

Paradoxes of Peace in
Nineteenth Century
Europe

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(until the 1860s). Strategic thinking played as important a role as the legal style of reasoning, and the difference between the two was blurred from the outset by the fact that 'equilibrium' was maintained as a semi-legal term of reference for decision-makers. Furthermore, leaders have to internalize the norms of the system, and rules and norms have to be passed on from one generation to another, so an institutional memory is required. The Concert did not have that. Decisions have to be rule-based, and rules have to be transparent, just and legitimate. There were references to past protocols, to equilibrium and the wishes of the people, and normative discourse was generally held in high esteem, but specific norms were thrown overboard (principle of moderation, 1878), or interpreted to the advantage of the powerful (standard of civilization, eg 1860, 1875/6). The power to make rules was abused (doctrine of anti-revolutionary intervention, 1820, *terra nullius*, 1885).

Other criteria the Concert fulfilled, at least halfway. The Concert's practice to hold closed sessions without the participation of countries concerned in order to be able to speak freely and arrive at a just compromise, was probably necessary. Majority vote was probably also necessary for the directorate to succeed; however, it may also have facilitated the abuse of the majority, as in the case of Austria's mandated interventions in the Italian states (1820–1822). Europe's Great Powers represented two-thirds of the population of nineteenth century Europe, even more when Italy joined the Concert. So under the conditions of the pre-democratic era, the Great Powers could speak for Europe. Yet they had no legitimacy to decide for other parts of the world, as they did at the Africa Congress, where no representative of that continent was present. Nor have the current UN-Security Council's P-5, which represent less than 30 per cent of the world's population, that legitimacy.

Great Power Concerts provide no guarantee for restraint, and the less the conditions for a positive peace are fulfilled, the less they will exercise it. They may refuse to set rules in certain areas in order to maintain a *marge de manoeuvre* for unilateral action. Or they may uphold special privileges in order to defend special interests. The veto in the UN-Security Council, which prevents any decisions being taken against the will of a Great Power, illustrates this dilemma.

Still, isn't power abuse by a single hegemonic power even more likely than Great Powers' collusion? For the Great Powers' interests are often difficult to reconcile. And at any rate, how to preserve peace without the cooperation Great Powers? In a world federation with a world court, the application of law poses theoretically no problem, but in a states system with an unequal distribution of power and resources, it is only with the participation of the powers most likely to wage war, ie the Great Powers, and not against them, that any legal and political international order can be stabilized. Hence, effective measures have to be found to entice Great Powers to bind themselves to a code acceptable to a broad majority of state actors, and to make sure that administrative and political elites in leading states internalize international norms and rules. If democracy (according to democratic peace theory) and education provide the best guarantees for social peace, Great Power concerts which fulfil the criteria mentioned above may be better placed to play a disinterested managing role in crisis situations than a single hegemonic power.

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The Holy Alliance as 'An Order of Things Conformable to the Interests of Europe and to the Laws of Religion and Humanity'

Adrian Briskin

I. Introduction

When touching on the subject of the laws of nature in his masterwork *De l'Esprit des Lois* (*The Spirit of Laws*, 1740), eighteenth-century French political thinker Charles de Montesquieu—for whom the laws of nature meant those deriving from human experience, in contradistinction to divine law—argued that peace was the first law of nature: the desire for self-preservation rather than attacking one another.¹ He sharply rebuffed Thomas Hobbes's view that mankind was driven by the natural impulse or desire to subdue one another. To Montesquieu, the impulse to dominate was very much tied to the notions of empire and dominion—complex conceptions relying on other notions—and therefore it could never be the first which occurred to the human understanding.² Montesquieu's conception of peace can be read, then, as the primary human instinctual reaction. A call to peace, shared by each human being, precisely because of that desire for self-preservation. But of course his notion of peace was an intervention in a hypothetical human state of nature, ie before human beings entered historical societal relations. So when that invitation to peace, however, is brought forward by an imperial political actor—part of not any small and simple society but complex and compromised by the impulse to dominate—then that initial reaction cannot be dissociated from a suspicion that in that call there is the drive to subdue and even wage war. Indeed in this imperial context, paradoxically, peace means both peace and war. Even more suspicious and paradoxical (meaning counterintuitive), it would seem to Montesquieu a situation in which an imperial actor advanced a project for peace by appealing to divine law to forge peace, as was the case with the monarchical peace project of the Holy Alliance in the early nineteenth century.

¹ Charles de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, trans by Thomas Nugent, PA: Breiningsville, Digitreads.com Publishing 2010, p 29.

² de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*.

Without much dwelling on philosophical stipulations and historical reflections prior to the declaration of the Holy Alliance—a project for peace in the European continent put forward by Russian Emperor Alexander I at the end of the Napoleonic wars—it is rather easy to see why this intra-European and even global project for peace was inherently paradoxical and riddled by contestations from the very outset.

Indeed, as one of the most outstanding projects for European peace premised upon Christian unity and solidarity, shortly following the early nineteenth-century Vienna Congress settlement (1815), the Holy Alliance was strongly contested and even rejected by contemporaries. From its very declaration, it raised doubts among European monarchical circles for combining religious and liberal vocabularies as to conduct European politics in the post-Napoleonic European restoration. Equally, it did not win the trust of sceptics who saw it as medium for camouflaging Russian expansionary imperial ambitions in Europe. Also, it never really convinced those voices who suspected it as an illiberal and reactionary platform for suppressing a growing liberal consciousness on the continent. These contestations are somewhat reflected in the historiography of the subject. There are those narratives, on the one hand, especially in the Soviet literature, which characterize the Holy Alliance as a reactionary, religious, and conservative tool for legitimizing European monarchical order.³ Post-Soviet historical scholarship seems to indicate a departure from the Soviet interpretation, advancing instead a reading of it as projecting a vision for a 'United Europe'.⁴ While on the other hand, there are others, particularly in the western European literature, that largely view it as setting the tone and stage for intra-strate cooperation, as with major international peace organizations in the twentieth century.⁵ The historical argument advanced here is that the Holy Alliance embodied and displayed all these elements. Trumpeting Christian unity and monarchical solidarity in achieving a 'durable peace' in Europe, the Holy Alliance—in the geopolitical contestation between Emperor Alexander I and Austrian Chancellor Clemens von Metternich—was liberal, reactionary, secular and religious, peaceful (through

³ In the book entitled *Iskrytia diplomatii*, Moskva, Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury 1959, the Holy Alliance is read as 'an organization with a sharply delineated monarchical-ideological, built on the ideas of revolution and repression of political and religious freedom of thought, wherever they may be manifested' in LV Mel'nikova, 'Aleksandr I i sozdanie Svyashchennogo soyuzā' at <http://www.horodino.ru/download.php?file_id=166&_CM3=2t47neq02re51hpce4vt7199ru3> (accessed 27 March 2011), pp 1–2.

