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L'udovít Štúr's Plebeian Ethos of Resistance in the 1840s

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Abstract

The author examines L'udovít Štúr (1815–1856), the main representative of the Slovak national movement in the 1840s, and his personal ethos in the struggle for the rights and freedom of the Slovak ethnic group. Štúr paid great attention to the development of the ethnic, social, and political awareness of Slovaks. In this effort, the *Slovenskje národňje novini* (*Slovak National Newspaper*) played an important role, through which Štúr and the representatives of the Slovak national movement shaped and spread its social and political program, the aim of which was both the fight against the national oppression of the Slovaks, but also the achievement of equal rights for the Slovak ethnic group in Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy.

Keywords: L'udovít Štúr; plebeian ethos; national freedom; Slovak ethnic group; Magyar liberal nationalism

Introduction

It was not only the French but also other inhabitants of Europe who embraced the 1789 revolution's slogans of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The French Revolution's events also gave birth to the Spring of Nations, culminating in the 1848–1849 revolution. The theme of freedom, in its various forms, was the leitmotif of the first half of the 19th century throughout the European continent, even though the results of the 1815 Congress of Vienna created a sturdy obstacle for the ideals of the French Revolution to spread in Europe. Despite this, in the 1820s, the fight for freedom was ignited in many European places, proving that the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity were alive. The ethos of freedom was a significant theme of intellectual, political, and social discourse in Europe at that time. Isaiah Berlin described the grounds for this when he stated that “if the liberty of myself or my class or nation depends on the misery of a number of other human beings, the system which promotes this is unjust and immoral” (Berlin 2002, 172).

A great number of intellectuals and politicians increasingly realized that the ideas of freedom cannot work without the equality of civil rights and duties of all people; freedoms and rights are not something to be exclusively owned by privileged aristocrats, while duties only burden the other social classes. This, similarly, concerned the ideas of how to solve the issue of nationhood in multinational empires where the ruling national elites abused its position to oppress the other nations and ethnic groups living in the same state. This was why such a political situation was considered unjust and immoral and why the ethos of freedom was directed against them, both in their theoretical and practical form. It was represented by the Young Europe movement, as well as by a great number of intellectuals in other countries whose goal was to change the position of individuals, nations, and ethnic groups.¹

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Miroslav Hroch noted a high degree of personal ethos of representatives of the forming national movements of small nations in Europe, including Central Europe in the 19th century when agitating members of their own ethnic community (in phase B according to his theory)² in an effort to create an abstract national community with its language and culture is a value in itself (Hroch 2022, 113). According to him, this effort was associated with a high degree of moral commitment to selflessly work for the nation, its education and culture, and its growth and development. He attributes a high ethical value to this effort, and it also included the struggle of committed patriots for the equal rights of vernacular languages and their cultivation within the framework of literary creation as one of the moral obligations toward the ethnic group or the nation (Hroch 2022, 118). According to Hroch, the activities of committed patriots in phase B also included efforts to educate simple people without distinction of social origin or ethnicity, which he considers to be a highly humanist act that was for the benefit of people and humanity (Hroch 2022, 117).

Moral commitment thus reached a higher level because the term *nation* already expressed an abstract community. Hroch attributes a positive moral connotation to the effort of committed patriots to selflessly make sacrifices for the benefit of the nation and beyond their own duties and considers it humanist. Therefore, he refuses to label these activities with the negative term *nationalism*. Instead, he considers the terms *love* and *altruism*, but, in the end, he leans toward the term *patriotism* (Hroch 2022, 125).³ He understands the demands of the national movements of small nations for the equal rights of their languages and the development of literature in the national language as part of the social and civil emancipation efforts because, at the same time, this demand was aimed at the civil equal rights of the ethnic proto-national community. According to him, it was a contribution to the common good, so he sees it as a positive ethical contribution of patriotism (Hroch 2022, 119).

Following Hroch's definition of the ethos of committed patriots in the national movements of small European nations, the aim of this article is to examine whether the activities of Ľudovít Štúr,⁴ a leading personality of the Slovak national movement in the 1840s, and his plebeian ethos⁵ fulfil Hroch's criteria.

Štúr's Political Newspaper *Slovenskje národňje novini* (Slovak National Newspaper)

Štúr was influenced by Hegel, and he was an active publicist, criticizing the feudal conditions in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁶ From the second half of the 1830s, Štúr fought (mainly with his friends Jozef Miloslav Hurban and Michal Miloslav Hodža) on the side of the Slovak ethnic group against the Magyar ruling elites (Štúr 1954, 99, 140, 166). He battled for the rights of the ethnically oppressed, focusing mainly on the national and social position of the Slovak ethnic group; he also defended, by means of philosophical argumentation, the poor and oppressed. Štúr was aware of the plebeian character of the Slovak ethnic group, 90 percent of whom were peasants, and the rest were rural intelligentsia (village teachers, parish priests and pastors, and, in some cases, doctors and lawyers), small craftsmen, and workers. Only a very small part of the rural nobility claimed to be of Slovak ethnicity and mastered one of the Slovak dialects. The Slovak ethnic group did not have a developed social structure at the time because its ranks lacked representatives among the most politically powerful strata of society, the high aristocracy, which almost completely supported the Magyar nation (Štúr 1846, 217–218, 221–222; Hučko 1974). Štúr himself came from the plebeian ranks of the rural intelligentsia, as he grew up in the family of a village teacher. He was very well aware of the problems of the Slovak ethnic group and strongly perceived the need to improve its social, political, cultural, and educational status in general and within Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy.

The welfare of Slovaks came to be the starting point as well as the end of the efforts of young Štúr, who at the beginning of his activities, did not have a clearer idea of how to work for a nation (Štúr 1954, 26). He searched for ways of working for the future of the Slovak ethnic group and the welfare of mankind from his position as a student at the Lutheran Lyceum in Bratislava

(Pressburg/Pozsony) and later as a substitute professor of the same institution and, following that, while studying at the University of Halle, where he familiarized himself in more detail with Hegel's philosophy (Hurban 1959, 168–171). On his return, he mediated it to his students (Štúr 1981, 542–549), once again as a substitute professor at the Bratislava Lyceum, until he was forcefully removed by the church hierarchy, who accused Štúr of Pan-Slavism, as he taught the students about their Slavic past, presented them with Slavic languages, literature, and so on (Armour 2012, 135; Kiss 2005, 95). However, intervention from the powers that be did not break Štúr, on the contrary, it gave him a new impetus not to give up and to continue working for the benefit of the Slovak ethnic group, although in very difficult living conditions, also with help from friends who provided him with financial support for his livelihood. He refused Count Carl Zay's offers to send him abroad and devote himself to the study and preservation of Slavic languages (including the Slovak language) at a university (Demmel 2016, 55–56).

