

Philosophical roots of the slovak national revival movement in mid-19th century: A case study on the Memorandum events of 1861 in Turciansky Sv. Martin

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Abstract

The Memorandum events from June 1861 constitute an important milestone in the development and shaping of the Slovak nation, its culture, political self-awareness, and national self-determination. Formulated and approved by the First Slovak National Gathering on June 6-7, 1861 in Martin, the Memorandum of the Slovak Nation to the upper chamber of the Hungarian parliament, containing the Petitions of the Slovak Nation which ask for a just enactment of the law with regard to equality of the nations in Hungary, reflected not only the political ambitions but also philosophical and religious convictions (and presuppositions) of the leading figures of the third phase of the Slovak National Revival Movement in mid-19th century. Jozef Miloslav Hurban, Karol Kuzmany, Michal Miloslav Hodza, Andrej Braxatoris Sladkovic and others belonging to the “Sturovci Circle,” the circle of German-educated Slovak Lutheran pastors surrounding their leader Ludovít Stur, brought to Slovakia the new trends of national awakening coming out of the right-wing Hegelian philosophy. In their national awakening efforts, Sturovci also incorporated Romanticism’s interest in language as a medium of thought, which made them strong proponents of education and cultural emancipation of the Slovaks. The paper provides an analysis of the philosophical roots of the governing ideas of the main leaders from the “Sturovci Generation” with the focus on the Memorandum Events of 1861 and Andrej Sladkovic.

Key words: Slovak National Revival, Memorandum of the Slovak Nation, Hegel, the Sturovci Generation

Introduction:

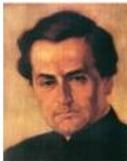
The Memorandum events from June 1861 constitute an important milestone in the development and shaping of the Slovak nation, its culture, political self-awareness, and national self-determination. The philosophical roots of this crucial event, however, have not been sufficiently explored so far. Our paper offers new insights on the ideational anchoring of important figures of the Slovak national Revival (Awakening) movement, showing how philosophical thoughts intertwined with religious convictions and monotheistic metanarrative presuppositions in cultivating a specific, nationalist-philosophical outlooks that shaped the Slovak culture and nation. After a Brief overview of the three phases of the Slovak National Revival Movement, we will examine the philosophical roots and ideas of the ‘Sturovci Generation,’ explore the reception of Hegelianism and other selected philosophies by the ‘Sturovci Generation,’ and finally offer a short case study on the role these philosophical ideas and corresponding religious beliefs played in the Memorandum of the Slovak Nation in Martin (1861). Here, we will focus on the personal views of Andrej Braxatoris Sladkovic (1820-1872), one of the leading figures of the ‘Sturovci Generation.’

Overview of the three phases of the Slovak National Revival Movement

The Slovak National Awakening of the 18th and 19th centuries marked the beginning of a cultural emancipation process of the Slovak ethnic group living in what was then known as the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Three distinct phases

can be identified, spanning the period between 1780-1870. The following table (Table 1) offers a succinct overview of the phases, indicating the time period, leading figure(s), and main emphasis of the given period.

Three phases of National Awakening






| <i>Phase 1</i> | <i>Phase 2</i> | <i>Phase 3</i> |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 1780 – 1820 | 1820 – 1835 | 1835 – 1870 |
| Anton Bernolák and the "Bernolák Generation" | Ján Kollár and Pavol Jozef Šafárik | Ľudovít Štúr and the "Štúrovci Generation" |
| common folk edification and written language codification | Slavic nations cooperation | written language codification, cultural and political rights of the people |

