



Hungarian Thinkers in Search of Democratic European Identity

(The ideas and discussions of Eötvös, Jászi and Bibó on nation, state, and federation)

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1 Abstract

The paper deals with the intellectual history of the theory of international relations in Central Europe in a comparative perspective. It concentrates on the views of three Hungarian political thinkers on the idea of civil society, modernization, democratic Europe and its internal and external state organisation principles corresponding. The three thinkers are József Eötvös (1813-1871), Oszkár Jászi (1875-1957), and István Bibó (1911-1979). They represented three different periods of history: Eötvös was one of the most important political thinkers of the reform period, and the compromise period in Austria-Hungary. Jászi was the most important liberal theoretician and politician of the beginning and the first half of the 20th century, while Bibó played an analogous role after the Second World War period and during the Soviet supremacy. Additionally, the ideas of their most important Central European and Western contemporaries, including their discussions on nation, state and federation, will also be presented. Biographical motivations, psychological analyses of social processes, national images of stereotyped thinking will also be addressed to make ideas on social organization and reality more understandable and enjoyable.

On basis of a large source material and specialized literature the paper shows how well these Hungarian reform politicians, and their Central European contemporaries were embedded in the West European political and philosophical thinking. The main purpose of the paper is to present how these Hungarian thinkers tried to move the Central European society (the Habsburg Empire and Hungary) in direction of Western social processes. It concentrates on their search for a democratic European political identity, and for democratic state organisational principles for a multinational state. The paper also shows that all three recognised the antagonism between democracy and nationalism, as they appeared in the Western idea of democratic nation state. Supporting federative and confederative legal constitutional principles, they developed the idea of democratic constitutional multinational state. While drafting the framework for a supranational identity, they also contributed to the development of human rights, and the emergence of a European identity.

The following topics are discussed in more details: the history of the idea of a civil society; the challenge of the American Constitution, 1787, the Swiss Constitution, 1848, and of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, 1789 in Central Europe; the period of the democratic reforms of the liberal nobility in the Habsburg Empire, including its Hungarian part; the dead-lock of the social democratization process caused by the emergence of “language fights” and nationalism; a critical assessment of the French idea of a constitutional centralised unitary nation state; discussions on the unitary nation state and federation among nationalists and federalists; ideas on a democratic multinational constitutional state organization directed by multilevel governance, as opposed to nationalism; the idea of personalism based on equal political and human rights and duties; the idea of separation of nation (cultural nation) and of state (political nation); the organization of people in a double, i.e., cultural and civil administrative structure within the framework of democratic constitutional multinational states; the Hungarian Nationality Law of 1868 – as the first attempt in Europe to solve the national minority problem on a democratic legal constitutional way; democratic association policy; cul-



tural/language “borders” in a federation; discussions on the necessity of a Central European union as the regional part of the European union; the influence of Kant’s ideas on the eternal peace and world federation in Central Europe; the interpretation of the idea of democratic European identity.

The works of these Hungarian thinkers and their Central European contemporaries are enough forgotten in the West. It is necessary to rethink, and to reintegrate this knowledge, too, into the general European cultural framework, if a true European identity is to be developed. This is also the background of this study.¹

¹ In this paper I used larger portions of my articles published in Ungarn-Jahrbuch with the permission of the editor in chief, Lengyel K. Zsolt.



2 Eötvös on the multinational federalist state based on multilevel governance

2.1 Eötvös and the Western idea of civil state

2.1.1 Against the backward society of the 'People of Orient'

Baron József Eötvös (1813-1871) was born into a politically prominent noble family on September 3, 1813 (About Eötvös see: Ferenczi 1903; Voinovich (1902-1903): 195-227; Wierer 1960; Weber 1966; Bódy 1972; Bódy 2004; Kosáry 1990; Bóka 1999; Bóka, 2001; Bóka 2003). The young baron Eötvös rejected his family tradition of serving the political and social interests of the Habsburg dynasty. Under the influence of the deep going changes caused by the ideas of the French revolution and under the ideas of his favourite thinkers, Victor Hugo, Rousseau, Chateaubriand, François Guizot, Simone de Sismondi, Tocqueville, J. S. Mill, Benjamin Constant, Thomas Jefferson, Montalembert he worked for a Hungarian social and political renewal. In the beginning he wrote political essays, political treaties on prison reform, on Jewish emancipation, and also social novels which presented with realism the injustices of the backward Hungarian feudal social relations, especially serfdom (*The Village Notary*, Pest, 1845; *Hungary in 1514*, Budapest, 1847). This was the period when he tried to understand and speak about the problems of Hungarian society searching at that time ways out of backwardness. He acknowledged that compared to the Western states, there was in Hungary no freedom of thought, speech, and press, a penal code was also missing. The legal system of the country was obsolete, the public administration old-fashioned, the education system out of date, the bourgeoisie undeveloped. The people themselves were without rights. The traditional middle nobility, named gentry, had immense power by controlling the political, administrative, judicial and legislative organs of Hungary. This was due to the unique position of the Hungarian counties, based on the principle of the traditional county autonomy, which made them states within a state, and insured their controlling influence over the national Diet (parliament). All this was achieved through the powerful county assemblies, which had an absolute power in each county and elected the delegates to the Lower House of the Diet. As a consequence the counties controlled the parliament. Thus politics in Hungary depended upon the provincially-oriented, conservative and backward county aristocracy. This conservative system resulted in particularism and disunity. Eötvös believed that the county system made possible the rule of traditional despots in the Hungarian Kingdom.

In his youth Eötvös witnessed the crisis in the Hungarian society. At the same time he noticed the enthusiasm of his compatriots for the Western democratic ideas after that Széchenyi announced his reform program in Hungary. The majority of the population of Hungary and the parliament, too, demanded reforms. The problem facing the Hungarian reform nobility was how to unify the interests of the people and the ruling nobility. At the same time they had to defend the independence of their country against the regime of the Habsburgs aimed at the Germanisation policy of Hungary. The safe-



guarding of the ancient autonomy of the counties was generally regarded as the best defence of Hungarian independence, without recognising the fact that it could stop the planned reforms.

Eötvös was a humanitarian and moderate liberal nationalist in the reform period with a centralist modernization program (Bárány 1968: 268). His aim was to modernize feudal Hungarian society by means of peaceful democratic economic and institutional reforms. Eötvös acknowledged that the feudal nobility could only exercise the leadership of the reform in Hungary. He thought that it would be necessary to awake them to the consciousness of their interests. This is why he began to explain to the nobility that reform of the Hungarian society was in their interest. Since the Hungarians could not escape the Western expansionist, and modern world process the only way for them to keep what they had was to bring the country to the same cultural, economical, and political level as the most powerful and civilised nations. This could only be done by the ruling class, which owned the country as a result of its feudal privileges. If they did not want to lose all what they had, they had to change their ideas on the Hungarian state.

Eötvös started to attack the ancient county system and the old succession right of estate (the right of entailment). He made clear that these old and conservative privileges undermined national unity and made the country defenceless against foreign domination. They also paralysed every necessary common action for reform (Eötvös: Reform. In: Eötvös 1902-1903f: 89-326). The old county system, like the ancient Greek democracy and freedom, resulted in particularism in place of union. In Antiquity the Macedonians had easily conquered the Greeks and forced them to unite by despotic means. Eötvös believed that the situation of the Hungarian county autonomy was the same. If the nobility did not reform the county system of Hungary, the Habsburg despotism would subdue and unify the country (Eötvös: Agricola levelei. In: Eötvös 1902-1903h: 28-29). Regarding the right of entailment Eötvös emphasised that it did not provide the nobility with modern property rights. It was only a piece of paper, a text, based on ancient traditional law (Eötvös: Teendők. In: Eötvös 1971d: 98-119). Writing all this under the pseudonym of "Agricola" Eötvös tried to awake the traditional and conservative nobility to their real interests and tasks in a 19th century in Europe.

Eötvös outlined further a program of administrative and parliamentary reform, and of social emancipation. These reforms had to form the basis of a democratic political structure in Hungary with an autonomous government responsible to the parliament chosen by the people. He emphasised the necessity to abolish the privileges of nobility, to liberate the peasants from bondage, to introduce modern forms of taxation (common bearing the burden of taxation), to introduce freedom of conscience and the press, and equality before the law. Parallel with the elimination of the feudal institutional system of Hungary Eötvös planned the democratic reorganization of the county system. He emphasised that a certain centralization of the administration of the country by the state is necessary. At the same time he proposed to balance centralization by a bottom up democratic structure based on local autonomy, equal political and human rights for everybody, regardless on nationality, religion and property. His reform ideas were based on the Western democratic ideas. He believed that this was the only way to integrate Hungary into the contemporary Western society (Kosáry 1946: 246).

Eötvös program was a plan for a great experiment to improve the society of the "Peoples of the Orient" (Hungary) according to the principles of the "Peoples of the West". The feudal ruling class



had to change its old mentality, and give up its privileges. If they wanted to become the representatives of the “third class” in the Western sense they had to eliminate their feudal ego and behave according to the “Western codes and forms” (The Declaration of the rights of Man and Citizen). This was an idealistic program, but in fact the whole reform experiment was utopian. It needed a lot of time, work, knowledge and the good will of everybody to realize it. However Eötvös believed that following democratic standards of the West was the only way to safeguard Hungary in the future association (union) of the European nations. The great merit of the Hungarian reform nobility, like Eötvös, was that they recognized the necessity of fundamental reform and gave ideas for a better organization of the state. But there was a great gulf between the mentality and knowledge of the prominent democratic reformers and the common nobility (gentry) in Hungary. The traditional corrupt gentry mentality formed an insurmountable obstacle in the way of modernization and Westernization.

2.1.2 Against religious and national prejudices

The emphasis in the reform period was on the social improvement of the whole Hungarian society according to the Western democratic ideas including the traditional fight against prejudiced opinions. The reformers believed that the democratic reforms could solve the national minority problem automatically in Hungary. Eötvös was aware of the phenomenon of the national minority (nationality) problem but he had no proposition to solve this problem at that time. This is curious, because he studied the so called “questions” like the Turkish “question” the Jewish “question”, and the Irish “question” and as a conclusion he recognised and acknowledged already in the forties that the phenomenon of discrimination of the different people on basis of religion or nationality was based on prejudices which covered social conflicts, patterns of domination and forms of political manipulation.

Regarding the “Turkish question” (the Ottoman problem), Eötvös acknowledged that the creation of ‘eternal enemies’ and the presentation of the non-Christians by stereotypes were the products of medieval Christian worldview. According to Eötvös this age-old crusader mentality disguised the conquering mentality of European politics. He believed that the fight against the Ottoman Empire is lawful only as self-defence. In his social historical novel “*Aufstand der Kreuzfahrer*” Eötvös, following the example of the European humanists, presented the Ottoman society as better than the feudal Hungarian society from the point of view of the great masses of peasants and serfs who were more oppressed and exploited in Hungary (Eötvös 1976: 715). Eötvös wanted, in this way, awake Hungarian society to a better consciousness of its social injustice and backwardness. He raised the questions: Who was actually the ‘eternal enemy’ for the Hungarian peasants? Were they really the Ottomans? He believed that the real enemy of the peasants was their internal ‘eternal enemies’ embodied by their feudal landlords who kept them in eternal serfdom and regarded the country (Vaterland) as their loot. Therefore the Christian idea of freedom could not be realised in the fight against the Ottomans but by the struggle against the feudal nobility for the liberation of peasants in Hungary. The situation of the peasants in the Ottoman Empire had always been better than in Hungary. An improved and modernised Hungarian society would be able to defend itself more successfully against the Ottoman attacks when it needed (Eötvös 1976: 112-113, 225, 343, 382, 715, 725, 738). All these ideas show that Eöt-



vös regarded the ‘Turkish question’ as a religious prejudice. For him the Ottomans as ‘eternal enemies’ of the ‘united Christianity’ was one of the greatest prejudices and stereotypes of Christianity.

Eötvös regarded the ‘Jewish question’ as a religious and social prejudice based on false ideas. He believed that this attitude covered a complex socio–psychological phenomenon based on a medieval religious conception and on the fear of the economic power of Jews. As foreigners they always had been excluded from the traditional Hungarian noble society. As a result of their social isolation they were forced to live by trading, banking and studying. All this was condemned and scorned by the Hungarian feudal society. As experts of modern capitalism the Jews became rich and economically powerful. The fears of the Hungarian nobility of losing status and power reflected in the phenomenon of anti–Semitism. This traditional way of defending one’s interests by generating enemy images was deeply rooted in the self–defending mechanism of the human psychology. Proposing the emancipation of the Jews, Eötvös stressed that this was the only way to fight against false and discriminating ideas and social injustice. The elimination of religious, national and social stereotypes was only possible in the framework of a general democratisation process of Hungary by insuring everybody equal chances in the society. Equal chances meant equal political and cultural rights for everybody living in the country (Eötvös 1981a). Thus Eötvös believed that the condition of the emancipation of the Jews was the successful democratization of the Hungarian Kingdom.

Dealing with the ‘Irish question’ Eötvös searched the nature of the religious and national conflicts in the West. He wanted to know why the ‘Irish question’ was unsolvable. At the same time he wanted to find out how such conflicts were to be avoided in multinational Hungary in the reform period. This was why he had written his essay “*Poverty in Ireland*” in 1840 (Eötvös, 1902-1903g: 38-109). In this essay Eötvös made parallels between the Anglo–Irish controversy and the fight of Hungary for freedom against the Habsburg dynasty. Eötvös regarded the Anglo–Irish controversy not only as an example of a religious and national antagonism, but also as a struggle for social betterment and political freedom in Ireland. The Hungarian liberals were confronted with the same problems regarding their relationship with the Habsburg dynasty. Eötvös emphasised further the great economic differences between England and Ireland. He explained the poverty in Ireland by pointing to the systematic English policy since the 16th century to deprive Ireland of its nationality, religion and self–government. It was achieved by means of the systematic replacement of the Irish landowner aristocracy by the English one. An absentee Protestant English landowner class controlled as a result Irish land. Their power was based on conquest and it was upheld by an alien power. There were deep social, religious, and national animosities between the English conquerors and the Irish Catholic rural masses. The Irish Catholic population could not appeal to any authority for the protection of their human rights against the absolute tyranny of the English landowners. The religious conflict between the Irish Catholics and the English Protestants was the result of the oppression and exploitation of the Irish people by England. Thus, in Eötvös’ view, the ‘Irish question’ was a pure case of the conquest and the rule of one class over another. He believed that the English government played the stereotyped role of the tyrants in classical Antiquity. They used the centuries old mechanisms of tyranny to break the resistance of a people. They continually committed more and more crimes. The ruling class of England, otherwise admired by Eötvös, created a great empire by conquering world–wide, and used the unlimited rights



of an unlimited despotism in Ireland (Eötvös, 1902-1903g: 90). In this respect the Hungarian ruling aristocrats were the counterparts of the English one. They also remained indifferent to the fate of the serfs and served the Habsburg dynasty.

For the Hungarian reform nobility Eötvös mentioned, as a warning, the case of the Irish reform nobility. In 1782 the privileged classes of Irish society in the name of the common cause protested against the oppression of their fellow-countrymen and demanded the emancipation of the Catholics. But the enthusiasm of the reform nobility disappeared step by step. The Irish people felt themselves deceived. As a consequence under the influence of the French Revolution they revolted against their oppressors in order to get back their lands and properties. They made clear for everybody that the 'Irish question' as a religious conflict was only a cover for English domination. Finally Eötvös emphasised that the English government had to recognize at last that it could govern only by honesty. They had to acknowledge that one nation couldn't be the property of the other one (Eötvös 1902-1903g: 95-97).

Analysing the Irish reform movement, Eötvös wanted to emphasise also that the Irish rebellion had destroyed the possibility of peaceful reform. As a conclusion he proposed to the Hungarian reform politicians to learn from the 'Irish question' and to solve analogous social conflicts and nationality disputes between the Hungarian national democratic movement and the Habsburg government by a peaceful reconciliation based on a common constitution. He concluded further that the 'Irish question' was the result of a deep religious and social conflict, which appeared in religious and national intolerance. The solution to such kinds of conflicts could be only to insure for everybody equal political and human rights.

With respect to Hungary's multinational character, Eötvös' main problem was, how to break the feudal structure and implement democratic reforms in the whole country including the national minorities, too. On the basis of his studies of the 'Jewish and the Irish question' he believed that the main political goal of the reform programme of the Hungarian liberal nationalist nobility had to be the guarantee of equal political and cultural rights for everybody living in Hungary. He believed further that the democratisation of Hungary was in the general interest of every people living in multinational Hungary regardless of his or her linguistic, ethnic and religious differences. This was the way to prevent the rise of Serb, Croat, Slovak, Romanian etc. nationalism and conflicts of interests between the Magyar majority and the different national minorities in Hungary. He thought that the introduction of democracy was the only possible way to avoid of a number of similar 'questions' like the Irish one in Hungary.

It seems that Eötvös was thinking that accepting Western democratic ideas on civil society could solve Hungary's problems. He believed that the first step toward individual freedom had to be the liberation of the people (the persons) from the social oppression caused by privileges and prejudices: emancipation of the Jews, emancipation of the peasants. It seems further that Eötvös believed that the real and consistent realisation of the democratic reforms would solve the national and national minority problem automatically. He was in this period not yet able to perceive that in a feudal multinational territory which had not yet created a democratic political union in the form of a federate state structure or a centralised nation state, (like the United States of America or France) it would be necessary to



deal immediately and separately with the rights of the national minorities. He could not foresee that an inconsistent and incomplete realization of democratic reforms would revive national animosities and national prejudices. At the same time he was aware that the modernization of the country meant the implementation of Western institutions, which contradicted the Hungarian social evolution. He recognised that the experiment could produce unforeseen events and phenomena for the ‘People of Orient’ (the Hungarians) (Eötvös: Reform. In: Eötvös 1902-1903f: 240-241). He believed, however that the success of democratic reforms was an urgent necessity for everybody including the nationalities, too. He thought that national conflicts could only be the result of defects in the democratisation process.

Eötvös believed further that the different national minorities in Hungary lived in a centuries old coexistence with each other. He thought that Hungary was a historically developed unity of the different peoples living here. This centuries old historical unity of different people stood before a country-wide democratisation process. Although he only later used the idea of the ‘State of Saint Stephan’ as an argument it is very possible that he always had believed in this national idea. This idea expressed the imagined continuity of a unified Hungarian state since the 10th century. According to the “Exhortation of Saint Stephen to his son” the future governments of the country had to acknowledge that “*unius linguae uniusque moris regnum imbecille et fragile est*” (Eötvös: A nemzetiségi kérdés. In: Eötvös: 1902-1903i: 17). This principle was in accordance with Eötvös’ ideas on the peaceful coexistence of different peoples in a big territory, and even in one state as a result of a long historical development. The “idea of Saint Stephan” intended to safeguard and develop the patriotic unity of the multinational Hungary according to the idea of ‘Christian unity’. Eötvös believed that Hungary had always been composed of diverse nations that cooperated with each other peacefully under the protection of the Hungarian crown (Eötvös: A nemzetiségi kérdés. In: Eötvös: 190-1903i: 17). He believed that Hungary had developed into a national union during its first eight hundred-year history. It was the Turkish conquest that had prevented the resurgence of national antagonisms in Hungary. He thought that the ‘national awakening’ of the different national groups of Hungary would not turn against the historical union of the country because democracy was in the interest of everybody. He believed that the national minorities did not want to secede and they felt themselves at home in the united Hungarian Kingdom. Thus Eötvös believed in the unity of the country as an unquestionable historical fact. From all this followed his faith in the possibility of the democratic reorganisation of the Hungarian state structure as a unity of the people living there based on shared principles. He believed that the idea of the general democratisation of the backward feudal country by the implementation of Western democratic ideas, and by insuring equal political and human rights for everybody would work without causing national minority conflicts. Furthermore, only democracy could solve the national minority problems. Nevertheless even nowadays it is still open to discussion to what extent was Eötvös’ presentation of the situation of the national minorities in medieval Hungary and his conception of Hungary as a historically developed unity based on a correct evaluation of historical facts.

From this idealistic approach of Eötvös on the unity of Hungary followed that his specific reform proposals regarding the national minority problems were not yet defined before the revolution of 1848. Be it said in his excuse that it was not yet clear to people of this area that democracy and the legal settlement of the situation of the national minorities were closely connected tasks in a multina-



tional territory. People could not know to realise that the French idea of nation state was not suitable in multinational Hungary, which Eötvös regarded as a country on the borderline of Western and Eastern civilization. Thus Eötvös was unable to see the real nature of the Western idea of democratic nation state. His essay “*Kelet Népe és Pesti Hírlap*” (Eötvös 1902-1903e: 3-91) seems to prove this. Eötvös actually published this essay in 1841 at the time of the discussion between the radical Kossuth and the moderate Széchenyi on language, nationality and the role of the Magyar language in a modernized Hungarian national state. Széchenyi attacked Kossuth (the editor of the newspaper *Pesti Hírlap*) in the *Kelet Népe* (the organ of Széchenyi) because he propagated the French “one political nation” conception. Since Kossuth was in favour of Magyar language, as dominant in Hungary, and thus provoked conflicts between the Magyars and the national minorities, he created a great danger for the national unity. Eötvös agreed with Kossuth in 1841 that the propagation of the Hungarian language, literature and culture was desirable. At the same time he agreed with Széchenyi that compulsion in national minority rights had to be avoided and the relation between national minorities had to be based on the idea of toleration. Eötvös essentially thought that a well-developed Hungarian intellectual life would be necessary for preservation of national unity of Hungary. But it could play a positive role only if everybody, regardless of his nationality, would be included in the Hungarian constitution on equal terms (Eötvös 1902-1903: 14-15, 37, 76). His main aim with this essay was essentially to emphasise and explain that freedom of press made it possible to express and discuss differences in opinion. The Hungarian reform politicians had to start an open discussion on every problem including the national minority problem, too.

2.1.3 The test of the liberal national ideas in 1848–49

Eötvös tried to act according to his ideas during the revolution of 1848 when the liberal reformers got the power but the fight against the Habsburg absolutism demanded (as always) a certain unity of the interests of the Hungarian reform politicians. This was not an easy task to unify the ideas of the three great Hungarian reform politicians Széchenyi, Eötvös and Kossuth. Géza Voinovich for example characterized them as follows: Széchenyi wanted to realize the reform by the leadership of the government and the aristocracy, Kossuth by the lower nobility (gentry), Eötvös by the intellectuals acting for the interests of the people. Széchenyi wanted to accomplish the reform by a certain centralization of the legislative and executive powers; Kossuth by the counties; and Eötvös was for the centralization of every necessary things and autonomy in others. He wanted a strong responsible government based on popular representation. Széchenyi was moderate and tolerant, Eötvös was fair, just and reasonable, Kossuth was more powerful and nation tendentious regarding the national minority rights and the domination of the Magyar language. Széchenyi kept in view the interests of the Habsburg Monarchy, too. Kossuth dealt only with the Hungarian interests. He wanted an independent Hungarian state. Eötvös wanted to safeguard the Habsburg Monarchy by the way of its democratic reconstruction. Széchenyi believed that the economic development of the country is the most important for modernization. Kossuth thought that the institutional reform of Hungary is the most important because a free nation could only develop naturally. Eötvös believed that both economic and institutional reforms



were necessary for civilization and the social transformation of feudal Hungary (Voinovich: Báró Eötvös József. In: *Eötvös Ö. M.* v. 20: 250-251).

The liberal national reform ideas gradually developed into a national modernization program, which the reformers called ‘the policy of unity of interests’. The program of ‘unity of interests’ had three levels: a dynastic, a social and a national (Gerő 1993a: 125-129). Regarding the unity of the interest’s policy with the dynasty the modernization policy of Hungary seemed to be the interest of the dynasty, too. Regarding the social interests, the reformers aimed at the implementation of all necessary political and state–organizational principles of a liberal state: popular representation, responsible government, general and proportionate sharing of taxation, freedom of the press, etc. The most important idea of the creation of social unity of interests was the compulsory fee simple (örökváltóság), the emancipation of the peasants, and the abolishing the privileged situation of the nobility. They aimed in this way to make interested both the peasants and the nobility in the same reform process. It was the way to achieve the ‘unity of social interests’ and the support of all Magyar and non–Magyar people for the reforms.

The national minority problem, i.e. the coexistence between the Magyars and the non-Magyar nations (in Hungarian terms nationalities), was the most problematical element of ‘the unity of the interests’ policy. This was due to the conflicts developed between the unitary nation state conception of the Magyar liberal nationalism and the autonomous aims of the national minorities living in the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom. The reform politicians refused to recognize the rights for political autonomy of the non–Magyar national minorities. Consequently they did not create a necessary nationality law, which declared the rights of the national minorities during the reform period and the revolution of 1848. As it was above mentioned, they simply believed in the force of democratic reforms and shared principles of civil state.

Neither did Eötvös propose a nationality law during the revolution of 1848. But it seems that his activity as minister of religious and educational affairs in the first Hungarian responsible government of Batthyány made clear to him that it was necessary to regulate legally the national minority problem.

Eötvös was aware of the importance of the public education in the case of constitutional states and the democratic reconstruction of authoritarian constitutional states. He agreed with Rousseau’s ideas on the necessity of public education presented in his “*Considérations sur le gouvernement de la Pologne*“ which were popular among the Hungarian thinkers in the Reform period (Eötvös: Népoktatási ügy I. In: Eötvös (1971a: 23); Rousseau 1992: 429-430). Eötvös believed also that only popular education made it possible to realise the Western democratic ideas in Hungarian society. His educational reform aimed to establish a compulsory, universal and free system of primary education under the responsibility of the state, which made necessary the separation of state and church in public education (Eötvös: Népoktatási ügy II. In: Eötvös 1971b: 24-26). He was for Christian general education but he was against the school system of different religious denominations and the segregation of the children on basis of their religious beliefs. He rejected the influence of the party ideology in popular education, too. He wanted to create a national unity by his universal educational programme separating public education from religious, and every kind of ideological influences including party policy. He believed that public education had to be equal, centralised and the same in the whole country. In a



country where the population was mixed and in every local community different religious groups lived together it was not possible to insure for everybody his denomination's school (Eötvös: Népoktatási ügy. In: Eötvös 1971c: 34-38). At the same time Eötvös was for the legal acknowledgment of the equality and freedom of every religion in Hungary as a personal right (The speech of Eötvös on 11 July 1843 on the religious freedom. In: Eötvös 1902-1903c: 42).

Regarding the national minorities Eötvös proposed that the language of public education in any elementary school must conform to the language of the majority. But he added all this with the provision that in schools where the language of public education was other than Magyar, the latter must also be taught as a second language (Eötvös' bill on primary education, 1848. In: Eötvös 1902-1903b: 300). One can suppose that during his activity as Minister of Education and Religion the experience made him conscious of the importance of the legal solution of the national minority problem. His educational program was based upon toleration and recognition of national minority rights. Finally, his educational bill failed because the Catholic hierarchy powerfully defended its ancient privileged position, and the government did not want to protect native languages in the case of such national minorities that already accepted Magyar as teaching language.

Eötvös' activity as minister was unsuccessful. The April Laws of 1848 made the exercise of political rights contingent on the knowledge of the Magyar language under the influence of Kossuth. The democratic reforms were not properly implemented. Eötvös was completely defeated during the time of the rising of the minorities against the Magyars — as the tragic end of the democratic revolution of 1848. Magyar and national minority political nationalism became powerful against his will. The beginning of the military conflict between Hungary and the dynasty meant the defeat of his federation aims with the dynasty. All this happened in contradiction to Eötvös' conception of the Hungarian liberal national reform. Thus his ideas did not work in reality. In September 1848 Eötvös recognized that the road chosen by Kossuth would lead Hungary and the empire to a revolutionary disaster as happened in the case of the French Revolution. He saw no other alternative but to withdraw his support from such a policy (Eötvös 1967: 168-169). He resigned from the Hungarian ministry in September. He not only withdrew from public life but also departed from Hungary with his family and spent the next two years in a voluntary exile in Munich.

Why did all this happen? If we search the causes of Eötvös' failure as reform politician we can acknowledge that he always warned the Hungarian society to accomplish consequently the democratic reforms. He could foresee that the incorrect implementation of the necessary democratic reforms would cause serious social conflicts. Eötvös believed that the national minority conflicts were the consequences of the inadequate implementation of the democratic reforms. He always emphasised the necessity of the faithful fulfilment of social and political reforms, which would end inequalities for the middle classes, the peasants and suppressed national minorities. It would create a political understanding with the imperial government. Eötvös emphasised further the necessity of the revision of the emancipation act and the abolition of all feudal services and payments. He warned that any hesitancy to terminate all feudal obligations would lead Hungary into a social and national conflict with unforeseen consequences. The full social liberation of the peasants was for example the prerequisite for avoiding class and national minority conflicts.



In reality there were three domains where the legislation of 1848 was not consequently democratic:

1. Universal suffrage
2. Emancipation of the serfs
3. The national minority rights as human rights

Concerning universal suffrage, all citizens above 20 years of age could vote, provided they had a certain grade of education or paid taxes above a certain level (Kosáry 1969: 128-129).

Regarding the emancipation of the serfs the legislature of 1848 did emancipate the peasants and bring about equality before the law and far-reaching civil rights for the individual citizens (freedom of expression, right of assembly, freedom of the press) (Deák 1990: 215-217). Taxation was made general and proportional. All estates, churches, nations and corporations lost their special privileges. As a result of the democratic reforms the Hungarian nobility lost its constitutional privileges in 1848 by the process of liberation of the serfs. But in spite of all this the social policy of the nobility remained illiberal. The individual interests of the landowner nobility worked as a limit on the democratisation process. Kossuth himself also wanted to safeguard the political power of the lower nobility. As a consequence there was no full peasant emancipation in Hungary in 1848. All peasants were given personal freedom, and formal 'urban peasants' were granted full ownership of the lands they had. But the constitution did not fully abolish peasant obligations. Parallel with the abolishing of the right of entailment and the creation of capitalist forms of ownership the peasant obligations were considered to stem from proprietary relations, rather than feudal rights. As a consequence, hundreds of thousands of peasants who held parts of their lord's demesne in private contract were not given full ownership of their plots. The purpose was to free both labour and goods from chains of feudalism. To go further and to deal with the rightful and necessary regulation on property rights and the situation of the peasants arising from the logic of the democratic reform did not correspond to the interests of the landed gentry. Thus they stopped the reform at a certain point. The consequences of all this appeared after a short time and caused the deadlock of Hungarian civil development. The inconsistent implementation of the democratic reforms by the reform nobility made it possible to use the national minority antagonism and nationalism for political manipulation of the dissatisfied peasants everywhere in the country. This situation caused for example the rebellion of the Romanian peasants in Transylvania (Deák 1990: 215-217).

The constitution of 1848 had nothing to say about the national minorities, except to confirm that the Magyar language would be the language of legislation and administration throughout the country (Kemény 1947: 17). This was done in view of the prevailing conviction that granting special autonomous rights to the national minorities would help restore the old feudal system of local or corporate privileges in the national minority territories. This is why the reformers urged first of all the importance of the general democratisation of the country. This idea seemed to be just because for the general democratisation of the country it was necessary to concentrate all forces of the country including the forces of the national minorities, too. The reform of Hungary was regarded as the task of everybody living in the territory of Hungary. But the national minority leaders did not want to cooperate



with the Magyar reformers because the Magyar liberal nationalists did not want to deal with their demands. As we have above seen, the Hungarian politicians did not really deal with the solution of the national minority problem in the Reform-period and during the revolution. The Batthyány and later the Kossuth government refused to recognize, with the exception of the Croats, the political rights for autonomy of the non-Magyar national groups. They were for cultural autonomy. At the same time Hungarians managed to achieve independence from the Habsburgs as a national group on the basis of the historical rights. A contradiction was created in Hungary: whereas the Magyar liberal nationalists fought for their national independence from the Habsburgs, they did not realize the necessity of reaching agreements with the representatives of the national minorities of Hungary. The application of the idea of independent national state in multinational Hungary without the consequent fulfilment of the democratisation of Hungary and any arrangement of the national minority problem resulted finally and logically in the phenomenon of Magyar and national minority political nationalism which caused a bloody war in 1848 and 1849.

The Habsburg counter-revolutionary movement could find allies among the unsatisfied national minority leaders, first of all the Croats who wanted an independent state. The Croatian patriot, colonel J. Jelacić who was appointed as ban of Croatia-Slavonia by the emperor played an important role in the initiation of the Austro-Hungarian war in which the national minorities fought on the sight of the emperor against the Magyars hoping for autonomy from the emperor. As the Croats wanted a separate ministry in Zagreb and they declared to break all their contact with the Hungarian government in 1848 the other national minorities also appeared with political demands. They had just about that time arrived, after a cultural preparation, at political nationalism. They aimed at obtaining certain territorial autonomies. The peoples of Central Europe could not find at that time a peaceful solution among themselves. Finally the traditional policy of “divide et impera” of the Austrian government triumphed. They used the unsatisfied national minorities as a help of counter-revolution against Hungary without the attempt of the real solution of the national minority problem in the empire. The incitement of small peoples against each other without a reasonable state-organization conception for the whole monarchy resulted in general conflict in 1848-49. In the southern parts of Hungary the Serb National Congress demanded an autonomous Serbian territory governed by a “chief” (voivode). The imperial government supported this claim. The Serbian government of Belgrade used this for its own interests. Finally the congress of Hungary’s Serbs on May 1848 demanded nearly full independence. The Slovak National Congress in northern Hungary demanded wide-ranging national autonomy for the Slovaks. At the same time several Slovak leaders sympathized with the Czech movement, which demanded a separate ministry for Bohemia from the Habsburg ruler. The Rumanian National Assembly in Transylvania demanded extensive social reforms on behalf of the peasantry and national autonomy for the Romanian national minority.

The Hungarian government refused to accept the demands of the national minorities. All this led to armed conflicts in the South, with the Serbs, who had a long tradition of religious autonomy, and with the Croats, who had their own state, in the north-eastern and eastern part of Hungary with the Slovaks and the Romanians. At the same time in the South of Hungary in the extraordinary ethnic mosaic of



the Banat the first ethnic massacre happened as a consequence of the inciting the peasants by the Serbian and Hungarian radicals.

As a result of all these events the Hungarian movement of reform and the revolution of 1848 became a radical republican movement under the leadership of Kossuth. When in September the Croats under the leadership of Jelacić invaded Hungary the National Defence Committee, headed by Kossuth, gradually began to replace the government. When in October the king dismissed the Hungarian parliament, subjecting Hungary to military rule and appointing Jelacić supreme commander there, a period of armed conflict began between Austria and Hungary. This was actually a second revolution under the leadership of Kossuth. At that time Kossuth, appealing for a 'national crusade' against the invaders had a quasi-dictatorial power till the establishing of the government of Bertalan Szemere. This cabinet was committed to the independence of Hungary. On April 14, 1849 the Declaration of Independence dethroned the Habsburgs arguing that the dynasty has forfeited its right to the Hungarian throne. Hungary became an independent country. Kossuth became the Governing President of the liberated Hungary. He believed that the liberation of Hungary would be the starting point of the liberation of the whole Central Europe (Deák 1990: 220-221, 230-231).

Regarding the solution of the national minority problem Kossuth also did not use the suitable moment between the period after the declaration of the independence of Hungary, and the dethronement of the Habsburgs in April 1849, and before the Russian intervention to agree with the national minority leaders and create a national minority law (Gerő 1993a: 143). Only at the last moment, on the eve of collapse (on 28 July 1849), the parliament in Szeged enacted the first national minority law proposed by Bertalan Szemere. Szemere became the Prime Minister of the new government, which was established after the declaration of the independence of Hungary in 1849. The first Nationality Act was based on the principle of the equality of all the nations of Hungary. It was no more based on the ideology of the one and indivisible unitary Magyar political nation. It was intended to grant far-reaching linguistic, cultural, ecclesiastic and municipal rights to the nationalities keeping Magyar only as the "diplomatic language" of the administrative, legislative, and military affairs of Hungary (Kemény 1947: 36-37; Kemény 1962: 375-377). It was the first legislation in Central Europe that aimed at the welfare of national minorities by assuring them modern minority rights. On this day the Jews were also emancipated. But it was too late. The failure of the revolution in August in the same year and the collapse of the first independent democratic Hungarian state made it impossible to implement this law.

Kossuth did not get international help because in 1849 the revolutionary upheaval of 1848 had subsided. England and France had from the beginning favoured a constitutional Habsburg Monarchy as a European necessity. They would like better a compromise between the Hungarian and Austrian part of the Monarchy but neither the Hungarian nor the Austrian government was ready for it. Finally the Imperial army defeated the Hungarian revolution with the help of the Russian Tsar. The unconditional surrender of Görgey, the commander of the Hungarian army, to the Russians and not to the Habsburg ruler showed his contempt for the Austrians. He hoped that the Tsar would protect them against the Austrians and might even take them into Russian service. But Nicholas left them to the mercy of the Habsburg politicians (Kosáry 1969: 127-142).



The Hungarian liberal reformers, among them Eötvös, can be blamed that they did not do everything in time to agree with the national minorities. They are responsible that they could not find the means of the compromise at the time of the national minority conflicts (Gerö 1993a: 144). We cannot forget that tolerance was a natural moral duty and an ancient state organization principle. The settlement of the religious conflicts could serve for the Hungarian liberals at that time as an example. The demand of the national minorities for autonomy showed parallels with the demand of the different religious communities for toleration. But it needed more time to recognize the parallels in the case of the national and religious state organization principles. It needed more time to realise that liberation could be only a future task. At the same time we cannot forget that influenced by the western democratic ideas the reform liberals thought of the liberation (and not only toleration) of the people that theoretically did not make necessary to insure special rights for the national minorities. For Eötvös, for example, the analysis of the ‘Jewish and the Irish questions’ proved that the emancipation of everybody by insuring equal political and human rights was the only solution against religious, national and social prejudices. It was theoretically true. But in reality it worked as a utopian idea in the period of democratic nationalism in a multinational society full with feudal vestiges. Ideas and reality were not in harmony.