For Štúr, the key moment leading to the realization of the real need to work for the welfare of the Slovak ethnic group and mankind was his publicist activities. When defending the interests and needs of the Slovaks, Štúr realized the true situation that Slovaks found themselves in under the influence of the Magyarizing oppression. At the same time, he started, much more profoundly than ever before, to realize the faults and limitations of Slovak political life (Štúr 1845e, 97–98, 101–102). Following this realization, he started (mainly with his friends and followers) to fight by publicist and organizational means at all levels – not only for cultural and language-related issues, but also social and political enhancement of the Slovak ethnic group on its way to becoming a modern European nation, one that is equal to the other nations living in Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy (Brock 1976, 33; Gluchman 2022, 137; Halász 2011, 128–130; Hurban 1959, 263–264, 269–270, 538–539; Mráz 1948, 20–21).

Štúr and the Slovak national movement strove for the actual possibility of having their own political newspaper, by means of which they could, in Upper Hungary (now Slovakia), spread information about the political events in the country, as well as worldwide. The newspaper could contribute to the formation of Slovak national awareness, national identity, and national ideology in the battle for freedom and an equal position of the Slovak ethnic group (Štúr 1954, 202; 1956, 69). The fact that the representatives of the Slovak national movement had scarce options to efficiently defend themselves politically from the assimilation policies of the Magyar elites made it even more significant. In feudal Hungary, they had no political representation in the parliament that, even though called the Hungarian Diet, actually did not represent the interests of the country and its citizens but rather those of the ruling Magyar aristocracy (Brubaker and Feischmidt 2002, 735; Lendvai 2003, 192–193). In reality, the Hungarian Diet only represented 3–4 percent of the country's population (Holec and Pál 2006, 146), and its composition was unambiguously beneficial for the Magyar aristocracy that owned the hereditary right to be represented in the Upper House of the Hungarian Diet, and the Lower House was dominated by Magyar middle nobility (Holec and Pál 2006, 47).

After returning from his studies in Halle (1840), Štúr contemplated the idea of founding a Slovak political newspaper. When asking Hungarian state offices for permission to publish a newspaper, he pointed out that Slovaks were the second most numerous ethnic group in Hungary and, at the same time, the only one with no political newspaper that would contribute to the formation of its political awareness and the sense of belonging to the country. Despite a number of justified arguments included in Štúr's documents, the Magyar authorities denied granting permission to issue a Slovak political newspaper on four occasions. Their key argument stated that it was not in the interest of the Hungarian state to allow the publication of a newspaper that would impede the spread of the Magyarization of the Slovak ethnic group. Štúr, however, did not give up despite the dismissive attitude of those in Hungarian circles, because he was aware of the importance of the newspaper for the further development of the Slovak national movement and in the process of forming the Slovak ethnicity. That is why he also sought help from the Slovak nobility. For example, he received support from Lajos Kossuth's uncle, the nobleman Juraj (Ďurko) Kossuth, but he also found support from

some representatives of the Czech nobility at the Viennese imperial court, such as the State Minister, Count Franz Anton Kolowrat (Vyvíjalová 1972, 117–150). Thus, only the fifth appeal, handed in directly to the Imperial Court in Vienna, succeeded, as it became part of the policies of the imperial court in addressing the national issues in the Habsburg Monarchy and in the spirit of the slogan “Divide and rule!” Even after that point, however, Magyar political circles kept postponing the first issue of *Slovenskje národňje novini* [*Slovak National Newspaper*], to be first published as late as August 1, 1845 (Vyvíjalová 1972, 149).

In the editorials published in the *Slovak National Newspaper*, Štúr mainly presented himself as a supporter of social change, a fighter for social justice and the realization of the common good of the country and its inhabitants. His editorials present a very critical view of the Slovak people and the conditions in which they live but also vilify their social and cultural faults and shortcomings, such as alcoholism, indebtedness to Jews, superstition, and social and political disengagement. In his presentation, the Slovak people appear free of all illusions, and their weaknesses, mistakes, and shortcomings are revealed. He realized that the idealization of not only moral qualities but also Slovak ethnicity is not the way to go in an effort to awaken it to life and especially to greater social, political, cultural, and educational activity (Štúr 1845a, 1–2). “There is no greater benefit to a human than when he is taught, because a human who is taught his human dignity becomes aware, he becomes better and more useful in the village and in the country, he is warned against crude and ignorant outbursts, he willingly fulfils his duties and knows in to help oneself and others in all kinds of life circumstances,” asserted Štúr in another context (Štúr 1845b, 5).

However, the education of ethnic Slovaks was only a partial goal because, according to Štúr and other Slovak patriots, education for self-awareness, not only national but also awareness of one’s human dignity and one’s place in the life of the country and the Slovak community, was much more important. For Štúr and his supporters, it was also about raising the Slovak ethnic group in the context of efforts to involve them in the social and political life of Hungary, which would make the Slovak ethnic group a political subject and a subject of history, which was a frequent subject of criticism and disparagement from the Magyar side – namely, that Slovaks are not a historical nation, they have no land of their own, etc. In raising educational, cultural and social and political awareness, Štúr and his other close collaborators saw a tool to actively involve the Slovak ethnic group in the formation of the common good of the country and its inhabitants, so that they are not only the object of political efforts of the Magyar national movement with the aim of Magyarization but also became a political subject consciously fighting for their rights and freedoms, for equality with the other nations and ethnicities of Hungary, against the “law of progress,” according to which small nations and ethnic groups were supposed to disappear by assimilation with more civilized nations.

One of the most serious social problems among the Slovak people was alcoholism, against which Lutherans and Catholics joined forces in an effort to improve their social status. In this context, Štúr wrote that a person’s heart aches over the fact that alcohol brings misery and ruin to not only the whole family but also the whole village. In such villages, the surrounding countryside, gardens, hayfields, and grafting fields are wild and desolate, but on the other hand, there is also righteous anger over the moral weakness of the people. It is often said, Štúr stated, that these are bad times, but they are bad because Slovaks often make them bad thanks to their stupidity, blindness, and impure desires (Štúr 1845c, 30).⁷ The most important, however, was not the criticism itself, although it played a significant role, but mainly the movement of temperance associations, which spread throughout the Upper Hungarian counties and which led to the creation of a central association striving to coordinate not only the work and activities of these associations but also the adoption of a law prohibiting the opening of new distilleries or the use of potatoes for the production of alcohol due to a shortage of potatoes, being as they were one of the basic food items of the people living in the northern regions of Hungary. Another important consequence was the joining of forces of Slovak Catholics and Lutherans in the fight against alcoholism at all levels, which was an important fact strengthening the Slovak national movement in the mid-1840s.

