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A POPULIST MOVEMENT OF CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE

ABSTRACT

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It is therefore clear that Jászi's populism fits not only into the Kulcsár's framework, but also into the conceptual net created by Mudde, Müller and Pappas, because primarily he spoke about the corrupt elite and the pure people. But we can also say that Jászi and his movement's character is not the same as today's populist movement's character. Thus, we should create, and that's my main suggestion, a new concept of the Central-Eastern-European progressive populism: *they are that kind of movements, which want to modernize their societies, based on endogenous development and inside factors and somehow they want to extend the representation of the people*. It's not a whole complete concept, it requires further research especially about further populist movements in the Central-Eastern-European region.

KEYWORDS: Central-Eastern Europe, populism, Jászi

Introduction

The researches and the literature of the populism rise in the first decade of the new millennium. The characteristic of this period was this: there were a lot of new insights and there were a lot of different, many times even contradictory concepts of populism. We can say that it was the time of seeking ways in the science of populism. But nowadays this kind of disorder is over, however we can't say that there is an exact definition of populism, in my opinion it's not even necessary, but at least there are some famous authors

to whom the most are relying, to whom if someone would like to search populism, he or she can't miss.

Maybe the most popular one is Cas Mudde's concept. He says that populism is "a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people"¹. In a more abstract way, he means that populism is, in essence, a form of moral politics, as the distinction between 'the elite' and 'the people' is first and foremost moral, not situational, socio-cultural, or socio-economic.² In one of his other papers he also says that populism can take very different shapes, which are contingent on the ways in which the core concepts of populism appear to be related to other concepts, forming interpretative frames that might be more or less appealing to different societies.³ So he makes populism an uncertain idea.

An other famous concept of populism is Müller's, although he doesn't give a core definition of it, he describes its attributes. He says, populism is not anything like codified doctrine, but it is a set of distinct claims and has one might call an inner logic. When that logic is examined, one discovers that populism is not a useful corrective a democracy that somehow has come to be too "elite-driven". He also says that populism is a particular moralistic imagination of politics, a way of perceiving the political world that sets a morally pure and fully unified people against elites who are deemed corrupt or in some other way morally inferior⁴. So his starting point is similar than Mudde's. He argues that what populism usually suggests is that there is a singular common good, that the people can discern and will it, and that a politician or a party can unambiguously implement it as policy. The last attribute what he highlights is that populists assume that "the people" can speak with one voice and issue something like an imperative mandate that tells politicians exactly what they have to do in government.⁵

1 C. Mudde, C.R. Kaltwasser, 'Populism and (liberal) democracy' (in:) C. Mudde, C.R. Kaltwasser (ed.), *Populism in Europe and the Americas Threat or Corrective for Democracy?* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

2 *Ibidem*, p. 8–9.

3 C. Mudde, C.R. Kaltwasser, 'What populism is' (in:) C. Mudde, C.R. Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

4 J.W. Müller, 'What Populists Say' (in:) J.W. Müller, *What Is Populism?* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

5 *Ibidem*.

Last but not least we need to mention Takis Pappas's concept about populism. He says that populism is democratic illiberalism. Populism may be democratic but it is not liberal. So he understands populism as the polar opposite of political liberalism.⁶ We can say that he argues that populist trends are those what define themselves against liberal democracy and their main message is that the democracy must serve the masses' interests and not the elite's. He says that political liberalism is relatively easy to assess. Following Rawls, it is understood as a type of democratic politics promised upon the idea that in society coexist a pluralism of incompatible ideological doctrines that divide otherwise free and equal citizens by multiple, but often overlapping, class, ideological, religious, geographic or other cleavages.⁷ So populism is what against this.

I think these definitions are too minimalist and oversimplified, so it can be used randomly. We can ask that "isn't everyone a Populist, then?" or say that every politician we don't like is a populist. In my opinion the main problem with these authors is that they make two mistakes. One: they want to introduce the movements of the political left-wing and right-wing at the same time. And two: they want to introduce the movements of the economic centrum and the periphery, half-periphery at the same time. This time I want to deal with the second one hereafter. My persuasion is that the populist movements of the Central-Eastern-Europe's societies have entirely different focus points: beyond the western modernization's challenges and experiences, they need to deal with their own weirdly (under)developed institutions too. So, the task of the Polish and Hungarian scholars, who engage in legal theory and political theory is to create the conceptual framework of their own special populism.

