

**Duties of the Estate – or a Ballot: The Different
Preconditions, Facilities and Political Lines of Action
in Hungary and in Finland between the World Wars**

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1. The ideological and historical background

Looking at the period between the two world wars, it is useful to avoid certain stereotype ideas which are usually attached to some political and ideological terms. This is especially the case when the terms "fascist" and "conservative" are used vaguely. These terms are often used as political slander in disguise; they are terms which are usually applied only as accusations and libels and most often by their fervent opponents.

The reputation of both the Finnish and the Hungarian Conservatives between the world wars is generally not very favourable. Both are considered to have been pro-German, reactionary, illiberal and extremely old-fashioned – although the stigma of fascism, which was used especially during the 1970s seems to have been abandoned by now. But even now they are not usually evaluated from their own viewpoints and merits (or dismerits) and it is not appreciated that Fascism/Nazism was almost equally "under-class" and "revolutionary" in their eyes as socialism and communism were.

Conservatism in the Europe of the 1920s and 1930s had at least two main creeds: the parliamentary one and the autocratic one. Parliamentary Conservatism was the stronger creed in Northern and Western Europe – in the old established democracies, which had long traditions of both liberal democracy and moderate upper-class aristocratism, but also in those "young" countries where at least verbal democratic radicalism was the political tune of the day. Finland too belonged to these emerging new states where hardly anybody wished – or dared – call oneself "Conservative".

The main features of parliamentary Conservatism were

- adapting to parliamentary methods and democracy,
- adapting albeit often grudgingly to those "democratic" reforms which had already in a certain way been "institutionalized" (for example republicanism and equal vote),
- accepting the notion that reformism would carry on – provided the methods would be moderate and that they were based on traditions, not on theories,
- accepting the social mobility,
- meritocracy – not only the number of the masses, but also "quality", social standing and social education should matter – at least in some way,
- criticism of "overpoliticization" of the society,
- the rise of individualism,
- relatively moderate and "prokeynesian" views on economic policy,
- strong backing in army, church, economic circles, civil service – but, at the end of the day, submission to the fact that these institutions were being depoliticized,
- negative feelings about "cosmopolitan" Jewry, but rejecting the conclusions of the New Right,
- suspicion against fascists and Nazis because of their open hostility to democracy, pluralism and equal rights – and also based on the belief that these new, violent forces lacked the basic merits of education and were decidedly "under-class".

Authoritarian conservatism, which could also be called reactionary, shared many of the basic principles of their parliamentary brothers. But they tended to draw far more radical conclusions both of the aims, measures and possibilities. The main features of these conservatives were

- the idea that those who were "called" to lead could stand up against the majority; the "competent" and "right-minded" could use non-parliamentary, repressive measures if the votes were insufficient – provided the situation and the interests of the fatherland demanded it,
- old institutions – church, army, monarchy, civil service etc. – could be used to achieve political ends,

- pre-1914 values, "the good old days" which ought to be brought back,
- "noblesse oblige" – aristocratic viewpoint, no great desire to recruit new members from the masses,
- state and estate were more important than nationalism,
- anti-Semitism was a question of political appropriateness – not a question of racial ideology as in nazism,
- suspicion against fascism and nazism – not because of democratic pluralism, but because they originated from the masses and were "uncivilized" – a sort of second socialism.

There was plenty of potential to fascism and national socialism both in Hungary and Finland. Both countries had experienced a bloody Civil War which had started as a Red coup – even a Red reign for a few months. Hungary had lost almost three quarters of its former territories; the Finns had an irredenta in Eastern Karelia. Hungary had a good cause to think that it had been deprived of its rightful place as an eminent power; in Finland the Conservatives had reason to believe that they had lost the fruits of victory to the Liberal and Agrarian centre when instead of a "White" Monarchy a liberal, centrist Republic had been founded and the Social Democrats had returned to the Parliament – with 40 % of the entire electorate. Both countries also had national minority problems: the Jews in Hungary, the Swedes in Finland.

Even all this considered, neither of these countries became fascist – and in avoiding fascism/nazism, the methods and the development of Hungarian and Finnish Conservatives turned out to be quite different.

