



## Taming the Evil Passions: Moderation in the International Relations

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The concept of ‘moderation’ as introduced by Craiutu should not only be applied to domestic political history, but could equally be made fruitful in the context of international relations.<sup>1</sup> In fact, since the onset of the nineteenth century, the term ‘moderation’ was oftentimes used in conjunction with ‘balance’ and ‘balance of power’. ‘Balance of power’ was an old notion, but in 1814–1815 it was a newly invigorated ideological and political principle, a creed even, subscribed to by diplomats, monarchs and commanders alike, and projected onto the new post-Napoleonic European order. In this article, we will flesh out how the ideas of moderation and balance of power, as conceptualized in the

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The author wishes to express thanks to Yannick Balk, Ido de Haan, Annelotte Janse and Matthijs Lok for their critical comments and help. The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013)/ERC Grant Agreement n.615313.

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© The Author(s) 2019  
I. de Haan and M. Lok (eds.), *The Politics of Moderation  
in Modern European History*, Palgrave Studies in Political History,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27415-3\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-27415-3_5)

early nineteenth century, became intertwined and together proved to be a viable conceptual underpinning for the colonial and imperialist order of international relations. Invoking the semantics of ‘moderation’ and ‘balance’ helped to calm down the tide of evil passions and revolutions, but at the same time served to secure the highly asymmetrical division of power in the international arena. In this way, moderation functioned as a liberating and a pacifying, as well as an imperialist, colonizing device. It colonized hearts and minds, and subjugated them to the friendly, benign, enlightened yoke of paternalistic kings and diplomats, striving to provide ‘happiness’ for their peoples. In this sense, in the early nineteenth century ‘moderation’ as a political force served as a mobilizing, emotional means to cement and legitimate the new international order against potential dissenters and opposition, discredited as ‘jealous’, ‘extremist’ or ‘Jacobin’.<sup>2</sup>

### A LONGING FOR PEACE AND QUIET

After the final fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbons to the French throne in the summer of 1815, a new sense of life, feelings of relief and liberation were coupled with deep-seated confusion and insecurity. The continent was in transition. Contemporaries experienced in an almost physical sense how a new day had dawned.<sup>3</sup> Louis XVIII, provisionally restored to the throne in 1814, voiced these sentiments in the new French *Chartre* of 1814: ‘Striving thus to re-forge links with the past, which certain tragic divergences had interrupted, we have erased from our memory, just as we wish one could erase from history itself, all the evils which afflicted the country during our absence’.<sup>4</sup> By stressing the new beginnings, and enforcing an erasure of the past, he underscored the sense of rupture and the longing for the tides to calm down. These sentiments, of wanting and needing to break with the days of yore (leaving open whether this meant the *ancien régime* or revolutionary past) were pervasively present throughout Europe. They often led to a peculiar combination of excitement, the celebration of peace, renewal and new growth, but also to uncertainty, fear and a tense anticipation of what the future had in store.

That double sense of ominous excitement and hardly concealed relief that the worst was now past was also expressed in art, literature and poetry.<sup>5</sup> According to some historians, the rise of collective sentimentalism coincided with the transition from the Enlightenment to the

post-Napoleonic era. William Reddy believes that after the Napoleonic Wars, extravagant ‘performances of emotion’ became routine among the educated elite.<sup>6</sup> Reddy’s observations tie in with Georg Lukács’ argument in *The Historical Novel* (1937), in which he couples the emergence of a new, historical consciousness to the rise and fall of Napoleon, and suggested that history became ‘a *mass experience*, and moreover on a European scale’.<sup>7</sup> The American historian Lynn Hunt concurs and maintains that this shared experience, expressed in the epistolary novels that appeared during this period, ‘helped spread the practices of autonomy and empathy’, leading to a sense of a common human solidarity that came to be translated into the concept of human rights.<sup>8</sup>

The ‘emotional turn in history’ became manifest in the ways in which specific emotions and individual sentiments were translated into broader, shared emotional norms and attitudes, and ultimately into new political views. Emotions and emotive language were employed in order to undergird and give shape to political power, which came to be seen as an expression of a collectively shared emotional political culture with its corresponding emotional vocabulary.<sup>9</sup> The ‘new sentiment of 1815’, a sense of acceleration and change, of a break in time, came to define the content of new political concepts and metaphors, and ultimately a shared, imperial ‘idiom’, used, consciously or not, by the victorious allied powers, by their diplomats and hired artists, to establish and legitimate the new order. It spread throughout Europe in various ways, for instance in the novels of Sir Walter Scott, whose work was in great demand for his accounts of the last Napoleonic battles.<sup>10</sup> One of the most important imperialist markers of the era became the notion of a ‘balance of power’. While it was deployed already long before Waterloo, it now became a projection screen for the desires for peace and security in the realm of international relations.

