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FROM THE GUILTY CITY TO THE IDEAS OF ALTERNATIVE URBANIZATION AND ALTERNATIVE MODERNITY: ANTI-URBANISM AS A BORDER-ZONE OF CITY-PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURAL CRITICISM IN THE INTERWAR HUNGARIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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The phenomenon of anti-urbanism has accompanied the process of modernisation since the emergence of modernity. The city, the modern metropolis played a vital role in this transition from premodern world to modern era. The metamorphosis of archaic structures, including the fields of economy, society and thinking, are inevitably associated with tensions engendering aversion against the city. Anti-urbanism appeared sporadically everywhere, as a continuous tradition, it emerged at two remote corners of the world: in United States and Germany. Hungarian anti-urbanism of the interwar period had been motivated by the shock of the disintegration of the “Historical Greater Hungary”. The motif of guilty city emerged in the atmosphere of scapegoating: Budapest appeared as incompatible with Hungarian national character. These ruminations about the role of city were embedded in a special context mixing city-philosophy, cultural criticism, German-origin crisis philosophy, political philosophy and national characterology. It was a peculiar mixture in the Central European region: Hungarian interwar thought, from this respect, follows the regional patterns.

Keywords: alternative modernity, anti-urbanism, cultural criticism, metropolis, national character.

Introduction

My intent, in this paper, is twofold: 1. to contextualize the anti-urban ideas of two important Hungarian thinkers of the interwar period. The first of them, Dezső Szabó (1879–1945) was a writer and ideologue, his contemporary, Gyula

Szekfű (1883–1955), was a renowned historian and an influential ideologue as well. 2. To give a reconstructive analysis of the theory of Ferenc Erdei, the Hungarian sociologist who, rejecting the pattern-imitating modernization based on Western European models, elaborated the idea of alternative urbanization leading to an

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alternative modernity (Rohkrämer 1999). What follows here, is a comparative reconstruction based on three case studies. Our hypothesis is that the cultural package of anti-urbanism which in the German interwar cultural context was a part and parcel of crisis-philosophy and city-philosophy – the best example of it is the Spenglerian philosophy – in the Hungarian culture constituted a special border-zone mixing literal, philosophical and sociological approaches.

International context

The “Grand War”, as it usually mentioned, proved a watershed between two historical epochs having parted the pre-war era of liberal capitalism, the years of happy peace time in nostalgic Hungarian popular historical recollection, from the stormy, hectic years of the interwar period. The war, in this case, was a magnifier: it had magnified and intensified the symptoms of the *fin de siècle* crisis which was a complex phenomenon: it was on the one hand, a *modernity-crisis*, and, at the same time, it was a *crisis of modernization* which is, so to say, is an inevitable concomitant of modernization process everywhere when pre-modern economic, social and mental structures are dissolving and are compelled to give place for new ones (to the coincidence of modernity-crisis and crisis of modernization in Germany see Nipperdey (1986)).

Modernity-crisis means the crisis of a given type of modernity being dominant up to the moment of challenging its validity. The 19th century type of modernity, as a first step of globalization, with the practice and ideology of liberal capitalism seemed to live up its inner reserves. The idea of *linear modernization* including all spheres of life from technology and economy to society and culture seemed to be inappropriate for the interpretation of the changes of reality. The case of Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (AHM) or the Russian Empire proved the possibility of

sectional or departmentalized modernization; it meant some kind of hybridized reality with the compartments or segments of modern and premodern structures. The optimistic idea of overall progress lost its validity¹ – cultural criticism was a reaction to this situation. *Anti-urbanism* was a customary item in the package of the cultural criticism putting its roots to the *fin de siècle* modernism. What, before the Grand War, had been a plaything of modernist counter-culture became a dominant colour of political and cultural mainstream (to the history of counter culture see Green (1986)). Applying of antithetical notions – *culture-civilization, organic-mechanic, community-society, city-countryside, authentic-inauthentic* – to the description of reality was a conspicuous characteristic of the intellectual strategy of the thinkers of German conservative revolution whose ideas strongly influenced the interwar Hungarian cultural criticism from Szekfű to László Németh or Lajos Prohászka (Mohler, Weissmann 1989; Woods 1996).

