

H-France Forum

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Christine Haynes, *Our Friends the Enemies: The Occupation of France after Napoleon*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. 404 pp. Notes and index. \$39.95, £31.95, €36.00 (cl). ISBN 978-0-674-97341-5.

Review essay by Katherine Aaslestad, West Virginia University

The remarkable scholarship on the international peace conference in Vienna from 1814 to 1815 highlights the important work of rebuilding stability in Europe following the years of warfare and the dual defeats of Napoleon Bonaparte. Attention to the important discussions, concessions and negotiations in Vienna, however, has drawn scholarly attention away from defeated France and the critical work that took place there as the wars ended. This study by Christine Haynes demonstrates the centrality of Allied French relations in defeated and occupied France. Her engaging study of France under Allied occupation until 1818 demonstrates how the conditions of war continued even after peace treaties were signed, and also traces how the French and the Allies negotiated the occupation as a key component in building long-term post-war stability in France and Europe.

Conceptualizing the years and even decades after 1814 and 1815 as a post-war era, or as “the aftermath of war,” provides new understandings on how wars influence society long after combat ceases. [1] Despite exiting recent scholarship on the Napoleonic era, there has been surprisingly little exploration of the ways in which this decades-long conflict transformed European society after 1815, and Haynes’s work is a timely and excellent contribution. The cessation of hostilities, signed treaties, proclamations of victory or defeat are convenient markers for the end of wars, but the suffering of soldiers and civilians does not end with the treaties or declarations. War ends unevenly, probably best expressed in the French term “*sortie de la guerre*”—exit from war. [2] Since post-war problems and structures relate to the conflict that generated them, the “post-war” actually starts during the last stages of the conflict during a shift from the primacy of military strategy toward new efforts—demobilization, economic reconstruction, and reconceptualization of the state—that emerge simultaneously with and carry on following the cessation of hostilities. Haynes asserts the Napoleonic Wars did not end as neatly as often presented in the narrative associated with the Congress of Vienna. In fact, she maintains that the battle of Waterloo did not end the wars and turns her attention to the large-scale invasion of parts of France by Allied armies. Haynes sets up her study with an emphasis on the final years and months of the wars and dual defeats in 1814 and 1815 to position her larger analysis of the post-war occupation and its consequences.

Haynes demonstrates her versatility as a scholar in her willingness to explore a broad international historiography on the Napoleonic Wars, in particular the soldiers who fought those wars from many different countries across Europe. Her book focuses on the dynamic relations between French civilians and the British, Russian and German-speaking soldiers who moved into French villages and towns tasked to ensure stability and peace after 1815. She builds upon recent work featuring the “war of the little man,” in particular the experiences of military service as

well as the impact of invasion and occupation upon civilians and local economies. [3] Her account is nuanced, demonstrating the ongoing tensions between former enemies and exploitative practices of war that included military requisitioning and quartering as well as the efforts toward collaborative co-existence and reconciliation. Helpful maps document the location of the sectors of the Allied occupation along with the demilitarized zone designed to prevent conflict between the Allied and French armies.

In 1815, Allied forces imposed an arbitrary martial law on the defeated French territories that they occupied and asserted their authority over military and civilian functions alike. Following the Second Treaty of Paris, the Allies included several provisions to ensure security in France, and of central importance, according to Haynes, was the multinational occupation designed as a peacekeeping force (p. 40). The occupation was expected to last five years until the French had fulfilled their all obligations and financial payments to the Allies.

Haynes provides an insightful comparison of the different Allied armies of occupation. She integrates well the recent literature on the varied and unique German state experiences of war, highlighting state and military differences rather than subsuming them under a homogenous linguistic and war experience. This is important, as the Prussians and Bavarians shared different wartime relations with France. Her distinction between the German states and nature of different armies is central to her analysis as each occupying army often initially reflected their own individual state's relations with the Empire based on course of the wars. Defeated and humiliated by the Napoleon in 1806, Prussian leaders and soldiers retained a decidedly anti-French attitude, which manifested itself in rapacious destruction that included "sacking vineyards, trampling crops, slaughtering livestock and demanding liquor under threat of violence" (p. 24) and the arrest of well over 40 prefects and mayors within three weeks for resisting demands for monetary contributions and material supplies (p. 30). Austrian soldiers, repeatedly defeated by the French since 1792, also reacted with vengeance and exploitative practices, in contrast to Bavarian soldiers who had been allied with the French until fall 1813. Haynes also points out distinctions between the English and Russian practices of occupation, presenting the Russians surprisingly as the most "gentle" occupier despite the widespread fear of the Cossack (p. 153). She references the "Alexander-mania" evident elsewhere across Europe, but stressed Russian officers, some of whom spoke fluent French, fraternized openly with urban elites to illustrate social status as well as nation of origin shaped relations between occupied and occupiers.