⁴ Olga V Orlik, *Rossiia v mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniyakh, 1815–1829: Ot Venskogo kongressa do Adriianopol'skogo mira*, Moskva, Nauka 1998.

⁵ Maurice Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, Geneva 1954; WP Cresson, *The Holy Alliance: The European Background of the Monroe Doctrine*, New York: Oxford University Press 1922; Francis Ley, *Alexandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*, Paris, Librairie Fischbacher 1975; John Hunter Sedgwick, 'The New Holy Alliance', *The North American Review* 220(1825) (Dec 1924), 199–208; Jacques-Henry Pirenne, *La Sainte-Alliance: Organisation européenne de la paix mondiale*, Vol 1, Switzerland, Neuchâtel, Éditions de la Baconnière 1946; Stella Chervas, *Reinventer la tradition: Alexandre Stourdza et l'Europe de la Sainte Alliance*, Paris, Honoré Champion 2008.

constitutionalism) and militaristic (through collective intervention) platform, as the chapter explores below.

II. For a 'Durable Peace' in Europe

With the heavy dust of the Napoleonic Wars seemingly settling, the victorious anti-Napoleonic coalition comprised of Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia signed the Treaty of Chaumont on 10 March 1814—a deal for a concerted action to contain a military aggressive France. The main aim of the Treaty, which nearly a year later led to the establishment of the Quadruple Alliance, was 'to insure the future tranquillity of Europe by re-establishing a just equilibrium of the powers'.⁶ Yet following Napoleon's return from the island of Elba for another ten months disturbing once more the 'tranquillity' of Europe only to be decisively defeated at Waterloo, Tsar Alexander I had become convinced that something more than merely a concerted European action among allies was needed. With the view that his country had contributed the most in defeating Napoleonic France and in the process having accrued greater political clout than the rest of the allies—causing worries among them about its amassed 'enormous power'⁷—he sought a new European peace arrangement for the continent. But rather than based only on purely pragmatic and secular terms, this vision for European peace entailed organizing international and political relations on the teachings of the Gospel.⁸ Accordingly, this was the way to solve future wars, instability, and achieve a 'durable peace' in Europe.⁹

Already in December 1814, nearly ten months after the Treaty of Chaumont, the Tsar had sent a note to plenipotentiaries of the Allied Powers trying to convince them of the need to reform the alliance based on 'the immutable principles of Christian religion' as the 'only foundation of the political and social order with which the sovereigns, making common cause, will refine their principles of state and guarantee the relations between the peoples entrusted to them by Providence'.¹⁰ His project of the Holy Alliance for peace and a new geopolitical reordering would be formalized only when he succeeded in convincing the Austrian Monarch Francis I and the Prussian King Frederick William III to sign it in Paris on 14/26¹¹ September 1815.

This new geopolitical reordering—envisioning settling existing or potential European intrastate conflict and avoiding war by observing Christian

⁶ Quoted in Cresson, *The Holy Alliance*, p 20.

⁷ Harold Nicholson, *The Congress of Vienna: A Study in Allied Unity, 1812–1822*, New York 1946, p 250.

⁸ VK Nadler, *Imperator Aleksander I i iadna sviasshennago soiuza*, 5 Vols, Riga 1886–1892, Vol 1, p 3.

⁹ Janet M Hartley, *Alexander I*, London and New York, Longman 1994, p 133.

¹⁰ Quoted in Hartley, *Alexander I*.

¹¹ There is a difference of 12 days between the Gregorian and Julian calendars. The Julian calendar was in use in the Russian Empire until and during the nineteenth century. Unless specified, the dates in the text are in the Julian calendar.

precepts—did not impress the other remaining ally in the Chaumont Treaty, namely Britain. With the British Government having refused to sign it, British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh dismissed it as a ‘piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense’ and referred to the Tsar as someone whose ‘mind is not completely sound’.¹² Even though his emperor was signatory to it, Austrian Chancellor Metternich was not lauding it; instead referring to it as ‘this loud sounding nothing’ and a mere ‘union of religious and political-liberal ideas’.¹³ He saw the Holy Alliance as ‘only the overflow of the pietistic feeling of the Emperor Alexander, and the application of Christian principles to politics’.¹⁴ It was not only the seemingly political liberalism confounded with religion that disturbed Metternich but also a realization that this Alliance was a useless tool for dealing with present and future European affairs. In words less strong than Castlereagh he confided that ‘the paper was nothing more than a philanthropic aspiration clothed in a religious garb, which supplied no material for a treaty between the monarchs, and which contained many phrases that might even have given occasion to religious misconstructions’.¹⁵ Yet in spite of these strong reservations, before the signing of the document, Metternich contributed to the modification of these ‘misconstructions’.¹⁶ It was a deal between his Emperor, the Prussian king and Alexander I that the first two wanted to include their opinions as a condition for their agreement and in turn, Alexander I had to accept them. Metternich noted that ‘the Emperor Francis, although he did not approve the project even when modified, agreed to sign it; for reasons which I for my part could not oppose’.¹⁶ The entries probably at least in principle keenest to tame politics to Christian tenets, namely the Vatican, also refused to sign in. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Sultan was not invited.¹⁷ But soon after its declaration, the Alliance was joined by France, Sweden, Spain, and the Kingdoms of Naples and Sardinia¹⁸—some contemporaries viewed this process as pleasing Russia or for fear of it and its allies rather than subscribing to its religious principles.¹⁹ Thus, having questioned its practical values, it was responding to the ‘impulse to subdue’ of Russia that Metternich was probably insinuating when commenting on his Emperor’s reasoning for signing the document.