### A ‘SPIRIT OF MODERATION’

After 1814–1815, the European community of sovereigns, diplomats, their entourage, and the thinkers, experts, poets and novelists that loitered around them spoke of *repos* and *tranquillité* when they talked about their desire for peace and security, about ‘God’s providence’ and ‘the law of nations’. Peace and security required the suppression of new revolutions as well as preventing France, or any other sovereignty for that matter, from seizing hegemonic power and plunging the continent

into war again. Yet more importantly, the statesmen of 1815 were driven by the longing for things to calm down. The extremely rapid pace of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the many fissures and uncertainties, needed to be curbed.<sup>11</sup>

The French king, British diplomats and the Austrian chancellor Klemens von Metternich were all equally captivated by the dilemma of reconciling the uncontrollable acceleration of the Revolution on the one hand and the unrealistic and nostalgic aspirations to the former times of the *ancien régime* on the other. A regime of restoration had to be put in place that was in a position to manage this transition in a controlled manner. The ‘managers’ of that transformation, like Metternich and Castlereagh, knew that the clock could not be turned back. The Empire had come to an abrupt end in 1806. They stood in need of a system that would enable them to facilitate gradual changes and implement incremental adjustments and reforms, and when necessary to do so with a tight rein. Metternich underscored ‘the urgent necessity of putting a brake to those principles subversive to the social order upon which Buonaparte had based his usurpation’.<sup>12</sup> He thus echoed Castlereagh’s warning regarding the uprisings in Italy that erupted after Napoleon’s defeat: ‘It is not insurrection we now want in Italy or elsewhere [...] we want disciplined force under sovereigns we can trust’. Translated into practice, Metternich understood the disciplinary powers as the four great powers, who would act as ‘guardians’ and keepers of the new international system.<sup>13</sup>

In this respect, the term ‘moderation’ was seminal to the discourse of the men of 1815. Interestingly enough, it was used interchangeably to indicate both the virtue and personality traits of respectable statesmen and their plans for the new European order. ‘Moderation’ was the core element in an emotional vocabulary that linked psychology, morality, a domestic sensibility with good senses in the realm of international relations. For example, when Metternich first met Castlereagh at the allied headquarters in Basel in January 1814, he wrote home: ‘He has everything! Affability, wisdom, moderation’. In the same vein, Metternich expressed his satisfaction over Castlereagh’s plans for the new European order, and the necessity to constrain France and Russia alike.<sup>14</sup> Castlereagh, in turn, used the term moderation to indicate a typical political way of combining change with restraint. After the victory over France, he urged his fellow allied statesmen to implement the changes

in the French political system and in Europe as a whole via the way of gradual reforms:

It is impossible not to perceive a great moral change coming in Europe, and that the principles of freedom are in full operation. The danger is, that the transition may be too sudden to ripen into anything likely to make the world better or happier. We have new constitutions launched in France, Spain, Holland and Sicily. Let us see the result before we encourage further attempts. The attempts may be made, and we must abide the consequences; but I am sure it is better to retard than accelerate the operation of this most hazardous principle which is abroad.<sup>15</sup>

‘A moderate peace’ was not intended to further propel revolutionary changes, but to instil a sense of balance—that twin component of the European post-Napoleonic idiom of peace and quiet, both on the domestic front and for the European system as a whole. ‘Moderation’ and ‘balance’ were seen as both individual traits and as part of a collective political habitus characterized by a sense of public reason, calmness and restraint among the public and in society (as opposed to the spirit of disruption and revolution). This last meaning was used by Arthur Wellesley Duke of Wellington and the French Minister Armand-Emmanuel du Plessis de Richelieu who agreed in the necessity of furthering the ‘spirit of moderation’ among the French population.<sup>16</sup>

Such a spirit did not only apply to persons or on a population, but after the defeat of Napoleon also to the behaviour of states in the context of international relations. This international setting was dominated by the powers of the Sixth Coalition, which brought down Napoleon twice: Prussia, Russia, the United Kingdom and Austria. In the moral and emotional vocabulary used by the allied ministers that represented this Quadruple Alliance, the ‘aggression’ of revolutionary parties (in France, but also in South America) was juxtaposed to the ‘esprit de moderation’ and ‘sagesse’ of the European courts who deliberated to counter these extremist and immoderate forces.<sup>17</sup> As Castlereagh phrased it in August 1815 in a letter to Prime Minister Robert Jenkinson, 2nd Earl of Liverpool, after the Battle of Waterloo: ‘it is not our business to collect trophies, but to try [to] bring back the world to peaceful habits’.<sup>18</sup> In this emerging, post-1815 European moral and emotional vocabulary, notions of ‘vengeance’, ‘conquest’, ‘usurpation’ and ‘revolution’ were considered anathema. Moderation, wisdom, peaceful habits, concert

and deliberation—these were the topoi of the day. More examples of this imperial and emotional vocabulary can be found in the protocols of the Allied Council, which convened between 1815 and 1818 on an almost daily base in Paris. This Council negotiated the Second Treaty of Paris, monitored its fulfilment, organised the military occupation of France by a joint allied command and terminated this occupation at the Congress of Aachen—its protocols have been used for this chapter.<sup>19</sup> As its proceedings demonstrate, these semantic preferences translated into very concrete political practices, in particular into a rejuvenation of the concept of the ‘balance of power’. In this context, both the beneficial but also the highly paternalistic spirit of ‘moderation’ became tangible.

