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Part 1: The 'long' 19th century: a European history of conflict and cooperation

The Age of the Nation State (1814–1914)

Almost 200 years later, the Congress of Vienna and the European postwar order that it designed had lost none of their significance. The years 1814 and 1815 mark a crucial caesura in European history. Following almost two and a half decades of revolutionary wars, the continent was compelled to reorganise itself, both on an internal and external level. This could only be termed 'Restoration' to a limited extent.[1] Although the customary monarchical rulers were reinstated wherever possible, as was Louis XVIII of France, the achievements of the French Revolution were nevertheless maintained or reinforced, such as in the French Charte Constitutionnelle, at the same time. Elsewhere, such as in Germany, completely new systems were even created. The loose German federacy and the repressive spirit that inspired most of the member state governments may not have wished to live up to the hopes of the German National Movement that had first found its voice in the 'Wars of Liberation'; yet they by no means signified a reinstatement of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. All the more, the newly founded concerto of the five great European powers – Great Britain, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia – with its mechanisms for conflict regulation and war prevention, has proved to this day to be an up-to-date model for successfully catering to the diverging interests of various international players.[2] In this regard, the initial break marked by the second volume of the Franco-German History Textbook is convincing; further, the complex relationship between revolution and restoration within a limited space is at least mentioned and can be lent more depth with the help of additional term definitions, images and maps (p. 12f.). This is also the case for the further development of Germany and France in the first half of the 19th century, which is indeed ultimately a (shared) history of revolution. The July Revolution of 1830 (p. 14f.) and the February Revolution of 1848 (p. 24f.) are dealt with in terms of their social causes and effects as are the uprisings these revolutions provoked in the rest of Europe, especially in the German federation at the beginning of the 1830s (p. 16f.) and then, especially, in 1848 (p. 22f., p. 26f.). The book explores the contemporary term of the Spring of Nations and its ambivalent potential. On the one hand, in 1848, there seemed at times to be solidarity between the people rising up against their rulers; on the other, their demand for national self-definition, including the right to their own nation-state, harboured the seed of discord in view of the rival claims of different nationalities and ultimately the suspicion aroused by the great German dreams of St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt. Ultimately, these factors fuelled the revolution towards victory.

It should be underlined that this first chapter of the textbook is not a history of Franco-German relations; rather, it is a Franco-German portrayal of European history. This is no longer de facto the case for the three following

chapters of Part I, as the headers demonstrate: 'From a Growing National Consciousness to the War – France and Germany (1850–1870/1871)' (pp. 30–43), 'The Political Development of France and Germany (1870–1914)' (pp. 44–61) and finally: 'Germany and France – Responses to the Challenges of the 19th Century' (pp. 62–77). Now we may argue with good reason that a bilateral perspective – should it be presented factually, which is doubtless the case here – is an improvement compared to the primarily one-sided national perspective to be found in other textbooks. Furthermore, it is of course quite legitimate for a Franco-German history textbook to lay its focus on relations between the two countries at the particularly crucial phases of their history, thus – at least indirectly – defining the whole European development, which in turn can be assumed quite justifiably in the light of the pre- and post-history of the Franco-German War of 1870/71.

The proclamation of the 'German Reich' in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles on 18th January 1871 brought about the recession of all that had been achieved in the past, despite all differences, in terms of mutual enrichment. The military action on the soil of the conquered French opposition shifted the founding of the Reich into the continuous pattern of the Franco-German struggle surrounding foreign rule and national self-definition that had determined the relationship between the two countries since the beginning of the century. In the 'Liberation Wars', the German national conscience had evolved as being in opposition to France; the concept of the unified small German state in the national hope, eventually realised decades later, evolved from a war against France, thus rendering 'the enmity of France towards Germany a defining component of the foundations upon which the Reich was compelled to stand'. [3] Of course, the age-old animosity that had been passed down from generation to generation was primarily an ideological construct (p. 77) that had already been developed in the German federal states over the previous decades by social groups wishing to more clearly define German identity by means of enemy imagery and, at the same time, to popularise further their demand for a German nation-state via such a form of 'negative integration'. [4] On the French side, this animosity was put into concrete terms via the desire for revenge and a conclusive liberation from Madame de Staël's benevolent image of Germany in favour of the 'both Germanies' idea. [5] The stereotype of the 'land of poets and thinkers', which had not been completely forgotten, was immediately clouded over by images of a barbaric and domineering Germany, personified by the 'Boche' ('Kraut').

