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# 2016

## H-Diplo

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Introduction by Jonathan Sperber

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## Introduction by Jonathan Sperber, University of Missouri

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Modern European history was under the anniversary spotlight in 2014-2015. The centenary of the beginning of the First World War brought forth a steady stream of commemorations and publications. Standing out was Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers*, a global bestseller, whose controversial reinterpretation of the crisis of July 1914 and of the responsibility for its violent outcome ignited a widespread academic and public debate.<sup>1</sup> Overshadowed by the anniversary of the Great War's outbreak was the bicentenary of another great war's conclusion, two hundred years after the end of the Napoleonic wars. In this relatively subdued realm, most of the attention was devoted to the final instance of armed conflict, with official commemorations of, books about, large-scale reenactments of, and multimedia exhibitions displaying the Battle of Waterloo.

Hidden behind all these moments of bellicosity was a remarkable instance of its opposite, an attempt to restore peace and stability to the European continent after a quarter century of upheaval, the Congress of Vienna of 1814-1815. Of course, one might wonder what there is left to say about that peace conference, which is perhaps best known today as the subject of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's Ph.D. dissertation. Balance of power or hegemony, restoration, legitimacy, constitutionalism, nationalism, even the periwigged and knee breech-wearing aristocratic Congress delegates, dancing and flirting with charming salon hostesses—it has all been discussed before, *ad nauseum*.

Brian Vick's excellent monograph shows that such a jaundiced judgment is false, and that the Congress fully deserves its commemorative moment in the sun. His book provides three new perspectives on the Congress, all based on extensive research into primary sources—and not just the usual memoirs and diplomatic correspondence of the representatives of the Great Powers, but rarely used manuscripts of contemporary observers, ephemera, and objects of material culture. The upshot is a striking reinterpretation of the Congress, the practice of diplomacy and the political culture of post-Napoleonic Europe, which substantially enhances our understanding of the era while opening new possibilities for historical investigation and provoking scholarly debate.

One element of Vick's reinterpretation concerns the nature of the proceedings at Vienna. The author points out that it was not just a gathering of diplomats but an immense public spectacle, a *Friedensfest*, a festival of peace. Parades, displays, festivals, commemorative objects, pamphlets, and press reports brought the impact of the gathering to a nascent public sphere, not just in Vienna, but across Europe. The use of the phrase 'public sphere' in this context is no accident, since Vick explicitly adopts the concept of the German philosopher-sociologist Jürgen Habermas to thematize and theorize this aspect of the proceedings.<sup>2</sup> He also deploys the results of his empirical research to criticize Habermas's conceptualization by pointing to the salons, the regular receptions hosted by elite women—whether blue-blooded aristocratic ladies or the wives of Jewish bankers—as an example of a form of semi-public representation that does not quite fit Habermas's theory of a transition from an aristocratic to a bourgeois public sphere.

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (New York: Harper, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

The second reinterpretation deals with the object of the negotiations. Vick certainly investigates the key issues of territorial realignments, especially the vexed Polish-Saxon question that seemed, at the beginning of 1815, as if it might lead to a new war among the victorious powers. But he also turns to relatively under-illuminated topics of the Congress's proceedings. One we might call the global Congress of Vienna—in particular, the negotiations leading to the promulgation of a condemnation of the slave trade by all of Europe's powers, but also the abortive attempts to regularize relations between the Christian Great Powers and the Islamic realms of the eastern and southern Mediterranean. Globalization is a historical hot topic at the moment, but the Congress marked the end of one age of globalization in European diplomacy and power politics, the post-1500 struggle for overseas empires, and the beginning of a 65-year-long interlude before the start of a new one, with the new imperialism and the scramble for Africa. Perhaps more relevant is Vick's extensive discussion of questions of religion at the Congress, two of which stand out: the creation of a new status for the Catholic Church, whose existence had been severely disrupted—at times, mortally threatened—by the French Revolution, and the ultimately abortive efforts at devising an improved legal status for the Jews of central and eastern Europe.

The third arena of reinterpretation is the political universe of the Congress participants. Rejecting descriptions of the diplomats as benighted reactionaries, who were striving to restore a pre-1789 status quo or religious fanatics, trying to create an other-worldly Holy Alliance, Vick portrays them as predominantly 'reform conservatives,' whose attitudes had a lot in common with those of early nineteenth century European liberals. This evaluation of the leading figures of the Congress is perhaps not quite so novel as many of the book's other assertions. Rather more innovative is Vick's suggestion that the statesmen were not determined opponents of nationalism, but sought to integrate nationalist ideas into multinational empires and a pan-European diplomatic order that would keep the peace. Nationalism appears in his account as a politically multivalent force, not necessarily opposed to other forms of identity and loyalty and with many different varieties of political expression.

Such wide-ranging reinterpretations are bound to stimulate debate, as the reviews in this symposium suggest. I can mention two areas of controversy for readers to consider. One concerns the evaluation of the relationship between the events of the Congress that were designed to appeal to a broader public, and the private negotiations between representatives of the Powers. Mark Jarrett and Ambrogio Caiani see the two as co-existing without necessarily influencing each other, or at least understanding their mutual impact as unclear. Katherine Aaslestad, by contrast, perceives public opinion as a decisive force, enabling the diplomats to resolve hotly disputed issues, like the Polish-Saxon question. I might add, following in the footsteps of the observations of Peter Jackson about whether salons can count as part of the public, that it might be helpful to place this relationship between diplomacy and the public sphere in a developmental context. Public life in 1814-15 was still rather primitive. This was also a period in which diplomats could make use of the public sphere, but were not required to respond to initiatives developing in it, as would be the case later in the nineteenth century, to say nothing of the years after 1900.

A second area of controversy concerns Vick's interpretations of the political intentions of the Congress's architects. Both Jackson and Caiani are skeptical of the extent to which nationalism was actually reconcilable with the principle of legitimacy and the post-revolutionary territorial realignments established by the Congress. Certainly by the revolutions of 1848 it was not. But even as early as the immediate aftermath of the Congress, between 1816 and 1825, there were revolutionary upheavals, or confrontations reaching the verge of revolution, in the Great Powers, Russia, Prussia, France, and Great Britain, in the smaller German and Italian states, and in Spain, Portugal, and Greece, pitting supporters and opponents of the principles of the

Congress against one another. These raise questions about the limits of the reforms of Vick's reform conservatives, and about the compatibility of the new political principles stemming from the French Revolution with the ideals of the diplomats at Vienna. But whatever one's opinion of these issues there can be no doubt that Brian Vick's book has given us a lot to consider about the Congress of Vienna and placed it squarely in the front rank of centenary and bicentenary commemorations.

**Participants:**

**Brian Vick** is Associate Professor of History at Emory University. He is the author of *Defining Germany: The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), and *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), winner of the 2015 Hans Rosenberg Book Prize of the Central European History Society of the American Historical Association. He has written essays on German nationalism, historicism, and ideas of race. He has recently published several articles and essays for the Congress bicentennial, including on salons and festive culture in international relations and the growth of civil society in Austria, [see Brian Vick, "The Congress of Vienna as an Event in Austrian History: Civil Society and Politics in the Habsburg Empire at the End of the Wars against Napoleon," *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015): 109-133; idem. "Der Kongress tanzt, und arbeitet trotzdem. Festkultur und Kabinettpolitik," in Thomas Just, Wolfgang Maderthaner, and Helene Maimann, eds., *Die Erfindung Europas. Der Wiener Kongress 1814/15* (Vienna: Gerold, 2014), 268-285], and is completing another on the origins of humanitarian and liberal imperialist diplomacy in the efforts to abolish the African slave trade and interdict the Barbary corsairs during and after the Congress of Vienna.

**Jonathan Sperber** received his Ph.D. in modern European history at the University of Chicago in 1980. He has been at the University of Missouri since 1984, since 2003 as the Curators' Professor of History. Among his books on the political, social and religious history of nineteenth century Europe are *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth Century Germany* (1984); *Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848-1849* (1991); *Property and Civil Society in South-Western Germany, 1820 – 1914* (2005) and *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth Century Life* (2013). Sperber's current project is a global history of the years 1945 – 2001, "The Age of Interconnection."

**Katherine Barbara Aaslestad** is Professor of History at West Virginia University. She is the author of *Place and Politics: Local Identity, Civic Culture, and German Nationalism in North Germany during the Revolutionary Era* (Brill Press, 2005) and co-editor with Johan Joor of *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System: Local, Regional, and European Experiences* (Palgrave, 2014). She has also co-edited special issues on war and gender in *Central European History* and *European History Quarterly*. She has published articles on republican political culture in the Hanseatic cities, gender and consumption, and the Napoleonic Wars in northern Europe as book chapters in a variety of edited volumes. Her current book project is tentatively titled "After the Wars: German Central Europe after Napoleonic Conquest, 1815-1840".

**Ambrogio A. Caiani** is Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of Kent, Canterbury. His *Louis XVI and the French Revolution 1789-1792* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2012. He is currently researching a book on the problems of collaboration in Napoleonic Italy. He is also organising an international conference entitled "The Price of Peace, Modernising the Ancien Régime: Europe 1815-1848," which will take place in Paris in August 2016.

**Peter Jackson** holds the Chair in Global Security at the University of Glasgow. He received his doctorate from the University of Cambridge. Before taking up his chair at Glasgow, he taught at Carleton University, Yale University, Aberystwyth University and the University of Strathclyde. During the 2012-2013 academic year he was Visiting Professor at the *Institut d'Études Politiques* in Paris. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the subject of intelligence, security and policy-making. Jackson's most recent monograph is *Beyond the Balance of Power: France and the Politics of National Security in the Era of the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). He is now writing history of statecraft since the French Revolution.

**Mark Jarrett** received a B.A. from Columbia University, an M.A. in international history from the LSE, a J.D. from UC Berkeley, where he was an editor of the school's law review and Order of the Coif, and a Ph.D. in history from Stanford University. He was an attorney in the San Francisco office of the international law firm of Baker & McKenzie. He is the author of *The Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy After Napoleon* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2013) and is currently completing a book, *Castlereagh and Counter-Revolution: Enlightened Conservatism and the Political Order*, to be published by I.B. Tauris. His article "The Struggle for Poland at the Congress of Vienna" was published in the December 2014 issue of *History Today*.

**Review by Katherine Aaslestad, West Virginia University**

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The Congress of Vienna was never meant to be solely a meeting of statesmen and diplomats, Brian Vick's 2014 book reminds us. It was also a public celebration of peace. Most conventional studies of the Congress, however, treat almost exclusively the statesmen and monarchs who negotiated the post-Napoleonic settlement meant to ensure peace and stability for Europe. Vick argues that such narratives focus too narrowly on power politics, and his work expands the conception of politics to include the rich and complex European political culture where "influence politics" intersected with both political culture and the international system (328). As for the agents engaged in "influence politics," Vick includes powerful elites, the court, diplomats, government figures, other levels of society, and public opinion circulating in salons, social circles, and press and pamphlet literature.