Notably, the reception to this peace project—fusing a seemingly religious fever, which had captivated Alexander I, with European high politics—in the centres of European political power was less than congenial. It was historically paradoxical also that such a proposal came forward, when European Christian unity had been shattered by the sixteenth and seventeenth-century European religious wars. This paradox would not make sense if not taken into consideration with the collapse of secular notions (of Enlightenment) on European peace due to the impact

¹² Hartley, *Alexander I*, p 134.

¹³ Prince Clemens von Metternich, *Metternich: The Autobiography, 1773-1815*, Welwyn Garden City, Ravenhall Books 2004, p 262.

¹⁴ Metternich, *Metternich: The Autobiography*.

¹⁵ Metternich, *Metternich: The Autobiography*, p 260.

¹⁶ Metternich, *Metternich: The Autobiography*, p 261.

¹⁷ Henry Toyar, *Alexandre Ier: Le sphinx du nord*, France, Flammarion 1980, p 313.

¹⁸ Nadler, *Emperor Alexander I i iadzia sviaschenago soiuza*, Vol 5, p 637.

¹⁹ Hartley, *Alexander I*, p 134.

of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, and the revival of Christian, particularly Protestant, conceptions of it, to which Emperor Alexander I peculiarly responded to. More importantly also, it cannot be realized without considering the context in which imperial Russia, in the course of the Napoleonic wars, sought to assert and reassert itself as the Great Power in the continent: attempting to reconcile both Russian and wider European political, potentially conflicting, ambitions. And to be sure, the Holy Alliance had its friends in continental Europe, especially among some contemporary European intellectuals from German-speaking milieus. As potentially reconstituting a defunct *Res-publica Christiana*, these proponents cherished and welcomed the possibility for living in peace in a federation of European peoples in which politics and Christianity were bound together. For instance, prominent German publicist and economic theorist Adam Müller had already proposed in his work *Die Elemente der Staatskunst*, published in 1809, that Christianity had to be the binding element for a conceivable European federation.²⁰ During the still fluid period of 1814 and 1815, the Russian Tsar had received memoranda from a German Catholic theologian, Franz Xavier von Baader, who advocated the establishment of Christian theocracy and European Union on the Continent.²¹ In one of his memoranda submitted in July 1815 entitled ‘*Sur la nécessité créée par la Révolution Française d’une nouvelle et plus étroite union de la religion avec la politique*’, Baader asserted that the legacy of a loveless, despotic, and ‘devilish’ French Revolution could be erased by the organization of a counter-revolution—combining the notion of love in Christianity and European politics.²² More importantly in this context of vocal and active religious moves Alexander I, who in his youth had been instructed and taught in the spirit of political liberalism but also to follow the doctrines of Orthodox Christianity run affairs of the Empire when time for it would arise, came himself under the influences of unorthodox Christian doctrines—Protestant religious movements and mysticism. These movements had sprung up in his imperial realm and had been embraced by the high society, especially at the end of the Great Patriotic war (1812–1814) against Napoleon’s Grand Armée.²³ Particularly, it has been emphasized in the literature, the catalytic role that religious meetings between the Emperor and mystic Madame Barbara Julie de Krüdener had in Alexander’s conception of the Holy Alliance during and after the second campaign against Napoleon in 1815.²⁴

While sympathy for his project abroad was restricted to the non-political domain, at home the Tsar made sure that great support was generated both in the political realm as well as with his subjects. It must be noted also the religious

²⁰ Hartley, *Alexander I*, p 135; See, Adam Müller, *Die Elemente der Staatskunst*, Berlin 1809.

²¹ Hartley, *Alexander I*, p 135.

²² Ley, *Alexandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*, p 126.

²³ Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire 1801-1917*, p 165. Indeed, the Tsar authorized the establishment of the Russian Bible Society, which was modelled on the British and Foreign Bible Society. This society’s aims were to spread the Bible in the languages of the Russian Empire, with a membership open to any persons of any Christian confession, having as its first president, the Russian Minister of Education Alexander Golitsyn.

²⁴ Toyar, *Alexandre Ier*, pp 311–12.

thetic had been heightened in Russia before the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit (1807)—this treaty forged the Russo-French Alliance that officially lasted until 1812. On the orders of the Russian Government, the Orthodox Church had declared Napoleon as the Antichrist.²⁵ So, soon after his return to St Petersburg from his long stay in German states and France, Tsar Alexander made public his oeuvre on 25 December 1815 of the Julian calendar throughout the Empire, in a symbolic move as to coincide with the day of the birth of Jesus Christ. Publicized as a manifesto, the text was kept in its original version prior to Meternich's modifications. It contained the core ideas of Christian solidarity of European monarchies and justice, including the point of the necessity of having peace as a way of ensuring the well-being of the peoples.²⁶ Lastly, an order was issued in it to print copies to be read in all churches of the Empire.²⁷ The Tsar's decision to make the document public embarrassed his Austrian and Prussian counterparts who were used to a protocol of secrecy beyond the realm of cabinet. Nonetheless, it proved effective in the Russian context. In fact, from its declaration and throughout 1816, the Russian political establishment seemed engulfed by a sense that the country was moving towards a new political path, almost apocalyptically, with the monarchy appearing in a Theologico-Patriarchal nature. For the wider Russian society, meanwhile, the Holy Alliance meant opening up the religious realm—freedom, plurality, and equality for Christian denominations, including a number of Christian mystic groups—formalized with the 'Constitution of the Churches' decree on 18 March 1817.²⁸ It would not, however, be a particularly appealing prospect for the high representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church.

III. The Failure of the 'Grand Design' and the Holy Alliance as a Second Attempt

Regardless of whether the Tsar's intentions were genuine in upholding Christian solidarity for conducting European intrastate relations, through the Holy Alliance he sought to provide an ideological momentum to the new but rather laconic and dry principle of 'concerned action' set out in Article V of the Treaty of Chaumont. This Article had laid out the terms for the conclusion of a general peace with France—establishing that: 'The contracting parties will agree after the conclusion of the peace with France . . . to take defensive measures for the protection of their respective territories in Europe against all attempts on the part of France to trouble the result of this pacification.'²⁹ In retrospect, it served

²⁵ Dometic Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon*, London, Penguin Books 2010, p. 60.

²⁶ Melnikova, 'Aleksandr I i sozdanie Svyashchennogo soyuza', p. 6.

