sciendo

Ethics & Bioethics (in Central Europe), 2022, 12 (3–4), 154–165 DOI:10.2478/ebce-2022-0019

The nation, Slavism, and Russia in the national emancipation conception of Svetozár Hurban Vajanský

Marcel Martinkovič[1]

Abstract

The study explains the perception of the nation in the political thinking of Svetozár Hurban Vajanský, which is founded on primordialist starting points and has a holistic character. In this context, the relationship between the nationally conscious elite and the people is analysed in more detail. The ambivalence of Vajanský's political thinking is evident in the fact that, in many ways, he formally promotes Ľudovít Štúr's original idea of unity, but, within Slovak political discourse, he promotes the idea of programme uniformity. Subsequently, this becomes a source of cultural and political isolationism. This fact is complemented in parallel by reflecting the primary acculturation importance of the national elite in developing the national consciousness of the population. Vajanský also incorporated the idea of Slavic mutuality into the national emancipation concept of developing Slovak national identity. Its content is in line with Štúr's ethnic romanticism. The historicist concept of the development of Slavs under Russian protection also appears in his thinking. Vajanský's Russophilism was, thus, loosely tied to the ideas of Russian Slavophiles and the idealising perspective of the Slavs' civilisational mission, who were to form a new, more spiritual and culturally advanced, civilisation circle compared with the morally declining nations of the West.

Keywords: Hurban Vajanský, nation, representation, elite, Slavic solidarity, Slavism, Russia

Introduction

The political thinking of Svetozár Hurban Vajanský[2] is, in the Slovak national movement, a visible promotor of the idea of the natural existence of nations in history. In Vajanský's understanding of the relationship between culture and politics, emphasis is placed on the acculturation role of the national intelligentsia in implementing the national emancipation goal of the Slovaks, which, before him, was promoted by Ján Kollár, Jonáš Záborský, Ľudovít Štúr and his followers, as well as representatives of the so-called New School[3]. We consider research on the national emancipation concept of Vajanský to be important because it became a model of conservative nationalism in Slovak political thinking, which was formed at the end of the 19th century against a backdrop of ideological tension between the followers of politics founded on the ethics of principles[4] (Ľudovít Štúr, Ján Francisci, Štefan Marko Daxner, Janko Kráľ, and others) and the ethics of responsibility (Jonáš Záborský, Ján Palárik, Koloman Banšell, Miloš Štefanovič, Pavol Mudroň, and others). Vajanský chose the natural law concept as his initial philosophical-legal approach to the legitimisation of national equality in the monarchy. His respect for it was based on the political programme of the Slovak national intelligentsia as

[1] Slovak Academy of Sciences; Bratislava (Slovakia); marcel.martinkovic@savba.sk; ORCID: 0000-0002-0467-5131.

[2] In the text, we will also use the pseudonym Vajanský, which Svetozár Hurban often used for his articles.

[3] The emergence of the Nová škola [New School] as a programmatic political-philosophical national emancipation alternative is linked, in particular, to the thinking of Ján Palárik. Among the most important personalities of the New School were Ján N. Bobula, Ján Mallý, Koloman Banšell, and others who were associated with the editorial office of *Slovenské noviny* [*Slovak News*] (1868–1875). This created an organisational foundation for publishing opinions that were critical of the nation-building programme of Štúr and his followers, organised since 1870 around the editorial office of *Národnie noviny* [*National News*] with the label Stará škola [Old School]. The political programme of the New School was based on the systematic defence of the principles of national equality, Hungarian patriotism, constitutionalism, civil liberalism, and ideological pluralism. These principles were supposed to be the basis for the evolutionary expansion of participative political culture, which was in turn supposed to be the basis for the real application of individual and national rights of Slovaks.

[4] The essence of politics founded on the ethics of conviction is visible in the effort to implement abstractly justified ideals and to not reflect the foreseeable consequences of one's actions together with the objective limits of individuals and society (Weber, 2004, p. 84).

expressed in the second half of the 19th century in the *Memorandum of the Slovak Nation* (Maxwell, 2005, pp. 395–400; Hollý, 2013, pp. 45–58). In the structure of Vajanský's political considerations, the existence of a nation in history is expressed through the primordialist concept.[5] This forms the substantive ideological basis of his considerations on national rights. The perception of the nation as a natural collective that develops in history contains, in Vajanský's thinking, evident parallels with Herder's idea on emphasising the importance of folk culture as a source of basic national values. Vajanský derived the core of the cultural individuality of the Slovaks from the existence of the Slovak-speaking people[6], which is the key source of national specificities and cultural essence ("particularity"). In the context of sentiment on the nation, the political thinking of Hurban Vajanský is a continuation of reflections on the ethnic romanticism of Ľudovít Štúr (Gluchman, 2022; Pichler, 2008, pp. 17–39).