Vick's book, *The Congress of Vienna Power and Politics after Napoleon*, takes a broader perspective of the participants than traditional accounts and includes networks of operators and agents representing an increasingly politicized public that gathered in Vienna in 1814 and 1815. His enjoyable study considers the influence of salons, state festivals and spectacles, court and growing consumer culture, and the political press in shaping public opinion and illustrates the rich and complex political culture of the early nineteenth century. In contrast to an elite group of decision-makers, a truly international public that includes men, women, the nobility and the middle class, Christians and Jews, liberals and conservatives from across Europe populate Vick's study. By exploring the social webs, correspondence, and political opinions of this broader public, Vick illustrates existing world views, popular assumptions, systems of knowledge, and beliefs about the nature and practice of politics, the nature of states and nations, and the popular hopes for international stability that shaped discourse both in the public realm and in the antechambers of power in Vienna.

Instead of tracing a diplomatic narrative of the Vienna Congress, Vick explores the role of the international public in the diplomatic decisions made in Vienna and argues that statesmen were constrained and influenced by the larger public realm. In order to manage this international public and make sense of its possible influences, Vick conceives of the realm of salons and the press as social and political webs and networks. He asserts that the state and civil society blended in the realm of the festive culture, salon sociability, and the press. Vick's study attempts to bring attention to themes that coexisted with and, he argues, shaped power politics: a growing and politicized civil society, humanitarian sensibilities, a re-evaluation of constitutionalism and nationalism, and the role of the press and public opinion.

Vick begins his study with an affirmation of the Congress as a celebration of peace, as he brings the public experience of the Congress to life in his early chapters, describing Vienna's culture of display evident in military parades, religious ceremonies, court festivities, popular celebrations like the *Volksfest*, illuminations, and such spectacles as the panoramas. Although this culture of display drew heavily on traditional representative culture and pre-existing institutions and language, it also included civic elements of representation, grassroots patriotism, market forces, and a cross-class sociability comprised of men and women, the court, and the urban populace. Military and court festivals reached backward and forward; they reinforced traditional authority as they engaged a broad public in patriotic and nationalist discourses (238). Of all the court celebrations that honored the emperor and visiting royalty in Vienna, the military spectacles were the most innovative, Vick argues, as they fostered a close identification between the soldiers and the populace who celebrated their own role in gaining sovereignty. Likewise, Vick presents the *Volksfest* as an event that openly celebrated Austrian dynastic and state-based patriotism within a supranational Empire.

These festivities, therefore, illustrate changing ideas about popular identification with the state following two decades of war.

In contrast to other works that address the role of women at the Congress with an emphasis on sexual intrigue and amorous affairs, Vick's study gives women a political rather than objectified presence.<sup>1</sup> He takes seriously women's activities in hosting salons, where they acted as mediators of information and social spaces across class and religious lines. He emphasizes that their presence at teas, receptions, dinners, and other festivities was not frivolous; rather, women participated in discussions and drew their own conclusions based on conversations, articles in the press, and insider knowledge. For example, Vick points to the role of the Viennese salons of Baroness Fanny Arnstein and her sister Baroness Cécilie Eskeles to counter the effects of Habsburg censorship on the Saxon Question and carry on the salons' role of enabling varied viewpoints within the public sphere by circulating copies of the banned pamphlet *German Views on the Union of Saxony with Prussia* written by State Chancellor Prince Karl August von Hardenberg's "hired pen" Karl Varnhagen von Ense (298). Vick reveals that women documented and shared their views in correspondence with various networks and contributed to the political discourse at the Congress.

Vick features the role of humanitarianism in Congress negotiations and the political press by including such topics as minority religious rights and the abolition of slavery, which were often overlooked in past studies. These chapters also illustrate the problem of the universalist language of rights in contrast to local traditions and state sovereignty. Vick reveals that statesmen in Vienna spent more time addressing religious politics than most general studies reflect, and he emphasizes that ecumenical sentiments generated attempts to reconstruct the Catholic Church, promote freedom of religion, and guarantee free religious worship across Europe following wars that left millions under new rulers of different confessions. The Kingdom of Netherlands set an example by favoring protection for religious minorities, including Jewish emancipation. In Vienna, however, there was no consensus on the meaning and practice of religious freedom, as is especially evidenced in debates from the new German Confederation. Vick points to states like Calvinist Bremen that sought to return to its pre-Napoleonic religious and civic order and expel Jews who had relocated there in wake of Napoleonic reforms. Jewish communities employed a language based on universal rights, whereas the opposing cities drew on justification for local sovereignty to oppose federal interference in internal affairs. Likewise, the universalist language of humanitarian protection and the promotion of basic human rights animated Congress negotiations over the abolition of slavery among all nations and was especially pronounced in the press and pamphlet literature. Although even Spain and Portugal eventually agreed with the general principle of abolition, both states insisted on setting their own conditions with regard to the trade in their colonies. Despite discourse on human rights at the Congress, questions of states' rights and power limited the implementation of practices based on universal principles.

Vick rejects many of the simplistic interpretations of the Congress of Vienna as a predominately conservative settlement that repudiated liberal aspirations and ignored nationalist sentiments. Vick points out that conservative, especially reform conservative and liberal ideas, remained closely linked and were not exclusive.

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<sup>1</sup> The most recent work that represents this approach is Adam Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace, The Fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna* (New York: Harper, 2007). In contrast see articles by Glenda Sluga, "On the Historical Significance of the Presence, and Absence, of Women at the Congress of Vienna," *L'Homme* 25/2 (2014): 49-62 and "Madame de Stael and the Transformation of European Politics, 1812-1817," *International History Review* 37/1 (2015): 142-166.



He argues that both camps respected public opinion, sought to prevent renewed revolution and concomitant warfare, and viewed limited constitutions as the best possible tool for staving off radical revolution through compromise and limited reforms. He highlights the unprecedented constitutional settlements of the era, which have often been overlooked by other historians, as part of diplomatic efforts to court public opinion, maintain state sovereignty, foster stability, and integrate and reconcile new populations; simply put, constitutions were one of the best ways to satisfy post-war Europeans without dangerous experiments that might lead to radical ends (240).

Vick's conclusions on constitutionalism reflect 'new constitutional histories' like Markus Prutsch's *Making Sense of Constitutional Monarchism in Post-Napoleonic France and Germany*, which argues that "in 1814 and 1815 the concept of 'constitutional monarchism' was regarded as being hardly more than a temporary tool to politically stabilise continental Europe after the Revolution and Napoleonic Age."<sup>2</sup> Prutsch presents constitutional monarchism as a compromise that provided a representative constitutional system as it retained many of the monarch's traditional rights. It was a means to overcome the political fragmentation of the post-revolutionary and Napoleonic era and to harmonize monarchical power with the widespread push for liberty. The appeal of constitutions in the South German states, moreover, related to new challenges associated with financial consolidation, territorial and social integration, and the safeguarding of state sovereignty. Curiously, Vick does not address public expectations for constitutions expressed in the public sphere, which would have confirmed the role of constitutionalism as a public concern.

Vick's book also adds nuance to the meaning of nationalism as discussed in Vienna. He points out that scholars have traditionally criticized the statesmen and rulers of 1814 and 1815 for an insufficient awareness of nationalism and the rights of nationalities (266). In contrast, he argues that national ideas were widely discussed within the Congress milieu, and that political leaders understood that they had been fighting a war of nations based on a wave of patriotic mobilization against Napoleon. In contrast to the early twentieth-century nation-state nationalism, Vick draws on recent scholarship that highlights the variety of overlapping political allegiances, regionalism, state and territorial patriotism, dynastic loyalty, and cultural nationalism to present a nuanced understanding of nationalism in the early nineteenth century. Vick asserts that an awareness of the rights of peoples and nations influenced the statesmen and public at large in Vienna evidenced in settlement decisions as well as in the political press. Respect for national sentiments was compatible with fostering loyalty to supranational dynasties and the diplomatic settlements reached at Vienna, as evidenced in the case of the former Swiss territory Valtellina retaining its association with Lombardy in the Habsburg empire's northern Italian territories (264-266). As Paul Schroeder notes, although the statesmen of the era did not believe in popular sovereignty, they endeavored to meet popular wishes as they recognized that popular feelings affected the durability of the settlement.<sup>3</sup> In cases such as the Low Countries, international security concerns preempted popular satisfaction. Even so, the union of Belgium to the Kingdom of

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<sup>2</sup> Markus J. Prutsch, *Making Sense of Constitutional Monarchism in Post-Napoleonic France and Germany* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 217.

<sup>3</sup> Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848* (Oxford, Calrendon Press, 1994), 561-562, 576.

Netherlands in 1814 and 1815 did not ignore regional sentiments; it was intended as a federal union under one crown that would accommodate regional differences.<sup>4</sup>

Vick underscores that leaders like Austria's Foreign Minister Prince Clemens Wenzel von Metternich made distinctions between political nationalism and a 'national spirit' or cultural nationalism; Metternich himself was willing to work with national sentiments. The book provides examples of how Metternich also viewed regionalism as a means to support and strengthen attachment to dynasty and empire, and in fact he hoped the 'Lombard spirit' and Galician regionalism would help incorporate Italians and Poles into a broader Habsburg identity (275-276). "Step-wise identity building," as Vick describes it, encouraged local patriotism and cultural nationalism to strengthen loyalty to the dynasty and empire, and discussions of these "hierarchies of attachment" were evident in the communications among various social networks including William von Humboldt, Friedrich Schiller, Baroness Germaine de Staël, Friederich Genz and Friedrich and Dorothea Schlegel (274). The degree to which these ideas actually influenced or shaped territorial policies in Vienna, however, remains unclear.

As noted, much of Vick's study emphasizes the role of 'influence politics' at the Vienna Congress. He features the role of such social networks as the salons and the press in cultivating and circulating public opinion that informed and even shaped the decisions reached in Vienna. Vick defines public opinion as the thoughts of political, social, and cultural elites about concerns at the Congress and the broader engagement with these matters in the public sphere (295). In his final chapter on the territorial disputes regarding the Polish and Saxon Questions, he emphasizes the role of public opinion by exploring statesmen's attempts to shape opinion in the press and their serious efforts to monitor public views, as they were aware that public opinion or 'popular will' could serve as a proxy for self-determination. He also demonstrates that other powers remained very concerned with the British public's views on Poland and Saxony, since Britain was the most powerful state at the Congress, and its government seemed to be swayed by pressures within and beyond Britain (293).

