

Two Slovak students, Jan Kollar and Pavel Josef Safarik, transformed, in the 1820s, German Romantic nationalism into Slav nationalism.¹ Characteristically, in the Western-Slav countries, Pan-Slavism remained the work of poets and intellectuals to give ideological shape to the nations. However, unlike **Pan-Asianism** in Japan, Russian Pan-Slavism never represented a political force. Shifting back and forth certain themes of German romanticism, it could not develop into a proper philosophy either.

Around 1860, Pan-Slavism became also a subject of interest in Russia. The older Russian Slavophiles (just like the “first Russian philosopher,” Petr Chaadaev [1794-1856]) conceived Russia still as separated from Europe. Now, as the tendency developed towards Russian integration, reflections on the “spiritual” or “historical” destiny supposed to link together all Slav nations become more central.

Non-Russian Pan-Slavism insists on the European character of the Slav nations that require recognition as European nations. In principle, Russian Pan-Slavism was sympathetic to these intentions. Official government policy, however, adopted imperialist traits, vaguely insisting that the union of Germans should be encountered with a “Union of Slavs.” This was contrary to the intentions of the Pan-Slav thinkers.

1. Also to mention are the Czechs Frantisek Palatsky, Frantisek Rieger and the Pole Adam Mickiewicz.

Literature:

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