

Competing Nationalist Discourses: The Reception of Oszkár Jászi's National Politics during the Twentieth Century

By
Zoltán Kovács

Submitted to

Central European University
Department of History

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Balázs Trencsényi
Second Reader: Professor András Gerő

Budapest, Hungary
2009

Copyright in the text of this thesis rests with the Author. Copies by any process, either in full or part, may be made only in accordance with the instructions given by the Author and lodged in the Central European University Library. Details may be obtained from the librarian. This page must form a part of any such copies made. Further copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the written permission of the Author.

Abstract

Hungarian intellectual life in the twentieth century – similarly to other contexts of the region – was strongly affected by the discourse of nationalism. Competing discursive efforts in order to dominate the field of politics, culture and historiography have different offers for identification. Oszkár Jászi, who was the leading figure of the so called *civic radicals*, who appeared in Hungarian intellectual life at the beginning of the twentieth century establishing their own scientific and political journal *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth century), offered a radically new comprehension of nation that was designed to replace the traditional national identities with a more liberal and social one. The answers to this offer differed extremely during the century from absolute rejection to identification with the “prophet” of new patriotism. This thesis intends to describe and understand the reactions by applying a discursive approach to nationalism.

Table of Content

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The Role of Personality and Framing the Idea of Nation: Discourses of Reception - From Political Discourse to Historiography	10
Chapter 2: The Reception of the First Contributions to National Issue: Harsh Criticism and the Appearance of Cultic Language: Until 1919.....	20
2.1 Jászi's Appearance in Public Debates and Competing Definitions of Nation	20
2.2 The First Events of Constructing Nationhood.....	22
2.3 Constructing a New Interpretation of Nation: The Formation of Nation-states... and the National Public Opinion	25
2.4 The Prophet of the New Nation: Ady and Jászi.....	37
Chapter 3: Strategies of Elimination and Demonizing: The Inter-War Period (1919-1945)	40
3.1 Jászi's Changing Ideas: Out of National Framework	40
3.2 Critics: the Hungarian State-Idea.....	48
3.3 Organic-Democratic Criticism	53
3.4 Conclusions	58
Chapter 4: Canonization: The Moral Basis of an Alternative Nationalism	61
4.1 Jászi and Post-War Hungary: Changing Scenes of Reception.....	61
4.2 Discovering a Historical Predecessor: György Litván.....	63
4.3 The Rationalist Prophet of Danubian Patriotism: Látóhatár and Hanák.....	69
4.4 The New Generation: Predecessor under Doubts: Századvég.....	75
Chapter 5: Outlook and Conclusions: The Reconsideration of Old Debates	81
Bibliography	88

Introduction

Oszkár Jászi (1875-1957) was one of the most contested personalities of Hungarian intellectual history. He was one of the key figures of the intellectual culture at the beginning of the 20th century period in Hungary, which was among the most turbulent and flourishing periods of Hungarian cultural and intellectual history. The cultural context of the era was characterized by growing influences by the European scientific life, and the artistic modernism of Europe. Jászi - being among the founders of the periodical *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century), which, supported by the *Társadalomtudományi Társaság* (Social Science Society) intended to apply the results of western sociology to the discussion of Hungarian political issues – became a central figure of this context. From the beginning, the circle of these organs and especially its leading figure, Jászi became a heatedly contested phenomenon of political and scientific discourses because of his sharp criticism on the Hungarian establishment and some of its institutions. The debates of the beginning were followed by many others later in the century.

Jászi's thoughts, life achievement and character seem to be in several aspects provoking: in some topics of Hungarian political and historical thinking he transgressed some discursive boundaries. Jászi contributed to a number of issues in Hungarian and world politics that involved him into heatedly contested issues about communism, federalism, liberalism, socialism, the role that intellectuals have to play in society, the meanings of their involvements into politics, the nature and legitimacy of utopian thinking and so forth. One of the most contested and broadly effecting issue is *nationalism* that has played a central role in his reception in Hungary. Jászi at the beginning of the twentieth century faced the problem both as a theoretician and as a politician. His approach was criticized often by contemporaries and later critics as well, although it provided important conceptual and ethical basic for later approaches that were accepted by the mainstream of historiography in the socialist period and

after 1990 as well. The concept that the nationality policies of the Hungarian government were guilty in the dissolution of the Hungarian state that was first raised as a political issue by Jászi has become widely accepted. His attitude towards the nationalities and later the successor states of the monarchy was interiorized by a number of intellectuals after World War II.

Jászi's intellectual achievements on the issues of *nation* and *nationalism* were not merely interpreted and evaluated in the context of scientific discourse, but their interpretations - and in some cases the silence on it - were also influenced by the evaluation of his acts as a protagonist of the field of politics. His criticism and political conduct has provoked the sensitivity of nationalist discourses, which were in hegemonic position before the First World War and after the 1919 communist republic. His thoughts on *nation* and *nationalism* that were conceptualized by him in several books and publications, most detailed in *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* (Formation of Nation States and the Nationality Question)(1912.) and *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (1929.),¹ interpreted the phenomenon in the framework of modernization, what was provokingly new in the Hungarian context. Although it was legitimized in the international nationalism studies literature later, it did not have any significant influence on Hungarian thinking until the 1970s. This fact was in connection to his criticism on the Marxist theory, and even more on the practices of the Bolshevik regime, which made him unacceptable for the official intellectual thinking in the late 40s, the 50s and in some extent in the 60s.

The most contested period of his political activity was the revolution in 1918 and the following years, when Jászi was in immigration in Vienna. As a minister without portfolio in the Károlyi-government, he was responsible for the negotiations with the leaders of the

¹ Oszkár Jászi, *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* (Formation of Nation States and the Nationality Question)(Budapest: Grill, 1912); Oszkár Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929)

national minorities, and - in general - for the arrangement of the nationality issues in Hungary. In this case, he had the opportunity to take his ideas in action, but because of some reasons he failed, and after the revolution he was personally made responsible for the dissolution of the Hungarian state by some critics in Hungary. In addition, in the 1920s, he was sharply criticized by the Hungarian mainstream because of his politics of searching for correspondences with the successor-states of the monarchy neighboring Hungary.

The framework of this study is the focus on the issues on *nation* and *nationalism* that have some connections with other topics that will be involved into the investigation in some cases, where their analysis seems to be unavoidable for the understanding of the positions of the contributors to the national issue. The choice of this focus is supported by several legitimate arguments. First, this issue is a central problem of Hungarian political and historical thinking - similarly to other Central European contexts - that has both its own important debates and also a number of common or rarely reflected prejudices. Jászi plays an ambivalent role in this discourse concerning that he endeavored to make many of the consensual interpretations of Hungarian national history and politics visible and questionable relying on the positivist sociology of Herbert Spencer and the critical approaches to mainstream Hungarian historiography by Béla Grünwald and some socialist writers, especially Ervin Szabó. On the other hand, Jászi's sensibility towards the national question made it possible to frame his works as basic conceptual contribution to a new kind of national consciousness after World War II by a number of intellectuals, who relying on Jászi considered it possible to build "humanist", "rational", and "impartial" nationalism as a progressive and constructive paradigm of political thinking. From this ambivalence emerges the question, to what extent was Jászi's thinking and politics interpreted within and without the national framework. What constructions of nation motivated the interpretations?

Secondly, the issue of nation and national history can be a relevant choice because of its multiple connections to other topics of politics. In this regard, the ideas of *nation* and *nation-state* – being the paradigmatic frameworks of politics in the modern era – have been often gathering the main polemics in the field of politics, especially in Central European contexts, where politics is more bound to national terms than in other regions of Europe. The questions of utopias, the role of intellectuals, politics and ethics, political action that have important contributions to Jászi's reception have also aspects that connect to the problems of nation and national historiography.

Thirdly, today's federalist and trans-national perspectives and the new interest in Empires in historiography provide support for this focus, because Jászi's contributions to these topics is significant as it is proved by its reception by international historiography dealing with the Habsburg empire and nationalism studies that refers to his English language book on the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy as an important authority. The topic of relations between nationalism and trans-nationalism is central in Jászi's works and plays an important role in his Hungarian reception as well. Analyzing the discourses of this reception can provide a relevant contribution to the topic.

From the fact - which was mentioned earlier - that great number of the interpretations and evaluations on Jászi's thoughts were influenced by often rather emotional considerations on his political activity and personal character, comes some methodological considerations. It makes impossible to concentrate in this research merely on the aspects of history of ideas. It seems to be more adequate analyzing all the different fields of the discourse about Jászi, with consideration to the relations and effects of them on each other. The possible different fields could be described as the following: historiography of Hungarian history; political thinking; ethical or biographical discourse. Historiography in this regard means the texts that in their

narrations on Hungarian history have some comments on the Jászi's in the course of events. Political thinking contains all the discourses that concern the debates on the interpretation on the concept of *nation* that were mostly bound to the reception of Jászi's above mentioned books on the topic. But also the debates on socialism and the evaluations of his criticism on the pre-war regime belong here. The ethical and biographical discourse was not articulated in separate works characteristically until Litván's biography in 2003,² but it was concerned in most of the other discourses, adding to them in some cases heated emotional connotations. All these fields have their own discursive characteristics, involving special rhetorical and genre issues, what has to be taken into consideration during the analysis.

My research has a twofold purpose. Firstly, it is to fill in a gap in the Jászi-literature, because although there can be found some recent works that interpret and evaluate Jászi's work and life, and we also have a new biography on him, however there is not any that would concern his reception-history in detail and comparison. There can be found many sporadic details of the reception in this biography, but it does not give a systematic comparative overview on the shifts and contexts of it. In this research, the analysis should answer the question, what are the main elements of the different interpretations that evaluate Jászi's life and works in relation to the national politics offered by him. In addition, the analysis on the interpretations and evaluations on Jászi will also play the role of a case-study on the political and intellectual discourses of the 20th and 21st century Hungary. I suppose that through the analysis of the texts that interpret and evaluate him and his works, some aspects of the Hungarian intellectual life in the 20th and 21st century could be described.

The analysis of the discourses on Jászi will also contribute to the deeper understanding of the broader Hungarian historical, political and intellectual discourses during

² György Litván, *Jászi Oszkár* (Budapest: Osiris, 2003).

the period between the beginning of the 20th century and our contemporary period. What makes this topic sufficient to become a case study on the Hungarian discourses, is the provoking character of Jászi's life achievements. It makes a number of implications of these discourses explicit, or makes some of the problems of their implications visible. In the core of these discourses are the issues of national history and national thinking as a comprehensive discursive framework of politics. In this aspect, the analysis would concern the symbolic elements of the national discourses that prove to be sensible enough to call emotional reactions, if they are transgressed by some critical or political activity. From these breaking points the contents and rethoric of the national discourses could be described.

In relation to this question, it is necessary to examine, whether the narratives that concern Jászi in some roles could be gathered in groups according to their master narratives. I suppose that the different interpretations are framed by different political and historical discourses on the Hungarian history and politics. Some of the main discourses of the interwar period are described and used in the interpretations on some authors by Balázs Trencsényi.³ The clues of these discourses can be found in the discourses on Jászi as well. In the analysis of the reception these descriptions of political discourses can be used as guidelines, and other discourses can be described in addition, especially concerning the periods after the Second World War, which are described much less detailed in this aspect.

³ Balázs Trencsényi, "A békecsinálás művészete, a nemzetállamiság és a kelet-európai föderációs elképzelések" (The art of peace-making, nation-state and the Eastern-European federation plans), in. *A politika nyelvei: Eszmetörténeti tanulmányok* (Languages of politics: Works in the history of ideas) (Budapest: Argumentum, 2007), pp. 278 passim.

By the analysis of this discourses I will argue for the statement that Jászi's provoking contributions to the national issue of Hungarian political culture was interpreted according to the moral basis that was attributed to the idea of nation by the different discourses, and it could be used for the construction of a new (liberal) type of national discourse in the second part of the century that was based on the interpretation of the personality of Oszkár Jászi as a moral ideal. The content of the liberal or moderate definition of national discourse was used also for the legitimization of the efforts to transcend the opposition between the two branches of intellectual thinking in Hungary, the so called *populist-urban* debate.

The structure of the study will be organized according to the crucial turning points of Hungarian history that provide significant discontinuities in the intellectual history. The chapters will be organized by the description of the discourses of one period, relying on the assumption that the contributions on the discourse on Jászi participate in a relatively compact communicative situation: they reflect on each other either explicitly or implicitly, or at least they are bound indirectly by similar historical, political cultural or ideological references. Before going into the details of the narration of Jászi's reception, the first chapter will provide the theoretical framework of the analysis. The discursive approach of nationalism will serve as the theoretical background of the examination, also relying on the methodology of John Pocock and Quentin Skinner. The cultic usages of personality in symbolic politics that is used in the competition of nationalist discourses for the dominant position will also be taken into account.

The focal objects of the analysis in the second chapter will be the contemporary critics and followers of Jászi, before 1919, the end of the communist regime, when the new frameworks of the Hungarian state provided new situation for the intellectual life and also for

Jászi, who went into exile. In this period, the relations to the politics of the Hungarian state as a “nation-state” are in the focus. All the authors interpreted the policies towards the nationalities and the Hungarian nation in frames of nation-state, but they conceptualized it in different ways. The nationality problem and the relation to the Monarchy were involved in the debates in relation to the integrity of the state, although there were no differences in regarding the integrity of the old territories of the Hungarian kingdom as consensual framework until 1918-19. The differences can be found in the interpretations of the nation’s realities, the proper conduct of the co-existence of the ethnic groups.

In the third chapter the contributions of the inter-war period and the wartime until 1945 will be analyzed. The dissolution of the old state was in focus in this period determining the discourse around Jászi in two ways. First, all of Jászi’s interpretations were crucially influenced by the interpretations of the 1918-19 events and his role in it. Secondly, the discourse was driven by the different frameworks for reinterpreting the meaning of Hungarian nation. In this regard, the discourse concerning the meaning of historical reality was central: the lack of sensibility towards reality of the nation, the state and national history was often interpreted as a sin; it was morally interpreted, because of the moral value attributed to the nation, the old state and history. The interpretation of the meaning of reality depended on the discourse that was used for describing the national framework. The topic of Jászi’s activity in the emigration was also central: it was also involved in the moral interpretation of national history.

The fourth chapter examines the discourses between 1945 and 1989. After World War II, the concept of nation became problematic; the whole period was characterized by a re-interpretation of the national history. Tendencies to transcend the national framework, especially Marxism became central that were marginal before. However, the concept of

nation was present in different forms among most of the authors. This chapter is a focused examination of one branch of the reception, which is of central importance for my research. The authors (historians and public writers) will be analyzed in the greater part, who elaborated the interpretation on Jászi that served as the basis of a historical narrative that outlined the basis of a possible national interpretation of history, which differed from both Marxist, and the traditional, inter-war historiography. This discourse addresses the issues of federalism, national justice and impartiality concerning Jászi's works and moral personality.

In the fifth chapter an outlook will be offered concerning the most interesting opposition in Jászi's reception in the post-communist period that can be described as the canonization of the image that had been drawn in the 70s and 80s most prominently by Litván. On the other hand its criticism will be introduced by János Gyurgyák. Revision of the old Hungarian elite and its traditional historiography and historical image has had some influence this kind of reception and Jászi has been again criticized from "realistic" and "pragmatic" point of view. The chapter will also offer some conclusions of the research: the role of the discourse of "historical realism" and national ethics will be reconsidered on behalf of the understanding of the relations between the different discourses across the different periods..

Chapter 1: The Role of Personality and Framing the Idea of Nation: Discourses of Reception - From Political Discourse to Historiography

There has existed a great number of definitions to formulate the meaning of the concept, *nation*. This concept has proved to be powerful in political discourses of the modern era, although its meaning can not be defined properly. The emotional power of the word has provided mobilizing energy for a great variety of political movements in history, which interpreted the notion in different ways. It has become also the object of theoretical studies that are called nationalism studies aiming to provide scientific explanations of the worldwide success of nationalism in the course of the last two centuries.⁴ Nation, as the name of a community, a unit of politics, culture, history, social science, identity, loyalty, and so forth, is a powerful concept that is present in all part of social life in the modern era. This perception of the organization of world politics and history can be described as a *discourse*. In this sense, as Umut Özkirimli formulates it, nationalism is

“a form of discourse, a way of seeing and interpreting the world. The *discourse of nationalism* asserts that humanity is divided into distinct nations, each with its own separate past, present and destiny. Human beings can only fulfill themselves if they belong to a national community, the membership of which remains superior to all other forms of belonging – familial, gender, class, religious, regional and so on.”⁵

It is important to remark that in this approach the discourse of *nationalism* is taken as the object of the analysis, which constructs the different definitions of the idea of *nation*. *Nationalism* – understood according to this definition, as a complex cultural and political discourse - offers itself as the central comprehensive paradigm of modern historical sensibility. Most of the political and cultural discourses of modern history can be described as sub-discourses of nationalism, or ones that define themselves in their relations to it, opposing or transcending its framework. There are a great number of explanatory theories that

⁴ For the introduction of the development of this researches see Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005).

⁵ Umut Özkirimli, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A critical engagement* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), p. 2.

endeavor to describe the complex phenomena of nationalism in terms of historic, philosophical, economic, political, cultural and psychological methodologies. All these approaches can provide some explanatory contribution to the topic, however for the benefit of my research the discursive approach is the most relevant, because it offers framework for the analysis of textual products and their contexts that are to be examined because of their specific contributions to the field that can be distinguished as the field of discourse of nationalism.

The discursive approach focuses on linguistic representations, their usages in special contexts, analyzes their connections to each other. In this framework it is not the concept of nation and its specific definition that is the aim of the research, but the discursive processes of defining and using it in the different discourses. The most elaborated outline of this approach can be found by Rogers Brubaker.⁶ The “constructivist” approach that emerged after the 1960s, interprets social phenomena as the results of interactions. In this approach the construction of *national identity* is bound to the individual and to actual situations. This discursive and situative approach intends to question the realistic explanations of *groupness*, hence the nation, and concentrate to the actual phenomena of nationhood articulated in actual political and cultural discourses serving actual interests.⁷

Operation of nationalist discourse can be described as the application of four strategies.⁸ The first one is that nationalist discourse divides the world for “us” and “them”: it provides an identity as the member of the group that is opposed to outsiders. Secondly, nationalist discourse seeks hegemony: like other discourses, it is about power and domination: there is a continuous struggle for hegemony between different formulations of

⁶ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed : Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

⁸ Özkirimli, p. 33.

nation. Additionally, nationalist discourse tends to nationalize other discourses: it intends to marginalize other alternatives of community-formation. Thirdly, nationalism tends to naturalize itself: it positions itself as representative of eternal values that is not bound to certain social contexts. Nationalism introduce nation as a natural fact that exists out of history. Finally, nationalism operates through institutions.

Different discourses of nationalism serve as the discursive framework of this research. For the more exact outline of the actual analysis of the examined texts, I find necessary to involve the methodology developed by Quentin Skinner and John Pocock. The treatment of discursive acts that they, especially Skinner apply appears to be useful for my research.⁹ In this approach the actual speech acts of individuals are analyzed in the context of political and cultural discourses, in order to understand the *performative* value of a text. Skinner, applying speech act theory analyses the very acts of changing the discursive framework by actual usages of concepts.