2. Equal crisis, different traditions – diverse directions

Hungary: from the experience of revolution to the archetype of authoritarianism

Between the world wars, Horthyist Hungary was a sort of archetype of a stable, traditionalist, old-fashioned state; its values and leaders clearly and openly aimed at pre-1914 status in all senses – "the good old days" of the Old Kingdom. Hungary was not a dictatorship nor even a one-party system, but in practice the opposition had no real means to challenge the Horthyist party of

Government – the Christian National Unity Party. Even the laws of the elections were very conservative. The right to vote was not universal, and only in the 1930's did the ballot become secret also in the countryside, where the majority of the people lived – and even then the vote was denied by many censuses for many who had previously possessed the right to vote.¹

The philosophy behind this was summed up by the Minister of Interior: during the open ballot the lack of political judgement of many individuals had been controlled by public opinion, but under secret ballot not every one was competent enough to vote, when the control of the public opinion had been removed. According to him, the right to vote was not an end itself – it was a means to safeguard the constitutional life in Hungary.²

The new House of Lords had even more power than its pre-1914 predecessor, and the state was still constitutionally a monarchy, even though it had no King. The Regent Horthy was a sort of trustee of the Habsburg Heritage – an acting "King" while an actual King was not available due to the evil ambitions of France and the Little Entente. It is very illuminating that an Austrian prince and Austro-fascist Ernst von Starhemberg describes his visit to Horthy's house in the 1930s in his memoirs as follows: "...the atmosphere was thoroughly Austrian. It was a home of an Austrian officer and everything seemed so familiar that I could have believed I had entered my father's house."³

The book *Eastern Europe between the Wars* (1943) by Hugh Seton-Watson has been considered a classic on Eastern European history, and deservedly so. Even so, he has a clear tendency to evaluate Eastern European countries explicitly from a Western point of view. When one also bears in mind how the book was written one cannot help noticing that he also looks Eastern Europe through "a peephole of the Allies".

So it is no surprise that Hungary with its very conservative and somewhat pro-German tendencies is not treated very favourably by Seton-Watson. He writes that after 1920 the political history of Hungary makes dull reading, and the government of Prime Minister István Bethlen (1921–31) was a time of "peaceful stagnation".⁴ It is obvious that this is not meant to be a eulogy; but one could also point out that considering the "colourfulness" of the events in most

neighbouring countries this lack of dramatics might not have been such a bad achievement.

Even so, it cannot be denied that the Horthyist Regime was undoubtedly a typical case of most authoritarian conservatism. It was typical of an aristocratic group which had a romantic view of itself as a civilized gentry; which genuinely thought it had a mission which no one else could fulfil – that is to safeguard "culture" and "constitution" against the Red Menace, and simultaneously to block both the Teutonic and the Slav dangers. This gentry was used to having monopoly control of state affairs, bureaucracy and armed forces and thought that even the middle class was kind of upstartish. Such practical things as industry and trade were left to the bourgeoisie and the Jews – they were not aristocratic enough for the "nobles".

The system was outwardly stable. But it had also destabilizing factors, which were almost structural. The civil service, lower gentry and the less wealthy landowners were frustrated by the lack of the political influence and tried to gain more political ground at the expense of upper nobility and great landowners. Bethlen and Horthy were of course archetypes of the upper nobility, but they also had to conciliate with the strivings of the civil service and lower gentry.

From the Horthyian point of view, also Fascism and National Socialism were decidedly vulgar, incompetent, uncivilized and banal phenomena, which turned the natural order of things upside down. After all, they were anything but "of rank"; they emphasized the importance of the masses, who from the conservative point of view understood no politics and should therefore follow the more competent ones, not to mess up society as Socialists and Bela Kun had done. The masses were not to be mobilized, as Fascists and Nazis did – tranquillity and the harmony of the unequals was a much better goal.

The Regime of Gyula Gömbös (1932–36) was slightly different. It represented a sort of political transfer of right-wing generations – a shift from reactionary nobility to "the New Right", which in some cases flirted with Fascism and Nazism. There was no love lost between Gömbös and the old nobility; Gömbös was hostile to old-time reactionaries, a fervent anti-Semite, anti-Monarchist – at least anti-Legitimist – and wanted to recruit his support from the rising

middle class – a scare for the meritocratic upper class. He also had the trust of the civil service and the army. He thought the structure of Hungarian society was decidedly out of date and wanted to mobilize the masses – storm troopers, labour and so on. It is easy to understand why Horthy explains in his memoirs, that Gömbös's gains in elections were more of quantity than quality.