### BALANCE OF POWER AND ‘MODERATION’

The blueprint for the new and moderate post-war European political system of checks and balances revolved around a concept that in the literature too often is indiscriminately seen as an objective description, as a numerical calculation of raw materials, manpower and simply resources: ‘the balance of power’, ‘das Gleichgewicht der Kräfte’ or ‘l’équilibre’.<sup>20</sup> For the great powers and their diplomats, this concept perfectly enshrined their sense of life in 1815.

From the first coalition wars against Napoleon on, the ‘balance of power’, that translation of moderation into a principle of international relations, was the thread that connected the Allies’ discussions about post-war security in Europe and beyond. The concept of a balance of power was already in use far before 1815. It was coined to discuss the relation between Italian city-states during the latter half of the fifteenth century, resurfaced again after the great wars of the seventeenth century, and was used to describe the new system for sovereign state interaction after 1648, the ‘Westphalian state system’. After the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, where the hegemonic ambitions of Louis XIV were condemned and the equal status of victor and vanquished under international law was agreed upon, balance of power became an increasingly prominent concept. Eighteenth-century philosophers like Christian Wolff, Emer de Vattel and Samuel Pufendorf, building on the work of Hugo Grotius, coupled the balance of power principle to the legal norms of international law.<sup>21</sup> But it was only during the Napoleonic wars of conquest that the balance-of-power emerged as the key concept for all of

the anti-Napoleonic coalition's plans and initiatives, not only in theory (as articulated by the aforementioned philosophers), but also in practice. It turned out to be the preferred guiding principle for the development of a system of collective security.<sup>22</sup> The revival of this idea, and the revised sense of what it implied, was due in large part to political leaders from the United Kingdom and Austria—and their preference for 'moderation', a balanced set of ideas and concepts to confront despotism on the one hand and revolutionary terror on the other. In order to demonstrate the novel reading of balance of power in 1815, in its conjunction with the moral and emotional force of the notion of moderation, we need to briefly sketch its re-emergence in 1806.

In 1806, Friedrich von Gentz published a comprehensive study on the need for Europe to once again model its politics on the balance of power—the same year that the French emperor ruthlessly announced that the Holy Roman Empire no longer existed. For Gentz, it was all about conserving the power of the Habsburg kingdom by consolidating a political balance on the continent. Such balance would result from mutual respect between dynasties and states for each other's territorial spheres of influence, in particular between Austria, England, Russia and France, and to a lesser extent Prussia. Mutual respect was not only an expression of an ideal community of states, such as Gentz's mentor Immanuel Kant had thought of it in his essay on 'Eternal Peace' (1795). Gentz went further than Kant and coupled respect to a reciprocal pledge to monitor and enforce the balance of power. Such an ideal community was an illusion, according to Gentz; sanctions were necessary, or at least a credible threat of sanctions, to keep the peace.<sup>23</sup>

From a British imperial perspective, similar ideas had already emerged in England. Gentz's book (1806) was an echo of the so-called 'Pitt-plan', the memorandum about 'security and deliverance in Europe', which the British Prime Minister William Pitt had included in a letter to the Russian tsar in 1805 and which was re-submitted by Castlereagh in 1815.<sup>24</sup> The British interpretation of the idea of a balance also assumed that significant disparities among the powers in Europe ('any projects of Aggrandizement and Ambition') should be avoided, and that both France and Russia had to be kept in check. But Pitt added a specifically English geopolitical and commercial interest to the mix: an enduring European territorial balance of power could only be achieved if the ports on the North Sea were 'free' and in the hands of friendly states, which is to say in the hands of a stable and independent Dutch

state, with a strategically fortified border—functioning as the ‘Boulevard de l’Europe’. As ‘balancer’, England’s task was to bring ‘Solidarity and Permanence to the System’, in order to secure the British supremacy on the seas and for the colonies overseas.<sup>25</sup> The British memorandum and Gentz’s study complemented each other perfectly. They may be considered as the blueprint for the post-war balance of power: a system resting on sense and sensibility, morality and moderation—at least in the eyes of its architects, the imperial ministers of Austria and the United Kingdom.<sup>26</sup>

Experts and scholars in the field of international relations have often embraced the balance-of-power discourse as a realistic description of the state system established after 1815. Supporters of the Realist School of International Relations—obviously Henry Kissinger and his many epigones—have, without historicizing the concept further, used it as a category to analyse the relations between the great European powers. For them, ‘balance’ pertains to the addition and subtraction of concrete interests, military power, territory and a state’s resources; factors which are then weighed against one another in a ‘rational choice approach’.<sup>27</sup> A more nuanced approach is by the liberal institutionalist John Ikenberry, who argues that ‘balancing’ is an activity that pervades both foreign policy initiatives and domestic politics. Although he appreciates the value of norms and institutions as restraints on the arbitrary use of force in the international arena, also in this account balancing remains a far too narrowly rational, calculated and strategic activity.<sup>28</sup>