²⁷ Ley, *Aleksandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*, pp. 163–4.

²⁸ The decree elevated the diverse protestant churches in the Empire to the same status as the state church that was the Russian Orthodox Church—a move that still put them under the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church, allowing the latter to exercise certain controls over them. Ley, *Aleksandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*, pp. 167–76.

²⁹ Cresson, *The Holy Alliance: The European Background of the Monroe Doctrine*, p. 21.

as the foundation of the 'system' upon which European diplomacy operated until 1848. The defeat of Napoleonic France by the four powers had created a great void at the centre of European geopolitical order, leaving Britain and Russia—two peripheral empires on the continent—as the strongest contestants for filling that vacuum. The Congress of Vienna, held between September 1814 and June 1815—having institutionalized the balance of power—preceding the declaration of the Holy Alliance, together with earlier meetings arranged on the eve of French defeat by the Allied Forces, had given the allies a positive feeling about having regular meetings to consult on the preservation of European peace.³⁰ However, from the outset of the post-Napoleonic European intrastate political reality two alternative platforms emerged. On one hand, there was the Holy Alliance, in which Britain by excluding itself—in order to have a free hand in its foreign policy on the continent—gave Russia the leading role. While, on the other hand, soon after, on 8 November 1815, there was the Quadruple Alliance that reconfirmed the alliance of the Treaty of Chaumont, in which the rivalry between Russian and Britain was played out.

Thus for the Tsar, neither the Treaty of Chaumont nor the Congress of Vienna's diplomatic arrangements, offered a proactive ideological edge in making a bid for future peace in Europe, now that Napoleon I's threat was no longer there. For his part, Napoleon I had wrought havoc and destabilized the continent with the series of war campaigns. At the same time, however, he had projected a vision of peace in which a liberal European federation of national states came together under the principle of civil equality as well as a less 'dignified' programme for a self-sufficient European continent dominated by French merchants and manufacturers³¹—as the Continental Blockade of 1806 to 1814 had demonstrated. Thus, Alexander's response to Napoleon's vision—which could 're-haunt' the continent in the years to come—was a geopolitical arrangement for a European confederation based on voluntary association of nations and monarchies following the precepts of religion. With the Holy Alliance as a foregone reality, the three contracting parties, the Russian, Austrian, and Prussian monarchs, joined later by other European monarchs, had pledged their unbreakable bonds of brotherhood and promised to give support and assistance to each other whenever and wherever.³² This document was indeed vague enough: appealing only to the impulse of self-preservation rather than, obviously, domination and subdue, as in its text there were no suggestions for how the monarchs would support and assist each other in suppressing possible rebellions of their own subjects, or how to intervene in the internal affairs of other states.³³ Still, the 'hegemon,' namely the Tsar, was to champion a 'durable peace' based on the protection of three universal notions, religion, peace and justice.

³⁰ Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire 1801-1917*, p. 175.

³¹ OI Frederiksen, 'Alexander I and His League to End Wars', *Russian Review* 3/1 (Autumn 1943), 10–22, 14–15.

³² *Vyzhivayushaya politika Rossii: HIIH i nachala HH v Dokumenty: Ros. ministerstva inostrannykh del*. Ser. 1: 1801–1815 gg. (Moskva 1972), Vol. 8, Doc. 231, p. 518.

³³ Melnikova, 'Aleksandr I i sozdanie Svyashchennogo soyuza', p. 3.

As much as its ideological thrust could be impressive and controversial, in terms of Russian attempts to alter the mores of European intrastate relations at the onset of the nineteenth century, the Holy Alliance represented nothing new. In his earlier years young Alexander had contemplated the possibility of establishing a liberal regime in his Empire—granting a constitution and even relinquishing the absolute power his predecessors had enjoyed—while as a newly crowned Emperor he had envisaged an image for himself as a reformer of European intra-state politics.³⁴ That vision was conceptualized as the Grand Design³⁵—an idea conceived by his friend and Minister of Foreign Affairs Czartoryski and himself in 1804 as preparations for the Third anti-French Coalition were on the way. And in the Grand Design,³⁶ the notion of peace was constructed in purely secular and liberal terms, in the language of international law: equality, sovereignty, federalism, and diplomacy, as opposed to Christian solidarity. With this language, the Grand Design was intended as a 'fact of a permanent alliance' between Russia and Britain that would 'guarantee the tranquillity of the whole world'³⁷ laid out in the famous *Instructions*, which the Tsar and Czartoryski gave in September 1804 to their plenipotentiaries in London, Simon Yonontzov and Nicholai Novosiltsev, with the aim of forging this alliance. The Grand Design would set the stage, as Czartoryski elaborated, for a league of European nations whose peace treaty was to serve as the foundation of a 'new code of the law of nations'. This was a new European political system premised upon the 'principles of equity' as well as the 'law of nations' in which the Tsar was to play a leading role as 'an arbiter of peace for the civilised world... the protector of the weak and oppressed, the guardian of justice among nations'.³⁸ He was to open a 'new era in European international relations... based upon the general good and the rights of each nation'.³⁹ Like the Holy Alliance, it was a positive as opposed to a negative initiative for peace. The Tsar reasoned that to have a permanent alliance an 'indissoluble union' between Britain and Russia had to be forged on 'the highest principles of justice and love of humanity' as opposed to coming together on common hatred for Napoleon's tyranny.⁴⁰

³⁴ Ley, *Alexandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*, p. 39.

³⁵ Alan Palmer, *Alexander I: Tsar of War and Peace*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1974, p. 83.

³⁶ Very likely they drew on the idea of early seventeenth century French Minister, Maximilien de Béthune, Duke of Sully's *Grand Dessein*. It was advice for the French King Henry IV on creating the conditions for peace among European monarchies, the main principles being those of having states of equal power and common faith. Advice, though, aimed at diminishing the great power of the Habsburg monarchical house. See Maximilien de Béthune, Baron de Rosny, Duc de Sully, 'Mémoires des sages et royales economies d'estat, domestiques, politiques et militaires de Henry le Grand... in *Nouvelle collection des mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France depuis le XIII^e siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e*, deuxième série, tomes II et III, Paris, Edition Michaud et Poujoulat 1837.

³⁷ Ley, *Alexandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*, p. 40.

