

Viliam Pauliny-Tóth

## VIENNA, OR PEST?\*

In the previous issue, we published a letter sent to *N. fr. Lloyd*,<sup>1</sup> apparently from Vienna, in which the non-Magyar<sup>2</sup> nations of the Lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen [*Uhorsko*]<sup>3</sup> are admonished against cherishing false expectations that, along with Mr Hohenwart's pre-Litava agreement,<sup>4</sup> the days of more liberal national existence must be dawning also upon them; instead, they should rather grasp the "hand

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\* Viliam Pauliny-Tóth, 'Viedeň či Pešť?', *Národné noviny*, Year II; Tuesday, 12 Sept. 1871, no. 108; editor in charge: Viliam Pauliny-Tóth, editorial office and administration: Turčiansky Svätý Martin.

<sup>1</sup> Founded by Mór Jókai and others, the German-language newspaper *Neuer Freier Lloyd* was published in Pest in 1869–72; the Editor-in-Chief was Ede Horn (all footnotes by Anna Kobylińska).

<sup>2</sup> In the Slovak original, the word *nemaďarské* is used, in line with the Slovak-language rule of lexically emphasising the semantic difference between ethnic Hungarians (*Maďari*) and the ethnicities or nationalities co-forming the Kingdom of Hungary (who are at times referred to as *Uhri*; even more frequently, their ethnically non-Hungarian status is marked by a lexical connection with the adjective *uhorský*, or the name proper *Uhorsko* which refers to the multination state). In translation to other languages (Polish and English included), the difference between the ethnically/nationally defined Hungarian identity and the one defined in state-related terms is blurred by the use of the adjective 'Hungarian' in both cases, which obliterates the linguistic sensitivity of the 'subordinate nations' to ethnonymic questions and national ideologies manifested by these nations; this aspect was crucial particularly for the nineteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> The original word is *Uhorsko*, which – owing to the semantics of this name in the Slovak cultural context – refers not only to the Hungarian part of Austro-Hungary but also to a statehood continuum dating back to the Middle Ages, and whose still-vivid symbol in the nineteenth century was King Stephen I, which is in turn well reflected in the official name of the Hungarian part of the dualist state.

<sup>4</sup> What is meant here is a draft agreement with Bohemia, prepared by the Government headed by Karl Hohenwart, for which the way had been paved by a rescript issued by Emperor Franz Joseph I on 18 Sept. 1871 mentioning his coronation as King of Bohemia.

diffidently offered” to them by the Hungarians [*Maďari*],<sup>5</sup> whereby they eventually forced the latter into considerable concessions; in a word, so that they never expected anything from Vienna, but everything possible from Pest: for from Vienna, disillusion, reactionism, and absolutism may only come over once again; the fruits of true freedom would arrive from Pest, instead.

What should we the Slovaks say to this piece-of-advice that concerns us as well, which assumingly is amiably shared with us? Should we expect the happiness of Slovaks, liberty and deliverance, from Vienna, or from Pest?

According to our modest opinion, neither Vienna nor Pest shall mark a deliverance: only the will of our own people, the development of our own national powers shall do – and so, therefore, our own actions and merits.

When a real community of the Austrian power was still existent, fairly naturally, the leading men of the Slovakian nation claimed their rights wherever in this non-constitutional period there was any right place for it, that is, with the central Austrian authorities in Vienna; this, however – as is commonly known – without success, so we were joshed at that time as we were remunerated for our services with what the others were punished with; after the dualism was inaugurated and the entrusted constitutionalism brought back into life exclusively in the hands of the Hungarians [*maďarské ruky*], these very national rights were demanded not by individual men anymore but the duly appointed and conducted Slovakian congress, by intermediation of the deputation delegated to the Diet: and, with what result? [This is] attested by complete ignoring of the expectations of the Slovakian nation as submitted by the deputation to the parliamentary House; and, by the Act on equal rights to the nations from 1868: XLIV; and, by all the completely Magyarised offices and schools; this serves as obvious evidence of the fact that even from Pest would we

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<sup>5</sup> The original uses the word *Maďari*, an ethnonym that in the nineteenth century ceased to have a purely ethnical reference and gained political meaning as carrier of national identification and Hungarian national ideology. No semantic differentiation is in use in many literatures (e.g. Polish and English ones) between the Magyars and the Hungarians, which makes it difficult to render in historiographic discourse the ethnonymic nuances to which Slovaks were sensitive as one of non-dominant nations within the Habsburg monarchy.

be expecting in vain any manifestation of some particular goodwill and graciousness; and, since upon us Slovaks a day of the happier future is verily about to dawn, it shall not arrive to us from Vienna, as *N. fr. Ll[oyd]* tells us, but, in truth, of which we are convinced, not even from Pest, either, shaped into a young dove baked without labour, effort, or commitments.