Historians have fallen short in similar ways, in missing the connection of the 1815 idea of ‘balance’ with the moral and emotional force of ‘moderation’. Paul Schroeder, for example, sees the Concert of Europe’s balance of power in 1815 far too much from the perspective of the management of power differences. He reduces the treaties of 1814 and 1815 to ‘pacts of restraint (*pacta de contrahendo*)’.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, in his standard work from 1994, he maintains that the balance-of-power idea is a far too competitive, conflict-centred, eighteenth-century notion that no longer applies to the situation in 1815. According to Schroeder, it is better to talk about the transformation of the state of anarchy into a stable balance, a political ‘equilibrium’, established in 1813 by the mutual respect the two hegemonic powers Britain and Russia expressed for each other’s spheres of influence.<sup>30</sup> The German historian Wolfgang Gruner asks ‘whether the exploration and presentation of the relations between European states since the end of the eighteenth century in



terms of an equilibrium should be dispensed with'.<sup>31</sup> In spite of their justified, though highly complex, critique of the use of historical concepts, these historians remain committed to an anachronistic, power-realistic interpretation of the concept 'balance', disregarding its original historical context and the moral and psychological intent and purpose of its inventors. The way in which contemporaries like Gentz, Metternich, Castlereagh and Wellington talked about a balance of power in 1815 makes plain that they had something different in mind than a timeless management of power relations, or the establishment of a political equilibrium between the great powers.<sup>32</sup>

Terms such as 'balance', 'Gleichgewicht der Kräfte' or 'équilibre' should not only be seen as a phenomenological description, they need to be historicized, and to be read as emotional and moral categories as well. They breathe the spirit of their age, the longing for order, peace and stability—and most importantly, for *moderation*. For Gentz and Castlereagh, 'balance' was not the description of the status quo but the expression of a utopian ideal, as crucial feature of that spirit of 1815. When we seriously examine European international relations in the nineteenth century, there is nothing like an actual balance; power inequalities were fostered, and in the process, states were abolished, new kingdoms established, and borders redrawn at will. That is why the crucial question is not whether or not there was an actual 'balance of power', and which analytic categories you have to think up for that in hindsight, but how balance of power as a concept was used as a political tool of moderation and imperialism. It was a system of decency and balanced sensibility—in the eyes of its imperialist operators at least.

### A 'SYSTEM' FOR 'CULTIVIERTE STAATEN'

This normative and very subjective dimension is explicitly reflected in the manner in which contemporaries described this balance: they pointedly pit 'balance of power' against the 'despotism' of the revolutionary and Napoleonic period. According to the *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* of 1815, the (political) balance of power is 'the principle of the mutual preservation of freedom and independence in the European system of states by means of preventing the ascendancy and pretensions of a single power among them'. 'Cultured states' strove to honour this ideal system—one which *Brockhaus* simply projected into the distant past of the Greek city-states. The 'despotism of the French Revolution' had undone all of

that. In contrast to the benefits gained from states respecting each other, larger and smaller states—second- and third-rank states are also mentioned as being part of this system—were confronted by the threat of an usurping state, which chose might over right and paid no heed to any sense of balance. Although *Brockhaus's* 1815 picture of this threat is formulated in general terms, it points directly to the French Revolution and to the French state itself, which since the time of Louis XIV had been driven by the tendency towards hegemony.<sup>33</sup> This description of the 'System des Gleichgewichts' as the pre-revolutionary 'Idealzustand' of states of differing sizes working together on the basis of laws and treaties clearly lacks any historical support. It was a projection of an imagined reality, rather than an actual political stock-taking.

This was not just a German, romanticized vision for the new order: in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica's* entry on the 'Balance of Power', written between 1815 and 1824, and included in its seventh edition that was published in 1842, we find a similar argument. The principle of the balance of power had safely and squarely demonstrated its worth in international politics, it had 'a real foundation in the principles of intercourse and union among states, and [is considered] to have exercised a great, *moderating* and beneficial influence on the affairs of modern Europe': 'It is called the *balancing* system, because its aim is to *prevent* any state from aggrandizing itself to the danger of its neighbours, and to *counterpoise* any state that may in any way have become powerful, by a union of the forces of other states'.<sup>34</sup> Balancing was a structural effort to establish a system of collective security, formed by a group of unified, wise sovereignties that at all times could provide a counterweight to aggressive powers. 'Such is the general tendency of the system; and however it may have occasionally failed to prevent outrages, it cannot be doubted that it has proved a formidable barrier against conquest, and a rampart of defence to the weaker states'.<sup>35</sup> And in even more flowery language 'the system founded on the balance of power [...] was a bridle upon the strong, and a bulwark to the weak'.<sup>36</sup> The *Britannica* continued to describe the balance-principle as 'the only means which human wisdom can devise to control the conduct of independent states', indeed as

the only means which can be employed to guard against injustice, or obtain redress, without an actual appeal to the sword. [...] Without this habitual attention to foreign affairs, and constant application of the

principles of counterpoise, there cannot, indeed, be said to exist anything like a system of reciprocal guarantee of the independence of nations, such as is involved in the idea of a balance of power.<sup>37</sup>

