EUROPEAN LEGITIMISM AND SERBIAN REVOLUTION*

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The Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) promoted legitimist, aristocratic and clerical reaction, facing the consequences of various revolutions, uprises and Napoleonic reforms. New international order was to preserve the stability of borders and mutual political and caste solidarity. On the other hand remained the permanent discontent of citizenship, and a new reality that lurked beneath the layers of intellectual reflections on the character and the rights of nations, whose leadership restored order and imposed boundaries considered as tyrannical and unjust. One example in this respect was the Second Serbian Uprising, the next stage of the Serbian revolution, begun in 1804. Although it was a local movement placed on peripheral boundaries of both Ottoman and Habsburg empires, the Secon Serbian Uprising has emphasized the legitimacy of the nation. Previously, the first European liberals in Spain, although rebels against Napoleon, had advocated similar aspirations afterwards accepted by the Italian Carbonari and the Greek Filiki Eteria. The long-term successfulness of South European liberation movements, including the Serbian Revolution (1804–1830), was proof of long lasting unsteadiness of reconstructed European order.

Key words: Congress of Vienna, The First Serbian Uprising, The Second Serbian Uprising, revolution, Enlightenment

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$\mathscr{T}$HE CONGRESS OF VIENNA 1814–1815 WAS THE highest concentration of political power in the entire former known history. The future international order had to rely on large, unchanging entities, customized to the interests of aristocracy and clergy. The lack of understanding of all the current developments that did not match the new European architecture could be interpreted by previous tectonic disturbances that caused the conquests and reforms of Napoleon Bonaparte. Considering the future in major strokes, the European leaders were decisive in ending the processes which hindered the dynastical order, clerical supremacy and aristocratic exclusivity, reaching into the past until the revolts of the forties of the seventeenth century that culminated during the French Revolution. In the meantime, the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment have legitimized the power of reason, the thoughts of individual and collective emancipation, and, by the end of the eighteenth century, even the values of popular culture.[1]

By promoting the idea of international stability as a basis of internal hierarchical order, the Congress of Vienna intended to legitimize the aristocratic reaction, contradictory in relation to the spirit and messages of previous social and scientific revolutions. It even turned out that the legitimist vision was long-term achievable, even though already outdated by developments significantly deeper than official political decisions. These changes happened to be fundamental, especially those who were peaceful and gradual. Rationalism and Enlightenment have already strongly disputed the effectiveness and legitimization of political or social violence. The ruling legitimism haven't been brought into connection with righteousness, and that matter was already in a contrast with the sensitivities of the looming era of Romanticism. Overlooking the historical discontents originated from European complexities and accelerated modern transformations, the Congress of Vienna has established "the best of all worlds", modelled on an imaginary past and simplified current realities. As the European powers, and their subordinate partners, had to cope with the kaleidoscopes of nations, cultures and conflicting class interests, the stability of the "order restored" was imposed on the unstoppable stream of new collectivist ideas and interests.

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1   Basic readings on the Congress of Vienna: Webster 1931; Rie 1950; Griewank 1954; Bourquin 1954; Gulick 1955; Kissinger 1957; Sked 1979; Kraehe 1983.

The European balance of powers system was also based on legitimistic theories of the divine right of the ruler and international alliances representing the particular dynastic and the privileged estates' interests. Stabilization of dynastic power and bureaucratization of government have contributed to the relatively peaceful international order during the eighteenth century, although even the enlightened rule, devoted to the living conditions improvement and social stabilization, was prominently elitist. On the other side of the Enlightenment's historical limits, the space of oriental despotism was beginning to disintegrate in provincial anarchy.

During the Enlightenment period the concept of the nation was profiled precisely in the resistance to the estate-system and clericalism, as in Italy, or in opposition to the metastasized Ottoman administration across the Balkans. Of a foremost importance for the future of the Balkans at that point were the Metternich's attitudes in relation to the principle of a cooperative system regulated by the principle of collective security in international relations. "Metternich believed that states could be united without reference to a common enemy, but rather on the conviction that all were pledged to uphold a peace that was injurious to none." He advocated diplomacy rather than war, and doubted that an external threat will ever endanger the European system. He distrusted the eighteenth century balance of power and militarism, but remained influenced by the late Enlightenment idealism of "political equilibrium", the concept of European states structured in a legally regulated system in which each particular sovereignty would be regulated at the supranational level (Sofka 1998, 148–149).

