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Glenda Sluga, *The Invention of International Order: Remaking Europe after Napoleon*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. xvi + 369 pp. Maps, figures, notes, bibliography, and index. \$35.00 U.S./£29.00 U.K. (hb). ISBN 9780691208213; \$35.00 U.S./£29.00 U.K. (eb). ISBN 9780691226798.

Review by Christine Haynes, University of North Carolina, Charlotte.

In the epilogue to this important new work is buried an original point about the financial reparations that France demanded of the new nation of Haiti as compensation for the loss of its enslaved labor colony in 1825, which—especially in light of the controversy over *The New York Times* “Ransom” project—deserves to be highlighted.[1] Rather than a wholesale invention, Glenda Sluga reminds us, these reparations were part and parcel of a new international order established after the fall of Napoleon: “The French had taken a cynical history lesson from the reparations the victorious powers had forced on *them* in 1815” (pp. 274–275). Like the reparations that the French had paid to the Allies, these payments were managed by an international syndicate of financiers, including the Rothschilds. This double debt was just the most brutal example of the many paradoxes of the new international order, which in the name of humanitarianism and peace excluded and oppressed many, especially women, non-Christians, and non-whites. Such paradoxes remind us, Sluga concludes, “of the relevance of continuing to ask questions of the contemporary international order: What and whom is it for? Just how wide can the horizon of our own expectations be?” (p. 282).

Indeed, at a time when the European Union is facing such existential crises as Brexit and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, these are critical questions. Although she does not offer any definitive answers, Sluga perceptively emphasizes that our current international order is a product of the aftermath not of World War II, but of another global conflict, over two hundred years ago: the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. At the end of these wars, she argues, the Allied powers “invented a new culture of international diplomacy that expanded the possibilities of politics between states, from resolving territorial and fiscal disputes to advocacy for liberal principles, rights, and humanitarianism” (p. 26). Like Paul Schroeder before her,[2] Sluga views this transformation of European politics as revolutionary. However, in line with recent scholarship by Beatrice De Graaf, Brian Vick, Ido de Hahn, and others, she goes beyond Schroeder’s intellectual and legal approach to attend to the institutions, networks, practices, and emotions constructing the new international order.[3] Beginning with the Allied Central Administrative Authority created by Baron Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein in 1813, she highlights the role of conferences, commissions, and congresses—what De Graaf terms the “Allied Machine”—in constructing this multilateral system. Although it was guided by a moral

purpose, this multilateral system ultimately depended on a mundane architecture of ambassadors, consulates, meetings, protocols, notes, declarations, financial arrangements, and statistics (which, she reminds us, originally meant report on a “state”). Over eight years of conferences and five congresses between 1814 and 1822, the international order hinged above all on talking. (Prior to this, she suggests in an off-hand comment that deserves elaboration, it had hinged on dancing, which was required of all candidates for diplomatic posts [p. 26].) Emphasizing the importance of soft power diplomacy, Sluga also attends carefully to a range of non-state actors and institutions, including *négociants*, *salonnières*, and philanthropists, but also such pedestrian but essential organizations as the Commission on the Free Navigation of Rivers (pp. 126-130). Taking a thematic approach, the chapters move between exemplary individuals and broader structures to trace the developments—but also the paradoxes—involved in the shift from the eighteenth-century balance of power politics between monarchies to the modern multilateral system protective of the sovereignty of states.

As in her previous work, in her analysis of the origins of the international order, Sluga is particularly attentive to gender. Admitting that this book was motivated by a desire to counter the stereotype of women as only mistresses at the Congress of Vienna, she reconstructs the stories of a number of women whose role in the construction of the international order had previously been erased from the historical record. Beginning with the Duchess Wilhelmine von Sagan, who helped to convince the Austrian Prince Klemens von Metternich to join the Allied Coalition against Napoleon in 1813, she emphasizes the diplomatic influence exerted—in publications, fund-raising campaigns, and organizations, as well as in salons and boudoirs—by a number of women, including Rahel Varnhagen, Baroness Caroline von Humboldt, Anna Eynard-Lullin, Barbara Juliane von Krüdener, Dorothea Lieven, and especially Madame de Staël. While it is relatively well-known that Lieven, like von Krüdener, was instrumental in the construction of the “Holy Alliance,” Sluga shows how she continued to lobby for Orthodox Christians, against the Ottoman Empire, first in Greece and later in the lead-up to the Crimean War. Similarly, Sluga uncovers the influential roles played by Anna Eynard-Lullin, on behalf of Switzerland, and Caroline von Humboldt, in the resolution of the German question, at the Congress of Vienna (chapter nine). However, such influence-peddling provoked a backlash against women in diplomacy. As a result, Sluga argues, in the decades after 1815 these women were pushed out of official conferencing into private philanthropy and patriotism.