Table 1. Three phases of National Awakening; Source: authors

Phase 1 of the Awakening took place between 1780-1820. Its leading figure was Anton Bernolák (1762-1813) and his followers were known as the 'Bernolák Generation.' The main emphasis of this generation was common folk edification. This included not only the first attempt to codify the national language (in written form) but also teaching people about good habits and overcoming superstition. Phase 2 of the National Awakening lasted from 1820-1835 and was led by Jan Kollar (1793-1852) and Pavol Jozef Safarik (1795-1861). Kollar, Safarik and their followers took on the romantic position of appealing to the Slavic brotherhood and mutuality, hoping that in linking the fate of the small Slovak nation to that of the Russian people, Slovaks could find stability and protection, as well as new cultural inspiration for developing their 'Slavic spirit'. The third Phase of the Awakening took place between 1830-1870. Ludovít Stur (1815-1856) was the founder, inspiration and leading figure of this phase. Stur managed to inspire many gifted young intellectuals who looked up to him and who together aspired to edify the Slovaks by means of art and literature, as well as to organize them socially and politically as a self-aware national entity. Therefore, written language codification and the struggle for cultural and political rights, were the main emphases of their efforts. The so-called 'Sturovci Generation,' known also by the term 'Sturovci Circle,' comprised the following intellectuals: Ján Kalinčiak (1822-71), Samo Chalupka (1812-83), Andrej Sládkovič (1820-72), Janko Kráľ (1822-76), Ján Botto (1829-71), Janko Matúška (1821-77), Michal Miloslav Hodža (1811-70), Jozef Miloslav Hurban (1817-88), August Horislav Škultéty (1819-92), Samo Tomášik (1813-87), Viliam Paulíny-Tóth (1826-77), Ján Francisci-Rimavský (1822-1905), Štefan Marko Daxner (1822-91), Mikuláš Štefan Ferienčík (1825-81), Samo Bohdan Hroboň (1820-94), and other, less known figures. Most of the members of this circle were German-educated Slovak Lutheran pastors surrounding their leader Ludovít Stur. On the other hand, it would be incorrect to

argue that Lutheran Protestants were the only driving force behind the Slovak National Awakening in the 19th century. This can be clearly documented by the list (index) of authors who contributed to the two most influential national-cultural magazines of the time, as is shown in the Index below:¹

| Evanjelickí prispievatelia: | Katolíckí prispievatelia: |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Abaffy Leopold | Brázay Imrich |
| Ambrózy Matej | Čepka Leo Martin |
| Balkovič Gabriel | Dobšovič Anian |
| Bohurád Ján | Emmanuel Jozef |
| Bohuš Matej | Gerometta Eugen |
| Braxatoris Karol | Gerometta Ján |
| Čaplovič Ján | Hattala Martin |
| Černo Karol Ludomil | Holček Juraj |
| Čipka Ján | Hýroš Michal |
| Čipka Jonathan | Chlebák Michal |
| Daxner Štefan Marko | Chrások Michal |
| Demian Baltazar | Juračka Ignác |
| Dohnány Ľudovít | Ondrišík Ján |
| Dohnány Mikuláš | Palárik Ján |
| Féjerpataký-Belopotocký Gašpar | Plošic Július |
| Ferienčík Samuel | Rakovský Ján |
| Ferienčík Štefan Mikuláš | Serholec Jozef |
| Francisci Ján | Slopovský Karol |
| Helenay Karol | Soltész Aloys |
| Hurban Jozef Miloslav | Strakovič František |
| Jurecký Móric Samuel (Samoslav) | Šaliga Andrej |
| Kadavý Ján | Ščasný Jozef |
| Kardoš Adam | Tagányi František |
| Kellner Hostinský Peter | Tamaškovič Martin |
| Kráľ Janko | Tombor Ján Krstiteľ |
| Kraus Ján | Tombor Ľudovít |
| Kuorka Jur | Viktorín Jozef Karol |
| Langhoffer Tobiáš Ján | Závodník Štefan |
| Leška Štefan | Zechenter Gustáv Kazimír |
| Ličko Eduard | |
| Lučanský Peter | |
| Maróthy Daniel | |
| Maróthy Martin | |
| Meličko Michal | |
| Mešša Andrej | |
| Mínich Daniel | |
| Mockovčák Ján | |
| Nosák Timotej Ignác | |
| Novák Samuel | Evanjelickí prispievatelia (pokračovanie): |
| Orfanides Ľudovít | Šuhajda Ján |
| Rohoni Jur | Šulek August |
| Sládkovič Andrej | Šulek Ľudovít |
| Slujka Ján | Šoltés Michal |
| Šípka Jur | Špárnensis Eugen |
| Škultéty August Horislav | Tomášik Samuel |
| Štúr Ján | Trokan Ján |
| Štúr Ľudovít | Jančo Jozef |
| Štúr Samuel | Zoch Ctiboh |

Table 2: Index of contributors to *Slovenske narodnie noviny* and *Orol Tatranský*
Source: (Adamcik, 2016: 22)

¹ Table 2 lists Lutheran contributors in the first column on the left and the lower, separated column on the right, while Catholic contributors are listed in the right column from the top.

