

PIETER C. VAN DUIN

## Between Bohemia and Russia: Ľudovít Štúr, Slovak identity, and the controversies of the Slavic world

This essay tries to analyse the ‘Slav idea’, the structure of ‘Slavic thought’ of Ľudovít Štúr, and to explain why it was for him an attractive ideological option. Štúr’s *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft* is seen as more or less a natural continuation of his life-long ideological tendencies. But it is also argued that Štúr can be seen as a man with ‘two souls’ in his political personality. On the one hand, his activities were part of the Slav and Central European struggle for national emancipation, social reform, and democratic rights. On the other hand, many of his writings were marked by a belief in the special character and historical mission of the Slavs, and of the Slovaks and the Russians in particular. His All-Slav ideas were reinforced by the influence of Russian Slavophiles and Pan-Slavists, furthering the conviction that Slav political unity was to be implemented under Russian leadership. The Slovaks were seen as having remained linguistically closest to the original Slavs living in the Pannonian homeland and, therefore, as a special Slav group. Russia was seen as the political centre that was needed to unite the Slavs and to confer on them the leading historical role that Herder and Kollár had foreseen they would play. Meanwhile the values of democracy, equality, and other European ideals retreated to the margins. Aside from preserving the ‘old Slav village community’ as a model of social justice, the Slav idea was incapable of producing any remarkable social or political ideas. Instead it idealised Tsarist autocracy and the Orthodox Church as a conservative alternative to modern Europe.

**Key words:** Ľudovít Štúr ; Slav idea; Pan-Slavism; Slovak identity; Russian Slavophilism; Bohemian realism

The 200th anniversary of the birth of Ľudovít Štúr in 2015 was a suitable moment to revisit some old questions regarding Štúr’s role in Slovak and European history and to ask some new questions as well, or at least to tackle some of the old questions in a fresh way.<sup>1</sup> What I am especially concerned with in this essay is how Štúr tried to define the historical, political, and cultural identity of the Slovaks and their place within the family of Slav nations. The individual identity

<sup>1</sup> This essay was written partly in anticipation of the *Konferencia k 200. výročiu narodenia Ľudovíta Štúra* held in Košice in November 2015, an event in the political-science series *Kam kráčaš, demokracia*. The relationship between Ľudovít Štúr and the issue of democracy is indeed one of the problematical and intriguing aspects of Štúr’s ideas. This essay was also inspired by new publications on Štúr, including *Ľudovít Štúr: štúdie a eseje*, ed. Rudolf Chmel (Bratislava, 2015) and *Ľudovít Štúr na hranici dvoch vekov. Život, dielo a doba verus historická pamät*, eds. Peter Macho and Daniela Kodajová (Bratislava, 2015).

of the Slovaks as a separate national group was weak and vague, especially politically, and therefore Štúr needed the idea of the greater ‘Slav nation’ to underpin the reality of the Slovak nation as a part of it.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Štúr – and many others – believed that there existed such a thing as ‘the Slav nation’, and his efforts to define the identity and the position of the more specific Slovak nation within it were not made in opposition to this more general and fundamental idea. On the contrary, it gave the Slovaks additional strength and made the idea of Magyarisation of the Slovaks absurd. Ľudovít Štúr’s attempts to defend and strengthen the position of the Slovaks in Upper Hungary were arguably the most important aspect of his cultural and political activities. Yet we know that Štúr was also famous in the Slavic world and beyond on account of his endeavours to present a picture of Slavdom, of the Slav ‘nation’ and its significance, as a whole. In this respect he followed in the footsteps of his great Slovak predecessor Ján Kollár, although his understanding of the ‘tribal’ composition of the broader Slav nation, of the strategy that should be followed to achieve its ‘liberation’, and of other controversial historical, cultural, and political questions was quite different from that of Kollár.

## I

The struggle for the emancipation, equality, or liberation of the Slovaks in multinational Hungary will not be the focus of this essay; it has been abundantly documented and analysed. Instead, I will focus on the question – also examined before, but much more controversial and complicated – of how Ľudovít Štúr tried to come to terms with the problem of the specific role and identity of the Slovaks vis-à-vis the other Slavic nations, in particular the Czechs to the west and the Russians to the east and the north. (We should not forget that in the nineteenth century ‘Russia’, or rather Russian Poland, was not far away from Slovakia, lying in fact just to the north of Cracow and west Galicia.) To Štúr this implied that he also, indeed even first and foremost, had to resolve the question of the identity of the Slavs as a whole. That is to say, whether they were a European nation (or several European nations) like other European nations – in particular, like the ‘Latin’ or ‘Romance’ nations and the ‘Germanic’ or ‘Teutonic’ nations – or whether they had a unique identity and had to ‘fulfil a historical mission’ of their own. Indeed, he believed that the latter was the case, and that it was the Slavs’ mission – after the older Latin and Germanic nations ‘had completed their historical role’ – to bring to Europe and to the world a higher stage of ‘humanity’ in the cultural-philosophical sense of Johann Gottfried Herder and his Slovak emulator Kollár.<sup>3</sup> However, the idea of the special historical and cultural role of the Slavs might have implications that contradicted European notions of equality, democracy, individualism, etc. It meant, among

<sup>2</sup> See for example Ján TIBENSKÝ, ‘Der slawische Gedanke und seine Rolle zu Beginn der slowakischen nationalen Wiedergeburt’, in Ľudovít HOLOTÍK (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr und die slawische Wechselseitigkeit* (Bratislava, 1969), pp. 37-45; more in general, Radomír VLČEK, ‘Slovanstvo a národy habsburskej monarchie v 19. storočí (Slovanstvo ako kľúčový faktor formovania moderného národa. Prvá polovica 19. storočia)’, *Historický zborník*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2013), pp. 73-94.

<sup>3</sup> See for the influence of Herder and his reception by the Slovaks and other Slav nations, Holm SUNDHAUSSEN, *Der Einfluss der Herderschen Idee auf die Nationsbildung bei den Völkern der Habsburger Monarchie* (Munich, 1973); Karol ROSENBAUM, ‘Herder und die slowakische nationale Wiedergeburt’, in G. ZIEGENGEIST et al. (eds.), *Johann Gottfried Herder: Zur Herder-Rezeption in Ost- und Südosteuropa* (Berlin, 1978), pp. 92-106; Peter DREWS, *Herder und die Slaven. Materialien zur Wirkungsgeschichte bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1990), esp. pp. 156-69 on Slovakia.

other things, that Štúr had to face what was probably the most difficult and controversial question of all: if the Slovaks and the Slavs in general should strive for cultural and political (All-Slav or 'Pan-Slav') unity, either as a federation in one form or another (and perhaps in alliance with a non-Slavic dynasty like the Habsburgs) or under the leadership of the most powerful Slav nation, Russia, in order to preserve their position or attain their 'liberation' from the rule of non-Slavic nations like the Austrians, the Hungarians, and the Turks. There was no agreement among Slav leaders about these questions, and most Czech and Polish political and intellectual figures tended to develop different ideas about them than Štúr did. This was not only apparent in the 1850s, when Štúr wrote his Pan-Slav work, *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft*, but even before and during the revolution of 1848-1849 as he began to develop Slavophile and Russophile views.

This essay will argue that there was a greater degree of continuity between Štúr's pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary ideas than is sometimes admitted or recognised. Perhaps *Das Slawenthum* was less exceptional in the context of the evolution of his ideas (1830s-1850s) than was the brief episode of pro-Austrian activity between the second half of 1848 and 1850. The personality of Ľudovít Štúr may have contained 'two souls' from the beginning: a democratic-patriotic and a Slavophile pro-Russian one. This argument is not meant to 'criticise' Štúr or the Slovak leadership, but to try to understand the national-political and ideological 'logic' of contemporary Slovak ideas and Slovak actions, if such a thing existed at all. The Slovaks, in particular Štúr and the other Slovak leaders of the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, were faced with a difficult and complex national-political situation. The situation was complicated not just in terms of the Slovaks' objective position in Hungary and Central Europe, but also because of the contradictions in the Slovak leaders' own ideas and political attitudes. The Slovaks occupied a position in East-Central Europe which, politically, culturally and psychologically speaking, was situated between that of the more 'Western' Czechs (especially the Bohemians) and the more 'Eastern' Russians (including, according to some, the Poles). Even if it sounded like a cliché, it would seem that their position 'halfway' a Bohemian West and a Russian East – and located as they were in relatively backward Hungary – is not even such a bad way to describe their objective as well as their subjective position.<sup>4</sup> More than the Czechs or (for other reasons) the Poles, Slovak intellectuals tended to cultivate All-Slav and pro-Russian sentiments and historical-philosophical speculations. This was part of what may be called their politically 'undefined' position in Hungary and Central Europe and their 'compensatory' intellectual and cultural traditions, including the idea (an eighteenth-century invention) that the ethno-historical cradle of Slavdom, its original homeland, had been ancient Pannonia and the Tatra region (in fact, Slovakia) and that the Slovaks had remained the closest to the original Slavs in terms of language, culture, and identity. This myth led to the idea of Slovakia and the Slovak language having not only a special identity, but a unique status among the Slavs.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that the concept of Slovak identity as well as the Slovak struggle for national survival needed the idea of the greater 'Slav nation'.

<sup>4</sup> The Slovaks' position as a 'bridge between East and West' has been discussed until very recently. See for example Daneš BRZICA, Zuzana POLÁČKOVÁ, and Ivo SAMSON, 'The Slovak Republic: Bridge between East and West?', in Peter J. KATZENSTEIN (ed.), *Mitteuropa: Between Europe and Germany* (Providence, RI, and Oxford, 1997), pp. 192-239; more briefly, Svetoslav BOMBÍK, 'Kam, Slovensko, z križovatky?', in BOMBÍK, *Bližšie k Európe. Štúdie a články* (Bratislava, 1995), pp. 130-1.

<sup>5</sup> TIBENSKÝ, 'Der slawische Gedanke', p. 41; Marcela BEDNÁROVÁ, 'Slovakia a slovanská integrácia pohľadom Ľudovíta Štúra', in MACHO and KODAJOVÁ (eds.), *Ľudovít Štúr na hranici dvoch vekov*, pp. 69-85, here p. 73.