I think the modernization theory of Kálmán Kulcsár can help us to do that. Kálmán Kulcsár was a key figure of the Hungarian post-war jurisprudence. He was a university professor and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. We can say that he was the founder of the law and society movement in Hungary. Mainly he taught at Budapest and Pécs, but he also taught at universities in Columbia, Berkley and India as well. He was an editor of the international scientific journal, the *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*. His main research fields were the sociology of law,

6 T.S. Pappas, 'Populist Democracies: Post-Authoritarian Greece and Post-Communist Hungary', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 49, No. 1, p. 2.

7 *Ibidem*, p. 3.

modernization, the role of the law in modernization and the modernization political aspects. He wrote more than ten books and textbooks and several smaller writings. His main publication was the *Modernization and Law*.

Kulcsár's modernization theory's core concept can be described in the relation of the centrum and the periphery. He argues that in the centurms, which are historically evolved, the development of the society is automatic and organic, and it can accept the changes of the society, can integral these changes in itself. So these societies can create adequate and necessary answers for the changes of the environment and for the challenges from its own contiguous, uninterrupted progress.⁸ Contrarily in the peripheric countries, like Poland and Hungary, the development, the progress is inorganic, suddenly and then stagnant. The changes start from the outside and usually these societies try to modernize themselves and try to put an end to their periphery status with an outside sample. The main problem with this, he says, that this outside sample can't be use, apply without any distortion, deformity.⁹ So these societies development, partly because of their own specific, partly because of the deformation of the outside sample and its further transformed progress, is still different from the centrum societies' process and attributes. Probably this is the source of the frustration of this kind of modernizations.

In answer to these mainstream modernization attempts, new alternative movements evolved again and again in the last century in the Central-Eastern-European societies. These alternatives wanted to unfold the inside sample of their societies modernization. So they used the historically thinking to create this inside sample of progression, not to use it against the modernization, as traditionalist usually do. Kulcsár called this phenomenon populist modernization¹⁰. This kind of populism has had a lot of presence so far but there is a core feature, which characterizes all of them. This character is what Kulcsár call the concept of endogenous development. It means that they would like to build the progress of their own society on inside factors. They argue that the society's own, historically evolved institutions and values should use in the process of progress, despite that these are bound to traditional relations. Other features, which characterize all of these movements are that they build on the peasantry or/and the urban poverty class,

8 K. Kulcsár: *A modernizáció és a jog* [Modernization and Law] (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1989).

9 *Ibidem*, p. 35.

10 *Ibidem*.

they are under intellectuals leverage or control and they deny the western model more or less radically.

One example of this kind of thinking in Hungary, and probably we can say that the first example in Hungary is Oszkár Jászi and his movement at the beginning of the 20th century. Jászi was a key figure of the Hungarian early 20th century social sciences and politics. He was a sociologist, a university professor and politician in one person. He described himself many times as social liberalist but we can describe him, after the name of his political party, as civilian radical. Anyhow it is sure that he was a radical left-wing thinker in that time, he fought for the structural changes of the Hungarian society. But if we are honest, we have to confess that this was the times when if you say that everybody has a right to vote, you are radical. So we can say that if Jászi lived today, his ideas would be a solid social democrat's ideas. Jászi wasn't just a political thinker but also a politician and not just a regular one, he was a minister in the government of the first republic of Hungary in 1918. He could be a minister only a for months, because his government fell and he needed to leave the country because of the takeover of the bolshevist Hungarian Soviet Republic, what Jászi called the new medieval era and what the Hungarian history books called the Red Terror. After the fell of the Red Terror, the White Terror took his place with the command of Horthy so the environment never get better for Jászi, he couldn't return to Hungary in his life, he dead outside the Hungarian borders in 1957.

The early 20th century was a really inspirational period in a lot of field in Hungary: in the arts, literature, music etc. I think it is true for the most central-eastern-european countries. And what was Ady, Babits and Sienkiewicz for the literature, that was the Association of Social Sciences and their journal the Twentieth Century for sociology, legal theory and political theory in Hungary. This Association had a really great work to popularize the contemporary scientific and cultural international thinking in that time. They argued against the conservative opinions and they fought for the radical progress of the feudalist, half-feudalist Hungarian society.