Štúr, in his editorials published in the *Slovak National Newspaper*, placed the main emphasis on social and economic issues related to the development of the Slovak ethnic group, as well as the Upper Hungarian counties, in which the Slovak ethnic group dominated by its numbers. Thus, Štúr was not only a Slovak patriot whose horizons were reduced only to the topic of the struggle for the national rights of the ethnic Slovaks, but his attention was related to the wider social, political, and economic life of Hungary, although he was primarily concerned with the position and needs of ethnic Slovaks inhabiting the least fertile and least developed areas of Hungary, which resulted in poverty, misery, illiteracy, and many other social problems of a great number of its members. Additionally, the problem of lack of food or grain, which Štúr dealt with in one of his editorials, is an example of the fact that Štúr cared about the common good of all the inhabitants of Hungary and was looking for ways to help the southern and northern counties of Hungary (Štúr 1845d, 45–46).

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the publication of the *Slovak National Newspaper* brought about a split in the Slovak national movement, which was related to the language in which the newspaper was published. Ján Kollár, who also played a significant role in obtaining approval for their publication, did not hide his indignation and claimed that Štúr deceived him because he did not inform him that the newspaper would be published in the Slovak language, as opposed to the previously used Slovak version of Czech. Kollár, as a supporter of the common Czech-Slovak language, interpreted it as an attempt to defraud him and many others who supported the establishment of this newspaper to varying degrees and very intensely fought against Štúr's newspaper, as did many of his followers. Kollár, but also Štěpan Launer and Andrej Lanštlák, used many vulgar pejoratives in their publications to address Štúr, his newspaper, and the Slovak language in which it was published (Kollár 1846, 147–148; Launer 1847; Lanštlák 1847; Krištof 2020, 150–152; Krištof 2022, 147–152). Despite this, the *Slovak National Newspaper* was published until the revolution in Hungary; its last issue was published in June 1848.

Opposition to Štúr as the editor of the *Slovak National Newspaper* arose not only in the circles of supporters of the Czech-Slovak literary language but also among his more radical followers. Janko Král and Janko Francisci became the voices of this faction of the young generation, who, in letters to Štúr, criticized his caution in formulating the political orientation and goals of the Slovak national movement. Francisci called on Štúr to go beyond the narrow framework of Slovak ethnic interests and fight for rights and freedom for all citizens of Hungary, not only the peasantry, but also the middle class and nobility. He reproached Štúr for his lack of knowledge of Hungarian politics and warned him that unless they advocated for civil rights and liberties in newspapers, people would not listen to them. He called for the fight for freedom and human rights, because otherwise they do not even deserve them. He also criticized Štúr for taking all activities in his own hands and therefore making others feel useless, which is ultimately to the detriment of the newspaper and the Slovak public (Francisci 1960, 93–102). In his first reaction, Štúr sharply rejected the criticism as a misunderstanding of the real position of the Slovak national movement, newspapers, and Slovak ethnic groups in Hungary (Štúr 1956, 101). Gradually, however, he at least partially accepted Francisci's criticism and began to devote himself more intensely to the economic and social problems of Hungary in his journalism, going beyond the needs and interests of the Slovak ethnic group, including in the Hungarian parliament, where he served as a deputy in 1847–1848.

Štúr and Magyar Liberal Nationalism

Magyar liberals fought for freedom of trade, ownership, and religion (also for Jews); on the other hand, they refused to grant freedom to non-Magyar nations and ethnic groups living in the Kingdom of Hungary regarding their language, culture, school system, education, edification, and so on. They believed in the existence of only one true kind of freedom – for everyone to be able to become a Magyar – that is, to adopt Magyar awareness, identity, and national ideology and start using the Magyar language as their communication language, for which they were offered the opportunity to become part of advanced Magyar culture, “the great Magyar nation,” including the

possibility of social advancement, i.e., a chance to apply for top positions in state and public administration (Zay 1841; Maxwell 2009, 16; Péter 2012, 202).

The young Karl Marx, however, stated, at the same time, that freedom of trade, ownership, conscience, press, or justice are all types of one and only strain – freedom with no specific name. It concerns intolerance of one kind of freedom, which can only tolerate the existence of others provided they renounce their own rights and claim to be vassals (Marx 1975a, 173). Marx's words were completely true in the Hungarian context that intolerance was present in the form of placing a certain kind of freedom at the forefront at the expense of all other forms of freedom. It was only possible to acquire this form of freedom provided one gave up their freedom in other areas; in reality, they were required to abandon their own identity, that is, to perform self-alienation, as that was the only way a member of a non-Magyar nation or ethnic group could win the same rights and freedoms as were granted by the ruling power to the Magyar nation (Kiss 2005, 70, 83–87), even though they represented a minority of the country's population (Fényes 1842, 33–34; Janos 1982, 11; Lendvai 2003, 225).

In this, manifestations of inhumanity, degradation of human dignity, and the moral right of man to free life, growth, development, and cultivation all concerned giving up one's mother tongue, their ethnic or national affiliation, and so on. Such actions of the ruling Magyar elites were irresponsible toward the country and the common good of its citizens. They were also unjust and intolerant, since the ruling Magyar circles did not recognize the justified freedoms, rights, interests, and needs of the other nations and ethnic groups in Hungary, and they merely considered the interests of the Magyar nation and its elites, to whom they subordinated their policies at all levels (Varga 1993, 29–30, 82; Gluchman 2022, 128–144). However, Štúr claimed that

there is no supreme nationality, because each nation is only one part of humanity and no nation can personify it, that it would have best affected human development and possible perfection, so no nation has the rights of another nation when this he wants to move and educate himself, to force him to his life as to the greatest human perfection and to follow his own special path, namely the path most suitable for him, the one where he himself wants to go, not to let him go. Humanity is exalted above every nation, and the human spirit is above every nationality. The temple of this spirit stands on the highest hill, elevated above the temples of all the individual nations, and that nation best converted with its nationality, the higher it raised its temple to all mankind and imitated it. The Slavic singer sings well, calling out to the Slav, so that whenever he says Slav, a human will answer him. We don't want Slavs without humanity, but we also don't want nationalities without Slavs. (Štúr 1847e, 917–918)

