance of civilization. It would be

²³ Jussila 1969, pp. 13, 124–125, 219.

²⁴ Jussila 1979, pp. 9, 17–19.

assimilated by the more advanced Swedish culture which had already integrated southern Finland within its sphere of influence.²⁵

The ideologues of Finnish national romanticism were to turn this conception upside down in the decades following the Russian conquest. Centered first in Turku, then in the new capital, administrative center and university city of Helsinki, they created the ideal image of the Finn largely based on their mythic vision of the upland or Eastern Finnish peasant as, described in the words of Klinge,

a magnificent introverted meditative-vegetative work of nature, whose great mental powers would come forth if he could be helped in liberation from the chains of privation.²⁶

The enduring significance of the literary works of the national romantic authors in creating the fundamental concepts of Finnish national identity cannot be over-emphasized. The Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*, is perhaps the most appropriate symbol of the nationalist literary effort. This collection of Finnish folk poetry, selected and molded in a nationalist fashion by Elias Lönnröt, provided Finland with a mythical ancient past and a literary monument which could be used to prove the maturity and uniqueness of Finnish culture. The composition and form of Lönnrot's *Kalevala* was strongly determined by the conditions of "national awakening" within the shelter of Pax Russica and reflects the effort for peaceful or non-confrontational national assertion.²⁷ The effort to build Finnish national identity through literary projects and ethnological-linguistic studies and the propagation of their results took on a systematic organizational form with the foundation of the Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki in 1831.

The program developed by the initially small intellectual elite of nationalists, or "Fennomanians" as they came to be called, can be characterized by the endlessly quoted phrase, "Swedes we are no longer, Russians we cannot become; let us be Finns." Simply stated what this signifies is that from as early as the 1820s onward Finnish nationalists adopted, cultivated and systematically propagated the European concepts of national sovereignty, national character and national consciousness. From the very beginning Finnish nationalism was to be characterized by exclusion, anti-liberalism and authoritarian patriarchy. What this meant is that the people at large were to be discouraged from direct international contact and borrowing of ideas

²⁵ Klinge 1982, pp. 48, 73, 79, 106–108.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 131,195; Niemi 1980, p. 61.

and practices of popular politics and culture. The people living in "Finland" were not to emulate the French or the Swedes or adopt universal concepts of political freedom; rather they were to be formed, civilized and educated by the nationalist elite whose aim it was to "awaken" the Finnish nation to the sovereign maturity and consciousness of an individual whose security and power lies in being recognized as a national entity by other such entities.

The paradoxical essence of nationalism is that its central concepts are directly and consciously borrowed while at the same time it discourages individuals from direct cross-cultural contact through xenophobia. Nationalism can thus be defined as an elite way of structuring social order, it is cultural control on the part of national authorities. The early Finnish architects of nationalism maintained that with the cessation of Swedish political hegemony it was necessary to do away with Swedish cultural predominance in Finland as well. They called upon the educated class to convert from Swedish to Finnish culture by cultivating the use of the Finnish language in their private lives, in education and in the administration of the country. Here it must be strongly emphasized that in so converting they were not simply adopting something already in existence. The nationalists also *created* "Finland" and "Finnish culture." They *made* Finnish language into a language suitable for modern national education, national literature and the formation of national public opinion through the press.

The main opposition to the nationalist movement in its early stages lay in the fear the old conservative bureaucracy had for provoking the Russian authorities and in the mere fact that the use of Swedish was so deeply woven into the fabric of administrative and cultural life. Thus, for example, the journal edited by the nationalist ideologist and critic A.I. Arwidsson was suppressed and he was dismissed from his post at the University in 1823. He went into exile in Sweden. Although an internationally recognized philosopher, the leader-to-be of the Fennomanian movement Johan Vilhelm Snellman was prevented from entering the university staff in the early 1840s. Instead of undertaking a promising academic career abroad Snellman chose to move to the interior where, while directing a secondary school in Kuopio, he developed and spread the principles of his nationalism throughout the whole educated class. His work was far from meeting universal sympathy, proof of which was the suppression of his Swedish language journal *Saima* in 1846. The peak of this initial phase of opposition to the Fennomanian project can be seen in the censorship act of 1850, the aim of which was to prevent the diffusion of revolutionary ideas in the Finnish language.

Snellman and his colleagues were soon destined to rise to positions of power within the Finnish administration from which they were able to engineer significant victories for the cause of Finnish language nationalism. Yet it is important to realize that one of the most significant hindrances to the Fennomanian cause was not the active opposition of enemies of the Finnish language, but lay in the inertia or deep entrenchment of the Swedish language in Finnish society; Snellman himself spoke, and published his works, in Swedish. Even at the end of the century many of the most ardent Fennomanians preferred to write and speak in Swedish. Well into the twentieth century the Swedish language remained a strong foundation for intellectual culture in Finland.²⁸

There is a deep-set myth in Finland that Fennomanian nationalism represented the Finnish masses against the elitist and repressive Swedish culture. The more fanatic Fennomanians vigorously cultivated this image for decades. Ironically enough, however, the early efforts of the nationalists were opposed not only by the conservative administration and entrenched Swedish culture. The Fennomanians collided with a powerful social-religious movement which was gaining strength among the people of interior Finland which they so idealized. With roots in the pre-Russian pre-nationalism period, various forms of religious revivalism had developed strong centers in northern and southern Savo, central Finland and in the west as well by the early nineteenth century. During this period influential laymen rose to the leadership of the revivalist groups. Whereas the early nationalists used their conceptions of the Finnish people and their culture in the attempt to win over the educated class to their cause, the revivalist leaders were much closer to the people in practice. Under the pressure of opposition by the nationalists, official Lutheran church leaders and the lay authorities the revivalist leaders were able to achieve a new degree of trans-provincial cohesion for their movement, mobilize a broad base of support among the Finnish peasantry and to win vocal advocates among certain intellectuals.²⁹

Finland's annexation to Russia brought a complete halt to the development of representative government until the 1860s and in certain respects hindered economic advancement as well. The requirements of rising social groups were not taken into consideration. Heikki Ylikangas has shown that revivalism was not merely an expression of

²⁸ Klinge 1982, pp. 211–212.

²⁹ Ylikangas 1979, pp. 22–23, 232–233, 285.

religious will, but that it also served as a means of mobilization for those discontented people who could not tolerate the social and economic restrictions and stagnation resulting from the rigid and non-representative administrative system. He sees revivalism as an alliance of socioeconomically significant, but politically powerless, groups whose main support consisted of the most economically active peasants. Revivalism cannot be interpreted as a fully self-conscious political movement, but it can be seen as a bid for power, as a challenge to the restrictions of the prevailing system.³⁰ The revivalist protest was symbolized by the *körttipuku* or simple pietist clothes which were worn to express independence from, and rejection of, the privileged upper and educated classes and their symbols.³¹

The conflict between the revivalists and the nationalists indicates how sensitive the nationalists were to ideological rivalry. In their effort to create a guiding archetype of Finnishness the literary ideologists could not tolerate the alternative views of Finnish identity emerging among the pietists. The pietists denied the whole value of, for example, Lönnröt's collection of folk poetry. The literary nationalists authored a series of sharp attacks on revivalism, thus attacking the very "people" whose image they sought to manipulate. The revivalists maintained a completely different view of the values and aims of human life.³² The nationalist attack against the revivalists, which went so far as to influence the authorities in St. Petersburg to initiate a series of mass legal proceedings, ultimately failed. The revivalists infiltrated the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran church, setting in motion a process of reform from within. As Ylikangas has pointed out, they loosened the bonds between church and state, thus helping to undermine the ideological power with which ruling powers controlled the people.³³

The revivalist movement provides an insight into the extreme difficulty or impossibility of broad-based political mobilization in a situation in which the institutional machinery needed for such a process was non-existent and counter to the will of the Russian authorities. Indeed, before the end of the century, with the exception of the bourgeois protest and political mobilization described in the next section, there were no significant radical or violent sociopolitical confrontations in Finland. There were no peasant rebellions, no urban or rural riots, no military rebellions or revolutionary conspiracies and no collective violent engagements.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 280–284.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 233, 284.

³² Ibid., pp. 219–231.

³³ Ibid., pp. 292.

The ethnocentric nationalism of Fennomanians like Snellman and his follower Meurman represents perhaps the most prominent, but by no means the only current of Finnish nationalism. Throughout the decades men like Meurman fought hard to label their opponents as anti-Finnish and anti-national. Yet of necessity there had to exist a variety of approaches to nationalism. The liberal current which was developing in Finnish politics at the time came to be not anti-national, but rather a rival form of Finnish nationalism. Before 1861, however, the ideological and institutional foundation for modern Finnish liberal constitutionalist nationalism was very restricted.

3. Constitutional Confrontation, 1861

“At the beginning of the year,” wrote J.V. Snellman, “the human imagination could not have conceived of what was to happen in Finland in 1861.”³⁴ The year 1861 has long been recognized as an outstanding period in the development of Finnish political thought. Snellman’s contemporary and political opponent, the liberal politician Josef A. Schauman, noted in 1861 that the time immediately preceding this year was one of light and hope, with exceptional cultural, economic and political advancement accompanied by a notable awakening of national consciousness.³⁵

Schauman, no doubt like his liberal colleagues, was enthused by the political and social movements and upheavals taking place in connection with nationalist struggles throughout Europe in countries such as Poland, Hungary and Italy.³⁶ Although not aware of what the coming year had in store for Finland, Snellman also commented at the beginning of 1861 that the current period of world history was of extraordinary importance. He believed that throughout Europe a new stage had been reached in the formation of nations and that the idea of the right of national self-determination was beginning to receive broad popular expression beyond the limits of philosophical speculation. He saw “the doctrine of the right of nationalities” agitating all of Europe.³⁷ Snellman observed here that Finland was one of the considerable beneficiaries of the idea of the right to nationhood. As

³⁴ Snellman 1895, p. 16.

³⁵ Schauman 1925, p. 265.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

³⁷ Snellman 1929c, pp. 485–489; Klinge 1967, pp. 128–129.

shall be shown in detail below, Snellman did not, however, share the same type of optimism or approach in regard to free and peaceful political development as some of his fellow countrymen. Shortly after expressing the preceding thoughts he wrote: "But reality betrays these dreams, and the fates of nations are created through blood and tears."³⁸

An Opportune "Coup d'Etat"

On 10 April 1861 "Alexander II, by the grace of God, Tsar and Autocrat of all Russia, Tsar of Poland and Grand Duke of Finland etc., etc." issued an imperial Manifesto which, as Snellman described it, struck the Finnish people like lightning, triggering off an unprecedented storm of public debate and political action.³⁹ Alexander began the Manifesto by recognizing that the future spiritual and material progress of Finland was greatly dependent on critically needed legislative reform which had been put off since the annexation of the country to Russia.⁴⁰ Alexander's dilemma, as clearly shown in the Manifesto, was that according to an influential interpretation of the Finnish fundamental laws the needed legislative changes could only be validly put into force by approval of the Diet, which had not been convoked since 1809.⁴¹

After the Crimean War (1854–1856) budding Finnish political and cultural self-assertion coupled with the need for thorough legislative reform, particularly for economic reasons, long recognized by both Finns and the Russian administration created increasing public pressure for the convocation of the Diet. Alexander II assigned the governor-general and the Finnish Senate the task of preparing a list of those matters which necessitated constitutional change. With this work completed Finnish officials on various occasions tried to persuade the tsar to convoke the Diet, which he refused to do apparently because of prevailing conditions in the Empire. It was at this point, early in 1861, when the Finnish Senator F. Langenskiöld, stimulated by his discussions with the tsar, began to form a compromise solution designed to solve the legislative dilemma and ease the way for the future summoning of the Diet. This solution took its final form in Alexander's April Manifesto of 1861.⁴²

³⁸ Snellman 1929c, pp. 491, 500; Snellman 1894a, pp. 589–591.

³⁹ *Protokoller ...* 1862, pp. 3–6; Snellman 1895, p. 22.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–6.

⁴² Kruisius-Ahrenberg 1982, pp. 43–45.

It was Snellman's conclusion, with which later commentators have agreed, that it was specifically the political unrest and rioting in Poland and the repercussions of the emancipation of the Russian serfs (March 1861) which caused the tsar to proceed so cautiously in Finnish matters.⁴³ Therefore the tsar declared in the Manifesto that "higher interests of state" prevent him for the time being from convoking the Finnish Estates.⁴⁴ Assertedly with the interests of Finland in mind, not wanting to delay the solution of the problems at hand any longer, the tsar proposed a compromise solution: He would allow the formation of a committee, to meet on 20 January 1862, composed of forty-eight elected representatives from the country's four Estates. Succinctly stated, the Committee was to take over the legislative functions of the Diet for an unspecified time.⁴⁵ Section seven of the Manifesto was of particular significance: Alexander stated therein that until circumstances permitted the summoning of the Finnish Estates he would ratify the decisions of the Committee.⁴⁶

Opponents of the tsar's solution held that as such the Committee's work, carried out through unconstitutionally authorized legislative power, would have been a violation of the Finnish fundamental laws, placing the future of the constitution in question. Instead of placating the political longings of the Finns, the compromise expressed in the April Manifesto gave rise to shock, consternation and frustrated expectations. The Manifesto was easily construed as an attempted coup d'état.⁴⁷ According to the historian Lolo Krusius-Ahrenberg, the reasons for the ambiguities of the Manifesto have yet to be fully explained. She is convinced, however, that it was not an intentional attempt to violate Finnish political rights. Alexander consulted top Russian officials regarding the matter and was warned that the Manifesto could be seen as a coup. The Russian Foreign Minister A.M. Gorchakov even advised the full convocation of the Diet to the tsar. Apparently it was the tsar's Finnish advisors who convinced him that the Finns would not misconstrue the intent of the Manifesto.⁴⁸ It is not clear what the tsar's intentions were in relation to this miscalculation of Finnish opinion on the part of the drafters of the compromise.

⁴³ Snellman 1895, p. 21; Krusius-Ahrenberg 1982, pp. 44-45.

⁴⁴ *Protokoller ... 1862*, pp. 3-6.

⁴⁵ *Protokoller ... 1862*, pp. 3-6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6

⁴⁷ Krusius-Ahrenberg 1982, p. 43; Schauman 1925, p. 282; Nordberg 1958, p. 257, 264; *Finska Förhållanden* 1861, p. 63.

⁴⁸ Krusius-Ahrenberg 1982, p. 52.

In 1861 there were as yet no well defined political parties in Finland, only two general groups which were then called the “opposition” and the “government party.” The border between the two was not clear and the opposition contained many disparate elements including a variety of still politically unorganized liberals and nationalists. The opposition could be characterized by its adherence to certain general principles such as freedom of speech and the press, lingual equity and the awakening of constitutional and national spirit. The term “government party” generally signified conservatives, which were by no means unified. Both terms, reflecting the politics at the time, were extremely vague.⁴⁹

The April Manifesto provided the divergent groups of the opposition the needed concrete reason for political mobilization and the formation and clarification of basic principles; it was the first chance for the hitherto frustrated opposition to assert itself. Researcher Toivo Nordberg has noted that the Finnish educated class at the time was highly affected by the ideas of liberalism. He portrays the liberals of the 1860s as immature agitators prejudiced against legal government, intolerant and favoring radical means.⁵⁰ This may be a biased (Paasikivian) view, but it serves to show that the Manifesto not only put the liberal opposition on the defensive, but provided it with a concrete cause to consolidate its ranks in assertive and anti-absolutist constitutionalism; it was a highly opportune “coup” for a constitutionalist offensive.⁵¹

Finland’s First Modern Popular Political Movement

For the liberals it was clear that the Manifesto, being an infringement of the constitution, had to be challenged. Otherwise, if it were to meet only silence and indifference, Finland would forfeit its political rights and claims.⁵² Deciding that something had to be done, although not sure exactly what, the liberals decided to take the initiative. On 16 April, the same day on which the Senate received the Manifesto and

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁵⁰ Nordberg 1958, p. 260, 262. Considering Nordberg’s point of view and derogatory style one might place his work within the same current of political culture which Meurman represented.

⁵¹ It must be pointed out that the use of the terms “liberal” and “radical” in reference to the budding Finnish opposition is highly relative and context bound: the members of the Finnish opposition must not be mistaken for social or democratic radicals. Their anti-absolutism was of a rather elitist constitutionalist type.

⁵² Schauman 1925, p. 271.

a day before it was publicly published, a group of concerned members of the liberal opposition met at the home of the economist and political reformer Henrik Borgström. The continuing meetings of the “Borgström Circle,” or “*Sextioettan* (LXI)” (the Sixty-Oners), marked the beginning of the liberal mobilization which was to form around Finland’s first modern political newspaper *Helsingfors Dagblad* in 1862.⁵³ At their first meeting the question of means of action arose. They realized that the level of political awareness in the country was low and that, because of very strict censorship, the press could not be employed for the formation of public opinion, a task which they considered essential.⁵⁴

On the following day, the members of the Borgström Circle decided that the best course of action would be to draw up a national protest address to the tsar signed by a group of citizens representing the whole country. They therefore sent messengers throughout the land to summon influential citizens to draft and sign the address.⁵⁵ In the mean time, the liberal minority of the Finnish Senate carried out an unprecedented protest. In their official stand regarding the Manifesto the majority of senators decided to send an address of gratitude to the tsar, not mentioning the Committee by name and containing only weak criticism of the whole proposal.

The liberal minority on the other hand favored a more explicit address calling for clarification of the tasks and powers of the Committee. Moreover, they were backed in their defense of the constitution by the Finnish Attorney General C.P.E. Gadd. The news of this protest in the Senate soon spread, igniting further debate and inspiring the hitherto vacillating to take a clear stand.⁵⁶ By 24 April the Borgström circle, supplemented by members of the various Estates from elsewhere in the country, was already in the process of gathering signatures for their address. Therein the authors sought to communicate their deep concern and unrest regarding the proposed legislative power of the Committee, and implored the tsar to explicitly restrict its functions to that of preparation for the future convocation of the Estates.⁵⁷

The April Manifesto also sparked off agitation among the university students, giving rise to the first modern mass political demonstration in Finnish history.⁵⁸ Already on 17 April designs for a demonstration

⁵³ Törne 1935, p. 287.

⁵⁴ Schauman 1925, p. 273.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 273–274.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 274–275; Krusius-Ahrenberg 1982, pp. 47–48.

⁵⁷ Schauman 1925, includes a copy of the address, pp. 279–281.

⁵⁸ Hyvämäki 1961, pp. 24–25, 51.

were put forth, but did not receive sufficient support. As the activities of the Borgström circle and the opposition senators' protest became known, the students' enthusiasm for action and their desire to participate overcame their fears. Some students even had the idea, inspired by democratic notions, that a demonstration could serve to show the willingness of the common people – those not represented in the Borgström circle – to act.⁵⁹

On 22 April a large crowd, responding to the previous summons of student agitators, gathered on the Helsinki Esplanade to honor the opposition senators and the attorney general by marching to each of their homes and shouting out in Swedish "*lefve Grundlagen*" (long live the Constitution). The marchers were mainly composed of students along with journeymen and a wide variety of onlookers who joined in as the demonstration proceeded. Two of the more radical members of the Borgström circle, unknown to their colleagues, helped direct the march. Through some direct manoeuvring the students persuaded an artisans' association choir to join in. The number of demonstrators swelled to several hundred, or maybe even to a thousand, as one presumably exaggerating observer claimed. At any rate, it was in size and quality an hitherto unseen manifestation of public political enthusiasm.⁶⁰

The April Manifesto controversy was the first major confrontation of Finnish constitutionalism – however immature – with the power of the tsar.⁶¹ The Borgström meetings and the street demonstration were allowed to proceed without intervention on the part of the authorities. Apparently the governor-general was prepared to use police and military force, but was dissuaded by his advisors. Two cossacks following the demonstration reportedly did nothing more than comment that "it is a rebellion."⁶² The immediate reaction of Finnish officials and the Russian government was a soft-line policy of conciliation and, as agitation continued in the coming months, a strategy of appeasement.

Promptly after receiving news of the Finnish storm of opinion the tsar issued an imperial rescript, assuring the Finns that the Committee would not be invested with the same legislative powers as the Diet.⁶³ Some months later, deciding not to employ oppressive measures as in

⁵⁹ Klinge 1967, pp. 129–131.

⁶⁰ Rein 1928, pp. 333; Rein was a student eyewitness to the event; Hyvämäki 1961, contains an account by one of the participants in the demonstration, pp. 24–25, 51; Klinge 1967, pp. 131–133.

⁶¹ Krusius-Ahrenberg 1982, p. 49.

⁶² Schauman, p. 277; Rein 1928, pp. 333–334.

⁶³ *Protokoller ...* 1862, pp. 6–7.

Poland, the tsar made further concessions to appease his Finnish subjects. The discredited Governor-General Friedrich Berg was replaced, in a move calculated in Petersburg for its propagandistic effect, by P.I. Rokassovsky, who enjoyed popularity among the Finns. Moreover, Rokassovsky brought with him to his new post the concrete promise that the long-awaited Diet would be convened when the necessary legislative proposals were completed and that censorship conditions were to be eased.⁶⁴

These concessions were doubtlessly aimed in part to disarm the opposition which, although having given up its address campaign, continued its agitation even after the tsar's reassuring rescript. The Committee elections provided the various groupings a concrete motive for organization and the formation of common stances on critical issues. Before the regulations were revised, an address movement began for the elimination of censorship. Correspondingly, an anti-censorship demonstration was organized among the students.⁶⁵ A new demand for information concerning Finland's political status arose. When the jurist Johan Palmén published a concise analysis of Finland's fundamental laws in September 1861 it sold out faster than any other previous book in Finland, with the exception of J.L. Runeberg's nationalist epic *Tales of Ensign Stål*.

By the time that the elected Committee representatives met for the first time in January 1862, Finnish public opinion had been persuaded, through conciliation and the eloquent defense of the official line by J.V. Snellman, to approve compromise. This was preceded, however, by the most heated and bitter public debate in Finnish history. Schauman was right, a new awakening had occurred: The April Manifesto was a great political catalyst, and the radical opposition of the liberal circle forced people of all political persuasions to become more thoroughly acquainted with political matters.

It has been argued that there is a direct parallel between the events of 1861 and those of the Bobrikov period following 1898.⁶⁶ 1861 set the pattern for future Finno-Russian political confrontations. It is no mere coincidence that many of those who adopted the ideology and methods of passive resistance at the turn of the century, as well as those who opposed them, had their first experiences of political action in 1861. It is therefore not surprising to find that not only were certain

⁶⁴ Krusius-Ahrenberg 1982, pp. 62-63.

⁶⁵ Klinge 1967, pp. 139-140.

⁶⁶ Törne 1935, p. 287; Nordberg 1958, p. 310.

methods of passive resistance, as understood in the generic sense, employed, but that the given political conditions provided fertile ground for the specific idea of passive resistance to take root at that time.

4. The Strategy of National Survival and Development: J.V. Snellman on Passive Resistance, Power and Cultural Defense

In the final issue of *Litteraturblad* for 1861, dealing in general with the current political controversy and the coming activity of the Committee, J.V. Snellman considered it necessary to issue some concise critical observations regarding passive resistance and its applicability in Finland. Snellman's article is an invaluable central source for determining when, and in what form, the idea of passive resistance entered the Finnish political scene. With characteristic broad political and historical vision and with an equally typical haughty style he writes:

Among the means for attaining a freer social order [*samhällsskick*] our time has given rise to "passive resistance" and "the peaceful demonstration." Anyone who reads the newspapers knows how this agitation is practiced. In reality, however, it has been used by weaker peoples against foreign domination, and more rarely by subjects against rulers in independent states. Nowhere has this agitation yet produced any results. Like revolutionary conspiracy it is brought forth by the pressure of circumstances, and is capable only of negating the present without providing any certainty as to what should follow. One can often see even the most noble patriots driven to this negation; unfortunately humanity has had occasion enough to lament the unhappy outcome of such endeavors. They do have their own historical intention, aiming to gradually prepare for the time when the sought after reform falls like a ripe apple from the tree. But one must lament that freedom cannot be attained except through the alternations between revolution and reaction and the misfortune following both. The so-called peaceful demonstration must take the same course, because by nature it aims at making the present situation impossible without having control of the future.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Snellman 1894b, p. 768.

Snellman pronounced a forceful, belittling, judgement on passive resistance. He considered it to be a ridiculous form of contention, entirely inappropriate for Finnish conditions. Moreover, although he considered the technique of the peaceful demonstration as otherwise harmlessly absurd in its weakness, he argued that it had to be emphatically rejected because, being the work of the “rabble” and giving rise to perniciously exaggerated accounts of events, it would be a disaster for the country.⁶⁸

By deliberately placing the terms “passive resistance” and “the peaceful demonstration” (“*det passiva motståndet*” and “*den fredliga demonstrationen*”) in quotes Snellman emphasized that they indicated specific, clearly definable, interrelated, yet different, forms of action. Considering the contemporary circumstances Snellman’s use of the word “passive resistance” is similar to the modern idea of civil disobedience and can be distinguished from mere protest. He had the insight to realize that it was not a mere reactive or defensive technique, not “passive,” but was also an active and assertive means of social transformation. Snellman’s account clearly indicates that passive resistance was a widely known modern form of political struggle, invented in the historical circumstances of nineteenth century Europe and practiced, not just by “the rabble,” as he had to admit, but also by distinguished citizens. It was a new means for achieving redress and justice.

What specific cases did Snellman have in mind when indicating that anyone who kept informed on European affairs would have plenty of knowledge about passive resistance? In an earlier section it has already been shown that passive resistance was used throughout the nineteenth century in Europe in a wide variety of struggles. The idea of “*passiver Widerstand*” was particularly current in the German political cultural environment. Many influential educated Finns, such as Schauman and Snellman, had travelled and studied abroad, especially in Germany. As Snellman repeatedly stresses in his articles (especially in 1861) Finns had access to abundant material on current political ideas through the foreign press.⁶⁹ It is therefore not implausible to conclude that politically aware Finns knew of a whole variety of events known as passive resistance. There was, however, one specific case which was doubtlessly of particular relevance for the Finns, namely, the Hungarian resistance to Austrian absolutism.

One of the main conclusions to be drawn here, after having examined the events and ideas of the time, is that the European concept of

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 768–769.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 767–768; Snellman 1929b, pp. 584–594.

passive resistance received its first express formulation and application in Finland in 1861. Meurman, as cited earlier, was correct in seeing a kind of practical attitude of passive resistance, as understood in a general sense, prevailing in Finland in the early part of the century. Perhaps even the specific term was used now and then as it gained currency in Europe.

Meurman was not the first to specify earlier Finnish passive resistance. On 27 February 1845, Snellman wrote to his close colleague Johan Tengström: "Our past distinctly proves that the passivity of the masses has effectively withstood foreign influences."⁷⁰ Snellman expressly calls this old "passivity" "passive resistance." True, he admits, this old passivity was indeed successful, but the Finnish people were never really harshly harassed and nothing can guarantee the success of passive resistance in the future now that it has been "lifted from its old hinges."⁷¹ Snellman's comments here show that as early as 1845 a new concept of passive resistance had been developed and that proof of its effectiveness was being sought in earlier times. He explicitly contrasts passive resistance to "active resistance" (violent resistance), and is convinced that the latter is ultimately more powerful ("*har mera kraft*").⁷² Clearly at that time Snellman thought that passive resistance in the generic sense was more characteristic of the "wild" nature of the greater part of the Finnish people than violent resistance. He even comments that the Finnish people show remarkably little "patriotism" or "national hate."⁷³ Yet he also sees within these same people the maintenance of the capacity for violent action.

It was the political conditions of constitutionalist struggle in 1861 which provided the fertile meeting ground for the primal Finnish attitude of resistance and the constitutionalist concept of passive resistance. Earlier that same year one of the major constitutional confrontations in the Hungarian passive resistance movement took place. It is very likely that one of the main sources of the term and the concept of passive resistance as used in Finland was the Hungarian struggle. At any rate the concept of passive resistance was still new in Finnish society and did not receive the type of mature ideological expressions

⁷⁰ Snellman 1906, pp. 160.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁷³ By "wild" or the "state of being wild" (*vildhetstillstånd*) Snellman refers to the condition of not yet having achieved a high level of civilization. It is a condition which he obviously considers to prevail among the greater part of the Finnish people. Moreover, apparently Snellman considers patriotism or collective national hate to be a sign of higher civilization; *ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

that it would later. The tradition of Hungarian resistance, as will be seen, was to have an important effect on the development of the Finnish concept of passive resistance. However immature it was, it is clear that Snellman and his educated contemporaries had attained a certain familiarity with the concept of passive resistance and the methods of its application, both in international and domestic struggles.

It is no mere chance that Snellman, of all Finnish statesmen, should be the first to deem it necessary to undertake a refutation of the budding idea of passive resistance, the weapon of assertive liberalism. Snellman was certainly the most sophisticated and influential political philosopher and statesman of his time in Finland. Moreover, his political ideas, for example through the work of J.K. Paasikivi, have had a fundamental influence on Finland's present day political culture.⁷⁴ Even during his own lifetime (1806–1881) Snellman became one of the monuments of Finnish history. He remains a cardinal authority, invoked by Finns of all political persuasions for their own purposes (rather like the present day Paasikivi–Kekkonen line).

Above all, Snellman was the main ideologist of Finnish nationalism and the most outstanding leader of the Fennomania movement. Nationality was the central principle of his political thought and it has been argued that perhaps he, more than any other European thinker, can be considered the philosopher of nationality and the nation.⁷⁵ Whatever his true philosophical status may have been, Snellman was internationally recognized, particularly in Germany and Sweden, as an expert in Hegelian philosophy with a broad knowledge of French Enlightenment and contemporary thought.⁷⁶

Snellman's criticism of passive resistance provides a good starting point, by way of contrast, for the analysis of his interrelated concepts of cultural defense and national development. Snellman certainly took the challenge of the radical liberals seriously, judging from the frequency with which he was concerned with its refutation. The events of 1861 provided him with a testing ground for the political principles which he had been developing for decades.

According to Snellman the Finnish and Swedish liberals, excessively concerned with material profit, external political and economic freedom and the criticism of institutions and authorities which inhibit liberty, do not realize that the "people [*folk*] itself is responsible for its government and its institutions."⁷⁷ Snellman did not dismiss the

⁷⁴ Paasikivi 1957a, pp. 2, 59, 68–75.

⁷⁵ Salomaa 1948, p. 274.

⁷⁶ Salomaa 1934, pp. 156–157.

⁷⁷ Snellman 1929b, p. 586.

importance of political freedom and material wealth; he simply rejected the liberals' insistent advocacy of them as perniciously misleading in a situation in which the foundation of national culture was not strong enough for their support. For Snellman, the liberals entirely misconceived the nature of political and cultural power. He saw history as the work of peoples, of nations, not of individuals. The power with which rulers are invested is derived from the whole nation and therefore the liberal demands for external reforms were seen as superficial folly, providing nothing to replace the rejected system.⁷⁸ Snellman was pedantically fond of repeating in various forms, and he did so in his criticism of passive resistance, that the political structure of government is an empty shell if it does not correspond to the cultural level of the nation. Accordingly, the liberals, driven by the urge for individual gain, were blind to this truth.⁷⁹

One of the main themes of Snellman's work was national survival. While convinced that no nation could hope to possess an eternal form, he maintained that the highest goal of a nation during its period of existence, is to secure its preservation through the development of its unique forms of culture.⁸⁰ Snellman held (from at least 1842 on) that in international conflicts national survival, the capacity of national defense, is proportional to cultural advancement.⁸¹ Obviously his concept of culture is a very broad one, signifying a society's whole sociopolitical and economic way of life.

Snellman was an adherent of the common concept that might is right, that the *right* of a nation extends no further than its *power*. He qualified this proposition in a remarkable manner, insisting that it could by no means serve to legitimize brute force or to justify violence.⁸² Successful national defense and assertion is not founded on military power. This is why materially weak, but culturally vigorous, nations can survive in the face of overwhelming force. National culture is not only a power in itself, but receives further support, in proportion to its progress, from the recognition given by other advanced European nations. As Snellman saw it, European powers maintain the right of domination of one nation by another on the basis of cultural superiority. Thus for Snellman national survival, the justification and recognition of the right to exist as a nation among nations, is to be had through

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 584–587.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 584–587; Snellman 1894b, pp. 767–768; Snellman 1929a, p. 320.

⁸⁰ Snellman 1929a, p. 321.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 319; Snellman 1928, p. 12.

⁸² Snellman 1929a, pp. 306, 310.

adopting the prevailing European paradigm of cultural maturity which ensures national legitimacy.⁸³

At an early point in his career Snellman came to the conclusion that the Finnish nation could not free itself from lingering Swedish cultural hegemony, or protect itself from the looming Russian threat, through violence. Only the power of cultural development could provide salvation.⁸⁴ The principle that right is power and power is proportional to cultural advancement provided the ideological foundation for this view. Thus Snellman conceived of a strategy of national defense which explicitly rejected both violence and the types of protest and coercion classified by some today as “nonviolent action.”

In an earlier section Snellman was described as a shrewd practitioner of Realpolitik or Machiavellian “nonviolence.” Snellman clearly held that universally speaking any group or nation would find little avail in violence and military action without a strong foundation of cultural development or sociopolitical power-to. Moreover, he thought it pernicious to combine cultural development with violent assertion or agitative protest and coercion of any kind. He even went so far as to claim that even powerful nations in the face of overwhelming power-over may preserve their own cultural strength and ensure survival more effectively through submission than through coercive resistance.⁸⁵ Nowhere in his works, however, does Snellman suggest that the type of cultural defense which he advocated should or could be a complete alternative to or replacement for the organized violence of the nation-state. He simply meant that the reverse is not valid; organized violence cannot replace creative national development. In circumstances in which a nation does not have the basic *de facto* power-to necessary for the effective use of violence Snellman and a significant branch of his followers were quite explicit that passive resistance (or equivalently Gandhian paradigm “nonviolent action”) would be ridiculously ineffective.

Snellman represented what might be described as authoritarian capitalism. Already in the 1840s he saw the triumph of bourgeois revolution and capitalism – the dissolution of the old Estate society, the rise of the middle class, and the formation of the working class – as inevitable processes. He did not, however, deem the social and political freedom of individuals as a necessary condition of these

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 306, 310; Snellman 1929b, p. 589.

⁸⁴ Snellman 1931, Snellman to Cygnaeus, July 1840, pp. 131–135; Snellman 1906, Snellman to Tengström, 27 February 1845, pp. 157–161.

⁸⁵ Snellman 1930a, p. 245.

processes or of economic freedom and development. He advocated an authoritarian sociopolitical system combined with a liberal type of mixed capitalist economy based on free enterprise and private property. The masses were to be formed or civilized and cared for by the national spirit, i.e., the authoritarian leaders. This way, in a world of inevitable class differences the ignorant masses could be trained to feel a debt of gratitude toward the society which takes care of them. All forms of popular politics, both liberal and socialist, were to be controlled, avoided and suppressed. In the late 1870s, observing the socialist struggle in Germany, Snellman clearly sympathized with violent repression of socialist movements in case of the failure of severe, firmly enforced, State legislation and control.⁸⁶

A contradiction traverses Snellman's works from the 1840s onward. On the one hand he stresses that communities and nations develop civilization through interaction, interdependence and common cultural roots and that they are not eternally fixed entities. On the other hand each nation attains maturity as a sovereign individual dependent solely on itself. National maturity is not attained by borrowing bits and pieces of civilization from here and there like the deluded liberals think. What this meant in practice is that Snellman was directly adopting the European model of ethnocentric linguistic or cultural nationalism; it was a model of elite domination through cultural hegemony. Snellman definitely thought this to be the best approach to achieving social cohesion and societal inviolability, i.e., he understood it to be the best form of national defense. It is no coincidence that Snellman developed a special preference for the Italian Risorgimento model of national unification. Snellman can be compared, and contrasted, to one of the main ideologists of Italian nationhood Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872). Both men were cultural activists par excellence through newspaper and educational activities. Both saw the nation as something spiritual; they rejected the American model of the nation which in the words of Mazzini – words which could just as well be Snellman's –

is the embodiment, if compared to our own ideal, of the philosophy of mere rights: the collective thought is forgotten: the educational mission of the state is overlooked. It is the negative, individualistic materialistic school.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ This paragraph has been written with reference to Jussi Teljo's concise study of Snellman's political philosophy; see Teljo 1934, *passim*.

⁸⁷ Mazzini quoted in, Smith 1959, p. 13.

But Snellman of course was no Mazzini, nor was any other Italian leader quite like him. The Italian Risorgimento was an elite affair, carried out by the literati, students, skilled craftsmen, officials, and professionals of many types.⁸⁸ What Snellman most admired in the Risorgimento was that it was as he saw it based on a consciously nationalistically cultivated unified cultural heritage directed by intellectuals: The Italians were “a people which has risen against foreign domination, united by language, literature, and religion, in other words by *intellectual culture* [*genom intellektuell bildning*].”⁸⁹ Snellman, however, far surpassed his Italian counterparts in adherence to the kind of “passive revolution” excluding all popular mobilization and collective violence called for by Vincenzo Cuoco as discussed earlier. Compared to Mazzini and the other leaders of the Italian Risorgimento, however elitist they may have been, Snellman stands out, at least in the sphere of sociopolitical action, as an arch-conservative.

Snellman insisted throughout his career on maintaining the strict irreconcilability of systems of social order based on nationality and nationalism on the one hand and liberalism and constitutionalism on the other. This included seeing cultural defense and passive resistance as mutually exclusive. Hegelian that he was it could be supposed that he could have figured out a way to bring about a reconciliation or more advanced synthesis out of this dialectical tension. The only explanation for his not having done so is that it would have weakened his position in the fierce power struggle with the liberals in Finnish internal politics. Otherwise there exists no purely logical argument why sociopolitical liberalism cannot exist in various relationships of union with nationalism. Snellman’s concept of the irreconcilable dialectical antithesis and mutual exclusivity of liberal politics (along with passive resistance) and culture-based defense was taken up and perpetuated by his more zealous followers, such as Meurman. Perhaps ironically, however, for the first generation which was truly a product of the “national awakening,” and which came to maturity in the 1880s, the permanence of this dichotomy was not at all clear. Although the extremes of both sides were long in dying out, there began to emerge a new synthesis of liberalism and nationalism, of culture-based defense and passive resistance. Before examining the emergence of the new liberal nationalist synthesis, however, I would like to show how the Fennomanian nationalists themselves helped lay the groundwork for

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 36.

⁸⁹ Snellman 1894a, p. 595.

this synthesis. I will do this by bringing to light one channel through which the international model of nationalist culturally-based constitutional resistance was diffused to Finland.

5. The Finns Look to Hungary: Diffusion of Resistance Culture

The most often cited foreign precedent or model of constitutionalist passive resistance among the Finnish resisters after 1898 was the Hungarian struggle against Austrian absolutism which ended in 1867. It is not, however, the aim of this section to demonstrate any extraordinary causal relationship between the Hungarian and Finnish resistance movements. The idea is to present and analyze the example of one hitherto little known channel, the most prominent among numerous other channels, through which the currents of European resistance culture flowed into Finland.

In his later criticism of passive resistance J.K. Paasikivi wrote:

At that time, during the first part of the era of oppression, the Hungarian struggle for justice against Austria 1850–1867 was much discussed among us. The Hungarian struggle was similar to our own. The goal was the same: restoration of the former constitution through negotiation with the ruler ... the Hungarians attained victory ... the Hungarian struggle and its achievements were presented among us as a model.⁹⁰

This quote is taken from a context in which Paasikivi is providing an epilogue to the debate concerning the relevance of the Hungarian case for Finland. While recognizing the similarities between the two resistance movements, Paasikivi is concerned here with pointing out the differences in order to further reveal the weaknesses of Constitutionalist resistance policy. It is here that Paasikivi the innovative ideologist can be seen at work. Certainly the differences which Paasikivi specifies are accurate, but that is not what is of interest, since the aim here is not to discuss who was right, Paasikivi or the Constitutionalist. Paasikivi was not concerned with looking more deeply into why the Hungarian struggle was significant to Finns. He simply uses it as part of his ammunition against his ideological opponents. It is typical of Paasikivi (in the tradition of Meurman and Snellman), and indeed of

⁹⁰ Paasikivi 1957a, p. 44–45.

much post Civil War (post-1918) Finnish historiography, to identify passive resistance with the radical Constitutionalists. A deeper look into Finno-Hungarian cultural relations reveals that things were not so simple. What Paasikivi did not admit, or perhaps did not realize, is that it was the Fennomans themselves, his masters, who had propagated information on the Hungarian resistance in Finland from the 1860s onward.

A “Fabulous Kinship”

Initially I thought that Constitutionalist Finns turned to the Hungarian struggle for inspiration and practical experience simply because they perceived it to be similar to their own. It turns out, however, that the entrance of the Hungarian resistance heritage into Finland was facilitated by an already existing bridge of cross-cultural exchange built by the *nationalist imagination*. The Finnish nation builders came to propagate the idea of the Hungarian people as an elder, more mature and advanced, “kindred nation” (*sukukansa, heimokansa*) or as tribal brethren. The establishment in the eighteenth century of the fact that (certain aspects of) Finnish and Hungarian belong to the same language group (Finno-Ugric) provided the foundation for igniting an imagined *special* relation between the two peoples.⁹¹ From the time of the founding father of Finnish cultural studies, Henrik Gabriel Porthan, in the late 1700s educated Finns began to believe that rising Finnish nationalism had much to learn from the already “culturally awakened” Hungarian nation.⁹² Throughout the nineteenth century Finno-Hungarian relations were cultivated and expanded mostly by linguists, ethnologists and historians from both countries.⁹³ Throughout nineteenth century Europe it was people in these types of professions who served as the ideological carpenters of nation building. In an article analyzing the events of 1861 in Hungary the nationalist ideologist par excellence J.V. Snellman wrote prophetically:

⁹¹ I stress imagination here since ethnically – regarding language, genetic makeup, customs, politics and so forth – the Finns of the nineteenth century had very little uniquely in common with the Hungarians. For instance, ethnically speaking, it could be argued that they had much more in common with the Swedes, but this did not suit nationalist ideology.

⁹² Numminen 1984, p. 16; Tervonen 1984, pp. 46–47, 54.

⁹³ Numminen 1984, p. 16; “Unkarilais-suomalaisten kulttuurisuhteiden kronologiaa vuoteen 1983,” pp. 266–268.

It would be no wonder if our *fabulous kinship* were to awaken in us Finns more than in others sympathy for Hungary, which is now under severe repression, and which through the years has been robbed of its age-old institutions, laws and even language and whose future has seemed so hopeless.⁹⁴

Before examining how Finns looked to Hungary it might be useful to sketch out the actual background of the Hungarian struggle.

The Hungarian Resistance

In spite of the prevailing social reaction and absolutism, a broad and vigorous national awakening began to take place in Hungary in the early 1800s. Statesmen such as István Széchenyi, Lajos Kossuth and Ferenc Deák emerged to lead the “reform generation” in the realization of its cultural and political aspirations.⁹⁵ By March 1847 the various branches of reformers succeeded in forming a United Opposition Party to challenge the conservatives. The force of revolution throughout Europe in 1848, especially in Vienna, brought triumph for the Hungarian opposition. A new body of legislation was established, called the April Laws, laying the foundation for national autonomy and broad internal reform.⁹⁶ This victory, however, was short lived. With the reestablishment of reactionary government in Vienna, forces were mustered for the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution. The April Laws were repealed and by August 1849, militarily defeated, Hungary was on the way to being violently integrated into a reorganized centralized system of absolutism.⁹⁷

Throughout the period from the defeat of revolution in 1849 to the compromise of 1867, the majority of the Hungarian nation, including the peasantry, opposed the system of neo-absolutism.⁹⁸ It was generally recognized that armed struggle could no longer lead to victory although certain adherents of Kossuth sought to organize rebellion. However, with the failure of the widespread Mack conspiracy in 1851 Kossuth

⁹⁴ Snellman 1894a, pp. 593–594, my italics; Snellman himself, as he makes clear in this article, did not consider Hungary as relevant a model of national development and struggle as Italy.

⁹⁵ Barta 1973, pp. 224–225; I. Deák 1979, p. 34. Macartney 1974, p. 36.

⁹⁶ Barta 1973, pp. 251, 259. Macartney 1974, p. 36.

⁹⁷ Hanak 1973, p. 287.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 296, 299.

advised his followers to refrain from violent resistance until international conditions became more favorable.⁹⁹ Throughout the 1850s, unable to accept submission and convinced of the futility of violence, Hungarians adopted an attitude of unyielding passive noncooperation, which was later to develop into a positive program of resistance under the leadership of Ferenc Deák.¹⁰⁰

The ideological justification and basis for passive resistance as led by Deák was the assertion that the Pragmatic Sanction of 1773 and the April Laws of 1848 were still valid. “No compromise on the constitution,” expressed popular opinion; disobedience was justified since the new system was deemed illegal.¹⁰¹ Deák warned against violence, calling for adherence to legality. He held that Law provided the safe ground, upon which he and his unarmed compatriots could withstand armed force. His own words well express the ideology of passive resistance:

The nation will suffer if it has to.... It will endure without despair, as its ancestors patiently endured and suffered, to defend their rights; for whatever is lost through force may be retrieved through patience and good fortune, but what we surrender ourselves ... it is difficult and ever doubtful whether it can be regained.¹⁰²

Or, as quoted by a Finnish author in 1903:

Law keeps violence in check.... If a nation offers no protest against the violation of its laws, but suffers infringement in silence allowing a new law to replace each violated one, it depreciates the value of its laws itself, because silence is the same as accepting or forgiving what has occurred. If in circumstances in which power transgresses the borders of law a nation does not raise its voice in defiance then who can bring about its return to the way of law?¹⁰³

During the eighteen years from the military defeat of the Revolution to the compromise of 1867 the Hungarian resistance took various forms. From the beginning many Hungarians boycotted the new system, and those who did participate were often deemed untrustworthy by the Austrian authorities.¹⁰⁴ The majority of the gentry went the way of

⁹⁹ Macartney 1969, pp. 477, 480–481.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 478, 481.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 478, 487; Hanak 1973, p. 308; Griffith 1918, pp. 5– 6; Domanovszky 1923, p. 344.

