

Cultural policy building a nation

The paper discusses the essays of the Hungarian writer, László Németh (1901–1975), about Finnish culture and history, which were written in the late 1930s and the early 1940s. The texts were inspired by the linguistic affinity between Finnish and Hungarian, the heroic resistance of the Finns during the Finnish-Russian war and Sillanpää's literary Nobel prize, not to mention the European popularity of the *Kalevala*. In his Finnish-related writings, Németh highlighted the Protestant relations, too. Both nations had to preserve their linguistic, historical, and religious autonomy against the overwhelming military oppression and the overpopulation of the Russian or Habsburg empires respectively. In the following years, the delicate psychology of Sillanpää's novel, *Silja*, made a mark on Németh's novels, *Égető Eszter* and *Irgalom*.

László Németh found justification for his nation-building historical approach. The Finnish impact on his national categories replaced the ideas of the "revolution of quality" or the "revolt of the masses." Németh's ambitions to save his nation might have been encouraged by the Finnish intellectual and moral rise (following WWI, when two-third of the territory of Hungary was annexed by the neighbouring countries).

László Németh's interest in Finnish literature had supposedly strengthened in him the idea of nation building on the basis of denomination and ethnicity.

Keywords: *masterwork, Protestantism, culture, revolution of quality*

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