The central role of press and pamphlet campaigns in international relations was also important beyond Vienna, as underscored in Ruth Hemstad's book, *"Like a Herd of Cattle," Parliamentary and Public Debates regarding the Cession of Norway 1813-1814*.<sup>5</sup> She traces the propaganda campaign on the 'Norwegian question' initiated by Swedish Crown Prince Charles John (Jean Bernadotte) to facilitate a union between Sweden and Norway (which was part of Denmark until 1814) as promised him by Britain as just compensation for losing Finland to Russia in 1809. Hemstad analyzes the press war between Sweden and Denmark, especially as it sought to influence British public opinion. She views it as an early example of 'public diplomacy,' part of a diplomatic effort to influence public opinion in order to make a favorable impression of one's own foreign policy. Although Vick does not draw on the terminology of 'public diplomacy,' his treatment of the *Federkrieg* (war of quills) launched on the Saxon Question demonstrates that the press campaigns and pamphlet wars over the fate of Saxony reflect many of the key themes raised by Hemstad. Vick identifies the key papers, writers, and state players, in particular the Prussian-Bavaria contest to win German public opinion, as well as European wide press campaigns (302-304). Like Hemstad, he

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 561.

<sup>5</sup> Ruth Hemstad, *«Like a herd of cattle». Parliamentary and Public Debates Regarding the Cession of Norway, 1813-1814* (Oslo: Akademisk Forlaget, 2014).

recognizes that the rhetorical strategies within the press and pamphlet campaigns reflected the arguments made by diplomats in representing state interests, the law of nations from Emer de Vattel and Hugo Grotius, both of whom were legal experts on international law, as well as matters of dynastic allegiance, patriotism, and German nationalism (307). He also notes petitions from such corporate bodies as the city councils in Dresden and Leipzig that arrived in Vienna to advocate for an undivided Saxony with Friedrich August as king. Although Vick illustrates that public opinion swung against Prussia's acquisition of Saxony, in particular in the British public sphere, the reader is left to speculate on the degree to which this public discourse influenced the rulers and diplomats in their reevaluation of the fate of Saxony in 1814 and early 1815.

Vick concludes that the decisions in Vienna on Saxony represented a compromise between the dictates of power politics and the need to appease public opinion in Europe. He argues that once public opinion swung against Prussia's acquisition of Saxony, in particular in the British public sphere, Prussia was compelled to compromise on Saxon acquisitions, illustrating the role of public opinion in diplomatic negotiations (309-310). He asserts that statesmen considered public opinion in determining how to realize their goals and oppose their opponents. He examines the diplomats, *salonnières*, and writers in Vienna as all contributing to a common network of discourses based on political languages, social systems, and practices that were both inherited and unquestioned as much as they were manipulated to achieve certain goals (331).

Vick's book on political culture during the Congress of Vienna is an important contribution, as it recognizes a broad engaged political public concerned with and communicating about the key ideas and events that animated negotiations at the end of the wars.<sup>6</sup> His work also clarifies that the Congress occupied itself with much more than territorial changes; it addressed the humanitarian problems of slavery and rights for religious minorities, demonstrated concerns about instability in the Ottoman Empire, and supported constitutionalism as a means to maintain political stability and the rule of law. These points enhance our understanding of the Congress, but do not supplant the interpretations provided by Paul Schroeder and others who focus on the question of state and international security.<sup>7</sup> Schroeder demonstrates that political consensus on security and law, respect for sovereignty, and building a lasting peace led to a new international system at Vienna.<sup>8</sup> Power, employing and restraining it, and the quest for security were the key components of that process. Russia's withdrawal of support for Prussian expansion in Saxony in order to meet the goals of a larger international settlement had far more influence than public opinion on the Saxon Question. Compensating or satisfying Prussia with the Rhineland had no apparent relation to German public opinion; it represented a Great-Power decision to minimally satisfy Prussia, support an independent German federation, and check France in the west. Vick's work, read with studies that underscore the importance of power politics, negotiation, and

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<sup>6</sup> For recent work on political culture at the Congress see Jonas Teune, "Revolution wegtanzen! Die Hintergrund der Feierlichkeiten auf dem Wiener Kongress 1814-15," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 94/1 (2012): 177-200 and Reinhard Stauber, Florian Kerschbaumer, Marion Koschier (eds.), *Mächtepolitik und Friedenssicherung: Zur politischen Kultur Europas im Zeichen des Wiener Kongresses* (Wien u.a.: LIT 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*; Enno E. Krahe, *Metternich's German Policy*, vol. II, *The Congress of Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Wolf D. Gruner, *Der Wiener Kongress 1814/1815* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2014) and Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014)

<sup>8</sup> Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, and Paul W. Schroeder, "Did the Vienna System Rest on a Balance of Power," *American Historical Review* 97/3 (June 1992): 683-706.

compromise necessary to ensure a lasting peace, enriches our understanding of the Vienna Congress and its influence. His lasting contribution for diplomatic historians is his broad and rich representation of a European civil society engaged on many levels with the pressing issue of reconciliation and stability following two decades of war.

**Review by Ambrogio A. Caiani, University of Kent<sup>1</sup>**

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The year 2015 has descended upon us and the attention of nineteenth century historians, rightly, has turned to the bicentenaries of the Congress of Vienna and the Battle of Waterloo. These events, regardless of their participants' intentions, heralded the beginning of a century of profound transformation in European politics and culture. Such centennial commemorations often carry more than a slight whiff of contrivance. They allow mass audiences to express pious nostalgia or, worse, a lazy means of justifying the present. Such superficiality, thankfully, seems very distant from the minds of scholars reflecting on the diplomatic negotiations that took place in the Habsburg capital two hundred years ago. Distinguished researchers working across Europe's great archives are publishing some very fine volumes. These studies will undoubtedly open minds and shape historiographical debates for decades to come. Brian Vick's new monograph is a highly original, and generally successful, attempt to examine the political culture that influenced the Congress. The approach taken is certainly very different from traditional narratives, which have focused their microscopes on the finer details of high-level negotiations between monarchs and statesmen.

Indeed, the pages of this magnificently researched volume are full of surprises. The 'Saxony-Poland question,' generally the leitmotif of any history of the Congress of Vienna, is placed purposefully at the end of this study. Throughout the main body of the text, the reader is presented with a different perspective. The first three chapters, inspired by Jürgen Habermas' *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*,<sup>2</sup> see the Congress as marking a sort of mid-point in the transition from monarchical representational culture to public sphere. Vick defines this complex phenomenon as 'influence politics:' "the persuasive and manipulative efforts of a larger circle of court and government figures beyond the coterie immediately surrounding the ruler" (328). Thanks to this insight, the Congress emerges awash with semiotic rituals and festivities, drenched in symbolism, supported by a vast merchandising campaign, all under the critical gaze of a vast network of salons and print media. This implies not only that the Congress influenced a wider section of European society than had hitherto been appreciated, but, counter-intuitively, the diplomats also had to cast a 'backwards glance' towards the expectations of a European public unwilling to accept a role of passive spectatorship. This argument is generally compelling, although the first half of the chapter two 'selling the congress' is the weakest of the entire work, and might well have been excised. One wonders how much the knickknacks, curios, and other Congress memorabilia on sale actually reflected anything as exalted as political culture.

The subsequent sections are controversial, as they seek to recalibrate the importance of a number of familiar themes: religion, the abolition of slavery, and constitutionalism. These usually have been interpreted as incidental to the real business of the Congress, but Vick attempts a major re-interpretation. Building on the conclusions of the previous three chapters, he subtly highlights that these questions were vital concerns for the salon-going and newspaper reading public of Europe. The author, rightly, admonishes his readers not to apply twentieth-, let alone twenty-first, century categories of analysis to the discussions and outcomes of 1815. Religion, nation, conservatism, liberalism and reaction were evolving concepts that did not possess sharp

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<sup>1</sup> This review first appeared, in slightly different form, in the *International History Review* 37:5 (2015): 1105-1107. We thank Professor Andrew Williams, editor of *IHR*, for his kind permission to re-publish the review.

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

definitional edges. Following this, Vick proposes a much broader understanding of nationalism, one that fittingly eschews narrow boundaries. Accordingly: “national ideas and practices [...] identities also form through nested relationships within overarching, ever more inclusive hierarchies of attachment, from local and regional rivalries to regional and national identities, with the national not always being the end of the chain. But extending to larger dynastic or religious supranational identities, or indeed to the level of a cosmopolitan or European identity that was quite significant then as now” (272). This point is elegantly restated throughout the pages of this book, but is also one that will certainly elicit much debate. Especially when this broad understanding is transported outside the elegant surroundings of *salonnière* sociability. From a personal standpoint, I am left to wonder what is left of ‘nation’ when such a broad understanding is deployed. Readers will notice that sections on nationalism are the most slippery in terms of language and conclusions. While perhaps failing to convince entirely, Vick at least points the way to more interesting future discussions. The energy of Nationhood that was harnessed in the defeat of Napoleon could not simply be put back in the box after 1815. However, the true protagonist of this study is an interconnected pan-European public that wielded immense influence and authority on international affairs. As Vick eloquently concludes: “Metternich’s position remained not unlike Castlereagh’s -faced with parliamentary Britain – he had to consider not just the desires of his ruler [...] but also the loudly spoken mutterings or loudly spoken views of Austrian and European high society” (329). This book deploys an intellectually sophisticated means of understanding the Congress of Vienna that will also benefit those interested in the history of international relations more broadly. It is bound to inspire not just historians but scholars from sister disciplines as well.

Review by Peter Jackson, University of Glasgow

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Brian Vick's study of the Congress of Vienna is a superb work of scholarship that will be of interest not only to historians of politics and international relations during the early nineteenth century, but also those interested in the practice of international history more generally. Vick has produced an ambitious reinterpretation of the Vienna Congress that will become a standard point of reference in the history of nineteenth century international relations.

The familiar picture of the Congress of Vienna as dominated by balance-of-power calculations and the deeply conservative politics of Europe's leading statesmen was challenged most prominently by Paul Schroeder in the early 1990s. Schroeder argued that the years 1813-1815 marked a pivotal period in the "transformation of European politics" from a system animated by the principles of competition and power-balancing to a system based on consultation and political equilibrium.<sup>1</sup> Vick takes this argument further using a remarkably diverse array of sources, from print, visual, and material culture to memoir accounts, published documentary material, and a wide array of archival records generated by European political and diplomatic elites. Perhaps the most impressive achievement of *The Congress of Vienna* is its borrowing of methodological strategies from such diverse fields as social network analysis, the history of ideas, and the history of material culture. The result is a range of new perspectives on familiar questions, from the role of nationalist and liberal ideologies in Restoration Europe to the emergence of humanitarian causes as a factor in international politics.

