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**BROTHERS HUNGARIANS...  
JÁN PALÁRIK'S ATTEMPT AT RENEGOTIATING  
THE SLOVAK-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS  
ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE 1860S**

I  
A PROBLEMATIC BROTHERHOOD

The idea of brotherliness of Slovaks and Hungarians never became a pillar of Slovak political thought, though the framework of their cultural and political coexistence seems to include this model of mutual relation as well. And yet the idea of turning Slovak-Hungarian relations into close family relations emerged in the era of 'constitutional experiments'<sup>1</sup> in the Habsburg monarchy as an important, though still not featured enough to find its way into common consciousness, alternative solution to national animosities which had arisen in the period when modern, nationalistically oriented identity constructs were being constituted. In the case of Slovaks and Hungarians, models of national emancipation, and in the wake of it, political emancipation, are to a great extent different and conflicting. They are based on discordant semantic figures anchored in medieval historiography that is restored and completed in the spirit of the national revival, and portrays Slovaks as a people conquered by the invaders, the Magyars, hungry for power (be it symbolic) and new territories. The classic narration from the point of view of the Hungarians is presented in *Gesta Hungarorum*, the work of an anonymous thirteenth-century chronicler,

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<sup>1</sup> The period of constitutional changes (1860–7) preceding the establishment of a dualistic agreement between Austria and Hungary is sometimes called, both in Polish and Slovak literature on the subject, as a time of constitutional experiments. See Milan Krajčovič, *Slovenské národné hnutie v medzinárodnom kontexte. Od roku 1820 po vznik Slovenského štátu* (Bratislava, 2010), 63; Henryk Wereszycki, *Pod berłem Habsburgów. Zagadnienia narodowościowe* (Cracow, 1986), 181.

which includes at least three models of the beginning of Slovak-Hungarian relations – all of them following the paradigm of domination, though. Slovak historiography and literature document of course numerous attempts at revising and re-evaluating these unequal, non-partner beginnings of the common history.<sup>2</sup> Examples include the so-called theory of a contract, or a theory of hospitable welcome of Hungarians by Slovaks.

The idea of brotherliness between Slovaks and Hungarians – against this background alone – appears novel, extravagant even. From the point of view of Slavs, attached to visions of a community – as manifested, for instance, in the cherishing of the idea of Slavonic reciprocity – it can be seen as subversive, especially from the middle of the nineteenth century when the increasingly particular Slavic nationalisms clearly drew from the visions of unification of the Slavic lands, utopian though they were. However, I would like to demonstrate in this article that the concept of a brotherly bond between Slovaks and Hungarians can be approached as one among the strategies of fighting for the Slovaks' national rights within the Habsburg monarchy. As such, the concept may thus be perceived as a sign of national and political maturity, manifesting itself in the attempt to bring together national interests and choices resulting from civic behaviour.

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<sup>2</sup> It seems that the impulse for a number of the so-called apologies of the Slovak nation, in the spirit of Enlightenment historiography, was given by Michal Bencsik's 1722 publication entitled *Novissima dieta nobilissima principis, statuumque et ordinum inclyti regni Hungariae ...* Its author advanced a thesis that Svatopluk sold his land to the Huns and Hungarians (Magyars) for a white horse, and as a consequence his people had to take refuge in the mountainous regions of the land and was subject to the new inhabitants of the land. Indignant at the slander of corruptibility, the nobles of the *Trenčín župa* [Trencsén County, administrative unit in the Kingdom of Hungary at the time] requested Ján Baltazár Magin, famous for his learnedness, to respond in writing to Bencsik's aspersions that harmed not only the nobility, but all Slovaks, who (the nation as understood in terms of the estate, of course) felt equal to Hungarians. At a 1723 parliamentary session in Bratislava, representatives of the *Trenčín župa* presented his response: *Murices nobilissimae et novissimae diaetae Poseniensis scriptori sparsi, sive apologia pro inclyto komitatu Trenčiniensi (Ostne podsypané autorowi Najnovšej a najvznešenejšej bratislavskej diaety alebo apologia, obrana slávnej Trenčianskej stolice)*. The apology appeared in print in 1728 and became an inspiration to other historical works in the spirit of apologies: Samuel Timon, Juraj Fándly or Samuel Hojč who was only a few years older than Ludovít Štúr, becoming at the same time one of the sources of Slovak mythology during the so-called national revival. See Ján Tibenský and Mária Bokesová-Uherová, *Priekopníci slovenskej kultúry* (Bratislava, 1975), 37–46, 70–87.

The attempt to re-evaluate the Slovak-Hungarian relations in an affirmative spirit, clearly noticeable on the threshold of the 1860s, does not arise in an ideological vacuum. In the common cultural and political space of the multinational Kingdom of Hungary, conditions arose for the conception of cooperation between Slovaks and Hungarians, even if examples of such actions were not quite featured in the nationalistically-oriented historical discourse which has shaped Slovaks' and Hungarians' visions of their own past. In the earlier centuries, positive models of mutual relations that were present can be traced in the field of culture, as a broad concept, and in the area of social practices. They prove, to use Michael Herzfeld's term, that a cultural intimacy<sup>3</sup> occurred between the two groups inhabiting their common state. The first half of the nineteenth century repeatedly saw calls for respecting the nationalities' rights to use their own languages in the public sphere, or calls for economic reforms. They clearly radicalised in the following decades, taking on the character of political declarations and become ideologised. Among representatives of this trend, though evoking the community experiences from before the emergence of nationalisms, were definitely Gregor Berzeviczy (1763–1822), Ján Čaplovič (1780–1847), and Juraj Karol Rummy (1780–1847).<sup>4</sup> In the 1840s, the nationality question became the subject of deeper and more systematic thought among Hungarian politicians from the liberal wing.<sup>5</sup> In 1843, baron Miklós Wesselényi (1797–1852), an influential restorer of oppositional traditions in Hungarian nobility circles, published the work *Szózat a magyar és a szláv nemzetiség ügyében* [A voice on the matter of Hungarian and Slovak nationality], considered the cornerstone of Hungarian liberalism. In the same year, Bertalan Szemere (1812–69), who would serve as Minister of Interior during the revolution, wrote a study *Nemzetiségünk és a szlávtság* [Our nationality and the Slavdom]. Also

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<sup>3</sup> See Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (New York, 2005). I have used a Polish translation of the book, i.e., Michael Herzfeld, *Zażyłość kulturowa. Poetyka społeczna w państwie narodowym*, trans. Michał Buchowski (Cracow, 2007), e.g.: 14–17, 26, 62.

<sup>4</sup> See Ambrus Miskolczy, 'Povedomie Hungarus v 19. storočí', *Historický časopis*, lix, 2 (2011), 215–39.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the peculiar character of liberal movements in the Kingdom of Hungary, see András Gerő, *Modern Hungarian Society in the Making: The Unfinished Experience* (Budapest, 1997), 71–91.