This philosophical-political concept has its intellectual source in Herder's idealising theory of folk culture. The language of the people was already reflected by Johann Gottfried Herder as the basal part of collective existence, which forms the prerequisites for the cultural growth of individual nations (Thiesse, 2022, pp. 49–60). In Vajanský's thinking, the "national awakening" narrative – the idea that the quality, and objectively existing, essence of national singularity is already present in the culture of the Slovak people in an unconscious form – is often repeated in this context. This romanticising narrative comes from the idea of national and civilizational progressivism, which is expressed in the historical development of cultural diversity through the advocacy of the universal right of peoples to free development. Its realisation in Vajanský is connected, in particular, with the activities of nationally conscious elites. For this reason, Vajanský shared, with the majority of representatives of the Slovak national intelligentsia, the idea that the national emancipation activities of cultural elites should focus, in particular, on securing people's right to education in their mother tongue as a basic prerequisite for the development of national institutionalisation. Vajanský, thus, considered the legitimising of primordialist foundations as an effective means of institutionalising the national existence of Slovaks in contrast to the gradualist, liberal concept emphasising the development of a civil approach that emerged from individual rights in the national emancipation process (Kobylińska, 2013, pp. 121–146). This political approach came mainly from the philosophical starting points of the English and French Enlightenment. It was represented, in Slovak political thought, by thinkers organised around Ján Palárik and the New School. Its specificity was the programmatic defence of politics that respected the principles of the ethics of responsibility, which emphasised the evolutionary and systematic development of civic awareness and the value of individual rights (Martinkovič, 2020, pp. 133–145).

Vajanský designates a lack of education and mass ignorance of one's own cultural values as the primary cause of the low level of national awareness of the people and public passivity and poor socio-political position of Slovaks. He considered these factors, together with their lack of awareness of cultural belonging, as sources of their public passivity. His thinking, thus, contains an ambivalent evaluation of the people. On the one hand, he idealises Slovak-speaking people. This fact is expressed mainly by him emphasising their positive qualities, such as modesty, patience, and perseverance (Hurban, 1880c, p. 1). He attributes responsibility for the unfavourable state of the quality of the population's national awareness above all to the ineffective activities of Slovak-speaking elites and their inability to touch on the needs of the

[5] We present primordialism as a concept in which nations are perceived in the development of history as natural structures of the social organisation of people. To distinguish the essence of primordialist and functionalist narratives, see (Breuilly, 1999, pp. 43–46).

[6] The use of the term "Slovak speaking people" follows on the approach of Ernest Gellner, who sees the formation of national identity as a result of the programmatic spread of nationalism. This is the product of politically active elites who transform the awareness of the people on the basis of high culture into a national form (Gellner, 1983, pp. 55–58).

people. Without changes in the method of work and particularly without improvements in effectiveness, he predicts that the Slovak national emancipation movement s will always suffer from backwardness. In this connection, he observes that it will suffice if Slovaks do not give up their linguistic distinctiveness and specific cultural manifestations. In this context, however, he also warned of the risks that he associated with the public's passivity and their collective qualities, such as pliability and adaptability. In his view, these created the foundation of the servile mentality of the people and their inability to resist the assimilation pressure of Magyarization with pride.[7] He therefore linked the role of the national elite with the promotion of Slovak national distinctiveness of the and the spread of an enlightening programme that was to legitimise the mass use of the mother tongue and awareness of the uniqueness of Slovak culture.

National pride consists in the awareness of the particularity in appraising one's independence. (...) To speak Slovak in our country means to do battle. (...) This is enough; we, the conscious, educated class, should carry the Slovak language with us everywhere and attain its civil rights! (...) We have become the representative spirits of the nation; we are proud to speak the language of our fathers! (...) And, Slovak occupies an excellent, leading place among the Slavic languages! (...) But we are proud that we belong among the Slovaks and the Slavs. (...) This pride is a necessary addition to our patriotism. We can be proud! Proud of the purity of our ideas, the intentions and high goals, of the sufferings of our martyrs, who gladly died and are dying for their nation, of the genius of our awakeners, who led an idea out of the dead mass (Hurban, 1882c, p. 1). In the perspective of the acculturation role of the elite to awaken the national consciousness of the people "from sleep", Vajanský, at the same time, specifies the essence of the development of national existence into a full-fledged, conscious form (Hollý, 2009, pp. 243–269).

Representation of national culture through the principle of *pars pro toto*

In political thought, Vajanský, as we mentioned, the natural law conceptualisation of national rights is closely linked, in particular, with the activities of the national intelligentsia. This, in the initial phase of the nation's development, represents the interests of the entire community and therefore, for it to be successful, Vajanský thinks it is necessary to respect the principle of unity. The idea of emphasising the benefits of practically focused activities and programmatic homogeneity of the national elite creates a visible continuity between the thinking of Ľudovít Štúr and Svetozár Hurban Vajanský. Vajanský expressed this preference as follows.

Big words, a huge imagination and dark philosophising stand out poorly against practical pettiness, which is the mother of personal disputes, ridiculous duelling, indolent scraping by. (...) We, the descendants of the Šafáriks, Kollárs and Štúrs, should not sink to the lowness of commonplace knocks, to petty personal disputes but always have our high national goal before our eyes! To elevate the crystal-clear Slovak national idea, to always let quarrels, selfishness and gossip be silenced (Hurban, 1883a, p. 1).