The *Britannica's* fantastically optimistic interpretation of the results of the Vienna Congress and the congress system ended with an even rosier paean:

It must, we think, appear abundantly obvious to everyone who reflects calmly upon the subject, that the balancing system is, upon the whole, favourable to peace. The wars which peculiarly belong to it, are in the nature of a sacrifice of a smaller present, to secure a greater future good; and the tendency of the system is to render these wars less and less frequent.

In an apparent attempt to rival the emotional vocabulary and lyrical prose of Sir Walter Scott, the entry ends with these words:

The evil passions which give rise to ambitious attacks, like all other evil passions, will be more apt to be indulged, the less exposed they are to opposition or restraint. And it cannot be questioned, that in proportion as the maxims of this system are vigilantly and steadily pursued, there will be less inducement, because less prospect of success for ambitious undertakings.<sup>38</sup>

The *Britannica's* eight-page panegyric for the 'Balance of Power' solidly defined this political concept as a moral and emotional category as well. 'Balance' was the preferred moral policy, in which power, at least on paper, in treaties and in speeches, was reconciled with justice and legitimacy, with moderation and restraint.

## CRITIQUE

The legacy of this benign balance of power principle lasted until the late nineteenth century. In 1879, British Prime Minister William Gladstone reminded his audience that it was crucial "to keep the Powers of Europe in union together [...]. Because by keeping all in union together you neutralise and fetter and bind up the selfish aims of each. I am not here to flatter either England or any of them. They have selfish aims, as, unfortunately, we in late years have too sadly shown that we too have had selfish aims; but then common action is fatal to selfish aims".<sup>39</sup>

For Gladstone, the post-1815 order was built on the principle of a balance of power that offered the major powers a way in which to honour each other's national interests, and 'moderate' their own.

After the First World War, however, an old critique on the balance of power resurfaced, offering a totally contrary interpretation of the principle—turning its alleged morality upside down. For President Woodrow Wilson, the congress system was a series of 'covenants of selfishness'.<sup>40</sup> For him, the term disguised blunt political machinations and power calculations and lent moral support and legitimacy to the plans of the great powers to suppress smaller ones and quell liberal laws. 'Balance' was the semantic solution that would enshrine per treaty one's spheres of influence and position in Europe well into the future—to the detriment of everyone outside the circle of the great powers (including their own populations). This criticism was not new: it was already voiced in the eighteenth century, before the French Revolution. Even the *Britannica* acknowledged this criticism in 1815–1824: 'Among states, a most important object of foreign policy, intimately connected with the general peace and independence of nations; but which some have strangely treated as altogether chimerical, and others as strangely represented as having led only to pernicious results.'<sup>41</sup> 'Balance' was not moderate, it was a ploy to hide a highly selective, and aggressive tendency to dominance and exploitation.

The one who most famously referred to the balance of power as a 'chimera' (a fabled fire-breathing monster in Greek mythology that was composed of body parts from various animals) was the Saxon freelance writer and political economist Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, who launched his attack against this idea in 1758. Von Justi approvingly cites his eighteenth-century colleague Ludwig Martin Kahle who had argued in 1744<sup>42</sup> that the supposedly beneficial concept of balance was in fact a façade behind which a tough war-justifying ideology (a *Kriegsrechtfertigungsideologie*) lay hidden. Von Justi acquiesced: there could be no balance, it was simply ignoble drives and questionable intentions that hid behind 'the intriguing dress of godly zeal'. Driven by 'envy', the doctrine of the balance of power—a 'monstrosity of injustice'—always provided less powerful countries with the pretext to invade richer, more prosperous neighbours and in doing so disturb the 'rest and peace' of Europe. It was, in other words, a recipe for 'incessant war', because each power could then just invoke the need to correct the power imbalance. With a very modern reference to the power

of the imagination—the ‘power of nightmares’—Von Justi wrote: ‘I will seek to challenge a monster that, despite the chimera that it is, can cause much unhappiness. The monsters of the imagination, of the mind, are much more dangerous than all the terrifying monsters that Hercules conquered. When the moral monsters do not exist in the understanding, they are still present in the imagination, and that imagination, which is perhaps itself a monster, will be a very powerful and appalling ally of all monsters’.<sup>43</sup>