Another Enlightenment idealism has likely established a new imaginary model of a modern nation. The model emerged from the attempts to reconsider the Old Regime framework. Both nationalism and liberalism reflected the dissatisfactions within new social forces emancipated within the currents of economic and cultural transformation provided by official reforms aimed to improve general living conditions and interconnect the subjects with the state and institutions, thus also with the dynasty. Thereby the privileged structures firmly dedicated to the enlightening efforts have endangered their own traditional hierarchy, sometimes unconsciously encouraging ideas on national community originated in the common ancestry, history and culture.

Nationalism has basically appeared from attempts to dispute the feudal and clerical legitimism and mutual dynastic solidarity. The French Revolution and Napoleon irreversibly deepened the legitimistic and nationalist particularities in re-

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gard to the "old regime" and its following restoration from 1814/15. First National movements in South and South-Eastern Europe have also revealed certain features of modernity. The Italian Risorgimento was rooted even in the Renaissance, although the movement was directly pointed to the Austrian rule and the political function of the Holy See. Greek nationalism recalled the ancient past, while remaining powerless to gather and mobilize the Diaspora, scattered throughout the Balkans, or important national remnants in Asia Minor. Croatian and Serbian nationalism emerged from the cracks of European "old regime" and the Ottoman Empire. Quest for national identity took place in several different systems: the Habsburg monarchy, the Venetian or Dubrovnik Republic, and the Ottoman Empire.

The French Revolution and Napoleon conquests have fostered acceleration in political and social development. The Congress of Vienna was facing both the legacies of previous modern revolutions, and the current political changes. The new order's advantage was in huge political experience, and in gradual adaptability of leaders and administrations. Such abilities also reflected the changes in tentative assumptions of political power and international order. In the "world restored" the aristocratic republics have vanished, but various conspiratorial groups have survived. Regardless of the rule's invading and alien character, the Napoleon's usurpation has provided, in certain particularities, civic reforms and strains on feudal leftovers. In Italy and Greece, referred to the ancient heritage, the self-determination was legitimated in historical and cultural domain. The national autonomies in Serbia and Montenegro were becoming tolerable in comparison with the alternatives, as eventual suppression would have caused resentments related to the nature of the overall Ottoman rule. The principle of self-determination had to be somehow introduced in the international order of balance, establishing the counterweights to the principle of immutability of borders, including those of the despotic states. More balanced and less reactionary, such principle was more appropriate to the negotiating tendencies of international conflicts management than the apparently outdated theory of divine right. And that was, perhaps, the essence of vitality of those conservative responses that respected a need for gradual adjustment to contemporary challenges.

During the eighteenth century a noticeable interest in the phenomenology of nation has emerged. The nations were interpreted in terms of ancestry, history and tradition, and also of national spirit, character, poverty or wealth, even the

economy and institutions. Convinced that the community is shaped by language and learning, focused on cultural traditions as the ties that create a "nation", Johann Gottfried Herder emphasized the importance of folklore and popular poetry. Through language, a nation cherishes traditions, and regulates human relations. However, the impulses of national history were more practical. From the mideighteenth century, the nation became the new medium of international policies. In Serbian and Croatian Baroque and Enlightenment patriotism was beginning to include members of all classes. And although the Serbian revolution 1804–1830 was essentially a peasant uprising against the late Ottoman feudalism and alien rule abuses, the general movement has affected a broader historical space that included the Habsburg monarchy. Since the culture of patriotism was gradually losing the previous feudal and aristocratic exclusivity, the idea of the nation was at first accepted by the Serbian citizenship in Austria, economically and culturally emancipated under the late provincial Baroque and during the Enlightenment. In wars, mutinies or simple trade activities, Serbian peasantry under Ottoman rule has established important ties with the citizenry in Austria thanks to the greater permeability of borders and economic growth in the eighteenth century, especially by mediation of merchants and prominent national political leaders from both sides, Turkish and Austrian.