So with this article I would like to prove that there are some big problems with the concept of populism in the western scientific literature and it can be used hardly in semi-peripheric societies like Poland and Hungary. To do this I would like to show you a type of populist movements, a traditional central-eastern-european type through Jászi's group, through Jászi's writings. But why were they populist? Let's remember: in Kulcsár's theory a populist modernization movement has to have two things: they don't

accept any, neither western, neither eastern outside sample for progress, nor dictatorial one, moreover they argue against them and they want an endogenous development, build the progress of their own society on inside factors.

First of all I would like to show Jászi's thoughts against bolshevism, then against liberal capitalism merged with nationalism, because these were the two main outside sample in Jászi's time and Jászi had a lot of critics to both of them. In the end I show you the endogenous development what Jászi thought for Hungary.

1. Against bolshevism

Jászi attacked the ideology of bolshevism and the model of soviet authority on several levels. First of all as an ideology on the level of believes. He said that bolshevism is the absolutization of the Marxian doctrines. Jászi was a socialist so he didn't completely reject Marx's thoughts but he recognized that they need to be reconsidered in many places. He found it impossible to make a global order built only on them. He refused to use Marx's writings as a holy scripture, he thought that you can find only wrong philosophy of history and improper political aims this way, which can cause a lot of damage for the leadership of a country.

He could also criticize bolshevism as a way of exercising power after the socialist revolution in Russia and after the short-time-lived Hungarian communist revolution in 1919. His critics primarily related to the economic structure and the organization of society with dictatorship and bureaucratic power on the centre of them. Dictatorship was an important element of Jászi's writings, because he originated the moral crisis from it, which was the main problem with bolshevism for him. These articles were largely wrote in his emigration.

Jászi recognized the dualistic, contradictory nature of the Marxian doctrines, and that they took one step forward and one step back at the same time at several points, so Jászi saw it inadequate to be able to function as an absolutized state ideology, as he called it a state religion. The best example for this "one step forward one step back" motive is Marx's economic doctrine, which is the longest and the most detailed part of Jászi's critics.¹¹

¹¹ O. Jászi, 'A kommunizmus kilátástalansága és a szocializmus reformációja' [The hopelessness of communism and the reformation of socialism] (in:) J. Gyurgyák, Sz. Kövér (ed.),

Because, Jászi argued, Marx recognized correctly the inequalities and the misery of the industrial working class in his age but he gave a false answer, solution to them. First of all Marx thought that production forces could be best exerted if the state centralized the entire economic apparatus, and abolished the small factories, that are unviable and ineffective. In addition, the classic economy must be replaced by a “need-satisfaction economy”, which in fact means the elimination of the market, competition and actually individual objectives. Social production and social distribution, which is actually under the control of the state: this is the classical Marxist economics.

The main problem with this, according to Jászi, is that production can only be centralized if the needs, that need to be satisfied, are known. And these needs can be fully understood if the state determines which ones the community is willing to satisfy. Thus, these major needs must be predetermined in quantity and quality to their common production be possible. However to maintain this long-term, it is necessary to equalize and uniformize people’s desires and thoughts. To do this you need that kind of spiritual training, influencing and depressing bureaucracy which summon the most horrifying dystopias.¹²

For these regimes spiritual work, individual initiative and discovery are the biggest enemies anyway. Because if the wages of physical labor are governed by state, then intellectual work must be categorized as well. And this leads us to the classification of all kind of intellectual work into an official phalanstery. Furthermore as non-productive work, we can almost say that there is no place for intellectual work in the first place.¹³ This is why, as we will see, Jászi sympathized with the reform socialist economic models that build on cooperative fundamentals, which he calls liberal socialism.

The other most criticized part of Marx’s system by Jászi is its false philosophy of history. As almost everybody knows, Marx said that history is the history of class struggle and this class struggle is against the exploited and the exploiter classes. The dominant class is determined by the productive forces and the productive forces depend on the current technology. So with changes in technology and thus in productive forces, the power relations between classes also change, and this leads to revolutions. These

Jászi Oszkár, A kommunizmus kilátástalansága és a szocializmus reformációja [The hopelessness of communism and the reformation of socialism] (Budapest: Századvég, 1989).

