

The Legacy of the Wars for the International System

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Introduction

In 1819, the disgruntled French archbishop Dominique de Pradt, who went into early retirement to continue a prolific career as expert and commentator on the affairs of the world, summarised the post-Napoleonic state of affairs in international relations as follows: ‘Two colossal powers have risen upon Europe, England and Russia . . . There existed, it is true, previously to the new order, preponderant powers, but not powers exclusively preponderant; whose force was so disproportional to that of others, as to reduce them to a state of absolute vassalage; unable to sustain them without a continual league’. The system of states of Europe could therefore no longer be considered a system propelled by the principle of the balance of power, since there was no longer any balance of multiple forces, only a hegemony of two ‘colossi’.¹ This contemporary analysis precedes Paul Schroeder’s, one of the most incisive historians on the Congress System, by almost two centuries in interpreting the Vienna Settlement of 1815 as the hegemonic triumph of tsarist Russia and the British Empire.² In recent years, most historians have followed Schroeder’s (and unwittingly also

This chapter is based on the research done for Beatrice de Graaf, *Fighting Terror after Napoleon: How Europe became Secure after 1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

- 1 Dominique de Pradt, *Europe after the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle: Forming the sequel to the Congress of Vienna*, G. A. Otis (trans. with notes) (Philadelphia: Carey, 1820), 169–70, translation of *L’Europe après le Congrès d’Aix-la-Chapelle* (Paris: Béchét aîné, 1819), 236.
- 2 See Paul 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), 218–28; Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European politics, 1763–1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Paul Schroeder, ‘Did the Vienna Settlement rest on a balance of power?’, *American Historical Review*, 97 (1992), 683–706. See also Enno Kraehe, ‘A Bipolar Balance of Power’, *American Historical Review*, 97 (1992), 707–15.

De Pradt's) lead in subscribing to an analysis of the not-so-balanced treaty system after 1815.³

The settlement of 1815 indeed gave Europe a century of peace, in the sense that no 'generalised conflict' broke loose and wars remained local. Wars and conflicts did erupt and ranged from the uprisings in Greece, Naples, Spain via the Crimean War to the Wars of German and Italian Unification – but they never morphed into an unbound chaos that engulfed the whole of Europe and beyond.⁴ The treaty system remained in place, guaranteed and upheld in large part by joint efforts of the two powers that were willing to share hegemony: Russia and Britain. Notwithstanding these settled interpretations, new research points to a much more nuanced view. First of all, the other great powers (assisted by some of the secondary powers) could lay claim to being an equally essential part of the treaty system – albeit locked in a hierarchical order.⁵ Secondly, pointing to an abstract bipolar hegemonic order does not in the least explain how this order came about, was consolidated and then operationalised on the ground. The international states system is not a chimera that can be conjured up by analysts cramming the reality of international politics into their framework of international relations concepts. How then did the Vienna order stay afloat, on top of the rising aspirations for self-determination, imperial rivalries and internecine European competition? Thirdly, the balance of power system, whether understood as a multi-lateral or bilateral arrangement of powers, was far less mechanical, power-infused or reactionary than it has been depicted for so many decades, but can and should be read as a cultural and moral narrative as well.⁶ Only then will it be recognised for what it is: a truly collective, but imperial invention with global impact, including notions of hierarchy and

3 But not Wolf Gruner, to name an influential Restoration scholar. Wolf Gruner, 'Was There a Reformed Balance of Power System or Cooperative Great Power Hegemony?', *American Historical Review*, 97 (1992), 725–32.

4 Martyn Lyons, *Post-revolutionary Europe, 1815–1856* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 20.

5 See, for example, Gruner on the important role of the German middle states: Wolf Gruner, *Der Wiener Kongress 1814/15* (Stuttgart: Reclam Verlag, 2014); Wolf Gruner, *Der Deutsche Bund 1815–1866* (München: Beck, 2012). Or Laven on Italy: David Laven, *Venice and Venetia under the Habsburgs, 1815–1835* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1–26. Or on the role of the Netherlands in the making of the Paris Treaty: Beatrice de Graaf and Mieke Canneman, 'De prijs van de vrede. Nederlandse inbreng in het Europees Concert, 1815–1818', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 133 (2018), 22–52.

6 Especially Brian Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

patterns of inclusion and exclusion. It was, in sum, an ordering principle and narrative for the ‘affairs of the world’ after Napoleon.

One cannot fully grasp the revolutionary character of the international states system and its invoked culture of solidarity between ‘civilised’ states and modern monarchies, which provided each with mutual security after 1815, by merely studying the Congress of Vienna and its diplomatic movements. Nor does it help to apply anachronistic concepts from the social sciences to the early nineteenth century. Rather, the legacy of the Napoleonic Wars for the international system can more correctly be identified and understood by starting where it all began, namely, with what ensued right after the final armistice with France on 3 July 1815, and with the allied occupation of that country, as managed by the Council of Ambassadors in Paris.⁷ It is here that the transition from working together as a Sixth Coalition to a ‘council for the management of the state affairs of the world’ took place. This chapter aims to demonstrate and understand how the transition from war and occupation to a situation of consolidated peace and security was realised and managed by a caste of highly accomplished generals, ministers, diplomats and other professional agents. We will first highlight the role these ministers and ambassadors played in the Paris Conference of Ministers, which managed and oversaw the allied occupation of France. Then we will turn to what is perhaps the most salient legacy of the Napoleonic Wars for the new international states system, namely, the instrument of ambassadorial conferences, including their encompassing culture of imperialism and political morality. The chapter ends with a discussion of the lingering presence of these conferences throughout the century as the first instance of, and groundwork for, the management of collective security in modern history.