Lászlo Teleki (1811–61) expressed his opinion on the possibility of granting Slovaks rights, at least in terms of respecting their language rights.<sup>6</sup> József Eötvös (1813–71) certainly turned out to be the most influential Hungarian politician, considered by some modern scholars to have been the monarchy's most important political thinker in the nineteenth century,<sup>7</sup> systematically took into account the peculiar character of the multiethnic state in the reforms he proposed. His views took shape in the whirlwind of revolutionary events of 1848, and matured as a result of transformations of the political system in 1861. One should also add to the list the name of Lajos Mocsáry (1826–1916), who in his 1858 work entitled *Nemzetiség* [Nationality] addresses the following words to the Slavs: “We Hungarians hereby gladly admit our faults, which we have committed against you, and solemnly apologize to you for the past”,<sup>8</sup> though another passage shows rather clearly that the reflection had originated under absolutist oppression of Hungarians by Vienna.

The above remarks are not meant to outline the topic of this article, but to show the context in which I would like to place the actual focus of this study. And this is, namely, the political commentaries of the Slovak national activist Ján Palárik (1822–70) from the end of 1860, in which he calls upon Slovaks to change their political beliefs; putting it as succinctly as possible: to place their trust not in the monarch (who was also the emperor of Austria), but in the supra-personal letter of the law established by the Hungarian Parliament (and symbolised by the Constitution of 1848<sup>9</sup>). In practice it meant a call to turn

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<sup>6</sup> See József Demmel, ‘Dunajský mikrokozmos. Maďarské myšlienky o spolupráci národov v “dlhom 19. storočí”’, in István Kollai (ed.), *Rozštiepená minulosť. Kapitoly z histórie Slovákov a Maďarov* (Budapest, 2008), 114–18.

<sup>7</sup> See Tibor Pichler, ‘Eötvös, Grünvald, Mudroň a štátna idea Uhorska’, in *idem*, *Etnos a polis. Zo slovenského a uhorského politického myslenia* (Bratislava, 2011), 49.

<sup>8</sup> As quoted in Demmel, ‘Dunajský mikrokozmos’, 119.

<sup>9</sup> At the end of 1847 in Bratislava (Pozsóny, Pressburg), the Hungarian estates parliament convened for the last time, and in March 1848 it enacted the abolition of serfdom and a new electoral law, thereby opening the way for democratisation of the representative body (in reality, as is known, it was largely a matter of pretence: on the one hand, the estate membership criterion for the right to vote was abolished, whilst on the other, significant restrictions were introduced – a certain amount of property, level of education, with Hungarian being pronounced as the only language of the proceedings). In practice, the suffrage remained in the hands of 5–7% of citizens. See Ľubomír Lipták (ed.), *Politické strany na Slovensku 1860–1989*

towards Pest and to build Slovak political subjectivity through tightening the ties with Hungary. The existence of these texts, or rather their significance, has been heavily obscured; the reason was, I believe, exactly their ideological-and-political profile, which for me is, in turn, one of the most important reasons to undertake their analysis. As a result of the selective treatment of Palárik's journalistic heritage, his name is associated with political journalism, but in fact primarily with articles consistent with the ethnocentric spirit of national ideology – focused, for instance, on the political aspect of the idea of Slavic reciprocity, ecumenism, or the criticism of Church hierarchy.<sup>10</sup> Naturally, the question of the causes of this situation arises.

It is also an interesting moment when Palárik forcefully expresses his opinion in the matter of Slovak-Hungarian relations, creating in fact their modern mythology, though one cannot deny that he had the skill to rationally evaluate a situation. The timeframe proposed in the title hereof requires a few words of commentary at this point. So far the turning point of 1848 has commonly been used in attempts at capturing the factors that caused the Slovak national movement to become more radical and political. Indeed, the revolutionary months were a period when Slovak national activists, with Ľudovít Štúr

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(Bratislava, 1992), 16–18. Milan Zemko notes that the long-term effect of the thus shaped act, which later became a kind of a symbol of their national movement for Hungarians, was, basically, frozen democratisation of electoral law for the decades to come, even if compared to the Austrian part of the monarchy. See *idem*, *Občan, spoločnosť, národ v pohybe slovenských dejín* (Bratislava, 2010), 53. However, already in 1848, a parliamentary election in accordance with the new electoral law was announced, and on July 5, 1848 the Parliament convened again, this time in Pest.

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Mikuláš Gašparík, 'Kollárova a Palárikova koncepcia slovanskej vzájomnosti', *Literárnohistorický zborník*, 9 (1952), 22–3; *idem*, *Ján Palárik a jeho boj o demokratizáciu slovenského národného života* (Bratislava, 1952); *idem*, 'Ján Palárik – bojovník za práva a reč ľudu', in Ján Palárik, *Dielo v dvoch zväzkoch*, ii: *Za reč a práva ľudu. Kultúrnopolitické články*, ed. Mikuláš Gašparík (Naši klasici, 20, Bratislava, 1956), 7–24; Jozef Vavrinovič, *Ján Palárik, jeho ekumenizmus a panslavizmus* (Martin, 1993); Jozef M. Kirschbaum, 'Dve koncepcie slovanskej vzájomnosti na Slovensku', in *Literárny almanach Slováka v Amerike* (Middeltown, 1962), 58–65. The best evidence of a selective reception of Palárik's social political articles and marginalisation of texts which express the idea of brotherhood between Slovaks and Hungarians is the dictionary and lexicographic entries devoted to him, as well as sections in survey works on the history of literature. See, e.g., 'Palárik, Ján', entry in *Slovenský biografický slovník*, iv: M–Q (Martin, 1990), 372–3; *Dejiny slovenskej literatúry*, vol. 3 (Bratislava, 1965), 171–82.

at the head,<sup>11</sup> formulated their demands in a number of petitions, including the most important document of the period, compiled at the National Assembly convened on May 10, in Liptovský-Mikuláš – *Žiadosti slovenského národa* [Demands of the Slovak nation]. It was also a time of their intensive search for new allies for their national cause (for example in the south of the Slavic lands<sup>12</sup>), after their linguistic separation from Czechs.<sup>13</sup> Ivan Halász, a Hungarian historian and political researcher focusing on Slovak-Hungarian relations, argues that although the nineteenth century can be divided into at least four periods marked by significant changes, the events of 1848–9 turned out to be the most important landmarks and determined the directions of changes in the countries of the Crown of St Stephen, for Hungarians and Slovaks alike.<sup>14</sup> The opinion is shared by the vast majority of Slovak scholars.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The contribution of the so-called Štúrists (Štúrovci; a group of national activists led by Ľudovít Štúr, undoubtedly the most influential Slovak ideologist in the 1840s, considered a charismatic national leader) to the formation of the modern Slovak nation is seen as being fundamental. Lately, more and more scholars have tended to note, however, that albeit the merits of the Štúrists in the field of culture were undeniable (for example, the codification of the language), they did not directly contribute to development of strong social ties uniting the Slovak nation and allowing them (as a national community) a real say in the matter of the Habsburg monarchy's political system. For more in-depth discussion on this topic, see, e.g., Zemko, *Občan, spoločnosť* (esp. chap. 'Štúrovci – tvorcovia neuveriteľného projektu [ktorý bol nakoniec predsa len pomerne úspešný]'), 49–51.

<sup>12</sup> See Krajčovič, *Slovenské národné hnutie*, 62.