The Philosophical Roots of the ‘Sturovci Generation’

Uneasiness about Immanuel Kant

The beginning of the 19th century was marked by an anti-Kant movement in Hungary (counter-Aufklärer). Catholic schools in the country forbade Kant’s philosophy, excluding it completely from the curriculum. Lutherans were a bit more open in this respect. Though the later emphasis on Kant’s ethics made him [Kant] more acceptable in the eyes of some intellectuals, his theory of knowledge was considered especially toxic and dangerous. The overall cultural and intellectual environment was rather conservative. The political environment was marked by Habsburgs’ absolutism and a close ‘entanglement’ between the church (Catholic) and the state – two hierarchical institutions.

The ‘Sturovci Generation’ of Slovak intellectuals brought to Slovakia new trends of national awakening coming out of the right-wing Hegelian philosophy. (Dupkala, 2000) In their national awakening efforts, Sturovci also incorporated Romanticism’s interest in language as a medium of thought, which made them strong proponents of education and cultural emancipation of the Slovaks. (Meszaros, 2016) They tried to answer ‘big questions’ pertaining to the very purpose of existence of the life on an individual, the Slovak nation, and humanity, while their metanarrative framework was determined by their monotheistic belief in divine providence.

Four key philosophical influences

Four key philosophical influences can be identified underlying the thoughts and outlooks of this generation of Slovak intellectuals: (1) French Rationalism – especially Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (1669–1755), François-Marie Arouet Voltaire (1694–1778), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778); (2) 19th century German Philosophy – mainly Idealism and Romanticism as these were elaborated by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775–1854), and Karl Wilhelm Friedrich von Schlegel’s (1772–1829) interpretation of Hegel; (3) Polish Philosophy – especially Adam Bernard Mickiewicz (1798–1855), Bronisław Ferdynand Trentowski (1808–1869), August Dołęga Cieszkowski (1814–1894); and finally (4) the Russian ‘Slovanofili’ – such as Ivan Vasilyevich Kireyevsky (1806–1856) and Pyotr Vasilyevich Kireevsky (1808–1856), Aleksei Stepanovich Khomiakov (1804–1860), Ivan Sergeyevevich Aksakov (1823–1886) and others. (Osusky, 1936: 18–34)

Naturally, these four philosophical influences are not necessarily compatible in all respects and they did not exert the same level of influence on all phases, let alone all figures of the National Awakening. Still, it can be historically maintained that they constituted the most potent force of philosophical inspiration, providing basic outlooks and helping create governing presuppositions upon which further thought structure was erected.

Herder’s Philosophy of History

When it comes to assessing the major influence on the leading figure of the Sturovci Circle, Ludovít Stur was captivated primarily by Herder’s philosophy of history, published in his magnum opus *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–91). Herder believed that the source of religion is in the human sentiment. The purpose of history is to develop the dormant powers of individual entities, achieving a new, harmonious convergence in the ideal of humanity/humanness. The type of sentiment and cultural specificity that Herder identified among the Slavs lead him to believe that the future development of humanity is likely to be connected with the Slavic peoples, who are known to be peaceful, meek, hospitable, freedom-loving, malleable and whose cultural values are deeply entrenched in their hymns, myths, and fables. It is here where the renewal of the Western culture and civilization can find a potent resource. While it is questionable to what extent Stur himself believed Herder’s

presuppositions about the Slavic destiny as cultural 'saviors' of the Western civilization, he did agree with Herder's organic vision of history and the role that literature played in the forming of one's life-vision and moral as well as cultural identity. (Osusky, 1920; 1922)

The Reception of Hegelianism among the 'Sturovci Generation'