The phenomenon of anti-urbanism has accompanied the process of modernisation since the emergence of modernity. The modern metropolis played a vital role in the transition from premodern world to modern era. The metamorphosis of archaic structures, including the fields of economy, society and thinking, inevitably had been associated with tensions engendering a version against the city.

¹ This disillusionment has very expressively been formulated by Walter Benjamin: “A Klee painting named ‘Angelus Novus’ shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress” (1969: 257–258).

Hungarian context

Hungary after the World War I (WWI) had to confront the shocking experience of Treaty of Trianon (TT) imposed upon the country by the victor allied powers. As a consequence of it the country had lost two thirds of its territory and the half of its population (on the TT and its consequences see Bibó 2015: 217–221). A new constellation, as a socio-psychological consequence of war defeat, emerged: borrowing the term coined by Wolfgang Schivelbusch, the German cultural historian it was the *culture of defeat*. This phenomenon, according to Schivelbusch, is typical in modern mass-societies enforced to face the consequences of a lost war; it is a pathological fixation of collective consciousness to the recollection of defeat. War defeat, of course is one of the most frequently experienced situation of societies in human history but in modern times it is of great importance because it dominates not only the elites but permeates the whole society and it results in a paralyzed state of collective mentality. The culture of defeat arising in a traumatized society manifests itself in different symptoms ranging from scapegoating and self-chastisement to escape in a dream world and the presentation of the real defeat as a moral victory. The culture of defeat is a breeding soil for different myths fulfilling the function of protecting shield between the injured collective *psychē* and the unbearable reality. Schivelbusch compares the post-war situations of the South America, France and Germany after the American Civil War of 1861–1865, after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 and after the WWI. The collective *psychē* in these cases reacted similarly: it produced a protective mechanism based on myths serving as escape route from the unbearable reality:

“What neurosis is to individual, the creation of myths is to the collective. [...] Such myths (or, in the Freudian terms, fantasies) arising from frustrated desires for revenge, are the

psychological mechanisms for coming to terms with defeat. Moreover, they are not merely neurotic fictions of the imaginations but also healthful protective shields or buffer zones – emotional fortresses – against a reality unbearable to the psyche” (Schivelbusch 2003: 26).

István Bibó (1911–1979), the most significant Hungarian political thinker, decades before Schivelbusch, used the term of *political-communal hysteria* for describing post-war traumatic collective psychic states. In his description this phenomenon has been rooted in

“[...] protracted conditions of fear that occur in the wake of major historical shocks of communities, such as the demise of political authority, revolution, foreign invasion, military defeat, and that are manifest in the constant dread of conspiracies, revolts, attacks, alliances, and the raging persecution of presumed or actual political enemies. Real community hysteria occurs when all its characteristic systems are present together: an entire community’s loss of touch with reality, an inability to resolve the problems life creates, an insecure yet overblown self-assessment, and an unrealistic and disproportionate response to the impacts of the outer world” (Bibó 2015: 44–45).

The post-war Hungarian political elites responding to the trauma of defeat gave up the former, pre-war nation building strategy based on assimilation: it was replaced by dissimilation and ethnicity-protection including a flirtation with anti-Semitism which had been elbowed off from politics by the pre-war liberal minded political elites. This paradigm-shift can be detected in two contemporary bestsellers: *The Village That Was Swept Away* (VWS, in Hungarian: *Az elsodort falu*, original edition in 1919) by Szabó (1919) and the *Three Generations: The History of a Declining Age* (TG, in Hungarian: *Három nemzedék: Egy hanyatló kor története*, original edition in 1920) by Szekfű (1920).

D. Szabó

Szabó was a writer, ideologue and *bête noir* of the Hungarian interwar thought who exerted an enormous influence upon the contemporary middle class youth; he was the most important forerunner and inspirer of the Hungarian Populist Movement (HPM, Borbándi 1976). *VWS* is a strange book: it is not easy to define its genre because the belletristic and political dimensions have been intermingled in it in an inextricable way. Szabó began to write this voluminous book in the last years of the Grand War: it was a foreboding of the disintegration of Historical Greater Hungary (HGH). The writer had been influenced by the turn of century right wing French radicalism labelled by Charles Maurras; he spent a year in Paris as student in 1900. Albeit he did not know the contemporary German cultural criticism his ideas run parallel with these of Oswald Spengler. The fact was that Szabó, from the respect of the critique of metropolis, was ahead of the German philosopher; his book appeared in 1919 while the second volume of *The Decline of the West* (in German: *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, original edition in 1922 (vol. II)) comprising Spengler's ideas concerning the modern city later, just in 1922² (to the city-philosophy of Spengler see Kovács 2011).