“The act of political persuasion most commonly involves the rhetorically innovative extension or restriction of conventional meanings or repertoires as the author seeks to capture or deny the commendatory force of the term or to extend or restrict the particular application of it under discussion.”¹⁰

The interplay between consensual meanings and usages of concepts that is named “language” by Pocock in a Saussurian manner on the one hand, and actual performances articulated in texts is the territory of this kind of analysis. It means that context plays important role both in the diachronic and synchronic perspective. Diachronically the shifts in the discourse or language can be analyzed: the focus of this aspect is the unity of the

⁹ I follow Hampsher-Monk’s introduction in admitting relative coherence to the approaches of the two author. Hampsher-Monk, Iain. “Speech Acts, Languages or Conceptual History?” in *History of concepts: comparative perspectives*. ed. Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree (Amsterdam University Press, 1998). p. 46.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

discourse during the spin of time.¹¹ On the other hand, the synchronic approach concentrates on the actual usage of consensual meanings and their creative deviations from the norm that can create new meanings by the usage. This construction of new meanings can be considered as political acts, because in the cases, when they are influential enough, they can change the framework of the perception of social phenomena, which will be followed by the change of the practice.¹²

Nationalist discourses should be seen every time as special answers for the challenges of actual situations on the political and cultural field, which is framed by actual contexts of culture, politics. Different texts aim to fulfill special roles in constructing the social structures by the usage of constructive potential of language. Although each utterance that contributes to an actual nationalist discourse should be analyzed individually in its dialogue with the special context – as it will be provided by this research – general markers of different types of discourses can be described for the benefit of the theoretical contextualization of the analysis. Different typologies of nationalism have appeared since the first endeavors for conceptualizing the phenomenon. The most powerful and widely used distinction is established between western and eastern nationalism that was introduced by the classic of nationalism studies, Hans Kohn.¹³ His Eurocentric understanding of nationalism follows the tradition of dividing Europe into two asymmetric parts, which positions the western part as normative that should be followed by the East.¹⁴ This normative division was also labeled by the opposition between “civic” and “ethnic” nationalism binding the former to the West, the latter to the East. This typology proves to be problematic, because of its

¹¹ J. G. A. Pocock, „The concept of Language and the *métier d'historien: Some considerations on practice*,” in *The Languages of political theory in early-modern Europe* ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 36-38 passim.

¹² Hampster-Monk, p. 44.

¹³ Özkirimli, p. 22 passim.

¹⁴ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) p. 7.

normative connotations and assumptions, however it is important because the political and cultural content that is involved in it, and which serves as constitutive element of nationalist discourses that aims to synchronize nationalism with liberal politics.

The discursive attempts in order to formulate liberal, humanist, progressive nationalism that can be opposed to the violent tendencies of “regressive nationalism” work always with oppositions that helps them defining the identity of what “good nationalism” can be.¹⁵ This discursive tendency confronts with others in the competition for ruling nationalist discourse. In these competitions the identity-constructing mechanisms of the discourse play central role. New approaches of identity¹⁶ emphasize that it should be comprehended rather as a process of becoming than as being.¹⁷ As such, identity is a construct of cultural and political discourses that is always bound to special contexts of linguistic performances. This approach to the process of constructing identity involves the understanding of it as a matter of social power and actual political interest. Hence nationalist discourse can be understood as struggle on the one hand for securing the hegemony of national identity over other identities, on the other hand for defining the meaning of national identity and securing dominance to this definition over others.

In this process the role of the “other” in constructing the identity¹⁸ is important on three levels, of which two fit to the two sides of the struggle. On the first level *othering* is used in contrast to other national communities to define the meaning of the self. On the second level non-national identity constructions mean the others: cosmopolitanism, regionalism, imperialism, and other cultural or social discourses can be defined as significant

¹⁵ Özkirimli, p. 27.

¹⁶ Stuart Hall, “Ethnicity: Identity and Difference” in *Becoming National* ed. G. Eley and R. G. Suny (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 339-349.; Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond Identity,” in Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 28-63.

¹⁷ Özkirimli, p. 55.

¹⁸ Hall, pp. 344-45.

others for national identity. On the third level: different definitions of nations can be perceived as others. The third level of *othering* often use the other two in discursive competitions for the position of dominant definition. In the most cases political and cultural struggles are taking place in order to appropriate the national identity by defining it through exclusions and *othering* strategies. This strategy is made possible by the nature of identity constructing, which can be described as a two-sided process: partly self-construction, partly definition by others.¹⁹

National identity has proved to be so powerful in political and cultural discourses of the modern era that very few political agents have been able to avoid to be got involved in the struggle for appropriating it and none of them has been able to avoid to position itself in relation to it, what the result is of its discursive strategies that were mentioned above. In the struggle of cultural and political identification, the interplay of positive statements of self-determination and statements of defining by others is taking place, which makes identity-construction “the play of history and difference”.²⁰ Hence the territory of the struggle for identity is between the texts or performances as it will be outlined later in details.

National identities are often constructed around central characters, who serve as agents of a mythologized past playing roles that are fitting to the scheme of national mythology. Girardet analyzed these mythological narrative structures in details concerning French national history. According to his analysis in narrations of national history in the nineteenth century four central scheme were used: conspiracy, myth of Golden Age, myth of Messiah, myth of unity.²¹ In our research all the four can be introduced in the Hungarian material concerning Jászai, what shows the more general relevance of this typology. In this

¹⁹ Özkirimli, p. 55.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001).

mythological history certain agents play typical roles. For conspiracy naturally are necessary the conspirators; Golden Age are represented by some characters, who fit to the grandeur of it; the role of Messiah is fulfilled by historical personalities; unity is maintained by virtuous people and frightened by traitors. Agents of history are mostly interpreted in the frameworks of these topoi.

Personalities are often the objects of such narrations. Cult or moral charge often refers to the same personality in one time depending on the standpoint of the narration. This play of narrative frameworks is analyzed by Winock²² in the case of Dreyfus in France and by a collective project in the case of Kossuth²³ in Hungary. In these cases the object of the analysis is the interpretative usage of a personality, who is narrated in a manner, in which his name is presented as one that can represent general meanings and values that transcend the contingency of the existence of a certain person. In the analysis of the Dreyfus-affair the formation of value-communities is introduced that is framed by the different approaches to moral questions, which become matters of political and cultural discourse in France.²⁴ The moral questions can be raised because the affair concerns the assumed and real actions of a person; hence it is originally articulated in a personal context that involves moral considerations. This first context is appropriated by the political and cultural discourse in order to construct meanings that can be used in the discursive competition that is in essential relation with the conceptualization of the dominant idea of nation. These strategies of political discourse will be analyzed in the case of Jászi in this research.

²² Michel Winock, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism and Fascism in France*, transl. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1998)

²³ Iván Zoltán Dénes (ed.), *A bűnbaktól a realista lényeglátóig: A magyar politikai és tudományos diskurzusok Kossuth-képei 1849-2002* (From the scapegoat to realist : Kossuth images of the Hungarian political and scientific discourses 1849-2002) (Budapest: Argumentum, 2004)

²⁴ Winock, p. 117. *passim*.

The Hungarian work on Kossuth shows some difference in its character. In this case the historical and political discourses are analyzed that concern a person, who is of central importance in the national history. In this case, the unavoidability of the person secures the coherence of the work: it implies that every important historical and political discourse necessarily articulates its interpretation or evaluation of him. In these interpretations that are more or less explicit narrations that position Kossuth by attributing to him a certain role, the name gain additional meanings: it becomes a representative of some social and political meanings, which are important for the actual discourse with an attitude of either identification or refute. The political and historical discourses that can not be sharply distinguished according to Zoltán Dénes Iván²⁵ are analyzed in their socio-political and genre contexts, however they are collected around their approaches to Kossuth. In this case the name of the person is important because of the cultic and cultural meanings that it represents that can be called “symbolic politics”²⁶, however the moral considerations of historical acts appear in the discourses as well. Moral aspects of history and politics can only be articulated concerning acts of individuals.

For applying these theoretical offers to my research, it is necessary to outline, how it can manage to use the theoretical background that concerns nationalism, and how it can be bound to the special context of Jászi’s reception. As it was outlined in the introduction, Jászi’s reception will be analyzed in the context of discourses of nationalism in this research. According to the above presented plurality of discursive manners of nationalism, the concept is understood in the broadest possible sense. This approach provides a wide conceptual field for the play of actual usages of terms like *nation*, *nationality*, *race*, *state*, *people*, *territory*,

²⁵ Iván Zoltán Dénes, “Kossuth-képek és kontextusaik 1849-2002” (Kossuth-images and their contexts 1849-2002), in, Dénes, p. 160.

²⁶ Ibid., An example of the symbolic importance of an individual: András Gerő, *Imagined History: Chapters from Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century Hungarian Symbolic Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.), p. 37 passim.

integrity and so forth. If nationalism, is understood as a discourse that is in hegemonic position in the modern era, then different variations of this discourse can be described that has been fighting for the hegemonic position in articulating national discourse: this approach that was also outlined by Brubaker fits well to the methodology applied by Skinner. Actual constructions of nation that are articulated in texts aim to influence and change the meaning of this powerful concept that is in the centre of modern political discourse.

This competition for the domination of nationalist discourse in Hungary began before the appearance of Jászi's texts. It showed the patterns of inclusion and exclusion in a number of forms during the nineteenth century. Jászi's contribution fit to the series of discursive struggles, which were also present in the period of his and his circles critical contribution. Naturally, the articulation of their politics and especially Jászi's contribution to the nationality question was perceived by a heterogeneous discursive field of public opinion, which was divided by the great issues of national independence, nationality question and democratization.²⁷ The question is, how Jászi's texts changed this field, how they contributed to the shifts of meanings in the discourse.

This research aims to understand Jászi's reception in terms of discursive shifts in nationalism. It does not mean that it is based on the assumption that Jászi's contribution completely changed the conceptual field of the discourse. This work does not intend to overestimate Jászi's role in Hungarian nationalist discourse, although it aims to understand the meaning of his performances and their usages by others in various kinds of performances. Reception in this approach can mean various things; it provides a wide field of textual connections that are brought together by the name of Jászi. For the benefit of differentiating this field some useful categorizations of the texts appears to be necessary to be introduced.

²⁷ János Gyurgyák, *Ezzé lett magyar hazátok: A magyar nemzeteszmé és nacionalizmus története* (This is, what your Hungarian homeland has become: The history of the Hungarian idea of nation and nationalism) (Budapest: Osiris, 2007), pp. 15-80 passim.

The nature of the texts is determined firstly by difference in the presence of the main character in a dialogic situation or being out of context. The former situation is given in the pre-1919 period, when Jászi was part of the Hungarian public discourse, which made possible the reciprocity of evaluations. The situation changed radically after 1919, when he emigrated. This fact affected the nature of the performances concerning Jászi, because it slowly pushed the discourse one-sided, into a discourse about someone, who is not part of the present as an active actor.²⁸ Although there can be observed a number of different approaches to Jászi, for this theoretical outline the abstract possibilities of the two extremities are important. These extremities are: speaking about someone, who is not present, or speaking to someone, who is present in the situation. This abstract opposition provides an important categorization for the analysis of performances concerning Jászi.

²⁸ The grades of this process will be described later in details. Naturally, there are great differences in this regard between the 1920s, when Jászi was considered as an enemy of the interests of the nation, who actively struggles against the government from abroad, and the 1990s, when he was not alive and his political significance declined a lot.

Chapter 2: The Reception of the First Contributions to National Issue: Harsh Criticism and the Appearance of Cultic Language: Until 1919

2.1 Jászi's Appearance in Public Debates and Competing Definitions of Nation

This chapter is designed to outline and analyze the direct, contemporary reception of Jászi's appearance in the public sphere with special focus on the national question. The time-framework of the chapter is the period before Jászi's emigration to Vienna in May 1919, when both the frameworks of Hungarian history, politics and intellectual life, and Jászi's position changed dramatically. The state that had before provided this framework changed also in its territorial extension and in the grade of political independence, while Jászi was excluded from this new state, and his communication with Hungarian public sphere became restricted. The period under analysis started with Jászi's powerful appearance in public life as one of the chief-figures of the newly established journal in social sciences, *Huszadik Század* in 1900. The almost twenty years of this period was labeled by harsh debates in social and political issues that was mostly consciously initiated by the circle of the journal, which was also institutionalized in the *Társadalomtudományi Társaság* in 1901.

In the first years both the journal and the society included a relatively wide circle of scientists and public intellectuals: liberals, who were not sharply oppositional, were also among the authors and the board of editors. The first fraction happened in 1906, mostly as a result of the different attitudes toward the parliamentary crisis. In 1905 the governor party, which had been in power since 1867, the Compromise, lost the elections, but the King refused to appoint the winning coalition of oppositional parties, which was led by the Independist Party that positioned itself in opposition to the Compromise with a program that was unacceptable to the King. This decision hurt the constitution of the Hungarian state, therefore a strong nationalist and constitution defending campaign was started in the counties,

which were the centers of resistance. On the other hand, Francis Joseph appointed a government, which had no support in the parliament and was constituted of state officials. This government endeavored to gain support by the appropriation of some elements of the social democrats and the radicals, among others, the extension of the suffrage. In this situation Jászi and his circle supported the new government, as a result they became the target of nationalist criticism and a number of authors and editors left *Huszádik Század*.

After this break, the confronting policy of the radicals became more articulated. The debates around the criticism of R.W. Seton-Watson on the policy against the nationalities came as the next event in the thematization of national issues, which was in parallel elaborated in a number of articles by Jászi that provoked continuous debates. The elaboration of the issue was the most perfectly outlined in his 1912 book, *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* (The formation of nation-states and the nationality question). This work is the essence of the endeavor of Jászi to formulate a concept of nation that can be used in the political competition in seeking for dominance in the discourse of nationalism. The argumentation of the book remains inside the frameworks of Hungary as a nation-state by keeping the territory of the Hungarian state, although it seeks for co-operative salvations of the claims of nationalities by applying some elements of a kind of multiculturalism and by envisioning a more inclusive national framework.

Although until 1919 Jászi remained on the standpoint of keeping the old framework of the state,²⁹ during the First World War he started to be influenced by different concepts of federalism. For a short period, he supported Friedrich Naumann's plan for a Central-European federation under the leadership of Germany. Later he outlined a plan for a Danubian federation mostly from the territories of the Monarchy, but with the involvement

²⁹ András Baka, *Eötvös Józseftől Jászi Oszkárig: A magyar nemzetiségi politikai gondolkodás változásai* (From József Eötvös to Oszkár Jászi: the changing of Hungarian thinking in nationality politics) (Budapest, 1990), p. 171.

of the neighboring states. In these plans, most elaborately in the work that was published in October 1918, *A Monarchia jövője és a Dunai Egyesült Államok* (The future of the Monarchy and the Danubian United States), Jászi imagined the old state of Hungary as unit in the federation without territorial changes.³⁰ The issues of federalism became more central in the period after the world war, therefore its reception will be analyzed more detailed in the next chapter.

In this chapter the focus will be on the reception of the 1912 book, because it is the less elaborated issue in the Jászi- literature, and it provides a basis for the analysis of the different standpoints in the national issue later on. However in the wider public discourse the reception of the book did not play central role: in public evaluations of Jászi, his publicist activity and political declarations.

2.2 The First Events of Constructing Nationhood

The 1906 events were in details examined by György Litván.³¹ It meant a hard conflict in the choice of the object of loyalty. Jászi and his circle chose to prefer the project of democratization instead of being solid to the elite of the *independist* opposition and the kind of nationalism, which was represented by it. As a result, they became the target of harsh criticism as the supporter of “foreign interests”, “Habsburg imperialism”. In this time Jászi was not particularly interested in the national question, he did not perceived the weight of the question following the general leftist attitude that considered nation and nationality as an irrelevant phenomenon that is maintained for the support of the oppression of lower classes.³² His attitude was influenced by the idea that democratization, which can be achieved through the application of universal suffrage, will solve most of the problems of the

³⁰ Oszkár Jászi, *A monarchia jövője és a Dunai Egyesült Államok* (The future of the Monarchy and the Danubian United States)(Budapest, 1918), p.52.

³¹ György Litván, „*Magyar gondolat – szabad gondolat*” (Hungarian thought – free thought) (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1978), pp. 44-86. György Litván, *Jászi Oszkár* (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), pp. 47-64.

³² György Kalmár I., *Szociáldemokrácia, nemzeti és nemzetiségi kérdés Magyarországon (1900-1914)* (Socialdemocracy, national and nationality question in Hungary) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976), p. 31.

country. The criticism, which was supported by the political influence of the independist elite, which could rely on the social, economical and cultural power of a great part of the nobility, was based on the sharp distinction between the factors of “inner politics” and that of “foreign interests” that is characteristic for the self-perception of nation-states. On the other hand criticism could also rely on the legal framework of the Hungarian constitution that had long and strong traditions in Hungarian politics. The autonomy of Hungarian political institutions was attacked by imperial core in this interpretation. On the other hand, the other group could rely on the tradition of enlightened absolutism, which was introduced by them as the representative of higher civilization and humanity among the oppressing land-owner “tyrannies”. This choice was supported later by the elaboration of Jászi’s approach toward the national question and the program of “New Hungary” established the basis of the policy that was followed by him during the period and, which was also the basis of a restricted nationalism.

The other issue, which was perceived by the critics as the representation of foreign interests, was the support of the activity of R. W. Seton-Watson.³³ The Scottish scientist after a visit in the country started to criticize the policy of the Hungarian government towards the nationalities in 1908 in his book, *Racial Problems in Hungary*. He claimed that political, cultural and social oppression of the non-Magyar ethnic population in Hungary is general. Jászi published supporting reviews in *Huszadik Század*³⁴ and took the connection with him. The circles, who stood close to the government charged Seton-Watson with being the paid agent of *Slavs* and federalist circles in Vienna.³⁵ This standpoint dominated Hungarian public

³³ On the relation between Jászi and Seton-Watson see: Géza Jeszenszky, “Jászi Oszkár és R. W. Seton-Watson levelezése az első világháború előtti években” (The correspondence of Oszkár Jászi and R. W. Seton-Watson in the years before the First World War), *Századok*, 1977: pp. 749-774.

³⁴ Oszkár Jászi, „Scotus Viator Magyarországról” (Scotus Viator about Hungary), *Huszadik Század*, 1909, Nr. 7-8: pp. 60-72; Oszkár Jászi, „Magyarország, nemzetiségeink és a külföld” (Hungary, our nationalities and the foreign countries), in *Huszadik Század*, 1910: pp. 217-218.

³⁵ Jeszenszky, p. 753.

opinion; therefore Jászi's attitude was harshly criticized as the support of "anti-Hungarian" politics. Despite his general acceptance of Seton-Watson's criticism on Hungary, Jászi raised some critical issues on his approach. Most characteristically, he regarded as a weak point of Seton-Watson's analysis that he does not distinguish between the Hungarian elite and the "people", which is innocent in the evident "sins" of national oppression; hence it is oppressed itself as well.³⁶ This remark represents one of the central strategies of him in the period, which endeavored to separate the interests of the Hungarian nation as a whole from the interests and policy of the Hungarian elite as a unit. The acceptance and application of the Marxist concept of class struggle" meant the basis of this policy, which helped him to support his attitude that refused his loyalty toward the noble elite.

This strategy was criticized and refused characteristically by Ferenc Herczeg³⁷ as an illegitimate dividing policy in the journal *Magyar Figyelő* (Hungarian Observer), which was under the influence of István Tisza, the prime minister and was edited by Herczeg. According to him, echoing a widely accepted attitude, Jászi's demand for distinction inside Hungarian nation serves the strategy of dividing the society in order to weaken it: Jászi and his friends use every opportunity to attack the Hungarian nation. This assertion of Herczeg is a typical approach to Jászi, which has appeared later in several forms again. In this argumentation that kind of idea and ethics of nation-state and nation is applied, which assumes that the state and the nation has one interest that can be known by the political elite, which can be criticized, however the nation must be represented outside as a unit against other states. In the actual situation Seton-Watson's criticism was especially important for the

³⁶ Oszkár Jászi, 1910. pp. 217-218.