Finally, it seems that the noble democracy and the limited democratisation of Hungary had not so much in common with the principles of Western democracy. The revolution of 1848 was not a bourgeois revolution in the Western sense: this was the first great step which did not change the feudal structure of the Hungarian society but it opened the way to the development of the middle classes (Kosáry 1946: 250; Deák 1990: 209-217). The Habsburg policy did not cooperate with the Hungarian reformers. The imaginations of the Hungarian liberal nationalists on the modernization of the whole empire parallel with its Hungarian part proved to be idealistic.

After the revolutions of 1848 and 1849 the Habsburg policy returned to the centralised absolute state organization idea. The Austrian leaders mercilessly punished the Hungarian commanders and a number of civilians. Arguing with the so-called “Verwirkungstheorie” Hungary lost its historical constitutional institutions because of the “rebellion”. At the same time the Austrian government did not revoke the emancipation of the peasants, which was the most important achievement of the revolution. Drawing a lesson from the events of 1848 and 1849 the Hungarian moderate liberal nationalists under the leadership of Ferenc Deák remained on the political platform of the principles of the Laws of 1848 as an alternative for the future.

2.1.4 The analysis of the experience of the first application of the Western idea of civil state in the Central European society

2.1.4.1 The ideas of the Austrian legislature meeting of Kremsier (1849)

It began a new period in Eötvös’ life in Munich. This was the period of analysis of the first experience of the implementation of Western democratic ideas in Hungarian society. Eötvös was deeply motivated to find the mistakes that lead to the bloody national minority war and the failure of the reform policy of the Hungarian national liberals. At the same time this was the period of thinking on how to reconstruct the Habsburg Empire in a democratic way aiming to safeguard its unity. In 1848–49 the



whole political life of the Habsburg Empire was full of ideas and discussions on this problem. In Austrian policy there were basically three directions represented:

1. The idea of a centralised empire
2. The idea of the union of the autonomous historical political constitutional states
3. The idea of the union of the autonomous cultural/linguistic (ethnic) national territories

These three directions remained present till the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire in 1918.

Eötvös was very interested in these discussions and from Munich he could follow with attention the events. At the beginning of his voluntary exile he had not yet a clear conception on the solution of the national minority problem. He did not yet know what to propose for the democratic reconstruction of the multinational Habsburg Empire.

In this period the most important event, which deeply influenced the ideas of Eötvös, was the Austrian legislature meeting of Kremsier in 1849. It was called to draft such a new constitution that would settle the constitutional protection of national minority rights on the basis of equal political and human rights and decide the constitutional relationship between the autonomous territories and the imperial government. Eötvös was first of all influenced by the ideas of the Czech historian and statesman, Frantisek Palacky, who as a member of the Kremsier legislature meeting prepared the first proposal for constitutional reorganization of the empire. Both of them were motivated by the German constitution of 1849 (Hildebrandt 1979: 18-27). This constitution was based on a common German imperial law. Consequently it constituted the basic law for every citizens and member states of the German federation. It represented the federalist idea of shared principles and legal harmonisation.

Palacky influenced by the ideas of Herder became the first representative of the cultural/linguistic ethnic principle as state organizational principle. In his proposal on a common constitution for the Habsburg Monarchy Palacky represented the idea of a confederate Habsburg state. He believed that the preservation of the Habsburg Monarchy and its reconstruction in accordance with the dominant ideas of freedom, equality, and brotherhood was a common European interest. At the same time, he emphasised that the Czechs aimed to achieve the autonomous development of their own national group. As a consequence Palacky had no doubt that the national principle had to be realised during the reconstruction of the Habsburg Monarchy:

“So lange die Völker Grund haben werden um ihre Nationalität in Frucht zu sein, so lange wird es in Österreich weder Zufriedenheit noch Frieden geben” (Palacky 1974: 93).

In his federal plan Palacky first represented the cultural/linguistic (ethnic) principle for the reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire. He advocated the formation of eight national groups or provinces: 1. German–Austria, 2. Czechs–Austria (with Slovak districts), 3. Polish Austria, 4. Ruthene Austria (with Ruthens of Hungary and Bukovina), 5. Illyrian Austria (all South Slavs), 6. Romanian Austria (Transylvania and the Romanian parts of Hungary proper and Bukovina), 7. Magyar Austria, 8. Italian Austria. He proposed organising each province with its own local diet, but all subject to the central Parliament in Vienna in matters of defence, diplomacy, finance, commerce and customs. Palacky thought that federalism alone guaranteed those equal rights of all nations, which it was the historical mission of Austria to achieve. For him, national equality meant the emancipation of the Slavs and



Romanians in the Habsburg Monarchy (Palacky 1974: 94-96). Palacky's proposals were not accepted but he had a great influence on the ideas of the Kremsier Plan.

The whole spirit of the proposed Kremsier Plan showed the influence of the Liberals. It was the first modern plan of the federal constitution of a multinational state based on a supra-national unity and codification of the principle of national equality in all spheres of public life. It aimed unity in the essential things and free local governments with a reasonable decentralisation. The main achievement of the Kremsier Plan was that intolerant behaviour, and domination of ethnic minority by ethnic majority in cultural issues was in general considered unjust. In the administrative division of the provinces the single "Reichsländer" nationality was taken into consideration. The "Gleichberechtigung" of all national tribes (Volksstämme) and of all languages of the country in the schools, in the public and official life was guaranteed (Schlesinger 1945: 172-182; Wierer 1960: 44-45).

The main difference between the policy of the Austrian legislature meeting and the policy of the Hungarian liberal nationalists was that the Hungarian liberals did not accept at that time the principle of "Gleichberechtigung". Eötvös himself developed his own conception of constitutional reform as an answer to Palacky's propositions and under the influence of the Kremsier Plan (Bödy 1972: 59; Ferenczy 1903:176-177).

2.1.5 The influence of the dominant ideas of the 19th century on the state

2.1.5.1 Critique of the ideas of Western thinkers on the organization of the state

During his voluntary exile in Munich Eötvös wrote his famous book under the title "*Der Einfluss der herrschenden Ideen des 19. Jahrhunderts auf den Staat*" (Eötvös 1851). This book is a brilliant analysis on the development of the European ideas on the state. At the same time it can be regarded as Eötvös' contribution to the discussions on the reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire. In this book Eötvös searched first of all the causes of the failure of the Hungarian reform politicians. He searched also for ways out of the national conflicts caused by the incorrect interpretation and implementation of the national idea in the Hungarian state.

In Eötvös' approach the Western European culture was the history of ideas in permanent change aiming to fulfil the striving for freedom and equality of Christianity. He believed that the original goal of Christian civilization was to realise individual freedom and to unify mankind in peace. To achieve this goal Christianity had to surpass at last the state organisation principles of the idealized antique world. Christian civilization had to liberate people from the domination of the state by insuring individual freedom for everybody. It had to surpass the stereotyped idea of centralisation, lead to "caesarismus", inherited from the ancient world. Thus the goal of a modern state could only be to insure individual freedom in all spheres where it was possible (Eötvös 1871a v. 2: 27-29, 650, 722; Eötvös 1867: 175).

In Eötvös' view the Christian state organization practice of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century was a failure: the society before the revolutions of 1848 was a collapsed society that nobody wanted to defend and continue. During the revolutions of 1848 centuries old state structures collapsed because nobody believed in them. In Eötvös' view the goal of human civilization was to find such state organisation ideas that were the best suited to human society. Thinking on a suitable



future state structure Eötvös used the method of Bacon according to which our ideas had to be based on observations and experiences. He emphasised that Bacon's merit was that he changed the scholastic speculations with the rational mind. Following Bacon's method, Eötvös proposed that state knowledge had to be built on experience and reality in the future. It had to aim at the peaceful and democratic living together of the different peoples. Thus it had to be based on shared principles, which proved to be acceptable to the people. All this was possible only on the basis of experience, truth, real principles, and freedom, and not on the basis of imaginations, false ideas, false principles or authority (Eötvös 1851: 20-26).

Eötvös believed that the causes of the conflicts of his age had to be sought in the ideas and in the practice of the state organization. Eötvös criticized the state organization practice of his age because it was mostly based on the influence of the traditional ideas of antique authors. For example Plato, Aristotle, Epicures were acknowledged as absolute experts on state knowledge in Eötvös' age, too, when the principles of state organization were in a period of transformation. He criticised the representatives of the new ideas, Hobbes, Rousseau, Puffendorf and Wolf, too, because they created a whole science on the state during the 17th and 18th century without asking whether their basic principles were true or false. Eötvös believed that the contractual theory was also based on imaginations, because it supposed an original contract among the people that never existed. He believed that the legal arguments of natural philosophy were also based on mythology. He mentioned as a criticism, for example, that if the people gave up all their natural rights in favour of the state this could not save them against the despotism of one ruler. Eötvös criticised Montesquieu's theory on the division of powers in the state, too. He believed that it could not be a general principle because it worked only against the absolute rulers. Regarding Rousseau's theory he believed that his idealized natural state never existed.

All this proved for Eötvös that the basic principles of state organization never were searched and developed according to reality and truth in European thought. Antique and medieval prestige, authority, imaginations and mythology always dominated the state organization ideas and practices. This is why we could always find back the structures of the conquering and warrior mentality in the state. This is why we were full with stereotyped ideas. This mentality was never stopped by an improved state organization in reality. This is why Eötvös went back to the period of Bacon when progressive thinkers first protested against the false ideas of European politicians. This is why he emphasised that it would be necessary to think following Bacon's research principles and test the working of the state organization ideas in practice, and at the same time to speak about truth.

Eötvös believed that the whole history of mankind could be regarded as an example of the attempts of people worldwide to organize their coexistence, and human psychology and nature did not change much during history. Among these experiences the most important were the Greek, Roman and Christian state organisation experience. Thus Eötvös proposed to search critically all these experiences and to make conclusions. He believed further that the defects in the state organization were always caused by the ruling ideas serving as basic state organisation principles because they were mostly not in harmony with reality (Eötvös 1851: Introduction).

Studying the history of the state organization experiences Eötvös concluded that the states of his age developed from small communities of people during a long integration process. Thus one could



regard the whole history of mankind as an integration process, the elimination of the feudal particularities and the creation of bigger and bigger states. This was why state organization became the most important subject of policy. Regarding state science his measure was always how far a state could avoid despotism. Eötvös believed that if mankind could not find out such state organization ideas which could function according to the idea of individual freedom the states would develop in the future, too, in the direction of the unlimited power of the state and the unlimited rule of certain persons (Caesarism). He believed that the real task of a liberal thinker was always to oppose the absolute tendencies that always dominated human history. Eötvös believed that the subjugation of the individual to the state was the general trend of the Western state development after the collapse of the Roman Empire till his age (Eötvös 1851: 316-338). The best example was the development of the French centralised national state.

Eötvös himself proposed as state organization theory the concept of the “historic–political individuality”. It was based on the concept of historical law and personal freedom. According to this idea the communities of different peoples and the individuals themselves were the product of history and not the product of the will of people. He believed that the state organization had to be based on the historically developed autonomous communities of people, and on the persons. Its goal could only be to continue to develop and strengthen these communities (Weber 1966: 105). He believed further that the development of the states could not depend on the “will of the people”. Historical development decided the direction and the level of the possible improvement of the states and the possibilities of the people, too, in a given period of historical time. Proceeding from this fact his main question was how could the new ideas serve individual freedom in the development of the states. Analysing the dominant Western ideas of his age ‘freedom, equality, brotherhood’ from the point of view of the idea of freedom he tried to imagine by which circumstances they could work in harmony with freedom in the multinational Habsburg Empire and in Hungary. He searched further which state organizational experiences could serve as an example for Hungary. He was for the unity of Hungary and for the maintaining and reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire.

His ideas on the liberal state organisation can be grouped into three main themes:

1. The meaning of the dominant ideas of the 19th century and their influence on the state (the test of the French idea of nation state)
2. The nature of the national principle and its influence on the state organisation.
3. The idea of centralisation and decentralisation in the state

2.1.5.2 The meaning of the dominant ideas of the 19th century and their influence on the state (the test of the French idea of nation state)

Eötvös believed that the sources of the Hungarian disaster and the revolutionary unrest and dissatisfaction of the people everywhere in Europe were connected with the European state’s structure and the ideas according to which the states were organised everywhere. He acknowledged that the dominant democratic ideas of the nineteenth century — freedom, equality and brotherhood —, and the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen were the natural results of the evolution of Christian civilisation. Consequently peoples wanted to fulfil them in the period of the French Revo-



lution and, after that in the first half of the nineteenth century, everywhere in Europe. Unfortunately, the dominant ideas did not work in accordance with reality.

The questions which Eötvös raised searching the causes of the defects were the followings:

Whether the dominant ideas correspond to reality in state practice?

Are they in contradiction to each other and the socio-political conditions?

In which conditions do they work optimally?

Analysing the working of the ideas of freedom, equality and brotherhood represented by the French Revolution Eötvös came to important conclusions concerning the idea of popular sovereignty and national self-determination. Agreeing with Tocqueville he thought that the idea of popular sovereignty was badly thought out and applied by the French revolutionaries (Eötvös: 1851: 31-32; Bödy 1972: 67-68; Tocqueville 1961 v. 2:437-438). Actually the idea of popular sovereignty, how Rousseau proposed it, sacrificed more and more the idea of freedom to the idea of equality in the reality of state organisation. The French revolutionaries adopted it uncritically and they did not recognise that popular sovereignty made people embodying the nation and the state one and the same. The application of the idea of freedom and equality together under popular sovereignty in a centralised national state resulted in an absolute state structure thus the giving up of personal freedom. In his words:

“... an die Stelle der Idee der Freiheit in deren Rahmen man die Revolution begonnen, trat das Prinzip der Volkssouveränität, welches eine Folge des Prinzips der Gleichheit ist, in so ferne man dasselbe auf das Recht des einzelnen Bürgers an der Leitung des Staates teilzunehmen bezieht, doch in Hinsicht der Freiheit des Einzelnen nur diejenige Macht bezeichnet die Sie beschränken soll. ... Die politische Freiheit besteht darin, dass es keine Gewalt im Staate gebe, die nicht im Namen des Volkes und wenigstens mittelbar durch dasselbe ausgeübt wird ” (Eötvös 1851: 32-34).

Thus the concept of freedom came to be understood not as the freedom of the individual from state control, but rather as the unimpeded and absolute rule of the community (state) over the individual under the aegis of popular sovereignty. The concept of equality came to mean not equal opportunity for all, limited only by the individual's own abilities, but the uniformisation of human society (Eötvös 1851: 35-41). The French revolutionaries never realised this mistake. As a consequence they did not only take over the absolute state structure of Louis XIV but they let it be expressed more strongly. The absolute power of the people (i.e., their elected representatives or leaders) upon the state was never limited. As such it eliminated the ancient right of the revolt of the people against the tyrant. The tyrant became the sovereign people i.e. their representative (Eötvös 1851: 252-254). As a logical consequence the dictatorship of Napoleon, exercised in the name of the people, crowned the whole process.

Eötvös believed that the idea of nation in the French system was founded on the perpetual supremacy of the collective will, of which the unity of the nation was the necessary condition, to which every other influence had to defer, and against which no obligation enjoyed authority. His ideas show parallels with the ideas of Lord Acton. Similarly to Eötvös, Lord Acton also believed that in the French conception the nation was an ideal unit founded on ethnicity. It overruled the rights and wishes of the inhabitants, absorbing their divergent interests in a fictitious unity sacrificing their several inclinations and duties to the higher claim of nationality, and crushing all natural rights and all established liberties



for the purpose of vindicating itself (Acton 1967: 148). Thus, for Eötvös, the French state was an absolute national state that represented the French people as sovereign. Like every absolute power, it continued to be based on the centralisation policy of the state. As a consequence Eötvös, who searched always in the direction of freedom in a state practice, rejected the French conception of popular sovereignty and national self-determination as state organization principles (Bóka 1999: 440-441).

Eötvös realised that unfortunately the French model was accepted uncritically and in a stereotyped way in whole Eastern Europe (Eötvös 1851: 34). This was why he did search how the territorial equivalent of the idea of popular sovereignty (which was the idea of national self-determination) acted in a state where the population was multinational or mixed. He realised that the national principle made it possible for the national majority to dominate the national minority/minorities. In this way the interest of the linguistic ethnic majority representing the nation, would become the most important and the other linguistic ethnic groups had to recognise the superiority of one linguistic ethnic group over them. All this opened the way in the direction of the different levels of nationalism including the integral nationalism, too. From these results he concluded that the national idea was in contradiction to the idea of freedom and equality in a centralised nation state. Where this state structure was the reality there could never be freedom. Consequently the dominant ideas of the 19th century, 'freedom, equality and brotherhood', were in contradiction with each other in French revolutionary thought. Unfortunately the French revolutionaries did not realise this, because France was a centralised unitary nation state. From all this followed that the stereotyped repetition of the French revolutionary idea on popular sovereignty and national self-determination in the multinational and nationally unformed feudal Habsburg Empire resulted in the emergence of national conflicts (Bóka 1999: 440-441).

Eötvös mentioned one more dangerous thing following from the idea of popular sovereignty in a centralised national state, namely that it made possible to change from time to time the ruling classes and the whole social structure of the state. The naturally unlimited popular sovereignty acted in the direction of unlimited despotism. With all this it opened the way for a permanent change of governments and ideologies, for a mentality of 'everything is possible' or 'why not'. As a consequence in the future everything could depend on who and what could persuade the people in the name of the interest of the nation. Thus emerged the question: What will happen if one day somebody comes and tries to realise, for example, absolute equality (eliminating the sanctity of property), or the absolute nation state (integral nationalism)? For example – mentioned Eötvös - "if the idea of Communism could find its 'Constantine' we would see whether its triumph was really so impossible" (Eötvös 1851: 293). Eötvös believed that the development of the European states under the influence of the French nation state model would lead to the unlimited and autocratic rule of one person. In his view the possibility of a future European despotism was presented by the idea of popular sovereignty and national self-determination of the peoples (nations) in a centralised unitary nation state.

2.1.5.3 The nature of the national principle and its influence on the state organisation

When the German contemporary of the French revolutionaries, Johan Gottfried Herder, tried to formulate the relationship between the state and nation in the case of the confederation of the independent German principalities and the multinational Habsburg Empire, he could not confine the relation-



ship between the individual and the state in such a way as Siéyes could in the case of the politically and nationally already integrated France. Herder, as many of his German contemporaries, believed that the spirit (Genius) of a “Volk” was expressed the best by the language, and proposed as a criterion of nation language and culture (Herder 1966: 234).

Eötvös regarded nation as an indefinable idea. He rejected Herder’s proposition because he believed that the peoples (Volks) did not have properties. Only the individuals could have properties. It is further too difficult to define ethnicity because of the permanent interbreeding of the races during history (Eötvös 1867: 180-181). His main argument against the cultural/linguistic ethnic principle was that he regarded language and ethnicity as ‘privileges of birth’. He compared the cultural/linguistic national principle to the privileges of the hereditary aristocracy because the right of having privileges was based in both cases on birth (origin). Thus the cultural/linguistic national principle as a privilege of birth could not represent the idea of freedom in the state organization. The privileges were indisputably in antagonism with the ideas of freedom and equality. Every privilege covered a struggle for domination or ruling (Eötvös 1851: 55). In a state where all people had the same political rights the emancipation of the nationalities had not emerged. Thus people could not have political rights on the basis of their language and ethnicity. The state could not be equal with the “Volkstum”, with the cultural/linguistic ethnic majority.

Eötvös rejected defining nation or state by language while this was not a criterion. He thought that the different languages were only the result of the isolation of people during their earlier history. The linguists proved the existence of common original languages. Further it was not true that every language had its own culture. The languages were in permanent change, thus language could not be the criterion of the definition of nation. The culture of every nation was in interaction with universal cultural influences. Peoples were the same everywhere biologically and psychologically. The differences among the nations were only the result of a centuries’ old isolation. This would step by step disappear with technical development. He believed that:

“Die Zivilisation hat die Zahl der Völker vermindert, dasselbe geschah — nur etwas langsamer — mit den Sprachen” (Eötvös 1871b: 9).

In Eötvös’ definition the national idea represented actually the struggle of the different peoples (Völker) to succeed and to realise themselves as nations among the other nations. In his words:

“Die Idee der Nationalität äußert sich im Streben des einzelnen Volkes sich geltend zu machen, und zwischen andern Völkern jene Stellung einzunehmen, zu der es sich vermöge seiner Vergangenheit (seines historischen Rechtes), seiner Größe oder seiner besondere Begabung berechtigt glaubt. ... Die Grundlage aller nationalen Bestrebungen ist das Gefühl höherer Begabung, ihr Zweck ist Herrschaft“ (Eötvös 1851: 32, 51).

Eötvös was no more optimistic regarding patriotism, either:

“... das Gefühl der Selbstsucht rettet sich nur unter dem Schleier des Patriotismus, um sich da ohne Scheu geltend zu machen. Man untersuche, was dem Gefühle des Patriotismus — welches mit dem der Nationalität in anderer Form identisch ist — zu Grundlage liegt, und Niemand wird leugnen, dass es das Bewusstsein höherer Begabung, der Anspruch auf



größere Berechtigung ist, wie denn dies bis in die neueste Zeit auch Niemand geleugnet hat” (Eötvös 1851: 18).

With this mentality Eötvös explained the origins of the stereotypes, too:

“Es gibt vielleicht keine Sprache, in der nicht irgend ein Sprichwort die hohe Meinung ausdrücken würde, die das Volk von sich selbst, und die Verachtung, die es gegen seine Nachbarn empfindet” (Eötvös 1851: 18).

From all this followed a fight everywhere for emancipation (“Gleichberechtigung”) of the nations and, when it was achieved, the fight would continue everywhere for domination. This was the real nature of the national idea as seen by Eötvös.

Because Eötvös could not define either the nation or the national principle he thought it impossible to give all nations legal independent state frameworks. Consequently, he thought, that the idea of equal rights (“Gleichberechtigung”) of national minorities based on the territorial principle of autonomy, which was proposed as a solution, could not be a legal solution. Regarding the national principle the criterion of the delimitation of the people could only be the language (ethnicity). Eötvös thought it impossible to fragment the population according to its language in a multinational or mixed territory. How to draw the borders there? This would not go in accordance with the idea of freedom and equality. At the same time a half or a confused solution would stop the democratic evolution of the Habsburg Empire.

Eötvös concluded:

“Eine Teilung der Provinzen nach Nationalitäten, welche man als die erste Grundbedingung des Prinzips des Gleichberechtigung — im angenommenen Sinne — betrachten muss, in der österreichischen Monarchie nicht auszuführen ist” (Eötvös 1871b: 94).

Thus Eötvös believed that the national “Gleichberechtigung” (territorial autonomy) of the different national minorities could not solve the problem of national liberation of the people in a multinational territory where the population was mixed. It could not eliminate the domination of the majority. Furthermore it could increase a permanent antagonism. If it could win it would cause the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and would change the status quo of all states (Eötvös 1871b: 106). As a consequence Eötvös rejected giving rights on the basis of language or ethnicity to the different language (ethnic) groups as representatives of nations based on the territorial principle. The rights had to belong to the individuals, to the persons, and not to the national groups (Eötvös 1871b: 36). Thus Eötvös meant that the only principle, which could work in a multinational territory, was the personal principle.

He emphasised that the meaning of national self-determination was very confused and consequently there was a big mess everywhere where it was put into practice. One thing was sure, that this idea would change the whole former conception of the state organisation, furthermore it seemed that the historical principle would be eliminated. The multinational Habsburg Empire was facing a big change and the politicians were facing the necessity of a big state reorganisation to be able to survive. In Eötvös’ view for a democratic working of the national principle it was necessary to solve three things:



1. To find such a state organisation conception in which the new dominant national principle could act in accordance with freedom and equality
2. The democratic interpretation of the national principle, and fight against nationalism
3. To create a democratic federal structure.

2.1.5.4 *The idea of centralisation and decentralisation in the state*

Searching for a suitable liberal solution, Eötvös consulted the ideas of Tocqueville who stressed the differences between the French and the American state organisation. He emphasised that the European states were organized from above during history. The USA, in opposition, was organized from below, so decentralization could gain (Tocqueville 1961 v. 1: 86, 196). Eötvös also contrasted the French type of state organisation to the English and American ones, which were the two different, and opposite ways of state organisation. The French Republican state was “one and indivisible” centralised, absolute and organised from above. The English was decentralised and organised from the bottom-up. As a consequence:

“... die englische Verfassung das Bestehen einer ganz absoluten Gewalt in jedem Kreise des Staatslebens unmöglich gemacht hat, nur dem hat England seine Freiheit und Größe zu danken” (Eötvös 1851: 406).

The power of the English kings was limited and the constitution represented always a “Schutzmauer der individuellen Freiheit”. The preservation of historical rights guaranteed a free intellectual and economic development in England. The situation was very similar in the case of the North American constitution, too. Here the confederation of a number of almost completely independent states was the guarantee of individual freedom (Eötvös 1851: 406).

Eötvös, like Tocqueville, believed that the secret of a free state-organisation was communal autonomy. The self-governed community was the most natural basic way of organising the peaceful coexistence of people everywhere in the world. The historically developed communal self-government functioned as the real force of freedom in the state (Acton 1967: 149). It could transform, for example, the French dogma of absolute popular sovereignty into a democratic idea, because it served as a defence against authoritarian states. In a centralised state, on the contrary, there was no balance against absolutism. The state could decide from above the functionaries of the communities with a programme imposed from above (Tocqueville 1961 v. 1: 119).

The most important idea of Eötvös is that every self-governing community has to ensure the right of association for everybody to achieve certain aims, to solve problems (but not in the form of political clubs). In his conception the whole state has to be an association of associations of people for achieving certain aims. The free local associations play the same role in the free self-governing communities as the self-governing communities in the state. The right of association in defence of interests could serve as a balance against the misusing of the necessarily centralised functions that belonged to the competence of the state (Eötvös 1871a v. 2: 485-486). This is the way to create a democratic and stable state from healthy cells.



Finally, Eötvös concluded that the way in which the multinational Habsburg Empire, including Hungary, had to continue its state organisation was the bottom up state structure based on communal self-government and the right of free association of people. The rights had to be equal political and human rights for every person. In this way the dominant ideas of the 19th century, which were in Eötvös' interpretation "liberty, equality and nation", could work without contradiction and democratically.

2.1.6 The democratic interpretation of the national idea

In his book entitled the "*Nationality question*" (Eötvös 1869) Eötvös' aim was to explain how could the national idea function in the state as the representative of individual freedom. Looking back in history Eötvös found an analogy between the nineteenth century national movement and the religious movement of the age of reformation when religion was the dominant idea (Eötvös und Montalembert 1939: 10; Eötvös manuscripts 1854: Fol. Hung. 2999). Both of them were fights for freedom aiming to liberate oppressed people: the first from religious and the second from national oppression. The course of both of them showed the same tendencies. The emancipation of different religious groups by way of the legal assurance of their rights and privileges as autonomous groups proved to be a false idea causing permanent hostility. Religious autonomy represented not a real right; it was only something 'given' by the majority religious group. In reality the principle of "cuius regio eius religio" worked. Consequently the solution was not the emancipation of the different religious groups by autonomy, but the separation of state and church, and regarding religion as human right independent from policy (Eötvös 1869: 91). The national movement presented a parallel phenomenon. With reference of the national idea the different national groups aimed to safeguard their rule upon their national territory by assuring the use of their own language. This attitude based on the mechanism of the principle of "cuius regio eius natio" could not eliminate the aspirations for domination of the majority national group upon the minority ones (Bóka 1999: 441-442).

Eötvös agreed with John Stuart Mill, who recognised a general necessary condition of free institutions, that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities, but at the same time he emphasised that several considerations are liable to conflict in practice with this general principle. There are parts even in Europe, in which different nations are so locally intermingled, that it is not practicable for them to be under separate governments. The population of Hungary is composed of Magyars, Slovaks, Croats, Serbs, Romans, and in some districts Germans, so mixed up as to be incapable of local separation. As a consequence, Mill thought "there is no course open to them but to make a virtue of necessity, and reconcile themselves to living together under equal rights and laws" (Mill 1867: 122).

Eötvös, in his letter to J. Stuart Mill in 1869, acknowledged that the development of his country was different from Western development. Hungary did not pass the period of centralisation policy that unified the different nations in Western Europe into great states making by this way the small nations more obedient. He mentioned further that it would be dangerous to implement in the political practice of his country the dominant ideas of Western countries, which were the product of their own social



development because Hungarian society was backward and not sufficiently prepared for all this (Letter to Stuart Mill in: Eötvös 1902-1903j: 52-53).

Eötvös, searching the way of reconciliation, concluded that in the case of the national movements the solution could only be the separation of state and nation and regarding nationality as a personal right belonging to the cultural sphere of the people. Actually, individual freedom was freedom to act according to personal conscience and choice. While nationality was characterized by language it was impossible to decide legally one national language in a mixed territory. To decide this question belonged to the individual himself (Eötvös 1869: 63). The state responded to the idea of freedom only if religion and nationality were personal rights and as human rights they were guaranteed for everybody (Eötvös 1869: 91-93, 111-112). How was all this possible in Austria?

In his book entitled “*Über die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in Österreich*” Eötvös proposed a very important idea as a solution to the national minority problem. He regarded the absolute equality of all languages in such a state as Austria–Hungary as incompatible with constitutional life, and as leading inevitably to absolutism (Eötvös 1871b: 56). At the same time he realised that the principle of majority cannot justly be enforced in linguistic ethnic questions (Eötvös 1871b: 86). As a consequence he did not support a system of federalism based on the cultural/linguistic ethnic principle, since a division of the various provinces on a linguistic national basis seemed to him impracticable. Instead of this he proposed to reckon with the nationalities as free associations. The instruments for such a solution lay ready to hand in the ancient communal, municipal and religious autonomy that so long proved to be the bulwarks of individual freedom (Eötvös 1871a v. 2: 485-486). If nationality was regarded in the state not as a collective political right but as a personal human right expressed by free associations of the different nations the dominant ideas of the age ‘freedom, equality and nation’ would be in harmony.

Eötvös can be regarded as the pioneer of the so-called ‘personal principle’ instead of the collective ‘territorial autonomy’ principle. Later, similar ideas were proposed by the Austrian social democrats, Otto Bauer and Karl Renner (Fejtő 1993: 171). The similarity is undeniable if we think about the thoughts of Renner on the nation states. Renner also realised that if the nation was the absolute sovereign as legal personality there was nothing that could limit its power. This is why he emphasised that the nation state could not be the sovereign legal power (*souveräne rechtliche Gewalt*). The legal personality (*Rechtspersonlichkeit*) embodying the sovereignty could be only the state. The rights had to belong to the people, to the individuals (Renner 1918). Renner in contradiction to Eötvös rejected the historical status quo. He was for the federation of linguistic ethnic autonomous states created on the basis of the personal principle. He advocated implementing a double (a cultural and a civil) administrative state structure only in the mixed territories (Bóka 2002b). Eötvös was for a civil state organization on basis of the historical status quo. He favoured to create a separate administrative structure on basis of the cultural/linguistic principle.

Kossuth also proposed similar ideas as Eötvös for the solution of the nationality problem after the revolution. He recognised his former mistakes later, during his long exile. In his famous program on the reconstruction of Hungary he rejected the French trend of centralisation stressing the importance of the idea of freedom (Kossuth 1943: 5-6). He also found an analogy between religion and nation. He



considered the structure of various Protestant religious communities, and the way they coexisted based on mutual tolerance, as a perfect example of how national conflicts should be solved in a territory of mixed population or in a multinational state. Kossuth's merit is the drafting of the idea of nation as a free association of people:

“Les individus de la même religion s’associent, voilà l’église. L’église est une association, et rien de plus — une organisation qui s’organise et se gouverne librement. Elle n’a rien de commun avec l’État et l’État n’a rien de commun avec elle. ... La nationalité est un intérêt social, absolument comme la religion. Les citoyens faisant partie de telle ou de telle nationalité, s’uniront par communes dans l’intérêt de leur nationalité. A l’aide de délégués, ils associeront en districts, et les districts seront groupés en une communauté nationale. Ils organiseront ensuite comme bon leur semblera. Ils nommeront un chef national qu’ils appelleront voivode, hospodar, ou n’importe de quel nom. A leur communauté nationale, si cela leur convient, ils joindront le gouvernement de leur église et de leurs écoles, et feront des statuts conformément auxquels ils administreront leur société. En un mot, jouissant d’une parfaite autonomie, ils arriveront au développement de tous les intérêts moraux et sociaux, dont l’ensemble comprend ce que l’on nomme la nationalité. Cette association n’a rien de commun avec l’État et l’État n’a rien de commun avec elle. C’est ainsi, par simple voie d’association, qu’il importe d’assurer les intérêts de nationalité, lesquels sont du domaine des droits individuels” (Kossuth 1943: 7, 9).

2.2 The reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire

2.2.1 The monarchic–feudal state organization of the Habsburg dynasty challenged by the national principle

The legitimate sovereign in the Habsburg Monarchy was the emperor. The national movements for freedom challenged the classical monarchical diplomacy of the imperial government. After the revolutions of 1848 the dynasty stood before the challenge to summarize the experiences and to make the necessary conclusions. But the imperial government was not able to change the traditional receipt: ‘Govern and change nothing’. The dynasty was without an idea regarding the new challenges for the state organization. Thus the legitimate sovereign could not answer the problem how to reconstruct the empire according to the new ideas after the revolution of 1848.

The political philosophy of the new emperor, Francis Joseph, crowned at the end of 1848, was grounded further on the old idea that monarchs were chosen by God with the task to make the life of their subjects happy. At the same time in reality the whole empire was in motion. Ancient bounds of loyalty (Kaiser Treue) and obedience were undermined after Hungary, Bohemia, the Germans, the Italian provinces and the citizens of Vienna had rebelled under the influence of the ideas of the French Revolution against the traditional feudal empire in 1848–49. Democratic nationalism everywhere in the empire represented the idea of freedom against the absolutism of the dynasty. The whole situation of the empire demanded a mature and fundamentally wiser modernization policy.



The idea of the reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire along federal lines — as it was above mentioned — was earnestly discussed in 1848–49 but the imperial government would not hear of it. Finally after the failure of the revolutionary movement the Habsburg Monarchy entered upon an era of arbitrary absolutism. The government of Schwarzenberg arbitrarily dissolved the “Kremsier Reichstag” and proclaimed the “oktrojierte Verfassung vom 4. März 1849”. The “Märzverfassung” was based on the idea of centralism: “alle Länder und Stämme der Monarchie zu einem großen Staatskörper zu vereinigen” (Wierer 1960: 43). Thus the aim of post–revolutionary Habsburg absolutism was to create the indivisible unity (not the union) of all parts of the Austrian Monarchy administered according to a general Austrian code civil. It aimed to create from all parts of the Habsburg Empire, including Hungary, an Austrian “Kronland”. It aimed further to separate from Hungary Croatia–Slavonia, Transylvania, the Temes, Banat and Woiwodina as new “Kronlanden”. At the same time the “Märzverfassung” had a contradictory character. It repeated further the principle of “Gleichberechtigung” of all national groups (Volksstämme) and languages of the “Kremsierer Entwurf”. But regarding the languages it did not contain legal guarantees. It planned further to organize the lower levels of the administration (Gemeinde, Bezirk and Kreis) on the basis of the principle of self–government. It meant federalism on the lower levels and unitary centralism on the higher “Kronländer” levels of the empire. In reality the new absolute system remained an autocracy using force against the ambitions of the different historic and linguistic ethnic national groups demanding more independence. Schwarzenberg, Bruck and Bach, the most important politicians of the post–revolutionary period, continued the unitary and centralised Austrian policy. At the same time their quasi–federal plans and attempts, which in reality did not change the essentially centralised organization of the empire, showed a certain doubt regarding the adequacy and rightfulness of the unitary, centralised and absolute principles (Wierer 1960: 54).

Hungary after the revolutions of 1848 and 1849 was administered by force. The rebellious Magyars were crushed by cruelty and terror. The Habsburg absolute government continued to make efforts to crush every resistance and opposition. The constitution of 1848 was withdrawn, the county assemblies were dissolved, and Croatia and Transylvania were detached from Hungary. Administrative officials of foreign origins (Czechs, Poles) governed Hungary. The Habsburg policy tried to incorporate the Hungarian state by a centralization policy into a unified Habsburg Monarchy. At the same time Habsburg absolutism did not stop the modernization of the Hungarian society. It eliminated the Hungarian feudal system and initiated social and economic reforms, enforced the liberation of the serfs and the elimination of the right of entailment (*ösiség*) decided by the laws of 1848. The Austrian Civil Code abrogated the Hungarian feudal law. The Hungarian liberal politicians answered to this by the so-called ‘passive resistance’ policy led by Ferenc Deák maintaining the platform of the Laws of 1848 as the basis of their policy.