The First Serbian uprising of 1804–1813 attracted the public attention that was occasionally beyond the importance of a local movement. Encouraging the spirit of Romanticism and the French Revolution influences, in attempts to win a broad international support, the uprising was legitimized by the establishment of first institutions. The weakness of the movement was in mutual clashes of the insurgent leaders, in failures to affect Austrian support as in the previous century, in Napoleon's lack of interest, Russian deceptions, etc. Finally, the Napoleon's attack on Russia opened the political space to a broad Ottoman offensive and reprisals in 1813.[2] But the repression still lacked had a long lasting effect. The Second Serbian uprising in 1815 has emerged in deep shadows of the Congress of Vienna, when a durable general peace has been established. The movement's quick and long-term success was based on the implementation of prior experience, and the benefits of European peace, although the uprising has eventually disrupted the new international architecture. Indeed, the Second uprising was the first successful rejection

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2   Slightly comparable with the Russian role in Italy, see: Reinerman 1974.

of the restoration's principles, decisions and spirit. The liberation struggle for the provincial autonomy within the limits of the Belgrade *sanjac*,[3] as the first step toward national freedom, already Leopold von Ranke indicated as a Serbian revolution (Von Ranke 1829).[4]

The resolute step in the processes that were taking place also in Italy and Greece, the Second Serbian uprising has preliminarily undermined the principles of the Congress of Vienna, and subsequently, the Holy Alliance. In Vienna any official debate was held on the Eastern Question. The Congress was still pending when the Serbian insurgency broke in the immediate vicinity of the Austrian border with Turkey. European forces did not pay much attention. The uprising was local and marginal enough to become an eventual precedent. In the meanwhile the First Serbian uprising was crushed, regardless of the promised autonomy and Russian assurances that the rebels will remain within the international support. European officials did not consider the legitimacy and the nature of the Ottoman government as an immediate issue. The former factor in international relations, the Ottoman Empire has become a secondary object of European policies related primarily to the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean. The single clear European consensus in that matter was that Russia, a huge and despotic state, must not take the Black Sea straits and gain unrestricted access to global sea.

The Second Serbian uprising in 1815 was a small and local usurpation in new international order. Vienna press broadcasted only limited and belated news. And while the European public could have considered Serbia as a distant and confusing geographical notion, the key Austrian diplomat at the Congress of Vienna Clemens von Metternich stated that even the term Italy was nothing more than "a geographic expression". It could not be predicted, neither, that the Second Serbian uprising is becoming a paradigmatic announcement of the new order's future challenges, primarily a historical prelude to the Greek Revolution, while Italy has remained the Habsburg obsession founded in Austrian foreign policy priorities after 1699. The Greek War of Independence, in conjunction with similar movements through the Balkans and Italy, erupted already in 1821, indeed. However,

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3 *Sandjak* or *sanjaq*, Ottoman district.

4 This short study originated from material supplied by Vuk Karadžić, a Serbian writer, historian and collector of popular literature who had been also a witness of the scenes he related during the First Serbian Uprising. The book was afterwards expanded into *Serbien und die Turkei im 19 Jahrhundert*, 1879.

the Serbian uprising took place spontaneously and even independently of Serbian insights into contemporary European state of affairs. Serbian rebels were wrongly convinced that these relations have not significantly changed since the previous, First uprising, whose collapse almost coincided with Napoleon's. Three months before the uprising, on 17 January 1815, the Austrian Emperor Franz I promised to the Serbian deputy *prota*[5] Mateja Nenadović (1777–1854), that he will support Serbian demands for autonomy in communication with Turkish authorities. The Russian government sent to the Congress of Vienna representatives a circular note in favour of the Serbs. Interpreting these reactions Serbian rebels counted on a future Austrian and Russian military aid, while being assured by their compatriots from Austrian territory that after the fall of Napoleon European powers will attack Turkey and resolve the Eastern Question.

The Second Serbian uprising broke out on April 23 1815 in Takovo.[6] This time, in Vienna, *prota* Mateja Nenadović was rejected by Russian insults and Austrian threats. Metternich explained to the Emperor that the uprising interferes with Austrian interests, particularly disturbing the border with Turkey, and that the Serbian rebels should not receive any assistance, neither the eventual refugees a shelter on Austrian territory. The Austrian position slightly tempered after the second audition of Nenadović with Franz I the 8th of May, but the new principal support was accompanied by mockery and disbelief. The Russians promised to intercede with Turkey in favour of the rebels, but they demanded that the Serbs immediately and mandatory ask for peace (Gavrilović 1908, 118–131).