<sup>13</sup> Next to the uncodified Slovak language, to a lesser or greater extent filled with calques from Czech, the version of the Czech language known from the Kralice Bible (the so-called *bibičtina*) was used as the literary language until the 19th century. After an unsuccessful attempt at codifying the Slovak language based on the Western Slovak dialect, made in the late 18th century by Anton Bernolák, in 1843 a linguistic norm was successfully worked out (its authors were Ľudovít Štúr, Jozef Miloslav Hurban and Michal Miloslav Hodža), for the most part based on the Central Slovak dialect, which – though it would be gradually perfected later – is still in use today. Ján Kollár, who at the time was an unquestioned authority, strongly decried the linguistic distancing of Slovaks from Czechs, calling for the use of the Czech language.

<sup>14</sup> See Ivan Halász, 'Uhorská revolúcia a boj za slobodu 1848/1849 v kontexte a formovania modernej slovenskej identity', in *idem, Uhorsko a podoby slovenskej identity v dlhom 19. storočí* (Bratislava, 2011), 39.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Elena Mannová (ed.), *Krátke dejiny Slovenska* (Bratislava, 2003), 227–33.

Whilst it is not my goal to negate this point of view, I would like to focus on the end of 1859 and beginning of 1860 as well as the following years of this decade as, in some respects, much more significant in their effect on the formation of Slovak political thought and actual social ties based on the sense of a national community. It is a period of revising political decisions from 1848 and intense differentiation of ideological stances of the participants in Slovak political life – and also, perhaps more importantly, of deeper engagement in specific actions in the public sphere. They stemmed from the need for the revivalist movement to enter the phase of institutionalisation, which in the case of Slovaks proceeded with difficulty, because of the underdeveloped ties between the different social classes, as Tibor Pichler has observed.<sup>16</sup> The Slovak ideologists who were the most influential and opinion-forming in the previous decade had to face at that time the disappointment with Vienna's politics and the consequences of enjoying political support from the emperor (which led to, among other things, a neglect of the relations with Hungary). Another problem was the intensifying Magyarisation of Slovaks as part of the trend of cultural assimilation.<sup>17</sup> The overestimation of the role of the lower classes by many a national movement activist led to neglecting the burghers and impoverished landed gentry, that is the classes that played a significant part in the modernisation of the state and would soon gain real political power, whilst remaining more prone to denationalisation. At the same time, they had the chance to effectively combine national interests with duties of citizens, because of their social position. When 'old' leading national figures (with Jozef Miloslav Hurban at the head; after Štúr's death he pretended to the role of a leader) were busy analysing the previous and existing strategies, not always drawing rational conclusions from failures of the national movement, the next generation appeared on the scene. They were much better adapted to the changing power structures

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<sup>16</sup> See Tibor Pichler, *Národovci a občania. O slovenskom politickom myslení v 19. storočí* (Bratislava, 1998), 119–20.

<sup>17</sup> For a more in-depth discussion on the emergence and use of the stigmatising term *maďarón*, see Peter Káša, 'Pojem maďarón v slovenských intelektuálnych diskusiách po roku 1848 (na základe sporu Sama Vozára a Ludovíta Štúra)', in Ábrahám Barna (ed.), *Maďarsko-slovenské terminologické otázky. Materiály medzinárodných konferencií usporiadaných 8. júna a 1. decembra 2006 v Ostrihom* (Pilišska Čaba and Ostrihom, 2008), 129–39.

and flexible in their views; one could say, they were, in a sense, more seasoned in the whirlwind of the political game growing more intense. This difference in perspective in the period of formation of the modern Slovak political thought is accurately reflected in the pair of terms used by Pichler: nationalists and citizens.<sup>18</sup> I will risk the claim that the repertoire of stances and the configuration of beliefs that was outlined in 1848 (indicating the existent ideological divisions) were fully revealed – showing the true, that is political, reason for the dispute – precisely in the 1860s. National slogans, which a decade earlier were fitting into the atmosphere of the revivalist rise to freedom, affecting at the time mainly emotions and thus integrating the Slovaks, now appeared in a slightly different form – as a political calculation.

Because I would like to have a look at a single, individual Slovak response to the changes in the way the Habsburg state functioned, which was caused by the failure of the former centralist politics, I propose a case study. I choose the figure of Ján Palárik, as a mature activist in the field of culture and at the same time still undervalued political thinker, nationally and politically set in his views, but also an active participant of political life – as demonstrated, for example, by the fact that in 1861 he ran for a seat in the Parliament. This figure evades any simple classification, which can be taken as a sign of the autonomy of his views.

The changing situation, which by its nature provokes to verify one's former stance, is marked by the events of 1859 and 1860. Austria's defeat at Solferino and the loss of some of the Italian territories initiated the re-evaluation of the former internal politics led by the emperor Franz Joseph I. He summoned the State Council, in its extended cast, in March 1860 (Slovaks did not have a representative in it, but looked to the bishops Josip Strossmayer and Andrej Sagun to be the spokesmen for their interests), in order to consider internal affairs of the state. The result of actions undertaken was drawing up and proclamation in the same year of the October Diploma, which announced the restoration of parliaments in individual Crown lands in order to settle the most important legislative matters. The issuing of the October Diploma did not change the situation of Slovaks directly, but their reactions were influenced by the Hungarian response to these changes. Whereas on the Hungarian side, reforms announced

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<sup>18</sup> See Pichler, *Národovci a občania*.



by the monarch already in 1859 divided the actors of political life into those favouring the restoration of the Hungarian constitution from 1848, and those who opted for maintain a tie with Austria. The discussion in Hungarian press caused by the changes in legislation awoke political aspirations in Slovaks as well, and motivated them to look for new allies.

In the atmosphere of a lively public debate on the political system of the monarchy after the fall of the absolutist rule of Alexander von Bach and Hungarians' regained hopes for the restoration by the emperor of the constitution in its 1848 form, in some circles there revived the idea of *Uhorsko*<sup>19</sup> as the common home of many nations, on the basis of which arouse the vision of possible brotherly Slovak-Hungarian relations. It is expressed in the most spectacular way and propagated, at the risk of being accused of befriending Hungary, by Ján Palárik, a liberal considered the ideological leader of the so-called New Slovak School, journalist, playwright, and also a unruly Catholic priest, at odds with the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

I will attempt to bring out the dialogical or relational character from the texts published at the end of 1860 in the magazine *Priateľ školy a literatúry* [The friend of school and literature]<sup>20</sup> by the by-then-mature journalist. The chronologically first of the articles under study appeared in the 45th issue of the magazine and is entitled *Čo máme očakávať od konštitúcie uhorskej pre našu národnosť a čo nám teraz predovšetkým treba?* [What can we expect from the Hungarian Constitution and what do we now need the most?], three later texts

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<sup>19</sup> The term *Uhorsko* is used in Slovak as a name proper referring to the historical Kingdom of Hungary, which – through the relation to the term *Maďarsko* (Hungary) – makes it possible to bring out the difference between the multinational monarchy (the Lands of the Crown of St Stephen) and the Hungarian state that was being constituted on the basis of the national (ethnic) criterion, especially from the second half of the 19th century. Because of the topic under study, in the rest of the article I will use the Slovak term as the one directly referring to the idea of a multinational state. A detailed as well as synthetic explanation of terminological differences, present also in the pair of terms: *Hungarus/Hungaricus*, may be found in László N. Szelestei, 'Hungarus – Hungaricus / Uhorský – maďarský. Naša spoločná minulosť a maďarčina', in Barna (ed.), *Maďarsko-slovenské terminologické otázky*, 47–52. (It is a biligual, Slovak-Hungarian, publication; the page numbers refer to the Slovak translation of the text.)