¹⁰² As quoted in Hanak 1973, p. 311; the Finnish resisters often quoted this, as well as many other of Deák's statements.

¹⁰³ Quoted in Grotenfelt 1903, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ Macartney 1969, pp. 449–450.

Deák. They refused to take part in public life, withdrew from official positions and evaded the fulfillment of enemy orders. The representatives and military troops of the Austrian government, as well as the Czech officials they employed, were boycotted.¹⁰⁵ The obstruction or nonpayment of taxes was a popular form of resistance, as was the boycott of the Austrian army by Hungarian youths.¹⁰⁶

The press was used to spread information abroad concerning the Hungarian situation and to educate the people concerning national culture and history.¹⁰⁷ The arts as well as the establishment and maintenance of various institutions of science, culture and higher education both supported and expressed the spirit of resistance.¹⁰⁸ All social classes used symbolic forms of protest to express their opposition to Austrian domination. For example men and women used national clothing, forbidden colors, or seditious songs to assert their stance, and derided those who displayed favor for things Austrian.¹⁰⁹ Demonstrations were held during various key periods and frequent national celebrations, balls, lectures and banquets were used to cultivate and express resistance.¹¹⁰

Perhaps the most significant manifestation of the Hungarian people's united spirit of resistance was the Parliament of 1861. After its military defeat of 1859 in Italy, Austria was forced to seek reconciliation with its subjects. Absolutism was eased, the Hungarian county councils were restored and the Hungarian Parliament convoked. The Hungarians refused to be appeased by less than the restoration of constitutional conditions. The county councils proposed to stop paying the rate for the support of the Austrian army and to end the collection of taxes not approved of by the Hungarian Parliament.¹¹¹ In its two addresses to the crown, written by Deák, the Hungarian Parliament forcefully stated its case, emphasizing the right and duty to resist:

... we declare that we hold fast to the Pragmatic Sanction, and to all the conditions contained in it without exception, and that we cannot regard or recognize as constitutional anything which is in contradiction of it....¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ Hanak 1973, p. 297; Domanovszky 1923, p. 344.

¹⁰⁶ Macartney 1969, p. 487; Griffith 1918, pp. 32–33.

¹⁰⁷ Domanovszky 1923, p. 344; Griffith 1918, pp. 35–36.

¹⁰⁸ Hanak 1973, p. 298; Griffith 1918, p. 170.

¹⁰⁹ Jalava 1902, pp. 126–127.

¹¹⁰ Domanovszky 1923, pp. 344–345; Hanak 1973, p. 303.

¹¹¹ Macartney 1974, p. 37; Griffith 1918, p. 16.

¹¹² As quoted in Griffith 1918, pp. 20, 27.

In reaction to its radical stand the emperor dissolved the Parliament. The Hungarians resumed passive resistance as a new version of absolutism was imposed.¹¹³ In the years to follow, however, international events and economic pressures forced the Austrian crown toward concession. On the other hand many Hungarians, doubting whether an independent Hungary could survive situated between Russia and Germany, felt it necessary to reach a compromise with Austria.¹¹⁴ Austria's defeat by Prussia and Hungary's refusal to provide military support prepared the ground for such compromise. However, before the Compromise was concluded one more critical confrontation occurred. When, in the beginning of 1867, the country was brought to the edge of insurrection by an imperial decree making military service compulsory for Hungarians, Parliament sent the Emperor an ultimatum known as "Hungary's Last Word" demanding, in a tone of defiance, the restoration of the constitution. After complicated negotiations Hungary's constitutional law was restored, providing the basis for the Ausgleich or agreement of 1867 which established the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary.¹¹⁵

Lessons of Hungarian Heroism

In the 1860s, during the period of the Hungarian resistance, the Finnish view of Hungary began to go well beyond the borders of the earlier, primarily linguistic, cross-cultural studies between the two countries.¹¹⁶ In January 1887 Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen, the rising leader of the Fennomanian nationalist movement, stated the significance of Finno-Hungarian relations as follows:

I cannot refrain from expressing my joy that a considerable exchange of ideas has begun to build up between Finland and Hungary; at least we Finns feel a great longing to join other cultured peoples through the bonds of science and other common endeavors. It is only natural that our eyes turn eagerly to Hungary where the people is of our race and political conditions are in many ways comparable to our own. It is obvious that at least we share with the Magyars a common historical

¹¹³ Hanak 1973, p. 311.

¹¹⁴ Macartney 1974, p. 37; Hanak 1973, pp. 312–314.

¹¹⁵ Hanak 1973, pp. 317–318; Macartney 1974, p. 37; Griffith 1918, pp. 57–59.

¹¹⁶ To be sure, as Tervonen has shown, men like the prominent national romantic author Zachris Topelius (1818–1898) had ever since the 1840s been propagating among the Finns the ideal of the beautiful, noble and brave Hungarian brother nation heroically suffering injustice; Tervonen 1984, pp. 57, 64.

mission, namely, the duty to prove that the Turanian race has the capability and strength to create an independent culture and an independent political existence.¹¹⁷

In 1865 the well known Finnish educator, historian and linguist Oskar Blomstedt travelled throughout Hungary. In the years 1866–1888 Blomstedt and his other Fennomanian colleagues (such as his close friend Yrjö-Koskinen) published a wide variety of articles on Hungary in one of the major periodicals of the Finnish movement, the *Kirjallinen Kuukausilehti* (the Literary Monthly). Blomstedt's writings brought home the relevance of the Hungarian situation for Finns.¹¹⁸

Blomstedt begins, in his article of June 1866, by telling his readers that the Finns and the Magyars are the only peoples of the Turanian [Ural-Altai] race to reach a higher level of civilization, in spite of harsh geographical conditions and even harsher political circumstances. He suggests that this success has ennobled the Turanian race, proving that it is not of an inferior sort.¹¹⁹ He goes on to describe the system of unconstitutional oppression to which the Hungarians had been subjected ever since the defeat of the Revolution in 1849. However, Blomstedt writes, the “murderous designs” of the Austrians have been obstructed in a variety of ways by the “firm, but careful, resistance” of the Magyars; all the nationalities of Hungary have united behind the resistance policy of Deák which thwarted the Austrian intentions at the Parliament of 1861. Blomstedt says that this policy consists of holding fast to the country's constitutional laws, the deviation from which would place Hungary at the Emperor's mercy. Blomstedt places special emphasis on the cultural resistance of the Magyars, such as the cultivation of their own language and the establishment of independent national institutions.¹²⁰

Blomstedt's work shows that as early as 1866 the literate Finnish public had access to a popular analysis of the events and tactics of the Hungarian resistance to Austrian absolutism. Without doubt the author considered his article to be of direct relevance to the Finns. Although unusually detailed, Blomstedt's article was by no means the first in-depth description and analysis of the Hungarian situation. It was

¹¹⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 46.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 68; Wichman 1927, pp. 269–270.

¹¹⁹ Blomstedt 1886, pp. 142–143.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 143–146.

preceded by numerous articles in the Finnish press on events in Hungary.¹²¹

Some years after Blomstedt's analysis Yrjö-Koskinen decided to publish a new series of articles on Hungary. Among the various topics which he discusses therein is the course of events leading to the Compromise of 1867. He describes the firm resistance of the Hungarians after 1861, and emphasizes that the non-Magyar peoples of the country were now united with the Magyars in their policy of noncooperation. Yrjö-Koskinen shows how resistance and the careful leadership of Deák, combined with Austria's military defeats and political failures, led to the *Ausgleich*.¹²²

Later Yrjö-Koskinen was to be known for his unyielding anti-resistance or compliancy stance, and as the most extreme opponent to the Constitutionalists. It may therefore seem strange to find Yrjö-Koskinen and his colleagues in earlier years displaying such an avid interest in nationalist resistance movements abroad. The Hungarian struggle provided Yrjö-Koskinen with a clear precedent case for both staunch resistance and careful compromise in a situation perceived as similar to that of Finland. Throughout his later career Yrjö-Koskinen was to seek a solution to the problem as to what degree of resistance and what degree of compromise and submission were necessary. His policy does not seem to have been completely set before 1898, when he still considered passive resistance as a possible approach for Finland.¹²³

Simultaneously with the growing interest in Hungarian politics and culture there arose in Finland a particular admiration for the political leader Ferenc Deák. The number of articles and studies on Deák, and the enthusiastic tone with which they were written, shows that his policies were very attractive to Finns. Apparently one of the earliest articles of this type was in the Fennomanian paper *Suometar*; it portrays Deák in terms of overflowing admiration, describing how the Hun-

¹²¹ See "Unkarilais-suomalaisten kulttuurisuhteiden kronologiaa vuoteen 1983" 1984, pp. 267–268; for example in the Finnish Swedish-language newspaper *Papperslyktan* of 30 April 1860, there was an article "On the Movement in Hungary," describing the escalation of resistance and the massive demonstrations taking place; see "Om rörelsen i Ungern" 1860. Snellman, as discussed earlier, also paid particular attention to events in Hungary.

¹²² Yrjö-Koskinen 1871, pp. 289–291.

¹²³ Yrjö-Koskinen's dilemma is a recurrent problem in Finnish foreign policy and defense. It is interesting to study the development of Paasikivi's thought in this light. Ideologically speaking, Yrjö-Koskinen was among Paasikivi's most significant predecessors, as is made manifestly clear throughout Paasikivi's "memoirs" from the "years of oppression."

garian people adore and follow every action of this great authority.¹²⁴ Deák, another journal stressed, opposed the violent revolutionary policy of Kossuth and sought the road of peaceful negotiation.¹²⁵ Article after article emphasized Deák's insistence on careful resistance, for opposition on legal grounds, with strict abstention from violence.¹²⁶ Clearly Deák was a figure with whom the Finnish nationalists could easily identify.

Antti Jalava: Evangelist of Deákean Resistance

It was the Fennomnian Antti Jalava (1846–1909) who, during the later part of the nineteenth century, made the most significant contribution to Finno-Hungarian cross-cultural exchange. A close colleague of the leading Fennomnians associated with publications such as *Uusi Suometar* and *Kirjallinen Kuukausilehti*, Jalava, an immensely energetic and many-sided man, worked for the Finnish nationalist movement both in the arts and politics.¹²⁷

Again it must be emphasized how important Jalava and his Fennomnian colleagues considered the example of highly developed national consciousness as expressed in Hungarian culture and history. Jalava stressed this importance with much more force than his predecessors. His works overflow with praise for the Hungarians. The most striking characteristic of the Hungarian, according to Jalava, is his fiery love of country and national spirit. One would hardly be able to find, he continues, another people in the world whose national spirit is as highly evolved as that of the Hungarians; this is a people always prepared for sacrifice, and which unyieldingly holds fast to its nationality and language:¹²⁸

For this reason we Finns have so much to learn from the Hungarians. True, we too have attended the school of misfortune, and have had to suffer more than enough setbacks and disasters; so we are not at all inexperienced in that regard. Nevertheless, we may still have much to learn concerning the difficult art of standing unconquerable in times of misfortune, particularly in regard to politics. The action of the Hungarians during the two decades following 1848 is always a noble

¹²⁴ "Unkarialainen Deák" 1864.

¹²⁵ "Frans Deák" 1876.

¹²⁶ For example, see: *ibid.*; "Frans Deák" 1865; "Frans Deák" 1889.

¹²⁷ Tervonen 1984, pp. 68, 74–82; Kalima 1930, pp. 5–7.

¹²⁸ Jalava 1883, p. 42; Jalava 1876, p. 365.

example for us of how political justice and freedom are to be protected and struggled for, however gloomy and terrible the situation may be.¹²⁹

In his popular history of Hungary (1876) Jalava described how the country was relegated to the status of a borderland and subjected to the severe Austrian “police-state”; the country was to be culturally and administratively Germanified.¹³⁰ In connection with the Hungarian refusal in 1861 to take part in the Austrian Imperial Parliament Jalava gave the following analogy, pregnant with implications, significantly revealing the attitude toward resistance of a leading Fennomanian figure:

The situation was almost the same as if we imagine the impossible possibility that Finland’s Diet would be despotically stripped of all its constitutional power and transferred to some kind of parliament meeting in St. Petersburg ... to which the Finnish people would also be ordered to send its representatives. Of course the Finns could never participate in such a parliament, because it would mean the relinquishment of Finland’s whole constitutional autonomy and independent political status.¹³¹

The mere fact that Jalava wrote these words shows that this “impossibility” was all too conceivable and in such a case the Finns would be obliged to resist in a manner similar to the Hungarians. Jalava here succinctly states the principle of constitutional resistance and its conceivable application in Finland. There is evidence that Jalava’s work at this time was explicitly understood as diffusion of resistance culture. For example in 1878 Jalava published a translation of a popular nationalist Hungarian novel. A review of this translation in the northern Finnish newspaper *Kaiku* described the principles and practice Hungarian passive resistance and cultural defense in detail.¹³²

Like other Finns who wrote about the Hungarian struggle, Jalava quoted extensively the forceful words of resistance which Deák put forth in the name of the Hungarian people in the two Addresses to the Emperor during the Parliament of 1861.¹³³ As will be shown below, Deák’s Addresses made a significant contribution to the development of the Finnish concept of passive resistance.

Jalava’s biographers are strangely silent about the details of his politics; it is clear that he was among the avant garde of the Fennoma-

¹²⁹ Jalava 1876, p. 362.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 54.

¹³² “Käynti kirjakaupassa” 1878.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 54–57.

nians, but it is not at all clear to which political division of the Fennomaniacs he belonged during the period of passive resistance, 1899–1905. His writings on Hungary after the February Manifesto of 1899, however, seem to indicate that he did not adhere to the extreme compliant position, although he did side with the compliants in certain matters.¹³⁴ In a series of lectures delivered in 1898 Jalava again stressed how much the Finns have to learn from Hungarian history, “particularly in our present circumstances.” Here he also presented a Deákean form of cultural defense clearly applicable to Finnish conditions.¹³⁵

In 1902, in the middle of the Bobrikov period, Jalava published a one hundred seventy-seven page study of the life and politics of Deák. The fact that the book was allowed to be published is probably because its author was a Fennomaniac. Another possibility is that its subject matter was so foreign to the authorities that they did not deem censorship necessary. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that, within the political context it was published, the book dealt with subjects which could have pleased neither the Russian authorities nor the extreme compliants such as Yrjö-Koskinen; the tone of the opening pages makes this perfectly clear.¹³⁶ Jalava expressly described Deák’s tactics of noncooperation and refusal as “passive resistance” at a time when the compliant Finns were condemning it.¹³⁷ Jalava quoted page after page of Deák’s radical words expressing refusal to submit to Austrian demands. He went on to describe in detail the specific forms which resistance took throughout Hungary.¹³⁸ Although Jalava did not explicitly call on the Finns to emulate the Hungarian resisters, he could have hardly intended anything else. The character of his earlier works on Hungary as a model for Finland support this interpretation. Besides, if he were in agreement with the extreme compliants he would have explicitly condemned passive resistance just as they did.

That Jalava considered Deák the preeminent prototype of resistance leadership for Finland is revealed in his correspondence, which I have explored for references to passive resistance. As mentioned earlier, Jalava’s work was preceded by an old tradition of cross-cultural exchange, much of which took place through direct personal contacts between members of the nationalist elites in Hungary and Finland. Of direct pertinence here is Jalava’s cordial communication with the Hungarian expert on Finnish culture and language József Szinnyei

¹³⁴ Reuter 1928, p. 318.

¹³⁵ Quoted in I. Jalava 1948, pp. 375–376.

¹³⁶ Jalava 1902, pp. 1–3, 7.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, for example pp. 108–125.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 92, 126–127.

(1857–1943) from 1880 to Jalava's death in 1909. Already in 1880 Jalava had conceived of a major work dealing with the political thought and action of Deák. He discussed the conception of this work with Szinnyei and asked him for information. In the light of what he explicitly wrote to Szinnyei at that time all the material he published throughout the years on Hungary can be seen as a kind of a preface to his book *Frans Deák* (1902).¹³⁹

On 13 March 1881 Tsar Alexander II was assassinated by members of the revolutionary People's Will. On that same day Jalava wrote to Szinnyei with sorrow and apprehension concerning the tsar's death. He relates that Finnish apprehension is heightened by the fact that it is not known in which direction matters will proceed in St. Petersburg: perhaps even revolution is coming. Moreover,

we do not know if the Emperor will reconfirm our constitution and our special political status as his forerunners did. Who would even raise their little finger in our defense if our special status were violently taken from us? If only we had an army, it might produce a little respect.¹⁴⁰

Jalava admits here that the military approach would be useless, especially since the new system of general conscription initiated a couple years earlier has just got under way.¹⁴¹ It is worth mentioning here that Jalava's allusion to an army supports my hypothesis, discussed below, that in spite of their public propaganda against violence the Fennomans looked forward to a time when Finland's own military power might be able to effectively serve national interests, including opposition to Russia.

It was not, however, until a decade later that the Finns were given significant concrete cause for the apprehensions referred to by Jalava. On 13 September 1890 Szinnyei wrote, complaining that Jalava had not written to him for a long time. He observes that the times are changing for the Finns:

It looks as though the Russification of Finland has begun. Very depressing; but what is most depressing is that it is impossible for you to undertake resistance and to defend your independence.¹⁴²

Whatever the future may hold, Szinnyei warns his Finnish colleague, the Russians will surely not remain satisfied with the degree of domina-

¹³⁹ Jalava to Szinnyei: Correspondence 1880–1909, 24 October and 26 October 1880.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13 March 1881.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 13 March 1881.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 13 September 1890.

tion which they have thus far achieved.¹⁴³ In his reply Jalava completely agrees with Szinnyei's warning, emphasizing that one should not give in to any illusions on this issue. He notes that the attacks against Finland's special political status in the Russian press are increasing, with the Finns being accused of separatism. Also the official plans for the imperial integration of Finland's presently autonomous postal, telegraph, customs and monetary institutions are gaining momentum. "But however things turn out" Jalava writes in obvious refutation of Szinnyei's pessimism

we will never, in spite of everything, ever become Russians, nor will we succumb to hopelessness in the least degree, convinced as we are that in the present day and age peoples cannot be destroyed by the rod and the whip as long as they do not comply with their own destruction.¹⁴⁴

This is a truly Deákean statement of the principle of voluntary servitude; and it is no surprise that at the end of this letter Jalava relates to his friend his present endeavors to make Deák and "the Hungarian's passive resistance" known to the, Finns because of their special relevance to the current situation in Finland.¹⁴⁵ Jalava's next letter, however, communicates the kind of resignation to which he claimed he and his people would never succumb. Moreover, "armed opposition of any kind is inconceivable, it would be forthright insanity ... perdition; it is necessary, as always with the weak and small ... to suffer and await a better time."¹⁴⁶

As in 1881, the "Russification" feared by Finns in 1890 was not carried out right away. Conflict between the opponents and defenders of Finland's autonomy remained for the most part on a literary level until 1899. Correspondence between the two men shows that Jalava supplied Szinnyei with some of the main pamphlets and books of this on-going polemic. Jalava's letters to Szinnyei between November 1895 and December 1904 are missing; nevertheless, Szinnyei's letters reveal that well before the February Manifesto of 1899 Jalava renewed his inquiries concerning the Hungarian resistance tradition. For example, in a seven page letter of 30 April 1898 Szinnyei expresses his delight that Jalava will be conducting lectures on Hungarian "national development," and then proceeds to provide concrete details concerning a variety of aspects of the Hungarian movement to refuse to

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 13 September 1890.

¹⁴⁴ Jalava to Szinnyei, 29 September 1890.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 29 September 1890.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 15 December 1890.

cooperate with the Austrians in all areas of life.¹⁴⁷ Through the coming years Jalava carried on his teaching concerning Deák and Hungarian resistance. In August of 1902 Szinnyei wrote, congratulating Jalava: “its a pleasure to hear that your lectures on Deák have attained such great popularity ... such lectures are in present circumstances very beneficial.”¹⁴⁸

Four months later Szinnyei was again congratulating Jalava, this time for his new “very successful book,” *Frans Deák*.¹⁴⁹ As mentioned, this book was published in the midst of Finno-Russian crisis. Szinnyei sought to assure his friend that he agrees with him that all is not lost, “because the Finnish people possesses qualities which will help it endure days of hardship until the dawn of a brighter time.”¹⁵⁰ Here again Szinnyei brings up the topic of passive resistance, citing details from historical research as well as from his own boyhood memories. He explains the relative lack of primary sources on the Hungarian resistance by the fact that although passive resistance was practiced universally (even by “nationalities which were enemy to us” living in Hungary) people did not dare to leave remains such as diaries and notes concerning their activities.¹⁵¹

Thanks to the investigations of men like Jalava, and Szinnyei and their Fennomanian predecessors the Hungarian resistance became a much cited and discussed example in Finland after 1898. For example, the model of the Hungarian women’s resistance to the Germanification of household life and the education of the young was propagated on a mass scale among Finnish women in 1902.¹⁵² It was during that time that the conservative Fennomanians, like Meurman and his influential colleague Aksel August Granfelt, vigorously turned against the Hungarian model.¹⁵³ When seen through their eyes, and through Paasikivi’s later interpretation, the propagation of the Hungarian model appears as the work of misguided radicals rather than as a consequence of Fennomanian cultural inquiry and development.

¹⁴⁷ Szinnyei to Jalava, 30 April 1898.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 29 August 1902

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 24 December 1902.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 24 December 1902.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 24 December 1902.

¹⁵² Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 1, p. 349–350.

¹⁵³ Meurman 1903, p. 4; Meurman *Muistelmia*, 276; Granfelt 1905, pp. 8–16.

6. The Political Culture of Constitutionalist Resistance

The Finnish Diet was convened in 1863 and a process of Diet reform was initiated. The more radical attempts for constitutional assertion were, however, thwarted. Although the Russian authorities would not allow the creation of an altogether new constitution or, for example, the transformation of the Senate into a parliamentary government, the new Diet Act ratified in 1869 did represent a victory for reformers. The constitutional duties of the tsar and the Diet were more clearly defined. The tsar was now obliged to convene the Diet at regular intervals, which in practice came to every three years.

Although this period of reform paved the way for unprecedented political activity, no wide-scale broadening of the base of representation through suffrage extension took place. To be sure, the structure of the old Estate society dissolved, undergoing transformations characteristic of modern society (e.g., the formation of the capitalist strata and correspondingly the working class). Yet the upper class of Finnish society remained relatively closed. In general both Fennomanian conservatives and liberals opposed sociopolitical democratization. That political participation remained the prerogative of the elite is shown by the fact that on the eve of the establishment of the unicameral parliament in 1906 only about one tenth of the adult population was represented by the four Estates of the Finnish Diet.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, the various political ideologies which matured during the latter half of the nineteenth century were confined, for the most part, to the upper classes. Only with the intensification of the Finno-Russian crisis beginning in 1899 did nationalism spread on a truly wide scale; by that time it could no longer be confined to the narrow limitations dictated by the more conservative Fennomanians.

Liberalism Between Two Manias

The sociopolitical activity of the educated and politically represented upper strata of Finnish society in the decades preceding 1899 can be roughly divided into three categories, Fennomania, Svecomania and

¹⁵⁴ Between 1881 and 1910 the population of Finland increased from 2,061,000 to 2,656,000.

liberalism. The problem of the entrenchment of the Swedish language in Finnish administrative and cultural life became a highly controversial issue: the so-called “language struggle” was one of the central factors determining the structure of Finnish politics. The Finnish Diet became roughly polarized along language struggle lines, with the Estates of the Clergy and the Peasantry dominated by the Fennomanians and the Nobility and the Burghers by the Svecomanians.

Between the very active and vocal extremists of both sides there existed a broad spectrum of attitudes concerning the language question and related issues. It was during the very period of the political intensification of the language struggle that the liberal current of political thought began to mature among people associated with both camps. Although initially cooperation between liberals or constitutionalist nationalists was to be hindered almost to the point of impossibility by the limits dictated by the language struggle, liberalism ultimately paved the way for new political configurations and more multifarious cooperation, undermining the dominance of the language question and isolating the more fanatical leaders of both sides.

Liberal and constitutionalist tendencies had been present in Finnish political thinking at least since the period of revolution in Europe in 1848. As has been seen, the events of 1861 were a major stimulus for liberal mobilization. In November of 1880 fifty-three influential heirs to the events of 1861, all in positions of considerable authority, considered it necessary to issue a concise statement of the fundamental principles and aims of liberalism. This is a very important statement of constitutionalist ideology – one might even say mythology. It is a manifesto for the freedom and justice of a European bourgeois elite against absolutism. As they saw it, the liberal principles which they espoused had been a fundamental part of Finnish political life ever since 1860.¹⁵⁵ The stated purpose of this Program of the Liberal Party – Finland’s first party program – was to consolidate liberal ranks, attract new support and to dispel the mistrust and misconceptions of liberalism purposely aroused by its opponents. The aim, however, was not to go so far as to create a formal party organization.¹⁵⁶

The stated guiding principle of the liberal project was to further the development of justice within the given historical circumstances.¹⁵⁷ However, before presenting and elaborating their immediate concrete

¹⁵⁵ “Liberaalisen puolueen ohjelma” 1965, pp. 12–20.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

proposals these liberals revealed their interpretation of the European constitutionalist doctrine of resistance and revolution as adapted to Finnish conditions:

In those states where despotism has firmly set itself against the demands of the spirit of the times or where time has not left behind any suitable groundwork for progress, let necessity act to bring about improvements through sudden transformation to an entirely new foundation.... But Finland has already for five hundred years been part of a system of justice the fundamental features of which have of old been: the right of free trade, freedom under law, limited monarchy, recognition of the peoples' will in legislation and taxation....¹⁵⁸

The authors see these features as the core of their society's institutions which are pervaded by a "liberal and national spirit." Furthermore:

The task of each generation is, in accordance with its requirements and ideals, to expand, strengthen and beautify that societal-structure which it has received as an inheritance from its forefathers.¹⁵⁹

To leave such reform work undone, they claim, may lead to destruction. The concrete reforms proposed in this document follow the basic motive of the liberals to put "a constitutional system more surely and more perfectly into effect in our country."¹⁶⁰

The seventy-five year old J.V. Snellman reacted with a ferocious and abusive diatribe against the liberal program. He called it a contract among those who up till now have alone controlled culture, wealth and power; they are all good for nothing, ignorant and full of empty rhetoric.¹⁶¹ To call them "liberal" is a bad joke, it is absolutely ridiculous. Furthermore, he thinks them outright deceptive for claiming responsibility for Finland's economic and sociopolitical progress. Most important for this study is Snellman's perception that the program is a statement of aggression in relation to Russia: "... what in God's name is going on? Are we being threatened by an invasion, is the danger so close?"¹⁶² Obviously he thought the liberal demand for a clearer definition of Finland's status to be an extreme provocation. The liberal and moderate wing of the Fennomanians were open enough to speak of what they saw as the promising points of the liberal program. They also noted as a good sign that not all its signers were adherents of

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 13

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁶¹ Snellman 1930b, *passim*.

¹⁶² Ibid., pp. 526-532.

Svecomania. Over all, however, they retained an aloof distrust of the faction behind the program, adopting a wait-and-see attitude. They saw the program as a poor work, full of universally acceptable vagaries. Furthermore, it was a dangerous provocation of Russia.¹⁶³

The faction of liberals which stood behind this program did not mobilize a popular following. Some of them drifted into the camp of what was called the “Swedish party,” which was associated with Svecomania, while others, for the time being, remained semi-unaligned. Svecomania developed in response to the radical Fennomanian challenge. It is not difficult to understand why a great part of the Finnish upper strata, integrated as they were in the Swedish-European cultural sphere, found the demarcation of their internal cultural geography along Fennomanian lines unacceptable. The Svecomanians purposely resisted the Fennomanian pressure to convert to Finnish language culture and put forth a counter-ideology which in its extreme forms was explicitly racist.

The starting point for the politics of the Swedish party’s leaders was the notion that two nationalities inhabit Finland, forming a single political whole.¹⁶⁴ They saw Swedish culture – Swedish language, literature and the Swedish constitutional heritage – as the essential condition for Finnish survival in the struggle between Western and Eastern civilization or between the West and Russia. For them it was a matter of choosing between civilization and barbarism, and they thought that the Fennomanian language struggle and cooperation with the Russians would lead to the latter.¹⁶⁵ They envisioned themselves as the heroic defenders of higher civilization against the East. But it should be added here that this attitude of representing higher civilization was common to Fennomania as well and proved to be an important ideological bridge in resistance to Russia between those of the various factions in Finnish politics not adhering to the racial-ethnic views of the extremists of either Svecomania or Fennomania. Svecomania, in its various interpretations and degrees of intensity did not dominate the Swedish party, it was counter-balanced, modified and restricted by liberalism. The Swedish party became an important organization of the liberal trend in Finnish politics.

The liberal party program of 1880 is just one outstanding indicator of the development of liberalism in Finnish political culture. There existed several clubs or societies and groups which consciously

¹⁶³ “Liberaalisen puolueen ohjelma” 1881, pp. 1–11.

¹⁶⁴ Rommi 1964, pp. 65–67.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 65–67.

cultivated the liberal tradition. One such group was taking shape among the Fennomaniacs at this time; their activities led to the split of the Fennomaniacs into the Old Finns and the Young Finns.

In the early 1860s, as the lines of internal political contention began to be drawn, some of Snellman's zealous followers, such as Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen and Agathon Meurman, began to shape Fennomania into a political platform based on language-nationalism and rigid definitions of nationality and the "historical mission of the nation." This platform explicitly ruled out pluralist politics and the possibility of cooperation over party lines.¹⁶⁶ In the most literal sense these men were authoritarian Fenno-maniacs (maniacs in the sense of zealots or fanatics) who believed that there should be only one party in Finland, the Fenno-nationalist party.

The Finnish national movement, however, was never to be confined to party limits. In this sense it is revealing to note that the first generation of educated Finns to truly master the Finnish language from childhood on, in all its literary and political aspects, rejected the more fanatical and sociopolitically conservative restrictions of the nationalism of their predecessors. As this new generation came to its own in the 1880s it combined a liberalized language-nationalism (purged of Hegelism) with the emerging scientific world-view and a heightened awareness of social issues which made a broader base for political cooperation and pluralism. Again it must be emphasized that these are changes which were taking place in the upper strata of Finnish society, an upper strata which on the whole remained conservative in regard to the majority of the people in Finland. It would not be long before this upper strata would be called the "bourgeoisie," a bourgeoisie on the road to violent confrontation with socialist Finland.

One of the landmarks in the formation of the Fennomaniac liberal current is an article entitled "Reflections on the Parties of the Diet of 1877-1878," written in 1878 by Ernst Gustav Palmén (1884-1911), a prominent historian and statesman. Meurman's article on Finnish liberalism and passive resistance discussed at the beginning of this chapter was an explicit attack against Palmén's article. Obviously Meurman saw Palmén as a dangerous new threat: here was an innovative writer on the political cultural stage, writing in Finnish, prophesying and advocating the division of Fennomania. Palmén had a keen sense of history. He saw that what they called the "Finnish people" was something entirely new: "it is just as though our national and social

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 17-18.

life is yesterday's child ... a truly-national culture is just now being born among us";¹⁶⁷ and even the younger participants in the recent Diet had virtually witnessed the making of the now de facto "political independence" of Finland with their own eyes.¹⁶⁸ By calling this a "contradiction which seems extraordinarily odd" Palmén showed an unusual understanding of nationalism: The Finnish nation has its roots in cultural structures which reach back far into time, but what is now the Finnish nation, Palmén explains, is the fruit of the total restructuration of Finnish sociopolitical and economic life after 1860.¹⁶⁹

Palmén pays great homage to the liberal activists of the 1860s, seeing them as both nationalist and cosmopolitan. One feels that here he is pointing out a precedent for his own viewpoint, because he provides the example of a prominent liberal from that time who simultaneously worked for a freer social system as the foundation of national culture and strongly emphasized the need for a system in which the majority of Finns are represented through their own language.¹⁷⁰ Palmén then proceeds, however, to go into a sharp and detailed criticism the contemporary liberal faction, many of which would be among those to sign the liberal party program in 1880. He shows a sincere appreciation for the positive accomplishments of the liberals, but points out the many ways in which liberalism has hypocritically become a front for reaction and narrow-mindedness. Everywhere the so-called liberals fight for free enterprise and constitutionalism, while at the same time consistently blocking the progress of the Finnish language in administration and education. One of the major messages of this article is that politics must not be carried out on the terms of the reactionary liberals associated with the Swedish party and the Svecomanians.

Palmén's criticism of the Fennomanians is much more subtle, and he pays due reverence to Snellman, Meurman and Yrjö-Koskinen. But along with his often repeated sincere expressions of reverence he certainly offered the Fennomanian patriarchs strong medicine. His advice was that "Fennomanian liberals" and "Fennomanian conservatives" must form separate parties, a move which would provide a stronger foundation for the Finnish nationalist cause while preventing extremists of any persuasion from leading nationalism.¹⁷¹

Palmén's article was published in *Kirjallinen Kuukausilehti*, the

¹⁶⁷ Palmén 1878, p. 42.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.43.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 45.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 265–263.

literary monthly of the Fennomans. Two years later, in December of 1880, Palmén and his associates founded a new Finnish language journal, *Valvoja* (the Guardian), which was soon to take a central place in Finnish cultural life. In 1906 one of the founders reflected back on the “prehistory” of the *Valvoja* circle. He explains that it originated among a circle of friends at the University in Helsinki in the 1870s. They were inspired by the liberal spirit of the times, and their attitude can be characterized as one of optimism, belief in progress and rejection of the old. They admired John Stuart Mill, Darwin and modern science in general, and were out to overthrow Hegel. At an early stage they were conscious of synthesizing Finnish nationalism and liberalism. They saw the old Fennomans as reactionary, dogmatic, anti-scientific and the old liberals as downright hypocrites. They set out purposely to undermine the prevailing cultural political configuration and provide a new point of departure for liberals.¹⁷²

Liberalism and assertive constitutionalism can be seen as the general cultural foundation of passive resistance after 1898. Before examining some of the more particular ideological and organizational precursors of the passive resistance movement it is in place to present some remarks on the military in Finland.

Nationhood and the Military

The study of resistance and contention in Finland, although focusing on nonmilitary cultural defense and passive resistance, would be incomplete without providing an understanding of the role of armed force in Finnish society. Furthermore, what came to be called the “military question” was to become one of the central points of contention in the clash between Finnish autonomy and Russian imperial interests.

Before the twentieth century there were no armed rebellions, or even noteworthy schemes for armed struggle, against Russia in Finland. Throughout the century, however, Finnish statesmen agreed, with very few exceptions, that their country needed its own military system. The literary figures of the nationalist movement very effectively cultivated and propagated the basic myths, or narratives, of military heroism and values.¹⁷³ Behind the scene of Finnish concepts of peaceful coexistence one finds lingering a hidden spirit of resistance which persisted in

¹⁷² Tudeer 1906, pp. 1–9.

¹⁷³ Niemi 1980, see chapter VIII and English summary, pp. 159–169.

various degrees of latency throughout the entire period of Russian rule. In this hidden tradition peaceful cultural defense and construction was conceived as preparation for a time to come when open rebellion to “loathsomely cunning” Russian repression would be possible.¹⁷⁴ Finland’s only chance was seen to lie in an international challenge to Russian power from the West and East. As Matias Aleksanteri Castrén, the first university professor of the Finnish language, put it in a letter to his colleague Snellman in 1844:

Then we from the Finnish swamps will also rise, shouting destruction to the Muscovites. But until that time, thus thinking, we must refrain from all clamor, particularly since resistance will not be tolerated, neither can it be carried out.¹⁷⁵

Castrén straightforwardly wrote that linguistic science was for him merely a weapon of nationalism. He set out to demonstrate to the Finnish people their place in world history. He is the perfect example of a Finnish nationalist who could not accept the Snellman, and later conservative Fennomanian, line maintaining the mutual exclusivity of the struggle for political freedom and cultural defense.¹⁷⁶ The linguistic work, nationalistic mission and attitude toward resistance of M.A. Castrén cannot but bring to mind the work and ideas of the Fennomanian Antti Jalava many decades later.¹⁷⁷

In connection with European-wide armament escalation and efforts to more systematically mobilize human resources for military endeavors on behalf of nation-states, imperial Russia adopted universal conscription in 1874. Finnish political decision makers recognized that the only alternative to participation in the imperial army would be the formation of their own military forces. In one of those concessionary moves by which the Russian rulers favored Finnish autonomy, the tsar signed the Finnish National Conscription Act in 1878, allowing for the formation of a separate army. This did not, however, take place without the objections of important Russian officials, and was restricted to a ten year trial period.¹⁷⁸

The Conscription Act of 1878 was preceded by a series of debates which are highly significant in revealing the psychological role of the

¹⁷⁴ Castrén 1931, pp. 119–121.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 119–121.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 119–121.

¹⁷⁷ It also brings to mind other prominent Fennomanians such as the ethnologist Otto Donner and the historian and statistician K.F. Ignatius, both of whom were staunch advocates of resistance.

¹⁷⁸ For the history of the Finnish Conscription Act, see Seitkari 1951.

military in Finnish history, just as very similar debates did throughout Europe. On the concrete level there was no major mobilization of Finnish armed forces until the revolutionary period preceding 1918. But Finnish troops did, indeed, participate in crushing the Polish rebellion in the 1830s and in fighting off the British during the Crimean War (1854–1856). Both events contributed to the maintenance of martial spirit in Finland.

Early in the century the elite of Finnish decision makers realized the internal benefits a more comprehensive military system would have for establishing social coherence and order. They sought unsuccessfully to convince Tsar Alexander I that a reorganized independent Finnish army would serve Russian interests. They saw an essential role for the army in developing the “national spirit,” in mobilizing the masses for the purpose of the emerging modern nation by instilling them with a firm sense of obedience, order and a will-to-labor through the army as an instrument of national education.¹⁷⁹ Yrjö-Koskinen expressed the view of the centrality of the military in nationhood in 1870 thusly: “We cannot be the only people in the world to stand weaponless if we want to retain our small place among nations”;¹⁸⁰ and in 1876 he put it this way:

The Finnish people has slowly, step by step, risen to maturity; now the highest distinction of maturity, military capacity [*aseellisuus*], must be granted to it. The bearing of arms ... is the prime condition for the survival of nations.¹⁸¹

Only through the attainment of military power, asserts Yrjö-Koskinen, do nations “become real individuals [*henkilöiksi*, persons] in the perfect sense.”¹⁸²

As Snellman expressed it, a country with a constitutional system does not enjoy its full rights unless it can defend itself against internal and external enemies through armed force. He, like other influential Finns, looked to the Swiss and Prussian military systems as models. Snellman put forth another argument which is strikingly similar to one of the central premises of today’s Finnish military establishment. He claimed that Finland could only attain credibility and respect for its autonomous status in the eyes of Russia, and thus ensure its survival, by developing the capacity to assist in the defense of the Empire; but

¹⁷⁹ Danielson–Kalmari 1922, pp. 147–186.

¹⁸⁰ Yrjö-Koskinen 1870, p. 318.

¹⁸¹ Yrjö-Koskinen 1876, p. 12.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

only on Finnish soil, of course. Behind this view is the recurrent idea in Finnish political tradition that Finland must be able to fight for itself or Russia will do it.¹⁸³ It also contains the seeds of one of the dilemmas in Finnish politics: Where is the borderline between the credibility of Finnish military force in harmonizing with Russian interests and, contrariwise, when does such armed force pose a threat to those interests, giving rise to mistrust regarding Finnish armament and political intentions in general?

The Legal Battle and Early Russification¹⁸⁴

The military question came to play an important role in triggering off the “era of Russian oppression” in 1899. Earlier it was observed that the primary motives for the Russian occupation of Finland were military, not colonial or imperialistic in the economic sense. The crisis beginning in 1899, however, was in no way confined to problems of military strategy. In the second half of the nineteenth century a whole set of unfavorable circumstances for Finnish autonomy developed. Among them were: increasingly fanatic Russian nationalism; awareness in Russian ruling circles of the growing military threat of Germany and her allies and; social unrest and Russian revolutionary mobilization. The military question became the instrument and rationale for the effort to assimilate or Russify Finland. As the Russian Minister of War A.N. Kuropatkin expressed it in 1893:

The essential defensive and security interests of the Empire in the direction of Finland require that this borderland near the capital [St. Petersburg] be more swiftly and completely assimilated into the tsardom than others.¹⁸⁵

Just as Finnish leaders saw military service as a means of education and a way of mobilizing the masses for the aims of the nation-state, Kuropatkin and his colleagues saw the integration of Finnish troops into the Russian army as a central means for the assimilation of Finland into the Empire. This would organize the Finns for the cause of Russian nationalism. Gradually the Russian policy of dealing with the Finns through appeasement and concessions was abandoned. During the era

¹⁸³ Seitkari 1951, pp. 80, 83, 92–93; Rein 1928, p. 547.

¹⁸⁴ For the broad background of Russification, see Thaden 1981.

¹⁸⁵ Quoted in Polvinen 1984, pp. 77–78.

of crisis, according to the Paasikivian view, Finland was overwhelmingly pressed by a combination of “realistic” Russian security interests and an imbroglio of irrational factors which made coexistence extremely difficult. This estranged and embittered the once loyal Finns. Paasikivi described this irrationality from the Finnish point of view in its hopeless extreme by quoting the words of Dostoevsky: “We hope peace for all people, we desire good for the whole world, but first this world must become Russian – yes, thoroughly Russian.”¹⁸⁶

During the decades preceding the February Manifesto of 1899 and the new governor-general’s program for the administrative and cultural Russification of Finland, the Finnish political literati met the increasing attacks of the “Finland eaters” through the means of the “Legal Battle.” This can be characterized as a long drawn out propaganda struggle. It was waged between the ideologists of both sides – mostly historians, legal experts and journalists with political influence – on the pages of the domestic and international press and in highly polemical scholarly works. The principles of constitutional defense provided the foundation for a common Legal Battle front among the whole range of otherwise factional Fennomanians and liberals.¹⁸⁷

For the Finns the Legal Battle was the struggle to defend the autonomous Finnish political system as it had developed through the decades. It became, moreover, a struggle for “justice” with this term referring to far more than legal formalities.¹⁸⁸ On the one hand there was Russian justice, the Russian nationalist morality with its aggressive assertion of despotism, autocracy, Russian language, Orthodox Christianity and Slavic ethnic superiority. On the other hand was Finnish upper class justice, based on its distinct national political culture. Here were two potentially mutually exclusive moral systems, two truths, two Rights, on a course of collision, perhaps ultimately with no objective truth or justice to referee. Both were on the offensive, and both were on the defensive. The legal groundwork which had hitherto provided a pragmatic mode of cooperation between the two was becoming increasingly offensive to Russian nationalists.

In the Legal Battle, Finnish truth did not have the power to compel or persuade Russian truth. Yet the ideological and organizational heritage of the Legal Battle was later to form an essential part of the passive resistance movement. This relationship can be illustrated by

¹⁸⁶ Paasikivi 1957a, pp. 30–32.

¹⁸⁷ For the history of the Legal Battle, see Torvinen 1965.

¹⁸⁸ “Justice” as understood here in the broadest possible sense to indicate the social ideal or field of values upon which just resistance is based.

the example of the work of Leo Mechelin (1839–1914).¹⁸⁹ Mechelin was the embodiment of Legal Battle and assertive elitist constitutionalism. During his influential career he worked as a legal scholar, professor of law, Diet representative, and senator and carried out a host of other political and cultural activities. The liberal program of 1880 was to a great extent his work. Already by the mid-1870s Mechelin began to spearhead official Finnish efforts to refute alleged Russian misconceptions of, and attacks against, Finnish justice. In the coming decades he wrote a profusion of pamphlets and articles in defense of Finland; many of them were published throughout Europe in a variety of languages.

Mechelin was Finland's foremost pioneer in caring for the Finnish national image abroad and raising the Legal Battle onto the international stage, a task which he carried out in a systematic manner. His most famous and controversial work was *Précis du droit public de la Grand-duché de Finlande* of 1886. More than any other, this work internationally spread the concept of Finland's separate political existence. Its English translation (*A Précis of the Law of Finland*) was delivered to Gladstone and even distributed in the English Parliament.¹⁹⁰ This work was met with fierce counter-attacks by Russian nationalist ideologists. At home conservative Fennomans saw Mechelin's work as recklessly bold and provocative, a danger to Finno-Russian relations. Nevertheless, Mechelin was joined in the Legal Battle by Fennomans and liberals alike.

Mechelin played a key role in incorporating the international and domestic organization of the Legal Battle into passive resistance after 1898. Nevertheless, like many of his colleagues who belonged to the older generation he apparently was not an instigator of passive resistance in its more active or radical forms. This is not surprising considering that he was clearly no advocate of the swift expansion of popular democracy. Nonetheless, he expressly endorsed passive resistance at all stages of the struggle, and was among those who were prepared to further radicalize the Constitutionalist, and Finnish-particularist, struggle against the Russian regime if certain necessary conditions were realized.

By the early 1880s, after a couple of decades of development, nationalist Pan Slavism and Slavophilism had become powerful influences in Russian official circles. During the reign of Tsar Alexander III (1881–1894), a series of moves were taken to redefine Finland's juridic-politic-

¹⁸⁹ The most exhaustive biography of Mechelin is Nordenstreng 1936, 1937.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 110–115.

al status within the Empire, including plans for a new Form of Government. Yet the more comprehensive designs of the Russian nationalists for what Finns perceived as a coup d'état were not entirely approved of by Alexander and were therefore frozen until the reign of Nicholas II.¹⁹¹ This period saw the assimilation of Finland's hitherto independent postal system into that of Russia, but the planned abolition of the Finnish customs administration, monetary system and army were left for the future.

The Mass Organizational Predecessors of Post-1898 Resistance

As mentioned, Fennomania was never confined to formal political party limits: it was above all a sociopolitical cultural movement. The activist core of Fennomania was composed of zealous educators. In 1874 they founded an organization called the *Kansanvalistusseura* or the Society for the Enlightenment of the People. Its aim was the authoritarian formation, civilization and education of the people, and its motto was "light to the people."¹⁹² It created a network of 350 agents throughout the nation with the number of registered members remaining at about 5,000 until the end of the century.