The autocratic attitude was changed only when the military and political bankruptcy of the absolute and centralist system had become evident in 1859 after the Habsburg defeat in the war with Italy and France in 1859. As a result of the international events the government of Francis Joseph necessarily turned toward constitutionalism. In October of 1860 it was published an imperial diploma aiming to set up a central or federal parliament whose deputies would be chosen by the revived provincial



assemblies throughout the Habsburg Empire. It planned a strict “Realunion” with the characters of a “Bundesstaat”. The imperial legislature wanted to safeguard its competence in common matters (finance, currency, tariffs, army) but it let the decision regarding the other public affairs for the local assemblies. Concerning Hungary it planned the reconstruction of Hungary’s constitutional regime of 1847. The Hungarians rejected the October diploma because it called for a central law-making body and denied Hungarian ministerial responsibility and other rights of 1848. The Magyar politicians did not find this constitution liberal enough and they wanted to negotiate on the basis of the rights of 1848. After the nullification of the October Diploma the question was how would the Habsburg Empire reconstruct along centralist, federalist or other lines?

2.2.2 Modernization of the conservative monarchic–feudal Habsburg state organization system

In the period of 1861–1867 political life was full of discussions on how to reconstruct the Habsburg Monarchy. The forces of centralism and federalism fought with each other. At the same time in Hungary the legal solution of the national minority problem was one of the main subjects of political discussions. It was a great challenge for Eötvös to propose a common democratic constitutional system for the Habsburg Empire including Hungary, too. Eötvös believed that only a confederative constitutional order could insure the survival of each national group as the examples of Switzerland, Holland and Belgium showed. A centralised system would result, on the contrary, in forced assimilation.

Eötvös, searching the way out of the general crisis of state organization after the French Revolution, criticised the Congress of Vienna, which, after the Napoleonic war, neglected both the historic and national principles and continued the old monarchic–feudal principle in the reorganisation of a New Europe. The borders of states were made quickly and automatically. Furthermore, they failed to create a strong Germany. What was decided was not maintainable in practice (Eötvös 1861: 117). Eötvös, like List, was for a powerful democratic Central European state. He believed that for peace in Europe, it would be important to create a Central European Confederation that he regarded as the only guarantee of the peaceful coexistence of the many small nations living in Central Europe. At the same time, Eötvös realised that the national principle worked in the opposite direction, towards fragmentation causing conflicts among the different national groups of the Habsburg Empire. He acknowledged that the most important task of the democratic state organisation in the Habsburg Monarchy was the legal solution of the national minority problem. Thus, in his view, democracy in Hungary depended on the solution of the national minority problem (Eötvös 1859: 216).

Eötvös further believed that Germany had to achieve its natural place in Central Europe. The balancing role of Germany was the basic condition of the European peace. This would be very important because of the Russian threat (Eötvös 1861: 27, 115-117). As a solution he proposed, before German unification, to create unity between Germany and Austria. According to the national principle, the German territories of the Austrian Empire had to belong to the German federation and the non-German territories had to be connected by a personal union to Germany. The legal independence of Hungary would be the condition of the unity of Germany (Eötvös 1861: 118). He hoped to achieve more independence for Hungary, and more power to be able to develop into a powerful autonomous state interested in South–Eastern Europe.



After the German unification the political situation was changed. Eötvös, like many of his contemporaries, considered it a historical necessity to preserve the territorial unity of the Habsburg Empire and, in its framework, the integrity of the Hungarian Kingdom. He gave ideas for the reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire satisfying at that time the aspirations of the national minorities, too. He actually wanted to strengthen the Monarchy internally to be able to act as a protector of the small Danubian nations against the rising German and Russian imperialism. Eötvös' fear of a Russian-led Pan Slavism was acute. He used the old national stereotype regarding Hungary as a country on the borderline of western civilisation to be wedged between two great conquering nations. The first one was the Russian Empire, similar to the Ottoman Empire of the Middle Ages, which was a conquering power threatening the neighbouring countries. The Russian Empire was behind Pan Slavism and it aimed to create a great Slavish Empire. The other one was Germany, which worked on the unity of the German speaking territories and which aimed to conquer the whole territory of the Danube basin. He acknowledged that the Turkish Empire would soon disintegrate. Hungary was also on the way to disintegration because of Magyar nationalism and linguistic ethnic conflicts. Eötvös acknowledged that Hungary was in a very difficult situation: its external position demanded a strong centralisation, while the internal situation made only a loose one possible. He thought that it was the last chance for Hungary to find a solution for the national minority problem. Eötvös believed that if the linguistic ethnic principle could gain it would prevent the establishment of any new large state in Eastern Europe. The small nation states created by the national principle would constantly make war against each other and as a result they would be incapable of defending their own independence and of safeguarding civilized life (Eötvös 1869: 88). Eötvös believed that the future role of Hungary was to protect the peaceful coexistence of the many small national groups of Central Europe. Hungary could best defend the idea of 'European union' by achieving internal national peace in Hungary and in Central Europe.

Eötvös was convinced that there was only one way for the small nations living in the territory of the Habsburg Empire to survive and to avoid the future conflicts among themselves involving the great powers: to associate (Eötvös 1869: 33-39). Lord Acton also believed the same emphasising that the coexistence of several nations in a State served as a test of democracy and freedom; as such, it was in the natural and providential order, and indicated a state of greater advancement than the national unity that was the ideal of modern national liberalism. The combination of different nations, like the combination of different individuals in one state was a necessary condition of civilised human life (Acton 1867: 150). As a consequence Eötvös' main problem was how to harmonise the aspirations for independent statehood of the different national minorities, speaking different languages, with the historical development of the historical parts of the Habsburg Empire (Hungary and the "Kronlands" including Bohemia).

Eötvös recognised that the lack of "Habsburgian" or "Danubian" patriotism made the integration process difficult. In Austria only the person of the emperor kept together the territory of the empire. The people wanted to belong to their own nations, i.e. to their language groups (Eötvös 1871b: 108). They fought for their emancipation or they wanted to unit with their relative nations. Eötvös concluded from all this that there was a contradiction between the historical and the linguistic ethnic prin-



principles in the Habsburg Empire. Consequently, the national movements could be seen as struggles for or against historic rights. Thus Austria had three tasks:

1. “Die Begründung eines starken einheitlichen Staates.”
2. “Die Vermittlung der nationalen, auf historisches Recht begründeten Ansprüche der einzelnen Teile der Monarchie mit den Bedürfnissen der Einheit.”
3. “Die Vermittlung der auf die Verschiedenheit der Sprache begründeten Ansprüche der einzelnen Nationalitäten mit dem Prinzipie des historischen Rechtes in den einzelnen Teilen und mit den Erfordernissen der Einheit in der Monarchie“ (Eötvös 1871b: 123).

Eötvös emphasised that the Habsburg Monarchy was a historical formation. It was true that the old monarchical principle was untenable and it was necessary to change it by a democratic one on the basis of the status quo and historical rights. The linguistic ethnic principle was not suitable to this multinational empire. As a solution he proposed decentralising the empire and fragmenting its territory into provinces in their historical frameworks and giving to the different provinces self-government (Eötvös 1859: 81, 211). He rejected creating independent provinces (small national states) on a linguistic ethnic basis. Finally, he believed that the possible solution for the national problems of the Habsburg Monarchy rested in a confederation of the traditional historical entities on the top (in the framework of a constitutional monarchy) and a self-governing administrative organisation on the country and community levels with the right of free association for everybody on basis of nationality or religion. Nationality had to become a personal right belonging to the cultural sphere of the people. Thus Eötvös considered nationality as a principle of voluntary association but not as an instrument of vindicating the rights of a political collective. He proposed a double administration system of the state concerning the idea of the division of state and nation: a civil political administration for the historical parts (based on the status quo) and a national cultural administration for the different nations based on a free association policy. This proposition in Eötvös' age proved to be too idealistic because it was based on a consequent democratic policy. The Habsburg Empire (including its Hungarian part) was not a democratic state. Thus Eötvös' theory was never realized in the political practice of the Habsburg Monarchy. But his idea as a state organization theory for the multinational states or for multinational unions has an actuality nowadays, too (see for example the Belgian constitution that is based on analogous ideas, or the multilevel governance theory of the European Union).

It is remarkable that under the influence of the events and Eötvös' ideas, Palacky changed his conception of 1849 on the reorganization of the Monarchy on basis of the cultural/linguistic ethnic principle in 1865. Palacky favoured further the federalist solution in the spirit of the “Octoberdiplom” and was against a centralised or dualist solution. At the same time, he rejected his earlier linguistic ethnic national point of view as not practical and impossible. He, like Eötvös, also stressed the need to strengthen the political attachment of each nation to the historic territories and through them to Austria. He himself admitted the influence of Eötvös in changing his mind:

“Ich erkenne aber wohl, dass seitdem sich die geographisch historischen Grundlagen unseres Reiches wieder konsolidiert haben und die Theorie des Freiherrn Eötvös von den historisch-politischen Individualitäten nicht nur bei der Regierung sondern auch bei den



Völkern Anklang fand, mein Antrag aus dem J. 1849 nunmehr nicht nur unpraktisch sondern sogar unmöglich sei” (Palacky 1974: 37).

At the same time Palacky called the attention of his contemporaries to the dangers of a dualist solution (Austro–Hungarian Dual Monarchy) because it would strengthen Pan–Slavism and the nationalist forces (Wierer 1960: 77-78).

Thus, Eötvös aimed at a special kind of federal solution, a dualist structure based on the autonomous organisation of the historical parts of the constitutional Habsburg Empire. He criticised both the “Deákist” (dualist) and the federalist conception. His views were presented in an editorial of his journal, “Politikai Hetilap”. There he proposed a program for the solution not only of the Hungarian problem but of the reconstruction of the empire into a liberal state, too. He proposed organizing the political association of the Hungarian crown and the non–Hungarian territories of the Habsburg Empire not as Hungarian and Austrian national entities but as two political territories with autonomous rights and consisting of a diversity of nations. The rights of nations would have been protected by territorial autonomy in the case of Croatia, Bohemia, and Galicia and by the protection of political rights of all the small nations within the parliamentary institutions of Hungary and Austria. Thus a genuine democratic constitutional government in Hungary and Austria would make possible the solution of the national minority problems and the establishment of liberal government, i.e., the democratisation of the whole empire (Politikai Hetilap, 6 November 1865. In: Eötvös 1902-1903 v. 16: 210-215).

Regarding Hungary, Eötvös continued to stress the necessity of the democratic reconstruction of the county–system of the land that he regarded as a survival of the medieval Hungarian feudalism (Eötvös 1846). He emphasised also that, if Hungary wanted to become a modern democratic state, it had to go through the democratisation process completely without stopping halfway. The only way to avoid the impasses was to accomplish the civilization and democratisation process in Hungary (Eötvös 1846: 190-191).

Reality did not justify the state organization ideas of Eötvös in his age. The Austrian defeat of Königgrätz transformed the whole political situation in Central Europe. The Austrian government was forced to change its policy. In 1867 a constitutional settlement was achieved between the crown and the Magyar moderates named Ausgleich or Compromise of 1867. The Compromise of 1867 between the ‘Länder der Ungarischen Krone’ and the Austrian ‘Kronlandergemeinschaft’ transformed the centralised empire into a dual monarchy called ‘Österreichisch-Ungarische Monarchie’ or ‘Österreichisch-Ungarisches Reich’. The unitary emperor state based on the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was changed by a state based theoretically on the idea of equality of rights of the nations, i.e., national emancipation that was untrue implemented. It meant in reality that Hungary and Austria became two independent autonomous states united only by the common dynasty and common affairs (common military establishment, a common diplomacy, a common customs and commercial system and the finances necessary for common affairs). Historic rights of the country were re-established. Hungary had its own parliament and its ministry. Croatia and Transylvania had to be united with Hungary. This was the meaning of ‘dualism’ and it was adequate to the program repre-



gram represented by Deák. But soon the question arose whether this dual system was expandable into “trialism” by arriving at an agreement with the Czechs concerning the idea of national emancipation.

During the reorganization of the Austrian part of the Dual Monarchy the Austrian Constitution of 1867 established a formal constitutionalism. The fundamental laws were mustered after the French charter of 1791 (equality before the law and in the public service, freedom of press, speech and assembly were formally guaranteed). The Austrian Constitution of 1867 made liberal provisions for the interests of the various nations. It stated that all national minorities in the state enjoy equal rights and each one has an inalienable right to the preservation and cultivation of its nationality and language (May 1951: 43-47).

The Ausgleich of 1867 and the new system of dualism were not acceptable to the national minorities. The national minority leaders desired in general extensive and genuine provincial autonomy. All this meant that every nation aimed its Ausgleich with the dynasty in the framework of a confederate state. The Czechs, led by Francis L. Rieger, rejected and attacked the Ausgleich of 1867 and the system of dualism because it meant national discrimination for them. They fought for an autonomous Czech state aiming to extend the dualism into trialism. The Bohemian diet published in 1868 a detailed Declaration of Rights and Expectations, which served until the dissolution of the Monarchy as the exposition of the Czech position on constitutional questions. On the basis of historical rights the Czechs argued for the recognition of the unity of the “Bohemian Crown”. Palacky believed, for example, that if the Slavs were to be treated as an inferior people and handed over to two dominant peoples to govern them, they would transform their peaceful spirit into a warlike one (May 1951: 62). Thus the Czechs protest against the system of dualism in the name of the idea of freedom was enormous. Finally Czech national politicians tried to obtain protection by the Russian tsar and Napoleon III. The great game for playing out the Russian led pan-Slavism against Austrian and Hungarian nationalism began at that time.

The Austrian and Hungarian leaders of the dual system did not want to develop the system of dualism into trialism and further into a democratic confederation. Finally the Austrian government tried to rule Bohemia by repression that was a step back to the old autocratic policy. At the same time in the case of Galicia the Austrian government extended the privileges of the Poles and they created a special Austrian ministry for Galician affairs. The ministers of the dual monarchy did it emphasising that the first duty of the Galician Poles was to uphold and defend the Habsburg Monarchy in the name of freedom against Russian barbarism and Prussian militarism (May 1951: 50-53). Thus the idea of national toleration in the form of territorial autonomy was only a political means in reality used in the interest of the government of the dual monarchy. The break with the autocratic centralisation policy was only formal. The Habsburg Monarchy remained a formal constitutionalism. From the point of view of the dynasty the national principle played the role of the idea of freedom forcing the dynasty to modernize the state structure of the empire. From the point of view of the oppressed national minorities the national principle played a double role: it represented freedom and, at the same time, democratic nationalism. Thus the ideas of freedom and nationality were closely connected in the policy of the different national groups of the Habsburg Monarchy. The situation created for the Czechs was a good example of all this. At the same time the system of dualism proved in reality not suitable for



further democratic progress (May 1951: 58). The idea of federalization of the Habsburg Empire failed because of the Compromise of 1867. In historical reality it proved not possible to find a formula, which could reconcile Czech federalist aspirations with Austro–German ideas of centralism and Magyar aversion to further constitutional changes.

Eötvös clearly saw that the ‘Ausgleich’ from the part of the Austrian government was only a political manoeuvre because of the difficult political situation of the emperor. He did not think that the Compromise of 1867 was a satisfactory arrangement. He acknowledged its shortcomings. At the same time he believed that his generation could correct it and transform the Habsburg Empire in accordance with the democratic state organization ideas. Eötvös always favoured as the real solution the federalization of the empire. He thought federalism to be a more perfect political order than dualism. His personal proposal for the reconstruction of Austria was denied in 1867. The Nationality Act of 1868 was not created concerning his ideas. The dualistic state was a defeat for him. In spite of that fact he accepted the post of Minister of Public Education in the Hungarian Ministry formed by Count Andrassy in February of 1867. He supported the dualism because he believed that it might become the beginning of the democratic federalization of the empire. He believed that it was necessary to remain present in policy because this was the only way to advance democracy. As a minister of public education Eötvös aimed to reform the Hungarian primary school system, and he planned the reform of secondary and university education. Eötvös wanted to advance the moment when the liberal aims would be realisable. Experience showed him in 1848 the narrow contact between public education and the linguistic ethnic problems. As a minister of public education he wanted to promote the insurance of the cultural and national rights of the national minorities (The speech of Eötvös about the bill of public elementary school. In: Eötvös 1902-1903d: 166-176).

2.3 The legal solution of the national minority problem

2.3.1 Eötvös’ propositions for the legal solution of the national minority problem

After the Compromise of 1867 Eötvös, foreseeing the danger of the consolidation of nationalism in Hungary in the future, stressed that the legal settlement of national minority rights was a necessary condition for a democratic reconstruction of Hungary and of the Empire. Regarding the reorganization of Hungary, he emphasised the necessity to protect concurrently both cultural/linguistic rights and the political unity of Hungary. Eötvös continued to emphasize that a real democratic political order was the best guarantee for the protection of minorities. He believed that the Hungarian politicians had to implement the principles of equal political and human rights and personal freedom declared in 1848 as a basis for solution of the national minority problem. Thus, in his opinion, the solution of the national minority conflicts depended on the success of the democratic reconstruction of the political and administrative structure of the Habsburg Empire.

Regarding the implementation of the linguistic rights of minorities in practice Eötvös — as it was above mentioned — proposed already earlier in 1851 in his pamphlet entitled “*Gleichberechtigung*” to accept the right of each county to choose freely its official language. At the same time the official language of the Hungarian Parliament and the central government would be Magyar. He proposed to



recognize the right of any member of the Hungarian Parliament to speak in his native language. The central government had also to accept the usage of any language used in Hungary.

The parliament convoked in 1861 in Pest was a turning point in the history of the national minority problem. It aimed to clarify the constitutional contact between Hungary and the Habsburg dynasty and to find a legal solution to the national minority problems. The national minorities continued to confirm their resolutions made in 1848. At the same time they emphasised that they wanted to live as emancipated (autonomous) nations possessing equal rights (“egyenjogú nemzet”) in a common land with the Magyars. Eötvös continued to emphasise the necessity of the consequent fulfilment of the constitutional rights declared by the Laws of 1848. The Hungarian national minority leaders opposed his concept on the historical political nation based on the principle of personal right. They opposed his policy for equal rights and duties declared in 1848. They aimed to achieve equal rights of national minorities (national emancipation) in the form of national territorial autonomy and not in the form of personal autonomy.

The whole period between 1861 and 1868 was full of discussions on the solution of the national minority problem. The Hungarian politicians negotiated with the representatives of the Habsburg Monarchy about the reconstruction of the Monarchy into a dual system. At the same time the Hungarian politicians negotiated and discussed with the politicians representing the national minorities about the reconstruction of Hungary. A national minority commission was established concerning Eötvös’ proposition in 1861 that dealt with the solution of the national minority problem (Kemény 1947: 69; Kemény 1962: 498-499).

Eötvös regarded Hungary as a “political nation” and not a “one political nation”. As such the Hungarian state was for him the political association of every people living there. His idea to define the rights of citizenship in the Kingdom of Hungary according to the personal system, i.e. to guarantee equal individual human and political rights for everybody regardless of nationality (Kemény 1947: 50-55), was accepted by the moderate leaders of the Slovak and Rumanian national minorities who regarded the idea of common citizenship (Hungarian and not Magyar) of all people living in Hungary as a good solution. The other national minority leaders directly opposed Eötvös’ programme. They wanted to organize autonomous national territories, separated from each other by linguistic borders, in which one national minority alone exercised political control. For example the Serbian and Slovak national leaders demanded not only national emancipation but also a separate Serb and Slovak national territory (as political nation). The Hungarian politicians, including Eötvös, continued to ignore the most important goal of the national minority leaders, which was the demand of equal status as political nations (national territorial and not personal legal emancipation) with the Magyars. In place of national autonomy Eötvös continued to emphasise that a modernized Hungarian Constitution based on shared principles had to insure for all citizens equal political and human rights. It had to insure for everybody the possibility to cultivate his nationality. The Hungarian Constitution had to create unity among the national minorities and the Magyars. It had to convince the national minorities that it was the best guarantee of their individual political and cultural rights. Finally the Hungarian and the national minority leaders could not find a common platform in the period of their discussions on the necessary nationality law (Kemény 1947: 55-69).



Eötvös' proposals for national minority rights were presented in his Nationality Bill submitted to the Hungarian Parliament on June 26, 1867 (Kemény 1952 v. 1: 49-52). This bill reaffirmed and restated Eötvös' previous positions on national minority rights. It outlined a multilingual and multinational structure of minority protection. The fundamental premise of his program was the guarantee of the right of each citizen to use his native language in township, church and county affairs and the obligation of these authorities to communicate with citizens in their native languages. Only in the central administration and the Hungarian Parliament would Magyar be used. Eötvös provided further for the obligation of the central government to correspond with citizens and their associations in their native languages. The right of association of the national minorities was also presented as a human right in Eötvös' Nationality Bill of 1867 (Kemény 1947: 74-75). In his famous speech on 25 November 1868 in the House of Representatives on the Nationality Bill Eötvös continued to argue according to the above-mentioned ideas. He established that for the reconstruction of Hungary there were two proposals: The first was presented by the Hungarian Commission, which proposed to search the solution in the consequent guarantee of individual freedom for the national minorities. The second one presented the point of view of the national minorities. The different national minorities wanted to achieve three things as a possible legal solution of their situation: 1. To organise the provinces, the different districts and municipal authorities of the country in accordance with the territory of the national minorities. 2. The legal declaration in every provinces the rule of one language. 3. To divide the administrative and representative functions in Hungary according to the national minority proportion (Eötvös speech on the Nationality Bill. In: Eötvös Ö. M. v. 10: 177-187; Kemény 1952 v. 1: 139-141).

Eötvös rejected the proposal of the representatives of the national minorities with the following arguments: First of all, he emphasised that there was not such a legal principle according to which the nationality of the individual citizen is definable. Secondly, there was not such a legal forum that could decide the nationality of the individual persons. Thirdly, the ethnographical situation of the country made it not possible to create homogeneous national provinces. In every province of the country more nations had to live in coexistence with homogeneous or mixed groups. As a consequence it was not possible to decide the domination of one language without discriminating against the others.

Eötvös emphasised that the national minority problem was not a subversive provocation and propaganda. He believed that it represented the movement to freedom of his age that declared the equality of political rights and the freedom of conscience of every individual. From all this logically followed the demand for the free usage of the native languages of the individuals. Thus the national principle could represent the idea of freedom only if the safeguarding of language and nationality depended on the free will of the individual persons. Only in this sense was the national principle acceptable as an organization principle of the living together of the people world-wide in a world integration process, which – in Eötvös' opinion - was the main trend of human civilization. The role of the national principle was to become the representative of freedom eliminating the fears of national extinction and of the assimilation into greater states. It was originally a principle that aimed to make the world integration process peaceful. It was not the principle of creation one political nation states because, in this case, it represented oppression and not freedom. It continued the intolerant conquering policy of the former society and not the peaceful integration process of the people of a modern democ-



matic age. His warning was addressed to the Magyars and at the same time to the national minority leaders, too.

In summary, Eötvös acknowledged that the national minority “question” was a problem everywhere in Europe. He emphasised that the Hungarians had to propose such a nationality law, which was not in contradiction with the general Western European democratic direction (Eötvös 1869: 62). For Eötvös nationality was an inalienable and inviolable human right (Weber 1966: 154). He recognised as a distinct nationality every aggregate of people in which the feeling of their distinct personality was active (Eötvös 1869: 12-13). He believed that only the personal system could represent the idea of human rights in a multinational country.

The progressive ideas of Eötvös on the reconstruction of Hungary were not implemented in the Hungarian state organization. His program was too idealistic for a backward feudal society that could not accomplish the planned democratisation process of the country following the ideas of 1848. When, after the Ausgleich of 1867, the national minority problem was legally regulated, Eötvös tried to represent his ideas in the Act of Equal Rights of the Nationalities (XLIV. 1868) but the Act of 1868 was a serious defeat for his own program (See Kemény 1947: 107-109; Seton-Watson 1908: 429-433). The minority protection represented in the Act fell short of his public statements and private views.

Finally, The Nationality Act of 1868 (Act 1868:XLIV) accepted the political supremacy of the Magyar language. Each county was obliged to use the Magyar language as its official administrative language (paragraph five). It had a unilingual and centralizing intention but at the same time it had important liberal and tolerant impulses under the influence of Eötvös (See Petitions to the Hungarian Parliament concerning the Nationalities Bill of 1867. Hungarian State Archives Budapest: K-2 1867 - 1777, 1868 - 2621-29, 1868 - 2501, 1868 - 2628-31, and 1868 - 3676). Eötvös’s bill of 1867 was essentially different from The Nationality Act of 1868 in its approach to the French idea of one-political–nation that Eötvös originally rejected. However Eötvös finally accepted Deák’s proposition on the ‘one political nation’ model. The majority of the representatives voted against the autonomy propositions of the national minority leaders and they favoured Deák’s conception. Finally the Nationality Law was accepted in the form of Deák’s proposition by both of the houses of the Hungarian parliament, and it was proclaimed in 1868.

2.3.2 The Nationality Act of 1868

The Nationality Act of 1868 was the first European comprehensive code of the national minority rights. It may be divided into two unequal and somewhat contradictory parts. The preamble and the first paragraph emphasise the unitary character of the Hungarian State as embodied in the concept of “one political nation”, and proclaim the pre-eminent position of the Magyar tongue as the “state language” of Hungary. It declared that “from the political point of view” all Hungarian citizens form “a single nation” — the indivisible unitary Magyar nation of which every citizen of the mother country is a member, no matter to which nationality he belongs; since, moreover, this equality of right can only exist, with reference to the official use of the various languages of the country, and only under special provisions, in so far as is rendered necessary by the unity of the country and the practical possibility of government and administration”.



The remaining twenty-eight paragraphs spell out specific concessions to the individual national minorities designed to satisfy their national aspirations without endangering the unity of the state. Of the twenty-eight articles of the Nationality Law several dealt with or touched upon the dominant position of the Magyar language. It was proclaimed the official language of the parliament, central government, courts, higher administration, national university, and — with major reservations — the county assemblies. Still, far-reaching provisions were made for the use of all other languages of the country. Parliamentary laws were to be published in all of the seven languages. In the county assemblies, anyone had the right to use his own mother tongue; and the assemblies were permitted to employ any second language in their correspondence with the central government. On the communal or township level, these privileges were further extended. They were made even more encompassing on the level of the individual citizen. There, individual freedom truly became the guiding principle. Thus, every Hungarian citizen had the right to correspond and speak to the government and church authorities at all levels of administration in his native tongue or in one of the official languages of his own comitat. The law likewise guaranteed church autonomy, freedom of association and education (Seton-Watson 1908: 429-433; Kemény 1947: 107-109).

The above mentioned paragraphs presented Eötvös's modified ideas aiming to pacify the national minorities by satisfying all their national aspirations insofar as those were reconcilable with the principle of individual freedom and the political and territorial unity of Hungary. The cantonal arrangement with the "Gleichberechtigung" of the national minorities was rejected. The nationality law was based on the principle of personal autonomy. At the same time it consequently insisted on the assuring of the right of association to the various national minorities. It meant, in reality, that individuals, communes and denominations were at liberty to found schools and colleges for the furtherance of language, art, science, industry or agriculture; and individuals were secured the right to form societies and associations such as corresponded to "their lawful aspirations". In this spirit the article 26 of the Law of Equal Rights of Nationalities declared the following:

"As hitherto, so in the future both individual citizens, communes, churches and congregations of whatever nationality shall have the right to erect by their own exertions and in the way of association both elementary secondary and higher educational institutions. With this object and for the erection of other institutions which advance the cause of language, art, science, agriculture, industry and commerce, the individual citizens can, subject to the legal control of the State, join together in societies or leagues, can draw up statutes, and after the Government has sanctioned these statutes, can act in accordance with them; they can also collect money funds and can, subject to Governmental control, administer these funds in conformity with their lawful national claims.

Educational and other institutions that have been founded in this manner enjoy equal rights with state institutions of a similar character — but the schools, only in the event of the provisions of the law of Public Education being observed.

The language of private institutions and societies is prescribed by the founders"

(Seton-Watson 1908: 433).



The Act of Equal Rights of the Nationalities of 1868 was a proposition on how to realise a liberal state structure which made possible the further integration and co-operation among the different nations in the multinational Hungarian Kingdom. It was well appreciated in Western Europe. McCartney for example believed that the Hungarian Nationality Law was far from being illiberal. "It was, indeed, far more liberal than most of the contemporary German legislation, not to speak of earlier laws of Western Europe." Had the national minorities been willing to accept the fundamental assumption upon which it was based: that Hungary was a Magyar national state, that it was composed of "one political nation" it might have worked out very well (Macartney 1934: 120).

R. W. Seton-Watson, who thought about Eötvös as one of the greatest and most liberal Magyar statesman, writes: "On paper Hungary possesses a most admirable and enlightened law guaranteeing the Equal Rights of Nationalities" (1868); in practice, it has remained almost from the very beginning a dead letter (Seton-Watson 1915: 132). In the "*Racial problems in Hungary*" R. W. Seton-Watson made a few references to the extremism of the national minorities, and he remarked that while non-Magyar national minority leaders opposed the law of 1868 as unjust and inadequate, there was little doubt that the vast masses of their followers would have been satisfied by the very genuine national guarantee which it contained (Seton-Watson 1908: 161).

R. W. Seton-Watson criticised the law from two point of view. He believed that:

From a strictly legal standpoint the title of this law was a misnomer; the equality of the Hungarian races was not absolute, but was made conditional upon reasons of state. This did not necessarily detract from the liberal nature of the law, because a state composed of mixed races had to have a greater regard for the well-being of the whole.

The more serious problem was that the rights were made conditional and more depended upon the manner in which the law was executed.

R. W. Seton-Watson believed that Deák and Eötvös were genuinely desirous of conciliating the national minorities and of assuring to their languages and customs as large a measure of liberty as seemed consistent with the political unity of the State. In his opinion "The broad and tolerant views of Eötvös may be clearly traced in most of his political writings" (Seton-Watson 1918: 148, 161).

Jászi wrote that R. W. Seton-Watson, in his valuable researches before the war, always emphasised the significance of this law and called it a basis on which the national struggles of the country growing more and more acute could be cured (Jászi 1929: 316).

Unfortunately, the Nationality Act of 1868 was not realised. It was a failure for four reasons:

1. The system of dualism, which was created by the Ausgleich of 1867, stopped the future process of the liberal solution of the national minority problem. It was not possible to develop the dualist state structure in reality because it gave a power position for the Hungarian Magyars. It strengthened the Magyar nationalist forces and finally caused the deadlock of federalism in the Habsburg Empire.

2. The Nationality Act of 1868 proved inadequate for the political protection of national minorities in Hungary because in reality it made it possible to deny the political participation of minorities in local government and it made even more difficult minority participation in Hungarian national politics. This was mostly due to the fact that the Nationality Act of 1868 had no enacting clauses. The



rights were made conditional. This made it possible to misuse the ideas of this basically democratic law. More depended upon the spirit and manner in which the law was executed.

3. The general failure of Hungarian liberal policy. It was made clear first of all by the defeat of the reform proposal of Balthasar Horvát, the liberal Hungarian minister of justice, on the modernization of Hungarian local government, and the defeat of Eötvös' ideas on the reform of the educational system: The Hungarian Parliament vetoed Horvát's reform proposal on local autonomy system in 1870. The local government remained further under the control of the nationalist Hungarian landholder noble elite. As a consequence national minorities and the rural population remained excluded from effective political rights (Bödy 1972: 114). Eötvös always stressed that without a democratic representative and liberal system of self-government national minorities could not participate in local government because the effectiveness of national minority protection depended on local governmental institutions. This is why he emphasised the necessity for the autonomous bottom-up organization of government everywhere in the multinational Habsburg Empire.

Regarding education, which worked as a test of the nationality law and public administration in practice, Eötvös aimed to create an integrated and uniform state school system in Hungary continuing his ideas of 1848 on compulsory universal education (Fragmentary draft on education and school affairs. Manuscript Collection of the Széchenyi National Library Budapest Fol. Hung. 1492). According to the Education Law (Act 1868:XXXVIII) any denomination, association or individual was given the right to establish or maintain primary schools provided that they met the uniform equality standards established for state institution. From the point of view of the national minorities the Nationality Act laid down the general principle of the right of public education in the mother tongue (Várdy 1966: 258-259; Seton-Watson 1908: 208-211, 432). The nationalities regarded the idea of the uniform state school with compulsory universal education as serving the aim of the cultural leadership of the Magyars in Hungary and a striving for "Magyarisation". The church regarded it as an attack against the denominational schools. Finally Eötvös' attempt at a liberal educational reform was a failure because the democratisation programme of the country was not accomplished.

4. The influential leaders of the rising Slav and Rumanian national movements who represented a completely different national conception opposed the Nationality Act of 1868. They emphasized the political rights of every national group to create autonomous national territories (territorial autonomy) based on the linguistic ethnic principle. They demanded the continuation of the example of the Swiss cantons, and the organization of Slovak, Russian, Rumanian, and Serbian cantons, as separate autonomous national territories. Three forces struggled against each other in Hungary: the representatives of the principle of linguistic nationality, the representatives of the personal principle, and the representatives of the centralised Hungarian national state. Finally the dissatisfied national minorities step by step refused to support the cause of an autonomous Hungary against the Habsburg centralisation policy. The Viennese government offered to protect national minorities against Magyar supremacy. At the same time Hungarian nationalism became stronger and stronger. It appeared gradually in the identification of Magyar nationality with the historic Hungarian state (historical Hungary), and in the suppression of the rights of other small nations living in Hungary. As a reaction the national mi-



norities finally demanded the right of national self-determination based on the linguistic ethnic principle. Magyar and national minority political nationalism strengthened each other.

The goal of modernization and democratisation of the country on the basis of equal political rights represented by the Hungarian reform national liberals failed. The national conflicts played an important part in this. In reality the forces of Magyar and national minority democratic nationalism became more and more dominant after 1875. The Hungarian government aimed to create a uniform centralized administrative structure in Hungary. This state conception made the guarantees of the Nationality Act of 1868 largely a dead letter. In a centralised national state the government could not defend national minorities against the oppressive majority. The Hungarian national minority policy after 1868 till the First World War became more and more nationalist. Thus the solution of the national minority problem became the main condition of democracy in Hungary. It remained the most important political task of the following generations of the Hungarian liberals in the future too.

2.4 The actuality of Eötvös' ideas

Eötvös recognised the importance of the national principle but he rejected the stereotyped imitation of the French idea of national self-determination as a solution being in contradiction to democracy and freedom in a multinational territory. He believed that the nation state's mentality was in general, in contradiction to freedom. He thought that if we accepted national self-determination based on ethnicity (language, culture) we would create "a lot of small tyrannies striving for power" (Eötvös 1869: 86), and continue the old story of expansion in a new historical scene. This was his conclusion based on his studies of the first experience of the implementation of the western idea of nation state in the multinational Central Europe.

For Eötvös the "nationality question" meant a state organisation crisis to be solved by the means of democratic state organisational principles without changing the status quo, without forcing the people to move (Eötvös 1869: 23). The national idea was for him the representative of the idea of freedom serving the fight against the centralised and despotic state organization tendencies. He wanted to propose such a state structure that served the struggle against the idea of one political nation state in the name of freedom (unity in diversity). He proposed his ideas intending them to be the way out of the false mythology of the nation states and their conquering mentality and towards a more realistic and democratic world. He believed that, with the development of civilization the national idea would lose its political importance in the framework of greater multinational federal states. His contribution to the liberal state organisation with the theory of the "historic-political individuality" and the personal principle (personal autonomy) is very important. It has a certain actuality nowadays, too.

Eötvös believed that the future of Europe depended on whether the historical right or the new French principles of popular sovereignty and national self-determination would win. If in the future the French nation state model would dominate, if nation and state would coincide, if every state would consist of only one nation (people) the world would develop in the direction of eternal war. Christian civilisation would become merely a Utopia. Christian civilisation was only an integration process if the state did not limit individual freedom.



Eötvös stressed that only free and autonomous communities could create associations among each other, and this was the way of the future. Central Europe had to become a multinational democratic confederation; a Central European Commonwealth based on local self-government and the free association policy of the people as citizens of the state and the community of states. This would be a step towards a European Confederation and further to the world confederation (Eötvös 1869: 87-90; Eötvös 1859: 216). This was the way toward the centuries' old idea of Christianity which was freedom and peace in the world.



3 Oszkár Jászi from democratic assimilation policy to federalism

3.1 The democratic nationalist

Nationalism became dominant at the end of the 19th century. The racial ethnic interpretation of the national idea also appeared. Eötvös' ideas on the democratic multinational federate state, on the personal principle based on equal political and human rights of everybody living in the Hungarian Kingdom, and his fight against nationalism and national stereotypes were mostly forgotten. After the 'Ausgleich' of 1867 the great liberal politicians of Hungary disappeared, — died or retired. The new generation of the Hungarian politicians being in power position in the Hungarian Kingdom represented a new spirit regarding the national minority problem. The strengthening of Hungarian nationalism killed all chances of democracy in Hungary: the nationalist myth of the 'integrity of the thousand-year-old historical Hungary' became a national dogma. Nationalism appeared in creation of a fear of losing the integrity of the territory of 'historical Hungary' (Hungarian Kingdom) because of the behaviour of national minorities. Motivated by this fear, Hungarian politicians could not find a workable agreement with the leaders of the various national minorities. They fought their fight for freedom aiming at the creation of sovereign self-governing nation states under the influence of the general nationalistic atmosphere in Europe before the First World War. The originally social problem, which was the result of the inconsistent fulfilment of democratisation of the administrative and economic system of the feudal country by the reform nobility, ended with the strengthening of nationalism. Nationalism actually appeared as a political manipulation of people by untrue ideas, prejudices and permanent stereotypes, based on the psychology of the "friend-enemy principle" thereby disguising real social problems and power aims. Thus, the whole system of Magyar nationalism after the Ausgleich of 1867 represented a policy based on manipulation by national prejudices, and by imagined national interests. As a consequence, the national principle undoubtedly worked in the direction of the dismemberment of the Hungarian Kingdom. In this political atmosphere the main task of the democratic politicians was to fight for democracy in Hungary and to continue to oppose all types of religious and racial prejudices and stereotypes.