<sup>20</sup> In fact, it is a supplement to the weekly *Cyril a Metod* published by Andrej Radlinský between 1859 and 1861.

constitute a cycle entitled *Otázka národnosti a nasledovne i literatúry pri novom politickom preporení Uhorska* [The nationality question and, in consequence, the situation of literature, related to the new birth of the Kingdom of Hungary] and were published in following issues of the said magazine (46–7). The last text under consideration appeared in issue 52 and was entitled *Na dorozumienie inteligencii našich slovenských stolíc* [For an agreement between the intelligentsias of our Slovakian capital-towns]. All the articles appeared after the new legal acts were issued by the emperor on October 20, and they mention the fact as a turning point because of the change in the way the country was run, along with the new openness to the nationality question in the monarchy, which is in fact emphasised in the very titles.

My goal is not only to reconstruct Palárik's views manifested there, but also to show what rhetorical figures he uses to establish a rapport with both Hungarians and Slovaks. The way he uses (and transforms) the official idioms<sup>21</sup> indirectly indicates his position in the social structure (as a Slovak and a citizen) – both the actual one and the one he is aspiring to. Because the articles are a first-hand, ongoing response to the events and comment on their social repercussions, they enable to catch change as if *in statu nascendi* and illustrate the 'things occurring' and their accompanying emotions and reflections. I hold, therefore, that the sources I am analysing are of an remarkably discursive nature, in a broad concept of the notion – as a combination of linguistic aspects and the social reality. It is due also to the triply peripheral status of the texts under study; the centres are marked in this case by Vienna's politics and Budapest's response to it, but also the Slovak national movement. As a subject expressing his opinion with respect to each of these centres, Palárik situated himself in the peripheries: he responds to the ongoing developments and sentiments; he attempts at negotiating, though his voice does not add much to the situation; instead, he offers an instance of 'grassroots' diversification of ideas. Related to these aspects is also the reception of his texts and their resulting, limited, influence on the developmental directions of the period's political thought.

When writing the articles under consideration, Palárik stayed in Pest, where he lived for eleven years. He shows an awareness of the resulting differing perspectives in evaluation of the events between

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Herzfeld, *Zażyłość kulturowa*, 14.

the Budapest circles and other national activists. It is perfectly illustrated by a commentary which the author takes the liberty to write in the opening paragraphs of the first article:

These highly important events did not surprise as very much in Pest; one could have foreseen them based upon the various circumstances, while there was no force that could encumber them. Yet they must have surprised the greater part of our nationalists with their unexpectedness, and strike them with a sudden crush of all the hopes invested in the former state system.<sup>22</sup>

Because of his special situation, he takes on the role of an intermediary, interpreter of events, and mediator between the Hungarian and Slovak party. The triply peripheral position of the author of the cited passage, though he is in one of the centres of events, only seems to have been paradoxical. Next to Vienna, Pest constituted an important centre not only of the Hungarian, but also of the Slovak national movement; it was a place where many Slovaks worked and lived – which is not to say that, as a nation, they could exert any real impact on the political life in the monarchy. Although a number of Slovaks involved in the national movement were associated with Pest, the town did not act as a symbolic centre of the national life;<sup>23</sup> the town of Martin played this part at the time already. I have previously mentioned the peripheral status of the texts under study, in the context of selective reception of Palárik's journalistic output.

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<sup>22</sup> Palárik, *Dielo v dvoch zväzkoch*, ii, 29. All quotations from Palárik's articles come from this edition, so page numbers follow citations in the remainder hereof.

<sup>23</sup> The fact that Palárik was in favour of locating the Slovak Cultural Society, the most important Slovak institution for aiding national interests, in Pest, proves how strongly he believed the city to be an important centre of Slovak national movement. In the 1850s there was a debate on what city the institution should be located in, which split the Slovak activists into those who wanted to connect it with a typical Slovak provincial town and those who, Palárik among them, saw a reason behind founding it in the capital of *Uhorsko*. See Tibor Pichler, 'Národovci alebo občania. Inštitucionalizácia ako problém', in László Szigeti (ed.), *Slovenská otázka dnes. Výber textov z časopisu OS 1997–2006* (Bratislava, 2007), 102.

## II

## THE SLOVAK DISPUTE OVER THE HEGEMON

The first article in the cycle entitled *Otázka národnosti a nasledovne i literatúry pri novom politickom preporení Uhorska* ends with the words:

It seems as if history, that is, Providence, wished to give us time and opportunity to rectify the mistakes that Hungarians and Slavs of *Uhorsko* have committed in 1848 to their own detriment (hopefully it will make them wiser as well!). Since lack of tolerance of other nationalities and political feuds blinded our brothers then, now, after ten years of hardships, let us give priority to true reconciliation and cool, common sense. (p. 40)

Thus, Palárik inscribes the current events in a higher, providential plan of history, which gave the Slavs contributing to the creation of *Uhorsko* and ethnic Hungarians a second chance for a solution to the nationality question that would satisfy all parties and place the state on a higher level of social development. The references to Providence could be approached as merely a rhetorical figure, a rather frequent feature in nineteenth-century sociopolitical journalism, and nowise surprising in an utterance of a Catholic priest – had Palárik been not that consistent in resuming this concept in his historiosophical considerations. As Marcel Martinkovič accurately observed, one can see in Palárik's political concept certain residua of Hegel's influence, though Palárik was a declared anti-Hegelian and rejected the abstract concept of a state as the highest form of the national spirit's self-expression.<sup>24</sup> The condition of *Uhorsko* depends on the extent to which the nationalities' rights and civil rights are respected, but Palárik does not see a place for Slovaks outside of the form of a state entity granted to them by history, the symbol of which is the Crown of St Stephen. That there must exist a multiethnic state and the national goals call for being fulfilled within the *Uhorsko* is obvious to him, and entails the need to cultivate positive connexions with Hungarians (but also with other ethnic groups in the multiethnic monarchy).

The depth of Palárik's identification with the state is demonstrated in the rhetorical form of his utterances. In all the articles under present analysis, Palárik manifests that he belongs to *Uhorsko* by

<sup>24</sup> Marcel Martinkovič, 'Ideové paralely a odlišné stratégie v slovenskom politickom myslení', *Filozofia*, lxiii, 10 (2008), 896.

consistently repeating the expression 'our *Uhorský* country' (*krajiny našej Uhorskiej*), often strengthening the affirmative tone by adding the adjectives 'dear' or 'cherished' (*v našom milom Uhorsku* = 'in our dear *Uhorsko*'; *drahá naša krajina uhorská* = 'our cherished *Uhorský* country'). He clearly builds in this way an image (and illustrates it himself) of belonging to a greater, supranational political community, united by common history (law and symbols). Thanks to the fact that the possessive pronoun 'our' is used both in reference to *Uhorsko*, Hungarians, to other Slavs, and finally, to Slovaks, Palárik paints a picture of natural, obvious relations and ties, indicating closeness and permanence – what is 'ours' is very well known, tamed, constitutes a part of everyday experience and is unchanging in its essence, even if it is subject to transformations. The author's attachment to the Slavic nation (*národu nášmu slovenskemu* = 'our Slovak nation') is analogously manifested, and reinforced by his use of first person plural to give his own opinion, both when he identifies with the speaker and when he identifies with the addressee.