The *Kansanvalistusseura* was Finland's first independent mass citizens organization, and was surpassed in membership by other associations only in the late 1880s and mid-1890s.¹⁹³ This society had a strong impact on Finnish cultural life through a wide variety of activities, such as the organization of massive festivals and the publishing and distribution of popular editions of fiction and nonfiction. Antti Jalava's work on Deák was among them. Agathon Meurman was the director of the organization for twenty years, up until 1905. Along with many of his colleagues he explicitly, in the Snellman spirit, understood education of the people as a counter-revolutionary activity, the guarantee of social order in a world of growing class confrontation. The organizational secretary of the *Kansanvalistusseura* from 1878–1905 was the physician and prominent leader of the temperance

¹⁹¹ Torvinen 1965, pp. 34–35, 175–181; on Alexander III's policies regarding Finland see Schweitzer 1978, pp. 103–372.

¹⁹² Liikanen 1987, pp. 126–127.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 130; on the emergence, development and interrelation of mass organizations in Finland, see Alapuro et al. 1987.

movement, Aksel August Granfelt (1846–1919).¹⁹⁴ Granfelt was a staunch enemy of passive resistance; he specifically sought to show that the Hungarian model was entirely invalid for Finland and was based on a misinterpretation of Hungarian history.¹⁹⁵

There are two important reasons for describing the Fennomanian popular enlightenment movement here. First it supplies the background on the anti-resistance or compliancy faction after 1898. Secondly, I would like to point out that the Fennomanian sociopolitical cultural movement provided a direct organizational precedent for the organization of the resistance network throughout Finland. Perhaps ironically, the *Kansanvalistusseura* along with the later Finnish Youth League movement helped cultivate the ground for the adroit hierarchical organization of resistance. Furthermore, many of the resistance activists had grown up in Fennomanian circles; they consciously and effectively applied the techniques of *kansanvalistus* or enlightenment of the people for the resistance movement. It is no coincidence that as resistance spread, and other groups mobilized, the Old Finn anti-resistance *Kansanvalistusseura* lost its following.

Three other movements should be mentioned as background to the era of passive resistance: the temperance movement, the youth association movement and the socialist workers' movement. As elsewhere in Europe, the temperance movement played a central role in the social organization of workers in Finland. It was initiated by the Fennomans in 1884 with the establishment of a nationwide organization, the Friends of Temperance, under the directorship of A.A. Granfelt. Membership reached 10,000 in the early 1890s and 20,000 by 1902. Not surprisingly, the aims of this Fennomanian controlled movement were closely related to those of the *Kansanvalistusseura*, namely, the formation of the common people according to the ideals of the nationalist elite. The temperance movement, however, also helped create the foundation for the more independent political organization of the workers.¹⁹⁶ By 1900 the Finnish youth association movement had established 338 branches throughout Finland with over 22,000 members. It was an ardent Finnish nationalist movement under Constitutionalist Young Finn leadership. Consequently, its organizational structure and activists became part of the passive resistance movement.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Liikanen 1987, pp. 132–137.

¹⁹⁵ Granfelt 1905.

¹⁹⁶ Sulkunen, Alapuro 1987, pp. 142–156.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 154–156.

The formation and political organization of the working class in Finland before 1905 was an exceptionally peaceful process. The early Finnish labor union activity of the 1880s was primarily under the patriarchal guidance of the upper educated strata of society. Gradual loss of faith in these leaders, however, paved the way for socialism, which began to take root in the early 1890s. Socialists, some of whom were from the educated class and had traveled extensively, gained power within the unions. By 1895 a group of socialist leaders began to rise to influence, and the newspaper *Työmies* (the Worker) became the main organ of the workers' movement's struggle for independence from "bourgeois" domination.

Increasing demands throughout workers' circles for autonomous political organization bore fruit in July of 1899; at the national Congress of Labor Union Representatives the independent Workers' Party came into existence. Although the Workers' Party did not as yet aggressively assert socialism, it is clear that the majority of representatives had already fully adopted a socialist ideology and program. It was during this time that Marxism began to have a notable influence on Finnish socialism, especially with the growing availability in Finnish of Marxist literature. In 1903 the Finnish Workers' Party was renamed as the Finnish Social Democratic Party. It adopted a program fashioned after that of the Austrian Social Democrats, which remained for decades the foundation for working class political action.¹⁹⁸ In spite of the growing bitter antipathy and ideological incompatibility existing between the workers' movement and the Constitutionalist front (each, to be sure, having their own factions as well) significant cooperation between the two in passive resistance was possible before 1905.

The Affinity of Passive Resistance and Cultural Defense

By the end of the century a complex cultural heritage of means of contention, which can be described as a repertoire of approaches to national survival, resistance and assertion in relation to Russia, had developed in Finland. These approaches can be found in various relations to one another, varying from mutual exclusivity to close interconnection depending on the point of view from which they are studied and the circumstances in which they were applied. The components of this repertoire of contention can be enumerated as follows:

¹⁹⁸ Soikkanen 1961, pp. 21, 40, 44, 47–52, 64–70; Hyvönen 1963, pp. 17, 25, 28–31, 34–35, 38–39, 54–55, 57.

1. Cultural defense: the development of an inviolable society through cultural advancement and progress in civilization;
2. Constitutionalist assertion: this developed into the so called Legal Battle of polemical literary confrontation with Russia, based on juridical and historical argumentation;
3. Compliance: the policy of accommodation or submission to Russia's will;
4. Passive resistance: a more intensive application of approaches 1. and 2. combined with a whole range of means of protest, noncooperation and struggle which excluded acts of violence against persons;
5. Violent struggle.

In the political thought of Snellman constitutionalist political assertion was to be strictly subordinated to cultural progress as a long term strategy for national development and defense. Moreover, he often saw the two as a dichotomy, as antithetical, particularly when constitutionalist assertion was given priority. Snellman associated passive resistance with extreme political assertion, with reckless, groundless revolutionary activity. He thus rejected it as contrary to Finnish cultural defense. When Meurman invoked Snellman's authority in 1878 in his attack against liberalism and passive resistance the circumstances were very different than in 1861. In the early 1860s Snellman could see passive resistance and popular demonstrations as foreign innovations advocated not only by domestic liberals, but also by agitators in Sweden who sought to stimulate strife between Finland and Russia. In the late 1870s, however, passive resistance could no longer be associated with foreign agitation. With the emergence of liberal Finnish nationalism the way was paved for its compatibility with cultural defense. Meurman could not succeed in associating Palmén with pro-Swedish anti-nationalist agitation. For his part, Palmén never became a radical passive resister, but like many Finns took a rather ambivalent middle stand between resistance and accommodation.

This ambivalent middle position tending toward accommodation and even compliance is comprehensible from the perspective of Finnish political culture. In contrast for example to the Poles, whose will for freedom expressed itself in violent rebellion and conspiracy, the Finns learned early in the nineteenth century that their security could be

greatly enhanced through conservatism, loyalty and peacefulness, which were rewarded by the Russians. Finnish policy makers made good the famous advice of an early Russian governor-general in realizing that instead of direct confrontation it was more beneficial that nothing should be heard from Finland, “neither good nor bad.”¹⁹⁹ Proof of its enduring relevance in Finnish political culture, President Urho K. Kekkonen (1956–1981) revived this principle: in the Paasikivian style he cited the notion as expressed by Yrjö-Koskinen that it is at times tactically more appropriate to pursue a “policy of remaining invisible,” a “*politique d’effacement*.”²⁰⁰ The effectiveness of the culture of mutual Finno-Russian accommodation is displayed by the fact that, in spite of serious clashes of interest, neither the Finns nor the Russians resorted to active armed force for the resolution of mutual conflicts until the revolutionary period and the intensification of international tension leading to the First World War.

The Finnish policy of accommodation should not be mistaken for some kind of pacifism or philosophy of brotherhood toward Russia. Some researchers have pointed out that there was indeed a strong expression of the value of peace, of the longing for peace, in Finnish culture which even gave rise to explicit, “Kantian,” philosophies of positive peace and, later, to a truly pacifistic movement which included Tolstoyan Christian resistance.²⁰¹ Yet, overall, the purer manifestations of pacifism remained rather limited and uninfluential. The Finnish approach can perhaps best be classified under the concepts of “realism” or “Realpolitik” as understood in the Machiavellian and Bismarckian sense of the terms.²⁰² What is remarkable here is that, perhaps in a way unique to all Europe, Finnish thinkers rejected – at least outwardly – the idea that armed force is a necessary ingredient of Realpolitik; however, as will be recalled they did see it as a highly desirable ingredient.

In tracing the genesis of the principles of passive resistance as applied after 1898 Finnish historians have attributed particular significance to a statement written by the Constitutionalist Baron Rabbe Axel Wrede (1851–1938) in 1891 entitled “Blick på ställningen i landet” (a glance at the situation in the land); his work is seen as the first formulation and manifesto of passive resistance.²⁰³ It is not difficult to understand

¹⁹⁹ Jussila 1969, pp. 162, 234.

²⁰⁰ Kekkonen, 1982, p.180.

²⁰¹ Niemi 1980, passim; Käkönen 1986, pp. 72–87.

²⁰² This interpretation is in keeping with the Paasikivian viewpoint.

²⁰³ For a few examples, among others, see Estlander 1931, pp. 228–231; Federley 1958, pp. 121–122; Hyvämäki 1960, p. 78; Rommi 1964, pp. 108–109.

why Wrede's work is interpreted as the first statement of passive resistance. In October of 1900, nine years after it had spread in handwritten form among the whole Finnish intelligentsia, the resisters reprinted Wrede's work in their underground press; it was thus circulated in thousands of copies in both Swedish and Finnish.²⁰⁴

Nevertheless, in the 1900 forward to Wrede's paper the resistance editors do not say that it is somehow monumental or unique in the history of the resistance tradition. They simply reprint it as a noteworthy statement of relevance for the present time. They are also careful to place it in the larger context of the constitutional conflict going on when it was written.²⁰⁵ Years later J.N. Reuter, the former secretary of the resistance organization and one of the main chroniclers of the resistance movement, gave Wrede's statement an outstanding place in the struggle against "violations of Finland's law [justice, *rätt*] before 1899."²⁰⁶ He cites and analyses the work at length, commenting that: "of most significance in this interesting document is, however, Wrede's formulation of the program for resistance conceived of on legal grounds, which was to be applied later during the 'years of oppression'."²⁰⁷

There is nothing inappropriate, of course, with using Wrede's paper as a convenient example and expression of pre-1899 constitutional resistance thought. Nevertheless, its significance within its own ideological context should not be exaggerated. Nor should undue direct and singular causal influence be attributed to it in relation to later resistance thought. It was one part of broader heritage. As Wrede himself expressed it at that time, the principles of resistance which he advocated were well known (Snellman, for that matter, had already said the same thing in 1861).²⁰⁸ Moreover, fixation on Reuter's interpretation of Wrede's significance serves the cause of those who, following the Meurman tradition, seek to label passive resistance as the invention of the Swedish party faction, to which Wrede did indeed belong. Just to show how misleading it is to attribute the formulation or invention of passive resistance to one faction or one man, one can interpret the facts to show that Meurman himself was one of the outstanding predecessors of passive resistance. This example is no mere contrivance since the resistance writers themselves appealed to Meurman's earlier work, just as they did to Wrede's.

²⁰⁴ Wrede 1891.

²⁰⁵ *Fria Ord/Vapaita Sanoja*, 2 October 1900, p. 1.

²⁰⁶ Reuter 1928, pp. 1–18.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

²⁰⁸ Wrede 1891, p. 1.

At the end of 1902 the resistance organization reprinted and distributed 25,000 copies of one of Meurman's defenses of Finnish legal morality which first appeared as a newspaper article and then as a leaflet in 1890.²⁰⁹ In this article Meurman appears as a forthright fighter in the current Legal Battle polemical confrontation with the Russian nationalist denigrators of the Finnish constitutional heritage. Against these Russian attacks Meurman seeks to protect the Finns' international reputation for "deep respect for the law."²¹⁰ When the Finn comprehends what law requires he "submits without argument. Law is holy, that is all."²¹¹ This obedience to law is the foundation for the whole "societal order which is the prerequisite not only of our development but of our existence as well."²¹² Meurman maintains that as the bone of contention between two predominant powers Finland has survived solely by persevering on the indestructible foundation of legality and honesty: "Even in the most awful circumstances it has not asked what perhaps might momentarily appear expedient, but only what is right and what duty demands."²¹³

Meurman expresses the profound indignation of the Finns toward the claim by anti-Finnish Russian newspapers that the tsar is not bound to maintain the fundamental laws of Finland holy and inviolable, but may change them arbitrarily at will. He sees the doctrine of the arbitrariness of law as a tremendous threat to social order. In forceful defiance he pronounces that

we thinking Finns will at all times resist this doctrine from the depths of our hearts. Our doctrine is, and will remain in all confrontations: persevere relentlessly on the road of law and duty no matter how you are violated. Whatever tempests may occur, heaven will finally redeem him who stays on the road of justice and eternal truth. Justice will prevail in the end.²¹⁴

For good measure, as an epilogue to Meurman's declaration, the resisters included a citation from the influential university lectures of the Fennomaniac jurist Jaakko Forsman (d. 1899). Forsman was Yrjö-Koskinen's brother – whose name was originally Forsman – and close political associate. The topic of this citation is the right and duty of officials or lesser magistrates to disobey their superiors. It straight-

²⁰⁹ Reuter 1928, p. 330; Estlander 1945, pp. 260–261.

²¹⁰ Meurman 1902a.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

forwardly emphasizes that if the measures of a superior official are illegal or lack legal justification then lesser officials are obliged to disobey. If they do not do so they are also guilty.²¹⁵

Like Forsman, Wrede was one of Finland's foremost legal scholars. For many years he was a leader in the Diet, working particularly on legislative committees, and he later made a significant contribution to the foundation of the legal system of independent Finland. His statement of 1891 is a detailed analysis of the country's political situation. On the background of the recent imperial integration measures and the express plans of the Russian nationalists in regard to Finland, Wrede sees a very dismal future for his country. If these plans are put into effect little will remain of Finland's political institutions and fundamental laws: Finland will be reduced to a mere dominion, and its Western political culture will be destroyed.²¹⁶ Wrede discusses how the Finnish officials, press and citizenry had thus far reacted to the crisis and how he thought they should act in the future. Among the details of this discussion is found Wrede's famous concise statement of the principles of such action. Wrede observes that it hardly needs to be mentioned that only "peaceful and legal means" are acceptable for the Finns; this is a self-evident fact which follows from the respect for law and loyalty to the ruler which have been long-time hallmarks of "our people".²¹⁷

Moreover, there exist certain means which we have not only the right, but also the duty to use. It has often been said that we must set ourselves on the sturdy foundation of legality, never on any condition departing from it. Thus we must always, when need be, defend our fundamental laws [*grundlagar*] in word and deed; we must always obey the law ourselves, even in apparently insignificant matters. We must never cooperate with the violation of our constitution [*örfattning*] and never recognize illegal measures as legal or justified.²¹⁸

These excerpts from the writings of Meurman, Forsman and Wrede are expression of a common political culture. This culture provided the ideological foundation for radical Constitutionalist resistance following 1898. When the resisters invoked Meurman's words in 1902 they were doing so as an act of agitation and propaganda. They sought to reveal the hypocrisy of Meurman and the compliants in general. They certainly felt more affinity for Wrede. This is because (in spite

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Wrede 1891, p. 1.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

of the fact that Wrede and Meurman shared a common mental cosmology and both agreed that the Russian regime was violating Finnish law) Wrede continued to staunchly adhere to the principles which they both declared in 1890–1891 while Meurman yielded. Moreover, conservative Fennomaniacs like Meurman and Yrjö-Koskinen held a deep set fanatic animosity and political rivalry for Wrede and his colleagues which made it difficult for them to cooperate on the basis of their common political-cultural heritage. It was the Fennomaniac extremists which helped blur for posterity the fact that passive resistance had a broad basis in Finnish society and was not masterminded by the Svecomanian elite.

Wrede's 1891 statement of the basics of Finnish legal morality was, then, by no means ideologically unique. As has been seen in the previous section dealing with Hungary, Fennomaniacs had been cultivating the ideological ground for resistance from the 1860s on just as much as their political rivals. Jalava's published and private writings and inquiries from the late 1870s onward are ample proof of this. Obviously Jalava was not working in a vacuum. Take for example an essay written in 1883 for a minor newspaper far away from the capital in the northern city of Oulu by an eighteen year old student. This young man explains to his readers that "we" must remain in accord with Russia if at all possible, since "open rebellion" and "public struggle" against it under present conditions is impossible.²¹⁹ The language issue is no longer of foremost concern; the Finns must now prepare themselves for the worst in relation to Russia. He advises them to practice "passive resistance against Russianness [*venäläisyyttä*]" in all aspects of national life to awaken and strengthen national awareness and to make it clear to every member of "our" nation that "we are not Russia's subjects."²²⁰

This youth, whose name was Kaarlo Ståhlberg (1865–1952), had been raised in the most Fennomaniac of environments. He went on to join the Constitutionalist front after 1898, becoming a significant organizer of resistance. Later he became the first president of the independent Republic of Finland. It is obvious that the "passive resistance" which he spoke of at the tender age of eighteen was an idea that had already been internalized by people throughout the nation. Ståhlberg's statement of 1883 looks like Snellmanian cultural defense combined with openly defiant passive resistance. For the later Ståhlberg passive resistance was to mean systematic noncooperation and organized defiance. It is, however, unclear exactly what he meant

²¹⁹ As quoted in Blomstedt 1969, pp. 26–27.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27.

by the term when he was eighteen; it was probably equivocal to most of people who employed it as well.

When, in 1900, Arvid Neovius wrote that the concept of passive resistance has its own clearly definable essence he was only partially correct. Obviously what he, as an ideologist, was aiming to do was to put forth one interpretation of passive resistance as the right one. But there existed other interpretations and the question of what types of action passive resistance was to include or exclude always remained controversial. For Snellman passive resistance was an internationally known weapon of radical constitutionalism, a revolutionary type of action. Snellman, however, also knew of another more passive type of passive resistance which he described as characteristic of the Finnish people at an earlier time. Meurman also knew of this distinction. He associated radical passive resistance with the constitutionalist activists of 1861 and “passive” passive resistance with the attitude of the Finns toward the Russians in the first decades following annexation.

In spite of his vocal diatribes against passive resistance Meurman himself seems to have fluctuated between the two forms. In what was probably the only pre-1899 attempt in Finland to give “passive resistance” a dictionary definition Meurman wrote:

Passive resistance: resistance which does not resort to positive acts of opposition, but through its noncompliance creates obstructions.²²¹

This definition characterizes the ambiguity of the concept of passive resistance prior to 1899. Where is the borderline between “positive,” “true” or “actual” acts of opposition and “*taipumattomuus*” (noncompliance, stubbornness, unyieldingness, immovability, resoluteness, etc.) to be drawn? This question expresses a dilemma genuinely experienced by all the factions of the Finnish upper strata.

The power of the conservative Fennomans had long been supported by the Russians. Obviously they had the most to gain from compliancy. Compliancy was also their weapon against internal opposition. Hence it is easy to understand why they condemned more straightforward types of resistance as fruitless and dangerous. Yet, what they understood as “Russification” was not in their interest either. There existed a high degree of uncertainty among them as to the appropriate course of action. This uncertainty can be illustrated by a private letter from the archcompliant Fenno-fanatic Yrjö-Koskinen to his son on 10 December 1898, two months before the promulgation of the February Manifesto:

²²¹ Meurman 1883–1890, vols. 7–8, p. 630.

In the field of politics matters are as mixed up as possible. Perhaps the new governor-general would not by nature be a bad man; but he is nothing but a *gefreiter* on assignment here obeying the orders of the ruling gang of robbers [in Russia]. Just the same I think the situation is not so dangerous for us if we do not let ourselves be startled. The chief intrigue of the prevailing policy is to make us commit political suicide; perhaps they [the Russians] will not dare to begin this murderous work; if they finally do we can recover. In other words: *those rights which we ourselves consent to surrender we will never get back, but those taken by force, yes. Passive resistance will be our salvation. In Russia itself we will have much support.*²²²

Obviously it is no coincidence that Yrjö-Koskinen's outlook in this letter is highly Deákean in spirit; indeed, parts of it approach verbatim citation of Deák. His colleague Jalava was preaching Deákean resistance at the time. Yrjö-Koskinen himself had a thorough knowledge of the Hungarian resistance ever since the 1860s. Clearly what he meant by "passive resistance" was a type of action at least as active as the resistance practiced in Hungary. Was Meurman's and Yrjö-Koskinen's advocacy of passive resistance and relentless refusal to surrender to violations of their nation's law and order simple hypocrisy? After all, early in 1899 they and their colleagues began to systematically comply with the very type of violations which they had earlier vowed should never be given in to.

Perhaps a better term for describing the later Fennomian advocacy of compliance is "power politics" or Realpolitik. Admittedly before 1899 those Old Finns who were to go the way of compliance were still uncertain as to the best course of action and that in 1899 they became convinced that compliance as cultural defense was the best approach to national survival. However, early in 1899 it was obvious that they were losing their following. They could not mobilize resistance under their own leadership. To join the passive resistance movement would have required equality or even subordination to the resistance activists who were their political rivals. In the face of what they called the hopelessness of resistance, for which they provided many sophisticated arguments, it can thus for strong reasons be assumed that they saw compliance as the best route to power in the future. However, with the Revolution of 1905 in Russia their reasoning proved a failure. In fact, Yrjö-Koskinen's preceding prediction concerning passive resistance turned out to hold much truth, although probably not in the way he expected.

²²² Yrjö-Koskinen to Yrjö-Koskinen 10 December 1898; italics added.

IV. Constitutionalist Insurgency, 1899–1905

It is obvious that Fennomania is now tolerated from above. There may, and will, come a time when this will no longer happen. Tolerance is calculated. But politics always calculates falsely when it reckons that it can at will direct a nation's spirit once it has allowed that spirit to awaken.

J.V. Snellman, 1845¹

1. The Russification Program and Resistance Mobilization

When N.I. Bobrikov arrived in Helsinki on 12 October 1898 to assume the office of governor-general of Finland, he came with a firm conviction of what had to be done. For too long the Finns had been allowed to cultivate the false doctrine of Finland's statehood and special autonomous status. Finnish constitutionalism and separatism now had to be uprooted. Bobrikov, as an agent of Russian military and conservative nationalist circles, understood his mission to be the thorough integration of Finland into autocratic Russia. Drawing directly and purposefully upon the legacy of Russification throughout the Empire, Bobrikov, several months before taking office in Helsinki, drew up a detailed agenda for the assimilation of Finland. He supplemented these policy goals, which had been approved by the tsar in August 1898, with further requirements early in 1899, after a tour of Finland had convinced him of how extremely estranged the Grand Duchy was from the rest of the Empire.²

¹ Snellman 1906, p. 160. Snellman implied that when such toleration ended the Russians would not be able to destroy the fruits of the Finnish national mobilization.

² Polvinen 1984, pp. 91, 133–134.

The first point in Bobrikov's "program" was the assimilation of the Finnish army into that of Russia.³ The priority of this point is not surprising considering that Bobrikov's main supporter in the Russian regime was Minister of War A.N. Kuropatkin, who saw the Russification of Finland's military institutions as the key to the assimilation of the country in general. More immediately, recent advances in military technology prompted the Russian regime to seek arms limitation agreements with the other European powers. Kuropatkin and the tsar desired to solve the Finnish military question before the negotiations (which took place in the Hague in May 1899) got under way.⁴

The other measures which Bobrikov called for were as follows: The Russification, or abolition, of the Minister Secretary of State's Office, which served the Finns as a direct channel to the tsar in St. Petersburg;⁵ the codification of local laws and the development of new procedures for bringing Finland under the jurisdiction of imperial legislation where matters of imperial concern were in question; the establishment of Russian as the language of the Senate, educational institutions and the administration of Finland as a whole; the abolishment of legal barriers preventing Russians from holding office in Finland; the increased surveillance of Finnish educational institutions and the inspection of the textbooks used therein; the abolition of Finland's separate customs and monetary institutions, to be replaced by the corresponding Russian ones; the foundation of an official Russian newspaper, and the facilitation of Russian publishing, in Finland; simplification of the ceremonies of the opening session of the Diet; revision of the regulations of the office of governor-general and; greater control of the Finnish press.

There was really nothing new among these, and Bobrikov's other, policy objectives from the time; they, like the principles they were based upon, had long been expressed, and published, by Russian conservative nationalists. Moreover, Bobrikov's program was intended as a preliminary step to be taken while a more thorough investigation of how Russification could be implemented was carried out.⁶

³ Lest there be any doubt, Bobrikov used the term "program," as others did as well; for Bobrikov's integration scheme, see *ibid.*, p. 134.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-78.

⁵ The former course was chosen when, in the spring of 1899, Secretary of State V.K. von Plehwe, former chief of the Russian police and present head of the Russian State Council, took over the office of Finland's Minister Secretary of State. In 1902 the arch-conservative Plehwe also became Russia's minister of the interior.

⁶ Polvinen 1984, pp. 92-93.

The February “Coup d’Etat”

In the spring of 1898 the Russian regime let it be known that an extraordinary session of the Finnish Diet would be convened at the beginning of the following year in order to dispose of the military question. At the same time the Finnish Senate was given the task of preparing to present the reforms required by the regime to the Diet. It was here, however, that the Russian desire for speedy military reform was frustrated. Unable to accept the military bill as such, the Senate revised it. The senators, like the majority of their politically aware countrymen, were apparently of the opinion that the formulation and enactment of imperial legislation involving Finland required the participation and consent of Finland’s legal governmental bodies. In other words, for them the tsar was a constitutional monarch, bound by oath to conform to Finland’s legal form of government.

Finnish constitutional assertion, as so manifestly in conflict with imperial interests, was now deemed intolerable by men such as Bobrikov and Kuropatkin; the tsar himself was angered by Finnish efforts to restrict his autocratic powers.⁷ Thus the Russian government was motivated to temporarily turn its attention away from the military reform bill, in order to destroy Finnish political illusions with a demonstration of autocratic will.

On 15 February 1899 the Russian regime declared its line in the tsar’s mandate on imperial legislation, known as the February Manifesto. The Manifesto let it be known that in the formulation and enactment of legislation of imperial concern the Russian regime was not constitutionally bound or liable to Finland’s local governmental institutions; accordingly, the Finnish administration had jurisdiction solely over matters of domestic concern. The Manifesto did not, however, attempt to clearly define the borderline between imperial and local legislation; it was left to be decided in each specific case. This indefiniteness, to the great consternation of the Finns, left the Russian regime extensive leeway to intervene in Finnish national life.

The February Manifesto was widely understood, in Finland and abroad, as a violation of Finland’s constitution, and even as a “coup d’etat,” “the instigation of military law,” and “the murder of Finland.”⁸ Scholars, such as Jussila, however, have shown such interpretations to

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 106.

⁸ For example see Bain 1899, pp. 735, 743; *Free Russia*, April 1899, p. 30; Puaux with Aho 1901, p. 218; Berendsen 1899, p. 755.

be inaccurate in a strictly juridical sense: “The February Manifesto could not have divested the Estates of their powers in relation to imperial legislation – as has often been claimed in the historical literature – since such powers had never *de jure* been granted.”⁹ In fact, from 1808–1898 numerous imperial laws and acts had been implemented in Finland without the participation of the Diet. Legally, the Manifesto was simply a clarification and extension of a long-established political order.¹⁰

Politically, however, as Polvinen states it, “the February Manifesto was understood, not only by the Finns, but by Bobrikov and his supporters too, as a change, and not just as any change, but as a one-sided dictate and show of strength: Kuropatkin and Bobrikov deliberately aimed for a confrontation with the Grand Duchy.”¹¹

Resistance Organization

Generally speaking the sociopolitical organization of Finland as such was, in spite of its weaknesses, an effective fortification against Russification. This organizational foundation allowed for the quick mobilization of a Constitutionalist front for coordinated protest and resistance, accompanied by a whole variety of only indirectly connected forms of subtle defiance.

On 17 February 1899 about 250 (or perhaps closer to 500) Finns, upon the initiative of Arvid Neovius, met in Helsinki in order to decide how to collectively face the threat posed by the imperial Manifesto issued two days earlier.¹² Their first move was to petition the Senate, in a statement signed by 500 citizens, not to enter the February Manifesto into Finland’s Statute Book, which would thus prevent its validation. Although the senators unanimously considered the Manifesto unconstitutional, many of them had qualms about carrying out such a defiant demonstration; the Senate decided in favor of promulgation, although its initial vote on the issue was split, ten to ten. The Estates, however, refused to recognize the validity of the Manifesto. Among the symbolic means which the inhabitants of Helsinki used to

⁹ Jussila 1979, p. 33; for the background of Finland’s legal status in the Russian Empire in 1899, see Schweitzer 1978, *passim*.

¹⁰ Jussila 1979, pp. 33,37.

¹¹ Polvinen 1984, p. 111.

¹² Reuter 1928, p. 22; Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 1, p. 88; Blomstedt 1969, pp. 94–95. Blomstedt writes that the meeting was attended by 500 people.

demonstrate their great disappointment with the Manifesto and its publication was to each day decorate the prominent statue of Alexander II in the city center with flowers. This activity culminated on 13 March, the anniversary of Alexander II's death, when the people flooded into the square around the statue to cover it in a profusion of flowers.¹³

Following the Manifesto's promulgation, the Helsinki citizen meeting's next move was to launch a mass protest. The result was unprecedented. In little over a week 523,000 signatures, representing almost half the adult population, were collected for what came to be called Finland's "Great National Address" to the tsar. Much of the collection work was carried out by university students who were swiftly mobilized through their already existing provincially organized, and highly nationalistic, unions.

The address organizers were relatively successful in keeping their project secret from the Russian authorities. Although Bobrikov got wind of what was occurring through gendarme reports, he was truly shocked by the scale of the protest. The governor-general was further enraged when a delegation of five hundred citizens from throughout Finland set out, deliberately without informing him, for St. Petersburg to deliver the twenty-six volume address to the tsar. Bobrikov saw the whole address movement as a organized conspiracy of criminal agitators, aided everywhere by Finnish officialdom, including Diet representatives, governors and senators, who had thus proven their utter untrustworthiness. The tsar, for his part, refused to receive the delegation.

One of the first means of opposing Bobrikov's offensive implemented by those who had long participated in the "Legal Battle" propaganda conflict with the Russian nationalists was to try to rally European public opinion to their cause. They did this by writing constitutionalist articles in defense of Finland for publications throughout Europe and by encouraging their European colleagues to do the same. Inspired by the Great Address, several of these men got the idea of requesting well known European cultural figures to protest en masse against the tsarist regime's injustice toward Finland. Their success was impressive: twelve "*Pro Finlandia*" addresses to the tsar were produced "signed by 1,050 of the most qualified representatives of literature, science, politics, and art in France, England, Germany, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Holland, and Belgium."¹⁴ Among the signers were Theodor Mommsen, Max Weber, Herbert Spencer,

¹³ Parmanen 1936-1941, pp. 92-94.

¹⁴ *Pro Finlandia 1899*, pp. 112-113.

Henrik Ibsen, Anatole France, Émile Zola, Florence Nightingale and Thomas Hardy.¹⁵ The *Pro Finlandia* movement was seen both in Finland and abroad as an historically unique “activation” of the “public opinion of the civilized world.”¹⁶ Nevertheless, the international *Pro Finlandia* deputation, which arrived in St. Petersburg on 26 June 1899 headed by France’s former Minister of Justice J.L.V. Trarieux, was not granted an audience with the tsar.¹⁷

At a meeting of seventy Constitutionalists in September 1900 it was decided to unite already established protest and resistance activity into a organization of committees – called the “Mechelin Committees” – to direct the various sectors of passive resistance such as finances, foreign propaganda and contacts, popular enlightenment and the distribution of resistance literature. This organization was named after one of its central coordinators, Leo Mechelin, whom Bobrikov later called “the chief leader of the revolutionary movement in Finland.”¹⁸

On 1 August 1901 the Finnish Senate promulgated the new Conscription Act, which was issued by imperial decree on 12 July. Of all the offensive tsarist mandates issued during the Bobrikov period this, alongside of the February Manifesto, gave rise to the most controversy and confrontation. Finland’s military establishment was thereby abolished and Finnish troops were to be conscripted as part of the imperial army. Once again mass protest was the first response. On 3 August a citizens’ meeting led by members of the 1900 Diet, representing all major political groups, convened at Turholm (near Helsinki) to decide what to do. A protest address, drafted by Mechelin, was revised and circulated throughout Finland. With 475,000 signatures, it was delivered to the Senate on 30 September. A Turholm Commission formed at the time served as an organization for passive resistance until January 1903.

Kagal

It was in September of 1901 that a clique of radical Constitutionalists, formed a resistance organization which, having risen out of the others,

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 123–130.

¹⁶ Leclercq 1900, pp. 93–94, as Leclercq saw it: “Les événements de Finlande ont provoqué une manifestation ou, pour la première fois, l’élite européenne, s’attribuant le rôle actif qui lui convient, s’est placée au-dessus des diplomaties timides pour affirmer la solidarité des peuples.”

¹⁷ *Pro Finlandia 1899*, pp. IV–V, 112–115.

¹⁸ Bobrikov’s 1903 statement on Mechelin quoted in Feodorov 1911, p. 7.

was soon to surpass, and in many ways incorporate them.¹⁹ These resisters, who had already earlier begun concrete agitation for less protest and more direct action, adopted the name “Kagal.” This term had been used derisively by the Russians to designate separatist groups in Poland and Finland; it was derived from the Hebrew name of an organization of persecuted Russian Jews.

From its headquarters in Helsinki, called “Helsinki-Central,” Kagal succeeded in establishing forty-five departments throughout Finland and was able to work through other long-established organizational channels as well. Moreover, a number of other specialized branch Kagals were formed such as the priests’ Kagal, the women’s Kagal, the physicians’ Kagal and Kagal-supported student and worker resistance groups. Such sub-groups were formed because of the key role they could play in hindering the new Conscription Act from being implemented; resistance on this front was considered by Kagal to be of the utmost importance. For example, priests could refuse to fulfill their duty to promulgate the imperial decree from the pulpits of the local parishes and cultivate a general spirit of disobedience; doctors could refuse to carry out the mandatory examination of conscripts; the women’s Kagal specialized in, among other things, smuggling resistance literature. Other groups, such as temperance societies, farmers’ and teachers’ associations, women’s societies, and cooperative business enterprises had a wider variety of special resistance functions.

From the outset the Finnish protest and resistance movement was financed by funds gathered through mass collections and donations by well-to-do individuals. Personnel costs were always minimal, since most of the people who participated in the multifarious resistance activities did so on a voluntary basis. The first collection was undertaken to finance the Great Address, which involved sending a delegation of 500 to St. Petersburg. The fund-raisers were surprised by the success of their efforts, which even yielded a surplus. In 1899 a “compensation fund” was established to help support resisters – especially civil servants – ousted from their jobs by the Russian regime. This fund was mainly supplied by wealthy individuals. The male directors of Kagal obtained money for the wide variety of insurgent operations from financiers, industrialists and other affluent people. In contrast, the women’s-Kagal gathered considerable sums mainly through mass collection campaigns among the less affluent people.²⁰

¹⁹ Reuter 1928, pp. 132–135.

²⁰ For resistance finances see Reuter 1928, pp. 138–146; Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 1, pp. 98, 354–355, 359.

The Resistance Press

Today passive resistance is most often identified with *Kagal* and the conscription boycott. These were, however, preceded by a radical and highly effective mode of insurgency: the underground resistance press, composed of newspapers, pamphlets and all sorts of leaflets which were often distributed by the thousands, and even tens of thousands.²¹ It must be emphasized that the underground press was no mere auxiliary part of the resistance. It was a major form of struggle which, moreover, necessarily involved other forms of serious defiance, such as smuggling. Furthermore, it was the medium through which the conceptual or theoretical work on passive resistance was carried out.

The resistance press was unequivocally insurgent not only in regard to its content, but also in that it was clearly violating Finno-Russian press and censorship regulations. In his crackdown on the Finnish press Bobrikov made only minor changes in regulations; in shutting down twenty-two newspapers between 1899 and 1901, and tightening control over those remaining, Bobrikov was legally wielding the long-established power over the press accorded to him as governor-general.²² For decades Finns had been struggling through legal channels for freedom of the press; now, in confrontation with Bobrikov, they turned to more radical means.

The most important underground newspapers were *Fria Ord* [Free Words], in Swedish, and *Vapaita Lehtisiä* [Free Leaflets], in Finnish.²³ Both were printed in Sweden after their production was forced out of Finland. The former was distributed in a Finnish translation, called *Vapaita Sanoja* [Free Words], from September 1900 to September 1901. It was then replaced by *Vapaita Lehtisiä*, which was independent of, yet closely associated with, *Fria Ord*. *Fria Ord* appeared, usually once a week in editions of around 2,500 copies, from September 1900 until the time of the Great Strike of 1905.²⁴ *Fria Ord* was founded by the staff of Finland's major Swedish-language newspaper *Nya Pressen*, which was shut down in the summer of 1900.

During its first year *Fria Ord* was run by the revolutionary Konni

²¹ The majority of the Constitutionalist tracts cited hereafter and composing most of the Primary Sources section of the Bibliography were written anonymously. The authorship of most of these works is well established; for the definitive bibliography of literature from the "years of oppression," see Estlander 1945.

²² Leino-Kaukiainen 1984, pp. 48, 51–52, 54, 158.

²³ Cf. Copeland's account of the "Emergence of the Underground Press in Finland"; Copeland 1973, pp. 41–46.

²⁴ *Fria Ord: Innehållsförteckning och sakregister till alla fem årgångarna 1909.*

Zilliacus who was then replaced by the staunch advocate of passive resistance Arvid Neovius. *Vapaita Lehtisiä* was founded by the staff of *Päivälehti*, the main newspaper of the Young Finns, when persecution by Bobrikov drove them underground. Among *Vapaita Lehtisiä*'s directors was *Päivälehti*'s ex-editor-in-chief, Eero Erkkö. The paper was produced until the time of the Great Strike, with editions of probably more than 3,000 copies.²⁵ As continuations of *Nya Pressen* and *Päivälehti*, and as the main organs of the resistance, *Fria Ord* and *Vapaita Lehtisiä*, represented the whole of upper strata Finland, excluding the compliant Old Finns.

The Social Status of the Resistance

What was the status of the constitutional resistance front in Finnish society? To begin with, Kagal was, as Reuter emphasizes, a self-appointed rather than popularly elected organization;²⁶ although it had hundreds of agents, thirty to fifty of which ran Helsinki-Centra!, Kagal, because of the necessity for secrecy, never sought mass membership. It is thus not possible to precisely measure its popular representativeness. Moreover, Kagal's formation marked a mild power struggle and a division between older and younger and moderate and radical elements within the Constitutionalist front. Such divisions were, however, by no means unambiguous and for the most part represented friction rather than fissure.

On 12 November 1902 the various Constitutionalist factions held a mass citizens' meeting for the consolidation of resistance. It was then that Kagal's status as the executive branch of the Constitutionalist front was confirmed through a special resolution.²⁷ Thus, from that time on Kagal can be seen as representing Constitutionalist Finland. There is no doubt that the Constitutionalist front represented most of the upper strata of Finnish society, i.e., that part of the population either eligible to vote in Diet elections or allowed automatic representation due to noble status; in fact, within this section of the population Constitutionalist popularity only increased during the Bobrikov years. This was confirmed in the Diet election at the end of

²⁵ On the Finnish underground press within the general context of the Finnish press under the Russian regime, 1891–1905, see Leino-Kaukiainen 1984, *passim*, especially pp. 201–217.

²⁶ Reuter 1928, p. 146.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 363.

1904 when the Constitutionalists won a landslide victory, with many Kagal executives and associates among those elected.

The Conditions for Resistance

As mentioned, Finnish society as such was a barrier to Russification, a fact which Bobrikov well recognized. Already in 1891 resistance-minded Finns estimated that the conditions for the Finnish administration to stand up to Russification were favorable. Their basic argument was similar to Machiavelli's principle that in moving from constitutional to absolute government the noncooperation of officialdom can create a decisive impediment to obtaining control over the population.²⁸ At that time, Wrede's colleague V.M. von Born argued that even if Russians were to be installed in the higher levels of Finland's domestic government, without the cooperation of Finns they would not be able to implement their illicit designs.²⁹ The viability of this principle was based on the fact that on both the higher and local levels the administration of Finland was de facto firmly in Finnish hands. Although this principle was maintained throughout the Bobrikov period, there was not complete agreement concerning its ultimate power, especially when faced with disunity among the Finns themselves. Some held, citing the Hungarian case, that passive resistance could be maintained for decades if necessary. Others held that no body of officials in the world could maintain unflinching noncooperation for long.

Moderate resisters emphasized that "we do not dare claim that our passive resistance might force the mighty tsar of Russia to abandon the measures which he considers beneficial to the Empire."³⁰ They held that the function of resistance was to convince the Russian regime of the rightness of the Finnish cause and to hinder the implementation of illicit measures. Nevertheless, writing against the moderate compliants (as led by J.R. Danielson-Kalmari), for whom resistance was to be subordinated to accommodation, they argued emphatically that passive resistance should not be given up. Although many of the resisters did not take nearly so modest a stand, this statement reflects the general understanding that the Finnish resistance *alone* was not

²⁸ Machiavelli 1961, p. 70.

²⁹ Born 1891; for the published version see *Fria Ord/Vapaita Lehtisiä*, 2 October 1900, p. 6.

³⁰ *Vapaita Lehtisiä (VL)*, 27 May 1902, p. 1; this was signed by "Finnish-minded Constitutionalists."

enough to defeat Russification. What many Finnish resisters believed was that passive resistance was their most pragmatic alternative, allowing them to successfully hinder the implementation of Russification in Finland and participate in their own particular way in an overall Empire-wide process (which some saw as becoming increasingly revolutionary) which would inevitably transform the Russian regime.³¹

The Finnish resistance writers maintained that in order to analyze the conditions for the success of resistance it was necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of current conditions and events throughout the Empire. A basic argument which they faced in advocating resistance was that Finland was so tiny in relation to the immense and mighty Russian Empire and that therefore it should submit in order to survive. Their response was that, yes indeed Finland is relatively tiny, but it certainly is not faced by the Russian Empire as a whole. The Great Russians by themselves, at over fifty-five and a half million were of course numerically overwhelming in relation to the Finns. But they made up only forty-four percent of the Empire's population and were by no means single-minded adversaries of the Finns; of the nationalities bound to Russia Finland was not alone in practicing the "separatism" so irksome to Russian nationalism. The deep social strife and administrative disunity and incompetence which plagued the Empire certainly was a major factor in favor of Finnish resistance.

In fact, a considerable discrepancy between the will to Russify the minority nationalities and the capacity to do so was one of the outstanding features of the tsarist regime. The Russian regime's ministries, for example, were not coordinated and there was continual disagreement and competition between them.³² The government could not invest a great deal of energy into Russifying the Finns and as with Russification earlier and elsewhere there was a certain inefficiency of implementation. For example, the policies of Bobrikov and Minister of War Kuropatkin in regard to Finland met with the aversion and active opposition of Finance Minister S. Witte. Witte saw Bobrikov as a fomenter of rebellion, who was only adding to the grave problems faced by Russia.³³ Moreover, Witte thought that the Bobrikov program was wasting energy on relatively insignificant matters; for him it would

³¹ See section 8. below.

³² Polvinen 1984, pp. 23, 335-336, 339.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

have been more important to focus on the economic incorporation of Finland into the Empire.

Perceptive Finnish resisters increasingly began to see that their “great enemy” was in a weak state and was, through its reaction, instigating radical change and even revolution. Consequently, they thought that one of the major conditions to be taken into consideration for the success of local Finnish resistance lay in the Empire-wide process of change which was threatening transform, and even sweep away, the old regime.³⁴

This, to be sure, did not mean that they advocated direct participation in the revolutionary movement; most of them manifestly desired to remain separate and they placed their hope in constitutionalist transformation.³⁵ What it did mean, however, was that in order to judge the possibilities for Finnish success, and determine the most realistic course of action, these men thought it necessary to transcend constricted local vision. Neovius considered the inability to do this to be a major weakness of the Finnish resistance. Consequently, unable to see the radical conditions which the near future held in store many Finns displayed a groundless faith that all would turn out for the better without having to resort to more intensified forms of passive resistance. He considered this attitude, which probably arose from decades of Finno-Russian peace, to be a factor of aid to the Russians and that perhaps “this wavering heedlessness helps explain the aggressor’s growing appetite.”³⁶

In regard to the domestic level, popular support was recognized as one of the most fundamental conditions for resistance. The Russian-backed compliants were strongly entrenched within certain key sectors of Finland’s higher administration as evinced by the so-called compliant Senate with its significant supporters within lower and higher officialdom, the church and the courts. Given compliant power within the establishment, the resisters concluded that it was necessary to supplement their struggle on that front through popular mobilization.³⁷

Thus the support of what was called the people or the rank and file of the nation came to be seen as an essential factor for success. The

³⁴ Neovius 1900b, pp. 1–2.