In addition to tracing the local dynamic of the occupation, Haynes also explores the emergence of new forms of negotiation and cooperation between the Allies and French civic leaders that replaced the military policing of 1815 with collaborative practices. She documents well the interesting story of how select Allied commanders, in particular the Duke of Wellington, collaborated with national and local French administrators to develop a new approach to security and stability based on cooperation. After numerous examples of exploitation, violation, insult and violence—though often "spontaneous, resulting from a breakdown in relations between occupiers and occupied living in close quarters and competing for scarce resources" (p. 84)—Haynes presents several cogent chapters on reconciliation between the French and their occupiers. Haynes argues that the determination by Allied leaders and French civic leaders to build stability on the local level was necessary for the nation's post-war political and economic development. I was particularly struck by the crucial role of civil society in this process. Haynes

builds upon the work of Brian Vick's study on the Vienna Congress to emphasize the important role of sociability and festive culture in fostering tolerance and amicable relations on the local level.[4] She describes the importance of clubs, dances, public events, fashion, common meals and religious ceremonies as well as shared harvesting and mutual aid in building social stability. One sub-prefect, for example, circumvented tensions at local dances by alternating the French preferred contra dance with the German preferred waltz, and once begun, no dance could be interrupted (p. 85). Through such steps, altercations could be avoided and stability fostered. In fact, she credits occupation with providing the security necessary for open political debate as the public sphere expanded following years of Napoleonic censorship (p. 273).

Haynes also provides a nuanced analysis of costs and benefits of the Allied occupation. On one hand, the war indemnity, designed as a punitive reparation, contributed to economic distress in post-war France, and on the other the hand the occupiers needed subsistence, forage for their horses and an array of personal and professional supplies. Local suppliers and business, therefore, profited from the foreign demand for French goods and services (p. 233). Haynes also highlights the grave agricultural crisis from 1816-1817, known as the "Year without Summer," and its detrimental impact on the French economy and day-to-day life. In areas under Allied occupation, grain scarcity led to competition for resources between the occupied and occupiers, and yet it also generated acts of mutual aid. My own research has also revealed that the dearth of grain, bottlenecks in distribution, and speculation continued the wartime subsistence crisis in parts of central Europe through to 1817. She also illustrates the indirect contribution of the Allies to the French agriculture in the form of manure produced by the fifty thousand horses of the occupying troops (p. 234). In addition to the manure trade, foreign artisans and traders, conducting business with the Allied troops, established breweries, machine shops and gas lighting to provide long-term benefits to the French economy.

In closing, I emphasize how much I enjoyed Haynes liberal use of prints as illustrative sources of the dynamic Allied-French relations, in particular in documenting the varied gender relations between soldiers and French women. Her analysis of illustrations and other examples of material culture bolster and enliven her work considerably. I also applaud her wide range of sources that include many national and local archives in France, Germany and Britain. I was especially intrigued by her many references to the reports of stagecoach drivers that offered opinions on almost every topic conceivable. I question the degree to which the memory of the occupation among the Allied troops provided "a fountainhead for nationalism" (p. 316). Many military memoirs, written in mid-century or later are more reflective of national sentiments of the time of their writing than the experiences described. The Napoleonic Wars provided plenty of material for the generous construction of enemy tropes when Prussian and French soldiers confronted each other again in 1870 and 1871. Finally, I enjoyed her last section on "Liberation," which examined the end of the occupation comprising of both the festivities celebrating regained French sovereignty, military reviews, and multi-staged evacuation of foreign soldiers. The comingling of gifts, tears, foreign deserters, and wagon trains of French wives and young children illustrate well the complexity and contradictions within the Allied occupation of post-war France and the shifting boundaries between soldier and civilian, enemy and friend in post-war occupied France. These final images reveal the logic of Haynes's paradoxical title, *Our Friends the Enemies*.

NOTES

[1] Katherine B. Aaslestad, "Identifying a Post-War Period and the German Confederation: Case Studies from the Hanseatic Cities 1813-1830" in *Decades of Reconstruction: Postwar Societies from the 18th to the 20th Centuries*, edited by Ute Planert and Jim Retallack, (Cambridge University Press, 2017) and idem, "Krieg, Demobilisierung und Erinnerungskultur in den republikanischen Stadtstaaten Hamburg, Bremen und Lübeck, 1813-1830," in *Kriegsenden, Nachkriegsordnungen, Folgekonflikte, Wege aus dem Krieg im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Jörg Echternkamp (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2012), 53-74. See also Christine Haynes, Denise Davidson and Jennifer Heuer, "Introduction" of Special Issue on "Ending War: Revisiting the Aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars," *Journal of Military History* 80, no. 1 (Jan. 2016): 111-130.

[2] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Christophe Prochasson, eds., *Sortir de la Grande Guerre. Le Monde et l'après-1918* (Paris: Éditions Tallandier, 2008). See also Cosia Flateau, "Les sorties de guerre. Une introduction," *Les Cahiers Sirice* 17, no. 3 (2016): 5-13.

[3] Leighton S. James, *Witnessing the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in German Central Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[4] Brian E. Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

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