However, Gömbös had neither the necessary force nor time to break the old traditions and to challenge the whole system. He died unexpectedly already in October 1936, and his influence had sunk even before that, because he did not have the absolute confidence of Horthy and because the nobility saw him more and more clearly as a threat to their concept of society of rank. Gömbös's successors were mainly traditional conservatives. However, Gömbös left behind an army, civil service and gendarmerie which were clearly more pro-German and radical than the old conservatives. Accordingly, there was no frictionless turning back to the "peaceful stagnation". The new forces found other channels to make their bid for their share of the power.⁵

Finland: parliamentary democracy – grumbling, but submitting

Finland experienced a Red coup in January 1918, long before Hungary. After the Civil War many Finnish conservatives were tempted to make a militant turn to the Right. The attempt to establish a pro-German Monarchy was only a part of this project. Many conservatives wanted not only to obstruct but also to abrogate some of the old, "ultrademocratic" reforms. Democracy was not blamed for the Red uprising as such – at least not generally – but it was not idealized any longer either; it was considered to be rather a means of developing the nation than an end itself.

Other features of this mental turning to the Right were the plans to establish a new Parliament with a second, corporatist chamber, to abandon parliamentarism and give an extra vote to the landholders (although these were, in contrast to Hungary, mainly smallholders).

As in Hungary, also in Finland the conservatives thought that their duty and manifest destiny was to protect and preserve culture, civilization and the interest of the whole country and society; there was, in their view, ample proof of the shortcomings and dangers of ultrademocracy and the rule of masses. Some sort of meritocratic imbediments would be needed, so that the "immature", "incompet-

ent” and ”selfish” elements would not get another chance and that the experience of January 1918 would not be repeated. The reactionary conservatism of spring 1918 was a kind of ”now it must finally be enough” -reaction.

The legend is that only the fall of Imperial Germany saved Finland from this kind of arch-reactionary fate. But actually all these plans – except Monarchism itself – were abandoned by the conservatives themselves in a very early phase. The explanation for this is the fact that the background and traditions of Finnish conservatives were so very different from the Hungarian ones.

In Hungary the aristocracy was used to having almost the total power in the society in its hands. It had the monopoly of armed forces, gendarmerie etc. and it was ready to use them if needed. True, there was always the Habsburgian overlord and a kind of attitude of rebellion against Vienna; but this hardly applied to concepts of society, both Vienna and Budapest had the same interests to preserve society as it was.

In Finland there was no equivalent for this kind of conservative dominion in society. There was the Swedish-speaking upper class and they had a firm hold of the civil service, trade and industry; the Swedish People’s Party actually was so rightist and paternalistic that it actively supported the plans to establish the second chamber and to elect some corporatist representatives. Again also the radical right-wing of the mainly liberal Young Finnish Party was very conservative. But the main stream of Finnish Conservatism were the so-called Old Finns, who represented about 15–20 % of the electorate.

The Old Finns were a unique case in the field of European Conservatism. Their roots, their reformist, meritocratic, moderate, even pacifistic traditions were completely different from those of the conservatives in other parts of Europe. Their tradition was not aristocratic – on the contrary, in the 19th century they had been ”a people’s movement”, the movement of the social under classes who had risen from below to challenge the power of the Swedish-speaking ”lords”. Even though the Old Finns had become much more conservative up till 1918, they simply lacked the tradition and mentality to be real ”reactionaries”; they were mere beginners in defending ”the inherited power”.

The Hungarian aristocracy had no tradition like this. Opposition against Vienna had no such social bases, it was mainly a political,

aristocratic movement of Magyar upper classes against Austrian upper classes, even though the Hungarians could claim a large nationalist following in Hungary – at least the Kossuth line. But it could not be compared with the Old Finns whose origins were so unaristocratic and who had had to fight the Swedish-speaking aristocracy in order to gain their share of civil service, economy and cultural life – and use the support of the peasant masses. To the Old Finns mobilization of the masses had not been a menace before the rise of socialism. Up till 1918 they also lacked the experience of using armed forces and other repressive methods – all that had been under Russian control.

The Old Finns were a peculiar mixture of social reformism and conservative values – that is loyalty to the Crown, pure Lutheranism and old-fashioned, paternalistic culture. Besides, they had also had one really democratic experience: the Great Strike of 1905, which had ended the first period of Russification and established the equal right to vote. After that the Finnish conservatives at least always respected the power of the masses and refused to believe that rightist reaction would ever have a chance – on the contrary, in the long run militant conservatism would only make socialism stronger. So the strong men of the Old Finns Lauri Ingman and J.K. Paasikivi refused to accept the plans for the second chamber or corporatism. In their opinion, such measures would miss the point: instead of reducing support for socialism they would increase it. In 1919 the same men also prevented the plans of the right-wing radicals, Activists, to seize power and attack St. Petersburg.