³⁵ Neovius, for example, was convinced that the tsarist regime’s policies were only increasing the “cancer” of unpredictable revolution; the solution which he and like-minded resisters advocated was the implementation in Russia of a western type of constitutionalism; *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁷ *V/L*, 14 October 1901, p. 2.

resisters knew only too well that this was a difficult condition to fulfill.³⁸ As will be seen below (section 7.), their faith in the people and conviction that their social order was stronger than that of other societies began to collapse as they discovered that a great part of the people did not yet possess national consciousness and did not understand the grave significance of the Russian onslaught. For example, Bobrikov's agitation campaign among the rural working population, including crofters and landless laborers, helped reveal the weaknesses of the social conditions for Finnish resistance. This part of the population was definitely estranged from the political culture of the upper strata of society. Some resisters began to realize that in order to channel the crofters and the landless, as well as the workers, into the resistance movement the immediate reform of the status of these people and moreover, the broader restructuring of Finnish society, had to be undertaken.³⁹

The geographical conditions for resistance were judged favorable. For example, well before the actual implementation, on 1 August 1901, of the new system for conscripting Finns into the imperial army, suggestions were being put forth concerning how it could be resisted. It was pointed out that if any country was geographically suitable for hiding the twenty thousand youths reaching conscription-age each year it was Finland: The Russians would need "ten, even twenty, times more men" to apprehend the draft dodgers hiding out in the formidable Finnish wilderness.⁴⁰ Thus the Russians would not be capable of crushing a nationally united conscription boycott. The conditions necessary for national unity, however, were far more precarious than those provided by nature. Hence the natural conditions for success were purely secondary in comparison to the sociopolitical ones. Nevertheless, in regard to the smuggling of resistance literature into Finland, and through Finland into Russia, geographical conditions proved highly advantageous.⁴¹

In spite of its serious weaknesses Finnish society proved relatively resilient to Russification as is proved, significantly enough, by Bobrikov's own observations. During his tour of Finland at the end of 1898 Bobrikov was struck above all by what he saw as Finland's isolation from Russia. He found that the Russian language was hardly spoken. He saw Finnish schools, and in general the whole Finnish administrative

³⁸ *VL*, 21 October 1901, pp. 3–4.

³⁹ *Fria Ord/Vapaita Sanoja (FO/VS)*, 18 January 1901, pp. 1–2; Gripenberg 1901.

⁴⁰ *FO/VS*, 20 February 1901, pp. 4.

⁴¹ On Finnish smuggling of insurgent writings see Copeland 1973, pp. 47–51 and *passim*.

apparatus, as continuously estranging Finland from Russia. Everywhere Bobrikov turned to implement the Russification program he found himself obstructed by the fact that Russians had almost nowhere succeeded in penetrating the deeper levels of Finnish society. For example, Russians were not able to gain complete control of the forces of law and order. Even after reinforcement, the Russian gendarme in Finland remained inefficient, obstructed as it was by Finnish non-cooperation and its own incapacity. Furthermore, the Russian regime could not meet Bobrikov's troop requests; he had to rest content with the 15,000 ceiling reached in 1902.⁴² In fact, the police-state powers implemented in Russia in 1881 were introduced into force in Finland only with the dictatorship decree of 9 April 1903.⁴³

Bobrikov clearly acknowledged, as revealed by his written reports on Finland, the favorable broad organizational conditions for resistance in Finland. Local community administration was almost entirely free of Russian officials. He observed that the high degree of local self-government facilitated the formation of centers of resistance. He saw Finland as the "promised land of associations," which served as networks for resistance propaganda and deeds. He also complained of the separatist nature of the press, the economy and the university. Upon arrival Bobrikov took special notice of the broad distribution of newspapers and high level of literacy in Finland. He saw the whole Finnish press as perpetuating the rebel doctrine.⁴⁴ The relatively strong foundation of the press ante-Bobrikov was definitely a favorable factor for resistance, especially since talented journalists went into service of underground press.

2. The Struggle for Justice

At the outset it was stated that the purpose of this study was not to elaborate upon the *de jure* status of Finland within the Russian Empire. Accordingly the aim was not to examine the legal argumentation of both sides to determine which was right, or even to merely describe such abstract argumentation. Instead the Finno-Russian conflict was to be examined as a power struggle between Finnish statemaking and

⁴² Polvinen 1984, pp. 302-303.

⁴³ Jussila 1979, p. 48.

⁴⁴ Polvinen 1984, pp. 98-99, 243, 249, 297.

nationalism and Russian autocracy and nationalism. Consequently, the Legal Battle was seen as signifying not just a formal juridical disagreement, but a clash between two potentially mutually exclusive moral systems or two concepts of what is right and just.

This approach was chosen because the main object of study, passive resistance, was the primary weapon of a militant constitutionalism which, being above all geared for practice, drew very little directly upon scholastic legal arguments. Accordingly it is maintained that to explain what passive resistance was within its political cultural context is to simultaneously give a fully satisfactory definition of Finnish constitutionalism.

Nevertheless, it may be argued that such an approach neglects the more abstract and metaphysical ideas which were essential to Finnish resistance thought. It is therefore necessary to explicitly define the Finnish Constitutionalist creed.

Today in Finland the term "constitutionalism," when used in reference to the period 1899–1905, is often associated with "legalism" (*legalismi*). This is an apt association, even though, it should be stressed, the Finns of that time did *not* use the terms "legalism" or "legalist." Today "legalism" signifies strict conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code; as thus defined it is highly synonymous with Finnish constitutionalism, which required unwavering adherence to Finnish law as understood not merely in a narrow juridical sense, but also as the social order (including metaphysical and religious aspects) in general. It is most important to emphasize that as such Finnish constitutionalism was very inclusive; it provided its adherents with a common creed for action while at the same time giving each individual significant leeway concerning personal motives or beliefs. This means that Finns could fight together regardless of whether they based their action on secular political grounds or on appeals to metaphysical justice and religion or on various combinations of both.

Following this argument, it is important to draw a distinction between the formal or theoretical constitutional thought preceding the Bobrikov period and the Constitutionalist creed which fueled the mass movement against Russification beginning in 1899. The latter was necessarily geared for the practical defense of the earlier concrete achievements of Finnish national development and assertive constitutional statemaking. The creed was often pronounced with practical simplicity: "According to our *Magna Charta*," that is, according to those rights which, by ceremonial oath, Alexander I ratified for the Finns and bound himself and his descendants to adhere to, "the ruler (and thus officials as well) must rule the country exclusively within the limits of the power

permitted the ruler by law. All which exceeds the boundaries of the law is violence....”⁴⁵

An exceptionally broadly representative, and therefore relatively moderate, statement of the Constitutionalist position and demands is found in the Finnish Estates’ “Great Petition” to the tsar of December 1904. The Great Petition was a manifestation of Deákian-like defiance, demanding the restoration of the legal order, as the Finns conceived it, through the dismantling of the “destructive” administrative system implemented under Bobrikov. The Estates employed the *Magna Charta*-style argument which had been appealed to innumerable times during the previous years. It was maintained that according to the Finnish “constitution” (*valtiosääntö*) as ratified by Alexander I before “Finland’s State-Estates” (*Suomen Valtiosäädyt*), and according to the Diet Act of 1869, legislation cannot, with some very specific exceptions, be created for Finland without the approval of the Finnish “State-Estates.”⁴⁶

It should be mentioned that in 1809 Alexander I could not have ratified Finland’s *valtiosääntö* before Finland’s *Valtiosäädyt*, because the word “*valtio*” or “state” came into use only toward the end of the century.⁴⁷ This supports the idea that, in the guise of defending ancient guaranteed rights, what the Constitutionlists were doing was defending the de facto achievements (which for the Russians were legally questionable) of statemaking. From this viewpoint it is understandable why, in resisting the Russian regime’s interpretation of Finnish constitutional law, the Great Petition states that it is necessary to appeal both to the letter of the law and to “higher truths,” both of which the Finns believed to be on their side.⁴⁸ In other words, even here in this very formal petition it is admitted that what is in question is not just a matter of interpreting clearly definable political agreements but that: “The Finnish nation, like every other nation which has received a place in history, is obliged to maintain law and justice and the kind of legal order which in the given circumstances guarantees that the nation and its individual members can act to achieve their own goals.”⁴⁹ Thus in demanding the restoration of the legal order the Estates were demanding that the right of internal independence and self-determination be

⁴⁵ *FOVL*, 27 September 1900, p. 1.

⁴⁶ Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 3, pp. 394–395; Parmanen’s work includes the whole Great Petition, pp. 394–411.

⁴⁷ On the etymology of “*valtio*” in its political context see Jussila 1987, pp. 88–89.

⁴⁸ Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 3, pp. 395–396.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

guaranteed for Finland. They claimed that this was not in violation of Russian interests.

One of the results of the compliants' broad anti-resistance campaign was that the resisters found themselves forever branded as dreamers and romantic sentimentalists always fanatically ready to defend what is right and to die with honor even in the face of insurmountable odds. They were accused of an incapacity for realistic political action and were depicted as naive good guys whose unswerving faith in the maxim "justice will inevitably prevail in the end" could lead only to misfortune.⁵⁰ A good example of how this portrait has been cultivated and carried on into present-day Finnish political culture is found in Paasikivi's memoirs. Paasikivi synthesized the Old Finn/compliant line making Snellman, Yrjö-Koskinen, J.R. Danielson-Kalmari and, implicitly, himself, stand out, in spite of acknowledged faults, as paragons of practical or realistic political wisdom. In contrast Paasikivi condescendingly says of the Constitutionalist resistance approach:

What a fine principle and rule of life! I have always ... envied the lucky ones who have been able to take such a forthright and idealistic stand. It makes issues and solutions so simple, clear and easy. But we Old Finns unfortunately found no support in the facts and course of history for these forthright and bright ideas and arguments.⁵¹

Paasikivi's interpretation of constitutional resistance doctrine deserves to be taken seriously not only because of its wide influence and the fact that it represents a certain paradigmatic viewpoint, but also because it is presented as based on scholarly research. Paasikivi emphasizes that his analysis is grounded on a broad rereading of the controversial political literature from the "years of oppression."⁵² Nevertheless, he does not bother to relate that the literature of resistance was very multifaceted and that in addition to, and often alongside of, the rhetoric of justice there were detailed arguments for the pragmatism of resistance and efforts to show that it worked in practice. Moreover, Paasikivi fails to present the arguments against compliancy which aimed to go behind the veil of the *raison d'état* discourse which the compliants had learned to use so well. The anti-compliancy case was also grounded on appeals to what is practical.

The discourse of constitutional resistance was, however, in some

⁵⁰ The resisters' references to these accusations are plentiful; for one example see Gripenberg 1904.

⁵¹ Paasikivi 1957a, p. 35

⁵² Ibid., p. 33.

respects a conspicuous sitting-duck for the Paasikivian type of Realpolitik criticism. The resisters' writings overflow with appeals to abstract right, to a justice which will ultimately triumph, which are expressed through seemingly incessant secular moral sermons. It is not surprising that many have seen the discourse of justice as the most outstanding characteristic of the resistance literature. The fact is, however, that many have thus been blinded to the other significant aspects of resistance thought and action. Moreover, the function of appeals to justice as an effective practical weapon in the repertoire of passive resistance should not be overlooked.

The Finnish resisters were participants in the general European culture of justice or *Recht*, a culture which was much more than legal statutes and practices; it was a common moral world. Proof of this trans-national European concept of justice is the fact that the Finns were so effectively able to mobilize European opinion. As the 1,050 signers of the *Pro Finlandia* addresses saw it:

Being interpreters of the principle of justice and concord, our endeavors have exclusively aimed at the use of every means in our power to lay before His Imperial Majesty the expressions of the ideas of brotherly fellow-feeling which, in different nations, unite all who consider the securing of the permanence of peace to rest on the respect of the fundamental laws of right and righteousness, no matter what the political forms of government of the respective states may be.⁵³

One of the influential representatives of this heritage of justice was a work, entitled *Der Kampf um's Recht*, by the German legal scholar Rudolf von Ihering (1818–1892). From the time it was first published in 1872 until it was translated into Finnish in 1902 this book had gone through fourteen German editions and had been translated into over fifteen languages. A Swedish version was available in 1879. In his 1891 preface Ihering emphasizes that the motive of the book is “ethical-practical” rather than theoretical; the aim is to further the state of mind and way of action from which justice must draw its strength.⁵⁴ The point of the work is that only through struggle can the individual or group attain justice and freedom or, in Kant's words: “he who makes himself a worm cannot later complain if he is trampled underfoot.”⁵⁵ Ihering thus sought to expound a principle that has been expressed innumerable times and “is written into the hearts of all strong

⁵³ *Pro Finlandia* 1899, pp. 112–113.

⁵⁴ Ihering 1902, p. 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. II.

individuals and peoples.”⁵⁶ Alongside of Deák’s writings Ihering’s book took on the status of a kind of a textbook, distributed in order to spread and cultivate the mentality of struggle.⁵⁷

Although this mentality of resistance was primarily action oriented it was sometimes expressed in lofty idealistic terms. For example Paasikivi quotes a speech by R.A. Wrede delivered on the First of May, 1899:

We can enter this struggle boldly and with confidence because it is in fact the struggle for truth and justice. These idealistic forces are ultimately stronger than all exterior power. When I say this I am not stating any empty phrases, but the truth, which is confirmed by reality, namely world history.⁵⁸

It must be noted that Wrede, as was indicated earlier, represented only one wing of the resistance, the most idealistic one. Although many of the resisters tended to indulge in high-minded flights about justice, freedom and truth in history, such sermons, when examined in context, were generally clearly linked to more restricted concrete practical concerns. The resisters’ abstract and virtually deified concept of justice represented their whole society and culture. Justice was therefore manifested in the whole constitution of society. To violate justice on Wrede’s view was to initiate the deterioration of civilization itself.⁵⁹ They believed that their institutions, such as religion and law, had through centuries of work and struggle become spiritual forces deeply rooted in the whole people (a view which was by no means confined to the resisters). Since Russification was an attack against society the resisters sought to mobilize the forces of western civilization through adamant constitutionalism, European struggle for justice and passive resistance.

Even the most utopian of the resisters rarely argued that justice must be defended solely for justice’s sake. They always maintained that against what they called the violent injustice of the Russian regime their best and most practical form of national self-defense had to be based on adherence to law and the avoidance of violence. It was seen as the most suitable alternative in the given circumstances. At first the Constitutionalists contented themselves with articulating the case and general morality for protest in a style similar to Wrede’s work of 1891

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. I.

⁵⁷ Estlander 1945, p. 261; Reuter 1928, p. 75.

⁵⁸ Paasikivi 1957a, p. 34.

⁵⁹ See Wrede 1902a,b; Wrede 1903.

cited earlier.⁶⁰ It must be emphasized, however, that Wrede's articulation of the metaphysics of justice is an extreme case. Prominent leaders, such as Mechelin, had been advocating the Finnish cause in purely secular political terms for decades. Moreover, Mechelin's popularity as a great authority and symbol of the Finnish national cause far outstripped Wrede's, and for that matter anybody else's at the time.

Soon, however, the need was felt to go beyond the words of the Wredes and Mechelins, to radicalize protest and to launch resistance in practice. At this point a group of men set to work whose aims could no longer be confined solely to the articulation of "Legal Battle" arguments and talk of justice. One of their first major deeds was the establishment of the resistance press which was a fundamental form of passive resistance "warfare."

3. "A New Way of Waging Warfare"

As discussed at the beginning of this study, in August 1900 Arvid Neovius described passive resistance as a powerful defensive weapon with its own definite essence requiring special preparation and know-how for application. The insurgent nature of Neovius' pamphlet was immediately obvious to the Russian authorities.

In the coming months resistance writers were to follow Neovius in redefining, radicalizing and refining the technique of passive resistance in theory and practice. They transformed it into what they considered to be "a new way of waging warfare."⁶¹

The first issue of *Fria Ord/Vapaita Sanoja* in the beginning of September 1900 is testimony to the radicalization of resistance in practice; it is a document of defiance to censorship and to Russification in general. Although initially the paper was managed by Konni Zilliacus, it was not merely a reflection of his own views. Zilliacus was one of the radical adherents of passive resistance, but within a few years he broke with the mainstream Constitutionalists to pursue a revolutionary line which was unacceptable to them. In 1900, however, the content of *Fria Ord* shows that he was still firmly within the Constitutionalist camp. Those various authors who wrote for the first issues of the newspaper were by no means writing within an intellectual

⁶⁰ For example see *Cirkulär-Bref* 1, 10 April 1899; this was the first in a series of mimeographed communiques which were the precursors of the resistance press.

⁶¹ *FO/VŠ*, 9 January 1901, pp. 1-3.

vacuum. On the contrary, the themes on which they wrote show that they were taking part in, and developing, an already well established discourse in Finnish politics.⁶² The opening article of the newspaper calls on the people to strive to make the new repressive system ineffective through all available means. The purpose of *Fria Ord* is stated as the carrying on of the positive cultural defense and cultivation of national self-consciousness which is the basis of passive resistance. Passivity is now unacceptable. The writers call for action, putting forth *Fria Ord* as one main implement and promising to defy censorship by reporting the intentions and deeds of Russification.⁶³

Fria Ord's first article on "Our Passive Resistance" begins with a glance backward. Thus far the struggle against the violations of Finnish law has been defined as the defense of the justice of legality (*laglighetensrätt*), perhaps better understood as the rightness of the Finnish legal heritage.⁶⁴ It has been understood that the fight cannot be waged with "material means of power."⁶⁵ The Finns' program so far has been to demonstrate what "our" inherited rights are, and to protest each time they are violated. The author thinks that this approach has thus far attained impressive results. One example he gives is the successful mobilization of the support of the civilized opinion of Europe in a "manner which is hitherto unique in world history."⁶⁶ He asks, but is this all that can be done? Up until now "we" have all been agreed that those political rights which are voluntarily surrendered cannot be regained; but there is a chance to retrieve those which have been seized through the "right of violence."⁶⁷

This, as the author sees it, generally accepted principle – so reminiscent of Deákian political thought – is not compatible with passivity: the Finns can no longer rest content in the false comfort of having protested, Russification is too serious for that. The author then claims that some people having once understood the true meaning of passive resistance are now trying to tone it down and take the word

⁶² The radical tone of this discourse was already manifested, for example, in the writings of Born and Wrede of 1891. Moreover, the practice of Constitutionalist defiance expressed in *Fria Ord* was, as the reader might recall, familiar in Fennomanian circles through the Hungarian case.

⁶³ *FO/VS*, 1&2, 1900, pp. 1–2; this first issue, unlike all the following, did not indicate the day of issuance. It had to be before 8 September, since that was the date of the next issue. Judging by the frequency of the following issues it was probably published at the beginning of September. For all *Fria Ord* issuance dates see *Fria Ord: Innehållsförteckning ...* 1909.

⁶⁴ *FO/VS*, 1&2, 1900, p. 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

“passive” literally. He emphasizes that passive resistance is not passive and that the mere proclamation of what is right and just, will not automatically bring justice.⁶⁸

The writer of this article does not hesitate to point out the potential severe implications of his reasoning. He maintains, in the classic European constitutionalist spirit, that when legality is to be defended through passive resistance not even fear of the “destruction of the prevailing bonds of society” should prevent everyone, from the highest officials to the most lowly citizen, from disobeying illegal orders and decrees. The consequences will be severe, loss of jobs, punishment, replacement by Russians, but finally the Russian system of oppression will fail “through its own impossibility”; the suffering of the whole people will lead to victory.⁶⁹

Thus from the very outset of the resistance press the “suffering” required for resistance was clearly not confined to passive martyrdom and protest; suffering was seen rather as a mechanism of making unjust Russian rule fail through noncooperation and disobedience. The first issue of *Fria Ord*, within the context of other resistance writings from the period, is proof that the resisters were well aware of the consequences their program might lead to in the circumstances of the potentially revolutionary process which the Russian regime had set in motion.

The first issue of *Fria Ord* also initiated discussion of the concrete methods of passive resistance in an article entitled “Defense Measures.” Its author straightforwardly asserts that “we are in a state of war,” a state which he claims had been forced upon them.⁷⁰ Consequently the time is irretrievably past when “verbal protest” could be seen as a means of influence or, as another writer put it, it is becoming increasingly impossible to continue the “great babble” and the “practice of humbug in the name of resistance”;⁷¹

Now we must act if we do not want to be destroyed; we must defend ourselves ... with all available weapons. One such weapon is the greatest possible boycott of all things Russian.⁷²

Of the four defense measures introduced by the author three are applications of the boycott (*bojkott*, *boikottaus*) weapon. The first measure, however, is more an “expression of opposition” which was

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 2–3; cf. Born 1891.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

⁷¹ *FOVS*, 19 November 1900, p. 3.

⁷² *FOVS*, 1&2. 1900, p. 4.

apparently intended to somehow develop into a boycott type of action.⁷³ As a continuation of the effort, initiated in 1890, to integrate the Finnish postal system into that of Russia the Bobrikov administration's legislation forbidding the use of Finnish stamps, both in the Empire and abroad, had recently come into force. *Fria Ord* called on its readers to place protest stamps, which had already been specially designed, alongside the newly required Russian stamps. This measure, which was actually carried out en masse, was meant to show the world that the Finns had no intention of "silently submitting to the destruction approaching from the East."⁷⁴ Furthermore, the author hinted that this protest would develop into action which would somehow prevent this Russification measure from being effective in the future. However, he does not explain how this could be done. At the end of this edition of *Fria Ord*, in conjunction with news that the Russians intend to forbid the Finnish protest stamps, the editors state that "perhaps we will soon have the chance to present some other, even more effective, means against Russian stamps."⁷⁵ The nature of such means remained unclear.

The second measure was prompted by the Russian "Language Manifesto" of June 1900 which initiated the lingual Russification of Finland's administration. The author's suggestions for combating this decree, however, are indirect. First he says that the hitherto friendly attitude of the Finns towards Russians must end. Secondly he suggests that all public expressions of the Russian language, such as signs, must be eliminated. He then requires that the use of Russian goods and trade with Russians must be stopped. The only exception to the latter is when the Russian in question "can prove that he considers himself one of us."⁷⁶ The general reiterated lesson is that everything that is Russian in Finland must be "systematically and vigorously boycotted."⁷⁷

It is important to note here that the author is obviously addressing individual Finns, not major industrial or agricultural trading organizations. This is a striking characteristic of the resistance press as a whole; from 1900 to 1905 there is a conspicuous absence of references to many of the most important aspects of the economic sector of society. For example neither *Fria Ord* nor *Vapaita Lehtisiä* ever mention the possibility of a concerted effort on the part of the Finnish paper industry to refuse to do business with Russian concerns.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

The target of measure three was the new limitations on the right of public assembly as put forth in the decree of 2 June 1900. The author suggests that the way to get around this is to alternate meetings from private premises to private premises. Moreover, he invites the readers to invent their own ways of defying violations of their right of assembly.⁷⁸

The purpose of the final measure was to counter what the author saw as an organized effort by Russian travelling peddlers to undermine the Lutheran religion, education and Finnish culture in general by, among other things, spreading rumors of impending agricultural reform. Again the remedy here is boycott. The Russian peddlers should not even be allowed access to food and other supplies. The author, however, admits that at present there is no unified plan for containing the peddlers, so each citizen must do his best.⁷⁹

The most comprehensive statement of the practical principles of passive resistance is to be found in an essay published in September 1900 by the prominent resistance activist Viktor Theodor Homén (1858–1923). Like Arvid Neovius, Homén was an accomplished natural scientist. At the age of thirty, already with a series of well-known studies behind him, he was appointed Professor of applied physics in Helsinki.⁸⁰ He did pioneering work in Finnish meteorology and hydrography. His activities as a Kagal organizer and resistance journalist led, after a year of banishment in Novgorod in 1904–1905, to a sixteen year political career as, among a variety of other functions, a parliamentarian. Homén's 1900 pamphlet, entitled simply *Passive Resistance*, remained for posterity one of the most well known statements on the subject. The reason for this is not only that the work is clear and concise, but also that Homén was the only resistance leader to later publish his collected political writings from the years 1899–1904.⁸¹

While the Finns could not meet the Russians with military force Homén believed that passive resistance provides a weapon by which a weaker people can defend itself against a stronger oppressor. It is, as he defined it, a method which requires just as much perseverance, manliness and love as armed struggle and it cannot be equated with either mild or radical protests which end in compliance with the

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 5–6.

⁸⁰ Coincidentally, Homén's doctoral dissertation, *Undersökning om elektriska motståndet hos förtunnad luft* (1883), dealt with electrical resistance.

⁸¹ Homén 1906.

oppressor's demands.⁸² Succinctly stated passive resistance consists of three basic principles:

1. consistent refusal to cooperate with any illegal or violent act committed by a stronger party; 2. that these violent commands not be obeyed, followed or advanced in any degree; on the contrary, the realization of the schemes against which passive resistance is aimed must be hindered through all legitimate means; 3. that the enforced system of violence never be recognized. Thus in short: noncooperation, disobedience, nonrecognition.⁸³

With point 1. Homén means in particular that when the Russians seek to introduce new decrees in violation of the Finnish constitution then no one is to assist in their promulgation, legitimization and enforcement. The Russians' violent acts must not be allowed to acquire the appearance of legality. The first point is therefore the key implement in the "equipment" of resistance.⁸⁴ He emphasizes, however, that of the three points 2. is the most difficult and extensive. This is because it requires action, and not just the action of the higher officials but that of the whole people. The officials are indeed in a key position, but only when the whole nation acts together can the mechanism of passive resistance have the effect of nullifying the destructive characteristics of the Russian attack.⁸⁵

But how does this mechanism work? Homén explains that "violence" – a term used by the Finns to include injustice and all forms of violations against their society – must at every stage of its endeavor be "forced" to display itself as violence. He claims that this is because "in the course of time nothing exhausts the ravaging of violence more than when it is incessantly forced to show itself in its true form."⁸⁶ Homén believed that in this way the violator, if left completely unassisted, would foment such great resistance that further penetration would not be possible.

Following Homén other resistance writers reiterated this point in various ways. For example in October 1900 rumors of impending searches of homes and deportations of resisters apparently gave rise to doubt concerning the capacity of passive resistance to endure in the face of escalating "violence."⁸⁷ The resisters' answer to this problem

⁸² Homén 1900, pp. 8–9.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9,13.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 9,11.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

⁸⁷ *FO/VS*, 30 October 1900, p. 1.

was that if individuals are attacked and prevented from functioning then this would only increase Finnish resistance. They thus saw violence as having a backfiring effect on its originator. Moreover, it was claimed that although limited numbers of individuals can be banished, hundreds and thousands cannot. The idea of justice was viewed as so strong that “new defenders arise en masse when one has been squashed.”⁸⁸ When confronted by passive resistance “the effect of acts of violence is completely opposite of what was intended; therefore ... the cause is furthered by those who meant to damage it.”⁸⁹ As one writer put it, the mechanism or “great strength of passive resistance” is that by adhering to the law – which meant disobedience to Russian authority – it “eliminates any chance for the oppressor to use violence, thus snatching from his hand that which makes him strong, i.e. brute force.”⁹⁰ This mechanism is what Neovius called the “flexible armor” of passive resistance which causes the exhaustion of the enemy by making his attack rebound on him.⁹¹ Thus the resisters saw passive resistance as a way to “maintain a conflict situation in which the ruler will finally be forced to change his policy,” as Mechelin summed it up at the Constitutionalists’ National Congress in November 1902.⁹²

The statements by Homén and his colleagues on the mechanism of resistance make it clear why the extreme – and, it should be stressed, primarily sincere – rhetoric of justice was necessary for the Finns’ struggle. Raw disobedience, noncooperation and defiance were foreign to Finnish culture. Therefore in taking up these weapons the Constitutionalists sought to legitimize their use and convert the masses through an innovative ideology of justice which, however, could draw on Finnish tradition. Such an ideology also served as propaganda against the Russians who had to be portrayed as immoral destroyers of civilization.

It must be emphasized that noncooperation, disobedience and nonrecognition were the basic practical principles of passive resistance. But to be effective in practice they had to be combined with incessant moral warfare. In fact the manipulation of the moral and ideological environment is a central part of a great many conflicts throughout history. Admittedly Homén’s declarations that now the “principle of justice” will overcome the “principle of violence” and that “our strength is founded not on power but on justice” may seem confusing to some.⁹³

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

⁹⁰ *VL*, 30 April 1902, p. 8.

⁹¹ Neovius 1902, p. 1.

⁹² Mechelin 1902.

⁹³ Homén 1900, pp. 10,18.

But it should be obvious by now that what Homén means by “power” here is unjust violence and what he means by “justice” is the legitimized social force of Finnish society, which in the particular circumstances of the struggle at hand makes no recourse to physical or military violence. Homén, like his colleagues, emphasized that the mere “verbal and written preaching” of justice and truth is vain if it is not matched with deeds, or if it is followed by compliancy.⁹⁴

In his essay Homén offers only two concrete applications for resistance, both of which are familiar from the first issue of *Fria Ord*. In the case of restrictions on the right of public assembly he says that they should either be ignored outright or, if direct confrontation must be avoided, defied by holding private meetings. In this way it will be impossible for the Russians to enforce the constraints.⁹⁵

Homén’s second application for resistance principles was aimed against the Russian peddlers and in particular against the Russian government’s decree of 2 July 1900 giving native Russian peddlers and other tradesmen the right to work in Finland in violation of Finnish legislative restrictions on foreigners. Here Homén also calls for a “radical and extensive boycott”; the peddlers are not to be given food or shelter, no business is to be done with any Russian person and the movement of Russian tradesmen and workers is to be hindered throughout the country.⁹⁶ In this context Homén suggests that the Finnish people must begin to use only domestic products. He does not, however, go into any detail concerning how this activity could be carried out on a large scale or what its consequences would be.⁹⁷

Many of the resistance writings from the latter part of 1900 reveal a more or less fanatical concern with the Russian peddlers. Apparently the travelling salesmen provided the resisters with a convenient target for escalating passive resistance from protest to a kind of warfare. Homén saw the peddlers as a deadly poison within the living organism of Finnish society; if they were not expelled the consequences for the organism could be detrimental.⁹⁸ His concern was not with the damage these “merchants, inciters and stooges” could do to the Finnish economy but rather with how their religion and language could undermine Finnish culture.⁹⁹ A impassioned circular by a well known resistance

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

writer is testimony of the desire to spread xenophobia as a weapon against Russification:

Not one citizen can indifferently watch how the native inhabitants of a foreign country rove in gangs throughout the country spreading worthless trinkets, devastating diseases and dangerous doctrines causing the disintegration of society.¹⁰⁰

The author calls upon all the people, both collectively and individually, to have nothing whatsoever to do with the “above mentioned aliens.”¹⁰¹ The aliens are not to be treated violently unless they initiate violence. Instead they are to be subject to complete ostracism through the “pressure of general patriotic opinion.”¹⁰²

That passive resistance was understood as a form of social warfare best suited to current circumstances is demonstrated in a leaflet exhorting the people to defend their fatherland.¹⁰³ The leaflet combines passionate patriotic spirit with calculated strategic argumentation. It is an exemplary work of propaganda and its anonymous author was surely one of Finland’s outstanding writers.

The author sets out by invoking the ancient martial spirit of the Finns. In spite of defeat it was the armed resistance of the completely united Finnish people which forced the Russian invader to leave the structure of Finnish society intact at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Now, however, the “ancient enemy” has taken up a new form of warfare, a kind of bloodless invasion which does not involve military confrontation.¹⁰⁴ The “ancient oppressor” does not now come

murdering, or burning our peaceful dwellings. Insidiously he slinks in from the East, weaponless and without expressing his sly designs; he befriends the unsuspecting and credulous Finn, working treacherously and slowly to attain his aim. And this main goal for which he strives is nothing less than the destruction of all which the Finnish people has from time immemorial considered sacred: our religion, our language and the social system inherited from our forefathers.¹⁰⁵

How is this invasion being carried out? The author claims that it is the Russian peddlers who are the forces of the destruction of which he speaks. He reports that at the beginning of 1899 the amount of

¹⁰⁰ Born 1900, pp. 1–2.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

¹⁰³ *Kehoitus isänmaan puolustukseen* 1900.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Russian-born peddlers increased considerably and that following encounters with local officials part of them had disappeared. After these events “no one doubts any longer that all Russian peddlers in Finland are in the service of a certain secret power.”¹⁰⁶ The author sought to propagate the idea that all the Russian peddlers were under the central command of Bobrikov and the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod, K.P. Pobedonostsev.¹⁰⁷ The approach to combatting the Russian forces is passive resistance, merciless and complete boycott without physical violence, thus making the peddlers’ lives impossible.¹⁰⁸

Even in the context of this one text the author’s claim that “all” the Russian merchants were part of a controlled force appears exaggerated. He himself paints a lively and touching portrait of the times when the peddler, who appeared to everyone as “decent,” “good-natured” and “playful,” roamed the countryside;¹⁰⁹ the peddler was welcomed everywhere with his “beautiful scarves” and assorted goods and when the local police “persecuted him we had mercy, giving him shelter when he was tired and food when he was hungry.”¹¹⁰ It seems highly implausible that almost overnight all the “harmless” merchants were to be transformed into “stooges of Russian masters” and “dangerous spies preparing the way for a greater enemy” who cheat the poor with their “riffraff,” “spread their infectious diseases” and “persuade the stupid people that the land will be redistributed, goods shared equally and that Russian law is better than Finnish.”¹¹¹ In support of his severe claims, however, the author gives the examples of the Baltic provinces Estonia, Livonia, Kurland and Ingria in the Russification of which he asserts Russian peddlers played a central part.¹¹²

Tuomo Polvinen’s thorough research into the Russian sources concerning Russian policy in Finland at the time has revealed no evidence of a coordinated mass peddler force under the command of higher Russian officials.¹¹³ On the other hand Finnish researchers have pointed out that given the discontented state of the country’s landless rural laborers it is no wonder that in 1899, with the coming of “Russian law,” rumors of the redistribution of land spread rapidly. No doubt in order to spread the good news and thus gain favor many peddlers told

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2–3.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹¹³ Polvinen 1984, p. 215.

the common landless people of the possible redistribution.¹¹⁴ Whereas earlier local officials had been tolerant of the formally illegal migrant salesmen they now began to arrest and expel them.

At the time when the anti-peddler resistance tracts cited above were written the amount of these travelling salesmen in Finland had already greatly diminished. Of course Bobrikov's legislative defense of the peddlers' right to trade in Finland, enforced in the decree of 7 July 1900, gave rise to genuine concern. But the threat of a massive influx of Russians who would be the vehicles of large-scale Russification was used as a tool of anti-Russian propaganda with the aim of winning "the people" over to the Constitutionalist cause. The migrant salesmen provided the resisters with a very convenient target for action at a time when they considered it of the utmost necessity to go beyond words to deeds. No doubt many an innocent peddler became the victim of the competition of the Constitutionlists and the Russian regime for the souls of the landless folk in Finland. As one observer commented: "The question of the travelling salesmen is not in itself very important; but the way by which the Finns have dealt with these enemies is the same which they intend to follow as the current struggle proceeds."¹¹⁵

In addition to Russian stamps, peddlers, language, imported products and restrictions on the right of assembly and the freedom of the press the resisters cited the Russian gendarme as an object for defiance. In a circular distributed anonymously late in 1900 Arvid Neovius expresses the resisters' concern about the increasing surveillance of Finnish citizens and officials by the gendarme. He emphasizes that under Finnish constitutional law the gendarme have no jurisdiction in the sphere of Finland's internal law and order. Neovius' aim is to make people aware of this, which he does by making a series of points: in relation to Finns the Russian gendarme have the status of private persons; no Finn is obliged to answer to, or enter into discussion with, a gendarme; no one is obliged to obey the commands of a gendarme but rather, on the contrary, it is their duty to disobey; no one is to do violence to a Russian gendarme and violent confrontation with them is to be avoided; however, in an emergency the right of self defense may be invoked according to Criminal Law, chapter three, articles six and seven; no Finn is under the obligation to show a gendarme his passport within Finnish territory. Finally Neovius calls upon all Finnish

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 215; Rasila 1961, pp. 182-186.

¹¹⁵ *FOVÖS*, 2 November 1900, p. 4.

citizens, each within his own capacity, to make sure that the gendarme remains in practice just as insignificant as it is de jure.¹¹⁶

The principle that Russians and all things Russian were to be met with extreme boycott seems to have been generally accepted by the resistance thinkers. How to relate to Finnish compliants was a more controversial issue. Clearly they all agreed that compliancy had to be submitted to rigorous criticism and protest. Boycott of compliant newspapers also gained general acceptance in principle. But the idea of extreme personal social boycott against compliants sometimes met with uncertainty and opposition. This idea is found expressed in two popular works published in 1902.

The first of these, *The Finnish National Catechism*, is couched in the style a preacher would use in instructing the masses. Given that Finns were educated by means of Luther's catechism this style was no doubt chosen for its probable psychological impact. Intermingled with talk of God and the holiness of law, the author describes to the Finnish citizen what "good politics" are.¹¹⁷ He insists that all who comply with Russification are criminals, slaves of fear, motivated only by self-interest; they are worse than murderers and thieves and must be punished more severely than ordinary criminals. In the current circumstances such punishment was to be implemented through a merciless program of social boycott by aid of which the compliant "traitors" and their "stooges" were to be ostracized from society.¹¹⁸

The second of these two works, called *The Black Book*, provided the resisters with a list of those higher compliant officials who were to be the targets of social boycott. Each chapter included a photograph of the condemned man; each section ended with an illustration of a hangman's noose or some other threatening symbol. The whole tone of the book was set by the etching on the first page: a white skull on a background of black above the white title, in special script, *The Black Book*.¹¹⁹ The actual program of social boycott – "instructions on how to deal with traitors and their stooges" – put forth in the *National Catechism* consists of a series of "do nots" in the style of biblical commands: The "traitors" are to be absolutely ignored. All citizens are to demand the exclusion of compliants from public places and from all business relationships. Conveniences must be denied them and no food sold to them. The compliants must be treated as socially dead

¹¹⁶ Neovius 1900d, pp. 1–3.

¹¹⁷ Fraser 1902a, pp. 1–9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–11, 16–19, 20, 22.

¹¹⁹ Lindqvist 1902.

and all traitors must be carefully watched. Those citizens who do not openly take sides are to be pressured into doing so. To these instructions plenty of advice as to how to be a good citizen was added.

The activities advocated in these works were clearly consistent with the principles of passive resistance. But the terms with which they were presented went beyond the standards of decency to which the mainstream resistance press adhered in relation to Finns: "We condemn the writing and distribution of pamphlets such as the *National Catechism*."¹²⁰ The resisters particularly deplored any effort to identify such extreme, "reckless and unsuccessful," works with mainstream resistance;¹²¹ "every nest has its rotten egg, every litter its unsuccessful individual," whose actions must not be allowed to disgrace the movement.¹²²

As Homén's account indicates, the compliants seem to have been effectively using the "the famous *National Catechism*" to defame the resistance press, accusing it of spreading "lies, slander and false rumors."¹²³ Homén simultaneously stresses that the *Catechism* was published by an individual without cooperation from the leading resisters and that his own criticism of compliancy is certainly more penetrating than the *Catechism*'s. This indicates that the Kagal-circle resisters did not approve of the *Catechism*'s encroachment on their own domain. The possible distribution of the *Black Book* by Kagal was debated by the organization's directors. While its merits were recognized, its tone was unacceptable and it was decided that its distribution would only damage the cause of passive resistance. The proposed further editions of the *Black Book* were never produced.¹²⁴

From the beginning of the radicalization of resistance in the latter part of 1900 it was emphasized that passive resistance is not passive. This of course appears to be a contradiction in terms. Although the Finnish resisters understood the word "passive" in the term "passive resistance" to signify all forms of just resistance short of violence they did have trouble with the term, and sometimes expressed dissatisfaction with it, realizing that it was an inadequate way of describing their way of struggle. For example in calling the people to action they were forced to use clumsy phrases like "passive active resistance," which meant that resistance was to be carried out actively, but without

¹²⁰ "Mätämunia," *VL*, 2 February 1903, p. 4.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹²³ Homén 1903b, pp. 150, 153, 154; Homén's citation of the compliants is from *Uusi Suometar*.

¹²⁴ Reuter 1928, pp. 388–393.

violence.¹²⁵ Reviewing the literature of resistance on the whole the field of action in relation to Russification can be seen as having been conceptually divided into four categories: 1. compliancy, 2. passive resistance, 3. active passive resistance and 4. active resistance. The borders between these categories were not always distinct. Number two primarily signified the realm of protest while number three referred to direct noncooperation, disobedience and defiance and number four to violent struggle.

The innovation of the radical Constitutionalists was to shift emphasis to the realm of action lying between passive resistance and violent struggle. Why, however, did this shift not bring about a corresponding innovation in terminology as occurred in the change from “passive resistance” to “nonviolent resistance” among M.K. Gandhi and his colleagues in southern Africa? This question cannot be answered with complete certainty since the Constitutionalists did not address it in writing. One definite reason was that the word “passive resistance” was so common and entrenched in Finnish political discourse.

Perhaps this terminological fixation, to offer one possible explanation, symbolizes the dead end the Constitutionalists were heading for in relation to the mobilization of the Finnish masses. After all, as Marx and other early nineteenth century observers noted, passive resistance was primarily a form of elite constitutionalist-led collective action. Although they certainly radicalized the resistance tradition, maybe the Finnish Constitutionalists’ retention of “passive” and their zealous adherence to the upper class rhetoric of justice indicated their unwillingness to go beyond a certain border, not merely in relation to Russia but, perhaps more importantly, in relation to the Finnish people.

Active passive resistance was primarily depicted as a defensive weapon. This is understandable since it was the Constitutionalists’ goal to keep Finland from being Russified; moreover, it was necessary for resistance strategy that the Finns be seen as the innocent victims of barbarian aggression. However, in their effort to develop the activeness of passive resistance certain thinkers maintained it also had the capacity for offensive tactics within the overall framework of defense strategy.

A good example of this way of thinking is an article, entitled “A Word on Attack as a Means of Defense,” by Neovius published on 2 November 1900 under his pseudonym A. Verner. “In military science and in tactics,” begins Neovius, “an important rule is that a straight-

¹²⁵ *FOVS*, 18 October 1900, p. 1.

forward defensive position carries within itself the seed of reversal."¹²⁶ Pure defense can lead neither to advances nor to victory, and it almost inevitably ends in retreat or defeat. Neovius argues that there are two main reasons for this, the "mathematical" and the "psychological." With the former he means that even in a firmly defended position what is lost cannot be regained; accumulated defeats, however small, will necessarily lead to the position's deterioration. Secondly, psychologically speaking pure defense is unendurable. This is because "nothing affects man's bravery and perseverance so depressingly as inertia and the feeling of inaction and helplessness which arises from it."¹²⁷ Furthermore, he who is exclusively on the defensive lacks the important source of psychological strength found in the forward movement of offense.

Neovius cites the Boer War as the freshest case for illustrating his point. If, instead of staying on the defensive, the Boers would have taken to systematic offensive action they probably could have mobilized the whole Dutch populace of Cape Colony thus decisively dividing the British. In referring to the Boer case, however, Neovius did not imply that the Finns should undertake military offensives. As one of his colleagues put it, "we cannot think of beginning to defend ourselves, weapon in hand, in the same manner as the Boers."¹²⁸

Instead Neovius depicts a kind of nonmilitary guerilla warfare, a kind of struggle carried out in between conventional politics and conventional warfare, which excludes blind and rash offensive for selective attacks on the enemy's weak points. Moreover, thorough knowledge of the "aggressor's position, forces and characteristics" is an essential condition for this "offensive defense."¹²⁹ Neovius emphasizes the free resistance press as one of the most important weapons of this type of struggle. This is because in a struggle which does not employ "military weapons or violence general opinion ... is the only power under which the strong are forced to yield."¹³⁰ In other words the mass mobilization of opinion, of the way people channel their consent, is the basis of a powerful offensive potential which can be carried out through disobedience and noncooperation.

By the time the new Russian Conscription Act was imposed on Finland in July 1901 innovative thought concerning the theory or

¹²⁶ Neovius 1900c, p. 1.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

¹²⁸ *FO/VŠ*, 9 January 1901, pp. 1-3.

¹²⁹ Neovius 1900c, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

practical principles of passive resistance had reached maturity. The Finnish model for a “new way of waging warfare” was to a large extent set, and its most outstanding applications, as in the conscription strikes of 1902 and 1903, were still to come.¹³¹

4. Tolstoyan Resistance in Finland

The mainstream line of resistance taken during the era of Russification was strictly Constitutionalist, with strong roots in Finnish nationalist political culture. A zealous effort, however, was also made to define and advocate a type of passive resistance, called here Tolstoyan resistance, which differed fundamentally from that of the Constitutionlists. Like Constitutionalist resistance, the Tolstoyan resistance of the Bobrikov period had its cultural roots in earlier decades. These roots, however, were relatively shallow; Tolstoyan resistance did not gain mass support and remained confined to small, primarily literary, circles.

In spite of this confinement there are several important reasons for exploring Finnish Tolstoyan resistance here. Firstly, it is an entirely unknown episode in the history of attempts to devise and implement nonmilitary ways of struggle.¹³² Simply as such it is worthy of analysis. Secondly, Tolstoyan resistance existed in such close relationship to Constitutionalist resistance that one might, if ignorant of the European history of passive resistance, be inclined to think that the latter was somehow derived from, or significantly influenced by, the former. It is therefore necessary to clarify their relationship. Finally, by contrasting these two forms of resistance their respective characteristics are made more distinct.

Tolstoyism in Finland¹³³

Count Leo Tolstoy’s ideas concerning religion, interpersonal relations (with emphasis on sexual morality) and politics, all based upon his

¹³¹ On the further development of passive resistance see section 9. below.

¹³² For the most detailed study of Tolstoyism in Finland see Nokkala 1958. As such Finnish Tolstoyan resistance has received little attention in Finland and it has not been studied at all in comparison to other forms of European resistance and contention. It has not been studied by non-Finns because of the relative inaccessibility of sources and, perhaps more significantly, because of the lack of a relevant heuristic perspective.

¹³³ See *ibid.* for a full treatment of this topic; Nokkala’s work includes an English summary entitled “Tolstoyism in Finland,” pp. 422–429.

Christian anarchism and strong criticism of irreligious rationalism, began to become known in Finland in the 1880s. At that time many members of the Finnish educated strata became thoroughly acquainted with Tolstoy's works.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Tolstoy had a significant influence on many Finnish writers whose works were widely read at the time and figure prominently today in the Finnish canon of national classics.

During that same period Tolstoy's writings became a central influence in the intellectual development of many of the men who were to become leaders of the Finnish socialist movement. Some of them combined Tolstoyism with European pacifism; others rejected many of Tolstoy's fundamental ideas while making use of his sociopolitical criticism. At any rate, the illustrious Russian author probably received more attention among the members of the Finnish workers' movement than any other author.¹³⁵ Even this movement's main pre-1918 theoretician and founder of the Finnish Communist Party, Yrjö Sirola, was deeply affected by Tolstoy's thought. Tolstoyism was also very influential within the Finnish Youth Society movement through its famous leader Santeri Alkio.