Many of the representatives of the 'Sturovci Generation' chose Halle as their preferred university town in Germany (as opposed to Jena or Wittenberg for previous generations). German Idealism mixed with Romanticism were the normative trend: from Kant, through Fichte, Schelling, to Hegel (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, 1770-1831). This mix engendered a rich variety of genres and a wide array of attitudes and moods, as Zajac (2016: 106) rightly observes: "the oscillation of emotional moods between heroic enthusiasm, idyllic happiness, melancholic sadness and existential anxiety." Hegel's teaching, mediated through 'right-wing' Hegelian philosophers in Halle and Berlin (more precisely, the second generation), made the deepest impressions on Stur and his compatriots. All four key works of the German philosopher played their role: *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1805), *Logik* (1812, 1816), *Encyklopedie* (1817), *Die Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechtes* (1821), although logic and Hegel's metaphysics were less significant for the Slovak intellectuals when compared to other parts of the Hegelian thought. The following teachers were recognized as 'genuine Hegelians' by Stur, Hurban and others from their circle: the historians Duncker and Roepell (historians), and the philosophers Erdmann, Schaller, Göschel, Gabler, Hinrichs (Osusky, 1936: 25-26). As indicated above, the 'Sturovci Generation' did not care much about Hegel's logic, metaphysics, or psychological constructions; instead, they preferred his ideas about the objective spirit, religion, philosophy of history, art, politics, and of rights.

The following ideas were often discussed by the 'Sturovci Generation' (and others, also from the Catholic intellectual circles): History consists of the actualization / development of the Spirit. This actualization of the Spirit is then the purpose of the world. History of philosophy is the proper tool at hand to identify and understand how the Spirit is developing, whose very essence is freedom and self-awareness. The intentional realization of freedom in the course of human history thus constitutes the goal of history of the world. True human freedom is not an original gift but rather a goal and a task to be completed by the acts of intellect and will. It is with Germanic Christianity that freedom achieved its last stage of development where each individual can be free. But this freedom must be acquired; it must be taught by a human community and intentionally cultivated. It starts with a family and then continues through a larger community (society) the unifying form of which is a nation. Finally, its highest form is the State – a unity of subjective and objective, morally informed will. As a divine idea, State is a moral community of free individuals, the most perfect expression of the absolute Spirit. Nations are mere tools of the State, fulfilling their temporary purposes as part of the larger purpose of the development of the Spirit.

One must remember, however, that the reception of Hegel in mid-19th century Upper Hungary (today's Slovakia), had its distinctive, historical-cultural specifics. (Varossova, 1987) There were two competing (and yet, somewhat converging) philosophical lineages among the 'Sturovci': (1) The rationalist-realist line (led by Ludovit Stur and Jozef Miloslav Hurban) and (2) the messianic-utopist line (represented by Michal Miloslav Hodza, Peter Kellner-Hostinsky, Samo Bohdan Hrobon and others). As mentioned above, traces of messianism could be found in the rationalist-realist line as well. (Meszaros, 2016: 846)

There is one important thing that needs to be clarified at this point. Members of the 'Sturovci Generation' often referred to Hegel when presenting their ideas, appealing to the authority of his method and system of thought. However, the original 'Hegelian System' can only scarcely be recognized in their own renderings of the allegedly 'Hegelian ideas'. Their cultural-political context along with their goals of cultural and

national emancipation gave rise to a synergy of theological and cultural metanarratives producing a unique reading of Hegel through a theological and eschatological (or even apocalyptic, at times) lens (Cuzy, 2016: 29-30). The Hegelianism of the 'Sturovci Generation' took the shape of a distinctive 'National Philosophy,' which expresses and cultivates the national spirit and leads to cultural and national renewal. Church representatives were the main proponents of this national philosophy during this time (i.e., the 19th century). This period was marked by the rejection of Immanuel Kant (especially his works on epistemology) and a return to classical metaphysics in the service of the national cause and the Judeo-Christian metanarrative. At the same time, the lack of functioning political structures and sufficiently developed academic environment gave support to messianic tendencies (contrary to the situation in Lower Hungary). (Meszaros, 2014: 734)

Ludovit Stur was the originator and main proponent of messianic elements in the Slovak national philosophy. Any change in interpretation of the existing national philosophy required an articulation of one's relationship to Hegel. To achieve this, members of the Sturovci Circle appealed to Stur's reinterpretation of Hegel. The Canonization of Hegel in what is today Slovakia thus came to pass through Stur in the form of "Stur-Christian-Slavic philosophy". (Ormis, 1869: 30; Meszaros, 2016: 850)