² Metropolis-critique, in the theory of Spengler, is a part and parcel of his historical morphology of civilization. It is not exaggeration to tell about a city-metaphysics. Modern metropolis is a typical phenomenon of ripe civilization; it is a human settlement-form dominated by money and intellect: "At the beginning, where the Civilization is developing to full bloom (today), there stands the miracle of the Cosmopolis, the great petrifact, a symbol of the formless – vast, splendid, spreading in insolence. It draws within itself the being-streams of the now impotent countryside, human masses that are wafted as dunes from one to another or flow like loose sand into the chinks of the stone. Here money and intellect celebrate their greatest and their last triumphs. It is the most artificial, the cleverest phenomenon manifested in the light-world of human eyes – uncanny, "too good to be true", standing already almost beyond the possibilities of cosmic formation (Spengler 1932: 431).

Szabó, continuing the romantic tradition, dressed in the costume of the writer-prophet giving a political program of regeneration for his nation (Kovács 2007). This intention has been accomplished in a mythical framework: the plot opposed the eternal village with the modern wicked metropolis, Budapest. Szabó had been inspired, similarly to Spengler, by the contemporary vitalism; his main categories are *life*, *volition* and *action* growing out from this tradition. He, presumably, had been influenced also by psychoanalysis; the human *psychē* in his description much more than the thinking Ego of Cartesianism. Rationality is only a floating island in the ocean of human instinct; he shared the *logophobia* of Spengler. Modern city is the birthplace of sterile rationality, money-grubbing and shallow life. Szabó, again similarly to Spengler, explained a very strong critique about modern representative democracy; for him it is a plutocracy covered with the fig leaf of sham-democracy.³ The press-manipulated citizen is unable to tell apart truth and lie; Szabó, interestingly, used the same term for the deceived voters as Spengler did: it is a multitude of *vote-cattle* (*voksbarom*)⁴ led by nose by the

³ Spengler in his democracy-critique argues in a similar way; it is not by chance because modern representative democracy was one of the main targets of the contemporary cultural criticism. Democracy, for the thinkers of this way of thinking, is a concealed plutocracy which, according to Spengler, inevitable ends in Caesarism: "The mighty ones of the future may possess the earth as their private property – for the great political form of the Culture is irremediably in ruin – but it matters not, for, formless and limitless as their power may be, it has a task. And this task is the unwearying care for this world as it is, which is the very opposite of the interestedness of the money-power age, and demands high honour and conscientiousness. But for this very reason there now sets in the final battle between Democracy and Caesarism, between the leading forces of dictatorial money-economics and the purely-political will-to-order of the Caesars" (Spengler 1932: 465).

⁴ Szabó in his *Roman* describes an electioneering meeting in the era of the AHM in a very satirical way. The assembly takes place in cold wintertime in a barn where the floor has been covered by straw so that, "lest be frozen down the vote-cattle's hooves" (Szabó 1919: 250). However "electoral comedy"

manipulative journalism bought by plutocratic capitalism.⁵ Szabó explained, again similarly to his German colleague, a vitalistic race theory which was different from biological race theory embraced later by Nazism. His theory was a strange mixture of Marxist exploitation theory and a vitalistic racism. Race, for him, is a psychic unit based on different factors. Blood, i.e. ethnicity is very important among them, but it is complemented by common culture and language. Szabó does not exclude the possibility of joining the Hungarian national community from outside, by the way of assimilation but strategic positions must be possessed by the “true-born”, “ethnically pure” Hungarians. Assimilation must go at a slow pace; it must be a gradual process giving time enough for the host society to incorporate the assimilationists keeping its national identity.