Of the truly anarchistic Tolstoyans in Finland Akseli Isohiisi was no doubt the most legendarily impressive. It has been observed that Isohiisi was more successful in actually living a Tolstoyan lifestyle than Tolstoy himself; his home became a center of pilgrimage for Finnish followers of the renowned Russian master's ideas and for people of a similar leaning. He and his brother were executed for refusing to bear arms in the Civil War of 1918.

The most famous of Finland's Tolstoyans was, however, the literary artist Arvid Järnefelt who became known as "Finland's Tolstoy." It was he who was the main ideologist of Tolstoyan passive resistance. Järnefelt grew up in an upper class Finnish nationalist environment among the cream of society. He went through a Tolstoyan spiritual awakening after exposure to the Russian master's religious thought by his mother. He therefore gave up his literary and legal studies to attempt to lead a genuine Christian life as a craftsman and a farmer. Järnefelt's many novels and other works are full of ideas typical of Tolstoy. After many years of study and translation of Tolstoy's works Järnefelt was completely immersed in the Tolstoyan way of thinking

¹³⁴ Tolstoy's name figured prominently on the Russian regime's list of works banned in Finland; see *Uppgift ... periodiska tryckalster, 1891-1901*.

¹³⁵ Soikkanen 1961, p. 138.

and his views rarely differed from those of his master. The two men maintained a correspondence which lasted from 1895 until Tolstoy's death in 1889.

Tolstoy's Paradoxical Doctrine of Resistance

Tolstoy's doctrine of resistance was based upon his interpretation of the New Testament Gospels. He expounded the elementary principles for this doctrine in his book *My Religion*, published in the early 1880s. In this work Tolstoy asserts that the Sermon on the Mount is the most essential part of Christ's teachings and that in it, as well as throughout the Gospels, he found affirmation of the same basic imperative, expressed by Jesus as: "Resist not evil." Tolstoy claims that Jesus' meaning here is

you have thought you were acting in a reasonable manner in defending yourself by violence against evil, in tearing out an eye for an eye, ... but I say unto you, renounce violence; have nothing to do with violence. 'Resist not evil' means, never resist, never oppose violence; or in other words never do anything contrary to the law of love.¹³⁶

At first thought it may seem a blatant contradiction to call this the foundation for a doctrine of resistance. After all the idea cannot be clearer: "never resist." Being the recalcitrant fiery critic that he was, however, Tolstoy, like the rebellious early modern Christians, must have found the unequivocal absolute submission required by the imperative "never resist" impossible to adhere to. He found his way out of this dilemma, as he further developed his doctrine in *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1893), by dropping the "never resist," modifying Jesus' "resist not evil" and retaining the renunciation of violence. This led him to formulate his doctrine in the phrase "non-resistance to evil by violence." This formula avoided the inaction of "never resist" while allowing for a kind of resistance conceived of as violence-free.¹³⁷ Tolstoy's formula was called for short "non-resistance," a term which has doubtlessly misled many into seeing it as a doctrine of inaction. The book *The Kingdom of God*, pervaded

¹³⁶ Leo Tolstoy 1885, pp. 5, 10–11, 13, 38.

¹³⁷ It is not difficult to see how the phrase "non-resistance to evil by violence" could have been modified, perhaps unconsciously, by Gandhi and his associates into "nonviolence." Gandhi read more works by Tolstoy than by any other single author and was particularly impressed by *The Kingdom of God in Within You*; see Gandhi 1959, p. 48–49 and, Gandhi 1947, p. 79.

as it is with an explicit spirit of noncompliance and defiance, is proof enough that such a view is indisputably mistaken.

Tolstoy believed that “from the very beginning of Christianity the doctrine of not resisting evil by violence has been professed ... by a minority.”¹³⁸ The centuries-old Quaker defiance to church and state provided Tolstoy with the most important historical prototype for his doctrine of resistance without violence.¹³⁹ Another, more contemporary and direct, essential influence on Tolstoy’s doctrine was that of American abolitionist and anti-militarist Christian radicals such as William Lloyd Garrison and Adin Ballou. In a nutshell, what Tolstoy learned from these men was, in Ballou’s words, that “evil is to be resisted by all just means, but never with evil.”¹⁴⁰

Tolstoy understood resistance without violence to be a powerful means by which people who have the will not to submit can use in any struggle against oppression and evil. He tried to show that those in control of state and church power have always opposed and feared “non-resistance,” ever maintaining a conspiracy of silence concerning it. He believed that this was because resistance without violence threatens the very foundation of the violent system of repression and submission which the church and state are founded upon. Thus Tolstoy’s “non-resistance” is not to be understood merely as an abstract moral principle, but as a potent practical weapon against everything which causes people to submit to evil. In other words, resistance without violence “is a most terrible and most dangerous doctrine for every despotism”; violent revolution is only counter-productive and “every [violent] conflict merely strengthens the means of oppression in the hands of those who for the time being are in power.”¹⁴¹

Although the basic principles of Tolstoy’s resistance doctrine were clear, he never discussed with much detail the variety of ways and means, or methodology, by which they could be effectively practiced. Therefore the practical scope and limits of resistance devoid of violence or evil, as Tolstoy conceived it, remained ambiguous. In his discussions with the Finns concerning the subject of resistance he added nothing

¹³⁸ Tolstoy 1960, pp. 2–11.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–11.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–15, 22; these Americans’ doctrine of resistance was called “non-resistance.” Garrison even founded a “Society for Non-Resistance.” Tolstoy also cites the work of Daniel Musser, *On Non-resistance* (1864). Hence the origin of the term Tolstoy used. For some Christians, resistance is intertwined with evil, which explains why they were willing to use such seemingly resistance negating and contradictory terms as “non-resistance” and “passive resistance” for their own doctrines of resistance.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 22, 36, 55, 199, 217, 233, 235.

new to the fundamentals of his doctrine. Again he emphasized that successful resistance must be based on the teachings of Christ, which contain the solutions to all problems.¹⁴² Tolstoy did, however, elaborate on some of his basic ideas in his advice to the Finns. Here he explicitly did not confine himself to a negative interpretation of “non-resistance.” He stressed the need for action, saying that when an external force seeks to deprive one of the sources of life and freedom then one has not only the right, but also the moral duty to defend oneself without violence because it is never right not to disobey an unrighteous command.¹⁴³ Resistance was thus imperative. Furthermore, Tolstoy reiterated to the Finns that resistance should not be based upon faith in a system of jurisprudence, since the legal order is always slave to state structural violence. Likewise patriotism had to be rejected as a motive for action. These principles were central to Järnefelt’s teaching in Finland.

Heroism Without Weapons

When Finnish resistance culture encountered Tolstoy’s doctrine of defiance in the mind of Arvid Järnefelt an inspired, almost messianic, and characteristically naive, vision was born. Järnefelt exclaimed that

A new kind of heroism has come.... Before its advance nothing can vie with it in greatness. Like a tidal wave it lays low everything in its path.... It has not come like the clatter of arms, nor like a raging storm, but unperceived like the wafting wind of a spring morning: Do not obey an unrighteous command! ... This new heroism is the heroism of weaponlessness. It unites all people....¹⁴⁴

During the era of Russification Järnefelt wrote a number of works in which his understanding of Tolstoyan resistance was adapted to Finnish conditions. The first of these was the play *Samuel Cröell*, performed in the Finnish National Theatre in 1899. The protagonist of this drama, Samuel Cröell, a highly intelligent and capable man, cared nothing for the nobility, for their so-called heroic deeds, their high positions or their use of violent weapons. Instead he extolled the virtues of rural life and the peasants. Putting conscience before national duty, Cröell

¹⁴² For example, in April 1899 Järnefelt promised Tolstoy that he would spread this primary tenet, among the Finns; see Järnefelt 1957, p. 15.

¹⁴³ Järnefelt 1899b, pp. 71–72, 103.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

helped many youths to avoid conscription by the Swedish Crown. Condemned by the nobles, Cröell set out in the name of justice to reveal all the criminal deeds of his accusers who dominated the land in a violent and unjust manner. He believed that such a struggle against law breaking enemies could be waged without weapons and that justice or right, as guaranteed by the law, could not be overthrown. Initially he believed that the Crown, the seat of law and order, would punish the evil doers once their misdeeds were revealed. In the end, however, Cröell realized that the whole legal system is based on violence and that the honest man will not achieve justice through appeal to it.¹⁴⁵ Thus Järnefelt's message to the Finnish people was that resistance should not be grounded in faith in, or allegiance to, the secular political-legal heritage embodied in the prevailing state structure.

Soon after the performance of this play some Constitutionalists requested Järnefelt to visit Tolstoy in order to ask advice concerning what the Finns should do in the current situation.¹⁴⁶ In a letter of 22 April 1899 Järnefelt told Tolstoy of his intention to publish and distribute throughout Finland the ideas which he received during that visit.¹⁴⁷ Decades later (1930) Järnefelt was to describe the effects of that visit with "the prophet of our time" in grandiose terms, claiming that in the depths of that dark period a new, perhaps hitherto unknown light, began to shine: "it was as if a new spirituality was soaring in time; one could have almost called it a religion. Its essence was a conviction that conscience and God's will were to be blindly followed."¹⁴⁸

Järnefelt began his elaboration of the idea of passive resistance by calling for a new interpretation of the history of Finland and the world.¹⁴⁹ He strongly criticized the inclination of historians to confine themselves to the narration of political and military events, to the doings of kings and soldiers. Because historical writing has been dominated by this perspective he thought that the history of the ancient and significant history of passive resistance had not been written. Thus, Järnefelt claimed, the true history of Finland was still unwritten because that history *is* the history of passive resistance. He felt sure that a new understanding of life was emerging which would stimulate a

¹⁴⁵ Järnefelt 1899a, pp. 34, 49, 111, 112, 113, 167, 168.

¹⁴⁶ Järnefelt to Tolstoy, 7 March 1899, in Järnefelt 1957, pp. 3–13.

¹⁴⁷ Järnefelt to Tolstoy, 22 April 1899, in Järnefelt 1957, p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Järnefelt 1976, p. 497.

¹⁴⁹ Järnefelt used the term "*passiivinen vastarinta*," i.e., "passive resistance," not Tolstoy's "non-resistance," a term which was not used in Finnish.

reinterpretation of history and reveal the deep roots of passive resistance.¹⁵⁰

However justified Järnefelt's criticism of current historiography may have been he failed to provide the material needed for the reinterpretation which he called for. He only cited one example from early nineteenth century Finnish history when peasants reacted with passive resistance when their property rights were challenged.¹⁵¹ Järnefelt was a hopeless historian; obviously he would never be able to substantiate his theory concerning the centrality of passive resistance in Finnish, little less world, history with such skimpy evidence. "Finland's Tolstoy" seems to have realized this himself, since it was not long before he was singing another tune.

In a long article entitled "Forward!", published in 1901, Järnefelt asserted that confidence in the power of passive resistance is based on a new kind of faith rather than upon historical experience. In fact he now admitted that history was full of cases of peoples overthrown unjustly and of examples of how passive resistance was not followed. Nevertheless, "in spite of the contrary evidence of history" Järnefelt believed that someday the oppressed peoples of the world would see the dawn of their day of freedom because "all that is grounded on violence ultimately cannot endure."¹⁵² Furthermore, he explained that the reason why there are so few examples of consistent and victorious passive resistance movements is the lack of belief in this basic principle. He was convinced that the faith which could make such resistance unbeatable was presently arising in Finland, and the world.¹⁵³

Thus for Järnefelt the deep truth or divine mechanism of passive resistance was that violence, like everything built upon it, was bound to fail in the end. In order to act in accordance with this principle resistance had to be implemented in a twofold manner. Firstly, all unrighteous commands had to be disobeyed without compromise. Secondly, in accordance with "the religious sense," violence had to be renounced unconditionally. The criteria for deciding what an unrighteous command is cannot be found in secular law but rather in the conscience of the individual. Järnefelt asserted that by obeying his own conscience the resister comes under the special protection of providence. Moreover, he believed that resistance based solely on

¹⁵⁰ Järnefelt discussed these matters in an article entitled "Does Finland have a History?"; see Järnefelt, 1900, pp. 7-15.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 209-211.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

Realpolitik motives is self defeating; the success of resistance depends solely on the degree to which it is motivated by conscience, by the religious, not secular, sense of justice.¹⁵⁴

Constitutionalist Nationalism Versus Tolstoyan Universalism

Was the Constitutionlists' version of passive resistance influenced in any essential way by Tolstoyism? At first thought it might seem likely that it was. Tolstoy's works *My Religion* and *The Kingdom of God* were available in Finland soon after publication both in Russian and Swedish. Considering the broad popularity of Tolstoy's writings within the Finnish educated class it can be assumed that most of the Constitutionalist leaders were familiar with the Russian master's ideas well before the Bobrikov era began. One can indeed find traces within the works of the Constitutionalist resisters which seem to indicate Tolstoyan influence. For example there are numerous articles in the underground resistance press concerning Tolstoy.¹⁵⁵ The Constitutionlists also took considerable effort, at least several well documented times, to make direct contact with Tolstoy concerning the Finnish situation. Furthermore, not surprisingly, some articles in the resistance press display certain Tolstoyan qualities. Finally, in 1901 a pamphlet containing selections from Tolstoy's *Kingdom of God* was published as part of the resistance effort.¹⁵⁶

In spite of these apparent traces of Tolstoy's influence the Russian author's doctrine of resistance had no essential effect on the development of the idea or practice of Constitutionalist resistance. In fact the two doctrines, although they shared the name "passive resistance," were to a large extent incompatible. If some of the Constitutionalist writings do bear a certain Tolstoyan flavor they certainly do not do so in an undiluted manner, full as they are of downright anti-Tolstoyan elements such as patriotism and worship of the legal heritage. The prominence of Tolstoy's name within the

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 210–213.

¹⁵⁵ For examples see *FO/VS*, 12 January 1901, 9 April 1901, 15 April 1901, 30 April 1901; *VL*, 11 November 1901, 25 November 1901, 13 February 1902, 26 February 1902, 30 September 1902, 8 October 1903, 18 January 1905.

¹⁵⁶ The pamphlet was entitled *Ur Leo Tolstoys "Frälsningen finnes hos dig själf"*; see Tolstoy 1901; the fact that years later this work was included in the Estlander bibliography of resistance literature (entry no. 121) indicates that it was considered to be part of the resistance effort.

resistance press can be explained by the fact that the resister's used it mainly for propagandistic purposes. For example in the articles dealing with Tolstoy, only minimal reference is made to his ideas and no mention is made of his doctrine of resistance. Instead, these articles focus on Tolstoy's many confrontations with Russian authorities; thus the Constitutionalists used the name of the world-renowned author to cultivate anti-Russian government sentiment in Finland. The *Kingdom of God* pamphlet, when its universalistic aspects were overlooked, was also well suited to this purpose since, for example, it provided justification for the Finns' resistance to Russian military conscription.

In their direct contacts with Tolstoy, beginning early in 1899, the Constitutionalists were no doubt genuinely interested in a more detailed account of his views on resistance. Järnefelt later exaggerated the Constitutionalists' degree of interest in this regard. He added, however, that in addition to being primarily interested in Tolstoy's doctrine they were also seeking, "of course," to gain international sympathy for their movement by taking advantage of Tolstoy's world-renown.¹⁵⁷ Järnefelt's order of importance here must be reversed. After Järnefelt prepared the way for communication by, perhaps guilelessly, convincing Tolstoy of the universalistic Christian nature of Finnish resistance the extremist Constitutionalist Georg Fraser took advantage of the situation, persuading Tolstoy to write an "Open Letter" to the tsar containing an appeal in favor of the Finns. The world-wide publicity such a letter would receive and the attention which Tolstoy's fame would bring in general were doubtlessly the primary motives for the Constitutionalists' contact with the Russian master.¹⁵⁸

Maintaining that "the nature of passive resistance is revealed most clearly when it is used directly for idealistic purposes" Järnefelt saw the classical type of peaceful Christian resistance offered by the Doukhobors to the Russian state as the ideal model of passive resistance.¹⁵⁹ In contrast the Constitutionalists' long held ideal of resistance was exemplified in the patriotic struggle led by Deák in Hungary. Obviously they never could have identified with the Järnefelt/Tolstoyan vision. Therefore one cannot but conclude that the literary artist Järnefelt was possessed by an imagination run wild when he sought to convince Tolstoy that the Finnish will to resist Russification

¹⁵⁷ Järnefelt 1976, pp. 497-498.

¹⁵⁸ Fraser himself was definitely not one to accept Tolstoy's basic principles. He was a staunch Finnish nationalist and outspoken advocate of a type of passive resistance which was incompatible with Tolstoy's doctrine of resistance; see Fraser 1902a and 1902b.

¹⁵⁹ Järnefelt 1901, p. 212.

was not based on the type of patriotism which they both condemned.¹⁶⁰ Even latter he was still captivated by his misguided vision when he explained for posterity in 1908 that the Finnish struggle started in the “pure” Tolstoyan manner and gradually became corrupted by nationalism, localism, mere utilitarian motives and, later, by the advent of violent resistance. He condemned the resistance as a failure.¹⁶¹

Järnefelt’s “pure” passive resistance was, of course, never implemented in Finland and the Finnish people were plainly never anywhere near being ready to carry out a Tolstoyan revolution. In fact the Constitutionalist antipathy for Järnefelt’s ideas was explicitly expressed as early as 1899. For example at that time the prominent resistance agitator Zachris Castrén, attacking Järnefelt’s play *Samuel Cröell*, totally rejected the character Cröell’s conviction that resistance must be based on Christian love and forgiveness. Instead, the justification of resistance, the determination of what is right and just, was to be derived from the “national sense of justice,” of which the judicial system and the legal heritage in general were manifestations.¹⁶² For the Constitutionlists faith in the national sense of justice was expressly superior to Järnefelt’s faith in individual Christian conscience.¹⁶³

5. Resistance or Submission? The Finnish Existential Dilemma

For the Finnish Constitutionlists resistance was right. Argumentation concerning the rightness of resistance was of utmost practical necessity for the resisters, since the call for disobedience posed a acute secular and religious dilemma for Finns. This argumentation followed classical western European constitutionalist lines. As Homén put it, the authorities may, and do, make mistakes and such mistakes must generally be born with patience until corrected through legal procedures. When, however, the mistakes of authority become systematic injustices then such authority has stepped out of the sphere of legality into irrationality and can no longer demand obedience; it ceases to be authority.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Järnefelt 1957, pp. 3–14.

¹⁶¹ Järnefelt 1908, pp. 229–230.

¹⁶² Castrén, 1899, p. 632.

¹⁶³ Castrén reiterated these views in 1908 in a rebuttal of Järnefelt’s interpretation of resistance during the Bobrikov era; Castrén 1908, pp. 222–229.

¹⁶⁴ Homén 1901a, p. 2.

To support and illustrate his point Homén draws on Snellman's fundamental book on political theory from 1842. In this work Snellman extensively cites the early seventeenth century thinker Hugo Grotius – who Homén points out was no liberal on matters of state – on the cases in which subjects are justified in implementing staunch resistance against higher authority. Homén mentions two of these cases. First is when the ruler treats a whole people as an enemy; second, and most significant, is when a constitutional ruler breaks the laws which bind him. In the latter case, as Snellman writes, the ruler forfeits ruling power and rulership itself.¹⁶⁵ The advocates of compliancy claimed that this type of argumentation was to take Snellman, and the tradition of political thought which he spawned, out of context. As they put it over and over again, the question was not one of what is right and just, but of what is realistic.

The compliants' dichotomy between what is right and what is practical was unacceptable to the resisters. It was through this dichotomy, as has been seen earlier, that the compliants perpetuated a biased view of the resisters' arguments and veiled their own truth in the guise of realism. Just as the Constitutionalist did not merely preach right and justice but put resistance into action, most of their argumentation was practically oriented, just as Finnish Constitutionalism was above all a *movement* and not merely a philosophy. The right to resist tyranny was indeed derived from abstract legal thinking and the morality of justice. But hand in hand with the right to rebel the resisters emphasized the duty to do so.¹⁶⁶ For its part the duty to resist was not derived merely from abstract principles, but from practical considerations; in fact in Finnish resistance principle and practice were inter-linked and they cannot be properly understood in isolation from one another. "The Great Question" for the resisters was that of survival or defeat and resistance or submission;¹⁶⁷ the question of rightness and justice was therefore highly pragmatic.

Well before the beginning of the passive resistance movement what might be called the Deákean pragmatic principle had become one of the basic maxims of Finnish political culture. Thus it is not surprising to find the first issue of the resistance organ *Fria Ord/Vapaita Sanoja* stating:

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 2; in this article Homén also goes from right to duty; for another example of the argument from abstract right to practical duty see *FO/VS*, 27 September 1900, pp. 1–2.

¹⁶⁷ The works of the resistance writers are abundantly entitled with rhetorical existential questions; "The Great Question" is from Toppola 1903.

we have all been in agreement that those of our political rights which we voluntarily allow to be taken from us cannot be retrieved, but that those which are seized from us by the right of violence can be redeemed.¹⁶⁸

In other words the duty to resist is derived from the fact that only through “submission does power politics acquire life force.”¹⁶⁹ The resisters found this principle stated in yet another manner in Leo Tolstoy’s interpretation of voluntary servitude holding that if a people do not make their sense of justice known in a firm and vigorous manner, if they do not refuse to submit, then they have only themselves to blame for the oppression which they suffer.¹⁷⁰ As one writer, clearly under the influence of Tolstoy, wrote in the resistance press: “The world is governed through us. The power of the world could be in our hands, but we play the slave to power. Oh brothers this is base.”¹⁷¹ Again and again it was emphasized that compliancy will poison the nation through moral degradation and destroy the fabric of society. One way the resisters sought to illustrate the detrimental consequences of complicity with injustice was by citing the recent Dreyfus affair “which poisoned the great French people and threw it off its track.”¹⁷²

Compliancy, as one resistance writer put it, was seen by its advocates as being derived from a time honored “policy of caution based on old traditions.”¹⁷³ Actually the resisters were willing to agree – at least for argument’s sake – with the past wisdom of that famous “axiom” of Finnish “foreign policy” holding that Finnish security is best maintained by diverting world, and particularly Russian, attention away from Finnish affairs.¹⁷⁴ The Russians had now, however, destroyed the groundwork for this old policy, and the resisters accused the compliants of unwillingness to acknowledge this. The Constitutionalist and the compliants both believed in the rightness of the Finnish cause. The former, however, were not willing to compromise with their minimum demand for the restoration of the Finnish legal order. They believed that to do so in the given circumstances would lead to devastation. Many of them, moreover, believed a multitude of pressures would force the

¹⁶⁸ *FOVS*, 1–2 [undated] 1900, p. 2.

¹⁶⁹ *FOVS*, 27 September 1900, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ *VL*, 8 October 1903, p. 2.

¹⁷¹ *VL*, 1 November 1902, pp. 3–5.

¹⁷² *FOVS*, 1 August 1901, p. 3; in his tract on passive resistance of September 1900 Homén explained that the Finnish compliant government is like the criminals behind the Dreyfus affair in that in the name of national interest it required the violation of the country’s laws; see Homén 1900, p. 17.

¹⁷³ *VL*, 30 September 1901, p. 3.

¹⁷⁴ *VL*, 25 November 1901, p. 1.

tsarist regime to retreat and even that the situation was ripe for the constitutional modification of autocracy, possibly even on an Empire-wide scale. The compliants believed in the triumph of tsarism (but not that it necessarily signified the destruction of Finnish autonomy) and therefore in the ultimate futility of persistent resistance, because it would destroy the basis for accord.

Neither side could convince the other of the validity of their respective arguments. The debate became increasingly bitter and polarized, so much so that the situation was seen as a kind of nonmilitary “civil war” which, at least on the level of propaganda and agitation, it indeed was.¹⁷⁵

Between the extreme points of compliance and resistance, as indicated earlier, there existed a whole range of attitudes.¹⁷⁶ It can be said that many considered both resistance and accommodation necessary; but because they did so in very different ways, this statement may obscure the fact that in the mid-area between the two extremes there were also sharp divisions. For present purposes a distinction between main-line compliance and main-line resistance is made. The main-line compliants, unlike their extreme colleague Yrjö-Koskinen, did indeed consider protest and, briefly, limited resistance necessary. But particularly in the course of 1902 disagreement between the mainstream compliants, such as the “triumvirate” Danielson-Kalmari, Meurman and Palmén, and the Constitutionalist resisters became increasingly sharp.

The followers of the politics of mainstream compliancy sought, while clearly expressing their opposition to the unjust imperial decrees, to avoid any action which might worsen relations between the sovereign and the Finnish people. They sternly warned their countrymen, in the words of Danielson-Kalmari (in the Snellman/Yrjö-Koskinen spirit), that it must not be forgotten

that the merciless hand of history sweeps aside all formal rights which no longer suit existing conditions. Therefore our relations with Russia do not ultimately depend upon the contents of ancient declarations, but upon the extent to which our special status in association with the Tsardom furthers not only our own interests, but those of the Empire as a whole.¹⁷⁷

Danielson-Kalmari firmly disagreed with the main-line Constitutionalist claim that, under certain circumstances, Finnish officials had the

¹⁷⁵ Hence “Civil War?” was the title of one of Meurman’s anti-resistance tracts; see Meurman 1902b.

¹⁷⁶ See above chapter I, section 1.

¹⁷⁷ Danielson-Kalmari 1901, pp. 14–15; cf. Yrjö-Koskinen 1901, p. 4.

constitutional right to not to implement the tsar's rulings; he claimed that strictly speaking according to law officials either had to comply or retire into private life.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, he thought it necessary to stress that the idea of a Finland unbound to "Russian world-power" is unthinkable.¹⁷⁹ Accordingly the Finns had to try not to give their rulers the impression "that Russia's interests and the prestige of the Sovereign require the thorough eradication" of their country's guaranteed special political status.¹⁸⁰ The main-line compliants came to agree with Yrjö-Koskinen's view of passive resistance as a vain endeavor which could only lead to destruction, and that the Finns had to realistically face the historical position in which they found themselves by submitting to conciliation.¹⁸¹ In a famous speech, Agathon Meurman described this historical situation, which he called a "revolution," as what might today be called a zero-sum game. In revolution, he said, there are only two roads, victory or defeat and "thus presently the sole option is that either the ruler submits or the people submits."¹⁸²

Meurman urgently advised the Finnish people to surrender to the tsar's will, since there was no hope for victory. Meurman's speech proves most explicitly that he had whole-heartedly set out to aid the tsarist regime in the destruction of passive resistance.¹⁸³ Meurman scoffed at the resisters' idea that the refusal to consent to injustice could generate power enough to force the tsar to acquiesce and he indignantly accused them of being "active," in the sense of using active force, and not properly "passive."¹⁸⁴ Just as Snellman castigated the passive resisters of 1861 for revolutionary activity, so Meurman now denounced contemporary Constitutionals as "Girondins"; he even went so far as to call the followers of these Girondins "terrorists": "In contradiction to the intentions of the Girondins," Meurman wrote with the Helsinki riot of February 1901 in mind, "the terrorists took passive resistance to the streets."¹⁸⁵ Passive resistance had initiated a "full-

¹⁷⁸ Danielson-Kalmari 1901, p. 40.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁸¹ Yrjö-Koskinen 1901, pp. 2-3, 4-5. In spite of the practical differences between them, the mainstream compliants held many basic views in common with Yrjö-Koskinen.

¹⁸² Citation from Meurman's speech at the Old Finn Congress held on 27 April 1902; see "Lausunto Suomalaisessa Nuijassa," in Meurman, *Muistelmia II* (unpublished memoir manuscript), pp. 246-247.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 248, 249, 253.

¹⁸⁴ See "Passiivinen vastarinta," in Meurman, *Muistelmia II* (unpublished memoir manuscript), pp. 273, 287, 288.

¹⁸⁵ See Meurman's notes from this period under the heading "Routavuodet" in Meurman, *Muistelmia II* (unpublished diary/memoir manuscript), p. 231c.

scale revolution” which caused Meurman to lament what he considered the incredible blindness of the resisters.¹⁸⁶

The so-called political realism of the compliants sometimes gave way to scathingly expressed factionalism. Yrjö-Koskinen asserted that the call for the unity of all Finns, regardless of language, against Russification was a plot by the Swedish speaking minority to regain the position of power it had been gradually losing since the Russian takeover of Finland.¹⁸⁷ Danielson-Kalmari, although less coarsely than Meurman and Yrjö-Koskinen, constantly emphasized the problem the Swedish speakers posed, and stressed that cooperation was beset by obstacles.¹⁸⁸ Perhaps at this time Danielson-Kalmari did not realize just how broadly-based the Constitutionalist front was. In his 1907 condemnation of Bobrikov period passive resistance he shifted focus away from the Swedish faction to the Young Finns and the Constitutionalist front as a whole.¹⁸⁹ The claim that certain factions of the Swedish party consistently hindered social reform and the cause of Finnish-speakers was certainly correct. But the compliants used this fact to obscure the significance of the Finnish speaking members of the passive resistance movement with superficial criticism; for example Yrjö-Koskinen called them the “wagging tail” of the Swedish speaking Constitutionlists.¹⁹⁰

The Constitutionalist front, to be sure, had in its ranks some of the country’s most prominent Finnish-language and bilingual journalists, writers of fiction and cultural figures in general. Juhani Aho, perhaps the era’s most outstanding writer of Finnish-language fiction, called the Danielson-Kalmari compliant program short-sighted, unclear and contradictory, a “soft potato which oozed between our fingers as we took hold of it”; it offered no options for concrete action but only passive obedience.¹⁹¹ The Finnish speaking editors of the Finnish language resistance press wrote of compliancy:

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 231c.

¹⁸⁷ Yrjö-Koskinen 1900.

¹⁸⁸ Danielson-Kalmari 1901, pp. 32–33, 45–48, 73, 83.

¹⁸⁹ Danielson-Kalmari 1907.

¹⁹⁰ Yrjö-Koskinen 1900; later Yrjö-Koskinen and his compliant colleagues sought to portray the November 1902 congress of the Constitutionalist front as a party conference dominated by the Swedish-minded. In the context of a general defense of passive resistance Leo Mechelin rebuffed this view, saying that it was not a party conference, but rather a joint congress of citizens from a wide variety of groupings, ranging from Old Finns to members of the Workers’ Party, interested in defending the constitutional system. He added that “extremely few of the speeches there were given in Swedish”; see (in Finnish) Mechelin 1903a, pp. 3–4.

¹⁹¹ Aho 1902a, pp. 1–2.

A more pernicious, unpatriotic, contemptible and servile doctrine has yet to be preached in Finland; a more wretched, cowardly and stupid policy has yet to be thrust upon us here.¹⁹²

The resistance was broadly based on Finnish nationalism. Moreover, there were many among the Old Finns and compliants for whom Finnish was a second language such as figures no less than Yrjö-Koskinen and Meurman themselves, whose mother-tongue was Swedish. Autocratic tsardom was the support of the old world of the Old Finns. Thus it is not surprising that some compliants came to see passive resistance as a great revolutionary threat. It is no mere chance that Meurman's criticisms of passive resistance are interspersed with condemnations of the moral depravities of contemporary society in general.

In his article "Yield or Resist?" Homén expressed the resisters' view that "to preach submission at this time is to lull the nation into the sleep of death."¹⁹³ The compliants had urged that instead of polarizing the conflict a "bridge" (Danielson-Kalmari's metaphor) be left between the tsar and the Finnish people. Homén pointed out in reply that in practice such a bridge can be nothing else than law (meaning, of course, formal mutually-binding agreement, or constitutional government, as opposed to one-sided arbitrary dictates) and that by violating the law the ruler destroys the bridgework for cooperation.¹⁹⁴ As another writer put it more simply, the building of a bridge by ruler and people spanning the divide between them can begin on the Finns' side only when the other side visibly begins work.¹⁹⁵ The compliants were convinced by their personal contacts with Russian officials that if the Finnish disobedience movement were overcome then a satisfactory peace could be obtained and Russification would be limited. The resisters' answer to this was: "*O sancta simplicitas!* Oh holy stupidity!"¹⁹⁶ For them the analysis of the tsarist regime's policies throughout the Empire, and in particular its deeds in Finland since 1899, provided incontrovertible proof that submission would only hasten Russification.¹⁹⁷

The idea that submission would convince the tsar to have mercy on Finland and bring about the recovery of Finland's autonomy was seen, as Homén for example put it, as an extremely naive hope, and nothing

¹⁹² "Ei Suomen kansan nimessä," *VL*, 8 November 1902. p. 1.

¹⁹³ Homén 1902b, p. 53.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁹⁵ *VL*, 7 May 1902, pp. 2.

¹⁹⁶ Homén 1903b, p. 127.

¹⁹⁷ For example *ibid.*, pp. 125–130; this view is also argued in relation to compliant claims in an analysis of "Our Enemy's Final Plan of Conquest," *VL*, 13 February 1902, pp. 1–2.

more than a hope. Those that believed the reassuring words of the Russian rulers were seen as gullible dupes, "just asking to be hoodwinked."¹⁹⁸ Those that exploited such words for the domestic power struggle were seen as criminals, like the criminals behind the Dreyfus affair.

In a way it was fitting for Meurman to liken the radical resisters to the Girondin wing of French revolutionaries which maintained that the success of revolution at home had to be secured through international revolution. The Finnish main-line resisters were not, of course, Girondins in a strict sense, because they certainly were not advocating active Finnish participation in Empire-wide revolution. But, as will be seen below, at an early stage the resisters began to see that radical change, if not revolution itself, was in store for Russian autocracy. The compliants criticized them for destroying the Finns' bridge to the tsarist regime. For their part, however, the resisters could chide the compliants for not having the political insight to see the significance of Empire-wide opposition and to build new bridges to the forces for change which were mobilizing in Russia. The tsarist regime's capacity to withstand opposition and revolution was already highly questionable.

6. Is Compliancy the Will of God?

In August 1903, after years of constitutionalist polemics, Theodor Homén stated, with a hint of exasperation, that it would be better to keep the Bible out of political affairs "since the doctrine of Christianity is not applicable to the fields of society and politics."¹⁹⁹ He knew, however, that this was impossible and that he would once more have to examine what the Bible has to say concerning authority, and obedience to it.²⁰⁰ Finnish Constitutionalists such as Mechelin and Homén and certain thinkers in Young Finn circles, like their predecessors elsewhere in secularized Christendom, had long since succeeded in divorcing their political thought from the realm of religion.²⁰¹ For men like these argumentation for constitutionalist resistance was primarily devoid of any appeals to religion; simply stated, the grand duke, constitutional ruler of Finland and tsar of Russia, had broken his pledge to uphold Finland's constitutional laws and society and therefore must

¹⁹⁸ *VL*, 21 October 1903, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ Homén 1903b, p. 114.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 114

²⁰¹ Which is obviously not to say that they were not personally religious.

be resisted. There were, to be sure, constitutional thinkers in Finland who explicitly brought a religious attitude into their political thought, believing as they did that the manifest order of society was an expression of a higher divine world-order.

At the beginning of the twentieth century purely secular social and political thought was still something practiced by the few in Finland. When the Constitutionalist set out to mobilize the entire educated strata, as well as the mass, of Finnish society for active disobedience of authority they were confronted by a profound dilemma. Mass radical resistance, and in some respects even the secular politics accompanying it, were innovations in Finnish society. In order for Finns to approve of radical disobedience en masse there had to be an equally radical reevaluation of the deep-set attitude of passive obedience to authority maintained through the Lutheran religion. Furthermore, such a process was necessary since the priesthood was still directly involved in Finnish politics, not only through the Diet Estate of the Clergy but in that legislative decrees had to be proclaimed in the churches by the priests throughout the land in order to come into force.

In mobilizing for the defiance of authority in Finland modern constitutionalism collided with a still deeply entrenched early-modern primitive Lutheran sociopolitical order and cosmology; the deep-set dilemma concerning the relationship of resistance and obedience to authority was part of Finland's Lutheran inheritance. This state of affairs goes a long way in explaining why the political argumentation of the era of Finnish passive resistance reminds one more of the early-modern constitutional polemics in continental Europe and England than of the discourse of universal right and reason which emerged during the late eighteenth century revolutionary struggles of America and France. Finnish constitutionalism remained bound to its primitive Lutheran base, which had been bolstered by Fennomania and revivalism. Thus the discourse of western democracy was stunted.

The most significant instrument of elementary education at the time was Luther's catechism and the lessons and texts based upon it.²⁰² They literally pervaded the whole society. Thus in 1902, in his vigorous anti-resistance campaign, the Finnish Archbishop could argue that as a child everyone had learned in their catechism that God requires

²⁰² Luther's catechism was introduced into Swedish and Finnish mass education through the editorship of the seventeenth century Swedish Archbishop Olof Svebilius. The work has gone through innumerable editions. It was first translated into Finnish in 1746. For the edition consulted here see *Lutheruksen vähän katekismuksen yksinkertainen selitys kysymysten ja vastausten kautta* 1901.

absolute obedience to authority and that God does not accept passive resistance.²⁰³

Through their catechism the Finns were saturated with the maxim that after God, and for fear and love of Him, absolute obedience was due to the established authorities. These authorities were parents, officials or all representatives of the prevailing political state and all socioeconomic superiors such as landlords, bosses and people of higher rank in general. Disobedience would be met with the wrath and punishment of God. It is not surprising that the Pauline doctrine, a main pillar of Luther's catechism, became the most pervasive argument for the conservative interpretation of absolute obedience in Finland, just as it had elsewhere in Europe. Passive resistance was the first concrete radical challenge to the Pauline doctrine. Thus passive resistance was not merely a defensive weapon against external aggression. It became an offensive weapon against the old domestic conservative Lutheran regime which had bound itself to decaying tsarism. During the years of passive resistance the conflict which had been going on for decades between the liberal view of law and society and the conservative Lutheran interpretation of the social order intended by God escalated into open battle.

In reaction to the promulgation of the new Conscription Act in July 1901 the most active members of Kagal set out with firm determination to convert the priesthood to the cause of resistance. The priesthood was in a strategically key position; the Kagalites held that if Finland's priests were to systematically decline to proclaim the new decree and refuse to collect and submit the lists of conscription-age youths to the authorities, which was their job, then Russification in this field could be decisively hindered.²⁰⁴ The priesthood became bitterly divided over the fundamental question of obedience to the tsar and a significant number of influential priests, and their flocks, joined the resistance as a religious duty.

The leadership of the Finnish church, however, went the way of compliancy and gradually succeeded through threat and punishment in suppressing resistance among their colleagues. By April of 1903 Kagal lost hope in trying to achieve wide and effective active support from among the priesthood.²⁰⁵ The church leadership's repressive action at this time, however, had fatal repercussions. With the Constitutionalist and socialist victory of 1905 the religio-political role of the

²⁰³ Johansson 1902b.

²⁰⁴ On the formation of the "Priest-Kagal" see Murtorinne 1964, pp. 112-119.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 219-225.

church as led by the Pauline compliants was broadly discredited.²⁰⁶

The resistance/obedience controversy gave rise to an unprecedented wave of discussion throughout Finland concerning themes which had been basic to European political discourse for hundreds of years. The best representative of the conservative Lutheran compliant viewpoint is doubtlessly Gustaf Johansson, who became Archbishop of Finland in 1899. In the 1880s this professor of dogmatics and moral philosophy became the most influential spiritual and political authority in the Finnish church; he served as a model for the priesthood to follow.²⁰⁷ Already in 1890 his religiopolitical platform was expressly grounded on the thirteenth chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, which he interpreted as meaning that absolute obedience was due to the powers that be, even if they are pagan. Moreover, he emphasized that submission is due to those secular authorities who abuse their power, since tyranny is a punishment for the sins of the subject population. Thus, as opposition to the February Manifesto of 1899 began to emerge, Johansson's colleagues explained Russification as God's chastisement of the sinful Finnish people; resistance was seen as an atrocious violation of God's will and world-order.²⁰⁸

Johansson's approach to the Russification problem was a combination of the Pauline doctrine and main-line compliant arguments. This means that while arguing that resistance is a sin he also asserted that it was politically unrealistic, which obviously meant that it was not compatible with the sociopolitical interests which he represented. Meetings with Russian Minister of the Interior (also Minister Secretary of State for Finland) V.K. von Plehwe and Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod K.P. Pobedonostsev in April 1900 and the tsar in February 1901 convinced Johansson that the Russian leadership was not out to totally Russify Finland or to destroy its constitution.²⁰⁹ It was this conviction which gave rise to Johansson's reputation of being an unscrupulous opportunist.

Johansson's approach is clearly and concisely expressed in two definitive pastoral letters which were circulated among the priesthood in 1901. He stresses that the Finnish people will be delivered only by

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 316–322.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 62.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19, 68–71.

²⁰⁹ While Plehwe and Pobedonostsev were certainly not sympathetic to the Finnish cause, they both were critics of Bobrikov's way of handling Finnish affairs. The tsar, however, committed himself more firmly to the Bobrikov line, and Plehwe ceased advocating compromise with the Finns; Polvinen 1984, pp. 83, 143, 307–309, 342, 346; on Johansson's meetings see Murtorinne 1964, pp., 81–84, 89–91.

adhering to the will of God. It is the duty of the priest to proclaim governmental decrees and it is not any of his business to question the legality or rightness of them. According to Johansson a priest may disobey the government only when it is perfectly certain that God wills resistance. He is emphatic that this is certainly not the case at present, stating categorically that “God’s will is not on the side of this kind of resistance.”²¹⁰ Moreover Johansson adds that passive resistance has no chance for success any way. In his second letter he re-emphasizes that to offend the ruler is to violate God’s will; and besides “the ruler has promised to preserve the constitution and I myself have heard from the ruler’s mouth that he does not want to change the internal conditions of the nation.”²¹¹ For many Finns, as displayed in the resistance press, the ludicrousness of these words was striking.

When the compliant line was resurrected for posterity in the Paasikivi paradigm it was conveniently purged of association with religiopolitical argumentation even though a primary determinant of Fennomanian cosmology was conservative fundamentalist Lutheranism. The resistance thinkers considered this combination of pseudo-realism and religiopolitical argumentation hypocritical, ironic and opportunistic.

As one writer put it: So far compliancy has appeared as “true political wisdom,” that is “up until now it has pretended to be the national policy of caution based on old traditions. Now it has been exalted to the politics of God’s will.”²¹² “Is it God’s will,” the author asks Johansson, “that the Finnish people forfeit their sense of justice,” and that the priesthood acknowledge the conscription decree, thus committing the Finnish people to obey it?²¹³ “Is it God’s will that our sons be sent to misery and death in a foreign land and that they be deprived of the protection of their law and the comfort of their religion?”²¹⁴ Does God will that vows, promises, justice and truth be trampled underfoot and that the Finnish people stand inactively by as the enemy marches in to destroy their society? According to the Archbishop, the author concludes, the answer to all this is “yes.”²¹⁵ Elsewhere another resister again asks rhetorically, is it only in submission that God is on our side, is He never by our side in struggle: “No. Because master Gustav Johansson’s God is only the God of the

²¹⁰ Johansson 1901, p. 6.

²¹¹ Johansson 1902a, p. 3.

²¹² “Jumalanko tahto?” *VL*, 30 September 1901, p. 3.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

powerful, the God of the great, not the God of the weak and the oppressed.”²¹⁶

While Homén found religious arguments for political compliance primitive it did not prevent him from addressing them seriously. His first effort in religiopolitical exegesis was an article entitled “The Bible and Obedience to Authority” published in the resistance press at the end of 1901. Homén observes that in the debate concerning whether or not it is the duty of the priests to proclaim the conscription decree from their pulpits certain parts of the Bible have been quoted over and over again as proof that God requires “absolute obedience in all circumstances to those in power.”²¹⁷ Homén quotes three of these passages (Romans 13: 1–2, 1 Peter 2:13 and Titus 3:1) pointing out that they have been interpreted by the compliants grossly out of context. He argues that when read within their Biblical framework it is impossible to derive a justification of submission to injustice and tyranny from them. To show this he analyses each passage in light of the surrounding text. Homén’s main point can perhaps be best summed up in the assertion that “Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s,” by no means signifies “give Caesar everything.”²¹⁸ In fact he thinks the cited texts specifically focus on social relations of justice and love between authority and those bound to it and between all people in general.

Furthermore, Homén accuses the church leadership of perpetuating a blatant misconception by arguing that Christ and the Apostles never opposed authority concerning affairs outside of religion. For example, instead of meekly submitting when officials sought to unjustly punish him, St. Paul appealed to his rights as a Roman citizen and Christ himself cast out the merchants whom the authorities allowed to carry on business in the temple.²¹⁹ Indeed for many the image of a weak and submissive Christ propagated by the compliants was repulsive and morally degrading.

For the novelist and Finland’s first woman journalist and newspaper editor-in-chief Anna Edelheim, as expressed in her forceful counter-attack on the conservative interpreters of Romans 13, Christ is the paragon of defiance to injustice; there is no better example for resistance to authority than Jesus and the Apostles.²²⁰ They never ceased to preach when threatened by officials. Edelheim offers St.

²¹⁶ *VL*, 14 May 1902, p. 4.

²¹⁷ Homén 1901b, p. 1.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

²²⁰ Edelheim 1902, pp. 1–4.