One criticism of Schroeder's seminal analysis is that it underplays the importance of ideology in shaping decision-making before, during, and after the Congress of Vienna.<sup>2</sup> This is not a criticism that can be levelled at *The Congress of Vienna*. Professor Vick argues persuasively that strong currents of nationalist and liberal thought ran through the entire peace-making process and were central elements in the Vienna Settlement. To illustrate this he sets about reconstructing and reassessing "the political culture of post-Napoleonic Europe". This political culture provided the crucial context in which great power diplomacy took place. (111-112)

Vick poses a powerful challenge to recent scholarship that questions the importance of nationalism and national identity as a political force in Europe during this period. This consensus is part of a 'transnational turn' at the heart of which is a normative project highly critical of nationalism not only as an ideology but also as an object of study. Interestingly, Vick draws on the methodological strategies underpinning the transnational turn in an analysis that underlines the pervasiveness of nationalist discourse in the public sphere. Using an imaginative range of sources, from the pomp of festive culture and dynastic display to the more prosaic marketing of Congress memorabilia, Vick demonstrates the extent to which "new forms of patriotic and nationalist imagery" were prominent in both elite and public discourses. Invocations of "Germania" ran through these discourses (13, 66). Symbolic displays of dynastic power were often expressed in the grammar of national identity. The Hapsburg emperor Franz I was represented as "Germany's saviour" and the "father of the Germans" in mementos and other cultural artefacts generated by the Congress. Nationalised representations of the Prussian monarchy as "German" were increasingly common. To better understand the market for Congress memorabilia and its significance for our understanding of this period, Vick deploys the

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*; for the point about ideology see especially H.M. Scott, "Paul W. Schroeder's International System," *International History Review* 16:4 (1994): 667-668.

interesting concept of “political consumption”. (27-29, 56, 99) The result is an important reassessment of the role of nationalist discourses in the public sphere.

The influence of liberalism is another important theme running through Vick’s analysis. This influence was manifested most obviously in the ‘wave of constitutional settlements’ that emerged out of the negotiations at Vienna. This neglected aspect of the Congress was an expression of both national and liberal currents aiming at the creation of representative institutions for national communities (even if these communities existed for the most part within multi-national empires). As a result, constitutions were devised for Restoration France, ‘Congress Poland’ and many other territories reorganised at Vienna. A central objective of the ‘German Committee,’ significantly, was to draft a constitution for the new German Confederation.

The granting of constitutions was not necessarily an expression of heartfelt liberal conviction. Vick acknowledges that constitutions could consolidate, as well as limit, the power of monarchs. He argues instead that the prevailing view of Congress politics as fundamentally conservative rests on an unhelpful binary conception of ideology as either radical or reactionary. The ideological positions of most key actors lay somewhere in the middle. Vick submits that we need new categories such as “reformist conservative” and “moderate liberal” to capture the complexities of the European ideological spectrum. He goes further to argue that there is much evidence for “the existence of an ideology of the middle” that combined liberal concerns for citizenship and representation with a belief in “historical rights and privileges” (237-238). The key point is that political elites understood that the fundamental contexts of *both* international and domestic politics had changed.<sup>3</sup> This realisation underpinned decision-making on such diverse issues as the restoration of France, the status of Switzerland, and the nature of the future German Confederation.

Vick also provides important new perspectives on the rise of humanitarianism as both a transnational movement and an international norm. Recent research focuses on the late nineteenth century, and especially the First World War, as pivotal moments in the rise of humanitarianism in international politics. This book makes a strong case for the influence of humanitarian politics in great power diplomacy at Vienna, since “the logic and emotive force of humanitarian language” were impossible for political and diplomatic elites to ignore. (1950) The language of human rights was deployed by an emerging transnational civil society that lobbied reasonably effectively for such causes the final abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the protection of religious and minority rights in Central Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

The case of the slave trade is particularly illuminating. A “common declaration” drafted at Vienna invoked “the principles of humanity and of universal morality” to condemn the trade. It observed that “the public voice in all civilised countries has arisen to demand that it be ended as soon as possible” (203). Some scholars have dismissed this declaration as “cheap talk” that did not result in decisive action. But such criticisms cannot explain why such language was deployed at all. The reality is that in 1814-1815 humanitarian rhetoric

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<sup>3</sup> Here Vick is drawing, in part, on the work of a wide range of scholars, from Schroeder’s *Transformation of International Politics* to Matthias Schulz, *Normen und Praxis: Das Europäische Konzert der Großmächte als Sicherheitsrat, 1815-1860* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009) and Matthew Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism: the transformation of Prussian political culture, 1806-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).



clearly exercised what international legal theorists would nowadays describe as “normative pull”.<sup>4</sup> It could not be ignored or dismissed out of hand. This is why the core question at Vienna was not *whether* the slave trade would be abolished but *when*, and under what conditions, it would be ended.

Vick goes further in underlining the novelty and importance of the abolitionist discourse to show that the negotiations pertaining to the slave trade produced a number of firsts in the history of international relations. The “common declaration” constituted a landmark moment in the evolution of international public law as “the first truly humanitarian measure cast in universalist terms to emerge from a diplomatic gathering” (204). Proposals to impose a commercial boycott on slave trading nations, meanwhile, provide an early example of economic sanctions being mooted in international negotiations as a means of punishing states for violations of human rights. Finally, the move to establish a semi-permanent international commission to monitor compliance with abolition of the trade pointed the way towards the creation of international humanitarian agencies later in the nineteenth century. Vick rightly points out that these developments have not received the attention they merit in the international history of this period.

The wide-angle lens deployed by Vick also captures other dimensions of Congress diplomacy that have been missed or confined to the margins in the existing literature. A good example is the influence of religious revivalism. Drawing on recent research in religious history, the book identifies a trans-confessional “ecumenical moment” in 1814 (139-140). This moment, which was in many ways a reaction to a quarter century of constant warfare, shaped attitudes towards peace, diplomacy and political legitimacy. This approach offers a fresh perspective on issues ranging from the politics of Catholic reconstruction to the diplomacy of the Holy Alliance. Vick’s approach also casts new light on the central role of women in transnational networks of political sociability. If historians have long recognised that ‘salon culture’ was an important dimension of Congress politics, the extent to which this culture was animated by female political engagement has not been fully understood. Vick explores this engagement in painstaking detail in his careful reconstruction of the overlapping social networks present in Vienna salon culture.

These various lines of interpretation come together to support an overarching argument about the nature of international relations and great power diplomacy. For Vick, cultural context is more than merely one factor among others in the calculations of international political actors. It is the precondition for these calculations. The way policy elites understand the world sets the parameters for what is possible, and what is not, in international relations:

Notions of ideology, constitutions and even nationality molded the language of interested parties and diplomats alike. This was true not simply as a matter of rhetorical strategy (important though patterns of rhetoric are in their own right): constitutional and national arguments also functioned as lenses to interpret and even decide diplomatic issues. (234)

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, J. Goldsmith and E.A. Posner, “The New International Law Scholarship,” *Journal of International and Comparative Law* 34 (2006): 464-466; C.K. Lamont, *International Criminal Justice and the Politics of Compliance* (London: Ashgate, 2010), esp. 174-178.

Belief systems thus constitute ‘the matrix and stimuli’ from which political elites “drew ideas and motivation” (331). This conviction underpins Vick’s analysis throughout the book. It justifies the effort to which Vick has gone to reconstruct European political culture after Napoleon.

It follows that research and conclusions in *The Congress of Vienna* will be of great interest to international relations (IR) theorists. Vick’s overarching argument has interesting implications for one of the ‘great debates’ in this field: that over role of ideas in international politics. ‘Realist’ IR theory assumes that the anarchical nature of the international system imposes a logic of competition among states. This logic has powerful agency in its own right. It induces state actors to pursue power and security, usually at the expense of other states. ‘Constructivist’ IR theory, conversely, rejects the assumption that the system imposes a logic that is independent of the understandings and expectations of individual actors. They argue instead that “anarchy is what states make of it.”<sup>5</sup> Vick’s interpretation, like that of Paul Schroeder, on balance supports the latter theoretical position. Bitter experience had fostered a desire among European statesmen to reform the international system and replace the logic of competition with new practices aimed at promoted consultation and co-operation.<sup>6</sup> Vick submits that his evidence demonstrates “the limitations of narratives and explanations that focus narrowly on power politics” (327) Although he does not come out and say so unambiguously, the implications of his argument are that ‘power politics’ is not a law of international relations. It is rather a belief system that shapes the behaviour of political actors. This is essentially a constructivist argument.

There is therefore a great deal to praise in this ambitious and superbly-researched book. Perhaps inevitably in a study of this scope, some of Vick’s arguments left this reader stimulated but ultimately unconvinced. Perhaps the most notable of these is the way the concept of ‘public opinion’ is deployed throughout. Integrating public opinion into an analysis of elite decision-making is notoriously tricky.<sup>7</sup> But Vick is right to insist that it cannot be ignored as a consideration of growing importance for decision-making elites at this crucial juncture in the evolution of mass politics.

Vick aims to modify the familiar conceptualisation of the ‘public sphere,’ as conceived by the sociologist Jürgen Habermas, to incorporate the influence of religion, women, and transnational links of intermingled aristocratic and bourgeois sociability. This allows for consideration of a much broader spectrum of political views and provides evidence to query the judgement that the Vienna Congress marked a decisive shift to conservative politics. (7-8) This helps Vick make the argument that constitutional and human rights were far more influential in public discourse than is usually assumed.

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<sup>5</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46:2 (Spring 1992): 391-425.

<sup>6</sup> For ‘realist’ responses to this argument see Jack S. Levy, “The Theoretical Foundations of Paul W. Schroeder’s International System,” *International History Review* 16:4 (1994), 715-744 and Robert Jervis, “A Political Science Perspective on the Balance of Power and the Concert,” *American Historical Review* 97:3 (1992): 716-24.

<sup>7</sup> An excellent consideration of the methodological issues in play is Daniel Hucker, “International History and the Study of Public Opinion: towards methodological clarity,” *International History Review* 34:4 (2012): 775-794.

The great difficulty, however, is that this part of the argument relies on salon sociability as a major source with which to assess state of public opinion. “Salons,” the book contends, “served as central venues or hubs for the shaping and transmission of public opinion” (295) It is true that salons have long been included as part of the Habermasian ‘public sphere.’ But it is fair to ask whether this is justifiable. Vienna salons were in no way ‘public’ spaces. They were highly exclusive gatherings of social and political elites. They undoubtedly provide a valuable source with which to gauge the state of *elite opinion*. But it is difficult to see how they could possibly have functioned as “arenas for the contestation of *public opinion*” (14). This may be a question of semantics - a case of different terminology used by historians working in different periods (I am mainly an historian of the twentieth century). Confusion could perhaps have been avoided if we had been provided with a clear definition of what is meant by ‘public’ in the context of this study. The book provides no such definition.