The rhetorical artistry of these articles conceals, of course, a powerful persuasive charge. Besides openly canvassing passages, recognised immediately as a result of the use of the imperative mood, there are passages in which Palárik used other techniques to convince Slovaks to support the constitutional system in the form proposed by Hungarians. To this end, he had recourse to, e.g., symbols of *Uhorsko* (St Stephen, the constitution), sites of memory (session of Parliament in Bratislava, assembly in Liptovský-Mikuláš) and archetypal figures (father, mother, brother), which hold a permanent place in the semiotic system of the addressees and are positively valued. Certain newly-added elements (names of Hungarian politicians, with József Eötvös at the head, and quotations from them; titles of Hungarian newspapers: *Magyar Sajtó* [The Hungarian Press], *Pesti Napló* [The Pest Journal], *Pester Lloyd* were meant to cause Slovaks to believe that the Hungarian party are not their enemy, and on the contrary, they desired cooperation, proposing an almost equal ground.

I am exposing the rhetoric of the article to show how unambiguous Palárik's stance was in the Slovaks' political dispute over a trusted instance that could ensure the fulfilment of their national strivings, since the manifestation of this stance in the language was so strong. Mentions of Austria and the emperor – as a matter of fact, he never uses the latter term, referring to a 'king' instead (*Jeho*

*apošt. Kráľovskej Jasnosti* = ‘His Royal Highness’) – quite plainly so, given his attachment to the Kingdom of Hungary, are distanced, cold, especially against the background of familiar terms reserved for the *Uhorský* side. Distrust towards Vienna results from his evaluation of the emperor’s stance in the years 1848–9, when the ruler refused to offer institutional support to Slovak national movement. One has to note that the Slovaks managed at that time to mobilise themselves enough to militarily support the monarch. They actively participated in the suppression of the Hungarian revolution, though it should be borne in mind that they did not all share identical views on the matter. Some, like Palárik, distanced themselves from it. There were also such, however, that gave support to the Hungarian revolutionaries (Ján Rotarides, Janko Kráľ). Palárik was also concerned about the passive policy of Franz Joseph I, the degree to which it was dependent on German affairs, and its focus on the interests of the dynasty.<sup>25</sup>

Palárik positively, if not enthusiastically, evaluates the unquestionable crisis of power, which the Austrian state experienced (“*dráma najnovších politických pohybov*”, i.e. “the tragedy of the latest political events”; p. 29). He sees in it a catalyst of the new order and a chance for a positive turn for the Slovak national cause, though the October Diploma enforced Hungarian as the official language and did not guarantee equal rights for all the nationalities. He tries to make his readers share the optimistic interpretation of the events. His chief argument is the constitutional system:

But it is good that this has happened, countrymen dear! You have nothing to regret, nor have you any reasons to lose heart. In the constitutional life of our *Uhorský* country, and for our Slovak nation, a brisker life begins. It is true that we do not find expressed in the highest concessions given the country the principle of equality of rights for all the nations, which we the Slovaks have fought for until now and which was solemnly promised us so many times and has been affirmed by the lips of those highest in authority; nay, the Hungarian language is clearly pronounced the official language for the entire country. But this recommendation of the Hungarian language does not define our rights as a nationality, nor does it have the right to curtail them. ... We are confirmed in this hope by the statements of official organs of the liberal party in Hungary, which, whilst not making equality of rights possible for us Slovaks, they at least render ‘free competition in

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<sup>25</sup> See Tibor Pichler, ‘Ján Palárik a pokus o slovenský liberalizmus’, in *idem*, *Národovci a občania*, 82–3.

the field of nationalities' possible; and in a constitutional state even this is a lot, and certainly *more* than, no matter how solemnly promised, equality of rights for nationalities in an absolutist system. (pp. 29–30)

The effort that Palárik puts in the creation of a positive image of the constitutional changes is closely tied with his views on the national cause. He is aware of the great extent to which the Slovak elites are divided by the difference of opinion on the ways of securing national interests. He is also aware that it is this division that seriously weakens the image of Slovaks in the eyes of both Hungarians and Austria, as well as their countrymen. The impasse results in the growing number of 'renegades' – ethnic Slovaks who assimilate and, in the fight for improving their social standing, push national feelings aside. It is them (the *maďaróns*) – but, after all, also those who in the 1850s chose German or Czech language as a guarantee of a career because of the administrative changes of the time – who, according to Palárik, like the Trojan horse destroy the rather feeble national community, which keeps fighting for the recognition of its right to exist.

I have already remarked that constitutional transformations made more acute the different stances of Slovak national activists as regards the authority that could ensure their national rights: the possibility to use the Slovak language in the public space, education in Slovak, freedom of publishing and freedom of assembly. The dispute was the effect not only of the current political situation, but had a much deeper, mental cause. Slovak national activists were not split along the lines of different ideas on the character of national matters or affairs (the right of a nation for its existence on equal grounds to be respected), but – as Martinkovič notes – by the attitude towards supranational matters, that is the way of understanding of the civic-mindedness and publicness in pursuing equal rights.<sup>26</sup> The issue of defining the relations between what is national – what the *ethnos* manifests itself in – and what is civil, stemming from the *polis*, called for ideological, but also moral, solutions. The bone of contention was the method of securing national interests, that is, the way to national emancipation: its setting out implied a clash of the residua of the feudal social order with modern visions of society coming out of the Enlightenment.

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<sup>26</sup> See Martinkovič, 'Ideové paralely', 892.

Palárik's stance on the issue of methods is unambiguous and consistent, and at the same time different from the formerly used strategy of following the currently stronger political group: he advocates a grassroots policy of small steps, a gradual strengthening of the Slovak position within *Uhorsko*, whose polity is regulated by the constitution guaranteeing equal rights.<sup>27</sup> He categorically rejects the Slovaks' pretentious attitude, though. In the second article in the cycle *Otázka národnosti ...*, he clearly points out that although respect for the national rights of people living in *Uhorsko* should be a political and moral duty, it is up to the Slovaks to make it happen. They should undertake a number of initiatives that would effectively manifest their national power in the public sphere, especially in case the Hungarians abused the rights granted to them by the October Diploma and did not respect the will of the 'local' population, for instance in the choice of language in communicating with offices. Palárik condemns passive expectancy for some higher authority to guarantee Slovaks the fullness of civil and national liberties, which is not to say that he negates the rule of legal protection. He rejects, however, a utopian, idealised vision of authority and chooses self-government instead.