The Slovak National philosophy of the 'Sturovci Generation' built above all on two key elements: (1) the theism of right-wing Hegelians, and (2) Hegel's anticipation (prophecy) of the inevitability of the coming of the Slavic Era as a next stage in development of world history. Hence the 'theological/eschatological' significance of Slovak history. Hegel's thought, mediated through selected intellectuals of right-wing Hegelianism, was therefore used pragmatically as a conceptual tool, a mobilizing framework to achieve certain cultural and political goals. (Meszaros, 2016: 851)

Legend has it that towards the end of his life, Hegel handed his pen over to August Cieszkowski, saying: "Finish what I have not been able to do". (Ormis, 1869: 23) This legend was 'alive' among the Sturovci which helps us understand the mutual intertwining of Slovak and Polish messianisms. (Osusky, 1939: 356-359; Bakos, 2008: 173-175)

It is not surprising, therefore, that there seem to have been a concrete historical reason for the preference of Hegel to Kant among the Lutheran intellectuals gathered in the Sturovci Circle – Slovak Lutherans of the 19th century led the cultural emancipation movement of the Slovak nation, the major part of which had been attempts to codify an official version of the Slovak language and to promote it in literature, worship, church governance, and education. Catholic intellectuals gradually joined these efforts, though Latin remained the preferred language of the church. However, Hungarian Lutherans and Calvinists promoted the Hungarian language in the whole Hungarian empire. Choosing Hegel and interpreting him in a way conducive to the Slovak national emancipation efforts may have been an intentional subversive maneuver on the side of the Sturovci (all of whom were Lutherans) and other Slovak intellectuals.

There are significant differences between Hegel's thought and the Slovak Hegelianism of the Sturovci Generation, most markedly, in their understanding of the nature of the Absolute Spirit. Contrary to Hegel's view that considered the absolute Spirit the final product in the development of nature, intellectuals from the Sturovci circle believed that the Spirit is the original, sovereign being who creates matter/nature. (Osusky, 1928: 145-157) Nature thus is not a negation but a creation of the Spirit. As such, it [nature] is to be developed in accordance with the Spirit's providence. (Ormis, 1869: 27) Critical voices warned against excessive speculations and the resulting messianic dreaming. (Hecko, 1868) For example, Ctiboh Zoch pointed out the lack of "academic society" as the underlying reason for the lack of "scientific thinking and coherency in thinking" among Slovak intellectuals. (Cochius, 1847: 407) Zoch was critical to German philosophy for its excessive analytical

dissections and lack of positive, upbuilding coherence: an analysis that dissects the human spirit into the subtlest elements possible will not lead anywhere. (Cochius, 1847: 412; cf. Meszaros, 2016: 854)

Memorandum of the Slovak Nation in Martin (1861) and Andrej Sladkovic

In 1861 several hundred representatives and intellectuals of Slovak nationality gathered in the rural town of Martin. Many of them had participated in the revolution of 1848, fighting on the side of the Austrian Habsburg emperor, only to be betrayed by the government in Vienna and sacrificed for the sake of the empire's "greater" political interest. The Memorandum events from June 1861 constitute an important milestone in the development and shaping of the Slovak nation, its culture, political self-awareness, and national self-determination. (Valco, 2012: 129) Formulated and approved by the First Slovak National Gathering on June 6-7, 1861 in Martin, the Memorandum of the Slovak Nation to the upper chamber of the Hungarian parliament, containing the Petitions of the Slovak Nation which ask for a just enactment of the law with regard to equality of the nations in Hungary, reflected not only the political ambitions but also philosophical and religious convictions and presuppositions of the leading figures of the third phase of the Slovak National Revival Movement in mid-19th century. Intellectual leaders of that era wanted to remain politically loyal to the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian state, as they expressed in many speeches at the gathering. At the same time they wished to articulate their own right to national self-determination, as well as that of other oppressed minorities: Croats, Serbs, Rusyns, and Romanians. Their underlying conviction was that all people(s) were created equal (in God's image) and shared common human dignity, the expression of which included the right for ethnic, cultural, and national emancipation and self-determination.