Even the experience of the Civil War had thus been enough to alter the basic political beliefs of the generation. And it is equally illuminating how differently the role of a smallholder was seen in Hungary and in Finland. In Hungary his role – and lot – was to obey and support his lords, in Finland an idealistic myth was created of a White Peasant Army which had liberated and delivered the country from the hands of evil Reds and Russians. Pride was also taken in the fact that Finnish peasants were free men, the backbone of society, who had never been serfs and who had had the right to participate in the Estate Diet for hundreds of years. All in all, also Finnish conservatives thought that all this was proof of a democratic, dignified, civilized and cultural state – a part of Western

Europe and Scandinavia. Finland should never "sink" to the level of Balkans, Baltic countries or Russia.⁶

The frustration of the Finnish conservatives had deepened in the 1920s: election results were not flattering, the class parties, especially the Agrarian Union, dominated, the Left was strong and becoming stronger and the Communists louder than ever. Democracy seemed to reward only the populist, "selfish" parties, who openly advocated the interests of only certain classes and set meritocracy aside.⁷

Because of all this the conservatives thought that the radical Lapua Movement in November 1929 was a political godsend which could save the country from the political morass it had sunk into. The Movement was a mixture of conservative values and right-wing radicalism. The most radical ones aimed at a coup – but a coup which would be performed by the President, the Government, the Army and the White Civil Guards, that is by the institutions from above, not by the "streets", from below. So even they represented a kind of authoritarian conservative reaction. The Movement did not intend to establish a new society like Fascism, which claimed that the old society had been degenerated and mummified; it was rather a reaction against the new world, which was industrializing, urbanizing and secularizing and thus threatened the old "White" values. Even some of the old plans of 1918 for a second chamber, corporatism etc. were revived – though again without success.⁸

The Movement achieved many goals which benefited conservatives and for which they could have not even dreamed of during the intense pessimism of late 1920s. Communism was banned; the National Coalition Party (the Conservative Party) had a landslide success in the parliamentary elections; the conservative candidate P. E. Svinhufvud was elected President; the hero of the Civil War, the White General C.G.E. Mannerheim returned to the political stage.

But soon the Movement also became a liability even for the conservatives. It was too violent – the comparison to "Mexican" politics or to the Red Guards of 1917-18 was most disturbing from the conservatives' point of view. What was even more important, the violence had alienated other bourgeois parties from the Movement and threatened to isolate also the conservatives. And according to

Ingman-Paasikivi -line this was the most damaging prospect: it would finally lead to a coalition of centre parties and socialists.⁹

However, the National Coalition Party also had a radical wing which resembled Gömbös's party in a way, and these radicals gained the upper hand in the party from November 1932 and maintained it up to May 1934. They were clearly radicals and militants: no compromises even with the bourgeois liberals and agrarians, but biding for time – let the left wing and centre parties govern for a while, they would inevitably lead things to a state in which they would have to call the right wing to help. And then the rightists could gain power on their own terms and form a strong man government, which would be responsible mainly to the President – Svinhufvud, a conservative – and only secondarily to the Parliament.¹⁰

Even though it was not openly stated, these radical rightists thought that the governments of von Papen and von Schleicher in Germany were just such Presidential right-wing governments. Also they may have had Gömbös in mind. The moderate conservatives accused the radical wing even of "hitlerism", but this has to be interpreted as a deliberate political overstatement; no National Socialism in essence was intended, even though there are similarities about the idea of useful political tactics.

Even so, the radicals might have been nearer to authoritarian conservatism than any other rightist creed in Finnish history. Their generation was by now the true protector of "inherited" power and status, alienated from Old Finn reformism and moderation. It was the "generation of the War of Liberation", far more appreciative of militant action than democratic compromise, far more ready to isolate itself and bide its time. This generation no longer shared the "democratic" experience of the 1905 Great Strike; it remembered only the successful activism of the "War of Liberation", and thus it fervently believed, that a minority of "real men" could challenge even a majority if the interests of the fatherland demanded it.