³⁷ Ferenc Herczeg, "Scotus Viator és a budapesti radikálisok" (Scotus Viator and the Budapest radicals), *Magyar Figyelő*, 1911, pp. 523-527. Similar articles: *Magyar Hírlap*, 1909. 12. January; *Budapesti Hírlap*, 1909. 25. May;

government, because it needed the support of the United Kingdom in the legal struggle with the Habsburg court, and the criticism questioned the liberal image of Hungary there.³⁸

2.3 Constructing a New Interpretation of Nation: The Formation of Nation-states... and the National Public Opinion

In a number of articles published in journals *Husztadik Század*, *Világ* (World/Light), *Szabadgondolat* (Free thought) Jászi started to outline a political program that was called “Toward New Hungary”,³⁹ which was based on the criticism of the established social order. Jászi refused the politics of the ruling elite asserting that it is oppressive and exploitive towards industrial workers and peasants. He also refused the culture of the Magyar noble elite that was considered by him to be provincial, anachronistic and exclusively nationalist. This kind of criticism originated in a great measure from the socialist framework of interpretation of the Hungarian social situation, nevertheless it sought for new directions in the issues of national culture. Instead of denying the importance of the question, Jászi emphasized the importance of integrating certain elements of nationalism into socialist politics.⁴⁰

Jászi outlined a nationalist politics that he positioned as the reconstruction of the original national project, which was *originally* bourgeois, hence, liberalist:

„National politics originally meant unifying the whole population of the state in common culture, common purposes, common ideas on the ruins of particularity.
National politics meant establishing the greatest possible level of welfare, civilization and happiness inside the borders of the state on the basis of equality in law and the free activity of each citizen of society.
National politics meant the sovereignty of the people in governing its destiny and in achieving its common interests.”⁴¹

³⁸ Géza Jeszenszky, p. 753.

³⁹ It was published in a separate book: Oszkár Jászi, *Új Magyarország felé* (Towards new Hungary) (Budapest, 1907)

⁴⁰ Oszkár Jászi, „Szocializmus és hazafiság” (Socialism and patriotism), in *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája* (Oszkár Jászi’s publicistic works) ed. György Litván, János Varga F. (Budapest: Magvető, 1981), pp. 49-61.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 52. My translation. „Nemzeti irány eredetileg annyit jelentett, mint minden partikularizmus romjain egységbe, közös műveltségbe, közös törekvésekbe, közös ideálokba egyesíteni egy állam egész népességét. Nemzeti irány annyit jelentett, mint törvény előtti egyenlőség alapján, a társadalom minden egyes polgárának szabad erő kifejtése alapján létrehozni egy állam területén belül a jólét, a kultúra, a boldogság lehető legnagyobb fokát.

This interpretation of nationalism is introduced in confrontation with the *fake nationalism* of the ruling elite, which is a “class ideology” that is used for the “intensification of exploitation, colonialism and imperialism”.⁴² The reconstruction of the “original meaning” assumes the unproblematic connection between liberal and national values, which are represented the most intransigently by a certain kind of socialism that is in this case means radical democratic politics: universal suffrage and the securing of welfare and education for every citizen. It is also necessary to remark that the concept of nation in this argumentation is inclusive as possible: it accepts the old liberal nationalist concept of “state-nation”, which means – resembling the French republican concept of nation - that the borders of the Hungarian nation is equivalent with the population of the Hungarian state: there is one nation in Hungary, although different ethnic groups that speak in different languages live here.

This concept of nation was in details elaborated in the monumental work, *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* (The formation of nation-states and the nationality question) in 1912. Jászi’s book used a sociological framework that in its intentions aims to contribute to the political debates about the policy of the Hungarian state toward the non-Magyar population living on its territory. It was internationally one of the first works that intended to outline a scientific, sociological explanation on the phenomenon of nationalism from a declared objective position.⁴³ As such, the text defines itself in terms of expectations of two different discourses. First, Jászi intends to contribute to the sociological understanding of the social phenomenon of nation. Jászi being largely under the

Nemzeti irány annyit jelentett, mint az egész szuverén nép önrendelkezési joga sorsa intézésére, közös érdekei fejlesztésére.”

⁴² Ibid., p. 53.

⁴³ Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005), pp. 45-47 passim. The first comprehensive work that provided a scientific theory on nationalism was Otto Bauer’s *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* in 1907 written in Marxist approach, which was reviewed by Jászi: Oszkár Jászi, “Néhány szempont a nemzetiségi kérdéshez (Otto Bauer könyvéről)” (Some aspects of the nationality question), in *Husadik Század*, 1907: pp. 889-905. Weber and Durkheim also dealt with the problem from sociological point of view, however they did not published a comprehensive work on the topic: “However, at this stage, even within the social sciences, there was still no *systematic* investigation into the phenomenon of nationalism” (Lawrence, p. 47.) Jászi’s book, although it was planned, was not translated to German or English.

influence of Spencer's sociology understood sociological knowledge mostly in the terms of natural science. Fitting to this intention, he proclaims that his book endeavors to describe the "laws" of the process of nation building. On the other hand, relying on the exact results of his scientific research, he intends to outline a political standpoint and suggestions to the nationality policy that is considered by him to be the "point of Archimedes" in the more general process of democratization of Hungary, which is the central aim of the political agenda of his circle. The political message of the book that is supported by the theory on the development of nation-states and the interpretation of the Hungarian history is formulated in the following way, that is called by Jászi "minimal program": "First, good school, good civil service, good jurisdiction on the language of the people. Secondly, the recognition of the rights of all nationalities for the free development of their language and culture."⁴⁴

This political program that accepted the situation of ethnic diversity on the territory of the Hungarian state as natural that can not be changed in a foreseeable time suggested a plan for gaining the loyalty of the non-Magyar population for the Hungarian state. For the support of this program he elaborated an interpretation on nationalism, which applied sociological, economical, historical and political discourse in order to provide a totality of explanation that will legitimize the political claims. As such Jászi's book meant a multilevel challenge for the historical and legal basis of the ruling nationalist ideology. This interpretation shows an ambiguous attitude toward its object. On the one hand, Jászi speaks about *nation* and *nationalism* as a forceful agency in history, which can overwrite the effects of material forces in some cases. In many cases he acknowledges the positive, "progressive" nature of *nationalism*, and introduces the *nation* as a necessary stage in the progress of integration. This attitude contrasts the interpretation of the Marxist historical theory, especially that of Ervin Szabó, who explains nationalism as an ideology of the ruling class that is used for

⁴⁴ Oszkár Jászi, *A nemzeti államok...*, p. 497.

controlling the oppressed population. Jászi endeavors to give nation and nationalism a meaning that is independent from the ideology of the ruling elite: he interprets nationalism as a democratic force, which unites the society against the power of *feudalism*. The claiming of modernity separates the postulated positive contents of nation from the history that is narrated by the official Hungarian historiography. In the conclusion of the book, Jászi offers a vision on the future, as the fulfillment of the progress of society in an ideal stage, when the integration of society naturally causes the assimilation of all people in one culture, which means the end of the existence of nations.

Nation and nationality are concepts that are bound to modernity and industrial society in this interpretation, which similarly to modernist approaches to nationalism that can be labeled the most characteristically by the name of Ernest Gellner, proclaims that talking about nations before the end of the eighteenth century is anachronism.⁴⁵ The concept of nation is bound to the appearance of modern state, which can provide the integrity of a wide territory in economic terms, and by the formation of public sphere, the infrastructural tools of modernity can develop the “unity of consciousness”, which appears in all registers of social life. Nation in this interpretation is an egalitarian form of social life, which is bound to linguistic unity. Without the mental and economic integration of the whole population, it is not plausible to speak about nation. In addition, without the appearance of ethnic and linguistic consciousness, nation can not exist. Although there are some elements of medieval social life, which show the tendency of forming national frameworks, they can not construct a system. These pre-national tendencies are the integrating efforts of the king on the one hand, but also the resistance to the power of the Habsburg kings on the side of the estates, which use the language of xenophobia.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 312.

The concept of feudalism is the corner stone of Jászi's interpretation on Hungarian history and the concept of nation. It is the *other* that helps to define, what the meaning of positive progress and ideal society is, which is conceived as modernity and more often as *industrialism*. In order to fulfill this function, the concept of feudalism that is used in the text must be loose enough to contain all the meanings that are important in the construction of this negative image. Jászi refers to the debates on the usage of the term in historiography, and he refuses the restriction of the usage to the cases, when it refers to the reciprocal relation between lord and vassal maintained by the oath of fealty and services given for land.⁴⁶ The feudal past is introduced as strange that is divided from modernity by a radical discontinuity on the one hand; however *feudalism* also means a negative tendency in the present, which labels a collection of destructive forces that are the obstacles of integration, although they will be eliminated according to the laws of progress. This picture of feudal anarchy that is introduced as principal until the nineteenth century aims to deconstruct the image of the heroic Hungarian history, which depicted the protagonists of politics as people, who sought the interest of the nation with all their acts. Instead of using history as a collection of examples for national virtue, Jászi constructs a history that is radically strange for the demands of the present, which is defined as the period of nation-states and industrialism.

The reinterpretation by rejection of institutionalized narratives of Hungarian history was in the core of the argumentation. In that part of his book, when he offers a historical narrative on the development of Hungarian nation, a number of gestures of rejection and opposition can be found constructing a gap between the official and his own interpretation in its rhetoric. In relation to the Hungarian history, Ignác Acsády and Béla Grünwald are the only authorities, who are accepted by Jászi. The former is respected because of his social sensuality and the applying of statistical examinations; the latter is followed in the harsh

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 254.

criticism of the ruling elite, because of its class-selfishness. In the demand for deconstructing the “national myths” of the ruling elite, Jászi connects to Ervin Szabó’s attitude, who offered an interpretation on the 1848-49 revolution in terms of class-struggle.⁴⁷ However, Jászi keeps distance also from the pure Marxist theory as well. His book is evaluated by György Litván, as a “new comprehension of the Hungarian history that differed both from the noble-nationalist and the Marxist-internationalist historiography’s interpretation.”⁴⁸ In the frameworks of a comprehensive interpretation of Hungary, this was the first experiment in asserting the historical understanding of the circle that labeled itself as “progressivist”.⁴⁹ Despite the differences between the historical approaches of the members of this circle, the work was perceived both by the critiques of the “nationalist camp” and the “progressivists” as the manifestation of the circles comprehension on the national history.⁵⁰ Fitting to this perception, the direct, 1912-14 reception of the book can be divided into two opposite categories that are “apologias of the comradeship or hostile rudeness”⁵¹ Litván mentions Pál Szende, Róbert Braun and Mihály Vajda in the first category, whilst Mihály Réz, Miklós Nagy and Aladár Krüger on the other. Litván claims that the latter apply only “political charges”. This judgment on the mentioned critiques must be sophisticated later, however, before the introduction of the reception an outline of the historical interpretation of the book has to be given.

⁴⁷ Ervin Szabó, “Társadalmi és párharcok a 48-49-es magyar forradalomban” (Social and party struggles in the ’48-49 Hungarian revolution), in *Szabó Ervin történeti írása* (Ervin Szabó’s historical works) ed. György Litván (Budapest: Gondolat, 1979), pp. 239-577.

⁴⁸ György Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*. (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), p. 82.

⁴⁹ That was emphasized by Pál Szende in his review. Pál Szende, *Husadik Század*, 1912: p.785.: “A magyar történeti fejezet első kísérlet arra, hogy főképpen a történelmi materializmus segélyével egybefüggő képét adja a magyar állam ezeréves történetének.” (The chapter on Hungarian history is the first endeavor for giving a comprehensive picture on the thousand-year history of the Hungarian state mostly by the application of historical materialism.)

⁵⁰ See the reviews of Pál Szende, Endre Ady and Mihály Vajda on the one hand; that of Miklós Nagy and Mihály Réz, on the other side. Pál Szende, *Husadik Század*, 1912: pp. 774-787.; Endre Ady, „Jászi Oszkár könyve” (Oszkár Jászi’s book), in *Ady Endre összes prózai művei: Újságcikkek, tanulmányok, Vol. X (Collected prose works of Endre Ady: Articles)* (Budapest: Akadémia, 1973), pp. 191-194. ; Mihály Vajda, *Szociálpolitikai Szemle*, 1913: pp. 4-6.; Miklós Nagy, „A nemzeti államok kialakulása” (The formation of nation-states), in *Történeti Szemle*, 3(1914): pp. 1-45.; Mihály Réz, “A nemzetiségi kérdéstről” (On national question), *Magyar Figyelő*, 1912: pp. 89-93.

⁵¹ Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, p. 84.

Jászi's work provides the outline of Hungarian history in the fourth part with the title *A magyar nemzeti egység kialakulása* (The formation of the Hungarian national unity) after the definition of the concepts *nation*, *nationality*, *race* and an outline of the national development in Europe since the antique age and an analysis of the nature of the process. First of all, this organization of the book provides a comparative perspective for the understanding of Hungarian history that was rare in the historiography of the period. The historical process that was described in the case of Hungary was introduced as the part of a universal historical process, which has "natural laws" that are stronger than the will of the protagonists participating in the political issues. The historical analysis of the processes of world history was used as an empirical source for the formulation of scientific natural laws in formation of nation. Appreciating the comprehensive perspective of the work, even the critiques acknowledged that no-one in Hungary has dealt with the problem of national development in such an extent, and even in the international literature only a few works can be found in this volume.⁵² On the other hand, in this framework, the history of Hungary received in many cases only the role of resembling the patterns of world-history.

World history in its present situation in Jászi's interpretation is a progress that emerges from the disintegration of feudalism and approaches the perfect integration as its thelos. Integration is maintained by the spread and intensification of division of labor and exchange of goods, thoughts and people, which is called industrialism in Jászi's terminology in a comprehensive way. This process tends to eliminate the existence of particular powers of feudalism. Feudalism means in Jászi's interpretation particularism maintained by natural economy and the negation of ethnic principle. Fitting to this picture, the existence of nation is bound to the modern period starting with the French revolution. As a consequence, the

⁵² Miklós Nagy, p. 2. Pál Szende compares the work to Bauer's book, arguing that these are the only works, which analyze the formation of nation-states in the context of the changes of economic development, producing structures and the ways of exchange of goods: Pál Szende, p. 785.

Hungarian middle age is depicted as a chaotic period characteristic for the never-ending struggles of the oligarchs against each other and against the king, who is the only power that intends to maintain a wider integration. According to the interpretation the lower social classes did not participate in the political struggles, except in some extraordinary periods, when religious enthusiasm emerged. Ethnic considerations did not play any role in politics in this period, only the articulation of primitive xenophobia can be found that mostly served the interest of local nobility in the distribution of courtly positions.

The real significance and meaning of that kind of interpretation of national can be understood with a short outline of the dominant narrating strategies of the mainstream historiography in the period and the reaction that was given by its representative to the challenge. Similarly to other European historiographies in the nineteenth century, Hungarian historiography was established to fulfill the task of constructing powerful narrations on the past of the nation in order to legitimize the politics of the nation-state. For answering to the expectations a number of historical narrations were written concerning the history of the Hungarian nation. These works often started the narration of the nation's history with the popular story of the ancient times focusing on the assumed relation between the Huns and the Magyars and the coming into the Carpathian Basin. These narrations constructed the history of the nation applying a concept that followed the state-centric approach of German historiography, relying on the "Hungarian state-idea" as the principal framework of the narrative.⁵³ On the other hand, around the millennium of the incoming in 1896 another narrative gained stronger emphasis that narrated the history of the land as a result of a conquer that made the Magyars the only subject of the history of Hungary.⁵⁴ This perspective gave an ethnic framework to the understanding of national history that was opposed by the ethnic minorities of the state, who proclaimed their support for the framework that defined

⁵³ Gábor Gyáni, *Posztmodern kánon* (Postmodern Canon) (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 2003), p. 67.

⁵⁴ Gábor Gyáni, pp. 87-88 passim.

the Hungarian nation as “Hungarus” that meant the citizens of Hungary without discrimination toward ethnic origin.

In spite of these tendencies the canonized versions of Hungarian historiography bound the existence of nation to the framework of the state. This historiography narrated mostly the political history of Hungary mixing it with a legal approach. Historians differed in their interpretations mostly in the questions of independence and the relations to the Habsburg dynasty. This question was also colored by religious differences: protestant historians mostly interpreted the history from the perspective of the anti-Habsburg movements, while Catholics tended to prefer the Habsburg standpoints, although these differences within the borders of the guild remained moderate. No-one of these historians queried the constitutional independence of the Hungarian state inside the frameworks of the empire.⁵⁵

The appearance of aspects of social and economic history that would abandon the perspective of the ruling elite remained on a restrained level in Hungarian historiography before the world war.⁵⁶ Although there could be found some initiatives for the application of a wider social perspective, most of all for the historical analysis of the urban population and its market activity, these remained peripheral or unfinished in most of the cases.⁵⁷ At the beginning of the twentieth century, under the influence of western sociological thinking and Marxism, the application of social approach with the support of statistical methods appeared in historiography, albeit mostly in the introduction of peripheral circles, which often came from outsiders, who were not part of the institutionalized elite of historians. The most accepted representative of social history was Ignác Acsády, who interpreted social and

⁵⁵ Péter Gunst, *A magyar történetírás története* (The history of Hungarian historiography)(Debrecen: Csokonai, 2000), p. 207.

⁵⁶ Péter Gunst, p. 168.

⁵⁷ Gunst mentions Pál Jászay's work on the social and cultural life of the generation lived after the battle of Mohács. (p. 181) The initiative of Miklós Nagy to write the social history of the nobility was not finished. (p. 195.)

economic history in terms of class-struggle, although not in a strict Marxist way. Beside and following his initiatives the circle of “civic radicals” and Marxist social-democrats offered interpretations in topics of Hungarian history, which were positioned in a critical distance to mainstream historiography that was considered by them to be the representatives of the oppressive ruling classes and their ideology. The works of Pál Szende, Péter Ágoston and Ervin Szabó⁵⁸ intended to question the national narrative of mainstream historiography that was perceived by them as a unite, which supports the oppressive politics in terms of class by a provincial perspective of history that is closed towards the tools of “real scientific” approaches of western sociology and Marxism asserting an autochthon view of history, which closes the door for any kind of criticism from outside. This criticism was refused in terms of two discursive apparatus: as dilettantism of outsiders in opposition to an institutionalized scientific discipline, and as “materialism” that neglects the “ideal facts” of human society reducing every social and historical phenomenon to the appearance and examination of pure interest. Both of these critical tools appeared in the reception of Jászi’s book.

The work was criticized in the most elaborated way by the only review that was written by a historian after its publication. Miklós Nagy refuses Jászi’s concept⁵⁹ from a conservative point of view by relying on the concept of nation as a personality that was widely used as a central metaphor since the romantic period. This concept, - besides offering anthropomorphic images for the understanding of human societies connected to the long tradition of conservative thinking, - also interprets the nation as a primordial subject of history that provides a continuous framework for the narration. On the one hand, this interpretation proves to be sensitive to the problems of historical change claiming that the bearer of the national idea had changed in the course of time. On the other hand, the semantic essence of the nation that is the meaning, with which one can identify himself, remains the

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 212.

⁵⁹ Miklós Nagy, p. 4.

same in spite of all changes. Nagy understands the national idea independently from the ethnic principle: nation in his interpretation means a consciousness of a political unite about its distinct personality. An example of this difference in interpretation is, when Jászi claims that there are two conditions needed for the nation-state: economic unity and political unity. The second is provided by the efforts of the king against the particular powers. According to Nagy⁶⁰ that shows that the king is the representative of the national idea in the Middle Ages. Fitting to this interpretation I. Stephen can be the representative of national idea, because in his period religious unity was the proper national politics without consideration to ethnic homogeneity.⁶¹

The interpretation of history as the continuous growing of the national personality - from the beginning, when only the king is the part of it, because only he is aware of its existence, to the future, when the whole population will be conscious part of it – is in confrontation with Jászi's view, which does not reckon with the personality of nation that can be the object of identification. The result of this confrontation is the reciprocal perception of each other's stand-point as destructive. In the perspective of Nagy, Jászi's approach lacks any historical sense by deconstructing the continuity of the organic growth of national development. On the other hand in Jászi's view by the conservative interpretation of nation as a phenomenon existing through ages is anachronism, which is used for legitimizing a political and social system, which oppresses every constructive power that comes from outside the exclusive circle of the elite. In order to question this legitimacy, he endeavors to present national history as such that is not part of the history of nobility: it is a new phenomenon, a democratic movement that is not bound to the institutions and culture of the historical elite.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 23.