For this reason, Alexander Matuška stated that

Štúr, fearing his nation would cease to exist, is fighting a triple battle: one for his bare life, another for the national life, and yet another for the nature and quality of such life. Just living is not enough; living nationally is not enough; one needs to live a human life among people and within mankind. As it is *'not one's nationality that comes highest,'* what is highest is humanity. Nationality is merely the means, not the end. (Matuška 1990, 102)⁸

Štúr, in his publicist activities in the 1840s, passionately revealed the deceitfulness of Magyar liberalism and the fight for freedom; he criticized the national policies of the ruling Magyar circles with regard to the Slovak ethnic group, as well as other non-Magyar nations and ethnic groups living in Hungary (Štúr 1843; 1935; Majerek 2011, 55–56; Mráz 1948, 13–14). In his private correspondence, he also informed the addressees of his letters of forceful Magyarization, which was a matter of life and death, declared by Magyars to Slovaks. In his view, Magyar fanaticism is getting stronger by the day. This is evidenced by the belief spread throughout the Kingdom of Hungary that he who does not support Magyarization is a traitor. He was, however, convinced that Magyars

would not succeed in Magyarization of all Slovaks (Štúr 1954, 204–205, 210–211, 273). “What is done to us is godforsaken injustice, but we shall suffer. The life of a nation costs many, many victims” (Štúr 1954, 352). It was a strong expression of Štúr’s determination and defiance, also on behalf of other representatives of the young generation within the Slovak national movement in the 1840s – that is, not to give up and persevere in the effort to save the Slovak ethnic group from cultural assimilation and extinction.

In 1841, Štúr wrote,

The battle is slowly getting stronger and it is advancing from the public space to households; it divides brothers and sons from their fathers. Nevertheless, it is merely at the very start of its period in the public space. This, however, is not and cannot be done differently! He strives for justice and wishes it was recognized and respected must go into battle and bring sacrifice to their good justice. In addition, apart from this, a great idea can only enter life slowly and is bound to come across thousands of obstacles. (Štúr 1954, 250)

Štúr adequately diagnosed the period and the issues Hungary faced in the 1840s. In many aspects, he had great observational talent thanks to which he managed to identify the most serious problems of his era and country; he did not lack courage, determination, combativeness, or a certain level of idealism. He believed in the success of his own battle and dedicated all his energy and abilities to fighting for the rights and freedom of the oppressed Slovak people. Štúr’s words aptly describe not only his determination and the conviction about the need to fight for the rights and freedoms of the Slovak ethnic group but also the need to sacrifice oneself in the name of freedom and the common good for the benefit of the weak and oppressed (Štúr 1954, 20–21).

Štúr pointed to the statements of Count Carl Zay, the general inspector of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, about Slavs not being capable of freedom and their spiritual development not being possible in their mother tongue (Zay 1841; Evans 2006, 158; Jászi 1929, 309). According to Štúr, Zay denied Slavs’ humanity; he deprived them of their human dignity, as he established that a Slav was not a human being. If there was a court of humanity, he would sue him (Štúr 1843, 9–10).⁹ Undoubtedly, Zay’s statements are examples of national intolerance, humiliation, and defamation of the human dignity of not only individuals but also members of the entire ethnic group. It served to justify and excuse their “political, cultural, and civilization mission” in accordance with “law of progress,” as, in their perception, what Magyars offered Slavs, including Slovaks, was freedom, higher culture, and civilization. According to Štúr, Lajos Kossuth was an example of how, under the mask of freedom, impertinence and high-handedness can be spread. The reason for his popularity lay in his getting hold of the public discourse that he adapted and embroidered and represented to the public. Instead of freeing himself from public opinion when he wished to do something for the country, Kossuth, in Štúr’s opinion, completely succumbed to it, which was why Magyar public opinion chose him as their favorite. He did not edify the public opinion; he did not become a source of a new way of thinking that would be beneficial for the Kingdom of Hungary. As Štúr saw it, Count István Széchenyi, however, took a different approach when he started a fight against public opinion, criticizing forceful Magyarization in his academic address (Štúr 1843, 31).¹⁰

Targeting Kossuth and Magyar liberals, Štúr claimed that he who prevents others from educating themselves and denies their human rights is not a true supporter of freedom, even though he might keep advocating it. Such a person wants something that is not reasonable and, without reason, there is no freedom, all that it truly is high-handedness (Štúr 1843, 19).¹¹ Most of us will probably agree with Štúr’s opinion that Magyars could not have been serious about freedom if they did not offer it equally to all but rather distributed it on the basis of national affiliation, mother tongue, or other criteria, which were not a direct result or consequence of one’s actions that would be in conflict with humanity rather than lawfulness. The reason for emphasizing the difference between lawfulness and humanity is that enforcing Magyar as an exclusive language of communication and instruction at schools as well as Magyarization were lawful, since the Hungarian Diet was in servitude of the

Magyar political elites, which meant it adopted laws that unilaterally preferred the interests of the Magyar nation. That, however, was not in accordance with humanity and man's moral right to growth, development, and cultivation, as these laws did not provide the same conditions for all the nations and ethnic groups living in Hungary. According to János Varga, Magyar nationalists refused to recognize other nationalities as political subjects and tried to replace their languages with Magyar not only in the political life of the country. They wanted to introduce Magyar into the churches and schools of the nationalities, and, by these interventions, the Magyar nationalists interfered in the lives of the masses (Varga 1993, 81). "There can be no doubt that the attempts to force assimilation infringed on the nationalities' rights, and violated people's human dignity. In our evaluation of these attempts, it is this and not their frequency that is the decisive consideration" (Varga 1993, 82).

