

SUMMARY

A Balance of Power or a Balance of Ideologies?

By K. Killinen

England was for centuries the holder of the balance in Europe, enabling whichever side she joined to win the conflict. As the first world war approached a change in the power relations altered this system. It was now a loose bipolar system in which the surrounding powers and the central powers tried in vain to balance each other and ultimately twice made war on each other. An outside power, the United States of America, was on both occasions required to restore the balance. The result was a widening of the system from Europe-centered to a world balance of which USA and the Soviet Union are today the poles.

The balance between these superpowers is kept by military alliances but depends mainly on the »balance of terror» based on the threat of nuclear weapons. The possibility of escalation makes wars between states too dangerous, so that this balance can only be changed gradually by ideological infiltration and revolutionary wars. On this ideological frontier the western democracies have been in retreat, because their ideology is not as easily applicable as socialism to the developing countries. The hope of USA is therefore based on a change towards a balance in ideologies. It supposes that if the socialist camp could be contained long enough, its ideological disputes and conflicts of national interests would slowly change its politics. It assumes that the foreign politics of a fully industrialized mass consumption society must of necessity differ from its politics in the developing phase.

Small Political Parties and Groups in the Finnish Parliamentary Elections of 1907—66

by Urpo Kivikari

In each of the parliamentary elections held in Finland, at least one political party or group has participated whose share in the total vote has been less than 5 per cent. There have been tens of such groupings, but no more than eight small parties have succeeded in securing seats in Parliament. Three of the small parties with representatives in Parliament have been liberal, three have been small-farmer parties, one has been mainly Christian-social, and one has been socialist.

On an average, 1.0 per cent of the seats in Parliament have been occupied by small parties. This proportion is less than the average share of these parties in the total vote, 2.7 per cent, would have implied. The small groups have had to suffer from the Finnish system of proportional representation at the electoral district level. Only through a coalition with a larger party, or through the fact that its supporters have been concentrated in a certain geographical area, has a small party in some cases succeeded in obtaining a number of parliamentary seats proportional to its share in the total vote.

In the elections of 1907, 1917, 1933 and 1962 the added up share of small parties in the total vote was exceptionally large. It would appear that periods marked by general political crises have often given rise to new political groupings and provided impulses for the organization of such groups. It should be kept in mind, on the other hand, that the reasons for variation in the number of supporters of small political groups have been partly regional.

In the capital city, Helsinki, small parties have been more numerous than elsewhere in the country.

None of the parties that have received less than 5 per cent of the total vote in the first election in which it participated has later been able to exceed this limit. Six of the eight small parties that have received seats in Parliament have ceased their activities. As a rule, the small parties have gained ground at first, during the early years of their existence, but a declining trend has generally set in prior to their death.