Occupation of France and the Council of Ambassadors

Standing solidly and squarely on the treaties of Chaumont, the military assistance treaty of March 1815, which forged and held together the Sixth Coalition, and the Treaty of Vienna, the four victorious powers concluded in the first week of July 1815 that an armistice alone was not enough. Not even a brief occupation in attendance of a peace treaty would suffice to bring France back to peaceful habits (as Napoleon’s return in 1815 and the ensuing

⁷ See, for example, Castlereagh, Memorandum, 13 July 1815. GStA III. HA Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten. I. No. 1461. See also: Henry Houssaye, *1815: Les Cent Jours* (Paris: Perrin, 1920), 425–6.

100 days had proved). After the military treaty of armistice was concluded on 3 July 1815, discussions regarding a sustainable peace plan for France began immediately, this time enforced by the lasting presence of an allied army of occupation of 1.2 million troops (reduced to 150,000 the next year) spread throughout two-thirds of France and commanded by the Duke of Wellington.⁸ Negotiations were hosted by Castlereagh and Wellington, held at the Hôtel Charost, the British embassy in Paris, and converted into official diplomatic protocols and minutes.⁹

Even more importantly, these talks on the occupation of France, on the terms of the designated peace treaty and on the future of allied cooperation were staged as a collective affair. The victorious powers' preferences went neither to bilateral agreements behind the scenes nor to the orchestra of voices that had resounded so vividly in Vienna earlier that year. Instead, a close knit, informal, but extremely prestigious community of ministers, ambassadors and experts convened to discuss their disputes and common interests on a daily basis. Earlier experiences with collective security management – for example, with the Prussian-directed Central Administration, which operated behind the advancing front lines of the Fifth Coalition and which had been staffed by meticulous bureaucrats such as Stein – had left an ambivalent impression. Rather than handing administrative arrangements over to one single power, the four allies decided to join forces. They set themselves up together as guardians of the future of France, making sure that no one of them would reap the fruits of victory unilaterally.¹⁰

The pressing need for a two-pronged fight against potential new revolutionary or Jacobin uprisings and against despotic tendencies (be it the dreaded return of Napoleon or one of his cronies, or the ascent of Russia in Europe) demanded a persistent effort in peacetime. During the weeks running up to the Second Treaty of Paris and the treaty for the Quadruple Alliance, Prussia

8 Arthur Wellesley Duke of Wellington, 'Memorandum on the Temporary Occupation of Part of France, 31 August 1815', in: *Supplementary Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington, K.G., Volume VIII: Arthur Wellesley Wellington* (London: John Murray, 1858–1872), 253–5; see also Thomas Dwight Veve, *The Duke of Wellington and the British Army of Occupation in France, 1815–1818* (London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 11–31; Volker Wacker, *Die alliierte Besetzung Frankreichs in den Jahren 1814 bis 1818* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2001).

9 For the minutes of these meetings see, among others: National Archives, Kew (TNA). Foreign Office Files (FO) 92, 139; Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK), Berlin. III. Hauptabteilung (HA) Ministerium des Auswärtigen (Mda) I, Politische Abteilung, Konferenz der Minister der alliierten Mächte in Paris, among others nrs. 897, 911, 1464, 1465, 1458, 1469.

10 Protocol, 12 July 1815, GStA III. HA Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten. I. No. 1461.

was forced to abandon plans for a dismemberment of France's territory, the United Kingdom secured plans for a reconstruction of a barrier of fortresses to contain the restored Bourbon Empire, and Russia and Austria were content to organise a joint military and temporary occupation, as a guarantee for the peace conditions (in the Paris Treaty) to be enacted and met within the next five years.¹¹ A number of smaller powers – who were not allowed to sit on the Allied Council – were invited to participate in thematic commissions on the return of looted works of art, on reparations, back-payments, and on military affairs and fortress planning. From July 1815 onwards, the political need to manage the day-to-day affairs in France quickly expanded to encompass a growing body of security issues ranging from passports, returning soldiers, border towns that refused to demobilise and regicides seeking refuge in countries elsewhere. This Paris Conference of Ministers (sometimes also referred to as the Allied Council), which included the aforementioned subcommittees, met daily until December 1815; by which time, Castlereagh, Metternich and Tsar Alexander had returned home. After that their representatives (ambassadors and ministers) decreased the frequency of these meetings to once or twice a week. The Allied Council's agenda was structured by four central, immediate goals or 'principles for salutary precautions', as Castlereagh called them, namely: demilitarisation; de-Napoleonisation; stabilisation; and the payment of reparations. The one overarching and unifying long-term goal was to create a system of 'permanence and solidity' in the international arena.¹²

Between 1815 and 1818, with some more-or-less serious setbacks, all these goals were met, at least initially. Napoleon's *Grande Armée* was dissolved and a new royal army was created and reformed based on a combination of *ancien régime* structures and Napoleonic innovations. The Bonapartes were banned from France and kept under surveillance in Italy, Prussia, Austria or Switzerland; Empire generals were fired and convicted or purged. From September 1816 onwards, after the dissolution of the 'Chambre Introuvable', the Allied Council concluded that the regime of Louis XVIII

11 See, for example, the notes from Wellington to the Allied Council, 'Réponses aux questions à discuter', protocol 20 July, GStA III. HA Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten. I. No. 1461.

