FIGHTING TERROR AFTER NAPOLEON

After Napoleon’s defeat in 1815, following twenty-six years of unprecedented revolutionary upheavals and endless fighting, the victorious powers craved stability. With the threat of war and revolutionary terror still looming large, the coalition launched an unprecedented experiment to re-establish European security. With over a million troops remaining in France, they established the Allied Council to mitigate the threat of war and terror and to design and consolidate a system of deterrence. The Council transformed the existing norm of interstate relations into the first modern system of collective security in Europe. Drawing on the records of the Council and the correspondence of key figures such as Metternich, Castlereagh, Wellington and Alexander I, Beatrice de Graaf tells the story of Europe’s transition from concluding a war to consolidating a new order. She reveals how, long before commercial interest and economic considerations on scale and productivity dictated and inspired the project of European integration, the common denominator behind this first impulse for a unification of Europe in norms and institutions was the collective fight against terror.

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FIGHTING TERROR AFTER NAPOLEON

How Europe Became Secure after 1815

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A journey into the nineteenth century requires suitable luggage, especially if one is a child of the twentieth century and departs from the twenty-first. People did things differently two hundred years ago. The international language was French, everything was written by hand, in Germany still in the oftentimes hardly legible Kurrentschrift. What complicates matters even more is the fact that the historical people I encountered were not even from the nineteenth century, but came from the eighteenth century – an era of pompadoured wigs that seems even more distant in time and customs. How should we then begin to understand what a politician, general or diplomat meant when talking about the balance of power, about peace or security?

I have been able to follow through with this voyage back in time and space and make sense of these historical encounters only thanks to my group of travel companions. My European Research Council group – Constantin Ardeleanu, Susanne Keesman, Wouter Klem, Erik de Lange, Melle Lyklema, Ozan Ozavci, Joep Schenk, Jossie van Til – accompanied me along the winding paths, through the mists of the immediate post-1815 years, and helped me avoid pitfalls and dead alleys.¹ Our group’s student assistants were also indispensable; without them I would still be wandering about: Yannick Balk, Annelotte Janse, Hannah Joosse, Paul Kardoulakis, Eva van de Kimmenade, Nicolette Moors and Celine Mureau, with Yannick and Celine being of essential help during the final stretch. The NWO Blueprints group in Utrecht – Clemens van den Berg, Trineke Palm, Peter-Ben Smit and Jorrit Steehouder – and the GIB/Conflict section in our History Department provided support and inspiration throughout. In between, the students of my MA tutorial on 1815 – Carla, Daan, Leone, Merit, Rob, Tim and Yannick – were a great audience for finding and testing the main arguments. I am grateful to Ozan, Wouter and Erik for helping me find my way through various archives, to Yannick for the beautiful images, to Erik Goosmann for the elegant maps and to Carla Spiegel and Myrthe van Groningen for the fine-tuning of the English edition.

¹ The research leading to these results also received funding from the ERC under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007-2013) / ERC Grant Agreement n.615313.
xii ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Inspiration and insight into the timescapes and temporalities of the early nineteenth century came from Chris Clark, Christine Haynes, Mark Jarrett, Lotte Jensen, Matthijs Lok, Niek van Sas, Glenda Sluga and Brian Vick. Eckart Conze’s support, his ideas on historicizing security and presence in Utrecht in 2017 were essential to this project. Susan Legêne helped me understand the nexus between the Concert of Europe and Empire. Without Mieke Canneman-van Leeuwen I would not have been able to decipher the crucial texts in the *Kurrentschrift*; I am very grateful for her patient help. Christoph Baumgartner, Guido de Bruin, Eckart Conze, Lotte Jensen, John Kok, Kees Noorda, Maarten van Riel and Maarten Wildervanck read and provided valuable comments.

Essential for a journey into uncharted territory – here, the winding trail of the Allied Council – were the archives and their guardians, the archivists, who were so very friendly everywhere. Stijn Lybeert at the Oudenaarde City Archives, Philip Schofield from the Bentham Papers in London and Christian Schwarzbach from the Secret State Archives Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation in Berlin deserve a special reference for their patient and lengthy answers to my manifold requests.

The journey also went via Cambridge, through the charming gates of St Catherine’s, where Chris Clark and Hans van de Ven invited me as visiting fellow to work on this project, and enjoy the lively discussions there and within the History Faculty. Colin Higgins, Andrew McKenzie-McHarg, Rachel Hoffman, Matthew Champion and Mary-Ann Middelkoop were perfect sparring partners.

At the end of the tour the book came in sight, first the Dutch one, but only thanks to the encouraging words of Joost Dankers, Marieke van Oostrom and Mai Spijkers, who advised me to make this story accessible to a broader audience. For the English version, I owe so much to Michael Watson, who encouraged me to write this history years ago. John Kok was of invaluable assistance in providing me with the English translation of the first Dutch draft, which I could then complement and adapt into the current, final one, but only with the help of Ruth Boyes at Cambridge University Press and Jane Burbkowski.

Roland and the children descended with me into underground mines and fortresses, helped me to navigate the Wellington Barrier and were always willing to listen to my endless stories of distant battles, Napoleon, Wellington or those marvellous radical women in Brussels. I am grateful for their companionship throughout this adventure. The story of this journey is also theirs.