The democratic interpretation of the national idea was one of the main political aims of Oszkár Jászi (1875–1957) the well-known liberal political thinker, social scientist and politician (On Jászi see: Fischer 1978; Borsody 1980; Hanák 1983; Hanák 1985; Litván 1986; Litván 1991c; Litván 2003; Bóka 1999; Bóka 2001b; Bóka 2002a). He was born in 1875 in Nagykároly (today Carei, Romania). His father was a Jewish doctor. He studied law and political sciences at the University of Budapest. In the first decades of the century he played an important role in the introduction of modern Western social thought (the works of Darwin, Spencer and Durkheim) in Hungary. He was editor for two decades of the 'Huszadik Század', the first scholarly review of sociology and political sciences in Hungary. Jászi was effectively the leader of the Sociological Society and the Free School for Social Sciences for workers and students. He initiated and edited the Library of Sociology. He wrote the first scholarly work in Hungarian on historical materialism but subsequently he turned away from not only



Marxist materialism but also all forms of determinism. His most widely read political forum was the daily 'Világ', a liberal democratic paper with Masonic background. In 1914, he became the chairman of the Radical party, which was founded by him.

Jászi, in the tradition of the previous liberal nationalist generation, continued to emphasise the necessity of modernization and democratisation of the Dual Monarchy. He strongly criticised the ruling classes and the whole social structure of the Dual Monarchy. He believed that the history of the Habsburg Monarchy remained from the beginning until its end a typically feudal history, dominated by the "morbus latifundii", i.e. by the interests of the aristocracy and church having immense estates (the so-called latifundia). In Hungary, the feudal character of the state was preponderant. As a consequence social life remained always agricultural (Jászi 1929: 133-271). The emancipation of serfs liberated only a part of the peasantry; the other part became freemen only from juridical sense, and remained in reality in economic dependence, lacking private property. With the growth of the population, there arose a continuously raising agricultural proletariat and a dwarfish peasantry, which could only continue their miserable lives as tenants and wage-earners of the landed aristocracy. The reign of the big landed estates dominated. The representatives of the economic and ecclesiastic feudalism continued to govern the Dual Monarchy by the right of their privileges. The "morbus latifundii" exercised an enormous pressure on the moral and social atmosphere of the whole society of the Dual Monarchy (Jászi 1929: 222).

Jászi advocated the necessity to change radically the semi feudal and backward Hungarian society dominated by semi feudal landowners and their political agents. He demanded general suffrage, secret ballot, and basic civil rights. In the Hungarian feudal society Jászi, and the circle of the 'Twentieth Century', represented the link between Western culture and Hungary. They formulated the norms of a progressive democratic economy, culture, and politics. Jászi's group represented a 'counterculture' for the semi-feudal Hungarian society. His political and scientific activity was strongly opposed by the politicians and the members of the Hungarian conservative establishment.

Jászi, as politician of the left, tried to mobilize the different forces of the Hungarian society in his struggle for democracy. He established contacts with the Social Democrats, with the anti-Habsburg Hungarian nationalists, and with the oppressed national minorities in the Dual Monarchy.

In Hungary the social democratic movement was at that time a strictly proletarian movement. Jászi realized the importance of the proletariat in the fight for democracy in a country without strong middle class. The Social Democratic Party, usually anti-intellectual, endorsed the program of Jászi. Jászi himself remained an "independent socialist"; he disliked the dogmatic Marxism of the Hungarian Social Democrats and their compromising tendencies.

Jászi's second alliance with the conservative anti-Habsburg Hungarian nationalists was a sign that he recognised the significance of the national problem. During the last years of the First World War the Independent Party represented an anti-German and anti-Habsburg pacifist parliamentary party that was to lead the democratic revolution of November 1918. Mihály Károlyi, the leader of the Independent Party, and the follower of the Kossuthist anti-Austrian traditions, and later president of the Hungarian Republic after the collapse, arose from this camp.



Jászi's alliance with the oppressed nationalities in the Dual Monarchy showed that he believed that nationalism and democracy were closely connected in a multinational country. He became one of the most knowledgeable experts of the national minority problems of Central Europe. Jászi established contact and kept friendly relations with the leaders of the Slovak, South Slav, and Romanian nationalities. He realized that the national movement of the non-Magyar national groups could not be oppressed. He strongly attacked Magyar nationalism and bitterly opposed official Magyarisation policy. He presented and strongly criticized the horrors and dreads of Hungarian nationalism. He tried to organise the Hungarian democracy against nationalism. "What he said in essence was that democracy and the solution of the nationality question were closely connected tasks in Hungary and in Eastern Europe" (Litván 1986: 32). As a consequence, he stressed that for the democratic development of Hungary it would be necessary to solve the nationality question and to make possible the bourgeois democratic transformation of the agrarian feudalism. He was convinced that political and social reform especially the introduction of genuine universal suffrage and the replacement of the great Magyar landed estates by peasant property and agricultural co-operatives, would solve the national conflicts in Hungary. He fought for the democratic transformation of the Hungarian state system following the state-organizational ideas of Eötvös.

His friendship and correspondence with R. W. Seton-Watson also shows that Jászi realised: in Hungary the nationality question was the most important problem. R. W. Seton-Watson highly appreciated Jászi's — in his words — "courageous efforts to further the cause of good government, racial peace and democratic progress in Hungary". He wrote to Jászi: "I foresee for your country a very gloomy future, if the efforts of men like yourself should by any unhappy chance end in failure" (Jeszenszky 1980: 445-446). When R.W. Seton-Watson published his very controversial book entitled "*The Racial Problems in Hungary*" in 1908, Jászi stood up for Seton Watson publicly (Jászi: *Scotus Viator on Hungary*. In: Jászi 1909: 60-72). This book was a history of Hungary with references to the development of the national minority question in Hungary, and a sharp criticism on Hungarian nationalism. In his 'Racial Problems' R. W. Seton Watson stood on the basis of territorial integrity of Hungary, with Hungarian as its official language and he proposed territorial autonomy only for the Croats. He wanted the satisfaction of the rightful claims of the nationalities in the spirit of the Law of Nationalities of 1868, which he regarded as a democratic and a correct solution of the national minority problems in a multinational territory. For most British observers this book was the decisive argument against the Hungarians, and it ruined the traditional British image of a Liberal, constitutional Hungary. In Hungary the book was condemned in the most aggressive language (Jeszenszky 1980: 438).

When R. W. Seton-Watson was strongly attacked for denouncing Hungary in West-Europe, Jászi defended him in a review of the book as an outstanding expert on the Hungarian nationality problems working on the basis of historical documents and facts. He rejected to regard him as a "Pan Slav agitator". Jászi understood that R. W. Seton-Watson was shocked, facing the corrupt and unlawful practices of the Hungarian ruling class. At the same time Jászi criticised the shortcomings of R. W. Seton-Watson's books, too (e.g., some exaggerated facts, not enough distinction between natural assimilation and enforced assimilation) (Jászi: *Scotus Viator on Hungary*. Jászi 1909: 60-72).



Jászi remained a friend and a colleague of R. W. Seton–Watson, even when the latter became more and more influenced by the Slovak, South Slav, and Romanian national leaders, and by the Austrian Liberals who became gradually disillusioned in the Hungarian official nationalistic policy. R. W. Seton–Watson step by step became the protector of the Slovaks, South Slavs and Romanian national minorities. At that time R.W. Seton–Watson’s name became an anathema in official Hungary because of his “anti–Hungarian” prejudices (Jeszszky 1980: 440–441). Jászi was also strongly attacked by the chauvinist leaders of Hungarian public opinion as an ally of the enemies of Hungary. One should also add that when Jászi realised the growing antipathy and bias of R. W. Seton–Watson regarding the Hungarians, he himself also criticised him in a private letter, writing that Seton–Watson should have distinguished between the Hungarian ruling class and the Hungarian people: “the oppressor in Hungary was the ruling class and not the entire nation” (Jászi to Seaton-Watson, 27 April 1914. In: Litván – Szarka 1991a: 42–44).

The first democratic nationalist period of Jászi’s life was full of events and challenges. He tried to react to these challenges: he worked out a theory of the national states. He joined the discussion on Central Europe. He questioned the different plans on the federalisation of the Habsburg Monarchy. He questioned the ideas of the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. He was challenged by the great utopia to eliminate conquest and wars among the nations by the proclamation of the idea of national self–determination as international organization principle.

In what follows the question will be the development of the point of view of Jászi on the role of the national principle in the democratic multinational state organisation.

3.1.1 Jászi and Eötvös

Jászi basically continued the way directed by Eötvös regarding state organization and the national minority policy. He emphasised the necessity of the consequent implementation of the Nationality Law of 1868 in Hungary. While Eötvös lived in a period of transition, for Jászi, who began his political activity at the beginning of the 20th century, most of the fears of Eötvös, concerning the national principle as political force, became reality. Nationalism and the nation state mentality triumphed in Hungary and everywhere in Europe. It culminated in the First World War, which was regarded as the great modern war of nations. At that time the real nature of the European nation states’ system was no longer doubtful.

As a consequence of the industrial and technical development of capitalism the social problems of workers, representing big masses of people, were also present. The socialist ideas spread and the socialist movement became stronger and stronger. In Eötvös’ age the socialist ideas had not yet come to the front. This is one of the sources of the basic contradictions between Eötvös and Jászi. Jászi criticised Eötvös in 1913 because Eötvös regarded private property as a dogma, because he did not deal with social questions, because he had fears of the equality principle proposed by the French model, and because he could not understand the real meaning of equal political rights, which gave for everybody the possibility to change and control the execution of the constitution (Jászi: Eötvös állambölcselete és politikája. Jászi 1913: 337).



Regarding the national minority problem, Jászi criticised Eötvös because he underestimated the force of the national movement, and he could not understand that the national minority problem was the subject of basic human rights, and he proposed to solve the national minority problem on the basis of historical rights maintaining the historical status quo of his age. He believed that if Eötvös had seen clearly the essence of the national idea he could have realised that the national principle would damage the state structure everywhere where people, belonging to different nationalities, could not satisfy their demands for freedom. At the same time Jászi thought that the national principle was not in contradiction with the tendency of creating big states (Jászi: Eötvös állambölcselete és politikája. Jászi 1913: 336).

However, he was not right in saying that Eötvös could not understand that the national principle would transform the whole formal world. On the contrary, Eötvös stressed that the new nation state form was a dangerous political idea while nation is indefinable. However nation, regarded as a language group of people, could not be a legal person having rights. The rights belong to the citizens of the state as individuals independently of nationality. From a juridical point of view, nation could not coincide with the state (one political nation) without resulting a special national mentality and the strengthening of the national interests.

Jászi's criticism regarding the importance of the national minority problem showed the basic contradiction between them. At the same time it presented the contradiction of Jászi within himself, too. Eötvös rejected the national principle as political factor. Jászi accepted it in a democratic nationalist sense. Jászi stressed that the triumph of the idea of nation was a historical necessity in the period of popular sovereignty, and it was the reality of his age. He believed that it was possible to deal with the national majority and national minority questions in a democratic way. It was possible to organise the peaceful living together of the different nations in Hungary with the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the Hungarian Kingdom. The most important contradiction of Jászi's thinking was that he till the last moment of the Habsburg Monarchy upheld his belief in the necessity of the territorial integrity of the Hungarian Kingdom (generally called historical Hungary), and at the same time he stressed the importance of the national principle, too. When he drew openly the necessary consequences for the Hungarian state organisation from the importance of the national principle it was already too late. This contradiction followed from his liberal nationalist approach. He wanted to fulfil, at the same time, his democratic nationalist feelings and his general democratic feelings in a multinational territory (Hanák 1985: 54-55). Thus he was really challenged by the national principle when he accepted it in its most democratic territorial political form. It may be that Eötvös was right when he thought that every kind of nationalism including the most democratic one, too, is based on prejudices and imaginations covering the imagined interests of the nation.

3.1.2 The idea of the national state

The national principle challenged the socialist movement, too. For Jászi it became necessary to define two things:

1. The real connection between the national principle and socialism.



2. The place of the national principle in the classical idea of world peace and peaceful integration process of mankind.

3.1.2.1 *National principle and socialism*

Concerning the first problem Jászi had to realise that the national feeling was a very serious power dominating his age. He was the first in Hungary who clearly formulated the relationship between socialism and national state in 1905. He believed that “socialism did not lead to homelessness of workers”. Socialism is not in contradiction with the pure meaning of the national principle (Litván 1978b: 41).

The famous book of Otto Bauer, Austrian social democratic leader, entitled “*Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*”, published in 1907, influenced Jászi (Hanák 1985: 36-38). He agreed with Bauer’s nation definition regarding nation as a community of destiny connected by common culture and language (Bauer 1907: 125). He agreed with the rejection of the racial ethnical point of view. Jászi regarded as a merit of Bauer that he had broken with the internationalist dogma of the II International believing that capitalism prepared the disappearance of differences among the nations. He stressed that one of the most important antagonism of capitalism was the contradiction between economic integration of the world and national disintegration: capitalism integrated into larger and larger unities the economy, and at the same time it created national disintegration and national separatist movements. The different language groups based on the national state idea — as sovereigns on their territories — wanted to have their parts as entrepreneurs in the capitalist world economy. At the same time they imagined that their national group protected them from the expansion of the other national groups. Jászi also regarded nation as a real cultural community involving the workers, too. He emphasised that the most important in Bauer’s perception was that he could realise that the national idea proved attractive for everybody. If the nationality question were not to be solved the people, the great masses, would become nationalist with all its consequences. National solidarity would overcome class solidarity (Hanák 1985: 131).

3.1.2.2 *The history of the national states and the nationality question*

Seeing the strengthening of nationalism, and the dead-lock of democracy in Hungary Jászi began to research and analyse the nature of the national principle in its historical development. He wanted to prove that the national movement is by no means the work of a few agitators. He published the results of his research in his book entitled “The origins of the national states and the nationality question” (Jászi 1912).

The ideas represented in this book made clear that Jászi professed the classical Christian/European idea on eternal peace and federalism. He highly appreciated Kant’s essay “To the Eternal Peace”. He tried to develop these ideas according to the national principle. In his conception the human history was an integration process, the history of creation always greater and greater communities, larger and larger united states. It was not a movement of fragmentation but integration — the movement of economic and cultural unity (Jászi 1912: 228). All this logically followed from his belief in the classical European federalist community organization principles. At the same time Jászi emphasised that peo-



ple always organized themselves according to their nationality, and all this originated in the human nature. Democratic nationalism was a necessary period in the bourgeois capitalist development and it was everywhere present where capitalism changed feudal particularisms. Its task was to eliminate the isolation and to integrate the national territories into large economic and cultural unities. From all this followed – in Jászi's interpretation - that the different national groups did not want to isolate themselves. On the contrary they wanted to participate in the economic life of their larger region (Bóka: 2001: 97-116).

Jászi summarized the main idea of his democratic assimilation conception as follows: "Mankind is created so that the road leading to the community of nations goes through the nations. The way toward the nations is directed through the mother language of the masses" (Jászi 1912: 530). The internal national solidarity of the single national states will be broken as a result of the common economic and cultural interest that will destroy the borders of the states. The importance of the language question will not be more significant than the religious affiliation. In the single nation states the majority language will become dominant. The same will be happening also in the case of the confederation of states (Jászi 1912: 530, 533).

Jászi involved in the classical idea of world integration the national principle, too. He wanted to prove in this way his programme, which aimed at the safeguarding the integrity of the Hungarian Kingdom. At the same time he advocated to solve the national minority problem with general democracy. Thus Jászi created a theory that made it possible for him to regard Hungary as a historically developed unity. So he proved for himself that the national minorities did not want to secede (Hanák 1985: 54-55).

Jászi's conception on the nationality movement as the movement of integration is naturally a question of faith. It is open to discuss. Nothing and nobody can prove it as a general trend of human development. Furthermore reality proved the opposite working of the national principle. In the Western society it worked as a principle of integration during the historical period of the creation of the national states. At the same time from the point of view of the European union the national state idea worked always against the real union. In the multinational Habsburg Empire the national idea worked as a principle of disintegration. The experiment of the implementation of the Western national state idea in practice showed that it was not the idea of peaceful world integration. It caused permanent conflicts and wars among the peoples. We cannot forget that it remained the main task of the future generations to break the nation state's mentality.

As a solution of the nationality question Jászi stressed the necessity of the implementation of the Nationality Law of 1868 in Hungary, which he considered to be a liberal and human law insuring the development of cultural and national life of nationalities (Jászi 1912: 511-512; Jászi 1929: 316). Regarding the reconstruction of the Hungarian state structure with satisfying the demands of national minorities Jászi continued the ideas of the state-philosophy of Eötvös on the personal principle, self-government and associations. He believed in the territorial integrity of a democratically reconstructed Hungary (Jászi: Eötvös állambölcselete. Jászi 1913: 337-345).



3.1.3 Jászi and the utopia of Central Europe

3.1.3.1 Naumann's 'Mitteleuropa'

In the midst of his imaginations on nation, state, federation, and world peace Jászi suddenly was challenged by the polemic on Central Europe in 1916 when the Central Europe Project (1915) of the German liberal thinker, Friedrich Naumann (Naumann 1916), provoked a great discussion on the future of the Habsburg Monarchy.

Naumann actually rediscovered the ideas of Friedrich List on a Central–European Common Market based on the idea of “great economic areas” and on an economically unified democratic federal republic as the framework for a German national state. Naumann gave the ‘Mitteleuropa’ agitation a sense of unity, meaning and perspective (Meyer 1955: 7). He acknowledged that the economic and technical development of his age demanded the organisation and co–operation of great territories. He spoke about four great economic powers, which were England, Russia, America, and the fourth had to be ‘Mitteleuropa’ (Naumann 1916: 3). He emphasised that before the peace conference it would be necessary that the Central European powers decided whether they wanted ‘Mitteleuropa’ or not.

Naumann believed that the framework of a Central European State historically existed and now it was the time to construct it by the will of the peoples living here to associate. In his plan he proposed, as a future aim, a supra–national federation with a German nucleus and a self–governing administrative organisation on the community levels on the basis of cultural autonomy of the historical states. Naumann aimed at securing the fundamental harmony between the different nationalities. Actually, he wanted constitutionalising the Austro–German alliance and supplementing it by a customs union and a strictly coordinated military defence system.

As the first step he proposed to begin with the organisation of a democratic confederation of the existing states. He himself realised that the organization of such a confederation could only be a long process because of the fear of Germanisation everywhere, and because of such a great decision demanded a lot of technical state organisation work. The first step on this way had to be the will of the people to associate. This is why he stressed that it was necessary to go out from the historical reality; consequently the first settlement should be planned only between Germany, Austria and Hungary. Naumann imagining the possible way to create such a supra–national confederation gave important general rules writing:

“Under the superscription Middle–Europe no new state will be created, but a union of existing States will be formed. In using the word ‘super–State’ for this union we have intended no decrease in political dignity for the separate portions; it ought not, will not and cannot mean this. Those who determine on the development, are responsible for it and carry it on, will be and will remain the present sovereign States concluding the treaty. These will make mutual concessions to one another, but it is they who do this, and they will not cease to be the subjects of future joint activities. If people like to call the new creation a confederation of States, it hits its character, but it cannot become a federal State”(Naumann 1916: 255).

Looking at the technical organisation of Central Europe he meant that the centralisation of certain political activities was necessary. But he made clear what could not be centralised. Religion, educa-



tion and the “much disputed language question had to be left to the decision of the individual states and their communities”. Naumann stressed that it would be quite impossible for the small, non-German nations to join themselves to Central Europe with feelings of complete freedom and satisfaction, if they ran any risk of their language question, to which they attached such importance. This meant that Germanisation was out of the question (Naumann 1916: 252, 255, 259). The whole sphere of internal administration, the constitutions of commune and state in the narrower sense of the word, would also remain undisturbed by the Central European State Union. The different members of the confederation had to solve their state organising problems alone. Central Europe had to be an association of sovereign states enjoying equal rights. He hoped that after a time a Central European civil right would be created. He planned the demolition of the nation states gradually as a logical consequence of the economic and military integration (Naumann 1916: 251-287).

Naumann wrote with appreciation on the Nationality Law of 1868 as a possible solution of the nationality question (Naumann 1916: 93-94). At the same time he stressed that the Hungarian point of view, responsibility and will would be very important for the success of the idea of Central Europe. In Hungary there was actually a strong official resistance to Naumann’s Central Europe. The Hungarian politicians were mostly not enthusiastic.

Naumann’s project started a great polemic on the reorganisation of Austria–Hungary. His plan was interpreted mostly as a plan of “German democratic imperialism” and the beginning of the German ‘Mitteleuropa’ projects. ‘Mitteleuropa’ was generally equated with militarism, aggression, ‘Prussianism’, conquest, ‘Kaiserism’, oppression, and annexation. This fear was based on Naumann’s following words: “the German economic creed must become in future more and more characteristic of Middle–Europe. The military defensive alliance will thus grow into a genuine partnership. A united economic people will develop, cutting across all constitutional boundaries” (Naumann 1916: 123). At the same time Naumann clearly realised that ‘Mitteleuropa’ would be a “fruit of war” (Naumann 1916: 287) because there was no compelling ideological, political, or economical force in Central Europe before 1914 to affect events in the direction of creating a German–dominated Central European structure. There was always a fight for domination or independence among the peoples of the Habsburg Empire and at the same time a fight against the Habsburg centralisation policy that did not recognise the national principle. This is why Naumann — being originally a Protestant pastor motivated by an inner mission — intended to call the people of this area to emerge from this war other than what they were when they entered upon it. They should emerge from the war as Central Europeans (Naumann 1916: 287). Proposing all this Naumann really began a great discussion in Austria–Hungary.

3.1.3.2 The discussion of ‘Mitteleuropa’ (Budapest, 1916)

In Budapest the “Association of Social Sciences” (“Társadalomtudományi Társaság”) organised a large discussion on the idea of ‘Mitteleuropa’ in 1916 among the theoreticians of the Hungarian Left (Debate on Central Europe. Huszadik Század 1916 January–July). The main question of the discussion was to decide whether the interest of Hungary was to accept Naumann’s plan. This was not an easy task because the idea of Central Europe was an old idea that always appeared as the means of the traditional Germanisation policy of the Habsburg rulers. After the French revolution the different



peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy consequently rejected the dynastic centralization policy as “Caesarism”.

All participants of the discussion thought of capitalism as an expansionist, conquering, and warrior society aiming to integrate the whole world. This was what experience taught them. Most of the participants regarded as the main task of the discussion to decide how Central Europe would function among the great powers and which consequences would it mean for Hungary. Another problem was also to discuss whether Central Europe could serve the aims of a peaceful integration process in Europe.

The majority of the speakers — among them the leader of the Social Democratic Party, Zsigmond Kunfy — opposed Naumann’s plan. They regarded the ‘Mitteleuropa’ plan as a militarist one and they expressed mostly their fears of German conquest and supremacy. They emphasised that a Central Europe dominated by Germany would ruin the Hungarian industry, economy, and agriculture. It would destroy the prospect of democracy in the region. The most interesting argument of the social democratic theoreticians Kunfy and Zoltán Rónai against Central Europe was that a separate Western and a separate Central European Confederation would react as two competing power blocks. As a consequence, expansive wars would continue in Europe and in the whole world. Kunfy based all this on his view that the Hungarian ruling classes could not think in other terms and their mentality dominated policy. Furthermore, he did not regard Germany a democratic state. Naumann’s *Mitteleuropa* meant for him the same as the idea of ‘Großösterreich’. He did not believe that a new Central Europe would solve the nationality question, because of the expansive and militarist goals of the major nations. Central Europe could not create a democratic confederation of the Central European peoples because of the lack of democracy. Kunfy believed further that for democracy not the borders of the states are important but the social and power differences among the different classes (Debate on Central Europe. *Husadik Század* 1916 January-July: 413-416, 530).

Rónai stressed that only a European Confederation could ensure peace in Europe. Consequently, he opposed to make big separate states including a Central European State. In place of making big state federations he proposed to change the relationships among the European national states and the whole structure of the national state system (Debate on Central Europe. *Husadik Század* 1916 January-July: 507-511). This is why he rejected the idea of a Central European State.

The speakers who were for the organization of ‘Mitteleuropa’ — among them Jászi and his friend Ervin Szabó, social democrat theoretician — emphasised the opposite of all this. For them Central Europe was — in words of Renner — a ‘thousand years reality’. The Central European region economically was since a long time integrated but the politicians never acknowledged it. They regarded Naumann’s plan as a plan of a democratic Central European Federation. They believed that the only way for central European small nations to avoid national conflicts and wars among themselves was to begin to cooperate following the principles of a democratic federation. This was their way toward a future ‘European Union’. They believed that Central Europe had to be an important step toward the ‘eternal peace’ serving the peaceful integration process of mankind.

Ervin Szabó believed that the problem of Central Europe was understandable only from a larger historical view and as a part of the European social and evolutionary development. He thought that the



basic rule of the European state development was the extension of the territory being under the rule of the state. In the first phase of the European development the feudal rulers created great centralized and absolute states. It was changed later by national states under the rule of the sovereign people. The future trend had to be the supra national, imperialistic state based on the economic integrity of a large territory. This process was always motivated by the phenomenon of “Wille zur Macht” causing always wars. Szabó believed that this trend would continue after the First World War and in the future, too. The only means to civilize this warrior integration process was a federation policy among states.

Szabó thought that the rules of the European federation policy were determined by geography. The first step was to federate with the neighbouring states. Hungary, for example, could come nearer to a future ‘European Union’ only gradually. First it had to co-operate and unite with his neighbours economically and politically. The way of Hungary to the ‘European Union’ led only via Germany because of Germany’s geographical situation. Szabó believed further that the German democracy was more developed than the Hungarian one; consequently, the union with Germany would not ruin Hungarian democracy. He believed that the Central European regional cooperation was a necessary phase of the general democratic association (integration) process among the different peoples living there. Central Europe, as an organic economic, political, and cultural association of the Central European people was for him a step toward the European United States (Debate on Central Europe. Huszadik Század 1916 January-July: 431-432, 436-438, 446).

Jászi in his speech (See Debate on Central Europe. Huszadik Század 1916 January-July: 409-533) was for the plan of Naumann because in his opinion the integrity and independence of Hungary was safe in the democratic Central Europe proposed by Naumann. He acknowledged that Naumann’s plan meant German hegemony in Central Europe but at the same time it made possible a Magyar hegemony in Hungary with the guarantee of a democratic national policy. He believed that the solution of the South Slav and the Polish questions was not possible without Central Europe. He expected the Central European Unity to be better than the anarchy of small closed nation states in a Europe dominated by the great powers. Based on this hope Jászi supported every tendency that could enlarge the markets and economic co-operation. He regarded ‘Mitteleuropa’ to be a step in the direction of a ‘united Europe’ and a defence against Russia. Thus a democratic Central European Union was in harmony with his world integration idea (Irinzi 1973: 163-169).

In his speech arguing for the Central European Union Jászi explained his conception on the “eternal peace” process and the role of Central Europe in the European integration process. He said that, in the age of the national states, the national states continued the earlier centralisation process of the feudal rulers. This was the process of the unification of the small nations and the economic and political expansion of the powerful big national states. This was not a new phenomenon but the continuation of the old 13th–18th century expansion mentality, perhaps with more democracy, more humanity; instead of wars, more organisation, co-operation among the states. In this sense Central Europe could be an important step in European integration and world integration process. Jászi believed that the democratic Central European Union could change the old dynastic “Groß-Österreich” policy that meant Germanisation and centralisation. This new League of Nations would be one of the greatest achievements of human history with its free trade, economic unity, national freedom, and personal



national cultural autonomy (Debate on Central Europe. *Huszadik Század* 1916 January-July: 447-460). Jászi believed further that the idea of a Central European Union or League of Nations was an old idea which always failed because of German and Austrian rivalry, thus because of political reasons and not economic reasons. At the same time he emphasised that the democratic Central European Confederation was the only way to solve the nationality question (Jászi 1918).

Why was really Jászi for this much discussed plan? What was the promise covered by the renewed idea of Central Europe for Hungary? First of all he hoped to save and to further the democratic development of the Hungarian Kingdom in the framework of this union. This was why Jászi also used the ideas of Friedrich List, who had been a supporter of a strong, industrialised and modernised Hungary (Debate on Central Europe. *Huszadik Század* 1916 January-July: 459-460). Further Naumann's project was based on the historical status quo, on the confederation of the historical states of Central Europe, on personal autonomy and on local self-government. All this was in harmony with Jászi's ideas. He actually visualised a kind of Central Europe as the pattern for peaceful, democratic development of the Central-European people, a bulwark against Russia and a step towards a united Europe. Hungary would become a bridge to the Balkans and a major factor of Central-European economies and politics (Debate on Central Europe. *Huszadik Század* 1916 January-July: 450, 459-461).

Finally Péter Ágoston emphasised in opposition to the radical and the socialist meanings that the national development of the different peoples of the central European territory was not yet accomplished. The region was in the period of formation of independent nation states. As a consequence to create a Central European Federation could only be a future task (Debate on Central Europe. *Huszadik Század* 1916 January-July: 495). The dominance of the Hungarian national interests in the discussion actually proved him.

In Hungary Jászi was attacked by those who regarded Naumann's 'Mitteleuropa' plan as a militarist and expansive plan. Jászi rejected these accusations because he never regarded Naumann's plan as militarist and expansive. He supported in Naumann's plan "the idea of a democratic and pacifist alliance of all the people which are thrown by their geographical and economic situation into dependence upon one another, and, whether they like it or not, are bound up irrevocably with one another". He wrote further that he regarded this other 'Mitteleuropa' as more than a transient formation, a stage on the road to the United States of Europe. "I was convinced — he wrote — that a democratic Central Europe must rapidly develop complete freedom of trade with Western Europe, so that there would no longer be any obstacle in the way of the economic forces making for a larger union". He wrote also that he supported the symbol of 'Mitteleuropa' only so long as Russia of the Tsarist autocracy was the ally of the Entente Powers, because he clearly saw that "the victory of the Entente in Association with that ally would place the economic, cultural and political life of Central Europe under the heel of the Russian reaction" (Jászi 1924: 2). Behind his words and thoughts one can feel his fear of the expansion of the big German and Russian nations whose expansive nationalism he wanted to humanise by supporting the idea of integration and federation of the Central-European nations. His point of view on the democratic Central European Union will be clearer if we make a comparison between him and Karl Renner.



Karl Renner also defended Naumann considering him a man of peace (Meyer 1955: 212-213). For Renner the essence of Mitteleuropa was to oppose Russian and British imperialism in world affairs (Meyer 1955: 156). He also emphasised that Mitteleuropa was not exclusively a product of national thought and ambition. The idea of a “Mitteleuropäische Zollvereinigung” had a long history (Renner 1917: 137-141). Thus the broader economic, social and spatial aspects of the Central European area and its people stimulated the conception of Renner, too (Renner 1917: 37-38). He believed that it would be important to express the real economic situation by the state organisation, too, in the modern age of imperialism. Between the Russian and English imperialism Germany and Austria–Hungary had to become a Central–European State Federation representing a greater economic area. The small sovereign states had no future. Renner rejected the idea of the nation state covering power aspirations and being subversive. Agreeing with Naumann Renner also believed that the First World War was the “Geschichtsprobe Mitteleuropas” (Renner 1917: 41) in the sense of what sort of state system would be achieved and realised there.

Jászi agreed with Renner regarding the necessity to reconstruct the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy into a central European federal state. They confronted and opposed each other first of all, as we will see below, regarding the organization principles of the future federal structure.

Masaryk, the Czechs liberal nationalist leader, considered Naumann’s Mitteleuropa plan as a cynical pan–German project serving the German ‘Drang nach Osten’ policy. He believed that Central Europe had to be reconstructed on the basis of national rights, the rights of minorities, and of the emancipation of the subject races of central and south–east Europe from German and Magyar control (Seton-Watson 1943: 86, 88).

In his famous inaugural lecture to the School of Slavonic Studies (University of London, 1915) Masaryk pleaded for the independence of small nations. He emphasised that from the eighteenth century the national principle has grown stronger, and received more and more recognition. National individualities, their language and culture have steadily gained ground all over Europe, and linguistic rights have been gradually codified. The national revival of oppressed nationalities in all states proved the force of the national feeling and ideas. Masaryk believed that the new national state idea represented democracy and it could change the old classical state that was the organ of military and political conquest. He thought that ‘true nationalism’ is not opposed to internationalism because mankind strives for unity and not uniformity. The general trend of the development of mankind was world–federation and not world–power: “Consensus gentium — not slavery of nations and races; the Organisation — not the Conquest of Europe.” He emphasised that the aim of the First World War could only be the revelation of this historic truth by the implementation of political principles proclaimed in France: “No ‘Herrenvolk’, but national equality and parity: ‘Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité’ among nations and individuals” (Masaryk: The problem of small nations in European crisis. In: Seaton-Watson 1943: 144-145).

Regarding the European state system Masaryk’s opinion was that Europe was getting more and more federalised and organized. The striving of the small nations for independence meant their desire for being peacefully inserted into the growing organization of Europe. The task of the European politicians was to realise this. The degree and the form of independence (autonomy within a state — fed-



eration — suzerainty — personal union, etc.), would be easily found in every individual case and be formulated according to constitutional rules and laws, once the principle had been acknowledged. He emphasised that the only real defence against Prussia could be to liberate the small nations of Central Europe. A free Poland, Bohemia and Serbo–Croatia as buffer states would promote the formation of a Magyar state, of a Greater Romania, of Bulgaria, Greece, and the rest of the smaller nations. Masaryk emphasised that the only positive result of the war could be the liberation of the small nations who were menaced by Germany (Masaryk: The problem of small nations in European crisis. In: Seton-Watson 1943: 151).

In a memorandum on the military situation (April 1916) Masaryk proposed to the Allies that the German political plan of Central Europe must be counterbalanced by a political plan aiming at freeing Central Europe from German control. He emphasised that the German plan for Central Europe is far-reaching, grandiose, and practical. The Allies must have an equally far-reaching and practical plan for the treatment of Central Europe. The real task of the war had to be the political organization of Central Europe containing small, un-free or half free nations. It must be a plan for promoting the moral and democratic progress of Europe, a plan to force Germany to be human. Masaryk emphasised that the plan of the Allies could only consist in an endeavour to liberate the non-German nations of Central Europe: the restoration and liberation of Poland, of Bohemia including the Slovak country of North Hungary, and the organization of a Greater Serbia. Regarding the Southern Slaves Masaryk proposed to liberate and unite the Southern Slaves under the political guidance of Serbia. He aimed further to remodel the Balkan on ethnic basis. “Of course Austria–Hungary must be dismembered” (Masaryk: At the eleventh hour. In: Seton-Watson 1943: 193-195).

3.1.3.3 *Jászi and the other interpretations of the national principle*

Before and during the war there was a great wave of confederation plans in Austria–Hungary aiming to reconstruct the Habsburg Monarchy into a federation of the different nations living here. Karl Renner, the outstanding theoretician of the national problem and the state philosophy summarized in his book entitled “*Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen*” the principles that were proposed for the reconstruction (Renner 1918: 46-47). He distinguished two basically different conceptions concerning the reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire (Jászi also used this terminology):

1. The atomic conception (which is individualist and centralist)
 1. Pure individual (the nation is an unconnected sum of individuals)
 2. Centralist (the indivisible “Einheitsstaat” stands directly against the individual)
1. The organic conception (which is collective and federal)
 1. Territorial–system
 - a. Historical conception (civic territorial)
 - b. Ethnic conception (linguistic; ethnic genealogical)
 2. Personal–system



- a. National autonomy
- b. National cultural autonomy

Jászi rejected the atomic centralist conception. Searching for a solution he questioned the different representatives of the organic conception, too, who were the representatives of the 1. historic-political plan, 2. cultural autonomy plan, 3. ethnic plan (Jászi 1918c: 24-25).

3.1.3.4 *Historic political plan*

The historic-political principle aimed to safeguard the “historic-political-individualities” (an expression used by Eötvös), i.e. the historical frameworks of the states, during the reconstruction of the Habsburg Monarchy. The Czech writers and publicists and József Eötvös represented this conception. Eötvös for example proposed a confederation created from the autonomous historical national states based on the status quo.

Jászi, on the one hand, recognised Eötvös’ great wisdom to understand that Habsburgian or Danubian patriotism never existed in the Habsburg Empire. In reality patriotism, as a living feeling and force, existed only in the different historical formations of the Monarchy. To divide these “historic-political-individualities” into administrative districts exclusively on the basis of linguistic ethnic frontiers will destroy the earlier state life there. On the other hand, Jászi remarked, as a criticism, that it is difficult to decide which kind of historical frameworks can survive and which one has to disintegrate. It is possible to make principles for this changes but without an international forum this will not work. The conception of Eötvös was a good guide-line in the case of Hungary and the Czech territories but its application in the whole Monarchy uncritically would have resulted in absurd things (Jászi 1918c: 27-28).

3.1.3.5 *Cultural autonomy plan (Jászi and the views of the Austrian social-democrats)*

Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, Austrian social democrats, also professed the classical idea of eternal peace. They were for a peaceful integration process among the different peoples. They involved the right for nationality as a human right in their theory on the world integration process:

“Die Vereinigung der gesamten Kulturmenschheit zu gemeinsamer Beherrschung der Natur und die Gliederung der Menschheit in autonome nationale Gemeinwesen, die ihre nationalen Kulturgüter genießen und die Fortentwicklung ihrer nationalen Kultur bewusst regeln, ist das nationale Endziel der internationalen Sozialdemokratie” (Bauer 1907: 521).