Borders with Turkey have remained under the strict Austrian supervision. Serbian volunteers from Austria who crossed into rebelled Serbia often clashed with border guards. Messages from Vienna warned that Europe is seeking peace and that no one will help riots and rebellions.

The success of the Second Serbian uprising, which broke out in a seemingly inconvenient moment, can be interpreted by local circumstances, particularly the weaknesses of the local Turkish authorities. The Ottoman provincial system has disintegrated enough during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and could not be simply fixed, even with the support of European policies seeking for order and peace. Turkish retaliation from 1813 has deepened the mutual hatred,

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5   Archpriest or Protopope.
6   Near present-day Gornji Milanovac, central Serbia.

transferred to the general relations between the Serbian and Muslim communities. In 1815, Serbian rebels were additionally careful. Like all similar contemporary plots, the Serbian movement was conspiratorial. The essence of the organization were personal acquaintances. The leaders were the champions of the First uprising that survived the struggles with the Turks and the internal political and personal conflicts. New Serbian leader Miloš Obrenović was personally very brave, but to the extent that his example may influence the overall success. New leadership of the Second uprising consisted of "princes", local popular representatives.[7] The "princes" have been more prone to an agreement with the Turkish authorities during the First Serbian uprising, but were partly and intentionally exterminated by the Turkish outlaws, the *Dahi*, usurpers of the Belgrade *sanjac.* The presence of different social layers indicate that the Serbian revolution had a pronounced social character, as an outbreak of anger against the violence of authorities and excessive taxation. The rebels were again mostly peasants, led by and volunteers and professional soldiers fled from Austria where they served defending the borders with Turkey, sometimes even in Austrian wars across Europe. For only three months they liberated the entire Belgrade *sanjac*, except the major cities. The political power was divided between the "princes", veterans and wealthier merchants.

The legitimacy of the rebel authorities originated from autonomous popular institutions that have evolved in the absence of effective Ottoman provincial government which has collapsed in several occasions during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The first autonomous preferences in this regard have appeared in the fifteenth century, when the Serbian border guards in the Turkish service were compensated by internal popular autonomy. The local autonomies were keeping the continuity of national life based on myths about the glorious past of the medieval state, lofty ethical principles of the Battle of Kosovo (1389), and the synergy of popular superstitions and the Orthodox influences as the Church, left without its patrons in ruling families and the feudal class, mainly opted for cooperation with the Turkish authorities, especially from the second part of the sixteenth century. After devastating experiences of wars with Austria, the Turks restored the institution of the supreme prince of Serbia in the late eighteenth century, but the new collaboration efforts were soon suspended during the *Dahi* usurpation of the Belgrade *sanjaq*. However, the common people still remembered and respected

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7   Knezovi or kneževi.

this function, and the function survived its new extinguishing, as well as in the period after the fifteenth century. Already during the Second uprising preparations, the most eminent figure in Belgrade *sanjaq* Miloš Obrenović (1780–1860) was considered as the future chief prince of Serbia, although he appeared at the revolution's forefront only after the resurrection has significantly developed. The people's high officials' assembly has confirmed his leadership, and he carefully defended the position at all the time the uprising has lasted. After the conclusion of the armistice with the Turks, when the first traces of autonomy were agreed, both the Serbs and the Turks considered Obrenović as the chief "prince", though he did not have any documents on the selection or appointment. And he was illiterate.

Prince Miloš Obrenović has consolidated his power in 1817. First, he removed Đorđe Petrović Karađorđe (1762–1817), the First uprising leader, both as his personal political rival and the main obstacle to the future gradual agreements with the Turkish authorities. Prince Miloš defended the ordered murder of Karađorđe by a state cause, a political necessity, but the decision had also origin in his quest for legitimism. Karađorđe was eliminated primarily as the former supreme prince of Serbia. The authority of the legitimate sovereign was entrusted him by the national assembly in Topola in 1808, after a series of victories over the Turks, and removal of real, potential, suspected or invented political opponents within the rebels. After that purge, Miloš provided his own election for the hereditary prince of Serbia, decided by the national leaders assembly, on November 6 1817. Miloš nevertheless remained cautious enough to stand before the Turks "always as an administrative, rather than a political figure, as a servant and clerk of the Porte, and not as a people's ruler" (Gavrilović 1908, 390–398). In a following favourable moment, even the Porte had to admit him as the appointed hereditary prince, but only in 1830, after Russian pressures and intervention.