The tragedy of these radicals was that they had none of those facilities which had enabled Gömbös to gain power in Hungary. Svinhufvud was no Horthy, he neither had as extensive power nor was willing to hand it to radicals. The radicals had no new ideas or ideology like Gömbös, they could only refer to the tradition and heritage of 1918. And whereas centrists and leftists were meager

forces in Hungary, in Finland they controlled over 2/3 of the Parliament. The bulk of conservatives did not want to go against such odds.

So in the elections of 1933 the National Coalition Party suffered a catastrophic defeat – and the Social Democratic Party gained a landslide victory. In the long run there was no political space in Finland between parliamentary conservatism and "fascism". In May 1934 J. K. Paasikivi was elected Chairman of the National Coalition Party – a more illuminating and symbolic point of the return of the Old Finn values could hardly have been made. Paasikivi made sure that the radicals lost all influence in the party and that the semi-fascist elements were expelled. Most of them had left the party anyway, since they established their own party in the Parliament, the Patriotic People's Movement. Paasikivi openly declared that British and Scandinavian conservatism were the models which Finnish conservatism should follow, and he made the most of German and Italian totalitarian features – Fascism and Nazism were examples of what *not* to do.¹¹

Finnish conservatism was thus to differ from virtually every Southern, Eastern and Central European creed: it did not fall prey to Fascism/Nazism nor tamed them to become its tool and facade of populism.

The People's Patriotic Movement resembled Gömbös's party even more than the radical conservatives and fascist or pseudo-fascist features. It openly supported corporatism, condemned not only the marxists but also capitalists and plutocrats, opposed the "stagnation of conservatism" and labeled conservatism a lethal poison, advocated anti-Semitism and assured that the goal was a new, mass-mobilized society. It also defended Hitler's foreign policy – but did not dare to demand that Finland should ally itself with Germany.

But Finland and also the Finnish Conservatives were bound to move to the left, not to the right. People's Patriotic Movement had no chance, since even the moderation of Paasikivi could open the doors to the government. In 1938 the Movement barely escaped being banned, in 1939 it lost almost half of its seats in Parliament and managed to hold only eight – of 200. The same year the Hungarian Nazis had 25 % of the vote.

Even in foreign policy Finland and Hungary went different ways. Hungary, eager to revise the peace treaty of Trianon, had no option but to seek the help of Germany and Italy. Finland, on the other hand, joined the Scandinavian countries and stressed as hard as it possibly could that a pro-German policy was not even under consideration – and the Finnish conservatives belonged to the most eager scandinavianists.

3. The relations between Hungary and Finland and the Finnish concept of Hungary

The relations between Hungary and Finland might perhaps be described very briefly: partly partners in destiny, no conflicting interests, mutual emotional sympathy but very few important common links or interests. Mainly, it was all about cultural ties and "tribal" fraternity.

Even so, the sympathy was evident. In Finland Hungary was usually considered a martyr of the world war, and because of the tribal ties the sympathy was kept alive whereas nobody bothered to feel a great, permanent grief for the similar fate of Austria or Turkey. The intellectuals and also public opinion usually accepted the opinion, that although the Hungarians might have been too harsh and dictatorial towards their Slavs and Rumanians, this was historically understandable and in a way even justified, since the Hungarians were more "civilized" and had a mission to rule peoples which lacked the ability and civilization required to create a state. Actually Hungarian rule had been a better option even for the subservient nations.

Only the left-wing was expressly critical of Hungary in Finland, since it totally rejected the nature of the authoritarian conservative rule. Also the centrists had some reservations. The Agrarian Union did not appreciate Hungary's "feudalism". As Aarne Wuorimaa, the Finnish envoy in Budapest 1940–44, states in his memoirs after a conversation with Prime Minister Kállay: The Prime Minister, who stressed that Hungary needed the aristocracy because the masses might abandon nationalism if Russia or Germany offered them social reforms, did not seem to realize that if Hungarian Governments had in time and by their own initiative made the necessary reforms, they need not have feared that the workers and the petty peasantry might accept Russian imperialism or German penetration.

