

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 by Denise Z. Davidson, Georgia State University

The three-year occupation of France that followed Napoleon Bonaparte's final defeat at Waterloo in 1815 brought hundreds of thousands of foreign troops into contact with French civilians. Both violent outbursts—including murder, rape, and destruction of property—and moments of accommodation and even friendship among the former enemies took place during these years. Although the occupation has been part of the standard narrative about the first years of the Bourbon Restoration, the significance of that foreign presence in shaping French political and cultural life has been largely overlooked. Christine Haynes's new book demonstrates without doubt that the post-Napoleonic occupation of France carried great significance and is thus a moment that deserves deeper analysis as well as attention to its broader consequences, not just for France but in terms of European ideas about diplomacy as well as the transition from war to peace. An impressive accomplishment, this big, ambitious, and important study contributes to wide-ranging areas of debate related to the political, social, and cultural history of early nineteenth-century France, as well as military history, diplomatic history, and transformations in ideas about how to build a peaceful and stable Europe.

Structured thematically for the most part, the book is organized into three parts, each with three chapters. Part one, "Enemies," includes the details of the occupation and its burdens and describes the sense of violation that ensued from both physical presence of troops and concerns about violence and property destruction as well as more psychological humiliations such as the removal art from the Louvre. Part two, "Friends?," includes chapters on peacekeeping, accommodation, and cosmopolitanism. The three chapters in part three, "Regeneration," are on reconstruction, recuperation, and finally liberation. Aided by engaging and lucid prose, this organization helps to carry the story, as the book begins with a helpful overview before launching into more detailed descriptions and analyses of what took place in various contexts. The last chapter focuses on the end of the occupation: the diplomatic and financial maneuvering that were necessary to convince the allies that they could leave France; the on-the-ground details of transporting so many troops back to their home countries; and French responses to finally seeing the troops leave their country. Deeply researched, relying on multiple archives in Paris and the provinces, as well as London, Stuttgart, Munich, Dresden, and other locations, the book uses many unexpected sources to depict both the realities on the ground and the occupation's broader consequences.

Although diplomacy plays a central role in the stories told here, much of the book provides a history of the occupation in terms of its organization and its impact on ordinary people's lives. In fact, the French lived through two separate invasions and occupations in quick succession. The first took place during the spring of 1814. On 31 March of that year, 120,000 allied troops

entered Paris from the northeast and went on to occupy other regions for several months. Those troops returned home for the most part by June of that year. The second invasion and occupation began in June 1815; this time it lasted longer and went through two phases, the military occupation from July to November 1815, followed by the “occupation of guarantee” that ended in late 1818. This longer occupation, defined by a series of treaties signed by France and the allied powers, sought to protect “order” against revolution and to promote cooperation in Europe. Haynes emphasizes the novelty of this approach to peacekeeping as well as its effectiveness, arguing that the occupation of guarantee “was one of the most successful cases of war termination ever” (p. 320) as Europe avoided another “total” war for a century.

Much of the book focuses on northeastern France where the occupation lasted the longest and where it had the broadest impact. Haynes draws attention to the details of life under occupation and reminds her readers of the difficulties of the period. These included the “year without a summer,” when soot in the atmosphere caused by a volcano in Indonesia led to unusually cold and wet weather, which led to a severe subsistence crisis in 1816 and 1817. The food shortages caused even greater hardships on top of the difficulties of provisioning the Allied troops and their animals. As Haynes puts it, “the requisitions levied by Allied troops placed a heavy material burden on the inhabitants of France, especially in the northeast, for more than three years” (p. 71). Haynes provides quantitative information on the total costs of the occupation in various regions and cities but also includes individual examples to give a clear sense of the experience of occupation: of fulfilling requisition orders, of interacting with troops, and of living side-by-side with “the enemy.”