12 Castlereagh, Memorandum, 13 July 1815. GStA III. HA Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten. I. No. 1461. See also Arthur Wellesley Duke of Wellington, 'The Earl of Liverpool to Viscount Castlereagh, 21 July 1815', in: *Supplementary Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington, K.G., Volume XI: Arthur Wellesley Wellington* (London: John Murray, 1858–1872), 47; See also Henry Houssaye, 1815: *La seconde abdication* (Paris: Librairie Académique Didier, 1905), 425–6.

was increasingly stable and that the spirit of revolutionary terror had at least been contained, not only with an iron hand and the help of intelligence agencies, but also by obliging France to forever retain its 'constitutional form'. So, too, the immense payments to be made for reparations, indemnities and debts in arrears were settled – albeit only at the last resort (this being the most damning of Castlereagh's four 'principles for salutary precautions' from a French perspective). Full payment of these sums, as negotiated in Aachen, was finally guaranteed through internationally staged loans and obligations that were facilitated by a consortium of foreign bankers headed by Alexander Baring from Baring & Hope.¹³ By 1818, the price of peace as set by the allies – 1,893 million francs – was (almost) paid. Although this sum was less than the reparations imposed on Germany after the First World War, it was in absolute terms more than any other externally imposed war debt in the nineteenth and twentieth century.¹⁴

When studying the minute, and often very mundane, administrative workings of the Allied Council, it becomes clear how professional and novel this instrument for the management of the security in France (and beyond) actually was. Even its most critical, contemporary commentators were able to agree on this assessment. For De Pradt, it was of course inconceivable that France should not be an honourable member of the Quadruple Alliance Treaty and its Allied Council rather than be subjugated to, and the object of, its deliberations. France, this 'great people', and designated 'fifth ally', was unforgivably left out of the system and almost reduced to the status of Poland (in the sense that that country was carved up and subordinated to the larger powers).¹⁵ However, even De Pradt admits that the Council represented the will of 'Europe' as a whole, 'in common accord' (and not just Great Britain and Russia). 'She [France] remained under the custody of Europe. It is the first example presented in the history of Europe of a similar measure, embraced with regard to any state whatever, and executed by common consent.'¹⁶

Not only did the Council execute its work with pen and paper. It could also impose reforms on France; it created a European security agency, headed by the Prussian bureaucrat and former Berlin police director Justus von Gruner,

13 'Apperçu [sic] sommaires', 1 November 1818, included with the protocol of 9 October 1818, AT-OeStA, StK, Kongressakten, inv. No. 17, Subfolder 'Protokolle', 105.

14 Eugene N. White 'Making the French Pay: The Costs and Consequences of the Napoleonic Reparations', *European Review of Economic History*, 5 (2001), 337–65, at 341, 361.

15 De Pradt, *Europe after the Congress*, xiv. 16 *Ibid.*, 8; see also 9–14.

which reported to Wellington and Hardenberg¹⁷ and was financed by French francs; and it enforced the agency's presence with an enormous army of occupation. Moreover, the Council visibly sealed its commitment to collective security in a very sustainable manner, namely one that was drawn on the paper of treaties, bonds and passports and built with the bricks of the Wellington Barrier, a series of over twenty fortresses stretching from the North Sea coast to Mainz. Seeing this financing of the reconstruction or building of fortresses along France's border, the second-level powers, which had initially been very critical and hostile towards the allied consortium, became eager to get on board. Countries like the Netherlands, Spain, Italy and the German principalities and Prussia were given access to financial support for building fortifications and to compensate for past debts.¹⁸ A total of 137.5 million francs (paid for by France!) was spent on bricks and mortar in Flanders, German principalities, Spain and Italian states.¹⁹

An Inter-imperial Affair

The Allied Council acted almost like a 'European Council for the management of the affairs of the world'.²⁰ In addition to the ministers and diplomats of the great powers, financial experts, police corps and bankers were also increasingly part of the picture. Bankers, investors, and security experts were needed to safeguard the interests of the great powers. After 1815, the culture of treaties and fortified cities with which Europe had protected itself since 1713 was supplemented with a whole series of new measures and practices. The new Wellington Barrier was just as much a demonstration of this as was Gruner's intelligence agency, which was to collect data on and analyse public sentiment in France. Opponents of Napoleon and his legacy found each other as allies in executing the daily business of managing the occupation of France. Wellington had in the past mastered the art of broadening colonial power by

17 See reports by Gruner, 22 July–November 1815, in Gruner No. 86; Nachlass Hardenberg 10a, GStA Berlin.

18 Harry David Jones, *Reports Relating to the Re-establishment of the Fortresses in the Netherlands from 1814 to 1830* (London: Spottiswood, 1861); Robert Gils, *De Versterkingen van de Wellingtonbarrière in Oost-Vlaanderen* (Ghent: Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen, 2005).