This point is in the focus of the criticism of Mihály Réz on Jászi's politics. Mihály Réz was a conservative professor of law in Kolozsvár (Cluj), who was also regular author in *Magyar Figyelő*, although his ideas were more radically conservative, anti-liberalist and nationalist than that of Tisza, who one time refused his radical opinions in the journal.⁶² Réz criticism was based on the concept of "historical realism"⁶³ that endeavored to avoid every kind of explanation of history and social processes, which seeks for a single cause for the understanding. He insisted to take into consideration both material and ideal forces in history, which can influence an actual historical situation. On the other hand his framework of historical understanding was the state - following Ranke – that represents an absolute value. As a consequence he criticized Jászi because of his asserted ignorance to the realities of political and social situation.⁶⁴ According to him Jászi suggests the politics of democratization without recognizing that the powers that could be the subjects, the supporters of this projects are absent in Hungary. Jászi believes that the lower classes and national minorities are democratic because of "objective interest", by contrast Réz asserts that they have anti-democratic mentality, which implies that the direct involvement of them into political decision making would not serve the process of long term democratization. In this interpretation traditional elites are introduced as the representatives of mature and enlightened politics. Aristocrats are also presented as more tolerant towards national minorities supported by the reference to the debate of Széchenyi and Kossuth, where the more conservative aristocrat criticized liberalist Kossuth for his intolerant assimilatory politics.⁶⁵ In his interpretation, national intolerance is the result of bourgeois liberalism and

⁶² Miklós Szabó, *Az újkonzervativizmus és a jobboldali radikalizmus története (1867-1918)* (The history of neo-conservatism and right wing radicalism) (Budapest: Új Mandátum Kiadó, 2003), p. 286-287 passim. On the national politics of Tisza and Réz see: János Gyurgyák, *Ezzé lett magyar hazátok*, pp. 118-130 passim.

⁶³ Mihály Réz, *A történelmi realizmus rendszere* (The system of historical realism) (Budapest: Studium, 1923).

⁶⁴ Mihály Réz, "Palinódia" (Palinody), in *Magyar Figyelő*, 1913: pp. 381-384 passim.

⁶⁵ Mihály Réz, *A nemzeti kérdésről*, p. 91.

not that of traditional noble elite, which is charged by Jászi as the bearer of “feudalist nationalism”.

2.4 The Prophet of the New Nation: Ady and Jászi

After the examination of the concept of nation that was offered by Jászi, and the criticism that it provoked, it is necessary to see the reception, which accepted his approach and considered Jászi as its representative. The question here is, who the peoples and political groups were that accepted his concepts and what kind of gestures of the acceptance can be observed in their written records. It was mentioned before that his book was accepted by a number of reviews without critical remarks with an apologetic tone, which greeted the work as the expression of an evident justice that unquestionably solves the nationality question. Among the supporters of Jászi’s politics was a common-place that his approach is impartial and honest, in addition, he has a wide horizon in scientific knowledge. The book was perceived as a monumental work that was legitimated by the great amount of work that was invested in it. The scientific tone of the text was accepted as the evidence of its objectivity.

The short review of the socialist journal, *Kassai Munkás* (Kassa Worker)⁶⁶ is a typical example of that kind. It accepts the book as unquestionable evidence in support of its central statement that is interpreted by the review as the following: in Hungary there exists no danger of nationalities, because the Magyars are in economical and cultural dominance, which means that the danger that is depicted by the political elite stating that the nationalities threat the Magyar dominance and the integrity of the Hungarian state is only a tool applied by the ruling classes in order to manipulate the people for making possible their oppression. On the one hand, this argument fits to the general attitude of social democrats in regarding national question as having secondary importance beneath class struggle. On the other hand, it accepts

⁶⁶ *Kassai Munkás*, 11. May 1912., p. 6. Other reviews in this manner: Imre Csécsy, “Radikalizmus és magyarság,” in *Radikalizmus és demokrácia: Csécsy Imre válogatott írásai* (Radicalism and democracy: selected writings of Imre Csécsy), ed. Tibor Valuch (Szeged: Aetas, 1988), pp. 37-41.

the traditional nationalist concept of the necessity of Magyar dominance and integrity of Hungary as a nation-state.

This ambiguity toward nationalism is typical among the supporters and followers of Jászi, which is also characteristic for his concepts. This ambiguity as it was mentioned before can be understood from the perspective of liberal, moderate nationalism as conceptual framework. The endeavors for reframing the concept of nation in a manner that could fit to liberal and socialist value-systems can be understood as the element of competition for the dominant position inside nationalist discourse. In this competition Jászi was often referred as an important authority, who became “the scientifically most prepared researcher” of “the whole complex of the nationality question, its historical theory and practical aspects” in Hungary.⁶⁷

Although several articles accepted Jászi’s concepts on nation as a scientific justice without any critical remark, it was the review written by Endre Ady, which went the farthest in the apology of the book. Ady, who became a cultic figure of Hungarian literature and also as a personality was an unquestionable authority, who was referred to by several different discourses during the century. Jászi discovered Ady as the poet, who express he same experiences as he knows in 1906, when his paradigmatic book, *Új versek* (New poems) was published.⁶⁸ Since that time, they had become friends, and Ady outlined his respect to Jászi in several times on his pathetic language. One of the most prominent expression of his respect can be found in his review on the *Nemzeti államok...* that was published in Nyugat. The review speaks in a cultic language stating that Jászi’s book provide the basis of a new

⁶⁷ Csécsy, p. 39.

⁶⁸ Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, p. 59.

patriotism that can solve the problems of Hungary. Jászi as a “prophet” and a savior⁶⁹ is introduced in a messianic manner.⁷⁰

Such a language places Jászi over the level of living humans as the possessor of a knowledge that can change the whole framework of the understanding of national issues by offering an alternative definition that can be appropriated as a proper object of identification. This evaluation by Ady, were used by a number of authors in order to legitimize Jászi’s politics both in terms of national originality and revolutionary potential. In this way, the cult of Ady provided legitimacy for the acceptance for identification with Jászi’s policy.

⁶⁹ Endre Ady, On the importance of the savior in national myths, and national identity see, Boia, p.190 passim.

⁷⁰ On the role of messianism and prophets in national culture, see: Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 41-43.

Chapter 3: Strategies of Elimination and Demonizing: The Inter-War Period (1919-1945)

3.1 Jászi's Changing Ideas: Out of National Framework

In Hungarian history, the end of World War I provided a situation, when the different discourses of nationhood confronted and shifted significantly because of the radical change of the political frameworks. During the period since the fall of 1918 up to the second part of the 1920s, when the new regime consolidated itself, the different national discourses confronted very sharply to each other, mainly in the frameworks of the interpretation of the close past. This past that was the end of the war, the two revolutions and the Treaty of Trianon provided the basis for the self-fashioning of every political movement, and also their national discourses.⁷¹ Oszkár Jászi was introduced in this framework in the debates, often as the ideological leader of the revolution of October 1918, who both as a sociologist and a politician fashioned himself as an expert of the nationality issue. Jászi's role in the process of the dissolution of the old Hungarian state – as it was interpreted from the perspective of Hungarian nationalist discourses – was a heatedly discussed issue in the 1920s and in some extent in the 1930s as well in Hungary that was bound to the interpretation of the revolutions, on the one hand, and to Jászi's political activity in Viennese exile concerning the criticism of the new Hungarian regime, on the other hand. Both issues are immanently bound to Jászi's ideas on the possibilities of federalist progress in the region.

This chapter intends to describe the most significant discourses of the inter-war period in Hungary that concern the interpretation of Jászi's role in the revolution, in the dissolution of the old state of Hungary and his policy in the exile in the early 1920s. This description will offer an insight into the different nationalist discourses of the inter-war period by the analysis

⁷¹ Balázs Trencsényi, "A békecsinálás művészete, a nemzetállamiság és a kelet-európai föderációs elképzelések" (The art of peace-making, nation-state and the Eastern-European federation plans), in. *A politika nyelvei: Eszmetörténeti tanulmányok* (Languages of politics: Works in the history of ideas) (Argumentum, Budapest, 2007), pp. 279-281 passim.

of their rhetoric. The self-fashioning of Jászi will be analyzed as well, in order to show, how far this language can be considered within the frameworks of national discourse, and how far can it be described as a counter-discourse of nation-state. In addition, it needs to be noticed that the discussion around Jászi both in the examined period and in later periods was outlined in a rather ethical manner that was also generated by his rhetoric. The concept of loyalty⁷² is opposed by Jászi's claim for impartiality in this discourse. It will be examined in this chapter, how far this opposition in ethical presumptions can be considered as an explanatory factor in this debate. The question is, how the texts of Jászi reflect on the criticism: is his different point of view a result of different evaluations of situations or are there any differences in ideological and ethical principles concerning the notion of nation, and the place of Hungarian nation in this system.

First the political activity and ideological development of Jászi will be introduced, in order to provide the basis of the analysis of the dialogical inter-play of discourses. It is necessary to remark, on the other hand, that the nature of the reception is much less dialogic than in the earlier period, because of the lack of presence of Jászi in the Hungarian public discourse and the appearance of historical narrations that frame his activity in a historical context, which is introduced as past completed that comes from the nature of the genre. On the other hand, Jászi's political activity in the emigration and the importance of the revolutions and the Treaty of Trianon as references in Hungarian political life makes him a living character in Hungarian discourses. Also his political connections to the governing elite of the successor-states of Hungary makes him the participant of debates with the elite of Hungarian minority communities.

⁷² On the opposition of the ethics of impartiality and loyalty, see: George P. Fletcher, *Loyalty: An Essay on the Morality of Relationships* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 11 passim.

As it was mentioned above, if the programs for the solution of the nationality problem worked out by Jászi are taken as the basis of description, it can be stated that Jászi accepted the old Hungarian state as the framework of a possible nation-state, which may be integrated into a federalist structure with the conservation of its territorial integrity. In that sense Jászi's thinking before 1919-20 is bound to the old Hungarian liberal tradition that is left only in one point, which is the acceptance of national territorial autonomies in 1918.⁷³ Two remarks are necessary to make about this issue that can serve as limitations and as evidences to other tendencies in this discourse. The first is that in his memoirs written in 1920 Jászi interprets the resign of the Károlyi-government as a tragic mistake that was motivated by nationalist feelings that emerged because of the open elimination of the integrity of Hungarian state by the Vix memorandum. Later he calls it the "myth of territorial integrity".⁷⁴ This means that although in 1919 for Jászi and the government, the Hungarian nation-state had meant an ideal that had had to be defended, after 1920 it was evaluated by him as a mistake referring to the notion of pacifism that had been beaten by nationalist feelings earlier. This opposition between nationalism and pacifism is one of the most important elements of Jászi's thinking that will be analyzed below. The other issue is the modeling of nation-state as an intermediate stage of the integrational process that was regarded by him as the law of history. In this Smithian concept national language and culture is considered only as a means of communication that is sufficient for the co-operation, but it has no essential significance in identity issues. This approach makes possible to think in the frameworks of federalism by Jászi.

The federalist policy, which became one of the core elements of Jászi's thinking after 1920,⁷⁵ was supported by two sources of his intellectual assumptions that were able to

⁷³ Baka, p. 193.

⁷⁴ Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, pp. 165-166.

⁷⁵ Hanák, p. 137.

strengthen each other in this perspective, but that provoked nationalist discourses; these were the scientific law of integration and the moral conviction of the eminence of pacifism. The result of these tendencies is a belief in a future society that is economically integrated, culturally homogenized by assimilation, politically democratic and federalist, morally just and peaceful. The interpretation of integration as the source of impartial benefits has a tendency to place Jászi out of the national discourse, because its utilitarian perspective is outlined in a great number of places as the policy of the benefit of the greatest number fashioned in a transnational perspective. The impartial ethic of Jászi's politics that worked as an imperative before 1919 in relation to the nationalities of the territories of Hungarian state gradually became the central element of Jászi's political thinking that left the frameworks of the Hungarian nation-state. First, it was the notion of territorial integrity of the old state that was left,⁷⁶ and then the limitation of national sovereignty became an important topic of his thinking. In an article about Masaryk, Jászi expresses the demand that the "community of civilized states" has to be involved in the internal matters of every state for the benefit of the other states.⁷⁷ This statement and a number of others show the predominance of federalist thinking in his thoughts in the 1920s.

The moral basement of this kind of thinking is expressed in an article that was written as the criticism of the policy of Norman Angell in the matters of international affairs.⁷⁸ According to this article, the just conduct of the international relations is not possible through international courts and other institutions until the extreme inequalities, the huge differences in the access to material and cultural goods remains. In this argumentation, justice is bound to the existence of equality that is described as the precondition of the existence of free

⁷⁶ Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, p. 203.; Hanák, p. 74.

⁷⁷ Oszkár Jászi, "Masaryk elnök tanítása" (The message of President Masaryk), in *Bécsi Magyar Újság*, 8 July 1923: pp. 1-2 passim.

⁷⁸ Jászi Oszkár. "A 'negatív pacifizmus' ellen" (Against 'negative pacifism'), in *Bécsi Magyar Újság*, 25 March 1923: p. 1.

individuals. Jászi claims that “the new world-order is possible only with really free people”. From this quotation, it looks clear that the moral basis of his political thinking tended to approach a perspective that can be labeled cosmopolitan. A possible new world-order is outlined that can establish the maintenance of long-term peaceful co-existence of people, who are morally developed enough for accepting that they do not want more than they can receive without threatening the welfare of others.

The tendency of transcending national boundaries became a heatedly discussed topic in relation to Jászi’s policy in the immigration, especially in the first half of the 1920s, when he and his group in Vienna wrote a number of articles mostly in the journal *Bécsi Magyar Újság* that criticized the Hungarian government and the political elite. Jászi interpreted it as their duty to inform the “impartial, just and free public opinion of Europe” about the “crimes” of the government. This activity was criticized by numerous contemporaries and later commentaries.⁷⁹ Even the Hungarian Court found them guilty in “crime against the reputation of the Hungarian nation and state”⁸⁰ Jászi’s answer to the criticism and charges was the reference to his interpretation on the Hungarian history and the contemporary situation. The essence of this interpretation is making distinction between the Hungarian *elite* and the *people* and endeavoring to divide the *loyalty to the nation* from the *loyalty to the elite*. A proper example is provided by an article from 1921,⁸¹ where Jászi makes a distinction between the “real Hungary” and the “terror organization that consists of the military group that is organized around Horthy”. He claims that their campaign is only against the second one without hurting the first. On the other hand, Jászi uses an elitist rhetoric in numerous places, for instance, when he speaks about the world’s public opinion as the proper judge of

⁷⁹ György Litván, “Hazaárulás-e a hazára ‘árulkodni’?: A polgári radikálisok nemzetfelfogása” (Is it a betrayal to tell of the homeland?: The civic radicals’ approach to nation), in *Valóság*, 1984, Nr. 12: pp. 58-69.

⁸⁰ *Pesti Napló*, 16 March 1924: p. 4.

⁸¹ Oszkár Jászi, “Az emigráció ‘hazaárulása’” (The ‘betrayal’ of the emigrates)(1921), in *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája* (Oszkár Jászi’s publicistical works), ed. György Litván, János F. Varga (Budapest: Magvető, 1982), pp. 379-383.

the local affairs, what means immanently the recognition of an elite group's competency in opposition to the local people.

The endeavors to leave national framework gained their most elaborated outline in the book, published in Chicago in English, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* in 1929. This famous book intends to give an interpretation of the dissolution in a manner that introduces the process as the result of deep structural characteristics that led to the disintegration. On the one hand Jászi's interpretation argues against the pro-Habsburg narratives, which introduce the dissolution as the result of the war, therefore they claim that it was inorganically forced by the enemies of the monarchy. On the other hand, his argumentation continuously marks the points, which could have been conducted in alternative ways by the governing politicians, which could have saved and intensified the "centripetal" dynamics of the state. The Monarchy could have been saved, according to Jászi, if it could have been federated. A possible federation, which could be able to maintain the advantages of integration in economics and cultural exchange, in addition it could provide international safety for the peoples of the region against the imperialist threat of Germany and the Soviet Union, is the only form that could have solved all the problems of the region.

These concepts of Jászi on the federalization could not be easily followed in the atmosphere of the irredentist, revisionist public life of Hungary. The number of his followers became rather limited here. Imre Csécsy, Jászi's "pupil" and secretary defended him in some publications and declared his loyalty to him. Besides him, the circle of the journal, *Századunk* (which was edited from 1934-1939 by Csécsy) was the supporter of him. Although this journal followed the theoretical and political tradition of *Huszadik Század*, and also connected to the theoretical line that was outlined by Jászi in the 1920s and some articles written by Jászi were published, direct references to his activity and theoretical work was

almost totally absent. A telling example can be the programmatic article by Rusztem Vámbéry in the first number in 1926.⁸² Although he clearly follows in his argumentation the attitude of Jászi, referring to the central authorities that were in the focus of his interest in the period (Oppenheimer, Spencer, Henry George. etc.), he avoids to reflect to him. In his vision, which states into opposition the new culture and science to the old, reactionary tendencies, the central reference is Ady, who proved to be more acceptable in the contemporary Hungarian discourse, being not involved on such a grade into the revolution because of his sickness and death, and being not Jewish in origin.

The politics of pacifism and the new possibilities of the co-operation of the European states were central topics of the articles in the journal, however Jászi was only mentioned, when his *Dissolution* was published. At this time, the book was introduced by references to the international success of it, in order to prove its scientific manner and values.⁸³ A review was also published, written by Jászi's old friend, Róbert Braun⁸⁴, who acknowledged its wide perspective and declared its importance in its contribution to the peaceful co-existence of nations, and its interpretation about the monarchy as an experiment for the supra-national state, supra-national consciousness. He also accepted the evaluations of the international journals in claiming that is a really objective and impartial interpretation of the dissolution. Besides this review the journal did not deal with the book.

Imre Csécsy's article in the journal *Auróra*⁸⁵ on the other hand, intends to defend Jászi's politics during the revolution. His defense is based on some continuous elements in the politics of the new government and Jászi's. Concerning his nationality politics and

⁸² Rusztem Vámbéry, "Az Új és a Régi küzdelme" (The struggle between the New and the Old), in *Századunk*, 1(1926), pp. 1-18.

⁸³ *Századunk*, 5(1930): pp. 5-10.

⁸⁴ Róbert Braun, "A Habsburg-monarchia bukása" (The fall of the Habsburg monarchy), in *Századunk*, 5(1930): pp. 129-139.

⁸⁵ Imre Csécsy, "A destrukció vezére" (The leader of the destruction), in *Radikalizmus és demokrácia: Csécsy Imre válogatott írásai* (Radicalism and democracy: Imre Csécsy's selected writings), ed. Tibor Valuch (Szeged: Aetas, 1988), pp. 61-73.

federalist plans, he intends to question the distinction between “realist politics” and “idealist politics” that appeared in the core of the argumentation of many critics of Jászi. In his interpretation, Csécsy presents Jászi’s concepts as ones that were not tried out, therefore it can not be said that they could have not preserve the integrity of the Hungarian state. In his narration the politics of the old governments are introduced – following Jászi’s interpretation - as ones that are partly responsible for the disintegration, although they were considered to be “realistic politics”. The advantage of Jászi’s plans comes from the fact that they could not have been applied, therefore in contrast to its alternatives, it can not be decided whether they could have been more efficient or not. According to Csécsy, the end of the war provided no real possibility to try out Jászi’s alternative, which was planned to realize it in peaceful circumstances. Csécsy interprets Jászi’s decision to accept the possibility for endeavoring the impossible as a moral decision – also following Jászi’s explanation in his memoir -, which meant the repression of the interests of the ego for the interests of the state and the people: it was a moral drive to give a chance for the politics that looked almost impossible to be realized.⁸⁶ On the other hand, Csécsy claims that Jászi did not really know that his politics impossible to achieve, because he could not accept and could not believe that the integrity of the Hungarian state can be destroyed against all rational interests of all the people living here. This element of his thinking that is common with all Hungarians, who even in 1921 can not believe it, proves his common feelings with the Hungarians despite his Jewish origin. For legitimizing Jászi’s plans, Csécsy also refers to the continuity between them and the ideas of Kossuth, Deák and Eötvös. Csécsy accepts the self-interpretation of Jászi in most points depicting a person, who always follows honestly his ideas, which are morally unquestionable, and which can serve as legitimate alternatives for the realized politics of the established order.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 67.