... I do not mean that because of this we Slovaks can only appeal to these moral premises and await the fulfilment of our national desires with our hands folded. Moral premises have to be strengthened by legal *material* conditions, that is, we have to firmly and effectively work with will and word in order to *enforce* the rights of a nationality. Otherwise, the right would be merely *negative* for us, which means that in theory, no one denies it; and *positive, real, bidding* shall it only be when we act on it, that is, put it into practice. (pp. 40–1)

For it to be realised, the 'natural' law of the nation as a negative, passive law, needs actions to be undertaken, which would bear witness to this natural law. It becomes real and positive only when it is put into practice, and this requires first and foremost a pro-social, civic attitude. Echoes of Montesquieu are clear here, but it is worth adding that Palárik's knowledge of English philosophy – the works of Thomas Hobbes and Adam Smith, John Locke and John Stuart Mill – also informed this author's views.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See Pichler, 'Ján Palárik', 78.

<sup>28</sup> See Marcel Martinkovič, 'Idea uhorského vlastenectva a občianskej individu-



I have proposed a thesis whereby the beginning of the 1860s can in many ways be considered a turning point in the Slovak political thought, claiming that it is only then that deep differences of opinion in the block of Slovak national activists were fully revealed, which – paradoxically – additionally propelled their political activity. Rather than limiting himself to expressing his opinions in the press, Palárik also brought together – acting in Pest – a group of people who endeavoured to refocus the Slovak political orientation. They strove for closer direct relations with Hungarian radically leftist liberals (Virgil Szilágyi, László Böszörményi)<sup>29</sup> and engaged in publishing activity, creating politically profiled media. Already in the first of Palárik's articles in question, he underlined the need to found an independent Slovak political newspaper which would constitute a forum for exchanging views, but he simultaneously showed the grassroots character of the initiative already undertaken:

We have to take the *Uhorsko* side at all, and show that it is herein that we have a right to live and that we valiantly stand by this. To do so, we above all indispensably need an independent Slovak political magazine, where in these momentous times we could look after the interests of our Slovak countries in harmony with the interests of our entire land of *Uhorsko*, protect the rights of our nationality, create and express a public opinion, and represent our nation in the creation of *municipia* of communes and voivodships, electing civil servants and members of the country parliament, etc. To found such an organ that would come out at least two-three times a week, a security-deposit of five thousand silver zlotys is required, and some nationalists living in Buda-Pest are trying to raise it, and plan to do so by the end of this month, with God's help. (pp. 32–3)

And so, on March 19, 1861, thus already after emperor Franz Joseph I issued the February Patent, there came out in Pest the first issue of the Slovak political magazine *Pešťbudínske vedomosti* [The Pest-Buda News].<sup>30</sup> Ján Francisci became the first editor of the newspaper,

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álnosti na križovatke politických stratégií', *Filozofia*, lxi, 10 (2006), 841; Gašparík, 'Ján Palárik – bojovník', 11.

<sup>29</sup> See Martinkovič, 'Ideové paralely', 893–4.

<sup>30</sup> Somewhat earlier, on February 20, 1861, the first issue of a political biweekly *Priateľ ľudu* [The Friend of the People] (with the subtitle *Slovenský politický týždenník* [The Slovak political weekly]) appeared in Pest. Its publisher and editor was Lukáč Mácsai, its co-editors – Ladislav Szeberíny and Ferdinand Pfeifer. In the beginning, Palárik had his texts published there as well, on a regular basis, agitating

which came out two times a week. It played a fundamental role in the institutionalisation of Slovak national life in the 1860s. Its founding was brought about partly thanks to activists, whose political paths diverged later on,<sup>31</sup> but in the initial period of transformation of the monarchy's political system, in part owing to Palárik's efforts, they were able to unite to the degree that enabled them to put up common candidates in the elections to the Hungarian Parliament.<sup>32</sup> The national assembly in Martin in the beginning of June 1861, summoned to work out a common political stance, was also a measurable sign of the stimulation to activity. The meeting resulted in the compilation of a document that has to this day been considered the founding stone of Slovak political thought – that is, the Memorandum of the Slovak Nation. It is a different problem that the content of the document, especially the demand to create a relatively autonomous entity, the so-called Upper-Hungarian Slovak Territory (*horno-uhorské slovenské Okolie*), as well as the choice of the authority to which it was to be presented (the Hungarian Parliament or the Emperor of Austria) deeply divided the signatories. Palárik, who participated in the assembly, severely criticised the idea of territorial separatism; he manifested his dissent in Hungarian press as well. Yet, he did not manage to stop the wave of accusations of separatism charged against Slovaks, which swept over Hungarian press.<sup>33</sup> Another case

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Slovak-Hungarian cooperation in the name of national causes and the good of the homeland, *Uhorsko*. Unlike *Pešťbudínske vedomosti*, the magazine did not become a forum for presentation of views of Slovak national activists of diverse orientations, because of its liberal profile. Yet the board of editors was an experienced group of people. From 1848 to 1849, Mácsai and Szebeni published a magazine with identical title. In 1867, the magazine disappeared again, and its editors and journalists moved to a newly created magazine *Slovenské noviny* [The Slovak News] (edited by Ján Nepomuk Bobula) which was the platform of the so-called New Slovak School.

<sup>31</sup> Ján Francisci, Štefan Marko Daxner, Jozef Miloslav Hurban, Pavol Dobšinský constituted a tight-knit conservative camp, while Ján Palárik, Andrej Radlinský and especially Ján Mallý-Dusarov represented the liberals focused on cooperation with extremely liberal Hungarian politicians. In the second half of the 1860s, Mallý-Dusarov became one of the key exponents of the New Slovak School.

<sup>32</sup> Slovaks and Rusyns came together to do so and formed a common front in the elections held on April 2, 1861. Adolf Ivanovič Dobriansky, a Rusyn, was the only one to eventually get a seat in the Parliament, while Ján Palárik received a good place on the list of candidates.

<sup>33</sup> For more on this topic, see František Bokes, *Maďarské prejavy protimemorandové r. 1861* (Bratislava, 1940).

of the dispute over the hegemon should be considered a symptom of a serious split, which in the next years of the decade would grow deeper and lead to the emergence of a new political option oriented to proactive cooperation with Hungary, the so-called New Slovak School.

### III

#### ST STEPHEN THE 'FATHER' AND CONSTITUTION THE 'MOTHER', OR THE POLITICAL STRENGTH OF SYMBOLS

Palárik's homeland is *Uhorsko*. In his texts, one would not find but a trace of doubt as to where his patriotic feelings should be invested. He does not talk about *Uhorsko* as a distant, abstract state – it is the homeland (*vlast'*), a country (*krajina*). Living in Pest, he is in the very centre of the homeland; it is, moreover, a homeland that is redefining its identity and its symbols, and undergoing a modernisation.<sup>34</sup> His texts radiate from the very centre,<sup>35</sup> of which he is a participant, despite his peripheral position in it. 'Local' patriotism, if we consider the entire Habsburg monarchy as a reference point, is in Palárik's case an *Uhorský* patriotism. In the light of Clifford Geertz's findings in the area of the symbolics of power, Palárik is – on the basis of his location alone – marked by the charisma of the centre.<sup>36</sup> The first of the articles under study is a model instance of this phenomenon, as it creates a semiotic system whereon Palárik builds his message in the

<sup>34</sup> See Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848–1914* (Baltimore and London, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> I use the notion of 'centre' not in a geographical sense, nor even in a geopolitical one, but like Clifford Geertz, I mean intertwined symbols of power that emanate a charisma. See *idem*, 'Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power', in *idem*, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983). I have used a Polish translation: *idem*, 'Centra, królowie i charyzma. Refleksje o symbolice władzy', in *idem*, *Wiedza lokalna. Dalsze eseje z zakresu antropologii interpretatywnej*, trans. Dorota Wolska (Cracow, 2005), 128–9.