In its analysis of the institutions and practices of the new multilateral order, another strength of this book is its attention to the role of financiers and the interconnection between political and economic security. Quoting Madame de Staël to the effect that “Credit...the true modern discovery which binds a government to its people...obliges the executive power to treat public opinion with consideration” (p. 159), Sluga emphasizes how critical credit—and particularly the invention of a sovereign debt market—was not just to domestic but also to transnational politics in the post-Napoleonic era. Following the money to illuminate the role of bankers like the Rothschilds, Barings, Hope, and Gabriel Ouvrard in financing the post-war settlement, particularly the reparations payments the Allied powers required of France, she effectively shows the importance of this new financier class to international security along with global capitalism. As Sluga writes, “This period of international finance embeds a sovereign debt culture in the history of European diplomacy. The implications are fascinating as transnational credit-raising potentially binds investors to the fates of foreign nations as well as to capitalism” (p. 214). Over the next few decades, this class would lead a number of humanitarian campaigns, for instance for Jewish rights, Greek independence, abolition of slavery, and protections for workers, such as the

paternalist reforms advocated by Robert Owen. However, it would also use its influence to profit from the new international system, particularly from the groups marginalized by the main European powers in this system, as seen in the double debt imposed on Haiti.

As Sluga's offhand comment about the Haitian debt reveals, the period between the congress of 1822 in Verona and that of 1856 at the end of the Crimean War in Paris was a key moment for the development of the modern international system. In her penultimate chapter, Sluga suggests that this was a period of transition from romantic internationalism to *Realpolitik*. During this period, abolitionism also became a cover for intervening in new colonies, for instance in West Africa. And, increasingly preoccupied with who was in and who was out of Europe, the European powers began for the first time to treat the Muslim world as inferior and antithetical to Western civilization (p. 80). These important points, which are covered quickly in passing, deserve further investigation.

Also worth further exploration is the role of emotions in international politics. Early on, Sluga emphasizes that the new approach to international relations was underpinned by gendered emotions, with men expected to demonstrate "sense" in contrast to feminine "sensibility" (p. 54). And, at various points, she implies that too much emotion aroused suspicion against male diplomats and provoked the backlash against women in diplomacy. However, these intriguing suggestions require more analysis. How exactly did emotion motivate and structure international diplomacy between the 1810s and 1850s? Which "emotives" (to borrow the terminology of William Reddy) dominated international politics in this period? [4] How did emotives play into the decisions and actions of statesmen and diplomats, for instance regarding religious equality, Philhellenism, and abolitionism, but also the reparations required of Haiti? And how did emotions inflect financial credit, which was so critical to international security? To begin to answer such questions, the analytical framework of "emotion" deserves to be carried more fully through the story of the invention of international order after Napoleon.

Finally, in a more stylistic vein, Sluga follows an unfortunate recent trend of employing the present tense in historical writing. In the introduction, she justifies this usage as a means to signal when she is trying "to understand the reactions and strategies of women and men who invested themselves in the new possibilities of the world around them" (10). However, it is not clear why these reactions and strategies of women and men long dead should not be conveyed in the past tense, and this stylistic decision leads to jarring jumps between the past and present tenses, as in this discussion of the Russian tsar's decision to join the coalition against France: "In the circumstances, not only was the Sixth Coalition's success not inevitable, its timing and its makeup were constantly in contention.... As the fate of Europe hangs in the balance between French ambition and Russian reaction, Tsar Alexander decides to seek out allies. He sets in train a military campaign that will eventually lead to the transformation of European politics and a new international order" (p. 12).

Such quibbles aside, this is an inventive study of a crucial but understudied moment in international politics. By revising our understanding not just of the Congress of Vienna, but the whole complex of individuals, institutions, and practices involved in the multilateral system that prevailed for much of the last two hundred years but is now facing serious challenges, Sluga is to be commended. This book is essential reading for historians not just of international relations, but of gender, nationalism, capitalism, and human rights in the long nineteenth century.

NOTES

[1] “Haiti ‘Ransom’ Project,” *The New York Times*, May 22, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/haiti> (accessed July 19, 2022).

[2] Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[3] Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan, and Brian Vick, eds., *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Beatrice de Graaf, *Fighting Terror after Napoleon: How Europe Became Secure after 1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); and Brian Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[4] William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

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