There was some merit to Von Justi’s and Wilson’s criticisms, that span a century and a half of balance of power politics. Indeed, the founding documents for the post-1815 order, the Pitt-plan, and Gentz’s study remained opaque on the precise borders and status of the smaller countries, the German principalities, Italy and Poland. They made sharp distinctions between the rulers, the primary powers (‘the four great military Powers’) and the ‘second class’ states (among them Spain, Portugal, some other German states, some Italian states, Switzerland and the Netherlands). The third category, that of ‘separate petty sovereignties’ was better off entirely without independence and autonomy, and could be wiped off the map of Europe; since they could not make any ‘claim, either of justice or liberality’. Although clad in liberal, peaceful and ‘moderate’ terms, in the new plans for the European post-war order, the imperial core remained intact; the asymmetrical division of power, and the reification thereof, persisted.<sup>44</sup>

‘Balance of power’, however ‘moderate’ it was portrayed, was therefore indeed not just that benign and benevolent to the world as a whole as the great statesmen of 1815 made it out to be. In their usage, it was indeed the cornerstone of an ‘imperial vernacular’, and colonial principle to subjugate the world, both territorial, cultural and ideological. The principle of balance of power was based on a sense of ‘entitlement’ among the great powers, to be granted the suppression of smaller states, territory, resources and peoples alike; of the levelling of protective trade barriers and the implementation of free trade.<sup>45</sup> It was moreover a permit to execute colonial and imperialist ambitions outside the realm and the receiving end of moderation: the outer European world had to make good for the relinquishing of aggressive ambitions on the continent.<sup>46</sup> By bringing ‘solidity, moderation and permanence to the continent’, revolution, radical reform and chaos were condemned. Inside Europe, revolutionaries and reformers were persecuted and prosecuted, outside Europe insurgency and insurrection met with outright destruction and

obliteration. The balance of power, the division of spheres of influence, executed in however a moderate fashion, would serve an idea of Europe resting on the legitimacy of great power rule. It was taken for granted—in fact, the whole edifice was built on the assumption—that not every group, every single state or populace would be represented in this idea, nor profit from it. And of course, the outer-European world was totally excluded from the benefits of the peace dividend.

## CONCLUSION

The new post-war order rested on the principle of a ‘balance of power’, which after 1815 became the common sense standard of decency. This chapter has demonstrated how that concept invoked a highly charged, ideologically laden, political vocabulary, pivoting around the attribution of ‘moderation’. Both on the home front and internationally, to be a ‘balancer’, to act with ‘moderation’, was a mark of distinction, but it was at the same time a category with an imagined and emotional content that the European powers used reciprocally to ward off and condemn threats and dangers. The attempt to present one’s own policies as reasonable, decent, predictable and orderly was pre-eminently a very passionate entreaty to discountenance or even criminalize those who supposedly lacked those qualities. Radicalism and revolution had to be nipped in the bud with reasonable arguments that nurtured an overwhelming public consensus. In the early nineteenth century, international policies had a very civil hue to them—more *Biedermeier* than *Vormärz*—but entailed a highly authoritarian, paternalistic character.<sup>47</sup> ‘Jealous’ were the Portuguese and Spanish, who tried to enforce the great powers to help them retrieve their colonies in 1818<sup>48</sup>; ‘jacobin’ and ‘revolutionary’ were the many publicists in Poland, Saxony, Germany and France as well as liberals like Harriet Martineau, who condemned the congress system as an alliance of kings opposed to their peoples. French historians felt that it humiliated their country without cause; and German thinkers like Heinrich von Treitschke believed that ‘Vienna’ had unjustly put a gag on German patriotism.<sup>49</sup> For them, the balance became a bridle and moderation an imperially ordained burden.

We could conclude by stating that after 1815, the allied statesmen tested and put into practice a series of inter-imperial security practices that were quite expansive and benign in their ambitions.<sup>50</sup> From the beginning of 1817, their scope widened to match those of Napoleon

to project their spheres of influence on the whole of Europe, and far beyond—stretching out to the ‘other hémisphere’ and South America.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, critics (the radical pundits in Brussels and London, for example) who argued that the allied interventions contributed to greater polarization in France and elsewhere, were harshly prosecuted in many of the European countries. The mutual attempts of the men of 1815 to ward off new hegemon and despots, resulted in a joint European system, a ‘concert’, which brought peace and security to many in Europe, and was presented as the tasty fruit of ‘moderation’. But it rested on a moral framework that legitimized exploitation and subjugation of many others on an increasingly expansive scale. As a very perceptive political scientist—Hans Morgenthau—many decades later put down as the fifth rule in his ‘Six Principles of Political Realism’: ‘Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe’.<sup>52</sup> In other words, be aware of any statesman that presents his plans in absolute moral and normative terms and declares himself ‘moderate’, thereby excluding the possibility of other, equally legitimate alternative moral claims to truth and power.