<sup>36</sup> See *ibidem*, 128. I have assumed that, although derived from the analysis of the rite of monarchical travels, Geertz's findings in this respect have unveiled a universal mechanism of symbolic transference of the centre into provincial areas in view of legitimising the power. The interpretative key I hereby propose comprises the statement that Palárik's output as a political commentator has – at least the author so assumes – a parallel function in many respects, thus confirming the universal relevance of the mechanism described by the American anthropologist; to prove this point would however require this study to be extended by the issue of reception of the texts in question, but this would exceed the thematic framework assumed.

later texts, referring to its key elements in the form of self-citation. Some phrases are repeated in the articles that followed like a refrain and take on the power of emblems, which contain the ‘shortcut’ to the ideosphere and iconosphere used by the author in the first text. He appeals in it to the spirit of the community created by St Stephen, making use of the persuasive strength of the symbols of power, and also of linguistic arguments:

We should not fear the Hungarian Constitution; there is no point. After all, it is *our holy heritage from our forefathers, which St Stephen, the first king, from the reverend ruins of the great Slovak kingdom, along with the Christian faith, accepted into his new state edifice* as the very terms: *király = král* [king], *nádor = nádvorník* [chamberlain], *ispán = župan* [count] ... demonstrate; later on, the fraternised nations of Hungarians, Slovaks, Croats and Serbs worked together to bring it to perfection; under its banner, our common country of *Uhorsko* experienced a time of fame and greatness, grew, conquered, and during an invasion of barbarians remained an unconquered tower for half a month. So, why fear the Hungarian Constitution? She is *our common mother*, who has raised us, and without her, like poor orphans we are perishing: Hungarians as well as we Slovaks, Serbs, Croats. ... Therefore, rise, Slovaks, let us catch a hold of our common mother Constitution with both hands and as her faithful children, let us be ready for new sacrifices, for new efforts. (pp. 31–2 [emphasised by AK])

The proposed network of notions consists of the words: father, mother, home, brothers, associated with St Stephen, the Hungarian (*Uhorský*) constitution, *Uhorsko*, Hungarians–Slovaks–Serbs–Croats. They are accompanied by a metaphor, brought into prominence in the articles that followed, of a new birth (*preporod*; *nový politický preporod krajiny našej Uhorskej* – i.e. ‘rebirth’; ‘political rebirth of our land of Uhorsko’), as the relationship of the feuding brothers needs a cleansing/metamorphosis. Connecting the constitution, on a rhetorical basis, with both the figure of forefather(s), the first crowned ruler of the Arpad dynasty, and a mother, means that its quality as a subject/entity is special. It becomes a timeless entity, a symbol of a historical synthesis, a bridge between the *Uhorsko* of 1860, getting nationalised and deprived of full political recognition, and St Stephen’s *Uhorsko*. What is more, it holds within, in the bud, a Slavic element in the form of the heritage of Sts Cyril and Methodius as well as Great Moravia, and the heritage is identified with – the substitution is worth noting as it is something more than just a semantic shift – with the kingdom

of the Slovaks! Because of its symbolically androgynous nature (I am using the term in its philosophical, ontological meaning, not just in the sense of joining the male and the female element), the constitution takes on almost magical qualities, becoming a remedy to the destiny of history; it has the power of reconciling feuding brothers and saving from decline, which Palárik takes a note of, this time very rationally:

The constitution allows *freedom of speech, freedom to proclaim one's own views, freedom of petition, freedom of assembly*; and if we, Slovaks, make a use of all this in accordance with the law, we will surely not perish. And in truth, this is really more, in that in our noble efforts we shall not be alone, but by our side shall be our tribesmen the Rusyns, the brave Serbs and Croats, whose undeniable efforts – as we are glad to observe in the magazines – are aimed at renewing the ties with the Hungarian Crown and holding on to the Constitution, but also guaranteeing equality of rights and free development of all nations living under the Hungarian Crown. (pp. 30–1)

I would find it hard to find any other text in the entire history of Slovak writing where the idea of brotherhood between Slovaks and Hungarians would be expressed as strongly as in the texts under study. The frequency with which the phrase ‘brothers Hungarians’ is being used is striking. The style of the text alone suggests that the author’s sympathies are divided equally between Hungarians and Slovaks. This brotherly relationship encompasses the other Slavs populating *Uhorsko*, including Rusyns. It is equally difficult for me to find a better defence of the constitutional system. Palárik does not look ahead to the republican system of government; it seems that he is content with constitutional monarchy, but the emphasis is certainly on the adjective in the phrase. In his reflections on the society, the constitution is the sovereign.

Because of the national, linguistic quarrels that have arisen between us recently, I think that now, as mature citizens of one homeland, like good brothers, we will become equals on the constitutional way and if we do not wish for a third judge to meddle in our patriotic disputes *et inter duos litigantes gaudeat*, we have to become equals, with no harm made to the one nationality or the other, whatsoever. We have to accept as a rule not to be disputed that: “What is dear to one, the other also has a right to”. (p. 31)

Concealed behind the metaphor of ‘a third judge’ is of course the figure of the Austrian emperor, but taking into account his view of

imperial Russia, shaped partly by Karel Havlíček Borovský (1821–56), it is safe to assume that he would be even more unwilling to see Emperor Alexander II in this role. This conclusion is not undermined by the fact that in one of his articles, he portrays Russia as the foreign pillar of strength for the Slavs living in the Habsburg monarchy as he does not go beyond the conventional, rhetorical figure of a ‘bugbear’, which was created to complete the survey of potential enemies and allies of the Slavs.

An attachment to his homeland and an affirmation of *Uhorsko* as the common home of many nations does not mean, of course, that Palárik is uncritical of it. The revival of *Uhorsko*, the state’s regaining of its strength, is hedged about with conditions for each party. I have already mentioned some of the conditions set for the Slovaks: they have to undertake action, prove that they are an equal partner, develop their cultural activity, integrate internally. He develops these threads especially in the chronologically last of the texts under analysis, that is, *Na dorozumenie inteligencie našich slovenských stolíc*. From Hungarians, on the other hand, Palárik expects that they cease their politics of supremacy over other nations, increasingly clear in the past decades, and obey the law, especially in the matter of other nations being able to use their own languages in public administration and education. He expects both sides to learn a lesson from the experiences of 1848–9 and the repressive measures applied in the aftermath by Vienna. Palárik is fully aware that the possibility of transforming the homeland depends on the way in which Hungarians solve the nationality question; yet, at the end of 1860, he expressed deep hope that lately both sides had reached the point when they could agree to a compromise solution:

But our brothers Hungarians – we place our trust in that – will also be more careful in relations with us than they were before 1848. They have learned a lot since then, and we have learned a lot, and God will grant that after so many hardships, we will finally work in true harmony for development of the material and spiritual happiness of our land and its fraternised nations. (p. 30)

The hour of changes has come, according to him, and not only the fate of *Uhorsko* as such is being weighed, but above all, of its citizens of various nationalities, who – moreover – are on different rungs of the social ladder. He strongly emphasises that “He who does not wish to

lose his rights, has to strive for them in this momentous time. Now the rule is: 'He that wants to life must move!'" (p. 32).