19 Allied Council, 2, 6, 7, and 8 October 1815 GStA PK III. HA No. 1469; Correspondence Krayenhoff-Wellington, December 1815, TNA, FO 92/15.

20 Castlereagh did not really favour this globalising approach and voiced his criticisms to the English ambassador in Paris, Stuart, on 22 July 1817: see Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815–1822: Britain and the European Alliance* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1924), 71.

co-opting subordinate chiefs and representatives of the local population, Gruner had done so in Prussia, as had Richelieu in Crimea. They could now put that into practice in France and elsewhere in Europe. Their inter-imperial cooperation was underpinned as much by a moral and 'Eurocentric Enlightenment thinking' as with anti-Revolutionary Christian revivalist notions that triumphed after 1815 and benefited from its symbolic confirmation in the Holy Alliance.²¹

That these self-proclaimed first-rank powers worked together was not at all self-evident or natural, as David Todd too has underlined.²² Driven together by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic whirlwinds, they decided to work the post-war order out among themselves, negotiating their issues while sitting around the same green tablecloth. Through this forum format, they created and consolidated a novel system of stratification in Europe. In the words of De Pradt, it had always been obvious in the history of Europe that some powers were 'superior' to others. 'Below the Alps and the Pyrenees' nothing much of political interest happened (in De Pradt's words!), bringing these zones 'neither in position nor proportion to influence' in European affairs. Whether this analysis holds true for the 'Western Question' (involving Spain), the 'Italian Question' or let alone the 'Eastern Question', is not the point here. De Pradt voiced notions of hierarchy, of asymmetry and distinctions that according to contemporary experts were ingrained in the system.²³

All four victors of the Sixth Coalition, the conservative and the liberal ones alike, entertained the same idea. Already in 1814, the Russian diplomat Razumovsky and Metternich discussed the secret of European harmony: it was the joint domination of the new European order by the four great powers. They could protect the social and political order of Europe from terror and despotism in the future only if they together formed a strong and united front.²⁴ Tsar Alexander was very clear about that. The primary goal for Tsar Alexander was to 'liberate Europe from the yoke that oppressed it; and to establish a political system based on law and on a firmly anchored balance of power'.²⁵ It is true that the First Treaty of Paris (1814) stated in Article 1 that: 'The high

21 See, for example, Brian Vick, 'Power, Humanitarianism and the Global Liberal Order: Abolition and the Barbary Corsairs in the Vienna Congress System', *International History Review*, 40 (2018), 13–14.

22 David Todd, 'A French Imperial Meridian, 1814–1870', *Past and Present*, 210 (2011), 155–86, at 161.

23 De Pradt, *Europe after the Congress*, 19–21.

24 Nesselrode to Austria, England, Prussia, 31 December 1814, in Johann Klüber (ed.), *Acten des Wiener Congresses in den Jahren 1815 und 1815* (Erlangen, 1817), Vol. VII, 69.

25 Russian memorandum to Castlereagh, 11 November 1814, in Léonard Chodzko (ed.), *Le Congrès de Vienne et les traités de 1815* (Paris: Amyot, 1864), Vol. II, 452.

contracting parties shall devote their best attention to maintain, not only between themselves, but, inasmuch as depends upon them, between all the states of Europe, that harmony and good understanding which are so necessary for their tranquillity.’ However, this political ‘system of the balance of power’ had to be protected by ‘the first-ranked powers, who then had to protect it against any form of hegemony’.²⁶

Less absolutist ministers such as Castlereagh harboured the same stratified view on the international system of states. At least since the so-called ‘Pitt-plan’²⁷ of 1805 and Gentz’s treatises on the balance of power of 1806,²⁸ it was understood that the four great allied powers would take the lead in drafting and signing the treaties of peace. The Final Act of Vienna was recorded by eight powers, including France, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. The Second Treaty of Paris, the Quadruple Alliance Treaty (both November 1815) and the occupation of France were, however, expedited by the Allied Council, in which only four allied powers were represented. They considered it their imperial task, as the four ‘great powers’, to put the European security machine together and to tend to it. 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.²⁹

After 1815, these rather ill-defined ideas on ranks and hierarchy gained serious traction. The four victors constituted the Quadruple Alliance and sat

26 Russian reply to Castlereagh’s circular of 12 January 1815, 19 January 1815, in Léonard Chodzko (ed.), *Le Congrès de Vienne et les traités de 1815* (Paris: Amyot, 1864), Vol. II, 799. See Andreas Osiander, *The State Systems of Europe, 1640–1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 229.

27 William Pitt, letter to the Russian ambassador at London, 19 January 1805, in Kenneth Bourne, *The Foreign Policy of Victorian England 1830–1902* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 197–8.

28 Friedrich von Gentz, *Fragments upon the Balance of Power in Europe*. Translation (London: Baldwin, 1806); Friedrich von Gentz, ‘Über de Pradt’s Gemälde von Europa nach dem Kongress von Aachen’, in *Wiener Jahrbüchern der Literatur*, 5 (1819), 279–318, also in Gustav Schlesier (ed.), *Schriften von Friedrich Gentz: Ein Denkmal* (Mannheim: Hoff, 1838), 88–156.