In this context, Hurban Vajanský also articulates the idea that the nation as a natural entity goes before the state and therefore should have a clear priority in the work of educated people. In his approach, work for the nation has greater value than for the state, which should mainly serve it as a means of meeting the requirements of the development of cultural individuality

[7] "We condemn pride in all forms, but we praise a certain degree of personal and national pride. It is atrocious to make idols of oneself, the idolatry of oneself. (...) Well, let's tell the truth; it will not hurt us to have more national pride! Many times, we lower ourselves before the world to the will of sweet peace, and in a limp docility we often sin against ideas. (...)We greatly exaggerate modesty. Not that of Khomyakov, holy and glorious, but a modesty that closely borders on weakness and frailty. (...) Well, we don't respect ourselves! (...)We hide our language in public social life! (...) Here is the counterweight of pride" (Hurban, 1882b, p. 1).

and the natural law principle of national equality.[8] The work of the national intelligentsia, in Vajanský's opinion, should be concentrated on the development of the cultural essence, on the cultivating of the traditions and morals of the people. This is also why Vajanský exhorts more intense public activity of the nationally conscious intelligentsia in contrast to abstract and *"dark philosophising"* (Hurban, 1884, p.1). This perspective, emphasising the practical orientation of the work of Slovak educators for the successful completion of legitimising the cultural and political rights of the people, was also typical for his father, Jozef Miloslav Hurban, who was influenced by Fichte's philosophy (Kalajtzidis, 2019, pp. 79–80). On the one hand, the problems of Magyarization and the political marginalisation of Slovak culture and language were, in Vajanský's view, proof of the conflict between the naturalness of historical development and God's reason, and, on the other hand, the power tendencies of the ruling elites. According to Vajanský, Hungarian government representatives, with their own nationalist politics, disavowed the natural rights of nations to self-determination and thus enforced the principle of national unification.

This is a Don Quixote policy and an immoral one at that... (...) This policy may have an effect when it is done by one political party against another, for example, Whigs against Tories, Conservatives against Liberals. (...) However, if these means are used by all sides of one people against another people, then they have gone into battle against nature, with God, order, reason and everything that is holy and precious to humanity! (...) Our natural source of strength is our people, our simple rustic people and the higher-ranking bourgeoise. (...) We must depend on this natural, close element, which itself urges us, itself seeks us! (...) It, too, has passed through the school of a thousandfold pains and has preserved itself for us, who represent its mind, express its feelings and give expression to its personality. (...) Our triumph is just as certain as it is perfect real and infallible (Hurban, 1881c, p. 1).

Furthermore, for this reason, too, Vajanský also predicted the failure of the national assimilation of Slovaks, since the "naturalness" of national existence can be suppressed only temporarily by means of power, but it cannot be completely destroyed. In his opinion, the improvement of the national consciousness of the people will depend on the acculturation activities of the elites, a component of which is the representation of national specificities and diverse forms of Slovak culture. In this point, by emphasising the idea of daily work for the people, Vajanský returns to Štúr's original evolutionary concept of the national emancipation strategy. The national elite, which, according to Vajanský, represents the people in the initial phase of the national emancipation process, must be aware that it has an obligation to serve and

> to know how to think not only for itself, but also for others, for the generality! Hundreds of thousands, even millions are dying in the villages only because the chosen people were unable or did not want to think and be active for the general public! (...) Let us prepare the people with words for these difficult operations! Let us take care of folk literature. (...) But let us not consider literature as a single task! Without it the truth takes not even a step; with it to action, to useful work. Indeed, our good, abandoned people deserve it (Hurban, 1881c, p. 1).

The central motive of these considerations is the perception of the political activity of Slovak educators, whose task, as representatives of the national rights of Slovaks, lies in the institutionalisation of collective rights.

[8] "We will not put the Slovak nationality, the Slovak language, the development of Slovak education, the supreme rights of Slovaks on Slovak territory into the last corner, nor will we beg anyone to recognise them. They were given to us by God, recognised by human and divine right. We are not asking; we are demanding. We legally, modestly, but persistently demand the carrying out, the initiation of natural Slovak rights. (...) We are not responsible for the fact that this banner is Slovak. We did not compile the mechanism of Slovak nationality: we found it ready when our heads commenced to think and our hearts to feel" (Hurban, 1884, p. 1).

Despite the demand for an upswing in all forms of educational activities, Vajanský considers, on the example of Herder, literary activity to be a starting attribute of the nation's spiritual development. In his view, culture and versatile educational activities conducted through literature are a basic prerequisite for the successful completion of national institutionalisation (Hurban, 1883c, p. 1). The viability of Slovak culture and literature, he thought, can be documented by the results and quality of the work of the national intelligentsia, which is also recognised in the international context. This reality, however, is at the same time, in his view, in contrast with the national unconsciousness of the Slovak folk classes and forms the central problem of the successful completion of the national emancipation effort.[9]

We are servants of the spirit. To introduce qualities to the masses which it does not possess would be an act of folly, but to awaken, to develop those qualities which the native mass does possess, but only latently, is a mortal duty. (...) We are a new creation in our nation, but we came from them. We are not a political party; we are a people, pars pro toto, as the saying goes, the head, instead of the whole person (Hurban, 1880c, p. 1).