## NOTES

1. Cf. Aurelian Craiutu, *Faces of Moderation: The Art of Balance in an Age of Extremes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Idem, *A Virtue for Courageous Minds: Moderation in French Political Thought, 1748–1830* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
2. This research is based on my monograph on the Allied Council in Paris: *Tegen de terreur. Hoe Europa veilig werd* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2018), also forthcoming in English: *The Balancers: How Europe Waged Peace, 1815–1818*.
3. See Rhys Jones, ‘1816 and the Resumption of “Ordinary History”’, *Journal for Modern European History* 14, no. 1 (2016), 119–142.
4. ‘Charte Constitutionnelle, Préambule’, 4 June 1814, in F.M. Anderson, *The Constitutions and Other Select Documents Illustrative of the History of France, 1789–1901* (Minneapolis: H.W. Wilson, 1904), xxvi.
5. See for example Lotte Jensen, *Celebrating Peace: The Emergence of Dutch Identity, 1648–1815* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2017), 163–182.
6. William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 155f. For the ‘emotional turn in history’ see further: Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History: Lost and Found* (New York: Central European

- University Press, 2011); Ute Frevert, Monique Scheer, Anne Schmidt, Pascal Eitler, Bettina Hitzer, Nina Verheyen, Benno Gammerl, Christian Bailey, and Margrit Pernau, *Emotional Lexicons: Continuity and Change in the Vocabulary of Feeling 1700–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Jan Plamper, *Geschichte und Gefühl: Grundlagen der Emotionsgeschichte* (Munich: Siedler Verlag, 2012). See also Nicole Eustace, Eugenia Lean, Julie Livingston, Jan Plamper, William M. Reddy, and Barbara H. Rosenwein, ‘AHR Conversation: The Historical Study of Emotions’, *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 5 (2012) 1487–1531.
7. Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962), 23.
  8. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton & Company, 2007), 32.
  9. See for example: Eric Van Rythoven, ‘Learning to Feel, Learning to Fear? Emotions, Imaginaries, and Limits in the Politics of Securitization’, *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 5 (2015), 458–475; Michael Torsten, ‘Time to Get Emotional: Phronetic Reflections on the Concept of Trust in International Relations’, *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 4 (2013), 869–890.
  10. For example, Walter Scott, *Paul’s Letters to His Kinsfolk* (Edinburgh: A. Constable, 1816).
  11. See Jones, ‘1816’, 119–142.
  12. Metternich, ‘Austrian Memoir’, cited by Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna: War and Great Power Diplomacy After Napoleon* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 165. See also Jones, ‘1816’, 124–126.
  13. Cited in: Robert Holland, *Blue-Water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean Since 1800* (London: Penguin, 2012), 26–27.
  14. John Bew, *Castlereagh: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 332–338.
  15. Bew, *Castlereagh*, 358–359.
  16. See protocol of the Allied Council/Paris Conference of Ministers, including the letter of Richelieu, in which he thanks the allies for their ‘moderation’, 19 February 1817. The National Archives, Kew (TNA), Foreign Office (FO) 146/15.
  17. Protocol of the Allied Council, Paris, 16 March 1817. TNA, FO 146/15.
  18. Cited in: Bew, *Castlereagh*, 407. See also Paul W. Schroeder, ‘A Mild Rejoinder’, *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992), 733–735.
  19. Based on research in Berlin, London, Paris and Nantes archives for my monograph *Tegen de terreur* (see above).
  20. For this paragraph, see: Beatrice de Graaf, ‘Bringing Sense and Sensibility to the Continent: Vienna 1815 Revisited’, *Journal of Modern European History* 13, no. 4 (2015), 447–457.



21. See Walter Rech, *Enemies of Mankind: Vattel's Theory of Collective Security* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013).
22. Heinz Duchhardt, *Gleichgewicht der Kräfte, Convenance, Europäisches Konzert: Friedenskongresse und Friedensschlüsse vom Zeitalter Ludwigs XIV. bis zum Wiener Kongreß* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 68–76.
23. Friedrich von Gentz, *Fragments Upon the Balance of Power in Europe*, trans. (London: M. Peltier, 1806); Gentz, 'Über de Pradt's Gemälde von Europa nach dem Kongress von Aachen', *Wiener Jahrbüchern der Literatur* 5 (1819), 279–318; also in Gustav Schlesier (ed.), *Schriften von Friedrich Gentz: Ein Denkmal* (Mannheim: Hoff, 1838), 88–156.
24. William Pitt, in a letter to the Russian Ambassador at London, 19 January 1805, printed in Kenneth Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England 1830–1902* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 197–198.
25. Cf. Michael Mandelbaum, *The Fate of Nations: The Search for National Security in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 18–19.
26. Duchhardt, *Gleichgewicht der Kräfte*, 137. See also Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, 39–42; Niek van Sas, *Onze Natuurlijkste Bondgenoot: Nederland, Engeland en Europa, 1813–1831* (Groningen: Wolters Noordhoff, 1985), 41.
27. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 78–102. See also Michael Zürn, *Interessen und Institutionen in der internationalen Politik: Grundlegung und Anwendungen des situationsstrukturellen Ansatzes* (Opladen: Springer, 1992); Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984/2005).
28. G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 11–13.
29. Paul W. Schroeder, 'Alliances, 1815–1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management', in Klaus Knorr (ed.), *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1975), 227–262; Schroeder, 'Did the Vienna Settlement Rest on a Balance of Power', *American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992), 683–706; Enno E. Kraehe, 'A Bipolar Balance of Power', *American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992), 707–715.
30. Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), vii, 482, 803.
31. See Wolf D. Gruner, 'Frankreich in der europäischen Ordnung des 19. Jahrhunderts', in Wolf D. Gruner and Klaus-Jürgen Müller (eds.), *Über Frankreich nach Europa: Frankreich in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Hamburg: Krämer, 1996), 201–274: 201–202. See also Wolf D.