There can be no doubt that the idea of Slav unity or mutuality played a special role in the Slovak national movement of the nineteenth century. According to Vladimír Matula, the ‘Slav idea’ was the ‘axis’ of Ľudovít Štúr’s *Weltanschauung*.<sup>6</sup> As already noted, he had inherited this from Kollár, whose influence was crucial during the 1820s and 1830s, but also from a longer Slovak tradition of seeking strength in the Slav idea: the idea, already articulated in the seventeenth century, that there was a large Slav nation of which the Slovaks were but a fragment. Interestingly, among the individuals who directly influenced Ľudovít Štúr in his youth was his teacher Leopold Pec at the Gymnasium of Raab (Győr), which Štúr attended between 1827 and 1829. Pec was a man with ‘Slavophile’ ideas and sentiments, but he was certainly not the only one among the teachers in the various gymnasiums of northern Hungary with a Slav background.<sup>7</sup> The ‘Slav’, ‘All-Slav’, ‘Slavophile’, or ‘Pan-Slav’ way of thinking was not just a matter of cultural, linguistic, or literary preoccupations but also an ethno-historical concept and, potentially, a matter of political aspirations and political ideology. The Slav or All-Slav idea conceived of the Slavs as an ethnic, cultural, and historical unity and had a strong ideological undertone in terms of Slav identity, historical mission, and so on. As a system of thought, Slavophilism (Slavophilia) added to the idea of intrinsic Slavic separateness the suggestion of the need for political union based on spiritual unity, while Pan-Slavism proclaimed this goal more openly or even advocated the need for Russian leadership.<sup>8</sup> The ethno-historical idea of a special ‘Slav history’ is something it is important to pay more attention to, and which has probably not completely been unveiled yet by modern historians.<sup>9</sup> The study of history was part of the activity of the Pressburg Slovak students’ movement in the 1830s and 1840s. One aspect of this was the belief that there had been a ‘glorious Slavic past’, which could still be seen at the ruins of Devín Castle and other ancient or medieval locations that had once been part of the Great Moravian or other early Slav civilisations and state formations. In 1835 Ľudovít Štúr himself started to give private lectures on the history

<sup>6</sup> Vladimír MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr (1815-1856)* (Bratislava, 1956), p. 27. I am referring to the German version of this small analytical biography. It is difficult to argue on convincing grounds that, since the older publications of Vladimír Matula and his generation, spectacular progress has been made in the historiography on Ľudovít Štúr, despite the disappearance of ‘Marxist’ terminology. The fact that Matula is hardly mentioned by later Slovak historians is a bit strange.

<sup>7</sup> MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> These ‘working definitions’ are improvised and other definitions of the terms concerned may be just as fitting. In the Russian context ‘Slavophiles’ were often in opposition to Tsarist policy, but in East-Central Europe this was not necessarily the case, because knowledge of Russia was often limited among the Slavs of Austria and Hungary. On ‘Pan-Slavism’ (including the Slovak variant) there is an extensive international literature. See especially, Alfred FISCHER, *Der Panslawismus bis zum Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart/Berlin, 1919); Hans KOHN, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1953), esp. pp. 11-28 on ‘Romanticism and Realism among Czechs and Slovaks’; Michael B. PETROVICH, ‘Ľudovít Štúr and Russian Panslavism’, *Journal of Central European Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (April, 1952), pp. 1-19; Michael Boro PETROVICH, *The Emergence of Russian Panslavism 1856-1870* (New York, 1956); Ferdinand ĎURČANSKÝ, ‘Die Slowakei und der Panslawismus’, in *Die Slowakei als mitteleuropäisches Problem in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich, 1965), pp. 117-54; Tatiana IVANTYŠYNOVÁ, ‘Die slawische Idee bei den Slowaken in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts’, in Andreas MORITSCH (ed.), *Die Slavische Idee* (Bratislava, 1993), pp. 24-36; Radomír VLČEK, *Ruský panslawismus – realita a fikce* (Prague, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Richard Marsina is a historian who is aware of this, as is shown by his recent analysis of Ľudovít Štúr’s *Starý i nový věk Slovaků* (1841); see Richard MARSINA, ‘Štúrov náhľad na historický vývoj Slovákov’, *Historický zborník*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (2015), pp. 29-41. But what is needed, too, is historiographical analyses of ‘Štúrist’ views on the history of the Slavs as a whole, not just of the old ‘Slovaks’ (even if they were the ‘Slavs par excellence’).

of the 'Slav nation' to his followers at the Pressburg Lutheran Lyceum, where he had arrived as a fourteen-year old student in 1829.<sup>10</sup>

This lecturing activity on Slav history and literature was most intense during the first half of the 1840s, when parallel to Štúr's recognition of the individuality of ten or more separate Slavic 'tribes', including the Slovaks, he also began to develop his Pan-Slav perspective of the need for Russian leadership of Slavdom. This meant, among other things, that he abandoned his Polonophilia of the 1830s which temporarily had challenged his older Russophilia, but also, it seems, the democratic idea of a voluntary Slav federation. On the one hand, there were the individual Slavic groups which had to consolidate their position in their own unique situation; on the other hand, there was Slavdom as a whole which needed a strong leader. The All-Slav or more political Pan-Slav concept was rooted in part in a modified, 'Slavocentric' version of the Hegelian philosophy of history<sup>11</sup> and in Herder's views on the promising future of Slavdom: German 'dialectical' and 'humanistic' ideas whose attractive philosophical dynamics and prestige Štúr could use for his own ends. But given that his Slavophile tendencies already began to appear long before his writing of *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft* in the early 1850s, which spelled them out more fully but not invented them, there were obviously other sources feeding Štúr's ideas as well. With regard to the years before 1848, Marcel Martinkovič speaks of a tendency of 'essentialisation' of Slav virtues and characteristics which betrayed the influence of the Russian Slavophiles.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, probably more important than his German inspirers were his Russian ones. Štúr derived his knowledge of Russia and things Slav, of what made the Slavs, their culture, and their history specifically Slav, in the main from older Russian historians like Nikolay Mikhailovich Karamzin (1766-1826)<sup>13</sup> and contemporary Slavophile historians and Russian Pan-Slavists like Mikhail Petrovich Pogodin (1800-1875), Stepan Petrovich Shevyrev (1806-1864), and other authors writing in the Moscow periodical *Moskvityanin*.<sup>14</sup> While some of the opinions expressed in this journal tended to adhere to Russian 'official nationalism', refraining from ideologically unorthodox views or Pan-Slav 'adventurism', others expressed a more independent Slavophile philosophy. Slavophile views on the special character and historical mission of Russia, mixed with adapted ideas of Hegel and Herder, were used by Ľudovít Štúr in his lectures on Slav history and in his writings, for example his articles in *Tatránka* (1841-1844). Among the latter was

<sup>10</sup> MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> In his analysis of Ľudovít Štúr's *Přednášení historická* from the early 1840s, Teodor Münz observes that Štúr only 'paraphrases' Hegel without critically commenting or conducting a discussion with him. Arguably, this made it easier for Štúr to create his own Hegel and not to enter into painful or contradictory arguments. See Teodor MÜNZ, 'O čom Štúr nehovoril', in CHMEL (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr: štúdie a eseje*, pp. 114-25. Tschizewskij (Čyževskýj) describes Štúr's philosophy of history as a form of 'free variation' on the Hegelian themes. See Dmitrij TSCHIŽEWSKIJ, 'Hegel bei den Slovaken', in TSCHIŽEWSKIJ (ed.), *Hegel bei den Slaven* (Bad Homburg, 1961), pp. 397-411, here p. 405.

<sup>12</sup> Martinkovič refers in this connection to Štúr's *Panslavizmus a naša krajina* and his *Zásluhy Slovanov o európsku civilizáciu*. See Marcel MARTINKOVIČ, 'Slovanstvo, Európa a Rusko v myslení Ľudovíta Štúra', in MACHO and KODAJOVÁ (eds.), *Ľudovít Štúr na hranici dvoch vekov*, pp. 100-14, here p. 105.

<sup>13</sup> See for a brief characterisation of Karamzin, Hans KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia. Historical and Political Thought of Russia's Great Age* (New York, 1962), p. 8, where he is described as a man with conservative and Russian-nationalist views who did not completely reject the West the way the Slavophiles did. Karamzin's *History of the Russian State*, perhaps the first serious Russian historical work, was published during the years 1816-1826. For a detailed study, see J.L. BLACK, *Nicholas Karamzin and Russian Society in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Russian Political and Historical Thought* (Toronto, 1975).

<sup>14</sup> For Russian names the English way of spelling is used, although it is not always consistent in the literature.

his *Azya a Europa čili určení Ruska v ohledu na Azyi*, a series of articles which remained unfinished. Štúr's message was that the Slavs would become the leading element of European and world civilisation, and that Russia was to play a crucial role in this process of historical change. It may be true that in the *Tatránka* articles Russia was not yet as emphatically presented as the major political and civilisational power of the future as would happen less than ten years later, in *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft*.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, during his feverish political activities in the second half of the 1840s Štúr usually denied being a Pan-Slavist, at least in a political sense, of which he was constantly accused by the Hungarians.<sup>16</sup> However, it was difficult to deny that he was a cultural or ideological 'All-Slavist' at the least, which was not surprising given the Hungarian anti-Slav de-nationalising policy on the one hand, and the general popularity of the Slav idea, on the other.

The library of the Czechoslav Society and, later, the Slavic Institute at the Pressburg Lutheran Lyceum was supported by book donations from institutions and private persons in Bohemia, Russia, the South Slav lands, and elsewhere. By the mid-1840s the library contained more than 2,100 volumes, the contents of which may help us understand how the 'history of the Slav nation' was conceptualised by Ľudovít Štúr and his several dozen Slovak followers, fellow-students, and future Slovak leaders.<sup>17</sup> It seems that from the beginning Russia was a special aspect of Štúr's Slavic concept. He expressed his love and admiration for Russia and the Russian people, and Russian history and literature were part of his private lectures. The progressive and reformist ideals of the Russian Decabrists in the 1820s, including their idea of a Slav democratic federation, had not been without influence in the Pressburg students' milieu. The undemocratic side of Russia was not only shown in the suppression of the Decabrist revolt, but also in the suppression of the Polish uprising in 1831. This rebellion against Russia, the 'Mother of Slavdom', was a painful experience for Ľudovít Štúr and others. In the early 1830s there was a wave of Polonophilia among the Slovak students in Pressburg and elsewhere, partly fed by the stories and propaganda of Polish democratic exiles in Hungary. But in the later 1830s a change took place among the Slovaks, away from pro-Polish feelings and back again to the old Russophilism, which had all kinds of repercussions. Some Czech patriots in Prague observed with mistrust the journey made by the Moscow Slavist Osip Maximovich Bodyansky from Bohemia, where he had stayed for some time, to Slovakia in 1837-1838, agitating against him as a 'Pan-Slav emissary'.<sup>18</sup> This accusation came from quite another milieu than the anti-Slovak Magyarisers, and was perhaps one of the first indications that there was emerging a difference in atmosphere and political orientation between the world of Czech students and patriots in Bohemia and the circle of Slovak students in Pressburg. In the 1840s a growing number of Czech intellectuals were moving away from the All-Slav and Russophile tendencies and began to develop a more 'realist', liberal, and European-oriented outlook, renewing the Austro-Slav perspective of politi-

<sup>15</sup> Vladimír MATULA, 'Štúr a Slovanstvo', in *Ľudovít Štúr. Život a dielo (1815-1856)*, ed. Vladimír Matula (Bratislava, 1956), pp. 359-87, here pp. 377-8, where, among other things, the rather critical autobiography of Jonáš Záborský is quoted as a crucial source on Štúr's ideas in the 1840s.