Also problematic is Vick’s call for a ‘tripartite’ approach to classifying and understanding political thought during this period. Vick is undoubtedly right to argue that the categories of ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ should not be understood in binary terms. The category of ‘reform conservative’ or ‘constitutional conservatism’ is helpful because it reflects the fact that most conservatives accepted the need for limited political reform. The same is true of the category ‘moderate liberal’. Most liberals were not committed republicans. But to go further and argue for “the existence of an ideology of the middle” risks depriving both liberalism and conservatism of their ideological essence. The core difference, it seems to me, was not whether all states should have constitutions. It was instead where sovereignty was to reside *within* these constitutions. Would they establish representative institutions with real political power? Or would the power to formulate laws, to use force, and to collect and spend taxes continue to reside with monarchs? This underlines the point that all attempts at categorisation must be context-specific. The dividing line between liberal and conservative was very different in Great Britain, for example, than it was in central Europe.

Nor is Vick’s reinterpretation of the nature and role of nationalism and national identity in Congress politics entirely convincing. Vick is certainly right to point out that, in their analyses of the Congress, historians have tended to apply a conception of nationalism that was prevalent at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 but very marginal in 1815. Indeed the model of the “fully independent ethnically defined nation-state” was by no means dominant even during Paris Conference. Vick argues instead for a ‘looser definition’ of nationalist politics that could exist within multi-national dynasties and was not necessarily a step on the road to demands for statehood and independence. This is persuasive. Less convincing, however, is his call for a new approach based on “multinational identity, or the stepwise approach to national identity” (276). In this conception, if I understand the argument properly, conceptions of nationhood and national identities did not exist *alongside* local and regional identities. They were instead subsumed and became constituent elements of broader multinational conceptions of political community. Like Vick’s argument for a ‘middle-way’ between liberalism and conservatism, this formulation risks depriving national identity of its core content. One is left wondering how European nationalist movements ever evolved into campaigns for self-determination - as they certainly did over the next century.

It would be unjust to end this review on a critical note however. *The Congress of Vienna* is an outstanding work of international history. Vick’s ambitious reconstruction of the political culture of post-Napoleonic Europe provides a new perspective on the history of this period. Just as importantly, the book opens exciting new avenues for future research. This is perhaps its most impressive achievement.

Review by Mark Jarrett, Independent Historian

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Three years ago, Harvard political scientist Stephen Walt listed the top five parties of all time, based on their ‘impact’ on international history.<sup>1</sup> Walt ranked the Congress of Vienna as second and Woodstock as fifth. Ironically, it was during the Woodstock concert that the late Gordon Craig was busily writing a review of Hilde Spiel’s book on the Congress. Perhaps it was in reaction to the festive atmosphere of the summer of 1969 that the doyen of diplomatic history was so uncharacteristically acerbic:

The Congress of Vienna has always fascinated historians, but often, unfortunately, for the wrong reasons. One would have thought that Lillian Harvey, Conrad Veidt and Will Foertsch had exhausted the ‘Congress dances’ theme once and for all in their film of thirty-five years ago, but here it is again in Hilde Spiel’s ‘eyewitness account.’ This is a collection of excerpts from the memoirs of people like Goethe’s friend Bertruch, the international playboy La Garde-Chambonas, and the *saloniste* Caroline Pichler, as well as from the published reports of Metternich’s police. . . . As might have been expected from this kind of plan, there is more in this compendium about the requiem mass for Louis XVI, the death of the Prince de Ligne, and the grand tournament in the Imperial Riding School than there is about the resolution of the Saxon problem; and there is more about Frederick William’s *tendresse* for the Countess Zichy than about the way in which his pro-Russian bias hampered the tactics of his negotiators, Hardenberg and Humboldt. . . . All in all, this is an unnecessary book.<sup>2</sup>

We can forgive Professor Craig for this harsh criticism, however, because what he clearly lacked was Brian Vick’s new book. Vick shows how these two spheres—the public and social side of the Congress, and its diplomacy—so often viewed as separate by historians, were actually part and parcel of a single process.

Ten years in the making, this is a profound study of European political culture at the time of the Vienna Congress. As Vick announces in his introduction, he utilizes the moment occasioned by the Congress to provide a window for peering into the workings of European society as a whole, especially in the public sphere; then, in turn, he uses the picture that emerges of the public sphere to illuminate several of the negotiations conducted at the Congress. In the process, we are exposed to a wide cast of characters, especially from German sources, who often do not figure in English-language accounts of the Congress. Vick simultaneously engages in a continuous dialogue with the existing scholarship in several disciplines, from sociology to history. Vick’s account therefore goes far beyond the anecdotes of Auguste Louis Charles La Garde-Chambonas and other memoirists—in fact, there is nothing quite like it in any language.

Vick demonstrates that European society in 1814-1815 can actually be conceived of as “wrapped” in several layers—“the rulers, the statesmen, and the realm of sociability and culture” (6). At its core were its royal and imperial monarchs; these were surrounded by their chief statesmen and generals (Brendan Simms’s

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen M. Walt, “Top 5 Parties in World History,” *Foreign Policy* (31 December 2012), accessed at <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/12/31/top-5-parties-in-world-history/>

<sup>2</sup> Gordon A. Craig, “The Congress of Vienna: An Eyewitness Account,” *Slavic Review* 28:3 (September 1969): 491-492.

“antechamber of power” or circle of advisors<sup>3</sup>); these in turn were influenced by members of the social elite, who attended the same schools and frequented the same salons, spas and social events—including the women who also participated in salon culture and with whom they shared their lives; beyond these were the military, political and ecclesiastical establishments; finally, there was the educated public who attended the spectacles, bought souvenirs, and engaged in print culture. Vick shows that this larger culture affected the diplomats’ strategies and tactics in both conscious and unconscious ways (7-8). In other words, all of these layers, in one way or another, influenced the course of events at the Congress and magnified the impact of its decisions on the rest of the world.

The first half of the book thus describes in colorful detail the varied forms of political culture exhibited at Vienna. In Chapter 2, “Peace and Power on Display,” for example, we learn about its military, liturgical, and musical ceremonies. In particular, Vick focuses on the festivities of 18 October 1814, celebrating the anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig; on the medieval jousting at the Imperial Riding School (an event known as the “Carousel”); and on the requiem mass in St. Stephen’s Cathedral on 23 January 1815, for the ill-fated Louis XVI (31-63).<sup>4</sup> The reader obtains a sense of the symbolic and emotional power of these monarchs, which reinforced their political authority—a point also made by, among others, German historian Thomas Kuhl-Stamm in his biography of King Frederick William III.<sup>5</sup> Vick’s marvelous descriptions especially highlight the exalted status of Tsar Alexander I, who emerges as respected by his fellow monarchs and as the darling of the crowd. From older accounts in English, such as those by C. K. Webster or Harold Nicolson,<sup>6</sup> one might have had the impression that the Tsar was somehow an eccentric or fringe character, but Vick’s careful research restores his centrality to the epoch. After all, only 14 months before the opening of the Congress, Napoleon had been retreating from the borders of Russia; it was Alexander who then made the momentous decision to carry the campaign forward into the German states and to liberate Europe from the French yoke. Little wonder that he thought of himself as the savior of Europe, and from Vick’s detailed account, it is obvious that many agreed. Vick shows how, in countless ways, an underlying message of monarchical solidarity was conveyed to the public—from parades and other public ceremonies to the manufacture and sale of porcelain plates, glassware, prints and medals. We get a sense of the public’s veneration of its rulers (89)—a heady mix of something like modern patriotism combined with the current

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<sup>3</sup> Brendan Simms, *The Impact of Napoleon: Prussian High Politics, Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Executive, 1797-1806* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 15-16, explaining the origins of his notion of the “antechamber of power” in the postwar writings of Carl Schmitt—“Even the most absolute prince . . . is dependent on his advisors.”

<sup>4</sup> See also Vick’s subsequent article on the impact of the Congress on Austria itself: “The Vienna Congress as an Event in Austrian History: Civil Society and Politics in the Habsburg Empire at the End of the Wars against Napoleon,” *Austrian History Yearbook* (April 2015) 46: 109-133.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Stamm Kuhlmann, *König in Preußens großer Zeit: Friedrich Wilhelm III, der Melancholiker auf dem Thron* (Berlin: Seidler, 1992); see also Hubertus Buschel, *Untertanenliebe: Der Kult um deutsche Monarchen 1770-1830* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> C. K. Webster, *The Congress of Vienna* (London: Oxford University Press, 1919) and *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh: Britain and the Reconstruction of Europe, 1812-1815* (London: G.K. Bell & Sons, 1931); Harold G. Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna: A Study in Allied Unity, 1812-1822* (London: Constable, 1948).

popularity of the British royal family.<sup>7</sup> At the Congress of Vienna, monarchs and other members of the European elite were so often seen rubbing elbows with the common folk that the born-again royalist Prince Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord, the head of the French delegation, even quipped that there was some danger of their demeaning themselves (49-50). Did such social mingling help their cause? Did it give the rulers insight into public views? It is hard to say, but one of those who mingled the most at Vienna, the King of Denmark, was by all accounts one of the greatest losers in the territorial settlement.

The marketing of royalty—and of the Congress in general—is the main subject of Chapter 2, “Selling the Congress,” where Vick shows us how the Congress created new opportunities for skillful entrepreneurs, and in fact represented a novel blend of traditional aristocratic outlooks with new bourgeois market forces. This was yet another way in which the leaders at Vienna were able to broadcast their message across to the rest of Europe. With Vick as our steady guide, we visit panoramas and museums, study transparencies and medals, attend concerts, and read reports in the press to see what it was like for the public in the days of the Congress. A very important section of this chapter deals with “The Congress and the Press” (99-111) and is particularly good on the roles of Austrian and German newspapers and the connections between their publishers, editors, writers and politicians. The larger import is that, although some theorists of the public sphere argue that it was separate and even existed in opposition to the state, in fact the “old and new public spheres, state and civil society” melded together (101).

On salon culture (Chapter 3, “Salon Networks”), Vick begins by presenting an analytical framework based on current network theory (114-121). He sees both places and individuals—such as Madame de Staël, Princess Katherine Bagration or the Duchess of Courland—as serving as crucial network ‘hubs.’<sup>8</sup> The Congress of Vienna, like European university towns and spas, became the scene of a giant “class or family reunion” (116-117). Vick persuasively argues that, despite some recent scholarship to the contrary, salons served important political purposes in which both men and women participated. Salons not only provided places where members of different social classes could freely exchange ideas, but also provided a space where women could make an impression on the course of public events. We learn about the contrasting styles of French and German salons—where there was typically a central figure, fixed seating, and a single conversation—and of Lady Castlereagh’s more informal British style, in which separate conversations were conducted simultaneously, an approach first seen as chaotic, but which actually became the pattern for the more intimate salons of the nineteenth century, which were marked by less formality, less status consciousness, and greater interior reflection (122-123); today, this might be seen as the pattern for many dinner parties. We also learn of the influence of Jewish salons, such as those of Fanny Arnstein and Rahel Varnhagen von Ense (119-121).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> One historian, for example, has recently noted that the Austrian Emperor enjoyed a great degree of popularity among his Viennese subjects, notwithstanding his shyness and somewhat “broken” appearance. Heinz Dürchardt, *Der Wienerkongress: Die Neugestaltung Europas 1814/15* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2013) 34.