The beginnings of Serbian Romanticism also originated from 1814/15 Vienna. A restoration of Serbian culture, during a quiet intermission of the national revolution, has additionally legitimized the national movement. The young writer and refugee from again conquered Serbia in 1813, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864) published in Vienna, in 1814, his first collection of Serbian popular poems. The following year, 1815, his new collection, more mature and complete, revealed authentic and rich talent of blind and illiterate popular poets. Jacob Grimm and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe have begun to learn Serbian to be able to read the poems in their original form. The cultural legitimacy eventually ap-

proached the Serbian revolution to the movements that followed in Greece and Italy, based not only on national requests, but also on legitimism that resembled the ancient heritage.

The Second Serbian uprising, as a continuation of the Serbian revolution, openly emphasized the legitimacy of the nation, and national exclusiveness. The rebellion was mostly unconscious opposition to the great powers attitudes, and a confirmation of persistent tendencies for gradual changes of boundaries, allegedly firmly fixed at the Congress of Vienna. It was the first and obvious example of the vicissitudes of the Holy Alliance order, even preceding association's formal conclusion. The example further confirmed Filiki Eteria in Greece and Italian Carbonari.

The Congress of Vienna has ignored the issues of nationality. The concept of nationality was still insufficiently developed and intelligible. Even in the case of Metternich who was supposedly acting in favour of German unity, he sought about the exclusion of France and Russia from Central Europe, and the limitation of Prussia in the new German Confederation. Maybe the new European order was based on a new hegemony, rather than on the balance of power, but, regardless of such assumption, 1815 is the one and only time in European history when statesmen sat down to construct a peaceful international system after a great war and succeeded; the only settlement, unlike 1648, 1713–1714, 1763, 1919, 1945, and many others, that was not accompanied or quickly followed by renewed or continued conflict, revived tensions, arms races, and competitive balance of power politics (Schroeder 1992, 705; Spiezio 1990, 165–181). Has the negligence of nationality opened a political space to the liberation movements in Serbia, Greece and Italy? Still, "the Final Act signed at Vienna on June 9, 1815, constituted the most comprehensive treaty that Europe had ever possessed in the nineteenth century and that its demarcation of national frontiers endured, except for one or two minor changes, for over forty years" (Rie 1950, 226–227).

The Congress of Vienna created a century of a peaceful prosperity (Kissinger 1956, 279–280). A century after the Congress of Vienna beginnings, the murder of Franz Ferdinand, the heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo, assassination supported by a local Bosnian Serb secret organization and a faction of the official Serbian army, confirmed that the peacetime of general prosperity was extinguished by new and dangerous European divisions.

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Rezime:
Evropski legitimizam i Srpska revolucija

Bečki kongres (1814–1815) nagovestio je legitimizam, aristokratsku i klerikalnu reakciju koja je bila odgovor na različite revolucije, ustanke i Napoleonove reforme. Novi međunarodni poredak trebalo je da sačuva stabilnost granica i zajedničku političku i stalešku solidarnost. Međutim, promene do kojih je došlo nisu rešile nezadovoljstvo onih koji su obnovljene granice smatrali nepravednim. Primer toga je i Drugi srpski ustanak, koji predstavlja naredni korak Srpske revolucije započete 1804. I pored lokalnog karaktera ustanka koji

je izbio na periferiji Habsburške i Otomanske carevine, Drugi srpski ustanak predstavljao je potvrdu načela legitimnosti nacije, koje je upravo bilo osporeno od strane najznačajnijih evropskih država na Bečkom kongresu. Prvi evropski liberali u Španiji, i pored toga što su se pobunili protiv Napoleona, zalagali su se za slične težnje koje su potom prihvatili italijanski karbonari ili grčka Filiki Eteria. Dugoročan uspeh liberalnih evropskih pokreta u Južnoj Evropi, među kojima se može svrstati i Srpska revolucija (1803–1830) potvrda je dugoročne nestabilnosti obnovljenog evropskog poretka.