Movement, change, 'things happening' become the sign of the current time, recognition of the rapid acceleration of the world, a change of the tempo of history. The very number of titles of Hungarian newspapers and names of Hungarian politicians mentioned by Palárik in the handful of his articles makes one realise how dense and concentrated the social dialogue became at the threshold of the constitutional change in the Habsburg monarchy. In the debate on the shape of the state, initiated by the October Diploma issued by the emperor, we find Palárik clearly aspiring for the role of a guide and a link between the milieu of Slovak national activists and the Hungarians. His homeland, as expressed through symbols of power, is the Kingdom of Hungary – and he would not desire any other, and thus is striving for a compromise with the brothers Hungarians; yet, clearly, such compromise would be based upon different principles now.

#### IV DIALOGUE IN A POLITICAL CHARADE

Before I come to a conclusion, I would like to underline that the argument for political cooperation with Pest that appears in all texts I have referred to is for Palárik the stance of specific Hungarian politicians, which allowed him to hope for an effective constitutional regulation of the rules of social life. In the same sense, those of Palárik's articles that have been analysed in this essay accurately reflect the spirit of the political dialogue that the Slovaks and the Hungarians conducted as they were working out a consensus on the line between national and civil interests, even if the dialogue is an example of niche cooperation, which did not bring measurable or lasting political effects.

It is interesting that by putting himself in the role of a mediator between the Hungarians and the Slovaks, Palárik joins two types of narrations into a semantic whole. Firstly, he emphatically uses numerous rhetorical figures, based on references to common historical heritage, but also on a biblical script (offering, sin, admonition, feuding brothers, new birth/rebirth). Secondly, thanks to the many facts he refers to: names, dates, documents, quotations, press references, his argument is objective. The effect of such syncretic formula

is that it is open both to a press dialogue with Hungarians<sup>37</sup> and to ideological-and-national dialogue with Slovaks and Slavs (a lengthy quotation from Strossmayer and commentary on his words). Palárik takes on the role of an interpreter of legal acts (just to mention the passages in which he quotes the October Diploma or the Demands of the Slovak Nation from 1848, point by point, comments on them and explains their meaning) as well as public statements (written or oral) of the public figures mentioned. The role that he took on is fully revealed in the opening paragraphs of the third article from the *Otázka národnosti ...* cycle. It received a subtitle: *Ohlas na slovo p. bar. J. Eötvösa v otázke národnosti* [Response to Baron J. Eötvös's words on the nationality question] and begins with the following words:

I was going to bring this important discussion to a close, but the new, joyful stage, which the solution to the nationality question in our dear *Uhorsko* is luckily entering, induces me to continue. In the Hungarian, Croatian and Serbian magazines, the spirit of the 20th of October blows freely like the peaceful, warm Zephyr announcing the joyful spring of 'better times', in favour of constitutional and national freedom, which is supposed to develop under the aegis of the Crown of St Stephen. The spirit warms us with dear hope that our divergent patriotic points-of-view as regards numerous languages and nationalities can be reconciled for the calming of all and the securing of both national rights and universal happiness of the country, since on November 20, *Pesti Napló* published on the first page an article by the former Education Minister, Baron Eötvös, which is written with real diplomatic talent in favour of equal rights for all the nationalities living in *Uhorsko*, and which has dispersed the last fogs of our doubts and fears. (p. 48)

After this introduction, Palárik relates the exchange of commentaries and political opinions that took place on the pages of the Croatian magazine *Pozor* [The Attention] and Hungarian newspaper *Pester Lloyd*, to which József Eötvös responded in *Pesti Napló*. Under the pretext of acquainting Slovaks with the exchange, Palárik in fact enters the to-the-point debate on the ways of solving national tensions, which was carried on in the *Uhorský* part of the monarchy. He ends

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<sup>37</sup> In the articles under discussion, Palárik quotes or refers to opinions of certain Hungarian publicist and public figures, published in the contemporary press. Along with Eötvös, the author he quotes the most frequently, the names of Zsigmond Kemény, Ivánka, Lónyi, Petényi appear.



his article by addressing Eötvös directly, with an almost prophetic hymn of thanks in his honour, in which the theme of brotherhood of Slovaks and Hungarians reappears, inscribed into the landscape of the Tatra Mountains and the Danube. How a completely positive solution to the nationality question, which turns out to be the primary topic of debates carried on during the period of ‘constitutional experiments’, is tied to the Hungarian constitution, is shown in the following words:

Now let us all work in harmony, so that the word of Eötvös ‘become flesh’ as quickly as possible; because we Slovaks also shall only begin to breathe with freedom when the Hungarian constitution regains its legal authority and when Eötvös’s suggestions regarding also our Slovak nation take on legal authority at the country’s parliament, and then a better future awaits us Slovaks, and all inhabitants of *Uhorsko!* (p. 53)

If one were to trust history textbooks, which often reconstruct only the official narration, sanctioned by the passage of time and the winning ideology, this statement, in which is hidden an example of Slovak evaluation of the Hungarian constitution, would have to be considered impossible. With his apology of the Hungarian constitution given at the end of 1860, Palárik clearly participates in the hidden undercurrent of Slovak political thought, which, though episodically, was followed also by the young Štúr:<sup>38</sup> – the *politicum hungaricum*.

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The analysis of Ján Palárik’s sociopolitical articles leads to the conclusion that the author, undeservedly accused by some of his compatriots of Hungarianism and Magyarism, carried out a sharp analysis of fast-paced social changes, accurately recognising the mechanisms of the formation of power structures in the period of national emancipation that was strengthened by the collapse of feudal structures. His political views, stressing the importance of civic stances, along with the common Slovak-Hungarian historical heritage, reconfirm this recognition. He rightly drew attention to the limited possibilities of

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<sup>38</sup> See Peter Brock, *The Slovak National Awakening: An Essay in the Intellectual History of East Central Europe* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1976). I have used a Slovak translation of the book, i.e., *idem, Slovenské národné obrozenie 1787–1847. K vzniku modernej slovenskej identity*, trans. Dagmar Kročanová-Roberts (Bratislava, 2002), 84–6.

rapid institutionalisation of Slovak national life, connected with the need of political and national awakening of the middle bourgeoisie. This key social class could negotiate equal relations with the Hungarian party, but at that time would not identify strongly enough with the Slovak language and culture, being driven instead in their political choices by pragmatism and economic interest, in the first place. His say expressed in the sociopolitical press is just as clear in 1861, which was an important year for the Slovaks, and in the years that followed as well. Present-day readers are generally more familiar with Palárik's texts from that period; these texts have been studied more often, perhaps because of their altered rhetoric. The euphoria caused by the loosening of imperial surveillance through administration in 1860 has died down, giving place to cool analysis of the next shifts on the political scene and their consequences for the Slovaks.

*trans. Aleksandra Michalska, Tristan Korecki*