<sup>8</sup> Germaine de Staël, daughter of the Swiss finance minister of France Jacques Necker, was known throughout Europe for her salon at Coppet, her writings *Delphine* and *D’Allemagne*, and her opposition to Napoleon; Katherine Bagration was a Russian noblewoman renowned for her beauty and love affairs—she bore Metternich’s first child; the Duchess of Courland was a Baltic German who lived with Talleyrand in Paris and was the mother of two women who figured prominently at the Congress—Dorothea of Dino and Wilhelmine, Duchess of Sagan.

<sup>9</sup> Arnstein was the wife of a wealthy Jewish banker in Vienna, while Varnhagen hosted a celebrated salon in Berlin. She converted to Christianity and married a Prussian diplomat shortly before the Congress.

Vick is especially strong on the political influence that the salons exercised—not only in furnishing, as previous historians have shown, a space where the allies could consult with Talleyrand and the French delegation as well as with the smaller states, but also in providing a means for the statesmen of the leading powers to gauge public opinion, to hear new ideas, and to shape public opinion—thus acting as “press conferences” while also fulfilling an “intelligence-gathering” function (132-134, 149-152). Salons, Vick tells us, had a further impact on print culture (150), and many had strong religious affiliations (138-149); he therefore includes information about Catholic conversions in this chapter rather than the next one on religion.

In this same chapter, Vick further points out that many of the Congress statesmen consulted and corresponded with women, and he especially draws attention to Jean-Gabriel Eynard and his wife Anna; Wilhelm von Humboldt and his wife, Caroline (who might be considered the ‘Abigail Adams’ of the Congress); and Prince Clemens von Metternich and Wilhelmine, the Duchess of Sagan.<sup>10</sup> To these examples, occasionally mentioned by previous historians, Vick adds the lesser known but quite revealing correspondence between the Prussian official Friedrich Staegemann and his wife, Elisabeth (125-131).<sup>11</sup> Finally, Vick shows that the salons also worked as safety valves: Congress statesmen retreated to friendly salons when public pressure, or even hostility, became too great (296-297).

Vick’s book is not just about pomp and circumstance. He applies what we learned about political culture in the first half of the book to the second half, which details several of the specific negotiations. Here, as mentioned above, he begins by adopting Simm’s approach of looking at a circle of advisors (or “antechamber of power”) as the locus of power, rather than focusing on a handful of individual decision-makers (6). As with his treatment of political culture, this adds a new dimension: we suddenly find we are strategizing in a game of three-dimensional chess on a board of more than 64 squares.

In his chapter on “Negotiating Religion,” we learn of the impact of “secularization” (the confiscation of church lands under the impact of revolutionary ideology and during the Napoleonic Wars), the subsequent issue of what to restore of the Catholic Church’s former properties and power, and the question of what the swapping of populations and territories often meant in this context (154-162). For example, Vick explains how, when Catholic Savoy was awarded to Protestant Geneva, the Church retained its right to appoint Catholic teachers (165). Moreover, the King of France refused to cede any further Catholic territory to Protestant Geneva (166). Vick also discusses the significance of religious toleration, not only in the Low Countries, where it was guaranteed by the First Peace of Paris as a necessary condition for the union of the Calvinist Netherlands with Catholic Belgium, but also in the independent city of Kraków (162-166). We also learn of the debates at Vienna over the position of the Catholic Church in the German states, a question that

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<sup>10</sup> Jean-Gabriel Eynard was a wealthy banker sent to Vienna to represent Geneva; Humboldt, a noted humanist and founder of the University of Berlin, was the second-highest ranking Prussian plenipotentiary at the Congress; Metternich was the Austrian Foreign Minister.

<sup>11</sup> On women at the Congress, see also Glenda Sluga, “On the Historical Significance of the Presence, and Absence, of Women at the Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815” *Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* (2014) vol. 25, issue 2, 49-62, “Madame de Staël and the Transformation of European Politics, 1812-1817,” *International History Review* (Feb 2015, vol 37, issue 1, 142-166; Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James (eds.) *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics since 1500* (London: Routledge, 2015), especially the essay in the latter by Stella Ghervas, “A ‘Goodwill Ambassador’ in the Post-Napoleonic Era: Roxandra Edling-Sturdza on the European Scene,” 151-166.

was ultimately resolved in favor of concordats between the Church and individual German states rather than with the Confederation as a whole (157-162). The rest of this chapter is devoted to the important negotiations in the German Committee on the status of German Jews, especially those in Frankfurt and the Hanseatic cities (166-192). We learn that after the German Committee was reconstituted early in 1815 to include more of the smaller states, Hanover became the swing vote (although it is not clear why the British Foreign Secretary, Viscount Castlereagh, did not more forcefully impose a policy of toleration on the Hanoverian delegates). The German smaller states seem to have obtained the upper hand in these later discussions when Napoleon's return threatened the alliance; again, it is not clear why the situation was not the reverse. We learn, in greater detail than ever before, the sordid tale of Bremen delegate Johann Smidt's rabid anti-Semitism, Senator Friedrich Hach's deceit, and the jurist Johann Ludwig Klüber's similar prejudices (189-190). At the same time, Vick is stymied, like scholars before him, by the mysterious fact that Metternich, Humboldt and the Prussian foreign minister Prince Karl August von Hardenberg all saw the language of the adopted provision on Jewish rights as providing Jewish communities in Germany with sufficient protection. In the end, Vick concludes that "politics and diplomacy [are] never about the words, but about power" (189). He quite sensibly sees the constitutional provision on Jewish rights as a semantic compromise, which each side intended to interpret in its own way.

Chapter 5, "Europe and the Wider World," shows that the deliberations of the Congress touched on matters reaching far beyond Europe's shores. Vick recounts the discussions on the abolition of the slave trade and shows the role of public opinion, not just in Britain but on the Continent. He also touches on two topics that were discussed informally but which never quite reached the formal deliberations of the great powers—the transgressions of the Barbary corsairs and status of the Greek Orthodox Christian subjects of the Ottoman Sultan (224-232). Notwithstanding the chapter's title, it does not address the relationship between the Congress and later nineteenth-century imperialism, an issue that has been raised in several recent conferences on the Congress of Vienna.<sup>12</sup>

For the political historian, one of the highlights of the book will surely be Chapter 6, "Between Reform and Reaction." In dealing with the politics of the post-Napoleonic Era, Vick eschews any simplistic approach of right versus left, or reactionary versus reformer. Instead, he stakes out a tripartite political classification: (1) revolutionary/radical; (2) moderate reformer/liberal conservative; and (3) reactionary (235-240). He quite rightly places most of the leading statesmen at Vienna in this middle category, at least for the years 1814-1815, whatever may have happened later. He emphasizes that, far from being the dark reactionaries of legend, many of the leading Congress statesmen were in fact ardent constitutionalists (242-243). He adduces the examples of the constitutions of the Southern German states, the Netherlands, Norway, Louis XVIII's royalist Charter for France, the Swiss Confederation, and proposed constitutional provisions for Genoa and the Legations (243-265). To this list, Vick might have added Finland, Poland, Castlereagh's recommendations to Louis XVIII during the Hundred Days to transform France into a true British-style constitutional monarchy, and the Tsar's various constitutional schemes for Russia—except that these latter examples might have stretched beyond the scope of his book.

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<sup>12</sup> For example, this question was discussed at the conference on the "Congress of Vienna and its Global Dimensions" at the University of Vienna in September 2014, and during the conference on "The Congress of Vienna 1814-1815: Making Peace after Global War," held at the European Institute of Columbia University in February 2015.



One of the most important sections of this chapter—and indeed of the book as a whole—is its pithy yet insightful treatment of nationalism (266-277). Paul Schroeder, it will be recalled, had argued that nationalism was simply not that powerful a force in 1814-1815.<sup>13</sup> Vick is something of an expert on this subject, having written a book ten years ago on early nineteenth-century German nationalism.<sup>14</sup> He rejects any notion of nationalism in this period as being the exclusive nationalism that developed later in the century; instead he emphasizes what he variously characterizes as a “stepwise” approach to nationalism (272 and 274), “nested relationships” (272), “nested identities” (291) or a “chain of patriotism”—basically, the idea that an individual could be loyal to a whole chain of political entities—one’s city, province, state, people, and even to European society as a whole.<sup>15</sup> He furnishes examples ranging from Saxony (289-292) and Galicia (277-278, 287), and works his way up to Germany and Poland.<sup>16</sup> We learn, for example, of Talleyrand’s argument that political authority could jump from local authorities to Saxon ones to the German Confederation as a whole without the mediation of Prussia (290-291); and of the contrary views of Hardenberg and Humboldt, that Prussia was the quintessential “German” power, and that Saxons could only realize their true German nationality under Prussian rule (290, 306-307). All this makes great sense, and exposes the error of those who would simplistically argue that the statesmen at Vienna deliberately condemned or avoided nationalism. The picture is far more complex, and, as Vick argues, “nationalism had simply become too important a political language to neglect, representing a rhetorical high ground to be seized” (289).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “[O]ne may seriously doubt that there was at this time any wide popular demand in Europe for freedom, natural rights, and national unity. The claims made at Vienna in the name of liberty and national rights, closely examined, usually turn out to be pleas by particular groups for special privileges, often impractical and restorationist, sometimes reactionary and dangerous.” Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 576.

<sup>14</sup> Brian E. Vick, *Defining Germany: the 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); see also, Brian Vick, “Of Basques, Greeks and Germans: Liberalism, Nationalism, and the Ancient Republican Tradition in the Thought of Wilhelm von Humboldt,” *Central European History*, 40, 4 (2007): 653-681.

<sup>15</sup> As Vick explains: “Identities also form through nested relationships within the overarching, ever more inclusive hierarchies of attachment, from local and regional rivalries to regional and national identities, with the national not always the end of the chain, but extending to larger dynastic or religious supranational identities, or indeed to the level of a cosmopolitan or European identity that was quite significant then as now” (272).

<sup>16</sup> Earlier in the book, Vick also explores Metternich’s interest in the different folk traditions of the Habsburg Empire, which similarly demonstrated regional loyalties within a larger imperial framework (46-47).

<sup>17</sup> In reading Vick, one is forcibly reminded of an earlier classic account of the complexities of German nationalism—that of the German historian Friedrich Meinecke. Meinecke, for example, pointed out that Johann Gottlieb Fichte, in his *Addresses to the German Nation*, “could still suggest that the relationship of the particular character of the German tribes to the general character of the German nation formed a parallel to the relationship of the total national character of Germany to the new general European character. In both cases the particular always arose from the general. . . .” For this reason, according to Meinecke, Fichte “saw the finest source of German culture and the primary means of insuring its character in what we call the plurality of states . . .” Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) 74, 84.