<sup>16</sup> See Ján HUČKO, *Život a dielo Ľudovíta Štúra* (Martin, 1988), pp. 127-71 passim for the many official and unofficial Hungarian accusations of 'Pan-Slavism' levelled against Štúr and his followers.

<sup>17</sup> See for the library of the Slavic Institute, Anna FERIENČÍKOVÁ, *Knižnica Slovanského ústavu v Bratislave* (Bratislava, 1972).

<sup>18</sup> Josef KOČÍ, 'Der Austroslawismus und seine Rolle in der tschechischen Politik', in HOLOTÍK (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr und die slawische Wechselseitigkeit*, pp. 90-116, here p. 102.

cal advancement within the Habsburg framework and developing views that were more critical of Russia and of the romantic dreams about a common Slav nation or a Pan-Slav policy. Czechs like František Palacký and Karel Havlíček Borovský were among the most prominent of these patriotic realists and democrats, rejecting the Slav idea as a leading principle and trying to reinvigorate the Austro-Slav policy which focused on the practical political and cultural needs of the Czech or 'Czechoslav' nation.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, the Czech tradition to regard the Slovaks as a part of the Czechoslav nation meant that the Czech leaders rejected the growing tendency among the formerly pro-Czechoslovak Protestant Slovak leaders to define the Slovaks as a separate national group, 'tribe', or 'branch' within the greater Slav nation.<sup>20</sup> The combination of a Bohemocentric Austro-Slavism and a national-cultural Czechoslavism that in a way denied the autonomous national personality of the Slovaks, was bound to lead to growing Slovak-Czech friction. One of the few Czech political leaders who understood and accepted the Slovak desire to develop an autonomous national policy, including the new literary Slovak language introduced by Štúr in 1843, was Josef Václav Frič, one of the most liberal figures among the many political talents in Bohemia and Moravia.<sup>21</sup> A man like Havlíček, on the other hand, could reject the All-Slav idea and at the same time insist that the Slovaks should stay within the framework of the Czechoslav nation together with the Bohemians, the Moravians, and the Silesians.

## II

During his years as a student in Halle in 1838-1840, Ľudovít Štúr developed contacts with Russian students and Russian Slavists in Germany some of which were intensified after his return to Pressburg. Russian visitors to members of the Czechoslav Society and Slavic Institute in Pressburg in the 1830s and 1840s, of whom Bodyansky may have been one of the first, were warmly welcomed by the Štúrists. Although their number may have been relatively small, some of these Russians were highly influential. They included the professor of Slavic literature at the University of St Petersburg, Ismail Ivanovich Sresnevsky, who became a close friend of Štúr; a man like the Polish professor W.A. Maciejowski from Warsaw (remarkably enough a Russo-ophile); and the Russian Slavophile writer Nikolai A. Rigelman. Correspondence and exchange of information and literature were maintained with the Russians Bodyansky, Pogodin, Shevyrev, Sresnevsky, Rigelman, Peter Ivanovich Preis, the Slavophile historian Alexei Stepanovich Khomyakov (1804-1860), and others.<sup>22</sup> Most of them represented the views of official Russia or

<sup>19</sup> In 1845 Havlíček started his 'Young Czech' political alternative to All-Slav 'sentimentalism', a movement that wanted to be 'realist', practical, and Austro-Slav in orientation and that adopted a spirit of liberal 'democratism' from Western Europe, which could be seen as the beginning of a long-term political project. See Otto URBAN, *Česká společnost 1848-1918* (Prague, 1982), p. 17. It should be noted that the Czechs had greater political and cultural liberties in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy than the Slovaks had in Hungary.

<sup>20</sup> Josef KOČÍ and Jan NOVOTNÝ, 'Ľudovít Štúr a česko-slovenské vzťahy', in MATULA (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr. Život a dielo (1815-1856)*, pp. 325-57, here p. 333.

<sup>21</sup> Karel KOSÍK, 'Josef Václav Frič – český buržoasní revolucionář', in *J.V. Frič a demokratické proudy v české politice a kultuře*, eds. Václav ŽÁČEK and Karel KOSÍK (Prague, 1956), pp. 7-42, here pp. 31-4.

<sup>22</sup> Helena TURCEROVÁ, 'Styky Slaviofilov so Slovákmi a ich vplyv na odtrhnutie sa Slovákov od Čechov', *Prúdy*, Vol. IV, 1912-13, No. 9 (August 1913), pp. 345-50; MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, pp. 32, 76; BEDNÁROVÁ, 'Slovania a slovanská integrácia pohľadom Ľudovíta Štúra', p. 76.

of a variant of Slavophile thought that was even more exalted about the greatness and unique qualities of Russia than were its official spokesmen. There can be no doubt that Ľudovít Štúr, and a major part of the Slovak intelligentsia around him, were strongly influenced by these Russian nationalists and Slavophile thinkers. Rigelman visited Štúr in Pressburg in April 1845, and later reported that Štúr was especially influenced by Shevyrev, the author of the thesis, presented in *Moskvityanin* in 1841, of the 'decay' of the West and the threat that its decadence posed to Russia and the Slavs. Rigelman also mentioned Štúr's good knowledge of Slavophile concepts and his regular reading of *Moskvityanin*.<sup>23</sup> According to Vladimír Matula, the Slavophile and Russophile influence 'deformed' the Slovaks' view of Russia, because it led them to ignore the representatives of the other, democratic and more progressive Russia who resisted the Tsarist autocracy and the 'obscurantism' of the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>24</sup> It remains difficult to understand why a more open-minded and democratic thinker like Vissarion Belinsky should not have exerted a certain influence in Slovakia, for example through his essay, 'A View on Russian Literature in 1846' (published in the journal *Sovremennik*), in which he criticised the Slavophiles for their narrow-mindedness and their inability to properly understand the West.<sup>25</sup> This may have been caused by the relative isolation of Slovakia, which did not become acquainted with certain types of literature and information, despite the growing size of the Pressburg Slavic library. But perhaps it was also a question of the Slovak preference for Romantic and Slavophile ideas rather than liberal or more critical ideas.

Ľudovít Štúr and other Slovak leaders did not know Russia and never visited the country, unlike Karel Havlíček, whose stay in Russia in 1843 turned him into a principled opponent of the 'Slav idea' and Russophilism. Štúr, meanwhile, derived his knowledge of Russia from rather biased sources like the nationalist and Slavophile journal *Moskvityanin*. All his life he continued to depend on the views of Russian Slavophiles like Khomyakov and ideologists of Russian 'official nationalism' like Pogodin and Shevyrev, who warned against the poisonous influence of the West and presented Russia as an alternative civilisation. As noted above, this is surprising because there were other Russian voices as well, but Štúr, it seems, largely heard what he wanted to hear. The 'dark side'<sup>26</sup> of his one-sided Russian contacts, and the consequences of their influence upon him, became more apparent in his 'later views' as expressed in *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft*. However, Štúr's ideological 'dark side' had been moulded during the course of two decades or more. In the 1840s, at the latest, he already gave unmistakable expression to the conservative side of his Weltanschauung not only by his Russophile tendencies, which somehow managed to co-exist with his more democratic and reform-minded ideas, but also by a work like *Das neunzehnte Jahrhundert und der Magyarismus* (1845). This publication made his monarchical and autocratic tendencies quite clear, even if it is true that one of its specific objectives was to attack the pseudo-liberal Magyar gentry – by suggesting an alliance with Habsburg legitimism and enlightened despotism – and another to please the Austrian authorities and gain their permission for starting his intended newspaper, *Slovenskje Národňje Novini*.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Tibor PICHLER, 'Esej o Štúrovi a protestantizme', in CHMEL (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr: štúdie a eseje*, p. 42; see also KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia*, p. 107.

<sup>24</sup> MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, p. 32; MATULA, 'Štúr a Slovanstvo', pp. 373-4.

<sup>25</sup> See for BELINSKY, KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 116-37, 139, here esp. pp. 133-5, 139.

<sup>26</sup> MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, p. 33.

<sup>27</sup> The identification by some historians of Štúr's conservative or even 'reactionary' tendencies is traditionally not appreci-

It was hardly a coincidence that Štúr got on well with the small group of Russophile Serbian students attending the Pressburg Lutheran Lyceum; nor that the famous Njegoš, prince-bishop of Montenegro and a prominent Serbian author one of whose works idealised the massacre of Muslims in Montenegro more than a century ago, celebrated Ľudovít Štúr in one of his poems.<sup>28</sup> In some ways Štúr seemed to have more in common with the Serbs or the Russians than with the Czechs, who were not enthusiastic about his unrelenting Slavism or indeed his Slavic innovations. When after the introduction of the new Slovak literary language Štúr was heavily criticised by older-generation Slovaks like Kollár and other Protestant ‘Czechoslavists’, but also by the Czechs and an Illyrian (South Slav) leader like the Croat Ljudevit Gaj, he wrote in 1846 to Pogodin in Russia as though he wanted to explain himself to his Slavic mentor. Štúr defended his historic linguistic step arguing that he rejected unnatural constructs like Czechoslavism, Illyrianism, or Greater Serbianism. However, he did not reject All-Slavism, which he would always advocate in combination with the autonomy of a larger number of individual Slavic groups.<sup>29</sup> In the end, so he argued, this would not weaken but strengthen the greater Slav nation, because its different components could first strengthen themselves and then create a stronger All-Slav union. This union was his ultimate goal and his source of inspiration, as he assured Pogodin: ‘The Slav idea has been my star since my early youth; she overwhelmed me, sustained me, and will always nourish me.’<sup>30</sup> As Štúr tried to explain to Gaj in 1847, the strengthening of the separate Slavic branches had to be seen as a transitory stage in a larger process that would be followed by the unity of all Slavs on a ‘higher qualitative level’.<sup>31</sup> Here he made good use again of the Hegelian dialectical philosophy, or terminology, he had studied in Halle. In 1843, distancing himself from the Kollárist and Czech theory of the existence of four major Slav groups (Russians, Poles, Czechoslavs, and South Slavs), he had postulated the existence of at least eleven groups. Interestingly, one of them was the Ukrainians or Little Russians. But while Štúr took a ‘liberal’ stance with regard to national individuality – which in the Slovak case was underpinned by claims about the unique identity of the Slovaks as the inhabitants of the original Slav homeland – he refused to follow Czech or other liberals when it came to condemning Russia on political or constitutional grounds. The lack of political freedom and democracy in Russia, or its social, economic, and cultural backwardness, was no reason for Štúr to reject Russia. His counterpart in this respect was the Czech journalist Karel Havlíček Borovský, to whom we must pay some attention in order to understand one of the great controversies of the Slavic world.

