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Jean-Claude Caron and Jean-Philippe Luis (eds.), *Rien appris, rien oublié ? Les Restaurations dans l'Europe postnapoléonienne (1814-1830)*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes. 2015. 434 pp. Illustrations. 23.00€. (pb). ISBN 2753542686.

Review by David Wetzel, University of California-Berkeley.

A book like this is the reviewer's nightmare. It is the product of a series of conference papers (thirty-eight in all; some no more than six pages in length; most no more than ten) delivered at the Université Blaise-Pascal Clermont-Ferrand in October 2013 or in June 2014, at the Maison de la Recherche of the Université of Paris-Sorbonne. The subject to which it is addressed is the sixteen-year period from 1814 to 1830, that is, to the period between the Congress of Vienna and the revolutions of 1830, the period usually—and, as the book's essays clearly demonstrate, wrongly—called the “*restauration*.” The essays are grouped in four sections. Part one discusses the historiography of the restoration from the standpoint of contemporaries; part two takes for examination the reconstruction of European society after the downfall of Napoleon; part three treats cultural and religious themes; part four, political topics, covers resistance and repression, though it must be added that the articles in each of these sections do not always conform to the words used to introduce them. Attempting to catalog the thirty-eight individual pieces would itself constitute a scholarly exercise of major proportions and would far surpass the limits of space allotted me. It would also prevent me from doing justice to those pieces I have chosen to review and, a more important point, saying something about the book as whole—its organization, its underlying themes, and its structure. Instead, I have addressed the ten essays I found most interesting, most urgent, and with which I am most competent to deal.

Two essays in the first section are of special interest to students of the first decade of this period. Pierre-Marie Delpu denies there was a true restoration in Naples during those years under King Ferdinand I. The changes wrought by Joachim Murat, Ferdinand's predecessor, during the previous eight years were too deep-seated for that. Ferdinand could not expect to find useful supporters after he got control, not among old Napoleonic officials and generals nor among other disaffected groups—former Jacobins, some of whom remained outwardly loyal to Murat, or liberals, whom he could not control. Reaction did not triumph until 1821 when Ferdinand, supported by the Austrian army, revoked the constitution that had been imposed upon him by the Carbonari, the secret revolutionary society wanting a united Italy. All in all, Delpu's article is a valuable exercise full of telling and often surprising judgments.

Fabrice Bensimon examines the conditions that prevailed in that country during these years. The background is clear. The very circumstances that led to England's commercial growth and industrial supremacy gave rise to social and political problems that were incapable of easy solution but which, while unsolved, posed the gravest possible threat to social order. These disturbances and others (too numerous to mention here) upset the propertied classes and led to widespread acts of repression. Again and again, Bensimon, like the historians upon whose works he draws—E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm, for example—emphasizes the inflexibility the government, the heartlessness of its leaders, and the myopia of their vision when it came to dealing with those advocating social change. Sometimes the vigor of Bensimon's prose results in excited overstatement. Reading the essay gives one the

impression that the government that ruled England during these years was, as J.L. and B. Hammond once remarked, not unlike that of the tsar in Russia. But surely this was far from being the case. There was no Alexander or Nicholas, no Arakcheev or Beckendorff, in England after 1815. Many of those in the power during this time had worked long years to overcome the armies of Napoleon and were, even now, engaged in an effort that would prevent a new outburst of revolutionary agitation on the continent. They could not but be sensitive to the prospect of revolutionary agitation at home. This reservation aside, Bensimon's article is a powerful exposition that draws a clear and fascinating picture of a nation in the throes of social upheaval.

The outstanding essay in the second section is by Marie-Pierre Rey who gives a general survey of the background, development, and consequences of the Holy Alliance of Tsar Alexander I of Russia. Rey's thesis is as clear as it is compelling. Those who argue that Alexander used the alliance as a tool for establishing Russian influence and hegemony on the continent make a great mistake and ignore the many things he did in 1815 and after that worked in the other direction. More than anything else, the Holy Alliance served to restrain Russia.