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 16–17.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 20–21.

revolutions do not come to a standstill until the new class, which productive forces predestine to power, have no leading role in society and until the new ruler class transforms the legal system and the constitution according to their own goals. This is the scheme of the whole world history, which, according to the Marxist teachings, can only be broken if the proletariat comes into power. Because under the proletariat there is no exploited class, so when the proletariat frees itself, humanity moves into a new era, the age of a classless world. Jászi realized that this is built only on one experience of world history: the history of French revolution and the emergence of the bourgeois, liberal global order.¹⁴ The bigger problem is that this theory leads to the strengthening of revolutionary dialectics, the myth of the proletarian dictatorship, so to violence and moral disorder.

In contrary Jászi argued that this path of social development is not deterministic and we should deal with an other model, the evolutionary method. According to this, the antecedent of social change is relative overpopulation, which means that with the development of human mind, a growing mass of productive forces develops, and they are unable to find a proper place in the old economic and ideological world. Because of this, they remain at the bottom of the line, which increase their feel of unsatisfaction and frustration. Of course this unsatisfaction is not necessarily material. The frustration however brings the society revolutionary tension which has only two outgoing paths: one is a creative reform policy that allows new productive forces to live as they pleased, the other is the revolution that breaks the old world with violence. The former is the path of development of reason and freedom, which Jászi seeks to strive for.¹⁵

The dogmatic approach of these incomplete and in many places contradictory doctrines led the Hungarian and especially the Russian Bolsheviks to a state development which was predictable and inevitable. In the first years of the Russian revolution they acted according to the Communist Manifesto and the other classic Marxian records: they sought to a state production without market, competition and money.¹⁶ However they needed to make a compromise on a very important point already in the beginning:

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 32–33.

¹⁶ O. Jászi, 'Az orosz szfinx' [The Russian sphinx] (in:) J. Gyurgyák, Sz. Kövér (ed.), *Jászi Oszkár, A kommunizmus kilátástalansága és a szocializmus reformációja* [The hopelessness of communism and the reformation of socialism] (Budapest: Századvég, 1989), p. 110.

they had to tolerate that the hated and “reactionary” peasantry take the split feudal estates to their private ownership. Later, understanding the economic reality and understanding that the Marxian doctrines are not realistic in real life, Lenin and other bolshevist leaders were forced into even greater concessions, they almost were forced to betray the communist doctrines. In 1921, with the introduction of the new economic policy, NEP, they practically set up the system of state capitalism. The economic system continued to operate under strictly capitalist principles and work discipline, only with the control and participation of the state. They also hoped that foreign capitalist capital would flow to the country because they made huge discounts for them.¹⁷ However, they created a very unstable state and unstable social order with this. This meant that if the industry and commerce started to recover, they quickly hung up the development after a while because they feared the revival of capitalism. And they also could not have been completely destroyed it because that would have meant the overthrow of their budget and the restoration of famine.¹⁸ For the maintenance of this slippery system, they were forced to create a long-term bureaucratic totalitarian repression, which was also the betrayal of the Marxian thoughts because in Marx’s writings the dictatorship of the proletariat was only a temporary period.

In this way, the new Bolshevik State could not fit for Jászi’s sympathy because he refused every kind of dictatorship. In general, he believed that dictatorship was a denial of moral autonomy: nor any individual and nor any class of society could be empowered to impose their will on others. Furthermore he thought that the working class is not capable of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat as it is in Marx’s writings. Because as it happened in Russia, it did not mean abolishing class rule, but reversing it. He argued that to reach the socialist ideals, the strength of reason and the expansion of moral consciousness are more important than class struggle.¹⁹

Finally Jászi wrote a lot about the moral critique of bolshevism because he thought that the crisis of the socialism in his age is moral crisis.²⁰ This

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 112.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 115.

¹⁹ O. Jászi, ‘Proletárdiktatúra’ [The dictatorship of proletariat] (in:) J. Gyurgyák, Sz. Kövér (ed.), *Jászi Oszkár, A kommunizmus kilátástalansága és a szocializmus reformációja* [The hopelessness of communism and the reformation of socialism] (Budapest: Századvég, 1989).