The contribution of Renner and Bauer to the democratisation of the national principle is very important. They also wanted to find a solution to put an end to the conquering attitude and power aspirations involved in the territorial principle (Bauer 1907: 344). This is why they proposed, instead of the old territorial system, the personal system. They regarded the national idea as a cultural phenomenon, which had to be divided from the civil political organization sphere of the state. They believed that the state had to be based on common democratic legal organizational principles. They rejected the linguistic/cultural ethnic principle as a civil state organisation principle in territories with mixed population.



At the same time they accepted it as the organization principle of a democratic multinational federate state, i.e. Großösterreich, with Deutschösterreichischer hegemony (Mommsen 1963: 353-361).

Renner stressed that the smallest organising part of the state, the local self-government (Kreis), had to be healthy, i.e. democratically organised (Renner 1918: 236). The secret of the health of the whole state organism was the healthy cell. As a solution Renner, agreeing with Bauer, worked out the concept of the personal national autonomy, which was based on the separation of the political and cultural/linguistic organization sphere of the state following the example of the organization system of the protestant religious communities. His idea of personal national autonomy eliminated the principle of “*cuius regio eius natio*” mustered after the principle of “*cuius regio eius religio*”. He believed that nation and state never had been and never would be convertible terms. A clear distinction had to be drawn between the state as a territorial political conception, and nation as a conception of individuality, of kinship, of mutual association. This distinction led Renner to the idea of creating a dual basis for the executive: a territorial and a national; as a consequence the individual citizen would, in all national matters, be subject to its own national corporation, but in all other respects to the ordinary civil authorities. Briefly, the national problem would be solved in the same way as the religious — and the associations of the peoples with different nationality, like the churches, would be recognised as corporate bodies in the State. This meant that national status was not to be conferred on the population in a nationally mixed territory but linked to the individuals themselves, regardless of their domicile. People could register in a public record book as nationals of their own choice. Consequently the national status became a personal right belonging to the cultural sphere of the people. Renner believed that this conception could in reality reform the local government into an association of free people. It could settle the national problems in the mixed territories.

Concerning the idea of personal principle and free association policy of Renner Jászi mentioned the similarity between the ideas of Kossuth and Renner. Jászi thought that Renner’s national autonomy plan surprisingly resembled to the plan of Kossuth but Renner himself did not realise that. He, like Kossuth earlier, found an analogue between the solving of the religious controversies and the nationality problems (Jászi 1912: 223). Jászi summarized the essence of Renner’s plan as follows:

Renner based his theory on the fact that religious controversies could not be solved on the territorial basis. The principle of “*cuius regio, eius religio*” led only incessant warfare during history. Consequently in the case of the national problem the territorial principle of “*cuius regio, eius natio*” also cannot be serve as a solution. In place of it the personal principle should be introduced. Following this principle all the members of each nation should be entitled to form local, intermediate, and central national associations, so-called “National Universities”, endowed with a state-like jurisdiction in all matters pertaining to cultural life and education system, disregarding the territorial divisions of the whole empire. In this manner all the Germans, Czechs, Poles, and the other nations of the monarchy could have been united from a national point of view without establishing national state division inside the empire. According to this program the joint state should be doubly organised, first from a national stand-point and second, from an administrative stand-point. The national organisations would not coincide with the administrative divisions which would be determined not by national but by economic, financial, and trade considerations. National considerations would be acknowledged



only so far as the local administrative units should form, when possible, homogeneous national settlements. The establishment of such administrative districts on a local national basis could carry on public government in the maternal tongue of the various nations. As a consequence a new nation should be constituted as a purely cultural association (Jászi 1929: 178-179).

Jászi appreciated the approach of Renner and Bauer regarding the national principle as the principle of personal cultural autonomy. The reason for the contradiction between Jászi and the Austrian social democrats was actually the form of the federation structure proposed by them:

Renner actually represented the Great-Austrian socialist idea of a unified Central European Community. By the reconstruction of Austria–Hungary he attempted to create a genuine international socialism within the Habsburg state. He emphasised that in the period of imperialism the idea of nation had changed and it was the merit of Bauer to recognise this fact (Bauer 1907: 176, 324, 353, 146-281; Renner 1918: 29). In the earlier period of capitalism the meaning of the dominant idea of democratic nationalism was to make independent and closed national states. In the period of imperialism (economic and political expansion) the earlier dominant idea of nation state changed into the national imperialism that aimed to create “nationality states” (Nationalitätenstaat) and their union (Nationalitätenbundesstaat) (Renner 1918: 23). In place of the importance of the national territory came the importance of the economic territory of the state (for example the British Empire, German Empire, Russian Empire, Habsburg Empire). As a consequence, the national state had to become an empire. National capitalism passed beyond the national frontiers and it necessarily transformed the national state into an international world state. Thus the period of imperialism invalidated the national principle and the idea of nation, and independent nation state. Consequently, the principle of national self-determination lost its meaning. This change in the interpretation of the idea of nation caused a tension that culminated in the world war. As a consequence Renner rejected the idea of the independent sovereign nation state (Renner 1918: 92-93).

Renner thought that the idea of an independent nation state belonged to the past. According to his point of view national self-determination meant autonomy, more precisely national autonomy in a federal state: “Die staatsgleiche Konstitution der Nation, ihre Einrichtung als Gliedstaat und die Ordnung des gesamten Staates als Nationalitätenbundesstaat” (Renner 1918: 84).

Renner believed that the healthiest state was organised upwards from below. Regarding the cooperation among the different nations in the framework of the state Renner proposed the so-called “Statenstaat” or “Nationalitätenbundesstaat”, which was the federation of the eight nations (in cultural/linguistic sense) associated in Österreich. He made difference between “Bundesstaat” and the “Nationalitätenstaat”:

“Österreich wäre als Bundesstaat mit vier territorialen Gliedstaaten einzurichten i.e. vier Nationalstaaten. Aber wir zählen acht Nationen so muss Österreich in einem Bundesstaat mit acht nationalen Gliedstaaten verwandelt werden, i.e. Nationalitätenbundesstaat.”... “Der Ausdruck Bundesstaat trifft zwar politisch zu, weil er eine Verbindung von Staaten bezeichnet; juristisch ist diese Verbindung besser als Staatenstaat zu benennen, denn ihr



rechtliches wesen besteht darin, dass zwei hoheitliche Gewalten übereinander gelagert sind, der Ober- und Gliedstaat" (Renner 1918: 146).

As an example he mentioned the United States of North–America and Switzerland.

Renner believed that Austria could only become a 'Nationalitätenbundesstaat', in which every associated state had to organise a federation on its territory. He emphasised that the common federal state had to be a federation (like in the USA) and not a confederation (like in the German Empire). This makes necessary as much centralisation as possible.

Renner and Bauer had the same ideas on the reconstruction of the multinational Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy, too. They had seen in Hungary the main obstacle to the modernisation and democratisation of the Dual Monarchy. This is why they wanted to put an end to the state unity of Hungary and to federalise it in the same way as the Austrian part of the Monarchy and to subordinate the whole territory of the Hungarian Kingdom to a central government.

Jászi, who was for the autonomy of the Hungarian national state and the Hungarian hegemony in the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom, definitely rejected the plans of Bauer and Renner because he believed that they, in the framework of a centralised 'Groß-Österreich' under the democratic Caesarism of the Habsburgs, wanted to realise the national autonomy of every people living here (Litván 1986: 36-37).

The sources of the most important contradictions between Jászi and Renner followed from three things:

1. Their different views on the national principle and the idea of national state
2. Their different conception on federation
3. Their different views on Hungary (the Austrian social democrats attacked the separate status of Hungary)

For Renner the nation was a myth: "eine Menschen Vielheit, die durch ein geheimnisvolles, mystisches Band zusammengehalten scheint" (Renner 1964: 17).

Renner, like Eötvös, has spoken about a kind of "Raubtiermentalität" concerning the idea of national state. He did not believe in the possibility of humanisation of the idea of a national state as a political force because he realised that the pure idea represented the continuation of the expansive mentality of the European political culture in a modern scene. He emphasised that the world state organisation could not be based on a national state system. The way of humanisation of the dominant national principle could only be the neutralisation of it as a political factor. This is why he proposed as a solution to reorganise Austria as a federal state ("Staatenstaat") of eight nations, organised from the eight main cultural/linguistic ethnic groups living there, on the basis of personal cultural (national) autonomy (Renner 1917 v. 1: 43).

Jászi, on the contrary, believed in the democratic role of the national principle as an important political factor in Central and Eastern Europe. He was also against the nationalist attitude of the nation states. But he could not accept the "democratic Groß-Österreich" conception as a centralised state while it automatically meant a German dominance and the loss of the separate status of Hungary



(Mommsen 1963: note 2, 357). He regarded the idea of Renner as too mechanic and unrealistic from the point of view of historical and national development of the Central European territory.

Jászi's first objection was that Renner ignored the national consciousness of Germans, Magyars, Czechs and Poles in this period when the idea of nation was not only a simple cultural and ethnographic connection but also an enthusiastic movement aiming to unite the national territories into an independent state. The imagination of Renner of a super-state could not be acceptable for the warring nations, while he completely ignored the historical nations and their historically developed states (Jászi: *A nemzetiségi kérdés*. Jászi 1918d: 496). These historical nations (Germans, Magyars, Czechs, Poles, South-Slavs) would have perhaps been inclined to combine their independent states with the others in a confederation (Jászi 1929: 180). Thus the first step could only be a "Bundesstaat" and not a "Nationalitätenbundesstaat"

Concerning the federal or confederal structure of the state a discussion arose already earlier between Jászi and Bauer on the so-called "nations without history" ("geschichtslose Nationen"). Bauer, who was the adherent of a "Großösterreich", actually regarded the Czechs as a nation sinking down into the "geschichtslose Nationen" (Bauer 1907: 405). Jászi rejected this interpretation as a schematic one. He himself emphasised the opposite of this. The case of the Czechs was an example of a strong national fight of an oppressed historical nation. This was not an example of the national awakening of a "nation without history" (Jászi 1912: 213, 217, 219).

From all this followed the question what were nations, nationalities (small nations, national minorities), "nations without history" in the case of the Dual Monarchy. Jászi stressed that the terms of nation and nationality (small nation, national minority) were very ambiguous in sociological and political literature. Very often they were used in the same sense denoting a multitude of people with the same history, tradition and language, literature and customs. Sometimes, however, we found a slightly different meaning for each term: nation meant a fully mature nationality which had reached its complete independence as a state building organism; "nationality", on the contrary, meant a struggling national entity which, under the sway of a dominant nation, had not yet reached its complete independence (Jászi 1929: 26). Jászi, in the case of the Dual Monarchy, recognised five historical nations: the Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, Poles and South-Slavs. He did not recognise the Hungarian nationalities (national minorities) as historical nations.

2. Regarding the federation system, Jászi opposed the atomic-centralisation conception in general. In the idea of the "Österreichische Nationalitätenstaat" of Renner and Bauer he saw the tendency of centralisation policy.

Jászi summarised the essence of the proposition of Renner as follows:

"Renner elaborated a new and ingenious system of national autonomy on the basis of what he called principle of personality, in conscious antagonism with those efforts which tried to solve the problem on the basis of the territorial principle. This latter endeavoured to divide the monarchy into various political territories based either on the historical rights of the various countries or on the natural settlements of the various nations. All these distinct territorial governments should be combined into a kind of confederate state. The principle of personality advocated by the socialists rejected this conception of distinct national states.



They were not willing to establish a distinct Czech, Polish, Yugoslav, or Rumanian state inside the monarchy, but tried to give to the old state an international or, better to say, supranational organisation” (Jászi 1929: 178-179).

Thus the essence of his objection was that the Austrian social democrats “driving ideology was the most complete affirmation of the idea of a greater Austria (Großösterreich) and indirectly (a thought not outspoken) German hegemony inside of Austria” (Jászi 1929: 180). The more, their plan would have strengthened the leading economic and political role of Vienna.

Jászi criticised also that Renner in his last book, published before the collapse of the monarchy as a summary of his reform ideas, did not speak about a real confederate state but about something so called “Staatenstaat”, i.e. a supranational synthesis, which tried to satisfy the nations with cultural autonomy. All this proved the fact that Renner criticised the Ausgleich because it stopped the centralisation process of the German–Austrian state (Jászi 1918c: 118). Jászi consequently rejected Renner’s idea of the “Staatenstaat”. He wanted to change the feudal–bureaucratic structure of Dualism into a democratic confederation (Bundesstaat). Regarding Austria he proposed a “Bundesstaat” of the four historical nations of Austria. Regarding the whole Monarchy he aimed to continue the way which was begun with the Hungarian–Austrian Compromise, that is to make from the aristocratic dualism a democratic confederation of five historical states (Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, and South–Slavs) (Jászi 1918c: 118-120). In this way he thought to maintain the independence of the Hungarian Kingdom in a reconstructed Habsburg Empire.

3. Jászi opposed Renner and especially Bauer because they were against the separate status of the Hungarians and they believed that Hungarian nationalism endangered their imagined “Nationalitäten-bundesstaat”. Regarding the Hungarian separatist aspirations, Bauer advised the Habsburgs to force Hungary by use of arms to assimilate into the empire. Bauer understood well that without the solution of the national problems the monarchy could not be maintained. For this reason, he advised this desperate method, by an operative interference to give a federate constitution to the monarchy against the will of the Magyar feudalism and nationalism. Jászi thought that Bauer imagined that Austria’s mission was to become the example of national freedom for the Hungarians. Thus the army of the Crown would fight against the independent Hungarian national state for the idea of the United States of Greater Austria, for the idea of a confederate state in which each nation would govern independently its national affairs and all the nations would unite in one state for the protection of their common interests (Bauer 1907: 353, 373). Jászi explained the behaviour of the international socialist and anti-militarist leader of the Austrian social democrats in terms of the gravity of the inner crisis and the menacing dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy.

Renner was more moderate regarding Hungary. But he stressed that the Austrian part of the Austro–Hungarian Dual Monarchy has to be reorganised following his ideas, independently from the Hungarian part (Renner 1918: 262). At that time he proposed to create so called “Konkurrenznationalitäten” everywhere in the empire by assuring cultural and local autonomy.

After all this it is understandable why the plan of Naumann was more sympathetic for Jászi. Naumann stressed that the reconstruction of the Monarchy could be based at the beginning only on the



historical status quo. The first step would be a confederation amongst Germany, Austria and Hungary as independent nation states based on the system of personal autonomy and local self-government. This was more acceptable to Jászi than the federalism of Renner based on the cultural/linguistic ethnic national principle.

Finally, we can conclude that Jászi, Renner, Bauer and Naumann wanted to safeguard the Habsburg Monarchy in a reconstructed and democratised form. As a consequence they rejected the idea of national self-determination in the sense of creating independent nation states. They used self-determination in a doubly and closely connected sense: on the one hand, in the meaning of an internal (historical political, cultural/linguistic ethnic) and on the other hand in the meaning of an external (federal or confederal) personal self-determination at the same time.

The irony of fate is that everybody was right in this discussion, where everybody represented the interest of his nation. Jászi was right, when he stressed that the triumph of the national principle was the reality of the age. As a democratic nationalist he actually tried to find his own explication for the national idea as a historically developed political force. Renner and Bauer were right when they stressed that by accepting the national principle as a political force in the form of national self-determination politicians would build further the imperialistic, expansive and warrior past.

3.1.3.6 *The ethnic plan*

Jászi opposed the authors of the ethnic minority plans who proposed to put into practice the national principle and construct a federation on the basis of autonomous (self-governing) states created by the ethnic principle. He believed that this idea corresponded to the idea of national self-determination represented by the Allies, thus the federation of the autonomous states created by the ethnic principle. The most important representative of this solution was Aurel Popovici, the leader of the Rumanian National Party of Hungary who fled to Austria in order to avoid imprisonment in consequence of a pamphlet which he wrote against the policy of Magyarisation, published later as a book under the title "*Die Vereinigten Staaten von Großösterreich*" (Popovici 1906). In this book he proposed for the Habsburg politicians a scheme of dividing the whole Monarchy after the ethnic principle into distinctly new territories entirely disregarding the historical limits of the states and provinces. He tried to demonstrate that only a constitution based on the principle of equality of the nations could save the empire, and to transform it into a Central European Great Power.

Jászi's opposition to Popovici is still interesting because Popovici represented the ideas of a Hungarian national minority leader. Thus he explained the idea of national self-determination from the point of view of the interest of his national group (Hungarian Romanians). It is not by chance that Popovici regarded Palacky's national idea as an example to be followed. He believed that if the proposal of Palacky ("*Bund freier und vollkommen gleichberechtigter Völker*") had been realised it would have solved the nationality problem in the Habsburg Monarchy (Popovici 1906: 283-284).

It was also not by chance that Popovici, like Masaryk and Benes, believed that Eastern Europe came into the period of popular (people's) revolution, namely into a period of the fight for independence of the people based on the right of national self-determination (Nationalitätenprinzip). This was a period when people wanted to take in their possession the territories where they lived and they



fought for the territory among themselves (Popovici 1906: 185-210.) In Popovici's definition the national principle meant "das Recht der national erwachten, aber noch unterdrückten Völker auf Autonomie". "Das Nationalitätenprincip ... ist der gesitteter gewordene Kampf der ehemaligen Naturstämme."

Popovici was convinced of the triumph of the idea of national self-determination. As a consequence he propagated that the different nations of the Dual Monarchy wanted to live in their closed national territories, among their rightly delimited borders like autonomous individuals in a Bundesstaat. This Bundesstaat would be a midway between centralism and federalism guaranteeing the free development of the different nationalities (Popovici 1906: 228, 237, 242-243). Thus Popovici was for the ethnic principle, i.e., "Die Abgrenzung der Nationalitäten nach ihren großen ethnografischen Grenzen" (Popovici 1906: 283). He stressed that the solution had to be searched on the ethnographic map of the Dual Monarchy. He rejected the Hungarian historic-political conception and the myth on the integrity of Hungary while it was a veil covering Hungarian domination (Popovici 1906: 283, 286).

Popovici called for the creation of the "Gesamtreich" because of the Russian threat. He stressed that Pan Slavism would not be a real force if the rights of the Slav national minorities would be guaranteed. Pan Slavism was mainly a play, an anxiety, because people fought against the foreign rule in every imaginable way. In the Habsburg Monarchy the play with the Russian card also belonged to this way. As a solution he proposed to organise from the fifteen Nationalitätenstaaten "die Vereinigten Staaten von Großösterreich" as a League of Nations (Völkerbund) with a common customs area under the rule of the Austrian Emperor. This Federal Austria, would be composed of fifteen national states — German Austria, German Bohemia, German Moravia and Silesia, Czech Bohemia, Magyaria, Transylvania, Croatia, West and East Galicia, Slovakia, Carniola, Voivodina, Szekelland, Trentino, Trieste — each possessing a Diet where local affairs would be discussed in the local language, but each sending delegates to a central Parliament, to which all matters of diplomacy, defence, finance, customs, railways, coinage, patents and civil and criminal law would be referred. The central Government would be conducted by an Imperial Chancellor, and an Imperial Court of Appeal would decide disputes between the various states. The German language would necessarily be adopted as the official language of the Empire. Special privileges would be secured to the smaller national enclaves scattered throughout the territories of the larger nations. In Hungary it was necessary to enforce the Nationality Law of 1868, in Austria a system of autonomy had to be realised according to Renner's ideas. In this way the medieval historic boundaries would be definitely abandoned.

Jászi criticised the ethnic principle seriously because in this way all the old historical and economic organisms of the area would be destroyed and the people would be rearranged in nationally homogeneous territories made by rule and compass inside of a united Great-Austria. For him this meant a new variant of the old "Großösterreich" conception aiming to preserve the German hegemony. Agreeing with Bauer (Bauer 1907: 473) Jászi also regarded the new ethnic organising principle as the modern variant of the old territorial one in the modern age of imperialism (Jászi 1929: 245). As a consequence it represented for him the continuation of the old conquering mentality. Jászi attacked the mechanical application of the ethnic principle because it could not work in a territory where the



population was mixed: it was impossible to create homogeneous ethnic states there without having dangerous consequences.

Finally Jászi rejected this theory because he believed that the centuries' old historical and economic development and social traditions could not be ignored by the reconstruction of the Habsburg Monarchy (Jászi 1929: 31-34). He stressed that it would be necessary to proceed from the real historical situation of the Dual-Monarchy and build up the new democratic reforms on this basis step by step.

3.1.3.7 *Lenin and the myth of national self-determination*

Jászi's confrontations continued when Lenin also joined the discussion among the socialists regarding the reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire. Lenin dealt first of all with the idea of national self-determination that became gradually the main point of this discussion. Lenin realised that there was a democratic content in the fight for independence of every oppressed nation. He was for the transformation of the Habsburg Monarchy into a democratic federation of the nations living there. This problem was, for him, a state organisation problem: how to define the contact between the historical and the ethnic principle and how to organise the co-operation among the different national and historical parts.

In his discourse about national self-determination (1914), Lenin summed up the main points of his conception (Lenin 1951: 5-120). Trying to define the meaning of national self-determination Lenin went out from the following questions:

“What should be understood by that term? Should we seek for an answer in legal definitions deduced from all sorts of ‘general concepts’ of law? Or should we seek an answer in the historical and economic study of the national movements?” (Lenin 1951: 8).

Lenin actually regarded the phenomenon of national self-determination, thus the formation of independent national states, as the tendency of all bourgeois-democratic revolutions:

“Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of national states, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The profoundest economic factors drive towards this goal, and therefore, for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the typical, normal state for the capitalist period is the national state. Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations not by juggling with legal definitions, or “inventing” abstract definitions, but by examining the historical and economic conditions of the national movements, we shall inevitably reach the conclusion that self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, the formation of an independent national state” (Lenin 1951: 10).

Thus Lenin regarded national states as the products of historical development. He differentiated the national state development in Western Europe from the Eastern European. He stressed that the national question has been settled long ago in most Western countries. In Western, continental Europe the epoch of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions embraced a fairly definite period, approximately from 1789 to 1871. This was precisely the period of national movements and the creation of national



states. In Austria this revolution began in 1848 and ended in 1867 with the Austro–Hungarian Double Monarchy created by the “Ausgleich”. In Eastern Europe and Asia the period of bourgeois–democratic revolutions only began in 1905. Thus he recognised that the Russian national movement was retarded compared to the Austrian. It is natural that Lenin made parallels between the situation in the Habsburg Monarchy and in Russia as Russia had also oppressed national minorities inhabiting the border regions having compatriots across the borders who enjoyed greater national independence and who were more developed. In fact, the experience of national conflicts in the Habsburg Monarchy, and the aspirations of the Hungarian national minorities to secede, made Lenin favourable to the concept of national self–determination even to the point of separating and forming independent national states. He thought that in the Russian situation it was necessary to recognise the right of nations to self–determination (Lenin 1951: 27-29) to be before the fight among the peoples of Russia. Thus Lenin wanted to precede the national tragedy. He stressed that:

“Only the blind can fail to see in this chain of events the awakening of a whole series of bourgeois–democratic national movements, strivings to create nationally independent and nationally uniform states. It is precisely and solely because Russia and the neighbouring countries are passing through this period that we require a clause in our program on the right of nations to self–determination” (Lenin 1951: 26).

Lenin was basically in agreement with Kautsky who formulated the historical tendency to completely remove all national distinctions within the socialist system and to fuse all of civilised humanity into one nation. However, Kautsky believed that, at the present time capitalist development gave rise to the phenomena which seemed to work in the opposite direction: the awakening and intensification of national consciousness as well as the need for a national state (Kautsky 1915: 12-17; Luxemburg 1976: 128-129). Consequently Kautsky was against the “Nationalitätenstaat” conception of Renner and Bauer. He opposed the ethnic fragmentation of the big states. He was for the great economic areas as the basis of a state. As a solution he proposed to create the confederation (Staatenbund) of the different national states. Such an association of autonomous national states could have different forms. It could be first of all an association of associations. He believed that this was the way to create a world association. (He mentioned the example of the United States and the British Empire). Kautsky emphasised that the status quo could be changed only with the consent of the people living in a territory (Kautsky 1915: 75). He rejected further conquering as a way obtaining territory.

Lenin agreeing with Kautsky also was against the “Nationalitätenstaat” conception of Renner and Bauer (Lenin 1975: 126). He thought that the national state was the form of the state most suitable for the present day situation, the more so as “it is the rule and the norm of capitalism”. Thus Lenin concluded:

“It means that “self–determination of nations” in the program of the Marxists cannot, from a historical–economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self–determination, political independence, the formation of national state” (Lenin 1975: 15-16). “Complete equality of rights for all nations; the right of nations to self–determination; the amalgamation of the workers of all nations — this is the national program that Marxism,



the experience of the whole world, and the experience of Russia, teaches the workers”
(Lenin 1975: 10).

The propagation of national self-determination was a necessary step in the everyday political tactic of Lenin who estimated the importance of the liberation movement of the nobility and the bourgeoisie in Eastern Europe. At the same time it did not escape Lenin’s attention and he found very peculiar the situation in the Habsburg Empire, where after the collapse of the attempt in 1848 of the Hungarians to create an independent national state, the Hungarians and the Czechs, too, fought not for independence, and separation from Austria, but on the contrary, for the preservation of Austria’s integrity hoping to preserve their autonomous national life, which might have been completely crushed by more powerful neighbours. Owing to this peculiar situation, Austria assumed the form of a double-centred (dual) state, and was now being transformed into a three-centred state (Germans, Hungarians, Slavs) (Lenin 1975: 28). As a consequence Lenin — agreeing with Kautsky — regarded national self-determination not as an absolute right but as a starting point of a transitional period, a step in the direction of the higher integration of nations. He believed that only from the nationalist point of view could national self-determination be regarded as an end purpose. The natural way of the development was the integration of the nations after their “real national liberation” (Lenin 1975: 125-126; Irinyi 1973: 268-269).

Lenin’s conception of nation was connected with the French national state idea and the ideas of the French Revolution. He did not realise, or as a “professional revolutionary”, simply ignored those meanings concerning which the French conception of centralized national state was at fault because it might result in an absolute national state under the absolute rule (absolute tyranny) of the people as sovereign. As such it was a state organization idea to reject in a multinational territory. His polemic with Rosa Luxemburg is a good example of this.

Rosa Luxemburg was for the personal autonomy proposed by the Austrian social democrats. She emphasised for Lenin that “the national state is only an abstraction, which can easily be developed and defended theoretically but which does not correspond to the reality.”... The right of self-determination of small nations is rendered illusory by the development of the great capitalist powers and by imperialism. The political self-determination of the nations is a confused idea. The independence of states is economically determined (Lenin 1951: 12-13; Luxemburg 1976: 131).

Rosa Luxemburg meant that national self-determination gave no practical solution of national problems (Luxemburg 1976a: 135). “The right of nations to self-determination is at first glance a paraphrase of the old slogan of bourgeois nationalism put forth in all countries at all times: “the right of nations to freedom and independence” ... “Hopes of solving nationality questions within this framework by insuring to all nations, races, and ethnic groups the possibility of self-determination is a complete utopia” (Luxemburg 1976a: 102-103).

She explains all this with the fact, that during history, every state in Central and Eastern Europe became extremely mixed; consequently national self-determination will not solve the problem. “The general fact is that historical development, especially the modern development of capitalism, does not tend to return to each nations its independent existence, but moves rather in the opposite direction” (Luxemburg 1976a: 123).



She warned Lenin that, by sponsoring the national self-determination cause, and thereby making the proletariat a supporter of nationalism, the Bolsheviks were helping the bourgeois leaders to pervert the self-determination campaign into a counter-revolution instrument and they gave more chance to German imperialism. She believed that the nationalist appeals were useful to the bourgeoisie to deflect attention from basic economic and political issues (Luxemburg 1976a: 101-287, 102). She warned Lenin that national self-determination could be used only in the sense of autonomy in a democratic federation of nations (Luxemburg 1976a: 123).

Finally Luxemburg concluded that a general attempt to divide all existing states into national units and to re-tailor them on the model of national states and statelets was a completely hopeless, and historically speaking, reactionary undertaking (Luxemburg 1976a: 134). Thus she rejected the idea of national self-determination while the existence of small nations was an illusion, and would become even more so.

Lenin on the contrary continued to believe that in Eastern Europe socialist revolutions could not be achieved without championing the right to national self-determination. He did not reject the territorial principle. He stressed that the proletariat had to support the bourgeois-democratic demand for a national state even at the risk of playing into bourgeois hands because a nation could not be free if it oppressed other nations (Lenin 1951: 37). This was why the Bolsheviks declared that they wished to establish peace on the basis of the right of nations to control their own destinies.

Lenin regarded the problem of national self-determination not only a special Eastern and Central European problem but as a problem world-wide. He divided the world into three distinct areas where the function of self-determination differed radically:

Firstly, the advanced countries of Western Europe and the United States of America where the bourgeois, progressive national movements came to an end long ago.

Secondly, Eastern Europe involving Austria, the Balkans and particularly Russia where it was the twentieth century that particularly developed the bourgeois-democratic national movements and intensified the national struggles. The task of the proletariat in these countries could not be achieved unless it championed the right of nations to self-determination.

The third area was the semi-colonial countries, like China, Persia, Turkey and all the colonies. In these countries the bourgeois democratic movements were far from having been completed. Socialists had to demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensations and help their fight against the imperialistic powers that oppressed them (Lenin 1975: 131-132).

Lenin developed the Western self-determination theory in two new directions:

First, he established the inextricable connection between the national movements and the class struggle. As a first step he emphasised solving the national problems as a precondition of a successful class struggle. Second, he posited the right of national self-determination as a universal principle (Mayer 1964: 299).

Lenin realised that although the Western statesmen and reformers were thinking of a possible application of this principle, they wanted to realise it only in Europe not in Asia and Africa. He wanted to create a worldview of international politics against the Europe-centred international policy. In his



conception he involved the liberation of the oppressed nations of the whole world, thus to settle the colonial problem, too.

Finally, propagating the idea of national self-determination of the oppressed nations, i.e., their right of free political secession by a plebiscite (Lenin 1975: 121, 125), Lenin imagined a world revolution aiming the liberation of peoples worldwide from the conquering and warrior attitude and mentality of the Western political culture: 'a world revolution eliminating conquest'. With all this he revealed the secret of the imperialist culture for a moment. But, as an irony of fate, by proposing national self-determination he repeated the French revolutionary myth again with its tragic consequences for Central Europe and the whole world.

3.1.3.8 Jászi and the challenge of the Russian Revolution

Jászi himself was enthusiastic in 1917. He realised that the Russian Revolution was of the same importance as the French Revolution had been. He believed that Russian socialism was intimately connected with the social revolutionary movement of the West. The ideas represented by it were originally Western ideas including the idea of national self-determination, too. Thus he saw a continuity among the West-European democratic ideas and the Russian revolution which proclaimed not only the human rights of the western culture but faced it with such problems, too, which were not yet solved by western culture, like national minority question, equality, free land property, emancipation of women. But he was doubtful regarding the future prospects of this democracy (Jászi 1918a: 217-218; Jászi 1957: 219). He thought that Lenin, by proclaiming the ideas of freedom, equality, fraternity (internationalism of the proletariat) and nationality (national self-determination) and aiming to fulfil completely the ideas of the French Revolution in Eastern Europe would realise the fears of Eötvös of a 'Constantine' of the equality principle and of the establisher of totalitarianism.

Jászi believed that Lenin's thesis had nothing to do with the "scientific" theses of Marxism (Jászi: Anti-Marx. Jászi: 1983: 99). It was the old Creed of the Jacobins and their successors that all the suffering masses of mankind were endangered a common tyranny. Some Bolshevik leaders vividly felt the continuity between the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks. Lenin himself called the Bolsheviks "the Jacobins of Socialism" (Jászi 1957: 127, 145-146). Jászi believed that there was a remarkable continuity from Babeuf to Lenin in the development of theories of revolution. He regarded Lenin as a convinced and determined revolutionist, certain of the necessity of destroying by force the agencies of existing government, a hated political and economic system. He believed that Lenin was convinced of the necessity of a dictatorship, individual or collective, during the period of transition between the old order and the new. This is why he returned to the traditions of the previous revolutions. Consequently his position was a purely tactical one. Thus Jászi could not regard the fight of Lenin as the continuation of the old moral struggle for freedom against tyranny.

Jászi, in accordance with the belief of the western social democrats, stressed that the Russian revolution was not a proletarian revolution but it was the great "French Revolution" of Eastern Europe and he had written all this already before Bauer (Jászi to Károlyi, Boulder 10 February 1924. In: Károlyi 1990: 212). Lenin, like an "official revolutionary", continued the way of the French Revolution think-



ing that the Eastern European area was now in the period of the bourgeois and bourgeois democratic revolution.

The ideas represented by Lenin really showed parallels with the French Revolution. (Kohn 1967: 21-53). Lenin used, for example, as stereotyped ideas the followings:

1. The proletariat, like the Third Estate (Tiers État) in France took the feudal Russian Empire in its possession.
2. The national self-determination was proclaimed
3. The idea of socialism of Lenin and the ideas of the Bolshevik Revolution were aimed to spread and propagate in the whole world. Thus the Bolshevik revolution had also a missionary character. The mission of the Bolsheviks aimed to establish a new order in the whole world. It supported the fight of the oppressed nations against their tyrants. It proclaimed the emancipation of the colonies. It aimed to unit the whole world proclaiming proletarian internationalism under Russian leadership.
4. It was proposed, as a “war for peace” while the revolutionary war was not regarded as a war among nations, but as a war of principles. The enemy was not the alien nation but its domestic oppressors.

Criticising Lenin’s conception, Jászi continued the ideas of Eötvös who stressed that the ideological structure of the French Revolution based on Rousseau’s doctrine was in contradiction with the idea of freedom. The more so as the whole structure created by the French revolutionaries was unfortunately such that it made possible its continuation and repetitions. Marx also based his ideology on this. Lenin had no doubt about realising the equality principle and changing the role of the bourgeoisie with the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat followed logically from the continuation of the idea of popular sovereignty. The communist system that he elaborated still presented liberty and equality as its remote goals, but Lenin’s application of the communist revolution had already involved an unscrupulous undermining of the beginnings of democratic institutions in Russia (Jászi 1983: 47, 63, 87-88).

The new world revolutionary ideas of Lenin and his system of the proletarian dictatorship created a fear in Western society. The old stereotypes regarding Russia as another barbarian world began to revive after the Bolshevik Revolution. Soon Europe was suffering from the dread of communism and revolution, and the old, well-known anti-Russian sentiments and stereotypes re-established themselves in the public mind: “a fear of the Russian virus”. Jászi himself meant, “The expansion of Bolshevism would destroy our culture” (Jászi 1983: 99). He understood well that the Russian revolution and the Bolshevik-proposed national model would be an attractive model for the oppressed nations in the Habsburg Monarchy. Jászi realised also that the most important propagandist and spreader of the Bolshevism in the Habsburg Monarchy would be the declaration of the principle of national self-determination in the form of secession, too, by the Bolsheviks. This is why the idea of national self-determination became the main point of the ideological war. After the February Revolution in Russia Jászi did not continue to support the plan of Naumann. He began to search for new ways and new orientations.



Finally, it cannot avoid our attention that the criticism of Eötvös regarding the stereotyped French idea of national self-determination and the national principle is appropriate in the case of the conception of Lenin on the idea of national self-determination, too.

3.1.3.9 *Wilson and the utopia of world peace based on national self-determination*

Jászi stood before the strongest challenge when after the Russian Revolution Wilson, as the representative of the prototype of the modern democratic society, appeared on the political scene of Europe. Actually he always regarded the democratic state structure of the United States of America as an example. Before the First World War America was not involved in the European affairs. But it had come of age, and could start looking outward. After the Bolshevik challenge the time had come for America to spread the “true faith of democracy” covering its active intervention policy and its classic way of great power attitude developed after the example of the English and French political traditions. It depended too much on Wilson’s policy in the revolutionary situation of Central and Eastern Europe.

Wilson, the American politician understood that in his competition with Lenin he had to propose such a great and attractive thing as a diplomatic revolution aiming to realise the classical idea on world peace. This fact was behind his famous rhetoric. He had to find the way to defeat the new utopia of Lenin who proposed a better life for great masses of people everywhere in the world in place of the unworkable European political ideas, which had ended in a monstrous war. He had to propose — like Lenin did — a new diplomacy based on the idea of national self-determination for the whole world to put an end to the conquering and warrior mentality of the nation states. Essentially it was necessary to propose ideas for a democratic fragmentation of the territory of the whole world serving as a basis for a future world peace (Mamatey 1957; Dorreboom 1991).

Wilson himself recognised the coming of the modern world of national states in Europe and everywhere in the world. Being a Calvinist gentleman he tried to harmonise the new process with his old ideas on the liberal state organisation. Finally he dedicated himself as a leader in service to his nation whose mission he believed to be a spirit of liberty to all the nations of the world (Freud – Bullit 1967: 133; Dorreboom 1991: 78). He regarded the federalist structure of the United States as a possible model for the rest of the world to create a community of nations as the basis of a democratic and peaceful international world order. The American federation seemed to be an example of the successful realisation of the great idea of peaceful world integration and an alternative of a peaceful living together of the nations for the whole world (Dorreboom 1991: 264-265). This is why Wilson was popular in Central Europe when he appeared on the European political scene.