3.2 Critics: the Hungarian State-Idea

Although a number of varieties can be observed, the nationalist discourses in inter-war period, which dominated the public discourse in Hungary, can be divided into two clusters according to the central concept they use for defining the actual meaning of the nation. By this aspect an ethnic discourse can be identified that considers the Magyar people as its central value and also the real protagonist of the Hungarian history. This discourse can be called “little Hungarian”⁸⁷ way referring to its exclusive attitude towards nation that by preferring ethnic markers in drawing the boundaries of nation ignores the eminent importance of the old state-framework for the proper existence of Hungarian nation. This branch of nationalism can be labeled by the names of Dezső Szabó, László Németh and in general the mainstream of the populist movement, which became really influential in the 1930s. This discourse rejected the eminent importance of the historical state framework in the proper development of the Hungarian nation. It was critical to the governmental politics of the new regime and intended to represent the interests of the peasant majority of Hungarian society by applying an anti-elitist attitude.

The discourse of the other variety of nationalist canon in the 1920s that is called “Great Hungarian way”⁸⁸, or, according to the system of political ideologies, neo-conservative, or liberal conservative tradition, is determined by its more inclusive attitude in definition of nation. This characteristic of this discourse is strongly driven by its sentiment toward the “historical state” of Hungary, which is presented by it as a value on its own sake. Despite of its harsh criticism on the pre-war liberalist system and its illusions concerning assimilation, this discourse meant the most direct continuation of the dominant discourse of the Dualist period in the definition of the meaning of Hungarian nation. This discourse that

⁸⁷ Trencsényi, p. 281.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

was most prominently represented by the historian, Gyula Szekfű, can be appreciated as the dominant and official discourse of the 1920s, the Bethlen era.

Concerning the reception of Jászi, both discourses prove to be rather critical in judging his political activity. They are similar in the focus of their evaluations in taking into consideration mostly his politics as a manner of behavior toward political activity, and ignoring his theoretical achievements. They have also some common topics in the interpretation of his activity: *realism* and *strangeness* have the same importance in the critical texts of both clusters. In the following I will introduce and analyze some critical texts that were written from the context of the “great Hungarian” discourse. I will focus on the most prominent text written by Gyula Szekfű, however in some cases I will refer to other texts that were outlined in a similar manner written by László Ottlik, Gusztáv Gratz, Sándor Pethő and some articles from journals close to the government.⁸⁹

Szekfű's work, *Három nemzedék és ami utána következik* (Three generations and what is following) is an extremely influential historical essay written by the most prominent historian of the inter-war period first published in 1920 then with a supplementary part in 1934. Szekfű as a historian, started his carrier in the beginning of the century and became famous with his work on Rákóczi in the exile, which expressed a critical attitude toward the symbolic figure of independist nationalist culture that provoked a heated criticism. As the most prominent representative of the catholic-Habsburgist historical tradition, he became the leading historian of the Horthy-era, especially the 1920s, when he was the editor of the journal *Magyar Szemle* that expressed the attitude of the circle of the prime-minister, István

⁸⁹ Gyula Szekfű, *Három nemzedék és ami utána következik* (Three generations and that is following) (ÁKV-Maecenas, Budapest, 1989); László Ottlik, “‘Uj Hungária’ és ‘Keleti Svájc’” (New Hungaria and eastern Switzerland), in *Magyar Szemle*, 7(1929), Nr. 2: pp. 113-124.; Gusztáv Gratz, *A forradalmak kora: Magyarország története 1918-1920* (The age of revolutions: history of Hungary 1918-1920) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1992); Sándor Pethő, *Világostól Trianonig: A mai Magyarország kialakulásának története* (From Világos to Trianon: the history of the formation of contemporary Hungary)(Budapest: Enciklopédia R.T., 1925)

Bethlen.⁹⁰ Szekfű's narrative is based on the experience of the dissolution of the old Hungarian state; hence the claim for seeking for the causes of this "tragedy" is the motivation of his interpretation. The old state provides the framework of the "Great Hungarian" thinking, which tends to interpret every movement in relation to its contribution to the maintenance or destruction of the territorial integrity of the state. This tendency accepts the institutions, traditions and history of the old state as the only framework of *realistic* policy, as the "floor" of realism and as the strongest reality even in the 1920s. Szekfű, affected by the trauma of the dissolution of the old Hungarian state, interprets Hungarian history from a conservative point of view as a process of decline since the liberal reforms of the 1830s. He explains the process as a result of losing realistic political sense by the political elite and applying western-type liberalist political theory mechanistically. This discourse criticizes the application of abstract theories in political practice just like it will be seen in Szakmári's populist text, but its sense of realism goes even further, hence it interprets the whole revolutionary tradition in the frameworks of *misleading illusions* excluding it from realistic politics. The central reference of the text is historical reality that contains the traditions of the Hungarian politics, the institutions of the state, their continuity and organic development that was broken by the inorganic, from western liberalism borrowed liberal politics that propagated nationalist illusions of assimilation, which was one of the most important causes of the dissolution of the old state.⁹¹ This realism often refers to "historical sense" as its proper characteristic that is the knowledge of the actual possibilities, which can be the basis of proper, realistic politics.

It is the core of the criticism of László Ottlik on Jászi's policy. He asserts that it was not the content of Jászi's nationality policy that was the demand for linguistic autonomy for

⁹⁰ On Szekfű see: Ferenc Glatz, "Előszó az 1989-es kiadáshoz: Három nemzedék története a hetedik nemzedék szemével" (Foreword for the 1989 edition: The history of three generations in the eye of the seventh generation), in Gyula Szekfű, *Három nemzedék...*, pp. I-XXVI.

⁹¹ Szekfű's perspective approached to the populist view in the supplementary chapter that was published in 1933.

nationality regions, which was a priori false, but the time that he chose for realizing it. In his pragmatic argumentation Ottlik states that every policy has to be the answer for the actual situation, hence what a realistic policy is after the dissolution of the old state that was a destructive policy before that, because it did not count with the real power-relations and possibilities. For supporting his program, he outlines his interpretation on the Hungarian nation that is not identical to the ethnic nation. This concept of nation is interpreted in the frameworks of legal tradition that defines nation as the participant of legislative power in dualism with the king.

Despite regarding Jászi's political theories unrealistic, Szekfű's criticism on the liberal nationalist tradition has some common points with Jászi's. He acknowledges⁹² that the radicals were free from the national and state illusions of the Hungarian liberals; therefore they represented a more realistic nationality policy following the thoughts of Kossuth and Eötvös than the liberal mainstream. On the other hand, they are criticized by Szekfű, because of the strangeness of their thoughts that compare every social phenomena to the theories of the French radicals, hence they remained strange to the Hungarian historical tradition. Their lack of historical sense caused that they could not take in consideration the real historical possibilities of Hungarian politics. This evaluation is proved by the radicals' interpretation on the nationality problem, which explains it with the feudal character of the old Hungarian middle-class that can be explained by their hate against Magyars that is interpreted by the Jewish origin of the participants of this movement that binds the text to the anti-Semitic discourse. The rootlessness, the lack of knowledge of the "Hungarian floor" and the "Hungarian needs" that make their policy superficial comes from the fact of their origin.⁹³ For proving the anti-Hungarian hate of Jászi that shows that he does not have the community of feelings with Hungarians, Szekfű mentions that Jászi uses the statistical sources of a

⁹² Szekfű, p. 358.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 360.

“centralist Austrian historian” for supporting his judgment against the Hungarians for making them responsible for the bad treatment of the nationalities. According to Szekfű this fact shows his partiality against the Hungarians that makes him “the ally of Austrian centralists and federalist politicians, ally of Renner and Popovici in the fight against the Hungarian hegemony” instead of being a second Wesselényi.⁹⁴ This opposition intends to emphasize the difference between the policy that is tolerant to the nationalities and understands their claims, but without leaving the framework of the Hungarian state and the goodwill towards Hungarian politics and on the other hand Jászi’s policy that is not loyal to the “Hungarian feelings”. This opposition is supported by the rhetoric of the narration that eliminates the distinction that was taken by Jászi between the Hungarian nation and the “feudal” elite. Similar claim can be found by Gusztáv Gratz:

“It is not the poverty of their ideas that can be criticized by him, but rather their one-sidedness and rootlessness, and above all that his attitude was not only straight but even hostile to everything that was created by the Hungarian political Genius both the good and the bad.”⁹⁵

Different articles that were published in journals close to the government described Jászi’s activity during the revolution concerning the negotiations with the representatives of the nationalities⁹⁶ introduce his attitude toward the Hungarian also as hostile. The official approach to his politics in the emigration also rejected the distinction he made between the criticism of the governmental politics and the interest of the Hungarian nation. This rejection was expressed in the judicial process against him. In the depth of this opposition a debate can be found about the question, who can be accepted as the legitimate representative of the Hungarian nation: the ruling elite, because of its traditionally inherited capacity for leading

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 359.

⁹⁵ Gusztáv Gratz, *A forradalmak kora*, p. 27. (My translation): „Eszméinek nem annyira szegénységét, mint inkább azok egyoldalúságát és gyökértelenségét lehet szemére vetni, főleg pedig azt, hogy mindazzal, amit a magyar politikai génusz teremtett, jóval és rosszal egyaránt, nem csak idegentül, de egyenest ellenséges indulattal állt szemben.” The rootlessness of the ideas of the radicals was a commonplace among the conservative authors: Sándor Pethő referred to it as well in context of the introduction of the new generation of the Jews: Pethő, p. 127.

⁹⁶

the nation and its embeddedment in the institutions of the state or an intellectual elite, which the proponent of democratic institutions is and claims to be morally superior to its counterpart. The central argument of Jászi is based on the necessity of the future development of democratic institutions in the region, which is obstructed by the “feudal”, “irredentist” and “anti-democratic” Hungarian elite and government.⁹⁷

3.3 Organic-Democratic Criticism

The “little Hungarian” discourse in its democratic version will be represented by a text written by Gáspár Szakmári⁹⁸ that was published in the Journal *Aurora*, which was edited by the most prominent representative of the Hungarian Christian socialism, Sándor Giesswein. The text offers an interpretation on the 1918-19 events in general, and then it focuses on Jászi’s role, whom he considers as the intellectual leader of the movements. Jászi is described as the mastermind of the turmoil, who had planned to grasp power for twenty years. According to its historical style, it can be named as “romantic”, because - as it will be shown – it uses the patterns of romantic narrations. According to the romantic narrative of the text, the events of these two years can not be called *revolutions*, because a *revolution* would be a “natural emanation of the soul of the people” that would be a result of spontaneous action without need for leaders.⁹⁹ This argumentation accepts the romantic narrative of *revolution* as a legitimate form of the expression of the will of the people that could be a meaningful event of the history of a nation as the representation of justice, albeit it asserts that the Hungarian people, which is identical to Magyar peasantry is not a revolutionary people. This discourse uses the narrative of the romantic interpretation on revolution, for which Michelet provides the archetypical example. Following this narrative structure, Szakmári introduces the events as not revolutionary, arguing that they were created by a

⁹⁷ See for instance: Oszkár Jászi, “A magyar emigráció feladatairól” (On the tasks of the Hungarian emigrants), in *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája*, ed. György Litván and János F. Varga (Budapest: Magvető, 1982), 372 passim.

⁹⁸ Gáspár Szakmári, “Az októberi-márciusi felforgatás és irányítója” (The October-March disorder and its arbiter), in *Aurora*, 1922: pp. 9-42.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

small group of opportunist people, who took advantage of the situation, when there did not exist any powerful authorities in Hungary, and the people were fallen into passivity, as a result they could grasp the power. The main characteristic of these people, besides their lust for power, was that they had no relationship with the Hungarian people, by contrast, they fashioned themselves as the representatives of it. They had tended to speak in the name of the people demanding democratic changes for years before the war, although they felt contempt against the people that is the Hungarian peasantry. As a natural outgrowth of this narrative comes the interpretation of the aims of this group as strange to the Hungarian people that are following ideas that do not have any relevance for the Hungarian circumstances.

According to the narration a second public opinion was created artificially by the leader of this group that was Jászi. This *public opinion*, which was often used as reference by the leaders, was composed of the Jewish youth of Budapest that is identified with the Galilei Circle by the author, which was a youth movement organized in 1908 that stood close to the radicals. In this narration of the events, Jászi is introduced as *spiritus rector*, as a demonic character, whose plan was realized in the actual forms of the events. The romantic narrative interprets the events as the results of conspiracy of one man, if it is not the result of the people's will; it acknowledges only these extremities as possible moving forces. For supporting his argumentation, Szakmári applies a great number of quotations that were taken from Jászi's texts that were written in different periods. The narrator constructs a coherent plan out of the different texts, which is interpreted as a hidden plan behind the events that was perfectly realized.¹⁰⁰ The question is, what are the main characteristics of this plan, and how they relating to the idea of nation that Szakmári uses. As it was mentioned, the main reference in the text is the *people* that is the most authentic protagonist of Hungarian history

¹⁰⁰ Similar strategy is applied for the interpretation of Jászi's politics in the texts of Elemér Mályusz and Cecile Tormay: Elemér Mályusz, *A vörös emigráció* (The red emigrants) (Gödöllő, Máriabesnyő: Attraktor, 2006), pp. 6 passim.; Cecile Tormay, *Bujdosó könyv : feljegyzések 1918-1919-ből. Vol. I.: Az "Őszirózsás forradalom"* (An Outlaws Diary. Notes from 1918-1919. Vol. I.: The "Aster revolution") (Budapest: Magyar Ház, 2005), p. 217.

similarly to the *populist discourse* that was one of the most influential in the inter-war period in Hungary, and which was inspired by the prophetic tone of the writings of Dezső Szabó, who became the editor of *Auora* in a few months. The content of the term *people* in this discourse is the ethnic Hungarian peasantry that is considered as the real bearer of *Magyariness* in an essentialist framework. From this presumption an arsenal of metaphors emerges that is used for describing society by the language of agriculture. One central concept of this language is *root* and belonging to it the *soil* that intends to emphasize the immobility of culture that is always local and is organically grown from the special milieu. In this language, *Magyar* culture is an individual and special organism that is bound to the place, where it has grown.

From this sense of culture and history, a sharp criticism of Jászi's thinking and policy is developed that argues from a perspective of radical democratism against Jászi's democratic rhetoric.¹⁰¹ For the argument that the government that called himself "people's government" (népkormány) is not really democratic, Szakmári asserts:

"The people's government came not for *this* people and for *this* country; foreign ideas bound it to a distant community. Its aim was not the realization of the will of *this* people, and the formation of the *Magyar* people-state, but channeling to a new, not even formed world-order that people that had never heard about that world-order, not even to identify itself and fitting to it would have been its lust."¹⁰²

This is an argumentation that is rich in connotations that were expressed by a number of other texts in this period, which expressed an openly anti-Semitic discourse. In the current text by Szakmári the anti-Semitic discourse is only partly explicit, he only labels the *Galilei*

¹⁰¹ I do not discuss the sincerity of this discourse.

¹⁰² Szakmári, p. 26. (My translation) "Nem *e* népért és nem *ez* országért jött a népkormány; idegen eszmék távoli közösségbe kapcsolták őt. Nem *e* nép akaratának szabad érvényesítése, nem a *Magyar* népállam megalakítása volt a cél, hanem új, még ki nem alakult világrendbe való bekovácsolása annak a népnek, mely soha még nem is hallott arról az új világrendről, nemhogy azt átérezni s abba beleilleszkedni kedve lett volna."

Circle Jewish, but the rhetoric refers to often used anti-Semitic topoi.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, if these connotations are ignored, in order to apply a closer reading of this quotation, it is clear that it uses a democratic perspective in its criticism. Szakmári's interpretation on democracy is organized around the will of people that is the *real* people of Hungary, not the pseudo public opinion of the Galilei circle. This interpretation of the real democracy is described in opposition to Jászi's ideas that according to this interpretation are governed by the vision of a new world-order that has no relation to the real and concrete people of Hungary. Besides stating that Jászi's policy is not democratic, this argumentation leads to the topic that is often discussed by other authors as well that is the idealism or illusionism of Jászi's thinking and politics that is criticized from different "realist" perspectives. Here the realist discourse is fashioned in democratic argumentation: Jászi's policy is not realist, because it has no communication with the will of the people.

The author's criticism on Jászi is culminated in moral judgments that are related to the picture of him as an idealist, who is driven by internationalist future-oriented ideas that make him indifferent to the suffering of people. In that discourse the ideological thinking that is postulated as the most important characteristic of Jászi's political activity is evaluated as immoral, because of its abstract character that is opposed to realism, which is introduced as a democratic policy that is bound to the will of the people. Loyalty to the nation means in this interpretation, a close communication with the people that will be naturally expressed in the community of feelings. By contrast, the policy that was represented by Jászi, which has no communication and as a result no common feelings with the people, is an elitist policy that uses the people in its *experiments*. This criticism has two interrelated elements. First, it states that the events can be described as the result of *experimental activity* of a small group, more specially Jászi. Secondly, the experiment immanently is an accidental event in Hungary. The

¹⁰³ His publications in the journal's following numbers shows a strong tendency in making this anti-Semitic discourse more explicit.

assertion that Jászi's policy can be described as an experiment that uses the people is based on some quotations taken from him¹⁰⁴ that uses the rhetoric of experiment in order to support his attitude towards the soviet republic that can be described as a kind of passive co-operation with it.¹⁰⁵ In an article that was published in the journal *Huszadik Század* in April 1919,¹⁰⁶ he suggests to the non-communist intellectuals that they should support passively the new government, because the experiment of communism has to be tried out in order to provide facts about it for the consideration of the mass. According to him the communism is a necessary stage of the historical process. In the interpretation of Szakmári the whole character of Jászi's policy can be identified with the notions of this quotation. As a result of this interpretation, the bolshevist government is described as the integral part of Jászi's plan.¹⁰⁷

The other element of the interpretation comes from the implications of the concept of experiment that are bound to the evaluation of Jászi's view on history. An experiment in this context means the realization of abstract ideas in order to try their relevance towards reality. According to the interpretation, the ideas come from foreign theories that have no relations to the Hungarian reality. These theories concern abstractions of people that could be tried out anywhere in the world, because they have no local character, as a result, their application is accidental that could have happened everywhere, but accidentally and "unfortunately" they were tried out *here*. These theories connect to a determinist historical thinking that looks at history as the series of inevitable changes that is called "historical necessity" that leads to an

¹⁰⁴ It is also quoted by Elemér Mályusz as the strongest evidence of Jászi's immoral thinking. Mályusz, *A vörös emigráció*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ This paper focuses on discursive patterns, and as result, can not deal with the relevance of the different interpretations. Here, it is only a short comment about Jászi's relation to the soviet power: he did not feel any sympathy to the representatives of the new government, but he did not confronted with it openly. See György Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, pp. 166-169 passim.

¹⁰⁶ Oszkár Jászi, "Szociológia és politika" (Socology and politics), in *Huszadik Század*, 1919: pp. 311-312 passim.