²⁰ O. Jászi, ‘A kommunizmus kilátástalansága’... *op. cit.*

has also a antecedent in classical ideology, since Marx did not see anything else in the moral world as a bourgeois ideology that could be shaped by the power to reach its economic and social goals. And the bolshevik ideology took over the worst statements of Marxism.²¹ As mentioned, bolshevism raised Marxist class struggle as a categorical imperative, and this was also the main guiding principle of ethics, which argued that the obsolete moral ideology of the old world need to be completely overshadowed.²²

So it is not difficult to see how this demagogic propaganda created a detrimental moral atmosphere for the then proletariat: a class that hears nothing but being the sole depositor of progress, calls for the leadership of political power to create a new world order but everybody else is obscurantist and corrupt, it will naturally mislay all moral and legal rules.²³

This is why Jászi demanded ethical revisionism in socialism: all real morals are above nation and class for him. As it is impossible to live as our humanity stands until our Hungarian, German or Polish being, it is unimaginable to say that it stands until our proletarian, peasant or civic class.²⁴

2. Against nationalism

Jászi also criticized the national liberalism many times, which was the ruling ideology in the western world and especially in Hungary. Because according to Jászi, this ideology and the compromise between the civic class and the aristocracy abandoned and betrayed the classic nation idea as well as the mass of people.²⁵ Jászi argued that the idea of the nation originally meant to unite the entire population of a country into a common unity, a common culture beyond particularism. This was based on the sovereign right of the sovereign people and equality before the law, which was

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 14.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 47–48.

²⁴ O. Jászi, 'A bolsevizmus erkölcsi válságához' [About the moral crisis of Bolshevism] (in:) J. Gyurgyák, Sz. Kövér (ed.), *Jászi Oszkár, A kommunizmus kilátástalansága és a szocializmus reformációja* [The hopelessness of communism and the reformation of socialism] (Budapest: Századvég, 1989).

²⁵ O. Jászi, 'Szocializmus és hazafiság' [Socialism and Patriotism] (in:) Gy. Litván and J. Varga F. (ed.), *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája* [Writings of Oszkár Jászi] (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1982).

supposed to create the highest level of prosperity, culture and happiness for each citizen within the territory of a state.

This movement was the ideological product of the modern economic order, which replaced the medieval world, and which based on strong industry and commerce.²⁶ Its essence was to break the medieval order and destroy the power of the feudal lords in order to provide new national markets and free consumption areas. This required unified administration and unified legal order. Thus, these economic trends have developed the nationalist idea.

This was also the idea which in its early ages united the elements of the society who felt the autocratic weight of the old order unbearable, namely the civics and the proletariat. However, this association did not take long because according to Jászi this fight ended with the compromise between the civic class and the element of the old regime, the aristocracy. So the nation states came into existence with the power of the proletariat and the peasantry but in favor of the old nobility and the new bourgeoisie.²⁷ The liberalational, fraternal and equalizing aspirations have ceased and a new alliance of property and capital was created under the umbrella of the spiritual and moral culture created by the bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile, the meaning of patriotism has also changed: there is only untruthful propaganda about democracy and the will of people, they are replaced by the phrases of colonialism and imperialism. The goal is the greater wealth for the price of greater servitude. The main ideal is no longer the wealth of the whole nation or democracy, only to preserve the “historical families” who are the preserving elements of the nation, and of course to preserve those who want to become the part of this new aristocracy.²⁸ This is how the classic national culture became class culture and became the main instrument of maintaining the hegemony and the power of the ruling class, which maintains prejudices and keeps new aspirations away.²⁹

Because Jászi saw how much error the national liberalism had but at the same time he had to see how powerful it was between intellectuals and non-intellectuals in his age, he was concerned with the integration of the nation idea into socialism. He argued that there is no point where the two would be in conflict. As he wrote, their main task is to prove that their internationalism is

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 53–54.

the same internationalism as the internationalism of capitalist companies (cartels, sugar makers) with a big difference: theirs one serves the people, not the pockets of the millionaires. It is important to make clear that they do not take nation away, but give homeland to those poor people who haven't got before.³⁰

Jászi's approach and the relationship with the Hungarian political leadership can be very well characterized by the way he viewed the nationality issue. The nationality issue was perhaps the most important topic of the Hungarian early 20th century, so Jászi also had a lot to say about it. However, as a socialist, he didn't look at it as a nationalist approach like the most of the contemporary politicians, but he was convinced that the essence of the issue was a matter of class struggle. Because of historical and international examples, he argued that the awakening of the nationalities' languages, linguistic and cultural consciousness is nothing else than the appearance of the democratic principle.³¹ Because the liberation of the vilenage happened in the name of nationalist idea and equal legal rights. In the other hand however, the classes in power fear their wealth and cultural hegemony, they are unable to separate their own interest from the fate of the homeland, so they start the chauvinist propaganda, which says that the only protection for the homeland is to save the position of the ruling class (the majority) and to repress the nationalities (the minority).