The Ukrainian nation that Štúr included in his list of eleven Slav groups was mentioned by Havlíček as well, which he did in his famous article, ‘Czech and Slav’, published in *Pražské noviny* in 1846. This historic essay will always be recalled to illustrate the remarkable differences of opinion that existed among the Slav leaders, notably between a convinced All-Slavist like

---

ated by other historians. Elena Városová, for example, expressed her displeasure with S.Š. Osuský’s ‘one-sided stress on the reactionary aspects’ of Štúr’s thought. See Elena VÁROSSOVÁ, ‘Svetonázor Ľudovíta Štúra’, in MATULA (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr: Život a dielo (1815-1856)*, p. 86, referring to Osuský’s *Filozofia štúrovcov. I. Štúrova filozofia* (Myjava, 1926).

<sup>28</sup> See for Njegoš, for example, Zuzana POLÁČKOVÁ and Pieter van DUIN, ‘Montenegro Old and New: History, Politics, Culture, and the People’, *Studia Politica Slovaca*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (2013), pp. 60-82, here pp. 65-8.

<sup>29</sup> Vladimír MATULA, Reply to discussants, in HOLOTÍK (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr und die slawische Wechselseitigkeit*, pp. 425-31, here esp. p. 429.

<sup>30</sup> BEDNÁROVÁ, ‘Slovania a slovanská integrácia pohľadom Ľudovíta Štúra’, p. 69.

<sup>31</sup> MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, p. 42.

Štúr and a more liberal and European-oriented figure like Havlíček. In Slovakia, to be sure, not everyone thought like Štúr: a man like the liberal Protestant Štěpan Launer, for example, had different views. At the same time, in Bohemia not everyone was like Havlíček: J.J. Malý attacked him violently from the Pan-Slav point of view. But while Štúr may easily be seen as a rather 'typical' product of romantic Slovakia, Havlíček seemed increasingly representative of a more realist Bohemia and Moravia. Therefore, an understanding of Havlíček may serve to illuminate, by way of contrast, what Štúr was not. Havlíček had travelled to Poland and Russia (where he stayed in Shevyrev's house in Moscow for some time) in 1843 and was deeply disappointed by both of them, i.e. by the egocentric mentality of the Polish nobility and the misery of Russian tyranny and backwardness. After his return to Prague, he explained that he had been cured of his All-Slav ideas and now had become 'a simple determined Czech, even with some secret sour feeling against the name Slav.'<sup>32</sup> He had come to the conclusion that the Slavs 'are not one nation.' There were different Slav nations, just as there were different Romance or Teutonic nations, and the name 'Slav', Havlíček insisted, should remain a geographical and scientific name and not become a political or national one. Nationality was determined, 'not only by language but also by customs, religion, form of government, state of education, sympathies', and so on. Thus he had learned to regard the Russians and the Poles 'as nations alien to us Czechs.' 'We cannot expect unity even among closely related Slav nations', Havlíček wrote. 'On the contrary, the closer they live together the more disunity we may expect.' In this connection, indeed, he could have mentioned the widening rift between the Štúrists with their claim of a separate Slovak language and national identity, and his own insistence that the Slovaks spoke a dialect of Czech and therefore should remain 'Czechoslavs'. But given the main concerns of his essay, he pointed to a similar and perhaps more spectacular problem: the relationship between the Russians, the Ukrainians, and the Poles. Both the Russians and the Poles had behaved towards the Ukrainians as 'wolves' to a 'lamb', and both regarded the Ukrainian language as a dialect of their own language. (If Havlíček disagreed with this, he was actually not an unconditional supporter of the 'four tribes thesis'.) Indeed, the 'three great Eastern Slav nations' hated each other, and if the Russians or the Poles spoke of 'Pan-Slavism' each of them meant something different. The Russians had found some Pan-Slav friends 'in the West' (meaning, apparently, Slavs in the Habsburg lands and parts of the Balkans)<sup>33</sup> and were convinced that 'they will one day control all Slav lands!!!' Havlíček's use of three exclamation marks betrayed his state of excitement and distaste as well as his sincere belief, it seems, that the Russians were scheming to incorporate East-Central and Southeast Europe.

Havlíček claimed that 'the Russians think of the other Slavs in no brotherly fashion, but dishonestly and egoistically.' He even wrote: 'I admit that I prefer the Magyars, who are open enemies of the Czechs and Illyrians, to the Russians, who approach us with a Judas embrace – to put us into their pockets.' The Czechs should not rely upon others but work for their own advancement. Havlíček's perspective was practical and realist. 'For the very reason that people

<sup>32</sup> KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 83-90 for an English translation of crucial parts of the essay in *Pražské noviny* (February/March, 1846).

<sup>33</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century the notion of 'Central Europe' had not yet been invented and Europe was seen as being divided into 'West' and 'East', although Russia was also described as 'the North'. Since most of the Poles belonged to Russia they could be seen as part of the East, while the Slavs of Austria and Hungary and even some of the Slav groups belonging to the Ottoman Empire could be seen as part of the West, i.e. Europe outside of Russia.

work harder among us, there is no doubt that on the better historical foundation we have, and with our better general education, we Czechs will advance in the arts, in literature, and generally in national happiness beyond the Russians and the Poles.’ In equally self-assured and sober-minded fashion he stressed: ‘The Austrian monarchy is the best guarantee for the preservation of our and the Illyrian nationality, and the greater the power of the Austrian empire grows, the more secure our nationalities will be.’ It is clear that Havlíček saw the Czechs (or Czechoslavs) and the Illyrians (the Croats and other South Slavs in the Habsburg Monarchy) as sharing a common historical destiny, which was different from that of the Poles under Russian rule or the Slavs under Ottoman rule. His final conclusion was that ‘the Slavs are not one nation but four nations as independent and unconnected as any other European nations.’ In the final analysis, then, Havlíček was not prepared to regard the Ukrainians as a separate nation, nor the Slovaks or any South Slav nation unhappy with the Illyrian or All-South Slav concept.

František Palacký similarly believed that the Czechs ‘belonged intellectually to the West’, as Hans Kohn has phrased it.<sup>34</sup> This appeared among other things from his interpretation of Czech history, in particular the Hussite Revolution. In 1848 Palacký made a major contribution to keeping national-revolutionary Germany out of Bohemia-Moravia, arguing that the Austrian empire was crucial for the protection of the Czech nation. But in the same year he also warned against the danger of Russian expansion, Russia’s tendency to found a universal monarchy and imperial state, an evil ‘which I, though heart and soul a Slav, would deeply regret for the good of mankind, even though that universal empire called itself a Slav one.’<sup>35</sup> It was precisely such an empire that was envisaged by Pogodin and like-minded Russian nationalists influenced by the messianic imperial and Slavophile ideology. Like Palacký, Havlíček helped to develop the Austro-Slav political concept in opposition to the All-Slav idea, and at the same time to define the national identity of the Czech or ‘Czechoslav’ nation to which both men believed the Slovaks belonged as well.<sup>36</sup> This nation was orientated on the traditions of Western culture, not just the traditions of the Western Church but also the political culture of European democratic ideals, the opposite of which was the tradition of Russian autocracy, rigid social hierarchy, and caesaropapist conservatism. Nevertheless, there were some Russophile Czechs who fiercely opposed Havlíček and Palacký’s political perspective, especially Jakub Josef Malý and the notorious falsifier of historical documents Václav Hanka. The latter had declared in 1841 that ‘Bohemia could only be free if Russia took possession of Galicia’, which indeed would create a corridor from Russian Poland to the Czech lands.<sup>37</sup> At the same time in Slovakia, where it may have been difficult to imagine a figure similar to Havlíček or a political outlook similar to Czech realism, there was an oppositional anti-Štúrist like the liberal Protestant Štěpan Launer. Launer stressed the European connections of the West Slavs, their links with West-European and German culture, and regarded Štúr as a ‘traitor’ to Protestantism. His work *Povaha Slovanstva* could be seen as an alternative manifesto on the identity of the Slovaks and the West Slavs. Like Štúr, Launer was influenced by Hegelian thought, but – as was perfectly possible – he had a different interpretation of the role of the Slavs in the scheme of world history and had drawn different conclusions: he saw the West Slavs as part of Europe and the West and as different from the Orthodox Russians or

<sup>34</sup> KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia*, p. 72.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>36</sup> KOČÍ, ‘Der Austroslawismus und seine Rolle in der tschechischen Politik’, pp. 110-4.

<sup>37</sup> KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 100-1.

Serbs.<sup>38</sup> There was actually nothing surprising about these perfectly conventional and Protestant views. What was surprising was rather the fundamentalist Romanticism and Russophile leanings of Štúr. On the other hand, his criticism of the Bohemocentric outlook of the majority of Czech leaders was understandable.

### III

Štúr, indeed, criticised Czech Austro-Slavism as a Czech hegemonic policy among the West Slavs.<sup>39</sup> This criticism was only briefly suspended during the period between the second half of 1848 and 1850, when the Slovaks took part in the Austrian-led anti-Hungarian military campaigns and discussions about an administrative reorganisation of the Slovak territory. Štúr's belief that the Slovaks were different from the Czechs and had to develop their own national policy within the broader framework of Slav salvation, had consequences some of which may not have been fully appreciated. One of them was a deep scepticism about Austro-Slavism as a policy that was actually not suited to the needs and special position of the Slovaks. Another one was the tendency to continue invoking Slavdom as an ideological source of inspiration with a special significance for the Slovaks, who regarded themselves as the descendants of the 'original' Slavs and therefore a unique branch of the great Slavic tree. A third consequence was the tendency to abandon any kind of Austrian, Bohemian, or 'Western' orientation and to replace it with a radically different ideological perspective that was openly Russophile and Pan-Slav. This option was by no means an unnatural one for people like Štúr, who had been cultivating the 'Slav idea' with its inevitable Russophile elements for decades. The political and, indeed, psychological argument of Štúr's 'disillusion', 'disappointment' or 'frustration' about Austrian post-revolutionary, 'neo-absolutist' policy has long been used to explain his later 'turn' to the openly pro-Russian and Pan-Slav Weltanschauung of *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft*. But this argument has never been convincing. Other Slovak and Czech leaders were 'disappointed' or 'frustrated', too, but did not make the extreme ideological step that Štúr did. It would rather seem that Štúr continued to follow an old direction and now decided to draw the ultimate conclusion. This final step, it is true, made him more exceptional, but Štúr's ideological evolution as a whole was not exceptional but reflecting the Slovak national-cultural and intellectual mainstream of the time. That his ideological step was also unrealistic is illustrated by the fact that Russia itself continued the old policy of defending the 'legitimate' order in Europe, uttering not a word about Austrian neo-absolutism and ignoring Pan-Slavists at home.