Luke 13:32 as an example, because when the Pharisees told Jesus either to get out or be slain by Herod, he refused with defiant words. Edelheim also points out that if Luther had truly been the figure portrayed by the compliants, then the Protestant Reformation would not have been carried out.²²¹ That Kagal certainly considered the political-religious debate highly significant for their struggle is witnessed by the fact that it distributed two Finnish editions, of 5,000 copies each, of Edelheim's tract, along with a Swedish edition of 3,000.²²²

Homén clearly outstripped the compliant exegetes in biblical argumentation. When Johansson and his colleagues defended and vigorously propagated obedience even to evil rulers on grounds that Romans 13 was written in reference to Nero, Homén found them wide open for attack. Johansson had written that it was "under Nero's bloodthirsty scepter and with cruel persecution and a martyr's death before him" that St. Paul gave the "commands" in Romans 13:1-2.²²³ Homén asserts that this is a serious historical mistake, since, he says, Romans was written in A.D. 57 or 58 when Nero's government was still a model of justice and mildness. Sparing no effort, Homén then goes on, with detailed Biblical citations and references to theological scholarship, to attack the idea that St. Paul acted in the service of tyranny. For example, he cites Luther in order to show that St. Paul, and thus Luther himself, considered the function of authority to be the maintenance of the outer security necessary for a holy life; although Luther and other scholars have interpreted Romans 13 as a warning against rebellion Homén strongly emphasizes that this text contains no command to carry out criminal or illegal actions at rulers' demand.²²⁴

He also cites the famous nineteenth century Swiss Protestant Biblical hermeneutist Frédéric Louis Godot. On Godot's interpretation Romans 13 does not require cooperation with evil or with illicit commands by those in power. On the contrary, it allows for passive resistance or noncooperation accompanied by willingness to suffer the consequences.²²⁵ Godot's view that such resistance is the mechanism whereby tyranny is spiritually overcome and progress advanced was a confirmation of Homén's own standpoint. With no little irony Homén exposed how the Finnish religious leaders had debased themselves by

²²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-4.

²²² Estlander 1945, pp. 157-158.

²²³ Homén 1901b, p. 1; it was only in a later article that Homén revealed, upon request, that the source of his quote was no other than the archbishop himself; see Homén 1902a, p. 2.

²²⁴ Homén, 1902a, p. 2.

²²⁵ Homén 1903b, pp. 114-115.

insinuating that Christ could compromise with what is right. Thus they associated themselves with the “doctrine of the Jesuits and Machiavelli” which could ruin the nation.²²⁶

Homén was the only one of the main passive resistance writers who addressed the religiopolitical dilemma of resistance and obedience in detail. There were, however, many more writings against the theological argument for compliancy, many of which were doubtlessly more genuinely religious than those of the secular-minded Homén. A penetrating example is an essay on authority and obedience in Christianity signed by “a teacher of religion,” and distributed by Kagal in an Finnish edition of 5,000 copies.²²⁷ This religious instructor seems to have little sympathy for either the compliants’ or Homén’s approach. While agreeing with Homén that Biblical passages must be understood in context, he criticizes both sides for reading the Bible like a law book or a handbook of morality, throwing Biblical statements at one another.²²⁸ The Bible does indeed give guiding principles for Christian life, but for the interpretation and implementation of such principles the mediation of conscience is necessary.²²⁹

With this in mind the author goes on to point out that nowhere does Paul say what authority actually is. What Paul does say is that authority is of God. Since God is absolute truth, good and justice then what is contrary to these cannot be authority. To violate these virtues or to carry out unconstitutional political change is to violate God’s world-order; it is a “criminal revolution.”²³⁰ Authority is not an individual, but a quality; when this quality is relinquished then the state of being in authority ceases. Another writer explained this by distinguishing between “domination” and authority; domination or superior power is not always the same as authority which is legitimate and holy power.²³¹ He illustrates this with a point which even the compliants would certainly not be able to reject:

If, for example, a violent upheaval, a revolution, were to occur within the state then God would absolutely forbid the Christian from taking part in such an insurrection; on the contrary, He would demand it be prevented.²³²

²²⁶ Ibid., pp. 116–117.

²²⁷ Pesonen 1902; Estlander 1945, p. 159.

²²⁸ Ibid., pp. 1–3.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

²³⁰ Ibid., pp. 3–6.

²³¹ Toppola 1903, p. 13; like Homén this author cites Godot in detail, see p. 14.

²³² Ibid., p. 13.

The logic here is clear, if a revolutionary group were to take over the country then the prevailing religiopolitical morality would certainly not prevent it from being opposed with violence; the revolutionaries and their supporters could invoke the Pauline doctrine in argument against opposition. This may seem ridiculous but the author had the insight to see that if the compliants invoked the Pauline doctrine in relation to Russification then in principle they would also have to accept it in the case of a successful revolution. Obviously they would never have done this in practice.²³³ Thus the author was able to reveal the compliants' bias.

In cultivating the ideological ground for active resistance in the sixteenth century the spiritual leader of insurgent Protestantism, Theodore Beza, went as far back in history as ancient Israel to prove that rulers are created by the people and for the welfare of the people.²³⁴ Given the status of Lutheranism in Finland it is not surprising to find that the Finnish resistance clergy turned to the same type of argumentation as their spiritual forefathers from the Reformation.

At a meeting of Constitutionalist leaders on 3 August 1901 an argument was put forth for the divine origin of constitutional government in a speech called "Is Compliancy the Will of God?" The listeners were apparently impressed by the relevance of the work and requested that it be published for distribution throughout Finland.²³⁵ According to its priest-author God has only one state, Israel, which is the divine model for all other states. As their nation expanded the Mothers and Fathers of Israel created a higher government. The government and its aides were divinely sanctioned but only in so far as they were chosen by the Israeli people and remained the servants of the people. This is the foundation of the Christian State. Any power which violates the divine constitutional order sets itself against God's will. To ask whether one should willingly submit to injustice is to ask whether one should willingly go against God's will. It is therefore a sin to surrender, a sin to give up the divine or constitutional form of state: "passive resistance is not only permissible, it is a holy obligation."²³⁶

²³³ When in 1918 the Finnish Reds took over half of Finland, including its industrial centers and capital, then there was not even a mummer by the Whites about the duty to submit.

²³⁴ Beza 1969, pp. 116–118; Franklin 1969, p. 33.

²³⁵ *Myöntyminenkö on Jumalan tahto? Erään papin lausunto päivän polttavasta kysymyksestä 1901*; this work was signed by "a certain priest" who obviously wanted to remain anonymous.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–8.

7. The Enigmatic Rank and File

Time and time again the resistance writers reiterated that the vast majority of the people, the rank and file of the nation, supported the passive resistance movement.²³⁷ Nonetheless, for the Constitutionalists, as for the whole upper strata of Finnish society, the so-called rank and file of the nation was a relatively unknown and ultimately unreliable mass. In the early stages of the struggle, however, the Constitutionalists believed that they understood this mass. It was seen as something which, when awakened and properly guided, would ensure victory.

In May 1899 the internationally known Finnish anthropologist Edvard Westermarck conveyed to the British reading public the image of Finland being a “democratic nation” whose classes are pervaded with “a strong national spirit,” indissolubly uniting them.²³⁸ This unity was the result of centuries of “breathing the invigorating air of freedom.”²³⁹ This image, with its exaggeration of the degree of democracy, freedom and social unity in Finland, represents the upper strata’s ideal of Finnish society.

Although this ideal was certainly often embellished for propaganda purposes, there can be no doubt that it was widely and sincerely held within Finland’s upper strata. This is at least partially explicable by the fact that the superiority of Scandinavian civilization and the freedom of the Finnish masses was conceived in relation to what was known of the life of the people in Russia. It was observed, for example, that the Finnish peasant had never been subject to serfdom and that therefore the people was not now composed of ex-serfs and exploitative landowners.²⁴⁰ The resisters interpreted this, and more generally the apparently less extreme degree of social inequality as compared to Russia, as a major impediment to Russification.

The role which the Finnish elite, including most of the resistance leaders, envisioned for the masses was still, however, mostly a passive one. Thus after writing of Finnish freedom and democracy Westermarck promises his British readers that “we shall endeavour to make our people ever more enlightened, law-abiding and patriotic.”²⁴¹ For

²³⁷ See for example, *VL*, 23 June 1902, p. 1, 11 October 1902, p. 2, 8 November 1902, p. 1, 22 November 1902, p. 1.

²³⁸ Westermarck 1899, p. 659.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 659.

²⁴⁰ *VL*, 11 October 1902, p. 2.

²⁴¹ Westermarck 1899, p. 259.

the resistance leaders the people were something to be awakened, molded and disciplined. Any efforts to grant them equal democratic political rights or the allow them to act as self-determining subjects was to a significant extent avoided.

The Finnish educated class had great faith in, even a secular-religious zeal for, what they called popular enlightenment. In response to the Russian attack they increasingly emphasized that this enlightenment required genuine personal contact between educated and uneducated; only thus could the former help advance the latter.²⁴² Popular enlightenment, or mass education, as one writer put it,

has put forces into motion which otherwise would have remained unused, and it has raised obstacles in the path of the practitioners of violence which they did not take into account because of their deficient understanding of the nature of the Finnish people. You see, it is the nature of our national movement that it is very difficult to awaken, but once awakened it displays a vitality and endurance which could trouble an even more skillful regime.²⁴³

Views of this type demonstrate that the upper class advocates of popular mobilization thought they had, by virtue of their own Finnishness, special understanding of the people; they believed that they could creatively direct mass force. They romantically proclaimed that national “defense is shifting more and more to the profound rank and file of the nation where the power which is on the decline among the upper classes is now to be found.”²⁴⁴ At first they did not realize just how true this statement (which must be understood as part of the campaign against their compliant compatriots) was or what it held in store for them. Soon, however, they began to realize that they were flirting with unknown masses, awakening a monster from the “profound” depths of the rank and file.

Thus there was a profound contradiction in the resistance writers’ propaganda concerning the people. On the one hand they claimed that the people was infused with an understanding of the necessity of resistance. On the other hand they claimed that the national awakening had just begun. In other words they contradictorily held that “all which is sacred to the people” such as free institutions, laws and local self government are not so well understood by the people; hence the emphasis they placed on popular education and “personal contact” with the masses.²⁴⁵

²⁴² *VS*, 19 November 1900, p. 4; Aho 1902b, p. 13; *VL*, 28 December 1903, p. 2.

²⁴³ *FOVS*, 19 November 1900, p. 4.

²⁴⁴ *FOVS*, 14 October 1901, pp. 1–2.

²⁴⁵ *VL*, 21 October 1901, pp., 3–4.

Contradiction, perhaps sometimes even hypocrisy, was a fundamental element of Finnish Constitutionalism. The upper strata fought for decades for national justice through the Legal Battle. With the dictatorship decree of 9 April 1903 the Constitutionalists could complain that the Finnish people had been striped of their “personal freedom” and “human rights.”²⁴⁶ It is ironic that they had never before spoken of universal “human rights.”²⁴⁷ The right or justice which they spoke of earlier was always that of the upper strata. When they spoke of “our conviction that justice and truth will defeat injustice and falsehood,” they did not quite realize, or refused to admit, that the great majority of the people had all the right and reason to hold such a conviction in relation to the Finnish upper strata and thus to carry out a struggle for justice against it.²⁴⁸

Late in 1903, when prospects for the victory of resistance looked dark, resistance writers became disillusioned with the masses. The national unity which they had extolled and preached proved nonexistent. They had over-estimated the people’s degree of political maturity. Moreover, the people apparently did not even know that they were a people.

The transformation of the resisters thought concerning the people can be clearly seen, for example, in the works of Homén. In 1900 he wrote that even if the compliant statesmen, in their heights and with their pretentious political wisdom, forget what is right and noble they must take into their calculations the fact that the people’s sense of justice will remain firm.²⁴⁹ In 1903 he asserted that “real democratic reform work is ... the core of passive resistance,” emphasizing that now “above all it is important for us to strengthen the national spirit, enlighten the people and further its independent development and participation in the determination of the fatherland’s fate.”²⁵⁰

But by March of 1903 Homén, in an article entitled “Our Weakness”, was already asking, along with many of his colleagues: “Is it worthwhile any longer to work for the redemption of our people if the people itself strives for ruin....”²⁵¹ He then wonders if there is a basic “flaw in our national race,” since how else could one explain the fact that prominent figures from the Finnish elite along with a significant part

²⁴⁶ *VL*, 15 June 1903, p. 1.

²⁴⁷ The article here cited was signed by K.Z., the initials of the maverick Constitutionalist Konni Zilliacus. Perhaps he was introducing a new idea in the guise of defending something ancient.

²⁴⁸ Quote from *ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁴⁹ Homén 1900, p. 17.

²⁵⁰ Homén 1902b, pp. 50–51.

²⁵¹ Homén 1903a, p. 80.

of the masses had gone the way of compliancy.²⁵² He came to the painful realization that the great words with which he and his colleagues had spoken about their own righteousness and their people's unswerving obedience to law were to a startling extent empty and that a sense of justice and love for freedom were almost non-existent.²⁵³

Therefore many resistance writers concluded that popular enlightenment had to start again at the at the beginning with the very ABC's of political life; this instruction had to begin by explaining that "the Finnish nation is the Finnish nation ... and what duties a people has toward itself so that it does not in its ignorance and stupidity trade its birthright for gruel."²⁵⁴ The resisters came to the bitter awareness that they had been "living in illusions imagined about our own people."²⁵⁵ After decades of what they described as hard honest work among the people the people had now betrayed them and shown its true degraded and slavish nature.²⁵⁶ The most disillusioned described officialdom, the educated class and its young as having sacrificed everything for truth and justice while the rank and file of the nation yielded to enslavement.²⁵⁷

What the educated class did not realize, however, was that the true problem was not simply that the Finnish people did not know it was a nation but that it really was not a nation. National consciousness had not yet spread to all the people of the diverse communities living within the borders of what the Finnish upper strata and the Russian authorities called Finland. Constitutionalist and compliants alike now realized that the only way to make the nation something more than an idea in the minds of the upper strata was to go beyond the earlier achievements of the patriarchal national movement and to truly extend political rights, and broad social reforms, to what they called the rank and file.²⁵⁸

As resistance weakened the Constitutionalist began to emphasize the importance of attaining the confidence of the "working class" in particular through reforms and making it feel itself to "belong in the

²⁵² Ibid., p. 80.

²⁵³ Ibid., pp. 81–82.

²⁵⁴ *VL*, 18 August 1903, pp. 1–4.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 1–4.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 1–4.

²⁵⁷ *VL*, 28 October 1903, pp. 1–2.

²⁵⁸ This is, to be sure, not to belittle the earlier social achievements of the Finnish national movement, participants of which were now in both the Constitutionalist and compliant camps. There were of course in both camps vocal long-time advocates of broad reform as the basis for successful national defense; but truly radical reform did not become a practical part of their programs until 1905 and thereafter, when the social democratic movement became a main political contender.

sphere of this social system.”²⁵⁹ But even when they suggested sociopolitical reforms they did so hesitantly and the word “democracy” was not a frequently used component of their vocabulary.

The exiled Constitutionalists asserted that the two hundred Finnish citizens who attended the congress which they convened on 6 March 1904 in Stockholm came from the depths of the rank and file of the Finnish nation. One of the aims of the congress was to contradict the propaganda of the Russian government holding that the present Finnish Senate, composed as it was of compliants, represented the Finnish people.²⁶⁰ These Constitutionalists, although certainly having all right to question the representativeness of the Senate, could have, using their own arguments, just as well seriously challenged their own representativeness, and that of their class and the Diet, in relation to what they so often called the common people or the rank and file of the nation.

For almost one hundred years the upper strata of Finnish society had been living within the shelter, restrictive though it was, of Russian power. Together the Finnish elite and the Russian administration kept the great majority of the people living in Finland outside of political life. With Russification this system broke down. Now for the first time part of the Finnish elite felt the need to activate the masses in an open fight with the Russian regime. What the elite found, however, was a great divide which could not be bridged in an instant by popular enlightenment and the much spoken of personal contact between the educated and uneducated classes. Moreover, the people itself was not, of course, a unified mass to be swayed hither and thither as a unit. This was a period of competition for the souls of those people, called the rank and file, living in Finland who were not part of the so-called civilized class.²⁶¹ By far the most important sociopolitical organizational force among the rank and file at this time was the budding workers’ movement. Thus it is no wonder that the Constitutionalists made a significant effort to direct that force for their own ends.

The attitude of the Constitutionalists toward the workers’ movement

²⁵⁹ *Eri osista maata* 1903; *VL*, 28 December 1903, quote from p. 2.

²⁶⁰ *VL*, 20 March 1904, pp. 2-3.

²⁶¹ The Constitutionalists’ popular enlightenment campaigns were often seen specifically as part of the struggle with Bobrikov for the allegiance of the Finnish people. When Bobrikov designed a plan to help the landless Finnish people the resisters saw it as a sign that a new attack was to be launched against Finnish society; see *FO/VS* 18 January 1901, p. 2. For his part Bobrikov well understood that the relationship between the Finnish upper strata and the masses was a weak one; he sought to take advantage of this to undermine the Constitutionalists.

is well illustrated by a controversy which took place soon after the publication of the February Manifesto. When Finnish bourgeois leaders gathered to plan the Great National Address representatives of the workers' movement were not invited. Certain socialists were outraged by this, since the bourgeoisie expected the workers to sign the petition. Matti Kurikka, one of the most prominent socialists (although not an orthodox Marxist), wrote in the newspaper *Työmies* on 3 March 1899 that this type of treatment should not be accepted by the working class and that cooperation with the bourgeoisie should be rejected as long as the representatives of the workers' movement were not allowed to participate in political decision making. Kurikka condemned the Constitutionalists' motive for passive resistance by saying that the rotting political structure which allowed so much injustice should not be defended for preservation but rather a new structure should be built.²⁶²

From early 1899 onward *Työmies* included many articles criticizing the Constitutionalist position.²⁶³ Basically the socialists saw the existing legal system as created by and for the bourgeoisie. They challenged and rejected the Constitutionalists' concept of the sacredness of the legal system which the working class had no hand in fashioning.²⁶⁴ The Constitutionalists' claim that the existing legal system was an expression of the Finnish peoples' sense of justice was spurned as ludicrous in light of the fact that the voice of the people was unheeded in the nation's representative institutions and that basic social reforms were avoided.²⁶⁵ The members of the workers' movement could not adopt the ideology of Constitutionalist resistance when it was so clear that Finnish law was mainly serving the interests of those in power or the upper classes.²⁶⁶

Although fundamentally the ideology of the workers' movement was incompatible with that of the Constitutionalists and the upper strata as a whole there were significant areas where those belonging to these two groups actually joined together in practice. Later this cooperation, especially where resistance to Russification was concerned, was underrated and even ignored by both socialist and bourgeois writers. This is doubtlessly because of the tragic polarization of the two groups beginning after 1905 and culminating in the Civil

²⁶² Kurikka 1899.

²⁶³ Soikkanen 1961, p. 73.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 76.

²⁶⁵ For example the article "Onko laki yleisen mielipiteen tulkki?" *Työmies*, 14 November 1899 asks "Is Law the Interpreter of Public Opinion?"

²⁶⁶ For example see "Lain pyhyys," *Työmies* 18 August 1899.

War of 1918. An investigator of the intricacies of pre-1905 bourgeois-worker cooperation, Antti Kujala, believes that the workers and the Constitutionalists were actually natural allies in the common endeavor to prevent Russification; the Finnish Social Democrats had a functioning mass organization and the Constitutionalists had mastery of essential resources such as political experience, international connections and money.²⁶⁷

Bourgeois-worker cooperation, however, was no simple matter even though in July of 1901 the Workers' Party, after much debate, officially decided that work with other parties (often thought of as class enemies) was allowable as long as no activity was undertaken in contradiction of the Party program.²⁶⁸ Just as the bourgeois or upper strata of Finnish society was divided into various factions, mostly in relation to the resistance/compliancy dichotomy, so the workers' movement was divided into at least five different orientations whose relation to one another depended on the issue at hand.²⁶⁹ Concerning the issue of resistance to Russification the workers' movement was divided primarily into two branches, the compliants and the resisters.

There are several reasons why the compliant line was seen as the lesser of evils for those who adhered to it.²⁷⁰ Pre-1905 worker compliancy was primarily a tactic for securing the survival of the Finnish workers' movement which, with its legal organization and press, had hitherto been allowed to function less restrictedly than similar organizations elsewhere in the Empire; after all, in Russia the workers' movement was forced to operate underground. It is thus understandable that there were many who did not want through provocation of the Russian government to jeopardize the status of the movement and the possibility of initiating peaceful reform.

Furthermore, worker animosity toward the Constitutionalists was reinforced by the Bobrikov regime which saw the Finns as a basically loyal mass being led astray by the resisters in the upper class whom it considered to be its main enemies. Worker compliancy should not, however, be understood in the sense of a close alliance with the Russian government; toleration of the Finnish workers' movement was not wholly a tactical procedure but was also the result of the Russians' sheer incapacity to control everything and the fact that Finnish worker activity in itself was not considered to be of much significance.²⁷¹ The

²⁶⁷ Kujala 1978, p. 176.

²⁶⁸ *Ensimmäinen työväen puoluekokouksen pöytäkirja* 1901; Hyvönen 1963, pp. 46–49.

²⁶⁹ Kujala 1978, p. 223.

²⁷⁰ Kujala 1985, p. 182; Kujala 1978, p. 90.

²⁷¹ Kujala 1985, pp. 182, 184.

workers' compliancy approach became increasingly ineffective in the course of 1904 and intensified Russian pressure gave rise to a broader radicalization of the workers' movement.

In numerous parts of Finland passive resistance had wide support among the working people and many socialist leaders worked directly for Kagal. Kagal financed and helped direct worker anti-government activity. Alongside of students workers did a great deal of the agitation work for passive resistance at the local level, especially in connection with the annual conscription boycotts of 1902–1904.²⁷²

8. Resistance and Revolution: The Scope of Constitutional Insurgency

The years 1899–1905 witnessed a hitherto unprecedented radicalization of the Finnish culture of contention. From the Great Address of 1899 to the Great Strike of 1905 more Finns than ever engaged in nonroutine intensified conflicts and learned new, more militant, techniques for doing so. Before 1905 the Constitutionalist front was the most significant agent of radical change among the Finns. This may seem paradoxical given the front's immediate conservative goals. But in the critical circumstances of 1899–1905 it was the Constitutionalist front which led the unique mass defiance to the long-established Russian regime and thus cultivated the ground – by effectively disseminating the idea and practice of the right and duty of rebellion against authority – for future insurgency. Moreover, by deliberately adhering to an articulated and distinct doctrine and technique of struggle – passive resistance – involving mass organized disobedience they became, willingly or not, active participants in a broader potentially revolutionary process.

It is generally recognized that the outburst of revolution throughout the Russian Empire in 1905 extended to Finland too. But because the Social Democratic movement is usually focused on as Finland's main revolutionary agent, and given that the Great Strike was this movement's first major independent revolutionary campaign, some of the major domestic antecedents of the 1905 revolutionary situation in Finland have perhaps been overlooked. Thus, using Tilly's concept of a revolutionary situation, Alapuro is able to write of 1905 in Finland:

²⁷² Kujala 1978, pp. 76, 82, 133–147, 177–179, 223–224.

“During a short but decisive period, the government, which had previously been under the control of a single polity, became the object of effective, competing and mutually exclusive claims by two distinct polities.”²⁷³ Tilly’s definition of revolutionary circumstances, as Alapuro applies it to 1905, and especially to the situation in Finland in 1917–1918, is also useful in the analysis of the period preceding the Great Strike.²⁷⁴ This, to be sure, is not to say that the period preceding the Great Strike was a revolution or a revolutionary situation in a strict sense, but that comparison and contrast is otherwise illuminating.

Beginning in 1899 the implementation of imperial integration in Finland was confronted by a truly multifaceted insurgency. The existing polity became fragmented: As the Russian regime sought to infuse itself more deeply into the local structure of politics and society the Finnish upper class became sharply divided. Competition between the compliant Old Finns, the Constitutionalist front and the Russian regime began for the souls of the majority of the people who were excluded from estate society. Tilly’s generalization that polity “fragmentation frequently involves the emergence of coalitions between established members of the polity and mobilizing nonmembers” is applicable here.²⁷⁵ The rising workers’ movement – the most significant “nonmember” – was itself divided in its coalitions with the various blocs from the old polity, but emerged after 1905 as the single most successful competitor for the political support of the masses.

Throughout the nation and at all levels of government the Constitutionalist front, along with all those whose diffuse resistance indirectly supported it, was able to defy the long-established Russian governmental authority. When forced increasingly out of national and local institutions the Constitutionalists formed a *de facto* nation-wide popular insurgent administration underground which played a key part in preventing the Bobrikov regime from attaining its goals and prepared the way for their own rise to power, first in the Diet in 1904 and then in the government following the Great Strike.

Furthermore, it was Finnish Constitutionalists and not, as might be supposed, the socialists who had the most knowledge of, and contacts within, the Russia opposition and revolutionary movement prior to 1905.²⁷⁶ It is striking that most of the socialist leaders, not to speak of the rank and file, had no contacts or cooperation with Russian socialists

²⁷³ Alapuro 1988, p. 115.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 143–145.

²⁷⁵ Tilly 1978, p. 192.

²⁷⁶ Copeland 1973, *passim*.

at that time.²⁷⁷ In fact from 1899 to 1905, in order to protect their own status, the Finnish socialists intentionally sought to isolate themselves from the Russian revolutionaries and workers' movement in general; individual members caught helping Russian revolutionaries were even suspended from Party functions. Kujala concludes that in the whole Russian Empire no other socialist party was as insular as that in Finland. This insularity continued until the Great Strike of 1905, when relations between the Finnish Constitutionalists and the Russian revolutionaries ceased, and the Finnish Social Democrats began to cultivate cooperation with their Russian comrades.²⁷⁸

Having said this, however, elucidation of the Constitutionalists' association with radicalism and revolution remains problematic. After all the resistance thinkers and propagandists, especially in the beginning of the struggle, often employed a distinctly anti-revolutionary type of discourse.²⁷⁹ Indeed, their major express goal was the restoration of the legal order ante Bobrikov. For example, in 1899 Edward Westermarck sought to convince the English public that "of a rebellion no one even dreams in Finland. We shall offer peaceful resistance.... We have no connection with the disaffected elements in Russia.... Their cause and ours are not the same ... we only stand up for our guaranteed rights."²⁸⁰ At that time Leo Mechelin also stressed, as shown in a letter to J.N. Reuter, that in their writings abroad the Finns had to strongly emphasize the loyal nature of the Finnish opposition.²⁸¹ Another excellent example is provided by a rhetorically eloquent anonymous writer's article from the summer of 1901. His aim is to counter charges that passive resistance is a violent and dangerous policy. "It is in fact a logical impossibility," he explains, "to call a policy violent which requires noncooperation with all illegal or violent measures. Quite the contrary, it is a conservative policy in the strictest sense of the term."²⁸² In 1903, in a pamphlet originally meant for Russian readers as a rejoinder against charges that Finns were separatist in a revolutionary sense, Mechelin asserted that "now a true change of regime is necessary"; he stressed, however, that in defending Finland's "self-administration," "fundamental laws" and "internal independence," ie. its "*separaattinen*' (separate) status within the Russian Empire-group," the Finnish demand for a change of regime simply meant "an honest

²⁷⁷ Kujala 1985, p. 182.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 184, 185, 187.

²⁷⁹ Again, this is not to imply that they were simply insincere.

²⁸⁰ Westermarck 1899, p. 658.

²⁸¹ Mechelin to Reuter, 21 February 1900.

²⁸² *Fria Ord/Vapaata Sanoja* (FO/VS), 1 August 1901, p. 2.

return to a legal mode of government in accordance with the country's constitution."²⁸³

Since a certain conservatism was a prominent feature of Finnish constitutional resistance thought, it is pertinent to consider Perez Zagorin's observation that the connection between conservative ideologies and innovation is more intricate than is commonly thought:

to revolutionary actors, the manifest function of the beliefs they profess may be preservation or restoration; their latent function, however, even if the actors are unaware of it, may be innovation.²⁸⁴

A common characteristic of many European insurgent and revolutionary movements from early-modern times onward was the adherence by rebels to an "ideology of the normative past" appealing to "to antiquity, custom, and rudimentary contractual traditions as a source of authority and a limit upon absolutism and royal power."²⁸⁵ In the case of Finland almost the whole upper strata of society had been cultivating such an ideology, or mythology, of the normative past since the 1860s; it was a basic element of assertive Finnish nationalism.

What Westermarck and his colleagues were in effect saying is: we shall rebel without rebelling, i.e. revolt without being associated with the stigma of subversion. Cannot Homén's observation that "violence always aspires to cloth itself in the cloak of justice and will suffer great trouble to do so even a little" be applied to the Finnish resistance too?²⁸⁶ The Finns went to an extreme in cloaking their defiance in all the rhetorical finery of the European civic religion of justice. True to the classical constitutionalist tradition they held that it was the tyrant who was the true rebel and revolutionary. Putatively they were not aiming for a new order, but merely defending an old well-established one.

With the Russian offensive of the Bobrikov period the Constitutionalist front invoked this ideology, combining it with radicalized insurgency. What the Finnish resisters in fact did – through the discourse of passiveness, the normative past and legalism – was to tell the Russian authorities that either a constitutional system must be guaranteed or they will revolt, i.e. withdraw all cooperation. The Russians understood Finnish Constitutionalist insurgency as separatist and revolutionary. Indeed, Finnish passive resistance can be seen as an attempt at what

²⁸³ Mechelin 1903b, pp. 12, 153.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁸⁶ Homén 1902c, p. 72.

can be classified as a regional or borderland constitutionalist rebellion against its absolutist monarchical state center. Furthermore, it was a distinct yet dependent part of an Empire-wide revolutionary process.²⁸⁷ Nonetheless, if the Russians meant that the Finns were revolutionary in a strict sense of the term then they were mistaken, since passive resistance was understood as a way to struggle without resorting to revolutionary violence.

The Bobrikov regime's offensive against Finland's de facto degree of autonomy was undeniably one of the essential factors making for revolutionary conditions in that country prior to 1906. Obviously much can be said for the simple assertion that it was Bobrikov who radicalized Finnish society.²⁸⁸ But, as will be recognized by anyone familiar with studies of insurgence and revolution, this is to say nothing more than that it is never solely insurgents who create such situations. Finland's assertive nationalism and constitutional state ideology, with its interminable striving for increased autonomy in relation to Russian government, was bound for collision with Russian nationalism. In the later part of the nineteenth century the Finnish national mobilization could not help but cultivate the seed of a more radical insurgency. Passive resistance was conceived of as an extreme weapon of this insurgency long before the Bobrikov period.

The "passive" part of "passive resistance" by indicating the exclusion of armed violence did not thus mean the exclusion of force. The word "passive" did, however, serve to help rhetorically cover up force by indicating pure defense without rebellion or subversion; it meant good and just resistance. When referring propagandistically to resistance without resistance or insurgency without insurgency the term passive resistance cannot but be recognized as a contradiction in terms, as the socialist Ferdinand Lassalle pointed out in 1849.²⁸⁹ The Finnish resisters found that they could not long hide behind the rhetorical facade of passivity as they were pressured by their opponents to adhere to the literal meaning of "passive." Insurgent as they were, they could not

²⁸⁷ To reiterate, this is not to say that the passive resistance movement in itself was a revolution or that the resisters were violent revolutionaries.

²⁸⁸ As Neovius put it in 1902, the unwillingness of the blind Russian regime to give up its illegal policy of overthrowing the Finnish system has naturally forced the Finnish people to implement passive resistance; see Neovius 1902; for one of the most forceful and impassioned formulations of this argument which, among other things, blames Bobrikov for completing destroying the basis for mutual Finno-Russian trust and for reviving the Finns' deep-seated "racial hatred" for the Russian people see *VL*, 29 September 1903, pp. 5-7.

²⁸⁹ Ladendorf 1968, pp. 236-237.

of course be passive and were forced to be explicit concerning how active passive resistance really was intended to be.

For the most part the Constitutionalist were manifestly insurgent in both word and deed. They clearly adhered to the international constitutionalist doctrine of the right and duty of rebellion against tyranny. Accordingly, they explicitly held that when tyranny becomes systematic in its violation of constitutional law, then subjects have not only the right, but are also obliged, to revolt. In fact, as was shown earlier, one of the outstanding features of the resistance press is its express attitude of defiance to Bobrikov, that “vulgar personification of the politics of despotism and illegality,” and the Russian regime in general.²⁹⁰

As the Finno-Russian conflict escalated, and with the increasing awareness of the Empire-wide pressure for change, some Finns openly dared to express their innovative constitutionalist goals in relation to Russia. They were convinced that “Anglo-Saxon-Scandinavian” constitutionalism represented the superior solution for replacing the current regime. Finland was accordingly seen as a bridge for the spread of western constitutionalism into Eastern Europe and North Asia. There was even a vision of Finland playing an important part in a possible Empire-wide constitutionalist transformation.²⁹¹

A review in English of the situation in Finland at the end of 1904 by the journalist and politician Axel Lille clearly expresses the special innovative nature of the Finnish resistance. After reviewing the history of the Finno-Russian conflict Lille writes:

The period of conflict had set in all over Finland. It was and it is not only a conflict between the monarch, who oversteps the constitutional limits of his powers, and the people and its representatives, who endeavor to defend the law. It is a conflict between the Russian power, that illegally and destructively intervenes in the political life of Finland, and the Finnish nation in its entirety fighting for its existence. It is, moreover, a conflict between Eastern despotism and Western principles of justice and love for law abiding freedom.²⁹²

After relating in detail the principles and practice of Finnish passive resistance Lille concludes:

Since it has become known in Finland, during these last years, of what nature the forces are which, under the aegis of autocracy, drive the

²⁹⁰ *FOVS*, 17 May 1901, pp. 1-2.

²⁹¹ Neovius 1900b, pp. 1-3.

²⁹² Lille 1904, p. 920.

political machinery in St. Petersburg, we cannot hope for a satisfactory solution of the conflict until an entire change of system has been carried out in Russia.²⁹³

Lille's view provides an excellent example of a common belief among Finns that the success of their own struggle depended on change in Russia. But their dependence on such change and the question as to how much they should actively become involved in it were complex issues. What then was their relation to change and revolution in Russia?

The Coming Transformation of Russia

As privately expressed in the 1898 letter to his son cited earlier, Yrjö-Koskinen thought that a combination of passive resistance and support within Russia itself against "the ruling gang of robbers" would ultimately prevent the Russification of Finland.²⁹⁴ What Yrjö-Koskinen meant by "much support" in Russia for the Finnish cause is unclear. It is probably safe to say that he was not referring to the radical opposition, but he had to have in mind the possibility of some kind of effective opposition to the regime's current policies. Although Yrjö-Koskinen soon abandoned this approach, the formula resistance plus support or change in Russia was quickly adopted and cultivated by Constitutionalists.

The resistance press, especially in its early phase, did indeed tend to focus on the technique of passive resistance and the domestic prerequisites for it. Yet from the very outset of their endeavor the resisters realized that the course of events in Russia would have a significant, if not decisive, influence on the outcome of their resistance movement. One of the most marked characteristics of the resistance press is the profusion of articles dealing with events in Russia. With the intensification of revolutionary action and the approach of war in the Far East, the frequency of these articles only increased. Not surprisingly these articles, referring to a great variety of events and citing both Russian and western European sources, concentrated on news which put the Russian government in a bad light or revealed its weaknesses.

Initially the Finnish Constitutionalists seem to have understood the idea of backing in Russia in terms of the support they would receive

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 924.

²⁹⁴ Yrjö Koskinen to Yrjö-Koskinen, 10 December 1898.

in official Russian circles against Russification in general and in particular against the conscription of Finns into the imperial army. In spite of the fact that there was indeed hope in this regard, the editors of the resistance press emphatically warned their readers that they should not be overly optimistic about the potential efficacy of support for their cause in St. Petersburg governmental circles. They pointed out, for instance, that the tsar need not heed pro-Finnish opinion even when, as at present, some members of the Imperial Council were in favor of the Finns on the conscription issue.²⁹⁵ It was not long, however, before the Finnish Constitutionals came to identify support in Russia with the activities of the various opposition groups and the general revolutionary process. The success of the passive resistance movement in Finland thus came to be understood as bound to that of the opposition, and even revolutionary, movements in Russia and the Empire in general.

It is important to stress here that the meaning of support and dependence on change in Russia was continually ambiguous to the Finns, and these concepts should not be understood as necessarily implying direct involvement with Russians. Likewise, the meaning of the terms signifying the transformation of Russia, such as “revolution” were also equivocal. Politically aware Finns certainly had some understanding of the difference between the parties and factions of the extreme left and the opposition groups to their right. But such distinctions were by no means clear, and all these groups were understood as being part of a revolutionary process. It is true that men like Neovius deplored the fact that the Russian regime was giving rise to “the unpredictable cancer of revolution” in the Empire.²⁹⁶ But it was not long before they began to believe that the Russian regime was doomed to death, a death which could very well bring the initiation of a constitutional form of government in Russia.²⁹⁷

How this death and reformation was to occur was unclear; was it “complete change,” “overthrow of the system” or “revolution”? Precise distinctions between these kinds of concepts were not often made. There can be no doubt that many Finns began to believe in a constitutional transformation in Russia, and that such an event should

²⁹⁵ *FO/VS*, 1 February 1901, p. 1.

²⁹⁶ Neovius 1900b, p. 1.

²⁹⁷ In 1900, for example, Neovius predicted that the repressive Russian regime was doomed to death, because people throughout the Empire would no longer support it, and it would fall, cursed by a hundred million. His point was that this fall had to be taken into consideration when thinking about the future: Neovius 1900e, pp. 3–4.

be prepared for. Moreover, many came to understand that such a change could even happen through the forcible change or overthrow of the current system. One need not look to the extreme Russian left to find people prepared for forced political change; even the most moderate Russian opposition groups contained those who were willing to contribute to the overthrow of autocracy, as Finnish resisters were well aware.²⁹⁸ Finns of the “loyal opposition” began maneuvering to establish good relations with those who might take power in Russia.

Several of the leading members of the Constitutionalist front were among Finland’s foremost experts on Russian affairs. Under the pressure of Russification these men became dismayed by the general highly deficient knowledge in Finland of the current transformation of Russian society. For example, the arrival of the accomplished geographer and internationally renowned anarchist Prince P.A. Kropotkin’s *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* in Finland incited the resisters to call for a change in this state of affairs.²⁹⁹ They were clearly impressed by Kropotkin’s profound insight into nineteenth century Russian life.³⁰⁰ In a review of Kropotkin’s work they come to the conclusion that knowledge is power, meaning that an essential condition for self-preservation is knowledge of the phenomena which threaten. They assert that what is presently known in Finland of Russian politics and the social currents which are effecting developments there is so vague and superficial that it can hardly be called knowledge. Finally they call on their countrymen to be more critical toward sources on Russia, which are presently undependable, and to take advantage of all opportunities to increase their knowledge of the subject.³⁰¹

Some of the resisters began inquiries into the details of the effort to transform Russia. For example, in an article of 23 July 1901 Neovius presented the Russian Social Democratic analysis, as voiced by the Geneva emigres, of current conditions.³⁰² The Social Democrats believed that recent events in Russia were unprecedented in

²⁹⁸ Copeland 1973, p. 165; Galai 1973.

²⁹⁹ Kropotkin’s memoirs were first published in serial form in the American journal *The Atlantic Monthly* (September, 1898 to September, 1899). The first book edition, published in 1899, includes a forward by Georg Brandes which the Finns cited; see Kropotkin 1971. In 1899 Kropotkin defended the Finnish cause from London and had contact with Finnish resisters such as J. Reuter; see Copeland 1973, pp. 58–59.

³⁰⁰ Kropotkin was one of the authorities whose observations, as published in the European press, on changing conditions in Russia were later cited by the resisters; for instance, one such observation was that the present conditions in Russia were strikingly similar to those in France before the Revolution of 1789; see *VL*, 7 April 1903, p. 4.

³⁰¹ *FOVS*, 18 October 1900, p. 3.

³⁰² Neovius 1901b, pp. 2–4.

revolutionary magnitude, observing that many revolutions in western Europe had been ignited by less. Even if the time of revolution in the full sense of the word had not yet come the Social Democrats held, as quoted by Neovius, that revolutionary forces were now gathering strength for the final confrontation with autocracy.

Neovius knew that the Finns' knowledge of the revolutionary movement was incomplete. Furthermore, he did not seem to believe in the validity of the revolutionaries' economic theory, he had his doubts about their methods and was puzzled by the Party's, or its factions', relationship to "revolutionary Red terrorism."³⁰³ However, in spite of all the uncertainties concerning the escalating Revolution, Neovius was prophetically certain that the Russian Social Democratic movement would "play a central role in the political growth and the formation of the fate of the Russian people in the near future."³⁰⁴ The Constitutionalists' correspondent in St. Petersburg, V.M. Smirnov (writing under the pseudonym *Observer*), went a step further, writing that in its fight for the freedom of Russia the "Russian revolutionary party" was simultaneously fighting for "the independence of Finland"; furthermore, it is the revolutionary party, with its clearly expressed genuine sympathy for the Finnish cause, which is Finland's best ally in Russia.³⁰⁵

Smirnov, who was half Finnish, was the Russian Social Democratic Party's most important contact-man with Finland in the early part of the century. One of his tasks was to write articles on Finland for *Iskra*, one of the chief editors of which was V.I. Lenin. As was typical of Finno-Russian opposition relations at the time, Smirnov's contacts with the Finnish Constitutionalists were more significant than with Finnish socialists; Kujala has observed that what Smirnov wrote for the Finnish underground press mostly suited the Constitutionalist line.³⁰⁶ But it is instructive here to contrast Neovius' approach to Smirnov's. Neovius presents the Russian Social Democratic position and estimates the Party's significance, but does not openly suggest involvement with them.³⁰⁷ Smirnov, in contrast, openly claims that the revolutionary party is the Finns' best ally, a claim which many within the Finnish

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁰⁵ *VL*, 14 May 1902, pp. 7-8; on Smirnov see Kujala 1989, pp. 46-47 (and sources cited) and; Copeland 1973, pp. 65-69, 72-77.

³⁰⁶ Kujala 1989, p. 46.

³⁰⁷ Neovius was, however, involved with Russians in the smuggling of subversive printed materials through Finland; he was, for example, among Smirnov's most important contacts; Copeland 1973, pp. 47-51, 63-77.

opposition certainly would not have desired to acknowledge, little less actively advocate. The great aversion felt toward involvement with Russian revolutionaries is well illustrated through the case of Konni Zilliacus.

It was about this time that Zilliacus, who would later establish a violent resistance faction, began advocating direct cooperation with Russian revolutionaries. In October 1902 Zilliacus published a book which for the first time made the story of the revolutionary movement in Russia available to Finns in broader detail. The work was very influential in changing Finnish perceptions of what was occurring in the Empire.³⁰⁸ Nevertheless, Zilliacus' open proposals, as expressed in *Fria Ord* in September, for collaboration with the Russian opposition for the destruction of autocracy met with significant dissent within resistance circles.³⁰⁹ For example, in a *Fria Ord* article from 30 September signed by "Fria Ord subscribers," the main author of which (as Copeland shows) was apparently Wrede, it is claimed that the aims of the Finnish resistance and the Russian revolutionaries are totally incompatible and that collaboration between them, and involvement in Russian internal affairs, would lead to the destruction of the separate political existence of Finland.³¹⁰

Although Wrede was an adamant passive resister, he was among the most socially conservative of Finns; his views cannot therefore be taken as characterizing the mainstream of the Constitutionalist front. The resistance leaders did, however, agree with Wrede that Zilliacus' proposals should not be publicly discussed and that his way of proceeding was not compatible with the strategy of passive resistance.³¹¹ Under Neovius' guidance, *Fria Ord* adhered to the passive resistance line and Zilliacus' role in the paper decreased.³¹² Nevertheless, already at this early stage there were those among the Constitutionalist who were, among other subversive activities, clandestinely exploring the nature of the Russian opposition and carefully weighing the potential consequences and conditions of cooperation.³¹³ This led them to adopt a different line than Zilliacus.

Whatever line was advocated it is obvious that by 1901 the concept

³⁰⁸ Copeland 1973, pp. 113–114.

³⁰⁹ Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 1, pp. 395–396, 431, vol. 2, pp. 675–676; Copeland 1973, pp. 113–114.

³¹⁰ Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 2, pp. 675–676; Copeland 1973, pp. 113–114.

³¹¹ In 1905 Neovius referred back to this controversy, reiterating that the pursuance of the Zilliacus line of direct participation in the Russian revolution would result in the destruction of Finnish independence; Neovius 1905a, p. 2.

³¹² Kujala 1987a, p. 60.

³¹³ See Copeland 1973, particularly Parts III and IV.

of “the Revolution in Russia” was becoming common.³¹⁴ That is to say that by this time the peasant, student, worker, intelligentsia, religious and national minority confrontations with the government, and sociopolitical turmoil in general, in Russia which they had been reporting and commenting on, and which had reached an unprecedented scale of intensity, now came to be seen, rather indefinitely, as part of a Russian Revolution which was coming or which was even now underway. The concept of a Russian Revolution now became an ambiguous and inclusive category under which events in Russia were classified and understood.³¹⁵ Moreover, although they did not follow Zilliacus’ leadership, resistance thinkers such as Neovius and Homén came to understand the Finnish struggle as contributing to the Russian Revolution.³¹⁶ Again, this is not to say that these men, little less their conservative colleagues, were revolutionaries in a strict sense; but revolution in a general sense was a real occurrence with which they knew they had to reckon.

Obviously for the Finnish opposition in general work toward a Constitutionalist victory in the Empire was to be preferred to dependence on the revolutionary left. It became common within the Finnish resistance movement to believe that the triumph of liberal forces in Russia could very likely be the guarantee of the success of the Finnish struggle.³¹⁷ Accordingly, as expressed on the front page of *Vapaita Lehtisiä* in 1901, that the kind of transformation which “liberal and radical elements” are struggling for everywhere “will occur in Russia there can be no doubt”; throughout the Russian Empire there are dissatisfied nationalities, social classes and individuals for whom the civil and military powers supporting autocracy are the common enemy.³¹⁸ This writer’s conclusion is that the Finns’ most

³¹⁴ For example see *FOVS*, 4 April 1901, p. 1–4; this edition is bursting with news of “the Revolution in Russia,” dealing with a wide variety of occurrences from riots and bloodbaths to the excommunication of Leo Tolstoy.

³¹⁵ For the writers of the Finnish resistance press one of the significant sub-categories of the Russian Revolution was the Russian Social Democratic movement; they published a serious exploratory noncommittal study of it in a series of articles beginning in July, 1901.

³¹⁶ Homén did not write of the Revolution in his printed works, but in a private letter from 1903 he shows a certain enthusiasm for the “Russian Revolution” and the radicalization of the Finnish struggle. Moreover, he clearly credits Zilliacus for spreading the idea of the Russian Revolution; see Homén to Mannerheim, 5 June 1903 (thanks to Antti Kujala for this source); Neovius believed in contributing to the Russian Revolution without becoming directly involved in it; Neovius 1905b, p. 4.