This is how the different assimilation efforts of different countries have been created. Following Sarah E. Simmons, Jászi he distinguished two types of these aspirations: aristocratic and democratic.³² The aristocratic type (e.g. Russia) is characterized by the persecution of religious groups and the suppression of freedom of press and freedom of thought. In short, violence. These movements, connecting with the chauvinist ideology, glorify the past, admire blindly the domestic institutions and suitable to divert from the social problems of the people to fight against a fiction enemy.³³ Contrarily in the focus of the democratic type is universal suffrage and complete civil liberty. With a better word, perhaps we could name it as integration nowadays. Jászi's program was

30 Gy. Litván, 'Magyar gondolat – szabad gondolat' [Hungarian thought – Free thought] (in:) J. Gyurgyák (ed.), *Litván György, Magyar gondolat – szabad gondolat. Válogatott történelmi tanulmányok* [György Litván, Hungarian thought – Free thought. Selected historical articles] (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2008), p. 33–34.

31 O. Jászi, *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* [The born of the nation states and the issue of nationality] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1986).

32 *Ibidem*, p. 99.

33 *Ibidem*, p. 102.

close to this, it cannot be otherwise, because he completely rejects violent assimilation. In his opinion, once a nation has come to a national consciousness, every violent attempt to assimilate is useless, or even has an opposite effect. According to him, merging is an unconscious process (economic necessity), so history does not even know an example of a successful violent assimilation.³⁴

I do not want to go into details of the early 20th century Hungarian nationality issue in this article because it was really complex and had a lot of elements, what is important is that Jászi saw this issue as a class struggle between governors and governed.

3. Towards a new Hungary

So we can say that Jászi realized that his country needs modernization but he refused the eastern bolshevist model and the western liberalist-nationalist model of development too. Because of this he believed a development, a modernization which would have based on the Hungarian historical tradition and which primary goal would have been to help the people who are in deep poverty and to break the hegemony of the feudal elite. Today we would call him as a populist. In the following three subchapters, I present the main points of his ideas, mainly to his early ideas of the 1907 early radical program, his cooperative economic model based on Proudhon and his gandhist based ethical revisionism. I hope these will clear the radical civic movement's program as well.

3.1. The early program

Jászi summarized his and his movement's program and his relation to the actors of the Hungarian political spectrum best in his early writings, *Az új Magyarország felé* [Towards a new Hungary]. This article published in the movement's journal, the *Huszadik Század* [Twentieth Century], and according to Jászi's greatest researcher, György Litván, it was the first appearance of the radical democratic movement.³⁵ We can say that this program was

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 98.

³⁵ O. Jászi, 'Az új Magyarország felé' [Towards a New Hungary] (in:) Gy. Litván, J. Varga F. (ed.), *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája* [Writings of Oszkár Jászi] (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1982), note.

the cornerstone, because its main thoughts appeared later in the publications of Jászi's latter party, the Polgári Radikális Párt [Civic Radical Party] and in Jászi's latter writings.

In the beginning Jászi writes his opinion about the models of western state development and about historical tradition. About the former, he says that Hungary doesn't suppose to look that way for model of development because they have other problems and other tasks. About the latter, about tradition he says that the movements and aspirations that are unable to integrate themselves into the historical powers of their country's past is weak and powerless.³⁶ With this he connects his movement into the populist modernization traditions of Central-Eastern-Europe.