"Štúr and his generation [...] engrained in the nation a longing for social and national liberation and the universal idea of freedom" (Hučko 1997, 259); they pointed out that the fight for freedom is to the fight for the freedom of all, not only Magyars, i.e., universal freedom. Thus, if Magyars were to fight for their own national freedom with regard to Vienna, for the rights of the Magyar language, education, culture, and so on, non-Magyar nations and ethnic groups living in the Kingdom of Hungary also demanded the same rights to freely use their mother tongues in public life, in counties, courts, church, etc. They equally demanded schools where their children get education in their own mother tongue; they requested the freedom to establish cultural and edifying associations, in which they could develop their own culture and edify the members of their nations and ethnic groups, and so on.¹² In these radical times, Štúr served freedom, which he considered a cure to all ills of the era. That was why he fought for and defended freedom (Mináč 1997, 124).¹³

However, the Magyar political elites were not interested in universal freedom, as they considered their fight for freedom an exclusive Magyar issue – what they requested from Vienna they refused to grant to the non-Magyar citizens of Hungary. Their ideas of freedom were exclusive rather than inclusive or universal, as they only concerned a small part of the country's population while selling this exclusivity of freedom as a commodity. The cost of acquisition would have meant, for the members of non-Magyar nations or ethnic groups, abandoning their mother tongue, their national awareness, identity, and their nation or ethnic group as a whole; in other words, owning exclusive freedom meant becoming a Magyar. Any social advancement of a member of a non-Magyar nation or an ethnic group was determined by national or ethnic alienation from one's origin, mother tongue, culture, awareness, and identity. Endre Kovács stated that the Magyar public opinion "did not understand in the slightest that the country's non-Magyar nations reached the same point in their development and that they feel just as much of a nation as Magyars and that they also request freedom, independence, and independent progress" (Kovács 1956, 191).

Magyar elites justified their dominant position in historical Hungary and the policy of Magyarization by historical right, the essence of which was the existence of Magyar statehood starting with the establishment of the Kingdom of Hungary. Slovak patriots, including Štúr, strove to move natural law to the level of free existence of an ethnic group or nation. Based on this, Štúr did not merely request political and social freedom for man in the spirit of liberalism, that is, as a citizen of the country, but freedom at all levels of his life – national, cultural, linguistic, educational, and so on. The liberal perception of the freedom of man as a citizen and, mainly, its interpretation on the part of Magyar liberals was highly reductionist, as it only provided all citizens with certain political and social freedoms and refused to grant them many other freedoms following natural law, or it only acknowledged these to some, based on the national or ethnic principle justified by historical right. In the end, it was merely an illusion of freedom, as it broke social bonds while, at the same time, tied the majority of the inhabitants of Hungary with Magyar linguistic, educational, cultural, religious, and other chains. Only caricature of freedom, so promised and glorified, was left for the majority of the citizens; they were not allowed to freely use their mother tongue in public, they could not freely get education in their mother tongue, establish cultural and edifying associations, and the like.

Hungary was a Magyar national state; this simple dogma carried Kossuth to success... But great areas of Hungary were without any Magyar population, other than absentee land-owners; and the Magyars were a minority in the state which they claimed as theirs. This was the key to Hungarian politics for the next hundred years: the Magyars pursued a pseudo-liberal policy, but could carry it out only by illiberal methods. They could maintain their national position, only by establishing an artificial monopoly of all public life and by preventing the cultural awakening of the other peoples in Hungary. (Taylor 1948, 52)

In Hungary, laws prevented the majority of its population from living a free life; they did not reflect its interests and needs but rather the interests of the country's minority – namely, the Magyar nation and its elites. Hungarian laws were deformed freedom, as they made the majority of the country live in contradiction with their human nature; instead of the mother tongue, they were forced to use a foreign language; instead of their national or ethnic awareness, they were to adopt different, strange, national awareness, identity, and national ideology.

Striving to make the borders of their own linguistic nation identical to the country's political borders, the patriotic reformers became entrapped in a war on two fronts – against the Habsburgs and against the non-Hungarian majority of the population – which could only end in defeat for them and their country. It was this conflict over the introduction of Hungarian as the official language throughout the country which eventually brought down the kingdom of Hungary. (Lendvai 2003, 203)

Magyarization was one of the brakes of the social and cultural development of the Kingdom of Hungary, and any criticism of Magyarizing laws was perceived as a manifestation of hostility toward the ruling Magyar national elites and its “justified” interests and needs, even though these Magyarizing laws did not take any concern for justified interests and needs of the majority population of Hungary into consideration. The Magyar ruling circles, as well as other Magyar elites, did all they could to prevent full-bodied participation of the other non-Magyar nations and ethnic groups in the country's life (Jászi 1929, 308–309; Maxwell 2009, 16). They not only adopted laws exclusively beneficial for the Magyar nation at the expense of the others but also created obstacles to prevent the elites of other nations and ethnic groups living in Hungary from participating in the country's life and contributing to forming the common good, which would, if possible, reflect the interests of all its citizens of any national, ethnic, or social background.

Whereas the earlier philosophers of constitutional law proceeded in their account of the formation of the state from the instincts, either of ambition or gregariousness, or even from reason, although not social reason, but the reason of the individual, the more ideal and profound view of recent philosophy proceeds from the idea of the whole. It looks on the state as the great organism, in which legal, moral, and political freedom must be realised, and in which the individual citizen in obeying the laws of the state only obeys the natural laws of his own reason, of human reason. (Marx 1975b, 202)

This quote by the young Marx points to the justification of Štúr's efforts, as well as the efforts of other Slovak patriots, to enforce such an understanding of the state that is a realization of political, moral, and legal freedom based on laws resulting from human nature. In Marx's perception, the idea of a whole meant taking into consideration the justified rights, interests, and needs of all the country's citizens, not only the minority at the expense of the majority. Human reason, which Marx called to, directed Štúr, as well as other representatives of the Slovak national movement, to try and prevent Magyarization of the Slovak ethnic group, as they considered natural laws resulting from human reason sacred (Kiss 2005, 90). They strove to pursue them, as they believed the entire country, rather than just the members of the Slovak ethnic group, would benefit from their fulfilment and it would be a contribution to the common good of all, as that would enhance the

edification, education, and cultural advancement of Hungary's population (Maxwell 2018, 46). Alexander Maxwell claims that Štúr's determination for the benefit of Slovak national goals was undoubted; he, however, hoped they could be achieved by means of Slovak-Magyar cooperation, which, however, due to the dismissive stands of the Magyar elites, never happened (Maxwell 2009, 70).