³¹⁷ In his memoirs, Paasikivi says that this was a “very common claim” used “against us Old Finns”; Paasikivi 1957a, p. 42

³¹⁸ *VL*, 25 November 1901, p. 1.

important source of support in Russia will be the Russian liberals or Constitutionalists who, he emphasizes, must thus be given a good impression of the Finnish resistance movement.³¹⁹ He hastens to add, however, that this does not mean that the Finns must undertake direct cooperation with Russians; rather they must redouble their own domestic resistance efforts, which are under the close scrutiny of the Russian opposition, and only thus secure support and sympathy and ensure that the Finns will be remembered in the future for their staunch struggle.³²⁰

This line was not merely held by radical Constitutionalists, as is indicated by a resistance tract written by two influential Old Finns. They argued, against the compliants, that those presently in power in Russia are opposed by a great and influential party. Therefore by continuing resistance the Finns would help discredit and weaken the regime, thus contributing to the liberal victory.³²¹

Thus by 1901 it was well understood among resisters that the tsarist regime was being seriously challenged from a variety of positions and that therefore their own strategy had to take into account all the forces for change in Russia. Their own Realpolitik sense would not allow them to count on, like the compliants, the continued dominance of the autocratic system without major changes; furthermore, they thought "it would be stupid" to believe that if a revolution did break out, or change occur in some other manner, it would necessarily be defeated by the tsar's forces.³²² As the Finnish resisters saw it, the present Empire-wide unrest could no longer be understood simply as the typical type of extremism which had long been a characteristic feature of Russian life. Much of the Russian population was now on the brink of rebellion and people from every class were in a revolutionary mood. However it would happen, whether through peaceful change or violent revolution ending in a constitution or not, the forthcoming overthrow of the prevailing "system" and the present rulers of Russia could now be predicted with "almost mathematical certainty."³²³

The Russo-Japanese conflict only bolstered convictions of the probability of radical change in Russia. In January of 1904, one month before the war broke out, the head article of *Vapaita Lehtisiä* maintained that all signs indicate that the bloody and unjust Russian

³¹⁹ Homén also emphasized the need to impress the Russian liberals by maintaining staunch resistance; see Homén 1902b, p. 56.

³²⁰ *VL*, 25 November 1901, p. 1.

³²¹ Ignatius, Donner, pp. 5–6.

³²² *VL*, 21 December 1903, p. 2.

³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

regime cannot long withstand the liberation movement of the Russian people.³²⁴ The editors, in support of their own conclusions, quoted the St. Petersburg correspondent of the Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*. After observing that “everyone intuitively feels that Russia has come to the decisive point in its development,” he concludes that this time of reckoning will only be hastened if war, which the Russians will surely lose, breaks out.³²⁵ Furthermore, “those Russian patriots who are leading the Liberation Movement have long been completely prepared to take over at the right moment.”³²⁶

Thus the Finnish resistance writers increasingly identified with the members of the Liberation Movement who, like the Constitutionalist in Finland, represented the broad spectrum of constitutionalist and liberal resistance and revolutionary attitudes within Russian educated society, who were seen as now teaming up with the whole of Russian society for the overthrow of autocracy; ultimately this movement would “without doubt sweep the Romanov dynasty from the stage.”³²⁷ The Liberation Movement now provided the main perspective from which the escalation of revolutionary events in Russia were written about by the Finnish resisters.³²⁸

The escalation of revolutionary events in Russia was clearly reflected in the Finnish resistance press. There increasingly appeared articles not merely describing revolutionary events, but also allowing the advocates of violent revolution to express their views. Their message was: “Open your eyes! ... Deeds of bloody political violence cannot

³²⁴ VL, 14 January 1904, p. 1.

³²⁵ Ibid., p. 2 (*Aftonbladet*, 10 January 1904). Leo Mechelin was convinced that even if Russia did win the war economic crisis and other difficulties would force revolutionary change and bring victory for the Finns; Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 2, p. 617.

³²⁶ VL, 14 January 1904, p. 2. Copeland sees the summer of 1903 as a landmark in the development of Finnish attitudes toward the Liberation Movement. At that time the Liberationists made direct contact with Finns in Helsinki and moderate elements of the Finnish resistance began to consider them a force worth dealing with. Copeland also quotes one of Neovius' letters from that time (July 1903) saying that Finnish interest in the Russian liberation and Constitutionalist movements had swiftly increased in the preceding year; Copeland 1973, pp. 165–167.

³²⁷ For the role of the Liberation Movement, as distinct from the Russian Social Democrats and the Socialist Revolutionaries, in the events leading to the First Russian Revolution (1905) see Galai 1973, *passim*. The Finnish resisters understood the Liberation Movement as representing the great majority of the disaffected middle and upper classes as composed of *Zemstvo* activists, city councilors, medical doctors, lawyers, university officials, writers and artists and, “in a word, all those who can be counted as belonging to educated Russia”; see VL, 31 December 1904, pp. 1–3 (quote in main text from p. 2).

³²⁸ For example see VL, 30 November 1904, pp. 1, 3; 6 December 1904, pp. 1–2; 31 December 1904, pp. 1–3.

be averted unless the legal system is restored. They are – as we have tried to show – the immediate consequence of illegality and will continue until ... the policy of violent oppression has been abandoned.”³²⁹ One of the most extreme examples was a series of open letters written by the popular revolutionary leader Father G.A. Gapon, reprinted in *Vapaita Lehtisiä* after “Bloody Sunday” in St. Petersburg, 22 January 1905. Gapon preaches that the January violence throughout Russia has initiated the Great Russian Revolution”;³³⁰ therefore now is the time to rise without delay in violent revolution. He urges his readers to use dynamite and bombs.

One of the very last articles in *Vapaita Lehtisiä*, written during the Great Strike, was entitled: “On the Threshold of Revolution!”³³¹ This title very well expresses what had been a dominant theme in the resistance press for at least two years. In fact the message of this article is: “Now it has finally happened! ... In recent days the Finnish people has finally broken its chains! It has brought the whole machinery of government and business to a standstill,” i.e., it has stepped over the threshold into revolution; “Long live the Revolution, long live Finland!”³³²

But even now, with the enthusiasm of insurgency at its height, this step over the threshold did not signify for the mainstream Constitutionalists a merger with the Russian Revolution. Up until its end, the Finnish resistance movement remained primarily a separate and particularistic affair; it was a separate part of an Empire-wide revolutionary process and the resistance leaders aimed to keep it that way. This is one of the main reasons why the Finnish Constitutionalist front stuck to its strategy of passive resistance.

In 1901 Danielson-Kalmari had stressed that no reasonable person could think of Finland politically disassociated from Russia. Perhaps the fact that he felt it necessary to exclaim this principle indicates that some such thinking was indeed going on. Nonetheless, in general the mainstreams of compliance and Constitutionalism alike continued to adhere in practice to the idea that Finland would remain in some kind of political association with Russia, but they did so in very different ways.

At the beginning of 1905, when the Empire-wide crisis was clearly escalating, the Finnish Constitutionalist-dominated Diet presented its

³²⁹ *VL*, 17 August 1905, p. 1.

³³⁰ *VL*, 9 February 1905, p. 2; 6 March 1905, p. 4.

³³¹ *VL*, 4 November 1905, p. 1.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Great Petition to the tsar. The Petition was, as mentioned earlier, broadly representative of moderate resistance sentiment.³³³ In that defiant condemnation of the Russian regime's policy in Finland, it was claimed that the Finnish nation had never pursued interests at the expense of Russia or put forth demands which would weaken the political bond between the Grand Duchy and the Empire.³³⁴ Accordingly, in the Great Petition one cannot find even a hint of a demand for direct total independence from Russia. In a word, the aim was restoration of the legal order.

The terms of the Petition's discourse, however, should not allow one to underestimate the extent of the Finns' demands. By no means could there simply be a return to a previously well-defined static political state of affairs or status quo ante Bobrikov. Such a state of affairs never existed. For the Finnish opposition the call for restoration of the legal order was a way of demanding that Finno-Russian relations be set up on Finnish terms. For many this meant the attainment of guarantees for the inviolability of the Finnish political and legal system and the right for self-determined development.³³⁵ To be sure, the Petition made it clear that the Russian regime would still have considerable power in regard to Finland, but it had to be exercised in accordance with the Finnish legal system.

The Great Petition was an official document aimed at coming to an agreement with the tsarist regime. In many ways, however, it also reflected the demands which the Constitutionalist front had come to consider realistic in case of a liberal transformation, or overthrow, of the Russian government.

The implementation of Russification had brought about an unprecedented deterioration of Finnish loyalty toward, and trust in, the tsarist regime. It is not surprising then that many Finns began to consider how their relation to Russia might be best reorganized to secure their own interests, some began to consider the possibilities for radical, or even revolutionary, remedies. Nevertheless, in the course of 1904, after a good deal of inquiry concerning, and direct contact with, the Russian opposition, both the moderate and radical leaders of the Finnish resistance front came to view the basic platform of restoration of the legal order as the most realistic alternative.

It is true that the more forthright Constitutionalist, including Mechelin and his fellow exiles in Stockholm, had made it clear to the

³³³ Section 2. of the present chapter; also see section 9. below.

³³⁴ Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 3, p. 407.

³³⁵ Mechelin 1913, p. 103.

Russian liberals in January 1904 that a return to the pre-Bobrikov state of affairs with additional specific guarantees for political freedom was their minimum demand and that the possibility, as Mechelin put it, for the formation of “a completely independent state” was under consideration.³³⁶ In their dealings with the Russian opposition the resistance leaders in Helsinki took a much more cautious line.

Indeed as the crisis became more acute even the radical Constitution-
alists were usually very discreet with their visions for expanded political
freedom for Finland. This can be illustrated through the example of
Jonas Castrén. Castrén had a definite enthusiasm for revolution in
Russia. As early as 1903 he advocated going beyond demands for mere
restoration, and in case of the overthrow of autocracy he said that
Finland should “become a neutral, independent state like Switzer-
land.”³³⁷ At what was considered a critical point for the Finnish
struggle, a Constitutionalist meeting was held on 15 March 1904 in
Boden, northern Sweden, to determine how resistance was to be carried
on and intensified. Castrén’s speech there emphasized the central
importance of understanding current events in Russia and their
implications for the Finnish struggle. He exclaimed that now was the
time for Finns to rise up in mass struggle. But he advocated neither
involvement in the Russian Revolution, nor of a struggle for direct
independence. In fact his call for radical struggle was entirely within
the bounds of Constitutionalist passive resistance.³³⁸

Castrén, like his colleagues, believed that the primary campaign at
that point should be for the Constitutionlists to take over the Diet
and then defiantly demand the restoration of the legal order. It was a
Deákean strategy, and the result was the Great Petition at the end of
the year. But it must be emphasized that however cautious they were
in practice, many of the Constitutionlists were progressive in attitude,
holding, as Neovius put it, that events of the last several years had
taught them that the restoration of the old order was to be considered
the minimum goal and the first step toward legally “replacing it with
a new, freer and more modern form of government.”³³⁹

Up until the dissolution of the organization of resistance following
the victory of the Great Strike in 1905, Constitutionalist insurgency
remained within the bounds of disobedience and noncooperation

³³⁶ Copeland 1973, pp. 176–179, Mechelin quoted on p. 178.

³³⁷ Castrén quoted in Copeland 1973, p. 168.

³³⁸ Castrén 1904; Castrén’s speech was recorded by the Old Finn Mauno Rosendal, the revivalist leader and religious scholar who often functioned as secretary and organizer of Finnish-minded resistance meetings.

³³⁹ Neovius 1905c, p. 1.

without violence. Moreover, even for the most radical of those who stayed within the Constitutionalist bloc, passive resistance remained the primary strategy for struggle. On numerous occasions between 1903 and 1905 the Constitutionalist both individually and collectively reconfirmed their steadfast primary adherence to passive resistance.³⁴⁰ Likewise, *Vapaita Lehtisiä* and *Fria Ord* remained, until they were terminated in 1905, specifically organs of passive resistance;³⁴¹ those who openly advocated the use of violence were forced to turn elsewhere to propagate their views.

Violent Schemes

On 26 June 1900 the well-known poet J.H. Erkko complained to his younger brother, Eero Erkko, that the depreciation of the Russian revolutionaries' activities in the Young Finn newspaper *Päivälehti* two days earlier was unwise. The younger Erkko was the paper's editor-in-chief, soon to be forced underground, whence, along with other resistance activities, he ran *Vapaita Lehtisiä*. The elder Erkko thought it foolish for Finns to disparage Russian "nihilists" (revolutionaries) in order to bolster their own righteousness. The nihilists, he said, belong to the Russian educated class and they are not the enemies of the Finns. He pointed out that Russification could very well give rise to nihilist-type phenomena in Finland too.³⁴²

In a similar vein an anonymous writer for the resistance press observed, in October 1902, that only a few years ago the mere mention of the terms "nihilism and terrorism" aroused aversion and fright among the Finns.³⁴³ Before, his article states, the Finns would do everything to immediately apprehend, and hand over to the authorities,

³⁴⁰ For example at the "Stockholm Diet" conference, 3–5 September 1903, the Finnish Constitutionalist reaffirmed their adherence to passive resistance; *VL*, 21 November 1903, pp. 2–3, includes an article signed by twenty-eight prominent Constitutionalist making it clear that passive resistance was still their primary strategy and the best means available. One of the main resolutions of the massive (one thousand-participant) Constitutionalist meeting in Helsinki on 13 September 1905 was to maintain passive resistance against the Russian regime; the whole meeting was a mass confirmation of adherence to passive resistance.

³⁴¹ See *VL*, 18 April 1905, p. 4 (Neovius 1905b), in which Neovius, whose articles figured prominently in both papers, explicitly, in the context of a major debate on the comparative merits and faults of violent and passive resistance, reasserts the superiority of passive resistance on pragmatic grounds; he expressly recognizes that the Finns certainly have the right to violent self-defense.

³⁴² Erkko to Erkko, 26 June 1900.

³⁴³ *Vapaita Lehtisiä* (*VL*), 18 October 1902, pp. 5–6.

any Russian nihilists straying into Finnish territory. However, the treachery and unscrupulousness with which Pobedonostsev, von Plehwe and Bobrikov have so swiftly destroyed Finnish law and justice, replacing it with arbitrariness and Russian bureaucracy, has now given every Finn an understanding of why nihilism and terrorism arose in Russia; it has thus aroused within them a certain sympathy for the Russian revolutionary parties. The article concludes that absolutism and military domination give rise to revolutionary violence, the seeds of which Bobrikov has now sown among the Finnish people.³⁴⁴ This writer did not claim that Finns had already at that time turned to “nihilism and terrorism,” but he predicted, like J.H. Erkko, that if the Bobrikov regime’s oppression was to continue unabated then they would most likely be driven to it in desperation. Perhaps he was among those who were already investigating the possibilities for armed rebellion or who, not long thereafter, began planning the assassination of key Russian figures such as Bobrikov.

Thus, as Erkko anticipated, Russification did indeed give rise to a certain sympathy for violent action. To more fully understand the extreme scope of Constitutionalist insurgency it is necessary to examine not merely the published words and manifest passive resistance practice of the insurgents, but also their more clandestine schemes.

Constitutionalists proceeded very carefully in regard to involvement with Russian revolutionaries. Before the latter part of 1904 direct Finno-Russian cooperation in resistance, in contrast to mere contact, was limited almost exclusively to the smuggling of revolutionary underground literature through Finland to Russia. Only a few Finns were involved in its organization. Of them Konni Zilliacus apparently hoped that this work might lead to more significant cooperation. His aim was to help unify the opposition movements throughout the Empire. But Kagal did not want to commit the Finns to such work.³⁴⁵

Zilliacus was part of a small fraction of men driven by an increasing dissatisfaction with the approach of their Constitutionalist colleagues. Their own program was based on a vehement criticism of passive resistance as a main strategy and the advocacy of terrorist violence and working cooperation with Russian revolutionaries. At the Stockholm conference of exiled Constitutionalist leaders and Kagal

³⁴⁴ Ibid. pp. 5–6; in its 10 September 1904 (p. 1) issue *Vapaista Lehtisiä* cited a “satirical” comment by a Russian liberal observer, made shortly after the assassination of Bobrikov on 16 June 1904, saying that the assassination was the surest sign so far that Russification was succeeding in Finland; succeeding that is in giving rise to the same ways of thinking and rebellious action as in Russia itself.

³⁴⁵ Kujala 1987b, pp. 88–89.

representatives in September 1903 this platform was firmly rejected. The Constitutionalist majority reconfirmed adherence to passive resistance and expressed a preference for increased contact, but not an alliance, with the Russian liberals, not with the Social Democrat or Socialist Revolutionary groups. One year later Zilliacus organized a conference of opposition and revolutionary parties from throughout the Russian Empire. The Finnish Constitutionalist refused to commit themselves to the conference's resolutions, thus marking Zilliacus' final failure to persuade the Finns to join in a united Empire-wide resistance effort on his terms. The result was that Zilliacus and company broke away and formed the Finnish Active Resistance Party.³⁴⁶

One of the outstanding features of activist propaganda was the criticism of passive resistance; the very name "Active Resistance Party" signifies a dramatic break with passive resistance. The members of this party were convinced that passive resistance, however important and promising it had been in the past, was now a complete failure and entirely unrealistic. They advocated all-out violence against the Russian regime.³⁴⁷ It was not, however, the activists' argument against passive resistance in abstract which chiefly alarmed the Constitutionalist, but rather the concrete alternative to it which they offered. For example Neovius, in open debate with the activists, rebukes them for not elaborating on the consequences of their schemes: the activists' approach of direct cooperation with Russian revolutionaries is a danger to Finnish autonomy, it is harmful to the particular interests of Finland.³⁴⁸

Neovius elaborates his view in response to an activist rejoinder as follows: the activists urge Finns to take part in the Russian Revolution. A sharp distinction between taking part in, and helping, the Revolution must be made. The Finns "should and can help the Revolution," especially the liberal Liberation Movement: "But we cannot *take part* as long as we want to preserve our special status; Finland is not, and does not desire to become, part of Russia."³⁴⁹

Next, although explicitly his main purpose is not to challenge the principles of violent struggle in abstract, Neovius rejects the activist principle that violence is superior to passive resistance in general. He considers the assertion "that violence is the only secure foundation for justice" is a false doctrine and is astonished that anyone can nowadays

³⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 90–92, and; for the broader background see Kujala, 1988b.

³⁴⁷ Gummerus 1935, 60–70, 81; Mörne 1903; Zilliacus, 1904a, 1904b.

³⁴⁸ Neovius 1905a, pp. 2–3.

³⁴⁹ Neovius 1905b, p. 4, my emphasis.

adhere to it: if it were true then small states would have no justice. He then reiterates the often cited case of the Hungarians achieving through passive resistance what they failed to attain through violent resistance. In other words, Neovius does not adhere to the principle of violence being the *ultima ratio regum* or, in more modern terms, the ultimate means of the people or state. He, like his counterparts in the Russian Liberation Movement, believed that the other revolutionary groups were disastrously confusing armed might with political power.³⁵⁰

Adherence to these principles did not, to be sure, rule out the use of armed force under appropriate conditions. Although the Constitutionalist front and Kagal leaders rejected the Russian revolutionary connection as pernicious to their cause, some of them did, beginning in 1902, secretly explore a variety of possible ways to supplement passive resistance if need be. Their policy was that inquiries into the prerequisites for armed struggle should be carried out, and that such struggle should be implemented only if certain stringent qualifications were met. For example, at the beginning of 1902 Finnish military officers considered joining the British army, and Kagal leaders negotiated with British military officials. In 1901 and 1902 plans were made in Kagal circles for the formation of a secret voluntary militia of citizens for self-defense, but the Kagal directors refused, at this time, to support such a venture. Furthermore, inquiries were undertaken concerning the procurement of weapons from abroad.³⁵¹

As the Russo-Japanese conflict escalated toward war, the Japanese began to explore ways to foment rebellion and revolution in the Russian Empire. Thus, it is not surprising to find that contact between Finns and Japanese had been made by February 1904. Essentially there were two possible, apparently mutually exclusive, schemes for the Japanese to follow with the small group of Finns with whom they were plotting. First there was the Finno-particularist scheme of the radical Constitutionalist and second there was the Empire-wide line of their estranged comrade Konni Zilliacus. The proponents of the former sought to manipulate the international situation for the exclusive benefit of Finland. They would accept Japanese aid for armed rebellion if they could be sure of support from Sweden, England and other European powers in conjunction with the rebellion of national minorities in the Russian Empire. In the event that Britain did join the war against

³⁵⁰ The Russian debate on this subject, from the Liberation Movement's point of view, is presented in *VL*, 2 August 1905, pp. 3-5.

³⁵¹ Kujala 1988a, p. 5.

Russia they hoped that these conditions might include the British navy's outright support of a possible Finnish armed uprising.

Furthermore, the radical Constitutionalists tried to persuade the Japanese to commit themselves to securing the full independence, or at least to the internationally guaranteed complete autonomy, of Finland after the war; they wanted this commitment to be binding regardless of whether or not the Finns actually did join the armed struggle.

Apparently the Constitutionalists' communication with the Japanese was poor, and the two parties never did come to any practical agreement concerning the funding and equipping of a Finnish armed rebellion.³⁵² Instead, the Japanese turned to Zilliacus, approving his scheme in the summer of 1904. In the summer of 1905, after months of planning, he launched on an adventure which was intended to ignite the Russian Revolution. The idea was to provide arms to all the revolutionary parties, but by May 1905 it seems that Zilliacus and his Japanese contact considered it plausible only to arm the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Finnish activists. Father George Gapon was to assist them in mobilizing the masses. Soon, however, both Kagal and the Russian Bolsheviks caught wind of the scheme and wanted in on it.³⁵³

Kagal, with its characteristic Realpolitik sense, knew that in the current circumstances the unfolding revolutionary plot could have significant repercussions. It therefore sought a way to steer the scheme for the benefit of the Finnish Constitutionalist front. For practical reasons only, the Kagal directors decided that the best tactic was to support the Russian Bolsheviks. Through contacts such as that between Kagal director Adolf Törngren and N.E. Burenin, who belonged to the Bolshevik's technical combat group, the two parties had a practical working relationship. For his part V.L. Lenin personally arranged with Father Gapon in Geneva for the Bolsheviks to be in on the plot and to take part in the planned reception of weapons in St. Petersburg. This revolutionary enterprise was taken very seriously in Kagal circles. Prominent leaders took part in the planning and even Mechelin knew about this major attempt to launch the Revolution.³⁵⁴

This whole endeavor to initiate armed insurrection miscarried. The various parties concerned failed to effectively coordinate their action. The Bolsheviks were obviously best prepared to control the distribution of the arms if the shipment would have reached St. Petersburg. The

³⁵² Ibid., pp. 6–20.

³⁵³ Kujala 1980, pp. 261–262.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 264–268.

Finnish activists therefore planned to unload in Finland so that they could direct the distribution into Russia. Nevertheless, the actual struggle for control of the weaponry never took place, because the main shipment of 15,560 rifles, 2,500 revolvers and three tons of explosives ran aground off the coast of Finland and was blown up on 8 September. Three days earlier Japan and Russia came to a final peace agreement which resulted in the termination of Japanese aid to the revolutionaries.³⁵⁵

In September the changes which were to bring the Finnish Constitutionalists to power, and their plotting for violent rebellion to an end, in November were still unforeseeable. When, on 13 September, Russian troops disbanded a national convention of the Constitutionalist front Kagal decided to initiate the training of citizens for armed struggle against the tsarist regime. To avoid repetition of the recent failure, weapons were to be smuggled into the country in small quantities.³⁵⁶ This was Kagal's last known effort for armed struggle.

9. Failure in Success: The Outcome of Resistance

Given the previously examined fundamental ideological and sociopolitical conditions for Finnish struggle it can now be asked what the accomplishments, failures and outcome of passive resistance were.

Of the Constitutionalist front's achievements it is most appropriate to first mention the resistance press, because it was both a major battle field in itself and, from start to finish, a basic part of all other resistance operations. Moreover, the smuggling of resistance literature was a highly successful operation. The resistance writers proudly, with manifest insolence, reported official Russian anxiety concerning the distribution of Finnish anti-Russian printed matter.³⁵⁷ Although Bobrikov succeeded in stifling the Finnish press on one level, his enterprise failed when the Finns went underground. As part of his attack Bobrikov pushed through the establishment of a Russian paper, the *Finliandskaia Gazeta*, in January 1900. At first it appeared three times a week then, beginning in 1901, four times a week; a selection of articles from it appeared weekly in Finnish. It was subject to boycott by the Finns and

³⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 269–273.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 271.

³⁵⁷ *FOVŠ*, 2 November 1900, p. 3.

Bobrikov's effort to offset the Finnish "separatist" press with regular imperial integration propaganda failed.³⁵⁸

In 1901 the Russian Major General M.N. Kaigorodov, acting governor of the province of Uusimaa (including the capital Helsinki), concluded that of all the current means of opposition it is the underground resistance press which is most detrimental to the Russian cause. He reported that the dangerous resistance writings were smuggled into, and distributed throughout, the country in enormous amounts. He then listed some of what he considered to be the most pernicious resistance publications from 1900, all dealing with the ideology and technique of passive resistance.³⁵⁹ He characterized the main resistance organ, *Fria Ord/Vapaita Sanoja*, as a "despotic paper," which foments "merciless persecution" of Russians and their friends.³⁶⁰ Kaigorodov's observations are concrete evidence in support of the conclusion of the famous Finnish novelist and journalist Juhani Aho:

The suppression of free expression has succeeded so poorly that, although press conditions are more difficult than ever, and although efforts have been made to restrict the freedom of assembly, written and oral public discussion of the most urgent current issues is more vigorous and freer than ever.³⁶¹

Likewise, the combination of Finnish noncooperation and Russian incapacity prevented cultural Russification in other spheres of Finnish society; for example, the replacement and surveillance of school textbooks and the infiltration of the Russian language was largely unsuccessful.³⁶²

The first outstanding successful initial manifestations of Finnish resistance were the Great Address and the international *Pro Finlandia* project of 1899. Both operations, however, were marked by a certain degree of failure. Neither persuaded the tsar to reverse his policy. Moreover, the *Pro Finlandia*, although extraordinarily successful as a show of support by the cream of European culture, did not, as with other broad efforts to mobilize international public opinion, lead to any official practical intervention or symbolic support from European governments. Nevertheless, the Russian regime was impressed and

³⁵⁸ Polvinen 1984, pp. 251–252.

³⁵⁹ *VL*, 26 March 1902, pp. 1–2; *Guvernörens årsberättelse*. The works Kaigorodov mentions by name, like Homén's definition of the idea and practice of passive resistance, belong to the class of resistance works cited throughout the present chapter.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ Aho 1902b.

³⁶² Polvinen, pp. 199–205.

disturbed by the grand scale of both the Finnish National Address and the *Pro Finlandia*. These protests composed significant obstacles for the Finland-eaters, causing them to proceed more slowly. Furthermore, the importance of these two campaigns in advancing mass political action, fostering popular national consciousness and fomenting an anti-Russian regime spirit should not be underemphasized.

The response evoked by the Finnish cause among foreign scholars and reporters was considered a success for the resistance. The resistance writers were gratified by the amount of “scientific” works on the Finnish situation. They listed them for their readers, claiming that, in spite of the differences between them, the final conclusion of them all was the same: “Finland is right, Russia wrong.”³⁶³ As with the *Pro Finlandia* the weakness of this success was that, apart from promoting international sympathy and domestic morale, it did not lead to concrete action on the part of governments.

One of the first operations portrayed within resistance circles as a success was that carried out against the Russian travelling salesmen. In November of 1900 *Fria Ord/Vapaita Sanoja*, repeating the observations – with a clear pro-Finnish bias – of a reporter from the English paper the *Morning Post*, concluded that the Finns’ manner of dealing with the peddlers “offers perhaps the best proof of the strength of Finnish passive resistance while demonstrating the difficulties the representatives of Russian authority will have to overcome in order to implement their will in the Grand Duchy.”³⁶⁴ In direct defiance to the Russian government “local officials used their power” to deport “tens and hundreds of Bobrikov’s wandering agents.”³⁶⁵ Thus, according to this account, in his powerlessness to protect the peddlers, the governor general could do little more than express rage. Furthermore, the reporter claimed here that throughout Finland the Finns had successfully implemented the total boycott of Russian salesmen.³⁶⁶

The Finnish resisters carefully watched Russian responses for signs of their own success. For example, Neovius saw Bobrikov’s suggestion that Finnish troops be transferred to Russia as a kind of confession of the success of resistance. Bobrikov had complained that the spirit of the resistance press had infested the whole Finnish people, including

³⁶³ *FO/VS*, 2 October 1900, pp. 7–8; this issue contains a list of forty-five titles, in German, English, French and Russian, concerning the Finno-Russian conflict.

³⁶⁴ *FO/VL*, 2 November 1900, p. 3. The article was entitled “Statements by Foreign Papers: Reports to the *Morning Post*.”

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

the military. The only way he saw for purging the troops of subversive contamination was to send them to Russia. Neovius saw this reaction as proof of the Finns' imperviousness to Russification.³⁶⁷

The underground press cites Governor Kaigorodov's inspection of the province of Uusimaa as a success for passive resistance. While Kaigorodov's own account paints Russian success, the evidence indicates otherwise, claim the resistance editors. Their article reports that almost nowhere on the governor's trip did anyone come to welcome him, nowhere was he the object of celebration.³⁶⁸

One matter which Kaigorodov seems to have been particularly concerned about on this trip was, as revealed to him by Russian gendarme reports, (in the article's words) the "prevailing temperament in various localities, agitation work among the people, the spread of uncensored literature, etc."³⁶⁹ Throughout the article it is stressed that everywhere Kaigorodov went he met a spirit of stubborn and subdued defiance among the local officials. On the basis of secret denunciations made to the Russians, the governor accused certain officials, including Finnish police, of "political agitation" and threatened them with dismissal.³⁷⁰

The Finns he interrogated denied the veracity of the reports of the gendarme's informers. The article claims that Kaigorodov finally concluded that his interrogations were in vain. The mayor of Hanko recalcitrantly engaged Kaigorodov in a debate, countering the Russian official's accusations that, as proved by their inefficiency in quelling resistance, the local police were not effective enough. For his part, Kaigorodov claimed that agitation and the distribution of forbidden literature was being practiced throughout the region. Furthermore, he said that he knew that the distribution of the underground publication *Fria Ord/Vapaita Sanoja* had spread throughout all of Finland. The mayor openly sided with that paper's view that the appointment (on 5 March 1901) of Kaigorodov as governor was illegal.³⁷¹

Governor Kaigorodov's official report on the situation in the province of Uusimaa at the end of 1901 provides an official Russian view regarding the hitherto effectiveness of Finnish resistance.³⁷²

³⁶⁷ Neovius 1901a, p. 1.

³⁶⁸ VL, 30 September 1901, pp. 5-6.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

³⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

³⁷² The governor's report was published in Finnish in VL, 26 March 1902, pp. 1-2. Kaigorodov's report, as signed in Helsinki on 31 December 1901, was to be published in *Hufvudstaadsbladet*, but the Russian Censorship Board forbid it: see *Guvernörens årsberättelse*.

Kaigorodov reports that recent events in the area under his jurisdiction have shown that there prevails a widespread misunderstanding, proliferated by the Finnish educated class, of the Russian policy of imperial integration. Considerable effort will still be necessary, he appraises, to counter the Finnish opposition, to help those friendly to the Russian cause and to protect Russians residing here from the boycott implemented against them.³⁷³

To illustrate the problem Kaigorodov describes some of the events in question. When the Russian Language Manifesto was promulgated what he calls the Finnish “separatists” and “intelligentsia party” members undertook agitation against it.³⁷⁴ This included a declaration of protest addressed to the minister secretary of state by seventy-nine members of the Finnish Diet in which, says Kaigorodov, the Manifesto was denounced as illegal. Moreover, with the implementation of the Manifesto everything Russian was immediately subject to boycott including the removal of Russian street and shop signs, the avoidance of places keeping such signs, the refusal to buy Russian goods, etc.

Continuing his list of complaints, the governor reports that the Russian administration’s efforts to restrict the Finns’ right of assembly and the collection of funds for political purposes were being effectively evaded by a whole variety of means. Other aspects of the current resistance movement the governor gripes about are the campaign against Russian travelling salesmen and the extensive use of all kinds of symbolic objects of protest such as anti-Russian signs, drawings, medals, badges, emblems, bottles, etc. Furthermore, he observes that the “doctrine of resistance” has become deeply entrenched within the Finnish school system and that the teachers have been taking an active part in resistance activities.³⁷⁵

The Russian governor concludes that the struggle against the underground press and other aspects of the resistance movement is very difficult because

the majority of the provincial administration’s officials have taken a hostile attitude toward all of the forementioned [Russian] governmental measures and toward all Russians; moreover, they are obviously in solidarity with the most zealous of local agitators.³⁷⁶

Kaigorodov was convinced that during 1900 the resistance had spread throughout the whole province under his care and that the resistance

³⁷³ VL, 26 March 1902, pp., 1–2.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 1–2.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 1–2.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 1–2.

agitators were succeeding in producing a widespread attitude of hostility and disobedience toward the Russian government. He felt himself to be helpless in the face of the current agitation and advised his superiors that only through swift and firm action could the upheaval be suppressed.³⁷⁷

Another way the Finnish resisters gaged their own effectiveness as perceived by their enemies was by monitoring the Russian press. For example, in March of 1901 the resistance press noted that the Moscow paper *Moskovskiiia Vedomosti* had admitted that the “Russian cause” was not proceeding well in Finland due to resistance.³⁷⁸ The Finnish resisters saw this as a sign of success, but agreed with the Russian paper’s observation that the disunity among the Finns was a weakness which the Russians could take advantage of. Therefore they were able to conclude that resistance had so far saved Finnish freedom and that compliancy is a crime against the fatherland leading to national disaster.³⁷⁹

Was the detrimental effect of compliancy really as clear-cut as the resistance writers made it out to be? Perhaps not: certain concessions combined with moderate or indirect forms of opposition may have actually contributed to the overall success of resistance. This is, among others, Polvinen’s view. In fact he even goes so far as to claim that the probable harmful consequences of forthright resistance were counterbalanced by Old Finn compromises. For example, the Senate’s promulgation of the February Manifesto and the Conscription Act can be seen as helping preserve the Senate in Finnish hands; it is accordingly believed that complete noncooperation on the part of that body would only have hastened Russification. Moreover, by staying in office through compromise Finnish bureaucrats were in certain cases able to stall Russification. Hence follows the argument that both compliancy and resistance were necessary in defense of Finnish autonomy; Polvinen concludes that “totally radical noncooperation” on the part of the Finns would have led to all-out confrontation, the logical consequences of which, he implies, would have been the defeat of the Finnish cause.³⁸⁰

Evidently some compliants were able to contribute to the hindrance of Russification in certain cases. It does not, however, follow that compliancy decisively offset the supposedly probable harmful, or even fatal, effects of radical passive resistance. Such a view is purely

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

³⁷⁸ *FOVS*, 5 March 1901, p. 1.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁸⁰ Polvinen, pp. 186–187, 345.

speculative.³⁸¹ It is impossible to say what the result of a totally noncooperative Senate and higher administration joined by a unanimously resisting nation would have been. Admittedly, it could have led to a severe crackdown by the Russians. But, given the disunity within, and incapacity of, the Russian regime along with the other favorable conditions for resistance, it could equally have led to the defeat of the Bobrikov order before 1905. Furthermore, if there had been no significant compliancy it does not mean that the resisters would have acted rashly. Their attitude toward violent struggle factually shows how careful they were in choosing how to proceed. Moreover, they were certainly prepared for negotiation once certain *minimum* demands were attained.

Polvinen's empirical research, on the other hand, does show that the success of Old Finn concessions was only a matter of gaining time.³⁸² Bobrikov had no sympathy for the Finnish compliants; he manipulated them for his own purposes and had no intention of fulfilling their final hopes. His aim was the integration of Finland into the Empire and the compliants too obstructed his path.³⁸³

Just as Bobrikov's reports on his governor-generalship from 1898 to 1904 aid in understanding the conditions for opposition to Russification, they also prove that the Finnish resistance was a matter of primary concern to him, that it succeeded in directly obstructing his plans, and that it caused him to proceed with caution in the implementation of Russification. From the beginning of his governor-generalship Bobrikov clearly understood how deeply entrenched passive resistance was in the sociopolitical structure of Finland. Therefore from that time on he maneuvered to obtain the extraordinary dictatorial powers necessary to destroy the foundation of resistance and to implement Russification. Bobrikov's resort to dictatorial powers can be interpreted as a reaction to the hitherto success of resistance. His reports support the conclusion that he needed greater power to combat it. The dictatorship decree's power to banish provided Bobrikov with a weapon with which he was able to inflict a serious wound on the resistance leadership.³⁸⁴

The most well-known campaign of the passive resistance movement in the eyes of posterity, and certainly a major threat to Bobrikov's

³⁸¹ Moreover, it is a view which perhaps has more to do with today's political consensus in Finland than with understanding the past.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 317–318.

³⁸⁴ For the background of the dictatorship decree, see Polvinen, pp. 301–318.

schemes, was the mass boycott of Russian conscription. Preparations for this campaign got under way following the Conscription Act of 1901. The resisters placed high hopes in the boycott, since it would necessarily involve many sectors of Finnish society.

First, it involved the clergy and parish communities, because new public ordinances had to be promulgated from the pulpits of the churches of the land. Kagal agitation on this front bore fruit, with a significant number of priests refusing to proclaim the enactment of the Conscription Act. Where priests did comply, whole congregations reacted with shouting or singing, and by walking out of church altogether.³⁸⁵ Next, the struggle shifted to the secular municipalities, where the draft boards were to be set up composed of local officials and physicians. There was bitter competition between resister, compliant and Russian regime factions for influence over these boards. This competition, supplemented by student, worker and other organizations, then extended into the fierce agitation carried on amidst the thousands of conscription-age youths who were ordered to register for the draft.

A governmental statement issued on 20 April 1902 helped the resisters to measure the effectiveness of the first conscription boycott campaign. The statement, reports *Vapaita Lehtisiä*, is a response to the Finnish Senate's announcement that the draft for the current year cannot be completed by its prescribed deadline.³⁸⁶ It includes a warning that the continued boycott of Russian conscription will force the regime to restructure local administration. This, as the resistance press portrays it, is, in spite its threatening appearance, a clear admission by the Russian regime and its Finnish helpers that the resistance movement has successfully postponed the implementation of the draft: it provides further evidence of the illicit regime's "forced retreat and powerlessness."³⁸⁷ As for the threat of administrative change, the editors point out that that would have taken place all the more swiftly without resistance and, as they usually stressed, that it certainly cannot be prevented in the future through compliancy. The article concludes that the goal of the anti-draft campaign – to prove that it is impossible to implement the new conscription regulations – has now been half-way achieved.³⁸⁸

In 1902 the resisters had good reason for optimism, since 58 %

³⁸⁵ For priests' accounts of these protests see *VL*, 18 November 1901, pp. 2–3.

³⁸⁶ *VL*, 30 April 1902, pp. 1–2.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

(14,587) of the draftees evaded conscription.³⁸⁹ The Russian reaction, however, was effective. Officials participating in the resistance were dismissed. For example, the directors of the Finnish health administration were replaced with compliants for refusing to name physicians to the draft boards, and the members of the Court of Appeals were fired for cooperating with the resistance. Draft resisters were ordered to be called up directly for duty. Many conscription-age youths then considered it better to leave the country; the resistance press saw the considerable increase in emigration as a cowardly response. With the weakening of resistance only 32 % of the draftees joined the conscription boycott in 1903, and in 1904 the number fell to 22 %.³⁹⁰

Although participation in the boycott diminished in time, its success was considerable. Because of the boycott Finnish youths were not inducted into the Russian army and the Russian government finally abandoned its efforts to do so. Finns therefore did not, for example, have to fight in the Russo-Japanese war. It cannot be doubted that on this front the conscription boycott successfully stifled one of the major goals of Russification.

Success, with its serious limitations, did not, however, go to the resisters' heads. Nor did they deem it necessary to cover up failures. From the early stages of the struggle on it was not at all unusual for the resisters to openly write of their perceptions of the weakening of resistance and the lethargy of the population. They harshly criticized Finns' cowardice and unwillingness to sacrifice their own comfort for the cause. They berated the meager results of resistance.³⁹¹ For example, the campaign against Russian stamps was seen as a failure: By November of 1900 it was observed that Russian stamps were now generally in use, and that apparently the stamp protest was considered too inconvenient by the Finns, who, "finally considering it best to submit," had now given up the campaign.³⁹²

Another type of failure, from the resistance leadership's point of view, was the occasional riotous behavior of people in the streets against compliants and Russians. Such behavior was considered pernicious for the overall strategy of passive resistance and was duly condemned while, nevertheless, the Russians were blamed for fomenting

³⁸⁹ Due to the capitulation of evaders under pressure the final figure was 45%. Reuter 1928, p. 237; Parmanen 1936-1941, vol. 2, pp. 531-532.

³⁹⁰ In the capital province of Uusimaa in 1903, 42.5% of the draftees evaded, and the corresponding figure for the province of Vaasa was 53.5%. Reuter 1930, p. 82; Parmanen 1936-1941, vol. 2, pp. 466-467.

³⁹¹ *FO/V/S*, 19 November 1900, p. 2.

³⁹² *FO/V/S*, 19 November 1900, p. 2.

it.³⁹³ Again it should be pointed out that this was not an absolute condemnation of violence; but random violence was not seen as beneficial to the overall cause. Since systematic and broadly based armed struggle were not possible at the time, the resisters emphatically denounced the use of violence. Violent confrontations were, however, relatively rare during the Bobrikov period. Perhaps the most outstanding one was the so-called Cossack Riot of April 1902. This violent clash between cossacks and riotous anti-Russian and anti-compliant demonstrators did not involve the use of firearms or result in any deaths.

The main failure of passive resistance, aside from the numerous setbacks and tactical errors, lay, however, in the incapacity of the Constitutionalist to gain a sufficiently large active permanent mass following. As shown, the Constitutionalist were initially optimistic that the rank and file of the nation would stand firmly behind them. But already the anti-peddler campaign, commonly viewed as a success, helped reveal to some grounds for an even greater failure: At that time they realized that the rural laboring population could not be mobilized en masse simply through resistance agitation,³⁹⁴ sociopolitical reform was needed first.

The Shift to Deákian Parliamentary Defiance

By 1903 at the latest the writers of the resistance press openly recognized that the broad unity which they considered a precondition for resistance was not forthcoming. In fact, the pessimists among them considered Finnish national solidarity to be in a state of swift decay. The initial compliancy of the domestic government, the Senate, was seen to have given rise to ever expanding national moral degradation.³⁹⁵ Indeed, 1903 gave rise to a whole series of articles characterized by a bitter loss of faith in the people, a recognition of the achievements of compliancy and Russification and a striking attitude of hopelessness and failure as resistance was paralyzed and key Constitutionalist leaders were banished with the implementation of Bobrikov's dictatorial

³⁹³ *FO/VS*, 28 March 1901, pp. 3–4.

³⁹⁴ *FO/VS*, 18 January 1901, p. 2.

³⁹⁵ *VL*, 7 April 1903, p. 3.

powers.³⁹⁶ By mid-1903, states an article summing up the general state of mind,

complete disunity and general confusion arose throughout the whole land. Honored citizens were driven into exile. More peaceful citizens were taken to jail in irons. Bribed men were dispersed as informants throughout the whole country. Nowadays the most despicable citizens strut about as officials in many places. Complete depression has overcome the whole people, and the once brave youth has been driven off course.³⁹⁷

The circumstances now required innovation in resistance. During the main period of the conscription boycott the doctrine and technique of passive resistance seem to have remained relatively fixed. A *Fria Ord/Vapaita Sanoja* article from late August 1901 taking a look at “The Future in the Light of the Last Years” exemplifies this fixity. The author declares that now there can be no doubt about it, Finland’s ruler, the tsar, has declared war against her. He then briefly summarizes almost all that has been said about the nature of passive resistance such as that it is the only suitable means, it is a kind of warfare which is not merely defensive, and that besides “social boycott” it involves total noncooperation with the enemy. What is new here does not concern what passive resistance is or how it works but rather where it is aimed. This article represents a shift of focus from targets such as the migrant Russian merchants to the much more significant field of mass mobilization for resistance to Russian conscription.³⁹⁸

Apparently during this time of fixity not even Arvid Neovius had anything new to offer on the theory of passive resistance. For example, in an article late in 1902 Neovius sums up the principles of passive resistance – that “tremendous weapon in the hands of the weak against material predominance” – in a way which suggests that it had become for him a fixed doctrine.³⁹⁹ The general fixity of passive resistance is further evinced by the National Congress of the Constitutionalist front held in Helsinki on 12 November 1902. One of the main collective decisions made at the Congress was to continue unwavering passive resistance against all unconstitutional measures, ceasing only with the restoration of Finland’s legal order. Nothing new concerning the idea or practice of passive resistance was expressed and apparently the

³⁹⁶ See for example *VL*, 15 June, pp. 1–2, 18 August, pp. 1–4, 8 October, p. 2, 28 October, pp. 1–3, 1903.

³⁹⁷ *VL*, 15 June 1903, pp. 1–2.

³⁹⁸ *FOVS*, 24 August 1901, pp. 1–3.

³⁹⁹ Neovius 1902, p. 1.