The Štúrists' political perspective had a contradictory character from the start. On the one hand there were the practical activities in the cultural, journalistic, and political field in multinational Hungary. (It is true that these were being curtailed to a greater extent than the activities of the Czechs in Austria.) On the other hand there was the persistent All-Slav sentimentalism that

<sup>38</sup> PICHLER, 'Esej o Štúrovi a protestantizme', pp. 39-42. It is interesting that there was also criticism of Štúr in terms of his attitude and mentality: in the 1840s some Slovak students accused him of being domineering, authoritarian, and despotic, and indeed of 'Russian absolutism'. See BEDNÁROVÁ, 'Slovania a slovanská integrácia pohľadom Ľudovíta Štúra', p. 77.

<sup>39</sup> Ľudovít HAKAKSIM, 'Die slawischen Programme', in HOLOTÍK (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr und die slawische Wechselseitigkeit*, pp. 217-40, here p. 224.

could easily derail into a form of Russophilism. This brings us to a fundamental question about Ľudovít Štúr. Did Štúr indeed have two souls in his breast from the beginning of his public activity? This question will be further discussed below, and a case will be made for the thesis that it was actually this dynamic inner contradiction between the demands of practical politics, and the claims of romantic (and potentially conservative or even reactionary) ideology, that enabled his ‘Slavophile half’ to thrive and finally triumph. Štúr experienced a process of political and personal change but also this constant dualism, even if one side of it or the other dominated at particular stages of his life. At the last stage, indeed, he dared to openly write down what he may have believed for years but often formulated in less straightforward terms. This interpretation is different from the thesis which claims that Štúr ‘suddenly’ became a Russophile ideologist because of his disillusion or frustration with Austro-Slav politics. Another form of frustration may have been important, though, namely growing impatience with the uncertainties and setbacks of painstaking practical reform politics, probably a crucial factor for a political romantic like Štúr. The fantastic promises of Russian Slavophile ideology may have become even more irresistible as his political impatience increased. He finally fell back on it completely, and therefore an analysis of the ‘ideological chemistry’ between Štúr and the Russian Slavophiles and their ideas is of critical importance. An understanding of Štúr appears to be impossible without an understanding of the Russian influences.

In 1843 Pogodin wrote a memorandum for the Russian government pointing to the ‘difficult situation’ of the Slavs in Austria and Hungary, their ‘sympathy for Russia’, and the need, as he saw it, to support them.<sup>40</sup> At this stage the Tsar and the Russian government were not willing to engage in political intrigues or adventures in Central Europe, and Russian students going to Prague or other destinations were warned by the Russian authorities to stay out of politics. As Haraksim has argued, the contacts of the Czechs and Slovaks with Russia and Russian visitors had mainly a ‘cultural’ character, and even Pogodin focused on cultural co-operation in his contacts with Austrian and Hungarian Slavs.<sup>41</sup> Yet the difference between cultural or linguistic issues on the one hand, and ideological or political questions on the other hand, was vague. Religion and history were other – both ‘cultural’ and ‘ideological’ – fields where All-Slav ideas could flourish. In addition to the influence in Slovakia and elsewhere of various institutions, periodicals, and personalities from Moscow or St Petersburg, there was an organisation like the Cyrillo-Methodian Brotherhood, which emerged in the Ukraine in 1845. It may have been a rival to the Russian nationalist and Slavophile circles in Moscow, but its leading spirit M.F. Rayevsky (Rajevskij), who resided for many years in Vienna, similarly propagated the unification of all Slavs on the basis of Orthodoxy and the Russian language.<sup>42</sup> Štúr may have had contacts with Rayevsky on several occasions, as he did with other official and unofficial representatives of the Russian Empire. It is interesting, to say the least, that the Russian traveller F.V. Čižov, who travelled through Austria and Hungary and across Dalmatia and the Balkans in the mid-1840s,

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 220, 227. Kohn speaks of an essay by Pogodin from 1837 entitled, ‘Letter on Russian History’, which will be further discussed below; see KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>41</sup> HARAKSIM, ‘Die slawischen Programme’, p. 226.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 224-5; MATULA, Reply to discussants, in HOLOTÍK (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr und die slawische Wechselseitigkeit*, p. 426. Rayevsky was working as a priest at the Russian embassy in Vienna and was an important figure in the Orthodox mission in the Habsburg lands; see Peter SCHEIBERT, ‘Rajevskij und die orthodoxe Mission in den slawischen Ländern’, in *ibid.*, p. 420.

declared in Moscow in 1847, when he was interrogated by the police after his return to Russia, that the Slovaks, especially Ľudovít Štúr, were ‘the most pro-Russian of all the Slavs.’ According to Čižov, who had become involved in Dalmatian politics and apparently visited Pressburg as well, Štúr had declared that only the Russians could build a Slav ‘hard core’, an effective Slav political centre, because they were the only Slavs who had been able to defend their independent political and national existence.<sup>43</sup> Other Russian travellers to the West Slav lands included the influential Pogodin, who visited the Habsburg and Ottoman empires five times between 1835 and 1853 in order to establish closer contacts with the West and South Slavs; the no less influential historical thinker A.S. Khomyakov, who visited Prague but perhaps not Pressburg and who wrote a work known as ‘Notes on World History’; and the Slavophiles Ivan and Konstantin Aksakov.<sup>44</sup> In addition there were a number of Russian students who studied in Prague and, possibly, Vienna and other places in the Habsburg Monarchy, as well as in Germany.

Štúr had attained a certain fame in Russia and in the rest of the Slavic world as a result of his activities, his writings, and the visits of Russian, Serbian, and other Slav sympathisers. In 1848 it was Štúr who, together with Bakunin, founded the organisation striving for Slav unity, *Slovanské bratstvo*, at the Slav Congress in Prague. Although shortly thereafter he began to participate in the Austrian military actions against the Hungarians, during the entire first half of 1848 Štúr’s Slav perspective had remained distinct from the political outlook of the Czech national movement, which was always largely Austro-Slavic. Even when he gradually began to support Austro-Slavism as the only practical and strategic possibility of the moment, it basically meant to him a ‘transitory’ stage towards an ‘All-Slav federation’, however difficult this may have been to realise or even define.<sup>45</sup> By 1850 Štúr again abandoned his short-lived Austrian orientation, and in January 1851 he wrote from Vienna to his Russian friend Sresnevsky that under the ‘German yoke’ their situation – that of the Slovaks in general and the Slovak intelligentsia in particular – was even worse than under the Hungarian yoke.<sup>46</sup> In what is apparently the same letter (but dated 15 December 1850 by Ondrejovič) he also informed Sresnevsky that he rejected the ‘un-Slavic separatism’ of the Czechoslav and Illyrian movements, which continued to pursue the Austro-Slav policy.<sup>47</sup> It was possibly already in 1851 that Štúr wrote *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft*,<sup>48</sup> although others believe that this happened more gradually during the years 1852-1855.<sup>49</sup> The fact that the manuscript was translated into Russian (by V.I. Lamansky) and published in a Moscow journal in connection with the All-Slav Congress in 1867,<sup>50</sup> was not surprising given the strong Russophile tendency of this late-romantic and revealing work. More

<sup>43</sup> HARAKSIM, ‘Die slawischen Programme’, p. 228. In the late 1840s Štúr was to make similar statements (see below).

<sup>44</sup> S.A. NIKITIN, ‘Bemerkungen zum Referate Doz. Walicki’, in HOLOTÍK (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr und die slawische Wechselseitigkeit*, pp. 330-4, here p. 333. In 1881 Ivan Aksakov defined Slavophile theory as ‘democratic autocracy’; see KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 59, 108.

<sup>45</sup> MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, pp. 63-4.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>47</sup> Slavomír ONDREJOVIČ, ‘Jazykovedné glosy k Ľudovítovi Štúrovi’, in CHMEL (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr: štúdie a eseje*, pp. 26-37, here p. 31.

<sup>48</sup> E.g., Tibor ŽILKA, ‘Štúrova utópia slovenskej vzájomnosti’, in CHMEL (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr: štúdie a eseje*, p. 63; MARTINKOVIČ, ‘Slovanstvo, Európa a Rusko v myslení Ľudovíta Štúra’, p. 107.

<sup>49</sup> E.g., MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, p. 73.

<sup>50</sup> See for the Moscow Slav Congress of 1867, Hans KOHN, *Pan-Slavism*, pp. 130-45; PETROVICH, *The Emergence of Russian Pan-Slavism*, pp. 198-240.

surprising, perhaps, is that Lamansky managed to get hold of a copy of the unpublished work during a visit to Slovakia in 1862 with the help of an old friend of Štúr, whose name he did not disclose in his translation.<sup>51</sup> Vladimír Matula has given a useful summary of *Das Slawenthum*'s ideological contents, which I will roughly follow in an attempt to grasp the meaning of Ľudovít Štúr's last and perhaps most significant work.<sup>52</sup> The interpretation of *Das Slawenthum* remains diverse, especially its place within Štúr's thought and activity as a whole. Was it a bizarre digression from his previous 'progressive' and 'democratic' orientation? Was it the logical outcome of his evolution as an All-Slavist? Was it something in between these two interpretations?