³⁸ Quoted in Charles Morley, 'Czartoryski's Attempts at a New Foreign Policy under Alexander I', *American Slavic and East European Review*, 12/4 (Dec 1953), 475–85, 476.

³⁹ Morley, 'Czartoryski's Attempts at a New Foreign Policy under Alexander I', 476.

⁴⁰ Morley, 'Czartoryski's Attempts at a New Foreign Policy under Alexander I', 477.

Alexander I and Czartoryski were familiar with the idea of 'perpetual peace'; yet both considered it as an unrealistic dream. 'It is not at all a question of realising the dream of perpetual peace', they wrote in the *Instructions*, 'one can reasonably hope that Europe would enjoy a longer period of peace and prosperity than she had ever known before.'⁴¹ In addition to this alliance, which was key to the liberation of Europe and forcing France back to its just limits, a new league of European states was needed with a treaty based on clear and precise principles guided by the precept of the 'rights of people'. These precise principles entailed submission to the 'positive rights of the nation', assuring the privileges of the neutrality, inserting in the treaty the obligation of not starting the war until all the means of negotiation were exhausted through the mediation of a third party.⁴² This new league of constitutional and liberal states—which would have to sign up to these principles—would live in peace under benign protection and arbitration of Russia and Britain.⁴³ These principles would become, without any sanctions involved, the 'immutable rules' of European cabinets' conduct. Those cabinets violating them, however, faced the full force of this new union.⁴⁴ British Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger was puzzled and irritated by what he considered moralistic phrases in the text.⁴⁵ The British responded with a counter-proposal suggesting instead sending a draft treaty as an ultimatum to Napoleon I to withdraw his troops to French pre-war borders, which was signed by the British and Austrian as well as Russian representatives in St Petersburg. It was to be the basis for the Third Coalition, which on 28 July 1805 ratified the Anglo-Russian Alliance. It was not the 'permanent alliance' as conceived in the Grand Design, however. Rather, stripped of any grand standing, it entailed Britain having to subsidize annually one million and half British Pounds in exchange for every one hundred thousand Russian troops in the field.⁴⁶

Thus the Tsar's Grand Design failed to convince Britain to negotiate a geopolitical arrangement—the two empires cooperating under a European legal framework—that could lead, in his understanding, to a lasting peace on the Continent.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, it became a stepping-stone in Russia's quest, with Britain opting out of it, for altering the terms of European intrastate politics and making its weight felt. As such, the document of the Holy Alliance can be seen

⁴¹ Charles de Mazade (ed), *Mémoires du Prince Adam Czartoryski et correspondance avec l'Empereur Alexandre Ier*, 2 Vols, Paris 1887, II, pp. 34–6.

⁴² N Norovitch, *La Russie et l'alliance anglaise*, Paris, Pion 1906, p. 202.

⁴³ Hartley, *Alexander I*, p. 69.

⁴⁴ Norovitch, *La Russie*, p. 202.

⁴⁵ On more practical grounds, however, he could not fully subscribe to three specific proposals, namely: the establishment of a German Confederation independent of both Austria and Prussia; the conclusion of an agreement between Britain and Russia that would decide on the highly possible partition of the Ottoman Empire in case the sultan collapsed as a result of internal strife or excessive dependence upon French patronage and thirdly, the acceptance of a revised code of maritime law to protect the commerce of neutral states from British naval interference in any future war. Palmer, *Alexander I*, p. 83.

⁴⁶ This alliance that was soon joined by Austria set the basis for the Third Coalition, which like the ensuing Fourth Coalition would be crushed by the Napoleon's Grande Armée, in Palmer, *Alexander I*, pp. 86–7.

⁴⁷ Palmer, *Alexander I*, p. 87.

in its revisiting, as establishing a new order in Europe and beyond. The difference this time, as noted, was that a new language—which nonetheless accommodated some of the terms from the Grand Design—was activated, and in a new context, too. Then, by mustering a coalition under the umbrella of the Holy Alliance, the Tsar could envisage a primary position for Russia not only in the European equilibrium but crucially also in a new system of universal equilibrium. The geopolitical rationale behind the Holy Alliance entailed a scenario in which Austria was tied to the Holy Alliance and isolated in Europe through a concord with Prussia, the Netherlands, and France. If he could manage this, the Habsburg Empire would be obliged to follow Russian policy. In this way, it would have been easier for the Tsar to challenge any of British politics in Europe and elsewhere in the globe.⁴⁸ From a Russian imperial historical perspective, Alexander I was reinventing a doctrine in foreign policy established by Peter the Great: namely, dominating through the 'protection' of neighbours. His grandmother, Catherine the Great, had shown herself a real virtuoso in carrying this out in the expansion of the empire in the south and southwest. The 'merit' of Alexander I, in these terms, had been that he created the vocabulary, 'the template for Russian imperial engagement in Europe'.⁴⁹ Thus the Vienna Congress post-war settlement was for a lasting peace deal between the great powers whose interests took precedence over any smaller nation. This was a change that Alexander brought about discursively, regardless of how controversial it might have been for the wider European context, for this morally imbued vocabulary gave him quite an envious stature as a divinely ordained king to administer God's rule on earth, dealing with any political issues emerging among the sovereigns who signed in to respect the principles of the Christian religion.⁵⁰ In this way, all local tensions had the potential to be treated as intra-national problems that needed to be addressed. Also, geopolitically what mattered was that the more European territories that came under Russian control under the Holy Alliance the better secured Imperial Russia would be. The humiliation caused by the Grand Armée penetrating right into the core of the empire, the old capital, would not be allowed. The main task for Alexander I was to bring as many countries under the new system, even forcibly⁵¹—something much easier said than done.