Regardless of lasting bilateral transfer projects and communication via culture, academia and economics, and even attempts towards temporary political reconciliation, which, of course, continued to take place even subsequent to 1870/71, such mutual enemy imagery was liable to being swiftly reactivated at any time, especially since the development of both societies and their political systems followed very different paths, as the third chapter of the textbook, 'The Political Development of France and Germany from 1870 to 1914' (pp. 44–61) demonstrates very well. In France, the 'Third Republic', which did not succeed in asserting itself against monarchic alternatives until the end of the 1870s, then becoming further established in the decades leading up to World War I; school policy and struggles within the Church, the successful resistance against the anti-parliamentary and nationalistic Boulanger Affair, and finally the Dreyfus Affair, all served to reinforce the so-called *synthèse républicaine*

and to marginalise the significance of radical opponents of the system, especially in the reactionary monarchist camp.[6] At the same time, a constitutional monarchy existed in Germany with an openly and freely elected parliament – albeit consisting entirely of men – as well as a successively developing modern industrial society, which nevertheless remained an 'authoritarian state before democracy' (Thomas Nipperdey) with a distinctly military character.[7] This ambivalence not least reflected the position of Alsace-Lorraine in the German Reich, as is documented by an instructive two-page dossier (pp. 58-59). The 'Reichsland' may indeed have benefited from the general German economic improvement; nevertheless, at the same time it remained a politically neglected and – of course – a military occupation zone and thus primarily a symbol of the long-term conflict inherent in Franco-German history.

Ultimately, the ruling opinions regarding important social and political issues, such as the Constitution and political participation (p. 64f.), the 'Social Question' and socialism (p. 66f.) as well as the relationship with 'State and Religion' (p. 68f.) and 'Nation and Nationalism' (p. 70f.) varied considerably. It is therefore not surprising that both countries' mutual perceptions had been dominated by alienation at best – and at worst by silent rejection or even open animosity – since 1870/71 at the latest. A dossier on 'Mutual Perceptions of the French and the Germans' (p. 72f.) presents a colourful mixture of caricatures and quotations that allow teachers and pupils to examine the mutual images of the French and Germans for their clichéd nature as well as for their effect.

Certainly, the strength of Part One of the Franco-German History Textbook is to be found in its multi-perspective, albeit primarily Franco-German, portrayal. Anyone working with it will benefit not only from a wealth of visually attractive images and maps, but also from numerous quotations from historical sources and portrayals, which may be assessed via a variety of different methods also provided for assistance. Furthermore, at the end of the book at least – in Chapter 19 of Part 7: 'Europe and its Nations: Conflicts and Challenges (1815–1945)' (pp. 356–369) – the perspective is extended once more to the whole of Europe across the entire period of history dealt with in the book. In doing so, the book correctly and for the first time incisively reveals the ambivalence of the era between the Congress of Vienna and World War II. On the one hand it was a matter of a lasting history of conflict that was exacerbated by the new phenomena of militarism and nationalism, ultimately culminating in two World Wars in the twentieth century. On the other hand, this history was complemented – if unfortunately not counteracted – by a tendency towards increasingly strong social, economic and civilising connections within Europe, especially in the last decades of the 19th century, which can certainly be interpreted as integration within the continent *avant la lettre*. [8] Nevertheless, alongside the praise, the conception of the Franco-German history textbook, which is weak in places, does invite criticism. Firstly, the strength of the book – its illustrative portrayal of content – is simultaneously its weak point. Images, graphs, illustrative boxes and timelines may well be attractive; however, they can sometimes completely bewilder the reader, who may thus be distracted from the content of the main text. In extreme cases, this could lead to the textbook only being used in the classroom as an additional source of materials alongside other, 'text-heavy', volumes, which

would be a pity. Secondly, the order is not always convincing as it splits up historical contexts without an explicit indication of such. For the chapters dealt with here, it has already been pointed out that Part 1 of the book and the last chapter of Part 7 are closely linked. 'Europe and its Nations: Conflicts and Challenges (1815–1945)' (pp. 356–369) may well be intended as a stock-taking chapter; however, then one must simply run the risk of repeating oneself and avoid providing completely new information that should really have appeared in previous chapters. Alternatively, it could be pointed out to the reader, so that discovering useful complementary information is not left to chance. Another particularly striking example for this structural weakness is the account of the 'Ems Dispatch' telegram. On page 38, it is briefly mentioned and extremely superficially defined in the context of the Franco-German War without any reference (not even in the glossary!) to the fact that not only is the telegram itself depicted on page 76, but that it is also contrasted with the exact wording of the original version before it was edited by Bismarck.

Mistakes or inaccuracies should not be pedantically criticised here, especially since textbook facts are reduced for didactic purposes. And so we might turn a blind eye to the laconic comment on page 38 that the Republican 'government of national defence' continued fighting in the late summer of 1870 subsequent to the fall of the Second Empire, which indeed is not incorrect. And yet – thirdly – such a statement does misrepresent the fact that the new French leadership initially wished to end the Franco-German War, which had been criticised by its members from the start, and also to accept the founding of the German Reich, with the exception of Bismarck's unexpected demand for the annexing of Alsace and Lorraine. It would certainly be desirable to omit the issue of responsibility when depicting the Franco-German War. Firstly, this is a topic that remains explosive amongst academics even today;^[9] secondly, this would be a good opportunity to illustrate the particular advantage that the makers of textbooks claim as their own: 'the change of perspective that emphasises the intertwining of historical strands of development, the common as well as the disputed memory and the diverse and various approaches to one and the same reality' (p. 3).