Matula has observed that Štúr's 'aversion to liberalism' was getting deeper after the revolution of 1848-1849, and that this included the liberalism of Western Europe, notably the 'egoism' of its bourgeoisie.<sup>53</sup> If this is true, it means that Štúr's 'reaction' to the Austrian post-revolutionary police regime and the neo-absolutist era, and his 'disillusion' and 'frustration' about the non-implementation of a form of national-cultural autonomy for the Slovak region, embraced much more than just these Slovak and Central European questions. Štúr had an aversion not only to the Austro-German yoke but to the society and political culture of Western Europe, similar to the anti-Western aversion of many German Romantics and of the Russian Slavophiles and nationalists who were looking for an ideological rationalisation of their fear and hatred of the West. In *Das Slawenthum* Štúr expressed his belief that Western Europe, i.e. the Latin/Germanic Europe of the historic Western Church that was experiencing a complex process of political and societal modernisation, was actually 'stagnating', decaying, disintegrating, etc. The Catholic Church had seriously degenerated as a religious institution and Protestantism was in a crisis as well; socialism or communism was no alternative because it rejected religion and pursued only material interests; representative democracy or Parliamentarianism was a comedy; and European art was becoming degenerate and literature vulgar.<sup>54</sup> Palacký, perhaps the principal auctor intellectualis of realist and Austro-Slavic Czech patriotic policy (but temporarily regarded by the neo-absolutist regime as a threat), was declared obsolete by Štúr. Matula describes Štúr's harsh criticism of Austro-Slavism as 'courageous' because he expressed it in a situation in which the Austro-Slav 'illusions' continued to prevail among many of the Bohemian and even Slovak political leaders.<sup>55</sup> However, if this observation is true, it also shows that Štúr was rather exceptional in his insistence that all Austro-Slav strivings should be thrown overboard and a completely different definition of the situation made. In other words: the ideology of *Das Slawenthum* was not so much an 'understandable' or 'logical' reaction to Austrian neo-absolutist policy, but rather the product of Štúr's own mind at a new stage of its evolution and in a new set of circumstances which made him brush aside all remaining inhibitions to revealing his 'non-liberal' side. Štúr had always had a non-liberal, authoritarian, and conservative soul alongside his more reform-minded and democratic soul, but now, after 1850, the impatient romantic side of his dualistic political personality seemed definitively to suppress his democratic-reformist side. While other leaders of the Czechs,

<sup>51</sup> Svetoslav BOMBÍK, 'Das Slawenthum... ako Štúrovo odmietnutie Západu', in BOMBÍK, *Bližšie k Európe*, pp. 64-78, here p. 64.

<sup>52</sup> MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, pp. 70-79; see also MATULA, 'Štúr a Slovanstvo', pp. 382-6.

<sup>53</sup> MATULA, *Ľudovít Štúr*, p. 70.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

the Slovaks, and the Croats remained more ‘patient’, moderate, and pragmatic in anticipation of the passing of neo-absolutism, Štúr descended into the abyss of Slavophilism Russian-style.

Indeed, his alternative for European liberalism, democracy, and individualism was a return to the idealised patriarchal *Urgemeinschaft* of – as the Slavophiles saw it – the Russian-Slav tradition. Štúr expressed his belief that in Russia the condition of culture and society had remained fundamentally better than in West or Central Europe. Russia had a ‘healthy’ Slav population with ‘pure customs’ including the old tradition of hospitality. (It is remarkable that ‘hospitality’ has a long history as a topos of characterisation of the Slavs.) According to Štúr, there had been no poor people in the Slav *Urgemeinschaft*, because the land belonged to all. Feudalism had been alien to the Slav spirit, but only in Russia the enslavement of the people had been prevented thanks to the survival of the autonomous village community. The Tsarist autocracy on the one hand, and the agrarian community (*obščina*) on the other, ensured in combination a harmonious patriarchal socio-political structure. Of course, there was also a system of serfdom in Russia and unjust privileges of the nobility. It was necessary to end this system through autocratic reform and so strengthen the autonomous village community and patterns of communal land ownership. The patriarchal power of the Tsar made this possible, which would confirm that there was no cleavage between the Tsar and the people but a superior system of social harmony. Not only the Tsar and the village community but also the Russian Orthodox Church was a crucial institution preserving the structure of stable and harmonious patriarchal society. Indeed, Štúr was prepared to believe that the Orthodox Church was the only Christian Church which had remained true to its high Christian mission, both in religious, social, and political terms.<sup>56</sup> All of this fed his conviction that what was needed to move the Slavs forward in the historical process was a Greater Slav empire under Russian leadership.

#### IV

Štúr’s *Das Slawenthum* was based on a flawed, one-sided knowledge of the socio-economic, political, and cultural-historical realities in both the Slavic and the non-Slavic world. As we have seen, his view of Russia was biased as a result of his overwhelmingly Slavophile and Russian-nationalist sources. Nevertheless, Štúr’s ideas were popular with conservative Slovaks during the second half of the nineteenth century, and his Russophile sentiments with more progressive Slovaks as well.<sup>57</sup> Even if Štúr’s Pan-Slav political propositions remained rather isolated, a part of the Slovak national elite tended to identify with Russian messianism and the belief that Russian support could be instrumental in achieving more national-cultural rights.<sup>58</sup> Russophilism and All-Slav thought were Slovak traits throughout the nineteenth century and across the unfolding Slovak political spectrum. There has always been debate about the precise nature of Štúr’s ‘later orientation’, his motives, and the question to what extent there was a difference between his earlier and his later years as far as his fundamental historical, cultural, and political ideas were concerned. The Štúr of the 1850s was certainly a Slavophile thinker if Slavophilism is de-

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 72, 75, 77.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 74, 79.

<sup>58</sup> Dušan KOVÁČ, ‘Slovenské dejiny a “zrozumiteľná oblasť historického výskumu”’, in KOVÁČ (ed.), *Slovenské dejiny v dejinách Európy. Vybrané kapitoly* (Bratislava, 2015), pp. 13-30, here p. 17.

fined as an ideological tendency to regard the Slavs as a unique nation with a special historical and cultural mission, which would most likely be fulfilled under Russian leadership since Russia was the only power capable of enforcing Slav unity and civilisational renewal in Europe and beyond. Marcel Martinkovič has characterised Slavophilism as an ideology propagating an ‘enlightened Tsarism’, including an absolutist patriarchalism, Orthodox spirituality, and a system of communal agrarian life ‘connected with nature’.<sup>59</sup> This definition of Russian Slavophilism is certainly applicable to the thought of Ľudovít Štúr as well, as we have seen above. But in Štúr’s case Slavophile thought overlapped with the Pan-Slavism of those non-Russian Slavs who strove for Slav unity under Russian leadership, which made his views in many ways identical to the (official) Russian nationalism of men like Pogodin.

Indeed, the distinction that some historians have made – undoubtedly correct with regard to Russia itself – between, perhaps, oppositional Russian Slavophiles and Russian ‘official nationalists’<sup>60</sup> is not very relevant in the case of Ľudovít Štúr. According to the Polish historian Andrzej Walicki, Štúr, unlike the Russian Slavophiles, did not idealise the *obščina* as a communal agrarian institution – that is, from the political-administrative point of view – but believed that, as a form of traditional self-government, it should be replaced with a modern state organisation.<sup>61</sup> Russia was the only Slav state, Štúr believed, which had overcome the early Slav condition of stateless communalism, and he was in favour of a strong Tsarist state ruling the Slav world.<sup>62</sup> Thus, there may emerge some confusion about Štúr’s views on the socio-economic vs. the political-institutional aspects of the Russian/Slav village community (and on related questions like the role of the Russian nobility and ‘feudalism’). Štúr was an étatist as well as a Slavophile striving for ‘social justice’, and while he idealised the Russian village community as an autonomous social and economic institution, he also wanted it to be politically subordinated to the Tsarist state. Therefore, Walicki’s claim about Štúr’s attitude to the agrarian community is not entirely correct, nor is his assertion that Štúr was no ‘conservative utopian’ or ‘romantic critic of rationalism’ but always a ‘petty-bourgeois democrat’. Štúr certainly was a conservative and romantic utopian, and by the 1850s he was clearly something different from a ‘petty-bourgeois democrat’. The principal question is where his Slavophilism and Russophilism came from. Although Štúr was also influenced by some non-Russian Slavic thinkers like the exceptional Polish Russophile Maciejowski and the Polish historian J. Lelewel,<sup>63</sup> it was mainly the Russian Slavophiles and Pan-Slav nationalists that helped him shape the ideas responsible for *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft*. These thinkers, writers, historians, and ideologists had been influencing Štúr and his supporters already long before the 1850s, indeed at least as early as the 1830s.

We have seen above that the argument may be defended that Štúr united within himself both conservative or even reactionary ideas, and more progressive and democratic ideas. This may help us to understand the complexity of his thought and personality and to choose the most con-

<sup>59</sup> MARTINKOVIČ, ‘Slovanstvo, Európa a Rusko v myslení Ľudovíta Štúra’, p. 101.

<sup>60</sup> See for example Hugh SETON-WATSON, ‘Russische Politik und die Nationalitätenfrage’, in HOLOTÍK (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr und die slawische Wechselseitigkeit*, pp. 335-8, here p. 336.

<sup>61</sup> Andrzej WALICKI, ‘Die Beziehungen E. Štúrs zu den russischen Slawophilen’, in HOLOTÍK (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr und die slawische Wechselseitigkeit*, pp. 406-8.

<sup>62</sup> One wonders what was the extent of Štúr’s knowledge of the history of Bohemia or Poland, but this is only one question among many regarding the nature of his intellectual world.

<sup>63</sup> MATULA, Reply to discussants, in HOLOTÍK (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr und die slawische Wechselseitigkeit*, p. 426.

vincing hypothesis out of four hypotheses that might be considered with regard to the development and nature of Štúr's ideas. The first hypothesis would postulate that Štúr was at first a 'petty-bourgeois democrat' or democratic patriot, and later became a pro-Russian Slavophile. The second hypothesis would argue that he always was a democratic patriot and that his later Slavophile tendency should not be taken too seriously. The third hypothesis would claim that Štúr had always been a Slavophile romantic and that even his 'democratic' political activities of the 1840s could not conceal this. Finally the fourth hypothesis, which I am inclined to defend, would argue that Štúr had always 'two souls' in his political and personal make-up: a more 'progressive', 'modern', and democratic one, and a more 'conservative' and All-Slav 'national-romantic' one. These two 'souls' or political-philosophical dimensions, these two sides of a dualistic ideological personality, could remain in balance for quite some time, perhaps forever. However, it was also possible that – under the influence of changing circumstances or internal personality factors – one of them would come to dominate his Weltanschauung to the point where the other one was expelled from his mind. The dualistic structure of his political personality was not necessarily a weakness but probably a source of unusual intensity and creativity, which may also explain his 'opportunistic' shifts in activist and ideological orientation. It was not impossible, however, that with the 'victory' of the Slavophile option his thought would be frozen in a reactionary mould – 'reactionary' in the spiritual and political sense of anti-modern and anti-democratic, which could include an alternative, autocratic concept of social justice. Štúr was a child of his age and his Slovak environment. He was influenced by democratic, liberal, and 'realist' political tendencies from Europe and Bohemia, but also by romantic-nationalist and Slavophile tendencies from Germany and Russia. West-European and German ideas had also influenced Russia, but the Russians themselves and – partly through their influence – thinkers in the rest of the Slavic world concocted their own brew of ideological constructs from both European and Russian elements.