Rey traces the alliance to the Anglo-Russian "Two Policemen" treaty eleven years earlier. I am skeptical about this. The decisive feature of the "Two Policemen" treaty was hegemonic. Two dominant states, alike half-European and half-world powers, proposed to impose on Europe a settlement they themselves had devised and make the rest of Europe fight and pay for it. By 1815, things had changed. These same two Powers (albeit somewhat still superficially) had become European in spirit and worked out a settlement in advance *with* the rest of Europe. Everyone participated; everyone consented; everyone fought and paid for it, and the two hegemonic powers were no longer intimate allies, no longer bent on controlling the rest of Europe.

Natalie Petiteau discusses the views of the French nobility toward the restoration as seen through the diaries and memoirs of women writers. Their attitudes surprise. Most were openly hostile to the new King Louis XVIII. There was nothing they could do about it. The social system of the Old Regime had been completely smashed by the revolution. The king and the court played a much-diminished role and were widely unpopular. As for the nobility, the subject of the essay, they found it impossible to regain their former monopoly of political and social power, for their position was undermined by the wealthy bourgeoisie. Petiteau's essay is altogether an attractive piece; politics at the top are covered in a fine dramatic style, while the portraits of the actors are drawn with wit and distinction.

Emilio La Parra explores the circumstances that led to restoration of Ferdinand as King of Spain in 1814, and, after being deposed, his restoration again in 1823. Again, the theme is clear: "These restorations were not marked by a strong counter-revolutionary spirit or by repressive policy" (p. 228). Ferdinand wanted to heal Spain's wounds. But there were wide gaps between what he was willing to grant, what some Spaniards wanted, and what his country needed. A more immediate problem was that, with Spain's finances still devastated by war, European depression, and the loss of overseas revenues and trade, Ferdinand insisted on trying to reconquer Spain's empire in the Americas (a subject La Parra rather slights). Still, this is a first-rate contribution, a clear and dispassionate examination of the topic, full of important information, even for the expert.

Pedro Rújula takes up La Parra's theme with a different twist. Ferdinand owed his throne to the allies who overthrew Napoleon, after being deposed by the latter in 1807. Yet the Ultras, his most fanatical supporters, did not see things that way, and launched the myth that Ferdinand's restoration was the work of divine intervention. For that reason it was necessary, among other things, to guard against the "abuses of the press which seeks to seduce the people with promises...of eternal happiness [and] vile petty thoughts" (p. 235). This lent, at least for a time, some superficial stability to the situation, but in the long run it proved disastrous. The Ultras were nasty men—cruel, unscrupulous, selfish. Rújula's final sentence merits quotation: "The struggles between them [and the liberals] for the next three decades mark the beginning of contemporary Spain [and] owe their origin to the monarchical

restoration of 1814" (p. 242).

Oliver Tort makes the same case about the restoration in France. Very little was restored except the Bourbon dynasty. In some ways there is nothing surprising about this. France had undergone twenty-five years of revolutionary change since 1789, and it was obviously impossible to reestablish the institutions and laws of the Old Regime. The first French ruler of this period steadfastly resisted the advice of those councilors who wanted to turn back the clock. In the case of the most profound changes affected by the revolution, those in the economic and social organization of the country, there were too many people who benefitted from the transformation of the last twenty-five years to permit efforts to restore the old system. Tort's is a delightful piece with many revelations, rich in detail, but never losing sight of the general picture.

Two essays in the third section treat religious and cultural themes. Gilles Malandain discusses the strange career of Alexandre Mazas, a devious, secretive, and cantankerous person—vain, boastful, and vindictive. The circumstances that gave rise to this curious figure stemmed from the assassination in 1820 of the Duke de Berry, the youngest son of the count of Artois (the future Charles X) who was considered the only member of the Bourbon family likely to have a son who would assure the line of succession. The murderer admitted that his motive was to remove that possibility. As it turned out, the attempt was belated, as the Duchess of Berry was already with child. The murder led Mazas to publish in October of that year a strange pamphlet, *Les trente premières années de Henri V*. Malandain says more about Mazas than his role in society would seem to warrant but demonstrates this is necessary because of the highly unusual nature of Mazas's intellectual and political personality, and by the element of mystery that surrounded many of his attachments and activities for twenty years. This is an admirable study in political history; important for the new material it contains and the brilliance of many of its phrases.