29 The ‘Pitt-Plan’, in Thomas Curson Hansard (ed.), *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time* (London: Baldwin, 1815), Vol. XXXI, 177–82, at 179–80.

on the Allied Council together³⁰ as the primary movers of the continent. The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and the German principalities were only allowed to participate in the Council's subcommittees, with entities like the Ionian Isles or Parma considered merely as objects of the negotiations.³¹ As Jennifer Pitts has illustrated, this new order, compounded by the occupation of France, infused and sparked new rounds of inter-imperial cooperation and expansion – encouraged by many liberal supporters of modern imperialism, such as James Mill and John Stuart Mill and De Tocqueville.³² This becomes clear when discussing the issue of piracy, as debated in Paris, London and Aachen. Piracy did not remain a mere talking point, it became the object of veritable concerted security efforts already during but also after the occupation of France. As Erik de Lange has laid out, the ensuing interventions can only be understood as an essentially *inter-imperial* process of the great powers going at it together.³³ Overly nationalist readings of, say, the fight against piracy as adventurous episodes in national naval histories (of Britain or France) have obscured the transnational, European qualities of nineteenth-century imperialism in the Mediterranean.³⁴ It should not be forgotten that the Congress of Aachen, for example, highlighted the importance of collectively discussed threat perceptions and discourses of security, in diplomatic settings (namely conferences) where the great powers' smaller partners also had a say.

The collective fight against 'Terror' embraced by the post-Napoleonic community of states thus carved out the contours of nineteenth-century Europe.³⁵ 'Terror' was defined as the overarching threat (either through unilateral despotism or through Revolutionary upheavals) to the vested interests of landed elites, bankers and property owners. European ships jointly undertook the fight against Barbary pirates and incorporated the

30 See, for example, the protocols of July and August 1815, in which all other states are explicitly excluded. GStA PK III. HA No. 1464.

31 According to De Pradt, the new Kingdom of the Netherlands 'ranks in the first class among states of the second order', in De Pradt, *Europe after the Congress*, 47.

32 Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 15–27.

33 Erik de Lange, 'Menacing Tides: Piracy, Security and Imperialism in the Nineteenth-century Mediterranean' (unpublished PhD thesis, Utrecht University, 2019).

34 Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovsky, 'Introduction: Methodological Approaches', in Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovsky (eds), *Imperial Cooperation and Transfer, 1870–1930: Empires and Encounters* (London and New York: Bloomsbury 2015), 3–34, at 9–10 and 16; Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 11–17. See also the first paper that briefly mentions this insight in passing: David Todd, 'A French Imperial Meridian, 1814–1870', *Past and Present*, 210 (2011), 155–86, at 161.

35 The following paragraphs are partly based on Chapter 10, 'Conclusion', in De Graaf, *Fighting Terror*, especially 450–8.

Mediterranean into that system of security. At the same time, a veritably unprecedented transformation took place in the heart of Europe itself. The four great powers colonised the continent and transformed it into a region of industrious activity, peace and security that was based on a complex system that ranked social and people groups. It inspired collective European attempts at external and internal projects of colonisation. European commissions colonised the Rhine – the lifeblood of Europe – and opened the deltas of the Scheldt for free trade. Based on a hierarchy of profit-making and exploitation, this security framework can, therefore, not be broken down into an intra- and extra-European culture. Processes of ‘othering’ – excluding certain groups that were seen as a risk or threat – and of a unifying standardisation on the continent and beyond were in line with each other. According to Christopher Bayly, the features of a paternal state were now much more clearly delineated, and government actions were much more evident and more ‘rational’ than they had been in the eighteenth century.³⁶ But these post-Napoleonic states and community of states were also far more geared to control, monitor and exclude or marginalise the groups or categories that did not fit their imperial interests.

These European attempts to expand their realm of security and free trade, and to stratify this realm into categories of inclusion and exclusion naturally and irrevocably created enemies, both in the bosom of their own states and societies, on the side of the oppressed, among the marginalised supporters of the *ancien régime*, but also in the new world, in South America and the United States. As the geopolitical and ideological ambitions increased, resistance grew. Thus, the fight against ‘Terror’ and enforced security were always dependent on the compliance of the citizens and the subjugation of indigenous peoples. As in the colonies, the central security policy and the superiority of the ruling government’s police and military forces were invariably challenged by those on the ground and regularly kindled resistance from the local population.³⁷ This was evident from the beginning, in the obstruction that the French populace and local administrators initiated against the allied occupiers. It was palpable in the physical attacks on Wellington in 1818 and the Duke of Berry in 1819 in Paris or on August von Kotzebue in Mannheim, all three notables of the Restoration in Europe. Attacks on the allied occupational forces in France continued until the latter left in 1818. Complementary

36 Christopher A. Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Compromises* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 39.