As a substantial number of the gathered people were clergymen, either Roman Catholic or Lutheran (or members of the lay intellectual elite most of whom had studied theology and philosophy in German universities),² it is safe to argue that their religious conviction and a robust monotheistic outlook was the preeminent motivational force behind their actions. Obviously, Slovak historiography prior to 1990 could not fully reflect this motive. Scholars resorted instead to attribute these courageous actions to a general ethical responsibility based on a thoughtful reflection of abstract ethical ideals. There was an implicit ideological pressure that often manifested itself in the form of self-censorship to downplay or utterly hide the possibility that such actions could have been fueled by the religious-normative vision of life derived from a certain meaningful (and meaning conferring) narrative, in this case, the Christian monotheist metanarrative.

Upon a close reading of the public declarations, statements, historical documents and existing pieces of literature from the representatives of these events, however, we can observe a clash of diverging worldviews: the theocentric world of the biblical narrative on the one hand, and the anthropocentric world of the enlightened human mind on the other. It was interesting to observe how the rationalists emphasized political realities at the expense of theological and ecclesiastical ones and how, on the

² Out of 195 representatives of the Slovak National Memorandum gathering (1861), 59,8% were intellectuals and 20% clergymen. Out of the 1117 charter members of the seminal Slovak cultural institution – Matica slovenská (1863-4) – 57,5% were intellectuals and 30,4% were clergymen. When it came to the percentage of the founding members of the National Newspaper (Národné noviny, 1872), the percentage went up to 58,7% for intellectuals and 40,3% for clergymen. (Holec, 2008: 44)

other hand, the theologically anchored proponents interpreted the transpiring events more in line with their understanding of the biblical history of salvation, often disregarding (or miscalculating the importance of) the value of political action. It was also interesting to notice that whenever the rationalist side disagreed theologically with their opponents from the more conservative/confessional camp, their arguments and/or accusations went almost solely along political lines, almost never using theological reasoning. This could be observed in the ongoing cultural and political struggle against the Magyarization efforts of the Hungarian government, as well as intellectuals and most of the Hungarian Calvinist Church representatives. “It was as if theology had been dispersed in and identified with their national and political ambitions. Their sense of identity and responsibility (i.e. of the rationalists) thus seems to have been more derived from a national-cultural narrative, rather than a comprehensive religious one.” (Valco, 2017: 166) Of course, it was not so easy to distinguish religious from nationalistic zeal during this era. The socio-cultural imaginary of the 19th century kept them closely intertwined. Nevertheless, one could still claim that “even if it could be argued that national-cultural and political interests had in some cases prevailed over the religious ones, one’s nation, culture, language and land were all associated with the divine providential care as divinely appointed realities for which human agents needed to assume responsibility.” (Valco, 2017: 166) We can see a powerful dynamics of mutual influence of one’s life vision (as grounded in one’s metanarrative framework) and socio-political responsibility (stemming from one’s civil identity). The internalized monotheistic metanarrative constitutes the necessary motivational basis for concrete expressions of civic engagement. This ‘civic experience’ then, in return, helps the active agents attain a higher maturity in their respective worldview (or even theological convictions). Such development in maturity leads to a more courageous and competent civic engagement for their local communities, ethnic group and nation. “Their religious convictions (based on their internalized monotheistic narrative) helped deepen their national patriotism. Both of these factors subsequently played an important role in shaping human characters and identity, providing thereby a solid basis for cultivating a sense of personal and social responsibility.” (Valco, 2017: 175)

Many of the intellectual leaders of that time compared the Slovak nation to the nation of Israel, seeing divine providence manifesting itself in the way of the cross – that is, God leading their nation through much toil and suffering into a new, promised future. Those who suffered innocently were being prepared for surprising new tasks of divine blessing, whereby they would become a blessing for the surrounding nations as well. (Valco, 2012: 133) This motif was most notably worked out in Andrej-Braxatoris Sladkovic (1861) in his *Náčrtky v predsieni slovenskíeho národného shromaždenia* [*Sketches in the Vestibul of the Slovak National Gathering*]. In the introductory paragraphs of his *Sketches*, Slakovic writes:

The almighty God created this Slovak tribe, preserved it, led it across many regions of Asia, and planted them in all valleys of Ural, the Tatras, Krkonose, and the Balcans; He promoted it and then humiliated it with the domain of Great Moravia, baptized it with His arm, enlightened by the Scripture of the blessed Thessalonians; he gathered them in troops against the Magyars, Germans, Tartars and the Turks, against the rebels and usurpators; He made it into a sage, artist, engineer, plowman, master, and teacher, priest and writer for all nations – ‘a Jew to the Jews, a Greek to the Greeks, to gain all’ – ... He made it [the Slovak tribe] a polyhistor and polyglot, so that the Slovak would be everything to all but nothing to himself; he made it a sacrifice for all so all could be in him; He made it a cosmopolitan until the time came for it to become a nation again. The world

appropriated its history as in a strife, so that nobody could achieve anything of his own without it, so that in all specific historical moments it would find hidden its own acts and deeds, until the time would come when it [the Slovak tribe] will demand its portion from the heritage of the fathers in Asia and Europe, in Germany and Hungary. (Sladkovic, 1861: 3-4)

In the next section, Sladkovic quotes Paul's First Letter to Corinthians 9:19-22 'a Jew to the Jews, a Greek to the Greeks, to gain all', whereby He situates the Slovak nation into the position of a mediator of blessing for the surrounding nations; and also as a subject who is willing to bear calamities, inequities, and difficulties as an "sacrifice ... for all". We can also discern the motive of an intentional diaspora of the Slovak tribe, through which God wishes to humble the Slovak people in order to make them ready to be "enlightened by the Scripture" so that they may serve other nations through their work and sacrifice. The Slovak tribe, however, was not always faithful to its higher calling. Sladkovic attributes the current state of affairs to a self-induced deafness of the people, especially then its priests and teachers, to the love and truth of Christ. "The young souls were first captivated by the young age; ... the unbiased mind of the new generation started to embrace the impressions of the spirit of the age." (Sladkovic, 1861: 5) After much pain and suffering, and diverse kinds of afflictions, the nation was made ready by the divine providence for its calling and new lot on the stage of world history. "The truth of the nation had to be purified by fire and crucified to strengthen the shoulders in the service of the nation – so that the flames of martyrdom would call forth new believers within our nation." (Sladkovic, 1861: 24)

Sladkovic's appeal to St. Cyril and Methodius reflected the crucial notion of a 'Cyrillo-Methodian cultural and spiritual tradition' present in the works of many representatives of the Slovak National Awakening. In fact, this idea goes way back to the middle of the 17th century, namely to Jakub Jakobeus. Jakobeus mentions this 'Cyrillo-Methodian' notion in his *Viva Gentis Slavonicae Delineatio* from 1642 and also in his earlier work, *A Reflection of Changes of the Czech Evangelical Churches in the Splendid Czech Kingdom* from 1624. In the Roman Catholic environment, reference to Cyril and Methodius can be traced to the Hymnal *Cantus Catholici* from 1655 (Judak, 2002: 122), as well as to the Roman Catholic priest, Jan Baltazar Magin (1681-1734) who considers the Cyrillo-Methodian cult in the Slovak lands to be ancient, continuous, and original, and as such constituting a substantial element of Slovak national awareness.³ (Judak, 2002: 123)

Sladkovic was not the only one holding this view, though his mystical-eschatological interpretation of the development of history and the place of the Slovak nation in it could not easily be matched by others. The only exception, perhaps, was Michal Miloslav Hodza (Osusky, 1932: 215-220). Nevertheless, even if lacking the mystical, eschatological emphasis, the Lutheran intellectuals associated with the Sturovci Circle along with the Roman Catholic priests and intellectuals at the Martin gathering of 1861 interpreted their liberation as an opportunity and a call for service, tolerance and peace. This was, however, not a mere secular-philosophical principle, or primarily a historical possibility, but rather a theological precept stemming from their belief in the providential guidance of the world history by the Divine Spirit. World history was viewed eschatologically as the 'History of Salvation' – right-wing Hegelianism interpreted theocentrically in line with a 'personalist monotheism'.

³ See Jan Baltazar Magin's work: *Murices Nobilissimae et novissimae diaetae Posoniensis scriptori sparsi, sive Apologia pro inclito comitatu Trenchiniensi* [Thorns or Defense of the Glorious Trenchin Region and town of the same name]. Puchov, 1728. Magin's work is the first defense of the Slovak nation written in the Latin language.