However, when all attempts by the representatives of the Slovak national movement to grant cultural and linguistic rights to the Slovak ethnic group by the ruling Hungarian circles failed, including their rejection of the fourteen points of the *Demands of the Slovak Nation* from May 10, 1848, Štúr and his followers came to the difficult decision to enter into an armed struggle with the Magyar power to obtain rights and freedoms for the Slovak ethnic group in Hungary (Štúr 1956, 194, 213). Authors commenting on the Slovak uprising in 1848–1849, depending on their ideological and political positions, differ in their evaluation of this step taken by the Slovak national movement, because in the end, it took the side of Vienna against the Magyar Revolution and, although to a small extent, it nevertheless contributed to its defeat. One of the strongest critics of the attitude of the Slavs in the revolution of 1848–1849 was Friedrich Engels, who saw the Magyar Revolution as a righteous struggle of the Magyars for freedom against reactionary Vienna, while he saw the struggle of the Slavs, including the Slovaks, as support for the counterrevolution, overlooking the fact that the Slavs sided with Vienna and the imperial court against the Magyars after the Magyar national movement led by Lajos Kossuth refused to recognize their national demands (Engels 2010a, 227–238; 2010b, 362–378). On the other hand, in this difficult situation, the imperial court appeared very accommodating toward the fulfilment of the legitimate needs of the Slavic nations and ethnic groups living in the monarchy, although the result was in the end inglorious because both the Slavs and the Magyars ended up defeated by the imperial court and very little changed in the position of the Slavs, including the Slovak ethnic group. However, the events of the revolutionary years 1848–1849 showed the bitter truth that the Slovak ethnic group was not yet sufficiently politically ready to fight with arms in hand for their rights and freedoms; they were often deceived by Magyar propaganda, believed false information defaming the leaders of the uprising and the goals of the uprising, while it often itself succumbed to the illusion that the uprising was a way to settle personal scores or to loot. The revolution of 1848–1849 caught the Slovak ethnic group in a very immature political, social, and cultural state, which was not only reflected in its participation in the armed uprising but also in its perception by the rest of the Slovak population of Hungary.

This knowledge also influenced the evaluation of Štúr and the three Slovak campaigns in the years 1848–1849 against Magyar domination by Marxist-oriented authors, including Slovak ones in the second half of the 20th century. Many criticized Štúr, but also Hurban and Hodža, for siding with Vienna and the counterrevolution, while the Hungarians were fighting for freedom against the reactionary Habsburg Monarchy. According to Vladimír Mináč, Štúr's contradiction was manifested in this because he was neither a consistent revolutionary nor a traitor to the revolution; he was broad-minded, but, on the other hand, he limited himself to only one idea – he was a radical, but at the same time he worshiped St. Petersburg.¹⁴ According to Mináč, the Slovak national movement and its political development in the given period cannot be understood without understanding this contradiction (Mináč 2014a, 17–18; 2014b, 115–116, 127).

Ludovít Štúr was always an opponent of servility and did not fully trust the Austrian governments of his time. He did not lack generosity, prudence and courage, even political talent, but when dealing with difficult practical political tasks, faced by the extremely complex, changeable and not clear enough situation in the years of the revolutionary crisis, he did not always know how to keep himself at an adequate level; he finally went on the counter-revolutionary path. It wasn't his fault, it was his misfortune. He came to this political error for several reasons. As for internal causes, mainly as a result of an insufficiently developed and mature social base, secondarily also due to the lack of necessary political

experience. The establishment of the modern Slovak nation was his lifelong goal, therefore, in a critical situation during the revolutionary years, he could not subordinate the endangered Slovak national cause to the interests of European democracy. His democratism in political practice crashed on this dilemma. But even if Štúr was not a revolutionary, not even a consistent democrat, progressive moments clearly prevailed in his rich public activity in the 1840s. (Dubnický 1956, 64–65)

Similarly, Ľudovít Holotík characterized Štúr's activities in the period 1848–1849 as contradictory and ultimately harmful to the Slovak nation because he did not realize that freedom for the Slovak nation could only be achieved in the context of the freedom of other European nations. However, he came to the absurd conclusion that Štúr lacked historical perspective; for that reason, he did not realize that the definitive liberation of the Slovak ethnic group from oppression could only be won by the working class, led by the Communist Party (Holotík 1956, 510–511).¹⁵

Conclusion

The Slovak national intelligentsia, including Štúr, used their philosophical erudition to reveal the false nature of Magyar liberalism, advocating the fight for national freedom and the rights of Magyars while refusing to grant the same freedom and rights to non-Magyar nations and ethnic groups living in the Kingdom of Hungary (Kraszewski 2021, 25). For this reason, Štúr and other Slovak patriots followed natural human rights befitting all the citizens of the country regardless of race, nationality or ethnicity, religion, or faith.¹⁶ They demanded that Hungary and Magyars respect the human nature of all inhabitants of Hungary and not divide the country based on criteria used to justify the unnatural situation in the country, where a minority appropriated the country, its history, and everything related to it (Bárándy 1841, 762–766, 772–774; Kiss 2005, 59–60). At the same time, it placed all others into a position of petitioners demanding their natural laws that they could only acquire if they lost their own identity, thanks to self-alienation, and abandoned their own nation or ethnic group.¹⁷ The argument used on the Magyar part to justify their Magyarizing steps regarding their wish to unify the country and its citizens was false. This would mean the oppression and assimilation of the majority of Hungary's population, since Magyars made up only slightly more than a third of the country's population.

The country was not to become stronger or more unified if many of its citizens were to, in the name of social advancement, give up their mother tongue, identity, and national or ethnic awareness. They were to distance themselves from their relatives and, ultimately, self-alienate, which was also pointed out by Count Leo von Thun. In contrast, the attacks of Magyar political, social, cultural, and religious circles against non-Magyar inhabitants of Hungary divided the country and its citizens, which meant its internal weakening (Thun 1843). Magyar elites succumbed to false ideas about their own exceptional historical, cultural, and civilization mission following “the law of progress,” which they used to convince other countries about the need for such steps in the name of protection of the West from Slavic barbarism. For a long time, they succeeded. Many leftist intellectuals of Western Europe, especially in the context of the 1848–1849 Magyar Revolution, also fell for this deceptive idea.

In that period, Štúr wrote books such as *Die Beschwerden und Klagen der Slaven in Ungarn* (1843)¹⁸ and *Das neunzehnte Jahrhundert und der Magyarizismus* (1845), revealing the false nature of Magyar liberalism, which concealed the ideas of national oppression of non-Magyar citizens of Hungary with slogans about a fight for freedom (Maxwell 2009, 44). He demasked the Magyarizing policies of the ruling circles of Hungary at the level of state, public, and church administration, as harmful to the entire country. Under the slogans of the common good, they enforced the narrow nationalist intentions of the Magyar national movement, which directly concerned non-Magyar citizens of Hungary, such as, for instance, Slovaks and Rusyns (Ruthenians) who were under the threat of assimilation as a result of Magyarizing national policies (Štúr 1847d, 869–870). Štúr also

wrote *Slovenské nárečie a potreba písania v tomto nárečí* [*The Slovak Dialect and the Need to Write in This Dialect*] (1846), in which he defended the independence of the Slovak ethnic group and the need for its own language as a tool for further development, thanks to which it would become a nation in its own right alongside the other nations living in Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy. It was part of the process of national agitation, formation of national identity, and national ideology within Phase B of the development of the Slovak national movement, which, according to Miroslav Hroch, did not reach a mass character even during the revolution of 1848–1849 due to Magyarization (Hroch 1985, 98–99).