Wilson played the leading party in the development of the general ideal of national liberation into an officially recognised Allied policy of self-determination. His ideas on this subject were part of a long considered political philosophy. His political thinking derived from the American democratic tradition, from the democratic and national ideals of the French and American Revolutions. The key to the understanding of Wilson’s conception of self-determination is the fact that for him it was the basic idea of democratic theory. It seems that he thought if the answer was formed to the question, which people belonged to which nation, the nations could live in eternal harmony world-wide. From this



utopia he developed step by step his point of view on national self-determination under the pressure of events (Cobban 1945: 52).

Wilson, in an address to the Senate in 1916, blamed the old balance of power protecting the war and its continuance. He proposed instead a system of collective security; a community of nations, where every nation would have its rights guaranteed, and would be free to develop in its own way. "There must be" he said, "not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organised rivalries, but an organised common peace". This end could be reached only through a "peace without victory" (Dorreboom 1991: 281), "Only a peace between equals can last". The peace has to be based upon the principles of democracy. He believed the time was ripe for democracy around the world. The war has to become a "War to end all wars" (Dorreboom 1991: 281-282).

Self-determination was, early in 1917, turning from a mere phrase into what Wilson later called "an imperative principle of action". On January 22, 1917, in an address to the Senate, he asserted that a lasting peace would have to be a peace without victory supported by a League of Nations in which, as a new world power, the United States would have to play a responsible role. In his address of 2nd April 1917, Wilson recommended to the Congress the declaration of a state of war, and directed the aims of America that had to be democracy and the rights and liberties of small nations. Self-determination to Wilson meant at that time almost another word for popular sovereignty. In this he followed the French and the American, rather than the British political tradition (Mayer 1964: 384).

Early in 1918 Wilson crystallised his proposals in the Fourteen Points and the Four Principles, but even now the scope of the self-determination envisaged was strictly limited (Baker 1923 v. 3: 42-46). The famous 10th Point involved that "the peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development". Wilson promising "the freest opportunity of autonomous development" to the peoples of Austria-Hungary, did not envisage its destruction. He believed that Austria-Hungary was a political necessity. The 14th point emphasised that a general association of nations had to be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guaranties of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

In his Four Points on July 1918 Wilson proposed firstly the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that could disturb the peace of the world. Secondly he emphasised "the settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people". This was a concrete step in the direction of the self-determination of the nations. He concluded: "What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organised opinion of mankind" (Baker 1923 v. 3: 45-46). At the same time it cannot escape our attention that Wilson had spoken about self-determination with an even greater lack of precision. Basically he meant by self-determination "a government with the consent of the governed" (Mamatey 1957: 100). It seems that Wilson's main mistake was that he did not really understand that national consciousness and self-government could each exist without the other. Consequently it was not necessary that self-government and national consciousness would be congruent in the different states, especially not in



multinational states with mixed population. The idea of national self-determination was the concept that propounded their interdependence. It expressed the striving to make culture and policy congruent (Heater 1994: 27). We cannot forget that in effect it is nationalism that has been defined as a striving to make culture and policy congruent (Gellner 1993: 43).

The development of the principle of self-determination was for a considerable period hampered by the unwillingness of the Allies to contemplate the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire because of the fear of Germany and the Bolsheviks. For the British and French governing classes Austria-Hungary was a traditional necessity. They feared that in the case of the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy Austria would unite with Germany. Masaryk reported that he found everywhere that the Allies had not wanted to destroy Austria-Hungary. "Austria was generally looked upon as a counterweight to Germany, as a necessary organisation of small peoples and odds and ends of peoples, and as a safeguard against "balkanisation" (Masaryk 1927: 244).

During 1918 the meaning of national self-determination was seriously discussed. The first important practical step was the holding of a Congress of Oppressed Nations at Rome in April 1918, under Italian patronage. It included, as well as Italians, Romanians, Poles, Czech-Slovaks, and South Slavs (Seaton-Watson 1981: 259-276).

Allied declarations gradually became stronger as the situation in the Dual Monarchy unfolded itself. Finally, on 18th October, 1918, in reply to an Austrian Note, Wilson refused to accept autonomy as a satisfactory answer to the aspirations of the subject nations of the Dual Monarchy, saying that it was for these people to decide for themselves "what action on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government will satisfy their aspirations and their conception of their rights and destiny as members of the family of nations" (Cobban 1969: 59).

Lenin had to realise that Wilson's daring proposal for orderly change became the most decisive challenge to his own revolutionary ideology; the proclamation of national self-determination as the basis of a new world system revolutionised the diplomacy, too. Governments were forced to make major concessions to a new diplomacy of open covenants (in place of secret diplomacy), to self-determination of nations (in place of conquering by might and the monarchic-feudal diplomatic organising principle), to a non-expansionist solution of the war (in place of a policy of annexations), to a "peace without victory" and without punishment. There was a large-scale search for new ideological, political, and social ideals at that time. In this search some turned to Wilson others to Lenin.

The challenges of the national idea for Jászi continued when Lenin, Wilson, Renner, Masaryk, Clemenceau, and the others who were representatives of different national interests explained the meaning of the idea of national self-determination according to their own national interests.

3.2 Jászi's confederation period

3.2.1 The answers to the challenge of Wilson

For the liberal politicians of Central Europe American democracy, the fight of the American people for the independence, the federal structure of the country proved that the peaceful coexistence of the



people is realisable by democracy. They regarded American democratic federalism as a model for Central Europe. The utopia of world peace represented by Wilson was very attractive to the peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy where a nearly one century's old state organisation crisis culminated at that time. The Double Monarchy was in collapse and in its place new nation states demanded diplomatic recognition. Wilson emphasised that he wanted to give principles of orientation to the politicians of Central Europe. They had to find the solution themselves. Living with this liberty, the reactions of the politicians of the Habsburg Monarchy were anti-utopian. Interpreting the ideas of Wilson they continued to present the "real interest" of the nations represented by them. The true nature of the national principle worked again in the way mentioned by Eötvös. All this represented very well the reactions of the three most important Central European political thinkers and politicians, Renner, Masaryk and Jászi. As a consequence they could not create and propose anything common and realisable in political practice for the future co-operation among the nations of the Habsburg Monarchy.

3.2.1.1 *Renner's plan*

The ideas of the Austrian social democrats on a "Nationalitätenbundesstaat" as a Central European Community of Nations were in harmony with the world trend represented by Wilson. The Anglo-Saxon political ideology meant for them a competition and challenge. In Renner's interpretation the Anglo-Saxon policy was one of the best examples of political hypocrisy because it represented at the same time both the "Nationalitätenprinzip", in the form of the idea of national self-determination, and the principle of the international legal community, too, in the form of the idea of United Nations. They aimed to replace the idea of the sovereign national state with the idea of the League of Nations. Renner thought that in reality, the Anglo-Saxon policy continued the traditional expansive policy of the great powers. Propagating this political hypocrisy the Anglo-Saxons wanted to achieve their own dominance upon this "Völkergemeinschaft" (Central Europe). Renner believed that Wilson continued and perfected the traditional competitive policy under the cover of his "new diplomacy". His peace policy covered the American aspirations for domination in the world.

Renner summed up the essence of the Austrian idea of national empire, proposed in competition with Wilson, as follows:

"Sie (die nationale Rechtsidee) fordert, dass alle Kulturvölker zunächst des Abendlandes in eine Völkergemeinschaft eintreten, auf die die Souveränität der Einzelnationen übergeht; die einzelne Nation wird ihr autonomes, aber dienendes Glied, das ihr Recht von der Gesamtheit empfängt, dessen Rechte von dieser Gesamtheit geschützt, dessen Pflichten von ihr erzwungen werden. Zugleich aber ist jede Nation Mitschöpferin des gemeinsamen Rechts, Mitverwalterin der gemeinsamen Interessen und Teilhaberin der gemeinsamen Gerichtsbarkeit. Und das sind die Postulate der nationalen Rechtsidee: Souveränität der internationalen Gemeinschaft, Selbstbestimmungsrecht als Autonomie (nicht als Souveränität) der Einzelnation, Mitgesetzgebung, Mitverwaltung und Mitgerichtsbarkeit der Einzelnation im internationalen Verband. Für diese Organisation der Menschheit ist der Nationalitätenstaat das Vorbild und der empirische Bahnbrecher" (Renner 1918: 94).



Renner himself — as we have seen above — outlined a liberal democratic state–structure, trying to realise in the situation of the Habsburg Empire the American federalist idea. He stressed that his conception on the “Nationalitätenstaat” of the multinational Austria was not in contradiction to the ideas of Wilson. Renner himself proposed his plan of the “Nationalitätenstaat” to Wilson as an example for a democratic international legal system. Self–determination, in his conception, meant personal autonomy. He aimed to realise his plan in Austria to give an example and to begin the European Unity that would serve as an example for the whole world (Bóka 2002b).

3.2.1.2 *Masaryk’s New Europe*

Masaryk’s aim as liberal nationalist was to make an independent Czech state (Masaryk 1927). In his political memorandum, entitled ‘Independent Bohemia’ (Masaryk: Independent Bohemia. In: Seton Watson 1943: 116-134), he emphasised already earlier in 1915 that the modern era is characterised by the development of various nationalities, as strong political and state–forming forces. In practice, language, as the medium of common cultural life and effort, is the main test of nationality. He believed that the watchword of ‘National States’ sums up the tendency of modern political development. Regarding Bohemia Masaryk emphasised that the main aim of the Czechs is to attain independence: “The independent Bohemian State would be composed of so–called Bohemian countries, namely of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia; to these would be added the Slovak districts of North Hungary, from Ungvar through Kaschau along the ethnographical boundaries down the River Ipoly (Eipel) to the Danube, including Pressburg and the whole Slovak north to the frontier line of Hungary. The Slovaks are Bohemians, in spite of their using their dialect as their literary language. The Slovaks strive also for independence and accept the programme of union with Bohemia” (Masaryk: Independent Bohemia. In: Seton Watson 1943: 117, 125). Masaryk stressed further that it would be necessary to solve the problems of the other oppressed nations, too. It would be necessary to construct and reconstruct Poland, Serbo–Croatia and to solve the Balkan and Turkish question. From all this logically followed that Masaryk believed that the history of the Habsburg Empire represented how dismembered a conservative empire step by step because of the triumph of the national idea.

In his plan on New Europe (1918) he professed the coming of the people’s revolution against the great feudal empires. This is why he became the spokesman of national self–determination and the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy. He also believed that the peoples of Central Europe now made their “French Revolution” liberating themselves as nations and taking in their possession the territory of the Habsburg Empire. He emphasised the necessity of the people’s revolution there and the reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire into a League of Nations. From Masaryk’s aspirations sprang, in October 1918, the idea of a Democratic Central European Union represented in his plan on New Europe.

Masaryk accepted national self–determination in the sense of national independence. In his plan he proposed to the West–European statesmen and Wilson to proclaim national self–determination as a basic principle of diplomacy. Concerning the definition of self–determination Masaryk’s main problem was that he could not give a theoretical definition of the self–determination in spite of that it being a principle generally recognised and pervading all life of society. Neither could he exactly define



nation and the national principle. Finally he had to recognise that the subject of language and national rights was not determined by any code. Thus he regarded self-determination as a product of the centuries' old democratic development of European history and ideas of state organisation. He thought that the national principle manifested itself through language and culture. But he realised that this was really not enough criterion to proclaim something as a basic organising principle of international policy (Masaryk 1918: 18).

Thus Masaryk as a politician imagined for himself an ideological construction proving his aim to make an independent Czech state:

He thought that Europe had reached the stage at which multi-national feudal empires lost their *raison d'être*. Instead of enhancing security and peaceful co-operation they had become instruments of destructive forces. On their ruins, he asserted, would raise governments responsible to legislative assemblies and conducting both home and foreign policy without recourse to militarism or secret diplomacy. He believed that the war developed into a contest between the traditional empires and democratic governments deriving power from the consent of their citizens (Masaryk 1918: 13, 18-19).

Masaryk recommended that the Allied statesmen accept the national principle by redrawing the map of Europe while the war made clear for everybody that the territory of Eastern and Central Europe was a territory of unsettled national problems and struggles (Masaryk 1918: 20-22). The principal problem of the future peace would be the political reconstruction of Eastern Europe on a national basis. Masaryk spoke about the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary as the principal aim of the war while Austria-Hungary represented the old dynastic state that oppressed the peoples living there and used them against each other. All this made necessary the readjustment of the political boundaries in Central Europe: new states and governments had to be organised (Masaryk 1918: 18-19, 32, 34-35).

Masaryk further stressed the importance of the federation principle. He believed that the liberation of all nations would make possible the organic association, the federation of nations of Europe and of all mankind (Masaryk 1918: 25-26).

At the same time he referred to the historical principle, too. Finally he did not base the claims of the Czechs to independence on the principle of national self-determination, but on an ingenious combination of Bohemia's historical rights with the theory of social contract and right of revolution. He argued that the Czechs elected the Habsburgs to the throne of Bohemia and as a consequence they had the right to cancel their contract with the Habsburgs (Masaryk 1918: 25). This was the continuation of the old fight against the tyrant.

Finally we can conclude that Masaryk's enthusiastic propaganda for the right of national self-determination was a political tactic for achieving the independence of the Czech state. He did not deny all this while at the same time he concluded that there were as many national questions as there were nationalities — there was no single rule for dealing with all national questions (Masaryk 1918: 29).

3.2.1.3 *Jászi and the Czechs movement for independence*

Jászi's ideas on nationality illustrate very well his opinion on the Czechs' independent movement. Jászi actually supported the Czechs' movement for independence while he regarded the Czechs as a nation with historic, economic, and cultural development having all the criterion of independent state



making. He, like Masaryk, regarded the national principle as an important force. Both of them thought that national autonomy (recognition of language rights in schools, public offices, and in the parliament) might be sufficient in certain cases, especially for national minorities but it was not sufficient for national majorities and nations, such as the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, and others, who had lost their historical independence.

Thus Jászi sympathised with the Czech separatist movement. He recognised it as a rightful one. He believed that the essence of the Czechs' separatist tendencies was the same as that of the Magyars: an effort for constitutional independence, the unification of the countries of the Czech crown under national government that is the guarantee of the independence of the state in the spirit of the historical rights.

As a difference between the Czechs and the Hungarian movement for independence Jászi mentioned that the Czechs, from the first awakening of the democratic national spirit until the dissolution of the Monarchy, were not disinclined to accept the plan that the future independent Bohemia would become a part of a federal state and they would have willingly participated in a central parliament including all the nations of the monarchy as equal members. Just the opposite was the standpoint of the Magyar politicians: Hungary could not accept any state community or supranational central organ with the other nations of the Monarchy (Jászi 1929: 385-386).

Jászi emphasised that the Hungarian and the German leading politicians never satisfied the claims of the Czechs for national autonomy. Under such circumstances Jászi thought it to be natural that "the Czechs fixed their eyes more and more on the "big Russian brother" when they saw that they could not guarantee their national independence in a peaceful, constitutional way" (Jászi 1929: 387). Jászi never thought the feeling of solidarity of the Czechs with the Russians a very serious intention, because a union with the Russians geographically, ethnographically and culturally was not possible. He believed that "the flirting of the Czech intelligentsia with pan-Slavism, their pilgrimages to Russia, their enthusiastic cultural connection with Russian intellectual life, and the growing emphasis of Slav solidarity did not signify a possible or serious irredentist movement but rather a tactical and also sentimental position" (Jászi 1929: 387).

Jászi stressed that the Czechs were never for the dissolution of the Monarchy. The Czechs national movement influenced by Palacky fought for a federative reconstruction of the empire. The Czech national politicians emphasised that the Habsburg Empire should be maintained on the basis of the equality of their peoples. This conception was enlarged by several northern and southern Slav political writers into a doctrine called Austro-Slavism that opposed the pan-Slavism and advocated the maintenance of a democratised and federalised Austria (Jászi 1929: 388). The more Europe became segregated into two military camps which by a system of alliances and counter-alliances prepared for the final battle, the more important became the card of sentimental and cultural pan-Slavism in the hands of the leading Russian circles for utilising the hatred of the Slavs of the monarchy against the countries which refused to accept them as equal in their constitutional life. Jászi concluded that this propagandistic effort of Russian imperialism was to a large extent successful during the war and became one of the chief causes of the dissolution of the Monarchy (Jászi 1929: 387).



3.2.1.4 *Jászi's national programme (1918)*

In 1918 in the “*Twentieth Century*” Jászi summed up his belief about the national question and its importance from the point of view of the social and individual development (Jászi, *A nemzetiségi kérdés*. Jászi 1918d: 91-111). He repeated his unbroken faith in the assimilation process of history, in which the period of the national states was a necessary step. Naturally, it was not the last period in history. The association process continued. The last phase had to be a world federation based on autonomous states. Concerning the national groups he emphasised that the aim of every nation was to create independent national life. While the situation of the national groups was different there was no general rule, only guiding principles helping peaceful cooperation that was the precondition of the further world integration process.

In Jászi's theory these general basic principles are the following (Bóka 1999: 454):

1. It is desirable, even indispensable to create new nation states everywhere where it is possible, — where there are the conditions of an independent life.
2. Where the conditions of independent state-making are not present, for example in the case of a mixed population, or if a national group is already integrated into a state, etc. there it is the interest of a progressive policy to stop the creation of independent states incapable of survival and to maintain the economically, geographically and culturally co-operating old states.

Jászi mentions further three criteria for the creation of a new state:

- 1.1. Is the state economically and culturally capable of an independent national life, i.e., is the state capable of resisting becoming a “Pufferstaat” among the rival great powers
- 1.2. Is it really the solution of the national problem and is it not the cause of a new conflict
- 1.3. The new state does not destroy such old statehoods which work together better than the new one (Bóka 1999:454).

From this program it is clear that Jászi continued to represent the idea of integration of Hungary (point 2. and 1.3), but he made a concrete step in the direction of the confederation of independent states (point 1). Regarding those national minorities which were not capable of an independent national life he proposed to guarantee for them economic and cultural autonomy. Jászi's minimal programme included making it possible for great masses of people to use their mother tongue. At the same time he realised that there was not a general method for solving the national minority question. The solution everywhere depended on the local situation. As maximal program he accepted the plan of Renner, which he thought to be brilliant from the nationality point of view, while it organised every national minority in the state as legal units following the system of church autonomy, making it possible to associate: to organise schools, and defend the cultural autonomy of people. But he continued to reject Renner's views on a future centralised federal structure. Jászi emphasised that the solution of the national problem had to become a gradual and permanent process in the democratic state organisation (Bóka 1999:454).

3.2.2 **The Danubian Confederation plan**

Under the influence of Wilson Jászi gave in his Danubian Confederation Plan published in October 1918 (Jászi 1918b) a programme for the realisation of these ideas. At the same time he summarized



his above-mentioned objections to the other plans, and expressed his ideas on the confederation. He wanted to present this plan as a step towards the League of Nations. Agreeing with Károlyi Jászi proposed creating a new balance among the peoples of the Monarchy and the Balkan within the framework of a Danubian Confederation (Károlyi 1924: 385-386; Károlyi 1978: 64, 119, 157-158, 160, 162, 267, 268, 444). Influenced by Károlyi, he renewed the famous programme of the Danubian Confederation of Kossuth and regarded it as a basic idea of his plan (Jászi 1918c: vi; Bóka 1999: 454-455).

Kossuth, under the influence of the ideas of List, proposed the necessity of co-operation among Hungary and the neighbouring nation states which had large numbers of co-nationals in Hungary. He stressed that only an economic and political alliance between Hungary, Rumania, and Serbia would be capable of guaranteeing the independence of these smaller states against pan-German and pan-Slav pressure. Solving the national problem this confederation would be able to maintain efficiently the peace in Central Europe (Jászi 1929: 313). Kossuth planned that after the collapse of the despotic Habsburg Monarchy and Turkey, Hungary would enter into an alliance with Rumania, Croatia, and Serbia in the form of a democratic confederation creating a great economic unity (Kemény 1962: 323-324; Magyarország története 1979 v. 6: 710-711). He proposed to establish a common government for the whole confederation dealing with the common affairs; the participating states had to have their own autonomous governments based on the local autonomy system. The organization principle of the community would be the right of free association of peoples with each other. Regarding the solution of the national and religious problems Kossuth proposed to insure the usage of the mother language for everybody in the parliament; the usage of language has to depend on the collective decisions of the autonomous communities and provinces; everybody has to have the right to associate, and create national or religious associations and to live following his cultural traditions (Kemény 1962: 324-326). He believed that by this way each community could find his autonomous place in the Danubian Community, and in the larger community of mankind.

The essence of the idea of Kossuth was to secure the role of Hungary as a central political force of the Danubian basin by means of democratic state-organisation. His plan aimed the establishment of a confederation between the Hungarian Kingdom and the neighbouring countries based on the autonomy of the composing parts, and the free association policy of people. Actually this was a programme for safeguarding the Hungarian Kingdom in a democratic way.

In his Danubian Confederation Plan Jászi applied the ideas of Kossuth's plan with modifications aiming to reconstruct the Habsburg Empire. Jászi proposed creating a confederation of the five historical states (Austrians, Magyars, Czechs, Poles, and Serb-Croats (Illyria)). He wanted to ensure full autonomy for every nation, where it was possible by territorial autonomy, where it was not possible by means of personal registers (cadastral) as in the idea of Renner. He searched for a way out from the tragic dead-lock of the independent nation-states and nationalism in a democratic confederation of the historical nations. Jászi's Danubian Confederation plan was in accordance with the west European ideas on the League of Nations and it intended to maintain the framework of the Habsburg Empire and save the Hungarian Kingdom. The problem with it was that it was proposed too late, and it was utopian (Hanák 1985: 67-68; Bóka 1999: 455).



In Hungary Jászi wanted to pursue the reforms within the framework of the historical frontiers of the country, without federalisation of Hungary, and giving the nationalities vast cultural and administrative autonomy on the basis of personal autonomy. Concerning Hungary he maintained further his preconception regarding it as a historically united state, and thinking that the Hungarian national minorities were not able, and did not want to create independent states. Based on this belief he was against the federalisation of Hungary. However regarding the Austrian part of the Monarchy he accepted federalisation. This was his main fault and miscalculation (Litván 1986: 38). Furthermore all this made his whole conception clearly contradictory (Bóka 1999: 456).

3.2.3 Jászi and the utopia of “Wilson–peace”

The Károlyi government, which was formed in the democratic revolution of 1918 (on power from 31. October 1918) after the defeat of Hungary in the First World War, basically accepted the ideas of Wilson (Jászi 1924: 35-36). Jászi was the minister of national minority affairs in the Károlyi government. They wanted a “Wilson–peace”. “Wilson–peace” meant instead of the old balance of power, a League of Nations; instead of secret treaties, open diplomacy; instead of autocracy of monarchs and conquering, self–determination by plebiscite; instead of expansion, a peace without victory (Károlyi 1924: 399).

“Wilson–peace” was utopia. It was used as a means of manipulation serving the fight for domination of Central Europe among Western democracies and East European powers. The culminating point of this ideological struggle was the competition between the Bolshevik and the Wilsonian interpretation of the idea of national self–determination in the last period of the war. Self–determination was never defined concretely. It remained a “magic word” under which everybody could understand what he wanted. As a consequence everybody presented it in the interest of his nation. Furthermore these interpretations of self–determination were always modified according to the political and territorial interests of the great powers and the different national leaders under the influence of the quickly changing events.

The republican Clemenceau proved to be one of the most realistic politicians regarding the idea of national self–determination. For him national self–determination was already a more than one century old historical myth with its tragic consequences. He respected Wilson’s ambitions regarding the idea of world peace but as a realist he believed that the idea of power is deeply rooted in man, and in the whole universe. “Countries are different, interests are urgent, too often in conflict behind the veil of literary manifestos of impartiality in which the most beautiful formulas of universal equity have exhausted all the virtue and pith of their ideology, without producing anything but fresh disorders more or less skilfully disguised” (Clemenceau 1930: 186-187).

All this was proved in the last phase of the war when it became a fight for independence of the peoples of Central Europe challenged by the Russian Revolution and by Western and American democracy. When Wilson no longer accepted the pure autonomy for the nations of the Habsburg Monarchy and he made possible national self–determination by way of negotiations with the Austro–Hungarian government, the Habsburg Monarchy collapsed at the end of 1918.



Under the influence of the rapidly changing events Jászi, as the minister of nationality affairs, also changed his position step by step regarding the myth of the integrity of 'historical Hungary':

In October 1918 Jászi accepted the right of national self-determination of the people, but only for the Czechs, Poles, and South-Slaves (Croats, Serbs, Slovenes). For the national minorities in Hungary he rejected it. Thus Jászi stopped halfway and this was an evident contradiction in his conception (Fischer 1978: 67).

At the end of November 1918 Jászi emphasised the necessity of the reorganisation of Austria-Hungary based on cantons, following the Swiss pattern but without changing his conception on the territorial integrity of the Hungarian Kingdom.

As minister for national minority affairs Jászi planned to persuade the leaders of the various peoples, mainly the Romanians, Slovaks, and Ruthenians to keep their people within the borders of Hungary by offering them maximum autonomy. In a period when every national leader wanted autonomous and independent national states it seemed to be hopeless to solve the century old national minority problem in Hungary by negotiations with the leaders of the national minorities on basis of Hungarian territorial integrity. Jászi despite of all this tried to negotiate with the national leaders on the basis of the Wilsonian idea of national self-determination. He realized that Wilson's ideas were only guiding principles. Thus this was the task of the Magyar and the other national politicians of the country to find the real meaning of Wilson's guiding principles in the practice. This is why Jászi organized an official inquiry between the Magyar and the national minority politicians about the national problem and the interpretation of the meaning of the right of national self-determination as the new principle of territorial organization of the future peace negotiations (Litván – Szarka 1991a: 83-84). Jászi wanted to prepare by this way the future democratic solution of the national minority problem. He sent his above-mentioned article, and Mihály Réz's article on the nationality question published in the "Twentieth Century" (Réz 1918: 1-17) to a lot of persons concerned, among them the representatives of the national minorities, too, as a basis of the discussion. All this proved that the meaning of the ideas of Wilson on national self-determination was discussed in Hungary (Litván – Szarka 1991a: 84).

Jászi was successful only in his talks with the Ruthenians (Carpathian-Ukrainians). The Ukrainians of Hungary received the autonomy, and their representatives joined to the government.

On November 12 Jászi, as minister of the national minority affairs, began negotiations with the leaders of the Hungarian and Transylvanian Romanians' National Council (Litván – Szarka 1991a: 91-100). In a Memorandum the Roman National Council demanded the Károlyi government the right of independent government, above all in the territory where Romanians lived in Hungary. Jászi reacted on the Romanian Memorandum in the spirit of the Wilsonian idea of national self-determination. He guaranteed the Romanians their own national government but only if they guaranteed the right of national self-determination for the Magyar, German and Serb minorities living on the territories dominated by the Romanians in Transylvania. He made two conditions: First, to recognise the integrity of the Hungarian borders until the peace conference, because the decisions on the borders were of the competence of the international arbitration of the peace conference. Secondly, he demanded to safeguard the relationship between the Hungarian state and the Romanian national gov-



ernment. Jászi emphasised further to the Romanian national representatives that the Károlyi government wanted to implement the right of the national self-determination of the nations following the example of Switzerland.

Jászi's point of view had a mixed effect on the Romanian national minority leaders. Finally, they could not agree because of territorial demands. The Romanians did not want to accept Jászi's statistic on the Magyar and Romanian population. In Jászi's opinion the Romanians wanted too much territory without being able to prove their Romanian majority, and they also claimed Magyar dominated territories. Furthermore the Romanians wanted to decide the Romanian and Magyar majority rates by provinces, and Jászi by districts.

Jászi's negotiation with Maniu, the leader of the Romanian national minority, proved that Maniu wanted to organize an independent nation state on the territory of those 26 provinces which the Romanian National Council demanded from Jászi to hand over. As the Austro-Hungarian dualism collapsed he wanted full national independence for the Romanian national group. Maniu was thinking in terms of a nation state form, and he wanted to insure as much power as possible for the Rumanian national minority to have better chances during the peace process. He did not want to guarantee the right of national self-determination for the national minorities (Székelys and Saxons). Jászi opposed Maniu's demands for national independence because he did not believe that the Romanian national minority group could exist as independent state. For him only the Swiss autonomous canton-form was suitable. He emphasised that the only solution was the full implementation of the right of national self-determination and the federative reconstruction of Hungary. The point of view of the Hungarian government regarding the Romanian aspirations was: neither oppresses nor let oppress. Finally, the Romanian leaders rejected the offer of autonomy, and on November 20 they proclaimed their wish to secede from Hungary. The leaders of the Transylvanian Romanians decided to join with the Kingdom of Romania that was recognized as a co-belligerent by the Allies.

The negotiations of Jászi with the representative of the Slovak National Council, Milan Hodza, on the basis of the Wilsonian principles and Jászi's ideas on a Swiss type confederation seemed to be more successful (Litván – Szarka 1991a: 101-102). The Slovaks already earlier pledged themselves to the strivings of Czechoslovak union. As a consequence, there was not too much hope for an agreement between Jászi and the Slovak representatives. In spite of this Hodza was ready to accept provisional autonomy for the period preceding the conclusion of peace. It seemed that the Slovaks wanted to achieve a wider autonomy from Prague and they wanted to avoid solving the question by military occupation and force. The attempt of Hodza to reach a compromise produced violent simultaneous reactions among the nationalists being present in the governments of both Prague and Budapest. Jászi's attempt failed (Litván 1988: 87-89; Hajdu-Nagy 1990: 298-299).

Till the conclusion of the peace Jászi wanted to achieve with the national minorities a provisional order based on the different forms of autonomy, democratisation and by no means secession from Hungary (Litván – Szarka 1991a: 90-103). Only at the end of 1918 under the pressure of the events did Jászi accept the federalisation of Hungary after the example of the USA or Switzerland. In this republican Hungary the Magyars, Slovaks, Ruthens, Transylvanians, Serbs and Germans had to build



their cantons or states. This Hungarian Federation would be a seed for a Danubian Confederation in the economic sense. He recognised also the rights of the national minorities to secede.

Only in the middle of December did Jászi and Károlyi change their conception officially, too, and they proposed openly to Wilson the Danubian Confederation plan that was formed after the example of Switzerland, an economic and foreign political unity amongst politically independent nations (Bóka 1999: 456).

As we have above mentioned the government of Károlyi basically wanted a peaceful agreement on the basis of the Wilsonian 14 points. The Hungarian National Council demanded full independence for Hungary and at the same time the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Hungary. Károlyi and Jászi wanted to achieve the territorial reorganization of the country by the means of plebiscites under international arbitration, thus by the application of the Wilsonian idea of national self-determination. This is why they wanted to maintain the territorial integrity of Hungary till the peace conference. They were idealists and at the same time rationalist democratic nationalists. They realized that the First World War was a classical expansive war for territories among the nations motivated by the interests of the national states. At the same time they believed in the democratic idea of national self-determination by plebiscite and hoped to achieve better chances for Hungary, defeated in the war, on the peace treaties. Their behaviour presented again a good example of the contradictions of the idea of democratic nationalism. As a consequence the old stereotyped idea of the 'territorial integrity of historical Hungary' became a special dogma in their presentation (Jászi 1924: 38).

Today, it seems to be a mistake that the Károlyi government, including Jászi, too, maintained the idea of the 'territorial integrity of historical Hungary' and Jászi only, under the pressure of the revolutionary circumstances, began to act according to his thoughts on a confederate solution for Hungary. When he accepted national self-determination for the Hungarian nationalities, too, it was already too late (Fischer 1978: 50-142). It was not possible to save the territorial integrity of Hungary in the democratic nationalist way proposed by Jászi. History did not justify him.

The democratic government of Károlyi did not get any support from the Allies. Jászi himself realised that Hungary had lost the war, and it meant that the political integrity of Hungary was beyond saving. He was informed that the territorial claims of the Czechs, Slovaks and Rumanians had already obtained treaty recognition from the Entente during the war. In this situation Jászi wanted to save the principle of plebiscite and so to secure the best attainable settlement for Hungary. He wanted further to prepare the way for a future reconciliation and federation, assuring complete autonomy to each of the nations living in Central Europe. This is why he began to propagate and discuss the ideas of Wilson. He believed that only the implementation of the Wilsonian principles in the Central European political reality would change the classical warrior principle of territorial organization which were always repeated during history. It was repeated by Franchet, the commander of the Eastern Armies of the Allies, too, who told Károlyi and Jászi that Hungary would be treated simply as a defeated enemy. A few days later Juliu Maniu of Romania made it clear to Jászi that the fate of Transylvania would not be decided by democratic principles but by the prevailing balance of forces (Jászi 1924: 53-54, 57). The Károlyi government was completely abandoned in West. Nobody regarded Károlyi as a negotiat-



ing partner (Károlyi 1978). As a result of this international isolation the democratic experiment of the Károlyi government was step-by-step defeated.

On December 18 Colonel Vyx replied that in accordance with instructions received from the Allied High Command, the Entente regarded Romania as an Allied Power, whose army had the same right as those of the other Allied Powers to take part in the occupation of the areas defined in the Armistice agreement. When Colonel Vyx on March 20 handed to Károlyi the well-known note — which led down fresh and much worse lines of demarcation, which cut off some purely Magyar districts, and which was regarded as definite political frontier — the Károlyi government resigned. Jászi and Károlyi saw themselves defeated. The bright promise of Wilson's League of Nations, the just peace and the right of self-determination by plebiscite, in which Jászi and Károlyi had placed their trust, proved to be a utopia (Jászi 1924: 56-57). When the illusion of "Wilsonism" was shattered, the Russian alliance became a possible chance to get help to save the country. Jászi believed that the inhuman policy of the Entente daily ripened Bolshevism in Hungary. The Communist leaders regarded the Vyx Note, thus the immediate and final surrender of Hungarian territory to the Romanians, as a cause of the Communist revolution. The Social Democrats joined hands with the Communists in proclaiming Hungary a Soviet Republic under Béla Kun. The nationalist Bolshevik regime (Red Terror) of Béla Kun began a war of national defence. After that the Communist regime came to the power Jászi left Hungary and he settled down in Vienna. Between 1919 and 1925 he was the leader of the democratic exiles in Austria.

The Hungarian Kingdom fell apart together with the whole Habsburg Monarchy. The national minority leaders chose separation from Hungary and the union with their kindred nations and their old or newly created independent states. The Hungarian Kingdom lost two-thirds of its territory and one third of the Magyars (over three millions of them). They became national minorities in Austria-Hungary's so-called "successor states". The Western allies supported this process and later sanctioned the new status quo in the Treaty of Trianon. This new Central Europe was the opposite of what Jászi imagined. In the post-war period the idea of the democratic Danubian confederation fell, and more or less authoritarian small nations with ethnically heterogeneous population were established. A new Magyar irredenta was taking the place of the by the Magyars oppressed former nationalities. The national question was not solved in Central Europe. Thus the national minority question in the Hungarian Kingdom was changed into national minority questions in the 'successor states'. Following the defeat of Soviet Hungary the revanchist and anti-Semitic Horthy regime came to power with the help of a Romanian intervention. The established nationalistic governments discredited democracy for decades. The republican episode was presented as the reason of Hungary's national disaster (Litván, Introduction. In: Jászi, *Homage to Danubia*. Jászi 1995: xiv-xv). The democratic experiment of the Károlyi government, together with the coming of the nationalist Bolshevik regime of Béla Kun to power, remained one of the most discussed events of Hungarian history.

Later, Jászi in his famous work on the causes of the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy emphasised that the Monarchy was destroyed by the national antagonism. He wrote self-critically that "The point of view of Kossuth concerning which "there are many nationalities in Hungary but only one nation, the Magyar", ran as a red thread throughout the whole modern history of Hungary. It became



one of the chief causes which finally destroyed the Monarchy” (Jászi 1929: 301, 304). Jászi in his democratic nationalist period regarded Hungary as a historical unity of peoples and as the central political power of the Danubian basin. He also continued this national myth but in a more democratic and more human form. This was the source of his contradictions. Later he himself recognised this fault (Jászi Csécsy Imréhez, Oberlin 20 September 1938. Litván –Varga 1991b: 420-421).

The national minority conflicts beginning with the discussion between Kossuth and Széchenyi culminated at the moment of the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of 1918. The politicians of the area could not propose anything in common for future co-operation. Renner wanted a democratic federation, Masaryk an independent Czech state in a federation, Jászi wanted to maintain the Hungarian Kingdom in a confederation of the Central European states. Excellent ideas remained on paper because of nationalism and the lack of co-operation. In reality the ambitious fight for the national success triumphed under the name of national self-determination. The idea of national self-determination, as the new democratic diplomatic organising principle of the international community, did not work according to the democratic imaginations in reality because of the lack of democracy (the European states were authoritarian national states and national empires at that time). Thus the war among peoples remained an unprincipled war for territories with its consequences. Everybody represented the imagined political interest of his nation.

In fact, this revolutionary process in world diplomacy resulted in the dissolution of the three conservative empires of Eastern Europe. There was a moment when it looked as if the ideas of the French Revolution could be revived: the territory of the disintegrated Habsburg Monarchy becomes free for the self-determination of nations. However, the diplomatic revolution was only an ideological one with a lot of unclear details. It could not succeed in turning the originally conquering nature of nation states into democratic ones. In reality, a kind of diplomatic “counter-revolution” was in effect, which triumphed in the treaty of Versailles. As a consequence, there was no self-determination and it did not become the dominating principle of state-forming for the nations at that time. The old power and conquering policy of nation states again dominated the scene, which it had never left in the reality. Furthermore the idea of national self-determination became a stereotype covering power aspirations, expansion and territory acquisitions. The policy pursued by the nation states completely confused and paralysed the thinking of the people. The demonstration of the practical inadequacy of the idea of national self-determination and at the same time its presence in the political life as diplomatic organisation principle led to renewed discussions on the relationship between nation, state, and democracy, and on the nature of the idea of self-determination, mostly at times of and as consequences of great changes in world policy, like in 1945, and in 1989–94.