Among the races he wrote, following the conception of the contemporary social Darwinism there is a struggle for life but there is no biologically determined value-hierarchy; the outcome of historical competition depends on outer accidental circumstances. From this conception came his cultural anti-Semitism; he described Jews as a wonderful race with enormous talents; their harmful social role is an unintended outcome of the special Hungarian conditions; here had emerged a dual society comprising of premodern and modern segments. Jewry had occupied the empty niche of the capitalist class because the representatives

of Hungarian traditional, feudal society were unable to play this role vital important in modern world. Hungarian society was simply unprepared for competitive capitalism which, Szabó argues, was a natural environment for the Jewry which felt itself in it as a fish in water. Szabó's conclusion comes from these premises: it must be a national revolution emancipating Hungarian peasantry and ensuring to the representatives of this class the key positions of economic, social and cultural life. The struggle of the eternal village and the vicious capitalistic metropolis, Budapest must be ended with a new settlement of Magyars repeating the old historical settlement of Hungarian tribes in the 10th century. At the same time Szabó did not give a clear know-how or precise schedule of this revolution; he was unable to outline a practical political program. His conception has been explained by suggestive metaphors in an expressive language; he remained a prophet scourging the sins of the decadent metropolis which must be occupied by the Hungarian peasant, the most healthy and robust social class, the true representative and reservoir of Hungarian race.

G. Szekfű

Szekfű published his *TG* after the WWI. The moment of publication in this case was very important: 1920 was the year of the TT which had sanctioned the disintegration of the HGH. Hungarian circumstances were similar to the German ones: the societies, in both countries, had been shocked by the war defeat and the collapse of the old country.

Szekfű, in *TG* supplied the wished myths for the susceptible audience: scapegoating and self-chastisement had been given in optimal doses by him. The book used the *narrative of national characterology* and questioned the pre-war assimilative nation building strategy based on the liberal nationalism applied by the old noble origin political elites. His book, in contrast to the work of Szabó, *VWS* did not propagate the

became a distinct literary genre in the region where competitive representative democracy realized in a distorted oligarchic form.

⁵ Spengler's argumentation is essentially same as Szabó's: "What is truth? For the multitude that, which it continually reads and hears. A forlorn little drop may settle somewhere and collect grounds on which to determine "the truth" – but what it obtains is just its truth. The other, the public truth of the moment which alone matters for effects and successes in the fact-world is today a product of the Press. What the Press wills, is true [...]. Its bases are irrefutable for just so long as money is available to maintain them intact" (Spengler 1932: 461–462).

idea of a dissimilative nation building strategy based on the concept of ethnical purity; the warranty of national regeneration, according to Szekfű, is a return to the political romanticism of István Széchenyi (Szekfű 1920: 9–60); it is the only authentic Hungarian politics based on the idea of organic development compatible with Hungarian national character (Trencsényi 2012). Political romanticism, in the interpretation of Szekfű, is a political opponent of national liberalism fostering the national vices and national illusions; political romanticism does not flatter national vanity, and as such it necessarily remains in minority. Liberalism focuses upon the revolutionary transformation of political institutions, political romanticism, as a counter tradition, focuses upon the education of Hungarian character; it aims at getting rid of national vices and bringing national virtues to the surface. Political romanticism, in short, is some kind of conservative reform activity in consonance with the idea of organic development.

TG became a bestseller; its author precisely felt the public mood of the country. There was an atmosphere of scapegoating: the question concerning the causes of the catastrophe was necessarily intertwined with the question of responsibility. It was the liberalism who Szekfű put to the prisoner's dock. Szekfű, similarly to the intellectual strategy applied by the thinkers of the contemporary German conservative revolution, including Spengler, described the Hungarian history of the 19th century as a history of decline (*Verfallsgesichte*). The title of the book unanimously refers to it: it tells the story of the successive three generations of 19th century Hungarian political elites. Every generation represents a weaker quality comparing it to its predecessor concerning the sense of reality and problem-solving ability. The first generation overpasses the level of its successors but the dichotomy of political romanticism and liberalism appears in the opposing characters of Széchenyi and Lajos Kossuth.

Liberalism, in the interpretation of Szekfű, was an imported political ideology incompatible

with Hungarian conditions. Szekfű uses a metaphor: the seeds of liberalism had been carried by winds onto Hungarian soil. The plant grown from them is alien from the Hungarian political flora, i.e. it is incompatible with the Hungarian national character (Szekfű 1920: 87). This idea appears again and again in the book in the form of metaphors; the liberal political arrangement is compared to a new suit following English dress patterns and made to ready by the scissors of a French tailor. The message is clear: Western style modernization is inadequate among Hungarian circumstances. It became a widely shared idea among the thinkers of this region in the interwar period. The rejection of the copying of the Western modernization models has frequently been associated with third road theories.