## V

An historian like Hans Kohn may help us understand the interaction of conservative (or reactionary) and democratic (or revolutionary) ideological tendencies that was taking place both in Europe and in Russia during the decades of Ľudovít Štúr's life. Revolutionary democratic, reactionary anti-capitalist, and Russian Slavophile ideas could influence each other in bizarre ways:

Was the Slav peasant not close, in all essential concerns, to the ideal man envisaged by Jean Jacques Rousseau and Johann Gottfried Herder, and infinitely superior to the Western bourgeois? Did not Russia provide a better soil for the fruition of the hopes of Western romantic reactionaries and socialist revolutionaries, both equally opposed to middle-class society? Did not Russia possess a living tradition of an organic community of fraternity and harmony, whereas Western society was held together, in competition and exploitation, by the coldness of law and the brutality of force?<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia*, p. 9. The Western romantic reactionaries mentioned here included Frenchmen (for example, Joseph de Maistre), Germans, and others.

The world of nineteenth-century critical and radical ideas was both paradoxical and explosive:

The magic world of romanticism and social utopianism received its sanction in an extravagant misinterpretation of the character of the Russian people or of Russian history, or of both. Romantic reaction with its idealization of the past, and socialist revolutionism with its concentration upon the future, both had originated in the West. There, however, they remained intellectual stimuli within the framework of a developing society. In Russia they became absolutized.<sup>65</sup>

Many Russians were convinced that they alone lived in Christian purity and were the only truly Christian people. Slavophiles believed that the Russian past with its Orthodox Christianity was superior to Roman or European Christianity, as well as to rationalist and individualist modern Europe. Russian traditions and Russian society were not backward as compared with Europe, but expressions of Russia's unique identity and destiny. While the West was becoming old and degenerate as a result of ethnic and class war, social destruction, and loss of faith, Russia would bring new life to Europe.<sup>66</sup> Russia would also liberate the other Slavs from Western influences, as some Slavophile and Pan-Slav thinkers explicitly announced.

The Pan-Slav ideologists Pogodin and Shevyrev, professor of history and professor of literature at Moscow University respectively, were not only scientists and the editors of several periodicals – of which *Moskvityanin* (1841-56) was the most influential – but also thinkers with a daring perspective. In 1837 Pogodin wrote an essay for the future Tsar Alexander II (which in the end did not reach him) entitled, 'Letter on Russian History', which explained his Russian nationalist and Pan-Slav ideals and perspectives. Like Štúr's *Das Slawenthum*, it was only published during the Moscow Slav Congress in 1867.<sup>67</sup> In his Letter Pogodin wrote that Russia's sixty million people should be united with the thirty million Slavs of the lands outside of Russia, 'in whose veins flows the same blood as ours, who speak the same language as we do, and who feel, therefore, according to the law of nature, as we do,' since 'the Slavs form by origin and language a spiritual entity with us.'<sup>68</sup> The political strength of a united Russian-Slav empire would be irresistible:

All these physical and spiritual forces form a gigantic machine, constructed in a simple, purposeful way, directed by the hand of one single man, the Russian Tsar, who with one motion can start it at any moment, who can give it any direction, any speed he wishes. [This machine is] animated by one feeling, an ancient legacy from our ancestors: allegiance, limitless confidence, and devotion to the Tsar, their God on earth.<sup>69</sup>

While Europe was decaying, Russia was rising: 'Corruption of morals in France, laziness in Italy, cruelty in Spain, egoism in England', and the fact that it was 'the Golden Calf, the mam-

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 5, 15-6, 18.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 58-9. In the Pan-Slav context the distinction between the Russian Slavophiles and 'official nationalists' was often irrelevant and difficult to make, because Slavophile thought could always be used to bolster Russian propaganda among the Balkan or Central European Slavs.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 60; pp. 60-8 for an English translation of the Letter on Russian History.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 63-4.

mon, to which without exception all Europe pays homage', made Russia the only power to bring 'a higher level of a new European civilization, of Christian civilization', to Europe and to the world.<sup>70</sup> Pogodin referred to Kollár, 'the famous Slavic poet of our time', who had predicted 'the coming glory of the Slavs.' But it was Russia which, 'by its numbers, its language, and the totality of its qualities', should be considered 'the representative of the entire Slav world.' Russia was 'chosen to consummate, to crown the development of humanity, to embody all the various human achievements (which hitherto have been accomplished only separately) in one great synthesis, to bring to harmony the ancient and modern civilizations, to reconcile heart with reason, to establish true justice and peace.'<sup>71</sup> Russia, in a word, had a mission to fulfil the definition of which even surpassed the boldest historical concepts of Herder and Hegel.

Although Štúr probably did not read this particular manuscript, we may be sure that he received the message through other, similar texts in Russian periodicals and other publications. It is hardly necessary to extensively quote other Russian ideologists to understand what were the foundations of Russian Pan-Slavism and Slavophilism. Although there were differences between individual thinkers, Pogodin's ideas quoted above can be regarded as typical of a major ideological trend between the 1830s and the 1850s, which deeply influenced Ľudovít Štúr. It is true that the social-reformist, the 'anti-feudal' aspect of Slavophilism was less apparent in a Pan-Slav nationalist like Pogodin, but for this aspect Štúr could turn to an ideologist like Khomyakov. The ideas of some Slavophiles, indeed, were not simply 'conservative' or 'reactionary' in the social sense, because they demanded an end to serfdom and wanted social and economic reforms to make Russia more just, efficient, and 'spiritually free'. What they did not want, however, was political or constitutional change, because they accepted the system of Tsarist autocracy as an expression of the Russian genius and patriarchal justice. That Khomyakov saw the peasant commune as a Russian institution that was the best protection against the extreme 'individualism' and 'materialism' of the West, was something that Štúr may have picked up, together with other ideas of Khomyakov, shortly before he began to write *Das Slawenthum*.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, Štúr's ideas as contained in *Das Slawenthum* seem to have been derived in the main from Pogodin, Shevyrev, and Khomyakov, resulting in a kind of synthesis of their views. The Russian Pan-Slavists had influenced Štúr and other Slovak patriots for several decades, and for Štúr it had been no problem to balance his democratic-reformist activities with his perspective of All-Slav unity. His actions were piecemeal, responding to the needs and possibilities of the moment, and could assume an All-Slav ideological or a more pragmatic form depending on the 'objective' situation but also on his 'subjective' state of mind, which oscillated between disillusion and enthusiasm. A Czechoslovak concept could be replaced with a Slovak-national one; a pro-Austrian strategy with an anti-Austrian or 'anti-Western' attitude; and a democratic perspective with a pro-Russian ideology. What always remained, however, was the Slav idea, the old Slavophile tendency which could be pragmatically combined with the reformist opportunities that existed in Central Europe but not in Russia. The complexity of Štúr's thought and actions was possible because he seemed to have two souls, with many contradictory tendencies, in his political and ideological personality. How he defined and presented himself was partly a question of changing historical context and the objective factors influencing this. It was also a question of contradictory personality traits,

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 66-7.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 67-8.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 106; MARTINKOVIČ, 'Slovanstvo, Európa a Rusko v myslení Ľudovíta Štúra', p. 111.

including authoritarianism vs. tactical flexibility and ideological dogmatism vs. political creativity. The dilemma of Slav uniqueness vs. European modernity was the principal contradiction, which had to be balanced or resolved in one way or another.

With so many roles to play, so many challenges to face, and so many political and intellectual talents, it is perhaps not surprising that Štúr sought a mode of ideological certainty in the ‘Slav idea’. This may have been a naive misunderstanding of what the historical evolution of Europe was all about, but it was also a syndrome of his time and by no means the only bizarre ideology of the nineteenth century. If Štúr was a ‘Slavist thinker’ or even a Pan-Slavist and Russophile, this does not diminish his merits or historical importance for the Slovak people. The contradictions and ‘enigmas’ of Ľudovít Štúr should be a stimulus for further research, for deeper and broader investigations in which new questions are asked and different historiographical and scientific disciplines – including cultural analysis, psychology, sociology, and so on – are linked together. Many questions surrounding Štúr suggest that such a comprehensive approach is necessary, not in the last place because his role as an individual national-political actor also reflects a broader problematic and, therefore, has to be connected with broader questions. Some of these questions are the following. Why did Štúr, not only in the last years of his life but even earlier, feel attracted to the Slavophile concept of a civilisational and spiritual division of Europe into West and East, rejecting the ‘old’ and ‘degenerate’ West and placing the Slovaks/Slavs outside of it?<sup>73</sup> This surely had deeper roots than just his disillusion with Austrian policy, and may in part have been a reaction to the Western and German tendency to look down upon the ‘East’ or the Slavs. Were Štúr’s Slavophile tendencies not the result of his urge to prove that the Slav peoples were important too, and that ‘their time was still to come’, as Herder and Kollár had declared? How important really was the Hegelian philosophy of history which suggested that one dominant (perhaps ethnic or national) culture always replaced another one, offering thinkers like Štúr the possibility to insert into this model the future world-historical role of the Slavs?<sup>74</sup> Were the prestigious German thinkers only used to help sanction ideas that Slavic thinkers had already invented independently of them? Was the popularity of Slav thought in Slovakia partly a result of the country’s relative intellectual isolation and of the weakness of urban society as compared with Bohemia? Was it rather the lack of a Slovak state-political tradition that caused so many Slovaks to embrace the All-Slav idea and to long for a Slav union whose political greatness was more important than its democratic values? Why were the Slavophile writings more popular among Slovak students in Pressburg than were other, more liberal and democratic writings? Does the fact that Štúr felt attracted to the idea that Russia was the power of the future instead of the materialistic, individualistic, and atheistic West, mean that he was a reactionary thinker who believed that tradition, hierarchy, and the stability brought by autocracy were preferable to the destabilising threats of social change, equality, and democratic turmoil? Was the ethno-political romanticism of the nineteenth century a crucial feature not only of Štúr’s but of the Slovak collective mind, which also included an aversion to urbanism, liberalism, and individualism? I will end this essay by presenting a few more data that may be relevant to answering some of these

<sup>73</sup> Cf. BOMBÍK, ‘Das Slawenthum... ako Štúrovo odmietnutie Západu’, pp. 64-78; Vladimír PETRÍK, ‘Dve kapitoly k Štúrovi’, in CHMEL (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr: štúdie a eseje*, pp. 48-52; MARTINKOVIČ, ‘Slovanstvo, Európa a Rusko v myslení Ľudovíta Štúra’, p. 109.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. PICHLER, ‘Esej o Štúrovi a protestantizme’, p. 43, and other authors (from Matula to Münz) who understandably seem uncertain about the significance of Štúr’s Hegelianism.

questions and by quoting some recent observations made by Slovak historians and political analysts. They may provide clues on how to continue the investigations that are needed.