IV. Calling for and Enforcing 'Joint Moral Actions'

To make the Holy Alliance work, and the project of peace a reality—Metternich had been sceptical of its practicality from the very outset—Tsar Alexander I would employ two instruments from two uncommon origins: the convening of congresses (a recent legacy of anti-Napoleonic coalitions) and granting of written

constitutions (a powerful symbol of the French and American Revolutions). While congresses were venues for consulting each other on preservation of peace and inclusion of new members in line with the spirit of the Holy Alliance, the granting of constitutions was seen by the Tsar as a way of pacifying internal political struggles in countries and territories that he sought to befriend or include under his expanding Empire. In the assumed role of a continental hegemon he agreed to, and saw through, the establishment of constitutional regimes in France through the *Charte constitutionnelle* of 1814 (earlier in 1809 he had allowed the recently incorporated Duchy of Finland to maintain its Constitution) and in Congress Poland through *Konstytucja Królestwa Polskiego*, the Constitutional Law, on 27 November 1815.⁵² This was his policy of 'Sage Liberalisme',⁵³ advocated by one of his foreign policy advisers, John Capodistria. Under this nomenclature, the Tsar considered the Polish constitution⁵⁴ as the most liberal political document of the time. Earlier, the granting of the French *Charte* had come about as a result of the Tsar's personal dislike towards the would-be restored French Bourbon King Louis XVIII. In allowing the restoration of the Bourbon kingdom, King Louis XVIII had to agree to the Tsar's condition to assume power not as an absolute monarch but as a constitutional one by accepting the *Charte*, to which Alexander I not only approved,⁵⁵ but was also to some extent influential in the making of.⁵⁶ As for the *Sage Liberalisme* within imperial realm, besides the Duchy of Finland and Congress of Poland, he had encouraged his State Minister Mikhail Speransky in the early years of his reign and his friend Nicholas Novosiltsev⁵⁷ during the Holy Alliance years to produce constitutional drafts but ultimately failed to support them, especially Novosiltsev's.⁵⁸ Peace to be manifested in these ways, however, still seemed to the rest of European states as a Russian drive to subdue European affairs to its will—backed by the threat of its military might. Fully aware of it, nonetheless, Alexander I, in an exchange with his ambassador in France on 18 March 1816⁵⁹ emphasized 'the peaceful seduction' that Christian nations would enjoy from adhering to Christian precepts embraced the Holy Alliance, dismissing the possibility of its becoming a project of conquest and use of force of weapons.⁶⁰ With the Holy Alliance having been proclaimed on the wake of European settlement of the French question, France achieving internal stability and

⁵² Angela T. Pienkos, *The Imperfect Autocrat Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich and the Polish Congress Kingdom*, New York, Columbia University Press 1987, p. 29.

⁵³ Palmer, *Alexander I*, p. 312.

⁵⁴ Pienkos, *The Imperfect Autocrat Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich and the Polish Congress Kingdom*, p. 27.

⁵⁵ The Charte Constitutionnelle guaranteed equality before the law and religious toleration. The two constitutional achievements of Napoleon I were maintained, namely, the Civil Code and the Concordat with the Pope. Executive power was given to the king and a bicameral assembly was set up that was to be chosen a restricted voting population. The assembly had limited legislative power, with no right to initiate legislation but with the right to reject and not amend, a bill proposed by the king, see Hartley, *Alexander I*, p. 129.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Hartley, *Alexander I*.

⁵⁷ Georges Vernadsky, *La Charte Constitutionnelle de l'Empire russe de l'an 1820*, Paris 1933.

⁵⁸ Ley, *Alexandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*, pp. 209–28.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Ley, *Alexandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*.

⁴⁸ Prenne, *La Sainte-Alliance*, p. 237.

⁴⁹ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, London, Vintage 2010 [2005], p. 119.

⁵⁰ Prenne, *La Sainte-Alliance*.
⁵¹ Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*.

peaceful conduct with other European states would be the first test of success for his peace project. On 3 November 1818—the opening day of the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, the first for the Holy Alliance—Alexander I seemed over-enthused by the stability brought about by the efforts of the Alliance on the French question.⁶⁰ Indeed, before the commencement of the proceedings, he ordered the circulation of a letter in which he revealed his true conviction about the Alliance's success as a solidified peace project. With a stable and peaceful France, the brotherly union of the sovereigns and their cabinets presiding successfully over such complicated affairs had become a reality. This was a system of intimate union that had increasingly accrued new elements of stability—the foremost being the establishment of the 'unanimity of intentions' among each of the respective governments. The letter provided a historical evaluation of recent accomplishments of this Alliance, advancing a projection of stability that encompassed the continent and would stretch beyond it. A fragment in it read:

This close system of union based on treaties is not therefore a work of the moment; a resource created by the immediacy of a universal danger. It is more than this. It has and it will acquire more in the days to come new elements of stability; it will strengthen and ameliorate thanks to human prudence in graciously keeping with religion and as the Providence wills, against all odds, to dispense it in Europe and the universe.⁶¹

Tsar Alexander's high-spiritedness was noted by Metternich's adviser Friedrich Gentz, present at the event, who gave a rosy depiction of his enthusiasm and confidence. To him, both the Tsar and his project enjoyed a spell of grandeur in the congress. His charisma exhibited no falsity, in spite of his duality of images—protector of the oppressed versus that of conqueror—and the Russian Emperor appeared true to his sentiments, the religious ones being paramount and sincerest. Gentz also emphasized Alexander I's seriousness in maintaining political equilibrium in Europe in living up to his pledges because he was the architect of European stability—the soul, the leading thinker, and the hero.⁶² The outcome of this congress had been the peaceful reintegration of France in the Quintuple Alliance, which was not contested by Austria, Prussia, and Britain. But there was a more controversial issue that Alexander I and his diplomatic entourage were keen to materialize, namely to 'give teeth to' the vague notion of 'Christian solidarity of monarchs' as 'joint moral actions'—a call for collective intervention in Europe—which was met with fierce opposition by the Allies.⁶³

The more the Russian side tried to define the meaning of the Holy Alliance, as in calling for 'joint moral actions', the more obvious became the accentuation of the notion of peace as subduing and controlling, as opposed to peace as self-preservation. It was this accentuation, fuelled by political events in the continent, through which

traditional narratives depict the Holy Alliance as a vehicle for conservative and reactionary politics. Indeed, this image became more apparent when a series of liberal political events in the continent, including Russia, put to the test the solidarity of Christian monarchs. But the story is not that straightforward. In fact, up to the death of Alexander I in 1825, it is a story of heated contention between Alexander I and Metternich. It was played both within and outside the venues of congresses, and was about using the 'joint moral actions' (unilateral versus collective intervention) as these liberal uprisings unfolded in German states, Spain, Italy, and Greece, but also without completely discarding the vocabulary of constitutionalism. The assassination of a German conservative writer, August Kotzebue, on 23 March 1819 and its aftermath⁶⁴ was the first instance of this contention. Deeply worried by the aftermath Metternich, as a representative of the Habsburg Monarchy, had convened a 'restricted' conference at Carlsbad in August 1819 with those from nine main states of the German Confederation agreeing to quell the explosive situation.⁶⁵ It was restricted in that it was outside the political frame of the Holy Alliance, dismaying the Tsar, as he was not able to intervene in the German affairs. In a memoir to the British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh on 21 November 1819 entitled 'Emperor's Views on the German Affairs', Alexander I called for a joint action with Britain against what he saw as Metternich's reactionary tendencies. For him, this event and the ensuing series of liberal revolutionary eruptions in southern Europe in the early 1820s⁶⁶ illustrated powerfully the need to agree on 'joint moral actions' among the allies.