Jean Claude Yon shows that what has just been said was perhaps less true during the years in the last six years of the monarchy when the aforementioned Count of Artois took the throne as Charles X, Louis XVIII having died in September 1824. Once more, the most reactionary party in France, the Ultras, not unlike their counterparts in Spain, felt the sensation that their fondest fantasies had come to life. The new king, Yon argues, though a kindly and charming man, was also one of limited intelligence in political matters, a reputation for cowardice and an ostentatious piety that exasperated his subjects who were soon repeating the story that he was a Jesuit and bound by the rules of the order. The pomposity was vividly illustrated during his coronation which was a veritable orgy of plays, operas, and festivals—all of which impressed no one, and left his subjects gaping in horror, convinced that their new king had a messianic concept of his role in the world. But it is unnecessary to dwell on the events of the reign of Charles X. History is doubtless filled with examples of political folly, but surely there are few that are so unrelieved as the one afforded by the last Bourbon king. In short, this is a most useful contribution, full of valuable information.

Among the ten essays in the final section, Daniel Schönplflug's piece takes a prominent place. On 23 March 1819, Sand, an unbalanced theological student, murdered Alexander von Kotzebue, a reactionary publicist and playwright (whose works, one may add, were eminently forgettable) and sometime political agent of Tsar Alexander I of Russia. Schönplflug, to emphasize "the European dimension" (p. XX?) of his piece stresses the influence on Sand of such radical sects as the Carbonari in Italy and the Greeks who were fighting against Turkish rule. Schönplflug's essay leads one to conclude that Sand had no viable program, only a vague unstable amalgam of notions about recreating the German empire as a constitutional monarchy. Disturbing elements of Francophobia, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and German frenzy were connected with it closer to home. Oddly enough, only one line is devoted to the Carlsbad decrees to which the murder gave rise, and Metternich, their author, is passed over in silence. Though the essay contains a rich stock of anecdotes, the material in it does not change existing interpretations.

The results are summarized in a brief conclusion by the editors, Jean-Claude Caron and Jean-Phillipe

Luis. They divide the era into three periods: 1814-1815; 1814/1815-1830; and the year 1830 itself. But the overriding theme is clear; “*restauration* is a singularly inappropriate word to describe this period in European history” (p. 461). “In Germany the term only appeared in dictionaries in 1824... [The word] reflects a ‘gallocentrism’ of the European situation [in these years. The phrase makes sense] only if one understands it as phase of recomposition of mind led by the dynasties that had been threatened by revolution” (p. 462). Finally, “if one cannot speak in this book of counter-revolutions, it is because the latter does not constitute a coherent policy but more a movement of reaction and a failed rejection to advances in liberal principles and practice” (p. 463).

This is the correct, unavoidable conclusion. But there is something missing in it. No general explanation is given for this remarkable advance, but one is at hand. It begins with the Vienna system, a network of treaties, institutions, and practices developed in 1813-15 during the last Napoleonic Wars and at the Congress of Vienna. That settlement, combined in a network of mutually supporting treaties, gave all the governments a stake in a new system of mutually interlocking rights and obligations.

A more important point. One word never appears in the book: concert. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of what the concert of Europe was or why or what it made possible, but a word or two on the subject will not be out of order. Essentially the European concert was a principle by which the five great powers became a governing council or directory for settling serious international questions, using concert practices rather than bilateral or multilateral negotiations to achieve agreed solutions. Many of the topics the book’s chapters discuss (the revolts in Spain, Naples, and Piedmont in 1820-1821 and Spain, 1822-1823, for example) were settled by great power conferences which led to their suppression (in Italy by Austria, in Spain by France). The means were, of course, repressive but never without great power war or aggrandizement. Had there been, there is no telling what would have happened, but surely it is not going too far to suggest that a return to the storms of 1802-1812 was by no means impossible.

The collection of essays is thorough and accurate, with (as has been made apparent above) some fine pieces in it. It contains much invaluable information, but it is out of proportion for it devotes too much space to domestic history at the expense of foreign policy which should have dominated the work.

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