Despite his faults and mistakes, Štúr was an example of the high personal and moral commitment of a representative of the national movement of the first half of the 19th century, who selflessly worked for the defense and all-round uplifting of the Slovak ethnic group, as Miroslav Hroch mentioned in his article (Hroch 2022). According to Rudolf Chmel, Štúr was lucky to have been born in an era when history was being written, when national and civic society was being born. Štúr exchanged the freedom of an intellectual for a collective fight for social freedom (Chmel 2009, 11–12).

Ludovít Štúr arrived at a time when the status of an intellectual in Europe was growing and the nobility had to respect it. He himself is the first Slovak intellectual who consciously transformed himself into a committed politician with a strong nation-building drive. He overcame all the previous barriers – the smallness and underdevelopment of the Slovak environment, the absence of noble origin but also of a state or at least a limited territory, a middle status, a historical center, a deficit of political tradition and political thinking, but also of political representation. (Chmel 2009, 38)

He came to the cognition that Hegel's logical composition of philosophy is all well and good but not attractive enough for the world and its people, as it lacks a direct connection to life and its needs. That was why he took from Hegel what he considered usable and productive: because of his philosophy of history, which prompted him to a creative search for solutions to issues of the national movement with regards to the future of Slavic nations in their fight for freedom and independence (Várossová 1956, 95). Štúr dealt with national oppression, feudal relics, the backwardness of Hungary, and, especially, the social and cultural deficiency of a significant part of the population of Upper Hungary. He fought for the elimination of the national oppression of Slovaks and other non-Magyar citizens of Hungary, the dissolution of feudalism, and the removal of the privileges of aristocracy. Štúr developed his philosophical erudition in his polemics about Magyarization, Slavic reciprocity, and the Slovak language, be it with Magyar, Czech, or Slovak authors, defending the thesis of the independence of the Slovak ethnic group as a part of the Slavic nation in its own right. He successfully applied the philosophical method of Hegel's dialectics and his philosophy of history to the specific conditions of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy. It was philosophy applied to life and for life in the interest of freeing the oppressed, exploited, and persecuted plebeian, which was used as the basis for a practical pursuit of the plebeian ethos of national freedom (Gluchman 2023). Štúr's plebeian ethos arose in strong opposition to lordly and noble culture, accepting peasant, patriarchal, and patrimonial models. He highly valued hard work, diligence, modesty, economy, and family life. His ethos also contained patterns of bourgeois puritanism: strictness of morals mixed with prudence, but also frugality, economy, utilitarianism, and pragmatism (Janaszek-Ivaničková 1978, 396–397).

History has confirmed that Štúr's ideas of the first half of the 19th century only slowly, and with difficulty, achieved success and had to overcome a great number of obstacles. This meant he did not see his life's work being fulfilled; instead, it came to fruition for the next generations, despite the "law of progress," according to which small nations and ethnic groups (including Slovaks) were condemned to assimilation.

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Notes

- 1 I use the terms “ethnic group” and “national movement” in accordance with Hroch’s terminology, which uses the term national movement in relation to those ethnic groups that have successfully transformed into a modern nation (Hroch 1986, 54; 1985). In the case of the Slovaks, it is a national movement, the goal of which was to form a nation out of the Slovak ethnic group and to obtain an equal status and rights for them in Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy.
- 2 According to Miroslav Hroch, Phase B was mainly a process of national agitation and plays a decisive role in the formation of the nation, national identity, and national ideology. The subject of the national agitation was a group of patriots who were not satisfied with only an interest in language and culture. During Phase B, the national agitation increasingly appealed to the broad masses of members of the oppressed ethnic group, forming a mass national movement including all social classes of the given ethnic group, which led to the formulation of a broadly conceived national program (Hroch 1985, 23–24; 1986, 64–65).
- 3 For a long time, Hroch has consistently distinguished between the terms “nationalism” and “patriotism,” refusing to confuse or equate them. It mainly draws attention to the negative evaluation connotations associated with the term “nationalism” as a manifestation of national egoism, nationally justified intolerance, aggressiveness, and superiority (Hroch 1985; 1986, 370–373; 2007, 11; 2009, 33–34, 266–267).
- 4 Ľudovít Štúr (born on October 28, 1815, in Uhrovec, died on January 12, 1856, in Modra) was a Slovak politician, journalist, linguist, philosopher, historian, and pedagogue. He studied in Győr, Bratislava (Pressburg/Pozsony), and Halle (1838–1840), worked as the editor-in-chief of *Slovenskje národňje novini* (*Slovak National Newspaper*, 1845–1848), and was a member of the Hungarian Diet for the Royal town of Zvolen (1847–1848). He was at the head of the Slovak National Council during the armed uprising against the Hungarian government (1848–1849) alongside Jozef Miloslav Hurban (1817–1888) and Michal Miloslav Hodža (1811–1870). Among his most significant works are *Die Beschwerden und Klagen der Slaven in Ungarn über die gesetzwidrigen Uebergriffe der Magyaren* (1843), *Das neunzehnte Jahrhundert und der Magyarizismus* (1845), *Nárečie slovenské alebo potreba písania v tomto nárečí* (1846), and *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft* (not issued until 1867 in Russian entitled *Slavjanstvo i mir budúčego*).
- 5 By the “plebeian ethos,” I mean the efforts of the non-aristocratic and non-privileged classes to eliminate serfdom, achieve equal status and rights in the country, etc. This framework also includes the individual ethos of political, social, cultural, religious representatives coming from non-aristocratic and non-privileged layers of non-Magyar ethnicities and peoples of Hungary, who were the main object of Magyarization. The ruling Magyar elites were aware of their importance and the role they played in the national movements of non-Magyars nations and saw in them the biggest obstacle to Magyarization.
- 6 Since the present article discusses a specific time-period only, without venturing after the breakup of Austro-Hungary, both “the Kingdom of Hungary” and “Hungary” are used interchangeably. Regarding nationalities, “Magyar” is used instead of the more common “Hungarian” when pointing to the ethnicity within historic Hungary, as opposed to “Hungarians” as an umbrella term for the people living in historic Hungary. However, in direct quotations from Magyar authors, I maintain the form used by them, according to which they often identify the terms Magyars and Hungarians.