Similarly, with regard to the meaning of the unity of the national elite and the people, where the elite represents the nation as *pars pro toto*, see the article *Nálady a výhľady II* (Hurban, 1897, p. 1). The paradox of Vajanský's political thinking is the presence of ideological ambivalence. On the one hand, he emphasises the idea of patriotism and the thesis of national diversity while respecting the principles of equality, freedom, and tolerance in the monarchy. On the other, he systematically doubts the contribution of political pluralism and the broad discussion within the Slovak national movement. The argument Vajanský uses to justify this holistic stance is similar to the approach of Ľudovít Štúr, who considers the preservation of national unity in the programme goals and strategies as an existential matter.

If we understand our matters only a little reasonably and want to save our life in context, then it is an error to break into fractions and specialties. Then it is an error to get choked with questions, perhaps estimable, important, interesting and fashionable for humanity. We can fill our free time with them... (...) But with our current conditions, with the colossal pressure which is life or death for us, the only genuinely strong issue is preserving our nationality, our language! (...) Nationality and language are spiritual matters, and thus are related to that 'ligamen cum Deo', that bond with God, in one Latin word: 'religio'. They are related; they are directed towards the eternal, the highest. They are essential aids in the economy of human spiritual salvation. And therefore the only strong question of our doleful days is the question of saving, defending, accentuating national rights, winning the honour of our Slovak nationality, our Slovak language. Everything we do should be focused on this goal. (...) But every splitting into factions and specialities is a curse (Hurban, 1900, p. 1).

A component of Vajanský's defence of uniformity of opinion among the national elite is also the rejection of foreign political and cultural influences that encumber the spiritual and cultural development of the people. His selective application of the principles of plurality, freedom, and tolerance to external and internal relations within the national movement ultimately negatively limited the development of the national emancipation process.

[9] "This broad sense of Slavic belonging, which must be awakened in others, is artificially dormant in our masses. But we cannot find a clear understanding of the uniqueness of the Slovak nation anywhere in the autochthonous people, despite the fact that it is actually a full, real nation. Without an instinctive feeling that the nation is a single body, on the path of learning... awakening to the truth, it is difficult to arrive at results given elsewhere by nature. This is why there is a lack of national pride, tenacity and an accentuation of national existence (...) This tribal lack of consciousness, we think, is the basic cause of our difficult journey. (...) But in the meantime, we remind you of one remedy: what we have fallen behind on as a nation for whatever reasons, we must catch up, and we will catch up with comprehensive activity, and particularly by influencing the people so that they come to the awareness that the nation spread under the Tatras is the Slovak nation. (...) We must demonstrate with facts that all our moral, material and spiritual salvation lies in the preservation and development of Slovak nationality" (Hurban, 1883b, p. 1).

Vajansky's perception of Russia and the essentialising of Slavic virtues

In Slovak political thinking, the idea of Slavic mutuality and Slavism took a politically central position. The works of Štúr, which in a principle way, determined discussions on the relationship of Slovaks to Russia as the only state actor, followed on Kollár's original non-political interpretation of Slovak reciprocity (Kollár, 2009). In the work *Das Slawenthum und die Welt der Zukunft* [*Slavism and the world of the future*], Štúr philosophically admits the possibility of giving up his national identity and articulates an optimistic historical development in the cultural, political, and religious integration of the Slovaks with Russia (Štúr, 1993, pp. 159–173). Intellectually, Svetozár Hurban Vajanský also followed Štúr's dichotomous perception of the relationship between East and West in the context of Slovak political thinking (Jahelka, 2015, pp. 67–85). He also used arguments founded on the glorification of Slavic cultural excellence in defending the national specifics and cultural "particularity" of the Slovaks (Hurban, 1896, p. 1). Aside from Štúr, Slavophiles like Aleksey Khomyakov, Ivan Aksakov, V. I. Lamansky, and Nikolay Danilevsky were, in particular, among those thinkers who had an influence on Vajanský's idealising view of the Slavs and Russia.

The disillusionment and political passivity of educated Slovaks in the last third of the 19th century also led Vajanský to go back to promoting the national emancipation programme of Slovaks through emphasising cultural values and collectively conceived Slavic virtues. Much like Štúr, Vajanský found their source in Russian culture and in Russia. The cause of this ideologising view had its source primarily in the ideological adoption of Slavophile ideas, which emphasised the special qualities of Russian cultural, religious, and political qualities through the accentuating of traditional Russian values, which were founded on the close connection between the Orthodox Church and the state. The spiritual precedence of Russia representing the "East" were expressed, among other things, in its spirituality, in the harmony of the interests of the people and the government, taking into consideration the interests of the whole versus the parts, etc. From the perspective of Slavophiles, these characteristics were elevated against the "decadent values" of the secular, liberal, and individualistic "West". The thinking of Slavophiles was also visibly shown in Slovak political-philosophical discourse, particularly in the ideologically reductive way of perceiving the cultural tension between East and West and the place of Slavs in it.

