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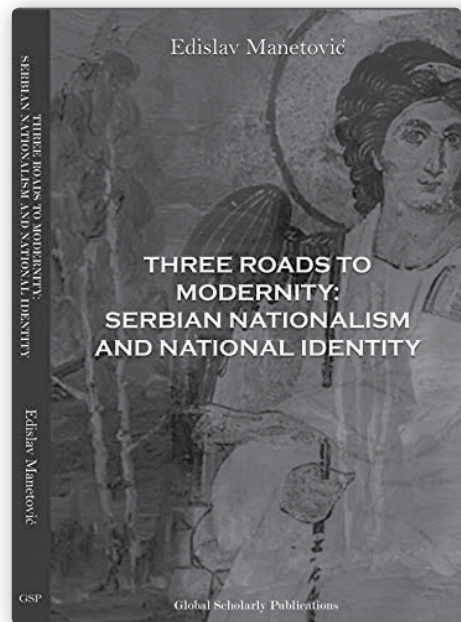
**Edislav Manetović**  
**THREE ROADS TO MODERNITY:**  
**SERBIAN NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Global Scholarly Publications, New York, 2019, 263 pages  
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The respected author took the search in his latest book into the realm of classical phenomena of political sciences: modernity, nationalism and national identity that form the main apparatus of any research in the essence of contemporary societies and nation states. Placed in a clear, defined and backed up historical frame this book tries to explore the origins and dimensions of these processes within the Serb political philosophy during the previous almost three centuries. For this purpose he is exploring in details the work and ideas of the three founding fathers of the Serbian nationalism.

The book consists of six similar structured chapters, each of them having its own Introduction and Conclusion. However, the monograph by itself could be, at least for the purpose of this review, structured in three parts as far as the content is concerned.

Firstly, the Introduction, containing contemplation of the power



discourse (Orientalism, Balkanism and the civic/ethnic dichotomy) as well as laying down the conceptual framework of the arguments. Here the text stems from the known fact that the national idea both contributed to the emergence of new states and to the dissolution of the existing ones, depending on different social historical, political and other determinants (the latest such example offers the end of the

Cold War three decades ago). As highly indicative the author points out “the tragedy of nationalisms in the world periphery: they aspire to popular and national sovereignty, but achieving both is largely dependent on external forces” (p.19).

Basically, “nationalisms of the world capitalist periphery emerged and are evolving under similar conditions: undeveloped socio-economic structures and positioned at the lower end of the international structure of power” (p.32). Hence, the proces of achieving sovereignty remains to be uncertain till its very end, while the outcome depends on the stream of events beyond the influence of internal driving forces in a given case. The dissolution of three multinational states in the time of the collapse of the bipolar world order and the way newly formed states were establishing themselves and building their positions in the international community at the same time offers a variety of examples for this uncertainty and dependence on external circumstances.

Secondly, three case studies of three main theoreticians of the Serbian nationalism, the founding fathers of political thought in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: Dositej Obradović (1739-1811), Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787-1864) and Ilija Garašanin (1812-1874). It's them from whom the Serbian nationalism as idea and notion origins. They also paved the way for the evolution of the Serbian national political programs,

linking them to concrete political activities, like the First (1804) and the Second Serbian Uprising (1815) against the Ottomans. The first two were contemplating these issues, while the third one also took active part in the Serbian politics, where he remained for three decades. This part of the study is the most important, not only the most extensive one. We pay attention to their fundamental contributions later on.

Thirdly, chapters five and six dwell on the role, status and importance of nationalism in the current international environment, having nation at its focus. Bearing in mind that globalization as a process, frame and driver is the main characteristic of our times, makes this research endeavour not a bit less complex. This part of the text focuses on discussing national identity with its relation from one point of view to (international) political economy (exogenous and endogenous constraints) and from another one to groupness (here the case of former Yugoslavia comes into discussion). It is to point out that the author discusses in this part of his work the nation's organizational culture, in particular its political culture.