37 See, for example, Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire: Challenges to Modern British Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

to these dramatic attacks, protest and dissent against this imperial consortium of allies also took more mundane forms, such as the ingrained and widespread corruption staged by Belgian workers during the construction of the Wellington Barrier, or French, German and Polish refugees venting their frustration via newspapers and pamphlets produced and distributed in exile – against which the ministers of the Allied Council collectively, though increasingly frustratedly, tried to intervene.³⁸

More Ambassadorial and Ministerial Conferences

The seminal important instrument which was created on the ruins of Napoleonic Europe, and which brought together the states on that continent in an international community, was the institution of the ambassadorial or ministerial conferences. The Allied Council has already been introduced, but another conference was inaugurated on top of it in 1817, when the powers of the Quadruple Alliance invited Richelieu to be a participating member in the so-called *Conférence de Cinq Cours Médiatrices*. This conference discussed the Revolutionary threats in that ‘other hemisphere’, South America.³⁹ It mediated between Portugal and Spain in the handling of insurrections and (Portuguese) invasions in the Rio de la Plata between 1816 and 1823. Interestingly, its meeting times were scheduled right after the Allied Council in the years between 1817 and 1818, and the *Conférence de Cinq Cours* continued after the Paris Conference was officially declared disbanded at the Congress of Aachen. Unlike the Allied Council however, this conference did not have a joint allied force at hand, nor a single authoritative chairperson like the Duke of Wellington to persuade the others to follow and enforce a decision. Wellington was in fact asked to head the Cinq Courts Conference, but politely refused in 1818.⁴⁰

38 Arthur Wellesley Duke of Wellington, ‘Memorandum to Ministers on the Libels Published in the Low Countries, 29 August 1816’, in *Supplementary Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington, K.G., Volume 9: Arthur Wellesley Wellington* (London: John Murray, 1858–1872), 464–9; Niek van Sas, *Onze natuurlijkste bondgenoot: Nederland, Engeland en Europa, 1813–1831* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff/Bouma’s Boekhuis, 1985), 125–62; Pierre Rain, *L’Europe et la restauration des Bourbons: 1814–1818* (Paris: Librairie Académique, 1908); W. P. Sautijn Kluit, ‘Dagbladvervolgingen in België 1815–1830’, *Bijdragen voor vaderlandsche geschiedenis en oudheidkunde*, 3:6 (1892), 307–94.

39 Allied Council, protocol 16 March 1817, TNA, FO 146/15.

40 See, for example, Note, Labrador to Council; deliberations and annex, Protocol 16 March 1817, TNA FO 146/15; Letters Wellington to Castlereagh, 23, 26, 30 March 1818, TNA FO 92/33.

Although this attempt to master ‘the Western Question’ failed (all South American colonies gained independence), the generation of colonisers that took part in these conferences after 1815 was nimble and agile and enjoyed a certain level of mutual trust (derived from their long-lasting acquaintance over the years of anti-Napoleonic warfare). They were open to reform and innovation in the areas of management, high finance and governance. However, this generation left international politics in the 1820s, causing the system of collective security to show fractures. Nevertheless, the meetings and conferences of 1814–18 did lay the foundation for a new form of European collective politics. More congresses took place than ever before. While the by now preferred means of the conference between ministers (or ambassadors) did not always resolve conflicts and security threats, they did at least bring them out into the open and allow them to become topics for possible mediation, instead of considering them as a *casus fœderis*. Between 1642 and 1814 only a handful of European congresses took place. With the Congress of Vienna and the Allied Council of 1815, a century began in which the number of ministerial conferences – and the appropriation of new, uniform measures and practices that resulted from them – increased exponentially, on both ‘national’ subjects – for example, South America (1826), Greece (1827), the Belgian question (1830), the return of the pope to Rome (1849), the Danish monarchy (1850) – and also on ‘thematic’ issues – such as, sanitation concerns and quarantines (1851), sugar tariffs (1863), telegraph cables (1863), the postal unions (1863), and many other international affairs.⁴¹ These kinds of conferences gave European countries a huge head start in terms of technical, economic, financial and military issues compared to the rest of the world. During the First World War, this form of transnational cooperation at a professional level continued to exist; for example, in the joint European membership in the Mixed Courts of Egypt and in the Central Commission for the Rhine and the Danube.⁴²

41 See, for example, Peter Macalister-Smith and Joachim Schwietzke, *Diplomatic Conferences and Congresses: A Bibliographical Compendium of State Practice 1642 to 1919* (Graz: Neugebauer Verlag, 2017); Louise Richardson, ‘The Concert of Europe and Security Management in the Nineteenth Century’, in Helga Haftendorn, Robert Keohane and Celeste Wallander (eds), *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 78–9.

42 See, for example, Mark Hoyle, *Mixed Courts of Egypt* (London: Graham & Trotman, 1991); Joep Schenk, ‘The Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine: A First Step Towards European Economic Security?’, in Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan and Brian Vick (eds), *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Hein A. M. Klemann, ‘The Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine, 1815–1914: Nineteenth-century European Integration’, in

The joint, allied occupation of France, which set the precedent for these sorts of conferences, was itself a novelty and remained in the collective memory. In the years that followed, the European powers would turn to such joint, treaty-sanctioned military or armed security occupations and interventions more frequently, for example: in Syria (1860–1); in Macedonia (1898); and in China (1900).⁴³