Although Vajanský perceived the idea of Slavism in the context of Slavophile prejudices against the West, he did not slide into the extremes of political pan-Slavism, as Štúr did in the in the last phase of his thinking in the work *Slovanstvo a svet budúcnosti*. Vajanský's vision of Slavic mutuality is not founded on the integration of Slovaks under the jurisdiction of Russia. The essence of Slavic mutuality is reflected in Russian guarantees of the national individuality of Slavic peoples, which is covered by the existence of the civilisation sphere of the Slavs.[10] Like Štúr, Vajanský essentialises Slavism within the philosophy of history, adopting Hegel's dialectic of history. Within this, he considers the key driving force to be cultural dispute between the West (represented mainly by the "*Germanic element*") and the East (represented by the "*Slavic element*"), in which the Russian nation dominates culturally and politically. Like Herder, Kollár, and Štúr, Vajanský perceives the Slavs in similar contexts of the historical task of humanising humanity. In his thinking, he specifies the collectively perceived Slavic virtues which predestine the Slavs for the successful realisation of their civilising role in the history of mankind. In a number of articles, he formulates the conclusions that pride and superiority are foreign to the Slavic nature and includes in them, for example, modesty, perseverance, courage,

[10] A group of thinkers was formed against this prospects of Slavic mutuality who reflected on the meaning and essence of Slavism on the basis of free cooperation with the aim of implementing the principle of national equality. We can, especially, also include Jonáš Záborský and Štefan Launer (Krištof, 2020, pp. 150–152) or J. Palárik, and the thinking of representatives of the New School (Kačírek, 2011, pp. 88–121) to this group of thinkers.

and the ability to sacrifice oneself for common goals ("self–sacrifice"). In the article *Angličan o Slavianoch* [*An Englishman on the Slavs*], Vajanský refers to Washburn's article *The coming of the Slavs*, which examines the essential features of Slavs through Russian specifics. He locates them in the spiritual unity of the people and government elites (*sobornost*), in intense religiosity that creates social unity, and in the tendency to sacrifice oneself for the whole (Hurban, 1898a, p. 1). Such an expression of the essentiality of Slavism was also connected to Vajanský's idealisation of the social conditions in tsarist Russia. A natural component of it was the biased and uncritical reflection of patriarchal absolutism, which Vajanský approaches, for example, in the article *Cár osloboditel* [*The tsar liberator*] (Hurban, 1881a, p. 1). In Vajanský's opinion, the power of the East, projected in Russian statehood and the tsarist establishment, together with the nature of *sobornost*[11] is a representative of higher civilisational values than those represented by the European states of the "West". He also perceives the Slavic nations as bearers of the spirit of understanding and the search for harmony between nations, in contrast to the nations of the "West", which are bearers of the culture of materialism, individualism, selfishness, and "Darwinist justice" recognising only the principle of the right of the stronger (Hurban, 1882a, p. 1).

Slavism and Vajanský's conception of the tension between East and West

In Vajanský's thinking, we can characterise two basic positions of his approach to the issue of Slavism, depending, especially, on the development of the political situation in Austria-Hungary and in Russia. The first is directed towards Štúr's messianic perception of the role of the Slavs, which uncritically elevates Russian cultural and political specificities. In this ideological position, Russia not only takes the role of guarantor, who should indirectly ensure the equality and development of the Slavic peoples, but also the role of bearer of a new civilisational mission in history. This, in Vajanský's view, was beginning to be realised more visibly at that time, particularly in Asia. For him, Russia represented a progressive method of acculturation and transformation of these "barbaric and uncultured tribes" into new citizens of Russia (Hurban, 1881b, p. 1). This emphasis on the historically pioneering way of acculturation takes place against the background of accentuating the differences between the method of colonisation between the "West" and "East". He associates the "West" with a forceful mode of colonisation in which a strategy of cultural assimilation predominates, while in the essence of colonisation of the "East", represented by Russia, integration is founded on respect for the freedom and cultural individuality of the other.[12]

A part of his positive perception of Russia as a representative of the East is his emphasising the importance of religion as the central outline for the social order (Rusnák, 2019, pp. 187–215). When describing the differences between Russia and Western Europe, his approach is also inspired by Nikolay Danilevsky's work *Russia and Europe*. Vajanský, however, did not mechanically adopt the ideas of the Slavophiles; he only chose those parts that did not disturb his idea of the national emancipation programme. The formation of the national individuality of a number of Slavic peoples should, in his view, be covered by a joint effort to create a unified cultural and political circle of Slavs. The essence of Slavism, he claimed, is manifested, among other things, in moderation and the ability of the people to make sacrifices for common goals. He saw these common expressions of collective behaviour as a prerequisite for the successful convergence of the individual Slavic nations. He believed that, with time, the value differences between the individual Slavic peoples would diminish and the cultural prerequisite of their

[11] The value of *sobornost* was primarily thematised in the Slavophile environment by Ivan Aksakov.