¹⁰⁷ Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, pp. 165-166 passim. The passing of power is explained by Jászi as the tragic result of nationalist feelings that was the affection to territorial integrity.

ideal society, which is used for the legitimization of political acts, as such they can properly be labeled as utopian.¹⁰⁸

3.4 Conclusions

For summing up the findings of the chapter, the discourses around Jászi's relation to the nation can be described in divisions in some concepts. The differences of the three examined discourses can be grasped in their notions on political realism. The ethnic discourse find the realism of politics in the will of the people, hence it criticizes Jászi's policy because of its elitist tendencies and its strangeness to the Hungarian people. It refuses the policy that refers to tendencies in world-history as not realistic to the claims of the local people. Its strong commitment to locality is completed by sentiments to the individuality of the Hungarian people that is expressed by its personality that is regarded as a value on its own right. As for the "great Hungarian" discourse, its sense of realism is bound to the historical institutions of the old Hungarian state that were the creation of the traditional elite. Realism means in this context, the refusal of abstract ideas that are borrowed from other contexts. As a result this discourse rejects Jászi's discourse because of being abstract on the one hand, and being in opposition to the traditional historiography of the Hungarian state and to the traditional elite, which is identified with the nation. If the ethnic discourse criticizes Jászi because of his elitism, then the "great Hungarian" discourse emphasizes his anti-elite tendencies that concerns the traditional Hungarian elite. For the realism of Jászi, the tendencies of world history mean the basis of political judgment. Realistic policy means to him the following of these tendencies that are bound to a European perspective. The prognosis of the future tendencies means the basis of this policy. These tendencies are the results of the strongest force of history that is integration, which causes the greater good for everyone. It is a common characteristic of the three discourses that the realist policy is also

¹⁰⁸ Mályusz, p. 52. According to Mályusz, Jászi's argumentation on the "historical necessity" is to eliminate moral responsibility.

considered moral. Nevertheless, moral good is more central in the motivation of politics in Jászi and Szakmári than in Szekfű, because by him realism is the central value that is bound to history, whilst in the other discourses the different moral assumptions determine frameworks of realistic politics.

The differences between the two moral discourses can be described as the difference between a loyalist ethics that is bound to an individual community and the ethics of impartial justice that is bound to the “greatest good for the greatest number”. In this sense, it is plausible to accept that in Jászi’s thinking a principal difference can be found based on moral conviction that make him opposite to the nationalist discourse of Szakmári, who uses the will of existing people as moral imperative. However, it is not the abstraction of the thinking that makes the difference, rather the sources of moral judgment. Although in the strategy of discrediting an elite group by claiming that they have no connection with the people and they cause suffering for it his rhetoric is close to Szakmári’s, in other aspects Jászi’s thinking stands closer to Szekfű’s. The moral motivation of political act is bound by both of them to tendencies of history that are stronger than the will of actual people, though the histories that are referred to are different.

As it was introduced in this chapter, in the inter-war period, the Hungarian historical and political public sphere was dominated by discourses that defined themselves in opposition to the tradition of the revolutions. As such, they also rejected the activity of Jászi. The grade and gestures of rejection differed from the demonizing narrative of Szakmári, which attributed to Jászi almost superhuman capacity fitting to the mythical scheme of conspiracy-theories, to the strategies of eliminating his role by assuming his unrealistic, idealist, naïve politics. The latter strategy was marked by the repeated statement of the untalented, over the capacities ambitious character of the circle that led the revolution that

fitted to the scheme that label them as outsiders in politics. On the other side, the followers of Jászi's politics and ideology did not make strong efforts to hold him in the Hungarian discourse as an example that can be followed.

Chapter 4: Canonization: The Moral Basis of an Alternative Nationalism

4.1 Jászi and Post-War Hungary: Changing Scenes of Reception

The end of the Second World War established a totally new situation for the intellectual life of Hungary, which was from the beginning determined by the change of the inter-war elite, and the emergence of democratic and communist elites. In the few years of transition, before the communist party established its total power, a number of intellectual circles could start to organize their organ of communication, among them the followers of the *Huszádik Század* tradition, with the leadership of Imre Csécsy they reorganized the journal. Jászi could appear in the public discourse for a while, and he also grasped the possibility to visit home, however he went back to Oberlin with the experiences of a country, which is transforming into a dictatorship.¹⁰⁹ His pessimistic comments on the situation of the country and the role of the communist party called for an angry reaction on the side of the supporters of the communist transformation. After it was achieved, Jászi became an enemy of the system because of his anti-communism and propagation of the values of western democracy.

In the fifties his name was forgotten in Hungary, or it was only mentioned in the context of his “imperialist” activity. On the other hand, in the emigrant circle of the journal *Látóhatár* (Horizon) that was established mostly by the representatives of the populist movement, especially by the former members of the Peasant Party that was the participant of the democratic period. The editors and authors of this journal regarded Jászi as their most important predecessor despite the fact that in the inter-war period they had limited connection with him. Their attitude that intended to transcend the traditional “populist-urban” opposition serves as the first context of the construction of a reception, which accepts Jászi as an authority, mainly in moral terms, in some cases using the gestures and the language of a

¹⁰⁹ Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, p. 443.

cultic manner. In this chapter their activity in constructing a new approach to the nation relying on Jászi's work will be an important issue.

After the period of silence, Jászi's reception in the 1960-70s became more vivid in Hungary as well. Besides the critical approaches that followed the Marxist line in rejecting the bourgeois character of Jászi's and the radicals' thinking¹¹⁰ works started to be published, which introduced the "anti-feudal", "anti-clerical" and later "anti-fascist" tendencies of their politics and theories.¹¹¹ The "progressive" elements of this circle were presented as a tradition, which can be partly accepted and followed despite its "ambivalences". In addition, with the appearance of György Litván's and other's publications the problems of the group's attitude toward nationalism started to be discussed, which meant a certain degree of distancing from the strict Marxist point of view: although out of the two topics, which meant problem in the reception of Jászi in the communist dictatorship, that were his anti-communism and the nationality question, the latter was the less sensitive, however it meant an important change. Litván's historical interpretations on Jászi's national politics will be the first concerned topic of the chapter with special focus on his interpretation on Jászi's moral decisions and their relations to nationalism.

Besides their distance from a strict Marxist point of view, both Litván's and Péter Hanák's, Jászi's other important monographer's, interpretations preserved the "progressive anti-feudal" character of Jászi as a leitmotif. As it will be analyzed in details in this chapter, both of them presented Jászi as the hero of their narratives, who with his attitude, behavior and thinking expresses the beliefs of a whole generation, which is accepted by the authors as

¹¹⁰ Most prominently: György Fukász, *A magyarországi polgári radikalizmus történetéhez 1900-1918: Jászi Oszkár ideológiájának bírálata* (On the history of the civic radicalism in Hungary: the criticism of Oszkár Jászi's ideology) (Budapest: Gondolat, 1960).

¹¹¹ The best example of this rethoric is the monograph of Zoltán Horváth on the beginning of the century: Zoltán Horváth, *Magyar századforduló: A második reformnemzedék története 1896-1914* (Budapest: Gondolat, (1961) 1973), p.7 passim.

an example of pure, honest historical activity, which fits to the progress of history. In this regard the narrative schemes of constructing Jászi's personality and its moral character, and the strategies of legitimizing will be analyzed. Hanák's work, *Jászi Oszkár dunai patriotizmusa* (Oszkár Jászi's Danubian patriotism) will also be analyzed as the most elaborated expression of the efforts to outline a moderate nationalist discourse relying on Jászi's theory, politics and moral behavior.

In the 1980s a canonic interpretation of Jászi was constructed by a number of publications, which was designed to serve as a possible tradition of the democratic politics of the political opposition, although the figure of István Bibó proved to be more successful in fulfilling this role. The new generation of the '80s that was collected around the journal *Századvég* (End of the Century) accepted Jászi as a possible predecessor, who was suggested by the elders, personally by Litván, who co-operated with János Gyurgyák and others in publishing materials from Jászi's correspondences and articles. On the other hand, a tendency can be observed in the circle of the authors of this journal to raise the problems of Jászi's politics regarding the Hungarian minorities in the neighboring countries. The topic that was an important element of Jászi's positive reception by the circle of *Látóhatár* and by Hanák and Litván, the policy toward, the nationality question, started to be the object of some criticism showing the problematic character of the national politics that intend to introduce itself as impartial. This topic helps to understand the problems of moderated nationalism and brings back Jászi into a historical position from the heights of impartial morality.

4.2 Discovering a Historical Predecessor: György Litván

In Hungary the historical reception of Jászi – after some peripheral and Marxist critical contributions - was started in the context of the discovery of the “second reform

generation”¹¹² that emerged at the beginning of the century with the program of reforming Hungarian culture and society against the “feudal, reactionary” regime of the Dualist period. In this interpretation, which intended to canonize the movements around the literary journal, *Nyugat* and *Huszádik Század* by emphasizing the “progressive” tendencies of them, which make them acceptable despite their “bourgeois” character, Jászi appeared as an important figure of the scene; however he gained no special attention. In contrast to the reception at *Látóhatár*, his political and theoretical activity after World War I was ignored or only its anti-fascist aspect was mentioned.¹¹³ Jászi, who distanced himself from the revolutionary communism in the emigration, naturally, could not be the object of recognition in the eye of the Marxists, however the figure of Jászi before 1919, who was a “Hungarian Jacobin” and “patriot-democrat” could be accepted as the part of a wide-range progressive tradition in the beginning of the 60s, although this acceptance was criticized by the strictest Marxist historians.¹¹⁴ József Varga argued for the recognition of the importance of Jászi with references to Ady’s evaluations on him, which became a central strategy for supporting his legitimacy among the historians, who narrated the story of Jászi from an empathic point of view.

Because of the taboos of Jászi’s anti-communist politics, his reception focused on his contributions to the national question in the period before his emigration. This issue, mainly with regards to the possibilities of “progressive politics” started to be raised and analyzed by György Litván in the mid-seventies, most prominently in his article in the journal *Valóság* (Reality), which has a more elaborated version published in a separate book, “*Magyar*

¹¹² The term was used in Zoltán Horváth, *Magyar századelő...*

¹¹³ István Borsody, “Jászi Oszkár politikai eszmevilága” (Oszkár Jászi’s political ideas), in *Új Látóhatár*, 37(1987): p. 2.

¹¹⁴ József Varga, “Vita Jászi Oszkárrol” (Debate on Oszkár Jászi), in *Új Írás*, 1(1961): pp. 662-663. The article is part of a debate on the book expressing the strict Marxist opinion by György Fukász.

gondolat – szabad gondolat” (“Hungarian thought – free thought”).¹¹⁵ Litván was a historian, originally a Marxist, who was in prison because of his political activity during the ‘56 revolution. After receiving amnesty, he started to orient towards the tradition of the civic radicals and Ervin Szabó.¹¹⁶ In his first article on the relationship between national and “progressive” politics in the activity of this generation he endeavored to outline a possible political behavior, which could integrate the claim for national independence including some elements of nationalist politics and the program of democratization and modernization, which are introduced by him as ones that has been stated in opposition in numerous times in Hungarian history and political thinking. This article presents the alliance of the civic radicals led by Jászi and the leftist part of the Independentist Party led by Mihály Károlyi as a realization of this synthesis, which was repeated only in the movement, *March Front* just before the Second World War.¹¹⁷

The synthesis that was achieved by Jászi and Károlyi is presented by Litván in contrast to the opinion that was outlined by István Király,. According to Király, who was specialized in the research of Ady,¹¹⁸ the radicals and the whole generation of the “progressives” remained “esoteric” in their culture, it had no connection with Hungarian society and they felt no solidarity with the “national struggles of the present and past”. By echoing the most widely accepted evaluation on the radicals in the earlier periods, Király intends to match Ady to the radicals. The argumentation of Litván is driven by the claim for

¹¹⁵ György Litván, “‘Magyar gondolat – szabad gondolat’: Progresszió és nemzeti törekvések a századeleji Magyarországon” (Hungarian thought – free thought: Progression and national movements in Hungary in the beginning of the century), in *Valóság*, 1975, Nr. 3: pp. 11-26.; György Litván, „*Magyar gondolat – szabad gondolat*”: *Nacionalizmus és progresszió a századeleji Magyarországon* (Hungarian thought – free thought: Nationalism and progression in Hungary in the beginning of the century) (Budapest: Magvető, 1978). Although the book provides a longer introduction on the events, the earlier article is more analytical and the debates are more explicitly outlined, what provides more details on the positioning of the text. The 1978 text provides a more fluent and unproblematic narrative.

¹¹⁶ On Litván, see: András Nagy, “Litván György (1929–2006),” in *Holmi*, 2006, Nr. 12, <http://www.holmi.org/2006/12/litvan-gyorgy>, (accessed June 04, 2009).

¹¹⁷ Litván, 1975, p. 25.

¹¹⁸ The explicit polemics with Király: *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15 passim. Litván refers to Király’s book: István Király, *Ady Endre* (Budapest, 1970)

confute the relevance of this division, and place it between Jászi and his circle on the one side and others, for example József Diner-Dénes on the other side. This strategy is contextualized in the text by other gestures of exclusion of the radicals from the membership of the nation that were applied against them in 1906 and later on.¹¹⁹ For supporting the argument, Litván introduces the efforts made by Jászi in order to integrate national questions into socialist and democratic politics. This discourse of Jászi was always in conflict with the performances of exclusion from the side of other nationalist discourses and the politics of internationalism on the side of socialists.

In his argumentation Litván introduces Jászi as the constructor of a new kind of nationalism, which was defined against the old nationalism of the “feudal elite” that was used for the oppression of the peasants and the workers on the one hand, and against the anti-nationalist politics of those socialists, who tended to define themselves out of national frameworks. In the outline of this differentiation, Litván speaks about two distinct tendencies of the history of Hungarian progressive politics. That part of the progressive camp, which has been existed from the period of II. Joseph wanted to achieve the reforms relying on the support of outside-powers, it applied abstract theories and foreign examples for Hungarian reality, wanted to make the reforms or revolutions from above or outside, because it did not believe in the capacities of the actual people of the country labeling them *Asiatic* or *feudal*. By contrast, there has existed another part of progressive tradition, which recognized the real necessities of the society and started reforms from inside relying on the forces of the society.¹²⁰ In this opposition, in which Jászi is introduced as the embodiment of the latter side, Litván resembles the discourse of political realism and the relation to the Hungarian tradition, but in a reconsidered way. The criticism that was often applied against Jászi’s politics is used here in order to separate one part of the progressive tradition, which can be constructed this

¹¹⁹ Litván, 1975, pp. 12 passim.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

way as a significant other, what helps to define the identity of the movement that is bound to Jászi, who becomes the follower and embodiment of the proper line of national history.

Although, Litván remains critical in some issues to Jászi, his narrative is driven by the claim for presenting a political and cultural agenda, which can integrate the positions of the movements of the populists and that of liberal democrats.¹²¹ As a result of this construction, he elaborates a narrative of history, which places the politics, which can be labeled as moderate and liberal or social nationalism in the centre of the historical development of Hungary. The movement, which had been labeled as esoteric, peripheral, unrealistic, non-Hungarian, etc. becomes the mainstream of Hungarian history in Litván's narration, on the basis of moral values and the reality of its ideology.

The book, which was published three years later provided a longer narrative extending also the time-frameworks of the analysis, starting with a more detailed contextualization of the national politics of Jászi and the radicals, placing them into the wide perspective of cultural achievements of the generation, which was perceived from the beginning with the charge of anti-national sentiments, and ending with the story of the revolutions and the political activity of the emigrants in opposition to the Horthy-regime. The extension of the narrative beyond the moment of the declaration of the alliance introduces the synthesis in a more problematic perspective, because it can not avoid facing with the political unsuccessfulness of the coalition, which should represent the new national synthesis. The early days of the revolution are introduced as the "embodiment of the unity and common hopes of all the progressive and national forces"¹²² that was established on the program of real democratization, which meant the refusing of the traditional politics of national supremacy as

¹²¹ For Litván's efforts for building this alliance can be seen in his frequent references to Gyula Illyés and his interview with him: György Litván, "Illyés Gyula Jászi Oszkáról: Illyés Gyulával beszélget Litván György" (Gyula Illyés on Oszkár Jászi: György Litván's interview with Gyula Illyés), in *Kortárs*, 1983: pp. 1785-1791.

¹²² Litván, 1978, p. 128 passim.

well in order to accept the real equality of the nationalities following Jászi's program by accepting the right of using mother tongue in an extended sphere of public life.

The content of this new type of patriotism was defined by the rejection of the “militant” nationalism for the benefit of the application of the politics of peaceful co-operation. However, according to Litván's interpretation, which follows Jászi's approach in its main elements, the appearance of the “militarist, imperialist” forces in the governance of the Entente-states, and the “militant nationalist tendencies” in the neighboring countries made it impossible to achieve this politics.¹²³ The threatening of the territorial integrity of the Hungarian state placed the Hungarian government under the pressure of the public opinion, which caused the acceptance of the pre-eminence of its defense before the program of democratization. This decision of the government, which led, according to the explanation of Károlyi and Jászi to the transfer of power to the socialists, is narrated by Litván with acceptance of their version.¹²⁴ Also following Jászi's interpretation, Litván asserts that it was a mistake to state the priorities in this way. This argumentation bears a twofold tendency: on the one hand, it maintains that the territorial integrity of the Hungarian state, which became the central value of the post-war mainstream providing the basis of the charges against the revolutionary government, was the part of the national identity of the progressive coalition in the first months of 1919. On the other hand, the following of the retrospective self-criticism of Károlyi and Jászi, the narration presents this part of the identity as something that had to be left for the benefit of purer version of restricted and impartial nationalism.

Litván also refers to the reception of the politics of the revolutionary government in the inter-war period. He interprets it as the strategy of radical exclusion from the community of nation by discrediting the whole discourse of the Octobrists as anti-Hungarian asserting

¹²³ Ibid., p. 130.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 143.

that the dissolution of the state was the direct result of their politics.¹²⁵ In this way an alternative nationalist discourse can be discredited as anational quarantining it from the competition of the nationalist discourses for dominance.

4.3 The Rationalist Prophet of Danubian Patriotism: *Látóhatár* and Hanák

After his visit at home in 1947, Jászi became rather isolated in Hungarian public discourse,¹²⁶ therefore he welcomed the invitation of the newly established emigrant journal, *Látóhatár* published in Munich and Paris for sending articles for publication. Jászi was sympathetic for the populist movement already in the 1930s, however few public gestures were done by the populist writers to express their respect for him. In the new situation, when writers and politicians like Gyula Borbándy, Imre Kovács and Zoltán Szabó had to emigrate from the communist Hungary, on the other hand, they intended to keep distance from the tradition of the Horthy regime as well, in order to gain legitimacy for their middle position, which meant also the not uncritical acceptance of the western democracies, they found themselves on the same platform with Jászi, who was accepted by them as an important authority.

The relationship between the much younger generation of the populist writers around *Látóhatár* and Jászi showed the patterns of the relationship of the pupils to their great professor. Jászi on the other hand expressed his respect for the board of the journal claiming that they are the real continuer of his work. He asserted that he could find his real home among this young writers.¹²⁷ The expression of respectful acceptance was declared in the most articulated way first in a special number of *Látóhatár*, which was dedicated to the eightiest

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 144.

¹²⁶ Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, pp. 447 passim.: Jászi broke the relationship with Mihály Károlyi and criticized publicly Imre Csécsy because of their co-operation with the communists.

¹²⁷ His letter to the editors is quoted by Gyula Borbándi, *Nem éltünk hiába: az Új Látóhatár négy évtizede* (Budapest: Európa, 2000), p. 38.

anniversary of the professor.¹²⁸ In this number, the gestures of respect are expressed in a wide range from the personal memories of a student of Jászi from Oberlin to the historical essay of Imre Kovács on Jászi's role in Hungarian history and the relation of the populist movement to his work. In spite of the great variety of the manners of the texts, some common features can be observed among them.

All the texts introduce Jászi from a moral point of view: all of them emphasize the moral character of the person and asserts the outstanding moral standard of his behavior. Jászi's relation to history and politics is narrated in these texts from a perspective, which follows the self-fashioning of him that was outlined in his articles and more elaborately in his memoir after World War I, *Magyar Kálvária – Magyar Feltámadás* (Hungarian Calvary – Hungarian Resurrection). By contrast to other interpretation in the inter-war period, this kind of self-interpretation is taken for granted: it is impossible to imagine any other motifs for the author that comes from the gesture of respectful celebration. All the articles are used for the strengthening of the bonds of a political alliance. As a result of the strategy of identification with the professor, the history of Hungary is interpreted from Jászi's point of view, which provides a problematic, however useful narration that can be accepted for the establishment of the legitimacy of both parts.