This agreement would happen at the second congress of the Alliance held in the small town of Troppau in Silesia from 23 October to 19 November 1820. This time, it was the Italian question that was on the table. Metternich was keen to intervene unilaterally by military means and restore the king of Two Sicilies with the prerogatives of an absolute monarch. Tsar Alexander I, on the other hand, argued for negotiations; the king would have to grant constitutional guarantees to his people, or failure of these options opened the way for collective intervention—Britain and France, meanwhile, decided not to participate but observe.⁶⁷ This contention between the two was resolved thanks to emerging events in the Russian Empire, disturbances in the Polish Diet and the revolt of Semovnovsky guards.⁶⁸ The preliminary protocol of the congress thus made a reality the right of intervention

⁶⁴ This represented a culminating point in sprouting liberal activities of German students and proclamations of liberal constitutions by some princes in the German states.

⁶⁵ Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, p. 250.

⁶⁶ In Cadiz, Spain, the 1 January 1820 military revolt of the liberals against the re-established Bourbon Monarchy of Ferdinand VII managed to re-institute the liberal constitution of 1812 that had been abolished in 1814; followed by the insurrection of the secret society of Carbonari in Naples, in the Kingdom of Two Sicilies; in July 1820 that was also able to force king Ferdinand I to grant a constitution modelled after the Spanish Constitution of 1812; and the military revolt of Oporto in Portugal in August of that year.

⁶⁷ Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, pp. 264–74.

⁶⁸ Following a stream of disquieting news within his realm, the disturbances in the Polish Diet—over time the Tsar had granted almost dictatorial powers to his brother, viceroy to Congress of Poland, Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich and by 1819 the tsar had abolished freedom of

⁶⁰ Namely, the liberation of France from the Allied troops and whether it should be reintegrated as a major power in European politics.

⁶¹ *Levy, Alexandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*, pp. 219–20.

⁶² *Levy, Alexandre Ier et sa sainte-alliance*, pp. 220–1.

⁶³ Melnikova, 'Aleksandr I i sozdanie Svyashchennogo soyuza', pp. 8–9.

in internal affairs of other states without the consent or request of their governments to suppress revolutionary movements.⁶⁹ The Tsar's two-pronged approach to European peace through the project of Holy Alliance, granting of constitutions and convening congresses, was being radically transformed. His loss of enthusiasm for constitutionalism at home was soon followed also by an abandonment of *Sage Liberalisme* in Europe. *Sage Liberalisme* had always promoted a particular sort of constitutionalism, which became even more evident as the revolutionary demands for liberal constitutions increased. His response to these demands was sharply negative: 'Legitimate sovereigns were forced to give in to revolutionary demands by reinstating or granting liberal constitutions',⁷⁰ he noted. This was unacceptable because granting of constitutions in certain parts of the continent would happen only with his approval—whenever and wherever he deemed it appropriate and not through revolutionary means from below. He had become convinced that, after all, not all nations of Europe, including Russia, were predisposed to constitutional government. Paradoxically, only civilized (enlightened) nations could be constitutional, even though he had no doubt that the Russian Empire was an enlightened and civilized nation, as Czartoryski had also forcefully projected in his conception of the Grand Design some years earlier. In a letter to a French ambassador Count Ferronays, in light of the events in Iberian and Italian peninsulas, he wrote:

I love constitutional institutions and think that every decent man should love them, but can they be introduced indiscriminately for all peoples? Not all peoples are ready to the same degree for their acceptance. Of course, freedom and law which can be enjoyed by an enlightened nation such as yours, it does not suit to ignorant peoples of both peninsulas.⁷¹

In the final protocol of the congress, the Holy Alliance gave its collective 'blessing' to Austria to intervene unilaterally in restoring royal power, in its absolutist form, in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The declared aim of intervention was to 'liberate the King and the Nation'. For Alexander I, this congress was a triumph of his 'collective action'⁷² and a complete abandonment of the awkward notion of *Sage Liberalisme*.

Having put into practice the concept of 'joint moral actions' by allowing Austria to intervene in the Kingdom of Two Sicilies he, however, would not succeed in making use of it when Russian imperial ambitions seemed to be at stake. In the third congress of the Alliance convened in January 1821 in Laibach

press and introduce preventive censorship; his government coming under constant pressures, and the revolt in the prestigious Semenovskiy Guards—a peaceful protest against excessive military measures of a certain Colonel FE Schwarzar that was put down heavy-handedly by his government, see Hartley, *Alexander I*, p. 216; as well as a further personal inclination towards religiosity and a growing repulsion and direct attack against the ideology of political liberalism stemming from the doctrines of French Encyclopaedists such as Voltaire, Mirabeau, Condorcet—'Are we not obliged to as Christians' he asked a friend, 'to fight against this enemy and its infernal deeds with all our powers and means that the Divine Providence has put in our hands. . .?' quoted in Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, p. 277.

⁶⁹ Meï'nikova, 'Aleksandr I i sozdanie Svyashchennogo soyuza', p. 9.

⁷⁰ Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, p. 254.

⁷¹ Quoted in Hartley, *Alexander I*, p. 152. ⁷² Hartley, *Alexander I*, p. 152.