While recognizing that the creation of a civilian democracy similar to the West is the primary task for Hungary, he draws attention that it would be only a temporary status. But this temporary status is necessary because in his opinion the power and hegemony of the dominant agri-feudalist system cannot be overcome without this and without a short alliance with industrial capital. However this short alliance and this temporary state could last for a short time, because the goal is a proletariat democracy, a modern socialism, because for him the weaknesses of the Western capitalist system are already well-known from Western experiences.³⁷ This is why it is necessary to have a radical civic party alongside the labor party, to differentiate the supporters of radical progress. The radical civic party needs to fight for the civilian democracy for Hungary, it has to implement the reforms which overthrow the agrarian "reactionary", who are in power, while the revolutionary labor party must represent the interests of the working class and help civil radicalism to destroy the obstacles of the real proletariat democracy.³⁸

Jászi also mentions his proposals for economic transformation in general. The main points of these are the economic autonomy, which means that domestic production need satisfy domestic consumption; usury should be rolled back and capital must be forced into socially useful and productive investments; and last the fight against large estates, which means dividing them and creating the system of the small estates, which farm intensely, with the help of a producer, consumer and sales co-operative network.³⁹

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 93–94.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 101.

Another essential point in Jászi's program for the modernization is the creating of the widespread popular self-government. To boost the spiritual and cultural condition of the people, public education reform is needed, which must be based on the education of economic and technological knowledge and human culture, which can be the foundation of the productive and creative work and the ethics of peace. It is also necessary to socialize public health and to secure the freedom of speak, press, assembly and association, because the foundation for social progress is the free dissemination of ideas. The cover to execute the program would be the introduction of a progressive tax.⁴⁰

We can summarize the essence of the movement and the program with the famous words of Jászi:

If you had a ruinous house, if your walls were crumbling, what would you do? Would you take your nation flag out and paint the house the colors of your nation to keep it from falling down? No, you would strengthen the walls and create a new foundation. This is the same with the house of a nation: the outer ornament does not help when the basics are fluctuating. The basis of the national existence is the power, richness and cultivation of the people.⁴¹

3.2. Cooperative economy – Proudhon

As mentioned before, Jászi considered the economic problems of Bolshevism to overly dogmatize Marx's economic theses without realizing that it was contradicted with the human nature and thus necessarily wrong. So he thought that the solution to the economic model of future labor-democracy does not lie in the extraction of Marxian doctrines, but in re-thinking and reforming them. To do this he relied on the writings of Adam Smith, Henry George but mostly he relied on Proudhon's thoughts. Proudhon appeared in Jászi's writings a several times: sometimes he referenced to him as a better descriptor of the future society than Marx⁴², and even in his early work

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 101–102.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 100.

⁴² O. Jászi, 'Újabb adalék a bolsevizáló lélek természetrajzához' [New thoughts about the study of bolshevist spirit] (in: J. Gyurgyák, Sz. Kövér (ed.), *Jászi Oszkár, A kommunizmus kilátástalansága és a szocializmus reformációja* [The hopelessness of communism and the reformation of socialism] (Budapest: Századvég, 1989).

on the nationality issue, he argued that only intensive, cooperative foundations of small estates can be the engine of the economy, not the latifundiums or the isolated small and dwarf estates that characterized the nationality country in his age.⁴³ Thus, it is evident that cooperative economy was an immanent part of Jászi's thoughts and writings, whose foundations can be found in Proudhon's writings, so it is inevitable to understand Proudhon's ideas to understand the essence of Jászi's world.

Proudhon's initial thesis, like Marx's, is also the alienation that he perceived in economic and political terms. The economic alienation is, in fact, the alienation of work, which means that in the capitalist societies the worker completely loses his relationship with the product of his work and the wage of the worker for his work is pre-determined by the prevailing class, which, of course, is much smaller than the real value of his work.⁴⁴ After this, the bourgeoisie, same way as the leading classes did in former societies, describes this status as a natural, necessary, unchangeable and historically defined phenomenon. This is why Proudhon argues that the material-social crisis of his age is also an intellectual crisis. To fight against this, it is necessary to overthrow alienation, which requires a political philosophy that can demonstrate where this alienation is located, and able to restore the order of the society in the right direction.⁴⁵ For Proudhon this philosophy is anarchy, the self-government of the communities.