3.3 The Danubian federalist

3.3.1 The utopia of Danubian Patriotism

Jászi only after 1919, in the new situation created by the Trianon treaty changed his idea on the integrity of the Hungarian state and gave up his Magyar chauvinism (Károlyi 1978: 517). Completely



breaking with his earlier liberal nationalist ideas Jászi imagined and developed the idea of a higher community consciousness in the form of Danubian patriotism (Hanák 1985: 95-108). He based his idea of Danubian patriotism on the necessity of regional co-operation and regional community of interest of small nations living there. At that time he wrote that he had grown away from the old local patriotism of Europe. There was no longer an isolated Hungarian problem for him. He remained loyal to Hungary but he had “the same sympathy for all the suffering peoples of the Danubian Basin” (Jászi 1929: vi). He mentioned that the system of the Danubian independent states as created after the war would not be capable to survive while the economic, political and cultural co-operation could not begin amongst them: it would be necessary to stop the national hostility. The Danubian people had to harmonise their strivings for independence with the necessity of their economic and cultural co-operation. In order to be able to create a free association of free peoples the Danubian people had to renew ideologically and morally. He stressed that peace in Europe depended on this (Jászi: *A Dunai Szövetség jövője*. In: Litván – Szarka 1991a: 137-144).

Jászi left Hungary during Béla Kun’s proletarian dictatorship. He was against any dictatorship as the negation of both moral autonomy, and the spirit of genuine democracy. He had no further illusions about the chances of the Communist regime’s survival or the inevitability of a bloody counter-revolution. He had to remain in exile in his whole life because — in his words — “Horthy’s terrorist system was followed by Nazi and Russian rule” (Jászi: *Soviet policy at the Danube*. Jászi 1951: 133-134). But he remained in close contact with developments in Hungary and her neighbour states; some of them he revisited several times and he studied the recent social and political changes there. During his exile Jászi continued to organise the political forces for a peaceful Danubian Confederation.

At the beginning of his exile he lived in Vienna, where he became the leader of the democratic exiles. As editor-in-chief of the ‘Bécsi Magyar Újság’ (Vienna Hungarian News) Jászi aimed to unmask Hungary’s counter-revolutionary regime in Europe. After the consolidation of the Horthy regime he found it hopeless to continue his role as emigrant politician. In 1925 he became professor of political science at Oberlin College in America. It was a great challenge for him to understand the spirit, the institutions, and the moral atmosphere of the American commonwealth. The study of the American society helped him to gain a better understanding of the problems of the Danubian basin. He became convinced that Hungary and the whole multinational Central Europe had to follow the example of the USA if the people living there wanted to liberate themselves from their miserable condition. The possibility to have a wider view on the world made him a representative and theoretician of a peaceful world-commonwealth. He believed that the only means against wars was democracy and federalism. He saw as his chief mission to inform the American public on European and especially on Danubian conditions, and to initiate a Democratic Danubian Confederation in place of the small nationalist and militant nation states.

3.3.2 Nationalism, federalism and the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy

In his best-known book entitled “*The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*” Jászi summed up the causes which led to the failure of the federative state organization experience in the Habsburg Monarchy. At the same time, he analysed the phenomenon of nationalism in the new age of popular sover-



eignty after the French revolution. He acknowledged that the national question in the Habsburg Monarchy appeared as a force of mass psychosis: often, the struggle was carried on for slogans and sentimental symbols, which belonged more to the sphere of a religious creed than to the normal party and class struggle. The national aspirations were always surrounded by something mysterious, something religious. He believed that the main cause of this nationalistic mystery was that the Hungarian ruling circles disregarded the national problem of the non-Magyar national groups. The reigning nations, the so-called “state-sustaining nations” regarded only themselves as true nations, whereas those under their rule were only second-rate nations. They viewed the fight for independence of the national minorities through the spectacles of their ideology of supremacy. The national minorities lived mostly in an almost ghetto-like seclusion, isolated in language, in customs and in religion from the ruling society. This prejudicial thinking became more and more dangerous as a consequence of an absolute theoretical blindness regarding the nature and the origin of the national movements. Jászi concluded: the leading circles did not try to solve the problem but rather to maintain their former national privileges that they simply identified with the very interest of the state (Jászi 1929: 215-216).

Referring to the failure of the federalist ideas in the Habsburg Empire Jászi acknowledged that the Habsburg dynasty could triumph against feudal nationalism. At the same time it did not succeed to organize the political unity of the empire on the basis of a compact linguistic, and national unity like it happened in the case of the Western national states. He believed that the very mixed ethnical situation, the racial, religious and national conflicts, the Turkish occupation retarded the evolution of the Monarchy for about two hundred years. Whereas the unifying function of the royal power in the West was carried out at a time when the racial, linguistic, and national consciousness of the great masses were not yet developed, in the Habsburg Monarchy the process of political and administrative unification went on after the French Revolution, i.e., in a period in which nationalism became a conscious force (Jászi 1929: 31-32). The Habsburg rule was without a national character. There was no Danubian or Habsburg people or language. Therefore the Habsburg rulers could not deal with the forces of the new popular and democratic nationalism that tried to reconstruct the old empire on the basis of popular sovereignty and national self-determination. Jászi emphasised that popular sovereignty and national self-determination signified a higher principle of political organization than the nationless absolutism of the Habsburgs. As a logical consequence, a supra-national state, which meant a more advanced type of political organization, could not serve as a solution for the reconstruction of the multinational Habsburg Empire. Only a well-balanced federalism, which could satisfy the national aspirations of the various peoples of the monarchy based on local government, could serve as a solution. Finally, Jászi drew the following lesson from the experience of the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy:

“In a period of acute nationalism the struggling nations aspired not only toward a linguistic and cultural autonomy but also toward the establishment of their national states on a traditional basis. The Magyars fought for the Hungarian state, the Czechs for the Czech state, the Yugoslavs for their own state, and they were not willing to abandon these ideals in the interest of a bloodless supra-national state. On the other hand it is true that the historical territories of the various nations included large national minorities and the danger was near that this new nation states would oppress their national minorities in the same manner the



dominant nations did in the dual monarchy. But the real remedy for this danger would have been, not the Utopia of a nationless supra-state (which would have meant as a matter of fact a centralised German state), but a statesmanship which would have combined the new national organisms in a confederation. The sovereign power of such a confederation could have efficiently defended the national minorities by appropriately uniting them in national districts and in broader organizations on the whole territory of the confederate state” (Jászi 1929: 247).

3.3.3 Federalism in Danubia

Jászi believed that the main challenge for everybody was to realise the idea of peaceful world federation. He stressed that within the future World Union a European Union would be necessary and in its framework a Danubian–Balcanic Union (The program of Jászi on the Hungarian policy in 1945. Jászi 1991b: 475-476). Jászi realised that the First World War and the post-war situation meant the failure of the century old ideas of European federalism. However he believed that this was only a temporary crisis caused by the misuse and falls implementation of the democratic state organization ideas by adventurers and conservative ruling classes. He acknowledged at the same time that the idea of the fascist and communist dictatorships were the logical consequences of the idea of centralised unitary sovereign nation state governed by the representatives of the sovereign people. Everything happened following Eötvös’ analysis, mentioned above, on the functioning of the idea of popular sovereignty and national independence in a centralised nation state.

The main subject of Jászi’s articles, lectures, political essays in the period of his permanent exile was to search the ways of the democratic and federative reconstruction of the Central European region. This task demanded a permanent analysis of the political systems, tendencies, and events. In his article ‘*Federalism in Danubia*’ Jászi summed up the history and the perspectives of the idea of Danubian Federalism (Jászi: *Federalism in Danubia*. Manuscript 1948, Butler Library, Columbia University. Jászi 1995c: 123-130). He actually searched the causes of the failure of the Danubian federalism and the new ways of federalism. In his view the idea of Danubian federation arose from the common democratic thought of the 19th century: during the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century some of the best political thinkers of the Monarchy were convinced of the historical necessity to transform the centralized, militarised, and bureaucratic Habsburg Empire into a federation of free and equal national units. The idea of popular sovereignty led inevitably toward the demand of national autonomy. Peoples fought for the free development of their language, traditions and way of life. However while the idea of national state motivated the European big nations to unify their territories, the same idea caused the dismemberment of the multinational Habsburg Empire.

Searching the causes of this phenomenon Jászi made clear that the only experience in Austrian history to rebuild the state into a federation was during the revolution of 1848. The parliament of Kremsier aimed to transform the large empire into a supranational unity based on the principle of national autonomy and equality. Unity in the essential things, free local government and a reasonable decentralization were the leading ideas of the Kremsier parliament (Jászi 1995c: 124). The counter-



revolution of 1849 successfully eliminated all these hopeful beginnings but the ideas of national equality and federal cooperation continued to live.

Analysing the history of the chances of federalism in the Habsburg Empire Jászi strongly criticised the dualistic system. In his view the dualistic constitution of 1867, based on the privileges of the German and Hungarian ruling classes, became more and more inconvenient. In opposition to the dualist system he appreciated the views of Adolf Fischhof, a liberal political thinker, who warned the monarchical politicians not to accept the idea of national state. Instead the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy should become a “nationality state”, i.e. a decentralized state composed of a lot of autonomous nations built from bottom up (Jászi 1995c: 124). Beside Fischhof’s federalism he emphasised also the importance of The Hungarian Nationality Law of 1868, which gave broad local autonomy, and declared the right of cultural self-determination to the different language (ethnic) minorities of Hungary; the initiative of the Austrian social democratic leaders aiming to make progress toward national autonomies breaking by this means the structure of ‘Ausgleich’; the belated effort to implement universal suffrage under Francis Joseph; the comprehensive plan of Francis Ferdinand for a federal reconstruction of the Habsburg Monarchy on basis of national autonomy; the ideas and the principles of the “Wilson-peace”. In his opinion all these ideas and events protected the federalist aims. He strongly regretted that historical circumstances did not make possible to realise these ideas, and nationalism remained alive with its tragic consequences.

3.3.4 The irresistibility of the national idea

Searching the causes of the failure of the federalist attempts Jászi concluded: the irresistibility of the national idea was a historical, social, and psychological phenomenon that was born out of the very nature of human civilization. This was based on the ethnic (group-oriented) thinking of people (Jászi: The irresistibility of the national idea. In: Jászi 1995f: 23-29). He believed that without the satisfaction of the most elementary cultural and social needs, appearing also through the language of a population, people were incapable of any serious economic and cultural progress. This was why the national and national minority problem remained more important than any other problem. This was why nationalism could defeat federalism, and even socialism. The peace treaties putting an end to the First World War did not solve the national minority problem. The old policy of a forced and artificial assimilation was continued. Some of the old irredentist movements survived and new ones were created. After the peace treaty of Trianon Central Europe had, instead of Czech, Slovak, Romanian, Yugoslav, and Polish irredenta, German and Magyar irredenta in almost the same regions. After losing the two third of its territory, it was easy to create a psychosis of war in Hungary, as done by the nationalist propaganda. Jászi emphasised that the main source of the war psychosis was not only a nationalistic illusion but also the true pathological conditions of feudal exploitation and national oppression: the main causes of warlike conflicts remained unsolved in Hungary. This is why the great pacifist ideas or diplomatic slogans of the Western democracies had no influence.

Jászi concluded: the irresistibility of the national idea could be broken only by elimination of over centralisation, economic exploitation of backward peoples, suppression of weaker nations, and elimination of language imperialism:



“Give equal opportunities to equal energies, give decent possibilities for development and self-expression for all nations and races, and you will have peace. Everything else is mere repetition of magic formulas and cheap slogans of a naive goodwill or political hypocrisy” (Jászi 1995f: 29).

3.3.4.1 *Fascism and nationalism*

In another essay on the crisis of the European democracy Jászi analysed the phenomenon of Fascism that, beside Bolshevism, became the dominant movement in the first half of the 20th century (Jászi: The crisis of European democracy. In: Jászi 1995b: 38-47). In his view Fascism developed from the national and social disillusionments after the First World War. In Jászi's definition: “Fascism is a new system of philosophy and political practice that openly proposes to overthrow the antiquated and impotent democracy and to establish the rule of an active, self-confident, unscrupulous nationalistic oligarchy. It proposes to lead the nation toward a renaissance of the old glory and to stop any movement of workers and peasants opposed to this concept of a chauvinist imperialism” (Jászi: The crisis of European democracy. In: Jászi 1995b: 38). Regarding the phenomenon of Fascism Jászi thought that history again repeated itself. He compared Fascism to this new kind of private militarism that arose during the terrible decomposition of Italian society in the Middle Ages under the leadership of the mighty condottieri: Mussolini was a typical hero of this type. Jászi emphasised that Fascism took on various forms. The system of Mussolini was, for example, distinctly capitalistic and was financially supported by the big industrialists. It was in essence the movement of the small bourgeoisie. At the same time, the system of Horthy in Hungary was clearly feudal in a quite medieval spirit.

3.3.4.2 *Fascism and Bolshevism*

Comparing Bolshevism and Fascism Jászi recognised that, in spite of their extreme diversity concerning the final aims, there was a profound harmony between them in their political and moral attitudes because both represented the rule of a small-armed minority over the will of an oppressed majority. Both systems hated political and individual liberty of any kind. Both were based on the centralised power of the state. Individuals were regarded only as the instruments of the state. Both suppressed all thought which were opposed to their principles. Both were based on the domination of a single political party. Both believed in almighty violence. Both ridiculed parliamentarism. Both had a kind of myth as state religion: Fascism the millennium of the Roman Empire, Bolshevism, the millennium of the world revolution. Both believed in war. However, in spite of all these analogies there were two important differences between them. The violence of Bolshevism was more solidly established because it was the violence of the state produced by a despotic government. The violence of Fascism was far more anarchical because it refused any state control. Bolshevism further had a moral foundation because its doctrine was based on the equality of the people and it aimed internationalism. In its origins Russian Communism was intimately connected with the liberal revolutionary movements of the West. At the same time Fascism was strictly amoral, regarding class domination and national domination as the very essence of history. The Fascist and Nazi systems were the occasional improvisations of political adventurers, without any real theoretical foundation (Jászi: Tyranny in our time. In: Jászi 1995j: 63-74). Another analogy mentioned by Jászi: both systems were based on a despotic (cen-



tralised and autocratic) state structure and, as such, were unable to solve the national problem. On the contrary, both of them used nationalism to achieve political aims. Both of them represented the logical consequences of the working of the ideas of freedom, equality, and brotherhood in a state organized according to the French idea of centralised national state, just as predicted by Eötvös. Seeing these new dangerous phenomena in Europe Jászi realized that Europe was undergoing a terrible crisis in its political and economic life and in ideas as well.

When Jászi went to America he hoped to find some new and original conceptions, which might help him to contribute to the solution of the deep European social crisis: America differed considerably from the European social, moral, and economic structure. It was liberated from the old dogmatic traditions of Europe and from the mass hysteria that followed the European Great War. But he was disappointed because instead of genuine and original American social thinking, he found there a range of ideas corresponding to the thought of Europe at the end of the last and at the beginning of the present century (Jászi: Europe's hope – America's reality. In: Jászi 1995e: 30-33).

Finally, Jászi proposed as a necessary program for European democracy in 1924: to reconstruct Europe on basis of free trade; to protect all national minorities; to reform the colonial system; and to introduce democracy not only in political life but in the social life, too (Jászi 1995b: 47). Jászi actually was for the idea of liberal socialism. In his definition liberal socialism was based on the idea of free trade, decentralisation and local autonomy (Jászi 1983: 114).

3.3.5 Against the myth of Trianon

In the summer of 1935 Jászi visited the successor states of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. He found there a situation that convinced him that the nationality problem was not solved in the new national states. The undemocratic minority policy did not make it possible to pursue a peaceful cooperation among the peoples of Central Europe. The “minority treaties” supplementing the Trianon treaty, after a few years optimistic experiences were finally not implemented. After the First World War Austria had adopted a liberal policy toward its Magyar and Yugoslav minorities. President Masaryk had always emphasised the equal rights of all the nations in Czechoslovakia. The National party of Maniu had offered to allow cultural autonomy to the national minorities in Romania, and later, Octavian Goga, the well-known Romanian politician and poet, had made a liberal compromise with the Hungarian minority. But in reality it proved to be impossible to implement these democratic minority policies. In many regions an impatient nationalism broke out against the “former oppressors” motivated by the psychology of revenge. The new states were concerned about the Magyar irredentist propaganda. The ‘culture shock’ of the Magyars, who had become minority groups in the successor states, caused a lot of conflict and animosity, including sabotages against the new governments. The national animosities gradually strengthened. As a result the human rights and a certain minimum of political rights were not guaranteed for the minorities in the new states.

In 1935 Jászi saw a growing spirit of nationalism everywhere in Central Europe. In his article entitled ‘*War germs in the Danube basin*’ (Jászi 1995k: 77-86) he enumerated the national grievances, and the violation of the minority rights in Czechoslovakia, in Romania, and in Yugoslavia. All these convinced him that post-war nationalism became deeper and more extensive than it was before the



war because nationalism had become a popular movement. All nations in Central Europe were living in a state of mental and moral mobilization: ethnic discrimination and expulsions became part of the everyday life. Nationalism as popular movement caused such a social psychological situation, that people, the individuals, became tyrants. Seeing all this, Jászi's question logically followed: can we avert war?

Regarding the 'Trianon question' Jászi recognised that arguing about the injustices of the peace treaties issues old social exploitation, tyranny, and classical power interests in the new states were disguised. The states of the 'Little Entente', which were created by these treaties, were deeply interested in the maintenance of the status quo. However Austria and Hungary regarded the situation created by the peace treaties unbearable and humiliating. This was, for example, why 'Trianon' became a national myth in Hungary: it motivated people to fight for having back the lost territories of the Hungarian Kingdom and all their problems would be solved.

Analysing the post-war situation in Hungary Jászi recognised that side by side with Italian and German imperialism Hungarian revisionism was the most active force in creation of a new war in Europe. Hungary was affected seriously by the loss of two-third of its territory and between 2,500,000 and 3,300,000 of its Magyar population. The Magyar ruling nationalist aristocracy regarded the Trianon treaty as a robbery and Balkanisation of the country. They rejected the new frontiers and fought for 'justice' to Hungary through the revision of its frontiers. They aimed to recreate 'the territorial integrity of the thousand-year-old state' i.e. 'the old unity of the Crown of Saint Stephen'. This doctrine was propagated everywhere in Hungary. According to the myth of Trianon the Treaty of Trianon was the cause of the misery of Hungary. This new national myth disguised the evils of the system of latifundia, the feudal administration, and the corruption. It regarded the restoration of the old frontiers as the only remedy for the country (Jászi 1995k: 83).

Jászi acknowledged that the Trianon treaty was a lost occasion to give a chance to the democratic development in the Central European small states. At the same time he thought that the correction of the treaty would not solve the real social problems in Hungary, because the re-annexation of the lost territories could not make the economic situation of the country easier, and it would not satisfy the present feudal mentality of the country. However, revision was out of question, because the Little Entente rejected all such claims. He believed that the revision of the frontiers was not a fundamental issue, because it could not satisfy the most important needs of the Danubian society which were the improvement of education, to overcome the agrarian crisis, the improvement of the agrarian situation everywhere, and the efficient defence of national minorities. The racial mixture in the Danube basin and the Balkans made it impossible to solve the problem of minorities by any frontier arrangement. He believed further that even if the present minority treaties were taken seriously, it would not be enough. The national minorities needed not only tolerance and a certain minimum of rights, but also a system of cultural autonomy from elementary school to university. Such an educational system should receive proportional financial support from the state. The majority nation must stop to rule. The members of the various national groups must have a proportional share in the administration and the juridical system of the state. All this meant that nationality and citizenship should be separated and the new



states should establish federal structure like Switzerland or Estonia (Jászi 1995k: 85). He acknowledged however that it was impossible to achieve these aims in the present situation.

Jászi emphasised that only a democratic Hungarian government, democracy and federalism in Central Europe could achieve something to ameliorate the situation and solve the conflicts caused by the new frontiers. The solution of the nationality problem in Central Europe depended on the success of fundamental democratic reforms. It was necessary, for example, to achieve a radical agrarian reform. The Danubian people had to organize free trade on large areas instead of autarchy; they have to establish a federal union instead of armed sovereign nation states. Jászi believed that if the nations of Central Europe would not carry out fundamental reforms in a very short time a new war would come and after the war the dictatorship of the proletariat. Not Europe but Asia would rule in this part of the world (Jászi 1995k: 85-86).

History justified Jászi's predictions. The sovereign nation states safeguarded the century old warrior and conquering mentality. The mythology of national grievances opened the way of success for fascist dictatorships and a new war. For a time it seemed that German National Socialism could integrate Europe under the domination of the German 'super race' thanks to its military preponderance and economic efficiency. Nationalism could defeat the human and reasonable idea of regional cooperation and federalism: the democratic alternative in Central Europe ended in a blind alley. People could not realize that their society remained an expansionist and warrior society motivated by national stereotypes. They could not understand that the only way to eliminate territorial disputes and false myths was to think according to social reality, and to start to fight for democratisation of their states, and for regional federalist cooperation.

3.3.6 Post-war dangers and post-war chances of federation in Europe

When Hitler's empire collapsed at the end of the Second World War people believed that a new democratic and peaceful world order would emerge worldwide. A free federation of free peoples was the interest of everybody. It was a historical moment when the majority of people realised that the horrors of the two world wars were due to the misuse of democratic ideas. The questions rose: how to avoid the future misuses of democratic principles? How to realise the idea of European federation? After the Second World War Jászi searched the answers to these questions.

In Jászi's opinion five issues were of importance to achieve a successful federation in Europe:

1. Free Germany.
2. To create the federation of 'free nations' in Central Europe.
3. Free communication and contacts between Russia and the Western democracies.
4. To change the conservative policy of the United Nations with a real and free federation policy among the different nation states.
5. A democratic Soviet federation policy in Central Europe.

1. In an article on the plans of settlement of post-war Germany Jászi called the attention of the peace planners to their most fundamental error, namely that "they intended to dismember Germany in



small states and prevent her from ever becoming a great political and economic power". He warned the leading politicians writing: "Do not forget: you cannot chain the people of Germany without enslaving the peoples of the neighbouring countries. Therefore, our main task should be not how to weaken and isolate Germany, but how to lead her — as a reliable, loyal, and prosperous partner — into an all-embracing European federation" (Jászi: Our government's plan for post-war Germany. In: Jászi 1995h: 90).

2. Writing about post-war pacification in Europe Jászi warned his contemporaries that such an amount of hatred and mutual distrust had never been accumulated in history of mankind as by the end of the Second World War. No new world order on a sincere and stable basis could be imagined until these hostile emotions and prejudices would not be forgotten (Jászi: Post-war pacification in Europe. In: Jászi 1995i: 91-101). Jászi believed that after the war people should face a most acute conflict in south-Eastern Europe: this territory between Germany and Russia had for centuries constituted the danger zone of Europe because the nation states which were created there functioned as many small competing national groups. The competing great power profited from their conflicts. Consequently, in Jászi's opinion, the main task of the victorious democracies had to be to eliminate the blood bath, distrust, and rivalry between the small nations of Eastern Europe by establishing a good system of peace. Jászi was convinced that to return to the pre-war system, with or without the League of Nations, had already become anachronistic after the war. The tendency toward economic integration and cultural cooperation was so imperative worldwide that the restoration of small independent states would be a reactionary policy: impotent, and hopeless. Jászi emphasised the necessity to learn from the tragic experience of the small nation state system in Central Europe created after First World War, and to organize there a genuine federal system based on the alliance of 'free nations' forming a common government with a common administration and military force. Under 'free nations' Jászi meant nations with "universal suffrage freely exercised; a free and open party system; free press and free discussion, a decent minimum existence for the majority of the population; a high degree of literacy among the citizens; an adequate separation of powers in the government, with the independence of the legislation; and a sufficiently long tradition in the exercise of democratic institutions. Without these prerequisites, no stable federal structure could be created" (Jászi 1995i: 94).

Jászi believed that the Central European nations would not become 'free nations' automatically after their liberation from Hitler's rule. They will become free nations only by pursuing a consistent and energetic democratic policy. He outlined a plan for the federation policy in Central Europe under the surveillance of the Anglo-American nations and of the Western democracies as already real 'free nations' (France, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland). Following his plan all the liberated small countries in Central Europe must be put under the surveillance of this democratic states creating a union. Once the liberated small nations declared their will to maintain the peace and to develop a real democratic structure, the democratic union of free states should protect and strengthen the small nations, in the sense that they might elaborate their own structure of government, they might federate with those neighbouring countries with whom they feel a genuine community of interests and solidarity in certain traditional cultural values. However, they could not have an independent army, but only contingents in the union. They could not establish protective tariffs



against the other states without the consent of the union. They had to establish universal equal suffrage with secret ballot under the control of the union. They had to settle their frontier controversies on the basis of the broadest plebiscite controlled by the union. They had to implement a land reform with the help of the union. They had to guarantee a minimum of nationality rights for their minorities, which would remain in their countries after the plebiscite. If all these conditions were fulfilled and there was a real democracy in the small states they could determine their final form of government and become equal members of the federal union (Jászi 1995i: 95). Jászi emphasised further the necessity of the agrarian reform and the elimination of the feudal estates.

Jászi believed that only real European federalism could solve the nationality problem in Central Europe, and in Germany. The dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy — due to the lack of federalism — was a good example for this. The experience of the former Austro–Hungarian Monarchy proved also that individual human rights alone could not solve the nationality problem. National minorities wished to achieve not simply equality before the law, but a reasonable administrative autonomy in their own territories and the free development of their own traditional and cultural values. Local autonomy in a decentralised state is the key of the solution of the nationality problem.

Jászi believed further that an economically reconstructed and politically federated South–Eastern Europe, under the protection of the Western democracies, would create a new situation in Europe. This was the key to solve the Soviet problem, too. The Soviet states having no more fear of the European expansion could develop a higher economic and cultural level, thereby strengthening the forces of the democratic reforms. This would diminish the tension and eliminate the ‘enemy images’ between the Western democracies and the Soviet federation. Democratic federalism in Europe would result in democratic reforms in Russia and at the same time the elimination of the traditional historical forces of oppression and domination in Europe.

While proposing his ideas on the reorganization of Central Europe Jászi did not forget the reality of his age. This was why he emphasised that to create such a federation, or any other federation, was impossible in the future without the radical change of the ruling political and economic structures in Central and Eastern Europe. The liquidation of the latifundia–system was a fundamental necessity. The feudal lords in Hungary, the military dictatorship in Yugoslavia, the corrupt dynastic capitalism in Romania, the junta of the colonels in Poland, the absolutism in Bulgaria would never accept a federation limiting their economic and military sovereignty. In spite of this Jászi remained optimistic regarding the future perspectives of a Central European federation. He continued to believe that an economically reconstructed and federated Central and Eastern Europe would lead to the solution of the nationality problem. He thought that it was stupid and demagogic to speak of the innate hostility of the various tribes there. Human nature in the Danubian region or elsewhere was essentially the same as in Switzerland. The solution of the nationality conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe was not the barbaric expulsion of minorities, or forced migration, nor new strategic frontiers, but federalism, decentralization, and equality of private and public rights (Jászi 1995a 102-103).

3. After the Second World War the future of the Central European small states, and the federation policy depended on the aims and methods of the Soviet Union (Sovietisation or national autonomy),



and on the aims and methods of Western democracies. Regarding the Central European small states the 'raison d'état' demanded from Stalin a more careful policy than in Russia. Jászi hoped that, because of the public opinion and the cooperation with the Western democracies, Russia would not interfere in the cultural and national independence of the Central European countries. In April of 1945 Jászi called the attention of the Western democracies on the fact that if they regarded Central Europe as a no man's land Russia would inevitably Sovietise this territory. Russia had to know and feel that Western democracies were not exhausted and they protected democratic values all over the world. At the same time Jászi emphasised the importance of the moral and spiritual rapprochement between Russia and the Western democracies. Without this the United Nations' idea would be not only frustrated, but it would be ridiculous.

However Jászi recognized that, in reality, the old type of power politics continued to be present at the beginning of a new world order in Europe. This is why he regarded as the most important task of the universities and colleges to bring the West and East nearer in a spirit of mutual trust and sympathy (Jászi: Central Europe and Russia. In: Jászi 1995a: 113-114).

4. Jászi mentioned as a danger for the peaceful coexistence of people the phenomenon of our "One World" as the United Nations Organization represented it. The idea of "One World" originated from the century old traditional belief in the unity of Christendom that never existed in reality. European history was full of ideas and political plans aiming at the organization of the union of the different European countries from the early periods of the European history. But it proved to be a very difficult task to achieve peace and union within the European states after centuries of bloodshed. In spite of the permanent wars in Europe people imagined that they had a unity. They did not realize that in history peace was always established by the unification of formerly divided territories under the system of free trade and undisturbed communication among the people and the goods. They did not realize also that peace always demanded the acceptance of common cultural values, and the founding of common governments to protect collective interests. Therefore they could not realize that the existing nation states in Europe actually recreated the situation of centuries ago when the feudal princes and rulers associated by integrating their territories into larger peaceful units. He thought that all these was forgotten when the United Nations was established. The founders of the United Nations believed that it was possible to solve the most dangerous problems simply by vote, international tribunal, and an international police force without establishing federalist cooperation in all necessary fields. Jászi emphasised the great importance of the United Nations, but at the same time he warned his contemporaries that it would be a great exaggeration to regard the United Nations as a world state and to believe that it could prevent wars when the interest of the big powers (as their primary national interest) demanded wars.

Jászi warned people not to believe in the "One World" formula based on an imagined union among states and people: the reality is an unbalanced system of sovereign nation states: "We are living in a kind of political nebula that cannot be developed into a real international solar system" (Jászi: The dangers of our "one world". In: Jászi 1995d: 115-122). He regarded the policy pursued by the United Nations in 1947 as the strongest obstacle to the necessary unification of the regions, which



were hopelessly divided among the spheres of influence of the big powers. He believed that it would be necessary to establish a real democratic United States of Europe in the framework of the United Nations because a real federation among free nations was the only solution. This was true in the case of the small Danubian and Balkan states, too.

Regarding “One World” represented by the United Nations, Jászi believed that the promoters of the highly important institution of the United Nations should handle the issues with courage and sincerity. But the structure behind the United Nations was hopelessly chaotic. This was why Europe urgently needed a new system of free, spontaneous association among the nation states based on the autonomy of the member states: inside the newly created regional units the composing nation states should be maintained, and not hindered, in their autonomy and traditions. Jászi emphasised that the ultimate foundation of a real democratic international structure was the “self-evident and inalienable right” of the individual (Jászi 1995d: 115-122).

5. Regarding the Soviet federation policy Jászi thought that the Soviet ideology and policy was in antagonism with the idea of democratic federalism (Jászi: *Federalism in Danubia*. In: Jászi 1995c: 123-130). The Soviet doctrine emphasised the principle of national sovereignty, but without individual freedom and the respect for the rights of national minorities people could not build up a federal structure. Jászi believed that what the Soviet dictators wanted was not a real federation, but a “monolithic unity” under which the whole economic, military, and diplomatic life of the satellites was strictly subordinated to the super dictator. In Jászi’s opinion Soviet leaders knew well that their rule was mostly based on their military supremacy in Central Europe. They knew also that the overwhelming majority of the population was anti-Communist. They were aware also the menacing danger of nationalism: the nationalism of the small states continued to be present and manifested itself through the fight for independent statehoods and through national animosities among each other. But independence was imaginable only in the framework of a democratic federal state structure. The Soviet leaders did not protect federalism of the satellites, and the different nations living in the Sovietunion. Therefore the national consciousness of the small Central European satellite states remained alive and led to national democratic revolutions against the Soviet rule. Parallel all these there was a ‘hidden’ animosity among the East-European small states, too, because the century old national problem remained unsolvable in many parts of Central Europe.

Jászi recognised that the expectations of a more prolific atmosphere for a future federation were not justified by history after the Second World War. He believed: “should the rule of tyranny be shaken inside and outside of Russia, and should the union of the West become a reality, the revolutionary spirit of 1848 might reawaken. Individual liberty and democratic constitutionalism might be proclaimed again, and the rode toward a free and independent federation of peasants’ and workers’ democracies under the guidance of a really creative intelligentsia would be opened. A unified West and a democratised Russia would be equally eager to help these small nations into a genuine federation” (Jászi 1995c: 129-130).

With respect to the tragedy of the Soviet satellite states Jászi believed that there were no special remedies for these states. Their misfortune was only a part of the general world situation, and its cure



depended on the general line of the international policy. The remedy could only be the development of international integration. But this process was possible only among peoples sharing the same fundamental values and peaceful ways of life. He believed that the real solution was a federal union of democracies inside the framework of the United Nations (Jászi 1995g: 141).

3.4 World organization for lasting peace

In the last years of his life Jászi summarised his meditations on the phenomenon of war and peace that was always the main dilemma of human history. In his article entitled “*World organization for durable peace*” (Jászi 1995m: 149-172) Jászi analysed the ideas of the peace movement searching the causes of its permanent failure. He called for the search and implementation of new democratic principles of diplomacy. Continuing Kant’s ideas on eternal peace Jászi attacked the stereotyped repetition of the principles and methods of the warrior and expansive human political culture. He proposed ideas for modern democracies on how to avoid repeating the principles of the monarchic–feudal diplomacy, how to break the traditional nation states, and how to create a modern democratic federation.

In Jászi’s definition war was a struggle, mostly armed and violent between two communities (mostly between states, but also between other organized self–conscious groups, representing some broad common interests), through which one tried to force the other to do something. The warrior attitude of people was usually motivated by psychological reasons, in the most cases, frustration, disillusionment, distress or comfort, luxury and power. The peace movement, to which Jászi always belonged, aimed to unify mankind in peace. Jászi highly appreciated the moralist force of the early modern European pacifism, which was behind the development of the democratic international law. In his opinion the aspirations for the unification of mankind were so deeply rooted in people’s thinking that early modern European pacifism with its idealistic belief in legal coordination of sovereigns, and in the importance of education of mankind remained still the most widespread conception for world peace.

Jászi believed that it was Immanuel Kant who explained the problems of war and peace at first essentially and in its deepest complexity. In Jászi’s interpretation Kant’s merit was that he emphasised that the problem of the establishment of a perfect civil constitution as a guarantee of permanent peace was dependent on the legal regulation of the external contacts among states. Each state had to organize its internal and external policy according to the common democratic legal rules, i.e. shared principles. Outlining his eternal peace project Jászi used as a source ‘The definitive articles’ of Kant’s *Eternal Peace* (Kant 1984: 10-24). He emphasised the importance of the following basic ideas:

1. The civil government of every state had to be republican.
2. The law of nations should be based on a federalism of free states.

Jászi not only continued Kant’s idea on federation but he developed it in the direction of organic solidarity among people under the influence of the ideas of Emile Durkheim. He thought that the essential aim of the peace efforts of people should be to change the world from a conglomerate of mechanical solidarity into a community of organic solidarity. Therefore all those institutions that were based on violence, exploitation, superstitious creeds and ideologies should be transformed into institu-



tions of genuine solidarity serving justice, cooperation, and rational agreements. Jászi demanded moral, educational, economic and political reforms based on the idea of “free state”. Among them the most important were: the extension of the self-determination of nations, and national minorities; eliminating the criminal practices of forcible exchanges of population; emancipation of the backward and subjected peoples by restoring their native land, and by raising their economic, moral, and political level toward free and spontaneous cooperation; free handle and free flow of information; the limitation of national sovereignties by supranational organs in all fields where the interests of people in a federal union were the same.

Jászi, like Kant, believed that there was no single remedy for war, and for this reason there should be a continuous effort in all fields that determine national and international relations. The realization of a peaceful world federation demanded a centuries long hard organization work (Jászi: World organization for durable peace. In: Jászi 1995:m 156-157). In 1952 Jászi mentioned the following problems to solve:

1. The elimination of the antiquated system of national sovereignties that had become hindrances to further economic and cultural integrations, and the establishment of a new sovereignty over these nations, and territories which were ripe for such an integration. The world system based on nation states resulted in anarchy worldwide. Therefore the nation states became as antiquated as the small dukedoms, principalities, and city-states of the earlier Middle Ages. The nation state system has to be changed by regionalism (Jászi 1995m: 163).
2. The United Nations, in its present form, was manifestly unable to guarantee a lasting peace as long as Russia followed a different constitutional and moral model of life from the Western democracies. The United Nations had to change into a real federal union following the example of the American union. Therefore it is necessary to transcend the sovereign nation states by establishing democratic federal organs dealing with the military and economic integration of the cooperating states. The union of democracies had to be decentralised, and should not force more centralisation than that was absolutely necessary for protecting the interest of the whole.
3. The real centre of the democratic integration process should become the Atlantic union in a more or less federalized form of the states of the Atlantic coast: these nation states represent the best democratic traditions, both in theory and practice; the Atlantic union could represent an overwhelming economic might and military power.
4. The democratic world union should be sovereign. Nevertheless it should be based on the free and autonomous development of local federations inside the larger federal units: “A world state without true federalism and without a system of true national autonomies would be the worst tyranny which mankind has ever experienced.” The values and principles of Western democracies cannot be stereotypically imposed upon the greater part of the world, which is rooted in different historical and cultural soil.
5. There should be as much local autonomy and spiritual freedom as possible for provinces, cities, and villages inside the federation. The real achievement of a nation should not be meas-



ured on the basis of her big cities and metropolises, but on the standards of life, and human dignity in her smallest and most hidden villages.