[12] At the same time, Vajanský adopted from Danilevsky's work *Russia and Europe* the idea of a greater degree of violence present in the life of the nations of the West. He described its content on the pages of *Národnie noviny* in articles with the subtitle *Dôležitá kniha Rossia i Europa* [The important book *Russia and Europe*] (Hurban, 1887, pp. 1–3).

unification into a cohesive civilisation circle would be fulfilled. Vajanský nevertheless differentiated the Slavs into two basic circles. The first represents Russia in Asia, and the second is represented by Western Slavs, who compete with the "Germanic element" in Europe. Even though the designation of a "Germano-Romance race" representing the West as the antipode of the East is the same for both Vajanský and Danilevsky, the method and projection of the resolution of this cultural clash were different. The reason lies in the fact that Danilevsky fills the idea of Slavism with pan-Slavist content and locates its role in a joint open struggle against the Europeanisation of the Slavic peoples and Russia. We do not find this approach in Vajanský's political thinking. In the article *Dva prúdy* [Two Currents], Vajanský reflects on Russia as an actor who will help the Slavic peoples in their struggle for national rights, however, without the necessity of state unification (Hurban, 1880a, p. 1). Vajanský's perception of Russia's relationship with other Slavs had no political pan-Slavist dimension. He perceived the importance of Russia for the Slavs in a mutually beneficial relationship, which preserved the potential for development of the "Slavic cultural-historical race".[13] Vajanský's uncritical view of the great future of the "Slavs" in contrast to the "Germano-Romance race" displayed elements of historicism (Popper, 1961); however, he never reached Štúr's level of the romanticising messianism in his *Slovanstvo a svet budúcnosti*. The connection of the idea of Slavic mutuality and that of Slovak national individuality has a pragmatic character for Vajanský; i.e., in his opinion, both harmoniously complement one another. Ensuring the collective rights of Slovaks thus remained the unquestionable aim of all his considerations. Otherwise, there would be a denial of those qualitatively more positive features of Slavism (respect for the freedom of others, peace–loving), which Vajanský thought predestined the Slavs to assume a fundamental civilising role in the historical development of humanity. In his understanding of the national emancipation process, the accentuated goal – securing national rights – took precedence over formal questions of a state-law nature. The ability of a state's political elites to ensure the development of cultural uniqueness, the "essence" of the individual nations it encompassed, thus becomes an essential criterion of the state's strength. For example, in the article *Štát* [The State] Vajanský considers culture to be the content, the essence of national existence, and the state as the form, while giving first priority to the content (Vajanský, 1898b, p. 1).

The peculiarity of Vajanský's understanding of the idea of Slavic mutuality within the notion of *unity in difference* is, therefore, not expressed in his perception of patriotism in the conditions of multi-ethnic states. Here, he perceives national plurality as a positive element in the formation of patriotism. However, in relation to the idea of Slavism, he articulates the stance that the idea of unity in multiplicity, under certain circumstances, can represent an obstacle to the formation of a "Slavic cultural-historical type". As an example, he introduces the dispute between the two largest Slavic nations (the Russians and the Poles), which he clarifies in a series of articles titled *Slaviani v nedorozumení* [Slavs in a Misunderstanding]. In these articles, in addition to cosmopolitanism, which he considers to be a manifestation of spiritual and cultural decay, he also clearly rejects the idea of pan-Slavism as the goal of the political and cultural unification of the Slavic peoples with Russia. He senses several fundamental problems in the process of shaping Slavism as a unified civilisation circle. He considers religious differentiation (Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodoxy) as the greatest of them, but even these differences should not, in his view, prevent cooperation between Slavic nations in ensuring the principle of national equality (Vajanský, 1888, pp. 1–2).

[13] Vajanský took the term from Danilevsky, who understood history as a process in which nations converge on the principle of cultural and value relatedness into civilisation circles (Danilevsky, 2013).

Conclusion

Vajanský's primordialist approach to the nation-building process is founded on the close connection of the meaning of language, culture, and politics. At the same time, his considerations on the relationship between the people and the national elite shows holistic features, which are manifested in the emphasising of the unity of the national elite and its acculturation and representative role of a nation based on the principle of *pars pro toto*. The ascent of the nation as a subject of history is possible in Vajanský's perspective only in the presence of one's own activity, first on the level of the national conscious intelligentsia. His "national awakening" notion, despite the declaration of a positive relationship to the idea of cultural tolerance and the discursive concept of politics, contains opinions that advocate for cultural isolationism. An element of this approach is also the emphasis put on the civilisational contribution of the "East" represented by the Slavs and the intention to minimise the impact of non-Slavic influences, which, in Vajanský's opinion, hinder the dynamic development of Slovak national identity. This aspect of national conservatism in the context of differentiating between our original Slavic cultural values and foreign ones imported from the "West" indicates the adoption of the ideas of Slavophiles, who ideologically and selectively consider the positives of the culture of the Slavs, of the "East", and, universally, described negatively the cultural expressions of the "West".