According to Proudhon, the structure of society should be based on the self-management of natural communities. This idea is based on the concept of work: the liberal economic concept concerns only the product, not the workman, the classic leftist philosophies, however, examine the working class as a single monolithic whole. Proudhon argues that the working class is a complex, constantly changing element of society. Thus, like in other natural communities, the workers don't have as a unity, but the individual worker has a right to self-governance at his workplace. Otherwise the natural communities in Proudhon's writing are the communities which are potentially in possession of collective consciousness and collective power. Because of consciousness they have political capacity and they are the basis of a free society.⁴⁶

43 O. Jászi, 'A nemzeti államok kialakulása'... *op. cit.*, p. 216.

44 A. Pritchard, *Justice, Order and Anarchy. The international political theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 103–104.

45 *Ibidem*, p. 105–106.

46 *Ibidem*, p. 135–155.

Jászi didn't define himself as an anarchist, but the proudhonist idea was basically in his mind when he wrote that the actors of the economy should be subject to social control.⁴⁷ Of course, for him this state control is not based on bolshevist state property, but as a mixed local self-government and cooperation of workers, entrepreneurs and specialists. Jászi, however, has often identified himself as a liberal socialist when he wrote about economic issues. Jászi tried to reform the classical liberal doctrines and the classical Marxist doctrines, because he was sure that this could be the path for the Hungarian modernization. This is why he wrote that the extreme laissez faire and manchesterism have never been the fundamental idea of classical liberalism, but to set a minimum that nobody can lower.⁴⁸ Thus Proudhon and the cooperative idea were very suitable for him, because he could find a unique idea that would fit organic into the traditional Hungarian development.

3.3. Ethical revisionism – Gandhi

Jászi thought a lot about ethics and moral renewal between the two world wars, because he saw the crises of Europe and the left primarily as a moral crisis.⁴⁹ He foresaw the danger in the state-building ideologies of the West and the East, which can cause distraction and danger to human life. And history later justified him. He drew attention to the fact that violence became a mass confession. This is why he was concerned about Gandhi's movement in India, which primarily propagated peace and love.

The two central concept of gandhism is Satya and Ahimsa, both have an origin in the Indian mythology.⁵⁰ Satya is the adherence to the divine truth. Like the Kantian categorical imperative, Satya is the absolute Truth and

47 O. Jászi, 'Haldoklik-e a liberalizmus?' [The liberalism is dying] (in:) J. Gyurgyák, Sz. Kövér (ed.), *Jászi Oszkár, A kommunizmus kilátástalansága és a szocializmus reformációja* [The hopelessness of communism and the reformation of socialism] (Budapest: Századvég, 1989).

48 *Ibidem*, p. 202–203.

49 O. Jászi, 'Erőszak vagy passzív rezisztencia. A bolsevizmus és a gandhizmus vitája' [Violence or passive resistance. The debate between Bolshevism and Gandhism] (in:) J. Gyurgyák, Sz. Kövér (ed.), *Jászi Oszkár, A kommunizmus kilátástalansága és a szocializmus reformációja* [The hopelessness of communism and the reformation of socialism] (Budapest: Századvég, 1989).

50 R.N. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

the primary source of all ethics, politics and religion according to Gandhi. So Gandhi argued that there is an absolute Truth in every human beings which is the highest moral value and the greatest human goal and we must live our daily lives according to it, because it is worthless and useless without it. Satya is also a guide for the political and social communities, organizations, not just for the individuals. Because the individuals can only live in a system which they trust in, and the basis of the trust is Truth.⁵¹

The origin of Ahimsa is also in the Indian culture and mythology and its meaning is nonviolence with one word. The narrower sense of it is the abstention from killing, the broader sense is the abstention from any act with which we can physically hurt anyone. Gandhi spoke about two kind of Ahimsa: a negative Ahimsa, which means the abstention of every hurtful thought and act, and a positive one which means the tendency to love and generous activity. So Ahimsa means not only the gentle treatment with the enemy, but the ultimate denial of the enemy itself. Gandhi also argued that the state should also work on this principle, because decisions brought by a peaceful dialogue are more advantageous in long term than forced ones.⁵²

Jászi, even though he considered Gandhi's teachings as an interesting initiative, he also drew attention to its dangers.⁵³ In his opinion full passive resistance and total tolerance of violence is not realistic and incorrect, and the morality of this whole has a bad impact on the human and community spirit. Nevertheless, it can be a good starting point for an ethical renewal.

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⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 150–176.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 178–179.

⁵³ O. Jászi, 'Erőszak vagy passzív rezisztencia'... *op. cit.*

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