Interestingly enough, despite De Pradt's lamentations, which were representative of the grudge many French (politicians and people alike) bore towards the Quadruple Alliance, the French government eagerly copied the instrument of collective interventions and conference diplomacy. As for the (disgraceful, at least for France) allied military occupation,⁴⁴ the idea of such a joint European intervention served as an example for France's own overtures in international politics. In 1829, the ultra-royalist French Minister of Foreign Affairs and prime minister, Jules de Polignac, distributed a plan to occupy Algeria via the French embassies among the diplomats in Europe. In doing so, France could take the lead in 'freeing Europe from the threefold scourge' of piracy, Christian slavery and the financial extortion of European ships and commercial convoys by Barbary sovereigns – and *en passant* underscore the place of France among leading powers of Europe.⁴⁵ Polignac suggested to the king, Charles X, that he organise an international conference and invite the other great powers to think about a joint occupation of Algeria and about dividing up the Ottoman provinces among themselves. Polignac also sketched out a first move in this direction. His plan included a complete rearrangement of Vienna Congress Europe: the Kingdom of the Netherlands would be moved to Constantinople, which together with Greece, would come under the authority of the House of Orange. In this way, the heart of the Ottoman Empire would once again be firmly in Christian (albeit Protestant) hands. The European parts of the Ottoman Empire would go to Russia, and the Balkans to Austria. The Kingdom of the Netherlands in Europe would be dissolved; the Dutch

Ben Wubs and Ralf Banken (eds), *The Rhine: A Transnational Economic History* (Baden: Nomos, 2017), 1–26.

43 Matthias Schulz, 'Cultures of Peace and Security from the Vienna Congress to the Twenty-first Century: Characteristics and Dilemmas', in De Graaf et al. (eds), *Securing Europe after Napoleon*, 21–39.

44 This event was rarely mentioned in the later French history books regarding this period, and even then often reduced to a footnote.

45 Letter of Polignac to Rayneval, the French ambassador in Vienna, 20 April 1830, Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de La Courmeuve (CADLC), 11CP/412, 148–51. With thanks to Erik de Lange. He elaborates on this in his dissertation thesis: de Lange, 'Menacing Tides'.

territory divided between France and Prussia, with the Dutch colonies going to Great Britain. France would thus gain 3.8 million Dutch citizens and, even more importantly, all the fortifications making up the Wellington Barrier. With help from indigenous local princes and administrators, the allies would then determine whether the joint occupation of Algeria would be for a definite or indefinite period.⁴⁶

With that, Polignac showed that he had taken the lessons of the allied occupation of France to heart. Even the extremely reactionary and ultra-royalist Polignac knew by now that unilateral military or security operations in post-war times (after 1815) would be met with too much resistance. The French desire to expand its Empire would have more effect if it was embedded in European congress politics and could be implemented with the support of the other allies. Although the plan of the Duke of Polignac was quite exotic, it was seriously discussed in Paris, Vienna and St Petersburg. But Polignac and Charles X never got around to executing such ambitious foreign projects. In July 1830, the French population rebelled against their autocratic leadership and its repressive domestic laws and put an end to the Bourbon monarchy for good (and Polignac ended up in jail).⁴⁷ The idea of the French intervening and occupying the Ottoman provinces was, however, not entirely off the table. Under Napoleon III, France would indeed play a crucial role during the European intervention in the Syrian civil war in 1860 and the occupation regime of Mount Lebanon – under the pretext of protecting the Christians in the Ottoman Empire. The repertoire of allied military interventions and (temporary) occupations – discussed, inaugurated and managed by the ambassadorial or ministerial conferences – was further transposed into the mandate system of the League of Nations after the First World War. In this way, the conference system of sanctifying and executing collective security operations can also be seen as having been an example for later colonial interventions.⁴⁸

46 Charles-André Julien, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine. Vol 1: La conquête et les débuts de la colonisation (1827–1871)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979), 59–60; Albert Pingaud, 'Le projet Polignac (1829)', *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique* 14 (1900), 402–10.

47 Alfred Stern, 'Der grosse Plan des Herzogs von Polignac vom Jahre 1829', *Historische Vierteljahresschrift* 3 (1900), 49–77, at 67–9.

48 Ozan Ozavci, *Dangerous Gifts: Imperialism, Security and Civil Wars in the Levant, 1798–1864* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

The Legacy of 1815

The security managers and 'balancers' of 1815 sought to protect the future from the terrors of the past. The fight against this real or perceived 'Terror' united the states of Europe into a new hierarchy of a collective security system. In 1818, Tsar Alexander was still very worried about Napoleon. His minister at the Paris Conference, Pozzo di Borgo, forced the other allied ministers at Aachen to declare that they would not cave in to a more liberal approach or even to the release of the ailing Emperor. Pozzo also impressed on his colleagues that Napoleon's relatives had to remain under supervision and in their assigned countries.⁴⁹ After 1818, however, the Bonapartes were no longer the most important security risk (Napoleon was to die in 1821). Nor was the resurrection of France as an aggressor going to put the guardians of Europe's security to the test in the coming years. That test would prove to be the want of freedom nestled in the bosom of its own states and the flare-up of national reform movements. In fact, the rulers of the absolutist-governed countries, those who had worked the hardest to set up central intelligence agencies, databases and blacklists, became the greatest threat to their subjects. This made the finding of a common moral ground in the fight against 'Terror' and persistence in the organisation of deliberations and mutual discussions more difficult. Rifts began to widen between more reactionary states and liberal, constitutional ones, between imperial powers and land-locked powers.