Liberalism, in Hungary was not a rational system of political ideas but, as a consequence of Hungarian national character, a diffuse sentiment or emotion forming the public mood of the Hungarian political elites. Szekfű evaluated the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 (AHC 1867) in a very ambivalent manner.⁶ The compromise itself, according to him, was a sober real politics keeping up the territorial integrity of the HGH; the liberal politics of assimilation, at the same time, Szekfű argues, was doomed to failure because it produced a shallow assimilation not being more than a language change and the Magyarization of names.

Szekfű's anti-urbanism was a consequence of his conception on Jewish assimilation; he,

⁶ This question was in the centre of debates of Hungarian historiography and political thought. Its defenders evaluated it as a good compromise laying down the grounds for economic boom and rapid capitalistic modernization of the pre-war decades. Its opponents, among them the HPM following Szabó, held it a fatal political act binding Hungary to the Habsburg Monarchy doomed to death. In their interpretation 1867 was a prelude of the later disintegration of HGH after the WWI. Szekfű in this debate stood in a middle way position: he evaluated highly the AHC 1867 but damned the Hungarian political elites because they failed to take advantages of it. The scapegoat for him was not the compromise itself but the liberal politics of these elites.

following the accustomed platitudes of the journalism of the second half of the 19th century, blamed the official liberal immigration politics because of not restricting the Jewish immigration from Galicia.⁷ Newly assimilated Jews, Szekfű asserts, proved very diligent students in over-fulfilment of the requirements of assimilation. They incited the Hungarian illusions on the mirage of *Imperium Hungaricum*, and tried to be more Magyars than the “true-born” Magyars and were flattering the Hungarian national vanity; in the press they propagated the fatal official imperialist politics resulting in the alienation of national minorities from the Hungarian state. These immigrants, Szekfű argued, had occupied the key positions of the economy and culture. A whole chapter of his book deals with the role of Jewry in the culture and the press of Budapest (Szekfű 1920: 287–300). Jewry, according to Szekfű, dominated the main strategic positions of the emergent capitalism including both material and intellectual production. He saw the situation disquieting in cultural sphere, especially in the press. This press, according to Szekfű, had enormously contributed to the making of the Jewish metropolitan culture of Budapest which was very similar to the Central European metropolitan cultures of Wien and Berlin. The Jewish-dominated Budapest press launched a strange kind of *inverse assimilation*; the “true-born” Hungarians, the majority had been assimilated to the cultural patterns of minority, the shallowly assimilated cosmopolitan Jewish minority. This is not the fault of the Jews, Szekfű concludes, it is the consequence of the weak, fragmentized state of the “original” countryside Hungarian culture.

The approach of Szekfű was typical that of the contemporary cultural anti-Semitism which did not made the distinction between two things. There was, on the one hand, a sociological fact, the overrepresentation of Jewish-origin persons in economy and culture and there was, on the other hand, the phantom of organized Jewish power. The most known example of this phantom appeared in the pages of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (in Russian: *Протоколы сионских мудрецов*, original edition in 1903) which was telling about the world-wide conspiracy of the power-hunger Jews. Szekfű was far away from this theory but his conception on the collectively exerted Jewish influence cannot be justified as well. The results of historical research has proved that the influence of Jewish religious organizations for Jewish communities definitely felt in the second half of the 19th century in the modernizing Hungary; they failed to be main orientation-points in the identity construction of Jewish origin persons, especially in Budapest.

F. Erdei

Erdei (1910–1971) belonged to the younger generation entering public life in the thirties. He was one of them who established Hungarian sociology as an autonomous discipline. In the centre of his theory were the conception of dual society and a utopia of modernization. He elaborated a third-road theory. He was an outstanding representative of the young Hungarian sociographers who aimed at presenting an overall picture on the conditions of Hungarian peasantry, the majority of the total population having stuck half way through between the pre-modern feudal, estate-based society and the modern bourgeois one (Némedi 1985). Albeit in Hungary there was a land-reform it did not put an end to the domination of large estate with its political, social and cultural consequences. The sociographers established the populist movement whose main intent was

⁷ This motif had been popularized by a book published in 1901 entitled *On Khazarland* (in Hungarian: *Kazárföldön*). It was a travelling-report whose author, Bartha Miklós took a round tour in Galicia and depicted the immigrant Jewry in a very negative way and called the attention to question of assimilation. The Galician Jewry appeared as the prototype of the threatening alien. The book prefigured the patterns of the dissimilative nation building strategy in the interwar period.

an emancipation performed by the help of an overall social and political reform generating a grass-root, peasantry-based modernization; this conception involved the idea of third road comparing to the Western and Eastern European models, including Anglo-Saxon type capitalism, national socialism and bolshevism as well (Erdei 1973: 123).