In view of all this, it is equally regrettable that the 'Rhine Crisis' of 1839/1840 is only briefly touched upon (p. 18). Its significance is not to be underestimated as far as Franco-German perceptions of the self and the 'other' in the 19th century are concerned, which, after all, is one of the main topics – if not a crucial issue – of the current volume.^[10] In Germany, the old fears of the threat posed by a feisty France were revived and given a voice in memorable political songs and poems. As in the 'Liberation Wars' before, the German image of the self was once again sharpened against the enemy image of the French, which was accepted without question, now once again even by a younger generation. Even the democratic and liberal forces for whom France had been a model of political progress had joined in this anti-French soupçon. Yet this positive image of France also revealed latently negative features. It was precisely these progressive powers in the German federacy that were – at the same time – the bearers of the German concept of unity: a correlation that is hardly mentioned in the Franco-German History Textbook. For them, France resembled a potential aggressor in this regard, one who would strive to annex the left bank of the Rhine, an undertaking that some of them – such as at the

Hambach Fair in 1832 – countered with the idea of winning back Alsace-Lorraine. Here once again, it became evident how the hard-wearing experience of the Napoleonic occupation had marked the Germans' attitudes towards their westerly neighbours. This background also helps us to understand how a war against France made it possible for Bismarck to win back his domestic opponents, even those from the South-German states, in 1870.

[translated by Wendy Anne Kopisch]

[1] Volker Sellin, *Die geraubte Revolution. Der Sturz Napoleons und die Restauration in Europa*, Göttingen 2001.

[2] Peter Krüger, Paul W. Schroeder (eds.), *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848: Episode or Model in Modern History?* Münster 2002; Matthias Schulz, *Normen und Praxis. Das Europäische Konzert der Großmächte als Sicherheitsrat 1815–1860*, München 2008.

[3] Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Die Deutsche Frage und das Europäische Staatensystem 1815–1871*, München 1993, p. 51. On Franco-German relations in the 19th century, cf. Jacques Bariéty, Raymond Poidevin, *Les Relations franco-allemandes 1815–1975*, Paris 1977 (German version: *Frankreich und Deutschland. Die Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen 1815–1975*, München 1982); Hartmut Kaelble, *Nachbarn am Rhein. Entfremdung und Annäherung der französischen und deutschen Gesellschaft seit 1880*, München 1991; Reiner Pommerin, Reiner Marcowitz (eds.), *Quellen zu den deutsch-französischen Beziehungen 1814–1919*, Darmstadt 1997; Michel Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*, Paris 1999.

[4] Michael Jeismann, *Das Vaterland der Feinde. Studien zum nationalen Feindbegriff und Selbstverständnis in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1792–1918*, Stuttgart 1991.

[5] Wolfgang Leiner, '1870/71 – Wandel des Deutschlandbilds im Spiegel der französischen Literatur', in: Franz Knipping, Werner Weisenfeld (eds.), *Eine ungewöhnliche Geschichte. Deutschland – Frankreich seit 1870*, Bonn 1988, pp. 28–46, here p. 34.

[6] François Caron, *La France des patriotes de 1851 à 1918*, Paris 1985 (German version: *Frankreich im Zeitalter des Imperialismus 1851–1918*, Stuttgart 1991).

[7] Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866–1918. Vol. 1: Arbeitswelt und Bürgergeist*, München 1990; vol. 2: *Machtstaat vor der Demokratie*, München 1992; François Roth, *L'Allemagne de 1815 à 1918*, Paris 2006.

[8] Elisabeth du Réau, *L'idée de l'Europe au XXe siècle*, Bruxelles 1996; Peter Krüger, *Das unberechenbare Europa. Epochen des Integrationsprozesses vom späten 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Europäischen Union*, Stuttgart 2006.

[9] David Wetzel, *Duell der Giganten. Bismarck, Napoleon III. und die Ursachen des Deutsch-Französischen Krieges 1870–1871*, Paderborn 2005; Josef Becker (ed.), *Bismarcks spanische 'Diversion' 1870 und der preußisch-deutsche Reichsgründungskrieg. Quellen zur Vor- und Nachgeschichte der Hohenzollern-Kandidatur für den Thron in Madrid 1866–1932*, 3. vols, Paderborn 2003–2007.

[10] Reiner Marcowitz, *Großmacht auf Bewährung. Die Interdependenz französischer Innen- und Außenpolitik und ihre Auswirkungen auf Frankreichs Stellung im Europäischen Konzert 1814/15–1851/52*, Stuttgart 2001, pp. 152–184.