In the history that is told the central references are the Horthy regime, Masaryk, and the virtual existence of the “Danubian federalism” and “eastern Switzerland”. The Horthy regime is introduced as a political system, which maintains the persecution of Jászi because it needs him and his circle as scapegoats for the dissolution of the historical state. The lack of sociological knowledge and blindness for the real problems of society on the one hand, and rude oppression against the workers and peasants inside and contempt against the

¹²⁸ *Látóhatár*, 1955, Nr. 2.

neighboring nations marks the character of this system.¹²⁹ According to Kovács, it is self-evident that a system like this will haunt a person like Jászi, who is “one of the purest characters and the most prepared scientists of his age”, who became the most dangerous enemy of the regime as a “homecoming specter”. Although he was vilified for being responsible for the dissolution, he could not do anything because of the long-term faults of the earlier governments that provided a situation, in which Jászi found himself in front of “nationalists” of the nationalities. Although he was not successful in his policy as a minister, according to Kovács, he established a school with his program for the “more realist nation- and society perception.”¹³⁰

Realist nation-perception means in this context the acceptance of the “equality of nations” that is expressed by the withdrawal of that kind of nationalist sentiment and ideology, which is based on the supremacy of the Hungarian nation above others. In this regard the ethical behavior that is based on the self-imposed restriction of the own claims in order to make possible the proper existence of others, is introduced through the presentation of the moral personality of Jászi as the basis of solving the problems of the region. It is important also because of the situation of the Magyar minorities in the neighboring lands. Jászi became also an important legitimizing reference as the Hungarian, who was sensitive towards the problems of national equality before Trianon as well.¹³¹ The virtual history of ethical acts and rational understanding is opposed in this narration to the reality of history that is the result of the realized alternatives, which proved to be always the worst choices.

On the one hand, this kind of reception of Jászi means the acceptance of a Kantian ethic and vision on the co-existence of people in a cosmopolitan manner, on the other hand,

¹²⁹ Imre Kovács, “Jászi és a nép” (Jászi and the people), in *Látóhatár*, 1955. Nr. 2.: p. 117.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 118.

¹³¹ István Borsody, “Jászi és Bibó” (Jászi and Bibó), in *Új Látóhatár: Válogatás 1950-1989* (Új Látóhatár: selection 1950-1989), ed. Pál Szeredi (Budapest: Püski, 1989), p. 159.

the national framework is not left by the authors. Nation, as the subject of history and of a possible federal organization remains in the centre of this discourse, which is shown for example in the above mentioned article by Kovács, which explains the importance of the agricultural reform among others by its role in the maintenance of the population of Magyar ethnic character. According to Kovács the situation of the last centuries can be described as the existence of “the sintering Magyar ethnic population in the deadly squeeze of the nationalities”.¹³²

Despite of some textual clues on a more problematic perception of the questions of national oppositions the restricted nationalism of the circle is dominant in the discourse. This nationalist discourse tends to formulate itself in terms of gestures and rhetoric of impartiality that can be observed in the references to a possible comparison of Jászi and Thomas G. Masaryk.¹³³ Both of them are introduced as the representatives of universalistic humanism and democratism that had been represented by them with intransigent morality. However, Borsody states that there can be observed some difference between the two of them. He depicts Jászi as the purer and more credible representative of national impartiality.¹³⁴ According to his interpretation, Jászi could more perfectly transcend nationalism (that means in this case only partial ideologies of nationalist discourses), because he was affected by the sins of the Hungarian statehood, therefore, his experiences made him possible to distance himself from all forms of national partiality. Masaryk, on the other side, remained between the frameworks of nation-state for a much longer period, and even, when he approached federalist thinking, the federal plan that was offered by him, was restricted to a Slavic federation with hostile feelings towards Germans and Hungarians. Federalism, as the

¹³² Kovács, p. 120.

¹³³ István Borsody, “Jászi és Masaryk,” (Jászi and Masaryk) in *Látóhatár*, 1959: pp. 56-61.; Hubert Ripka, “Masaryk és Jászi,” (Masaryk and Jászi) in *Látóhatár*, 1955: Nr. 2: pp. 113-115.

¹³⁴ Borsody, p. 57 passim.

the loss of the development in leaving partial emotions towards the own nation became the most perfect expression of the hopes of transcending national conflicts for Borsody.

After the contributions to Jászi's reception by the circle of *Látóhatár* and Litván, the most elaborated interpretation on his nationalist politics was provided by Péter Hanák. Hanák in his monograph introduces the development of Jászi's concepts on the national question focusing on its formulation of an impartial nationalism, which considers the interests of all nations by applying the idea of Danubian solidarity and consciousness. Hanák's text is written in a manner that can achieve the articulation of a twofold argumentation. On the one hand, Hanák distance himself in the narrative from the position of Jászi's by explicit evaluations of his politics as unrealistic that articulates an utopian thinking that originates from Jászi's nineteenth century thinking, on the other hand, Jászi's ideas are presented as the plan of a "prophet", which bears the possibilities of salvation of the problems of the region:

"Jászi's significance in history of ideas can be grasped in his contribution to the milder, more civilized variety of Hungarian nationalism and its seeking for compromise."¹³⁵

In the interpretation of "civilized nationalism", Hanák follows Litván's contributions: it is the result of the integration of the political movements of "anti-feudal struggle" and independentist movement. The program of this kind of nationalism would be "peaceful assimilation and national integration."

Hanák also accepts Litván's distinction between the two types of intellectuals, who came from Jewish background: the internationalist-socialist, and the "one, who reforms national thinking".¹³⁶ This distinction is also placed in a comparison with the contemporary generation in Vienna, whose members were also alienated from their traditions, however a great difference can be observed in their reactions. While the Viennese intellectuals moved

¹³⁵ Hanák, p. 35. (My translation.) "Jászi eszméletörténeti jelentősége éppen abban áll, hogy a Magyar nacionalizmus szelídőbb, civilizált változata és kompromisszum keresése felé tájékozódott."

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 29.

toward an esoteric, avant-garde direction, their counter-parts in Budapest – at least partly – imagined their activity in a national framework seeking for new definitions of national identity. Jászi, who belonged to the latter, is presented as the tragic hero of the narration of history, who represents a moral reality that does not fit to the realities of history, although it would mean a higher level of moral existence. On the one hand, Hanák criticizes Jászi's thinking because of his lack of capability to accept that the positivist rationalism has its nineteenth century limits in understanding social reality.¹³⁷ Hanák's criticism resembles the arguments of Szekfű and the conservative liberal discourse in referring to the problematic relations in Jászi's thinking to social and political reality. On the other hand, a great difference can be observed in the evaluation of this characteristic of his thinking. As it was shown before, in the interpretation of the "great Hungarian" discourse, applying an unrealistic politics that breaks the continuity of historical institutions can be judged morally as unacceptable, because it follows its great ambitions that are not fitting to the capacities of the agent and the possibilities of the situation, therefore this behavior can be marked as irresponsible. By contrast, Hanák evaluates this behavior as tragic, however not in the sense that it would be caused by a tragic sin, but as tragic greatness. This is the tragedy of the hero, who struggles against the overwhelming forces of maladies of history; therefore in spite of his fall, he represents moral superiority over the existing history.

The narrative of the tragic hero is constructed in romantic manner. Jászi is introduced as a "rationalist prophet", one, who always prepared for making great things, who wanted to solve the problems of his nation and humanity.¹³⁸ From the beginning of the narration, Jászi is introduced in a very empathic way. His "prophetic" attitude, his "messianism" is legitimized

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 151.

¹³⁸ It is characteristic for the picture that is introduced by Hanák that the book starts with the quotation of Jászi's memoirs concerning the first memory of him about a peasant, who talked with the little Oszkár and he expressed his experience this way: "I imagine Jesus like him. Only Jesus can speak as beautiful as him." (My translation, the original: "Így képzelem el Jézust. Csak az tud ilyen szépen beszélni.") Hanák, p. 5.

in the conclusions of the work, after the outline of the doubts about its relevance in politics, by references to Ady, who is accepted as a special authority by Hanák, fitting to the tradition of a cultic interpretation of his role in the culture of the beginning of the century Hungary, because of his genius that could achieve the synthesis of revolutionary and national tendencies in his poetry and personality, as a result, he became the living embodiment of the spirit of Hungarian history.¹³⁹ Ady's opinion on Jászi's role is accepted as the conclusion of the work. This opinion raises Jászi's figure into a sphere, which is partly aesthetically, partly spiritually transcendent from the sphere of every-day politics.¹⁴⁰ The "rational prophetic character" of Jászi gains its significance in the content of the message that is communicated by him by his "angelic"¹⁴¹ gestures: the initiatives that serve the communication and the construction of a common mentality that can transcend national partiality.

4.4 The New Generation: Predecessor under Doubts: Századvég

In the 80s, when the censorship of late Kádárist regime started loosen, some journals were established, which could remain independent from the direct control of the state. The two most important journals of this kind, *Medvetánc* (Bear-dance) and *Századvég* (End of the Century) were established in order to provide forums for publications in social sciences, what implied that direct political discourse was not part of their agenda. These university journals remained on the field of legality avoiding the taboos of the political life, however making possible the publication of fresh or old articles, which represented scientific approaches that were different from the official practice. In this division of work, *Medvetánc* could maintain a policy, by which the editors intended to avoid any "lying words", although they accepted that some taboos cannot be discussed.

¹³⁹ József Varga, 1961, pp. 660 passim.

¹⁴⁰ Hanák, pp. 157-158 passim.

¹⁴¹ Hanák refers to Jászi's program for establishing *Dunai Népek Kultúrszövetsége* (Cultural Alliance of Danubian Peoples) in order to promote the formation of a new mentality that could construct common cultural values in the region, as "annunciation": Hanák, p. 100.

By this policy the editors could achieve that the authors could write in topics of social sciences without control of censorship¹⁴² that was resulted in the emerging of the scientific prestige of the journal that made it possible to replace *Valóság* in the role of the most prominent journal of social science.¹⁴³ Besides the free tone of the new articles both *Medvetánc* and *Századvég* followed a policy of republishing texts that were considered to represent a living democratic tradition, which was outside of the realm of Marxism, or provided an alternative interpretation to the official line of Marxism. According to Tamás Miklós, the main editor of *Medvetánc*, they published “found “texts that helped to construct a spiritual space: the tradition of Hungarian social science provided a common reference for the discussion.¹⁴⁴ This initiative helped the authors to contextualize themselves in a wider European context through the European horizon of the earlier generations. In *Századvég* a distinct column was established for the publication of old texts called “Living past”. In the first number of the journal in the foreword for the publication of Oszkár Jászi’s articles from the *Bécsi Magyar Újság* (Viennese Hungarian Journal) János Gyurgyák asserts that it is their intention to make connection with the earlier generations.¹⁴⁵

In this practice of both journals, although some differences can be observed, the anti-Marxist and heterodox Marxist leftist tradition played a central role. Especially the generation of the beginning of the century served as an important reference. Similarly to the endeavors of some neo-avant-garde artists to reconstruct the continuity with the pre-first World War generation, the civic radicals and the *Sunday circle*,¹⁴⁶ in the focus of the interest of this circle were also the representatives of these groups: Oszkár Jászi, Károly Polányi, György Lukács

¹⁴² Tamás Miklós, “Foreword,” in *Medvetánc: Magyar gazdaság és szociológia a 80-as években* (Budapest: Minerva, 1988), p. 4.

¹⁴³ László Lengyel, “Levélféle a Valóságról” (Letter on Valóság), in *Új Forrás*, 1996, Nr.7: p.67.

¹⁴⁴ Miklós, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ János Gyurgyák, “Jászi Oszkár és a Bécsi Magyar Újság” (Oszkár Jászi and the Bécsi Magyar Újság), in *Századvég*, 1(1985), p. 123.

¹⁴⁶ József Havasréti, *Alternatív regiszterek* (Alternative registers) (Budapest: Typotex, 2006), p. 117.

and so on. The reception of Jászi is more explicit in the case of *Századvég*, where more articles dealt with topics concerning him besides the republishing of his texts. On the other hand, critical approach to his work and especially his politics is more articulated in *Századvég*, which establishes a relatively more problematic relation to him. In *Medvetánc* only two republishing can be found, but no articles concerning his theories or politics. One of the source publications concerns the correspondence of Jászi and Polányi.¹⁴⁷ Jászi is also present with another selection of correspondence.¹⁴⁸ These letters of Jászi concerns the relation between him and Mihály Károlyi, who approached the communist standpoint after his emigration. Jászi went into another direction refusing Marxism, communism and especially Bolshevism, which he regarded – in accordance with Károlyi – the authentic interpretation of Marxism. The publication of this correspondence introduces Jászi as the paradigmatic representative of the anti-Marxist and anti-Communist leftist democratic tradition, which made him an important sample of behavior among the members of the opposition.

In the first number of *Századvég* a selection was published of Jászi's articles in the *Bécsi Magyar Újság* the representative organ of the Octobrist and communist emigration. In the introduction to the selection, which is also the introduction of the column *Living Past*¹⁴⁹ János Gyurgyák emphasizes that it is not accidental that it was started with Jászi stressing his central importance in the tradition. According to this introduction, the column was designed to open the field for the debates of the earlier generations:

¹⁴⁷ János Gyurgyák, György Litván, "Válogatás Jászi Oszkár és Polányi Károly levelezéséből" (Selection from the correspondence of Oszkár Jászi and Károly Polányi), in *Medvetánc*, 7(1987): pp. 256-283.

¹⁴⁸ György Litván, János Varga, "Az emigráns Jászi Oszkár levelezéséből" (Selection from the correspondence of Oszkár Jászi as an emigrant), in *Medvetánc*, 3(1982-1983): pp. 180-215.

¹⁴⁹ János Gyurgyák, Jászi Oszkár és a bécsi magyar újság, in *Századvég*, 1985, Nr. 1., pp. 123-127.

“We want to provide some details for the mapping of the battle positions of the groups and generations, which became tragically in opposition and could not understand each other, and for the understanding of their thinking, ideas and arguments.”¹⁵⁰

Following the initiatives of Litván, this introduction positions itself in the role of a mediator between the oppositional layers of Hungarian intellectual life.

Gyurgyák’s introduction presents Jászi as an emigrant, who was excluded from Hungarian intellectual life, but whose thoughts have lived on in hidden places. He was vilified more often than anybody else as a traitor, the agent of the little entente, naïve dreamer, counter-revolutioner, however he saw it forward that it will be his destiny.¹⁵¹ By this emphasis on his prognosis, he is positioned as someone, who is above the debates going on around him, which shows a cultic pattern. The selection is designed to provide articles that deal with theoretical questions of socialism and liberalism, which are held relevant because of their endeavors to establish an anti-etatist and anti-Marxist socialist theory that can be accepted as a third route between liberal capitalism and communism.

In the later numbers of the journal, there can be found some other articles on Jászi, which deal with his politics toward nationality question. The article written by László Kövér¹⁵² deals with the plans of federalism in the region. He mentions Jászi as one of the prominent representatives of the idea. His interpretation on Jászi’s policy follows Litván’s canonic evaluation: it came too late and did not go far enough remaining inside the framework of the integrity of the old Hungarian state. The two other articles¹⁵³ concern Jászi’s policy and connections towards the neighboring states, Czechoslovakia and Romania with

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 123-124. (My translation.) „Az egymással tragikusan szembekerülő, és egymást meg nem értő csoportok és generációk hadállásainak feltérképezéséhez, gondolkodásmódjuk, eszmeviláguk és érvrendszerük megértéséhez kívánunk adalékokat szolgáltatni.”

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁵² László Kövér, “Egy halhatatlan utopia,” in *Századvég* 1986, Nr. 2, pp. 34-51.

¹⁵³ László Szarka, “Dunai konföderáció – Egy álom realitása. Jászi Oszkár csehszlovákiai kapcsolatai és a magyar kisebbségi kérdés 1919-1939,” in *Századvég* 1986, Nr. 2, pp. 52-66.; Kolozsvári B. Sándor, “Kisebbségben – Belülről és kívülről: Adalékok Jászi Oszkár romániai kapcsolataihoz,” in *Századvég*. 1987. pp. 121-143.

special focus on the problems of the Hungarian minority living in these states. This issue involves a topic that means a problematic part of Jászi's activity being heatedly debated in the inter-war period and influencing his evaluation among a number of intellectuals. The charge that Jászi supported the new governments of these states with ignorance toward the problems of the Hungarian minority concerns his moral integrity that can be formulate as a conflict of loyalties. Szarka's article is more empathic to Jászi's standpoint, although in some ambivalent remarks, it refers to the "moral problems" of the standpoint, which want to balance among the interests of the Hungarian minorities, the Czechoslovak government and the Hungarian democratic change: it claims that in the post-war situation the hope in a possible federation and a politics based on this hope is problematic in regards to the actual situation of the Hungarian minority.¹⁵⁴ The focus of the problem, according to the article is in the acceptance of the support of the neighboring states in the project of democratizing Hungary against the Hungarian regime and on the other hand the defending of the rights of the Hungarian minorities.

This problem is more sharply, although indirectly raised by Kolozsvári's article, which is rather a source-publication with some remarks that endeavor to evaluate the grade of justice in the argumentations of the published texts. The article introduces a debate about Jászi's report on his visits in the successor states of the monarchy in 1934. Nándor Hegedűs, literary historian, an active member of the Magyar Party, criticized Jászi's report in article, because he asserted that Jászi, whom he respects a lot and generally agree with his politics, did not dealt in a necessary weight with the problems of the Magyar minority in Romania. He refers to Jászi as someone, who had always stood out for his morally motivated and impartially balanced standpoints, when the problems of national minorities should be healed; hence now, when the position of Magyar minority in Romania is similarly problematic, he

¹⁵⁴ Szarka, László. p. 53.

should stand out for them using his international respect. This criticism that on the one hand maintains the image of Jászi as the representative of impartial ethics, on the one hand asserts that he became disloyal to his strict judgments because of false belief in the democratization of the successor states. Komáromi positions himself in the debate as a mediator, who introduces the justice of both side, however by publishing the articles, he put his finger on a problematic aspect of the politics of Jászi.

As a conclusion, it can be outlined that although both journals used the tradition of the civic radicals by the establishment of framing itself in the tradition of democratic social thinking that is different from the Marxist agenda, the stresses were laid on different places. On the one hand, in *Medvetánc*, in the first part of the eighties the criticism of Marxism and alternative theories of socialism played the central role. On the other hand in *Századvég*, which was published from the second part of the decade, besides this topic, problematic issues of the national question were also introduced showing a possible direction in distancing from the civic radical tradition that was fulfilled by Gyurgyák in the first decade of the twenty-first century, most radically in his book on the Jewish question in Hungary.

Chapter 5: Outlook and Conclusions: The Reconsideration of Old Debates

The period, after the collapse of communist regime changed the situation in the intellectual life, however Jászi's evaluation has not changed dramatically. On the one hand, he has not become a central figure of the political thinking and intellectual history of the new era, on the other hand, the interpretation that was developed by György Litván and Péter Hanák has become the canonic image on Jászi.¹⁵⁵ The bibliographical monograph that was published by Litván in 2003 provided a powerful image on its main character that was based on the central elements of the earlier interpretation that was elaborated by him. Although more emphasis was given to the American period of Jászi's life providing a great number of biographical details, and by the more elaborated introduction of Jászi's private and moral life, new possibilities emerged for divide the acceptance of his moral character on the one hand, while criticizing his political activity more strongly on the other hand, the image has not changed significantly. In contrast to Litván's synthesizing work, some efforts have been made by other authors in order to re-evaluate Jászi's politics. These interpretations have often used the arguments of earlier critics, mainly concerning the evaluation of the Dualist system and conservative, or traditional national-liberal politics. Political pragmatism and anti-utopianism appeared as the leitmotif of these works, of which the interpretation of János Gyurgyák's criticism is the most elaborated one concerning the national question. Gyurgyák's interpretation concerns also the issue of *populist-urban* dichotomy, which is intended to be transcended by him, however he, despite being a student of Litván, evaluates Jászi's role as a destructive force in the issue, what makes this interpretation outstandingly interesting on behalf of the current research. In the followings I will analyze the debate between the two forceful interpretations of Litván and Gyurgyák, respectively.