(Ljubljana) to discuss the modalities of Austrian intervention in the Italian peninsula, Metternich had expressed satisfaction with the 'European character of restoration'⁷³—meaning that Austrian troops were given the right to intervene, and in case of resistance Russian troops would join them. But while this was being agreed upon a Greek insurgency led by nationalist Alexander Ypsilanti against the Ottoman rule had erupted on 25 February 1821, tempting the Tsar who, in using this cause, would resurrect his grandmother's 'grand project' of opening Russia's route into the Mediterranean Sea. On his part, taking the Tsar by his principles of the Holy Alliance, Ypsilanti had called on Alexander I 'to save the Greek Orthodox religion from its persecutors . . . clean Europe from this sanguine monster, add to the great names that European consciousness have already given to you that of the Liberator of Greece'.⁷⁴ Yet the Tsar found himself between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, Capodistria, a native of Corfu, advised him to intervene in order to advance Russian interests and protect the religious rights of Ottoman Greeks. On the other hand, Metternich reminded him of what the Holy Alliance had become—a platform for thwarting revolutionary movements that undermined monarchical legitimacy on continent. As it happened, he chose Metternich's path, who called for negotiation with the Ottoman monarchy. Still he was bitter because, as he told Castlereagh, the Ottoman Empire was not part of the Vienna system, therefore not legally protected by it, and hence a fair target to intervene against—a view that the latter did not share.⁷⁵

Even more disappointing was the outcome from the last congress of the Holy Alliance, the Congress of Verona (October–December 1822)—concerned with the question of the Spanish revolution and political emancipation of its colonies in the New World.⁷⁶ The Tsar had suggested a real diplomatic offensive against revolutionaries in Madrid strongly backed up by collective vigorous use of force.⁷⁷ He was against the recognition of the independence of colonies—they threatened European equilibrium. Inspired by American political institutions, he considered that as new and independent states, the colonies would be opposed to the political institutions of countries like Russia and therefore advocated their 'pacification' under the Vienna and Paris agreements of 1815. For all the efforts, he managed to get no support for his proposals, while France got its way to intervene in Spain.⁷⁸

⁷³ Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, p. 283.

⁷⁴ Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, p. 298.

⁷⁵ Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, pp. 299–314.

⁷⁶ Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, p. 373.

⁷⁷ Offering to send Russian troops there that would transit through French territory. Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, pp. 316–26.

⁷⁸ France, keen to suppress the revolution in Madrid, was pivotal in dividing the two issues into a metropolitan and colonial one, and by politely refusing the movement of a promised 150,000 Russian troops, left the Tsar, together with the two other core countries of the Holy Alliance, Austria and Prussia to back a protocol that gave France free hand to intervene in Spain. Bourquin, *Histoire de la Sainte Alliance*, pp. 341–8.

V. Conclusion

As this last congress had made it obvious to him, the congress system was heading towards collapse.⁷⁹ There was an unbridgeable gap between the optimistic declaration at the Aix-la-Chapelle Congress of the 'unanimity of intentions' of the allies, and their insurmountable contradictions⁸⁰ following the last congress, especially in the light of the ongoing Greek-Ottoman crisis. A number of attempts were made to solve it diplomatically,⁸¹ with Russia organizing two conferences of St Petersburg of 1824 and 1825. In the second conference Britain did not participate, whereas France and Austria expressed themselves against any intervention, neither collective nor unilateral. Frustrated by Metternich's attitude, the Tsar confided to his Chancellor, Count Karl Nesselrode, how this crisis had isolated him at home and abroad and was intending to deal directly with Britain, as opposed to the whole Holy Alliance format.

The Turkish power is crumbling; the agony is more or less long, but is stricken with death. I am still here, armed with all my power, but strong in my known principles of moderation and disinterestedness. How will it not profit me, with my aversion from any project of conquest to reach a solution of the question which is incessantly disturbing Europe? . . . My people demand war; my armies are full of ardour to make it, perhaps I could not long resist them. My Allies have abandoned me. Compare my conduct to theirs. Everyone has intrigued in Greece. I alone have remained pure. I have pushed scruples so far as not to have a single wretched agent in Greece; not an intelligence agent even, and I have to be content with the scraps that fall from the table of my Allies. Let England think of that. If they grasp hands [with us] we are sure of controlling events and establishing in the East an order of things conformable to the interests of Europe and to the laws of religion and humanity.⁸²

By early 1825, lonely and depressed at home—having caved in to pressures by Russian Orthodox clergy—he had also turned against his endorsed policy of religious freedom through closing down on religious mystics and secret societies in 1822.⁸³ Isolated and frustrated abroad by his allies, the Tsar was witnessing the unravelling and collapse of his life's oeuvre.⁸⁴ His perseverance and enthusiasm about the Holy Alliance was waning as he was already thinking of relapsing into unilateral intervention policy based on Russian's own geopolitical ambitions. As he left St Petersburg, for what was to be his last journey south to the Crimea in September 1825, his armies began to concentrate on the borders of the Ottoman

⁷⁹ Hartley, *Alexander I*, p. 157.

⁸⁰ Melnikova, 'Aleksandr I i sozdanie Svyashchennogo soyuzâ', p. 10.

⁸¹ The Tsar had put forward a plan for the establishment of three autonomous Greek principalities, similar to the status of the Danubian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. The Greek side did not accept the proposal because it offered too little whereas the Turks rejected it because they saw in it too much to lose.

⁸² Hartley, *Alexander I*, pp. 159–60.

⁸³ Ley, *Alexander I et sa sainte-alliance*, p. 272. See also, Paul Bouryckhine, *Bibliographie sur la franc-maçonnerie en Russie*, Paris, Mouton & Co 1967.

⁸⁴ Melnikova, 'Aleksandr I i sozdanie Svyashchennogo soyuzâ', p. 12.

principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. No war was started, however, because the Tsar was officially pronounced dead in December 1825 in the Russian Black Sea town of Taganrog.⁸⁵ Undoubtedly, the Holy Alliance as a project for peace in Europe, based on Christian unity and solidarity, was paradoxical in light of past European historical experiences as well as contested by monarchical centres in the continent during the post-Napoleonic restoration. Unquestionably, it was also an evocative articulation of Russia's intentions, ambitions, and geopolitical power and their mediation with the rest of the allies. In combining secular and religious vocabularies, liberal and reactionary terms and methods, Tsar Alexander's Holy Alliance peace project was a platform appealing both to the impulse of self-preservation, monarchical as it were, and natural impulse to subdue.

⁸⁵ Hartley, *Alexander I*, p. 160.