Conclusion

The historical phenomenon of the Slovak National Revival Movement of the 19th century manifested not only the cultural and political ambitions of the awakening Slovak nation but also the specific, contextually sensitive philosophical and religious convictions (and presuppositions) of the leading figures of the Movement. This can be best seen in the example of the representatives of the third phase of the Slovak National Revival Movement. Jozef Miloslav Hurban, Karol Kuzmany, Michal Miloslav Hodza, Andrej Braxatoris Sladkovic and others belonging to the “Sturovci Circle,” brought to Slovakia new trends of national awakening coming out of the right-wing Hegelian philosophy. The Sturovci intellectuals, however, adopted and adapted selected right-wing Hegelian ideas in a creative fashion to suit their cultural and national interests and to comply with their overall religious outlook. In their national awakening efforts, Sturovci also incorporated Romanticism’s interest in language as a medium of thought, which made them strong proponents of education and cultural emancipation of the Slovaks. Choosing Hegel and interpreting him in a way conducive to the Slovak national emancipation efforts may be considered an intentional subversive maneuver on the side of the proponents of the third phase of the national awakening. Here it is important to notice that there are substantial differences between Hegel’s thought and the Slovak Hegelianism of the Sturovci Generation. The most fundamental difference, which then subsequently influences the appropriation and interpretation of some other key elements of Hegel’s thought, is their understanding of the nature of the Absolute Spirit. Unlike Hegel who considered the absolute Spirit to be the final product in the development of nature, the leading figures of the Sturovci Generation were convinced that the Spirit is the original, sovereign being who creates matter/nature and providentially governs over the history of the humankind. Nature thus is not a negation but a creation of the Spirit. As such, nature, as well as human history, which is nested in the natural order even if it must be clearly distinguished from it, is to be developed in accordance with the Spirit’s providence. World history was viewed eschatologically as the ‘History of Salvation’. (Chistyakova, 2020: 98-99) This, however, should not be understood in a Hegelian-pantheistic or panentheistic manner but rather in a monotheistic metanarrative sense. This crucial emphasis leads us to argue that the intellectuals gathered in the Sturovci Circle interpreted the right-wing Hegelianism that they had learned in Germany (for the most part) theocentrically in line with a ‘personalist monotheism’ – ideas that we see (though with some reservations and differences) developed in the 20th century Personalist movement in philosophy. (Dancak, 2014)

Andrej Sladkovic and his compatriots clearly understood that within the drama of these events there existed a confrontation of different worldviews – the theocentric world of the biblical narrative on one hand, and the anthropocentric world of the enlightened human mind on the other (easily identifiable in most German philosophers of the era). The cultural and political struggle against the feared Magyarization was at the same time a theological / philosophical struggle on the level of competing worldviews. These two things could not be separated though each had its own distinctive marks. Religion and nationalism thus could not be so easily distinguished and separated within the social imaginary of the 19th century. Even if it could be argued that national-cultural and political interests had in some cases prevailed over the religious ones, one’s nation, culture, language and land were all associated with the divine providential care as divinely appointed realities for which human agents needed to assume responsibility. Principles of freedom, truth, justice, and dignity of individual humans, as well as nations, the natural right for self-determination and cultural emancipation – these principles were considered to be the values of the divine righteous rule, something that our age continues to question and undermine with omnipresent relativism and creeping nihilism. (Bahovec, 2015;

Malovic, 2007; Pavlikova, 2017) The internalized monotheistic metanarrative prompted them to concrete expressions of engagement for their nation, which in turn helped them attain a higher theological maturity. This more mature theological understanding, then, led them to a more courageous and competent civil engagement for their people and nation. Their religious convictions (based on their internalized monotheistic narrative) helped deepen their national patriotism. Both of these factors subsequently played an important role in shaping human characters and identity, providing thereby a solid basis for cultivating a sense of personal and social responsibility. If this assessment carries any weight today, the urgency to enter into dialogue with religious metanarratives as they are formulated and enacted by local religious communities, should assume new importance. (Petkovsek, 2019) The task to hermeneutically recover the religious sources of human flourishing is inescapably before us. (Taylor, 1989; Petkovsek, 2016; Zalec, 2019) To face the challenge of cultivating authentic human personhood with a developed moral conscience, will need to include religious narratives and rituals into our discourse (Zalec – Pavlikova, 2019; Kocakova, 2018) and refuse to let ourselves be limited by the so-called ‘immanent frame’ of secular, exclusive humanism.

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