In the final chapter, “Poland, Saxony and the Crucible of Diplomacy,” Vick brings all his big guns into play. He shows the impact of public opinion, the press and pamphlet warfare, and women and the salons on the central confrontation of the great powers at the Congress: the famous Polish-Saxon question, in which the Tsar proposed to annex former Prussian Poland to form a new Kingdom of Poland under his own rule, and to compensate Prussia for its losses by awarding it the Kingdom of Saxony. Vick provides the best survey in English of the extensive press and pamphlet campaign waged by the Prussians and Bavarians. As might be expected, he is especially strong in his use of various German archives and in expounding the Prussian perspective on the crisis. He wisely downplays the role of the Triple Alliance of 3 January 1815 on the outcome and emphasizes the importance of the continuing negotiations of January and February.<sup>18</sup> He shows how the argument for Saxon unity (part of his notion of sidestep nationalism or chain patriotism) was actually used by both sides, and how Hardenberg contemplated a separate constitution for Saxony under Prussian rule similar to the one the Tsar granted to Poland, or granting rights analogous to those the Hungarians enjoyed in the Habsburg Empire (290).

On substantive diplomatic issues, Vick is especially valuable on Switzerland, the Vatican, the slave trade, the Jewish question, and nationalism; he also provides the wider context for the Polish-Saxon question and provides new background information on two issues not discussed in the formal deliberations of the Congress but which quickly became key issues in subsequent diplomacy: the Greek question and the Barbary pirates. Vick has explored the archives, not only of the major players (Vienna, London, Paris and Berlin), but also of several of the secondary powers—Lübeck, Geneva, Düsseldorf, Darmstadt, Hannover, Budapest and Bremen—all to great effect. For example, in this book we learn for the first time of the snickering of the delegates in the German Committee when they initiated their discussion of Jewish rights (185); on the Polish-Saxon question, we read the comments of Hardenberg to his female confidante, Princess Marianne of Prussia, which were buried in the archives at Darmstadt and have now been brought to light for the first time (300-301, 317); we benefit from the running commentary that Vick has recovered from the manuscript journal of Anna Eynard; we learn how, before the Congress, the Tsar and King of Prussia had considered transferring Frederick Augustus, the ill-fated King of Saxony, to a throne in Italy (288). In particular, Vick makes telling use of the writings of Anna Eynard and of Friedrich Staegemann, a Prussian official at the Congress.

In conclusion, Vick’s splendid book is now an essential read for all those who are interested in the Congress of Vienna or in early nineteenth-century European history in general. Does it therefore render all earlier accounts obsolete? “With respect to diplomacy and diplomatic history,” Vick writes, “one of this book’s most important contributions is to demonstrate the limitations of narratives and explanations that focus narrowly on power politics” (327). Has he stood Professor Craig’s objection to Hilde Spiel’s focus on popular culture on its head? Vick realizes, of course, that the statesmen of this era continued to be influenced by power politics as much as by the newer force of public opinion (301), and he adds some trenchant observations of his own on this dimension, such as his criticism of Paul Schroeder’s “bipolar hegemony” theory on the grounds that Austria and Prussia formed a major “independent bloc in the center of Europe” (322). All this seems very *à propos*, especially when one considers that Austria, as host of the Congress, maintained its great-power status and secured a temporary ascendancy over Northern Italy, the German Confederation, and Central Europe. Vick’s larger point, however, is that the new details he has now provided about contemporary political culture and the public context in which the Congress statesmen operated can help us to understand their actions even better. Few would disagree. But how public opinion precisely affected the decision-makers

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<sup>18</sup> On this topic, see also my *Congress of Vienna and its Legacy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013) 119-131.

in this time period, Vick admits he is unable to tell us (301-302). Nor is it to be forgotten that, much as these statesmen, living in the shadow of the French Revolution, were sensitive to public opinion—as demonstrated through publicly held events, salons, print culture, and their private correspondence—this was still one of those moments in history in which European statesmen, often cut off from their own countries, enjoyed extraordinary latitude and independent decision-making authority.

My own view, and here I must confess to some bias as the author of one of the more traditional narratives, is that Vick's magnificent book can be read with great profit alongside any one of these other histories. His treatment is thematic, not chronological, and assumes some degree of familiarity on the part of the reader, even though he does provide a brief overview of events in the first chapter (9-19). Readers will otherwise look in vain, however, for a summary of the key events in the lives of the Tsar, Castlereagh, Metternich, or Hardenberg prior to the Congress; or for a discussion of the issue of a general guarantee at the Congress, of the threshold question of whether the Congress should have held plenary sessions, or of the reactions of the allied statesmen to the return of Napoleon. Vick is scarcely to be faulted on these grounds—for there is only so much text that publishers today seem willing to permit, and these stories have already been well told. This does, however, mean that in order to derive maximum benefit from this brilliant book, non-specialist readers may find it useful to obtain the necessary background knowledge by reading a more conventional survey either before or alongside it. Perhaps, like Edmund Husserl's cube or Werner Heisenberg's particles, one simply cannot view and comprehend every aspect of the Congress—its diplomacy, its significance as a public event, and its long-term impact on the international system—all at once. Or it may simply be that a future synthesis, integrating existing accounts of the diplomacy (convoluted enough in itself) with all that Vick has marvelously uncovered on the public sphere, still awaits us. That would be cause to celebrate—perhaps even enough to be added to Stephen Walt's list.

**Author's Response by Brian E. Vick, Emory University**

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Let me first warmly thank the editors and the contributors for making this interdisciplinary engagement with my work happen, above all the reviewers for their careful and thoughtful analyses. The reviews are on the whole quite appreciative, and I was particularly heartened by the fact that not only the historians, but also the specialist in international relations, welcome so much of the book's approach and conclusions. I wanted this work to spark discussion, if possible among both historians and international historians, as well as further research into the development of the international system and of political ideologies and political culture in the nineteenth century, including the roles of nationalism, humanitarianism, religion, and confessional relations, and the activity of women and transnational civil society. Judging by the responses here, it seems set to do so.

Mark Jarrett raised the question of whether the present study had supplanted all others or obviated the need for diplomatic narratives of the Congress. On that score I can affirm that the book was never meant to be one-stop shopping for the Congress of Vienna. It remains imperative to consult narrative accounts of the diplomacy, of which Jarrett's recent volume is one of the best, and probably the current standard work among those covering the whole congress era from 1812 to 1823.<sup>1</sup> But to make a quantum leap in interpreting the Congress, or to offer a new paradigm for studying both it and nineteenth-century foreign relations more generally, it was necessary to adopt a thematic approach that could reveal the layers of political culture and of the international system surrounding and undergirding the negotiations in Vienna. The book then recounts the narratives of numerous individual negotiations within this broader framework. I hope that my work helps set the stage for a new round of monographs and narrative accounts that incorporate a wider range of actors, contexts, media, and themes, and thus brings studies of nineteenth-century international relations closer to international politics and its analysis as we know them today. The "polylateralism" of twenty-first century diplomacy, with its transnational state and non-state actors, is not as unprecedented as we might think.<sup>2</sup>

As most of the contributors note, the role of public opinion and of "influence politics" (7-8) comprises one of the book's central themes and arguments, and I offer some clarifications here. First of all, as Peter Jackson highlights, the purpose of the effort to trace the full dimensions of post-Napoleonic political culture was not only to demonstrate the various avenues through which public opinion might shape politics and diplomacy. Rather, it was also, or even primarily, meant to show how the political figures usually at the center of investigations into international history were – as actors, observers, and thinkers – immersed in the surrounding society, culture, and political culture, in ways that affected how they thought about the political problems they faced. At the same time, they were aware of themselves as actors in contact with the various

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013). Two excellent recent narrative analyses in German are Wolf D. Gruner, *Der Wiener Kongress 1814/15* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2014), and Reinhard Stauber, *Der Wiener Kongress* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014). In French, see Thierry Lentz, *Le congrès de Vienne: Une refondation de l'Europe 1814-1815* (Paris: Perrin, 2013), and Jacques-Alain de Sédouy, *Le Congrès de Vienne: L'Europe contre la France 1812-1815* (Paris: Perrin, 2003). For the broader period, Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) remains the standard account.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Wiseman, "Polylateralism': Diplomacy's Third Dimension," *Public Diplomacy* (Summer 2010): 24-39.

levels of the public and within the several dimensions of political culture. As Daniel Hucker argues in the article cited by Jackson, one goal of research into the effects of public opinion in international relations is to show how and through which corridors public opinion was received and understood in decision-making circles. My approach could probably be squared or integrated with Hucker's language of "representations," but it also offers a broader set of categories and tools.<sup>3</sup> Mediations need to be incorporated in the framework too, as well as language(s) and representations, with attention to networks, sociability, and media as central aspects of the process of reception and understanding.

Jackson remarks a lack of a clear definition of public or public opinion in the book. I would say such a definition or model is in fact there, but it is distinctive. I emphasize that we are confronted with publics plural rather than a public, and that the publics constitute or manifest themselves in several areas and in multiple layers. These different publics can be distinguished partly by medium and partly by social stratification. Some publics were elite, some popular (as in the crowds at festivals and parades), and some from the social middle, above all regarding the press (12-13, 132). To say that salons represent elite opinion is fair enough. I stress that point too, and it helps explain why statesmen paid such keen attention to opinion at that level, among the most influential in court, state, and society. At the same time, however, I still think it important to highlight the connection between salon conversation and other levels of the public, whereby salons represent not the source of broader public opinion, in the more common usage of the term, but rather a venue for its interpretation. The mixed aristocratic and educated bourgeois elites gathered in the various salons in Vienna and elsewhere read and discussed the press coverage and pamphlet literature as well as the "word on the street," for places from Saxony and Berlin to St. Petersburg and Paris, or London and Milan, and they did so within the hearing of the decision-makers and their advisors (295). They thereby helped both to transmit and to shape the rulers' and diplomats' understanding of public opinion more broadly, of course colored by their own diverse views and causes.