The last 'successfully' collective military intervention was staged by the French army into Spain, in 1823. Although France acted on its own, its actions were legitimated by conference diplomacy and by the support of most of the other European nations at the Congress of Verona. The debate on a possible joint intervention in Latin America ended in a stalemate among the European ambassadors as they discussed it in endless rounds in Paris, though its real death came with the announcement of the Monroe Doctrine in Washington. Whereas John Adams, when he was still ambassador and State Secretary, frequently asked Castlereagh to be invited to the ambassadorial conferences and to the European concert in 1815, 1816 and 1817, by 1823 he could do without the concert, when the United States went at it alone. Similarly, with George Canning's ascent, Britain made itself heard through her increase of

49 Carlo Pozzo di Borgo, 'Mémoire sur Napoleon' [sic], Aix-la-Chapelle, AT-OeStA /HHStA, StK, Kongressakten, inv. No. 18, Subfolder 'Protokolle. Aachen 1818', map fasc. 32, 34-47b.

commercial and naval power, and other countries likewise tried to go it alone.⁵⁰

With its focus on imperially inspired, hierarchical peace and security, the system was less stable than the signatories of the Quadruple Alliance had hoped, not only with regard to social and political peace at home, but also in international relations. Imperialist security, per definition, exhibited expansive and totalitarian tendencies, with the result that the great powers of Europe at times came to stand off against each other. As memories of Napoleonic domination faded, the ties that bound Europe together loosened. During the nineteenth century, imperialist interests began to collide more frequently, and the instrument of managing these collisions through collaborative forums was put at risk as soon as populist power-brokers and demagogues began to determine international politics. Moreover, the architects and managers of the conference system gradually disappeared from the global stage. Castlereagh committed suicide in 1822. Tsar Alexander died unexpectedly of typhus fever in 1825. Gruner also did not live long after being promoted away to Switzerland. Metternich and Wellington remained in the saddle for a long time, but their political stardom faded.⁵¹ When he was prime minister, Wellington's Conservative government became entangled in violent clashes and the refusal to implement new parliamentary reforms. In France, Louis XVIII was consumed by gangrene and his brother, who came to power as Charles X in 1824, exacerbated the polarisation. In 1830, the House of Bourbon had to clear the field for good.⁵² The satellite state of the Netherlands was split in half, and Belgium became independent and neutral, the Wellington Barrier thereby losing its value in one fell swoop.⁵³ Popular support was bought off by launching offshore colonial projects, in India or North Africa, where the French, having endured their own occupation, tried to occupy Algeria. No longer thinking in terms of a balance of power, domestic-driven nationalism was the catalyst for the disintegration of the Vienna system in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ Wellington in his old age (he lived to 1853 and even ended up in a black-and-white

50 David Waldstreicher (ed.), *John Quincy Adams: Diaries, 1779–1821* (New York: Library of America, 2017), 392, 395, 444, 501, 568–9; 'Letter Bagot to Castlereagh', 29 June 1818, in Charles William Vane (ed.), *Correspondence, Dispatches and other Papers of Viscount Castlereagh, Second Marquess of Londonderry, part II* (London: W. Shoberl, 1853), 458–9.

51 Cf. Rory Muir, *Wellington and the Fortunes of Peace 1814–1852* (London: Yale University Press, 2018), 139–45.

52 Rory Muir, *Wellington: Waterloo and the Fortunes of Peace, 1814–1852* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 383–400, 472–4.

53 Belgium did not have an adequate army to man the forts.

54 Osiander, *The State Systems of Europe*, 251.

photograph) made quite a fuss about these developments. He found populists' catering to public sentiment through the press and their blind eye to the need for collective security both extremely distasteful and definitely harmful.⁵⁵

Still, the second half of the nineteenth century again saw a round of conferences. Many of these late nineteenth-century conferences had technological innovations and industrially induced challenges on the agenda. Their conveners were moreover situated at sub-ministerial levels. Professional conferences, below the ministerial level persisted. Therefore, we could argue, that on an institutional and professional level, the conferences were the real legacy that remained from the joint coalition warfare against Napoleon. With the great powers as the engines, the conferences were the nuts and bolts of the international states system. Safety valves were only installed gradually in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in the wake provided by international legal norms, treaties and institutionalised orders. The actual gatekeepers of the transformation of the international states system after 1815 were therefore not necessarily the sovereigns and princes of that era, but their bureaucrats, deputies, officers, diplomats, experts, managers, bankers and lawyers. It was this professional caste of administrators that came out on top in the decades that followed. They reformed taxation policies, continued the standardisation of identification and registration practices, and built up transnational expertise regarding unhindered maritime and Rhine river navigation. Thanks to their knowledge, the joint European powers managed to force the Ottoman Empire to its knees in the Greek wars for independence.⁵⁶ They were the ones who mapped the newly acquired or occupied territories and implemented a new, colonial or imperialist administration, not just in the second half of the nineteenth century, but already in 1815. 'Grand technicians', like Cornelis Krayenhoff at the Wellington Barrier, and Karl von Müffling, for the German fortresses, came up with new metrics and all sorts of innovations for hydraulic engineering and military use. Security professionals, such as Gruner, staffed the new intelligence centres in Mainz, Vienna and Milan, and bankers, such as Baring, came up with new forms of transnational lending. The period 1815–18, so often glossed over in the trendsetting historical surveys, was not the calm that had arisen after the Napoleonic storm. It planted the seed of a new, modern system of European collective security – including the irrevocably linked imperialist surveillance of one's own population – and increased territorial expansion at the expense of the non-European world.

55 Muir, *Wellington: Waterloo*, 549. 56 Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 140–4.