The Scandinavian trajectory of modernization, not only for Erdei but for the Hungarian populism in general, seems to be an attractive model of modernization because, in their opinion, Scandinavian peasantry was a leading social factor in a smooth, gradual organic transformation of archaic social structures into modern ones and proved to be able to transmit its cultural values to the whole society. Peasantry, in Hungary, has been trapped in the structures of dual society, as a sub-society subdued to upper society consisting of the “true-born” Hungarian gentry and the foreign origin, German and Jewish, bourgeoisie.

The dream of Erdei is an autochthone Hungarian modernization; its agent is the entrepreneur-peasantry of the South Hungarian region with its specific settlement-form, the market or peasant town which was neither a city nor village; it acquired self-government and its inhabitants were dealing with agricultural market production; they became entrepreneur-peasants. This kind of settlement, for Erdei, was a potential model for a third road urbanization involving a modernization compatible with Hungarian historical traditions and national character. Market town, Erdei emphasized, was able to realize a mutually advantageous symbiotic connection with its countryside: there was no a hierarchical relation between them; countryside had not been enforced into a subdued position.

The main advantage of the third road Hungarian urbanization, Erdei argues, would be the avoiding of the exploitation of the countryside; the peasantry will not be enforced into the position of second-rate citizens comparing with the city-dwellers. He emphasizes that

his conception is based on the really existing double-dwelling system of the South Hungarian market town regions (Erdei 1939: 9) where the peasant-entrepreneurs possess farmsteads next to the town and commuted between the town and the farmstead. This was the separation of the place of the consumption and that of production; the scene of the former was the house in the town that of the latter was the farmstead.⁸ What is in mind of Erdei is not only *enbourgeoisement*, i.e. the transformation of the archaic way of production into a profit orientated one involving a new way of life determined by the calculative thinking of the modern capitalist entrepreneur. In the centre of Erdei’s theory is the political emancipation of the peasantry: the town-dwelling peasants are *citoyens* and *bourgeois* at the same time and are able to participate in the public affairs of the town. The market town model, in Erdei utopian conception, is a kernel of a new kind democracy not emulating foreign models having proved inappropriate among Hungarian conditions because of the existence of dual society.

Erdei’s theory has been embedded in the dissimulation narrative of the interwar re. His conception is flavoured by a soft version of ethnicism associated with an approach of national characterology. Hungarian urban development, according to Erdei, in the case of the majority of Hungarian towns followed foreign, first of all German models. Anti-urbanism is absent from his conception, albeit Budapest, in his opinion, is a pathologically overdeveloped megapolis; he esteems the urban way of life is univocally superior comparing it to the way of life in countryside because of the material and

⁸ The critics rightly points out that Erdei exaggerated the importance and the extension of South Hungarian market town system: he idealized this kind of settlement which in the interwar period already was in the state of decomposition. However, Erdei himself, in the subsequent years of his intellectual carrier gave up his utopian third road theory and joined the communists accepting their Marxian-Leninist conception of modernization.

cultural goods of civilization offered to the city dwellers. Budapest embodies for him a model of urbanization which is not compatible with the Hungarian national character, consequently does not meet the demands of authentic, organic historical development. The theory of Erdei, as it frequently happens in the national characterology narrative, produces ambivalences: on the one hand, it presupposes eternal, ahistorical national traits remaining unchanged behind the veil of temporal, historic changes, and, on the other hand, it asserts that these character traits are evolving and modifying in the historical process. It is not clear, that these traits are a priori modalities defining an eternal national essence or they are mere potentialities realizing in historical time.

