

The Working Class and the "Progressive" Bourgeoisie in the Struggle Against Fascism and for Socialism: Raoul Palmgren's Account of the Popular Front Movements in the 1930s

ALPO VÄKEVÄ

Raoul Palmgren (1912–1995) was one of the most influential left-wing intellectuals in Finland in the 20th century. In this article, I focus on Palmgren's ideas about the popular front movements in the 1930s, using his writings from the period as primary sources. I point out that Palmgren, like other Finnish left-wing intellectuals at the time, got excited about the popular front politics in the mid-1930s, because it seemed to offer a viable strategy against fascism. The Finnish left-wing intellectuals started to promote the popular front politics in Finland by taking a model from the popular front movements in Europe, but they were disappointed, because the popular front politics did not properly take off in Finland. I draw attention to the fact that Palmgren came close to other Finnish left-wing intellectuals with his perspectives on the popular front practice and differed from them with his historical perspectives about the popular front movements. He justified the popular front politics by interpreting history from a Marxist perspective.