The ambivalence of Vajanský's political thinking appears mainly in the practical consequences on the development of Slovak political discourse. His approach, founded on the legitimisation of national elitism and the advancing of the process of national emancipation from the top down, subsequently led to a reinforcement of the monopoly position of conservatively oriented academics within the representation of the Slovak national emancipation movement. Vajanský's understanding of the roles of a unified national elite thus cast doubts on the contribution of the pluralistic concept of cultural development based on respect for individual rights and systematic acculturation work "from below", which were being advocated in that period, e.g., by thinkers associated with the New School or, later, Andrej Radlinský (Katuninec, 2003, pp. 41–62), Miloš Štefanovič, or Pavol and Michal Mudroň (Pichler, 2009, pp. 940–943). Vajanský's emphasis on the principles of elitism and holism in the end did not lead to any improvement of the national emancipation activities of the Slovak intelligentsia, and his thinking became the main representative of the traditionalist, anti-liberal trend in the Slovak national emancipation movement. For this reason, Vajanský's view of the Slavic peoples retained a romantic character that consists in the uncritical generalisation of the collectively conceived virtues of the Slavs and the "East" versus the culturally and spiritually declining nations of the "West". Therefore, the characterisation of Slavic mutuality in his political thinking is mainly limited by an idealising vision of the future of the national existence of Slovaks resting on Russia as the civilisational centre of the "Slavic cultural-historical race". The nature of his Russophilism, thus, preserves the stamp of ethnic romanticism and does so despite the fact that he emphasised the importance of usefulness and practical work, as opposed to abstract ideas on the philosophy of history.

Vajanský, like Štúr, identified the religious disunity of the Slavs as the greatest shortcoming that would prevent them from fully asserting themselves in history.[14] Thus, the answer to the question of the Slovaks belonging as a people to the civilisational community of the West or the East in the Slovak nation-building process remained limited by the religious affiliation of the Slovak elites to the Western circle of Christianity. Neither the linguistic kinship of Russian as a means of communication of the most numerous Slavic nation nor Štúr's or Vajanský's idealisation of Russia and Russian cultural traditions could change anything about this fact.

[14] In a similar meaning, Samuel Huntington reflects on religion as a basic criterion limiting the creation of civilisational boundaries even within the Slavic nations (Huntington, 1996, pp. 158–161; Marchuk, 2016, pp. 66–91).

Thus, the goal of Vajanský's particular type of pan-Slavism was, mainly, to justify the importance of cultural-political cooperation of the Slavic peoples based on stressing their positive qualities. He found their models in the culture of the Slavs and in Russian culture, which was characterised by the tradition of *sobornost* [the spiritual community of many people living together]. For Vajanský, who was influenced by the thinking of Russian Slavophiles, this represented the basic unifying and harmonising element of Slavism.

In a special way, Vajanský emphasises, in the context of the principle of *sobornost*, the unity of the nation as a whole, whose interests are represented by a unified national elite. All of the mentioned ideas on the national representation in history became part of Vajanský's conceptualisation of the national emancipation process of the Slovaks, which was tied to the romanticising idea of the role of Russia and Russian cultural, religious, and political traditions in the scope of carrying out the idea of national equality and the civilising role of the Slavs in history.

Acknowledgement
This article was supported by the project "Slovensko–stredoeurópske perspektívy myslenia" [Slovakia – Central European Perspectives of Thinking], VEGA project no. 2/0078/21.

References

BREUILLY, J. (1999): Nationalism and modernity. In: J. Müller & B. Strath (eds.): *Nationalism and modernity*. San Domenico: European University Institute, pp. 43–46.
DANILEVSKY, N. I. (2013): *Russia and Europe*: *The Slavic world's political and cultural relations with the Germanic-Roman West*. Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers.
GELLNER, A. (1983): *Nations and nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
GLUCHMAN, V. (2022): The 19th-century Slovak National Movement: Ethos of Plebeian Resistance. In: *Nationalities Papers* (forthcoming).
HOLLÝ, K. (2009): Negácia udalostnej histórie a historický optimizmus: historická ideológia Svetozára Hurbana Vajanského (1881–1897) [The negation of event history and historical optimism: The historical ideology of Svetozár Hurban Vajanský (1881–1897)]. In: *Historický časopis*, 57(2), pp. 243–269.
HOLLÝ, K. (2013): The historical narration as a political programme. Analysis of images of the past in the texts of the Slovak national movement's programmes from 1848 and 1861. In: A. Hudek (ed.): *Overcoming the old borders*. Bratislava: Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences, pp. 45–58.
HUNTINGTON, S. (1996): *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York: Simon &Schuster.
HURBAN, S. (1880a): Dva prúdy [Two currents]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 11(85), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1880b): Poznávajme ľud náš! [Let's get to know our people!]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 11(22), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1880c): Vytrvajme! [Let's hold on!]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 11(143), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1881a): Cár osloboditel [The tsar liberator]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 12(32), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1881b): Ruské víťaztvo [Russian victory]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 12(15), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1881c): Sila [Power]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 12(50), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1882a): Darvin [Darwin]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 13(48), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1882b): O národnej hrdosti I. [About national pride I]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 13(93), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1882c): O národnej hrdosti II. [About national pride II]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 13(94), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1883a): Malichernosť [Pettiness]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 14(15), p. 1.