- 7 In connection with the alcoholism of the Slovaks of that time, Štúr also took a critical position toward Jewish innkeepers, whom he accused of facilitating alcoholism among ethnic Slovaks, thereby contributing to their impoverishment and social deprivation. However, he considered Jewish innkeepers as a tool of the nobility owning distilleries, which, in his opinion, were the most widespread type of business in Upper Hungary (Štúr 1847c, 805). Therefore, he supported the demand for taxation of the nobility, including the payment of taxes on the production of alcohol (Štúr 1847b, 713).
- 8 Prior to this, Samuel Štefan Osuský also wrote that, for Štúr, there was mankind above every nation and there was human soul above every nationality. It was not Slavism without humanity that was concerned but also not a nationality without Slavism (Osuský 1936, 111).
- 9 Štúr responded to Zay's statement, according to which the progress of education, humaneness, and intelligence can be sought in the Germans, but never in the Slavs. In this spirit, Zay called on the Slavs to work for intelligence, humaneness, and civil freedom through Magyar, not the Slavik language, because Magyar is the language of the country that gave birth to them and feeds them; it is the language that is the developing and protective element of the nation and freedom (Zay 1841, 62–63).
- 10 Thomas G. Pesek wrote, "In this precarious situation, the Slovaks found three able leaders to champion their interests: Ludovit Štúr, Jozef Miloslav Hurban, and Michal Miloslav Hodža. Štúr, however, was by far the most dynamic and articulate and, as events turned out, he was to become the preeminent figure of the separatist movement" (Pesek 1970, 135). Anna Kobylińska also claims that Štúr was a charismatic personality: he emanated an aura, and, in this way, he influenced his contemporaries; he became the focal symbol of Slovak national life of the period in question (Kobylińska 2016, 138). According to Dmitrij Čiževskij, Štúr was just as much of a man of action as he was a man of ideas; his most significant one being thinking of life in direct connection to immediate reality, i.e., life of the nation (Čiževskij 1941, 56).
- 11 According to Viliam Jablonický, Štúr penetrated the issue of freedom not only from the political but also philosophical viewpoint, as he identified freedom with reason; without it, freedom is inconceivable; it makes it possible to differentiate between good and evil and is an attribute of man's dignity (Jablonický 1997, 268–269).
- 12 The 1843 codification of standard Slovak was part of this process within the Slovak national movement. Its goal was to enhance the development of Slovak ethnic awareness and Slovak identity and was part of the formulation of the Slovak national, political, as well social program. It contributed to the unification of Slovak Catholics and Lutherans in the Slovak national movement. Štúr, together with Jozef Miloslav Hurban and Michal Miloslav Hodža, pushed through this step despite the strong opposition of Kollár and his followers, as well as against the will of the representatives of the Czech national movement, who considered it a serious weakening of common, but mainly Czech, national, and political interests in the Habsburg Monarchy (Štúr 1943; Connelly 2020, 98–99; Čiževskij 1941, 56; Demmel 2015, 146–147; Giza 2000, 89–90; Hurban 1959, 388–391; Kamusella 2009, 133–136, 545–546; Maxwell 2009, 115).
- 13 Evidence of Štúr's efforts for the universal freedom of the citizens of Hungary were, for example, his editorials in the *Slovak National Newspaper*, where he rejected the exclusivity of freedom for the nobility; and, when it came to representation in the Hungarian Diet, he demanded the same freedoms and rights for the bourgeoisie and representatives of industry and commerce (Štúr 1847a, 670, 673). The development of industry in Hungary was directly linked to the expansion of political freedoms in the country (Štúr 1847b, 697). He demanded that the freedoms and rights of one state (nobility) be transferred to the other states, which will stimulate the development of human dignity of all citizens of the country. Part of his demands included freedom of education and the development of science, which, according to him, should also contribute to the improvement of the material status of teachers (Štúr 1847e, 905, 913). In his speeches on the floor of the Hungarian Diet as a deputy of the free royal city of Zvolen, he defended the rights of the free royal cities to equal representation in the parliament: he also

- demanded freedom for the subjects, because only freedom and equality is a guarantee of the country's security. He demanded freedom of education in the Hungarian Diet, because an educated and enlightened people will be on the side of the further development of the country (Štúr 2007, 313–318, 320–322).
- 14 Štúr's Russophilism manifested itself most prominently in the first half of the 1850s, when he wrote the work *Slavdom and the World of the Future* (published for the first time in 1867 in St. Petersburg), in which he criticized the West, suggested the union of the Slavs under the auspices of Tsarist Russia, and was also in favor the adoption of Russian as the literary language of the Slavs and the conversion of all Slavs to the Orthodox Church. However, it was a different story for Štúr, which was largely the result of his disappointment with the uprising in 1848–1849.
 - 15 An example of period-based criticism of Štúr and the Slovak national movement of the first half of the 19th century can be the opinion of Milan Hodža, who in the spirit of Czechoslovakism blamed Štúr for the linguistic separation with the Czechs and the breaking of Czechoslovak national unity (Hodža 1920, 189–190).
 - 16 However, with his speech at the Hungarian Diet on January 21, 1848, in the spirit of the instructions of the town of Zvolen, he supported the request of the free royal towns regarding the validity of Article 29 of the law from 1841 on the ban on the residence of Jews in mining towns. He justified his position by the impoverishment of the Slovak people by the Jews (Krajinskí snem 1848, 1025; Demmel 2015, 246). His position was motivated socially, not racially or religiously.
 - 17 Robert B. Pynsent accused Kollár and Štúr of creating a myth of Magyars as Asian barbarians who Slovaks civilized (Pynsent 1994, 167). He did not take into consideration the historical context, in which this opinion was born in defence from belittling Slovaks and their history on the part of Magyars in the process of Magyarization of the Slovak ethnic group. On the other hand, Maxwell points out that supplicant nationalists (including Slovaks) “emphasised their loyalty to existing state structures, posed as moderates and emphasised their peaceful intentions. They eschewed threats, emphasised reconciliation, and repeatedly flattered the dominant nation and its representatives” (Maxwell 2018, 46).
 - 18 Peter Petro claims that was the beginning of the main activity of Štúr and his generation, which culminated in the 1848–1849 revolution (Petro 1995, 65–69).

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