Three roads to Serbian modernity, as the title suggests, are materialized within “the founding triangle” (p.107) of Serbian nationalism that consists of individualistic (Obradović), collectivistic (Karadžić) and statist national ideas (Garašanin). This formula is the core

innovative substance of the reviewed monograph. It is here where the author and his vivid analysis come to its best: very systematically presented, deeply elaborated and policy commented, backed up with numerous and different references, including, in the third part, a variety of opinion polls that provide essential food for thought to debate the variable nature of the Serbian national identity in its contemporary outlook.

Dositej Obradović, as the first one, advocates individualistic nationalism, praising the fatherland. This should be governed by the enlightened monarchy, ruled by law and merit based. Paying a special attention to the issue of language, his national thought could be best categorized as cultural nationalism. Hence and on a general basis, he viewed nationalism as an ideal, but one should remark here that such types usually do not approximate reality. Nevertheless, Obradović, whose thought on Serbian nation state was directly influenced by the First Serbian Uprising, paved the way for the process itself.

Vuk Karadžić, as one of Obradović's students and his direct follower, apart the language, put the need for stability and harmony between the ruled ones and the rulers to stand out. While Obradović initiated the process of forming the literary language, Karadžić standardized it and preserved through this its rich oral tradition. Later on, he also

rather reluctantly included religion as another national symbol. For the second in the Serbian triangle, the outstanding national symbols would make his nation similar to the advanced European nations, basically through education. Throughout his life he was heavily engaged in fulfilling those goals.

Ilija Garašanin took a step forward both with his concrete and long political engagement as well as with providing the first Serbian national programme (*Načertanije* in 1844, four years before the Spring of Nations). In its focus there was a belief that it is the state that plays a central role, both in the existence of a nation and of a man. And it was state's security that primarily guided his political thought and deeds. Hence, it was logical that he was favouring the establishment of an independent state that should be large, since only large state could be safe as well. He learned much from the experiences of both Uprisings that led to the autonomous Principality of Serbia. This gave him an opportunity to also practice what he was promoting as a political thought.

On a comparative basis we already pointed out some differences between the three of them, but one could also refer to certain similarity in their views. This is not that much obvious at all the three of them, but more comparing the second one with the first one and the third one with the second one. This leads us to the evolving nature of the

triangle's primary contribution to the Serb political thought as well as to practice. However, as the author puts it, the three of them "heavily lean in favour of national sovereignty and do not bode well for popular sovereignty" (p.148). The reason for the evolutionary nature would be twofold: from one point of view they were learning, absorbing and stemming from the previous work and from another one the Serbian political reality during their period changed significantly. In particular Garašanin was able to feel this and to incorporate it in his contemplation and in practical activities.

The overall conclusion of the development of nationalism and national identity through the prism of this monograph could be that it is framed with the dichotomy national-international. On a general level this finding is not new, but it again firmly confirms this rule. Additionally, the case study of Serbia, based on a centuries long political thought, its development and evolution of traditional values, intertwined with the civic principles, is a telling lesson learned from, as the author puts it, world capitalist periphery. The pressure or at least the influence from the international community and its main actors is even stronger,

more decisive and more visible.

One could claim that the major cases of countries that emerged or reestablished their statehood along the end of the Cold War would prove this observation, although each of them with its own specifics within this general finding. Here this case with its exact point of view comes as a useful and refreshing account. Particularly having in mind the post Yugoslav states, where "the advent of neoliberal capitalism has deepened dependency on foreign capital, imposed limited sovereignty, and limited democracy" (p.243). The case of Serbia also shows "its hybridity characterized by both civic and traditional values" as well as "fluidity; polls indicate that insecurity of the 1990s correlated with a rise in traditional values" (ibid.).

It is up to policy makers to decide to what extent they will possibly include findings from this monograph in their thought over of the early 21st century politics. This reviewer can only highly recommend the book to scholars, policy community and the rest of the interested public. They will surely benefit from studying it.