Congress did not give rise to any innovative thinking on the subject.⁴⁰⁰ This problem is illustrated on the local level in a letter from the youth association leader and agrarian political organizer Santeri Alkio to Mauno Rosendal in September 1902. The Oulu-based revivalist leader Rosendal was an energetic grassroots resistance organizer who worked closely with Eero Erkko and other Finnish-minded resisters. Alkio responded positively to these men's idea of holding resistance meetings in southern Ostrobothnia; but, he emphasized, given the generally rather weak spirit of resistance there it would be good to know if any new applicable concrete forms of action have been devised.⁴⁰¹

The lack of theoretical and practical innovation for struggle along with the moral depression among the resisters could be seen as indication of the final failure of passive resistance. But such a simple view would, at least partially, be mistaken. Certainly resistance did reach a low-point, especially during the course of 1903 until late 1904. After that, however, new conditions advantageous to Constitutionalist success arose. The focus and tactics of struggle shifted. In the latter part of 1903, with the increasing failure of the conscription boycott, the dictatorial implementation of Russification and the other events which contributed to their discouragement, the resisters began to seek new ways to rejuvenate and develop passive resistance. It was at this time that the resisters began to focus on the implications of the opposition and revolutionary movement in Russia and significant contacts with the Liberationists were made. At this time Homén, for example, suggested that there should be a shift of emphasis from the struggle for justice, which was not well understood, to the popular struggle for freedom.⁴⁰² Similarly the resisters increasingly realized the necessity of democratic reform and collaboration with working people.

The discussions at the Boden conference in March 1904 show that already at that time plans were being made to focus resistance on taking over the Diet. On 16 June 1904 Bobrikov, the chief executor of Russification in Finland, was shot. Some weeks later, on 28 July, the Socialist Revolutionaries murdered Russia's Minister of the Interior von Plehwe. Thus within a brief time-span insurgent Finland's two

⁴⁰⁰ "Kansalaiskokous: 12/11 1902," *VL*, 29 November 1902, p. 1; this point is exemplified by Mechelin's speech for the Congress and by a leaflet discussing the decision made by the Congress to continue passive resistance and defend the fixed model of it; see Mechelin 1902, and *Perustuslaille uskolliselta kannalta* 1903; one year later twenty exiled resistance activists expressed the same fixed idea in a collective letter "To Those at Home"; see *Kotona oleville*, November 1903.

⁴⁰¹ Alkio to Rosendal, 24 September 1902.

⁴⁰² Homén to Mannerheim, 5 June 1903.

main Russian enemies were eliminated. The timing of these assassinations was excellent for the Finns. The crisis in the Far East and internal unrest led the Russians to ease up on Finland. Under the new governor-general, Prince I.M. Obolensky, the Finnish Diet was soon allowed to re-convene and the exiles elected to it were allowed to return home.

The elections provided the Constitutionalist front a chance to surface from the underground of passive resistance, and shift the struggle into a legitimate institutional framework. This new tactic is clearly articulated in an article from September of 1904, by the well-known statesman and resistance writer Lennart Gripenberg, re-evaluating in detail the significance of the Hungarian resistance in light of current events.⁴⁰³ Gripenberg now envisions the possibility for the Finns to use the Diet, like their Hungarian forerunners, to spearhead the national struggle. He points out that while the Finns have all but given up after several years of struggle, the Hungarians carried on passive resistance for thirteen years before attaining victory. Gripenberg's innovation here was to try to persuade the Finns to broaden their perspective to that of possible long-term institutional-level passive resistance.

Gripenberg's vision was indeed implemented: After a landslide electoral victory the Constitutionalist prepared for Deákian insurgency as the Estates were set to convene on 6 December. In the Noble Estate probably no more than ten of the 203 members could be classified as compliant;⁴⁰⁴ in the Estate of the clergy it was a tie, with the Old Finns and the Constitutionalist receiving twenty-four seats each; in the Burgher Estate the Constitutionalist received sixty-seven seats, the socialists – in alliance with the resistance front – three, and the Old Finns three; finally, even in the Peasant Estate, known as a bastion of Old Finn power, the Constitutionalist triumphed, thirty-seven to twenty-five.⁴⁰⁵ The resistance organization Kagal played a central part in the election campaign with the result that many of its leaders and active members passed directly from this underground organization into the Diet.

The Russian regime was taken aback by the Constitutionalist's

⁴⁰³ Gripenberg 1904, pp. 1–5; Gripenberg relies almost entirely on Jalava for his information on the Hungarian case.

⁴⁰⁴ Tuominen 1964, p. 142. Representatives to the Noble Estate were not elected. Each noble family had the privilege of sending a representative to the Diet. Blomstedt writes that thirty of the Noble representatives were of the compliant faction; Blomstedt 1969, p. 171.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142. It should be remembered here that to be an Old Finn was not necessarily synonymous with being a compliant.

election victory, for it was believed that the resistance front had been dissipated. The return of the banished resistance leaders and other refugees throughout December 1904 and January 1905 met with popular enthusiasm, brilliant celebrations and mass demonstrations of support.⁴⁰⁶

In the spirit of the well-known Hungarian resistance Parliament of 1861, with its two defiant addresses to the crown drafted by Deák, the Finnish Estates refused to proceed with Diet business without first laying down the terms for Finno-Russian relations. The core demand of the Estates' Great Petition, as mentioned earlier, was the restoration of the legal order through the rescission of all of what the Finns considered to be the illegally implemented acts and decrees of the Bobrikov administration.⁴⁰⁷ This meant that, among other things, the draft according to the Conscription Act of 1901 had to be terminated, the governor-general's dictatorial powers had to be revoked and the February Manifesto had to be nullified. Moreover, it was made clear that Finland had to be purged of all the ill effects of Russification, necessitating a "sweeping transformation of the regime."⁴⁰⁸ The Petition made it clear that unless this was done, and unless Russian efforts to "suppress and destroy Finnish national existence" ceased, resistance would continue and "even worse and more grievous confrontations" would inevitably occur.⁴⁰⁹

At the beginning of the Diet term the tsar made it clear that he intended to leave the February Manifesto, and the acts and decrees which followed it, in full force. Nevertheless, following the Great Petition he compromised by revoking the Conscription Act on 29 March 1905.

Directly after the close of the Diet term on 17 April 1905, a forty-man delegation, with members from each Estate, was formed to monitor events. Furthermore, this Diet delegation, with over half its members coming directly from Kagal, to a great extent superseded the resistance organization.⁴¹⁰

The 1904 elections provided an avenue for the best organized and

⁴⁰⁶ Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 3, pp. 363–378, 389–390.

⁴⁰⁷ Parmanen, whose book includes the whole Petition, notes that although the Petition as issued was "very radical and to the point," and a "severe indictment" its original wording was toned down in order to attain Diet unity through support from among the Old Finns; *ibid.*, p. 393, 411.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 403, 406; as an appendix to the Petition the Estates compiled a detailed list of all the acts, decrees and related directives which they demanded be repealed.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 394–397.

⁴¹⁰ Reuter 1930, pp. 345–346.

most broadly based political force of Estate Finland into the existing legitimate political machinery. It was the achievements of the resistance organization combined with the election victory which, in the context of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the Finnish Great Strike, put the Constitutionalists in a position to take over the Senate (December 1905), i.e. the domestic government, from the discredited Old Finns.

The Great Strike: Labor takes the Initiative

Already in early 1905 the rank and file began to challenge the legitimacy of the Constitutionalist Diet and its leadership of the struggle against Russia. At that time massive demonstrations, with up to 35,000 participants, were held in favor of universal suffrage. Popular discontent was heightened when it became clear that the Diet would not solve the issue before the end of its current term. It was widely recognized at that time, as R.A. Wrede pointed out in 1913, that the fundamental democratization of Finnish representative institutions was inevitable. This was acknowledged by the Constitutionalists not just because of building socialist pressure, but because they knew that future national unity against Russia necessitated sweeping electoral reform.⁴¹¹ Nevertheless, preoccupation with the “restoration of the legal order” combined no doubt with the unwillingness of men like Wrede to initiate the necessary changes too quickly (which could undermine their own power) kept the Diet from resolving the suffrage question. It was probably at this point that the Constitutionalists lost their final chance to lead a truly broad-based national coalition.

In the last half of October 1905 revolutionary activity in Russia culminated in what has been seen as the most extensive and effective general strike in history. Paralyzed by the strike, the tsarist regime was forced to capitulate. During the course of the Russian strike the Finnish Constitutionalist statesmen began maneuvering in St. Petersburg to achieve their demands. Given such favorable circumstances they did not desire to initiate a general strike in Finland. But now Finnish organized labor took the initiative. On 30 October, the day the strike ended in Russia, workers shut down Finland’s railway system. Soon the whole nation, including the Constitutionalists, joined what soon

⁴¹¹ Wrede 1913, p. 25.

became known as the Great Strike against Russian autocracy.⁴¹² In Finland too the general strike overwhelmed the Russian administration, isolating and paralysing it. The police were disarmed and some joined the strike while others were ousted from the force. Members of the Russian gendarme fled, as did many other people from the Bobrikov administration. With the railways closed, the Russian military garrisons were isolated from one another. A Finnish national Civil Guard was formed to maintain law and order.

At its outset the Great Strike was characterized by extensive solidarity; labor and management, bourgeois and proletarian, stood together against Russian oppression. The Constitutionals and the Social Democrats arrived at a common platform. Their demands, as expressed in the Constitutionalist convention's manifesto (which promised that the present "liberation movement" would not cease until they were all fulfilled) were: that the present governor-general resign immediately; that the "prevailing dictatorial regime of violence, including all illegal ordinances, be abolished immediately" and all illegally installed Russian officials be expelled; that the higher and lower administration of Finland be purged and re-manned by trustworthy citizens; that the country henceforth be administered by a parliament elected through universal and equal suffrage; that the first task of the new parliament be the implementation of a new form of government, subordinating the higher administration to parliament and securing the basic freedoms and personal inviolability of citizens.⁴¹³ These requirements were in essence the same as those of the Great Petition with the added demand for the implementation of universal suffrage and parliamentary reform.

In spite of initial solidarity, however, serious civil strife emerged before the strike was called off on 6 November. A significant faction of socialists wanted to immediately dispense with the old Diet, calling, in their Red Declaration, for a revolutionary national constituent assembly to be elected by universal suffrage. Moreover, the national Civil Guard soon became divided by differences between the Red Guard and the rest of the Guard. As the strike drew to a close the two factions were on the verge of armed confrontation.

In the face of socialist insurgency, and with the Old Finns reduced to political insignificance, the Russian regime turned to the Constitu-

⁴¹² For what still remains the most detailed account of the Great Strike, see Roos 1906, *passim*; see also: Jussila 1979, pp. 65–86; Parmanen 1936–1941, vol. 4, *passim*; Soikkanen 1960, pp. 171–190.

⁴¹³ *Perustuslaillisten vaatimukset* 1905.

tionalists, whose demands were implemented. By the tsar's proclamation of 4 November, known as the November Manifesto, the February Manifesto and related decrees were revoked. The Constitutionalists, with Mechelin at their head, took over the domestic government. The passive resistance leadership, strongly represented in the new Senate, then set about dismantling the Bobrikov regime. Moreover, the Mechelin Senate, drafted a Parliament Act and an election law, passed by Diet on 29 May 1906 and confirmed by the tsar on 20 July 1906, thus abolishing the fundamental political organ and relic of the old status society, the Diet of four Estates.

With the Constitutionalist successes of 1904 and 1905, Kagal and the resistance press, and in general the underground resistance movement associated with them, became defunct. They were not resurrected in 1908 when a new Russification campaign was initiated.⁴¹⁴ One of primary reasons why the organization of resistance was not revived and no innovative works on passive resistance were written was that the political situation had changed completely by 1908. The Constitutionalist front was an amorphous constellation of interests held together by the will to oppose Russification. The front was not a political party and with the victory of 1905 its components naturally set off to pursue their own goals.

Now, with the tenfold increase in voters following the implementation of universal suffrage, the Constitutionalist front was defunct and scattered and the Social Democrats, with strong support among the rural workers, became a major political force. The parliamentary elections of 15–16 March 1907 gave the Young Finns twenty-six seats, the Swedish Party twenty-four, the Agrarian Union nine, the Old Finns, who after their recent failures had adopted a platform of radical reform, fifty-nine, the Christian Workers' Party two and the Social Democrats eighty. The enigmatic rank and file, which had hitherto been confined to the political muzzle of sub-Estate society, had now spoken its mind.

With the political configuration of Finland thus changed it is understandable why passive resistance, as conceived of before 1904, could not be implemented in response to the Russification which was gradually re-initiated after 1908. Already by 1903 the Constitutionalists realized that they were not going to be able to harness the majority of the masses to their cause. The Great Strike only confirmed that urban workers were not to be organized en masse under the banner of Constitutionalist passive resistance. It may very well be that in the

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 345, 371, 374.

situation following 1905 there was no solid social foundation for bourgeois-led passive resistance and the cross-class solidarity it would necessitate. At least the upper strata, whose position of political dominance was significantly weakened, could no longer harbor the illusions it once had concerning the rank and file.

But there is a further reason why the Finnish political factions were not willing to commence mass nonmilitary, or even armed, struggle against the Russians before 1914: During this so-called second period of oppression Russification was never really very efficient. In fact in the very significant sphere of economic matters, as the conservative banker-politician Paasikivi affirmed, the Finnish elite was very free.⁴¹⁵ There is no doubt that certain groups were satisfied with the block which Russian power set up against the legal efforts of the Social Democrat's bid for power, leaving them room for economic and cultural domination in Finland. Anthony F. Upton's explanation makes it clear why mass resistance was not revived at this time:

The cutting edge of Russian oppression affected too narrow a section of society.... On the whole, the Russian presence was restrained.... The bourgeoisie would continue to shout about oppression, just as the socialists shouted about revolution, but neither was really going to sacrifice present amenities for a problematic future. The truth was that Finland was prospering in 1914: The industrial revolution was gathering speed.... Misery and poverty and stark social injustice did exist.... But Finland in 1914 was a stable society; the Russian imperial presence, though an irritant in some ways, was the ultimate guarantee of the stability and prosperity.⁴¹⁶

The passive resistance tradition was by no means entirely neglected during the so-called second era of oppression. For example, in 1910 the Finnish Parliament refused to select representatives for the Russian Duma and Imperial Council, and was therefore dispersed by the Russian regime.⁴¹⁷ But Constitutionalist insurgency through organized militant passive resistance was not revived at that time. In fact very soon after 1905 commentators, as reflected in writings well into the inter-war years, came to see the era of passive resistance as a clearly

⁴¹⁵ Paasikivi 1957b, pp. 190–191.

⁴¹⁶ Upton 1980, p. 15. For a study in English of the Russian administration of Finland from 1905–1917 see Luntinen 1985.

⁴¹⁷ Blomstedt 1969, p. 287.

defined period which had come to an end by 1905.⁴¹⁸ Organized passive resistance was, however, actually revived and effectively implemented during the Civil War in 1918. Nevertheless, in this war, unlike during the Bobrikov period, passive resistance was not the main strategy, but was distinctly subordinate to armed struggle.

Nonmilitary Resistance in the Civil War

Post-1914 economic and sociopolitical crises left Finland in a highly unstable position with the collapse of Russian absolutism in the February Revolution of 1917. The massive socialist-engineered national general strike of 14–17 November 1917, including organized violence and extremist terrorism, completed the polarization of Finnish society. Upton concludes that the only way out of the political deadlock thus produced was civil war or foreign intervention.⁴¹⁹ Indeed, only several months after the Bolshevik take-over in Russia in October 1917 a destructive civil war broke out among the Finns.

The war divided Finland between two Finnish forces, called the Whites and the Reds. Both launched their respective offensives on 28 January 1918, a date which, to be sure, was preceded by significant violent confrontation. The Whites began what they conceived of as a “war of liberation” with an attack to disarm the Russian troops in southern Ostrobothnia.⁴²⁰ Soon, however, their military efforts were to be occupied in combating the Finnish Reds. The Finnish Red attack began with what is variously called a rebellion, a socialist revolution or a coup d’etat in Helsinki. The extremist socialists, who had gained sway with the breakdown of relations between the Social Democrats and the bourgeois parties, initiated action which led to the relatively easy Finnish Red take-over of southern Finland. This area contained about half the Finnish population and the country’s most significant political, cultural and industrial centers, including the country’s capital.

The passive resistance tradition was revived when, in the wake of

⁴¹⁸ Two very early examples of this conception are Homén 1906 (entitled “Our Passive Resistance: Political Writings 1899–1904.” The chronological list of events therein ends with the murder of Bobrikov in June 1904) and Danielson-Kalmari 1907. Both Reuter 1928, 1930 and Parmanen 1936–1941 clearly adhere to this periodization.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁴²⁰ At the outset of the war there were about 40,000 Russian troops in Finland. They were, however, highly ill-equipped, demoralized and disorganized. Moreover, only a minority of them were Bolsheviks. After January 1918 their numbers decreased as they returned to Russia.

the Bolshevik Revolution, fears of a Red coup began to grow. Broad umbrella organizations of agricultural producers (*Maataloustuottajain Keskusliitto*) and civil servants (*Virkamiesyhdistysten Keskusliitto*) were formed to, among other things, carry out systematic noncooperation in case of a coup. Thus when the Red takeover did occur the Central Federation of Civil Servant Associations was ready to immediately issue a directive calling for passive resistance to the usurpers in all sectors and on all levels of government.⁴²¹ It is not surprising that the directive was signed by a former Kagal organizer and staunch resister from the Bobrikov period, Per Evind Svinhuvud, now the political leader of White Finland, and later president of the Republic of Finland.

Faced with the challenge of socialist revolution the traditional technique of passive resistance was implemented both spontaneously and with pre-planning. An underground news-sheet in Finnish and Swedish, called *Vapaa Sanaa/Fria Ord* after its Bobrikov era predecessor, was even founded. Much of the machinery of state, and many other sectors of society, were paralysed, or at least obstructed, by the noncooperation movement which had the financial backing of an association of Finland's most influential economic power holders.⁴²²

In 1917–1918, in strong contrast to the Bobrikov period, passive resistance was not conceived of as the main strategy for defeating the Finnish Reds or for the “war of liberation” against Russia. No tracts were produced on the nature of passive resistance and the underground press, unlike before 1905, was only minimally concerned with it as a subject in itself. Passive resistance was now a mere technique whose principles were taken for granted and was in need of little ideological justification and innovation.

From 1899 to 1905 Finnish resistance thinkers vocally emphasized that organized armed violence is not the *ultima ratio* in extreme confrontations. To support this claim they cited the Hungarian example which Finns had been using as a model already for decades. This does not mean that they claimed that nonmilitary means were ultimately superior to military ones, but rather that the reverse is not always true. In contrast, the potential applicability of passive resistance as the main form of battle was not a prominent topic of discussion during the Civil War.

⁴²¹ Soikkanen 1969, p. 75.

⁴²² The most detailed account of the civilian resistance to the Red take-over in English is Upton 1980, Chapter 13; the subject is given distinct treatment in Pilonen 1982, pp. 114–119.

The reason for this is not as obvious as it may seem. Initially there were many on both sides for whom violent civil war did not appear to be the inevitable course of action. Moreover, both sides had a strong social foundation for nonmilitary struggle. The socialists had already proved, through their massive strikes, that they could wield great nonmilitary power. The Whites too, as demonstrated by their passive resistance movement after the coup, had significant potential for exercising nonmilitary power. Moreover, it is not at all clear that military action on the scale of a "war of liberation" turned against one's own countrymen was the only solution for ridding Finland of the already disintegrating Russian forces. Technically speaking, the Whites could have, to cite only one possibility, adopted nonmilitary warfare against the Reds, who were obviously incompetent in taking over the administration of the nation, and carried out limited military excursions against the Russians where necessary. Of course, following this scenario, in significant sectors where the socialists did hold sway the Whites would have been forced to negotiate and to recognize the legitimate interests of the workers' movement, which had hitherto been repressed with the support of the Russian regime.

To explore the role nonmilitary struggle could have taken in the Civil War is, of course, mere speculation. The usefulness of such speculation, however, is that it helps display the balance of power between, and the motives of, the two opposing groups. Nonmilitary struggle alone would have left both parties in defensive positions they were unable to accept, perhaps resulting in deadlock or a nonmilitary war of attrition. Significant groups among the Whites and Reds had long been on the offensive and came to hold that the power struggle necessitated violence. Both created military forces through which they contended for dominance and both believed in the centrality of military force for political power.

The Red-White military engagement proceeded indecisively until April 1918 when Red control over the industrial center Tampere was overthrown and Germany entered the war on the side of the Whites. 16 May marks the final defeat of the Reds by the combined German and White Finn offensive. The Whites then carried out harsh, often arbitrary and illegal, repression, including executions, prison camp deaths, police control and purges, which reduced the power of the left, not only in quantity but in quality, to a fraction of what it had become in the preceding years.

Reflection on the status of nonmilitary struggle in the Civil War also helps underscore just how different passive resistance was during the Bobrikov era. Before 1905 passive resistance was not a mere technique,

but also a grand vision and strategy for struggle against Russia and for the defense of assertive constitutionalism as well as for the nationalist mobilization of the Finnish people and the destruction of old patterns of obedience.

V. Passive Resistance and Nonmilitary Struggle

In this study the Finnish struggle against Russification has been examined as a case of European passive resistance, constitutionalist insurgency and nonmilitary contention and, in a restricted sense, warfare. Consequently, in addition to seeking to determine and portray the particulars of Finnish Constitutionalist insurgency, this work was geared to generating a variety of general observations concerning the conceptualization, historical study and empirical nature of nonmilitary struggle. Instead of simply recapitulating the main points of the work, which were outlined in the Preface and elucidated in the appropriate sections, one outstanding generalization will be used here as a point of departure for elaborating upon what an understanding of the Finnish case has to offer for the comprehension of nonmilitary struggle in general. The generalization is as follows: Around the turn of the twentieth century, the Finnish Constitutionalist developed one of the most ideologically and technically sophisticated and successful versions of European passive resistance and nonmilitary struggle.

The method used here for substantiating, and exploring the implications of, this assertion is to inquire into how the Finnish case meets the criteria employed by researchers to judge the feasibility of “non-violent” nonmilitary or social defense. The criteria, which represent the state of thinking on the subject, were critically compiled and concisely formulated by Alex P. Schmid in his examination of social defense and Soviet domination published in 1985. Schmid makes sure to point out that, due to the lack of theoretical consensus in the field, the conditions for social defense which he lists “serve more as an analytical touchstone to discuss pertinent themes than as formal yardsticks.”¹ Such an analytical tool is very useful, despite its limits, for estimating

¹ Schmid 1985, pp. 30, 371–372, 401; Schmid, however, fails to note that this is doubtlessly a general problem in the formulation of the criteria for analyzing collective action. Similarly, many of the noted conditions and limitations of social defense are common to other forms of action, such as armed struggle.

the comparative status of a case without having to cite details from other cases. Of course such a list excludes many significant themes regarding resistance and contention, and the reader is asked to turn to the appropriate sections of this study for discussion of them. Likewise, the material used in examining the following points is drawn from the preceding chapters, where it is naturally dealt with in greater detail and within a broader context.²

1. There must be a social carrier who is acquainted with the basic principles of nonviolent resistance and is prepared to apply them. Whether his resistance is nonviolent out of principle or out of pragmatic considerations (absence of weapons, imbalance of armed force, etc.) is less important than discipline, training, preparation and organization.

What Europeans called “passive resistance” was a secular way of struggle, the principles and techniques of which became known throughout Europe at the time of the Revolution of 1848. It is not to be identified with pacifist or Christian “resist not evil” types of opposition, as is proved by contrasting Finnish Constitutionalist and Tolstoyan resistance with one another. As Snellman pointed out in 1861, educated readers had access to plenty of information on how this form of struggle was used throughout Europe. During the Finno-Russian constitutional conflict of 1899–1905 the Finnish resistance tradition was redefined and radicalized. Passive resistance came to include a variety of means ranging from the Legal Battle tactics of juridical argumentation and the mobilization of European opinion to mass organization for “a new way of waging warfare,” including the systematic noncooperation with, disobedience to and nonrecognition of all things Russian. Passive resistance was not understood merely as defense, but also as a kind of nonmilitary guerilla warfare carried out with discerning offensive tactics. Although Finnish resistance was highly organized, there was no training comparable to the type used in preparation for mass military struggle and the use of an army-like model of organization for civilian passive resistance was not advocated. The Finnish case perhaps indicates that the pre-crisis organization of society was of more fundamental importance than immediate “training.”

The distinction which many researchers make between principled and pragmatic passive or “nonviolent” resistance is inapplicable to the Finnish and doubtlessly many other cases of such struggle. The evolution of European constitutionalism involved the complex interaction

² The following indented ten points are quoted from *ibid.*, pp. 27–29.

of concrete conditions and political ideals. Likewise, Finnish passive resistance cannot without misconception be analyzed merely as technique, since Finnish Constitutionalist insurgency was inseparably both a way of acting and a way of thinking. Thus highly principled Constitutionalist argumentation had highly practical intentions and consequences. For example, one of the most curious aspects of 1899–1905 era in Finland was the early-modern form of discourse on resistance and rebellion. In their struggle against Russia, the Finnish Constitutionalist invoked neither the acts nor the ideologies of the American and French Revolutions. It is well known that the French revolutionaries drew very little directly from the American precedent, but that both Revolutions drew upon a common revolutionary heritage. The Finns too drew upon the common European heritage of constitutionalist resistance in their own unique way. Well before the Bobrikov era Finnish political leaders had internalized the current European political morality of the struggle for Justice and the duty of rebellion. For them the preeminent precedent was the Hungarian struggle as led by Ferenc Deák. But when the Constitutionalist set out to propagate their doctrine of struggle they found themselves faced with the entrenched cosmology of evangelical Lutheran Finland. They thus had to go back to the roots of the European constitutionalist insurgency tradition in order to overcome the deep-set patterns of absolute Lutheran obedience to authority.

Thus the deliberate avoidance of violence required by Finnish passive resistance cannot be classified exclusively as either a matter of principle or of pragmatism. If, however, by “principled nonviolence” is meant the absolute renunciation of violence, then the Finnish resisters did not adhere to it. But this distinction would be misleading, since the Finns’ development of a technique of struggle excluding violence was inextricably intertwined with their constitutionalist principles. Nevertheless, the constitutionalist principle of avoiding violence does not exclude the principled use of violence in certain circumstances. Accordingly the choice of means involves the interaction of principle and practical considerations.

The Finnish resisters knew that to use military struggle against Russification would be counterproductive; they often emphasized the practical necessity of passive resistance. Nevertheless, they were seriously, and with great care, exploring how armed struggle might in changing circumstances be fruitfully applied. Likewise, the Russian regime did not consider it suitable to implement Russification through direct armed force, but the possible use of such force was never excluded and the military threat was ever present. Thus both Finnish

passive resistance and Russification can be seen as practical alternatives to the application of armed and military warfare against nonmilitary struggle and warfare. From this, however, it does not follow that either of these two forms of contention can be seen as “functional equivalents” to warfare for use against all-out military warfare, and neither side really saw them as such.

It is indeed true that Finnish political thinkers and activists such as Snellman and Neovius emphatically argued against the age-old maxim that armed violent struggle is the *ultima ratio* and the most essential component or tool of political and state power. Moreover, both were able to muster significant evidence in support of their claims. Nevertheless, paradoxically enough neither of these men ever completely denied the belief that the military and other institutions of organized violence ultimately play a vital role in the maintenance of national existence. Both in fact, each in their own time, were in the forefront of those who fought for autonomous Finnish military institutions. Although the Finno-Russian conflict was primarily nonmilitary, the control of military institutions was always a central bone of contention. One of the primary ways Russification aimed at uprooting the pernicious idea of a Finnish state was to disintegrate the Finnish military and integrate Finns into the Russian army. Following their victory in 1905 the Constitutionalist immediately began investigating how the Finnish army might be reestablished, and they set about purging the forces of law and order of Bobrikovian and compliant elements. Moreover, Constitutionalist began to consider how armed and military force could be used against radical socialists. In the war against the Reds in 1918 the pragmatic renunciation of violence through the use of passive resistance as the main strategy was not even seriously advocated.

These considerations no doubt bolster the interpretation that the implementation of passive resistance from 1899 to 1904 was a matter of Realpolitik. It seems then that only from a position of weakness did ruling-class Finns ever speak about the dispensability of organized violence for the control of state power and the defense of the nation.

2. The social unit to be defended must have a certain independence with regard to resources and skills necessary for a defense effort.

Chapter III. shows how Finland met this requirement to a remarkable degree.

3. The social unit to be defended must have, and be able to maintain, an adequate ability to communicate within its own ranks (3.1), with third parties (3.2) and with the social basis of the attacker.

Like social defense theoreticians, the Finnish resisters strongly emphasized communication. The underground resistance press was certainly one of the most essential components of passive resistance. Likewise, a serious well-organized effort was made to carry out propaganda abroad and to mobilize European opinion. Although consensus concerning what constitutes success is difficult to achieve, it is undeniable that, comparatively speaking, the Finns were highly successful in these endeavors. Sub-point 3.2. was not one of the resisters' goals if it is taken to refer to the Russian population at large. Nevertheless, the Constitutionalist had behind them a long tradition of propagating their ideas and seeking support among educated and influential Russians. This no doubt facilitated their rise to power in 1905 and contributed to Russian disunity concerning imperial policies.

4. A tradition of free democratic activity with spread political power and an informed and politically conscious population will add to the general will and ability to offer resistance.

This is a condition which was certainly considered necessary (increasingly so as the struggle proceeded) among the Constitutionalist, although the scope of what was meant by democratic activity was restricted by their membership in the upper class of the decaying status society. Zealous popular enlightenment, including the cultivation of mass national-political consciousness, was seen as fundamental to passive resistance. Intuitively this view seems quite plausible and the manifest attitudes of certain working-class groups indicate that it was a necessary condition. But, as the example of the highly educated and nationalistic compliant leaders indicates, advanced political consciousness may result in the will not to resist and thus significantly decrease the ability of insurgent action. Therefore social defense theorists must take into consideration the possibility that even in advanced societies, enjoying widespread political consciousness and consensus and other favorable conditions for resistance, significant groups may for a whole variety of motives opt for collaboration and submission.

Thus while point 4. may be a necessary condition for social defense, it is not sufficient. Moreover, although the structure of Finland's administration and society in general was seen by Russians and Finns alike as a power-base of resistance, it is not at all clear what this might imply concerning the relationship of "nonviolent" or social defense and democracy. Moreover, "democratic activity" and "political consciousness" may in some cases be mutually exclusive. Thus this study

of the Finnish case and European passive resistance indicates that researchers should pay more attention to the role of domination in past cases and what this implies for social defense theorizing. It is conceivable that even under a constitutional government with formal distribution of power and a relatively high degree of municipal administrative autonomy it might be more effective according to the interests of actors involved to implement some kind of elite-led and even authoritarian “nonviolent” struggle. As discussed in chapter I., the history of the manipulation of “people power” and opinion under constitutional democratic, as well as communistic, types of government shows only too clearly how possible this is.

5. The social unit to be defended has to have (had) a political system whose perceived legitimacy is greater to the majority of the population than the one imported by the attacker.

In regard to the upper strata of Finnish society, including the compliants, this condition was completely fulfilled. This was probably also true for the majority of the population, although in a weaker sense. As with point 4., the compliants’ line shows that the fulfillment of this condition does not necessarily give rise to the will or ability to resist; in fact it can even be used to justify submission.

The question of legitimacy was a central theme in the Finno-Russian conflict. The Constitutionalist put a great deal of effort into doing propaganda concerning the superiority of the Finnish political system, promising that reforms could be initiated if only the constitutional order was restored. For their part, the Russians perceived the Finnish upper strata’s political legitimacy crisis in relation to the rank and file; they sought to further discredit the Constitutionalist and to convert, with little success, urban and rural laborers to the Russian cause. The Constitutionalist front took this threat very seriously, as witnessed by their campaign against the Russian peddlers. A major weakness of the elite-led resistance cause was the growing awareness among the rank and file that Constitutionalist propaganda concerning the righteousness of the Finnish law and social order was not credible.

6. The social unit to be defended must be able to maintain (or obtain) a high degree of social cohesion in relation to the attacker.

The initial broad unity in protest achieved by the Finns was dissipated as Russification continued and the rifts underlying Finnish society became pronounced. Nevertheless, in spite of serious social strife the

Constitutionalist front was able to achieve the cohesion necessary to attain significant success.

7. A situation of dependence of the attacker on the defending social unit must (be made) exist. Where such an economic, political-administrative or social-dependence is lacking, such a dependence must at least exist with an ally on whom the social defence unit can count.

The crisis triggered by Bobrikov's confrontation with assertive Finnish constitutionalism and state-making was preceded by a long period of relatively peaceful Finno-Russian relations within the context of Russian domination. Thus although the Finns and the Russians (and the various sub-groups involved) found serious faults in the relationship, neither initially wanted to introduce chaos into it through armed political violence. It was not the immediate goal of Russification to physically destroy Finnish society, but rather to "nonviolently" integrate it more thoroughly into Russia and make sure it remained an effective territorial buffer. This is probably why it was not in Russia's interest at this point to wage severe economic warfare against Finland. Thus in the implementation of its concrete integration goals the Russian regime was dependent first of all on Finland's upper strata, which controlled the political and cultural administration of the country, and secondly on the broader population. Herein lay the power of the Constitutionalist front. Finnish resisters did, however, clearly realize the limits of their power and came to see that the success of their struggle was dependent on the broader process of opposition and rebellion in the Empire; this process was the passive resisters' essential ally.

8. The social unit to be defended must have (or create) opportunities for interactions (also informal ones) with the adversary on the level of individuals.

Finnish passive resistance did not include the tactic of fraternizing with enemy Russians. On the contrary, resistance propagandists advocated the extreme social boycott of them and their Finnish collaborators. Informal interactions probably did exist, but it is difficult to judge their repercussions because they were not an explicit form of resistance. If, however, "interaction" is taken to signify the effort to persuade the adversary through arguments of the rightness of their cause, then the resisters took every opportunity to try to do so. Nevertheless, it was the compliants who believed in personal interaction with the advocates of Russification. This was an approach which the resisters came to believe was futile.

9. The defending social unit must have some legitimate status in either public opinion (9.1), with foreign governments (9.2) or with the attacker (9.3).

Finnish political thought from the first half of the nineteenth century on strongly emphasized the necessity of the international recognition of Finland's nationhood and, later, its distinct political or state-like existence. Such recognition, understood as based on the country's level of civilization, was seen to be more essential for national survival than the organization of armed force. The ideologists of Finnish nation and state building sought to achieve *de jure* legitimacy for their *de facto* achievements. In response to the Russian challenge to their political assertion Finns became adept at doing national propaganda in those European nations whose recognition was deemed most advantageous. Thus with the initiation of Russification in 1899 Finnish political activists already had a strong foundation for the mobilization of both domestic and international opinion. Finland was understood to have suffered a coup d'état at the hands of Bobrikov. Even if the exact nature of Finnish statehood remained controversial the Finns' right to a distinct, constitutionally defined and guaranteed, political existence received broad support among educated Europeans. The struggle for recognized legitimacy was one of the fundamental elements of passive resistance. As for the Finns' adversary, the Russian regime, its goal was to reduce the Finns' *de facto* degree of statehood, an effort which involved the vigorous denial of Constitutionalist claims concerning Finland's *de jure* status.

10. The chief adversary of the nonviolent resistance – or at least those in his surroundings capable of influencing him – must be rational and not permanently fanatical or crazy.

In the specific sense of “rationality” used here (but certainly not by Finnish Constitutionalist standards) Bobrikov and Tsar Nicholas II were rational in the implementation of their imperial integration policy for Finland. This means that in disintegrating the degree of statehood attained by the Grand Duchy the Russifiers were not willing to proceed at all costs or induce chaos – at least not immediately. Already in the 1890s resistance-minded Finns thought that systematic noncooperation could make the cost of Russification too high. Moreover, Bobrikov was constrained both by a long tradition of not using extreme violence on the Finns and by those of his colleagues who agreed with his cause but not with his methods. Hence he had to do a good deal of manoeuvring to obtain extraordinary powers.

The Finnish struggle against Russification has long been cited as somehow relevant to the further development of emancipatory nonmilitary forms of nonroutine struggle and defense, since without arms the Finnish resisters defied a great power. A basic element of Finnish Constitutionalist insurgency, moreover, was the European principle of voluntary servitude, holding that the first step in liberation is subjects' realization that power-over them is derived from them and that through united action people can reclaim and mobilize the power which inherently depends on them; if they do not do so they have only themselves to blame for their servitude. This voluntaristic concept of power combined with the secular religion and rhetoric of Justice makes the Finnish struggle against Russia highly amenable to study through emancipatory power perspectives, such as the Gandhian paradigm.³ Furthermore, the analysis of the preceding ten points shows that in comparison to the cases commonly studied as "nonviolent" or nonmilitary struggle, the Finnish case fulfilled to an extraordinary degree the conditions considered necessary by theorists for making such struggle both possible and viable. These considerations give concrete reason to believe that it is indeed worthwhile to ask if the Finnish case of passive resistance actually provides any valuable lessons for those exploring the potential uses of a technique, or repertoire of instruments, for coercing, fighting and defeating an enemy without recourse to conventional military means or direct physical violence.

In addressing this question it must first of all be emphasized that in general throughout Europe passive resistance was usually developed and employed in circumstances of long-term interrelation and various degrees of mutual dependence between antagonists in the context of domination by one of them. This is true as well of twentieth century struggles considered as "nonviolent" and nonmilitary. Apparently passive resistance was never used by an independent state as a substitute for military defense against invading armed forces. This is an important point, since social defense theorists have sought to extrapolate from past cases, especially inter-polity ones like the Finno-Russian, a type of "nonviolent" defense system which, when sufficiently

³ To reiterate, it is perhaps equally appropriate to study it from the perspective of domination. For example, critics such as Marx and Lassalle saw the constitutionalist passive resistance of 1848, with its legalist rhetoric, as a great deception and an effort to control the Revolution and manipulate the masses. This early view of passive resistance is certainly of relevance in analyzing the Finnish case. The study of passive resistance could thus be a contribution to Foucault's effort to show how Right "puts into motion relations that are not relations of sovereignty, but of domination." Foucault 1980, pp. 95-96.

developed, could serve as a “functional equivalent” of, and superior alternative to, military defense and war for defeating a military aggressor. Reflection on the Finnish case, within the context of western resistance history, suggests that the logical jump from such extrapolation to a “nonviolent” functional replacement for war is at best shaky and perhaps unfounded.

The reader will recall from the earlier discussion that European history presents no rigid dichotomy between violent and “nonviolent” action. This is not to imply that people did not understand the differences between various forms of contention between peaceful politics and extreme violence. But, before the twentieth century, in neither thought nor deed did Europeans (or their colonial subjects) develop a type of secular violence-excluding struggle which can be seen as (potentially) functionally superior to violent struggle in all conditions; passive resistance was the closest thing to it.

This may seem obvious, but it has been suggested that the American colonists developed a “nonviolent” weapons system which proved to be at least as “effective” as military warfare. The examination of the American case in chapter II., however, brings over the necessity of realizing that in the modern western culture of contention physical violence has often been rejected as a replacement for, or the main tool of, creative mobilization in conjunction with a process of liberation from a long standing relation of subjection to a superior military power.⁴ Common to this type of struggle is that the opponent or enemy does not (yet) turn to systematically applied extremely destructive measures like full-scale military war against the building of national (or, in general, group) autonomy and the employment of the weapons of economic and cultural noncooperation which have been directed against him. These are not (yet) extremely polarized conflicts. However, when it is a question of defending the creative achievements of mobilization and development from destruction or extremely damaging setbacks it is has been almost universally held that the “weapons” of economic and sociopolitical protest and noncooperation cannot be made to serve as a functional equivalent to defensive military war.

These observations indicate how important the course of action chosen by the enemy is in determining the feasibility of nonmilitary

⁴ Contrastingly, in the case of imperialism domestic creative mobilization may go hand in hand with exploitation and violence abroad.

struggle.⁵ This point can be elucidated by considering the significance of the exceptionally extensive fulfillment of the conditions for social defense in the Finnish case. To put it bluntly, even if all the necessary internal conditions for social defense are sufficiently met, the power this gives the defender can be nullified if the aggressor resorts to highly destructive means such as large-scale mass deportation, genocide and systematic material devastation.

It is thus appropriate to reiterate that from the long-term perspective, one of the most favorable conditions for the effectiveness of Finnish passive resistance (and of the Snellmanian approach too) was the special nature of the Finno-Russian relationship as established in the nineteenth century. Russification itself was a nonmilitary form of struggle, based on legitimized military domination, attempting not to physically destroy Finns and Finnish institutions, but rather to more thoroughly dominate them and take over and transform the system from within (which for many Finns meant the destruction of their society). It is this fact that gave the Finnish national resistance front, within the given circumstances, its power: Russification could be effectively hindered and even prevented through systematic non-cooperation.

This, to be sure, is not to depreciate the significance of passive resistance or related types of violence-avoiding struggle which can certainly make a decisive difference in conflicts. The aim here is, however, to emphasize that such types of struggle as applied in inter-polity conflicts have taken place in highly specific and limited circumstances, and are therefore likely to do so in the future. To put it simply, judging from the past, organized passive or “nonviolent” resistance will only take place where the attacked polity meets the internal conditions (as enumerated above) for struggle within the context of long-term, or at least already established, domination with the dominator being sufficiently dependent on the dominated.

The relevance of these conclusions can perhaps be made clearer by briefly considering them in relation to post-World War II and present day Eastern Europe. Schmid and his colleagues carried out, within the context of a broad study of Soviet postwar military actions, a detailed examination of four popular resistance struggles which have often been

⁵ Schmid notes that social defense theorists have paid disproportionate attention to the internal conditions for struggle rather than to conditions determined by the opponent; this weakness has been avoided in the present study by appropriately emphasizing the Russian regime's intentions and the limits on its power to implement them; Schmid 1985, p. 27.

considered, at least partially, as cases of “nonviolent” action.⁶ They discovered that in none of the cases were the crucial conditions necessary for social defense to be viable decisively fulfilled. This led to the conclusion, from the perspective of 1985, that the sanctions involved in the use of “nonviolent” nonmilitary or social defense cannot effectively dissuade, repulse or defeat the Soviet Union.⁷ Of course the possibility of a new perspective on the postwar era has arisen following the “Revolution of 1989,” but it still can be said that the Soviet regime, through means such as military intervention, secret police and communist party coercion, purges, imprisonment, torture, execution, mass population transfer and the restructuring of society, was able to decisively control the conditions for outright organized resistance and rebellion against it.

Now, in the light of its failures, it is clear that the price of Soviet repression was tremendous and from the post-1989 perspective the various uprisings against it do not appear as futile as they once may have. Outright mass challenges to Soviet power, as in Czechoslovakia 1968, doubtlessly contributed significantly to the long-term decay and break down of that power. Nevertheless, ultimately what was of far greater importance in diminishing Soviet control were the multifarious forms of everyday resistance which never reached the level of collective defiance and rebellion. This era clearly shows how the resources and conditions for outright organized struggle can be controlled and how masses of people can be coerced and manipulated, but how in the long-term such a system cannot maintain the social cohesion, and thus the economic power, to sustain domination.

To be sure, one should not underrate, in the words of Timothy Garton Ash, “that large-scale, sustained, yet supremely peaceful and self-disciplined manifestation of social unity, the gentle crowd against the Party-state, which was both the hallmark and the essential domestic catalyst of change in 1989, in every country except Romania....”⁸ The mass movements of 1989 (and their seminal predecessors, like Solidarity in Poland) had a decisive effect on the outcome of the struggles. But, as Ash indicates, people power movements were not the foremost condition of change. Why did “nonviolent” mass movements catalyze sudden change in 1989 and not earlier? Because now, even though severe repression and violent confrontation would

⁶ The cases are the Lithuanian resistance to Soviet re-occupation 1944–1952 (one component of which was called “passive resistance”), the East German uprising of 1953, the Hungarian uprising of 1956, and Czechoslovakia 1968.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 220, 401–402.

⁸ Ash 1990, p. 17.

have been possible, the ruling powers, on the background of economic crisis and the otherwise general unworkability of the communist system, were unwilling to destroy the "revolution."⁹

On the one hand, in the wake of the on-going radical transformation of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union the conditions for self-determined collective action throughout these areas are improving. One of the implications of this is that the conditions for the effective application of violence-avoiding (as well as violent) forms of struggle both within and between communities are more favorable than before because the previous level of repression cannot be maintained.

On the other hand, however, neither historical cases of passive resistance and "nonviolent" action, nor recent European events lend themselves to the postulation of a kind of social or civilian-based "nonviolent" defense system which could functionally replace organized violence. On the contrary, given its historical nature as primarily a form of struggle for liberation and justice, often in the context of established domination, and viable only in very specific conditions, passive or "nonviolent" resistance seems to have little to offer as a way of reducing ultimate dependence on military defense against extreme violence.

Apparently it is an entirely vain endeavour to try to extrapolate from historical cases or derive from theoretical construction a form of defensive power politics which if adopted by a community which has renounced the use of organized violence would render it inviolable or even less violable than military defense.¹⁰ This is because there is no mechanical way to say what kind of struggle is objectively most "effective" or "superior" in general, contrary to what many working in the Gandhian paradigm claim or imply.¹¹ One must always ask:

⁹ Ash points out that Soviet troops were no longer available to Eastern European ruling elites which, for their part, were no longer willing to use their own "still-formidable police and security forces" to the extent necessary to destroy the popular movements; he thinks that "perhaps the ultimately decisive factor," making the transformation of 1989 possible was "that characteristic of revolutionary situations described by Tocqueville more than a century ago: the ruling elite's loss of belief in its own right to rule." *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁰ By "defensive power politics" I mean any defensive technique of wielding power over an adversary the effectiveness of which is independent of communication (such as negotiation on the basis of shared values and interests) with the adversary.

¹¹ Summing up the claims of the members of the "tough" or "pragmatic" school of nonviolence two of the most sophisticated authors in the field write: "They maintain that nonviolence is (or can be made to be) more effective than military means, even when it comes to 'deciding' a conflict by defeating or expelling an occupant at minimum cost. They argue that even within its own narrow framework military defense is simply less effective than the alternative they propose. If this is so then there is no argument at all to be made for military defense..."; Boserup, Mack 1974, pp. 12, 13, 21.

effective for what, for what type of struggle and for what values and objectives? What research concerning violence-avoiding types of defensive struggle may hope to achieve is to indicate how groups seeking to defend their spheres of liberty and creative attainments in a world of power politics, where justice and cooperation are adhered to only to the minimum degree necessary, may more effectively cope with violations against them in various specific conditions.

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