## VI

During the period 1848-1849, Ľudovít Štúr played a prominent role in Slav politics and the revolutionary events unfolding in Central Europe. But instead of these experiences strengthening his democratic beliefs, he actually produced – not after but during these events – some writings idealising Russia and its social and political institutions. One of them was an article entitled *Rusi*, which was published several years later. In this article he asserted that in Russia, ‘there is no disagreement between ruler and nation as there is elsewhere’, and that Russia was also special because, while ‘other Slavs lost their independence, Russia did not.’ Perhaps he believed that the first phenomenon was the consequence of the second. The difficult national struggles of the Central European or Balkan Slavs were obviously not part of Russian life, but neither – he seemed to think – were any other reformist or democratic political aspirations or indeed the need for them. Slav statehood was idealised by Štúr to the point where it was seen as sufficient in itself and more elevated than pursuing democratic ideals. It was around this time, even before the disappointing outcome of the revolutionary events, that Štúr began to articulate more explicitly the concept of East-West dichotomy that took on a Russian messianic character in *Das Slawenthum*.<sup>75</sup> Had Štúr, indeed, become disinterested in the idea of democratic revolution or improving European political culture quite regardless of Austrian policy? If ‘disillusion’ was a motive behind his Pan-Slavism, it was not in the last place disillusion about the potential of voluntary co-operation of the Slav elites and the idea of Slav unity in diversity. In its stead, the utopian idea of union under Russian leadership was embraced. An essentialist vision of Slav identity and a Slavophile historical interpretation in terms of East-West spiritual antagonism had been present in Štúr’s thought before, but after 1850 they were articulated in a more explicit, radical, and systematic fashion. In *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft* all crucial elements of (both Russian and Slovak) Slavophile and Pan-Slav ideology were presented without inhibition: the original Slav culture and communal agrarianism which had been preserved in Russia; the Tsarist autocracy which ensured the social and political harmony of rulers and ruled; the respect for authority and the unity of State and Church; and last but not least, Orthodoxy, which integrated and unified society spiritually and culturally.<sup>76</sup> Martinkovič believes that Štúr now mainly relied on Khomyakov, a crucial Slavophile and historical-philosophical thinker on the messianic role of the Slavs, and especially the Russians. The rather mystical Khomyakov saw human history as a manicheistic struggle between the principles of ‘Iranianism’ and ‘Cushitism’ (after Cush, the eldest son of the despised Ham): between the world of spiritual values (‘internal freedom’, harmony, etc.) now represented by the Slavs, and the world of materialism, ‘external freedom’

<sup>75</sup> MARTINKOVIČ, ‘Slovanstvo, Európa a Rusko v myslení Ľudovíta Štúra’, p. 107. The paramount significance of political power and the Russian state in *Das Slawenthum* is stressed, for example, in Juraj DOLNÍK, ‘Paradigmatický zásah Ľ. Štúra do kultúrnych dejín Slovákov’, in CHMEL (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr: štúdie a eseje*, pp. 9-25, here pp. 11-2. Of course the unique importance of Russia could also be defined in Hegelian philosophical terms as ‘the culmination of world history and the World Spirit’; see MATULA, ‘Štúr a Slovanstvo’, pp. 382-3.

<sup>76</sup> MARTINKOVIČ, ‘Slovanstvo, Európa a Rusko v myslení Ľudovíta Štúra’, pp. 108-10.

(individualism, constitutionalism), and desire for power of the West. This ongoing struggle was reflected in the antagonism between a highly spiritual Orthodoxy and a spiritually degenerate Catholicism and Protestantism.<sup>77</sup>

While everyone has obviously the right to present their own interpretation of Ľudovít Štúr and his 'Slav idea' which culminated in *Das Slawenthum* in the early 1850s, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Štúr felt always attracted to the Slavophile alternative to European political culture. Andrej Mráz has written that *Das Slawenthum* was not an 'occasional' work, but the 'concentration of convictions developed during many studies.'<sup>78</sup> Ján Hučko prefers to say that in Štúr's view of the 1850s the Slavs should join Russia, 'on condition' that serfdom was abolished and social life democratised.<sup>79</sup> Although this claim may sound a bit naive, it is certainly in accordance with Štúr's convictions, which were similar to the views of those Russian Slavophiles who applauded the Tsarist autocracy, 'on condition' that it enforced social reforms benefiting the peasantry and eliminated serfdom and other unacceptable feudal traits of Russian society. According to Svetoslav Bombík, *Das Slawenthum* was the 'logical culmination' of Štúr's historical-philosophical and national-political orientation over an extended period of time. The work also had a 'fundamental influence' on the cultural and political consciousness of the Slovak intelligentsia.<sup>80</sup> Bombík asked the question how an educated Protestant intellectual could come to glorify Russia, and tried to answer it by suggesting that Štúr's 'concept of history' was responsible.<sup>81</sup> This, indeed, is one of the difficult issues I have mentioned above, but it can hardly provide a satisfactory answer in itself. The 'Herderian-Kollárian-Hegelian scheme' was used by Štúr in his own way, and although Bombík may be right that the idea of the Slovaks being an 'elect nation' was of crucial importance to him, it really was an idiosyncrasy. In other words: there was, first, the emotional and intellectual wish of Slovak self-assertion and then a concept of history claiming that the Slovaks had a special mission to fulfil as the direct descendants of the original Slavs in the Tatra region. A letter written by Ján Francisci in January 1843 is said to prove that this was indeed the essential point for Štúr.<sup>82</sup> But it was not only a question of defining Slovak identity but also the role and identity of the Slavs. If the Slovaks represented the historical continuity of the Slavs' original ethno-linguistic core, the Russians represented and effectively constituted their power-political core.

These ideas had far-reaching ideological and 'spiritual' implications. In 1851 Štúr wrote in *Slovenské pohľady*: '[We] don't need Western liberalism. Slavdom with its spirit and its strength is enough for us... Slavdom is our star.'<sup>83</sup> Slovaks and Russians were fused together in an anti-liberal Slavdom, which proved to be a tenacious feature of the Slovak political scene. In 1881 the conservative and 'late-romantic' Slovak patriot Hurban Vajanský hailed the Russian translation of Štúr's *Das Slawenthum*, of which he had obtained a copy.<sup>84</sup> Vajanský was perhaps the most remarkable emulator of Ľudovít Štúr among the later nineteenth-century Slovak Protes-

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>78</sup> Andrej MRÁZ, 'Ľudovít Štúr v slovenskom živote po roku 1849', in MÁTULA (ed.), *Ľudovít Štúr: Život a dielo (1815-1856)*, pp. 67-83, here p. 79.

<sup>79</sup> HUČKO, *Život a dielo Ľudovíta Štúra*, p. 243.

<sup>80</sup> BOMBÍK, 'Das Slawenthum... ako Štúrovo odmietnutie Západu', p. 64.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 66-7.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 67-8.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

tant nationalists. These people were able to reconcile their 'Western' or 'German' religion with sympathy for Tsarist Russia and Orthodoxy because they were men with a 'Slav' ideology. One way of fusing their conservative Lutheranism with older Slav identity markers was through the 'Great Moravian and Cyrillo-Methodian tradition', the Slovak myth of the historical continuity of national-cultural consciousness since the days of the 'Slav apostles' Cyril and Method in the ninth century. This encouraged a Pan-Slav, quasi-Orthodox and quasi-Byzantine, and pro-Russian sentimental orientation associated with the idea of Greco-Slavonic civilisational and Christian affinity.<sup>85</sup>

All these issues and controversies surrounding Ľudovít Štúr and his legacy may help us to better understand the position of the Slovaks among the Slav nations and the question of Slovak identity. The political weakness of the Slovaks and of their national elite, as well as their lack of a separate, non-Hungarian state-political tradition, made them more inclined to fall back upon the idea of the 'great Slav nation'. This tendency had a long tradition in the history of Slovak cultural and political ideas and made it difficult for Slovak intellectuals to 'choose' between 'East' and 'West'. For the Czechs with their more recent state-political, religious-reformist, and more 'Western' historical experience, this choice was easier to make around the mid-nineteenth century. The Russians, on the other hand, believed that they had a different and unique (perhaps European, but not 'West-European') identity and a special role to play in European and world history. While the Slovaks, especially the Protestants, had much that connected them with Czech traditions like the old Czech Bible language or even (aspects of) the Hussite legacy, they also had a different historical experience and a different 'collective psyche' (less political, less national-individual) which made them more susceptible to Pan-Slav and Slavophile influences. The fact that relatively many of the prominent All-Slav thinkers of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were Slovaks confirms this. In this sense Slovakia and the Slovaks were really a kind of 'bridge' between West and East, between Bohemia and Russia, and their relative isolation and being part of rather backward Hungary (as compared with Bohemia and Austria) entailed that they had a greater psychological distance to West-European politics, culture, and society. The utopianism of Slav cultural mutuality, or even political union under Russian leadership, could more easily penetrate the ranks of the Slovak than those of the Czech intelligentsia, even though Bohemia had its Pan-Slavists and Russophiles as well and Slovakia some more 'European-minded' thinkers. Ľudovít Štúr reflected this phenomenon in a fascinating way, which makes him an interesting figure not only in terms of his personal development but also in the context of Slovak national-cultural ideas and attitudes. It is an open question how much of the 'two souls' phenomenon, of a certain tension and dangling between East and West, is still an issue in Slovakia today notwithstanding the country's integration in the European and Western institutions.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 77. Slavophiles like Khomyakov and F.I. Tyuchev stressed this Greco-Slavonic civilisational link; see KOHN (ed.), *The Mind of Modern Russia*, pp. 92, 108. Indeed, even a late-medieval Hussite reformer like Jerome of Prague had already done so, showing the long history of All-Slav thought and the tendency of those who were critical of the Roman Catholic Church to seek a 'Greek alternative'. Slav Catholics were just as enthusiastic about the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition if not more so, but this was primarily motivated by pride that the Old Slavonic language had once been recognised by Rome as a 'fourth' liturgical language alongside Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.