¹⁵⁵ Gábor Zoltán Szűcs, "Jászi, Jászi, Jászi," in *Politikatudományi Szemle*, 2004: p. 284.

Gyurgyák, who was co-author with Litván in a number of projects concerning Jászi in the 1980s, in the 2000s developed an interpretation on the Jewish and national question¹⁵⁶ in Hungarian intellectual history that was based on a great measure on the rejection of the political and historical tradition that Jászi means.¹⁵⁷ The central topic of his books that can be regarded as their strongest intention is the description and understanding of the phenomenon of polarization in Hungarian intellectual history in order to mediate between the two parts and transcend their antinomies.¹⁵⁸ In the story that is told by Gyurgyák, Jászi appears as a dividing character, as an important figure in causing the formation of the division. According to him, Jászi being in the position of the intellectual leader of the civic radical circle outlined a provoking image on Hungarian society, politics and history, which excluded all possibilities for a dialogue. Although Gyurgyák acknowledges that Jászi was an outstanding intellectual, who had a number of important remarks and criticism on Hungarian society, however he asserts that Jászi was strongly partial against the traditional Hungarian elites. This statement is supported by the introduction¹⁵⁹ of Jászi's programmatic article in 1907, *Új Magyarország felé* (Towards New Hungary), which is evaluated by Gyurgyák as the expression of "nonsense" and "ahistoric" vision on "two Hungaries", the old and the new ones, respectively. According to Gyurgyák – echoing the argumentation of a number of critics before the First World War and the inter-war period - this concept constructs a strong image of "old Hungary" in order to define the political program of "new Hungary" that is an abstract construction without any historical sense serving pure political claims. Gyurgyák asserts that his observations on the lack of historical sense in the articles of Jászi can be

¹⁵⁶János Gyurgyák, *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon* (The Jewish question in Hungary) (Budapest: Osiris, 2001); János Gyurgyák, *Ezzé lett magyar hazátok: A magyar nemzeteszmé és nacionalizmus története* (This is, what your Hungarian homeland has become: The history of the Hungarian idea of nation and nationalism) (Budapest: Osiris, 2007)

¹⁵⁷ Balázs Trencsényi, "Megtalálni az angyalok hangját – és a részletekben lakozó ördögöket," (Finding the voice of the Angels and the devils in the details) in 2000, 2002, January, http://www.ketezer.hu/menu4/2002_01/trencsenyi.html (accessed June 2, 2009).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Gyurgyák, pp. 165 passim.

accepted as a general characteristic of the whole intellectual circle, of which no historians can be found, although they wrote about history. In his view, although the radicals assumed that their approach represents the proper, scientific comprehension of history, their image on Hungarian history was more impartial and politically motivated than that of the traditional historiography.¹⁶⁰

If the description of the same period and the program of *Új Magyarország felé* by Litván is taken in comparison, it is evident that the politics offered by Jászi is evaluated in rather different context. In this narration, Jászi and his program is introduced as an integrating power, which, after the purification from reactionary tendencies, is ready to offer an alternative that can integrate all “progressive” forces, including also the leftist elements of Independentist party. The difference mainly comes from the choice of the framework of interpretation: while Gyurgyák accepts the view of the liberals, most prominently Gusztáv Gratz, who left the journal *Huszadik Század* in 1906 as the result of the opposition in the evaluation of the King’s decision in not refusing to appoint the oppositional coalition, Litván follows Jászi’s interpretation on the events and the situations, provided by them. It was elaborated by Litván in his earlier books that the schism in 1906 was decisive event in the ideological development of the radicals and also in the formation of their reception, however in opposition to Gyurgyák, it was not interpreted as a fatal error, which led to the separation and esoteric closing of the circle, but established the possibility of the construction of a forceful political ideology. Litván substantially accepts Jászi’s interpretation on the old Hungary, which should have been changed dramatically, therefore he ignores the view of the branches of politics that were excluded from the vision of “new Hungary”. This strategy is introduced as an answer to the policy of exclusion, which was applied by the representatives of “old Hungary” against the radicals using the charge of being anational or anti-national and

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 167.

strange to Hungarian culture. Gyurgyák, on the other hand by his identification to the conservative liberal tradition presents Jászi's politics as a peripheral movement that excludes itself from the national tradition. By contrast, Litván emphasis the continuity of the radicals with the mainstream of nineteenth century liberal politics (Kossuth, Eötvös) in order to place them into Hungarian tradition that fits to their self-fashioning as well.

The difference between the two interpretations can be grasped in the authors' attitude towards utopist thinking and the ethical considerations that are bound to it. It is the difference between a pragmatic and institutionalist view that is close to historicism in its affinity to accept historical contingency, which also implies the acceptance of traditional authorities and power-relations. On the other hand, Litván's interpretation, following the tendencies of the interpretation of Hanák, intends to divide Jászi's oeuvre into two layers. The genre of biography helps him to provide a twofold narrative. On the personal level, the narrator identifies himself to Jászi's efforts in most of the cases. The characteristic of the narrative that it often follows Jászi's interpretations on the events¹⁶¹ expresses the narrators empathic understanding of the intentions of his main character. This empathic narration concerns the ethical character of a historical person, whose politics can be criticized on the basis of realizations, however his moral utopism and prophetism can be accepted as the representative of a historical tendency that expresses a higher level of politics in its intentions than the effectual events. The narration of the book is based on the almost uncritical acceptance of the statement that the intentions of Jászi as a historical personality are identical to the ones that are outlined in his self-interpretations. This characteristic of the biography comes from the approach that accepts the identity that is read out from the oeuvre.

At this point it is possible to bind the findings of the research to the opposition between the interpretations that have just been analyzed. From the analysis it has become

¹⁶¹ Szűcs, p. 288.

visible that Jászi appeared in the Hungarian public discourse with a radically new comprehension of the concept of nation and the politics concerning national differences. His theories on nation were based on the methods of sociological understanding; however he and some other intellectuals in his circle intended to support their ideas with the elaboration of an alternative vision of history that was sharply refused by the elite of historiography and traditional participants of political culture. By the application of his theories and historical explanation, Jászi intended to establish the basis of his politics, which included also the claim for the definition of new type of national identity that could participate in the struggle for dominating national discourse.

The different ways of reception of this initiative has been to be explained by the position of the authors in the discursive struggle in terms of nationalism: authors could join to the cluster of the discourse, which intended to exclude the radicals from the national discourse, or on the other side, they could interpret Jászi from a position, which accepted the identity that was offered by him, despite having a critical position against his effective political actions. The offer for identity proved to be much stronger than the political significance of Jászi's actual strategy.

The content of the different identities can be defined in several ways. In the research, it was found that the terms of political realism referring to several different meanings and the evaluations of moral positions played an important role. I found that in the discursive struggles, the concept of political realism could be used in a number of different functions and referring to different phenomena of social and political realms. Realism could mean the acceptance of traditional institutions and their practice, because of the assumption that they can maintain the integrity of the state. In another version, realism meant the acceptance of the people's will and the identification with its feelings. However, realism also could mean the

realist self-evaluation of a national consciousness, and the acceptance of the forces of history. It has also become observable that the content of the different national identities can be described from this perspective as the bearer of the sense of historical reality. In this approach the choice between different meanings of *Realpolitik* can be comprehended as a matter of identity-politics, which is bound to the different ways of the understanding of history.

Moral issues were strongly involved in the identity-politics of nationalism. The political acts and theoretical debates that concern national politics are always taken as the object of moral judgment. In the case of the topic of my research, moral intentions has been attributed (by himself as well) to Jászi by his empathic biographers, claiming that it is the moral drive of him that calls him to offer a new identity for replacing the immoral old structures of identity. According to the critics, this moral claim became the cause of the disintegration in Hungarian politics, while, it is the integrative power of this identity, which is emphasized by the canonic interpretation. Integration of different clusters of politics and different layers of society appeared as a motif in Jászi's political self-fashioning, and it was attributed to him in some contexts of reception both in regional initiatives for transcending national particularity and inside the national culture in efforts for building coalitions. However, in a number of other cases Jászi was assumed to become the supporter of the forces of dividing tendencies.

It was described in this work that often the assumed impartiality of his moral character has become the object of debates. In this regard, three types of attitude can be differentiated. There are two of them, which accept that Jászi's moral character was intransigently impartial towards the people, nations and phenomena around him. However, while the canonic interpretation emphasize it respectfully considering it as the evidence of his moral greatness, the other opinion asserts that it can mean indifference toward the suffering

of people, and the lack of special feelings that would differentiate his connection to the Hungarians from other people. This view can be accepted as the expression of the claims of a different type of morality that is based on loyalty. On the other side the opinion is outlined that Jászi was rather partial in his judgments against the traditional elite of Hungary. This view criticizes him on the basis of the same ethical norm, although it evaluates his behavior differently.

Bibliography

Ady, Endre. "Jászi Oszkár könyve." (The book of Oszkár Jászi) In. *Ady Endre Összes Prózai Művei Vol. X.* (Collected prose works of Endre Ady), ed. Láng, József, Vezér, Erzsébet, 191-194. Budapest: Akadémiai, 1973.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*.

Bajomi-Lázár, Péter. *Magyar médiatörténet a késő Kádár-kortól az ezredfordulóig.* (Hungarian history of media from the late Kádár-period to the millennium) Budapest: Akadémiai, 2003.

Baka, András. *Eötvös Józseftől Jászi Oszkárig: A magyar nemzetiségi politikai gondolkodás változásai.* (From József Eötvös to Oszkár Jászi: the changing of Hungarian thinking in nationality politics) Budapest, 1990.

Borsody, István. "Jászi Oszkár politikai eszmevilága." (Oszkár Jászi's political ideas) In *Új Látóhatár* 37(1987): 1-15.

Brubaker, Rogers. *Nationalism Reframed : Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Csécsy, Imre. "A destrukció vezére" (The leader of destruction). In *Radikalizmus és demokrácia: Csécsy Imre válogatott írásai* (Radicalism and democracy: the selected writings of Imre Csécsy), ed. Valuch, Tibor, 61-73. Szeged: Aetas, 1988.

Csécsy, Imre. "Területi integritás." In *Radikalizmus és demokrácia: Csécsy Imre válogatott írásai* (Radicalism and democracy: the selected writings of Imre Csécsy), ed. Valuch, Tibor, 50-53. Szeged: Aetas, 1988.

Csizmadia, Ervin. *A Magyar demokratikus ellenzék története.* (The history of the Hungarian democratic opposition) Budapest: T-Twins Kiadó, 1995.

Dénes, Iván Zoltán. "Kossuth-képek és kontextusaik 1849-2002." (Kossuth-images and their contexts 1849-2002) In, *A bűnbaktól a realista lényeglátóig: A magyar politikai és tudományos diskurzusok Kossuth-képei 1849-2002.* (From the scapegoat to realist : Kossuth images of the Hungarian political and scientific discourses 1849-2002), 159-170. Budapest: Argumentum, 2004.

Fodor, G. Gábor. *Gondoljuk újra a polgári radikálisokat.* (Rethinking the civic radicals) Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2004.

Gerő, András. *Imagined History: Chapters from Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century Hungarian Symbolic Politics*. New York : Columbia University Press, 2006.

Glatz, Ferenc. "Előszó az 1989-es kiadáshoz: Három nemzedék története a hetedik nemzedék szemével." (Foreword for the 1989 edition: The history of three generations in the eye of the seventh generation) In Szekfü, Gyula. *Három nemzedék és ami utána következik.* (Three generations and that is following) I-XXXVIII. Budapest: ÁKV-Maecenas, 1989.

Gratz, Gusztáv. *A forradalmak kora: Magyarország története 1918-1920.* (The age of revolutions: history of Hungary 1918-1920) Budapest: Akadémiai, 1992.

Gyurgyák János. *Ezzé lett magyar hazátok: A magyar nemzeteszme és nacionalizmus története.* (This is, what your Hungarian homeland has become: The history of the Hungarian idea of nation and nationalism) Budapest: Osiris, 2007.

Gyurgyák, János, György Liván. "Válogatás Jászi Oszkár és Polányi Károly levelezéséből." (Selection from the correspondence of Oszkár Jászi and Károly Polányi) In *Medvetánc* 1987, Nr. 3-4.

Gyurgyák, János. "Jászi Oszkár és a Bécsi Magyar Újság." (Oszkár Jászi and the Bécsi Magyar Újság) In *Századvég* Budapest, 1.(1985): 123-127.

Gyurgyák, János. *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon.* (The Jewish question in Hungary) Budapest: Osiris, 2001.

Hampsher-Monk, Iain. "Speech Acts, Languages or Conceptual History?" In *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, 37-50. Amsterdam University Press, 1998.

Hanák, Péter. *Jászi Oszkár dunai patriotizmusa.* (Oszkár Jászi's Danubian patriotism) Budapest: Magvető, 1978.

Havasréti, József. *Alternatív regiszterek.* (Alternative registers) Budapest: Typotex, 2006.

Jászi, Oszkár. „Scotus Viator Magyarországról.” (Scotus Viator about Hungary) *Husadik Század* 1909, Nr. 7-8: 60-72.

Jászi, Oszkár. „Magyarország, nemzetiségeink és a külföld.” (Hungary, our nationalities and the foreign countries) *Husadik Század* 1910: 217-218.

Jászi, Oszkár. *A monarchia jövője és a Dunai Egyesült Államok.* (The future of the Monarchy and the Danubian United States) Budapest, 1918.

Jászi, Oszkár. "A külföld felvilágosítása." (The information of the foreign public opinion) *Bécsi Magyar Újság* 23 April 1922: 1.

Jászi, Oszkár. "A magyar emigráció feladatairól." (On the tasks of the Hungarian emigrants) In *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája* (Oszkár Jászi's publicistical works), ed. György Litván and János F. Varga, 371-378. Budapest: Magvető, 1982.

Jászi, Oszkár. *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés.* (Formation of Nation States and the Nationality Question) Budapest: Grill, 1912.;

Jászi, Oszkár. *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929

Jeszenszky, Géza. "Jászi Oszkár és R. W. Seton-Watson levelezése az első világháború előtti években." (The correspondence of Oszkár Jászi and R. W. Seton-Watson in the years before the First World War) *Századok* 1977: 749-774.

Kalmár I., György. *Szociáldemokrácia, nemzeti és nemzetiségi kérdés Magyarországon (1900-1914).* (Socialdemocracy, national and nationality question in Hungary) Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976.

Kohn, Hans. *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background.* New York: Macmillan, 1961.

Kolozsvári B. Sándor. "Kisebbségben – Belülről és kívülről: Adalékok Jászi Oszkár romániai kapcsolataihoz." (In minority – From inside and outside: Details to Oszkár Jászi's Romanian correspondences) In *Századvég* 1987: 121-143.

Komáromi, János. "Jászi Aradon." (Jászi in Arad) In *Új Magyar Szemle* 1920. Nr. 1: 27-35.

Kövér, László. "Egy halhatatlan utópia." (An immortal utopy) *Századvég* 2(1986): 34-51.

László Lengyel, "Levélféle a Valóságról." (Letter on Valóság) *Új Forrás* 1996, Nr.7: 65-69.

Lawrence, Paul. *Nationalism: History and Theory*. (Harlow: Pearson, 2005).

Litván, György, János Varga. "Az emigráns Jászi Oszkár levelezéséből." (From the correspondence of Oszkár Jászi as an emigrant) In *Medvetánc* 1982/4-1983/1.

Litván, György. "'Magyar gondolat – szabad gondolat': Nacionalizmus és progresszió a századeleji Magyarországon." (Hungarian thought – free thought: Nationalism and progression in Hungary in the beginning of the century) *Valóság*, 1975, Nr. 3: 11-26.

Litván, György. "*Magyar gondolat – szabad gondolat.*": *Nacionalizmus és progresszió a századeleji Magyarországon.*" (Hungarian thought – free thought: Progression and national movements in Hungary in the beginning of the century) Budapest: Magvető, 1978.

Litván, György. "Illyés Gyula Jászi Oszkár-ról: Illyés Gyulával beszélget Litván György." (Gyula Illyés on Oszkár Jászi: György Litván's interview with Gyula Illyés) In *Kortárs*, 1983: 1785-1791.

Litván, György. *Jászi Oszkár*. Budapest: Osiris, 2003.

Magyar, Bálint. "Interview." In Csizmadia, Ervin. *A Magyar demokratikus ellenzék Vol. 2: Interjúk*. (The Hungarian democratic opposition: Interviews) Budapest: T-Twins Kiadó, 1995.

Mályusz, Elemér. *A vörös emigráció*. (The red emigrants) Gödöllő, Máriabesnyő: Attraktor, 2006.

Miklós, Tamás. "Foreword." In *Medvetánc: Magyar gazdaság és szociológia a 80-as években*. (Medvetánc: Hungarian economy and sociology in the 80s) Budapest: Minerva, 1988.

Nagy, András. "Litván György (1929–2006)," in *Holmi*, 2006, Nr. 12, <http://www.holmi.org/2006/12/litvan-gyorgy>, (accessed June 04, 2009).

Ottlik, László. "'Új Hungária' és 'Keleti Svájc.'" *Magyar Szemle* 7(1929), Nr 2: 113-124.

Özkirimli, Umut. *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A critical engagement*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.

Pethő, Sándor. *Világostól Trianonig: A mai Magyarország kialakulásának története*. (From Világos to Trianon: the history of the formation of contemporary Hungary) Budapest: Enciklopédia R.T., 1925.

Stumpf, István. "Egy lehetőség: a szakkollégium." (A possibility: the college) In *Századvég* 1(1985): 1-10.

Szabó, Ervin. "Társadalmi és pártharcok a 48-49-es magyar forradalomban." (Social and party struggles in the '48-49 Hungarian revolution) In *Szabó Ervin történeti írásai* (Ervin Szabó's historical works), ed György Litván, 239-577. Budapest: Gondolat, 1979.

Szakmári, Gáspár. "Az októberi-márciusi felforgatás és irányítója." (The October-March disorder and its arbiter) *Aurora* 1922: 9-42.

Szarka, László. "Dunai konföderáció – Egy álom realitása: Jászi Oszkár csehszlovákiai kapcsolatai és a magyar kisebbségi kérdés 1919-1939." (Danubian confederation – the reality of a dream: Oszkár Jászi's Czechoslovakian correspondences and the Hungarian minority question 1919-1939) In *Századvég* 2(1986): 52-66.

Szász, Zsombor. "A gyulafehérvári rezolúciók. 1918 december 1 – 1928 deember 1." In *Magyar Szemle* 4(1928): 356-364.

Szekfü, Gyula. *Három nemzedék és ami utána következik*. (Three generations and that is following) Budapest: ÁKV-Maecenas, 1989.

Szűcs, Zoltán Gábor. "Jászi, Jászi, Jászi." in *Politikatudományi Szemle* 2004: 280-287.

Takáts, József. *Modern magyar politikai eszmetörténet*. (Modern Hungarian history of political ideas) Budapest: Osiris, 2007.

Trencsényi, Balázs. "Megtalálni az angyalok hangját – és a részletekben lakozó ördögöket." (Finding the voice of the Angels and the devils in the details) In *2000*, 2002, January, http://www.ketezer.hu/menu4/2002_01/trencsenyi.html (accessed June 2, 2009).

Trencsényi, Balázs. "A békecsinálás művészete, a nemzetállamiság és a kelet-európai föderációs elképzelések." (The art of peace-making, nation-state and the Eastern-European federation plans), In *A politika nyelvei: Eszmetörténeti tanulmányok* (Languages of politics: Works in the history of ideas), 277-301. Budapest Argumentum, 2007.

Wolff, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.