”It reminded me of the medieval feudal countries of which I had read as a schoolboy. --- The Hungarian aristocracy could never forget its thinking of its divine privileged position.” Wuorimaa also criticizes the fervour of the ”*nem, nem soha*” mentality.¹²

But also the Agrarians sympathized with Hungary for ethnic reasons, and also Wuorimaa openly admits that he fell for Hungary. And the liberals had once – during the Period of Russification – thought that Hungary’s constitutional battle against the Habsburgs in 1849–67 was a real and heroic model to follow. The leading liberal newspaper had in 1907 called especially Ferenc Deák ”a giant statesman”.¹³

The Conservatives were definitely pro-Hungarian, and the bulk of intellectualls were in the 1920–30s rightists – most of them in fact nearer radical rightists than conservatives. These intellectuals accepted thoroughly the view that the peace treaty of Trianon indeed was an unjustified, brutal mutilation of a historical, highly civilized state. Wuorimaa’s rightist predecessor Onni Talas had much fewer reservations towards the society of Hungary than Wuorimaa in his memoirs.¹⁴ Also another conservative, Edwin Linkomies, who visited Hungary just before his Premiership (1943–44), is very flattering towards the Hungarians. Unlike Wuorimaa he states, that even if a land reform had been implemented, it would not have changed Hungary’s lot in the world war and in the upheavels after the war: Russia decided Hungary’s fate anyway. He even mentions the same person as Wuorimaa – Kállay – assuring, that social reforms indeed would be made.

Linkomies’s admiration of Hungary and of its nobility’s centuries-old traditions rose up to almost patheticism. According to him, Horthy embodied ”everything that was spiritually most valuable in a European man”; the leaders of Hungary were ”on an exceptionally high cultural level”, they had a deep humanity, which was difficult to define but which could only grow on cultural soil based on centuries-old culture. Linkomies admitted, that these leaders were very conservative, but he stated that even this conservativeness increased the cultural label. ”I don’t believe that in many European countries there were such men who were so unprejudiced about foreign policy and so thoroughly patriotic as those men whom I met leading Hungary in January 1943.” Linkomies

even made comparisons between Horthy and Marshal Mannerheim, and usually favour of Horthy.¹⁵

One can find the romantic respect for Hungarian aristocracy and Hungary's noble history – it was almost like "in front of the lord of the mansion", a representative of young culture in awe facing traditions which he knew he could not himself possess.

In secret diplomatic reports the picture is somewhat more critical. In the 1920s Finnish diplomats still tended to be quite flattering. For example, Bethlén was described to be above all others, deserving respect seldom due to other statesmen. After that there is more criticism: the authoritarianism and certain "Balkan", manipulative methods in elections, Gömbös's populism, intolerance of opposition, extensive pro-Germanism etc. began to bother Finnish diplomats, even Talas, who later recorded none of this criticism in his memoirs. Even social criticism appears in the reports, some of which describe utter poverty and accuse Hungarians of not seriously trying to make social conditions better. At the end of the 1930s one can detect clear anxiety that National Socialism might finally take over – and compared to this menace even old authoritarianism seemed a better option.¹⁶

Also Hungary's foreign policy raised doubts in the reports, even though excuses were raised to defend it: deep commitment to the Axis was due to the fact that Hungary really had no choice, and pro-Germanism was not emotionally genuine. On the contrary, Germany's attitude had raised repulsiveness among Hungarians and, paradoxically, decreased the vote of Hungarian National Socialists. All in all, "the party of government is forced to play in an orchestra conducted by Berlin, but this was only compliance. --- The friendship with Berlin is a forced friendship, which must be maintained for economic and other reasons".¹⁷

But even this criticism was not public and the overall estimation was, and particularly so among the conservatives, that Hungary was not to be compared with the rest of Eastern and Central Europe. Hungary was considered the martyr of Trianon, a dignified and culturally rich country – the Balkans and Poland were Slavonic upstarts which had as much benefited as suffered from Hungarian, Austrian and German rule. Particularly the Balkans but also Poland were upstartish, uncultured, unstable, undemocratic, unpredictable, corrupted and in many ways violent states – like a piece of Latin

America in Europe. Talas mentions in his memoirs scornfully, that Belgrade's culture was miserable, and even amusements limited to hundred-kilo belly-dancers in shabby cafés.¹⁸ And a conservative banker, who had travelled across the Balkans, mentioned in a letter as he arrived in Athens, that for the first time since Budapest he felt he was again in Europe.¹⁹ Even democratic Czechoslovakia was not very much appreciated. That was not the image of Hungary; Hungary might be almost too reactionary and feudalist, but it had dignity and culture – and stability up to late 1930s.