The book also draws attention to variations in the ways French civilians perceived the foreign troops. The chapter on accommodation focuses on moments when the French and their occupiers managed to get along, including various forms of socializing, developing friendships, and even some marriages between French civilians and Allied soldiers. Masonic lodges provided an arena for Allied officers to socialize with French elites, while dances and churches afforded other opportunities. The Russians seem to have developed the closest ties with the French, while the British had a reputation for being more reclusive. In contrast the Germans, particularly the Prussians, “developed a reputation as brutal barbarians” (p. 153) and thus had trouble making friends with the French. Later in the book, when discussing memories of the occupation, Haynes argues that accounts of the 1815 occupation have been tainted by memories of the German invasions of 1914 and 1939, thus reinforcing earlier depictions of these soldiers and erasing the many examples of peaceful accommodation and cooperation visible during the post-Napoleonic occupations.

One major theme of the book is cosmopolitanism, a term Haynes defines as “the sense of toleration of and curiosity about peoples of different nations, religions, and races” (p. 168). Mixing so many people together, causing them to see and interact with each other on a regular basis as they went about their daily business and participated in urban amusements and other opportunities to socialize, the occupation had an impact on both the French and the foreigners in their midst. Haynes’s research on cultural and social life in Paris during the occupation, including literary and theatrical depictions of the foreigners and particularly the popular amusements known as the *montagnes russes*, early forms of roller coasters, reinforces arguments by Brian Vick, among others, that the period around the Congress of Vienna saw a burst in elite

cross-cultural sociability. [1] However, Haynes also found that the Russian roots of such amusements quickly disappeared from French imaginings of them once the occupiers left. The process of forgetting this foreign influence on French politics and culture makes sense considering the humiliation the occupation brought to mind, but it also means that the significance of this moment in French history has largely been forgotten as well.

Although the book's focus is the occupation, Haynes's arguments extend well beyond the specifics of that moment and revolve around the emergence of new ideas about ending war. Building on David Bell's argument that the Napoleonic Wars were the first "total wars," and thus contributed to modern definitions of warfare, Haynes argues that the occupation of France in 1814 and again in 1815 to 1817 was the first modern occupation in the sense that it was the first whose goal was to help a defeated nation stabilize. [2] Yes, reparations were part of the story, and the occupiers expected to receive compensation for the costs of occupation, but the occupiers tried to define themselves as friends acting in France's best interests. They were emphatically not there to rape and pillage, and they went out of their way to emphasize that their enemy was Napoleon, not the French people. Though violence and theft did occur, perpetrators were generally punished by their superiors, some facing corporal punishment and others even executed for their crimes against French civilians.

Our Friends the Enemies changes the way we understand, and ultimately the way we will need to teach, the Bourbon Restoration and post-Napoleonic diplomatic settlements by making clear that the occupation had profound influence on both domestic French and European politics more broadly. Haynes argues convincingly, for example, that the emerging cult of Napoleon visible in a wide range of objects and behaviors, peaked in 1816-1817 in the context of food shortages and occupation. Bonapartism would of course continue to shape French politics throughout the century. Haynes's research also brings to light the extent of foreign influence on the Restoration government, particularly in efforts to hold back the ultra-royalists. The Duke of Wellington's interventions helped to convince Louis XVIII to rein in his brother, the Comte d'Artois, and eventually to adjourn the legislature in the fall of 1815 as the king feared that the political maneuverings of the ultra-royalists would prolong the occupation. Another important and convincing point that comes across from Haynes's research is how the Occupation contributed to a new idea of Europe. "By bringing together people from across the continent for a relatively extended period, the occupation of guarantee cultivated a new idea of 'Europe' as a political entity" (p. 5). By marshalling a wide range of source materials from a variety of perspectives, Haynes indeed builds a convincing case that the post-Napoleonic occupation shaped the history of modern Europe by instituting new approaches to peacemaking, in establishing a postwar order that succeeded in maintaining peace for nearly a hundred years, and by contributing to building a new French political order as well.

NOTES

[1] Brian E. Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[2] David A. Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007).

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