HURBAN, S. (1883b): Slovenské problémy [Slovak problems]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 14(80), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1883c): Spoločnosť II [Society II]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 14(50), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1884): Slovenská zástava [Slovak flag]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 15(74), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1887): Dôležitá kniha Rossia i Europa [The important book *Russia and Europe*]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 18(45), pp. 1–3.
HURBAN, S. (1888): *Slaviani v nedorozumení* [Slavs in a misunderstanding]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 19(119), pp. 1–2.
HURBAN, S. (1896): O ľude a pre ľud [About the people and for the people]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 27(155), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1897): Nálady a výhľady II [Moods and views II]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 28(262), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1898a): Angličan o Slavianoch [An Englishman on the Slavs]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 29(60), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1898b): Štát a národnosti [State and nationalities]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 29(239), p. 1.
HURBAN, S. (1900): Jediná silná otázka [One strong question]. In: *Národnie noviny*, 31(70), p. 1.
JAHELKA, T. (2015): Dichotomy of east and west in the history of Slovak national culture: Humanity and democracy as imperatives at creating national culture – Hamada, Vajanský, Masaryk and Osuský. In: K. Ihringová (ed.): *Cultural variances by Milan Hamada*. Kostelec: Pavel Mervart, pp. 67–85.
KAČÍREK, Ľ. (2011): Prívrženci Novej školy slovenskej (1868–1875) v Budapešti a na Dolnej zemi [Slovak New School supporters (1868–1875) in Budapest and the Low land]. In: A. Kováčová (ed.): *Identita, história a kultúra* [*Identity, history and culture*]. Budapest & Békešská Čaba: Výskumný ústav Slovákov v Maďarsku, pp. 88–121.
KALAJTZIDIS, J. (2019): Jozef Miloslav Hurban – filozoficko-etické aspekty [Jozef Miloslav Hurban – Ethical-Philosophical Thoughts]. In: V. Gluchman (ed.): *Ethical Thinking – Past & Present*. Prešov: FF PU, pp. 77–87.
KATUNINEC, M. (2003): Spolok svätého Vojtecha v prvom období svojho pôsobenia (1870–1918) [St. Adalbert's Society in the first period of its existence (1870–1918)]. In: *Historický časopis*, 51(1), pp. 17–39.
KOBYLIŃSKA, A. (2013): Brothers Hungarians...: Jan Palárik's attempt at renegotiating the Slovak-Hungarian relations on the threshold of the 1860s. In: *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 108, pp. 121–146.
KOLLÁR, J. (2009): *Reciprocity between the various tribes and dialects of the Slavic nation*, trans. & ed. A. Maxwell. Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers.
KRIŠTOF, P. (2020): Ethical aspects of the non-romantic thinking of Jonáš Záborský and Štefan Launer. In: *Ethics & Bioethics* (*in Central Europe*), 10(3–4), pp. 146–154.
MARCHUK, V. (2016): *Church, spirituality, nation*. Ivano-Frankivsk: Play.
MARTINKOVIČ, M. (2020): Ethics of responsibility in Ján Palárik's civic liberalism. In: *Ethics & Bioethics* (*in Central Europe*), 10(3–4), pp. 133–145.
MAXWELL, A. (2005): Multiple nationalism: National concepts in Nineteenth-Century Hungary and Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities'. In: *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11(3), pp. 385–414.
PICHLER, T. (2008): Nation, nationalities, state: On the politics of ethnic enthusiasm. In: *Historický časopis*, 56, Supplement, pp. 17– 39.
PICHLER, T. (2009): Miloš Štefanovič: O modernom slovenskom politickom myslení pred Hlasistami [Miloš Štefanovič: Modern Slovak political thinking before Hlasists]. In: *Filozofia*, 64(10), pp. 939–948.

POPPER, K. R. (1961): *The poverty of historicism*. New York: The Academy Library Harper & Row.
RUSNÁK, P. (2019): The sacred and the profane in Russian anthropology and philosophy. In: J. Feber, H. Hrehová & P. Rusnák (eds.): *Man between Sacrum and Profanum in Russian Philosophy in 20th Century*. Berlin: Peter Lang, pp. 187–215.
ŠTÚR, Ľ. (1993): *Slovanstvo a svet budúcnosti* [*Slavism and the world of the future*]. Bratislava: Slovenský inštitút medzinárodných štúdií.
THIESSE, A. M. (2022): *The creation of national identities: Europe, 18th–20th centuries*. Leiden: Brill.
WEBER, M. (2004): *The vocation lectures*. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company.