- Gruner, 'Was There a Reformed Balance of Power System or Cooperative Great Power Hegemony', *American Historical Review* 97, no. 3 (1992), 725–732; Wolf D. Gruner (ed.), *Gleichgewicht in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Hamburg: Krämer, 1989).
32. 'Mechanics', in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. XIV (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1842), 349–392: 356.
  33. 'Gleichgewicht (politisches)', in Brockhaus (ed.), *Conversations-Lexicon. Vierter Theil G und H* (Leipzig, Altenburg: Brockhaus, 1815), 276–277.
  34. 'Balance of Power', in: *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. IV, 308–309.
  35. 'Balance of Power', 311.
  36. 'Balance of Power', 312.
  37. 'Balance of Power', 309.
  38. 'Balance of Power', 311.
  39. William E. Gladstone, 'Speech at West Calder', 27 November 1879, in Gladstone, *Political Speeches in Scotland, November–December 1879* (Edinburgh, 1880), 115–116.
  40. Woodrow Wilson, 'Address to the Congress of the United States', 4 December 1917; Friedrich Freksa, *A Peace Congress of Intrigue (Vienna, 1815): A Vivid, Intimate Account of the Congress of Vienna Composed of the Personal Memoirs of Its Important Participants*, trans. H. Hansen (New York: The Century Co., 1919).
  41. 'Balance of Power', in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. IV, 308–313: 308. This seventh edition is rather rare but can be found in the Rare Manuscripts Room of the University Library Cambridge. The 'balance of power' entry was first included in the 'supplement' that was written between 1815 and 1824. In other words, this entry was composed shortly after the war and is older than the 1842 publication date.
  42. Ludwig Martin Kahle, *La balance de l'Europe considérée comme la règle de la paix et la guerre* (Berlin: Schmid, 1744).
  43. Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, *Die Chimäre des Gleichgewichts von Europa: Eine Abhandlung worinnen die Nichtigkeit und Ungerechtigkeit dieses zeitherigen Lehrgebäudes der Staatskunst deutlich vor Augen gelegt, und dabey allenthalben neue und rührende Betrachtungen über die Ursachen der Kriege und dem wesentlichen Grunde, worauf die Macht eines Staats ankommt, begehacht werden* (Altona: Iversen, 1758), 1–15. See also Wolfgang Burgdorf, 'Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi (1720–1771)', in Heinz Duchhardt et al. (eds.), *Europa-Historiker: Ein biographisches Handbuch*, vol. I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 51–78: 63–66.
  44. The 'Pitt-Plan', in T.C. Hansard (ed.), *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time*, vol. XXXI (London: T.C. Hansard, 1815), 177–182: 179–180.

45. See for example the protocols of July and August 1815, in which all other states are explicitly excluded. Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK) III.HA. Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, nr. 1464.
46. Cf. Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 448.
47. In German (more so than in English) historiography, the age between Romanticism and late-nineteenth-century Realism (1815–1848) is often designated with the terms *Biedermeier-Vormärz*. Writers, for example, of this period are frequently treated either as part of the ‘pre-march’ (Vormärz) ‘progressive’ movement in society leading toward the revolutions of 1848 or of the non-progressive (sometimes termed ‘reactionary’–the term Biedermeier derives from bieder, which originally meant morally upright, but later developed the negative connotations of unsophisticated, naïve and stolid) tendencies in society, characterized more by the homely façade of grace and simplicity.
48. ‘Lengthy Letters and Memoranda’, August 1818; 19 November 1818, TNA, FO 92/33. Letter Castlereagh to Stuart, protocol 14 August 1816, Allied Council, TNA, FO 146/13. See also the complaint by Spanish envoy Labrador about the arrogance of the Allied Ministers, protocol 22 December 1816, TNA, FO 146/15.
49. Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna*, xiv.
50. In this, it was a system of collective risk management, as provided for in Article VI of the Second Treaty of Paris. See: Edward Hertslet, *The Map of Europe by Treaty: Showing the Various Political and Territorial Changes Which Have Taken Place Since the General Peace of 1814* (London: Butterworths, 1875), 372–376: 375.
51. Allied Council, protocol 16 March 1817, TNA, FO 146/15.
52. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 4–15; A.J.H. Murray, ‘The Moral Politics of Hans Morgenthau’, *The Review of Politics* 58, no. 1 (1996), 81–107.