What we are meant to do is, therefore, to seek for deliverance for our nation in ourselves, rather than seek grace, as we have been taught by bitter experience, of the prejudiced authority – be it German or Hungarian [*maďarský*].<sup>6</sup> But nay, even if resulting from such grace of theirs, in spite of all this attitude, some concessions would be made, then would any such concession, not achieved owing to our own national efforts, be of any enduring value at all? Verily, no, for there is no durability in liberty granted to nations out of clemency; it may be given as it may be taken back in a conducive time.

Our attitude toward Pest, as we believe, is entirely different from the assumptions that the Viennese correspondent of *N. fr. Lloyd* is apparently driven by might suggest. It is not clemency that we seek from Pest, but it is our legitimate right that we demand, on a constitutional basis.

Pest is the capital city of our Hungarian [*uhorský*]<sup>7</sup> homeland, the seat of our Hungarian [*uhorský*] constitutional authority, and of our statutory Land Diet; it is with Pest that we are bound by our sacrosanct civic obligations and rights, and bound are we with it by the keen sentiment of patriotism, by our primaevial Hungarian political system,<sup>8</sup> and also by our love and faithfulness to our Hungarian [*uhorský*] homeland, which have, for many a century, been severely experienced, but never affected, not even by our severest national

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<sup>6</sup> The original has *maďarská vláda*, which points to a modern, nationalised understanding of Hungarianness already shaped up at that time, understood not only in ethnic terms but also in terms of political representation of a defined national group.

<sup>7</sup> In the original, the adjective *uhorský* is repeated a few times within the sentence, thus emphasising (anachronously already then, as seen from today's perspective) the sense of belonging to a multination state in which none of the nationalities would hold a privileged position.

<sup>8</sup> The Slovak original has *ústava*, in line with a legal tradition where it refers not to a 'constitution' (as a modern concept – the specific legal act) but to a collection of constitutional/political laws.

faults. That the authority is, exclusively, the Hungarians' [*maďarská vláda*] and that it is not quite favourable towards us, this is what we know well, as a matter of fact; it is, though, a natural edging of the parliamentary majority from the year 1867, and our people contributed significantly to such a majority, unfavourable to us as it is, in the election of 1865, which we regret to confess indeed; nay, the same majority did they indurate in the year 1869 as well, upon the chair of power and government. Moreover, we would appeal in vain there – we believe this would be so, in any case – for justice, or for benignancy; whereas in politics there is no justice, and there is grace – in God!

And indeed, we do feel gravely injured; on the other hand, however, we know that every nation has as much freedom as it has deserved; this ought to be the sacred duty of our life, without awaiting favourable political circumstances to come over, without counting on a sense of justice from people who are malevolent towards us, and without placing our hopes in gracious consents for any concessions that might occur, be it from Vienna or from Pest: to be involved with all one's powers in the legislative struggle; snatch our voters away from the hands of our renegades who still, and continuously, can influence our short-sighted people who are glancing at them: and, thereby, not by relying on grace but by virtue of our own merit, and through a significant development of our own forces, to secure for our dear nation free and happy life, durable existence, within its Hungarian [*uhorský*]<sup>9</sup> homeland.

Such was the path our brethren the Bohemians were treading, followed by the Slovenes and the Croatians; and, lo!, the time is near for them to, finally, attain the rights of their lives; and such is the road for us to march along, of necessity: so that the longed-for national equality-in-rights may, at last, turn into reality – not as some ephemeral gracious gift but as a several years' flower or efflorescence of the consentaneous will of our people.

[based on a translation from the Slovak original into Polish by Anna Kobylińska]  
*trans. into English by Tristan Korecki*

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<sup>9</sup> The original has *uhorský*; cf. fn. 7.