In conclusion, Jászi believed – in agreement with Kant - that world organization for lasting peace could only be based on a well-balanced system of autonomous nation states and free individuals accepting moral rules. To a democratic constitutional state system based on shared principles and legal harmonisation automatically belonged morality, i.e. the ability of individual identification with the intern and extern common organising principles of society.

3.5 Message to the future generations

Jászi during his whole life meditated on the chances of the democratic state organisation in Central Europe in the age of nationalism. His life can be divided into two periods: the first one was his democratic nationalist period in Hungary, and the second one was his federalist (regionalist) period during his long exile. Jászi, in his first democratic nationalist period, realised that the national idea was a matter of domination and conquering and at the same time defence of the national interest, which appeared in the form of nationalism. He represented the national idea in its most democratic form as a democratic assimilation policy. At the same time he was for the personal principle. This idea did not work even in this form at that time. His ideas on association, co-operation and confederation among nation states remained a self-justification and an escape to the classical idea of future world peace. Jászi's democratic nationalist period actually proved the belief of Eötvös on the national idea as a democratic political force. At the same time Jászi's ideas on humanisation of the national idea by the means of a democratic state organisation, based on the self-governing system and the personal conception of nationality on the country level, and a confederation system on the international level, were progressive ideas in the general nationalist environment of his age.

In the second, federalist period, Jászi had completely broken with his earlier democratic nationalist ideas. He believed that the only means against wars was democracy and federalism. He emphasised the necessity for the elimination of the nation state idea. He protected regional cooperation among the small Danubian nation states. He believed that democratic state organization in Central Europe had to be based on the idea of regionalism. To begin the regional cooperation every state had to reconstruct its state structure following the idea of a decentralised state based on local autonomy system. There should be as much local autonomy and freedom as possible inside the national states in which nation and state were divided. This was the only way to create a federal system in multinational Central Europe. The free association policy of the persons based on equal political and human rights was the only way to be able to live in peace. Self-determination was understandable only in this meaning. This was the conclusion of a long life beginning with democratic nationalism and ended with a plan on world peace in the framework of a democratic world federation.



4 István Bibó on the democratic European idea

István Bibó (1911–1979) was an outstanding Hungarian political theorist and politician (On Bibó see: Szilágyi 1991; Dénes 1993a; 1993b; Litván-Varga 1995; Bóka 1999; Bóka 2002-2003). His ideal was the “elimination of one man’s fear of another by humanization, rationalization and moralization of social processes and practices” (Bibó 1991a: 518), a free world without religious and social prejudices. He condemned all kind of exploitation. Throughout his whole life Bibó thought and wrote following the ideas of Western democracies. His ideas became highly influential during the resurgence of the Hungarian democratic movements towards the end of his life, and his influence has continued to be important up to day (Bóka 1999: 458).

Bibó was born in 1911 (About Bibó: Szilágyi: István Bibó, Central Europe’s political therapist. Bibó 1991: 527-546). He belongs to this generation that in his childhood experienced the First World War, the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, and the revolution and counter-revolution in Hungary. He studied politics and law in Hungary. He received his PhD in political science in 1933 at Szeged University in Hungary. He also studied in Vienna, Geneva, The Hague, and travelled to Paris. After his studies he worked at various Budapest court offices, and later in the Ministry of Justice. He published a series of essays and reviews in the field of jurisprudence.

During the second half of the 1930’s Bibó participated in the activities of the March Front and the populist movement of Hungary’s left-leaning progressive writers and intellectuals whose program included the democratisation of the country; the whole elimination of feudalism and of the latifundia; the introduction of a peasant cooperative movement; and the creation of an alliance between the peoples of the Danube Valley with the aim to oppose both pan-German and pan-Slavic expansionism, and to call for the democratic transformation of the region. Bibó held numerous lectures in support of these aims and contributed to draft the programme of the March Front. In the early 1940’s he taught at Szeged and Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) Universities (Litván-Varga 1995: 166-167).

During World War II Bibó worked as secretary in the Ministry of Justice where he provided expert opinion on issues of urban renewal and administration. He was a leading member of several scientific societies and he edited the Hungarian Review of Jurisprudence until the German invasion in 1944. In 1945 Bibó participated in the work of the provisional government. He was hoping for realization of the March Front’s programme, for the reconstruction of the country after the war, for the elimination of the survivals of the Horthy era, and for the birth of democracy in Hungary. At that time he worked in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, supervising the democratic organisation of the administrative and legal life in Hungary. He began to develop plans for an administrative system based on local self-government balancing the overwhelming power of state and county administration.

In 1946 Bibó gave lectures at the University of Szeged on the history of political thought and the development of state forms. During the years of Communist takeover in 1948–49 he was not allowed to teach. In 1950 the new regime wanted to pension him, but he found employment as a librarian. He remained silent during the early 1950s when the Stalinist Mátyás Rákosi ruled Hungary.



After years of enforced silence, Bibó played an important role during the days of the 1956 revolution. As Minister of State in Imre Nagy's coalition government Bibó drafted a proclamation entitled "For Freedom and Truth" in which he warned the world powers to demonstrate the force of the principles contained in the United Nation's Charter, and the strength of the world's freedom-loving peoples. He appealed to the major powers and the United Nations to make a wise and courageous decision to protect the freedom of Hungary (Bibó: For freedom and truth. Proclamation 4 November 1956. Bibó 1991: 325-331).

On May 23, 1957, Bibó was arrested and was sentenced to life imprisonment. He was released in 1963 under a general amnesty. He found an employment at the National Statistical Office and worked there as a librarian. He had no opportunity to participate in public life or to publish in Hungary. In 1971 he requested early retirement for medical reasons. During the last decade of his life he wrote a fundamental work in the spirit of Kant on international institutions and understandings published under the title "The Paralysis of International Institutions and the remedies" in England in 1976.

4.1 The democratic European idea in Bibó's interpretation ²

István Bibó was one of the best-known representatives of the democratic European idea in Central Europe. He consistently fought for reforms aiming at the implementation of the Western democratic principles of constitutional state organization in Central Europe. In his essay entitled "Reflections on the Social Development of Europe" he tried to explain the reasons that led to the tragedy of this area. He also put forward ideas for improvement (See Bibó: Reflections on the social development. Bibó 1991a: 421-523).

Bibó identified himself with the democratic European idea. He regarded it as the result of the ancient fight for freedom of thought and for the implementation of common legal and moral principles in the state organization. He identified himself with this historical process that was so successful in changing the feudal society and which could create a democratic system. He believed in the common principles of democracy. He was also a follower of the democratic European movement, which was to create the democratic community of the European states. As a Central European political thinker he fought for democracy and federalism in Central Europe.

The life-long challenge for Bibó was to interpret the role of the European social development through the emergence of the common democratic state organisation principles. He fought for the implementation of these principles in the Hungarian society. In his view the Hungarian society, as a satellite of the Soviet system, broke with the state organisation principles of Western democracies. This is why he was so deeply motivated to keep the ability alive for an eventual reintegration of the Hungarian society into the Western social processes, even after 1945. In order to do this, he analysed and emphasised the deformations of the democratic state organisation principles in the Central European social development.

² In this chapter I used large portions of my article published in *Ungarn-Jahrbuch* with the permission of the editor in chief, Lengyel K. Zsolt. See: É. Bóka: István Bibó on the Democratic European Idea and the Corresponding State Organizational Principles. *Ungarn – Jahrbuch*, 26. 2002-2003. 164-177.



Bibó believed that to belong to a European society, one had to identify oneself with the system of democratic liberties, as the historical product of the European social development. In Bibó's view, the history of the democratic European idea was a permanent fight for the implementation of shared principles in social organisation. The role of shared principles was to achieve a peaceful coexistence of the different nations that composed Europe. Such social organisation required that the citizens would have knowledge of the "rules of the game" of social organisation. Furthermore, it was also a way for legal enlargement and modernization. That is why Bibó found it necessary to examine the European social development and to search the progressive ideological driving force behind the controversial European culture.

In his essay on the European social development Bibó expressed his belief in European culture that would be able to develop a programme for a lawful social organization. He was convinced that a democratic Europe could continue the fight for the humanisation of power policy. His conviction was based on his assessment on the development of European democracy that in his view was a long process of moving away from authoritarian rule toward a system of truly representative governments, accountable to a mass electorate. It was in everybody's interest to participate in this fight, and in the discussions on the humanisation and the rationalisation of the social organisation.

Bibó favoured the idea of European unity. He was influenced by Kant's ideas on the principles of a peaceful state and international organisation. In agreement with Kant, Bibó was also in favour of a federal system of republican states in Europe based on shared, democratic state organisational principles. Of course, he hoped that the Central European states would be part of such federation. In his view, the centuries old idea of a European unity played a very important oppositional role against the unlawful expansionist power policy of European sovereign nation states and of national empires. It worked as a "shaper of shared principles" for a democratic European union.

In his meditations on European culture, Bibó tried to locate the tendencies that acted in the direction of freedom, peace, and the humanisation of the fight for power. In parallel, he also analysed all those events and tendencies, which acted against a peaceful co-operation among people. He also emphasised the Greeks, Roman, and Christian religious basis of the European culture. Greek political thinking and constitutionalism, the Roman legal state organisation, and the Christian moral principles formed the basis of the European culture. The whole of the Christian/European state organisation idea was based on an active legal and social organisation programme. It represented the idea of a conscious association policy among peoples based on legal and moral principles. That is why European culture accepted the ideas of the freedom of thinking and of social improvement. This guaranteed a permanent social development and made longer stagnations caused by despotic rulers impossible.

Bibó also analysed the importance and the evolution of the clergy in the development of European culture. The clergy could evolve toward the division of the secular and spiritual, as well as the subordination and regulation of secular policy by religious moral rules. Bibó had a great appreciation for Saint Augustine. In his interpretation, Saint Augustine, in his perfect "City of God", proposed rules for the secular, political community organization. He actually combined the practice of the Greek and Roman legal political state organisations with religious morality to yield a framework for rulers. The importance of Saint Augustine was – in Bibó's view – that he established a high moral measure for the



sovereign; the sovereign rulers had to become the representatives of social improvement. This high moral requirement for sovereign power constituted the basis for the European social organisation. Consequently, Bibó said, it was the idea and practice of the legal and moral state organisation that, based on shared legal and moral principles, could differentiate the European social organisation from the despotic one. The lawful social organisation policy of the clergy and the permanent social critique of intellectuals ensured a freedom of thinking. This freedom of thinking, on its turn, became the guarantee for the permanent development of the European society.

In Bibó's opinion the feudal, vassal system was in line with the basic ideas of this social organisational programme. Feudalism represented a legal, contractual framework among the members of the ruling class. To express critique on the social organisation of the ruling class remained possible. A representative system could develop from this kind of feudal system. In his words:

“Medieval feudalism, that is, the fact that the feudal lord represented his vassals, also made it possible to create an institution of public life where one person could represent others in the political sense. Initially it was the lord who represented all of his subjects, and later other, more independent forms of representation were developed” (Bibó 1991a: 444).

The emergence of the European civil society represented a new phase in the modernisation of the principles of social organisation. It was an urban development, which strengthened industry, trade, banking, and financial affairs. The towns played an important role in the emergence of a new civil society that was different from the feudal way of life. The citizens, in cooperation with the rulers, turned the privileged nobility insignificant. Analysing this period, Bibó emphasised the differences between the French, the English, and the Dutch social organisation. He differentiated them on the basis of the freedom in social organisation, of the strength of the centralisation policy, and of the continuity of the legal enlargement policy. Bibó regarded the Dutch social organisation as the earliest example of a defence, economic, and social union. He thought that it was the Dutch example that inspired the revolutions both in England and America, and it was the model for all bourgeois societies born in similar manner (Bibó 1991a: 446). The Dutch and the English revolutions – as well as the earlier Swiss one – were organic outgrowths of medieval constitutionalism. In contrast, Bibó regarded the concentrated power of the French absolute monarchy as strongly damaging the logic of the policy of legal enlargement.

Bibó criticised the French Revolution because it opened a new chapter in the history of the radical turning points in society. He regarded the French Revolution as the most and the least successful revolution of European history. In his words:

“Most successful because it made possible such a thorough and rational re-organization of society as had never before been accomplished by a revolution, least successful, because it aroused so much fear that the western world has not recovered from it since” (Bibó 1991a: 449).

Bibó believed that the French citizens would have been satisfied with a constitutional monarchy ensuring a civil development. He rejected enforcing democratic reforms through a revolution because such events could not remain in harmony with reality. Revolutionary violence automatically leads to distortions of the constitutional state. As a consequence, tragic impasses could emerge in social devel-



opment. In his view, for example, it was the French Revolutionary terror which created two entirely unproductive types of individuals who seem to prevail, irrevocably entrenched in European thinking: “the professional reactionary and the professional revolutionary” (Bibó 1991a: 451). The presence of these two “sterile types” in European society led the social organisation policy away from a real problem-solving attitude toward a world of artificial interests. This, on its turn, deformed the rational and lawful association policies. This deformation resulted in two phenomena. The first one was the phenomenon of nationalism in Europe. Nationalism was a dangerous impasse on the way of a democratic and federal association policy among people in the age of popular sovereignty and self-determination. The second phenomenon was the strengthening of the equality principle and the sharpening of the class struggle, which were the results of the emergence of the Marxist and Leninist ideology. In a society where the principles of democracy became confused, Fascism and Stalinism could gain social support. Bibó regarded these phenomena as logical consequences of the unsuccessfulness of the French Revolution.

Bibó favoured the idea of a constitutional state and federalism, based on a problem solving policy of legal enlargement. He was in favour of a modernisation policy through a democratic association policy, compromises, and reforms. This is why he regarded the system of democratic political rights, and the human rights and fundamental freedoms as the most important achievements of the European social development. According to his analysis, the English political practice and the ideological programme of the French Revolution played a very important role in the elaboration of the democratic liberties, although the roots of such a policy can be found in the Greeks, Roman and Christian social organisational ideas. The key elements of the system of democratic liberties are, in his words, as follows:

“ The separation of powers; a broadly representative parliament created by general elections, an executive branch that is either responsible to the parliament, elected by the people for a specific length of time, or subject to the popular recall; a judiciary which is independent of the executive branch, (indeed with jurisdiction in one form or another over the executive itself); a free press making possible the public supervision of all these institutions; freedom of conscience, assembly and other civic rights; and extensive local autonomy. All of these form an interconnected and mutually reinforcing system which no link could be removed without damaging the whole” (Bibó 1991a: 468-469).

Regarding the practice of modern systems Bibó made it clear that although people could not act directly through these democratic institutions, they could prevent rulers to act in a way that would be diametrically opposed to their clearly expressed will (Bibó 1991a: 468). For Bibó this kind of social development represented the essence of the European idea. Bibó understood the importance of the historical development in the system of modern liberties and the social organisation of the Western democracies, which ensured a permanent reform policy. This is why the Western democracies, after they had changed the feudal system to develop a democratic, civil system alternative, did not produce social revolutions. Addressing his own political environment, it is on this basis that he tried to convince his contemporaries that adopting the Western system of democratic liberties would not represent any danger for a “socialist” system. A modern society does not need any aristocracy or any other



ruling groups; highly educated elite suffices. Consequently, by adopting the Western system of democracy, the “socialist” countries would be able to create a free society and reintegrate into the mainstream of European culture.

The great merit of Bibó is to have shown his contemporaries that only a democratic constitutional state organisation was a proper safeguard against the tragedies caused by Fascism or Stalinism. Only the adoption of the Western democratic system could defend against Marxism, Leninism and Communism, which ended in the emergence of totalitarian dictatorships. Only the Western system could represent the real interests of the people by pursuing a lawful democratic reform policy. He believed that the socialist goals were only perspectives for the future, and they could only be achieved through a permanent and conscious fight for democratic rights and reforms. At the same time, Bibó also warned his contemporaries, pointing out that a corruption of the moral programme of democratic liberties could lead to deep crises, mass hysterias, and massacres. Therefore, it would be necessary to continue the movement started by the Age of Enlightenment, based on a rational search of social realities instead of imaginations. This is why he began to analyse the Central European societies, and especially, the Hungarian one.

4.2 The Hungarian society of falsehood based on the national idea³

After the Second World War Bibó began to write historic, social, and psychological essays on the Hungarian society. In his view the main problem of the Hungarian society was that the democratisation process of the country stopped after the defeat of the revolution of 1848. The deadlock of Hungarian democracy paralysed the social progress of the country. It contributed to the strengthening of nationalism. The March Front (from 1937) — in Bibó’s words — “revived the reform spirit of 1848” because the Hungarian democratic reforms were never accomplished. To create a western type democratic society in Hungary remained a permanent challenge for the representatives of the Hungarian democracy during the twentieth century, too. But in Hungary the aim of democracy, of social development, of freedom, and of complete liberation of people never could become a national program of social improvement as it happened in the case of the Western democracies (Bibó: *A Márciusi Front tíz esztendeje*. In: Bibó, Ö. M. v. 1: 252-254).

In his essay on the crisis of the Hungarian democracy (1945) Bibó emphasised that there were two fears endangering the chances of the Hungarian democracy which remained further between two extremes after the war: the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the reactionary development. This was caused by that fact that the Hungarian politicians could never implement the principles of the Western democracies in Hungarian society. Regarding the chances of democracy in Hungary Bibó’s conclusion was that it depended on the Hungarian people:

“Our domestic development does not necessarily depend on the vagaries of the external environment; the two are interrelated, and it is up to us to make our internal development more balanced, more autonomous, and thus more likely to influence our external situation” (Bibó: *The Crisis of the Hungarian Democracy*. Bibó 1991b: 89, 122, 148).

³ Bóka Éva: *Az európai egység gondolat fejlődéstörténete*. Napvilág, Budapest, 2001. 277-280.



As a consequence he believed that Hungary had to implement the general rules of a democratic society.

A deformed Hungarian society based on falsehood (false statements, and ideas) appeared in Bibó's essay entitled the "*Deformed Hungarian Character and the Dead-Ends of Hungarian history.*" (Bibó 1981-85a: 255-286). In his view the unsuccessful application of the democratic ideas in Hungarian society contributed to the strengthening of nationalism after the 'Ausgleich' of 1867 when a from constitutional, political, economical, ideological, and social point of view false and unchangeable state structure was created. This was the result of the fact that after the defeat of the revolution of 1848 Hungary's leaders, and the intelligentsia, focused on their fears of the dismemberment of the Hungarian Kingdom. All this, with the attempts of the land owning classes aiming to defend their property, resulted in the false and controversial edifice of the Compromise of 1867. Democracy in Hungary was paralysed by the dualist structure of the Habsburg Empire, which strengthened the position of the Hungarian Kingdom. The Hungarian politicians including the liberal nationalists, too, aimed at safeguard the unity of the Hungarian Kingdom under Magyar domination. Thus Bibó blamed the Austro-Hungarian Compromise for strengthening of Magyar nationalism and for making impossible the federal or confederal reconstruction of the Habsburg Empire.

He strongly criticised the triumph of nationalism, which continued to deform the whole Hungarian society and eliminated the chances of a democratic social development. In Bibó's view nationalism was based on false ideas, and prejudices. It created an imagined national ideology in the service of the interests of the ruling classes. This national ideology became the organizational factor of the society. It resulted that the real interests of the people remained forgotten. Consequently the feudal aristocracy saved its rule; the peasants remained under the same conditions as the feudal serfs. Thus Hungarian society was organized following false ideas during the domination of the national idea. Bibó thought that the Hungarian society got a chance to advance democracy in 1918. But the forces of democratisation were soon paralysed by the collapse of the Hungarian Kingdom. Bibó blamed for this the fear of the dissolution of 'historical Hungary'. This fear created a shock for the Hungarian ruling classes, and for the liberal and democratic nationalists, too. Under this shock of the collapse of Hungary the leaders of the October revolution did not want to sign the expected peace. They gave the power into the hand of the leaders of the proletarian socialists who tried to defend the country by an armed revolt.

Bibó made responsible the insistence of the Hungarian politicians on the nationalist image of 'historical Hungary' for the creation of a new falsehood that constituted the ideological basis of the Horthy regime. The politicians of the Horthy regime signed the Trianon treaty. At the same time as a compensation for the big territorial loss of Hungary they began an irredentist policy. It was based on the so-called 'myth of Trianon' that aimed at the revision of the treaty and the re-establishment of 'historical Hungary'. The politicians of the Horthy regime blamed for the dismemberment of the Hungarian Kingdom the idea of national self-determination which they regarded as a lie, a 'world-swindle', because three million Hungarian became subjects of alien nation states, and it led to the proletarian revolution which wanted to eliminate the old conservative society. They presented the principle of national self-determination as an evil that though proclaimed as its guiding principle the



idea of national liberation, finally resulted in national exploitation. They regarded the Károlyi government as the ‘loser’ of Hungary. These explanations were attractive for the ordinary people, who — in Bibó’s view — could not understand that all this happened as a result of the irresponsibility of the politicians in a transitional period of the democratic principles and not because of the new democratic ideas of diplomacy. These new ideas were based on democracy. But the European nation states were not democratic states. The ‘Trianon myth’ reinforced the fears of national perish and led to the blind alley policies of injured irredentism and anti-Bolshevism. In Bibó’s opinion the instincts of a healthy and democratic policy-making were completely destroyed. In his words:

“These instincts were gradually replaced by an increasingly entangling set of unrealistic political dogmas, focusing on the restoration and viability of ‘historical Hungary’ and the historical hierarchy of its society” (Bibó 1991d: 178).

Bibó thought that similarly to the system of the ‘Ausgleich’ it was not possible to develop the platform of the Horthy system in direction of democracy. This is understandable because the aim of its creators was to create immobility and changelessness in the society. The immobility of both structures (the structure of dualism and the Horthy system) explains that the Horthy regime could safeguard the national view of the Ausgleich during his twenty years Trianon revisionism policy. Horthy’s play with the national idea, based on the ‘Trianon myth’ was actually a hypocrisy aiming at the reconstruction of ‘Great Hungary’ or ‘historical Hungary’ (Hungarian Kingdom). On the one hand he continued to argue with the idea of the state of Saint Stephan (like the generation of 1867), which became a strengthened national myth. On the other hand he pursued a forced Magyarisation policy. In this political and social atmosphere the Hungarian society became very reactionary and rightist. The falsehood of the whole Horthy system resulted in Hungary becoming the ally of Germany, and after the Second World War the same happened to Hungary as before: Hungary lost every possibility of territorial change and the century old social hierarchical structure collapsed. This was the result of the untruth and false imaginations on the interests of the Hungarian nation state that ruled the Hungarian society after the revolution of 1848 under the aegis of the national idea. This was the result of the rule of fears, national grievances, and the ‘Trianon myth’.

In Bibó’s presentation the same happened to the German society after the Versailles treaty. The German hysteria shows parallels with the Hungarian one (Bibó: *A német hisztéria okai*. Bibó 1981-85b: 107-184). In Germany the treaty of Versailles played the same mythological role that the Trianon one for Hungary. It made clear the material and moral defeat of Germany for the whole world. It caused a minority feeling that was compensated by a power mania. The humiliation of the Germans — by using the old, conservative principles of peace making: dictated peace, the declaration of being a ‘warrior criminal nation’, reparations, disarmament, and the interdiction of ‘Anschluss’ — gave the possibility for the policy to create a mass hysteria in the German society based on the national idea. Because the Versailles treaty did not allow the German nation to live with the right of self-determination, Hitlerism could play out this fact as a means of political propaganda. Hitler demanded the right of self-determination of the German peoples over their territories. At the same time, the right of the non-German peoples for self-determination was denied. The German forces were activated only in the interest of the nation and not of the freedom. Hitler eliminated all the principles of the



European coexistence. But, as an irony of fate, the reason of the success of his international policy was the illusion that he acted till a certain point in harmony with the facts and the European values regarding the principle of national self-determination.

The principle of national self-determination became a very discussed although not necessarily rejected diplomatic organizing principle in the age of Bibó. This principle, which played such a controversial role in the history of Eastern and Central Europe, was one of the main subjects of Bibó's life-work: he searched the meaning of self-determination, which was originally a personalist federalist idea, in a democratic policy (Bóka 1999: 460-469).

4.3 The idea of a democratic international community

In Bibó's view, the international community became paralysed after the Second World War. It was unable to settle the critical disputes of international relations. This was especially true regarding the attempts to reach permanent settlements of territorial disputes and conflicts arising from the formation of new states. The number of unresolved situations increased alarmingly. Repeated armed clashes between nations remained a permanent part of the contemporary world scene, too. History continued to repeat its warrior and conquering past in our 'modern' age, too. War, which was an absurdity in the age of democratic states, has yet stayed with us. The international institutions were incapable to organise the peaceful coexistence of the states in the age of popular sovereignty and national self-determination. The United Nations was weak. There was no clear will to achieve peace between the great powers. Because of the lack of permanent institutions and shared principles every national conflict could develop into an international crisis.

Searching the causes of the defects of the international community of states (Bibó 1976) Bibó drew a contrast between the existing state of the international community and its precursor — the older, far less institutionalised, but far more workable system of the European monarchic community. At the same time he tried to clear up the continuity between the old and the new principles of diplomacy. As a result of his researches Bibó emphasised that the diplomatic organization principle of the European monarchies and aristocratic republics was the monarchic feudal legitimacy. The monarchic-feudal legitimacy created a very simple but logically constructed system of settling international problems (Bibó 1976: 81-83):

- For territorial adjustments between states, agreement was required between sovereigns, confident in loyalty of their subjects. Any change in the balance could be corrected through mediation by a third power or through territorial exchange.
- For the formation of new states, existing ones would have to recognise them and enter into diplomatic relations with them.
- Disputes not settled by peaceful solutions were settled by a duel-like procedure war, restricted to professional armies, which would lead to a peace treaty through negotiation. The treaty would be confined to the settlement of the dispute and would not be exploited to the extreme by the victor.
- Questions of sovereignty over unclaimed territories, worsening crises between weaker states, complex state formations or territorial adjustments, or other questions concerning the entire community were settled by the assembly of powers.



These rules and procedures of the monarchic–feudal organizing principle were not entirely invalidated by the collapse of the European monarchic system in 1918 because till this period the international law of the monarchies had become universal international law, accepted by the European and overseas constitutional monarchies and representative republics. However, the rise of the principle of self–determination made the conservative international law contradictory in some respects and unable to function, without providing a new system that could function beside, or in place of, the old one. As a consequence, there was a basic contradiction between the principles of the surviving old institutions and the proclaimed new principles in the functioning of the international community. It is true that after the two world wars in place of the League of Nations, the United Nations, a number of international specialist agencies, and the permanent International Court of Justice have developed. In spite of this the procedure and organisation of new state formations and territorial settlements remained a combination of often-unworkable old systems and still inadequate new procedures.

Bibó believed that the European monarchic community was more successful in the consistent application of its governing principle, monarchic legitimacy, than the modern international community has been in applying its own governing principle: the self–determination of nations. The signs, which showed the worsening of the international situation in the age of the rule of the idea of nation state, were the followings:

- War becomes total, and incapable of settling disputes. Its complete abolition is the central purpose of international law and policies and yet it is still with us, institutionalised and fundamentally unchanged.
- Insurrection has become a frequent means of achieving self–determination (for example in the case of the formation of the United States) and, without other procedures to replace it, cannot be completely ruled out of order. But international community was paralysed regarding, for example, the insurrection for national independence of the Hungarians in 1956 and the Czechs in 1968.
- International police forces have seldom been used and with little success, for the purpose of averting wars — mostly because of lack of concord amongst the great powers.
- The mechanics and spirit of international negotiation for international agreement have seriously deteriorated; and, for legitimating state–formations and territorial adjustments, the authority of international agreement has waned without anything to replace it.
- The importance of the international contracts in stabilising newly formed states lost its force.
- International guarantee of minority rights and territorial self–government — a useful second–best to self–determination — has not always been able to count on the loyalty of a population demanding self–determination.
- Population exchanges — that have resulted from the failure of the idea of self–determination — would destroy the last principle of territorial legitimacy still generally accepted: the right of self–determination of the nations with their territories.
- The plebiscites have proved to be useful, but without impartial forums, very sensitive and easily distorted institutions.
- The concert of powers, the supreme governing agency until the First World War, is unable to create great power agreements.



- Today almost every conceivable international procedure aimed at settling disputes by the Security Council or by plebiscite has proven to be all but incapable of settling international disputes and of creating stable and legitimate order.
- The International Court of Justice and lesser international courts were conceived as impartial forums, but they do not go beyond the strict application of codified international law to act as political arbitrators.
- The institution of impartial international political arbitration, which could work as an improvement of all these worsening, could not develop.

Bibó actually searched the answer, in the spirit of Kant, on the following question:

“Why the greatest and most promising undertaking of modern mankind — the organization of society on the twin bases of freedom and democracy — has, at several points, reached deadlock, and where the crucial ways to break out of this deadlock can be found?” (Bibó 1976: 144, 147).

Searching the reasons of the paralysis of international institutions Bibó concluded that the first reason was the inadequate functioning of the institutions of great power agreement, and the second one was the absence of agencies which could effect impartial political arbitration. The old system of international law was not enough to give substance to the basic principles of international community because it drew no distinction between the function of great power agreement and the summit level decisions in matters of principles. Thus there was no division between the so-called ‘legislative’ (representing the principles) and so-called ‘executive’ international powers. The absolute rule of the great powers dominated the international relations, which had as principle the balance of power. Democratic principles demanded a more differentiated system under which the function of great power agreement was divorced from impartial arbitration. But the optimal functioning of the institutions of great power agreement and the impartial arbitration which were the prerequisites for working of any international procedure for settling problems as constantly available institutions was not yet organized. The world organisations formed after the First and Second World War have never become more than the forum of a potential and not really existing effective international public opinion. Whereas the old basic institution of the old European community promoted concord between the great powers, the new organisations nearly destroyed any chance of such concord. It is true that the old European institution of promoting concord (the concert of great powers) was continued by the Security Council and the International Court of Justice. But the Security Council became a second-rate international forum of inadequate efficacy. The functioning of the international courts was irrelevant to the vital questions of war and peace, state-formation and territorial disputes.

Thus there was no alternative and more efficient vehicle of power agreement in the international community at the time of the proclamation of the ideas of a new diplomacy by Wilson and after the First World War. By the outbreak of the Second World War the traditional and modern agencies of great power agreement were out of action and virtually out of existence as well. The settlement of the Second World War contributed nothing to the technique of the peace-making, furthermore, even the faith in the principle of self-determination was broken. It is true that the United Nations Organisation, created at the end of the war, was far more successful and based on a far more realistic legal basis than



its predecessor the League of Nations, but it could not function powerfully enough as the institution of international stability.

Searching the possible means to make the power agreements more efficient Bibó recognised that the territorial disputes could be settled only if some legitimacy or principles could be discovered concerning state-formation or territorial demarcations. This is necessary even the agreements among great powers function optimally. Where there was no such legitimacy for some reason, great power agreements were no longer able to create new legitimacies so simply and naturally, nor to stabilise so quickly, as did the treaties of sovereign monarchs based on monarchical legitimacy. The International Court of Justice and the various international specialist courts were regarded as impartial forums by international law. But in intention and practice they were concerned with questions relating to the content and application of ordinary international law, and not with the ultimate principles of the international community in disputes over state formation or territorial settlements. The ordinary international jurisdiction could not have any part in the prevention of war. Thus the problem of exceptional international political arbitration, concerned with questions of state-formation as well as political and territorial issues to prevent wars, has remained an open question separated from the ordinary international jurisdiction. The necessity for the organisation of the institution of impartial international political arbitration, independently from the ordinary international jurisdiction, became actual as a result of the change from monarchic-feudal legitimacy to the principle of self-determination. Therefore the new, democratic, and morally superior principle of self-determination required the creation of this new international agency, functioning on the basis of the necessity to constitute an international community of states in order to prevent war. For this international court of arbitration every territorial change would be a question of constitutional change, i.e., a change in the international constitution of the territorial status quo of the states. Only such an exceptional, yet permanent and institutional, forum could apply and develop impartially the basic governing principles of the international community that have not yet crystallised into international law. The most important of these was the application of self-determination in those periodic and inevitable disputes where new international legitimacies had to be created. Thus the following items had to belong to the competence of this international impartial institution: decision making over all territorial disputes, over every change in the territorial status quo, over the usage of the principle of self-determination, over the rules of the membership of states in the international legal community, and over the necessary suspension or limit of membership of the problematic states. Bibó believed that such an 'International Political Tribunal' would be a second remedy to the present incapacity of the international community, and it would be necessary to create it as soon as possible.

Bibó recognised also that of course the two remedies (great power agreement and impartial political arbitration) could be successful only when used together. Great power agreement and action was successful only if it complied with the basic principles of the international community and the test of judgement of the impartial international forum. On the other hand, any judgement of such an impartial forum would be effective only if supported by the agencies of great power agreement and upheld by great power guarantees. In Bibó's opinion all this was the immediate and necessary precondition and



the starting point of a real international arbitration and the creation of a democratic international community of states (Bibó 1976: 144-147).

In conclusion Bibó believed that the principle of self-determination in the context of the international community meant no more than the application of democracy as a governing principle and as a basis for demarcation. He believed further that the two keys to begin to solve the problems which paralysed the international community were the improved functioning of the already existing agencies of great power agreement, and the creation of new and exceptional institutions of impartial political arbitration. At the same time, he realised that the idea of a democratic world government and the institution of the international court of arbitration was only a utopia and a future goal in an age still dominated by the competition among the sovereign nation states. He acknowledged, however, that nowadays we still have to solve questions of peace within the framework created by dominant conservative nation states, based on the principle of state interest. But to create a democratic international community that could eliminate war and conquering was the interest of everybody.

4.4 Bibó's ideas on a European Federation

Analysing Bibó's ideas on a European union, it is evident that he was in favour of a federation of constitutional states, based on shared, democratic principles. Every attempt for a democratic federation was seen as a tool to achieve a peaceful cooperation among peoples in Europe. As a follower of Kant's ideas, he favoured the creation of a democratic community of republican states. He also emphasised the importance of morality in a system of constitutional states. His most important problem was how to break the mentality that confined peoples' thinking among the borders of European nation states. He was also in favour of the peaceful cooperation between Germany and France, as a precondition for a federate policy in Europe.

As a political thinker he also realised that, in his age, only an economic union was possible in Western Europe; the political establishment of the nation states would not agree to surrender sovereignty to supranational institutions. However, he also believed that legal organisation of the economic cooperation and its supranational institutions would promote the permanent democratisation in each European state. Consequently, the system of democratic liberties would develop into shared principles, honoured by every state, and a European legal system would finally develop. As a result, the importance of the political borders would gradually diminish and finally disappear. Nation states would turn into democratic federate states, on the basis of the personal principle. In other words, the idea of nation-state would lose all its importance; only language and cultural traditions would remain as a sign of difference among the states. Finally, he was hopeful that, eventually, the Soviet Block would also dismember and the Central European states would also join this process.



5 Conclusions

Eötvös, Jászi and Bibó lived in a time and society that underwent fundamental changes. What they had in common was that they realized the necessity to join the Western modernization and democratization process. They regarded the phenomenon of Western democratic nation state and the principle of nationality as a challenge, and aimed to find ways for the multinational Central European society to respond effectively to it.

If we compare the three Hungarian liberal thinkers we can see that all of them believed in the classical idea of world peace; all three highly appreciated the principles of democratic state organization, and Western parliamentary democracy. All of them realized that the phenomenon of Western nation state is a controversial historical product, and it does not work in multinational territories. Eötvös proposed instead federalism based on the personal principle and the autonomy principle of community, minority rights, and decentralization. He consequently rejected the principle of nationality as political factor, as right of linguistic (ethnic) groups to create nation states. He did not accept either liberal nationalism or patriotism as political forces. He accepted nationality only in cultural meaning belonging to the personal sphere of the individual. Jászi in the first period of his life accepted the principle of nationality in the most democratic form of liberal nationalism. He elaborated on the idea of a democratic assimilation policy in the framework of the national state. In the second period of his life he surpassed his democratic nationalism and he became the supporter of federalism based on the personal principle and the autonomy principle of the participating states. Bibó regarded Western parliamentary democracy as the most important achievement of the European civilization. He supported the idea of self-determination based on the personal principle, decentralization, federalism, and the democratic international law.

As a result of a long thinking on democratic social organization all three realised the necessity to transcend the idea of unitary sovereign nation state and centralisation policy. They supported instead the idea of democratic federalism: the American or Swiss form of state organisation. To find the way out of the blind alley of nationalism of sovereign nation states all three proposed the idea of multinational federalist state, and federalism. It was based on equal democratic political, cultural and human rights for the citizens; the separation of nation (cultural/linguistic nation) and state (political nation) by establishing multilevel level governance; free and autonomous association policy; the establishment of a Central European Federation as part of the European federation.

In 1989 and 2004 the Central European society including Hungary got the chance to a democratic renewal. This historical change proved the optimism of Eötvös, Jászi and Bibó who struggled for the implementation of the Western democratic social organization principles in the Central European and Hungarian society. The new generations should continue the economic, political, cultural, and social modernization and democratization policy in accordance with the principles of the democratic European Community and European law in the framework of the European Union. This is the way toward the emergence of a real democratic European identity.



Abbreviations

- Bibó, Democracy, Revolution, Self-determination. Selected Writings. Bibó, István (1991): *Democracy, Revolution, Self-Determination. Selected Writings*. Ed. Nagy, Károly. Translated: András Boros-Kazai. East European Monographs 317. Boulder, Co: Social Sciences Monographs; Highland Lakes: Atlantic Research and Publications.
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