The conservatives of Finland and Hungary differed greatly from each other. Tradition, mentality, political culture, neighbours etc. were different, and so were the options. The Finnish conservatives were Scandinavian and parliamentary, they had a "peasant" background and they were used to referring to meritocracy and culture as their weapons. The Hungarians were authoritarian, had a background of a nobility in an old, strong state and had less inhibitions than the Finns. But mutual sympathy was there and many common values were shared: experience of a battle against communism, assurance of the role as a defender of a Western Christian culture both in foreign and domestic policy and suspicion against Fascism and National Socialism.

Even though the Finnish conservatives survived the Second World War and the Hungarian conservatives did not, one thing was mutual: as Linkomies states in his memoirs, other countries decided the fate of both countries.²⁰

Notes

¹ J. Erős, *Hungary. Fascism in Europe*. Ed. S. J. Woolf (London, New York, 1968), 99, 100, 127, 128; Jörg K. Hoensch, *A History of Modern Hungary* (London, New York, 1988), 95, 108–117; Hugh Seton-Watson, *Europe between the Wars 1918–1941* (3rd. rev. ed., New York, 1967), 86, 87, 121, 185–192.

² Cited by Tauno Sutinen from the Finnish Embassy of Budapest to Finnish Foreign Ministry 7.1. 1938, UM [The Foreign Ministry Archives] 5 C 27.

³ Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, *Mellan Hitler och Mussolini* (Stockholm, 1942), 148.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, 185, 186, 191, 192.

⁵ Erös, Hungary, 129–134, 139, 140; Hoensch, *A History of Modern Hungary*, 126–131, 135; Nikolaus von Horthy, *Muistelmat* (Helsinki, 1955), 192–194.

⁶ Vesa Vares, *Konservatiivi ja murrosvuodet. Lauri Ingman ja hänen poliittinen toimintansa vuoteen 1922. Historiallisia tutkimuksia 174* (SHS, Helsinki, 1993), *passim*, especially 332–335, 617–624.

⁷ Vesa Vares, *Itsenäisyys ja poliittisen mentaliteetin muutos. Konservatiivisesta elitismistä massa- ja luokkapohjaiseen demokratiaan (1919–1933)*. Turun yliopiston poliittisen historian julkaisuja C: 35/1991, 74–81.

⁸ Juha Siltala, *Lapuan liike ja kyyditykset* (Keuruu, 1985), *passim*.

⁹ Especially illuminating in this respect are Ingman's letters to a pro-Lapua clergyman K. R. Kares, Ingman Archives, 12.7. 1930, 18.7. 1930, VA [National Archives of Finland] Y 2346.

¹⁰ Vesa Vares, *Kevätvirroista vastavirtaan. Uuden Suomen piirin poliittinen toiminta ja linja Mäntsälän kapinasta välirauhaan*. Turun yliopiston poliittisen historian julkaisuja F: 3/ 1986, 1–19.

¹¹ Tuomo Polvinen, J.K. Paasikivi. *Valtiomiehen elämäntyö 2, 1918–1939* (Juva, 1992), 165–198.

¹² Aarne Wuorimaa, *Muistojeni Unkari* (Helsinki, 1947), 27–32.

¹³ *Helsingin Sanomat* 16.3. 1907.

¹⁴ Onni Talas, *Muistelmia. Itsenäisyysenaattorina ja lähettiläänä kymmenessä maassa* (Porvoo, 1960), 173–249.

¹⁵ Edwin Linkomies, *Vaikea aika. Suomen pääministerinä sotavuosina 1943–44* (Keuruu, 1970), 122–134.

¹⁶ K. G. Idman to President K. J. Ståhlberg 13.7. 1922, Ståhlberg Archives, VA Y 3884–85; Diplomatic reports to Finnish Foreign Ministry 8.4. 1924, 7.10. 1932, 16.2. 1935, 13.3. 1935, 23.4. 1935, 24.7. 1936, 14.10. 1936, 24.10. 1936, 29.10. 1936, 20.11. 1937, 7.1. 1938, 12.2. 1939, UM 5 C 27.

¹⁷ Diplomatic reports to Finnish Foreign Ministry 14.10. 1936, 7.10. 1938, 5.11. 1938, 9.1. 1939, 20.3. 1939, 29.7. 1939, UM 5 C 27.

¹⁸ Talas, *Muistelmia*, 267, 268, 274, 275.

¹⁹ Mauri Honkajuuri to Paasikivi 2.4.1921, Paasikivi Archives, VA Y 4398.

²⁰ Linkomies, *Vaikea aika*, 123, 124.