The theory of Erdei is a utopia of an *alternative modernization* in which the dichotomy of individualization, a necessary concomitant of modernization and the premodern sociability of peasant communities disappears. In the model of market or peasant town he sees a possibility of accommodation of competitive market capitalism with a community centred urban life. He labels this conception a *general urbanism* intending to eliminate the opposition of city and countryside, so characteristic of modern times when giant-cities monopolize the advantages of civilized urban life at the detriment of the countryside.

Conclusions

Anti-urbanism assumes different forms in different regions: it is an intellectual – cultural reaction to the concrete processes of urbanization. However, anti-urbanism appeared sporadically everywhere as a continuous tradition it emerged at two remote corners of the world: in the United States and Germany.⁹ Hungarian

anti-urbanism of the interwar period frequently followed the patterns of the contemporary German cultural criticism: both countries were situated in the Central European region and running different ways of urbanization comparing to the Western European developmental trajectories. So, because of similarity of social and political constellations, Hungarians cultural criticism, similarly to this kind of thought in the other countries of this region, was very receptive to the patterns of interwar German cultural criticism.¹⁰ The main lesson of the paper that these patterns which in the German cultural context had been rooted in a rich and ramifying philosophical tradition in Hungarian culture constituted a special border-zone in which theoretical-philosophical trains of thought became enclaves in literary texts including novel, political pamphlet, and essay. However, essay became a very peculiar product of the Hungarian interwar thought. The above-treated novel of Szabó contained a series of short essayistic train thoughts treating the problems of political philosophy and political anthropology. The historiographical essay of Szekfű applied the motifs of the German cultural criticism rooted in the contemporary German crisis-philosophy. Erdei, one of the grounding fathers of Hungarian sociology, in his sociological essays treated the problems of cultural and historical philosophy. Essay, in the interwar Hungarian culture, was a genre amalgamating literature with philosophy, sociology and historiography. It was not by chance that László Németh, the writer and essayist defined the essay as a genre of national education giving possibility for the author to inseminate his/her ideas into the national culture. Essay, in the interwar Hungarian thought, became the terrain of the approaches of political, cultural and historical philosophy.

⁹ The history of North American anti-urbanism has been treated by Morton White and Lucia White (1962).

¹⁰ The question of this receptiveness has detailed been explained by Balázs Trencsényi in his book *The Politics of "National Character": A Study in Interwar East European Thought* (2012).

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NUO PRASIKALTUSIO MIESTO LINK ALTERNATYVIOSIOS URBANIZACIJOS IR ALTERNATYVIOSIOS MODERNYBĖS IDĖJŲ: ANTI-URBANIZMAS KAIP MIESTO FILOSOFIJOS IR KULTŪROS KRITIKOS PARIBIO ZONA TARPUKARIO VENGRŲ POLITINĖJE MINTYJE

Gábor KOVÁCS

Nuo modernybės iškilimo antiurbanizmo fenomeną lydėjo modernizacijos procesas. Miestas, modernusis metropolis atliko svarbų vaidmenį pereinant nuo ikimoderniojo pasaulio prie moderniosios epochos. Archajinių struktūrų metamorfozė, įskaitant ekonomikos, visuomenės ir mąstymo sritis, neišvengiamai buvo siejamos su tendencijomis, sukeliomomis antipatijos miestui. Antiurbanizmas, kaip nenutrūkstama tradicija, atsiktinai rasdavosi visur – jis iškilo dviejose nutolusiose pasaulio pusėse: Jungtinėse Amerikos Valstijose ir Vokietijoje. Motyvas vengrų tarpukario laikotarpio antiurbanizmui buvo „Istorinės didžiosios Vengrijos“ skilimo sukeltas sukrėtimas. Prasikaltusio miesto motyvas atsirado atpirkimo atmosferos sąlygomis: Budapeštas atrodė esą prieštaraujantis vengrų nacionaliniam charakteriui. Šie miesto vaidmens permąstymai įsitvirtino ypatingame kontekste, kuriame dera miesto filosofija, kultūros kritika, vokiečių krizės filosofija, politinė filosofija ir nacionalinė charakteriologija. Šiuo atžvilgiu tai – savitas Vidurio Europos regiono junginys: vengrų tarpukario mintis išplaukia iš regioninių šablonų.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: alternatyvioji modernybė, antiurbanizmas, kultūros kritika, metropolis, nacionalinis charakteris.