Jarrett and particularly Katherine Aaslestad both express some doubts about how far I was able to demonstrate the influence of considerations of public opinion in the rough-and-tumble of power-political diplomacy; Ambrogio Caiani is probably the most accepting of the idea of a European public influential in setting political agendas and shaping diplomatic outcomes. I did not mean to imply that public opinion constituted a greater consideration in diplomacy than power-political calculations, but it did factor strongly into the equation. Most significantly from a methodological point of view, I wanted to show how the definition of power in power politics needs to be broadened. This applies both to how scholars assess the power relations and the power resources of states in the past, and to how actors at the time understood the nature of power and weighed the strength of arguments and of public opinion at various levels, foreign and domestic, in their calculations of the balance of power. Such an approach is not unlike the nuanced combination of soft and hard power in Joseph Nye's concept of "smart power."<sup>4</sup> I would like to think that I was able to cite enough specific instances of the explicit weighing of public opinion to establish it as a significant factor in negotiations. I would even say that observers, memorandists, and diplomatic communications remarked almost as frequently on the state of public opinion as on the balance of military and economic power (which is not to say that these matters figured equally in their calculations). Similarly, though also hard to prove

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Hucker, "International History and the Study of Public Opinion: Towards Methodological Clarity," *International History Review* 34:4 (2012): 775-794, 780-781 for the focus on decision-making elites.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), ch. 7.

quantitatively, it seems clear that governments spent as much time and effort talking about and gathering information on the opinions of elites and broader publics as on military and diplomatic intelligence. Indeed, to judge by the Habsburg police spy reports, the boundaries between intelligence on opinion and diplomatic information was rather fluid and porous. Rulers, advisors, and decision-makers were clearly listening to public opinion, in Vienna, back home, and in foreign capitals, and most also tried to manipulate public opinion, again both their own publics and those abroad. Thus as I conclude in the book, rulers and officials – and lobbyists – at least thought that public opinion was important, even crucial, and to the extent that they thought it was, at least their perceptions of public opinion must have been so (328-329).

As Aaslestad notes, it is of course correct that Tsar Alexander I's decision to weaken his support for Prussia's territorial aims in Saxony had more of an impact on Prussian policy than concerns about public opinion, whether in Europe or back in Berlin. At the same time, however, it seems clear that the concerns of Alexander and his advisors about public opinion on the matter in Vienna, St. Petersburg, London, and elsewhere played a significant part in his decision to encourage Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm to agree to a deal. Worries about British public and parliamentary opinion increasingly favoring the king of Saxony had helped sway the politics of British Prime Minister Lord Liverpool, Foreign Secretary and Congress plenipotentiary Lord Castlereagh, and his successor in Vienna the Duke of Wellington even before that. For that matter, Austria's chief statesman, Prince Metternich, had already found it difficult to maintain a common line with Prussia and Britain over Poland and Saxony in face of the unpopularity of giving Saxony to Prussia both in public opinion abroad and in Austrian elite opinion. It was thus not only the reluctance of Habsburg Emperor Franz I to sacrifice the Saxon king that prompted Metternich's change of course, and the Austrian ruler's reluctance was itself influenced by European opinion as well as by his own beliefs about sovereignty, or so he told Grand Duchess Catherine of Russia (301-302). If nothing else, recourse to public opinion could help excuse a diplomatic move that might be unwelcome to an opponent or interlocutor, as a convenient pretext, and in general public opinion provided an argument to cite both defensively and offensively even when its direct force was not weighed in the balance.

The final agreement on Saxony can also be seen in more power-political terms if one takes into account the realm of finance, as Castlereagh pressured the Russians to make concessions through the lure of a favorable settlement of Russia's Dutch debt, which the British controlled. Here too, however, it is telling that Castlereagh convinced the Tsar's representative of the scheme by explaining that he could only sell such a debt forgiveness plan to the public back home if he were able to point to some concession on the Tsar's part that clearly helped contribute to a final peace settlement. Under these circumstances, the Tsar successfully supported Castlereagh and Prussian Chancellor Prince Hardenberg in the unenviable and stormy task of persuading Friedrich Wilhelm to yield possession of the major Saxon city of Leipzig, site of the great victory over Napoleon fifteen months before (314-315). The point therefore is not that one must choose between Realpolitik and public opinion in interpreting these events, but rather that one must account for their intertwining within the international system and their mutual influence on diplomatic decision-making and outcomes.

With such emphasis on the role of public opinion, Aaslestad suggests that my work could be couched as an early chapter in the history of "public diplomacy," as in the work of Ruth Hemstad.<sup>5</sup> This is quite true. In an

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<sup>5</sup> Ruth Hemstad, ed. and intro., *'Like a Herd of Cattle': Parliamentary and Public Debates Regarding the Cession of Norway 1813-1814* (Oslo: Akademisk Forlaget, 2014).

essay for one of the bicentennial events on the Congress, I did in fact set the Congress in the longer history of public diplomacy and communication media from the early modern period to the First World War.<sup>6</sup> Addressing even broader methodological alignments, Jackson places my approach on the constructivist side of the theoretical divide in the study of international relations. On balance this is clearly the case. While I acknowledge that there may be aspects of international systems that often set states into relationships of rivalry defined by realist logics, it is more often proper to say that the logics of the actors in a system can lead to power-political competition. But this is not always so, and the ways of thinking about interstate relations among international actors can also sometimes promote cooperation. I consider that at the Congress of Vienna and for several decades thereafter we largely have to deal with a system predicated on cooperation above competition. As I point out in the conclusion to my book, on any given issue elements of balance-of-power behavior could and often did still emerge, but as Jarrett underscores, not in a bipolar hegemony or in the formation of a consistent bloc system, East-West or otherwise. Put another way, I see the logics of international relations as being sometimes or in part pre-programmed into the circuitry of the system, but more often I look to the mindsets of the actors involved in the system, both as individuals and as members of groups, networks, and institutions, and indeed of cultures and political cultures. The international system is more complex than an assemblage of states alone, and perception, comprehension, and decision-making take place at multiple levels within it. As Jarrett suggests in his study of the Congress period, a “levels-of-analysis” approach could also be useful in understanding these systems, and in a way that might cross the disciplinary divide between historians and international relations scholars.<sup>7</sup>

Along with the role and definition of public opinion, it is probably the treatment of nationalism that arouses the most hesitation among the reviewers. It was therefore encouraging that they still find the approach to national identity’s place in international politics provocative and stimulating for further research. All the contributors agree that in light of recent scholarship, the nation-state standard of the twentieth century would be largely anachronistic when applied to the early nineteenth, and that both sub- and supranational identities attached to states, regions, and dynasties played central parts in that earlier phase, potentially in accord with linguistic nationalism rather than only at odds with it. Still, for Caiani and Jackson, the book’s understanding of nationhood or nationalism is too broad and might obscure what we normally think of as a nation. I suggest, however, that the problem is not that I as analyst have set the boundaries of what counts as national too wide, but rather that the actors at the time operated with such broad understandings of nationality. Adopting only narrower criteria for what constitutes national phenomena proves too limiting for grasping the perceptions and politics of nationhood in the early nineteenth century and cannot capture the nuances of these developments, above all the experience of what I call multinational nationality.

With respect to Jackson’s comments, I can at least clarify that I see nationhood and national identity as coexisting alongside local, regional, and supranational identities and as in part interlinked and intersecting with them. The identities can work against but also mutually reinforce one another. I am not trying to subsume all these categories into one diffuse concept of nationhood. It is important to keep in mind the distinctions between national, sub- and supranational levels of analysis, but at the same time to recognize their

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<sup>6</sup> Brian Vick, “Negotiating Publics and Power Politics: Discourses and Practices of Secrecy and Publicity at the Congress of Vienna,” in William D. Godsey et al., eds. *Der Wiener Kongress 1814/15. Politische Kultur und internationale Politik* (2 vols. Vienna: Akademie-Verlag, forthcoming 2016); Hemstad, op cit.

<sup>7</sup> Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy*, 154.

interconnections and overlap in the realms of both thought and political practice. Similarly, group identity formation through negative ‘Othering’ is clearly a central aspect of the picture, but such focus on difference at one level can simultaneously promote the formation of broader group identities as well, be they regional, national, or supranational. It is possible to explain the development of movements for national self-determination later in the nineteenth century starting from this basis, in part as nationalist ideas evolved in the face of increasing conflicts, including in the 1848 Revolutions and even more in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century showdowns over ostensible borderlands and competitive demographic trends. Even then, however, as recent scholarship has emphasized, borderland bilingualism, “national indifference,” and support for a reformed Habsburg Empire of more autonomous regions rather than secession continued to be notable features of the nationality landscape in East-Central Europe.<sup>8</sup>

For Aaslestad, it is significant that the rulers’ and diplomats’ understandings of nationhood tended to affect the constitutional settlements and cultural politics more than the territorial settlements. This is certainly true, but again points more to the nature of nationality policy at the time than to the limited importance of national ideas as such. Given contemporaries’ understandings of relations among groups defined in part by shared language, history, religion, and other criteria, it was clearly always going to be on the level of rights provisions and cultural policy that one would most often see the effects of thinking about nationhood. As a rule the problem was to create the right conditions for multinational coexistence and patriotism within a territory, not to divide territories in such a way that irreconcilable nationalities would find themselves on the ‘right’ side of a border, or masters of a homogeneous nation-state (the latter about as difficult to have achieved then as it would be a hundred years later). It was mainly in a few cases of border-drawing such as with the Valtellina between Switzerland and northern Italy, or some fine-tuning of the frontiers in the Polish territories, that national and linguistic criteria helped determine territorial boundaries. At the same time, however, we must recognize the extent to which the various criteria of nationhood did still shape the diplomatic outcomes, including in territorial questions, insofar as they made up part of the battery of arguments adduced by both sides in many contests. Nationality criteria, including constitutional and rights-based claims, formed central components of the rhetoric through which the battles were fought, in both public and private diplomacy. The knowledge that recourse could be had to constitutional settlements and nationality rights provisions in the conflicts over the Polish territories, to take the most important example, made it easier to arrive at and sell the decision to partition the Polish lands once more. The knowledge that this territorial decision would in part fly in the face of beliefs about the legitimacy of Polish nationhood in turn put more pressure on the partition powers to agree to concessions on political, religious, economic, and cultural rights for Poles.

To conclude by returning to my opening thought, the extent to which much of my approach and many of my conclusions about the Congress of Vienna and nineteenth-century European political culture have found acceptance among such a range of scholars from the disciplines of both history and international relations is encouraging. I hope that the book, and the clarifications offered here, will help to spur and to shape future

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<sup>8</sup> Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); and Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69, 1 (2010): 93-119.



discussions about the Congress of Vienna itself and about politics and international relations in the decades after Napoleon's defeat. It at least seems clear that we cannot go back to assumptions about the Congress as a simple exercise in reaction, or as an event that can be analyzed solely on the basis of the interactions of four or five major statesmen in purely power-political terms. Even debates about whether the Congress represented more an effort at counter-revolution or at establishing a lasting peace do not seem quite so fruitful stated in this form. The leading actors tended to think instead in terms of the interrelationship between foreign and domestic policy and sought to achieve both aims, not only through repression but also in part through constitutional concessions. If nothing else, I hope that investigating international relations in this way, across several layers of political culture and involving many and diverse actors, will help to make both the Congress of Vienna as event, and diplomatic history as process, seem not only more complex but also more interesting and insightful to the scholars, statesmen, and publics of today's complex world of state and non-state actors.